



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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Sample Size: 1,160 adults nationally

Confidence Interval: +/- 3.1%

Samples Provided by: Multiple online opt-in panels, including Cint, Dynata and Prodege. Sample collection and quality control was managed by QuantifyAI under the direction of the University of Maryland's Program for Public Consultation.

This survey is going to address policies about US foreign aid.

You will be provided with background information, as well as arguments for and against each policy. This survey will take about 20 minutes to answer. Your answers will remain completely anonymous.

As you may know there are currently debates about America's foreign aid program.

The US has been providing foreign aid for some time now. After World War II, the US provided foreign aid to help Europe rebuild, and establish democracies there.

Since then, the US has been providing foreign aid to many less-developed countries to help them respond to disasters, address hunger and disease, build their economies and develop their democracies. Nearly all aid goes to non-profit and international organizations that have specialized skills, with a very small amount going directly to foreign governments.

All other developed countries also provide humanitarian and development aid.

The US also provides military aid to other countries, primarily to Israel.

[Perceptions of US Foreign Aid]

Q1. Just based on what you know, please tell me your hunch about what percent of the federal budget goes to foreign aid?

Total	Mean	25.2
	Median	20.0
GOP	Mean	26.9
	Median	20.0
Dems	Mean	23.1
	Median	15.0
Indep	Mean	26.2
	Median	15.0

Q2. What do you think would be an appropriate percentage of the federal budget to go to foreign aid, if any?

Total	Mean	15.0
	Median	10.0
GOP	Mean	13.0
	Median	5.0
Dems	Mean	16.4
	Median	10.0
Indep	Mean	17.2
	Median	10.0

Q3. If you think about the amount of aid that the US gives to less developed countries, as a percentage of the US' total economy, how do you think this compares with the percentage that the other industrialized countries give? Do you think the US gives:

	A lot more	Somewhat more	More	About the same	Less	A little less	Somewhat less	Ref/DK
National	36.7%	26.9%	63.6%	19.3%	17.1%	10.0%	7.1%	0.0%
GOP	48.1%	21.8%	69.9%	14.8%	15.4%	8.7%	6.7%	0.0%
Dem.	27.0%	31.6%	58.6%	22.9%	18.5%	12.2%	6.3%	0.0%
Indep.	27.8%	29.7%	57.5%	23.4%	19.1%	8.1%	11.0%	0.0%

Q4. We would now like you to think about US government spending to help poor people at home and poor people abroad. Of this total amount, what percentage of it do you think should go to help poor people in other countries?

Total	Mean	18.0
	Median	10.0
GOP	Mean	15.7
	Median	8.0
Dems	Mean	20.5
	Median	10.0
Indep	Mean	18.2
	Median	10.0

[Briefing on US Foreign Aid Spending]

Now we will tell you how much the US actually spends on foreign aid, and what other countries spend.

Spending on all foreign aid, including military aid, generally makes up about 1% of the Federal budget, or about \$72 billion.¹

¹ ForeignAssistance.gov, FY2023, Disbursements

So, if you think about how much you contribute in taxes every year—about 1% of that goes to foreign aid. For the median American taxpayer that is about \$60 per year.²

In comparison to other developed countries, the US spends more in total than others. However, relative to the size of its economy, the US spends less than most other developed countries, and less than the average.

[General Arguments For and Against Foreign Aid]

We will now ask you to evaluate a number of the arguments that are sometimes made both for and against US foreign aid, especially humanitarian and economic aid. For each one, please select how convincing you find each one.

Here is an argument in favor:

Q5. The United States should be willing to share at least a small portion of its wealth with those in the world who are in great need. As one of the world’s rich nations, the United States has a moral responsibility toward poor nations to help them develop economically and improve their people’s lives.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	24.1%	43.2%	67.3%	17.4%	13.9%	31.3%	1.5%
GOP	16.9%	42.4%	59.3%	19.0%	21.0%	40.0%	0.7%
Dem.	35.0%	42.7%	77.7%	13.2%	6.8%	20.0%	2.3%
Indep.	15.1%	47.2%	62.3%	24.7%	11.1%	35.8%	2.0%

Here is an argument against:

Q6. Helping people in foreign countries is not the proper role for the US government. This should be strictly a private matter with individuals making charitable donations through private organizations.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	22.8%	37.2%	60.0%	25.1%	14.7%	39.8%	0.2%
GOP	30.2%	41.4%	71.6%	21.9%	6.4%	28.3%	0.2%
Dem.	17.6%	31.1%	48.7%	27.5%	23.9%	51.4%	0.0%
Indep.	13.4%	41.7%	55.1%	29.2%	14.9%	44.1%	0.8%

Here is another argument in favor:

Q7. Giving foreign aid to countries who are strategically positioned in the world is a good idea because it helps ensure that they will stay friendly to us.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	23.3%	45.5%	68.8%	20.5%	10.7%	31.2%	0.1%

² Calculation: Median taxpayer contribution (~\$6,000) x Foreign aid as a percent of total federal outlays (~1%). Median taxpayer contribution is calculated by dividing the total income, employment and excise taxes from the \$50-60k income group (\$77.5 billion) by the number of returns for that group (13.3 million), using data from JCT Overview of the Federal Tax System, Table A-6. Non-military foreign aid is \$63.7 billion, using FY2023 Disbursements data from ForeignAssistance.gov; and total federal outlays for 2023 (\$6.1 trillion) is from the Congressional Budget Office. 2023 data is used for all variables, because 2023 is the latest year for which there is complete foreign aid spending data.

GOP	17.7%	47.8%	65.5%	21.7%	12.6%	34.3%	0.1%
Dem.	33.1%	41.7%	74.8%	18.3%	6.9%	25.2%	0.0%
Indep.	12.7%	48.8%	61.5%	22.9%	15.6%	38.5%	0.0%

Here is another argument against:

Q8. Too much US foreign aid goes to governments that are not very democratic and have poor human rights records. This is not consistent with American principles.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	28.3%	41.3%	69.6%	21.5%	8.8%	30.3%	0.1%
GOP	36.1%	40.8%	76.9%	17.0%	6.1%	23.1%	0.0%
Dem.	21.0%	41.8%	62.8%	25.3%	11.6%	36.9%	0.3%
Indep.	23.6%	41.9%	65.5%	24.9%	9.5%	34.4%	0.0%

Here is another argument in favor:

Q9. We should send aid to people in desperate need whether or not it will directly promote the national interest.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing
National	22.3%	42.2%	64.5%	21.4%	13.9%	35.3%
GOP	16.9%	39.3%	56.2%	24.1%	19.6%	43.7%
Dem.	30.0%	44.5%	74.5%	17.3%	8.0%	25.3%
Indep.	17.6%	44.9%	62.5%	24.8%	12.7%	37.5%

Here is another argument against:

Q10. There is so much waste and corruption in the process of giving foreign aid that very little aid actually reaches the people who really need it.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	36.8%	39.2%	76.0%	16.0%	7.8%	23.8%	0.2%
GOP	47.3%	36.6%	83.9%	10.9%	5.1%	16.0%	0.2%
Dem.	26.9%	40.0%	66.9%	21.1%	11.6%	32.7%	0.3%
Indep.	31.2%	45.6%	76.8%	17.6%	5.4%	23.0%	0.2%

Here is another argument in favor:

Q11. Studies show that it is not true that a lot of foreign aid is lost to fraud or waste, yet people who are against foreign aid keep repeating this false information.³ Decisions about foreign aid should be based on facts.

³ U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. (2021) [The credibility of corruption statistics: A critical review of ten global estimates.](#)

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	32.5%	40.0%	72.5%	15.5%	11.7%	27.2%	0.2%
GOP	25.4%	36.8%	62.2%	19.0%	18.7%	37.7%	0.1%
Dem.	43.9%	40.6%	84.5%	10.1%	5.0%	15.1%	0.4%
Indep.	21.9%	49.2%	71.1%	20.5%	8.5%	29.0%	0.0%

Here is another argument against:

Q12. Taking care of problems at home is more important than giving aid to foreign countries. The problems in America must be fixed first before the government even starts to consider giving taxpayer money to others.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	43.7%	33.8%	77.5%	15.8%	6.7%	22.5%	0.0%
GOP	55.0%	32.5%	87.5%	9.2%	3.3%	12.5%	0.0%
Dem.	31.7%	34.9%	66.6%	23.0%	10.4%	33.4%	0.0%
Indep.	41.8%	34.6%	76.4%	16.5%	6.9%	23.4%	0.2%

[Foreign Aid Programs]

We are now going to go look at the different types of humanitarian and economic aid and how much the US has been spending on them. Here is an overall picture of the main humanitarian and economic aid programs.

Humanitarian relief	\$15.6 billion
Health	\$16.1 billion
Economic development	\$19.4 billion
Education	\$1.1 billion
Environment	\$1.4 billion
Democracy and Human Rights	\$2.3 billion

Now we will tell you more about what goes into each of these areas, and you will get a chance to say whether you think the amount the US spends should change up or down or stay about the same.

[Humanitarian Relief]

For humanitarian relief, the US has been spending about \$15.6 billion a year.⁴ This aid is used for caring for people who urgently need food, medical care, or shelter because they are victims of a disaster like famine, a flood, or a war.

Here is an argument in favor of this kind of aid:

Q13. Humanitarian relief saves lives, alleviates suffering and hunger, and helps communities recover from horrible disasters that are not their fault. The US has a moral responsibility to do its part.

⁴ ForeignAssistance.gov, USG Sector Summary, FY2023, Disbursements, Humanitarian Assistance, accessed February 5, 2025.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	33.9%	44.5%	78.4%	13.8%	7.1%	20.9%	0.7%
GOP	25.3%	47.5%	72.8%	16.2%	10.8%	27.0%	0.2%
Dem.	44.9%	41.6%	86.5%	9.1%	3.3%	12.4%	1.0%
Indep.	29.6%	43.1%	72.7%	19.6%	6.3%	25.9%	1.4%

Here is an argument against:

Q14. Corrupt governments and terrorist organizations take advantage of humanitarian crises, and steal medical supplies, food and other aid. They then sell it back to their own people, so the US ends up funding these bad actors.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	34.0%	36.8%	70.8%	21.2%	7.8%	29.0%	0.1%
GOP	42.8%	35.6%	78.4%	16.7%	4.6%	21.3%	0.3%
Dem.	26.1%	36.6%	62.7%	25.6%	11.6%	37.2%	0.0%
Indep.	28.0%	41.7%	69.7%	23.3%	7.1%	30.4%	0.0%

Here is another argument in favor of this kind of aid:

Q15. By offering humanitarian support, the US shows compassion and builds better relationships with other countries, which can help promote peace and stability around the world.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	32.3%	45.8%	78.1%	14.6%	7.2%	21.8%	0.1%
GOP	23.1%	48.0%	71.1%	19.3%	9.6%	28.9%	0.0%
Dem.	44.7%	42.5%	87.2%	8.9%	3.5%	12.4%	0.3%
Indep.	25.5%	48.3%	73.8%	15.4%	10.8%	26.2%	0.0%

Here is another argument against:

Q16. It is not the government's responsibility to use taxpayer funds for humanitarian relief. This is the role of private citizens and charities.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	24.2%	32.2%	56.4%	28.3%	15.1%	43.4%	0.2%
GOP	30.6%	38.4%	69.0%	22.3%	8.5%	30.8%	0.2%
Dem.	19.2%	24.3%	43.5%	34.2%	22.3%	56.5%	0.0%
Indep.	17.7%	35.3%	53.0%	31.0%	15.5%	46.5%	0.5%

Q17. As mentioned, US government spending on humanitarian relief is about \$15.6 billion a year. Do you think the government should spend:

	A lot more	Somewhat more	A little more	More	Keep it the same	Less	A little less	Somewhat less	None at all	Ref/DK
National	6.7%	10.2%	11.1%	28.0%	28.1%	43.7%	14.7%	21.0%	8.0%	0.1%
GOP	5.5%	8.5%	8.7%	22.7%	19.7%	57.3%	16.0%	30.1%	11.2%	0.3%
Dem.	7.9%	14.0%	14.9%	36.8%	33.0%	30.1%	13.4%	12.5%	4.2%	0.0%
Indep.	7.4%	4.6%	7.7%	19.7%	41.5%	38.7%	14.0%	15.8%	8.9%	0.0%

[Health]

For health aid, the US has been spending about \$16.1 billion a year.⁵ This aid is used to:

- treat diseases (including HIV and malaria)
- prevent the spread of diseases
- improve health outcomes (especially for mothers and children)
- train doctors and nurses
- ensure access to clean water.

Here is an argument in favor of this kind of aid:

Q18. Health aid reduces suffering around the world, especially among children. Plus, having healthy populations throughout the world is better for everyone. Health aid helps prevent the spread of disease, which could end up in the US. It also helps countries to develop their economies, as healthy workers are more productive.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	38.2%	41.7%	79.9%	12.4%	7.2%	19.6%	0.4%
GOP	28.4%	45.1%	73.5%	16.0%	10.4%	26.4%	0.0%
Dem.	52.5%	35.8%	88.3%	7.6%	3.2%	10.8%	0.9%
Indep.	28.2%	48.2%	76.4%	15.2%	8.5%	23.7%	0.0%

Here is an argument against:

Q19. When a country gets outside aid to deal with their health problems, it can discourage their government from investing in making sure their own healthcare system is able to deal with problems. They become reliant on this aid and will continue to need more in the future.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	25.0%	36.9%	61.9%	25.3%	12.8%	38.1%	0.0%
GOP	31.3%	43.0%	74.3%	20.4%	5.3%	25.7%	0.0%
Dem.	20.2%	30.4%	50.6%	27.3%	22.1%	49.4%	0.0%
Indep.	18.2%	36.1%	54.3%	36.1%	9.5%	45.6%	0.0%

Q20. As mentioned, US government spending on health aid is about \$16.1 billion a year. Do you think the government should spend:

⁵ ForeignAssistance.gov, USG Sector Summary, FY2023, Disbursements, Health, accessed February 5, 2025.

	A lot more	Somewhat more	A little more	More	Keep it the same	Less	A little less	Somewhat less	None at all	Ref/DK
National	8.7%	10.4%	12.6%	31.7%	32.1%	36.2%	11.8%	16.4%	8.0%	0.0%
GOP	6.4%	6.7%	9.5%	22.6%	27.1%	50.2%	15.0%	23.6%	11.6%	0.0%
Dem.	11.1%	16.0%	16.7%	43.8%	34.9%	21.3%	8.2%	9.1%	4.0%	0.0%
Indep.	8.7%	6.2%	10.7%	25.6%	41.0%	33.5%	11.7%	14.1%	7.7%	0.0%

[Economic Development]

To help less developed countries improve their food production, develop their infrastructure, and build their private enterprises and financial systems, the US has been spending about \$19.4 billion a year.⁶

Here is an argument in favor of this kind of aid:

Q21. Americans are generous, so it is natural for them to provide relief when people are suffering. But the really intelligent thing to do is to help countries develop their economies so that they are strong enough to cope with their own problems. This will reduce humanitarian crises and mass migration, and reduce the need for aid in the long run.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	30.2%	42.9%	73.1%	16.4%	9.6%	26.0%	0.9%
GOP	25.2%	44.5%	69.7%	16.4%	12.9%	29.3%	1.0%
Dem.	36.9%	41.2%	78.1%	15.2%	6.0%	21.2%	0.7%
Indep.	26.4%	42.9%	69.3%	20.0%	9.2%	29.2%	1.5%

Here is an argument against:

Q22. Development aid interferes with the free market by having the US foreign aid bureaucracy decide where money should go rather than private business and consumers. It is not clear that the aid really does any good. We need to trust the free market.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	20.9%	34.0%	54.9%	28.9%	15.9%	44.8%	0.3%
GOP	27.4%	37.4%	64.8%	26.1%	9.0%	35.1%	0.1%
Dem.	16.3%	27.7%	44.0%	32.1%	23.6%	55.7%	0.4%
Indep.	13.1%	41.9%	55.0%	28.7%	15.9%	44.6%	0.5%

Here is another argument in favor:

Q23. The world is so interconnected today that, in the long run, helping countries to develop is in the economic interests of the US. The US has trade partners—like Korea—who were once aid recipients and now buy our exports. Development aid will continue to pay off economically.

⁶ ForeignAssistance.gov, USG Sector Summary, FY2023, Disbursements, Economic Development, accessed February 5, 2025.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	28.7%	45.0%	73.7%	17.2%	9.1%	26.3%	0.0%
GOP	20.9%	47.3%	68.2%	19.7%	12.2%	31.9%	0.0%
Dem.	39.4%	42.2%	81.6%	13.7%	4.8%	18.5%	0.0%
Indep.	22.9%	45.9%	68.8%	19.5%	11.7%	31.2%	0.0%

Here is another argument against:

Q24. While there are a few success cases there are many countries we have been giving aid for years and they are still doing quite poorly. Our aid only makes them dependent on us. It is better for them to find their own way.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	26.9%	38.1%	65.0%	23.1%	11.3%	34.4%	0.5%
GOP	33.9%	41.7%	75.6%	18.0%	5.4%	23.4%	0.9%
Dem.	20.4%	34.1%	54.5%	27.8%	17.6%	45.4%	0.2%
Indep.	23.1%	38.4%	61.5%	26.4%	12.0%	38.4%	0.0%

Here is another argument in favor:

Q25. By helping developing countries build their economies, the U.S. builds a positive relationship with those countries and helps counter China. China has been investing a huge amount of money into developing countries to increase its influence. Now is not the time to pull back this key tool of US foreign policy.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	30.4%	40.7%	71.1%	18.5%	10.3%	28.8%	0.1%
GOP	23.9%	41.7%	65.6%	20.6%	13.8%	34.4%	0.0%
Dem.	39.2%	39.7%	78.9%	15.5%	5.5%	21.0%	0.2%
Indep.	25.6%	40.2%	65.8%	20.8%	13.4%	34.2%	0.0%

Here is another argument against:

Q26. Development aid too often props up corrupt governments, which is the root source of most countries' lack of development. Countries need to work out their own corruption problems before the US gives them economic assistance.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	27.5%	38.9%	66.4%	22.1%	11.3%	33.4%	0.2%
GOP	35.1%	42.8%	77.9%	15.8%	6.0%	21.8%	0.4%
Dem.	21.0%	33.7%	54.7%	28.6%	16.6%	45.2%	0.2%
Indep.	21.5%	41.9%	63.4%	23.8%	12.8%	36.6%	0.0%

Q27. As mentioned, US government spending on economic development aid is about \$19.4 billion a year. Do you think the government should spend:

	A lot more	Somewhat more	A little more	More	Keep it the same	Less	A little less	Somewhat less	None at all	Ref/DK
National	5.9%	9.6%	10.6%	26.1%	29.8%	44.1%	16.6%	18.5%	9.0%	0.1%
 GOP	4.6%	9.1%	7.0%	20.7%	21.8%	57.2%	19.2%	25.0%	13.0%	0.2%
Dem.	7.5%	10.8%	14.8%	33.1%	37.3%	29.6%	14.0%	11.5%	4.1%	0.0%
Indep.	5.3%	7.7%	9.5%	22.5%	33.9%	43.5%	15.5%	17.5%	10.5%	0.0%

[Education]

For aid to less developed countries to train teachers, encourage school attendance (especially for girls) such as by offering school lunches, and improve literacy, the US government has been spending about \$1.1 billion a year.⁷

Here is an argument in favor of this kind of aid:

Q28. Education is the foundation of a strong economy and health democracy. Investing in education in poor countries – especially for young children’s education and teacher training – helps give people the skills they need to succeed and improve their country.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	34.6%	43.4%	78.0%	12.5%	8.6%	21.1%	1.0%
 GOP	26.7%	46.0%	72.7%	15.5%	10.8%	26.3%	1.1%
Dem.	45.4%	40.1%	85.5%	7.9%	5.5%	13.4%	1.0%
Indep.	28.5%	44.2%	72.7%	16.1%	10.4%	26.5%	0.8%

Here is an argument against:

Q29. The large majority of children in developing countries are already going to school. The US has done plenty to help education across the world, and there’s not much more the US can do at this point. It should be up to developing countries to cover the last mile.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	23.9%	36.5%	60.4%	24.6%	15.0%	39.6%	0.0%
 GOP	31.2%	38.5%	69.7%	22.8%	7.5%	30.3%	0.0%
Dem.	17.3%	32.2%	49.5%	26.7%	23.8%	50.5%	0.0%
Indep.	19.1%	43.1%	62.2%	24.3%	13.5%	37.8%	0.0%

Q30. As mentioned, US government spending on education aid is about \$1.1 billion a year. Do you think the government should spend:

	A lot more	Somewhat more	A little more	More	Keep it the same	Less	A little less	Somewhat less	None at all	Ref/DK
National	10.6%	11.9%	13.4%	35.9%	31.1%	32.9%	10.4%	13.5%	9.0%	0.1%

⁷ ForeignAssistance.gov, USG Sector Summary, FY2023, Disbursements, Education: Basic Education AND Higher Education, accessed February 5, 2025.

GOP	7.6%	10.1%	11.1%	28.8%	24.8%	46.3%	14.2%	19.0%	13.1%	0.1%
Dem.	13.9%	15.3%	14.9%	44.1%	37.2%	18.5%	6.7%	8.2%	3.6%	0.2%
Indep.	10.9%	7.5%	16.5%	34.9%	33.9%	31.2%	8.7%	10.8%	11.7%	0.0%

[Environment]

For environmental aid to less developed countries, the US has been spending about \$1.4 billion a year. This aid is used to help countries preserve their environment, reduce pollution, transition to energy sources that produce less or no pollution, and prepare better for natural disasters.⁸

Here is an argument in favor of this kind of aid:

Q31. Environmental aid not only helps the recipient country in terms of health and the risks of disasters; it also helps other countries, including the US. Air pollution spreads beyond borders and environmental crises can lead to mass migration.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	28.1%	44.1%	72.2%	16.0%	10.9%	26.9%	0.9%
GOP	18.8%	43.6%	62.4%	20.7%	16.5%	37.2%	0.4%
Dem.	40.9%	43.0%	83.9%	10.9%	4.5%	15.4%	0.7%
Indep.	20.8%	49.4%	70.2%	15.5%	10.9%	26.4%	3.4%

Here is an argument against:

Q32. Environmental aid programs try to steer poor countries to avoid using energy sources that might cause pollution. But we should not be encouraging them to avoid oil and coal. All major economies developed because they used the most economical sources of energy available.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	22.7%	35.2%	57.9%	25.8%	16.1%	41.9%	0.3%
GOP	29.6%	39.7%	69.3%	22.7%	7.5%	30.2%	0.5%
Dem.	18.9%	25.4%	44.3%	29.1%	26.5%	55.6%	0.2%
Indep.	10.6%	49.5%	60.1%	26.4%	13.5%	39.9%	0.0%

Q33. As mentioned, US government spending on environmental aid is about \$1.4 billion a year. Do you think the government should spend:

	A lot more	Somewhat more	A little more	More	Keep it the same	Less	A little less	Somewhat less	None at all	Ref/DK
National	9.5%	10.2%	12.8%	32.5%	32.0%	35.5%	11.3%	13.1%	11.1%	0.0%
GOP	4.9%	7.7%	10.1%	22.7%	26.1%	51.2%	14.1%	19.7%	17.4%	0.0%
Dem.	14.3%	13.9%	16.0%	44.2%	37.8%	18.2%	7.9%	6.6%	3.7%	0.0%
Indep.	10.7%	7.5%	12.2%	30.4%	34.9%	34.7%	12.5%	10.0%	12.2%	0.0%

⁸ ForeignAssistance.gov, USG Sector Summary, FY2023, Disbursements, Environment, accessed February 5, 2025.

[Democracy and Human Rights]

For aid that goes to further the development of democracy, human rights, a free press, and the rule of law, the US has been spending about \$2.3 billion a year.⁹ Nearly all of this goes to non-profits and international organizations with specialized skills, rather than directly to foreign governments.

Here is an argument in favor of this kind of aid:

Q34. Everyone deserves to have a government that is accountable to its people and respects their individual rights and freedoms. Furthermore, promoting democracy is a good investment for America. Democracies are more stable and are more likely to be allies with the US. They also have fewer humanitarian crises, which can require aid and cause mass migration.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	28.0%	40.7%	68.7%	17.6%	12.0%	29.6%	1.7%
GOP	20.8%	41.2%	62.0%	20.3%	16.6%	36.9%	1.1%
Dem.	38.6%	39.2%	77.8%	12.5%	7.5%	20.0%	2.2%
Indep.	20.2%	44.0%	64.2%	23.6%	10.3%	33.9%	1.8%

Here is an argument against:

Q35. It is none of the US' business what type of government other countries have. Each country has their own values and priorities. The US should not be pressuring other countries to adopt its values and style of governing. If the US is funding non-profits who are challenging their government, it can make it difficult for the US to work with that government when it needs to.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	25.7%	38.8%	64.5%	22.2%	13.3%	35.5%	0.0%
GOP	29.1%	41.7%	70.8%	21.1%	8.0%	29.1%	0.0%
Dem.	22.9%	33.9%	56.8%	22.6%	20.5%	43.1%	0.1%
Indep.	22.4%	43.8%	66.2%	24.5%	9.3%	33.8%	0.0%

Q36. As mentioned, US government funding to further the development of democracy, human rights, a free press, and the rule of law, has been about \$2.6 billion a year. Do you think the government should spend:

	A lot more	Somewhat more	A little more	More	Keep it the same	Less	A little less	Somewhat less	None at all	Ref/DK
National	7.1%	10.0%	9.1%	26.2%	33.5%	40.2%	12.2%	14.2%	13.8%	0.1%
GOP	5.3%	7.9%	6.5%	19.7%	27.2%	53.0%	13.6%	19.6%	19.8%	0.0%
Dem.	9.8%	13.4%	12.7%	35.9%	39.6%	24.5%	10.5%	7.7%	6.3%	0.2%
Indep.	4.9%	7.1%	7.2%	19.2%	36.2%	44.6%	12.8%	15.4%	16.4%	0.0%

⁹ ForeignAssistance.gov, USG Sector Summary, FY2023, Disbursements, Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance, accessed February 5, 2025.

[Bilateral vs Multilateral Aid]

Another debate is how much US foreign aid should go through bilateral or multilateral channels.¹⁰

Here is how they each work.

- **Bilateral aid:** The US provides aid directly to a specific country, primarily through US government contractors or non-profit organizations working in those countries, and in some cases directly to the government.
- **Multilateral aid:** The US provides funds to international organizations that work globally, such as:
 - United Nations agencies that provide services like disaster relief, food aid and healthcare
 - Development banks, such as the World Bank, which make loans and provide consulting to developing countries to help them develop their economy

Historically, about two-thirds of foreign aid is bilateral, and about one-third is multilateral.¹¹

Here is an argument in favor of shifting the aid balance toward working more through bilateral channels.

Q37. One of the best things about the US giving aid is that it improves our relationships with the government of that country. When we contribute to a multilateral agency our money is just mixed in with all the rest. Bilateral aid also gives the US more control over how the money is spent. With multilateral aid, the programs can end up being controlled by unaccountable bureaucrats who have their own agenda that may conflict with US interests.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	29.1%	45.3%	74.4%	16.6%	8.6%	25.2%	0.6%
GOP	25.9%	44.4%	70.3%	17.2%	12.1%	29.3%	0.4%
Dem.	35.1%	47.5%	82.6%	12.5%	4.6%	17.1%	0.3%
Indep.	21.4%	41.4%	62.8%	26.6%	8.7%	35.3%	1.9%

Here is an argument in favor of shifting the aid balance toward working more through multilateral channels:

Q38. Contributing to multilateral agencies ensures that other countries do their share, so the US is not carrying the burden by itself. By pooling our resources we also share knowledge and experience. When multi-country groups are involved, people trust the effort more because no single country is dominant or potentially trying to buy influence.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	21.9%	43.8%	65.7%	23.0%	11.3%	34.3%	0.0%
GOP	22.5%	42.4%	64.9%	21.8%	13.3%	35.1%	0.0%
Dem.	22.2%	45.2%	67.4%	22.6%	9.9%	32.5%	0.0%
Indep.	19.2%	44.4%	63.6%	28.0%	8.5%	36.5%	0.0%

Q39. So now, do you think the US should:

1. Keep the current aid balance of two thirds bilateral and one third multilateral
2. Shift the aid balance toward working more through bilateral channels

¹⁰ [OECD Data Explorer, DAC1](#). US, 2023, ODA Multilateral Aid (\$5,467 million), ODA Bilateral (\$56,827 million), accessed February 5, 2025.

¹¹ Congressional Research Service. (2024) Foreign Assistance: Where Does the Money Go?

3. Shift the aid balance toward working more through multilateral channels

	Keep the current aid balance of two thirds bilateral and one third multilateral	Shift the aid balance toward working more through <u>bilateral</u> channels	Shift the aid balance toward working more through <u>multilateral</u> channels	Ref/DK
National	39.0%	34.3%	26.1%	0.6%
GOP	33.8%	36.1%	29.6%	0.4%
Dem.	45.8%	32.0%	21.3%	0.9%
Indep.	35.8%	35.0%	28.5%	0.8%

[U.S. Agency for International Development]

Now, let's turn to the US agencies in charge of foreign aid.

Some foreign aid goes through the US State Department, but most foreign aid goes through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This agency was established in 1961 by then-President John F. Kennedy with a mission to focus specifically on humanitarian aid, promoting democracy, and long-term economic development efforts.

USAID answers to the President and works closely with the State Department. But it was established as an independent agency to keep its mission distinct from the State Department: While the State Department focuses on managing US foreign policy and diplomatic relations, USAID focuses on managing aid programs by employing specialized experts in disaster relief, health, education, environment, and democracy.

Recently, some have proposed abolishing USAID and putting its programs under the direct control of the State Department.

Here is an argument in favor:

Q40. We need to ensure that when the US spends money on foreign aid we are always getting a good return in terms of US interests. USAID has often gotten too preoccupied with helping other countries as an end in itself. Any and all foreign aid spending should be closely controlled by the State Department.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	28.8%	38.1%	66.9%	18.3%	13.7%	32.0%	1.0%
GOP	34.4%	39.4%	73.8%	14.5%	11.1%	25.6%	0.7%
Dem.	25.5%	35.2%	60.7%	22.3%	16.1%	38.4%	0.8%
Indep.	19.5%	42.6%	62.1%	19.5%	15.4%	34.9%	3.0%

Here is an argument against:

Q41. For both moral reasons and for our national interest it is important to have a small portion of the American government with the central mission of reducing suffering and poverty in the world. USAID has always worked closely with the State Department to make sure its work aligns with the foreign policy goals of the President. If USAID is simply abolished, humanitarian goals will be increasingly sidelined.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	27.3%	38.2%	65.5%	19.4%	15.2%	34.6%	0.0%

GOP	18.3%	41.3%	59.6%	20.0%	20.5%	40.5%	0.0%
Dem.	38.7%	34.3%	73.0%	16.2%	10.8%	27.0%	0.0%
Indep.	23.0%	39.4%	62.4%	27.2%	10.4%	37.6%	0.0%

Q42. So now, do you think that:

1. USAID should be abolished and its programs should be put under the direct control of the State Department
2. USAID should continue, with a distinct mission to focus on humanitarian aid, promoting democracy, and long-term economic development

	USAID should be abolished and its programs should be put under the direct control of the State Department	USAID should continue, with a distinct mission to focus on humanitarian aid, promoting democracy, and long-term economic development	Ref/DK
National	41.2%	57.9%	0.9%
GOP	59.8%	39.3%	1.0%
Dem.	22.1%	77.3%	0.6%
Indep.	36.0%	62.4%	1.6%

Methodology

Fielding and Sample Size

The national survey was fielded to 1,160 adults online February 6-7, 2025 by the Program for Public Consultation (PPC) at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy, with representative non-probability samples obtained from multiple online panels, including Cint, Dynata and Prodege.

The sample has a confidence interval is +/- 3.1%, calculated using the following formula:

Confidence interval = Square Root ((1+variance of the sample weights)/size of the sample)

The response rate was 8.17%.

Pre-Stratification and Weighting

The sample was pre-stratified and weighted by age, race, ethnicity, gender, education, household income, Census region, using benchmarks came from the Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey and 2023 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

The average weight was 1.0 (minimum: 0.17; maximum 3.05)

Sample Collection

Sample collection was managed by QuantifyAI with oversight from PPC. Samples were drawn from multiple large online panels, including Cint, Prodege, and Dynata, whose members are recruited using non-probability sampling methods. The selected sample was invited to participate via email invitation, push notification, or SMS for cell phone users. Respondents were offered cash or cash-equivalent incentives to participate in the survey.

Data Collection and Privacy

Survey responses were collected directly on the Qualtrics platform. Only respondents with a provided link could take the survey, using their computer or mobile phone.

Privacy and security measures were taken to ensure that data was collected in adherence to the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation policies for data privacy and security, as well as the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA).

Quality Control

Quality control measures in the sample collection process to disqualify duplicate respondents and survey bots included:

- checking respondents' IP addresses to determine if there are duplicate respondents
- employing an "operating system & Web browser check" to determine if there are any cross-panel duplicates
- using hCaptcha to detect and disqualify survey bots.

Quality control measures within the survey to disqualify dishonest or mischievous respondents, as well as survey bots, included:

- an attention-check question, e.g. Select the word that does not belong. [Tuesday]; [Friday]; [April]; [Wednesday]
- an honesty question, e.g. What have you done in the past week? Select all that apply. [Won a gold medal at the Olympics]; [Watched TV]; [Got a license to operate a Class SSGN submarine]; [Read a book]
- a speed limit, which disqualified respondents who moved through the first quarter of the survey at a pace roughly triple the average reading speed.

Lastly, respondents were removed from the sample who answered less than half the substantive questions, or who engaged in straight-lining.