

**Americans' Views on Taxes**

January 20-23, 2012

Currently, capital gains and dividends are taxed at a lower rate than income from employment, but half of Americans think that should change. Four in 10 say they themselves pay more than their fair share of taxes, and most think wealthier Americans don't pay enough.

52% of Americans think capital gains and dividends should be taxed at the same rate as income earned from work because the current policy (taxing them at a lower rate) increases the federal deficit and is unfair to people who don't have money to invest. 36% approve of the current policy of taxing capital gains at a lower rate because it encourages investment and helps the economy.

There are partisan differences on this question. Most Republicans approve of the current policy that taxes capital gains at a lower rate than earned income, while a majority of Democrats think capital gains should be taxed at the same rate as employment income.

**Capital Gains and Dividends Should be Taxed...**

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
At a lower rate than work income	36%	55%	23%	32%
At the same rate as work income	52	33	66	54

Americans express some concern about whether all are paying their fair share of income taxes. More than half - 55% - think upper income Americans pay less than their fair share of taxes. Only a quarter says higher income people pay the right amount in taxes.

**Do Upper Income Americans Pay Their Fair Share of Income Taxes?**

More than fair share	11%
Less than fair share	55
About right amount	24

There are partisan differences here too. 70% of Democrats think those with upper incomes pay less than their fair share of income taxes, but that percentage drops to 37% among Republicans.

When asked about their own federal income taxes, just over half of Americans say they pay about the right amount, but a sizeable number - 40%- feel they pay more than their fair share.

**Do You Pay Your Fair Share of Income Taxes?**

More than fair share	40%
Less than fair share	2
About right amount	52

Opinions are impacted by household income. 32% of Americans earning less than \$50,000 a year feel they pay more than their fair share of taxes, but that number increases along with income, reaching 48% among those earning \$100,000 a year or more.

**Do You Pay Your Fair Share of Income Taxes?**

	Total	<\$50K	\$50-\$100K	Over \$100k
More than fair share	40%	32%	45%	48%
Less than fair share	2	2	1	1
About right amount	52	57	50	48

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This poll was conducted by telephone from January 20-23, 2012 among 1,185 adults nationwide. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

**CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL**  
**AMERICANS' VIEWS ON TAXES**  
**January 20-23, 2012**

q3 Do you feel you pay more than your fair share in federal income taxes, less than your fair share, or is the amount you pay about right?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **			
	*** Party ID ***			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
More than fair share	40	39	36	43
Less than fair share	2	1	3	2
About right	52	53	57	49
DK/NA	6	7	4	6

q4 What about upper income Americans? Do you feel upper income people pay more than their fair share in federal income taxes, less than their fair share, or is the amount they pay about right?

More than fair share	11	18	4	12
Less than fair share	55	37	70	57
About right	24	35	17	21
DK/NA	10	10	9	10

q5 Federal tax policy now allows capital gains and dividends to be taxed at a lower rate than income from work. Which comes closer to your opinion? 1. You approve of the current policy because you think it encourages investment, which helps the economy and ultimately increases tax revenues, OR 2. You think capital gains and dividends should be taxed the same as income earned from work because the current policy increases the federal deficit and is unfair to people who don't have money to invest.

Approve current policy	36	55	23	32
Tax capital gains same as	52	33	66	54
Tax capital gains higher (vol)	2	2	2	2
DK/NA	10	10	9	12

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1185	
Total Republicans	336	322 (27%)
Total Democrats	386	352 (30%)
Total Independents	463	511 (43%)