

Appendix table 7-20

Public assessment of federal government spending, by policy area: Selected years, 1981–2004

(Percent)

Policy area	1981 (n = 1,659)	1983 (n = 1,631)	1985 (n = 2,005)	1988 (n = 2,041)	1990 (n = 2,033)	1992 (n = 2,001)	1997 (n = 2,000)	1999 (n = 1,882)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2002 (n = 1,322)	2004 (n = 1,364)
Exploring space											
Too little.....	18	17	9	17	9	12	14	15	11	12	15
Too much	43	39	45	42	52	50	45	46	48	38	39
Reducing pollution											
Too little.....	52	54	69	76	76	72	65	65	63	60	64
Too much	14	11	6	4	5	7	8	7	6	7	6
Improving health care											
Too little.....	61	—	68	68	75	79	68	71	70	75	79
Too much	6	—	3	2	3	5	7	5	4	4	4
Supporting scientific research											
Too little.....	31	—	29	34	30	34	34	37	36	36	40
Too much	18	—	18	15	16	19	14	14	14	14	13
Improving education											
Too little.....	62	71	73	76	77	81	76	75	76	74	74
Too much	6	5	3	4	4	4	6	6	5	5	5
Helping older people											
Too little.....	73	—	72	76	75	73	66	71	73	—	—
Too much	3	—	3	2	2	4	5	4	3	—	—
Spending for Social Security											
Too little.....	—	—	54	55	52	—	—	—	—	61	66
Too much	—	—	7	6	6	—	—	—	—	5	5
Improving national defense ^a											
Too little.....	33	19	11	11	15	15	23	31	29	31	39
Too much	26	47	50	53	40	40	32	25	25	22	26
Helping low-income people											
Too little.....	45	—	54	55	57	56	44	49	53	—	—
Too much	24	—	13	12	15	17	23	19	15	—	—
Assistance to the poor											
Too little.....	—	—	65	69	68	—	—	—	—	67	70
Too much	—	—	10	7	7	—	—	—	—	8	6

— = not asked

^aOnly 1,013 responses in 1988 because question asked on split ballot.

NOTES: Responses to: *We are faced with many problems in this country. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me if you think that the Government is spending too little money on it, about the right amount, or too much.* Detail does not add to total because "about the right amount" and "do not know" responses not shown.

SOURCES: National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (various years); and J.A. Davis, T.W. Smith, and P.V. Marsden, General Social Survey 1972–2004 Cumulative Codebook, University of Chicago, National Opinion Research Center (2005) for 2002 and 2004; and Spending for Social Security and Assistance to the Poor (selected years).

Science and Engineering Indicators 2006