

Appendix table 7-18

Public assessment of federal government spending, by policy area: 1981–2006

(Percent)

Policy area	1981 (n = 1,611)	1983 (n = 1,631)	1985 (n = 2,003)	1988 (n = 2,041)	1990 (n = 2,005)	1992 (n = 1,995)	1997 (n = 2,000)	1999 (n = 1,882)	2001 (n = 1,574)	2002 (n = 2,765)	2004 (n = 2,812)	2006 (n = 2,992)
Exploring space												
Too little.....	18	17	9	17	9	12	14	15	11	12	14	14
Too much	42	39	45	43	52	50	45	46	48	36	38	35
Reducing pollution												
Too little.....	52	54	69	76	76	72	65	65	63	60	63	67
Too much	14	11	6	4	5	7	8	7	6	8	7	7
Improving health care												
Too little.....	61	NA	68	67	75	79	68	71	70	73	77	72
Too much	6	NA	3	2	3	4	7	6	4	5	6	7
Supporting scientific research ^a												
Too little.....	31	NA	29	34	30	34	34	37	36	34	38	41
Too much	18	NA	18	15	16	19	14	14	14	13	12	11
Improving education												
Too little.....	62	71	73	76	77	81	76	75	76	75	75	73
Too much	6	5	3	4	4	4	6	6	5	5	5	5
Helping older people												
Too little.....	74	NA	73	76	75	73	66	71	73	NA	NA	NA
Too much	3	NA	3	2	2	3	5	4	3	NA	NA	NA
Spending for Social Security												
Too little.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	59	64	61
Too much	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4	5	4
Improving national defense ^b												
Too little.....	34	19	11	11	15	15	23	31	29	33	33	26
Too much	26	47	50	52	40	40	32	25	25	20	26	38
Improving mass transportation												
Too little.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	34	34	38
Too much	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	10	10	9
Assistance to other countries												
Too little.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	8	9	10
Too much	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	66	64	62
Helping low-income people												
Too little.....	45	NA	54	55	57	56	43	49	53	NA	NA	NA
Too much	24	NA	13	12	15	17	23	19	15	NA	NA	NA
Assistance to the poor ^c												
Too little.....	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	66	69	68
Too much	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	8	6	8

NA = not available, question not asked

^aQuestion asked of 1,358 survey respondents in 2002 and 1,401 respondents in 2004.^bQuestion asked of 1,021 survey respondents in 1988.^cQuestion asked of 1,407 survey respondents in 2002, 1,411 respondents in 2004, and 1,508 respondents in 2006.

NOTES: Responses to: *We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. 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.* Two versions of this question with different response categories administered. Table combines data for following sets of categories: space exploration program/space exploration; improving and protecting environment/environment; improving and protecting nation's health/health; improving nation's education system/education; military, armaments, and defense/national defense; assistance to other countries/foreign aid. Table includes all years for which data collected. Detail does not add to total because "about right amount" and "don't know" responses not shown.

SOURCES: National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology (1981–2001); and University of Chicago, National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey (2002–06).