



MOTIVATIONS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM™

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## Health and Finances: Americans' Views on Government Priorities

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Health and financial issues are the greatest barriers to Americans' personal peace of mind, and many have high expectations for government involvement in finding solutions.

Artemis Strategy Group's most recent Motivations Assessment Program™ (MAP) survey found that strains on personal finances are the most frequently cited barrier to Americans' personal peace of mind. Health concerns are next in line. Managing health effectively also is one of the top positive contributors to personal peace of mind, along with helping family and others.

Using our unique Motivation Research approach, we wanted to determine the connection between how Americans feel about personal issues and their views about the role of government in related topics that may impact them personally. Our first look reinforces the strength of the connection between these variables.

### **THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC WANTS MORE GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH AND FINANCIAL ISSUES**

Much of today's political debate revolves around the role of government and where the federal government should place its priorities. This study focused on a range of health and financial issues that are in the public discourse, including some of the more progressive ideas being proposed. For each issue, we asked respondents whether the government ought to prioritize the issue, and whether the government even ought to have a role in the issue.

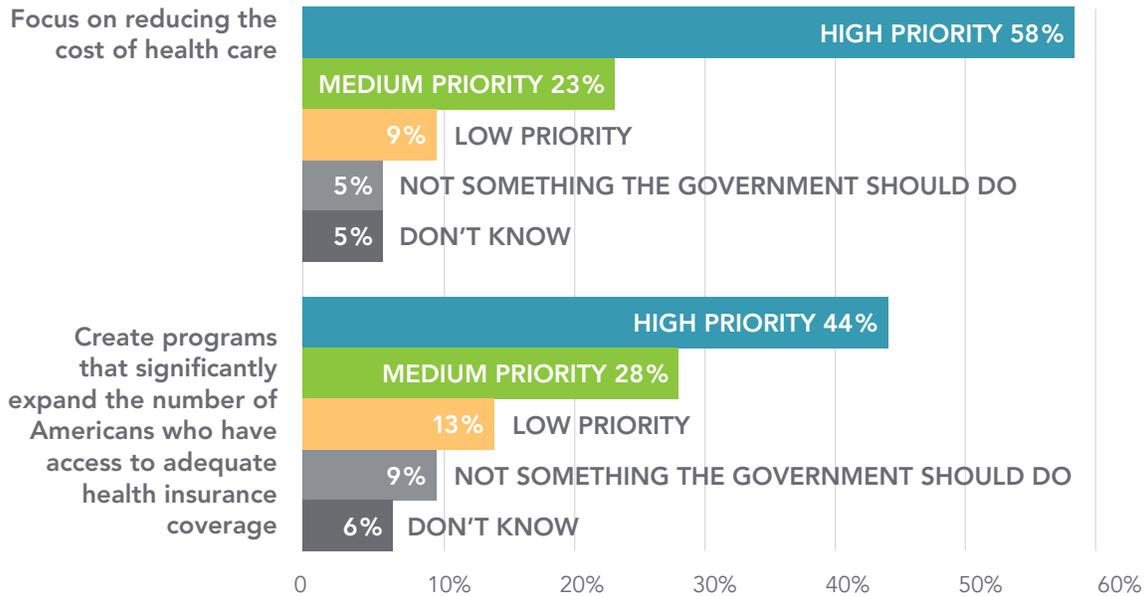
The results should give pause to those arguing for reductions in the government's role in health and financial assistance topics. Across the board, Americans strongly support engagement by the government. Even some of the more aggressive interventions are viewed by a substantial proportion of Americans as top priorities. For most potential initiatives, less than one-in-ten Americans see no government role.

Reflecting the ongoing cost struggles over the last decades, controlling health costs tops the chart among the 13 potential priorities for government action. Only 5% of Americans view this as something not within the government's purview. Lest this be seen as a rationale for cutting back services, most of those who attach top priority to health care cost efforts also rate highly the need for expanded access to health insurance and programs to help specific groups.



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**Here are some possible government programs.  
Please indicate how you would prioritize each.**



Even one of the more extreme health system cost and delivery alternatives, “restructure the entire system of paying for health care with a health insurance program like Medicare that would cover everyone” is viewed as an appropriate government priority by many. Over four in ten Americans consider this a high priority, and a solid two-thirds consider it at least a medium priority for government action. Only 15% said this is not something the government should do.

**BOTH ASSURING AND EXTENDING FINANCIAL SECURITY ARE VIEWED AS TOP GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

Social Security tops the priority list for financial initiatives by the government. Nearly three-quarters of Americans consider raising the income cap for Social Security to keep it well funded to be at least a medium government priority, with almost half considering it a high priority. While financial issues aren’t considered quite as critical as health issues, majorities of Americans also favor government giving priority to other efforts to both reduce income inequality and expand access to retirement programs. Even with the controversial topic of intervening in income inequality, only 13% of Americans (more than “the 1%” but much less than a majority) consider this not an appropriate government activity.

**OUR POINT OF VIEW**

These findings point to the degree to which Americans look to their government to solve the problems of everyday life – and the degree to which they are willing to look beyond the current portfolio of solutions. This may be surprising to many given the level of institutional distrust regularly measured among American voters.

When thinking about the government’s role, specific policies and programs are always important in building support, but their importance is derived significantly as a part of a larger mosaic of aspirations, emotions and values that voters apply to different contexts and decision points. Voters may appear hypocritical by taking seemingly different sides on issues that are seen through the rational eye as equivalent or consistent. But often consistency is made up more by how seemingly different issue positions drive to common emotional outcomes for the voter.

To succeed in policy and political communications, it is critical to understand how issues are an essential part of the grammar of messaging, but by themselves they don't deliver the sustained impact among voters that can be achieved by effectively linking policies and programs to the right aspirations and shared values.

For most people the underlying emotions (fear, uncertainty, love, etc.) and the drive of core values (like protecting and taking care your family, the search for security or the need for belonging) are much more important than any kind of question of specific policy or program approach, or political philosophy, party affiliation, etc. And, so, despite the great political divide over the role of government, there is a shockingly small divide over the desire people have for their government to help them be safe, prosper and succeed. More simply put, people want help from their government and if you take politics out of it there is a clear opportunity for success. But to succeed you have to understand what really drives people's decisions. It is not politics. It is a set of core values widely shared by most Americans.

**METHODOLOGY**

The information in this paper is from our MAP survey completed February 2019. The survey was conducted online among a census-balanced sample of 1000 adult Americans.



MOTIVATIONS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM™

The Motivations Assessment Program™ (MAP) is a resource we draw on to supplement our custom research for our clients. We offer papers and e-Books to illustrate our proprietary Motivation Research approach and, in the process, we highlight key decision drivers related to health and financial decision-making.

MAP uses primary, proprietary research to probe deeply into people's goals, actions, barriers and motivations. MAP research conducted in 2013, 2016 and 2019 reveals the rational-to emotional forces underlying health and financial decision motivations.

[www.artemissg.com/services/motivation-research](http://www.artemissg.com/services/motivation-research)



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