

## Poll position: Americans' fiscal concern wide, deep

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There were some pretty sobering numbers in a Fox News/Opinion Dynamics Poll released last week, with strong implications for Washington.

Three related questions — asking Americans how seriously they view deficit spending, unemployment and the country's general economic situation — got off-the-charts reactions: 81 percent think the economy is in crisis, while 82 percent said the federal deficit is as serious. Even more, 86 percent, said the current unemployment situation is at crisis level.

Majorities that size strip away any notion of partisanship. When you're talking about more than 80 percent in a poll, that's cutting across all ideological and demographic lines. In other words, the numbers are too big for Washington to dismiss.

It's about more than the recent health care vote or TARP or any of the other spending decisions Washington has made recently. It's the American people rising up — practically as one voice — to say something is desperately wrong. As telling: Just 32 percent said they think life for the next generation of Americans will be better than it is today.

The scary part is there's little reason to believe America's fiscal health is improving. "Our current budget squall is nothing compared to the tsunami to come," the Cato Institute's Michael Tanner wrote recently, referring to major entitlement programs that threaten to either go broke or gobble up the entire federal budget.

Americans have seen the warning signs; the Fox poll shows their engagement. Time for all of their elected representatives to match their concern.

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