

HEARTLAND MONITOR POLL



ALLSTATE/NATIONAL JOURNAL POLL FINDS TAX REFUNDS PROVIDE BOOST FOR MANY AMERICANS TO PAY OFF DEBT AND COVER BASIC EXPENSES

-- Increasing number of middle class Americans optimistic their personal finances will improve --

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 9, 2015) — Most Americans this tax season will leverage their refunds to pay down debt and to cover everyday needs, according to data released by The Allstate Corporation (NYSE: ALL) and Atlantic Media's *National Journal*.

The 22nd quarterly Allstate/*National Journal* Heartland Monitor poll surveyed Americans' attitudes, expectations, and personal financial situations at the height of tax season. The results reveal a population that is more optimistic for the future, however many Americans are still working to catch up financially in comparison to the broader recovery. The poll revealed that:

- More than half (55 percent) of the 1,000 Americans polled expect to receive a refund on their taxes this year and nearly four-in-ten (39 percent) do not expect a refund. Six percent of those polled do not know or did not state if they will receive a government refund.
- Among those expecting a refund, most (57 percent) will use it to cover financial obligations (37 percent will pay off debt and 20 percent will spend it on necessities). Additionally, 29 percent of refund recipients will save or invest their refund, while only eight percent will spend it on something "nice or fun" and two percent will donate their check to charity.
- Those with the highest expectations to receive a tax refund are women and men ages 18-49 years old, at 65 percent. In addition, 68 percent of parents with school age children expect a refund.
- Americans classifying their relationship status as single are more likely to expect a tax refund (65 percent) compared to those who are married or living with a partner (54 percent). Refund recipients who are single are more likely to spend their refund on "something nice or fun" (12 percent) than their married/cohabitating counterparts (7 percent).
- Forty-six percent of Americans designating themselves as lower class believe they will receive a tax refund this year. Of those respondents, a majority expect to spend their refunds to pay off debt (46 percent) or to purchase necessities (29 percent). In addition, 64 percent of Americans who identify themselves as lower middle class and who are expecting a refund plan to use it to cover financial obligations (37 percent expect to pay off debt and 27 percent will pay for necessities).

- For Americans categorizing themselves as upper middle class, 53 percent expect a refund and almost half (45 percent) say they'll save it or invest it for the future.

For personal budgets, the poll revealed 44 percent of Americans believe their personal financial situation will improve by the same time next year, representing a significant jump from the 38 percent who projected personal finance improvement in October 2014. The latest poll also reveals the percentage of Americans rating their personal financial situations as "excellent" or "good" has remained at 44 percent for four straight polls dating back to September 2013.

"Americans are working incredibly hard to improve their financial positions," said Tom Clarkson, president, West Territory, Allstate Personal Lines. "As a network of small businesses across the country, we see this progress firsthand. Our local agency owners are deeply committed to improving quality of life and expanding opportunities for the customers and communities we serve."

"Americans indicate in the poll that they still plan to be cautious with any tax refund they might receive," said Ronald Brownstein, Atlantic Media's editorial director. "That fits with the pattern of restrained optimism we see throughout the poll. While Americans' attitudes about their personal prospects and the country's direction have clearly brightened since last fall, most Americans remain skittish about the economy's overall performance and concerned about its ability to generate rising wages and living standards."

For complete survey findings, please visit www.heartlandmonitor.com.

Survey Methodology

Since April 2009, the Allstate/*National Journal* Heartland Monitor Polls have explored Americans' personal financial experiences, their views on the financial system, and their opinion of how the federal government's budget situation impacts their personal finances. The most recent Allstate/*National Journal* Heartland Monitor national poll was conducted by FTI Consulting, from February 18-22, 2015, among N=1,000 American adults age 18+, with 500 reached via landline and 500 reached via cell phone. The margin of error for survey is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

About Allstate Corporation

The Allstate Corporation (NYSE: ALL) is the nation's largest publicly held personal lines insurer, protecting approximately 16 million households from life's uncertainties through auto, home, life and other insurance offered through its Allstate, Esurance, Encompass and Answer Financial brand names. Allstate is widely known through the slogan "You're In Good Hands With Allstate®." The Allstate brand's network of small businesses offers auto, home, life and retirement products and services to customers in the United States and Canada. In 2014, The Allstate Foundation, Allstate, its employees and agency owners gave \$34 million to support local communities. Allstate employees and agency owners donated 200,000 hours of service across the country.

About National Journal Group

National Journal Group (NJG) is a premium provider of essential insights, analysis, and solutions for those operating in Washington's policy and government arenas. The brand currently reaches an audience of over 3 million through its editorial products, including NationalJournal.com, *Hotline*, *National Journal*, the magazine, and *National Journal Daily*. In addition, NJG serves 700 of Washington's top organizations through its robust Membership Services, and convenes the nation's top leaders at its 75 widely attended live events each year.

Tim Hartman is the Chief Executive Officer, Tim Grieve is President and Editor-in-Chief and Poppy MacDonald serves as President and Publisher. National Journal Group is a division of Atlantic Media.

About FTI Consulting

FTI Consulting, Inc. (NYSE: FCN) is a global business advisory firm dedicated to helping organizations protect and enhance enterprise value in an increasingly complex legal, regulatory and economic environment. With more than 4,400 employees located in 26 countries, FTI Consulting professionals work closely with clients to anticipate, illuminate and overcome complex business challenges in areas such as investigations, litigation, mergers and acquisitions, regulatory issues, reputation management, strategic communications and restructuring. The company generated \$1.76 billion in revenues during fiscal year 2014. For more information, visit www.fticonsulting.com and connect with us on Twitter (@FTIConsulting), Facebook and LinkedIn.

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