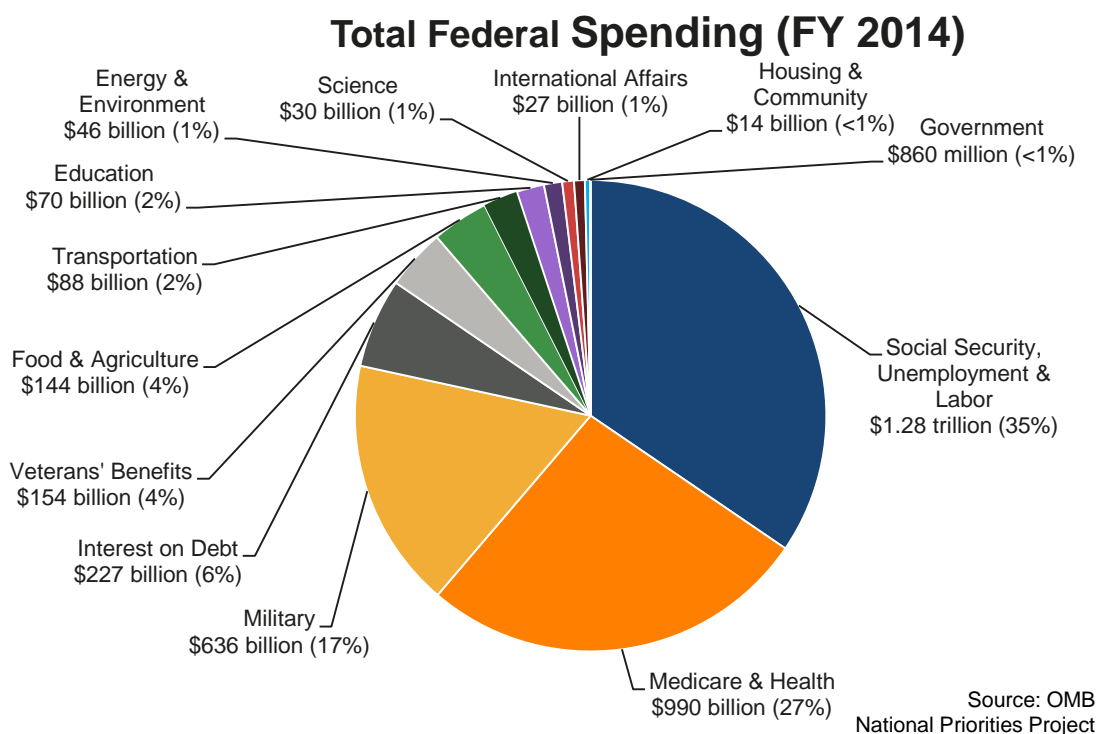


## Voter Guide 2014: Federal Spending

*National Priorities Project examines issues related to the federal budget in time for the 2014 election.*

### Federal Spending Affects You

The federal budget reaches your neighborhood through a variety of government services such as paved highways, clean drinking water, public transportation, law enforcement, and many other critical public services. Federal spending in fiscal year 2014 totaled \$3.7 trillion.



### Federal Spending in 2014

Within total federal spending, there are three distinct ways our public dollars are spent: discretionary spending, which is determined by Congress during the annual appropriations process; mandatory spending, which is determined through eligibility rules and benefit levels already in existing legislation; and paying interest on the federal debt.

The chart above shows how total federal spending breaks down in 2014. Throughout 2014, the federal government will bring in \$3.05 trillion in revenues. Because spending will exceed revenues in 2014, we will run a federal budget deficit.<sup>1</sup> (See [Voter Guide: Debt and Deficit](#))

The vast majority of federal spending in any given year goes towards mandatory spending on Social Security, Medicare and health programs, plus discretionary spending on the Pentagon – leaving just 21 percent to be divided between all other federal programs.<sup>2</sup>

### What Americans Say

*"To me, it's how taxes are used that's important, not what we pay. If [they] are used for excessive military support... that's a bad use of taxes. [I would rather] use taxes to improve our infrastructure, to get universal health care and better alternative energy.*

*-Richard (Bonita Springs, FL)*

### Public Opinion

Fifty-eight percent of Americans who receive information about how much we are spending on the Pentagon say they would support substantial reductions in military spending.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, an overwhelming majority of Americans consistently support federal investment in domestic programs like public education, jobs, health care, and infrastructure, and want to raise more revenue by closing corporate tax loopholes and limiting tax breaks for the wealthy. And a majority of Americans support maintaining or strengthening funding for Social Security and Medicare.<sup>4</sup>

### What to Ask Your Congressional Candidates

- How would you balance policies to promote our economic recovery with Washington's current emphasis on deficit reduction?
- What areas of the federal budget would you target for cuts or increases?
- How would you lead opportunities for bipartisan cooperation on the budget?

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Management and Budget, 2015 President's Budget.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Management and Budget, 2015 President's Budget.

<sup>3</sup> Program for Public Consultation [poll](#), conducted Apr. 12-18, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> See polling compiled in NPP's 2014 [Competing Visions analysis](#).