



Summary of Lake Research Partners 2011 Regulatory Research

The following is a summary of the findings from focus groups and national polling conducted by Lake Research Partners for the Bauman Foundation and in support of the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards. Information about the methodology is at the end of the summary.

- In a national poll in May 2011, **a plurality of voters favored increasing regulation of big business and corporations** (40% favor to 23% oppose), and over the course of just 30 minutes of engaged debate with some positive messaging, **support for increasing regulation broke into majority support (53% favor, 24% oppose)**. This is in spite of a majority of voters' concern regarding overregulation (54% worried about too much regulation, 48% worried strongly).
- Voters were able to identify numerous positive aspects of regulations, often citing protection and safety as initial impressions. **They regarded government regulation as one way to protect people from physical harm and prevent bad things from happening before they occur.**
- Areas the public would like to see more regulated include: **products, goods, and services that the U.S. imports from abroad; oil companies; Wall Street banks and the financial industry; credit card companies; lending and home mortgage companies; and "big business."**
- Majorities would also like to see **greater regulation of government officials and special interests and lobbyists**, and, with significant intensity, **they considered special interests a major problem compromising our entire system**, including effective government regulation.
- While people strongly supported regulation in the economic arena, they believed **regulations have failed to protect people from *economic* harm**, failed to ensure oversight of foreign imports, and failed to hold big businesses accountable to the people.
- **A plurality supported additional regulation of our air and water, the nuclear industry, the safety of workplaces, and food and drugs produced in the U.S.** While oil and gas companies — and gas prices, specifically — provoked

noticeably intense calls for greater regulation, they are also among the most polarizing of the entities explored in this study.

- **Voters were critical of the performance of regulatory agencies including concern about special interest and lobbyist “capture.”** The only agencies that drew positive job performance ratings were the Occupational safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (+8) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) (+4).
- The focus groups and survey demonstrated that the biggest concern around regulations is their cost, not that they kill jobs. Voters worry that regulations will increase costs for themselves and small businesses. Voters remain very protective and fond of small businesses.

Methodology

Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers. The survey reached a total of 700 likely 2012 General Election voters nationwide. The survey was conducted May 3rd through May 5th, 2011. The margin of error for this poll is +/- 3.7%.

Telephone numbers for the sample were generated from a file of registered voters. The sample was stratified geographically to reflect the expected turnout of voters in the 2012 General Election. The data were weighted slightly by gender, age, race, education, party identification, and region.

Four focus groups were designed, conducted, and moderated by Lake Research Partners. The focus groups consisted of: 1) college-educated women in Richmond, VA; 2) mixed-gender small business owners in Richmond, VA; 3) blue-collar men in Southfield, MI; 4) blue-collar women in Southfield, MI.