2011 Hamilton College Youth Poll on Poverty and Policy

Complete results available at www.hamilton.edu/poverty
Contributors

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• Knowledge Networks: www.knowledgenetworks.com

• Results Available: http://www.hamilton.edu/poverty
Data Collection and Sample

• Panel’s Sample
  – Knowledge Networks KnowledgePanel®
  – Representative of the U.S. youth population
  – 1,652 surveyed
  – Ages 18 to 29

• 2.5% margin of error
Poll Topic Areas

- Sense of the poverty problem
- Attitudes towards the poor
- Government role in helping the poor
- Who should fund poverty programs
- Background
Overall Findings

• Lack of available jobs is the leading cause of poverty
• Likely to be poor because of bad choices
• Current anti-poverty programs are ineffective
• Wealthy, government have obligation to help the poor
• Majority of young adults not willing to pay more in federal income taxes to aid the poor
Key Demographics:

• Race: Whites vs. non-Whites

• Gender: Male vs. Female

• Poverty Status*: Poor vs. Non-Poor

• *Calculated from reported categorical income
Key Demographics

- Non-whites, females and the poor more likely to be worse off than they were two years ago.

- Non-whites, females and the poor more likely to think that “the growing incomes of the wealthiest people ... negatively affect the quality of life of those with lower incomes.”
Key Demographics:

- Whites, non-whites, males, females, the non-poors and the poor all agree that a poor person is more responsible than an average person they know.

- Nonpoor respondents more likely to favor higher taxes on top 4% to help the poor than the poor respondents themselves.
Voters (73.8%) vs. Non-voters

• The poor are good money managers
  – 46.8% vs. 63.3%
• Income Redistribution
  – 61.2% vs. 53.9%
• Increased government anti-poverty expenditures
  – 31.8% vs. 38.9%
Bad Choices (82.6%) vs. Bad Luck

• The poor are good money managers
  – 45.1% vs. 62.7%

• Income Redistribution
  – 54.5% vs. 78.8%

• Increased anti-poverty expenditures
  – Gov’t: 29.5% vs. 52.5%
  – Taxes (Wealthy): 59.9% vs. 79%
Conclusion

• Young adults believe:
  – poverty is due to bad choices
  – poverty programs are ineffective
• Voters support income redistribution
• Young adults, especially young females and non-whites, are sympathetic to the poor
Thank You

• Find complete results at http://www.hamilton.edu/poverty

• Thank you to the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center for funding this project. http://www.hamilton.edu/levitt