

Building a New Narrative on Government, Budgets, and Taxes

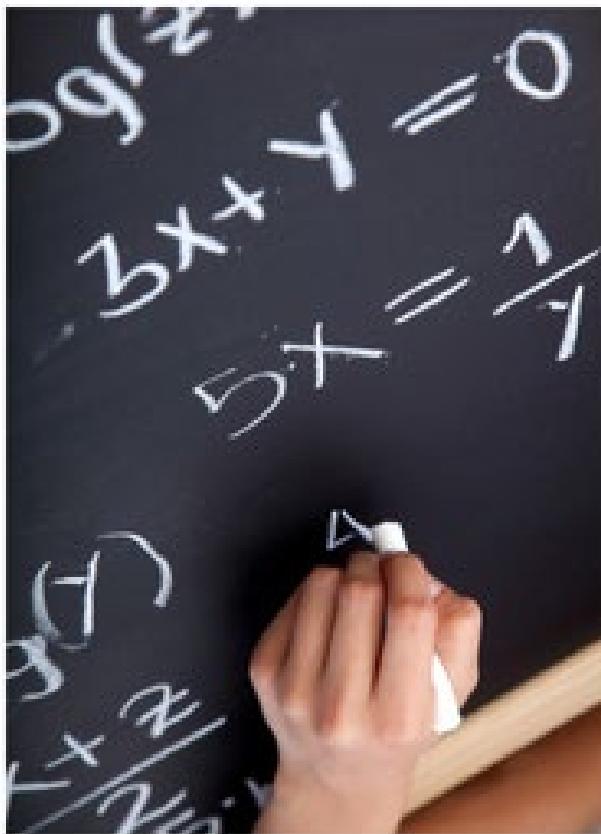
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Budget Messaging Basics



Budgets Are About People



OR



Avoid Jargon



Use Examples That Paint A Picture



Using Numbers Effectively

**Who gets the biggest slice
of Ohio's proposed tax cut?**



If you're poor? \$2*

Enough for one slice a year.

In the middle? \$48*

You can buy a cheap pizza maker.

At the top? \$2,515*

Round trip for 2 to Florence, with enough
left over for plenty of real Italian pizza.

*Average tax cut

- Provide scale
- Tie numbers to something people can visualize
- Bring it back to people

How People Think About Budgets and Taxes

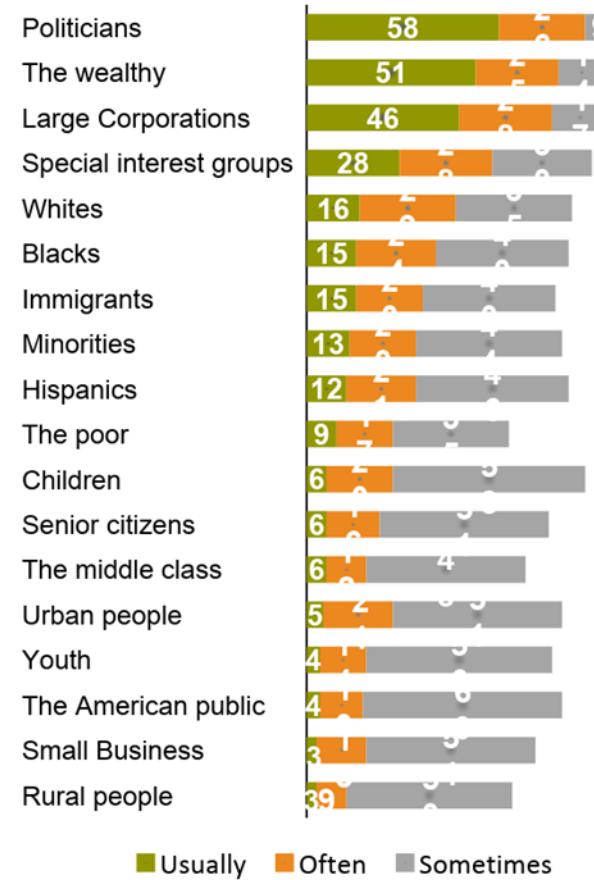


Default Narratives

- Government programs are inefficient, wasteful, bureaucratic
- Public spending is like a household budget; “We have to live within our means”
- The budget is another political fight where my voice doesn’t matter

Polling: Who Benefits?

How often do government actions benefit ...



A Different Vision

- Public investments are what make our communities and our economy thrive
- We can build on our past successes for a stronger future
- Community voices matter in shaping policy decisions

Reframing the Default Narrative



Remind People of the Role of Government



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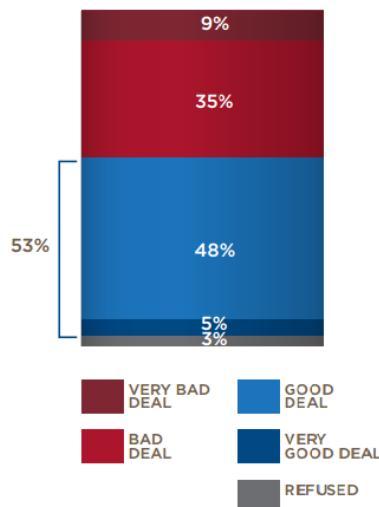
Example

“Maryland has a lot to be proud of. Our past investments in our education system, health care, transportation network, safe communities, and public recreation have made our state a great place to live and do business and have created the backbone of a successful economy.”

Language Changes Perceptions

TAXES: GOOD DEAL OR BAD DEAL?

Consider for a moment all the things government does at the federal, state, and local levels, including: (examples). With this in mind, when it comes to the taxes you pay, do you feel like you personally are getting a:

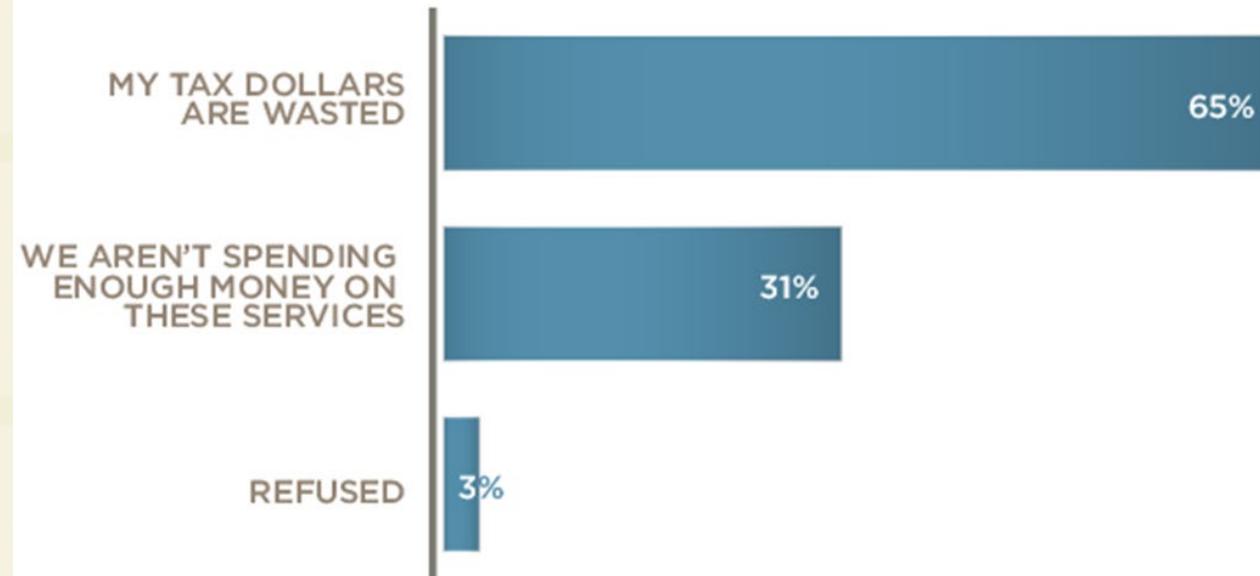


- When you simply remind people what government does, most think they're getting a good deal from their taxes.

Critique Without Undermining

PROBLEMS MEAN: WASTED TAXES OR MORE NEEDED?

When I see problems in government services, such as roads and bridges that haven't been maintained or schools that are doing a poor job educating our kids, it makes me feel like...



Example

“While our state’s best schools demonstrate what is possible when we invest in learning, Maryland’s current education system does not grant all children the same opportunities.”

Connecting the Dots

- Link public investments with the ways we pay for them
- Clearly lay out choices: e.g. tax breaks for special interests vs. investments in the foundations of thriving communities

Example

“Our shared investments in good schools, a robust transportation network, and safe communities have made Maryland a great place to live, work, and do business. But over time, our tax code has become full of tax breaks put there by special interests, and that is hurting our ability to maintain critical services, let alone make new investments that move our state forward.”

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