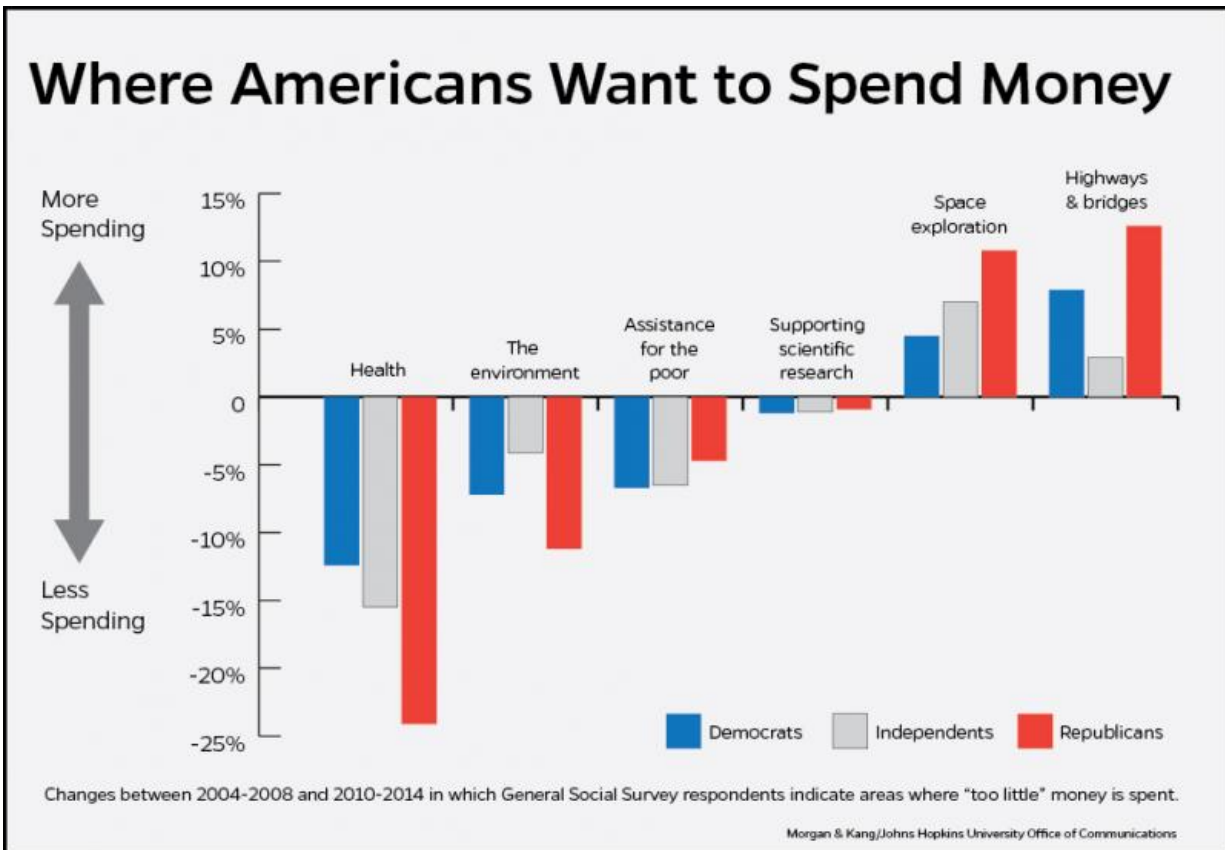


Obamacare saps enthusiasm for government health-care spending

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Changes between 2004-2008 and 2010-2014 in General Social Survey respondents who indicate that too little is spent by the federal government on health care. Credit: Morgan/Kang/JHU Office of Communications

The Affordable Care Act has eroded support for federal health care

spending not just from Republicans, but also from Democrats and independents, a Johns Hopkins University study has found.

Before the 2010 passage of the law widely known as "Obamacare," as many as 86 percent of Democrats thought too little was being spent on health. At the same time, about two-thirds of all independents and Republicans also supported increased [health spending](#).

But after the law was enacted, Republican support for more federal [health care spending](#) dropped 25 percent, while support among Democrats dropped about 12 percent, and support from independents dropped as much as 15 percent.

"One would expect strongly partisan responses to the passage of Obamacare," sociologist Stephen L. Morgan said. "But the decline in support is from everyone. Our conclusion is that a conservative 'cold front' may have arrived in 2010, fueled by the passage of the ACA."

Working with graduate student Minhyoung Kang, Morgan, the university's Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Education, analyzed data from the 2004 to 2014 General Social Surveys. They focused on responses - before and after the passage of the Affordable Care Act - from survey respondents who indicated that "too little" is spent on the nation's health. The findings are published by the online journal *Sociological Science*.

Morgan concluded the decline in support for health care is not something that can be attributed to the Great Recession or to a lower appetite for spending in general. He found that for Democrats, Republicans and independents, support for health-care spending dropped significantly more than for spending in other areas, even related areas such as the environment, assistance for the poor and scientific research. Meanwhile, during the same timeframe, public support for spending on space

exploration and highways actually went up for all three groups.

Morgan even found a five point decline in the percentage of Democrats who feel that the federal government should help individuals pay doctor and hospital bills. The decline was much larger for Republicans and independents.

"Our interpretation is that attitudes toward [spending](#) on health are distinctly negative," Morgan said. "It's a disproportionately large drop for [health care](#)."

Provided by Johns Hopkins University

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