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august 16-22

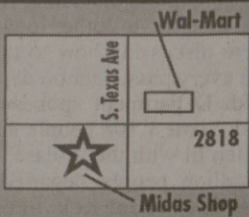
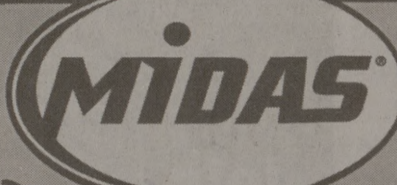
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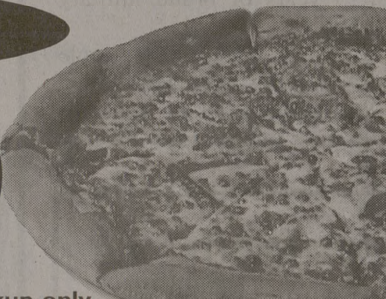
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AP Poll: Public opposes tax cuts; one in five concerned about an audit

By Will Lester
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Six in 10 Americans say they are against more tax cuts when the country is at war and already faces budget deficits, according to an Associated Press poll. Still, half of all Americans say their taxes are too high.

The poll, taken in the days before Tuesday's tax deadline, found that 61 percent say it would be better to hold off on additional tax cuts right now to avoid making budget deficits worse and ensure there is adequate money to pay for the war.

Half that many, 31 percent, said they think it is more important to pass more tax cuts to give people more money to spend and to stimulate the economy, said the poll conducted for the AP by ICR/International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

"I think they need to figure out how to pay for the war," said Joseph Ames, a 28-year-old cook from Boise, Idaho, who considers himself a political

independent. "They need to broaden their search to see where and who is actually affected by these tax cuts. I hear a lot of talk about the little man getting stomped on."

A majority of those who think taxes are too high and a majority of Republicans, 56 percent, said they preferred holding off on additional tax cuts right now. Three of four Democrats said it would be better to wait.

This session in Congress lawmakers are debating a possible tax cut, which could be around \$350 billion, though lawmakers are still debating the appropriate size of a cut. Supporters of a larger tax cut say it would be a boon to the economy, and opponents of the measure say it would worsen federal deficits expected to approach \$400 billion this year.

The economy's continuing problems have convinced some that more tax cuts are needed.

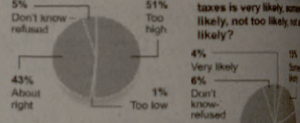
Kathleen Blank, a 79-year-old conservative Republican

ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL

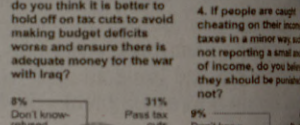
Many think tax relief can wait

The majority of Americans polled think it is better to hold off on tax cuts to avoid making budget deficits worse and ensure there is adequate money for the war with Iraq.

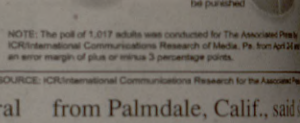
1. How do you feel about the income taxes that you currently pay? Do you think your taxes are too high, too low, or about right?



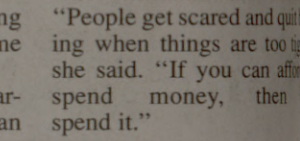
2. Do you think it is more important to pass additional tax cuts to give people more money to spend and stimulate the economy, or do you think it is better to hold off on tax cuts to avoid making budget deficits worse and ensure there is adequate money for the war with Iraq?



3. How would you rate your chances of being reviewed for another tax return audit by the IRS? Do you think an IRS audit of your taxes is very likely and likely, not too likely and likely?



4. If people are caught cheating on their taxes in a minor way, do you think they should be punished more severely than they are now? Do you think they should be punished more severely than they are now?



NOTE: The poll of 1,017 adults was conducted by The Associated Press International Communications Research of Media, Pa. from April 10-12, 2003. Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Plan

Continued from page 1

If the top 10 policy is not enough for advocates of racial preferences, it is too much for opponents who say percentage plans are affirmative action in disguise. Mark McCaig, vice chairman of the A&M chapter of Young Conservatives of Texas, said the policy favors students from low-achieving schools at the expense of better qualified students from more competitive high schools.

"The plan discriminates against whites and non-favored minorities including Asians," said McCaig, a sophomore business administration major. "The best answer is a system based 100 percent on merit."

Since the top 10 policy was adopted, more students with low SAT scores have enrolled at A&M. According to the Office of Measurement and Research Services, in 1996, 32 percent of black freshmen had SAT scores less than 1,000, compared with 23 percent of Hispanics, 7 percent of whites and 11 percent of Asians. In 2001, 43 per-

cent of blacks had a sub-1,000 score, compared with 23 percent of Hispanics, 9 percent of whites and 13 percent of Asians.

Among top 10 percent freshmen in 2001, those who scored less than 1,000 on the SAT had an average grade point ratio of 2.38, and those who scored more than 1,000 averaged 3.02.

However, Ashley said class rank was a better predictor of a student's success at A&M than SAT scores. He pointed out that top 10 percent students have a 94 percent retention rate, compared to an 88 percent rate overall.

"Obviously, these students are not all flawed out," Ashley said. "They are successful here like they are in their high schools."

Berekat Bisrat, spokesman for the African American Student Coalition, said the top 10 policy is "better than nothing," but said affirmative action is necessary to make A&M more diverse.

"People don't mind black students being admitted on athletic scholarships, but they do have a problem when students are admitted based on their race," said Bisrat, a junior political science major. "People need to be consistent."

POW

Continued from page 1

Marines who flew them to safety.

The others appeared to be unharmed.

In interviews with reporters from The Washington Post and The Miami Herald, some of the freed prisoners said they had been kicked and beaten when they were captured.

But they also said Iraqi doctors had performed surgery on the two who had been shot. Johnson said doctors told her "they wanted to take good care of me to show that the Iraqi people had humanity," but she believed they had other motives.

They said their jailers had been cruel at the start, taunting them, and less so as time went on; they were interrogated, but did not complain of torture. As their captivity

lengthened, they were often moved from place to place.

They were given water or tea and rice, some pita bread and sometimes chicken, two or three times a day. They slept under wool blankets on concrete floors, and were not allowed outside. Nor could they exercise or shower.

At one point, they said, the Iraqis moved an artillery gun into the prison — making it a target. Allied bombing came closer and closer, and one concussion even broke the door open, but the guards prevented them from escaping.

They were moved often after that. With each move, the prisoners said, their conditions eased somewhat. Finally, they said, they were guarded by police officers who paid for their food and medicine.

Shortly after their capture, the seven had been shown on Iraq's state-run television, giving a human face to the

peril confronting American troops.

Nine others of the 50th

convoys were killed. The seven freed Sunday were picked up wearing blue and-white pajamas, khakis and shorts.

Besides Miller, Johnson and Hernandez, the others from the 507th were Sgt. James Riley, 31, Pennsauken, N.J., and Army Spc. Joseph Hudson, 23, Alamo, N.M.

The others were Chief Warrant Officer Ronald D. Young Jr., 26, and Chief Warrant Officer David S. Williams, 30, of Orlando, Fla.

Back home, in Little Springs, Ga., Young's father watched shaky video footage of the soldiers on CNN. "I'm him, and I'm just so happy that I could kiss the world!" said Ronald Young Sr. "It's his. It's definitely him."

Liberation came without warning.

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