

# **AAA Bill of Rights For the Nation's Motorists On Transportation Funding**

The United States requires a new vision for transportation that addresses 21st Century needs, ensures broad access and adequate funding, as well as equitably allocates benefits and payments among users.

A new transportation vision must ensure that the system significantly enhances safety, mobility, and reliability to provide an appropriate return on investment to motorists who will continue to pay most of the costs.

Transportation improvements should be based upon needs that are clearly identified, and outcomes that are supported by research and assured through application of performance standards.

Transportation taxes, fees and other revenue collected from motorists must be equitable and transparent. Transportation agencies must demonstrate to the public that transportation resources are managed wisely and efficiently.

Motorists must receive direct and recognizable improvements to their travel experience if they are asked to pay more.

Revenues generated from taxes, fees, and other pricing mechanisms paid by motorists must be dedicated solely to meeting identified transportation needs and protected from diversion to other uses.

Funding alternatives to supplement or eventually replace motor vehicle fuel taxes must be carefully evaluated as to their ability to be efficiently implemented, accepted by the public, allocated fairly, fully dedicated to transportation needs, and be resistant to fraud and evasion.

Public-private partnerships to increase transportation investments must be carefully managed to ensure that motorist fees are fair and equitable, that motorist fees are not diverted to non-transportation purposes, and that the facility is consistently maintained and improved.

Publicly owned transportation facilities should be sold or leased to private interests only if agreements are in place requiring the maintenance of high levels of service and continuing public oversight. Revenues resulting from the sale or lease must be used only for transportation purposes and compensate the public for the full value of the facility.

Transportation fees, taxes, and other revenue collected from motorists should fairly represent their use of the system, and all transportation system users should bear a proportionate share of financing the system.



## **A message from the President & CEO of AAA Mid-Atlantic**

On November 1, 2010, AAA Mid-Atlantic celebrated its 110th Anniversary.

Over those 110 years much has changed and AAA Mid-Atlantic has grown to serve nearly four million members from New Jersey to Virginia.

However, one thing has remained the same: AAA works tirelessly to protect the rights, interests, safety and mobility of our members and all travelers.

It is from this unique perspective that we present this report to the Legislature.

The unmistakable message from voters after the 2010 election was a commitment to fiscal responsibility. The message was that the public wants accountability, results and transparency in seeing how its taxes translate into tangible benefits.

We hope this “TripTik” provides you with direction as you weigh decisions, perhaps none so challenging as jobs and transportation needs.

AAA advocacy concerning transportation and safety remains unchanged and typically enjoys broad support. It is in this spirit that we will continue to work in a bipartisan fashion to advance the safety, reliability and improvement of our highway network.

To those who have worked with us, we thank you and ask for your continued support. For those new to the Pennsylvania Legislature, please know that you can call on us for our guidance on a wide range of safety, transportation and motorist/consumer issues.

Sincerely,

Donald R. Gagnon  
President and CEO  
AAA Mid-Atlantic



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## AAA, AN OVERVIEW

For more than 100 years, AAA has been an advocate for the motorist and traveler. We have fought legislative battles for motorists, protected them against unduly restrictive legislation, and worked against harsh and unjust prosecutions. AAA has been in the forefront of the movement for adequate roads and safe use of those roads. We have fought for equitable taxation and stood constant watch over the rights and interests of America's travelers.

AAA is a federation of affiliated motor clubs with more than 1,100 offices in the U.S. and Canada. The organization offers personal service through its network of more than 38,000 full-time employees.

One in three licensed drivers has a AAA membership, which entitles them to special services, valuable savings, and priceless security. With more than 51 million members, AAA is the largest paid membership organization in North America.

### AAA Mid-Atlantic

A not-for-profit, fully tax-paying organization, AAA Mid-Atlantic is based in Wilmington, Delaware and serves nearly four million members in Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and the District of Columbia. AAA Mid-Atlantic continually monitors and responds to state legislative and regulatory measures that affect the traveling public and focuses special attention on three high risk groups – children, teens, and seniors.

While known primarily for providing emergency road service, maps and travel publications, AAA Mid-Atlantic works to make life easier, simpler and better for people on the go. Today, this means helping members not just on the road but also in other areas - whether at home, on vacation or shopping. With products and services such as insurance, travel planning, credit cards, loans, and "Show Your Card and Save" discounts, AAA Mid-Atlantic provides members countless ways to save time, money and trouble every day.

## **The Mid-Atlantic Foundation for Safety and Education**

The Mid-Atlantic Foundation for Safety and Education, established in 2002, is a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation dedicated to educating, training and raising the level of traffic and travel safety awareness for all. Through generous contributions from AAA Mid-Atlantic members and others, the Foundation works to make schools, communities and roads safer places for everyone by providing resources and educational programs for children, teens, adults and seniors.

Since motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year olds, teen drivers are an important area of focus for AAA Mid-Atlantic. As a leader in teen driver safety for 75 years, AAA has developed a suite of research-based tools to help guide families through the learning-to-drive process.

TeenDriving.AAA.com provides parents and teens with everything they need to know, when they need it and all in one place.

Some of the programs supported by member contributions include:

- AAA School Safety Patrol Programs and Training
- Elementary Education Using “Otto the Auto”
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education
- High School Alcohol Awareness and Safety Belt Programs
- Adult Crossing Guard Training
- Senior Mobility

<http://midatlantic.aaa.com/Foundation/Overview>



## INTRODUCTION

Over the years, AAA Mid-Atlantic has regularly surveyed motorists to ensure that we know their opinions about key issues impacting their safety and mobility. With approximately one in three licensed drivers in our region being a AAA member, knowing their positions is critical for us if we are to effectively and credibly represent them.

The findings that follow, our AAA Transportation Survey 2011, are the results of a scientifically conducted poll of licensed drivers in the state. The poll was commissioned by AAA Mid-Atlantic and was conducted in December 2010. (See p. 19 for detailed poll information).

Questions this year, while covering many topics, focused on two key areas: distracted driving, particularly concerning cell phone and texting instrument usage, as well as, transportation finances, given the current funding crisis that so directly impacts both mobility and safety.

We share these results with you, our policy leaders and lawmakers, in hopes that these results, drawn from the motorists in Pennsylvania, will assist you, in dealing with the very tough decisions that you will be called upon to make in this Legislative Session.

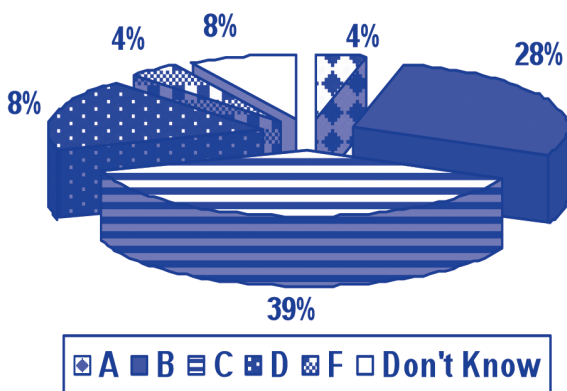
If you have any questions or wish to discuss any of these findings, or if AAA Mid-Atlantic can be of assistance to you in any way, please contact any of our Public and Government Affairs Legislative team, whose contact information is provided on p. 20.



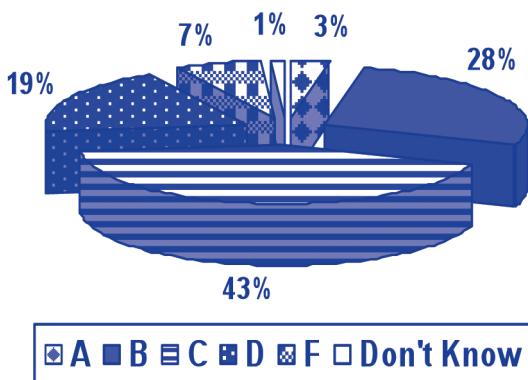
## ROADS & BRIDGES

When it comes to global competitiveness, stability of our economy and our quality of life, America's transportation system is at the heart of it all. Yet, only a small percentage of motorists give Pennsylvania's roads and bridges top marks, with 6% saying the Interstates, 3% saying local roads and 4% saying bridges deserve an "A."

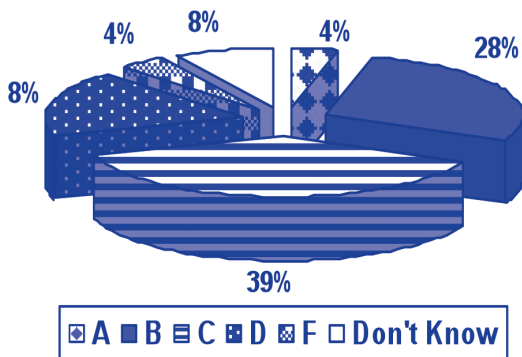
### Q. Grading the Interstate Highway System



### Q. Grading Local Roads (US or Major State Routes)



## Q. Grading Bridges





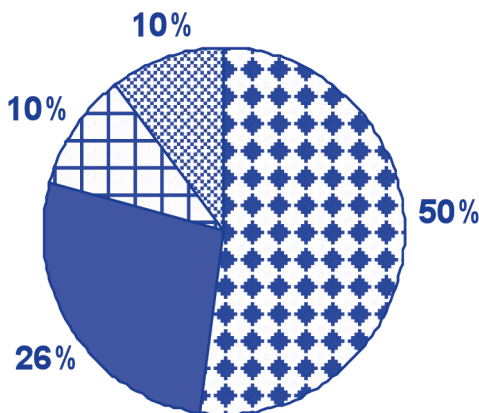


## MAINTENANCE & CONSTRUCTION COSTS

As the U.S. population has grown by 60 million people in the past 20 years, the number of vehicle miles traveled increased by 39%. Meanwhile, actual road miles increased by only 4%. When asked their opinions on constructing new roads and bridges to help alleviate traffic congestion, three-quarters were in favor, including 50% strongly so.

**Q. Do you favor or oppose the construction of new roads and bridges to help reduce the traffic congestion created by increased population growth and travel?**

<b>Strongly Favor</b>	<b>Somewhat Favor</b>
<b>Somewhat Oppose</b>	<b>Strongly Oppose</b>

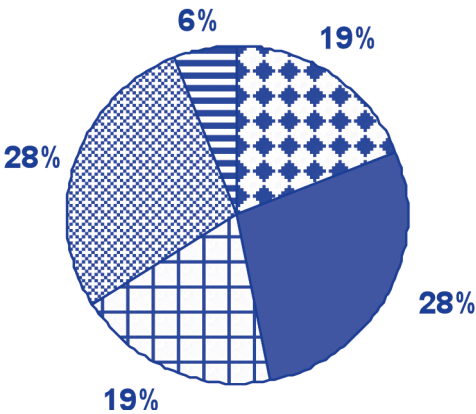


It costs huge dollars to build and maintain our roads and bridges and Pennsylvania, like many other states, currently has a transportation funding crisis. Clearly there are no easy choices and Pennsylvanians are, understandably, not excited about seeing their taxes and fees increased further to cover shortfalls.

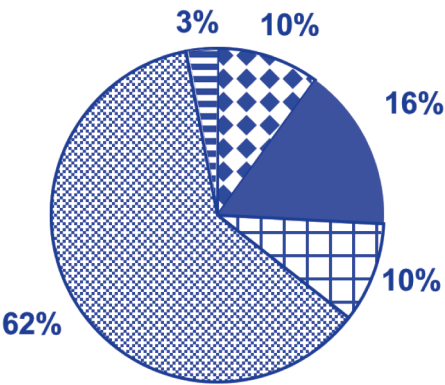
Most unpopular was the proposal to charge drivers a fee based upon the number of miles they drive with 67% opposed, followed closely by increasing the sales tax with 66% opposed, imposing fees to drive on major roads during peak travel periods (congestion pricing with 64% opposition and increasing the gas tax with 62% opposed).

Other revenue-raising proposals saw much closer margins between those opposing and those favoring, with tolling existing roads and bridges garnering 49% opposition to 35% support, while increasing licensing and/or registration fees was nearly a toss-up with 48% favoring compared to 51% opposed. And charging tolls on newly constructed roads and bridges was the most popular proposal for raising transportation revenue with a tie at 47% in favor and opposed.

**Q. Do you favor or oppose charging tolls on only newly constructed bridges and highways?**



**Q.** Do you favor or oppose increasing the gasoline tax?



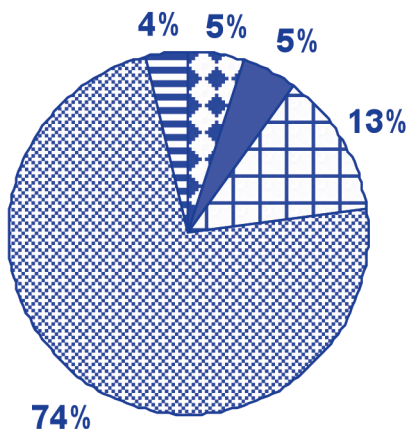


## LARGE TRUCKS

In Pennsylvania, trucks are currently limited to a maximum weight of 80,000 pounds and 53 feet in length – and those polled overwhelmingly want to keep it that way. Raising the bar to allow for longer, heavier trucks was opposed by 87% with three-quarters strongly opposed.

**Q. Do you favor or oppose longer and heavier trucks on our roads?**

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Strongly Favor</b>  | <b>Somewhat Favor</b>  |
| <b>Somewhat Oppose</b> | <b>Strongly Oppose</b> |
| <b>Don't Know</b>      |                        |

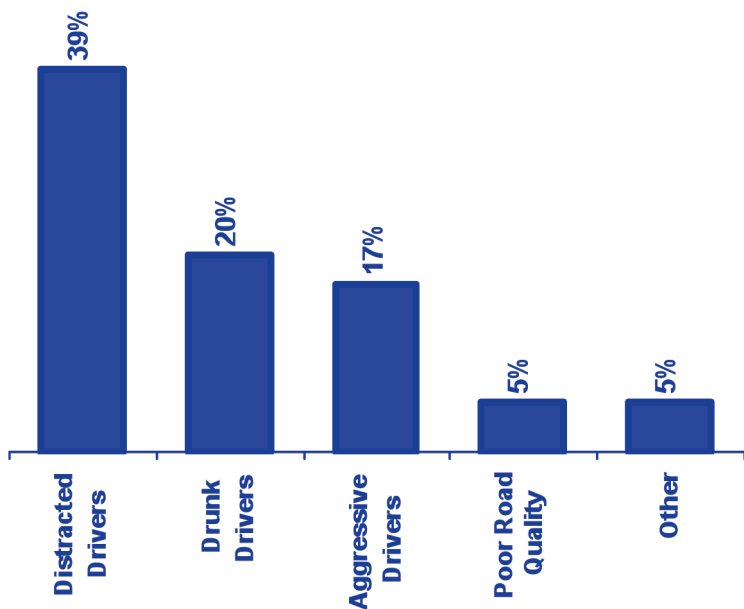




## SAFETY CONCERNS

Three major safety issues comprise 76% of the primary concerns voiced by Pennsylvania drivers in our 2011 poll. Over one-third (39%) listed distracted drivers as the top worry, followed by twenty percent (20%) who listed drunk drivers as their chief concern.

**Q. Which of the following is your top safety concern as a motorist?**





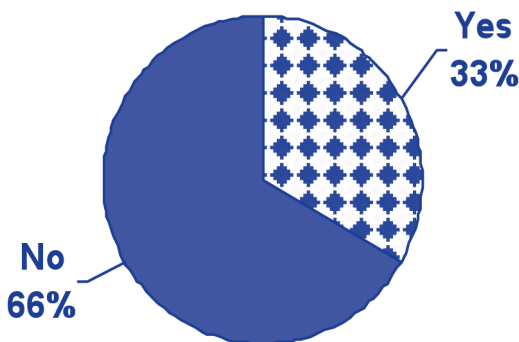
## DISTRACTED DRIVING

Distracted driving -- including the use of cell phones -- is a major contributor to automobile crashes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2008, 5,870 people lost their lives and an estimated 515,000 people were injured in police-reported crashes involving driver distraction. Driver distraction presents a serious and potentially deadly danger.

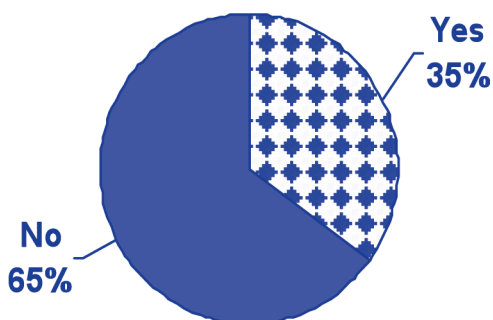
Twice as many Pennsylvania drivers polled in 2011 by AAA now feel that distracted drivers are a higher safety concern than drunk drivers.

Although two-thirds of those polled say they have never been in an accident caused by a distracted driver, an alarming one-third report that they have. An equal number report that they do not use their cell phones or text while driving.

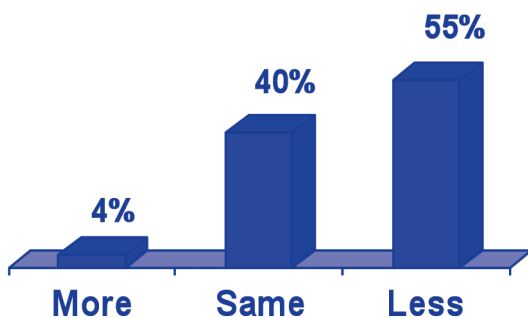
**Q. Have you ever been in an accident caused by a distracted driver?**



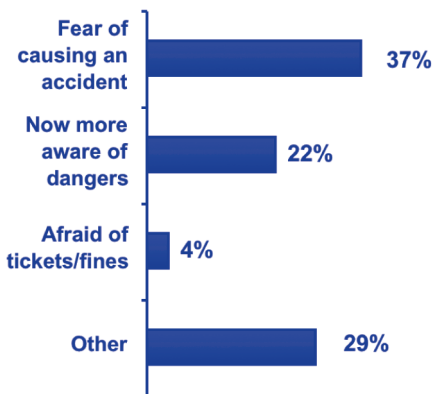
**Q. Do you ever use your cell phone to talk or text while you drive?**



**Q. If yes, do you use your phone more frequently, less frequently, or about the same amount while driving compared to a year ago?**



**Q. If less frequently, what motivated you to reduce the amount you use your cell phone while driving?**



It follows then that over two-thirds favor some kind of law banning the use of text messaging devices and cell phones while driving, with 57% strongly supporting such a measure.

Our poll found overwhelming support by Pennsylvania drivers for many measures to reduce distracted driving, with more than 80% support for measures to:

- ban all texting while driving
- ban texting devices and cell phones for all drivers under 18
- increase public awareness about the dangers of distracted driving

Our poll also showed over two-thirds of Pennsylvania drivers supporting two other measures to curtail distracted driving: 69% want stricter penalties, and 66% favor banning the use of text messaging AND cell phone devices for ALL drivers.

**Q. Do you favor or oppose each of the following measures to reduce the amount of distracted driving?**

Banning all forms of text messaging by all drivers				
Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK
88%	6%	2%	3%	1%

Banning the use of text messaging devices and all cell phones by drivers under age 18				
Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK
86%	7%	3%	4%	-



Banning the use of text messaging devices and all cell phones for all drivers				
Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK
66%	13%	10%	9%	3%

Establishing stricter penalties for distracted driving				
Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK
69%	13%	5%	4%	5%

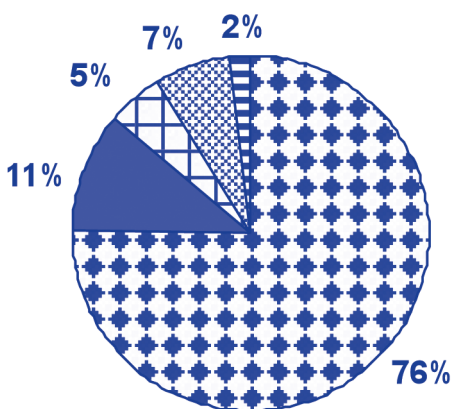


## TEEN DRIVING

Research has shown that limiting the number of teen passengers in vehicles operated by new teen drivers reduces the number of accidents and saves lives. More than 87% favor imposing such limits with three-quarters (76%) of motorists strongly in favor. Only 12% opposed the idea.

**Q. Do you favor or oppose efforts to limit the number of teen passengers that newly licensed teen drivers in PA can have in their cars??**

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Strongly Favor  | Somewhat Favor  |
| Somewhat Oppose | Strongly Oppose |
| Don't Know      |                 |





## A CALL TO ACTION

As an organization founded to represent motorists' rights, AAA Mid-Atlantic supports a multi-modal transportation system that provides safe and accessible choices for all users and their personal travel needs.

We believe responsible advocacy in the public policy arena is essential for all of us to continue to enjoy our freedom of mobility and to do so safely.

The following are just a few key points regarding AAA Mid-Atlantic's stand on critical issues.

### **Transportation Funding**

AAA opposes policies reducing or withholding federal transportation funding to states that fail to meet arbitrary VMT (vehicle miles traveled) reductions. AAA encourages innovative transportation finance measures that will offset the long-term impact of projected decreases in gas tax revenues.

AAA will continue to seek an adequately funded transportation system that returns the surface transportation program to a pay-as-you-go, user-fee funded model. A user-financed transportation program is important not only to the nation's deficit reduction efforts, but to ensuring increased safety, improving mobility and growing the economy over the long term.

## **Distracted Driving**

AAA supports a comprehensive approach to addressing distracted driving. Any legislative or administrative proposal to address the issue should be based on sound research and/or fundamental safety principles, and include a significant educational component. Research continues to show that text-messaging while driving is a dangerous activity. AAA believes texting while driving should be illegal. Laws prohibiting such practices should be comparable to those on the books for other dangerous moving violations, with considerable fines and accrual of demerit points assessed.

## **Electronic Enforcement (Speed & Red Light)**

AAA realizes the role that automated enforcement can play in improved safety for motorists, pedestrians and others who use the road by improving compliance with red lights, speed limits and other traffic-control devices. However, AAA opposes the use of photo enforcement systems that undermine fair and reasonable laws and that will do little to improve public safety. Photo enforcement cameras should be used solely to promote traffic safety, not generate revenues for government or technology vendors. Photo enforcement camera programs should be operated only under the direct supervision and control of state-certified law enforcement personnel.

## **Public-Private Partnerships**

Public-private partnerships to increase transportation investments must be carefully managed to ensure that motorists' fees are fair and equitable, and that they are not diverted to non-transportation purposes. Publicly owned transportation facilities should not be transferred to private interests unless the agreements require the maintenance of high levels of service and remain under public oversight.

## **Event Data Recorders (EDRs) – “Black Boxes”**

AAA strongly supports protecting the privacy of automobile owners whose vehicles are equipped with Event Data Recorders (EDRs), also known as “black boxes.” All manufacturers selling vehicles in the United States should be required to disclose on new-vehicle window stickers the inclusion of such devices on all vehicles so equipped. AAA supports federal efforts requiring data standardization to facilitate uniform access by all users.

## **Alternative Fuels**

AAA is a staunch advocate for implementation of an alternative energy strategy and encourages the government to work with the private sector to develop alternative fuel and vehicle programs. Specifically, AAA encourages further research into sustainable and renewable fuels; fuel-cell and battery technology; and other low- or zero-emission vehicle technologies. If alcohol fuel blends or other alternative fuels are exempted from federal or state gasoline taxes, federal and state highway trust funds should be compensated for any resulting loss of revenues.



## DETAILS OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

*The 2011 poll results are from the findings of a survey of 401 licensed drivers in Southeastern Pennsylvania (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties) conducted in December 2010. The survey was designed by Terry Madonna Opinion Research on behalf of AAA Mid-Atlantic and the interviewing was conducted by Susquehanna Polling of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The sample error for the total sample is plus or minus 4.9 percent. In addition to sampling error, this poll is also subject to other sources of non-sampling error. Generally speaking, two sources of error concern researchers most. Non-response bias is created when selected participants either choose not to participate in the survey or are unavailable for interviewing. Response errors are the product of the question and answer process. Surveys that rely on self-reported behaviors and attitudes are susceptible to biases related to the way respondents process and respond to survey questions.*



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