



Established 1973

4 rue de Chevreuse  
75006 Paris, France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 4720 2415  
Website: [www.aaro.org](http://www.aaro.org)  
Email: [contact@aaro.org](mailto:contact@aaro.org)

# AARO 2020 Advocacy Survey Results

## Article 1: The Top 3 Issues (plus a 4<sup>th</sup>!)

Financial issues are key; lack of representation in Congress is also a real problem

By Doris L. Speer

February 20, 2021

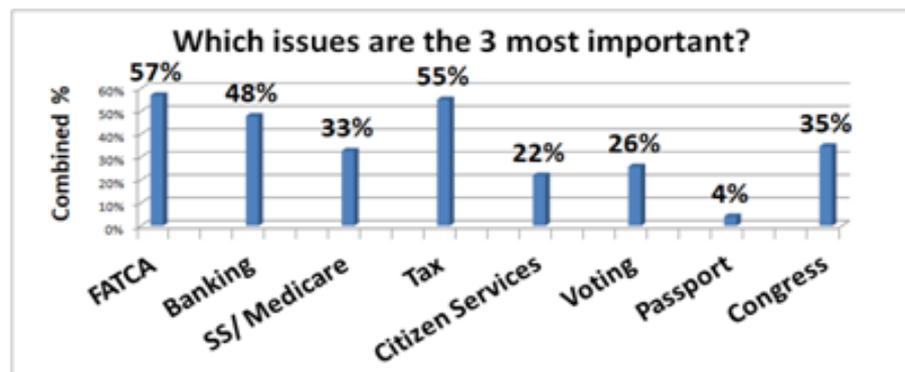
We asked respondents to choose their three most important issues and to rank them in order of importance. The choices were:

- FATCA
- Banking / Investment and Retirement Accounts
- Social Security and Medicare
- Taxation / Dealings with the IRS
- US Citizen Services Overseas
- Voting While Overseas
- Passport Revocation / Renunciation
- Representation and Recognition in Congress

### FATCA, Tax, Banking on Top

“FATCA” was the overall “winner” (or, rather, the “loser”); 57% of respondents put “FATCA” into the top 3 issues. Next was “Taxation” at 55% and “Banking” at 48%.

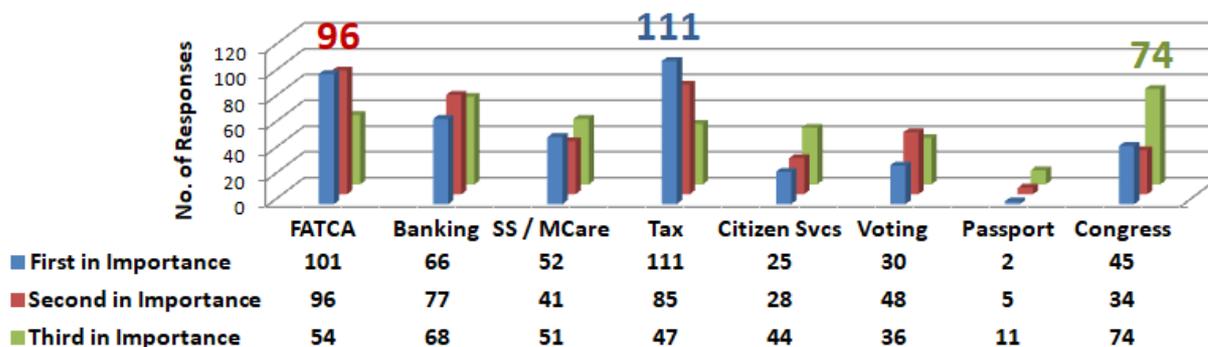
We will cover these 3 issues (as well as the others) in more detail in future articles.



## Representation in Congress Also Ranks High

When we broke down your responses into 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place, “Representation and Recognition” in Congress, fourth in the overall ranking, had the most 3<sup>rd</sup> place votes (74), behind “Tax” (111) and “FATCA” (96). See the table below.

### HOW DO YOU RANK THE ISSUES THAT MATTER?



In fact, in response to another question, 93% of you do not feel that you are fairly represented in Congress!

## What’s the Beef? How do you want to solve this problem?

Many of you consider us the “*ghost citizens of the USA*,” as one respondent so aptly put it. A lot of you highlighted the fact that “*there isn’t just one representative or senator for us; our votes are mixed in and therefore diluted with those of the state we last voted in*” and that “*we have no dedicated voice.*” “*We are too dispersed to have any effect.*”

Others believe that our representatives don’t have any understanding of the problems we must deal with, that they don’t “*feel responsible for us*,” or that they think that we are “*just a bunch of high-living tax dodgers.*” Others believe that there is “*a provincial mentality in the US that if you love it you don’t leave it, and that unfortunately leaves Americans who choose to live elsewhere at a disadvantage on many fronts.*” Finally, how can persons in Congress, who don’t even hold passports, understand needs of overseas Americans?

Your ideas to mitigate this problem could be grouped into 3 categories: A popular suggestion was that there should be a representative(s) for Americans abroad rather our voting in a state where we no longer live. That way we wouldn’t be “*lumped in with all the other residents of a particular state.*” This is how it is done in France, as a few of you note. “*Vote as a group instead of being attached to a state,*” you say. Did you know that, if all overseas Americans were placed in one state, it would be the

12<sup>th</sup> most populous state (between New Jersey and Virginia)? Others suggest that overseas Americans be included in the census.

Your last suggestion focused on advocacy and education. International organizations, like AARO, have been working hard to increase the visibility of overseas Americans. We strive to educate Congress that we are not high-living tax dodgers, but Americans just like those in the US, who have specific issues that have been caused by unfortunate legislation promulgated without knowledge or forethought of its effect on us. This survey gives us an important tool to continue to educate them.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO) researches issues that significantly affect the lives of overseas Americans and keeps its members informed on these issues. Founded in 1973 and headquartered in Paris, AARO is an international, non-partisan association with members in 46 countries. For more information please email us at [contact@aaro.org](mailto:contact@aaro.org).

Copyright © 2021 by The Association of Americans Resident Overseas. All rights reserved. Quotations and citations are welcome with attribution to the Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO) and Doris L. Speer.