

In Two Party Race, November Elections Could Go Either Way

But with a Tea Party candidate in the race, the edge goes to the Democrats

NEW YORK, N.Y. – August 25, 2010 –During an election year, August recess for members of Congress is a time for them to reconnect with their constituents and get a little rest before they come back to D.C. for a flurry of activity for one month followed by one month of intense campaigning. This year, they need to do more reconnecting than resting, as just 15% of Americans rate the overall job Congress is doing as positive with 85% giving their job negative marks. And, while Democrats may hold control of Congress, their partisans are not being more kind – three-quarters of Democrats (73%) give Congress negative ratings as do 89% of Independents and 95% of Republicans.

These are some of the results of ***The Harris Poll*** of 2,775 adults surveyed online between August 9 and 16, 2010 by [Harris Interactive](#).

The November Elections

One of the stories of this election season so far has been Democratic disenchantment and Republican enthusiasm. Looking at two simple factors – voting interest and voting likelihood – shows this story continues as the summer ends. While over half of Americans (53%) say they are absolutely certain they will vote in the November elections, that numbers goes up to 63% for Republicans and only to 55% for Democrats. Interest shows a similar trend. Three in five Americans (60%) say they are interested in the House of Representatives election this year. Looking at it by party, seven in ten Republicans (71%) say they are interested versus 56% of Democrats.

Tea Party supporters are the most enthusiastic. Seven in ten of those who are Tea Party supporters (70%) and three-quarters of those who consider themselves a Tea Party member (77%) say they are absolutely certain to vote. They are also more likely to be interested in the election. Eight in ten Tea Party supporters (79%) and 88% of Tea Party members say they are interested in the House of Representative election this year.

This enthusiasm is showing itself in a tight race for the House. One-third of Americans say they would vote for the Democratic candidate (34%) and one-third say they would vote for the Republican candidate (33%) with over one-quarter still undecided (28%). Looking at just those who say they are absolutely or very certain to vote this November, the edge goes to the Republicans, as 39% say they will vote for them with 37% saying they will vote for the Democratic candidate. And, among those who are extremely or very interested in this year's election, the Grand Old Party could see a landslide as almost half of these people (47%) say they would vote Republican compared to 35% who would vote for the Democrat.

But, if there is a Tea Party candidate in the race, things look better for the Democrats. In a three way race, 34% of Americans would vote for the Democrat, 22% would vote for the Republican and 11% would vote for the Tea Party candidate with one-third (33%) undecided. When looking at interest and likelihood to vote, the edge remains with the Democrats in the three-way race. Among those absolutely or very certain to vote, 38% would vote Democrat, 25% Republican and 14% for the Tea Party candidate. Among those extremely or very interested to vote, 36% would vote Democrat, 29% would vote Republican and 19% would vote for the Tea Party candidate.

So What?

The 2010 midterm elections are entering the final phase. Once Labor Day is over, the fall election cycle is in full swing. So far this year, 6 incumbents have lost in primaries around the country. Other incumbents have survived close calls. The electorate is disgruntled, but what happens over the next nine weeks will help decide two important factors. First, who will actually turn out to vote on November 2nd? And, more importantly, who are they voting for?

TABLE 1
CONGRESS' OVERALL JOB RATING

"How would you rate the overall job Congress is doing?"

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Political Party		
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE	15	5	27	11
Excellent	2	*	4	*
Pretty good	14	5	22	11
NEGATIVE	85	95	73	89
Only fair	35	24	48	32
Poor	49	71	25	57

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; * signifies less than 1%.

TABLE 2
CONGRESS' OVERALL JOB RATING – TREND
 "How would you rate the overall job the Congress is doing?"

Base: All U.S. adults

	TREND	Positive*	Negative**
		%	%
2010	August	15	85
	June	14	86
	May	15	85
	April	16	84
	March	10	90
	Jan.	16	84
2009	Dec.	17	83
	Oct.	16	84
	Sept.	19	81
	Aug.	22	78
	June	25	75
	March	29	71
2008	October	10	86
	August	18	77
	June	13	83
	February	20	76
2007	December	17	79
	October	20	77
	April	27	69
	February	33	62
2006	September	24	73
	May	18	80
	February	25	71
	January	25	72

*Positive = excellent or pretty good. **Negative = only fair or poor.

Note: Prior to March, 2009, this question was asked by telephone.

TABLE 3
VOTING LIKELIHOOD

“An election for the House of Representatives will be held on November 2nd. How certain are you that you will vote?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Political Party			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Supporter	Member
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Will Vote	80	88	84	81	92	92
Absolutely certain I will vote	53	63	55	51	70	77
Very certain I will vote	14	14	14	17	13	11
I probably will vote	12	10	15	13	8	3
Will Not Vote	13	7	10	13	5	4
I probably will not vote	7	5	6	6	3	3
I am certain I will not vote	6	2	4	7	2	1
Not sure if I will vote	7	5	6	6	3	5

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 4
ELECTION INTEREST

“How interested are you in the House of Representatives elections this year?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Political Party			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Supporter	Member
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Interested	60	71	56	63	79	88
Extremely interested	22	32	21	43	38	48
Somewhat interested	20	21	17	18	25	23
Interested	18	17	18	25	17	17
Not Interested	40	29	44	20	21	12
Somewhat interested	25	21	30	37	16	4
Not interested at all	15	8	14	25	5	8

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 5
MIDTERM ELECTIONS – TWO-PARTY RACE

“If the election for the House of Representatives was being held today, would you vote for the Republican or the Democratic candidate?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Political Party			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Supporter	Member
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Democratic candidate	34	2	77	23	12	10
Republican candidate	33	82	2	26	67	73
Other	5	2	1	12	5	6
Not at all sure	28	15	19	39	16	11

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 5B
MIDTERM ELECTIONS – TWO-PARTY RACE – VOTING INTEREST AND INTENTION

“If the election for the House of Representatives was being held today, would you vote for the Republican or the Democratic candidate?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Voting Interest			Voting Intention		
		Extremely/Very Interested (NET)	Interested	Not Interested (NET)	Absolutely/Very Certain will Vote	Probably Will Vote	Will Not Vote (NET)
		%	%	%	%	%	
Democratic candidate	34	35	35	24	37	37	25
Republican candidate	33	47	42	12	39	37	11
Other	5	5	5	9	4	5	8
Not at all sure	28	13	18	56	19	22	56

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 6
MIDTERM ELECTIONS – THREE-PARTY RACE

“If the election for the House of Representatives was being held today and all three were an option, who would you vote for?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Political Party			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Supporter	Member
		%	%	%	%	%
Democratic candidate	34	1	77	24	10	6
Republican candidate	22	57	1	16	39	23
Tea Party candidate	11	20	2	15	27	56
Not at all sure	33	22	20	45	23	15

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 6B
MIDTERM ELECTIONS – THREE-PARTY RACE – VOTING INTEREST AND INTENTION

“If the election for the House of Representatives was being held today and all three were an option, who would you vote for?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Voting Interest			Voting Intention		
		Extremely/Very Interested (NET)	Interested	Not Interested (NET)	Absolutely/Very Certain will Vote	Probably Will Vote	Will Not Vote (NET)
		%	%	%	%	%	
Democratic candidate	34	36	36	24	38	37	28
Republican candidate	22	29	26	10	25	24	12
Tea Party candidate	11	19	16	4	14	13	2
Not at all sure	33	16	22	62	23	26	58

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 7
TEA PARTY FAMILIARITY

“How familiar are you with the Tea Party Movement?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	March	May	June	August
	2010	2010	2010	2010
	%	%	%	%
Familiar (NET)	76	85	86	86
Very familiar	15	22	20	20
Somewhat familiar	39	44	48	44
Not that familiar	22	19	18	22
Not familiar (NET)	24	15	14	14
Not at all familiar	16	10	11	11
Never heard of	8	5	4	3

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 8
TEA PARTY SUPPORT

“Do you support or oppose the Tea Party Movement?”

[Asked of all adults excluding those who are “not at all familiar” or “have never heard of” the Tea Party Movement]

Base: All U.S. adults

	March	May	June	Aug	Political Party		
	2010	2010	2010	2010	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Support (NET)	33	38	37	38	70	13	42
Strongly support	14	18	16	15	34	5	12
Somewhat support	19	20	22	23	36	8	30
Oppose (NET)	23	30	31	29	5	51	31
Somewhat oppose	9	11	11	11	4	14	15
Strongly oppose	14	19	19	18	1	37	16
Not at all sure	20	17	17	19	18	20	16
Not asked/Not familiar at all/ Never heard of	24	15	14	14	8	16	11

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 9
TEA PARTY MEMBER

“Would you describe yourself as a member of the Tea Party?”

[Asked of all adults excluding those who are “not at all familiar” or “have never heard of” the Tea Party Movement]

Base: All U.S. adults

	May 2010	June 2010	Aug 2010	Political Party		
				Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	10	8	7	17	1	6
No	75	77	79	76	83	83
Not asked/Not familiar at all/ Never heard of	15	14	14	8	16	11

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between August 9 to 16, 2010 among 2,775 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

The results of this Harris Poll may not be used in advertising, marketing or promotion without the prior written permission of Harris Interactive.

J38557

Q1215, 1220, 1225, 1230, 1235, 1240, 1245, 1250

The Harris Poll® #100, August 25, 2010

By Regina A. Corso, Director, *The Harris Poll*, Harris Interactive

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the world’s leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll

and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers expertise in a wide range of industries including healthcare, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Serving clients in over 215 countries and territories through our North American, European, and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us – and our clients – stay ahead of what’s next. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.