

Americans Say Endorsements by President Obama, Sarah Palin and the Tea Party Make Them Less Likely to Vote for the Endorsed Candidate

Almost three in five most interested in upcoming election less likely to vote for Obama endorsed candidate

NEW YORK, N.Y. – September 9, 2010 – If you are a Democratic candidate running for office, would you want President Obama to endorse your candidacy? How about if you are a Republican – would you want Sarah Palin or the Tea Party’s endorsement?

Right now, the answer would be probably not. If a candidate running for office was endorsed by President Obama, 45% of Americans would be less likely to vote for that candidate and 42% say they would be more likely. Over half of U.S. adults (56%) say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate endorsed by Sarah Palin, while three in ten (30%) would be more likely to do so. When it comes to the Tea Party’s support, two in five Americans (41%) say they would be less likely to vote for their endorsed candidate, one-third (34%) would be more likely and one-quarter (26%) are not at all sure.

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](#).

Barack Obama’s endorsement

When it comes to an endorsement by President Obama, as might be expected, 85% of Republicans, 78% of Conservatives and 82% of Tea Party Supporters say it would make them less likely to vote for the endorsed candidate. On the flip side, four in five Democrats (79%) and 77% of Liberals say the president’s endorsement would make them more likely to vote for a candidate. Moderates and Independents are split – almost half of Independents (47%) say they would be less likely to support a Barack Obama endorsed candidate and 39% would be more likely to do so, while 45% of Moderates would be more likely to support Obama’s candidate and 40% would be less likely.

Looking at this election in particular, among those who say they are absolutely or very certain to vote, half (50%) would be less likely to vote for a candidate endorsed by President Obama and 43% would be more likely to do so. An endorsement also does not help among those most interested in the election. Among those who say they are extremely or very interested in the election, almost three in five (58%) say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate endorsed by the president; with over half (53%) saying they would be much less likely to do so.

	More likely (NET)	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Less likely (NET)	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	Not at all sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
President Barack Obama	42	27	15	45	8	37	13

Sarah Palin's endorsement

If Sarah Palin endorsed a candidate, two-thirds of Republicans (66%) and Tea Party supporters (64%), as well as three in five Conservatives (62%) would be more likely to vote for that candidate. But, more than four in five Democrats (84%), four in five Liberals (79%), two-thirds of Moderates (65%) and three in five Independents (62%) would be less likely to vote for a Sarah Palin-endorsed candidate. Also, over half of those who are absolutely or very certain to vote (54%) say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate endorsed by Sarah Palin but those who are extremely or very interested are split with 47% saying they would be more likely and 47% saying they would be less likely.

	More likely (NET)	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Less likely (NET)	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	Not at all sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sarah Palin	30	14	16	56	11	45	14

Tea Party's endorsement

A Tea Party endorsement, like Sarah Palin's, matters more to Republicans. More than three in five Republicans (63%) and Conservatives (64%), as well as four in five Tea Party supporters (80%), say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate endorsed by the Tea Party. Two-thirds of Democrats (66%), three in five Liberals (61%) and almost half of Moderates (47%) say they would be less likely to vote for a Tea Party endorsed candidate. Independents are a little more divided, as two in five (41%) say they are less likely to vote for a Tea Party endorsed candidate and 36% would be more likely.

Tea Party supporters are enthusiastic. Over half of those who are extremely or very interested in this November's congressional election say they are more likely to vote for a candidate endorsed by the Tea Party. Among those absolutely or very certain to vote, there is a divide, as just over two in five (43%) are more likely to vote for a candidate endorsed by the Tea Party and 42% are less likely to do so.

	More likely (NET)	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Less likely (NET)	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	Not at all sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Tea Party	34	16	18	41	10	30	26

So what?

One of the great debates among political scholars is the question of endorsements and whether they can influence an undecided voter. There is a sense that among partisans, it may not matter much and, even though Democrats say President Obama's endorsement will make them more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate, they were probably going to do so anyway. Although among Independents an endorsement may not be the final decision maker for an undecided voter, it could sway someone one way or the other. And, after looking at these two politicians and another party, candidates in tight races and in swing districts may want to hold off asking for their endorsement.

**TABLE 1
POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT SUMMARY**

"If a candidate running for office in your district was endorsed by the following, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?"

Base: All adults

	More likely (NET)	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Less likely (NET)	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	Not at all sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
President Barack Obama	42	27	15	45	8	37	13
The Tea Party	34	16	18	41	10	30	26
Sarah Palin	30	14	16	56	11	45	14

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

**TABLE 2
ENDORSED BY PRESIDENT OBAMA**

"If a candidate running for office in your district was endorsed by the following, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?"

Summary of President Barack Obama

Base: All adults

	Total	Political party			Political Philosophy			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.	Supporter	Member
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
More likely (NET)	42	6	79	39	12	45	77	14	15
Much more likely	27	2	56	19	8	27	53	8	11
Somewhat more likely	15	3	23	20	5	18	24	5	4
Less likely (NET)	45	85	13	47	78	40	9	82	84
Somewhat less likely	8	10	6	10	7	11	3	9	5
Much less likely	37	75	8	38	71	29	6	73	79
Not at all sure	13	9	8	14	9	15	14	4	1

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

TABLE 3
ENDORSED BY PRESIDENT OBAMA – INTEREST AND VOTING INTENTION

"If a candidate running for office in your district was endorsed by the following, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?"

Summary of President Barack Obama

Base: All adults

	Total	Election Interest			Voting Intention		
		Extremely/ Very interested (NET)	Interested	Not Interested (NET)	Absolutely/ Very certain to vote (NET)	Probably will vote	Will not vote (NET)
		%	%	%	%	%	%
More likely (NET)	42	38	41	33	43	43	42
Much more likely	27	29	28	21	28	28	24
Somewhat more likely	15	10	13	12	15	15	19
Less likely (NET)	45	58	54	28	50	49	26
Somewhat less likely	8	5	7	7	6	8	9
Much less likely	37	53	47	21	44	41	18
Not at all sure	13	4	5	39	7	8	31

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

TABLE 4
ENDORSED BY SARAH PALIN

"If a candidate running for office in your district was endorsed by the following, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?"

Summary of Sarah Palin

Base: All adults

	Total	Political party			Political Philosophy			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.	Supporter	Member
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
More likely (NET)	30	66	8	26	62	20	9	64	71
Much more likely	14	31	4	11	31	7	6	31	44
Somewhat more likely	16	35	4	14	31	13	3	32	27
Less likely (NET)	56	21	84	62	24	65	79	28	17
Somewhat less likely	11	10	10	13	8	14	7	13	5
Much less likely	45	10	74	49	16	51	72	14	11
Not at all sure	14	14	8	13	14	15	12	8	12

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

TABLE 5
ENDORSED BY SARAH PALIN – INTEREST AND VOTING INTENTION

"If a candidate running for office in your district was endorsed by the following, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?"

Summary of Sarah Palin

Base: All adults

	Total	Election Interest			Voting Intention		
		Extremely/ Very interested (NET)	Interested	Not Interested (NET)	Absolutely/ Very certain to vote (NET)	Probably will vote	Will not vote (NET)
		%	%	%	%	%	%
More likely (NET)	30	47	40	13	37	35	12
Much more likely	14	26	20	5	19	17	3
Somewhat more likely	16	21	19	8	19	18	9
Less likely (NET)	56	47	52	50	54	56	57
Somewhat less likely	11	8	10	9	11	11	13
Much less likely	45	39	42	42	43	45	45
Not at all sure	14	6	8	36	8	9	31

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

TABLE 6
ENDORSED BY THE TEA PARTY

"If a candidate running for office in your district was endorsed by the following, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?"

Summary of the Tea Party

Base: All adults

	Total	Political party			Political Philosophy			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.	Supporter	Member
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
More likely (NET)	34	63	12	36	64	23	13	80	88
Much more likely	16	32	5	16	38	6	7	41	65
Somewhat more likely	18	31	7	19	26	17	6	39	22
Less likely (NET)	41	16	66	41	16	47	61	9	5
Somewhat less likely	10	8	12	14	6	15	8	7	5
Much less likely	30	8	55	27	10	33	53	2	1
Not at all sure	26	21	22	24	19	29	26	11	7

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

TABLE 7
ENDORSED BY THE TEA PARTY – INTEREST AND VOTING INTENTION

"If a candidate running for office in your district was endorsed by the following, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?"

Summary of the Tea Party

Base: All adults

	Total	Election Interest			Voting Intention		
		Extremely/ Very interested (NET)	Interested	Not Interested (NET)	Absolutely/ Very certain to vote (NET)	Probably will vote	Will not vote (NET)
		%	%	%	%	%	%
More likely (NET)	34	53	46	11	43	39	10
Much more likely	16	31	24	5	22	19	2
Somewhat more likely	18	22	22	6	21	20	8
Less likely (NET)	41	37	40	29	42	42	38
Somewhat less likely	10	6	9	9	10	11	13
Much less likely	30	31	31	20	32	31	26
Not at all sure	26	10	14	61	16	19	52

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.

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