



Republican poll analysis: GOP poised to make historic gains in 2010

By: Ed Goeas

The latest edition the POLITICO-GW Battleground Poll finds the Republican Party poised to make historic gains this November. The electorate is highly dissatisfied with the direction of the country, clearly driven by their frustration with the policies that President Obama and the Congressional Democrats have pursued over the last two years. In addition, Congressional Republicans are in a strong position to be a powerful force in beginning to reverse that direction over the next two years.

Fully sixty-four percent (64%) of voters believe the country is on the wrong track, including a majority (56%) of voters who “strongly” believe this. In fact, vast majorities of Republicans (91%) and Independents (73%) believe the country is on the wrong track. When voters are asked to name the top reason for believing the country is on the wrong track, the top response categories are President Obama (21%), Congress/Democrats (12%), their personal economic concerns (11%), and the deficit/debt/government spending (10%).

This issue/concern matrix is clearly a problem for Obama and the Congressional Democrats moving forward as they cannot change their identity, they cannot escape blame for the disastrous economic policies of the past two years, and they cannot go back in time to curb the excessive and reckless spending of the past two years. It should come as no surprise that two of the top three emotions selected about the direction of the country are concerned (34%) and frustrated (20%). When you combine those emotions with the twelve percent (12%) of voters who state they are angry about the direction of the country, it is also not surprising that an overwhelming majority (62%) of voters state that they have less faith in government than they did two years ago.

This mix of concern, frustration, and anxiety leads to Republicans holding a six-point advantage (47%-42%) on the generic Congressional ballot. Given the institutional advantage that Democrats normally hold on this ballot, this is a staggering lead for the Republicans. Even among those who have a negative view of both political parties, the GOP has a twenty-two-point (46%-24%) advantage.

In addition, Republicans hold a ten-point advantage over Democrats in their intensity to vote (73% to 63%). This intensity advantage, coupled with GOP leads among other key demographics, provides Republicans with a twelve-point advantage (52%-40%) on the generic ballot with the “likely voter turnout model.” (The results of both these measurements are far greater than what was seen in the 1994 election.)



The Democrats will also be facing an American electorate that renders harsh judgments about their leaders. Fully fifty percent (50%) of voters, including majorities of Republicans (88%) and Independents (53%) now have an unfavorable view of President Obama. There are similarly negative sentiments about Nancy Pelosi (56% unfavorable/62% unfavorable with Independents) and about the Democratic Party (50% unfavorable/51% unfavorable with Independents).

In contrast, the Republican Party enjoys a net positive image (49% favorable overall, and 48% favorable with Independents). And, despite extraordinary efforts by the President and his allies, John Boehner's image remains still relatively unknown to most voters, but net positive, with just one-third of voters having an image of him (18% favorable/15% unfavorable).

Likewise, despite the unrelenting efforts by the Democrats and their allies to search for enemies to blame, and as part of their effort paint the Tea Party in a negative light, a plurality (41%) of voters hold a favorable image of the Tea Party, including a majority of Republicans (74%) and a plurality of Independents (43%) holding a favorable image of them. The Tea Party movement clearly continues to be seen as a positive force by many voters. A force now clearly focused on the failed policies of President Obama and Congressional Democrats over the last two years.

That is not a feeling, however, held solely by the Tea Party activists. A staggering number of voters have made a clear judgment that policies of President Obama and the Congressional Democrats have failed. A majority (51%) of voters disapprove of the job President Obama is doing (42% strongly disapprove). In addition, Congressional Republicans hold an advantage over President Obama on their ability to handle every issue tested, including turning the economy around (+6%), creating jobs (+11%), sharing your values (+1%), controlling the deficit (+16%). Even the historical issue handling strongholds for the Democrats of health care and social security have taken a hit in voter confidence, and Congressional Republicans now lead the President in handling of health care (+7%), and Social Security (+8%).

All this to say that the "change" brought to voters over the last two years by Barack Obama's Presidency through, not only control of the White House, but large majorities in the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives, have not been well received by a vast majority of voters. Voters are long past a discussion of "who is to blame," and all about rejection of President Obama and Congressional Democrat's solutions. In fact to see that, one only has to look at two of President Obama's key initiatives of the last two years. On the economy, the President's cornerstone economic policy has been his economic stimulus package – an economic solution that has been a key part of his



stump speeches across America until the last two weeks. Not only do an overwhelming majority (60%) of voters believe the economic stimulus is not working (45% strongly), fifty-seven percent (57%) of voters do not even believe it is even starting to work. Then there is the ultimate Obama cornerstone issue of health care reform, where not only a majority of voters (53%) are unfavorable towards the Obama solution, but intensity of angst against the handling of that issue is overwhelming – 40% strongly unfavorable and only 14% strongly favorable.

As Republicans are poised to make these historic gains, they should be mindful that they enter the next session of Congress and the next two years with high expectations. Voters are frustrated about the failed economic policies of the last two years and will be pouring into the ballot box to vote for a change in these policies. Voters are also frustrated by the health care reform law and the lack of transparency in government. They will be expecting these newly elected Members of Congress to stand up for fiscal conservative policies, greater transparency, and reforms that really solve problems. These new Republicans should know that they have both the support of the electorate and the advantage over Obama when the heated debates on these policies begin.