



# RESURGENT REPUBLIC

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Ed Gillespie and Whit Ayres  
**DATE:** July 15, 2009  
**RE:** Political Shift Among Independent Voters

In 2000, 2002, and 2004, Republicans won national elections in large part because Independents looked more like Republicans than Democrats on the major issues of the day. In 2006 and 2008, Independents looked more like Democrats than Republicans, and consequently voted for Democratic candidates by substantial margins.

Since April 2009, Resurgent Republic polling has shown Independents once again looking more like Republicans than Democrats on fiscal issues, interrogation of detainees, and health care reform. The longer debates continue on these issues, the more Independents will gravitate toward supporting Republican positions. That bodes well for Republican fortunes in 2010.

### Public Polling from June and July Reveals a Trend

- A CBS News poll records President Obama's job approval at 50% among Independents which is an 8 point drop. On the economy, Independents are near evenly split with 46% approving of President Obama's performance while 43% disapprove.
- A recent Gallup survey showed President Obama's job approval as low as 53% among Independents. This is a 10 point drop since May.
- From June 30 to July 15, Rasmussen's Presidential Approval Index recorded more voters strongly disapprove of President Obama's job performance than those who strongly approve. On July 15, the Index was -7.
- A Public Policy Polling survey in Virginia found that President Obama's job approval is 48%, with 46% disapproval. By a 52% to 38% margin, Virginia Independents disapprove of President Obama's job performance.
- A Quinnipiac University poll in Ohio shows 48% of Independents disapprove of the way President Obama is handling his job, while 38% approve. In addition, Ohio Independents disapprove of how Obama is handling the economy by a 56% to 33% margin.

- A recent Rasmussen survey found that 51% of voters not affiliated with either party strongly oppose President Obama's health care reform plan, a 12 point increase over the past two weeks.
- In Rasmussen's latest Generic Congressional Ballot, voters not affiliated with either party prefer the Republican candidate over the Democrat by a 39% to 19% margin.

### **A Trend Resurgent Republic Discovered in April**

- **Independents prefer smaller government with fewer services and lower taxes.** Overwhelming majorities of Independents (70%) and Republicans (90%) agree compared to Democrats (49%).
- **Independents have concerns about the size of President Obama's budget and the deficit it will create.** Majorities of Independents (56%) and Republicans (87%) are somewhat or strongly opposed compared to Democrats (70%) who somewhat or strongly support the President's budget.
- **Independents believe that big spending programs create few private sector jobs.** By a +13 margin, Independents hold this opinion over the idea that the federal government has to do more during times of economic crisis, and spending by the government stimulates the economy and creates jobs.
- **Independents have serious reservations about the costs of a cap-and-trade program.** By a +17 margin, Independents believe raising taxes on energy while the economy is in recession far outweighs any benefits from companies that may lower energy consumption and rely on more alternative fuels.
- **Independents believe the "harsh interrogation of detainees" was justified.** Independents (53%) believe the "harsh interrogation of detainees" was justified, while the majority of Democrats (57%) believe it was not justified.
- **Independents do not want a criminal investigation into harsh interrogation techniques.** Two out of every three Independents (66%) agree that a criminal investigation will divide the country, criminalize policy disagreements, and have a negative impact on future efforts to keep America safe.
- **Independents favor a health care system where most Americans receive private insurance versus federal government coverage.** Majorities of Independents (61%) and Republicans (87%) prefer a private insurance system, while a majority of Democrats (52%) prefer a federal government system.
- **Independents do not want health care reform to increase taxes or the deficit.** Majorities of Independents (62%) and Republicans (75%) agree with the statement "reforming health care is important, but it should be done without raising taxes or increasing the deficit," while only 38% of Democrats agreed (versus 57% of Democrats who agreed instead that "reforming health care is so important that the government should invest new resources to make sure it is done right").