

Independent & Tea Party Voters Voice Concerns About Obama Leadership and Reckless Spending

Washington, D.C. (June 29, 2010) – With the mid-term elections nearly four months away, Independent and Tea Party voters are more apprehensive about President Barack Obama's leadership due to the oil spill, view the Federal spending as reckless and out of control and think the government is playing by a different set of rules when it comes to debt, according to a recently completed series of Resurgent Republic focus groups.

"There is not only growing concern about spending, debt and the direction of economy but creeping doubts about President Obama's leadership abilities, which is probably a more troublesome concern to the White House and the president's supporters," said Ed Gillespie, Resurgent Republic Board Member.

During the focus groups that took place in five states, President Obama received low marks for his response to the oil spill from nearly all of the voters and is perceived as moving too slow and not recognizing the severity of the problem. Perhaps more damaging politically, Independents said the manner in which President Obama has handled the oil spill makes them more apprehensive or even nervous should a terrorist attack or a major foreign policy crisis occur.

Most of the Independents and all the Tea Party members viewed the current level of Federal spending as "reckless" and "out-of-control." They also viewed the amount of spending as "unnecessary" and "unhelpful" to the country right now. Out-of-control spending and debt stirs anxiety among Independents and is a defining issue for Tea Party voters. Nearly all the participants believe the growing level of debt is "unsustainable" and see it as a direct threat to future generations and America's standing in the world.

The closest participants came to tying the debt to their own lives was the sentiment that, if I have to operate within a set budget in my life, why doesn't the government have to do the same thing? The idea of the government playing by a different set of rules strikes voters as being unfair, especially when during this recession they've personally had to cut back on spending or have "to play defense," as a New Jersey small business owner lamented.

These voters believed nearly unanimously that the primary cause for the record debt is reckless government spending, not lack of tax revenue. For the most part, they believe additional tax revenue would go to new spending, not deficit reduction. The growth in government jobs juxtaposed with the hemorrhaging of private sector jobs was seen as extremely problematic (since the recession, the Federal government has added over 650,000 jobs while the private sector has lost nearly 8 million jobs). The disparity reinforced the idea that the Federal Government has the wrong priorities and is not focused on creating lasting jobs in the private sector, a common theme during the economic stimulus discussion.

"These focus groups in swing districts across the country provided great insight into the thinking of Independents, Tea Party voters and small businesspeople. Voters are clearly worried about the overall direction of the country, and they believe one-party control of government has led to out-of-control spending and the mortgaging of future generations," said Whit Ayres, Resurgent Republic Board Member.

The groups were comprised of registered or self-identified Independents (in states without partisan registration) who are undecided on the congressional generic ballot. One focus group pair was held with politically-independent small business owners, and two focus group pairs were conducted with voters who identify themselves as part of the Tea Party movement. The groups were held in battleground congressional districts in Iowa, Ohio, New Jersey, Arkansas and Florida.

Through a steady stream of national polls and focus groups, Resurgent Republic helps policy makers, think tanks, interest groups and others advocate for policies that are consistent with conservative principles. More information, including the key findings and full memo, can be found at www.resurgentrepublic.com.

###

Contact:

Jim Dyke, 843.722.9670
Jim Dyke & Associates
jim@dykeassociates.com