



RESURGENT REPUBLIC

KEY FINDINGS

RESURGENT REPUBLIC NATIONAL SURVEY OF REGISTERED VOTERS

APRIL 13-16, 2009

1. The mood of the country is improving, especially among Democrats, but still negative overall, with the economy overwhelming all other issues. Voters say that the country is off on the wrong track by a 50 to 40 percent margin, including a 52 to 34 percent margin among independents and an 80 to 13 percent margin among Republicans (Democrats say it is headed in the right direction by a 72 to 22 percent margin). Fifty-seven percent of voters say that the economy is the most important problem facing the country, while no other issue reaches double-digits.

2. Voters prefer smaller government with fewer services and lower taxes, and believe that government policies should promote opportunity over fairness by wide margins. There is broad partisan agreement when thinking about the size of government, with voters preferring “smaller government with fewer services and lower taxes” to “larger government with more services and higher taxes” by a 69 to 21 percent margin, including a 90 to 7 percent margin among Republicans, a 70 to 18 percent margin among independents, and a 49 to 38 percent margin among Democrats.

When thinking about government policies, voters believe they should “promote opportunity by fostering job growth, encouraging entrepreneurs, and allowing people to keep more of what they earn” rather than “promote fairness by narrowing the gap between rich and poor, spreading the wealth, and making sure that economic outcomes are more equal” by a wide 63 to 31 percent margin, including margins of 78 to 20 percent among Republicans, 65 to 28 percent among independents, and 48 to 44 percent among Democrats.

And, even in the current economic climate, voters say that government “is trying to do more things than it can do well, things that should be left to the private sector and individuals” rather than “should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people” by a 50 to 47 percent margin, including wider margins of 73 to 26 percent among Republicans and 55 to 40 percent among independents (Democrats believe it should do more by a 72 to 24 percent margin).

3. While voters do not hold the Obama Administration responsible for the current state of the American economy, they oppose the President’s proposed budget for next year. Thirteen percent of voters hold the Obama Administration very responsible for the state of the economy, while 30 percent hold it somewhat responsible, 22 percent not too responsible, and 34 percent not at all responsible. Republicans think Obama is responsible for the economy by a 63 to 35 percent margin, while independents and Democrats think he is not responsible by margins of 62 to 39 percent and 72 to 27 percent, respectively.

Nonetheless, voters oppose President Obama's budget "that would spend 3.6 trillion dollars and have a deficit of 1.4 trillion dollars" by a 51 to 39 percent margin, including an 87 to 9 percent margin among Republicans and a 56 to 33 percent margin among independents (Democrats support it by a 70 to 16 percent margin). Intensity is strongly against Obama here, with 38 percent of voters strongly opposing the budget versus just 17 percent who strongly support it.

4. Arguments that Obama's budget spends, taxes, and borrows too much, and that it wastes money on pork-barrel projects, bailouts, and big spending programs are very effective among these voters. Majorities of voters agree that "the proposed budget spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much," and that "the federal government is squandering money on pork-barrel projects, bailouts, and big spending programs that create few private sector jobs."

5. Over four-fifths of voters believe that the maximum federal income tax rate should be lower than its current level of thirty-five percent. Eighty-four percent of voters, including 93 percent of Republicans, 84 percent of independents, and 77 percent of Democrats, think that the maximum income tax rate should be no more than thirty percent. Among all voters, 50 percent think the rate should be no more than fifteen percent.

6. Voters overwhelmingly believe that climate change is happening, and a majority says that human activity is a significant cause. Voters say that climate change is happening by a 75 to 20 percent margin, including a 60 to 34 percent margin among Republicans, a 77 to 18 percent margin among independents, and an 86 to 10 percent margin among Democrats. Moreover, 58 percent of voters say that human activity is a significant cause of climate change, including 35 percent of Republicans, 61 percent of independents, and 76 percent of Democrats.

7. But voters also believe that other issues are more important than climate change and should be addressed first, and that whatever the U.S. does about climate change should not be allowed to hurt the economy. Majorities of voters agree that "there are other issues more important than climate change that should be addressed first," and that "whatever the United States does about climate change should not be allowed to cost jobs or hurt the economy."

8. Voters oppose paying higher energy costs to fund health care reform by a nearly two-to-one margin. Voters say they would not be willing to pay "significantly higher prices for gasoline and electricity if the money raised would be used by the federal government for health care reform" by a 63 to 32 percent margin, including an 85 to 11 percent margin among Republicans and a 64 to 30 percent margin among independents (Democrats would be willing to do so by a 51 to 42 percent margin).

9. Voters overwhelmingly support President Obama's plan to send 17,000 additional combat troops and 4,000 trainers to Afghanistan. Voters support Obama's plan for a troop surge in Afghanistan by a 62 to 32 percent margin, including a 71 to 22 percent margin among Republicans, a 63 to 31 percent margin among independents, and a 54 to 41 percent margin among Democrats.

10. Voters overwhelmingly think that Guantanamo Bay helps protect America rather than undermines our moral authority. Voters agree that "keeping terrorists at Guantanamo Bay helps protect America by keeping people who would kill Americans in custody overseas" rather than "holding prisoners at Guantanamo Bay weakens America's moral authority and isn't in keeping with our values" by a 58 to 33 percent margin, including 40 percent who strongly agree with the former statement versus 21 percent who strongly agree with the latter statement.

Republicans and independents agree by margins of 83 to 12 percent and 59 to 31 percent, respectively.

11. Voters support the conscience clause for health care workers by a wide margin. Sixty-one percent of voters believe that “health care workers should not be required to perform procedures they oppose on moral grounds, such as abortions,” while 34 percent agree that health care workers should be required to perform any medical procedures that are legal, including abortions.” Republicans agree by a 77 to 21 percent margin, independents by a 60 to 33 percent margin, and Democrats by a 49 to 45 percent margin.

12. President Obama enjoys strong personal and job approval ratings, which are currently driven by independents. Obama enjoys a 61 to 32 percent favorable-unfavorable rating, including a 24 to 65 percent rating among Republicans, a 61 to 32 percent rating among independents, and a 93 to 5 percent rating among Democrats. Similarly, the President has a 61 to 32 percent approve-disapprove rating among all voters, including a 25 to 66 percent rating among Republicans, a 59 to 32 percent rating among independents, and a 92 to 5 percent rating among Democrats. Intensity is on Obama’s side, with 39 percent of voters strongly approving of his job, versus 21 percent who strongly disapprove.

13. While voters believe that President Obama has governed as he said he would during the campaign, they view his political ideology as far more liberal than their own. Voters say that Obama has governed as he said he would during the campaign by a 61 to 29 percent margin, including a 56 to 31 percent margin among independents and an 88 to 6 percent margin among Democrats (Republicans say he has *not* by a 53 to 36 percent margin).

Ideologically, 64 percent of voters say that Obama is liberal in his political beliefs, including 84 percent of Republicans, 66 percent of independents, and 46 percent of Democrats. When asked about their own personal political beliefs, however, only 23 percent of voters say they are liberal, including five percent among Republicans, 20 percent among independents, and 43 percent among Democrats.

14. While Democrats in Congress have narrowly favorable name ID, the party’s leaders are viewed negatively. “Democrats in Congress” have a 45 to 42 percent favorable-unfavorable rating, which includes a negative 39 to 45 percent favorable-unfavorable rating among independents. Nancy Pelosi, however, has a 28 to 47 percent favorable-unfavorable rating (24 to 50 percent among independents), and Harry Reid has a 14 to 30 percent favorable-unfavorable rating (11 to 33 percent among independents).

Methodology

This survey of 1,000 registered voters was conducted April 13-16, 2009. Respondents were selected randomly from a random digit dialing sample including both cell phone and landline telephone numbers. All respondents confirmed that they are registered to vote in the county in which they live. Quotas were set for state, age, and race reflecting turnout in November 2008.

The margins of error for responses with an even split – 50 percent for one response and 50 percent for another response – is ± 3.10 percent for the full sample, ± 5.76 for Republicans, ± 5.25 for Independents, and ± 5.36 for Democrats. The margin of error is smaller when one response receives a higher level of support. For example, the margin of error is ± 2.68 percent when 75 percent of respondents in the full sample choose one response and 25 percent choose another response.