

Almost Nine in Ten Americans Give Congress Negative Ratings

Generic Ballot has Democrats ahead by four points

NEW YORK, N.Y. – June 28, 2010 – Normally in politics the one thing that can be counted on is that Republicans and Democrats will think differently about most issues. But, when it comes to how Congress is doing their job, it does not matter what party label someone has—they all give Congress negative ratings. More than four in five Americans (86%) give the overall job Congress is doing a negative rating while just 14% give it positive marks.

Breaking this down by party, almost all Republicans (97%) give Congress negative marks, as do nine in ten Independents (90%). Also, even though Congress is under Democratic control, three-quarters of Democrats (75%) give the institution negative ratings.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,227 adults surveyed online between June 14 and 21, 2010 by **Harris Interactive**.

The Tea Party

Tea Party support continues to hold steady with just under two in five Americans (37%) supporting the Tea Party Movement and three in ten (31%) opposing it. In May, 38% of Americans said they were Tea Party supporters while 30% were opposed to the movement. Most of this support is coming from Republicans (69% support the movement) followed by Independents (43%), while over half of Democrats (56%) oppose it.

While over one-third of Americans may be supporters of the Tea Party movement, this does not mean they all consider themselves members of the Party. Just 8% actually would describe themselves as a member of the Tea Party while 77% would not. In May, 10% of Americans said they were Tea Party members.

The 2010 Congressional Election

Looking ahead to November, it is potentially a close race. If the election for Congress were being held today and only a Democrat and a Republican were running, just over one-third (34%) of U.S. adults would vote for the Democratic candidate while three in ten (30%) would vote for the Republican candidate. In May, 35% said they would vote for the Democrat and 28% would vote for the Republican, so this gap is narrowing.

However, it would be better news for the Democrats if a Tea Party candidate enters the race. Just over one-third (34%) of Americans would still vote for the Democrat, but 18% would vote for the Republican candidate and 14% would for the Tea Party candidate.

So What?

While four months can be a lifetime in politics, the reality is it is just about 18 weeks until the elections in November. In that time, each party has to convince voters to vote for their candidate and not for the other one. But, in those 18 weeks, there are a lot of outside events that can occur which cannot be predicted. There is always that "October surprise" which can shift an election. The way this year is going do not be surprised if there are surprises in July, August and September, as well.

TABLE 1
CONGRESS' OVERALL JOB RATING

"How would you rate the overall job Congress is doing?"

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Political Party			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Supporter	Member
	%	%	%	%	%	
POSITIVE	14	3	25	10	4	3
Excellent	1	1	1	1	*	2
Pretty good	13	3	24	9	4	1
NEGATIVE	86	97	75	90	96	97
Only fair	38	26	51	33	22	19
Poor	48	71	24	57	74	78

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; * signifies less than 1%.

TABLE 2
CONGRESS' OVERALL JOB RATING – TREND

"How would you rate the overall job the Congress is doing?"

Base: All U.S. adults

	TREND	Positive*	Negative**
		%	%
2010	June	14	86
	May	15	85
	April	16	84
	March	10	90
	Jan.	16	84
2009	Dec.	17	83
	Oct.	16	84
	Sept.	19	81
	Aug.	22	78
	June	25	75
	March	29	71
2008	October	10	86
	August	18	77
	June	13	83
	February	20	76
2007	December	17	79
	October	20	77
	April	27	69
	February	33	62
2006	September	24	73
	May	18	80
	February	25	71
	January	25	72

*Positive = excellent or pretty good. **Negative = only fair or poor.

Note: Prior to March, 2009, this question was asked by telephone.

TABLE 3
TEA PARTY FAMILIARITY

“How familiar are you with the Tea Party Movement?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	March 2010	May 2010	June 2010
	%	%	%
Familiar (NET)	76	85	86
Very familiar	15	22	20
Somewhat familiar	39	44	48
Not that familiar	22	19	18
Not familiar (NET)	24	15	14
Not at all familiar	16	10	11
Never heard of	8	5	4

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

TABLE 4
TEA PARTY SUPPORT

“Do you support or oppose the Tea Party Movement?”

[Asked of all adults excluding those who are “not at all familiar” or “have never heard of” the Tea Party Movement]

Base: All U.S. adults

	March 2010	May 2010	June 2010	Political Party		
				Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Support (NET)	33	38	37	69	13	43
Strongly support	14	18	16	34	1	17
Somewhat support	19	20	22	35	11	26
Oppose (NET)	23	30	31	4	56	30
Somewhat oppose	9	11	11	3	16	15
Strongly oppose	14	19	19	1	40	15
Not at all sure	20	17	17	18	14	17
Not asked/Not familiar at all/ Never heard of	24	15	14	9	17	10

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

TABLE 5
TEA PARTY MEMBER

“Would you describe yourself as a member of the Tea Party?”

[Asked of all adults excluding those who are “not at all familiar” or “have never heard of” the Tea Party Movement]

Base: All U.S. adults

	May 2010	June 2010	Political Party		
			Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	10	8	18	*	10
No	75	77	73	82	80
Not asked/Not familiar at all/ Never heard of	15	14	9	17	10

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; * signifies less than 1%

**TABLE 6
MIDTERM ELECTIONS – TWO-PARTY RACE**

“If the election for Congress were being held today, would you vote for the Republican or the Democratic candidate?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	May 2010	June 2010	Political Party			Tea Party	
			Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Supporter	Member
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Democratic candidate	35	34	4	77	20	9	11
Republican candidate	28	30	79	2	22	59	67
Other	10	9	4	2	19	11	8
Not at all sure	27	27	14	19	39	21	14

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

**TABLE 7
MIDTERM ELECTIONS – THREE-PARTY RACE**

“If the election for Congress were being held today and all three were an option, who would you vote for?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	May 2010	June 2010	Political Party			Tea Party	
			Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Supporter	Member
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Democratic candidate	35	34	3	75	20	7	7
Republican candidate	19	18	50	2	11	29	25
Tea Party candidate	12	14	23	2	20	35	47
Not at all sure	35	35	24	22	48	28	20

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

Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between June 14 to 21, 2010 among 2,227 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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