

Almost Nine In Ten Americans Give Congress Negative Ratings

Contributed by Harris Interactive
Thursday, 15 July 2010

Generic Ballot has Democrats ahead by four points

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

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

*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

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

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

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

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

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.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

The results of this Harris Poll may not be used in advertising, marketing or promotion without the prior written permission of Harris Interactive.

J38301

Q1215, 1230, 1235, 1240, 1245, 1250

The Harris Poll Â® #82, June 28, 2010

By Regina A. Corso, Director, The Harris Poll, Harris Interactive

About Harris Interactive

For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com .

New York, N.Y. - 28 June 2010