

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Guy Molyneux, Hart Research Associates

DATE: November 3, 2010

RE: Election Night Survey In Swing Congressional Districts

On the evening of November 2, Hart Research Associates conducted a telephone survey among 801 voters in 100 swing congressional districts, as defined by the Cook Political Report (see end note for detailed explanation). The reported vote for the U.S. House among these voters was 53% Republican to 47% Democratic. The survey, conducted on behalf of the AFL-CIO, has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points. This memo reviews the survey's main findings.

Continued economic dissatisfaction was the driving force in this election.

- Voters in swing districts were motivated largely by continuing deep dissatisfaction with the economy. Fully 84% are dissatisfied with economic conditions, including 56% who say they are very dissatisfied. These very dissatisfied voters supported Republican candidates by 70% to 30%.
- Among those who are dissatisfied with economy, 37% expect it to improve in the next year, and Democrats won a majority of these votes (58%). However, those who are dissatisfied and not expecting improvement voted for Republicans by 66% to 34%.
- Jobs and the economy was Tuesday's top voting issue, with 46% selecting it as one of their top two issues. Health care is second (37%), well ahead of government spending and the deficit (24%). Interestingly, voters' agenda remains what it was in 2008: jobs and health care.
- Nearly three in 10 (28%) voters have lost a job or had someone in their household lose a job in the past two years. Even more voters have seen someone have their hours and/or pay reduced (40%).

Voters do not believe that either party has a plan for fixing the economy.

- While voters say the economy is their top concern, just 30% believe that the Democrats have a clear plan for strengthening the economy and creating jobs—a clear formula for trouble.
- However, voters also believe that the Republicans lack a clear economic plan: 35% say yes and 57% say no. Even among Republican voters (those who voted for the Republican candidate in their district), only a bare 56% majority believe the party has a plan to fix the economy.

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- Voters offer a very low approval rating for the overall job being done by congressional GOPers today (28% approve), a slightly lower approval than for congressional Democrats (30%). The problem for Democratic candidates is that voters who disapprove of both parties chose GOP candidates by 64% to 36%.
- Voters are significantly more concerned that Democrats and President Obama have done too much to help banks and Wall Street (43%) than that they have imposed too many regulations on business (34%).

Democrats struggled to win support from white working-class voters, especially men, who do not believe Democrats addressed their economic concerns.

- White non-college-educated voters in swing districts supported Republicans by a 16-point margin (58% to 42%). (In the national exit poll the vote was 62% to 35%.)
- Even more decisively, white non-college men gave the GOP a 34-point margin (67% to 33%).
- 63% of white non-college voters are very dissatisfied with economic conditions, and this rises to 70% among men.
- 71% of white non-college voters (and 77% of white non-college men) say the Democrats do not have a plan to improve economy.

Voters are not delivering a mandate for the Republican agenda, "A Pledge to America," as most voters—including a large majority of Republican voters—are not familiar with the Republican agenda.

- Only one-third (32%) of voters knows a great deal or quite a bit about the GOP's national agenda and plans, "A Pledge to America," while 67% say they know little or nothing about it.
- Even among those voting Republican for the House, only 35% report real knowledge of the GOP's agenda and 64% say they have little or none.
- Among Republican swing voters, who gave the GOP its victories on Tuesday, fully 73% say they know little or nothing about the congressional GOP's plans and agenda. (Note: "swing voters" are those who report that at some point they considered voting for the other party's candidate.)

Voters strongly oppose key economic policies embraced by GOP candidates in this election, and even Republican voters express less than 50% support. This suggests major governing challenges ahead for the new House majority.

- The survey gauged voter reaction to seven economic policies advanced by many GOP candidates that often were the subjects of major debate during the campaigns. In no case does support reach 35%, and in most cases they are met with overwhelming rejection.

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- Voters reject privatization of Social Security (62% opposed) and raising the Social Security retirement age (68% opposed).
- Fully 63% oppose tax reductions for those making more \$250,000 (the high-end Bush tax cuts), 72% reject abolishing the Department of Education, and 75% oppose reducing or eliminating the minimum wage.
- Even among those voting Republican for the House, less than 50% support all seven of these conservative policy initiatives.

Proportions Saying They Strongly Or Somewhat Favor Proposed Policies

	<u>All Voters</u> %	<u>Republican Voters</u> %
Cut taxes for people who make more than \$250,000 a year	34	49
Repeal the recent Wall Street financial reform regulation	33	45
Raise the Social Security retirement age	29	35
Privatize Social Security	28	45
Eliminate the Department of Education	24	41
Reduce or eliminate the minimum wage	18	25
Allow insurance companies to deny coverage to people with pre-existing medical conditions	12	17

Voters still support a strong investment agenda to create jobs, and extension of unemployment benefits for jobless Americans.

- At the same time they reject proposals to increase economic insecurity and voters say they want Congress to make job-creating investments. Fully 89% want to see tax credits for companies that create jobs in the United States. An extraordinary 77% favor investing in rebuilding roads, bridges, schools, and energy systems to create jobs. And 77% endorse investing in jobs to maintain U.S. competitiveness with China, India, and Germany.
- A 65% majority favor continuing federal unemployment insurance benefits for jobless Americans.
- A majority or plurality of Republican voters also favor each one of these progressive economic policies.

Proportions Saying They Strongly Or Somewhat Favor Proposed Policies

	<u>All Voters</u> %	<u>Republican Voters</u> %
Pass a major new job creation tax credit for businesses that create jobs here in the United States in the next two years	89	87
Create jobs by investing to rebuild roads, bridges, schools, and energy systems	77	63
Invest in jobs to maintain U.S. competitiveness with China, India, and Germany	77	74
Continue federal unemployment insurance benefits for those who have lost their jobs and are unable to find new jobs	65	47

Voters want the Republicans in Congress to compromise with President Obama and congressional Democrats, not continue an agenda of conflict and obstruction.

- By 62% to 35%, voters in swing districts tell Republicans in Congress that they should “look for compromises with President Obama and Democrats in Congress” to get things done, rather than “stick to their principles and stand up to President Obama and Democrats in Congress.”
- Republican swing voters, who gave Republicans their new House majority, agree that Republicans should compromise with Democrats (54%) rather than “stand up” to them (43%).

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ENDOTE:

*The 100 swing Congressional Districts included in this survey represent all of the "Leaning" or "Toss-up" districts listed by the Cook Political Report. Respondents were sampled from state voter lists and screened to ensure they voted in the mid-term congressional elections. Below is the list of 100 swing CDs.

AL-2	FL-24	MI-1	NY-1	PA-7
AR-1	FL-25	MI-7	NY-13	PA-8
AZ-1	FL-8	MI-9	NY-19	RI-1
AZ-3	GA-2	MN-1	NY-20	SC-5
AZ-5	GA-8	MN-8	NY-22	SD-AL
AZ-7	HI-1	MO-3	NY-23	TN-4
AZ-8	IA-1	MO-4	NY-24	TN-8
CA-11	IA-2	MS-1	NY-25	TX-17
CA-20	IA-3	MS-4	OH-1	TX-23
CA-3	ID-1	NC-11	OH-15	VA-11
CA-47	IL-10	NC-2	OH-16	VA-2
CO-3	IL-11	NC-7	OH-18	VA-5
CO-4	IL-14	NC-8	OH-6	VA-9
CO-7	IL-17	ND-AL	OR-5	WA-2
CT-4	IN-2	NH-1	PA-10	WA-3
CT-5	IN-9	NH-2	PA-11	WI-3
DE-AL	KY-6	NJ-3	PA-12	WI-7
FL-12	LA-2	NM-1	PA-15	WI-8
FL-2	MA-10	NM-2	PA-3	WV-1
FL-22	MD-1	NV-3	PA-4	WV-3