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Republicans Open Up Wider ‘Expectations Gap’ Ahead of Midterms

A Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Survey

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

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Republicans Open Up Wider ‘Expectations Gap’ Ahead of Midterms

With just over two months before the midterm elections, Republican voters are widening the “expectations gap” with the Democrats. About six-in-ten (61%) Republican and GOP-leaning registered voters think their party will do better than in recent elections — roughly double the share of Democrats (32%) who feel similarly about their party’s chances.

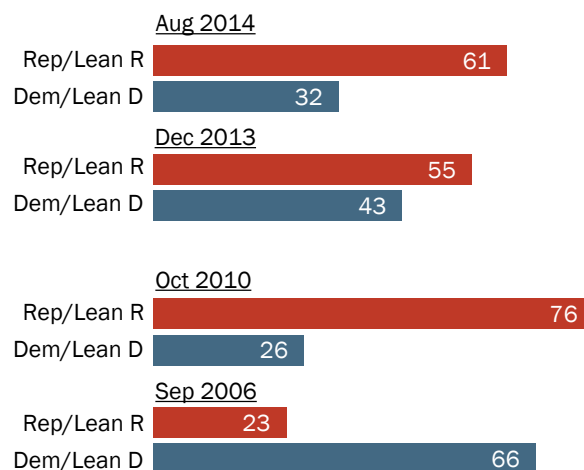
This gap has not reached the same levels of the GOP’s margin before their large 2010 gains or the Democrats’ expectations in their 2006 sweep of both houses of Congress. Last December, the expectations gap was narrower; 55% of Republicans and Republican-leaning registered voters said the party would do better than recent elections, compared with 43% of Democrats.

A plurality of Democrats (48%) believe their party will do about the same as past elections while 14% think the outcome will be worse. Among Republicans, about one-third (32%) think the GOP will perform about the same and just 3% say the party will do worse than in recent elections.

A new national survey by the Pew Research Center and [USA TODAY](#), conducted Aug. 20-24 among 1,501 adults (including 1,171 registered voters), finds that about half of voters (49%) have given “quite a lot” of thought to the upcoming elections. The amount of thought given to the elections at this point of the campaigns is in line with the attention given to past midterm elections.

Republicans More Optimistic that 2014 Will Be Better Election for Party

% of registered voters saying their party will do BETTER than in recent elections



Survey conducted Aug 20-24, 2014. Based on registered voters.

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The public's congressional vote preference remains fairly even. Among registered voters, 47% would vote for the Democratic candidate today or lean Democratic and 42% would vote or lean Republican (11% volunteer "other" or don't know). In surveys going back to last October, neither party has opened up a large lead in the generic ballot.

However, those who plan to vote Republican this fall have given more thought than Democratic voters to the midterm elections. Nearly six-in-ten (58%) Republican voters have given "quite a lot" of thought to the elections, compared with 44% of Democratic voters.

At about this point in the [2010 midterms](#), overall voter preferences also were closely divided. About as many Republican voters said they had given quite a lot of thought to the election as say that today (58% now, 59% then). But Democratic voters are now more likely to say they have given a lot of thought to the midterm than did so in early August 2010 (44% now, 34% then).

A Pew Research Center report [last month](#), which looked at other measures of voter engagement, also found that the GOP's engagement advantage, while substantial, was not as wide as it was at a comparable point four years earlier.

Divided Midterm Voting Intentions

In election for Congress, plan to vote for ...

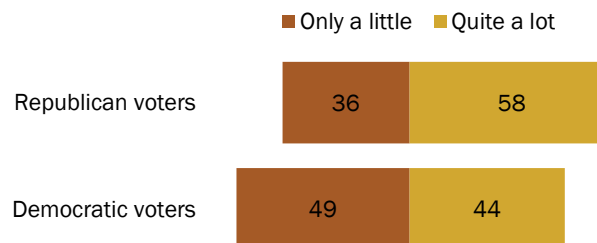
	Rep candidate %	Dem candidate %	Other/ DK %
August 2014	42	47	11=100
July 2014	45	47	9=100
April 2014	47	43	9=100
February 2014	44	46	10=100
December 2013	44	48	8=100
October 2013	43	49	8=100

Survey conducted Aug 20-24, 2014. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Based on registered voters.

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Republican Voters Have Given More Thought than Democrats to Midterms

How much thought have you given to the coming November election (%)



Survey conducted Aug 20-24, 2014. Based on registered voters planning to vote for the Republican or Democratic candidate. Volunteered responses of "Some," "None," "Don't know" not shown.

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About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted August 20-24, 2014 among a national sample of 1,501 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (600 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 901 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 487 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted under the direction of Abt SRBI. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2012 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,501	2.9 percentage points
Republican	382	5.8 percentage points
Democrat	473	5.2 percentage points
Independent	534	4.9 percentage points
Registered voters	1,171	3.3 percentage points
Rep/Rep-leaning RVs	494	5.1 percentage points
Dem/Dem-leaning RVs	572	4.7 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS/USA TODAY
AUGUST 2014 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
August 20-24, 2014
N=1,501

QUESTIONS 1-3, 13-14 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE
NO QUESTIONS 4-12, 15-20

ASK ALL:

The Congressional elections will be coming up later this year.

THOUGHT How much thought have you given to the coming November election – quite a lot or only a little?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1,171]:

	Quite a lot	(VOL.) Some	Only a little	(VOL.) None	(VOL.) DK/Ref
2014 Election					
Aug 20-24, 2014 (U)	49	3	44	3	1
2012 Election					
Oct 24-28, 2012	78	3	15	3	1
Oct 4-7, 2012	73	3	21	2	1
Sep 12-16, 2012	70	4	23	2	1
Jul 16-26, 2012	61	5	28	6	1
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	65	3	29	3	*
Jun 7-17, 2012	67	1	30	2	1
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	61	2	33	3	1
Apr 4-15, 2012	64	2	30	4	1
Mar 7-11, 2012	66	2	30	1	1
2010 Election					
Oct 13-18, 2010	55	4	34	5	1
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	50	5	42	3	1
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	44	5	44	6	1
2008 Election					
November, 2008	81	3	13	2	1
Late October, 2008	81	3	13	2	1
Mid-October, 2008	81	3	13	3	*
Early October, 2008	81	2	14	2	1
Late September, 2008	80	3	14	2	1
Mid-September, 2008	78	4	14	3	1
August, 2008	74	6	17	2	1
July, 2008	74	2	20	3	1
June, 2008	72	2	23	2	1
Late May, 2008	75	4	17	3	1
April, 2008	77	7	13	2	1
March, 2008	78	3	15	3	1
Late February, 2008	74	3	19	2	2
2006 Election					
November, 2006	61	5	28	4	1
Late October, 2006	54	6	35	5	1
Early October, 2006	51	4	40	4	2
September, 2006	45	4	48	3	1
2004 Election					
November, 2004	82	3	12	2	1
Mid-October, 2004	76	5	15	3	1
Early October, 2004	74	4	19	2	1
September, 2004	71	3	22	3	1
August, 2004	69	2	26	2	1
July, 2004	67	2	28	2	1
June, 2004	58	3	36	2	1

THOUGHT CONTINUED...

	Quite a lot	(VOL.) Some	Only a little	(VOL.) None	(VOL.) DK/Ref
May, 2004	59	6	30	4	1
Late March, 2004	60	4	31	4	1
Mid-March, 2004	65	2	31	2	*
2002 Election					
Early November, 2002	52	6	35	6	1
Early October, 2002	45	6	45	4	1
Early September, 2002	36	5	54	4	1
2000 Election					
November, 2000	72	6	19	2	1
Late October, 2000	66	6	24	4	*
Mid-October, 2000	67	9	19	4	1
Early October, 2000	60	8	27	4	1
September, 2000	59	8	29	3	1
July, 2000	46	6	45	3	*
June, 2000	46	6	43	5	*
May, 2000	48	4	42	5	1
April, 2000	45	7	41	7	*
1998 Election					
Late October, 1998	49	11	35	4	1
Early October, 1998	42	8	43	6	1
1996 Election					
November, 1996	67	8	22	3	*
October, 1996	65	7	26	1	1
Late September, 1996	61	7	29	2	1
Early September, 1996	56	3	36	4	1
July, 1996	55	3	41	1	*
June, 1996	50	5	41	3	1
1994 Election					
November, 1994	56	7	32	4	1
Late October, 1994	45	7	45	2	1
Early October, 1994	44	2	50	3	1
1992 Election					
Early October, 1992	77	5	16	1	1
September, 1992	69	3	26	1	1
August, 1992	72	4	23	1	*
June, 1992	63	6	29	1	1
	Quite a lot	(VOL.) Some	Only a little	(VOL.) None/ DK/Ref	
1990 Election					
<i>Gallup</i> : October, 1990 (GP) ¹	43	7	46	4	
1988 Election					
<i>Gallup</i> : November, 1988	73	8	17	2	
<i>Gallup</i> : October, 1988	69	9	20	2	
<i>Gallup</i> : September, 1988	57	18	23	2	
<i>Gallup</i> : August, 1988	61	10	27	2	
1982 Election					
<i>Gallup</i> : October, 1982 (GP)	29	22	37	12	
1978 Election					
<i>Gallup</i> : October, 1978 (GP)	23	22	39	17	
<i>Gallup</i> : September, 1978 (GP)	21	18	44	18	

¹ Gallup trends for 1990, 1982 and 1978 are based on general public.

ASK ALL:

Q.21 If the elections for U.S. Congress were being held TODAY, would you vote for **[RANDOMIZE: "the Republican Party's candidate" OR "the Democratic Party's candidate"]** for Congress in your district?

ASK IF 'OTHER' 'DON'T KNOW/REFUSED' (Q.21=3,9):

Q.22 As of TODAY, do you LEAN more to the **[READ IN SAME ORDER AS Q.21; IF NECESSARY: "for U.S. Congress in your district"]**?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1,171]:

	Rep/ <u>Lean Rep</u>	Dem/ <u>Lean Dem</u>	(VOL.) Other/ <u>DK/Ref</u>
2014 Election			
Aug 20-24, 2014 (U)	42	47	11
Jul 8-14, 2014	45	47	9
Apr 23-27, 2014 (U)	47	43	9
Feb 12-26, 2014	44	46	10
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	44	48	8
Oct 9-13, 2013	43	49	8
2012 Election			
Jun 7-17, 2012	43	47	10
Aug 17-21, 2011	44	48	8
2010 Election			
Oct 27-30, 2010	43	44	12
Oct 13-18, 2010	46	42	12
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	44	47	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	44	45	11
Jun 16-20, 2010	45	45	10
Mar 11-21, 2010	44	44	12
Feb 3-9, 2010	42	45	13
Jan 6-10, 2010	44	46	10
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	42	47	11
Aug 20-27, 2009	44	45	10
2008 Election			
June, 2008	37	52	11
2006 Election			
November, 2006	40	48	12
Late October, 2006	38	49	13
Early October, 2006	38	51	11
September, 2006	39	50	11
August, 2006	41	50	9
June, 2006	39	51	10
April, 2006	41	51	8
February, 2006	41	50	9
Mid-September, 2005	40	52	8
2004 Election			
June, 2004	41	48	11
2002 Election			
Early November, 2002	42	46	12
Early October, 2002	44	46	10
Early September, 2002	44	46	10
June, 2002	44	46	10
February, 2002	46	45	9
Early November, 2001	44	44	12
2000 Election			
Early November, 2000	42	48	10
Early October, 2000	43	47	10
July, 2000	43	47	10
February, 2000	44	47	9
October, 1999	43	49	8
June, 1999	40	50	10

Q.21/22 CONTINUED...

	Rep/ <u>Lean Rep</u>	Dem/ <u>Lean Dem</u>	(VOL.) Other/ <u>DK/Ref</u>
1998 Election			
Late October, 1998	40	47	13
Early October, 1998	43	44	13
Early September, 1998	45	46	9
Late August, 1998	44	45	11
Early August, 1998	42	49	9
June, 1998	44	46	10
March, 1998	40	52	8
February, 1998	41	50	9
January, 1998	41	51	8
August, 1997	45	48	7
1996 Election			
November, 1996	41	48	11
October, 1996	42	49	9
Late September, 1996	43	49	8
Early September, 1996	43	51	6
July, 1996	46	47	7
June, 1996	44	50	6
March, 1996	44	49	7
January, 1996	46	47	7
October, 1995	48	48	4
August, 1995	50	43	7
1994 Election			
November, 1994	45	43	12
Late October, 1994	47	44	9
Early October, 1994	52	40	8
September, 1994	48	46	6
July, 1994	45	47	8

**NO QUESTIONS 23, 26-29, 37, 39, 41-48, 51, 53, 55-59, 61, 64-65, 67-68, 71-76, 78-84, 87-89
QUESTIONS 24-25, 85-86 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED
QUESTIONS 30-36, 38, 40, 49-50, 52, 54, 60, 62-63, 66, 69-70, 77 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
Aug 20-24, 2014	24	31	37	4	1	4	15	16
Jul 8-14, 2014	25	34	37	2	1	1	16	15
Apr 23-27, 2014	24	30	41	2	1	2	18	17
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	22	31	41	3	1	2	17	17
Feb 14-23, 2014	22	32	39	4	1	2	14	17
Jan 15-19, 2014	21	31	41	3	1	2	18	16
Dec 3-8, 2013	24	34	37	3	*	2	17	15
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	24	32	38	4	*	2	16	14
Oct 9-13, 2013	25	32	37	3	1	3	16	18
Sep 4-8, 2013	26	32	38	3	1	1	17	15
Jul 17-21, 2013	19	29	46	3	*	2	19	18
Yearly Totals								
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):

Q.90 Thinking about this year's Congressional elections, do you think the Republican Party will do better, worse, or about the same as it has in recent elections?

BASED ON REPUBLICAN AND REPUBLICAN-LEANING REGISTERED VOTERS [N=494]:

	Better	Worse	Same	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Aug 20-24, 2014	61	3	32	4
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	55	5	33	7
Oct 13-18, 2010	76	1	18	4
Jun 16-20, 2010	72	2	23	3
November 2006	17	29	48	6
Early October 2006	16	21	56	7
September 2006	23	22	50	5
June 2006	16	17	62	5
February 2006	21	17	57	5
December 2005	16	21	56	7

ASK DEMOCRATS AND DEMOCRATIC LEANERS (PARTY=2 OR PARTYLN=2):

Q.91 Thinking about this year's Congressional elections, do you think the Democratic Party will do better, worse, or about the same as it has in recent elections?

BASED ON DEMOCRATIC AND DEMOCRATIC-LEANING REGISTERED VOTERS [N=572]:

	Better	Worse	Same	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Aug 20-24, 2014	32	14	48	6
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	43	9	43	6
Oct 13-18, 2010	26	30	39	5
Jun 16-20, 2010	29	19	48	4
November 2006	72	1	22	5

Q.91 CONTINUED...

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Early October 2006	67	2	26	5
September 2006	66	1	30	3
June 2006	62	2	32	4
February 2006	64	2	29	5
December 2005	64	1	29	6

ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=608]

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	(VOL.) <u>Haven't heard of</u>	(VOL.) <u>Refused</u>	Not heard of/ <u>DK</u>
Aug 20-24, 2014	34	10	53	*	2	--
Jul 8-14, 2014	35	12	50	2	1	--
Apr 23-27, 2014	33	11	54	1	1	--
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	37	11	50	1	1	--
Feb 14-23, 2014	36	9	54	1	1	--
Jan 15-19, 2014	35	12	52	1	*	--
Dec 3-8, 2013	32	9	57	1	1	--
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	40	9	48	2	1	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	11	45	2	1	--
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2013	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--

TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	(VOL.) <u>Haven't heard of</u>	(VOL.) <u>Refused</u>	Not heard of/ <u>DK</u>
Feb 2-7, 2011 ²	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21

Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:

(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls

² In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."