

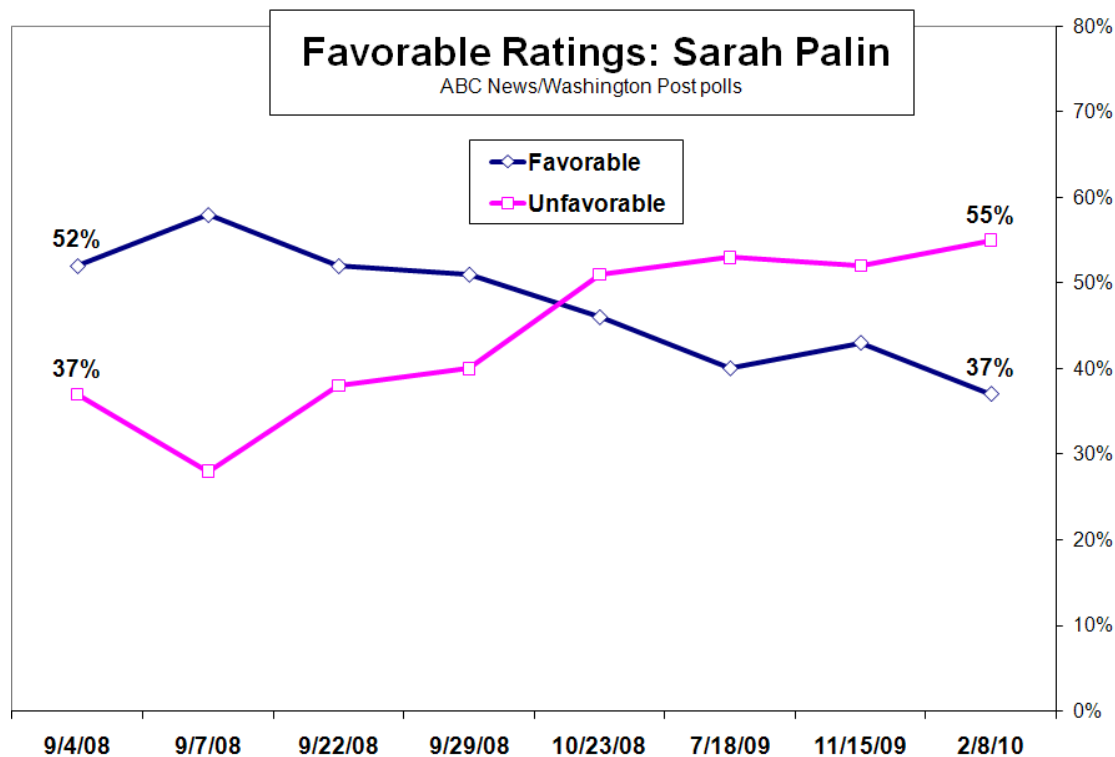
## Tea Party Shows Prospects; Less So for Sarah Palin

The Tea Party movement has the potential for significant political clout, but with challenges: high negatives, a fuzzy image and broader-than-ever skepticism about one of its most prominent backers, former vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin.

Thirty-five percent of Americans in this ABC News/Washington Post poll express a favorable opinion of the Tea Party overall, while 40 percent see it negatively. While that's far from ideal, another result bodes better: Forty-five percent agree at least somewhat with the movement's positions on the issues – more than the 36 percent who disagree.

On both questions substantial numbers – a fifth to a quarter – remain undecided about the movement. And nearly two-thirds don't yet have a strong sense of what the Tea Party's all about – results that show the extent to which many minds have yet to be made up.

Palin's own ratings are weaker, apparently hurt rather than helped by her return to the spotlight. Fifty-five percent of Americans see her unfavorably, the most basic measure of a public figure's popularity, and 71 percent believe she's not qualified to serve as president, a position she said Sunday she'll consider seeking. Both negatives are at new highs.



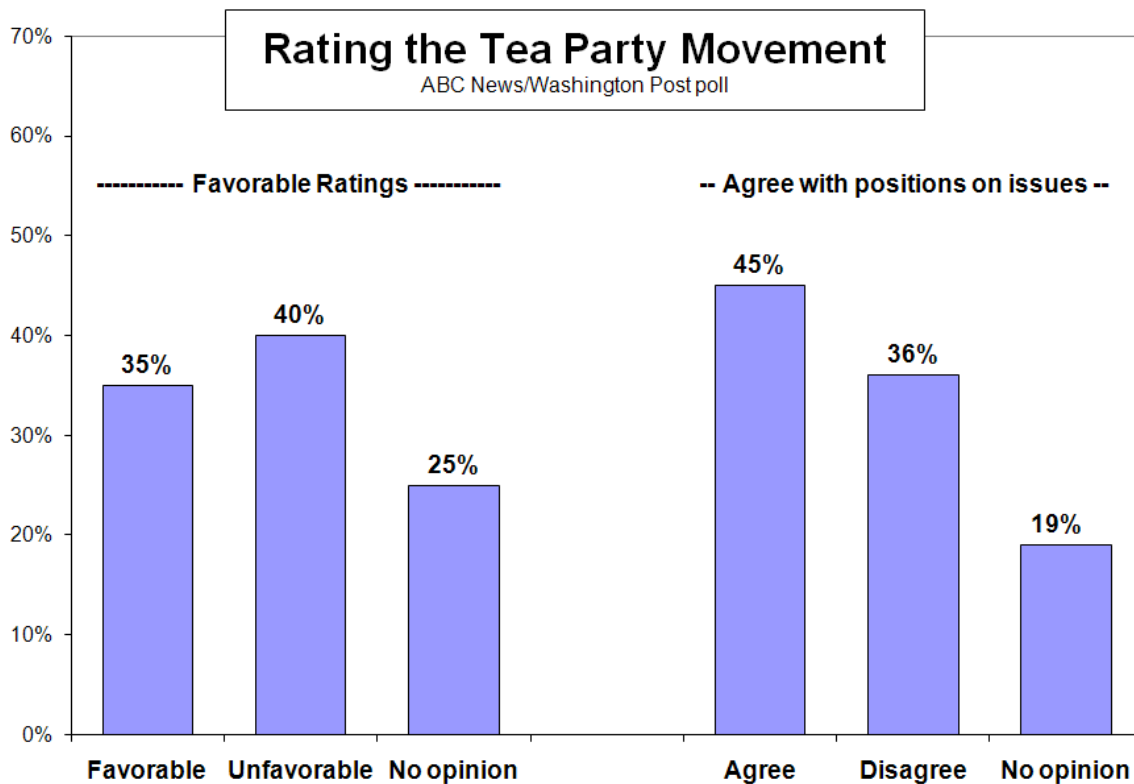
Palin’s more popular in her own party – 69 percent of Republicans see her favorably. But far fewer, 37 percent, do so “strongly.” (By contrast, in an ABC/Post poll last month, 70 percent of Democrats had a strongly favorable opinion of Barack Obama.) More problematic for Palin is that even in her own party 52 percent think she’s not qualified for the presidency – up by 16 points from an ABC/Post poll in November, shortly before the publication of her memoir, in which she criticizes the strategy of the 2008 Republican presidential campaign.

Palin: Qualified to serve as president?

|              | Yes | No |
|--------------|-----|----|
| All          | 26% | 71 |
| Democrats    | 6   | 91 |
| Independents | 29  | 67 |
| Republicans  | 46  | 52 |

Far more Americans see Palin strongly unfavorably, 38 percent, than strongly favorably, 18 percent. Among independents – swing voters in national politics – just 36 percent see her favorably overall, vs. 53 percent unfavorably, and only 29 percent think she’s qualified for the presidency.

TEA TIME – The Tea Party may have more opportunities, but also faces risks. It’s most popular among conservatives, Republicans, critics of the Obama administration, opponents of health care reform and those who are angry with the government. But the political center’s more ambivalent: In terms of favorability, independents divide essentially evenly on the movement – 39 percent favorable, 40 percent unfavorable.



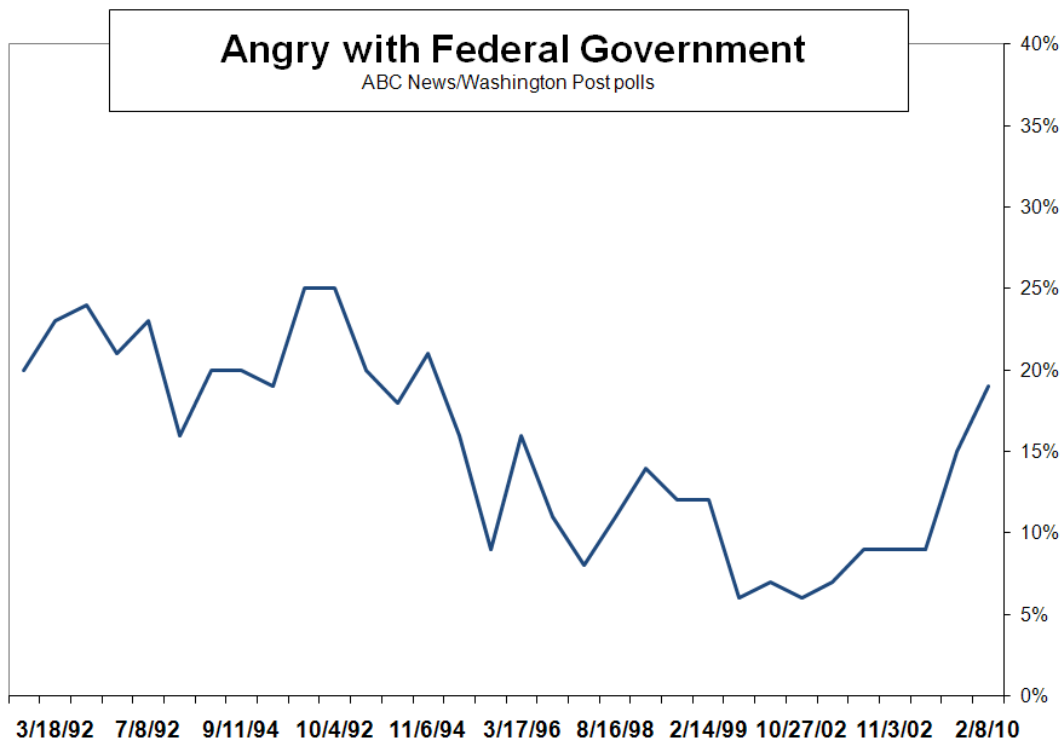
More independents, 54 percent, say they agree at least somewhat with its positions on the issues. Again that shows potential, but closing the sale may not be a simple task: Few Americans, 14 percent, “strongly” agree with the Tea Party’s positions as they know them, including 16 percent of independents, 25 percent of Republicans and 31 percent of conservatives. (Overall “strong” approval of Obama’s job performance, again for comparison, is at 29 percent in this poll, a career low for the president.)

More people agree at least somewhat with the Tea Party’s positions than see it favorably overall. That’s because its favorability is attenuated, 57 percent, among people who agree, but just somewhat. Among those who strongly agree with the Tea Party’s position, by contrast, 92 percent also view the movement favorably.

As noted, conservatives are among the Tea Party’s best groups; 63 percent agree with its positions at least somewhat, vs. 38 percent of moderates and three in 10 liberals. Among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, likewise, 63 percent agree; that drops to 22 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents.

Similarly, among people who disapprove of Obama’s job performance, 65 agree with the movement on issues. Among opponents of health care reform it’s 62 percent. And among Americans who are angry at the way the federal government works, 69 percent agree with Tea Party positions. Agreement drops dramatically among those who aren’t angry, to 39 percent.

ANGRY? – Anger, however, while present, is not vast. Nineteen percent of Americans say they’re angry with the way the federal government works. An additional 48 percent are dissatisfied but not angry, for a net negative of 67 percent.



While anger is well up from its low, 6 percent early this decade, it's also been higher – 25 percent in October 1992, a time, like now, of broad economic discontent, in which voters rejected George H.W. Bush's bid for a second term. (It also was a time in which desire for new alternatives fueled Ross Perot's independent run for president; he finished with 19 percent of the vote.) Net dissatisfaction peaked in fall 1992 at 81 percent, 14 points higher than it is now.

|              | Dissatisfaction with gov't |              |     |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----|
|              | Angry                      | Dissatisfied | NET |
| Now          | 19%                        | 48           | 67  |
| Low - 12/00  | 6                          | 34           | 39  |
| High - 10/92 | 25                         | 56           | 81  |

While 19 percent of Americans are angry, that rises to 30 percent of people who agree with the Tea Party's positions, including 52 percent of those who "strongly" agree.

Anger is linked with economic discontent; it peaks at 26 percent among people who say the economy hasn't begun to recover, and falls to 8 percent among those who say the recession's over. In a similar gap, agreement with Tea Party positions rises to 53 percent among people who see no economic recovery yet, compared with 32 percent of those who say the recession's ended.

**OTHER FACTORS** – There are other factors in Tea Party support. It peaks among people who are more apt to see the government as wasting money; people who strongly agree with the movement say on average that the government wastes 63 cents out of every tax dollar it collects. People who disagree with the Tea Party see less waste, albeit still a lot – 47 cents on the dollar.

Tea Party supporters are more apt to classify themselves as anti-incumbent – 64 percent of those who strongly agree with its positions do so, as do 53 percent of those who somewhat agree, compared with 40 percent of those who disagree. And the movement's conservative, Republican base shows up in vote preferences for the midterm elections. Among registered voters who agree at least somewhat with Tea Party positions, Republicans hold the lead over Democratic congressional candidates by a very wide 70-22 percent.

**PROFILE** – One way to tie up these threads is with a profile of people who agree strongly and agree overall with the Tea Party movement, compared with those who disagree. For example, as the table below shows, 87 percent of people who strongly agree with the movement are Republicans or Republican-leaning independents. By contrast, among those who disagree, 26 percent are leaned Republicans.

|                  | Agreement with Tea Party on issues |                          |                |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
|                  | Agree, strongly (14%)              | Agree, or somewhat (45%) | Disagree (36%) |
| Leaned Reps      | 87%                                | 64                       | 26             |
| Leaned Dems      | 9                                  | 30                       | 70             |
| Conservatives    | 80                                 | 52                       | 22             |
| Moderates        | 17                                 | 30                       | 40             |
| Liberals         | 3                                  | 16                       | 36             |
| Obama-disapprove | 90                                 | 67                       | 21             |
| Angry            | 52                                 | 30                       | 11             |
| Anti-incumbent   | 64                                 | 56                       | 40             |

KNOW 'EM? – As noted, many of the sentiments about it can fairly be described as tentative, since the Tea Party has far to go in making its positions broadly known. Thirty-five percent of adults say they know a great deal or good amount about what it stands for; that leaves nearly two-thirds who are less well-informed about it.

People who are better informed are much more apt to support the movement – 66 percent in this group agree at least somewhat with its positions. Among those who know less about it, many fewer, 34 percent, tend to agree with it, and nearly as many have no opinion. The question for the movement is whether, as its positions become better known, it gains adherents, or loses them.

One final set of results underscores that challenge. While the Tea Party promotes limited government, some of its supporters have different views on government health care mandates. For example, 62 percent of those who say they agree at least somewhat with Tea Party positions also say the government should require businesses to provide health insurance for employees.

Even more, 71 percent, say government should require insurance companies to sell coverage to people regardless of pre-existing conditions. And while shy of a majority, a substantial share of Tea Party supporters, 43 percent, say government should require all Americans to have health insurance, from their employer or another source, with financial assistance for those who need it.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 4-8, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,004 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3.5-point error margin. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-21 held for release or previously released.

22. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of [ITEM]? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

a-b. previously released.

c. Sarah Palin

|             | ----- Favorable ----- |          |          | ----- Unfavorable ----- |          |          | No opinion |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------|----------|-------------------------|----------|----------|------------|
|             | NET                   | Strongly | Somewhat | NET                     | Somewhat | Strongly |            |
| 2/8/10      | 37                    | 18       | 20       | 55                      | 16       | 38       | 8          |
| 11/15/09    | 43                    | 20       | 23       | 52                      | 18       | 34       | 5          |
| 7/18/09     | 40                    | 20       | 20       | 53                      | 19       | 34       | 7          |
| 10/23/08 LV | 46                    | 28       | 18       | 51                      | 11       | 40       | 3          |

|         |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 9/29/08 | RV | 51 | 29 | 23 | 40 | 11 | 29 | 9  |
| 9/22/08 | RV | 52 | 31 | 21 | 38 | 10 | 27 | 11 |
| 9/7/08  | RV | 58 | 35 | 23 | 28 | 11 | 17 | 15 |
| 9/4/08* | RV | 52 | 34 | 18 | 37 | 14 | 23 | 11 |

\* "the Republican nominee for vice president"

23. Regardless of whether or not you'd vote for her, do you think Palin is or is not qualified to serve as president?

|          | Is qualified | Is not qualified | No opinion |
|----------|--------------|------------------|------------|
| 2/8/10   | 26           | 71               | 4          |
| 11/15/09 | 38           | 60               | 3          |

24. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the political movement known as the Tea Party? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

|        | Favorable |          |          | Unfavorable |          |          | No opinion |
|--------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|------------|
|        | NET       | Strongly | Somewhat | NET         | Somewhat | Strongly |            |
| 2/8/10 | 35        | 20       | 15       | 40          | 20       | 20       | 25         |

25. How much do you feel you know about what the Tea Party stands for - a great deal, a good amount, just some or very little?

|        | -Grt deal/Good amt- |          |             | ---- Some/Little/Nothing ---- |           |             |                | No opinion |
|--------|---------------------|----------|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|------------|
|        | NET                 | Grt deal | Good amount | NET                           | Just some | Very little | Nothing (vol.) |            |
| 2/8/10 | 35                  | 13       | 22          | 64                            | 21        | 37          | 6              | 1          |

26. Given what you know about the Tea Party's positions on the issues, would you say that overall you (agree with them strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly)?

|        | ----- Agree ----- |          |          | ----- Disagree ----- |          |          | No opinion |
|--------|-------------------|----------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|------------|
|        | NET               | Strongly | Somewhat | NET                  | Somewhat | Strongly |            |
| 2/8/10 | 45                | 14       | 31       | 36                   | 22       | 14       | 19         |

27. On another subject, out of every dollar the federal government collects in taxes, how many cents do you think are wasted?

|          | Average  |
|----------|----------|
| 2/8/10   | 53 cents |
| 4/9/06   | 51       |
| 4/14/02  | 47       |
| 4/16/00  | 46       |
| 1/7/98   | 56       |
| 1/29/95  | 51       |
| 8/8/93   | 47       |
| 2/28/93  | 46       |
| 10/21/91 | 49       |
| 9/30/90  | 44       |
| 5/21/90  | 46       |
| 7/29/85  | 43       |

28-38 held for release or previously released.

39. I am going to mention four phrases and ask you which one best describes how you feel about the way the federal government works. Do you feel enthusiastic, satisfied but not enthusiastic, dissatisfied but not angry, or angry?

|             | NET | ----- Positive -----<br>Enthusi-<br>astic | ----- Satis-<br>fied | NET | ----- Negative -----<br>Dissat-<br>isfied | Angry | None/<br>Other | No<br>opinion |
|-------------|-----|---|----------------------|-----|---|-------|----------------|---------------|
| 2/8/10      | 32  | 3   | 29                   | 67  | 48  | 19    | NA             | *             |
| 10/29/03    | 42  | 2   | 41                   | 57  | 42  | 15    | NA             | *             |
| 11/4/02 LV  | 49  | 4   | 45                   | 50  | 41  | 9     | NA             | 1             |
| 11/3/02 LV  | 50  | 5   | 45                   | 49  | 40  | 9     | NA             | 1             |
| 11/2/02 LV  | 51  | 6   | 45                   | 49  | 40  | 9     | NA             | 1             |
| 10/27/02    | 50  | 4   | 47                   | 49  | 42  | 7     | NA             | 1             |
| 10/27/02 LV | 53  | 3   | 50                   | 47  | 41  | 6     | NA             | 1             |
| 2/21/02     | 56  | 7   | 49                   | 43  | 36  | 7     | NA             | 1             |
| 12/15/00    | 59  | 4   | 55                   | 39  | 34  | 6     | NA             | 1             |
| 2/14/99     | 52  | 3   | 48                   | 47  | 35  | 12    | NA             | 1             |
| 9/28/98     | 50  | 4   | 46                   | 49  | 36  | 12    | NA             | 1             |
| 9/28/98 LV  | 48  | 4   | 44                   | 50  | 37  | 14    | NA             | 1             |
| 8/16/98     | 41  | 2   | 39                   | 57  | 46  | 11    | NA             | 1             |
| 1/19/98     | 46  | 2   | 43                   | 53  | 45  | 8     | 1              | *             |
| 8/27/97     | 34  | 2   | 33                   | 64  | 52  | 11    | 2              | 1             |
| 3/17/96     | 29  | 2   | 27                   | 70  | 54  | 16    | NA             | *             |
| 5/14/95     | 48  | 3   | 45                   | 50  | 41  | 9     | NA             | 1             |
| 1/4/95      | 29  | 2   | 27                   | 69  | 53  | 16    | *              | 1             |
| 11/6/94 RV  | 28  | 2   | 26                   | 70  | 49  | 21    | 1              | 1             |
| 10/31/94    | 26  | 1   | 25                   | 73  | 55  | 18    | 1              | 1             |
| 10/23/94    | 28  | 1   | 26                   | 71  | 52  | 20    | *              | *             |
| 10/4/92 LV  | 17  | 1   | 16                   | 81  | 56  | 25    | 1              | 1             |
| 10/4/92 RV  | 17  | 1   | 16                   | 81  | 56  | 25    | 1              | 1             |
| 10/9/94     | 25  | 2   | 24                   | 72  | 53  | 19    | 2              | *             |
| 9/11/94     | 26  | 2   | 25                   | 73  | 53  | 20    | NA             | *             |
| 3/27/94     | 30  | 1   | 29                   | 68  | 48  | 20    | 1              | 1             |
| 2/28/93     | 33  | 4   | 29                   | 66  | 50  | 16    | *              | *             |
| 7/8/92      | 23  | 1   | 22                   | 76  | 53  | 23    | *              | 1             |
| 6/7/92      | 21  | 1   | 20                   | 79  | 58  | 21    | *              | 1             |
| 4/9/92      | 21  | 1   | 20                   | 79  | 55  | 24    | 1              | *             |
| 3/18/92     | 22  | 1   | 21                   | 77  | 54  | 23    | 1              | *             |
| 3/11/92     | 18  | 1   | 17                   | 80  | 60  | 20    | 1              | 1             |

40-42 held for release.

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