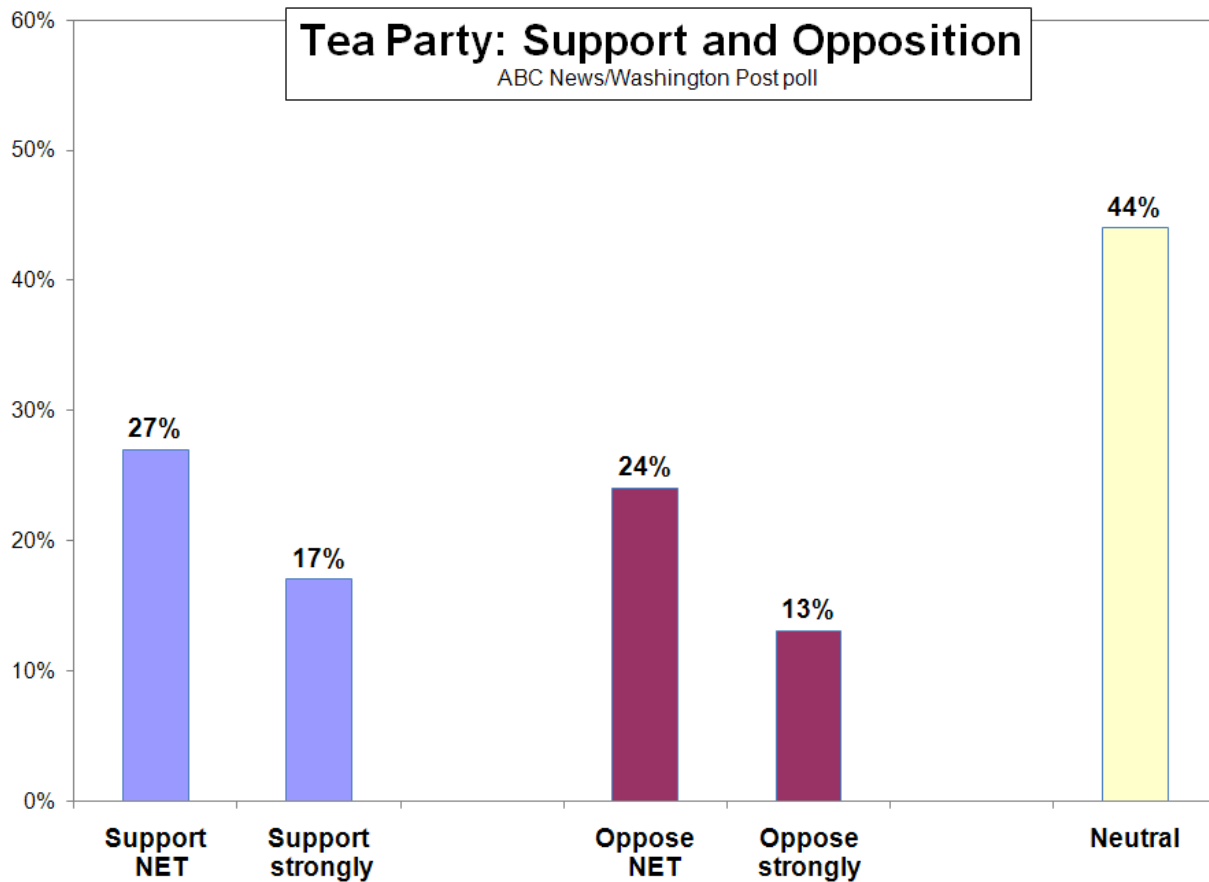


## **In the Tea Party Movement, Possibilities – and Challenges**

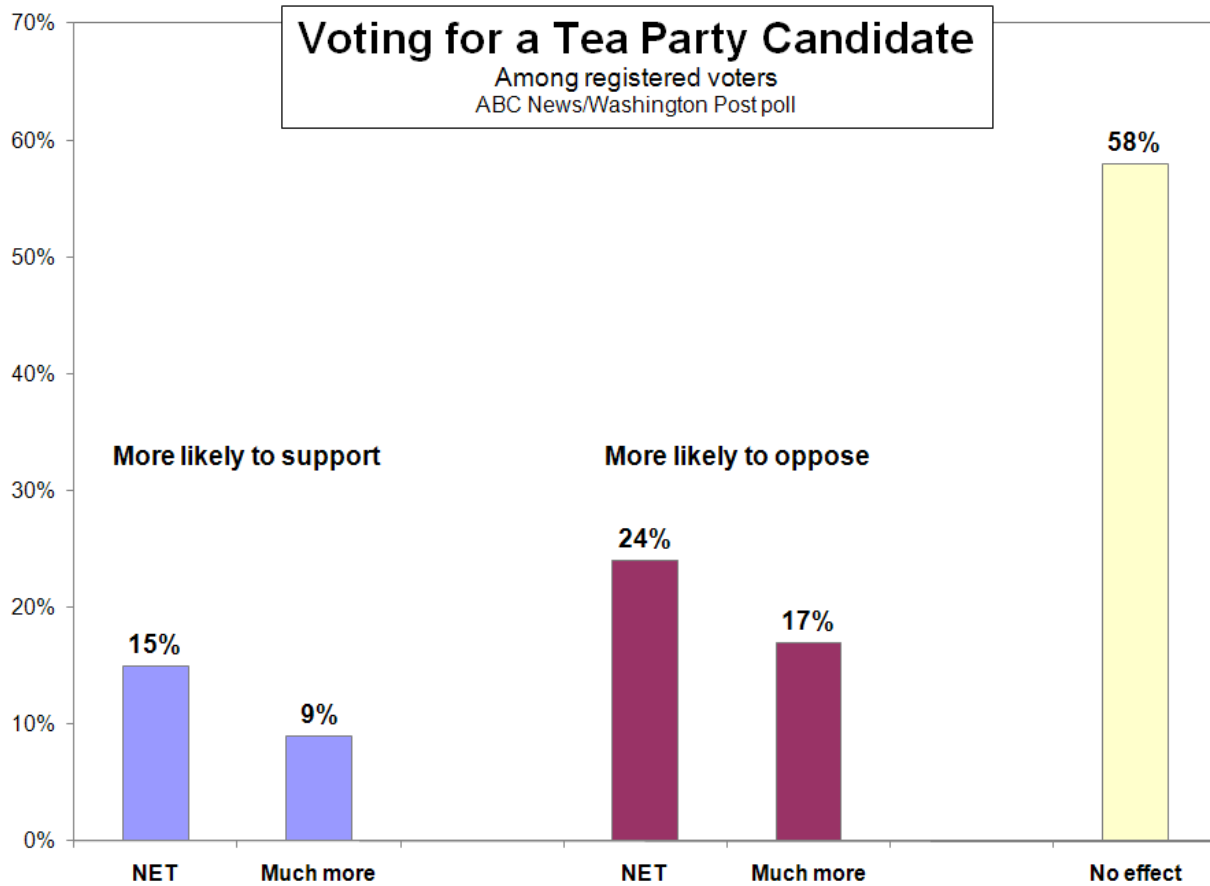
Conservative Republicans dominate the Tea Party movement, marking both its strengths in establishing a unified political message – and its challenges in attracting broader support.

Twenty-seven percent of Americans support the Tea Party, this ABC News/Washington Post poll finds, including 17 percent who back it “strongly” and just 2 percent who say they’re active participants. Its backers overwhelmingly reject the Obama administration, and many voice dissatisfaction with Washington, favor smaller government and express economic anxiety.



While that reflects a motivated political base, the movement’s broader appeal is in question. Nearly as many Americans oppose the Tea Party as support it. More say they like it less, rather than more, as they hear more about it. Far more are tuning it out than are highly interested. And association with the Tea Party may cost congressional candidates more votes than it attracts, particularly among better-educated Americans, whose election turnout tends to be high.

Among registered voters, 15 percent say they'd be more likely to support a candidate for Congress who's associated with the Tea Party movement – but 24 percent say they'd be more apt to oppose such a candidate. Focusing on strong sentiment produces a similar result: Just 9 percent are “much” more likely to support a Tea Party candidate, vs. 17 percent much more likely to oppose one.



The impact of a candidate's association with the Tea Party is more negative among Democrats than it is positive among Republicans, and nearly a wash among independents. It's much more of a negative for political moderates and especially among college-educated voters, among whom 36 percent are more likely to oppose a Tea Party candidate while just 14 percent are more likely to support one. (Among people with postgraduate degrees even more, 48 percent, are more apt to oppose a Tea Party-affiliated candidate.)

HEAR/LEARN – Among all Americans, 34 percent say the more they hear about the Tea Party the more they like it, but 43 percent instead say the more they hear the less they like it.

Its own supporters overwhelmingly like it more, opponents less – but another challenge to the party is the large group in the middle, 44 percent of Americans, who are neutral toward the

movement. Among people in this group 45 percent say the more they hear about the Tea Party the less they like it, vs. 22 percent who like it more.

Overall, 46 percent of all Americans are interested in learning more about the movement, while 54 percent are not. Again though there are differences under the surface: While eight in 10 Tea Party supporters are interested in learning more about it, this falls very sharply to 36 percent of those who are neutral toward it, as well as to 23 percent of its opponents. And, on an intensity scale, while 13 percent of Americans are “very” interested in learning more about the movement, nearly three times as many are not at all interested, 35 percent.

FROM THE GOP – The Democratic Party substantially leads both the Republican Party and the Tea Party movement in the sense among Americans that it best represents their values, is most concerned with their problems and best understands the economic difficulties people are experiencing. In each of these, the Tea Party encroaches far more on the Republicans than on the Democrats, underscoring its GOP base – and the potential risk to Republican candidates who fall out of Tea Party favor.

For example, 86 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say the Democratic Party best represents their values. Among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, though, just 56 percent say the Republican Party best represents their values – 29 percent instead pick the Tea Party. And fewer than half of leaned Republicans, 48 percent, say the GOP best understands their economic problems.

Which group best:	Among leaned Dems.			Among leaned Reps.		
	Dem.	Rep.	Tea Pty.	Dem.	Rep.	Tea Pty.
Best represents your values	86%	2	2	3%	56	29
Understands your concerns	84	4	4	8	50	33
Understands economic problems	81	4	6	9	48	31

The breakdown by ideology also is telling. Nearly as many conservatives pick the Tea Party as the Republican Party as being most concerned with their needs, 31 percent vs. 37 percent, and as understanding the country’s economic problems, 30 percent vs. 33 percent.

Another result also demonstrates how the Tea Party draws from Republican ranks. An ABC/Post poll in November 2009 tested the Democratic Party vs. the Republican Party on values and empathy. The Democratic Party’s scores are almost exactly the same now as then; it’s the GOP that’s lost ground with the Tea Party added to the mix.

	Which best represents your values		Which is most concerned with your needs	
11/09: Democrats	49%		51%	
Republicans	39		36	
4/10: Democrats	48%		49%	
Republicans	24		23	
Tea Party	14		17	

BASE – Underscoring the movement’s political and ideological base, 68 percent of people who identify themselves as “very” conservative are Tea Party supporters, as are 67 percent of strong Republicans and 59 percent of those who strongly disapprove of Barack Obama’s job performance. The movement is supported by more than half of John McCain’s voters from 2008, and by about half of all Republicans, conservatives, people who are very worried about the economy and those who are angry at the way the federal government is working.

A look in profile tells the same story: Eighty-four percent of Tea Party supporters disapprove of Obama, 83 percent prefer smaller rather than larger government, 64 percent are conservatives, 56 percent are very worried about the economy and 43 percent are Republicans – each far higher than its proportion in the general population.

Other measures show little differences, with Tea Party supporters no more or less apt to be college graduates, to have incomes over \$75,000 or to be either among the youngest or oldest age groups. (“Strong” supporters of the Tea Party, however, are somewhat more apt to be in upper-middle income categories, and to be age 50 or older.)

	Share of	
	Tea Party supporters	All Americans
Disapprove of Obama	84%	44
Prefer smaller gov’t	83	56
Conservative	64	35
Very worried/econ.	56	31
Republican	43	23
Angry at gov’t	32	18
College grad	32	33
Income > 75K	32	29
Age 18-29	18	21
Age 65+	20	17

Profiles of the group, is should be noted, depend on estimates of its size, which have ranged from 18 percent to 31 percent in recent polls, depending on how support for the Tea Party is measured. Again, in this poll 27 percent of Americans express support for the movement, 17 percent strongly.

THE QUESTION OF RACE – Tea Party supporters broadly agree on motivations for backing the movement – economic concern (cited by 83 percent), distrust of government (79 percent) and opposition to President Obama and the Democrats (72 percent). Many fewer supporters, but still 39 percent, cite dissatisfaction with the Republican Party as a reason for favoring the Tea Party.

At the same time, the movement’s supporters broadly reject the suggestion of racial prejudice against Obama. Eighty-seven percent of Tea Party backers say this is not a reason people support it. (One in 10 say it is). Racism, rather, is suggested by many Tea Party opponents, 57 percent of whom suspect prejudice in the movement’s ranks. (Among people who are neutral toward the Tea Party, about a quarter, 24 percent, suspect prejudice is at play in its support.)

Tea Party supporters are less apt than others to see racism as a major problem in this country – a majority do so, 58 percent, compared with 75 percent of all Americans. However, this concern is about the same among Tea Party supporters as it is among all adults who define themselves as very conservative (61 percent say racism is a significant problem). And Tea Party supporters are more apt to be white – 81 percent, vs. 74 percent of all adults (and 65 percent of Tea Party opponents). Whites are less apt than nonwhites to see racism as a major problem.

Further, while 18 percent of Tea Party supporters say Obama is doing “too much” to represent the interests of African-Americans, exactly as many say he’s doing too little in this regard. And those proportions are about equal among all Americans – 12 percent say Obama’s doing too much for African-Americans, 13 percent too little.

Ultimately, a statistical analysis indicates that the strongest predictors of supporting the Tea Party are views of Obama, ideology, partisanship and anger at the way the government is operating. Views on the extent of racism as a problem, and views on Obama’s efforts on behalf of African-Americans, are not significant predictors of support for the Tea Party movement.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 22-25, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,001 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).

1-13 previously released.

14. When it comes to representing the interests of [ITEM] do you think that Obama is doing too much, too little or about the right amount? (IF TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE) Is that a big concern to you, or not a big concern?

a. African Americans

	----- Too much -----			----- Too little -----			About the right amt	No op.
	NET	Big concern	Not big concern	NET	Not big concern	Big concern		
4/25/10	12	7	5	13	6	7	67	8
10/11/08* RV	14	8	7	5	2	2	77	4
6/15/08*	17	9	8	4	2	2	73	6

\* "as president Obama would do"

b. Previously released.

15. Changing topics, how big a problem is racism in our society today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a small problem or not a problem at all?

	----- Problem -----			----- Not a problem -----			No opinion
	NET	Big	Somewhat	NET	Small	Not at all	
4/25/10	75	33	42	25	19	5	1
1/16/09	74	26	48	26	22	4	*
7/7/96*	89	54	35	11	8	3	1
7/2/96	88	53	35	11	8	3	2
10/6/95	84	48	36	15	9	6	1
9/28/95	83	41	42	24	12	12	1

\*7/7/96 and previous: Post-Kaiser-Harvard poll

16-20 previously released

21. Changing topics: overall would you say you support the political movement known as the Tea Party, you oppose the Tea Party, or that you neither support nor oppose it? (IF SUPPORT/OPPOSE) Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat? (IF NEITHER) Would you say you lean towards supporting or opposing the Tea Party movement?

	----- Support -----					----- Oppose -----				No opin.
	NET	Strgly	Smwht	Lean	Neither	NET	Lean	Smwht	Strgly	
4/25/10	27	17	7	3	44	24	3	7	13	5

21a. (IF STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT SUPPORT TEA PARTY MOVEMENT) Do you consider yourself to be an active participant in the Tea Party movement, or a supporter but not an active participant?

Q21/Q21A NET

	----- Support -----					----- Oppose -----				
	NET	Active prtcpnt	Spprtr	Lean	No opin.	NET	Oppose	Smwht	Strgly	No opinion
4/25/10	27	2	22	3	1	44	24	7	13	5

22. How interested are you in learning more about the Tea Party movement - very interested, somewhat interested, not so interested or not interested at all?

	----- Interested -----			----- Not interested -----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	
4/25/10	46	13	33	54	19	35	*

23. Which group, the (Democrats), the (Republicans), or the (Tea Party) do you think [ITEM]?

4/25/10 - Summary Table

	Dems	Reps	Tea Party	All (vol.)	None (vol.)	No opinion
a. best represents your own personal values	48	24	14	1	9	3
b. is most concerned with the needs of people like you	49	23	17	1	7	4
c. best understands the economic problems people in this country are having	48	22	17	2	8	4

Trend:

a. best represents your own personal values

	Democrats	Republicans	Tea Party	All (vol.)	None (vol.)	No opinion
4/25/10	48	24	14	1	9	3
11/15/09	49	39	NA	2	9	2
11/4/06 RV	48	44		1	6	2
10/8/06	53	37		2	7	1
11/2/05	50	40		1	7	1
4/24/05	47	38		2	10	2
3/14/99	47	39		3	8	3

b. is most concerned with the needs of people like you

	Democrats	Republicans	Tea Party	All (vol.)	None (vol.)	No opinion
4/25/10	49	23	17	1	7	4
11/15/09	51	36	NA	2	9	3
10/8/06	58	30		2	9	1
8/6/06	56	30		1	12	2
11/2/05	56	33		1	9	1

c. No trend.

24. Which of these comes closest to your own view: (The more I hear about the Tea Party movement, the more I like it) or (The more I hear about the Tea Party movement, the less I like it).

	More I like it	Less I like it	Neither (vol.)	Haven't heard (vol.)	No opinion
4/25/10	34	43	8	11	4

25. Say a candidate for Congress associates him or herself with the Tea Party. Would that make you more likely to (support) that candidate for Congress, more likely to (oppose) that candidate, or wouldn't it make much difference in your vote? (IF SUPPORT/OPPOSE) Would you be much more likely to support/oppose that candidate, or somewhat more?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			Wouldn't make much difference	No opinion
	NET	Much	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Much		
4/25/10	14	7	7	23	7	16	59	4
4/25/10 RV	15	9	6	24	7	17	58	3

26. To what extent, if at all, do you think support for the Tea Party movement is based on (ITEM) - a great deal, a good amount, just some or not at all?

4/25/10 - Summary Table

	- Grt deal/Good amt- Great Good			- Some/Not at all - Just Not			No opinion
	NET	deal	amount	NET	some	at all	
a. Concern about the economy	56	40	16	36	22	14	7
b. Dissatisfaction with the Republican Party	38	21	18	54	37	17	8
c. Opposition to Obama and the Democratic Party's policies	58	39	19	35	24	11	7
d. Racial prejudice against Obama	28	19	9	64	21	43	9
e. Distrust of government							

overall 61 40 21 32 23 9 7

27-31 previously released

32 held for release

\*\*\*END\*\*\*