

REPUBLICAN MAIN STREET PARTNERSHIP



June 2011

Polling Data

Recent polling by NBC and the Wall Street Journal caused some political commentators to declare that “the GOP honeymoon is over.” The data shows that just 45% of GOP primary voters are satisfied with their presidential field. More importantly the poll puts Congress’ approval rating at a dismal 18%, down four points from last month. It has not been this low since March 2010, when the Democrats passed their health care proposal.

The GOP’s favorable-unfavorable rating is 30%-44%, compared with the Democratic Party’s 38%-39% score. What’s more, only 10% of respondents have a “great deal” or “quite a bit” of confidence in Congress, and majorities of all respondents (including Republicans) believe the House GOP has not brought much change. The one piece of non-bad news for Republicans in the poll: They’re tied on the congressional ballot with Democrats.

Another generic congressional ballot poll shows the Republicans with a small advantage. Rasmussen Reports’ weekly generic ballot has the Republicans at 43% with the Democrats at 37%. The Rasmussen poll has shown similar numbers for the past three weeks.

The GOP has been consistently ahead on Rasmussen’s “Generic Ballot” since June 2009, leading by as much as 12 points and as little as two. The week before Election Day last November, support for Republicans peaked at 51%, the highest level of support either party has enjoyed in the last two years, but GOP support tapered off after that. This marks the 12th week in a row that Republican support has fallen in the narrow range of 41% to 44%.

Democrats enjoyed a seven-point lead, 42% to 35%, when Barack Obama took office as president in late January 2009, but their support has generally remained in the mid- to upper 30s since June of that year. Republicans began to close the gap following the stimulus debate in February 2009.

Rasmussen Reports provides some interesting perspective and commentary on their polling. “During 2006 and 2008, Democrats led on the Generic Congressional Ballot and also were trusted more than Republicans on the health care issue. Following passage of the president's health care proposal, the Republicans became the more trusted party on health care

and also took the lead on the Generic Ballot. In January of this year, Republicans held a 14-point advantage on the health care issue, but that has disappeared.”

Michigan

Congressman Fred Upton, representing Michigan’s 6th Congressional District, was recently profiled for a story in the Detroit Free Press. According to the article, “Upton has never made big waves in Washington -- until now.”

Calling Rep. Upton a centrist Republican, it notes that he “was always a low-key guy who could work across the aisle, no matter which party was in charge. Then in January, he became chairman of the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee and was in the shadows no more. From the debt ceiling to health care, oil drilling, free trade agreements and auto industry regulation, Upton's in the thick of every showdown.”

The Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call did an extensive interview with House Ways and Means Chairman Dave Camp. Rep. Camp chose former Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer (TX) as his role model, calling his style “low-key” and “results-oriented.” The article says “he might be one of the most powerful men in Washington, but you wouldn't know it to look at [him]... as the Michigan Republican isn't known for a bombastic style, opting instead for a more measured approach. And that, those who know Camp say, is the secret to his success.”

Rep. Camp says that while there is a place for partisanship and messaging, his approach to running the committee is about results. Referring back to former Chairman Archer, Roll Call says, “Like Camp, Archer was a social and fiscal conservative in many ways. But particularly in the later years of his chairmanship, Archer built a reputation for attempting to find ways around partisan gridlock, working with Democrats and Republicans alike. Camp's agenda is simple: "Mine is focused on solutions and getting things done," he said.

So far this year, that strategy has given Camp a bit of a dubious distinction, being one of the few chairmen to author policy legislation that has been signed by President Barack Obama. Earlier this year Rep. Camp quickly pushed through repeal of the 1099 reporting requirement, a key component of Obama's health care reform law that was deeply unpopular with small-business owners because it would have dramatically increased the amount of information that they would file to the IRS. Unlike virtually every other GOP effort to repeal all or part of that law, Camp's bill found broad bipartisan support. "We're the only committee to have the president repeal a part of his health care bill," Camp said proudly.

New York

Former Corning Mayor Tom Reed has been appointed to a seat on the House Ways and Means Committee, with jurisdiction over tax policy, health care, international trade and Social Security. Rep. Reed was elected in a special election last November to fill the 29th Congressional District seat which had been held from 1987-2005 by Rep. Amo Houghton. Rep. Houghton had also served on the Ways and Means Committee, rising to Chairman of the Oversight Subcommittee.

The Buffalo News called the appointment “the most prestigious committee assignment yet for any of the six new Republicans elected to the House from New York State last fall.” Reed becomes the only New York Republican to serve on the Ways and Means Committee and is just one of three new Members on the Ways and Means Committee.

Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp said, “In the eight months since Tom Reed came to Washington, he has proven to be a tireless worker on behalf of his constituents and a thoughtful guardian of taxpayer dollars. His small-business background will bring an important perspective to the committee.”

“Serving on Ways and Means enhances my ability to serve this community,” said Reed, who has outlined three areas of focus for his work on the Ways and Means Committee.

First, Rep. Reed wants to streamline the tax code to help job creators. “The practice of using the tax code to pick winners and losers has to end. We must review and eliminate exemptions, subsidies, and loopholes contained in the 70,000 pages of tax code. Small businesses are the innovators and job creators, but they end up picking up the tab for all the loopholes.”

Second, Rep. Reed proposes removing excessive regulation. “Over-regulation has a disproportionately negative impact on smaller businesses. We need to promote ideas like the REINS Act which will require any regulation coming out of federal agencies which impact the economy by more than \$100 million to be specifically approved by Congress. No longer can agencies regulate through fiat.”

Third, Rep. Reed favors repatriating foreign income. “Trillions of American dollars sit in foreign accounts because of the high tax on bringing that money back to the U.S. That money can be invested here at home in new products, new facilities and new manufacturing if we reduce the cost of bringing it back into our economy.”

Political Commentary

David Gergen, Senior Political Analyst for CNN, recently provided his thoughts after viewing the New Hampshire Republican presidential debate. Gergen has been an adviser to four presidents, and is professor of public service and director of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

In general, Gergen felt all the candidates were all running to a “hard, uncompromising right.” And, he concluded, “My bet is that with the exception of a few remarks, these candidates played very well with the base of the Republican Party, and that base continues to grow more conservative. But for moderate independents who listened to the whole two hours, I imagine that there was growing discomfort. With the center of the Democratic Party moving left, we seem to be heading into even more partisan and polarized politics. Millions of Americans are yearning for something better.