



**21st Century America Project
June 2010 National Poll
Executive Summary**

This memo summarizes the findings of a major new poll of over 2,500 U.S. adults conducted online June 1-7, 2010.

The survey is the second of three national polls commissioned by NDN's 21st Century America Project. This project has been established to help policy-makers, elected officials and the public better understand the major demographic changes taking place in America today. This new poll has been specifically designed to provide more insight into how the political coalitions of the two major political parties in America are adapting to these rapid changes.

The poll finds that 21st Century America looks, acts and thinks differently than the country did in the last century and that only one political party is building a coalition that reflects the demographic and attitudinal direction in which the nation is headed. Specifically, the survey finds major differences between Democratic and Republican identifiers on the major issues currently confronting America.

While most Americans continue to favor activist government focused on promoting economic equality, those components of the electorate that identify most strongly with the Democratic Party are much more likely to want to see that approach reflected in legislation on such issues as health care, education, and off shore drilling. In addition, while both party's coalitions want action on the economy and financial reform, only major groups within the GOP coalition are strongly concerned with reducing government spending and the federal debt. These deeply felt differences are likely to be reflected in the 2010 midterm elections campaigns and on Capitol Hill in the years ahead.

Democrats retain a clear lead in both party identification and the congressional generic ballot that is virtually unchanged from the lead they held in the project's first survey conducted in February 2010. The core groups of the Democratic Party's new coalition – Millennials, African-Americans, Hispanics – remain solidly Democratic in both their partisan identifications and vote intentions, but the current lack of political intensity among these Democratic groups give Republicans an opening to make gains in 2010.

Some key findings from the project's June report:

21st Century America is changing:

- ***Millennials will increasingly dominate the electorate over the next decade.*** By 2012, Millennials will represent 24% of the voting age population, and by 2020 that number will jump to 36%. Millennials now under 18, who will increasingly enter the electorate during the next decade, already live in a Majority Minority country.

- ***America is becoming increasingly diverse.*** Minorities, who now make up 35% of the United States population, up from 31% in 2000, will become a majority by 2040. By 2050, only one-half of the United States workforce will be White.
- ***Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group,*** accounting for over half of the country's population growth between July 2008 and July 2009.
- ***America's suburbs reflect those demographic trends.*** A majority of each major racial and ethnic group now lives in the suburbs. Suburban voters are evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans on the generic congressional ballot, making the suburbs the key electoral battleground this November.

These changes have altered the competitive balance of the two parties. Unlike 1994, when the Republicans had a narrow party identification advantage over the Democrats, in 2010 the Democratic Party holds a decisive party ID lead over the GOP. Currently nearly half of Americans (47%) identify with or lean to the Democrats, while only a third (33%) say they are Republicans and a fifth (19%) claim to be independents. In spite of this year's political turmoil, the underlying balance over party strength within the electorate is unchanged since February.

The Country is Increasingly Divided on the Major Issues:

- ***The Economy And Jobs Dominate All Other Issues***
 - 64% of all Americans rate jobs and the economy as a critical issue.
 - A majority rates no other single issue critical.
- ***Among Components of the Democratic Coalition, Education Trails Only The Economy In Importance***
 - 41% of all Americans rate education a critical issue.
 - Concern with education is significantly higher among Millennials (45%), African-Americans (52%), and Hispanics (48%), all key components of the Democratic coalition.
 - Additionally, 37% of Millennials consider the cost of college education a critical issue.
- ***Half of all Americans say Federal Spending and the National Deficit is a Critical Issue***
 - However, fewer within the Democratic coalition share that belief: Millennials, 38%; African-Americans, 41%; and Hispanics, 45%.
 - But more within the Republican coalition do (56%, Boomers; 63% of those over 65)
- ***Healthcare Reform Sharply Divides the Country along Partisan Lines***
 - Forty percent of all Americans consider Healthcare Reform a Critical Issue
 - But, health care reform is more important to Hispanics (43%), women (44%), and African-Americans (52%).
 - A plurality of Americans want to give the new healthcare reform law a chance to work rather than repeal it (44% vs. 38%), but those numbers masks a deep split between the two party coalitions
 - Millennials favor the new law over repealing it, (48% to 32%) as do Hispanics, (50% to 30%) and African Americans (72% to 13%).

- By contrast, members of the Silent Generation, those 65 years old and over are about evenly split between wanting to give the new law a chance or repealing it (46%/44%). White voters overall favor repealing the law over giving it a chance to work (43% to 39%).
- ***Americans Favor Strong Financial Reform Legislation by a 48% to 27% margin***
 - As with other Americans, Women (47% to 23%), African Americans (49% to 21%), Hispanics (47% to 33%) and Millennials (43% to 28%) all express concern that Congress won't do enough to protect consumers and control Wall Street excesses, rather than fearing congressional action will go too far in limiting investment opportunities and future growth.
- ***By a 2:1 margin, Voters prefer the Democrats to the Republicans on Economic Issues, Education and Financial Reform. The Democrats are favored on healthcare reform by an even wider 4:1 margin.***
- ***Overall, the Country is Evenly Split (42%/41%) on Continuing Offshore Drilling, but the Two Coalitions Differ Markedly in their Opinion on the Issue.***
 - Millennials (48% vs. 33%), Hispanics (48% vs. 38%) and African-Americans (42% vs. 36%) all oppose offshore drilling. However, members of the Silent Generation, those over 65, (52% vs. 39%) and Baby Boomers (45% vs. 39%) favor offshore drilling.
 - There is also a clear gender gap on this issue. Women oppose offshore drilling, 45% to 34%, while men favor continued drilling, 51% to 37%.

Among all voters, Democrats have a solid lead over the Republicans on the generic House ballot (34% vs. 29% with 29% undecided). However, the Democratic advantage virtually disappears among those most likely to vote and most concerned with the election outcome.

- Democrats continue to hold a solid lead over the GOP among most groups in the electorate, especially Millennials (39% Democratic/22% Republican), African-Americans (74%/65%), and Hispanics (45%/22%).
- However, major components of the Democratic coalition are far less likely than other demographics to say they are "certain to vote" in November: Millennials, 42%; Hispanics, 53%; and Generation X (ages 29-45), 57%.
- These same key Democratic components are also less likely than others to believe that the outcome of the 2010 elections is "very important": Millennials (33%), Gen-Xers (40%), and Hispanics (41%).

Voter Registration is also a Major Issue for a Number of Democratic Coalition Components:

- As compared with 79% of the entire electorate, only 60% of Millennials, 75% of Gen-Xers, and 65% of Hispanics are now registered to vote.
- Complicating the matter, a significant number of Millennials (36%), Gen-Xers (18%), African-Americans (24%), and Hispanics (25%) have moved since the 2008 elections.

As a result, the Democratic Party's five-point lead on the generic ballot among all voters shrinks to three points among registered voters and two points among those most likely to vote in November.

Methodology

The results detailed above were obtained in an online survey conducted by Frank N. Magid Associates, the preeminent generational insights media market research and consultation firm, with a national sample of 2,553 persons 18 years old and over. . A sample of this size produces a sampling error of +/- 2% for findings based on the entire sample. The study was fielded June 1-7, 2010. .

About the 21st Century America Project

NDN/NPI created the "21 Century America Project" to help elected officials, policy makers and the public better understand the enormous demographic changes taking place in America today. The project will feature the work of NDN Fellows Mike Hais and Morley Winograd, critically acclaimed authors of *Millennial Makeover; MySpace, YouTube and the Future of American Politics*, NDN/NPI Senior Vice-president Andres Ramirez and his Hispanic Programs Team, and Senior Advisor Alicia Menendez.

A feature of the project will be a new series of comprehensive public opinion polls managed by veteran market research analyst Mike Hais. Conducted with very large national samples - 2500 people - these polls will look at the changing American population in great depth, complementing NDN's multi-year investment in basic demographic research.

About Mike Hais and Morley Winograd

NDN Fellows Mike Hais and Morley Winograd are the leading experts on the Millennial Generation. Their groundbreaking book, Millennial Makeover: MySpace, YouTube, & the Future of American Politics was named one of The New York Times Favorite Books of 2008.