



**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Simon Rosenberg  
**Date:** November 10, 2006  
**Re:** Voters deliver a mandate for a new economic strategy

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Over the last few months, NDN has been part of a broad progressive campaign to explain why the American economy was not delivering the type of broad-based prosperity this country needs. This week, American voters delivered a clear and unmistakable mandate for action on our economy. The facts are simple: during the Clinton era, the average family income increased by more than \$7,000; but in the Bush era the average family has actually seen their income decline by more than \$1,000. And the results this week make it clear that this lack of upward mobility was a critical issue in removing the Republicans from power.

There is a prevailing wisdom emerging that this election was about the Iraq war. This is only partially correct. Of course, Iraq mattered. But the exit polls and post-election analysis make it clear that the economy mattered a great deal, perhaps even more than Iraq. The economy was a deciding factor in key battleground states, and was especially important for swing voters. Moreover, voters who felt the economy was doing badly were overwhelmingly more likely to vote Democrat (all exit polls referenced are the official national exit polls which can be found [here](#)).

- **The economy was the most important issue.** The exit poll asked voters if they considered various issues important in deciding their vote. If you add up those who responded - where issues were extremely, very, or somewhat important - the economy comes out number one.

*Table 1: Which issue was most important?*

Issue	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Total
Economy	39%	43%	14%	96%
Corruption	41%	33%	18%	92%
Iraq	35%	32%	21%	88%
Terrorism	39%	33%	20%	82%
Moral Values	36%	21%	20%	77%

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901 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW • Suite 705 • Washington, DC 20005 • Tel: 202.544.9200 • Fax: 202.547.2929

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- **Economy Crucial in Battleground States.** The economy played a critical role in the key battleground states that decided the election. In these areas the results could not be clearer: the economy was the number one issue. The exit poll asked voters in key swing states about Iraq and the Economy. In each swing state more voters thought the economy was either “extremely important” or “very important” in their decision over who to vote for their senator.

*Table 2: Economy vs Iraq in Key Senate Races*

	<b>Economy</b>	<b>Iraq</b>
Missouri	83%	62%
Montana	82%	65%
Ohio	83%	66%
Pennsylvania	81%	68%
Virginia	82%	69%

- **Economy Plays Big with Swing Voters.** Stan Greenberg’s [post-election analysis](#) shows that Iraq was the dominant issue for the majority of voters. However, Greenberg is clear that the economy was the second most important issue overall, and that it played a disproportionately important role in persuading swing voters who were considering voting for the Democrats. Among this group of swing voters 51% cited economic issues like gas prices, while 38% cited jobs and the economy. Only 23% cited Iraq.
- **Only 30% of Americans believe they are getting ahead.** The exit poll in two separate questions about the perception of their own economic situation, only 30 percent said their own economic situation had improved in recent years. And remarkably, the same number – only 30% - said they believed the life of the next generation would be better than theirs. Of those who felt they had prospered voted about 2:1 for the Republicans. For those who were struggling, they voted the opposite way, 2:1 for the Democrats.
- **Those struggling to get ahead voted Democrat.** Additional questions confirm how much a factor perceptions of the economy were in driving the Democratic vote. Those who thought the economy was “excellent” voted overwhelmingly for the Republicans (86% vs 13%). Democrats easily carried those who thought the economy was either “not good” (74% vs 23%) or “poor” (85% vs 13%).

All of this added together clearly shows that the American people want the new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate to focus and pursue an aggressive strategy to help them and their families get ahead.

This administration’s [economic record](#) has left America weaker, and the American people worse off. This election year, the American people held them accountable. Now it is time for action.

**Voters deliver a mandate for a new economic strategy**