

Anger About the Economy Fuels the GOP Advantage

Anger, thy name is Republican.

That's part of the takeaway from the latest ABC News/Yahoo! News poll. Its results identify why the public's economic discontent is playing so strongly in the Republican Party's favor in the upcoming midterm elections. In elections, anger works.

This national survey finds that Republicans are markedly more likely than other Americans to describe themselves as "angry" about the economy. And angry people, by a wide margin, are more apt to blame the Democratic Party than the GOP for the problem.

Angry folks, for good measure, also are far less apt than others to believe the economy's started to show signs of recovery. That pessimism intensifies their hunt for change.

All told, 85 percent of Americans are either angry about the economy or at least dissatisfied with it, according to the survey, produced for ABC and Yahoo! News by [Langer Research Associates](#). That makes economic discontent even higher than anger or dissatisfaction with "the way the federal government is working," 71 percent in an ABC News/Washington Post poll last week.

What's crucial is not just the net total, but the "anger" number – 25 percent of all adults in this survey, with broad political differences. Among registered voters, just 12 percent of Democrats are angry about the economy. That jumps to 30 percent of independents, and among Republicans it soars to a remarkable 41 percent – an extraordinary number to express so strong an emotion.

Among those who are angry about the economy, 54 percent blame both parties equally. But 35 percent say they're more angry at the Democrats – more than triple the number, 10 percent, who aim their ire at the Republicans. To the extent that anger equals motivation, that 25-point differential explains some of the GOP advantage in pre-election polls.

Notably, blame shifts among the larger group of people who are dissatisfied with the economy, but not angry about it; they're 6 points more apt to be dissatisfied with the Republicans than with the Democrats. Mere dissatisfaction, though, is less of a motivator; in the ABC/Post poll, it was angry people who were the most apt to say they're certain to vote.

RECOVERY – A sense that the economy's begin to recover, meanwhile, has diminished from its level last winter. In an ABC/Post poll last February 45 percent of Americans said that regardless of whether the recession was over, they felt the economy at least had begin to recover. Today fewer, 34 percent in this poll, say so.

The new reading's in line with the ABC/Post result last week in which 31 percent said the economy's "getting better," which while low was up from its level a month earlier.

Again the gloom is sharply partisan. Among registered voters who are Democrats, 46 percent say the economy's begun to recover; among independents 31 percent; and among Republicans, just 24 percent – half its level among their political opposites.

Even with the partisanship, the decline vs. last February in a sense of economic improvement is general – down by 11 points overall; by 9 and 10 points, respectively, among Republicans and Democrats, and by 15 points among independents.

In addition to Democrats, optimism's highest among higher-income adults – 45 percent of those in \$100,000+ households say some recovery's begun, vs. 32 percent of those with incomes less than \$50,000. And younger adults, under 40, are more optimistic than their elders.

FLIPSIDE – The risk to Democrats of economic pessimism and downright anger could be mitigated if there were strong emotion on the other side of the ledger. But a mere 1 percent of Americans say they're "more than satisfied" with the current economy, and just 14 percent are satisfied with it – among registered voters, 17 percent of Democrats, 10 percent of Republicans and 8 percent of independents.

Satisfaction's not only less prevalent than anger, it's also a less-intense sentiment – and thus no match as a political force – with the election just three weeks away.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Yahoo News! poll was conducted Sept. 29-Oct. 5, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,010 adults. Respondents were selected using an address-based sample design. Households for which a phone number could be ascertained were contacted by phone; others were contacted by mail and asked to complete the survey via a toll-free inbound phone number or the internet. See details [here](#). Results for the full sample have a 4-point error margin. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error.

This survey was produced by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y, with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS of Media, Pa.

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

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Full results follow.

1. How would you describe your personal feelings about the current economy - would you say you're more than satisfied with the current economy, satisfied but no more than that, dissatisfied but not angry or angry about it?

	----- Positive -----			----- Negative -----			
	NET	More than- satisfied	Satisfied	NET	Dissat- isfied	Angry	No opinion
10/5/10	14	1	13	85	60	25	1

2. (ASKED IF DISSATISFIED OR ANGRY) In terms of politics, thinking about the way they've handled the economy, are you more (angry at/dissatisfied with) the (Democrats), more (angry at/dissatisfied with) the (Republicans), or equally (angry at/dissatisfied with) both?

	Democrats	Republicans	Both	No opinion
10/5/10	21	19	58	2

3. Regardless of whether or not the recession is over, in terms of your own personal experience, do you feel the economy has or has not begun to recover?

	Has	Has not	No opinion
10/5/10	34	63	2
2/8/10*	45	53	1
12/13/09	50	49	1
11/15/09	44	54	1

*2/10 and previous, ABC News/Washington Post

END