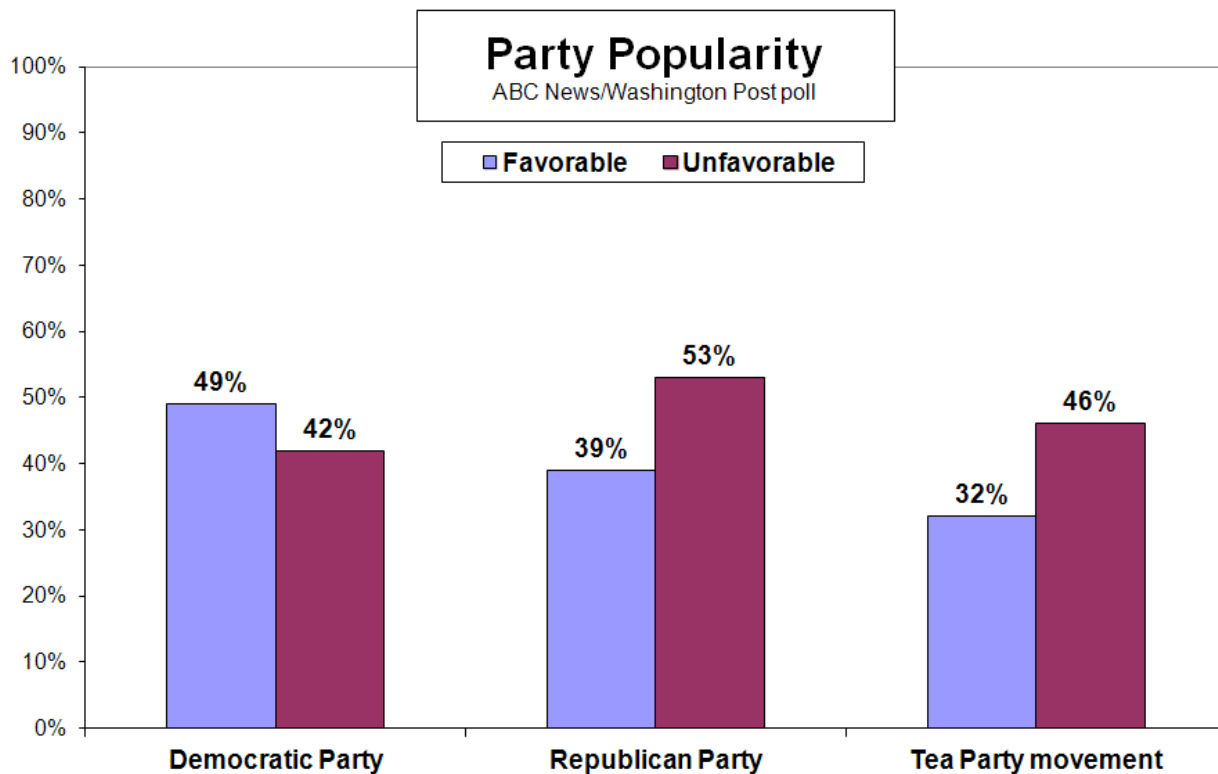


Lackluster Popularity Dogs the Political Parties

It's no party being a political party: The Democrats, while slightly more popular than unpopular, are near their record lows. The Republicans are underwater. And the Tea Party political movement has slipped to its weakest favorability on record in ABC News/Washington Post polls.

Those lackluster results indicate the public's continued discontent, political and economic alike. They also follow allegiance: The Democratic Party's better rating reflects the fact that more Americans consider themselves Democrats than Republicans.

All told, 49 percent see the Democratic Party favorably, 42 percent unfavorably – somewhat more positive than negative, but a far cry from its recent highs. The GOP, whose allegiance has waned in the past decade, gets a negative score of 39-53 percent. And just 32 percent see the Tea Party favorably, 9 points off its peak in spring 2010.



Self-identified Democrats and Republicans are broadly positive about their chosen parties, 89 and 84 percent favorable, respectively, in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). Among independents, that plummets to about four in 10 for both parties.

The difference is that 32 percent of Americans in this survey identify themselves as Democrats, vs. 25 percent as Republicans, levels that have held essentially steady the past three years. That’s down for the GOP, which achieved parity with the Democrats in 2003 but has lost ground since. (Independents now predominate, accounting for 39 percent in this survey.)

Intensity of sentiment is another challenge for the Republican Party: Substantially more Americans see it “strongly” negatively than strongly positively, 33 percent vs. 18 percent, while the Democratic Party breaks even (28 percent on both sides).

On the other hand, because fewer Democrats are registered to vote, the Democratic Party slips among registered voters to 48-46 percent, favorable-unfavorable, essentially an even split. The GOP, though, remains underwater among registered voters, 42-53 percent.

The Democratic Party’s favorability rating, as noted, is very near its record lows, 48 percent about a year ago and 47 percent in a 1984 survey, and well down from its highs, including 58 percent in 2008, 64 percent in 2000 and 60 percent in 1996. The GOP, similarly, is a mere 3 points from its own recent low in popularity, in June 2009, and far from its peak, 63 percent, last reached in 2002.

TEA PARTY – For its part, the Tea Party political movement has lost popularity; a record low 32 percent see it positively, down from a high of 41 percent in March 2010. Forty-six percent now rate it negatively.

Part of that, though, reflects increased indecision. Negative views of the Tea Party are lower than their peak, 52 percent, in January 2011; nearly a quarter instead now have no opinion of the movement, up 10 points in the same period.

GROUPS –These ratings are linked closely to political ideology. Seventy-eight percent of liberals see the Democratic Party favorably, declining to 53 percent of moderates and just 29 percent of conservatives. By contrast, 64 percent of conservatives see the Republican Party favorably, vs. just 32 percent of moderates and 17 percent of liberals.

The Tea Party movement is most popular among “very” conservative Americans, 59 percent, but drops to 45 percent favorability among somewhat conservatives, then falls steeply among moderates and liberals.

	Favorable-unfavorable ratings		
	Democratic Party	Republican Party	Tea Party
All	49-42%	39-53	32-46
Registered voters	48-46	42-53	32-48
Democrats	89- 9	7-89	13-66

Republicans	19-77	84-13	57-24
Independents	41-46	39-50	34-44
Liberals	78-16	17-75	17-66
Moderates	53-39	32-61	26-50
Conservatives NET	29-65	64-31	51-28
Somewhat cons.	30-62	60-34	45-32
Very cons.	27-68	70-26	59-22
Whites	38-52	45-46	34-46
Nonwhites	74-19	26-67	25-46

Among other groups, racial differences are striking, again a reflection of partisan loyalties. Whites divide essentially evenly in their views of the Republican Party, while seeing the Democratic Party negatively, 38-52 percent, favorable-unfavorable. Nonwhites differ profoundly – 26-67 percent negative on the GOP, while positive on the Democrats by 74-19 percent.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Sept. 26-30, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,024 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 4 points, including design effect. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gregory Holyk.

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

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Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

9/30/12 - Summary Table

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No op.
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
a. The Democratic Party	49	28	22	42	14	28	9
b. The Republican Party	39	18	21	53	19	33	8
c. The political movement known as the Tea Party	32	12	20	46	15	30	23

Trend:

a. The Democratic Party

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/30/12	49	28	22	42	14	28	9
10/30/11	48	21	26	46	21	25	7
3/26/10	50	25	24	45	14	31	5
2/8/10	50	24	26	46	17	28	4

6/21/09		53	NA	NA	40	NA	NA	6
8/22/08	RV	58			36			5
11/1/07		51			45			5
3/5/06		55			41			4
6/5/05		51			47			2
12/15/02		56			37			6
1/27/02		56			36			8
7/30/01		60			36			4
12/15/00		64			25			11
1/16/00		56			35			9
1/10/00*		61			33			6
1/10/00	LV	58			37			5
11/21/99		51			41			8
5/2/99		53			37			10
2/21/99		55			37			8
2/13/99		56			38			6
2/8/99		57			37			6
1/10/99		57			35			8
12/20/98		57			30			13
12/16/98		58			32			10
10/29/97		54			39			7
9/1/96	RV	60			36			4
8/18/96	RV	55			41			4
8/7/96	RV	57			38			5
4/10/96		55			38			7
4/19/95		51			43			6
7/8/92	RV	54			38			8
6/6/91**		52			34			14
4/2/90		54			35			11
1/15/90		58			32			10
11/16/88		54			36			10
11/4/84		47			42			11
10/4/84	RV	50	"	"	39	"	"	11

*1/10/00 to 7/8/92: Gallup

**6/6/91 and previous: CBS News/New York Times

b. The Republican Party

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/30/12	39	18	21	53	19	33	8
10/30/11	40	13	27	53	21	32	7
3/26/10	40	17	23	55	24	30	5
2/8/10	44	19	25	52	23	29	4
6/21/09	36	NA	NA	56	NA	NA	8
8/22/08	RV	47		49			4
11/1/07		39		56			5
3/5/06		51		46			3
6/5/05		49		49			2
12/15/02		56		38			5
1/27/02		63		30			7
7/30/01		51		46			3
12/15/00		54		35			11
1/16/00		53		37			10
1/10/00*		53		41			6
1/10/00	LV	56		39			5
11/21/99		50		44			6
5/2/99		47		44			9
2/21/99		45		46			9
2/13/99		40		54			5
2/8/99		45		47			8
1/10/99		40		52			8
12/20/98		31		57			12

12/16/98	43			47			10
10/29/97	50			42			8
9/1/96	RV 50			45			5
8/18/96	RV 55			41			4
8/7/96	RV 51			44			5
4/10/96	52			41			7
4/19/95	52			42			6
7/8/92	RV 53			39			8
6/6/91**	62			28			10
4/2/90	58			34			8
1/15/90	63			28			9
11/16/88	57			34			9
11/4/84	58			33			9
10/4/84	53	"	"	36	"	"	11

*1/10/00 to 7/8/92: Gallup

**6/6/91 and previous: CBS News/New York Times

c. The political movement known as the Tea Party

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/30/12	32	12	20	46	15	30	23
3/13/11	36	18	18	48	18	30	16
1/16/11	35	16	19	52	21	31	13
9/2/10	38	18	19	45	24	21	18
6/6/10	36	17	19	50	25	24	14
3/26/10	41	21	21	39	16	23	20
2/8/10	35	20	15	40	20	20	25

*** END ***