

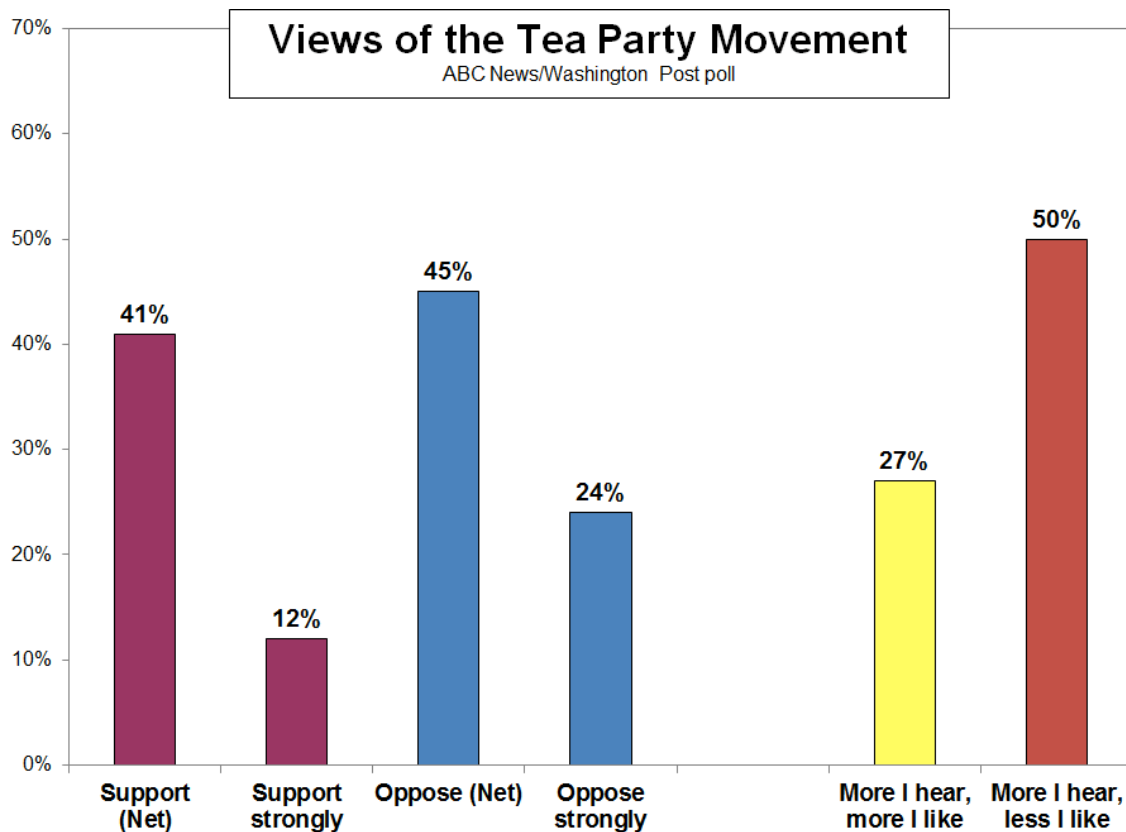
Tea Party Movement Looks Stalled; Half Like it Less as they Hear More

Whither the Tea Party?

A major force in the 2010 midterm elections, the movement has stalled in public popularity, its support well below a majority and decidedly lukewarm. And Americans by a broad 23-point margin say the more they hear about the Tea Party movement, the less they like it, rather than liking it more.

That negative buzz has worsened from a 9-point gap in an ABC News/Washington Post poll as the movement was gathering speed two years ago. And its avenues for resurgence may be limited: Interest in learning more about Tea Party is down 7 points from spring 2010.

This poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that six in 10 Americans aren't particularly interested in additional information about the Tea Party, and 41 percent aren't interested "at all." Thirty-nine percent have at least some interest, but just 9 percent are very interested. Among those with interest, moreover, more than six in 10 already support it.



All told, 41 percent of Americans identify themselves as supporters of the movement, compared with a high of 47 percent last September. Forty-five percent oppose it; 14 percent have no opinion. Support has dropped disproportionately among young adults in that period, down 20 points from 51 percent to 31 percent.

While overall support is roughly balanced with overall opposition, “strong” opponents outnumber strong supporters by 2-1. But perhaps most damaging is the buzz: Fifty percent of Americans say the more they hear about the Tea Party, the less they like it; just 27 percent say they like it more. That compares with a much closer (albeit still negative) 43-34 percent split on this question in April 2010.

These views have grown more negative particularly among young adults, seniors, women, moderates and people in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 income range, all with 10- to 17-point increases in “like it less” responses as they hear more about the Tea Party movement.

PRIMARIES – Tea Party supporters, of course, were far more prevalent in the Republican presidential primaries than they are in the nation’s population as a whole. In exit polls, 60 percent of Republican primary voters identified themselves as Tea Party supporters. Twenty-six percent were neutral, while just 11 percent said they were opponents of the movement.

Strong supporters of the movement looked decidedly different from its less-committed backers. Among strong Tea Party supporters in the primaries, Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum ran almost evenly, 33-31 percent. Romney, by contrast, beat Santorum by 42-27 percent among voters who support the movement only “somewhat.” In most states where Santorum won strong Tea Party supporters, he won the states overall – Louisiana, Alabama, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Iowa. In two others he came close, Ohio and Michigan.

ECONOMY – Part of the movement’s dilemma is the extent to which its support is an expression of economic discontent, given the improvement in consumer sentiment this year.

Today the movement’s support is 22 points higher among people who think the economy is not improving, 18 points higher among those who say it’s very difficult to find jobs in their area and 15 points higher among people who think the recession has not yet ended, compared with others. To the extent it represents an economic protest movement, gains in the economy overall, and the job market in particular, work to the Tea Party’s detriment.

On one basic economic attitude, additionally, the movement finds itself at a disadvantage. It wins support from just 24 percent of Americans who are chiefly concerned about unfairness in the economic system that favors the wealthy, vs. a much broader 69 percent support among those who see a bigger problem in over-regulation of the free market that interferes with growth and prosperity. The challenge is that more are concerned about fairness, by a 15-point margin.

... AND IDEOLOGY – A related problem for the movement (as with Santorum’s candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination) reflects its difficulties moving beyond its ideological and partisan base.

Within the Republican Party, Tea Party support peaks at 88 percent among conservative Republicans, with 32 percent “strongly” supportive. That declines to 69 percent of Republicans who do not describe themselves as “very” conservative – and notably, in this group, just 16 percent are strong Tea Party supporters. The movement also is backed by 64 percent of evangelical white Protestants.

Support is much lower outside the GOP and in non-conservative groups – 44 percent among independents, 40 percent among white Protestants who are not evangelical, 37 percent among moderates, 19 percent among Democrats and 18 percent among liberals.

The movement, as noted, has a decided intensity deficit: Strong opposition among critics far outstrips strong support among backers. Among all Republicans, for example, 23 percent strongly support the Tea Party, while a greater share of Democrats, 48 percent, strongly oppose it. And while it’s strongly supported by 32 percent of conservative Republicans, the movement is strongly opposed by a much larger share of liberal Democrats, 62 percent. The two groups are similar in size.

Support for the Tea Party movement		
	NET	Strong
Men	48%	15%
Women	35	9
18-29	31	6
30-49	51	14
50+	38	13
Democrats	19	6
Independents	44	10
Republicans	74	23
Liberals	18	3
Moderates	37	8
Conservatives	69	25
Liberal Dems	7	2
Cons. Reps	88	32
Reps, not very cons.	69	16
White Protestants		
Evangelical	64	22
Non-evangelical	40	7

There are other gaps among groups, if not as wide. The Tea Party has a gender gap, with 13 points more support from men than from women. And it does best with 30- to 49-year-olds, tailing off with under-30s and those 50 and older alike.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 5-8, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 4 points for the full sample. The

survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

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Full results follow.

*= less than 0.5 percent

35. On another subject, what is your view of the Tea Party political movement - would you say you support it strongly, support it somewhat, oppose it somewhat or oppose it strongly?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
4/8/12	41	12	29	45	21	24	14
3/10/12	44	15	29	43	17	26	13
2/4/12	43	12	31	45	20	25	12
1/15/12	40	13	28	50	23	27	10
12/18/11	42	13	28	45	20	26	13
11/3/11	43	14	29	44	20	24	13
10/2/11	42	12	30	47	20	27	11
9/1/11	47	13	35	45	18	27	8
7/17/11	44	13	31	46	23	24	10
6/5/11	46	13	33	44	21	24	10
4/17/11	42	16	26	49	21	27	10

36. How interested are you in learning more about the Tea Party movement - very interested, somewhat interested, not so interested or not interested at all?

	----- Interested -----			----- Not interested -----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	
4/8/12	39	9	30	60	19	41	1
4/25/10	46	13	33	54	19	35	*

37. Which of these comes closest to your own view: (The more I hear about the Tea Party movement, the more I like it) or (The more I hear about the Tea Party movement, the less I like it).

	More I like it	Less I like it	Neither (vol.)	Haven't heard	
				(vol.)	No opinion
4/8/12	27	50	9	6	7
4/25/10	34	43	8	11	4

All other questions previously released.

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