



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 10, 2011

Poll Shows Majority of Republicans in Favor of Third Party

Yesterday, Gallup poll released the results of its poll conducted from April 30-23 that reveals an unprecedented and dramatic change in the nation's political climate. According to the poll, a majority of Americans, and, most notably, Republicans, believe that the United States needs a third political party. The poll indicates that fifty-two percent of Republicans support the creation of a major, third political party, and an even greater number of Tea Party supporters made the same assertions. According to *The Hill*, the data underscores the occasional tensions between grassroots conservatives and the GOP establishment.



Likewise, 52 percent of Americans overall reported in the poll that a third political party is necessary.

As noted by *The Hill*, however, the most significant results pertained to Republican voters:

The number of Republicans who said that a third political party was necessary was at an all-time high since Gallup first began tracking opinion on the issue in 2003. And while support for a third party has crept steadily upward in the GOP, for the first time, it represents a majority opinion.

Supporters of the Tea Party are even more likely to back a third party, the poll found. Sixty percent of Tea Party supporters back a third party, while 32 percent say the existing two parties are adequate. By contrast, 47 percent of Tea Party opponents said the bipartisan system is adequate, and 44 percent favored a third party.

Gallup [wrote](#) of the results:

Gallup has always found political independents to be most desirous of a third party, and 68% currently are. But right now there is also a significant party gap, with 52% of Republicans favoring a third party, compared with 33% of Democrats.

This is the first time Gallup finds a significantly higher percentage of Republicans than Democrats in favor of a third party. During much of President Bush's term, the opposite was true, with Democrats more likely to favor the formation of a third party. That gap narrowed in 2007, after the Democrats' victories in the 2006 midterms, and there has been a minimal difference between the two parties until the current poll.

The notion that the Republican establishment may prompt the necessity for a third party has been articulated by prominent Republicans like former Alaska governor Sarah Palin, who, when asked if a third party should form if voters are dissatisfied with Republicans, answered, Why not? Similarly, Republican Senator John Thune said he sees the formation of a third party if Republicans do not adhere to their principles.

In the past, third parties have proven to have significant impacts on close races. Currently, for example, in a special election for the congressional seat in New York's 26th congressional district, Democrat



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Kathy Hochul is enjoying a lead over Republican Jane Corwin, who has to split votes with Tea Party candidate Jack Davis.

Gallup observes that the percentage of Americans in favor of third parties fluctuates, never surpassing 58 percent, and this most recent poll actually represents a smaller percentage of Americans in favor of third parties overall than from late last summer.

While more Americans are now identifying themselves as Independents than as members of either major political party, it does not necessarily indicate that a major third party will emerge, as a number of Independents do tend to have leanings towards one of the major political parties.

Likewise, Gallup writes, Third parties also face institutional challenges to gaining power in the United States, in terms of the way Americans elect presidents and members of Congress, awarding electoral votes or seats to the party winning the most votes in a state or district.

Its worth noting, however, that the current political climate shows a majority of Americans unhappy with the federal government, as well as the Democrat and Republican parties.

A recent Associated Press-GfK [poll](#) shows that 59 percent of Americans are unhappy with the way Democrats in Congress are handling the economy, and 64 percent disapprove of the way Republicans in Congress are handling the economy.

While the poll indicates that Americans are seemingly dissatisfied with both parties, a majority of those polled, 53 percent, report that they would elect a Republican candidate for the House of Representatives over a Democratic candidate, 43 percent.

Overall, the AP-GfK poll shows 57 percent of those polled believe the United States is heading in the wrong direction, and 73 percent of those polled disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job.

Perhaps now is the best time for the emergence of a major third party.

Photo: Rev. Chuck Baldwin, the presidential nominee of the Constitution Party for the 2008 U.S. Presidential election.



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