



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

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Super PACs Having Negative Impact, Say Voters Aware of 'Citizens United' Ruling

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Kohut

President, Pew Research Center

Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock

Associate Directors

Scott Keeter

Director of Survey Research

1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel (202) 419-4350

Fax (202) 419-4399

www.people-press.org

Super PACs Having Negative Impact, Say Voters Aware of ‘Citizens United’ Ruling

As campaign advertisements funded by Super PACs dominate the airwaves in the lead-up to the South Carolina primaries this Saturday, 54% of registered voters say they have heard about the 2010 Supreme Court decision that allows corporations and individuals to spend as much money as they want on political advertising as long as it is not coordinated with candidate campaigns.

Fully 65% of those who are aware of the new rules on independent expenditures say they are having a negative effect on the 2012 presidential campaign. And among those who have heard a lot about these new campaign finance rules, 78% say the effect has been negative.

Barely Half Are Aware of ‘Citizens United’ Ruling

The 2010 Supreme Court decision allowing unlimited independent expenditures on political ads

	All registered voters
	%
Heard about	54
A lot	18
A little	36
Nothing at all/DK	<u>47</u>
	100

But Those Aware of Decision See Negative Impact

	All who heard about	A lot	A little
<i>What effect on the campaign?</i>	%	%	%
Negative effect	65	78	58
Positive effect	16	11	18
No effect	10	5	13
Mixed/DK	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100
N	684	251	433

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 11-16, 2012. Q59-Q61. Based on registered voters (N=1,207). Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

There is no substantial partisan divide in awareness and opinions of the new campaign spending rules. Roughly half of Republicans, Democrats and independents alike have heard about the court decision allowing unlimited independent expenditures. And among those who have heard about it, comparably wide majorities in each group say it is having a negative effect on the campaign this year.

Men are more likely than women to say they have heard at least a little about the Supreme Court decision and its effects, and awareness is also higher among college graduates. There is little difference in awareness across age or region of the country. Among those who have heard about the decision, majorities of all groups see the impact on the 2012 presidential campaign as negative.

Partisans Agree on Negative Effects of New Rules

	All voters	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Heard about	54	51	54	56
Among those who have heard				
<i>Effect on campaign</i>				
Negative effect	65	60	63	67
Positive effect	16	17	21	12
No effect	10	16	6	11
Mixed/DK	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 11-16, 2012. Q59-Q61. Based on registered voters (N=1,207). Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted January 11-16, 2012 among a national sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (902 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 600 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 293 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,502	3.5 percentage points
Registered voters	1,207	3.5 percentage points
Republican voters	320	7.0 percentage points
Democratic voters	391	6.0 percentage points
Independent voters	440	6.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JANUARY 2012 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
January 11-16, 2012
N=1502

QUESTIONS 1-58 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

REGIST These days, many people are so busy they can't find time to register to vote, or move around so often they don't get a chance to re-register. Are you NOW registered to vote in your precinct or election district or haven't you been able to register so far?

[INSTRUCTION: IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS THAT THEY ARE IN NORTH DAKOTA AND DON'T HAVE TO REGISTER, PUNCH 1 FOR REGIST AND REGICERT]

ASK IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED '1' YES IN REGIST:

REGICERT Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote, or is there a chance that your registration has lapsed because you moved or for some other reason?

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77	Yes, registered
72	Absolutely certain
4	Chance registration has lapsed
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
23	No, not registered
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean <u>Rep</u>	Lean <u>Dem</u>
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2	17	16
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4	14	14
Dec 7-11, 2011	23	33	38	3	*	2	12	17
Nov 9-14, 2011	24	33	38	3	1	2	16	15
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	23	33	38	2	1	3	18	16
Aug 17-21, 2011	24	30	40	3	*	3	17	18
Jul 20-24, 2011	24	32	38	4	*	2	16	14
Jun 15-19, 2011	26	34	32	4	*	4	13	13
May 25-30, 2011	24	33	38	3	*	2	15	17
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	25	32	37	3	*	3	17	16
Mar 8-14, 2011	24	33	38	3	*	2	17	15
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	16
Feb 2-7, 2011	24	31	39	3	*	2	16	16
Yearly Totals								
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

ASK ALL:

Q.59 How much, if anything, have you heard about a 2010 Supreme Court decision allowing corporations and individuals to spend as much as they want on political ads for or against candidates as long as they don't coordinate with the candidates or campaigns. Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all about this?

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15	A lot
35	A little
50	Nothing at all
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF HEARD A LOT OR A LITTLE (Q59=1,2):

Q.60 How much is this decision affecting the 2012 presidential campaign? [READ]

BASED ON TOTAL:	BASED ON HEARD A LOT/LITTLE:	
Jan 11-16	Jan 11-16	
<u>2012</u>	<u>2012</u>	
25	51	A lot
16	33	A little
5	10	Not at all
3	5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
51	--	Heard nothing/DK/Ref
N 1502	803	

ASK IF HAVING AN EFFECT (Q60=1,2):

Q.61 Do you think the effect on the campaign is positive or negative?

BASED ON TOTAL:	BASED ON HEARD A LOT/LITTLE:	BASED ON HAVING AN EFFECT:	
Jan 11-16	Jan 11-16	Jan 11-16	
<u>2012</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2012</u>	
9	19	22	Positive effect
30	61	72	Negative effect
1	2	3	Mixed (VOL.)
1	3	3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
8	16	--	No effect/DK/Ref
51	--	--	Heard nothing/DK/Ref
N 1502	803	668	

NO QUESTIONS 62-63

QUESTIONS 64-69 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE