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# Republicans More Optimistic than Democrats about Midterms

*But Less GOP Optimism than in 2010*

A Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Survey

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ON THIS REPORT:**

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# Republicans More Optimistic than Democrats about Midterms

## *But Less GOP Optimism than in 2010*

Less than a year out from the 2014 midterm elections, Republicans are more optimistic than Democrats about their party's electoral prospects. But the "expectations gap" is far more modest now than it was prior to the 2010 election, when Republicans were brimming with confidence, or 2006, when most Democrats anticipated a midterm victory.

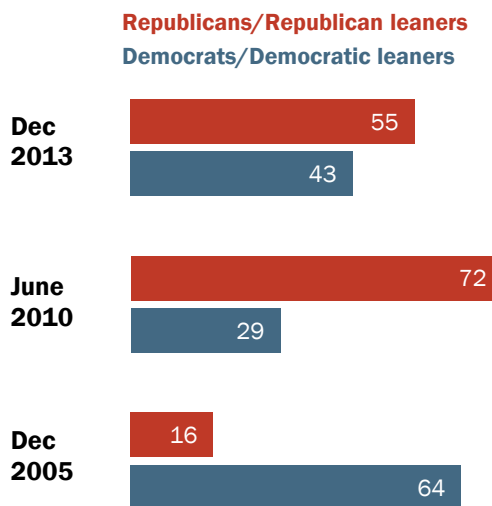
The new national survey by the Pew Research Center and USA TODAY, conducted Dec. 3-8 among 2,001 adults, finds that 55% of Republican and Republican-leaning registered voters expect the GOP to do better than it has in recent elections, 33% think it will do about the same, while just 5% say it will do worse. Democrats and Democratic leaners are less confident: 43% say the party will do better than in recent elections, 43% about the same and 9% worse.

Partisans' predictions are more closely divided than during either the 2006 or 2010 midterm election cycles. At a later point in the 2010 campaign (June 2010), fully 72% of Republican voters were confident in their party's chances to do better in the midterms. By contrast, just 29% of Democrats thought their party would do better in 2010 than in recent elections.

At this point in the 2006 election, Democrats were highly confident of victory. In December 2005, 64% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters expected their party to do better in the 2006 midterms than in other recent elections; just 16% of Republican voters felt the same way about the GOP's prospects.

### How Will Your Party Do Next November, Compared with Previous Elections?

*% saying their party will do BETTER than in recent elections. Based on registered voters*



Survey conducted Dec. 3-8, 2013. Based on registered voters.

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## GOP's Modest Enthusiasm Edge

The overall level of voter enthusiasm for the midterms is about the same today as it was at a comparably early point in the 2010 campaign.

About half (49%) of registered voters say they are very enthusiastic about voting in next year's elections, 29% say they are somewhat enthusiastic and 19% say they are not too or not at all enthusiastic.

Republicans hold a modest enthusiasm advantage: 53% of Republican and Republican-leaning voters say they are very enthusiastic about voting, compared with 47% of Democrats and Democratic leaners.

At about this point four years ago, Republicans held a much wider enthusiasm edge. In November 2009, a 57% majority of Republican and Republican-leaning voters said they were very enthusiastic about voting in the midterms, compared with 43% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters.

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### Republican Enthusiasm Edge Narrower than a Year Before 2010 Midterms

*How enthusiastic are you about voting in midterms?*

	<b>Nov 2009</b>	<b>Dec 2013</b>
<b>Republican/ Republican-leaning RV</b>	%	%
Very enthusiastic	57	53
Somewhat enthusiastic	26	27
Not too/at all enthusiastic	14	17
Don't know	3	3
	100	100
<b>Democratic/ Democratic-leaning RV</b>		
Very enthusiastic	43	47
Somewhat enthusiastic	36	33
Not too/at all enthusiastic	18	17
Don't know	3	3
	100	100
Gap in "very enthusiastic"	<b>R+14</b>	<b>R+6</b>

Survey conducted Dec. 3-8, 2013. Based on registered voters. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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At this early stage, registered voters split about evenly between whether they plan to vote Republican or Democratic in the 2014 midterms. Overall, 48% of registered voters say that if the elections for U.S. Congress were being held today, they would vote for the Democratic Party's candidate in their district or lean toward the Democrat, while roughly as many (44%) say they would vote for the Republican candidate or lean Republican. Opinion is little changed since early October.

At about this stage in the 2010 election, voter preferences were divided; in January of that year, 46% supported the Democrat while 44% favored the Republican. Among registered voters the race remained close over the course of the campaign. However, the GOP maintained a decided engagement advantage throughout the year. In the Pew Research Center's [final pre-election poll that year](#), registered voters were divided, but among likely voters Republicans held a 48% to 42% advantage. In the November 2, 2010 election, Republican House candidates received 51% of the vote, compared with 45% for Democrats, and the GOP regained the House majority.

Democrats had the advantage among registered voters throughout the 2006 campaign. In February of that year, Democrats held a nine-point lead among registered voters (50% to 41%). [Pew Research's final poll that year](#) showed Democrats with an eight-point lead among registered voters but a smaller edge among likely voters (47% to 43%). Democrats went on to win the national popular vote for the House, by 52% to 44%, and gained control of both the House and Senate.

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## Divided Midterm Voting Intentions

*Based on registered voters*

	Rep candidate	Dem candidate
<b>2014 Midterm</b>	%	%
December 2013	44	48
Actual vote	?	?
<b>2010 Midterm</b>		
January 2010	44	46
November 2009	42	47
Actual vote	51	45
<b>2006 Midterm</b>		
February 2006	41	50
September 2005	40	52
Actual vote	44	52

Survey conducted Dec. 3-8, 2013. National vote totals from Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives.

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## About the Survey

The analysis for this report is based on telephone interviews conducted December 3-8, 2013 among a national sample of 2,001 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (1,000 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,001 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 523 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 2011 Census Bureau's American Community 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 2012 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 among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus...</b>
Total sample	2,001	2.6 percentage points
Republican	539	4.9 percentage points
Democrat	655	4.5 percentage points
Independent	711	4.3 percentage points
Registered voters	1,579	2.9 percentage points
Rep/Rep-leaning RVs	752	4.2 percentage points
Dem/Dem-leaning RVs	715	4.3 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.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS  
DECEMBER 2013 POLITICAL SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
December 3-8, 2013  
N=2,001**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 6-7 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTIONS 3-5, 8-11****ASK ALL:**

Thinking about the next congressional elections that will be coming up about a year from now...

Q.12 If the elections for U.S. Congress were being held TODAY, would you vote for the Republican Party's candidate or the Democratic Party's candidate for Congress in your district?

**ASK IF 'OTHER' 'DON'T KNOW/REFUSED' (Q.12=3,9):**

Q.13 As of TODAY, would you LEAN more to the Republican or the Democrat?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1,579]:**

	Rep/ <u>Lean Rep</u>	Dem/ <u>Lean Dem</u>	(VOL.) Other/ DK/Ref
<b>2014 Election</b>			
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	44	48	8
Oct 9-13, 2013	43	49	8
<b>2012 Election</b>			
Jun 7-17, 2012	43	47	10
Aug 17-21, 2011	44	48	8
<b>2010 Election</b>			
Oct 27-30, 2010	43	44	12
Oct 13-18, 2010	46	42	12
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	44	47	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	44	45	11
Jun 16-20, 2010	45	45	10
Mar 11-21, 2010	44	44	12
Feb 3-9, 2010	42	45	13
Jan 6-10, 2010	44	46	10
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	42	47	11
Aug 20-27, 2009	44	45	10
<b>2008 Election</b>			
June, 2008	37	52	11
<b>2006 Election</b>			
November, 2006	40	48	12
Late October, 2006	38	49	13
Early October, 2006	38	51	11
September, 2006	39	50	11
August, 2006	41	50	9
June, 2006	39	51	10
April, 2006	41	51	8
February, 2006	41	50	9
Mid-September, 2005	40	52	8
<b>2004 Election</b>			
June, 2004	41	48	11
<b>2002 Election</b>			
Early November, 2002	42	46	12
Early October, 2002	44	46	10
Early September, 2002	44	46	10
June, 2002	44	46	10
February, 2002	46	45	9
Early November, 2001	44	44	12

**Q.12/13 CONTINUED...**

	Rep/ <u>Lean Rep</u>	Dem/ <u>Lean Dem</u>	(VOL.) Other/ DK/Ref
<b>2000 Election</b>			
Early November, 2000	42	48	10
Early October, 2000	43	47	10
July, 2000	43	47	10
February, 2000	44	47	9
October, 1999	43	49	8
June, 1999	40	50	10
<b>1998 Election</b>			
Late October, 1998	40	47	13
Early October, 1998	43	44	13
Early September, 1998	45	46	9
Late August, 1998	44	45	11
Early August, 1998	42	49	9
June, 1998	44	46	10
March, 1998	40	52	8
February, 1998	41	50	9
January, 1998	41	51	8
August, 1997	45	48	7
<b>1996 Election</b>			
November, 1996	41	48	11
October, 1996	42	49	9
Late September, 1996	43	49	8
Early September, 1996	43	51	6
July, 1996	46	47	7
June, 1996	44	50	6
March, 1996	44	49	7
January, 1996	46	47	7
October, 1995	48	48	4
August, 1995	50	43	7
<b>1994 Election</b>			
November, 1994	45	43	12
Late October, 1994	47	44	9
Early October, 1994	52	40	8
September, 1994	48	46	6
July, 1994	45	47	8

**ASK ALL:**

Q.14 How enthusiastic are you about voting in next year's Congressional elections? Would you say you are very, somewhat, not too, or not at all enthusiastic?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1,579]:**

(U)		
Dec 3-8		Oct 28-Nov 8
<u>2013</u>		<u>2009</u>
49	Very enthusiastic	48
29	Somewhat enthusiastic	32
9	Not too enthusiastic	10
10	Not at all enthusiastic	6
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	3

**NO QUESTIONS 15, 23-29, 32, 37-44, 46, 49, 52-53, 60, 62-66, 72-79, 89-93**

**QUESTIONS 16-22, 45, 47-48, 50-51, 54-59, 61, 67-69 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**QUESTIONS 30-31, 33-36, 70-71, 80-88, 98 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**



**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 Rep	Lean Dem
Dec 3-8, 2013	24	34	37	3	*	2	17	15
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	24	32	38	4	*	2	16	14
Oct 9-13, 2013	25	32	37	3	1	3	16	18
Sep 4-8, 2013	26	32	38	3	1	1	17	15
Jul 17-21, 2013	19	29	46	3	*	2	19	18
Jun 12-16, 2013	23	33	39	3	*	2	17	15
May 1-5, 2013	25	32	37	2	1	3	14	16
Mar 13-17, 2013	26	33	34	3	1	3	14	15
Feb 13-18, 2013	22	32	41	2	*	2	15	19
Jan 9-13, 2013	25	32	38	2	*	2	15	16
Dec 17-19, 2012	21	32	38	4	*	4	15	14
Dec 5-9, 2012	23	33	38	3	1	2	14	19
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
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
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 REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):**

Q.94 Thinking about next year's Congressional elections, do you think the Republican Party will do better, worse, or about the same as it has in recent elections?

**BASED ON REPUBLICAN AND REPUBLICAN-LEARNING REGISTERED VOTERS [N=752]:**

(U)		Oct 13-18	Jun 16-20	Nov	Early Oct	Sept	June	Feb	Dec
Dec 3-8		2010 <sup>1</sup>	2010	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2005
55	Better	76	72	17	16	23	16	21	16
5	Worse	1	2	29	21	22	17	17	21
33	About the same	18	23	48	56	50	62	57	56
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	4	3	6	7	5	5	5	7

**ASK DEMOCRATS AND DEMOCRATIC LEANERS (PARTY=2 OR PARTYLN=2):**

Q.95 Thinking about next year's Congressional elections, do you think the Democratic Party will do better, worse, or about the same as it has in recent elections?

**BASED ON DEMOCRATIC AND DEMOCRATIC-LEARNING REGISTERED VOTERS [N=715]:**

(U)		Oct 13-18	Jun 16-20	Nov	Early Oct	Sept	June	Feb	Dec
Dec 3-8		2010 <sup>2</sup>	2010	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2005
43	Better	26	29	72	67	66	62	64	64
9	Worse	30	18	1	2	1	2	2	1
43	About the same	39	48	22	26	30	32	29	29
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	5	4	5	5	3	4	5	6

**NO QUESTIONS 96-97****QUESTION 98 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):**

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

**BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=896]:**

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
Dec 3-8, 2013	32	9	57	1	1	--
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	40	9	48	2	1	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	11	45	2	1	--
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2013	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--

<sup>1</sup> Between June 2006 and Oct 13-18, 2010, item asked about "this year's Congressional elections."

<sup>2</sup> Between June 2006 and Oct 13-18, 2010, item asked about "this year's Congressional elections."

## TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 <sup>3</sup>	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21

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**Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:**

(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls

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<sup>3</sup> In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."