



21st Century America Project

March 2010 National Poll Summary

This memo summarizes the findings of a major new poll conducted Feb 5th-9th, 2010 of 2500 adults living in the United States.

This poll is the first of three national polls of NDN's 21st Century America Project. This project has been established to help policy-makers, elected officials and the public better understand the great demographic changes taking place in America today. This new poll has been specifically designed to provide more insight into how the political coalitions of the two major political parties in America are adapting to these rapid changes.

The poll finds that America is no longer a "center-right" nation. There are nearly as many self-perceived liberals and progressives in the American electorate as conservatives. On public policy, most Americans favor activist government focused on promoting economic equality and a multi-lateralist approach in foreign policy. Democrats also retain a lead in both Party Identification and the Congressional Generic Ballot.

The poll takes an in-depth look at the state of the new and very different majority coalition identified and activated by Barack Obama in 2008. While some of the core groups of this new coalition – Millennials, African-Americans, Hispanics, women – remain very Democratic, their current lack of intensity give Republicans an opening to make gains in 2010, and, overtime, begin to dismantle the Democratic Party's most promising and powerful electoral coalition since the mid-1960s, and perhaps even since the time of FDR.

Some key findings:

21st Century America is changing:

- Millennials, the largest generation in American history, outnumber each older generation: There are now about 17 million more Millennials alive than Baby Boomers and 27 million more Millennials as there are members of Generation X.

- Millennials will increasingly dominate the electorate over the next decade. By 2012, Millennials will represent 24% of the voting age population, and by 2020 that number will jump to 36%.
- America is also more diverse than ever before: We are on track to becoming Majority Minority. BY 2050, the United States will be only 47% White.
- Hispanics are booming: By 2050, Hispanics will be more than ¼ of the US Population.

So too, the 21st Century electorate is changing:

- About half of the US electorate (47%) identify as or lean Democratic. A third (34%) identify as or lean to the GOP. These numbers are virtually unchanged since a January 2009 Magid survey (48% Democrat vs. 34% Republican).
- About a third each of Americans call themselves liberal/progressive (31%), conservative (35%), or moderates (34%). This ideological distribution has not shifted significantly since January 2009 (30% liberal/progressive vs. 32% conservative vs. 36% moderate).
- A majority (54%) favors a government that actively tries to solve economic and social problems vs. one that stays out of society and the economy to the greatest extent possible (30%).
- A majority (50%) prefers government ensure that all Americans have a basic standard of living and income even if it increases spending over one that lets each person get along on their own even it means that some will have more than others (32%).
- A majority (53%) believes the best way to protect national security is through building alliances with other nations as opposed to relying primarily on US military strength (31%).

The 21st Century Democratic Coalition that both reflects America's changing demographics and underpins the Democratic majority is solid and intact:

- Millennials (18-28 year olds) identify as Democrats over Republicans (53% vs. 25%).
- Gen-Xers (29-45 year olds) identify as Democrats over Republicans (50% vs. 30%).

- African-Americans identify as Democrats over Republicans (83% vs. 7%).
- Hispanics identify as Democrats over Republicans (59% vs. 23%).
- Women identify as Democrats over Republicans (52% vs. 30%).
- Residents of the Northeast identify as Democrats over Republicans (50% vs. 28%).
- Residents of the West identify as Democrats over Republicans (50% vs. 31%).

But in spite of their solid party ID lead, voter intensity severely threatens Democrats in 2010 and presents an opportunity for Republicans to make inroads:

- Reflecting their party ID advantage, Democrats have a solid lead over the Republicans on the generic House ballot (34% vs. 26% with 30% undecided).
- The Democrats hold at least a 1.5:1 lead over the GOP among all groups within the emerging 21st century Democratic coalition, with particularly solid support among Millennials (2.4:1); African-Americans (11.8:1) and Hispanics (2.3:1).
- However, key components of the coalition are far less likely than other electoral segments to say they are “certain to vote” in November—especially Millennials (43%), Generation X (53%), and Hispanics (52%).
- These same key Democratic components are also less likely than others to believe that the outcome of the 2010 elections is “very important”—women (41%), Millennials (29%), Gen-Xers (39%), and Hispanics (41%).

Voter registration is also a major issue for key coalition components:

- As compared with 79% of the entire electorate, only 61% of Millennials, 73% of Gen-Xers, and 71% of Hispanics are registered to vote.
- Complicating the problem, a significant number of Millennials (34%), Gen-Xers (21%), African-Americans (27%), and Hispanics (26%) have moved since the 2008 elections.

Methodology

These results were obtained in an online survey conducted by Frank N. Magid Associates, the preeminent generational insights media market research and consultation firm, with a national sample of 2,771 adults 18 years old and over. A sample of this size produces a sampling error of +/- 1.9% for findings based on the entire sample. The study was fielded February 5-9, 2010.

About the 21st Century America Project

NDN/NPI created the "21 Century America Project" to help elected officials, policy makers and the public better understand the enormous demographic changes taking place in America today. The project will feature the work of NDN Fellows Mike Hais and Morley Winograd, critically acclaimed authors of *Millennial Makeover; MySpace, YouTube and the Future of American Politics*, NDN/NPI Senior Vice-president Andres Ramirez and his Hispanic Programs Team, and Senior Advisor Alicia Menendez.

A feature of the project will be a new series of comprehensive public opinion polls managed by veteran market research analyst Mike Hais. Conducted with very large samples - 2500 people - these polls will look at the changing American population in great depth, complementing NDN's multi-year investment in basic demographic research.

About Mike Hais and Morley Winograd

NDN Fellows Mike Hais and Morley Winograd are the leading experts on the Millennial Generation. Their ground-breaking book, [Millennial Makeover: MySpace, YouTube, & the Future of American Politics](#) was named one of The New York Times Favorite Books of 2008.