WHERE THE PARTIES ARE TODAY

Party images are less well defined than in the past, but Democrats and Republicans have clear strengths. The Democrats are seen as doing better handling unemployment and health care while the Republicans lead on taxes and national defense. The data here do not tell us how voters will rank these issues in importance in elections.

Question: Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party is...?

More concerned with people like yourself
- Don't know/no answer
- Both/neither (vol.)
- Republican Party
- Democratic Party

More likely to improve the health care system
- Don't know/no answer
- Both/neither (vol.)
- Republican Party
- Democratic Party

Better able to handle unemployment
- Don't know/no answer
- Both/neither (vol.)
- Democratic Party
- Republican Party


Question: Do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party would do a better job of dealing with each of the following issues and problems?

Would do a better job of dealing with the environment
- No opinion
- Democratic Party
- Republican Party


Question: Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party is more likely to reform the welfare system?

More likely to reform the welfare system
- Don't know/no answer
- Both/neither (vol.)
- Democratic Party
- Republican Party


Question: Do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party would do a better job of dealing with each of the following issues and problems?

Would do a better job of dealing with taxes
- No opinion
- Republican Party
- Democratic Party


Would do a better job of dealing with national defense
- No opinion/no difference
- Republican Party
- Democratic Party

Battlegrounds

Today there are a number of battleground areas between the parties. Crime is one where the parties appear evenly matched. Probably because Americans don’t think very much about the deficit, questions asked at the same time produce different results.

**Question:** Do you think the Democratic Party or the Republican Party can do a better job in each of the following, or do you think there’s any difference between them?

- **Can do a better job reducing the crime rate**
  - Not sure
  - Democratic Party
  - Republican Party

- **More likely to reduce crime**
  - Don’t know/no answer
  - Democratic Party
  - Republican Party

**Source:** Survey by Yankelovich Partners for Time and CNN, January 17–18, 1994.

**Question:** Do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party would do a better job dealing with each of the following issues and problems?

- **Would do a better job of dealing with the economy**
  - No opinion
  - Democratic Party
  - Republican Party

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, December 17–19, 1993.

**Question:** Do you think the Democratic Party or the Republican Party can do a better job in each of the following, or don’t you think there’s any difference between them?

- **Can do a better job reducing the federal budget deficit**
  - 5% Not sure
  - Democratic Party
  - Republican Party

- **More likely to reduce the federal budget deficit**
  - Don’t know/no answer
  - Both/neither (vol.)
  - Republican Party
  - Democratic Party

**Source:** Survey by Yankelovich Partners for Time and CNN, January 17–18, 1994.

**Question:** Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party is more likely to reduce crime?

- More likely to reduce crime
  - Democratic Party
  - Republican Party

Economics

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Democrats generally bested the GOP on keeping the country prosperous. In recent years, the matchups have been closer. Economic conditions clearly influence our views of which party can better handle unemployment. The GOP has gained over the last several decades in terms of its ability to deal with taxes.

Question: Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party do you think would do a better job of keeping the country prosperous—the Republican or the Democratic Party?

Note: “Looking ahead for the next few years” was periodically omitted from the question.
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of August 8-10, 1993, for USA Today and CNN.

Question: Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party is better able to handle unemployment?

Party that would do a better job...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democratic</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeping taxes from getting too high</td>
<td>31% Jan '946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22% May '947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing federal income taxes</td>
<td>23% Jul '52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing taxes during the next (four/few) years</td>
<td>30% Sep '56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34% Sep '57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding taxes down</td>
<td>31% Sep '78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with taxes</td>
<td>45% Oct '91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40% Jan '92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45% Dec. '92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37% Dec. '93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Question wordings—As you feel today, which political party—the Democratic or the Republican—can handle each of these problems (best): 1946-47; 1952, 1978? Whichever party—the Democratic or Republican—do you think would do the best job of reducing taxes during the next (four/few) years? (1956-57). Do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party would do a better job of dealing with each of the following issues and problems? (1991-93).
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of December 17-19, 1993, for USA Today and CNN.
Foreign Policy

The specter of World War III may not be as powerful as it was in the past, but the GOP has an edge over the Democrats in keeping the United States out of such a conflagration. The GOP has also gained over time on handling national defense and foreign policy.

Question: Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party do you think would be more likely to keep the United States out of World War III—the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?

Percent

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization; latest that of February 6-9, 1992.

Question: As you feel today, which political party—the Democratic or the Republican—can handle each of these problems better?

Party that can handle dealing with world affairs better

Question: As you feel today, which political party—the Democratic or the Republican—do you think can best handle foreign affairs—that is, dealing with Russia and other countries?

Party that can best handle foreign affairs/dealing with Russia and other countries

Question: Do you think the Democratic Party or the Republican Party can do a better job in each of the following, or don’t you think there’s any difference between them?

Party that can do a better job of managing the country’s foreign policy*

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization; latest that of May 14-17, 1947.

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization; latest that of July 16-21, 1954.

Some Gaps Narrow

The Democrats have lost ground with skilled workers and labor union members though they are still seen as the party that best serves these groups. The Democrats are also identified with women, and the GOP with wealthy people. Today the Democrats have a big advantage on dealing with race relations. This was not always the case.

Question: As you feel today, which political party—the Republican or the Democratic—do you think serves the interests of the following groups best?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Democratic</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People like yourself</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled workers*</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor union members</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired people</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy People</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Question wording—As you feel today, which political party—the Republican or the Democratic—can handle these problems better? (1949): Which party—the Republican or the Democratic—do you think can do the best job of...? (1956). Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party—the Democratic or Republican—do you think will do the best job of...? (1957). Which political party—the Republican or the Democratic—do you think will do the best job of...? (1964). Which political party—the Democratic or the Republican—can do a better job of dealing with...? (1966). Do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party would do a better job of dealing with each of the following issues and problems? (1991–92).

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of January 3–6, 1992, for USA Today and CNN.