

# ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF 2010 ON 2012

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2010

## Democratic operatives credit tea party

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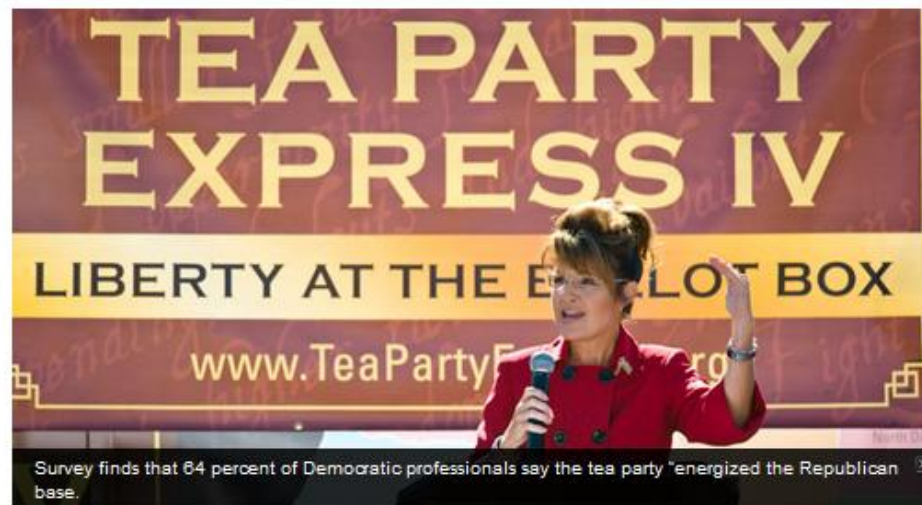
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By JONATHAN MARTIN | 11/17/10 11:06 AM EST Updated: 11/17/10 11:40 AM EST

Democratic consultants and operatives who worked on the 2010 campaign think the tea party movement served as more of an energy force for Republicans than a divisive factor that split the GOP, according to an informal survey being released today.

Sixty-four percent of Democratic professionals said the tea party "energized the Republican base" and was one reason for the GOP's gains" while just 36 percent thought it "splintered

# Methodology

- Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey from November 10 to 15
- Respondents came from a list culled from Democratic political consultants across the country
- Respondents included 132 campaign professionals who worked with Democrats in 2010
  - 46% Consultants of all stripes (media, mail, polling, etc.)
  - 25% Staffers for federal and state campaigns, focused on campaign managers
  - 25% Staffers for both national and state party campaign committees

# What does 2010 mean for 2012?

## What went wrong in 2010 for Democrats?

- How much is the economy to blame versus policy for Democratic losses in 2010, and how much would a turnaround improve chances for Obama and the Democrats in 2012?
- What did the GOP do better than Democrats this year?

## Looking forward...

- What are the odds for a Democratic political recovery?
- How will Obama stack up against potential GOP challengers?

# Democratic professionals are split on causes of Democratic defeats

Was it Democratic policy decisions or the state of economic conditions and other external factors that led to electoral defeat?

How much are the Democrats to blame for their loss of the majority in the House?

Democrat's own actions/campaigns are to blame

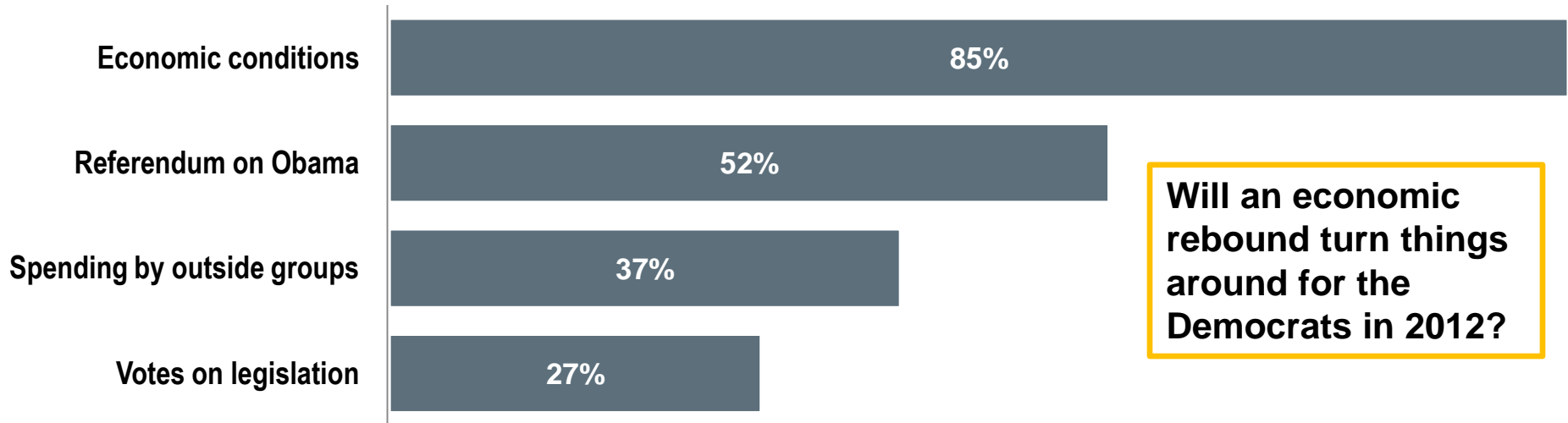
52%

External factors are to blame

48%

# But most Democratic professionals blame the economy first

In your opinion, why did Democrats lose over 60 House seats in this year's election (combined first and second choice responses)?



Which of the following do you think was more harmful to the Democratic candidates with whom you were involved?

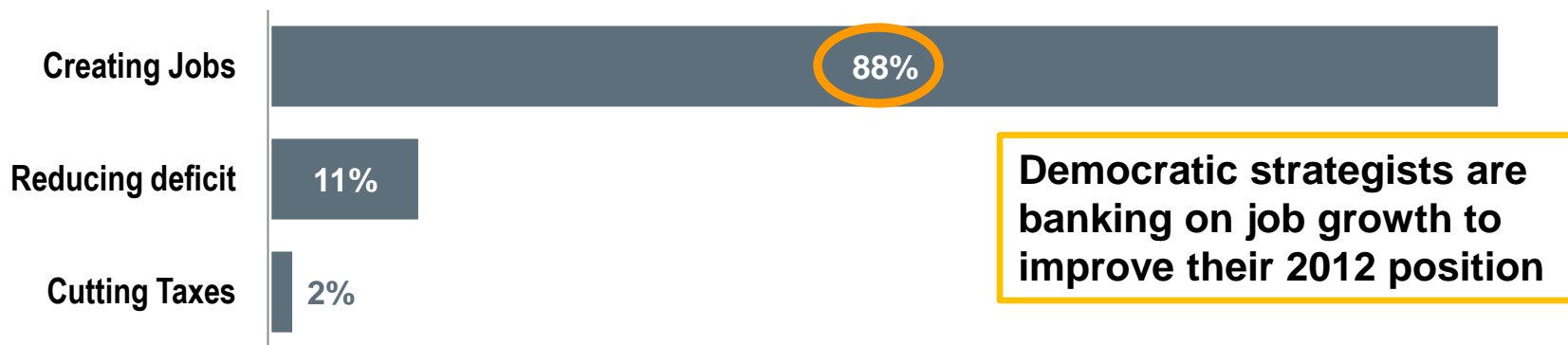
The unemployment rate

The health care reform fight

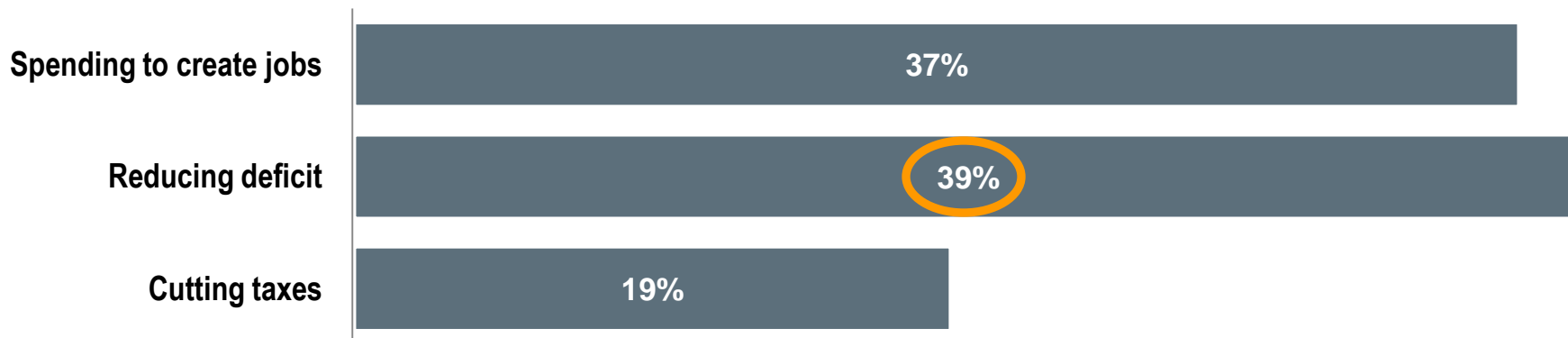


# Democratic Pros Think Creating Jobs is Best Political Strategy for 2012

*Politically*, which of the following should be the highest priority for Democrats in the next Congress?



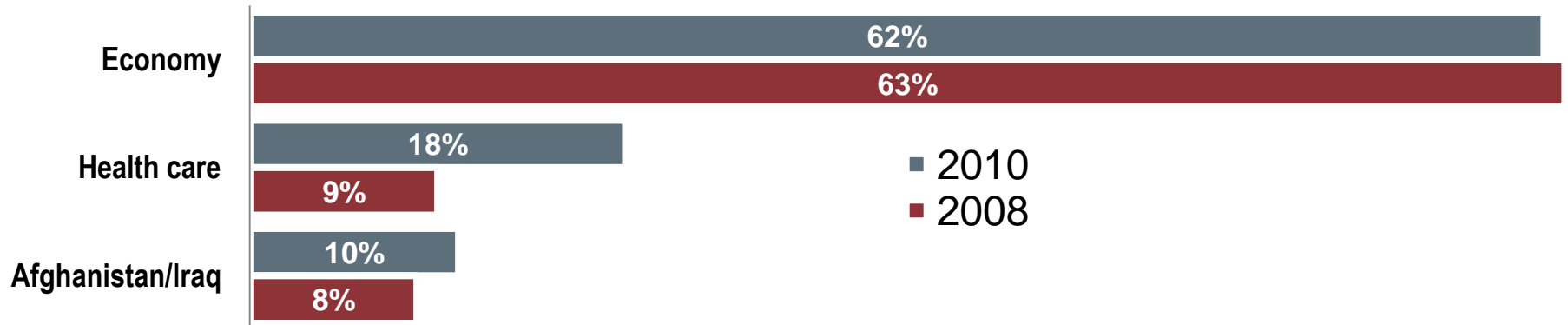
From Exit Polls: Highest Priority for Congress Nationwide



Nationwide data from national exit polling conducted by Edison Research for the National Election Pool Consortium during the 2008 and 2010 general elections (N=17504)

# A revived economy could win Democrats back economic voters

## Most Important Issues Facing the Nation - Nationwide



## Vote for Congress among the 62% of voters who say the economy is the most important issue facing the nation - Nationwide



Data from national exit polling conducted by Edison Research for the National Election Pool Consortium during the 2008 and 2010 general elections (N=17504 in 2010, N=16521 in 2008)

# Health care was more harm than help, but few think final passage hurt Dems

Thinking about the candidate you were involved with who voted in favor of health care reform, how much of a problem was that “yes” vote during the campaign.

Not much of a problem/Asset

N/A

Biggest/serious problem

35%

23%

42%

**Though only 2% of Democratic professionals say Health Care Reform was an asset, only 10% say it was one of the biggest problems faced by the campaign.**

Thinking about the health care reform fight, if the final piece of legislation had ultimately been voted down after more than a year of focus and votes on the issue, would Democratic candidates in general have fared better or worse in the midterm elections?

Fared worse

No difference

Fared better

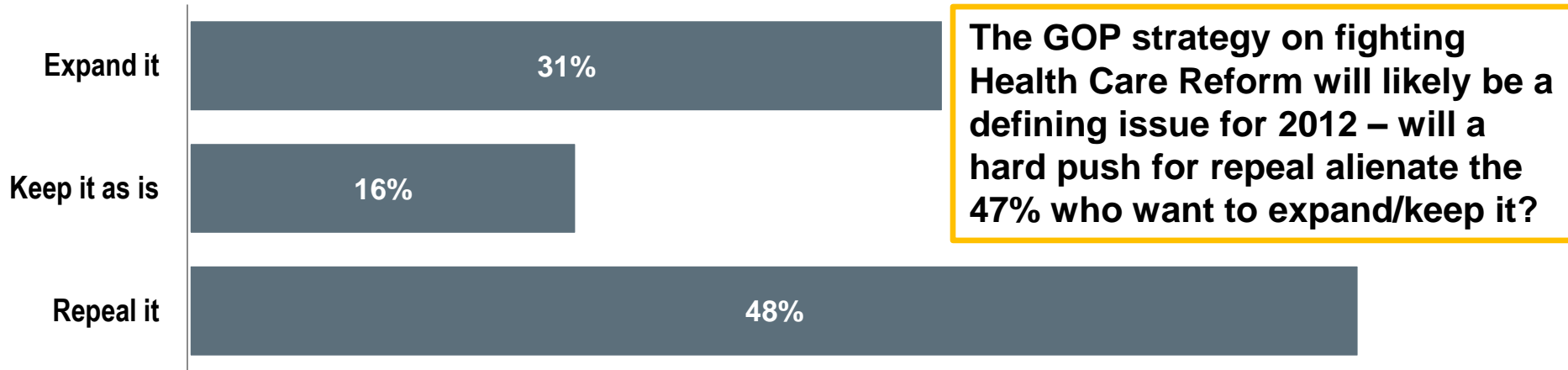
34%

47%

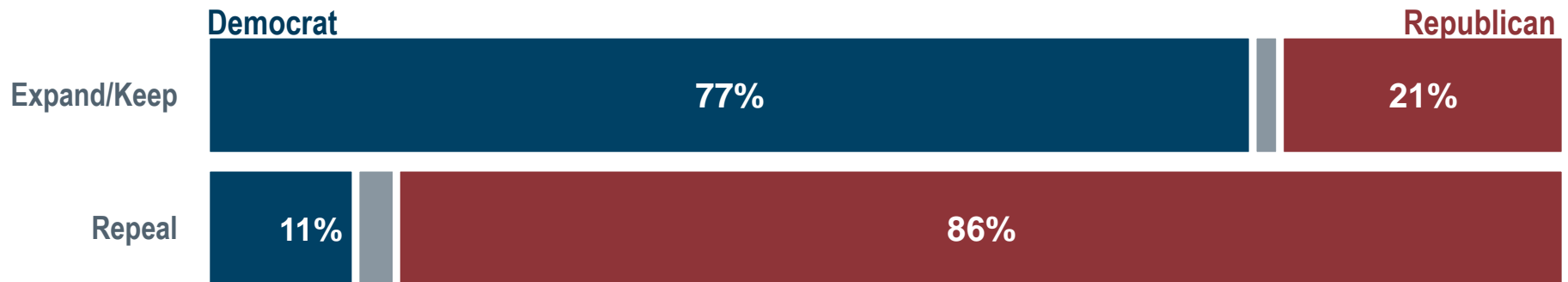
19%

# 2010 voters were largely divided about the reform law

## What Should Congress do with the new Health Care Law - Nationwide



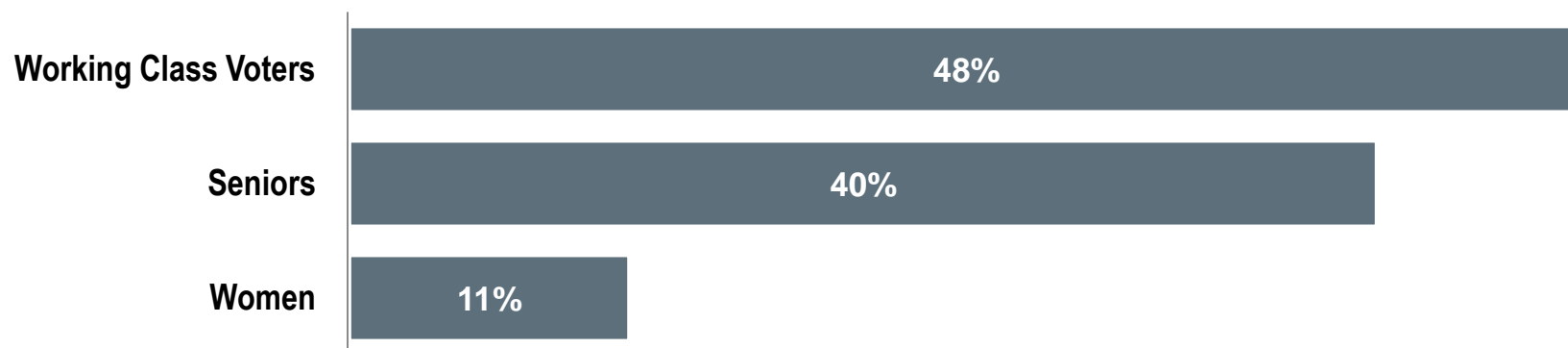
## Vote for Congress by feelings about new Health Care Law - Nationwide



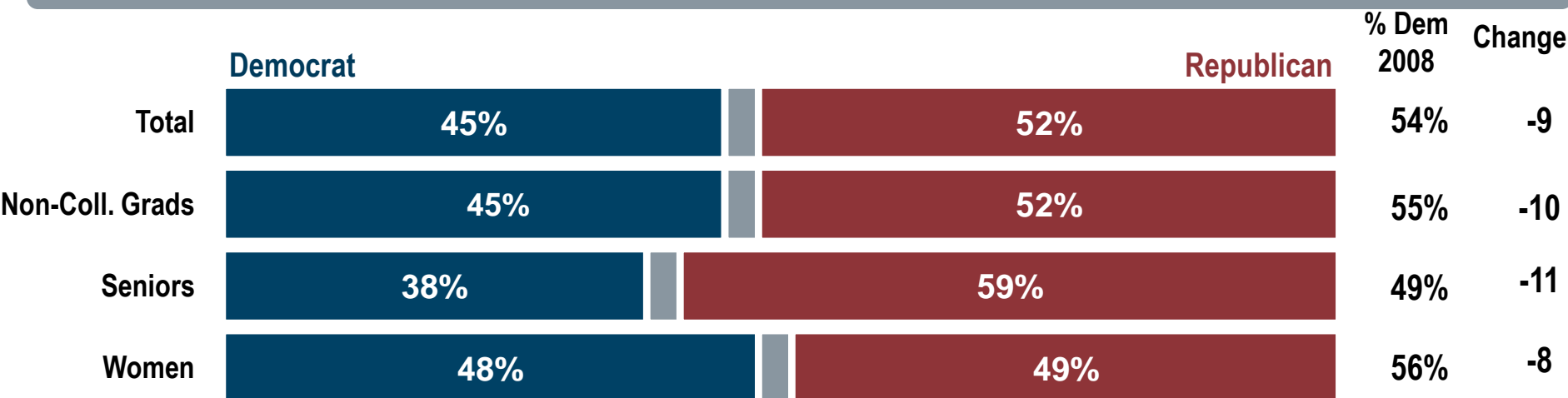
Data from national exit polling conducted by Edison Research for the National Election Pool Consortium during the 2008 and 2010 general elections (N=17504 in 2010, N=16521 in 2008)

# Dem Pros Say Working Class Voters and Seniors Hurt Most...

Democrats failed to improve their standing with some important demographic subgroups during the campaign. With which of the following was this most problematic?



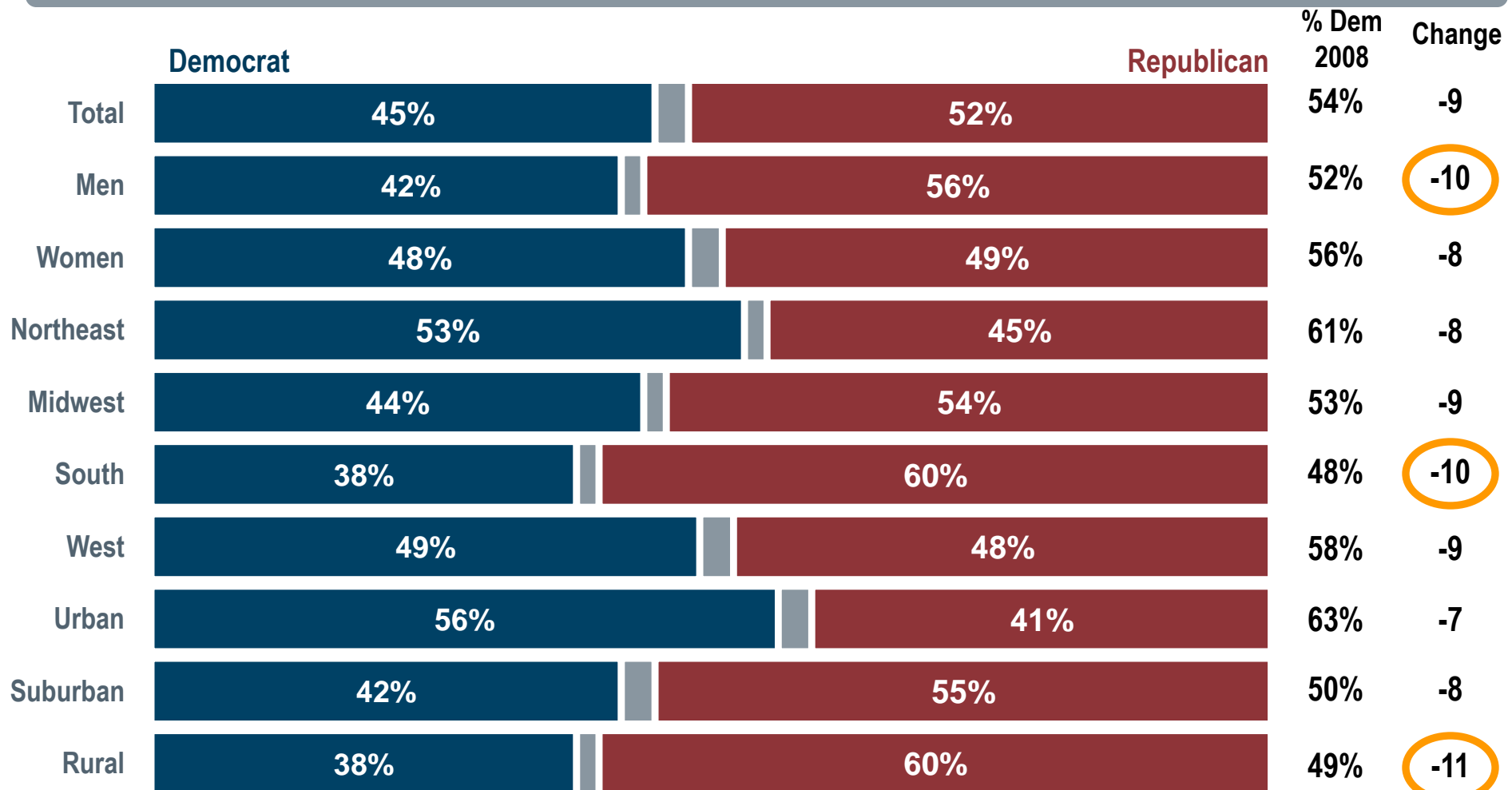
From exit polls - Nationwide Vote for Congress...



Data from national exit polling conducted by Edison Research for the National Election Pool Consortium during the 2008 and 2010 general elections (N=17504 in 2010, N=16521 in 2008)

# ...But Democratic Losses Extended Across Many Demographic Groups

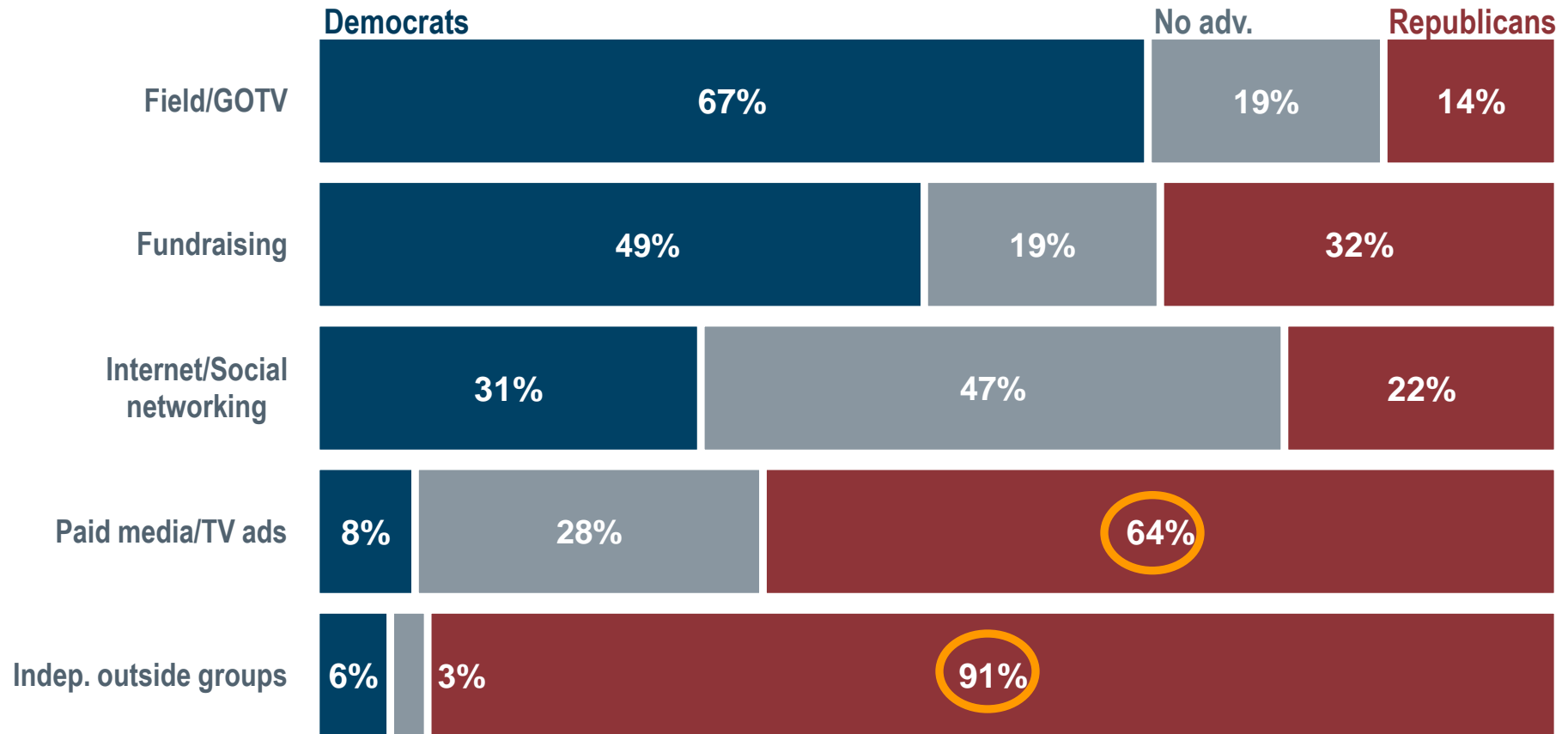
## Nationwide Vote for Congress - 2010



Data from national exit polling conducted by Edison Research for the National Election Pool Consortium during the 2008 and 2010 general elections (N=17504 in 2010, N=16521 in 2008)

# Republicans did a Better Job of Using Paid Media and Outside Groups

Generally speaking, which party did a better job using the following tools this year?

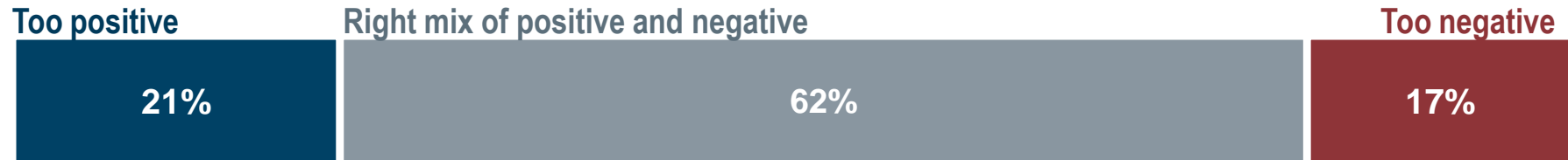


Democratic professionals rate the GOP's use outside groups such as 527s much higher than Democrats' – **how Democrats use these groups in 2012 will play in an important role in the election**

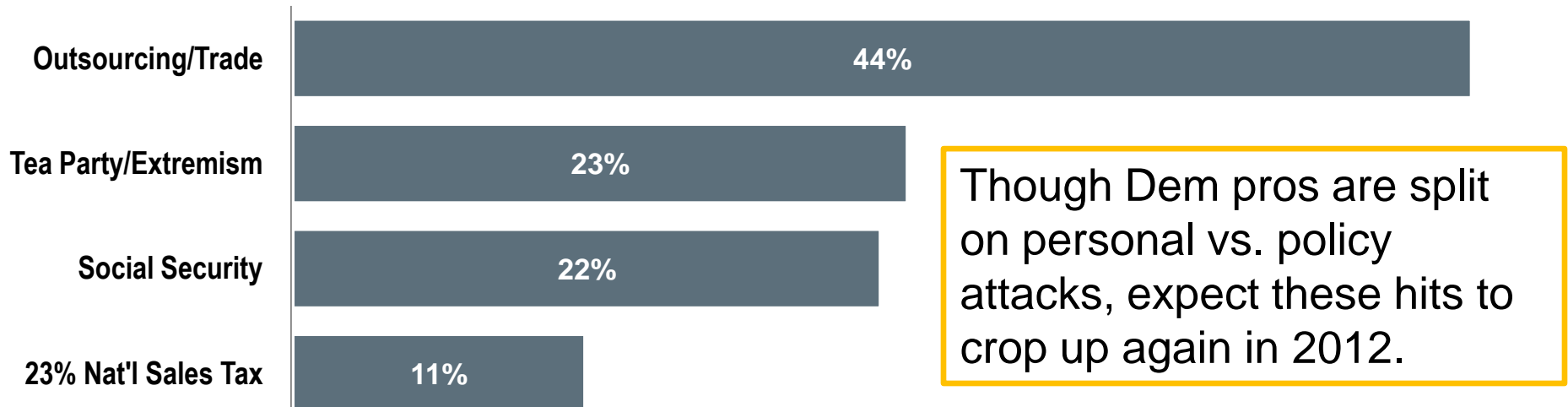
# Still, Don't Expect Democrats to Go Positive in 2012

If anything, Democrats say they should have been more negative in their campaigns.

Do you think the campaigns you were involved in were...



Which of the following do you think was the most effective attack against Republican candidates?



Though Dem pros are split on personal vs. policy attacks, expect these hits to crop up again in 2012.

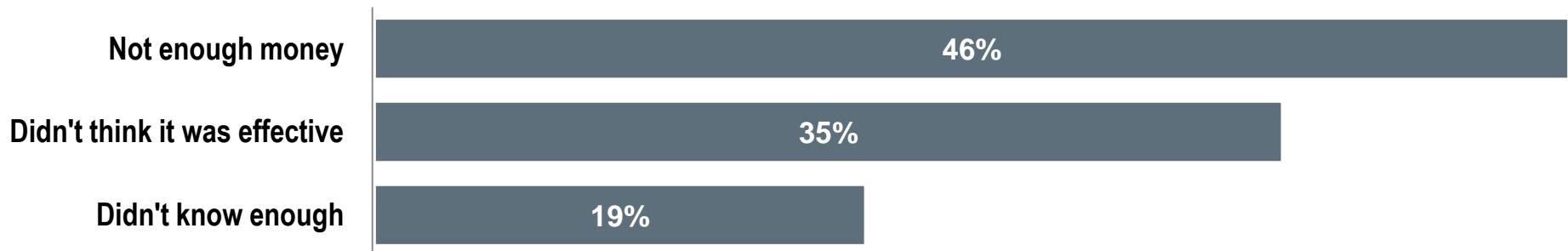
# Democrats report enthusiasm for online advertising

What percentage of a campaign's paid media budget do you think should be spent on online advertising?



**A majority (59%) say campaigns should spend more than 5% on online advertising – a much higher level of spending than most campaigns used in 2010**

What is the main reason some campaigns did not advertise online?



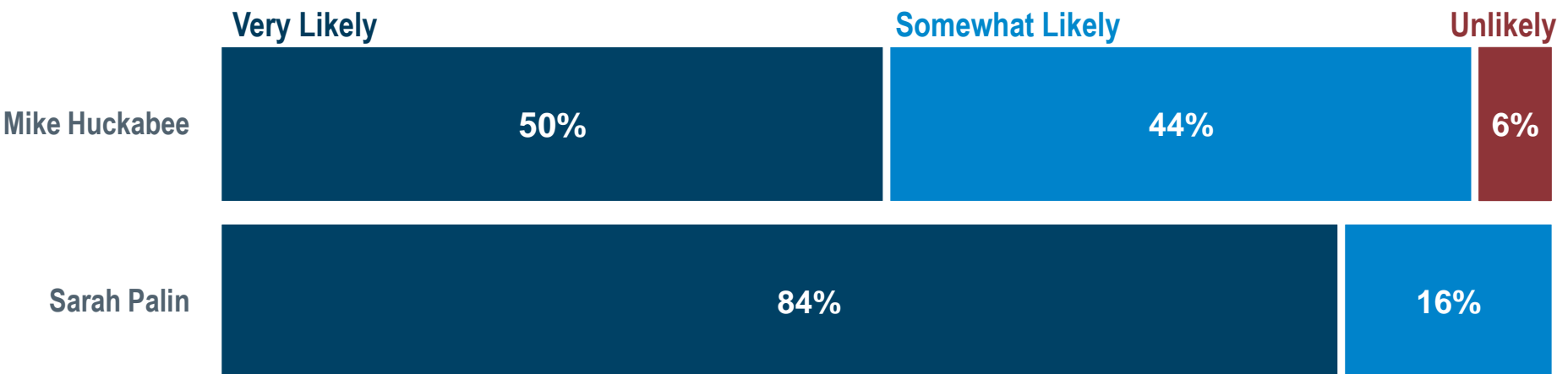
**Only 1 in 3 Democratic professionals doubt the effectiveness of online advertising, suggesting a growth in the industry for 2012.**

# Dem pros think Obama will be the nominee – and win re-election...

How likely do you think it is that Barack Obama will face a serious Democratic primary challenge in 2012?

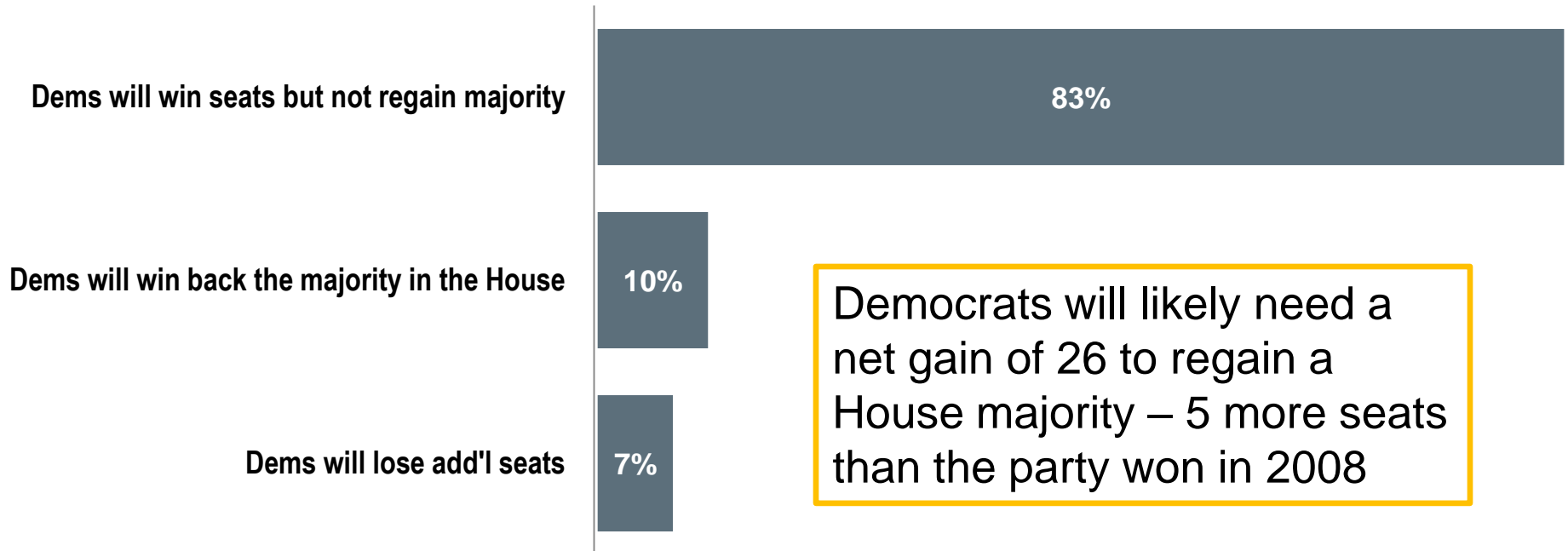


How likely do you think it is that Barack Obama will be re-elected in 2012 if Republicans nominate ...?



# ...and that Democrats Will Win back Some, but Not All, Seats Lost in the House

Which of the following do you think is most likely for the 2012 election?



# The Tea Party Helped the GOP in 2010 but Pres. Nominee will be Establishment

Which of the following statements about the Tea Party do you agree with more?

Tea Party energized the base/reason for GOP gains

64%

Tea Party splintered party/hindered greater GOP gains

36%

In 2012, do you think Republican Party is more likely to nominate a “grassroots Tea Party” candidate or an “establishment Republican” candidate for President?

Establishment Republican candidate

78%

Grassroots Tea Party candidate

22%

# Summing up the Democratic pros:

- Democrats lost more because **voters stopped trusting them on the economy** – especially working class voters and seniors – than because of opposition to HCR specifically
- **A growing economy, some time with a new GOP majority in the House and efforts to counter outside spending** in favor of Republicans will shake up electoral dynamics in 2012
- **Obama will likely win re-election**, especially against controversial candidates like Sarah Palin and Mike Huckabee, while Democrats in the House will regain seats but not the majority
- Look for **more negative campaigning** and an **increased focus on the Internet** for next year