

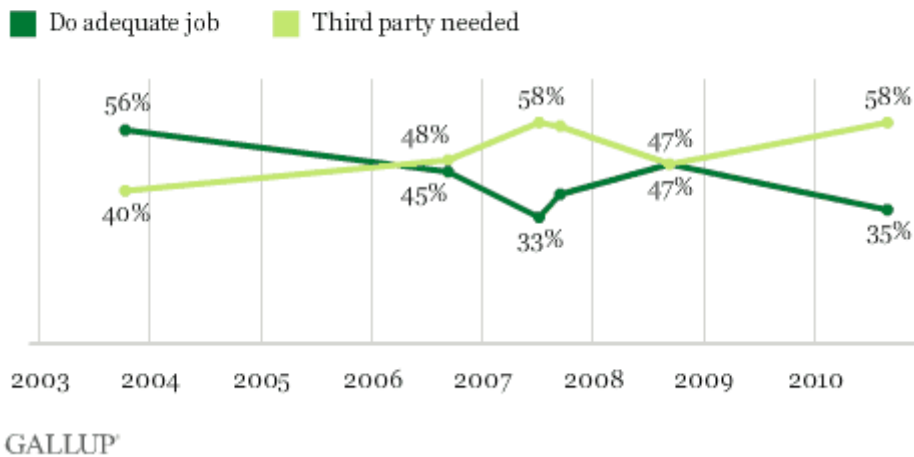
September 17, 2010

## Americans Renew Call for Third Party

Fifty-eight percent of Americans, and 62% of Tea Party supporters, favor third party  
by Jeffrey M. Jones

PRINCETON, NJ -- Americans' desires for a third political party are as high as they have been in seven years. Fifty-eight percent of Americans believe a third major political party is needed because the Republican and Democratic Parties do a poor job of representing the American people. That is a significant increase from 2008 and ties the high Gallup has recorded for this measure since 2003.

*In your view, do the Republican and Democratic Parties do an adequate job of representing the American people, or do they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed?*



The finding, based on an Aug. 27-30 *USA Today*/Gallup poll, comes at a time when Americans are widely dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States and give relatively weak approval ratings to the president and Congress.

Though the rise in support for a third party could be linked to the Tea Party movement, Tea Party supporters are just about average in terms of wanting to see a third party created. Sixty-two percent of those who describe themselves as Tea Party supporters would like a third major party formed, but so do 59% of those who are neutral toward the Tea Party movement. Tea Party opponents are somewhat less likely to see the need for a third party.

*Views of Need for Third Party, by Orientation to Tea Party Movement*

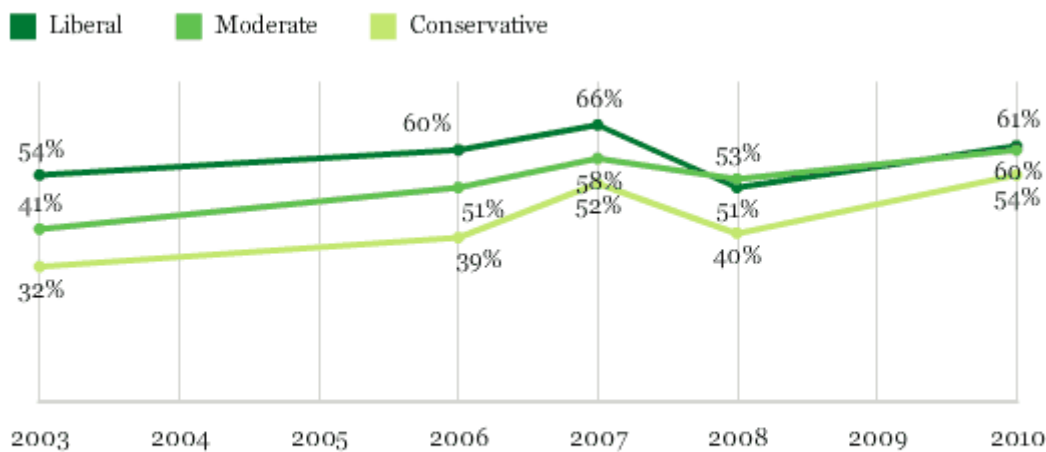
	<b>Supporter of Tea Party movement</b>	<b>Opponent of Tea Party movement</b>	<b>Neutral toward Tea Party movement</b>
Third party needed	62%	51%	59%
Parties do an adequate job	30%	44%	34%

USA Today/Gallup poll, Aug. 27-30, 2010

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The desire for a third party is fairly similar across ideological groups, with 61% of liberals, 60% of moderates, and 54% of conservatives believing a third major party is needed. That is a narrower gap than Gallup has found in the past; conservatives have typically been far less likely than liberals and moderates to support the creation of a third party.

*Support for a Third Major Political Party, by Political Ideology*

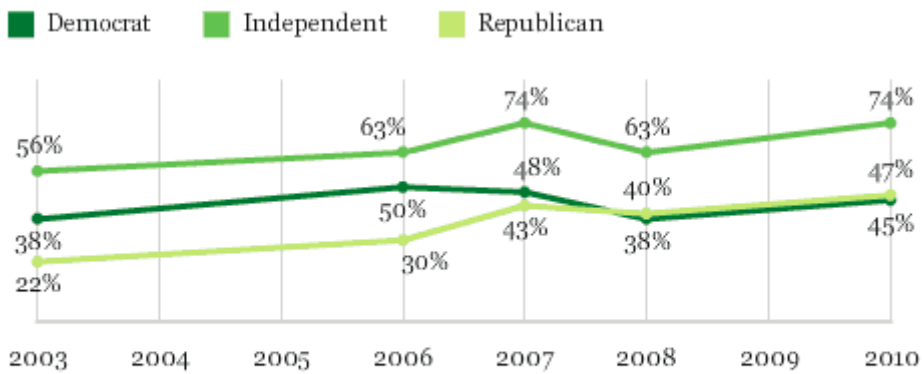


Note: 2007 data represent average of two polls

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Independents, as might be expected given their lack of primary allegiance to either of the two major parties, express a greater degree of support (74%) for a third party than do Republicans (47%) and Democrats (45%). Over time, independents have consistently been the political group most eager to see a third party formed. But each party group is more likely now than in 2008 to support the formation of a third major party. At that time, about two months before the presidential election, 38% of Democrats, 40% of Republicans, and 63% of independents thought a third party was necessary.

### Support for a Third Major Political Party, by Political Party Affiliation



Note: 2007 data represent average of two polls

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#### Bottom Line

Election results in recent years and polls from this year indicate Americans are frustrated with the job the two major parties have been doing. In 2006, voters elected a Democratic majority in Congress to replace the Republican majority, and in 2008 they elected a Democratic president to replace an outgoing Republican president. Polling on voters' 2010 voting intentions suggests that they may be poised to replace the Democratic majority in Congress with a Republican majority. But that seems to be as much because voters are rejecting Democrats as embracing Republicans.

Given the lack of alternatives, it perhaps is no surprise that Americans' desires for a third party are as high as they've been in at least the last seven years. And while the formation of an official third party is not imminent, that desire may be manifested in voters' strong anti-incumbent sentiments this year.