

Election 2006

June 21, 2006

Democrats Looking Strong Heading Toward Midterm Elections

Eleven-point lead in first half of 2006 is the highest Gallup has measured

Sondaggio GALLUP - Intenzioni di voto per le elezioni di mid-term in USA

by Lydia Saad

GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

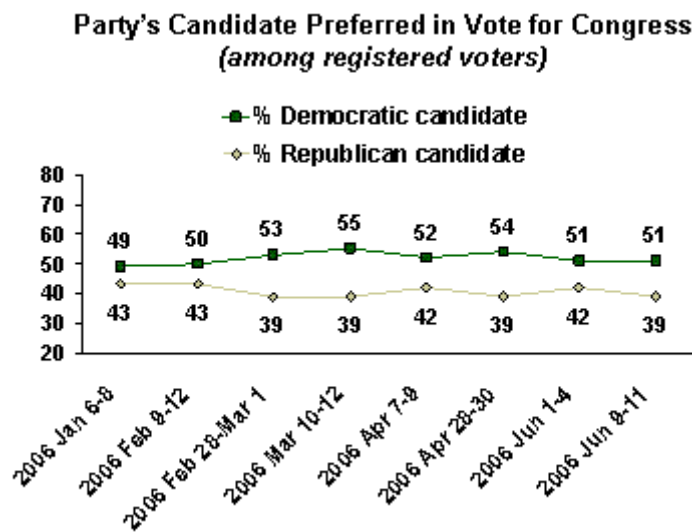
PRINCETON, NJ -- Less than five months from this year's midterm congressional elections, a June 9-11 *USA Today*/Gallup poll finds the Democrats leading the Republicans by 51% to 39% as the party registered voters say they plan to support in their local districts this November.

Republicans generally do better in midterm elections when turnout is taken into account using a "likely voter" model, something Gallup will not do until closer to the elections. But much can still be learned by comparing the vote preferences of the broad pool of registered voters today to the vote preferences of this group in previous elections.

Gallup's latest read on congressional voting intentions is the eighth this year. There are several ways to look at these data as an indicator of what might happen in the Nov. 7 elections. Most of them portend a strong showing for the Democrats this fall.

1. The Consistency of the Democratic Lead in '06

The current 12-point Democratic lead comes very close to the average 11-point lead the Democrats have held across the Gallup "generic ballot" measures conducted since the start of the year. More specifically, the Democrats have led the Republicans among registered voters by six or more points in every measure taken since January, and have led by nine or more points in every measure conducted since late February.



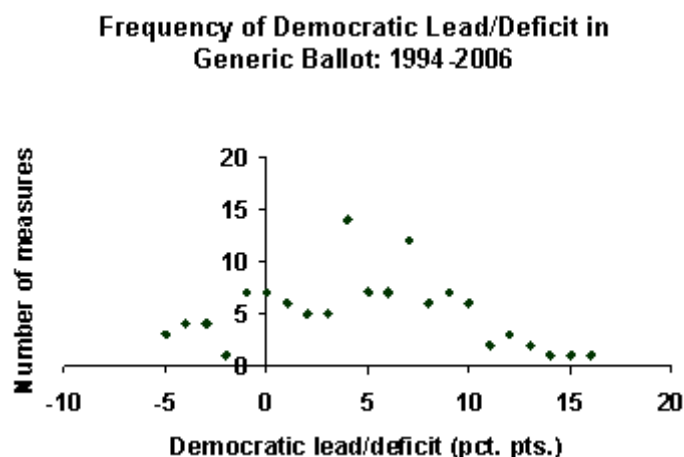
All of this suggests a degree of consistency to the Democrats' strength that, absent any major political or news events, might be expected to continue into the fall.

2. The Unusually Large Democratic Lead

Gallup has conducted more than 100 measures of the generic ballot since 1994. This includes six congressional elections, starting with the one in which the Republican Party most recently captured majority control of the U.S. House of Representatives from the Democrats (1994), and the subsequent five when the GOP was able to retain that majority (1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004).

Across all of these measures, the Democrats have led the Republicans by 12 or more points among registered voters only eight times. Five of those instances have occurred in polling on the 2006 midterm elections (from late 2005 through today). The others include two polls conducted in October 1996 and one in September 1998.

The average Democratic performance in all 111 generic ballots conducted since 1994 has been a 4.5-point lead over the Republicans, with most of the results falling between a 1- and a 9-point Democratic lead. The Republicans have led among registered voters only a handful of times.



Thus, according to recent history, with an 11- to 12-point lead among registered voters, the Democrats are in an unusually strong position to do well in the fall.

3. An Auspicious Start

In most election years since 1994, Gallup has found a degree of consistency between the average Democratic lead in surveys conducted from January through June of each election year, and those conducted from July through November. In other words, the broad pattern established early in the year seems to persist through the summer and fall.

In most cases, the Democratic lead has not changed in either direction by more than five percentage points when comparing the first six months of the year to the remaining months leading up to the election. In five of the six cases, that lead has expanded rather than contracted.

Average Democratic Lead/Deficit in Generic Ballot Among Registered Voters

	January-June	July-November	Change
1994	2.5^	-1.3	-3.8
1996	2.7	7.3	4.6

1998	5.7	6.0	0.3
2000	3.5	4.7	1.2
2002	0.4	5.9	5.5
2004	-1.0*	3.8	4.8
2006	11.1		

^ 1994 January-June average based on only two measures

* 2004 January-June average based on only one measure

Still, it's important to note that the traditional Democratic lead among registered voters on the generic ballot almost always overstates the actual vote for Democratic candidates come Election Day. That's because Republicans typically have a disproportionately high turnout rate. Should the Democrats' average lead among registered voters shrink by four or five points, that would put the Republicans well within striking range of maintaining their majority status.

Of course, what's really important is where voters stand in the final pre-election poll in November. Last-minute events can produce changes in voter preferences. As seen in the accompanying table, however, in most cases the final Gallup generic ballot poll result has been similar to the average of the preceding months. (The major exception was in 1996, when the final poll was significantly less tilted toward the Democrats than the polls that preceded it.)

Democratic Lead/Deficit in Generic Ballot Among Registered Voters

	July-November average pre-election poll	Final
1994	-1.3	0
1996	7.3	0
1998	6.0	7
2000	4.7	8
2002	5.9	5
2004	3.8	4

4. Exceptional Cases

The analysis presented here suggests the Democrats are likely to do well this fall, possibly capturing majority control of the U.S. House of Representatives. However, recent history does provide some examples of the Republicans recovering from double-digit deficits on the generic ballot and in the end retaining their congressional majority.

The strongest example of this is 1996 -- a presidential election year -- when the Republican Party fell behind the Democrats by 10 to 13 points on the generic ballot from about August through mid-October (with intermittent smaller deficits of 2 to 9 points). But this contracted to single digits by late October, and closed to a tie by Election Day. Republicans won that election with a 19-seat majority in the House -- a loss of 10 seats going into the election, but still a win.

In 1998, the Democrats led by 13 points in mid-September and 9 points in late October, yet the Republicans also narrowed the gap by November, and prevailed in that election with a 12-seat majority.

Implications

By virtue of Republicans' typically higher turnout in midterm elections, the Republican Party can expect to perform better this fall than is indicated by poll numbers based on registered voters. As noted, Gallup will not institute a "likely voter" model until closer to Election Day, but polling in previous years indicates the effect will be to narrow the Republican-Democratic gap by several points.

In recent elections, the Republican Party has trailed the Democrats in the final pre-election poll by as much as eight percentage points among all registered voters and still managed to win a majority of U.S. House seats in the election. It is unlikely, however, that the Republican majority could survive if the double-digit Democratic lead among registered voters -- as exists today -- persists into the final pre-election polling in late October and early November.

There is certainly time for the GOP to turn things around; as is said about the stock market, past performance is no guarantee of future earnings. Indeed, recent Gallup polling has detected some modest improvement in Americans' evaluations of the job Congress and President Bush are doing, as well as in their ratings of the economy and the Iraq war, although all remain decidedly negative. These are the important leading indicators to watch to determine whether the Democrats are likely to maintain their current advantage through the fall, or see it chipped away. Forthcoming analyses on gallup.com will discuss the relationship of these factors to the vote for Congress.

Survey Methods

These results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 1,002 adults, aged 18 and older, conducted June 9-11, 2006. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum error attributable to sampling and other random effects is ± 3 percentage points.

For results based on the sample of 930 registered voters, the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 4 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

. If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your congressional district -- [ROTATED: the Democratic Party's candidate or the Republican Party's candidate]?

2A. As of today, do you lean more toward -- [ROTATE: the Democratic Party's candidate or the Republican Party's candidate]?

candidate candidate Other	Democratic Republican Undecided/		
Registered voters	%	%	%
2006 Jun 9-11	51	39	10
2006 Jun 1-4	51	42	7
2006 Apr 28-30	54	39	7

2006 Apr 7-9	52	42	6
2006 Mar 10-12	55	39	7
2006 Feb 28-Mar 1	53	39	7
2006 Feb 9-12	50	43	8
2006 Jan 6-8	49	43	8
2005 Oct 21-23	50	43	7
2005 Aug 28-30	53	41	6

National adults

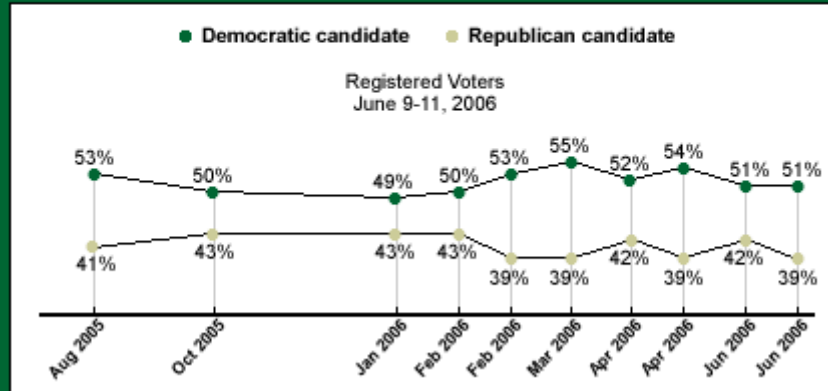
2006 Jun 9-11	52	38	10
2006 Jun 1-4	51	40	9
2006 Apr 28-30	53	38	9
2006 Apr 7-9	53	40	7
2006 Mar 10-12	54	38	8
2006 Feb 28-Mar 1	52	39	10
2006 Feb 9-12	49	42	9
2006 Jan 6-8	49	42	9
2005 Oct 21-23	50	42	8
2005 Aug 28-30	52	41	7

Regular voters ^

2006 Jun 9-11	49	44	7
2006 Jun 1-4	55	40	5
2006 Apr 28-30	53	44	3
2006 Apr 7-9	51	44	5

NOTE: Regular voters are defined as registered voters who say they "always vote" and who say they voted in the last midterm election. The regular voter sample consists of 514 respondents and has a margin of sampling error of ± 5 percentage points.

If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your Congressional district -- the Democratic Party's candidate or the Republican Party's candidate? As of today, do you lean more toward -- the Democratic Party's candidate or the Republican Party's candidate?



If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your Congressional district -- [ROTATE: 1) The Democratic Party's candidate or 2) The Republican Party's candidate]?

As of today, do you lean more toward -- [ROTATE: 1) The Democratic Party's candidate or 2) The Republican Party's candidate]?

	Democratic candidate %	Republican candidate %	Undecided/ other %
Registered Voters			
2006 Jun 9-11	51	39	10
2006 Jun 1-4	51	42	7
2006 Apr 28-30	54	39	7
2006 Apr 7-9	52	42	6
2006 Mar 10-12	55	39	7
2006 Feb 28-Mar 1	53	39	7
2006 Feb 9-12	50	43	8
2006 Jan 6-8	49	43	8
2005 Oct 21-23	50	43	7
2005 Aug 28-30	53	41	6
National Adults			
2006 Jun 9-11	52	38	10
2006 Jun 1-4	51	40	9
2006 Apr 28-30	53	38	9
2006 Apr 7-9	53	40	7
2006 Mar 10-12	54	38	8
2006 Feb 28-Mar 1	52	39	10
2006 Feb 9-12	49	42	9
2006 Jan 6-8	49	42	9
2005 Oct 21-23	50	42	8
2005 Aug 28-30	52	41	7
Regular Voters			
2006 Jun 9-11	49	44	7
2006 Jun 1-4	55	40	5
2006 Apr 28-30	53	44	3
2006 Apr 7-9	51	44	5

NOTE: Regular voters are defined as registered voters who say they "always vote" and

who say they voted in the last mid-term election. The regular voter sample consists of 514 respondents and has a margin of sampling error of ± 5 percentage points.

Please tell me whether you think each of the following political office-holders deserves to be reelected, or not. How about -- [ROTATED]?

A. The U.S. Representative in your Congressional District

	Yes, deserves %	No, does not %	No opinion %
<i>National Adults</i>			
2006 Apr 28-30	59	26	15
2006 Jan 6-8	60	27	13
2005 Oct 21-23	63	24	13
2004 Oct 14-16	62	21	17
2003 Oct 10-12	64	22	14
2002 Sep 20-22	64	19	17
2002 Apr 29-May 1	66	18	16
2001 Aug 24-26	64	20	16
2000 Jan 7-10	67	15	18
1998 Oct 9-12	68	16	16
1998 Apr 17-19	64	19	17
1997 Oct 27-29	62	18	20
1997 Aug 22-25	63	21	16
1996 May 9-12	65	22	13
1996 Jan 12-15	62	21	17
1994 Nov 2-6	53	29	18
1994 Oct 22-25	54	30	16
1994 Oct 18-19	57	29	14
1994 Oct 7-9	54	29	17
1994 Jul 15-17	60	27	13
1994 Mar 25-27	60	23	17
1994 Feb 26-28	59	28	13
1993 Dec 17-19	59	26	15
1993 Nov 2-4	62	19	19
1993 Jul 19-21	58	25	17
1991 Nov	58	25	17
<i>Registered Voters</i>			
2006 Apr 28-30	59	26	14
2006 Jan 6-8	62	26	12
2005 Oct 21-23	65	24	11
2004 Oct 14-16	63	21	16
2003 Oct 10-12	65	24	11
2002 Sep 20-22	67	19	14
2002 Apr 29-May 1	67	19	14
2001 Aug 24-26	67	20	13
2000 Sep 11-13	66	19	15
2000 Jan 7-10	70	16	14
1998 Oct 9-12	69	17	14
1998 Apr 17-19	65	21	14
1994 Nov 2-6	54	30	16
1994 Oct 22-25	55	32	13
1994 Oct 7-9	55	30	15
1994 Jul 15-17	61	28	11
1994 Mar 25-27	60	23	17
1994 Feb 26-28	59	28	13
1992 Oct 23-25	48	30	22
1992 Sep 11-15	54	25	21
1992 Jul 31-Aug 2	61	25	14
1992 Apr 20-22	50	31	19

1992 Apr 9-12	58	29	13
1992 Mar 20-22	56	30	14
1992 Jan 31-Feb 2	64	24	12
1992 Jan 3-9	61	25	14

Likely Voters

2002 Sep 20-22	74	18	8
2000 Sep 11-13	70	20	10
2000 Jan 7-10	75	15	10
1996 Oct 27-28	62	19	19

B. Most members of Congress

	Yes, deserves %	No, does not %	No opinion %
<i>National Adults</i>			
2006 Apr 28-30	37	52	11
2006 Jan 6-8	42	47	11
2005 Oct 21-23	45	44	11
2004 Oct 14-16	51	33	16
2003 Oct 10-12	51	35	14
2002 Sep 20-22	57	28	15
2002 Apr 29-May 1	58	22	20
2001 Aug 24-26	51	31	18
2000 Jan 7-10	55	31	14
1998 Oct 9-12	58	26	16
1998 Apr 17-19	56	28	16
1997 Oct 27-29	50	29	21
1997 Aug 22-25	56	27	17
1996 May 9-12	50	35	15
1996 Jan 12-15	47	38	15
1994 Nov 2-6	39	45	16
1994 Oct 22-25	43	44	13
1994 Oct 18-19	44	42	14
1994 Oct 7-9	37	48	15
1994 Jul 15-17	41	43	16
1994 Mar 25-27	46	38	16
1994 Feb 26-28	42	44	14
1993 Dec 17-19	38	47	15
1993 Jul 19-21	39	46	15
1991 Nov	38	48	14

Registered Voters

2006 Apr 28-30	38	53	10
2006 Jan 6-8	43	47	10
2005 Oct 21-23	46	44	10
2004 Oct 14-16	51	34	15
2003 Oct 10-12	50	37	13
2002 Sep 20-22	57	29	14
2002 Apr 29-May 1	57	24	19
2001 Aug 24-26	52	30	18
2000 Sep 11-13	54	30	16
2000 Jan 7-10	56	31	13
1998 Oct 9-12	58	27	15
1998 Apr 17-19	55	29	16
1994 Nov 2-6	38	47	15
1994 Oct 22-25	43	45	12
1994 Oct 7-9	37	49	14
1994 Jul 15-17	40	46	14
1994 Mar 25-27	46	38	16
1994 Feb 26-28	42	44	14

1992 Oct 23-25	29	50	21
1992 Sep 11-15	32	46	22
1992 Jul 31 Aug 2	40	46	14
1992 Apr 20-22	33	50	17
1992 Apr 9-12	32	53	15
1992 Mar 20-22	31	58	11
1992 Jan 31-Feb 2	43	43	14
1992 Jan 3-9	43	42	15

Likely Voters

2002 Sep 20-22	57	31	12
2000 Sep 11-13	55	32	13
2000 Jan 7-10	57	31	12
1996 Oct 27-28	55	26	19

Compared to previous elections, are you more enthusiastic about voting than usual, or less enthusiastic?

Trend for Mid-Term Elections

	More enthusiastic %	Less enthusiastic %	Same (vol.) %	No opinion %
<i>National Adults</i>				
2006 Apr 28-30	44	42	13	1
2006 Apr 7-9	40	46	12	2
2006 Jan 6-8	45	39	14	1
2002 Oct 31-Nov 3	38	45	14	3
1998 Oct 29-Nov 1	37	46	14	3
1998 Oct 23-25	35	47	16	2
1998 Oct 9-12	35	47	16	2
1998 Aug 21-23	38	41	17	4
1998 Apr 17-19	30	48	19	3
1994 Nov 2-6	38	48	13	2
1994 Oct 7-9	34	46	18	2
<i>Republicans/Republican Leaners</i>				
2006 Apr 28-30	38	46	15	1
2006 Apr 7-9	33	47	18	2
2006 Jan 6-8	47	32	20	1
2002 Oct 31-Nov 3	42	42	15	1
1998 Oct 29-Nov 1	39	46	14	1
1998 Oct 23-25	44	39	16	1
1998 Oct 9-12	45	36	17	2
1998 Aug 21-23	42	39	17	2
1998 Apr 17-19	31	48	19	2
1994 Nov 2-6	44	44	11	1
1994 Oct 7-9	40	42	18	*
<i>Democrats/Democratic Leaners</i>				
2006 Apr 28-30	50	37	12	1
2006 Apr 7-9	48	43	8	1
2006 Jan 6-8	48	44	7	1
2002 Oct 31-Nov 3	38	46	13	3
1998 Oct 29-Nov 1	39	44	15	2
1998 Oct 23-25	32	51	16	1
1998 Oct 9-12	41	45	13	1
1998 Aug 21-23	37	41	18	4
1998 Apr 17-19	31	48	19	2
1994 Nov 2-6	35	50	14	1

1994 Oct 7-9	29	50	18	3
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Registered Voters

2006 Apr 28-30	46	39	14	1
2006 Apr 7-9	42	44	13	1
2006 Jan 6-8	46	37	15	1
2002 Oct 31-Nov 3	41	42	15	2
1998 Oct 29-Nov 1	41	43	15	1
1998 Oct 23-25	37	44	18	1
1998 Oct 9-12	45	38	16	1
1998 Aug 21-23	39	39	19	3
1998 Apr 17-19	31	47	20	2
1994 Nov 2-6	40	45	14	1
1994 Oct 7-9	34	44	20	2

Regardless of how you, yourself, plan to vote, which party do you think will win control of the U.S. House of Representatives in the Congressional elections this fall – [ROTATED: The Republicans (or) the Democrats]?

	Republicans	Democrats	No opinion
	%	%	%
2006 Apr 28-30	39	52	9
1962 Sep 20-25	16	60	24
1958 Sep 10-15	12	67	22
1947 Oct 12-17	27	52	22
1946 Sep 27-Oct 2	63	37	--
1946 Jul 26-31	46	38	16
1946 Jun 28-Jul 3	45	35	20

How much thought have you given to the upcoming elections for Congress -- quite a lot, or only a little?

	Quite a lot	SOME (vol.)	Only a little	None	No opinion
	25%	3	66	5	1
2006 Apr 7-9					

How important will the issue of Iraq be to your vote for Congress this year -- will it be -- the most important issue, very important, but not the most important issue, moderately important, or not that important?

	Most important issue	Very important	Moderately important	Not that important	No opinion
Registered Voters					
2006 Mar 10-12	18%	43	28	10	1
National Adults					
2006 Mar 10-12	18%	42	28	11	1

Would you be more likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who supports President Bush, or more likely to vote for a candidate who opposes President Bush?

	Supports	Opposes	No difference (vol.)	No opinion
	%	%	%	%
Registered Voters				
2006 Jan 20-22	40	51	5	3
2005 Oct 21-23	39	55	4	2
National Adults				
2006 Jan 20-22	39	52	5	3

2005 Oct 21-23	39	54	4	3
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How important will each of the following issues be to your vote for Congress this year -- will it be -- extremely important, very important, moderately important, or not that important? How about -- [RANDOM ORDER]?

A. The economy

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Not that important	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2006 Jan 6-8	38	45	14	1	1
2005 Oct 21-23	43	41	15	1	*
2002 Sep 20-22 ^	37	44	17	2	*
2002 Aug 19-21 ^	34	44	17	3	2

^WORDING: Economic conditions

B. Terrorism

2006 Jan 6-8	45	35	16	3	1
2005 Oct 21-23	45	32	19	4	*
2002 Sep 20-22 ^	47	36	13	3	1

^ Asked of a half sample.

C. Health care

2006 Jan 6-8	43	39	15	2	1
2005 Oct 21-23	42	37	18	3	*
2002 Sep 20-22 ^	35	39	22	4	*

^ Asked of a half sample.

D. The situation in Iraq

2006 Jan 6-8	45	40	11	3	1
2005 Oct 21-23	44	37	13	4	2

E. Gas prices

2006 Jan 6-8	33	33	26	8	1
2005 Oct 21-23	41	29	22	8	*

F. Social Security

2006 Jan 6-8	36	43	18	3	1
2005 Oct 21-23	38	37	20	5	*
2002 Sep 20-22 ^	34	37	24	5	*
2002 Aug 19-21	34	36	21	7	2

^ Asked of a half sample.

G. Taxes

2006 Jan 6-8	33	38	24	4	1
2005 Oct 21-23	35	38	23	3	1
2002 Sep 20-22 ^	27	33	32	7	1

^ Asked of a half sample.

H. Corruption in government

2006 Jan 6-8	43	38	15	3	1
2005 Oct 21-23	45	36	15	3	1

I. Immigration

2006 Jan 6-8	26	35	29	9	1
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J. Abortion

2006 Jan 6-8	27	25	25	21	1
2002 Sep 20-22	18	28	24	28	2

K. Government surveillance of U.S. citizens

2006 Jan 6-8	29	30	27	12	2
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L. The Patriot Act

2006 Jan 6-8	26	32	27	9	5
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