



THE WINSTON GROUP

To: Interested Parties
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 Subject: Recent Polling on Party Identification

In looking at VNS/Media exit surveys over recent cycles, I am seeing party identification in recent public surveys that is not consistent with past historic results. Since party identification is critical to the generic ballot, this is an important point of discussion. The chart below shows the exit poll results from 1992 through 2004 for party identification at the House level.

Past Party Identification of the Voting Electorate in House Elections

<i>PARTY ID</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>
REP	36	36	36	36	36	40	38
DEM	39	36	40	37	39	38	38
IND	25	27	25	27	26	22	25
Margin	-3	0	-4	-1	-3	+2	0

The chart below shows the most recent public surveys. The reported party identification was sometimes of adults (A) or in other cases registered voters (RV).

Party Identification in Recent Media Surveys

<i>PARTY ID</i> (Universe) Field Dates	<i>USA Today/ Gallup</i> (A) 10/6-8	<i>CBS/NY Times</i> (A) 10/5-8	<i>ABC News/ Washington Post</i> (RV) 10/5-8	<i>CNN/ Opinion Research</i> Refused 10/6-8	<i>Newsweek</i> (RV) 10/5-6	<i>AP/Ipsos</i> (RV) 10/2-4	<i>Pew</i> (A) 9/21-10/4	<i>Time</i> (A) 10/3-4
REP	29	30	30	Refused	27	28	27	27
DEM	38	35	38	Refused	38	36	34	35
IND	33	35	28	Refused	35	36	39	38
Margin	-9	-5	-8	N/A	-11	-8	-7	-8

The final chart below contrasts the range of results of party ID over the last 7 elections at the House level, and the results of the most recent public surveys. For example, in looking at the party identification in the exit polls for Democrats, the lowest result was in 1994 (36%) and the highest was in 1996 (40%), so the range of results over the 7 elections was 36% to 40%.

However, the most important point in this chart is the contrast between R-D margins of the exit polls and the most recent public surveys. In the exit polls, the best result for Democrats was in 1996, when they held a 4 point advantage over Republicans in terms of party identification. The best result for Republicans was in 2002 when they held a 2 point advantage over Democrats in party identification. So the range for the exit polls was +4 for Democrats to +2 Republicans.

In the recent public opinion polls, the best result for Democrats was a Newsweek poll which gave the Democrats an 11 point advantage. The best result for Republicans was the CBS/NY Times poll which gave Democrats a 5 point advantage. So the range for the recent public polls was +11 for Democrats to +5 Democrats. All of the results of the recent public surveys fall outside of any of the previous 7 historical results.

It is certainly not out of the realm of possibility that this year's election could fall outside of historical results, but any survey that does should acknowledge that the data presented are based on a foundation that reflects a structural shift in the way the electorate identifies itself with a party.

PARTY ID	Public Poll Range	Exit Poll Range
REP	27-30	36-40
DEM	34-38	36-40
IND	28-39	22-27
Margin	+11D to +5D	+4D to +2R