



# Political Insiders Poll



**What issue will most motivate your party's base in the midterm elections?**

## ■ **Republicans** (68 votes)

<b>Fear of a Democratic majority</b>	<b>47 percent</b>
<b>The war on terrorism</b>	<b>35 percent</b>
<b>Tax cuts</b>	<b>1 percent</b>
<b>Social issues</b>	<b>1 percent</b>
<b>Two or more of the above (volunteered)</b>	<b>13 percent</b>
<b>None of the above (volunteered)</b>	<b>1 percent</b>

### ■ **Fear of a Democratic majority**

"Some may think Speaker Nancy Pelosi will improve GOP fortunes in '08, but most won't want to take the chance."

"We've pretty much blown every other issue. Fear is the only motivating factor left on the table."

"Pelosi and the liberal committee chairmen represent a political nightmare for the Republican base. It will wake them up and motivate them to vote."

"What I hope is that the fear of Nancy Pelosi [as speaker] and Charlie Rangel [as Ways and Means chairman] will motivate our troops, because it seems like nothing else will."

"It is the single unifying message: We may have fouled things up, but they will do worse. If the base is not enthusiastic over our record, we will terrify them at the prospect of Nancy Pelosi with the gavel."

"Our last chance is to scare people about Nancy Pelosi, but in the Hastert-Foley [page scandal] aftermath, that probably won't do it."

### ■ **The war on terrorism**

"Our base isn't pleased with the progress in Iraq, but they see it as part of the larger war on terror—far different than Democratic voters. If they're not in Kabul, the terrorists are in Kansas City. And that thought scares a lot of our guys."

"It is the strongest contrast—wraps foreign threats, border protection, phone surveillance, and extension of the PATRIOT Act all into one big choice for the future."

"At the end of the day, the Democrats have said or done nothing to instill confidence that they are serious about the war on terror."

"Has to be the war on terror. It sure isn't fear of a Democratic majority, because a sizable percentage of the base is dissatisfied with the Republican Congress."

### ■ **A combination of factors**

"It is fear of how a Democrat majority would manage social issues that will motivate most of the base."

"The real problem for Republicans is that not one clear-cut issue will motivate the base. All four might play a small role in getting voters out, but none has the leading edge."

## ■ **Democrats** (73 votes)

<b>War in Iraq</b>	<b>42 percent</b>
<b>President Bush</b>	<b>41 percent</b>
<b>Republican scandals</b>	<b>4 percent</b>
<b>Democratic agenda</b>	<b>1 percent</b>
<b>Iraq and Bush (volunteered)</b>	<b>8 percent</b>
<b>All of the above (volunteered)</b>	<b>1 percent</b>
<b>None of the above (volunteered)</b>	<b>1 percent</b>

### ■ **War in Iraq**

"This is No. 1 with our base."

"A new direction for Iraq, which is a part of the Democratic agenda. W. has been strong but wrong for too long."

"The base hates Bush and is reveling in the Republican scandals, but Iraq hurts the most because of what they believe it is doing to our country and the world."

"Iraq: It is the elephant in the room."

"Many Democrats believe that the Bush mistake in Iraq is one of the greatest calamities in the history of U.S. foreign policy, and it will take a generation to restore goodwill and moral standing in the world."

### ■ **President Bush**

"Iraq may be the more important issue, but Bush will be the best motivator."

"Close call between Bush and Iraq, but hatred of Bush wins."

"The mere mention of the name is a reminder of everything that has gone wrong since he's been in office."

"Please send Bush into our district. We could use the turnout boost."

"Iraq is the chief motivator for undeclared voters who may agree with Bush on some issues but detest the Iraq conflict. For core Democrats, however, talking about the president is the ultimate hot button."

"It's still all about Bush, and how to cripple him in order to sideline him for the duration of his tenure."

### ■ **Republican scandals**

"There is no consistent Democratic agenda voters are united behind. The commonality is the disgust with politicians in Washington, and a hope there might be some change."

### ■ **Iraq and Bush**

"They go hand-in-hand. There's no separating Iraq and Bush."

"Without a doubt, and the two are largely conflated in the minds of motivated Democratic voters. Republican scandals with their attendant dripping hypocrisy are really just icing on the cake."

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL

# Political Insiders Poll



**What issue will most discourage your base in the midterm elections?**

## ■ Republicans (68 votes)

How Republicans have run Congress	69 percent
War in Iraq	19 percent
President Bush	3 percent
Two or more of the above (volunteered)	9 percent

### ■ How Republicans have run Congress

"We're underwater on congressional [job] approval even among our own voters. Spending, scandal, ennui—take your pick."

"A swing and miss at Social Security, a swing and miss on energy policy, and a swing and miss on long-term tax reform have left the base disappointed—to say the least."

"Most-used comment from the GOP rank-and-file: 'Out of touch.'"

"The challenge is to point out the differences a Democratic Congress would mean. The prevalent attitude is 'What's the difference?'"

"Between excessive earmarks and scandal after scandal, many think [that] a term or two out of control may be what the GOP needs."

"Scandal, greed, and arrogance: The three ingredients that toppled the Democrat majority in 1994 have now come full circle."

"Between botching the war, spending like drunks, and the Foley cover-up, we've managed to alienate three out of three core Republican constituencies."

### ■ War in Iraq

"It's increasingly difficult to envision Iraq turning around... Iraq is no longer looking like a prospective peace-loving democracy."

"Iraq has been the greatest disappointment of the Bush administration."

### ■ President Bush

"Bush fatigue is the hardest thing to overcome at this point for the GOP."

### ■ A combination of factors

"Think of how the three combine, and the answer is: a conclusion that Republicans—at every level—are not up to the job of governing."

## ■ Democrats (73 votes)

Timidity in opposing the war in Iraq	33 percent
Lack of a national message	32 percent
Fatalism about Democratic prospects	15 percent
Nothing (volunteered)	21 percent

### ■ Timidity in opposing the war in Iraq

"It is not only Iraq. Democratic leadership is too often MIA across the board."

"Democratic voters are waiting for a leader on the issue of Iraq, but we'll take our gains at the polls this cycle and hope for that leader as we round the corner for '08."

"The mainstream Democratic approach to the war doesn't inspire the base. Our failure to call out this president's policy for the incompetent scattershot that it is leaves us vulnerable."

### ■ Lack of a national message

"If our congressional leaders had even a hint of a national message, this cycle would be in the bank."

"Democrats are not perceived as standing for anything. And while it may not cause Democratic voters to turn against them, it might just keep them home."

"We don't just need a uniform or 'national' message. We need a clear, compelling, and credible message. The Democratic Party is losing its brand identification."

### ■ Fatalism about Democratic prospects

"Democrats are still haunted by defeats in '02 and '04. If Democrats can get beyond this fatalism, this midterm will be a Democratic tsunami."

### ■ Nothing

"Our base is fired up: We know the public is hungry for change."

"The honest answer is 'Nothing.'"

"The base will turn out as long as the polls are open and the machines work."

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL

## National Journal Insiders

■ The 176 participants in *National Journal's* Political Insiders Poll were selected because of their campaign experience, insider knowledge, and ties to key voting blocs. The votes of 141 insiders—73 Democrats and 68 Republicans—were counted this week.

■ **GOP Insiders** Dan Allen, Stan Anderson, Gary Andres, Saulius "Saul" Anuzis, Rich Ashooh, Brett Bader, Mitch Bainwol, Gary Bauer, David Beckwith, Wayne Berman, Charlie Black, Kirk Blalock, Carmine Boal, Jeff Boeyink, Jeff Buley, Luke Byars, Nick Calio, Jim Cicconi, Jake Corman, Greg Crist, Diane Crookham-Johnson, Rick Davis, Mike Dennehy, Ken Duberstein, Steve Duprey, Debi Durham, Frank Fahrenkopf, John Feehery, Don Fierce, Alex Gage, David Girard-diCarlo, Bill Greener, Lanny Griffith, Janet Mullins Grissom, Doug Gross, Steve Hart, Ralph Hellmann, Chris Henick, Clark Judge, David Keating, David Kensingler, Bruce Keough, Bob Kjellander, Ed Kutler, Chris Lacivita, Jim Lake, Chuck Larson, Steve Lombardo, Joel Maiola, Mary Matalin, Dan Mattoon, Bill McInturf, Mark McKinnon, Kyle McSlarrow, Jim Merrill, Mike Murphy, Terry Nelson, Neil Newhouse, David Norcross, Ziad Ojakli, Jack Oliver, Tony Perkins, Van B. Poole, Tom Rath, Scott Reed, David Rehr, Steve Roberts, David Roederer, Ed Rogers, Dan Schnur, Russ Schriever, Rich Schwarm, Rick Shelby, Don Sipple, Javier Soto, Fred Steeper, Eric Tanenblatt, Heath Thompson, Jay Timmons, Warren Tompkins, Dirk van Dongen, Jan van Lohuizen, Dick Wadhams, John Weaver, Dave Winston, and Ginny Wolfe.

■ **Democratic Insiders** Karen Ackerman, David Axelrod, Dave Beattie, Andy Bechhoefer, Mitchell W. Berger, Mike Berman, Donna Brazile, Mark Brewer, Ed Bruley, George Bruno, Deb Callahan, Bonnie Campbell, Bill Carrick, Tony Coelho, Jim Craig, Jerry Crawford, Jeff Danielson, Jim Demers, Tad Devine, Monica Dixon, Tom Donilon, Anita Dunn, Steve Elmendorf, Eric Eve, Vic Fazio, Scott Ferson, Tina Flournoy, Don Foley, Don Fowler, Gina Glantz, Joe Grandmaison, Anna Greenberg, Stan Greenberg, Pat Griffin, Michael Gronstal, Marcia Hale, Paul Harstad, Laura Hartigan, Harold Ickes, Marcus Jadotte, Steve Jarding, Jim Jordan, Gale Kaufman, Shar Knutson, Kam Kuwata, Celinda Lake, David Lang, Sylvia Larsen, Jeff Link, Bill Lynch, Steve Marchand, Jim Margolis, Paul Maslin, Terry McAuliffe, Caroline McCarley, Gerald McEntee, Tom McMahon, Mark Mellman, John Merrigan, Steve Murphy, David Nassar, Marcia Nichols, John Norris, Tom Ochs, Tom O'Donnell, Jeffrey Peck, Debora Pignatelli, John Podesta, Tony Podesta, Bruce Reed, Steve Ricchetti, Susan Rice, Will Robinson, Steve Rosenthal, John Ryan, Wendy Sherman, Terry Shumaker, Erik Smith, Doug Sosnik, Darryl Sragow, Karl Struble, Katrina Swett, Sarah Swisher, Eric Tabor, Jeffrey Trammell, Ed Turlington, Mike Veon, Rick Wiener, Bridgette Williams, and JoDee Winterhof.