

# The Public Mood in 2012: Frustration and Volatility

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**Pew Research  
Center for the  
People & the  
Press**

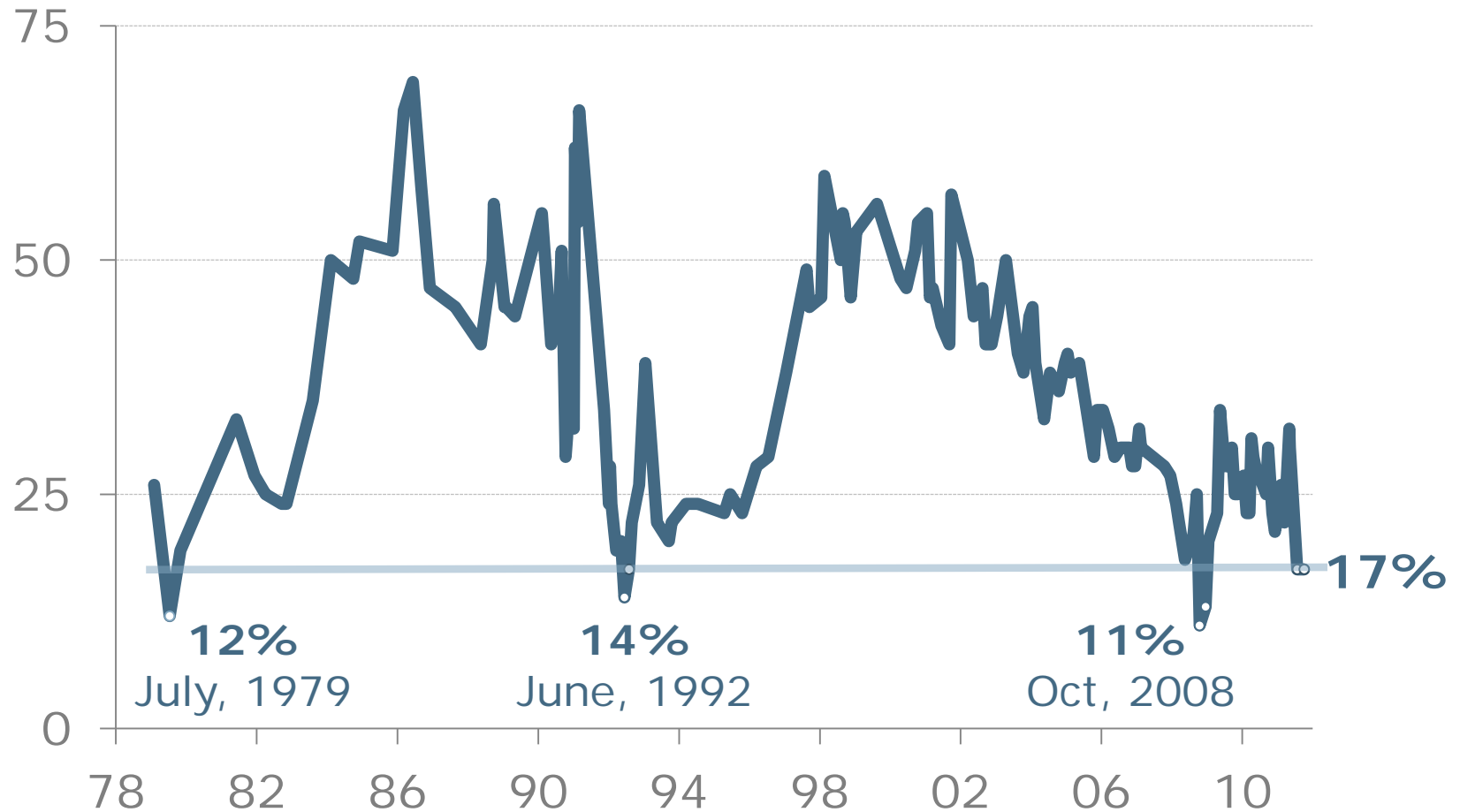


Prepared for the National Conference  
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San Juan, PR Dec 8, 2011

# Overview

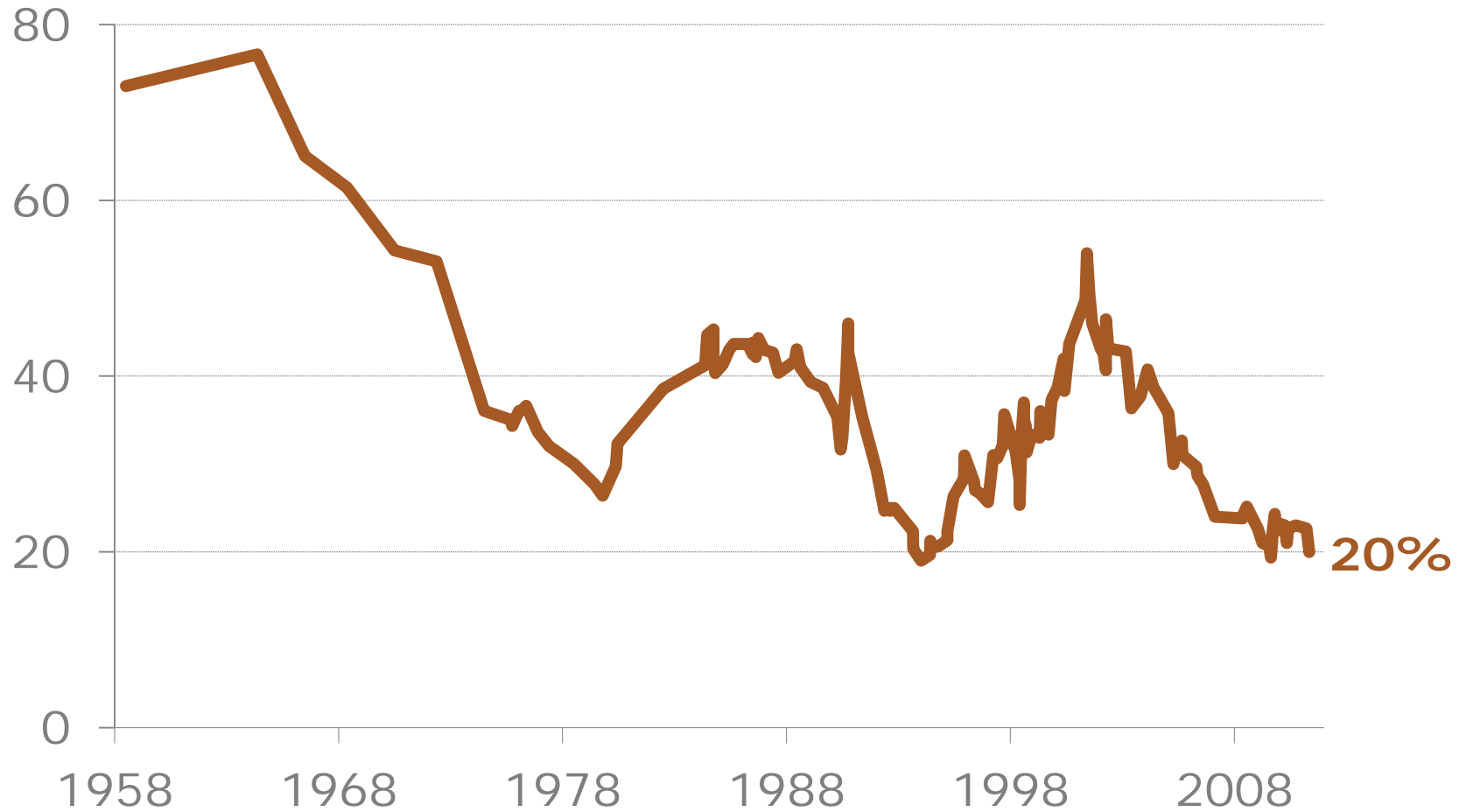
- 1) The Public Mood and Its Implications
- 2) A Look at the States
- 3) Economic Volatility
- 4) Implications for Leadership
- 5) The Landscape Moving Forward

# Satisfaction with the State of the Nation



Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Nov 9-14, 2011.

# Trust Government in Washington



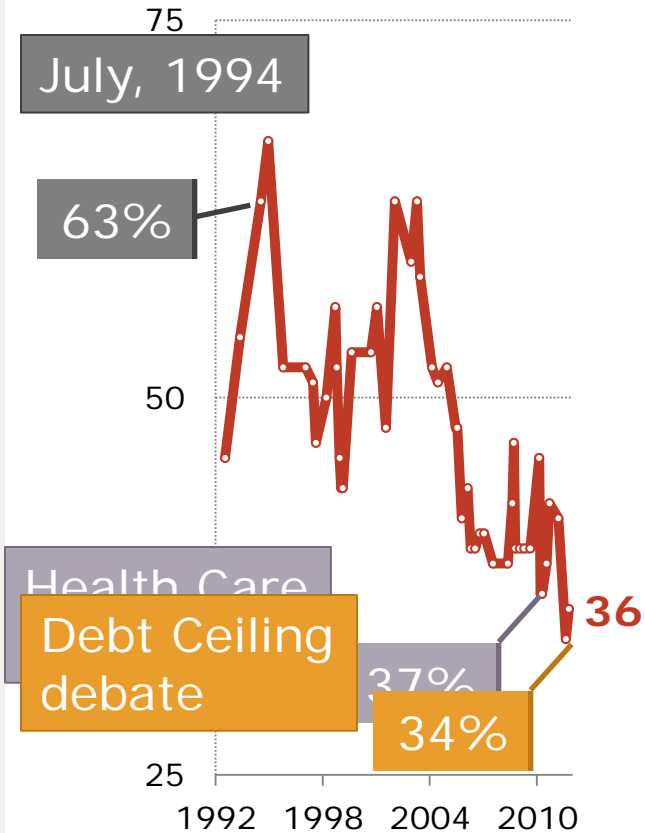
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Sept 22-Oct 24, 2011

# Trust and Satisfaction

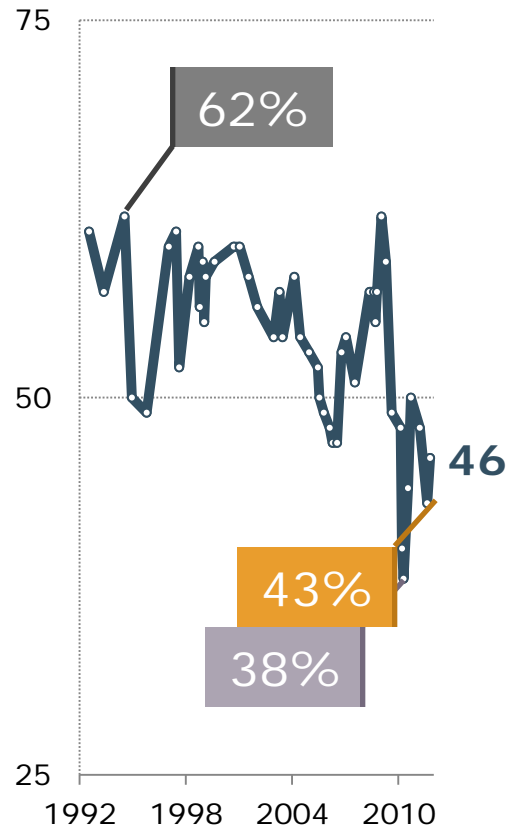


# Favorability Ratings

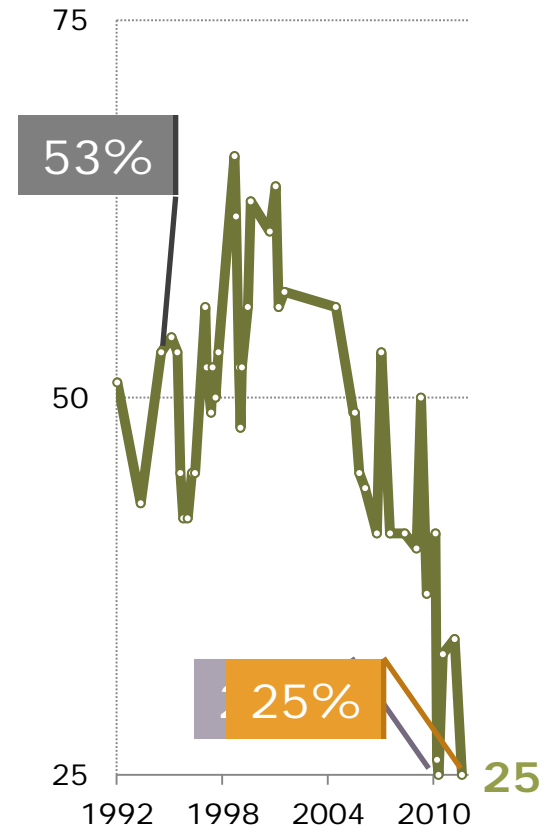
## Republican Party



## Democratic Party

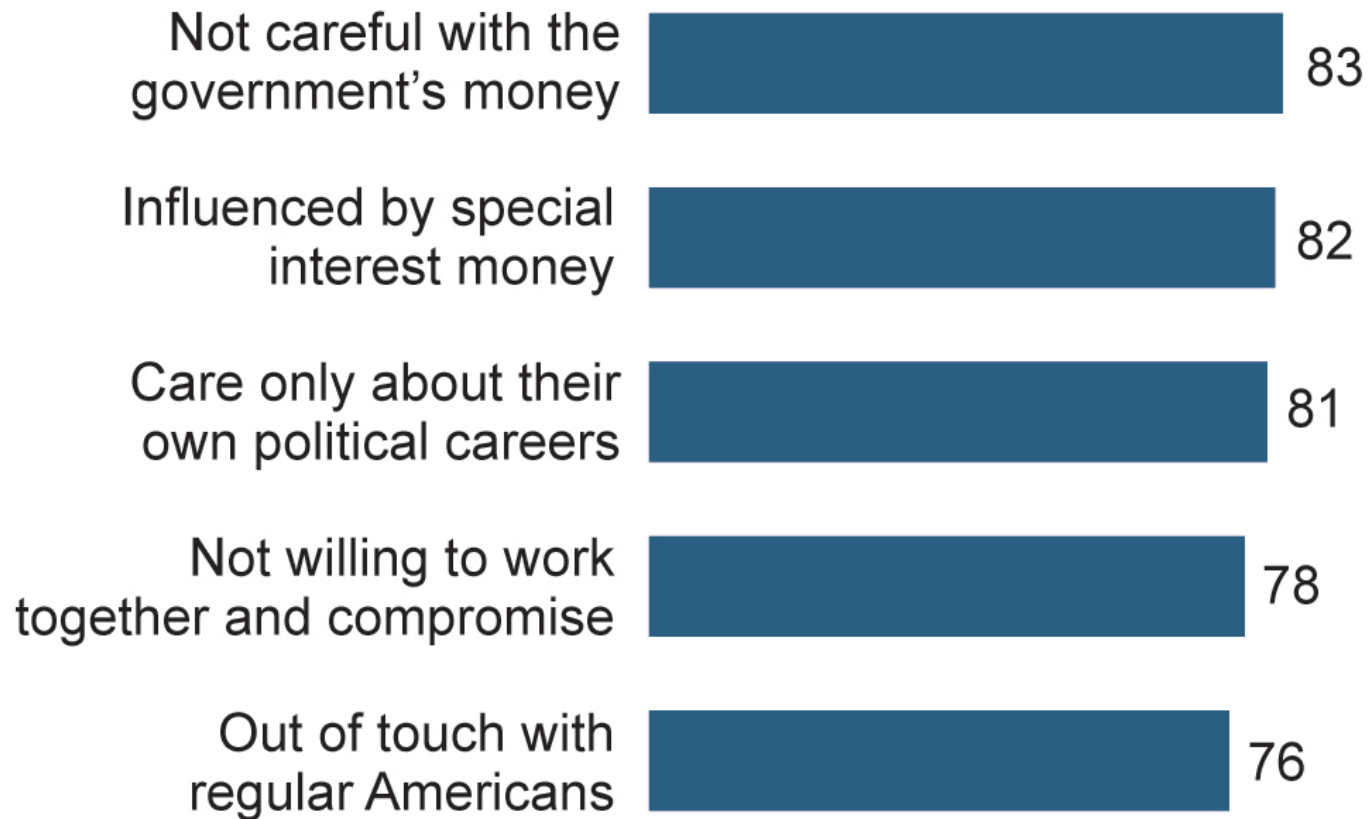


## Congress



Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Sept 22-Oct 24, 2011

# Everything is a “Major Problem” When it Comes to Elected Officials in Washington

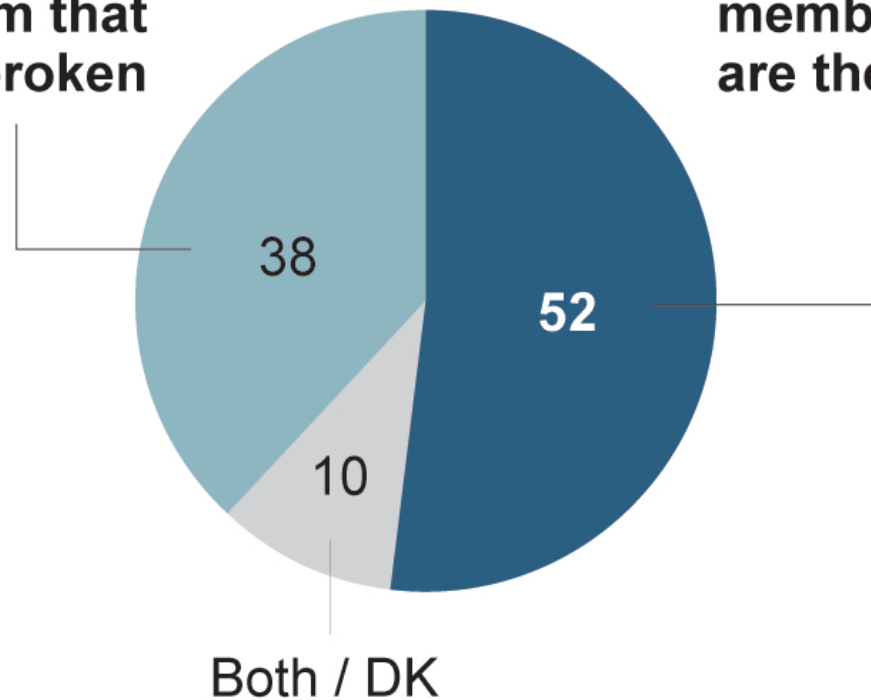


Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, March 11-21, 2010

# It's a Personnel Problem

Most members have good intentions, it's the **system that is broken**

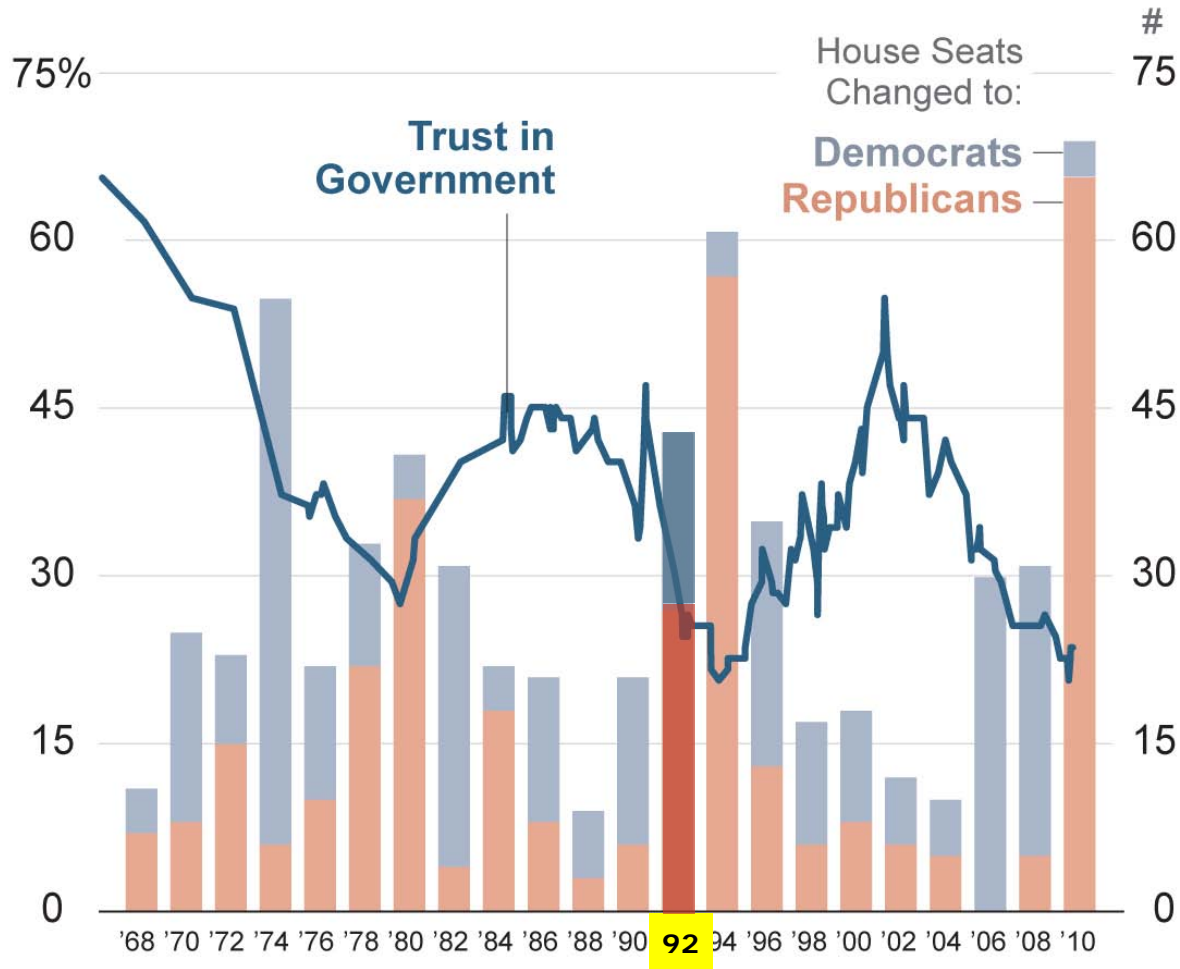
The political system can work fine, it's the **members that are the problem**



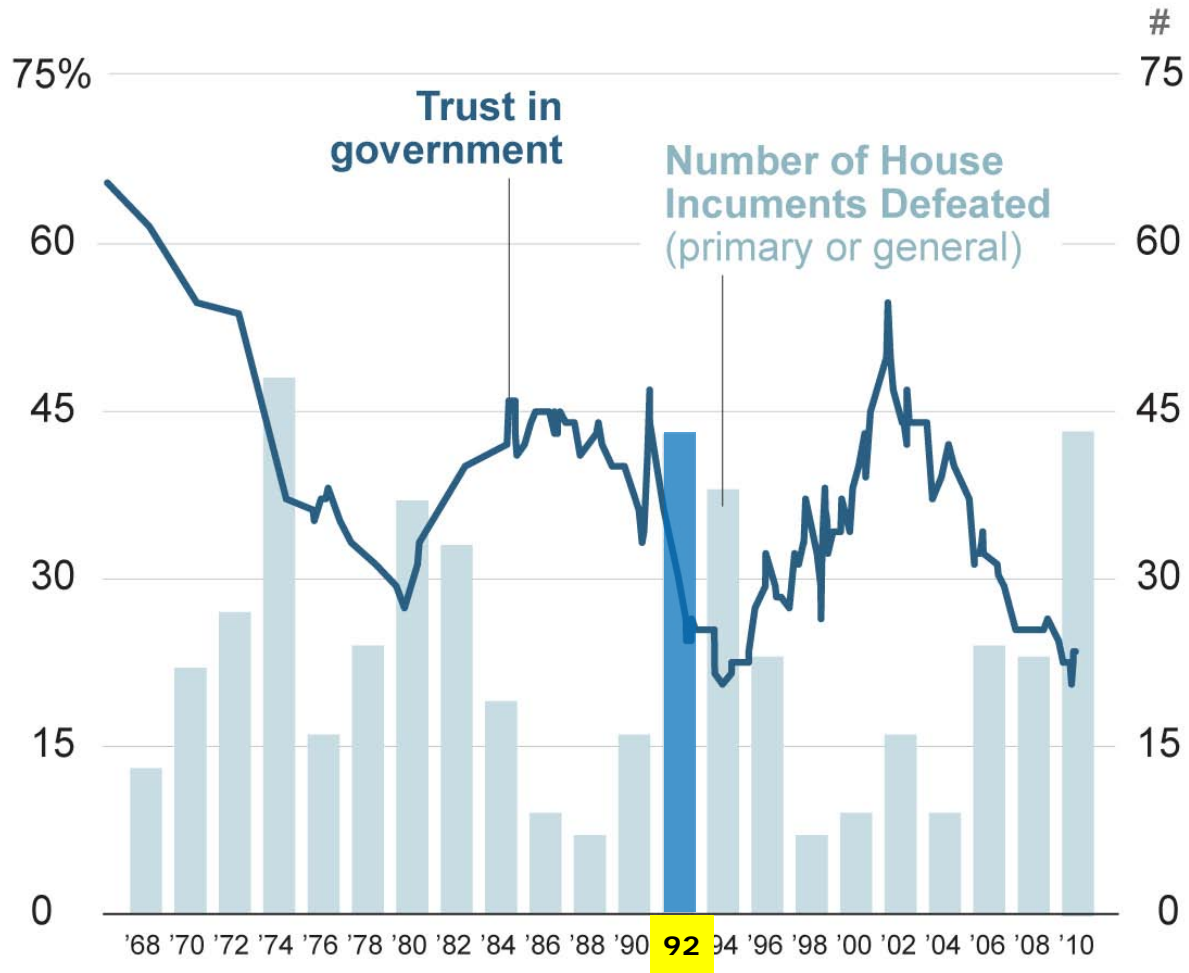
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, March 11-21, 2010



# Trust and House Turnover

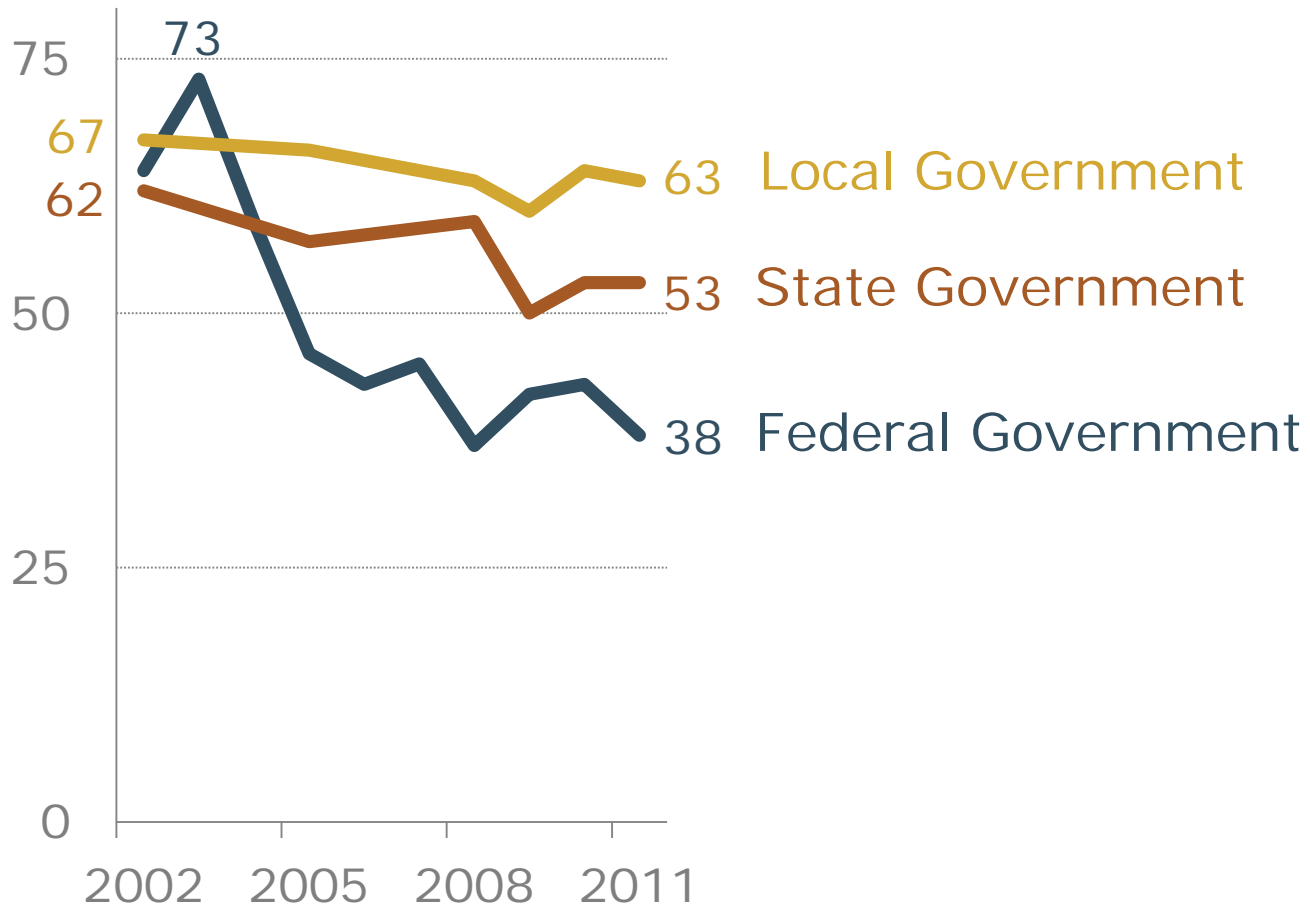


# Trust and Incumbent Losses



# A Look at the States

# Government Favorability



Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Feb. 3-6, 2011

# Views of State Budget Problems

## State Economy is in...

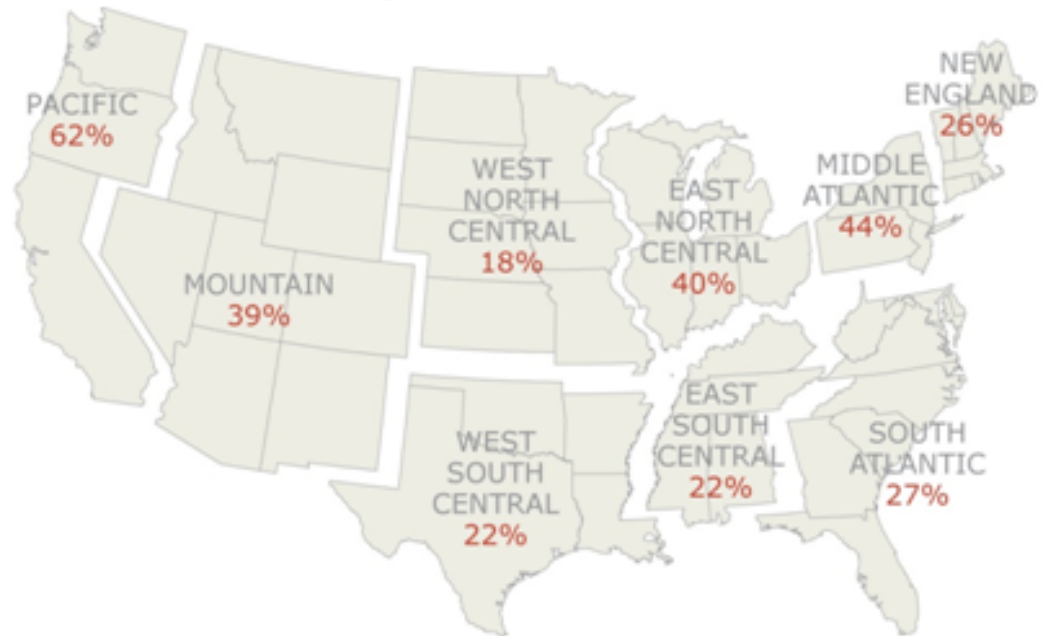
Excellent/Good shape	23
Only fair/Poor shape	77
	100

## Is your state facing budget problems?

Yes	81
Very serious	36
Fairly serious	36
Not too serious	8
No/Don't know	18
	100

## Severity of Budget Problems Varies by Region

Percent who say state budget problems are very serious



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q38 & Q39. States grouped into regions as defined by the Census department. See [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us\\_regdiv.pdf](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us_regdiv.pdf) for more information.

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Feb. 2-7, 2011

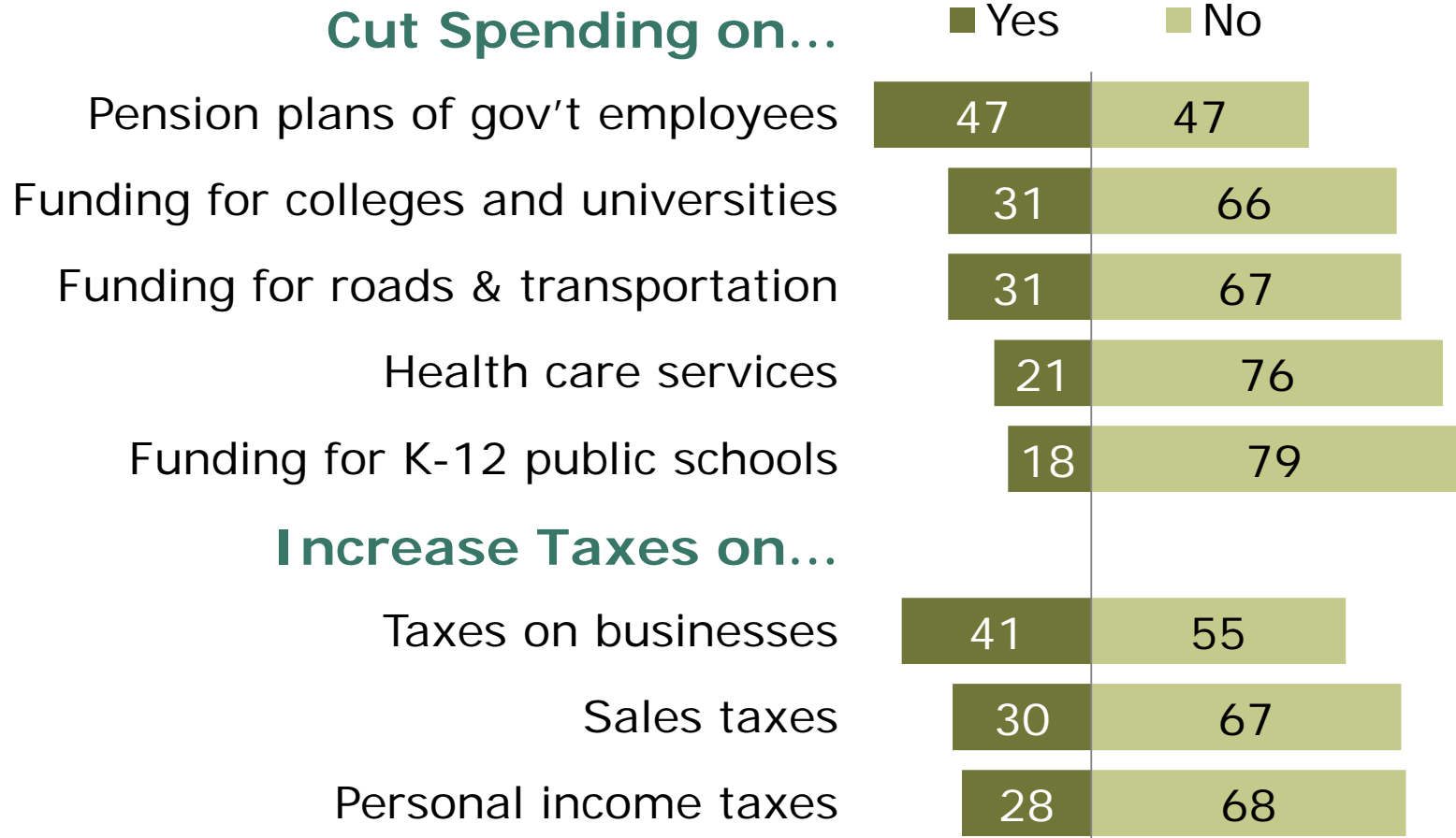
# Dealing with State Budget Problems

What's the better way to address state budget problems?	
27	Federal government should give more money to states, even if it increases the deficit
60	States should take care of this by raising taxes or cutting services
<u>13</u>	Other/Don't know
100	

To deal with budgets, states should...	
19	Mostly focus on cutting major programs
4	Mostly focus on increasing taxes
68	Do a combination of both
<u>9</u>	Other/Don't know
100	

Pew Research Center  
for the People & the  
Press, Feb. 3-6, 2011

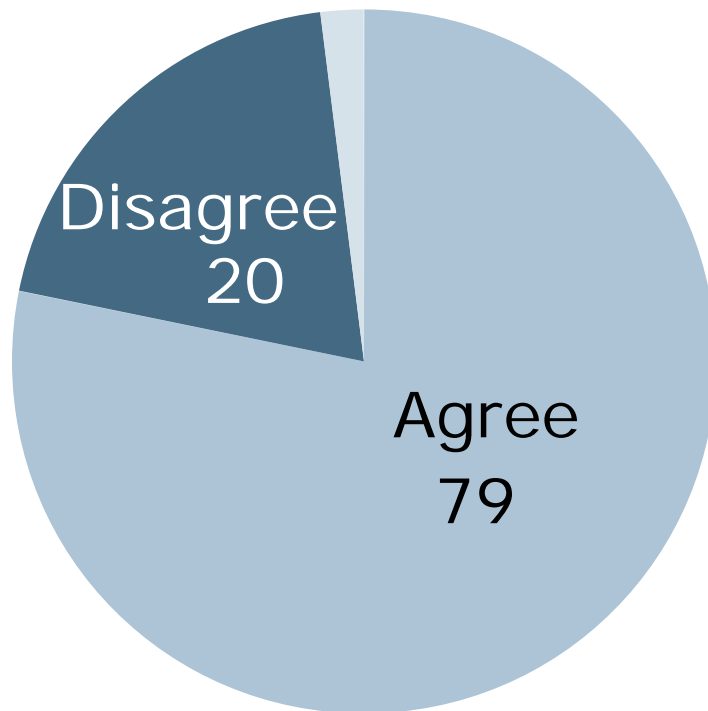
# Steps Your State Could Take



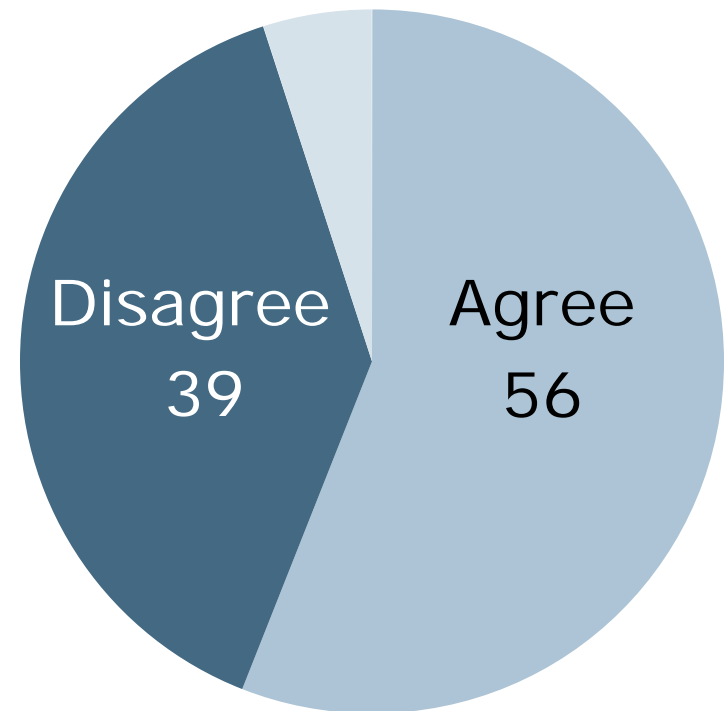
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Feb. 3-6, 2011

# Public Offers Some Recognition of the Problem

The government is facing more difficult problems than in the past



Americans aren't willing to pay for the things they want government to do



Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, March 11-21, 2010



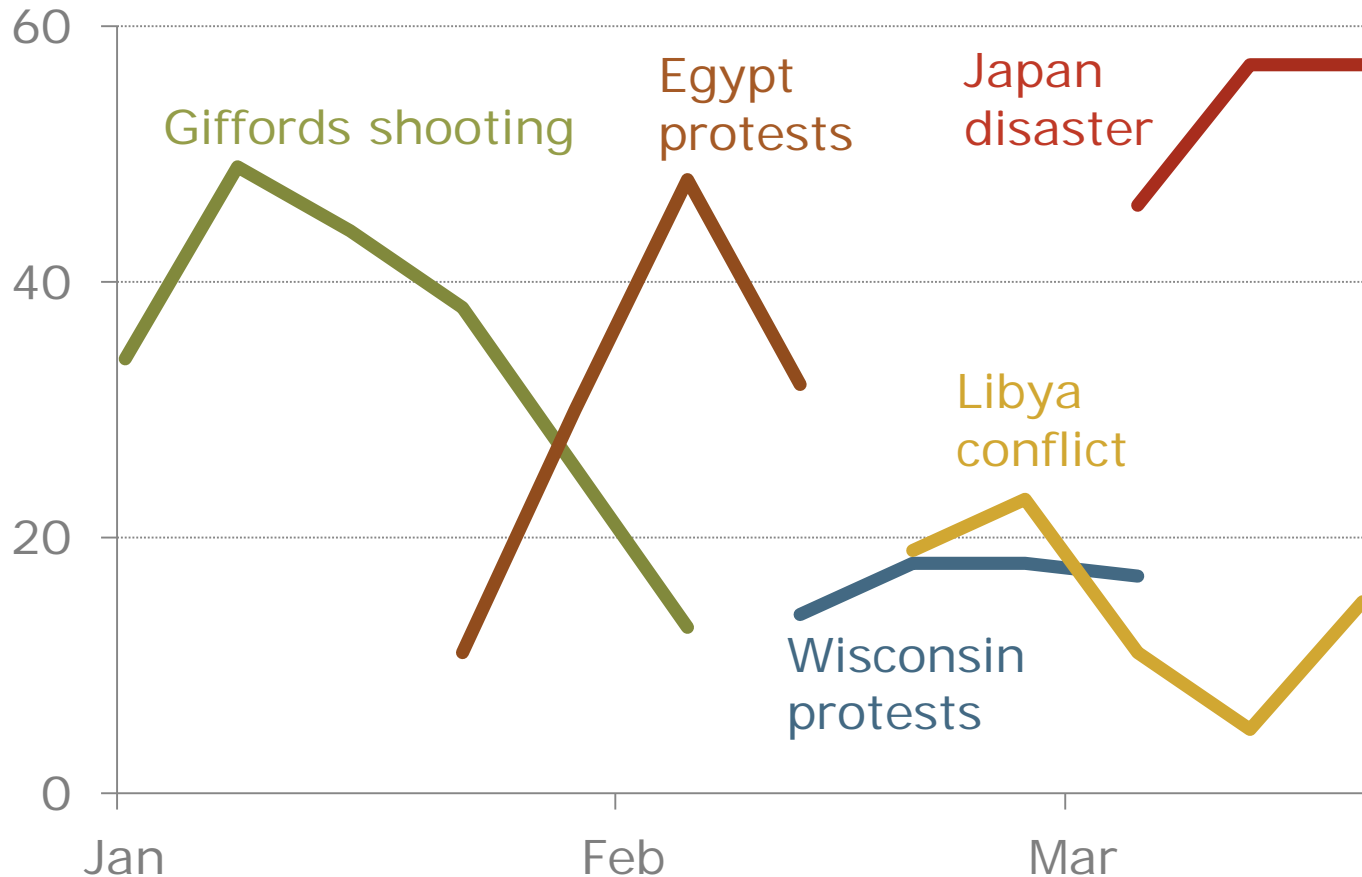
# How Much Do People Follow?



Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Feb. 17-20, 2011

# Top Stories of Early 2011

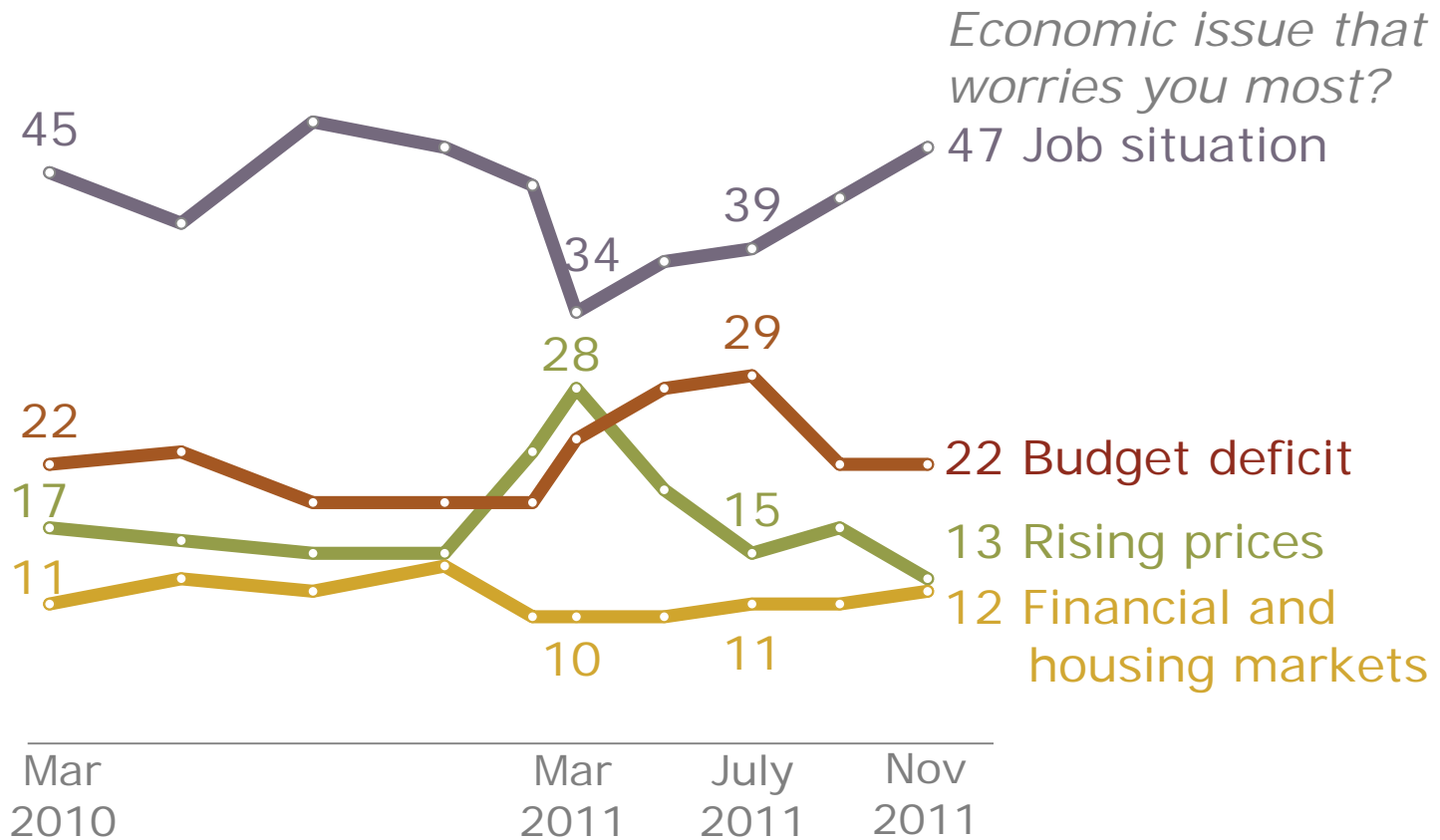
Percent Following Most Closely



Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, March 30, 2011

# Economic Volatility

# Jobs Remain Fundamental



Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Nov 9-14, 2011.

# No Partisan Advantage on Jobs

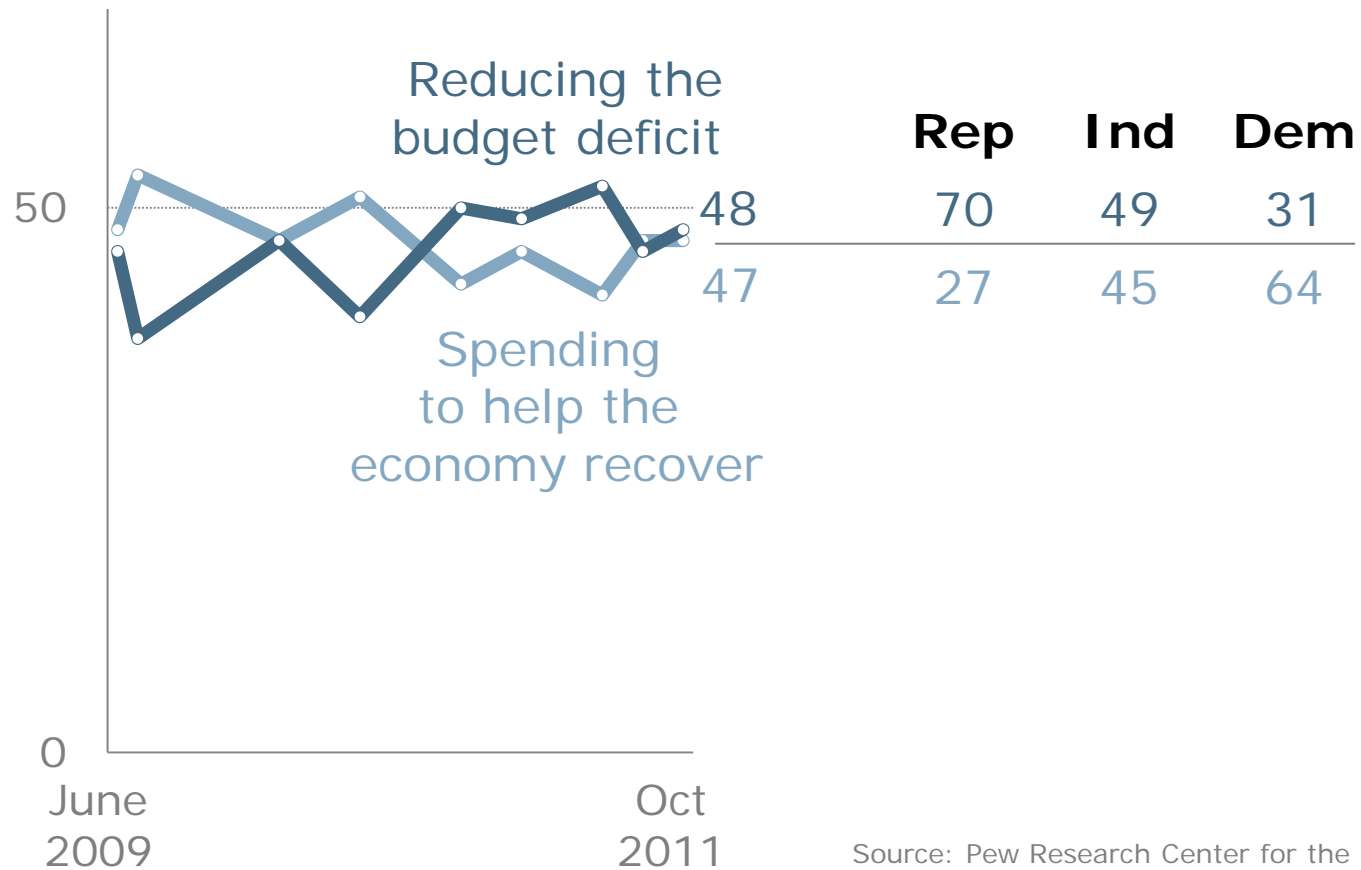
Which Party can do a better job improving the job situation?

	April	July	October
Republican Party	39	39	42
Democratic Party	39	39	42
No difference/DK	22	21	16
	100	100	100

Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Sept 22-Oct 4, 2011.

# Public Divided on the Key Economic Question

What should be the priority?



Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Sept 22-Oct 4, 2011.

# Conservative Tide Magnified by 2010 Election Turnout

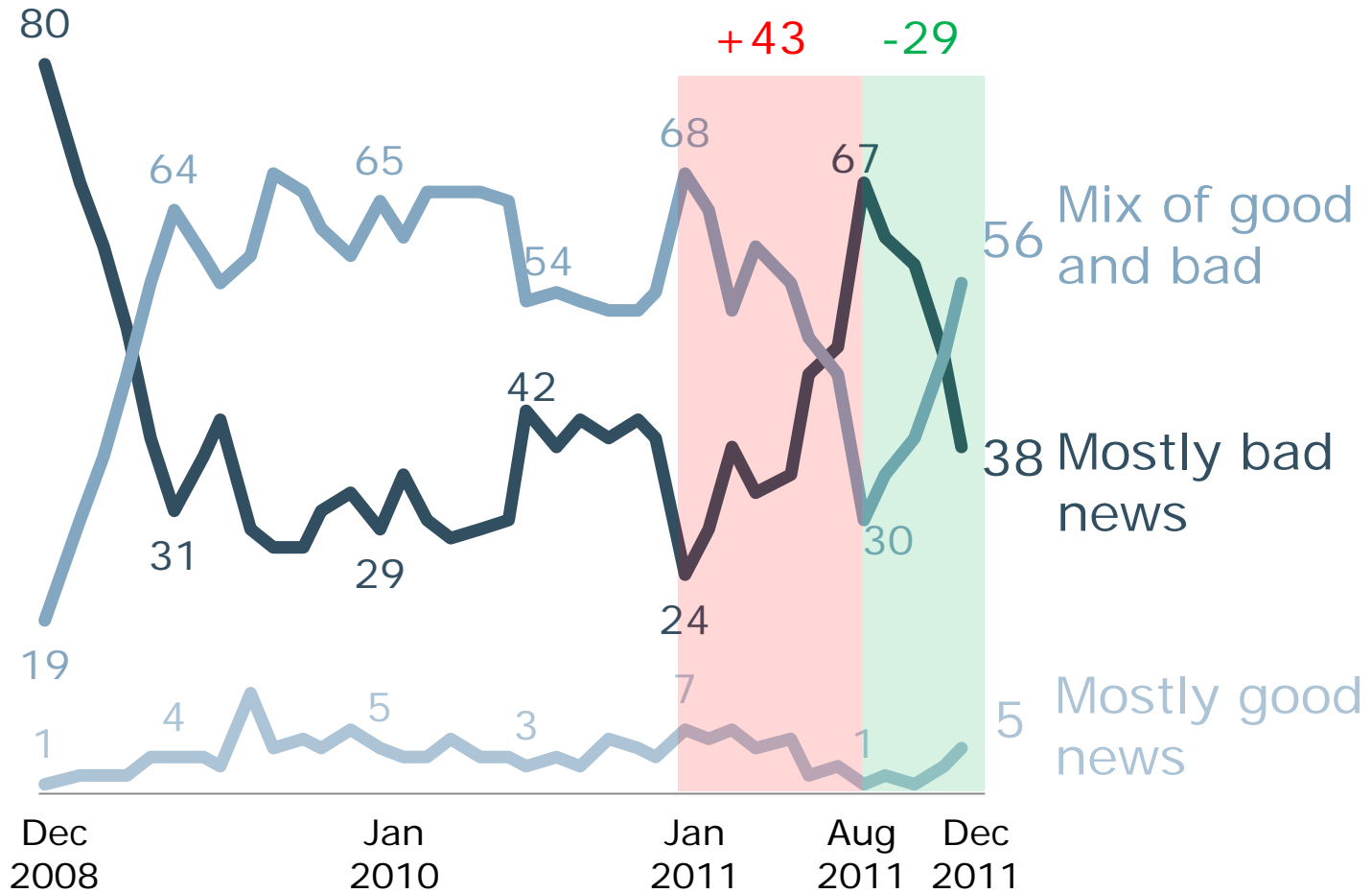
<i>Place a higher priority on...</i>	All adults %	Voted %	Did not vote %
Reducing the budget deficit	50	55	41
Spending more to help the economy recover	43	39	49
Don't know	7	5	10
	100	100	100

# Conservative Tide Magnified by 2010 Election Turnout

<i>Which comes closest to your view?</i>	All Adults %	Voted %	Did not vote %
Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals	48	56	34
Government should do more to solve problems	43	38	53
Don't know	9	7	13
	100	100	100



# Economic Views Turn Quickly



Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Dec 1-4, 2011.

# Economic Views Turn Quickly

<i>Hearing mostly bad news about...</i>	Aug %	Nov %	Dec %
The job situation	74	64	51
The financial markets	69	50	38

<i>News about retail sales</i>	Dec 2010	Dec 2011
Mostly good	33	51
Mostly bad	18	7
Mix of good and bad	45	35

Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Dec 1-4, 2011.

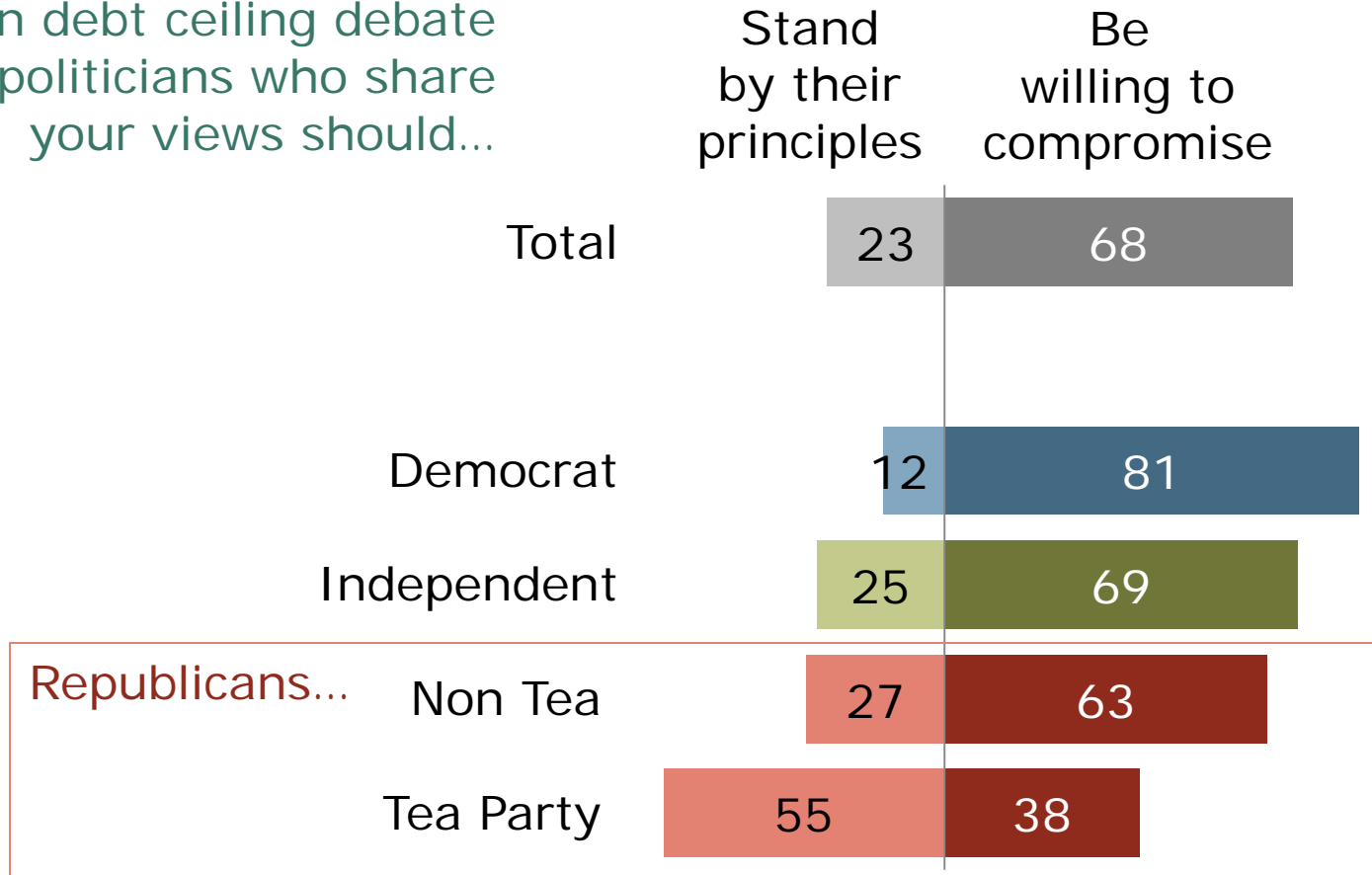
# Implications for Leadership

#1 – **DUCK!!!!!!**

**Doing Nothing vs. Dissatisfying the Base**

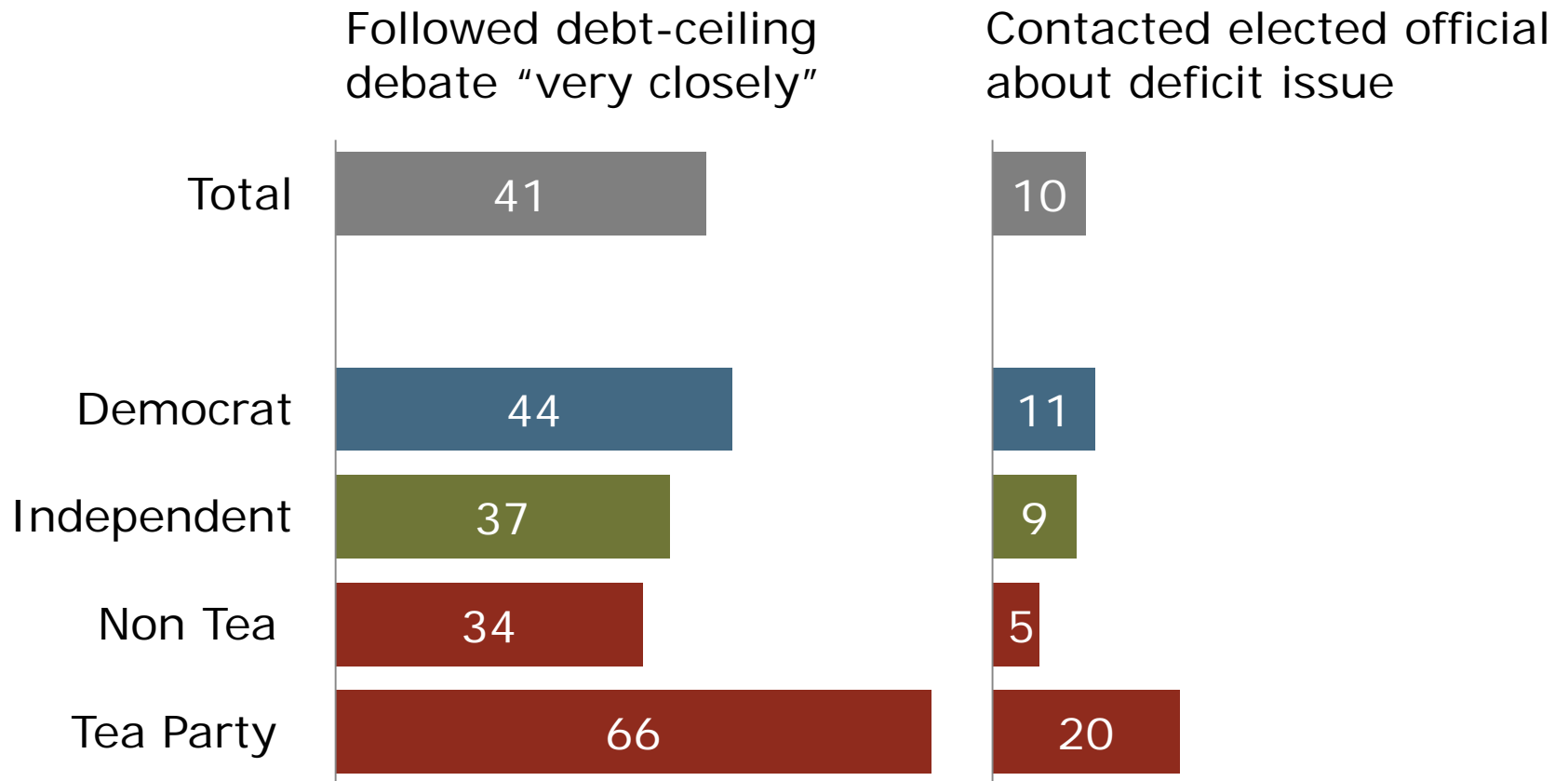
# Most Want Political Compromise

In debt ceiling debate politicians who share your views should...



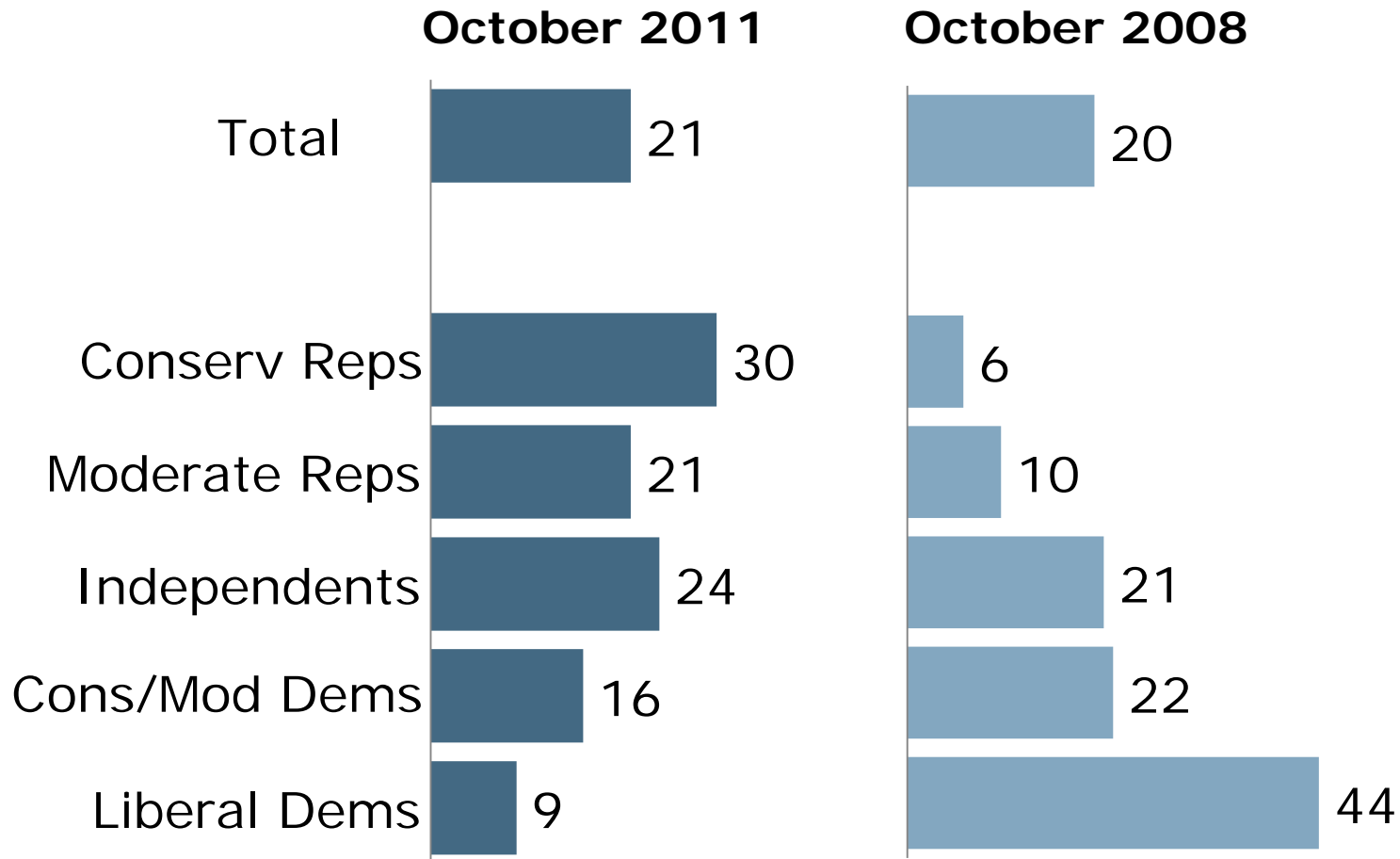
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press July 20-24, 2011

# Tea Party Engagement Endures



Pew Research Center for the People & the Press July 28-31, 2011

# Where's the "Anger"



Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Sept 22-Oct 24, 2011

# Implications for Leadership

## #1 – **DUCK!!!!!!**

Doing Nothing vs. Dissatisfying the Base

## #2 – **Think BIG or Think SMALL**

Grand Solutions vs. Incremental Steps

## #3 – **OPEN DOORS or BACK ROOMS**

See the sausage being made?

## #4 – **KEY WORDS: “Fairness” and “Sacrifice”**

# The Political Landscape Moving Forward

## A combination of CENTRIFUGAL and CENTRIPETAL forces are affecting American politics

- **Political polarization is real – There are wider divides on a broader range of issues**

The situation is amplified in Congress, and even many statehouses, but linked to a real change in the public

- **The Center Remains Strong**

More political independents, but no more political moderates

- **Multi-Faceted Ideology**

Substantial ideological and values “fissures” within political bases

- **A short-term conservative wave, but the tide is moving the other direction**

Generational politics, and growing diversity, pull country in a more liberal direction



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# The Typology Groups

- **Staunch Conservatives**  
*Highly engaged Tea Party supporters*
- **Main Street Republicans**  
*Conservative on most issues*
- **Libertarians**  
*Free market, small government seculars*
- **Disaffecteds**  
*Downscale and cynical*
- **Post-Moderns**  
*Moderates, but liberal on social issues*
- **New Coalition Democrats**  
*Upbeat, majority-minority*
- **Hard-Pressed Democrats**  
*Religious, financially struggling*
- **Solid Liberals**  
*Across-the-board liberal positions*