



# **GONE! Republican Lead in Congressional Party Preference Disappears in March**

## ***Democrats and Republicans Tied in 2002 Vote***

**Public Release Date: March 21, 2002 - 11:00 a.m. (EDT)**

*Between March 1 and 3, then again between March 14 and March 17, 2002, Ipsos Public Affairs interviewed two identical and complete representative samples for a total of 1,612 registered voters nationwide, by telephone. The margin of error is  $\pm 2.5\%$ . For results from the most recent survey of 802 registered voters, conducted March 14 to 17 only, the margin of error is  $\pm 3.5\%$ .*

### **March Turn for the Worse for the GOP in Congressional Preference**

For Democrats, March came in like a lion but it leaves as a much gentler lamb. Democrats eliminated the Republican lead in Congressional preference among voters nationwide, despite persistent high marks for President Bush's performance in office.

Republicans (41%) and Democrats (42%) are statistically tied on the question of which party voters want to see win control of Congress in November in two Ipsos Public Affairs/Cook Political Report polls conducted in March.

That compares to a 44% to 41% advantage for Republicans, on average, found in a compilation for *National Journal* magazine of four Ipsos/Cook polls conducted in January and February, with a total sample size of 3,161 voters and a margin of error of  $\pm 1.8\%$ .

Between the average for four polls in January-February (a 3 percentage-point Republican advantage) and two polls in March (a 1 percentage-point Democratic advantage) Democrats have enjoyed a net change improvement of 4 percentage points.

The Democratic advantage on the Congressional vote is 5 percentage points (still within the margin of error of a statistical tie) in the most recent survey, conducted March 14-17, 2002 among 802 registered voters. In the most recent poll, Democrats lead, 44%-39% on Congressional party preference.

The Ipsos/Cook polls generally report results from rolling averages of two consecutive polls, in order to allow small subgroup analysis. Each poll of about 800 registered voters is a representative sample with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5\%$ , however, so results from each wave, standing alone, are meaningful. The most recent results suggest a strong trend developing in favor of Democrats.



**Ipsos Public Affairs**  
 1101 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
 Washington DC 20036  
 202-463-7300

*North America*  
*Europe*  
*Latin America*  
*Asia*  
*Middle East*

### ***Congressional Party Preference***

And if the election for Congress were held today, would you want to see the Republicans or Democrats win control of Congress?

	<b>REGISTERED VOTERS</b>					
	<u>3/1-3 &amp; 3/14-17/02</u>	<u>3/14- 17/02</u>	<u>2/15-17 &amp; 3/1-3/02</u>	<u>2/1-3 &amp; 2/15-17/02</u>	<u>1/18-21 &amp; 2/1-3/02</u>	<u>1/4-6 &amp; 1/18-21/02</u>
Republicans.....	41	39	42	43	46	46
Democrats .....	42	44	41	41	39	41
Neither (VOL).....	13	14	12	12	11	10
Not sure.....	4	4	4	4	4	4

The favorable trend for Democrats on Congressional party preference follows a slight “settling” of high positive scores for President Bush that appeared in the mid-February-to-early-March Ipsos/Cook polls. In the average of two surveys, conducted February 15-17 and March 1-3, Bush’s re-elect score fell a net 4 percentage points (from 55% reelect Bush-18% definitely vote for someone else in the two February polls to 53% reelect-20% definitely someone else in the late-February/early March polls). In the same mid-February-early-March compilation, Bush’s overall job approval scores fell a net 5 percentage points, as did his scores on handling the economy, while his scores on handling other domestic issues fell a net 7 points.

Bush thus seems to have lost some ground in late February, and now Congressional Republicans have lost some ground over the course of March.

Most encouraging for Democrats should be how the Congressional preference question scores across the four broad categories of counties identified in a study Ipsos Public Affairs conducted for *National Journal* magazine. The study of Ipsos/Cook polls from January and February found Republicans leading not only in weak Bush counties (based on actual 2000 vote results) but also by an even wider margin in weak Gore counties, suggesting that Republicans had made deep inroads into areas Democrats must win in order to achieve a tie vote nationwide. In the March results, however, Democrats have achieved a dead heat with Republicans in weak Bush counties, and Democrats have claimed a lead in weak Gore counties. The Democratic base appears to be slowly returning home.

1101 Connecticut Ave, NW  
 Suite 200  
 Washington DC 20036  
 T 202-463-7300  
 F 202-463-3600

100 South Fifth Street  
 Suite 2200  
 Minneapolis, MN 554402  
 T 612-573-8527  
 F 612-904-6980

120 Montgomery Street  
 Suite 1776  
 San Francisco, CA 94104  
 T 415-274-8925  
 F 415-274-8942



**Ipsos Public Affairs**  
1101 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20036  
202-463-7300

*North America  
Europe  
Latin America  
Asia  
Middle East*

### ***Change in Congressional Party Preference, January-February versus March***

And if the election for Congress were held today, would you want to see the Republicans or Democrats win control of Congress?

		County Vote					
	Total	Strong Bush	Weak Bush	Weak Gore	Strong Gore	Bush counties	Gore counties
<b>Actual 2-Party Presidential Vote in 2000</b>							
2000 VOTE (Actual)		63% Bush 37% Gore	52% Bush 48% Gore	48% Bush 52% Gore	35% Bush 65% Gore	60% Bush 40% Gore	39% Bush 61% Gore
<b>Congressional Party Preference, January-February 2002</b>							
Republicans	44%	51%	44%	46%	34%	49%	38%
Democrats	41	34	41	39	51	36	47
Neither	11	11	10	11	12	10	12
(DK/NS)	4	4	5	5	3	4	3
<b>Congressional Party Preference, March 2002</b>							
Republicans	41%	50%	42%	38%	29%	48%	33%
Democrats	42	33	42	43	54	36	50
Neither	13	13	12	15	12	13	13
(DK/NS)	4	3	5	3	5	4	4
Net Change	+ 4 D	0	+ 3 D	+ 12 D	+ 8 D	+ 1 D	+ 8 D

The biggest shifts in favor of Democrats on Congressional party preference can be found among blacks in the most recent surveys (+12 D), following a similarly large movement two weeks earlier among voters over age 65 (+22 D among 65-74 year olds and +11 D among 75 and older voters). Blacks and the oldest voters are the groups with the largest proportions of strong Democrats, and the movement in favor of Democrats can be described as a movement of strong partisan Democrats in those groups.

Geographically, there has been a steady movement toward Democrats since mid-February among Midwesterners; weak Gore counties are predominantly white, Midwestern suburban counties, and that movement in the Midwest may be attributable to the restoration of Democratic control in counties Gore won narrowly in 2000.

1101 Connecticut Ave, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington DC 20036  
T 202-463-7300  
F 202-463-3600

100 South Fifth Street  
Suite 2200  
Minneapolis, MN 554402  
T 612-573-8527  
F 612-904-6980

120 Montgomery Street  
Suite 1776  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
T 415-274-8925  
F 415-274-8942

[www.ipsos-reid.com](http://www.ipsos-reid.com)



**Ipsos Public Affairs**  
1101 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20036  
202-463-7300

*North America*  
*Europe*  
*Latin America*  
*Asia*  
*Middle East*

*To view the latest poll results and research from Ipsos Public Affairs please go to:*

***INSERT LINK HERE TO LATEST FILLED-IN, AND EMAIL BOTH LINK AND RELEASE  
TO CHARLIE'S LIST AND EVERYONE WHO GOT NJ EMAIL. THANKS!***

**For more information on this release, please contact:**

**Thomas Riehle**  
**President**  
**Ipsos Public Affairs**  
**202-463-7300**  
[thomas.riehle@ipsos-reid.com](mailto:thomas.riehle@ipsos-reid.com)

*The survey was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs, the Washington, D.C.-based division of Ipsos-Reid, which is part of the world's fourth largest polling and market research organization, the Ipsos group, based in Paris. Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective public affairs research organization made up of Democratic and Republican campaign and political polling veterans. It was established in Washington in August 2001, and it is led by Thomas Riehle, who has more than 15 years of experience as a political pollster in Washington.*

1101 Connecticut Ave, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington DC 20036  
T 202-463-7300  
F 202-463-3600

100 South Fifth Street  
Suite 2200  
Minneapolis, MN 554402  
T 612-573-8527  
F 612-904-6980

120 Montgomery Street  
Suite 1776  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
T 415-274-8925  
F 415-274-8942

**[www.ipsos-reid.com](http://www.ipsos-reid.com)**