

**GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER** RESEARCH

---

September 20, 2010

# Framing the 2010 election

Message test using a web-panel experiment

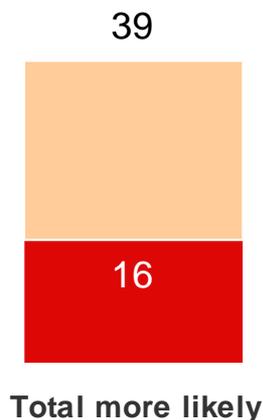
## Republican message frameworks

The following is a statement by the Republican candidate for Congress. After reading this, are you much more likely to support, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less likely to support (him/her) for Congress?

### Trillions for government

“The Democrats’ “Washington-first” policies have spent trillions we don’t have and pushed our nation to the brink of another financial crisis – all while failing to get people working again. They are pushing to have government take over health care, the auto companies, student loans and the banking industry, and my opponent supports these policies that harm our country. He will raise your taxes, but I won’t. I’ll work in Congress to move forward by returning to common sense policies. I support reining in excessive spending, decreasing burdensome regulation on business, and cutting taxes to get the private sector hiring again. This is what I’ll stand for, while fighting against the Obama-Pelosi agenda.”

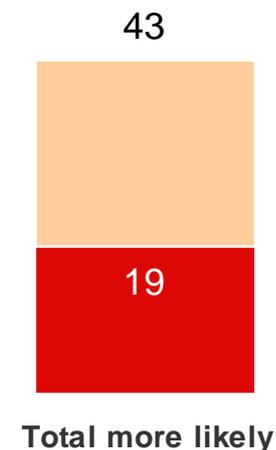
■ Much more likely



### Debt, bailouts and taxes

“Democrats were supposed to change Washington but instead betrayed the middle class by spending our country into endless debt on a failed economic recovery and bailouts for banks and car companies instead of focusing on average Americans. They will raise your taxes for sure, but I will stand up for you in Washington by working to restore fiscal responsibility, balance our budget, and focus on job creation. We need to extend the tax cuts for all Americans, create incentives for the private sector to start hiring again, and end costly regulation on our small businesses. Send a message to my Democratic opponent who has not been listening to the American people.”

■ Much more likely



\*Note: These messages were given to the entire sample of respondents.

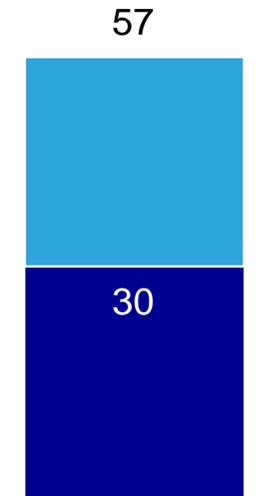
# Democratic frames: forward-back

*The following are statements by the Democratic candidate for Congress. After reading this, are you much more likely to support, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less likely to support (him/her) for Congress?*

## Forward-back obstacle

“The Republicans in Washington want to go back to the same Bush policies that took us down. I support common sense policies to help states keep critical employees and to help the unemployed with benefits and health care. To move forward, I’ve helped win permanent tax cuts for the middle class, small businesses and new industries so they can hire and create jobs. The economy is showing signs of progress. But the Republicans say no to score political points – no to unemployment benefits, to cracking down on Wall Street, and to stopping outsourcing. We must go forward, not back to the same old Bush policies that cost 8 million jobs.”

■ Much more likely

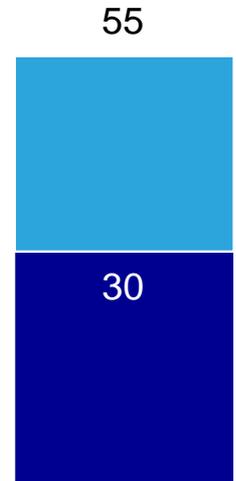


Total more likely

## Forward-back middle class

“The Republicans in Washington want to go back to the Bush policies that crushed the middle class. My priority is to cut middle class taxes and for small businesses to create jobs. Extend unemployment benefits and health insurance for the unemployed. Support new industries that create jobs and end tax breaks for exporting jobs. And the economy shows signs of improving. But the Republicans have different priorities. They want to give another \$300,000 a year tax break to the very wealthiest and \$5 billion in tax breaks to AIG and Goldman Sachs. We must go forward for the middle class, not back to old policies for Wall Street that cost 8 million jobs.”

■ Much more likely



Total more likely

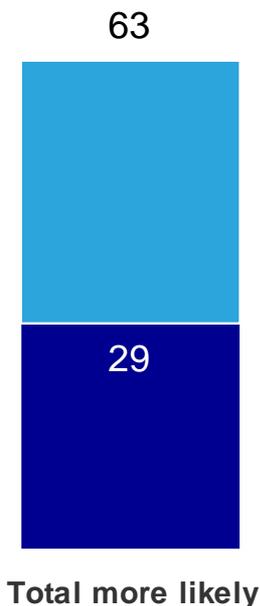
# Democratic frames: Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street and Ryan

*The following are statements by the Democratic candidate for Congress. After reading this, are you much more likely to support, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less likely to support (him/her) for Congress?*

## Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street

“In these tough times, I’m fighting for the middle class, and wish Republicans in Washington weren’t always looking out for Wall Street and the super rich. They voted to let Wall Street keep the taxpayers’ bailout money and companies to keep tax breaks for exporting American jobs. My opponent favors a \$300,000 a year tax break for the richest, while giving \$5 billion tax cuts to AIG and Goldman Sachs. I’ll take a different approach: new middle class tax cuts, helping small businesses and new American industries create jobs, extending benefits and health insurance for the unemployed, and making sure Wall Street acts responsibly. Let’s make our country work for the middle class.”

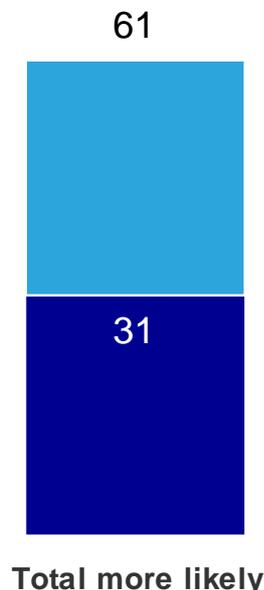
■ Much more likely



## Ryan Medicare

“Republicans have vowed to cut long-standing programs for the middle class, like Social Security and Medicare. The official Republican budget and the plan of their budget chairman is very clear about what will happen if they win back control: proceed with privatizing Social Security just like President Bush tried to do, shifting Social Security savings to the stock market, and ending guaranteed benefit levels. Medicare as we know it will end, as seniors will have to purchase private insurance using a voucher that will cover some of the costs. I have a different view. Medicare and Social Security are critical to the survival of the middle class – and they paid for them.”

■ Much more likely



## Democratic frames: change Washington, pro-middle class, against Wall Street

*The following are statements by the Democratic candidate for Congress. After reading this, are you much more likely to support, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less likely to support (him/her) for Congress?*

### Change Washington

“As people here know better than anyone, we can only get change if we get more common sense in Washington. In such tough times, Congress should not be voting to raise their pay. I want to end the revolving door of lawmakers becoming lobbyists and voted against my own party to crack down on powerful committee chairs. I supported eliminating special tax breaks for big oil companies and corporate subsidies that bust the budget. Republicans want business as usual – allowing corporate lobbyists to have free rein and permitting big corporations to regulate themselves, write their own rules and make unlimited campaign contributions. That’s not right, and I’ll fight to change Washington.”

■ Much more likely

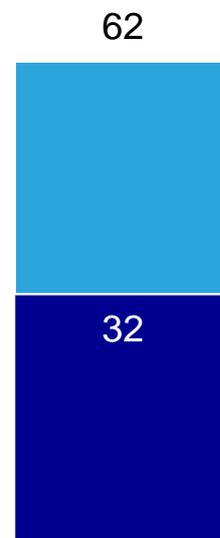


Total more likely

### Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street

“In these tough times, I’m fighting for the middle class, and wish Republicans in Washington weren’t always looking out for Wall Street and the super rich. They voted to let Wall Street keep the taxpayers’ bailout money and companies to keep tax breaks for exporting American jobs. My opponent favors a \$300,000 a year tax break for the richest, while giving \$5 billion tax cuts to AIG and Goldman Sachs. I’ll take a different approach: new middle class tax cuts, helping small businesses and new American industries create jobs, extending benefits and health insurance for the unemployed, and making sure Wall Street acts responsibly. Let’s make our country work for the middle class.”

■ Much more likely



Total more likely

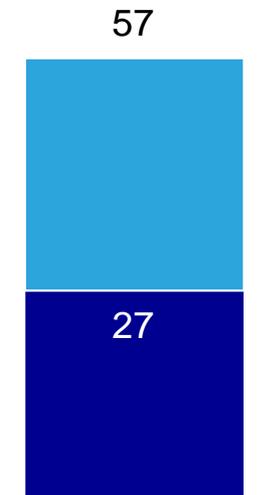
# Democratic frames: unequal for middle class

*The following are statements by the Democratic candidate for Congress. After reading this, are you much more likely to support, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less likely to support (him/her) for Congress?*

## Unequal middle class/reform

“The rich have recovered. Big corporations are raking in massive profits, paying out big bonuses, and are just sitting on almost \$2 trillion in cash. I support reforms to rein in CEO pay, protect consumers from credit card companies and health insurers who drop people with pre-existing conditions. I fought against the special interests. The Republicans are for tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas, proposed \$5 billion in new tax breaks to Goldman Sachs and AIG, and want to give each of the wealthiest Americans a new \$300,000 a year tax break. Republican policies already cost us 8 million jobs and now the \$8 trillion in new deficit-financed tax cuts for the rich and corporations they propose will run the economy back into the ground and destroy even more jobs. We must go forward, not back to policies that got us into this mess..”

■ Much more likely

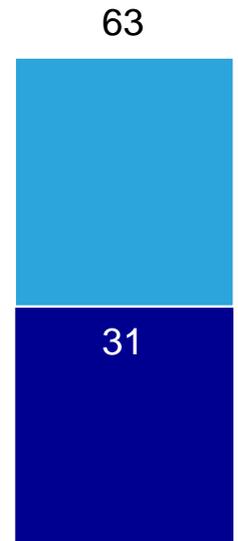


Total more likely

## Unequal middle class/jobs

“The middle class and working Americans are struggling, but the rich and big banks are back with the same bonuses and big profits. I want to narrow that gap by investing in education to train workers for emerging new industries. I want to protect the jobs we have and spur small business and new industries to start hiring and bring manufacturing jobs back to America. I support new tax cuts for the middle class and small businesses that hire and create jobs. Republicans want \$8 trillion in new deficit-financed tax cuts for the rich and corporations, even as they’d kill even more jobs by halting investments in infrastructure projects, clean energy, and schools. We need to invest in new jobs rather than give more to those who are ahead.”

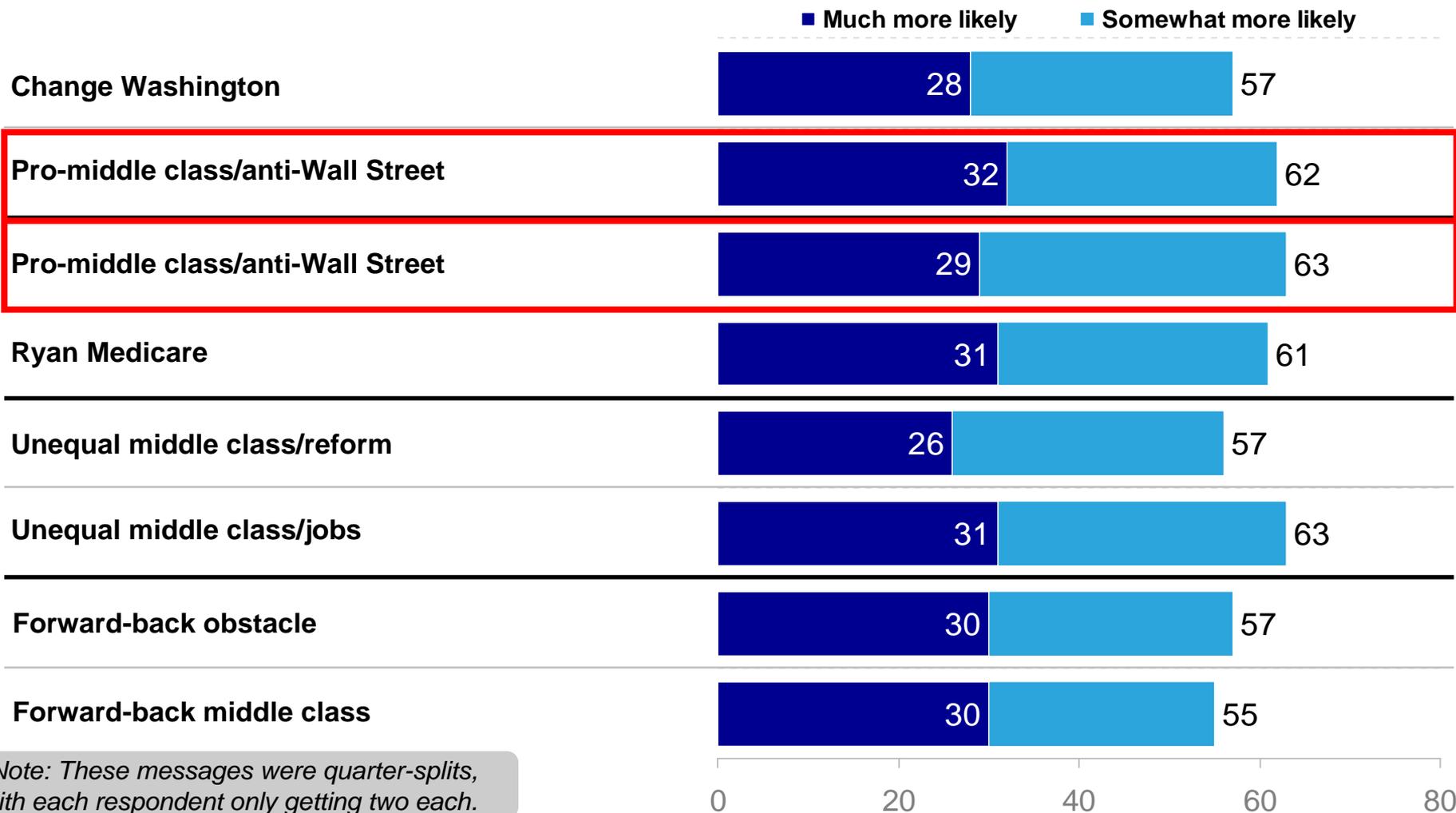
■ Much more likely



Total more likely

# Summary of Democratic messages

The following are statements by the Democratic candidate for Congress. After reading this, are you much more likely to support, somewhat more, somewhat less, or much less likely to support (him/her) for Congress?



\*Note: These messages were quarter-splits, with each respondent only getting two each.

## Most persuasive messages across groups

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After reading this, are you much more likely to support this Democratic member, somewhat more, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

	Total	RAE	White Non Coll	Blue Collar
Change Washington	57	58	57	56
Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street	62	71	54	64
Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street	63	71	62	60
Ryan Medicare	61	65	50	55
Unequal middle class/reform	57	61	48	48
Unequal middle class/jobs	63	66	56	58
Forward-back obstacle	57	61	49	51
Forward-back middle class	55	59	51	52

*\*Note: These messages were eighth-splits, with each respondent only getting one of them. Data reflects those who responded much or somewhat more likely.*

# Frames impact who's better on economy

---

## SHIFTS: frames shift which party better on economy - Total

For the following issues, overall, do you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue?  
The economy...

	Toward Dem	Toward Rep	Total shift	Net shift
Change Washington	17	10	26	+7
Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street	17	10	26	+7
Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street	18	19	37	0
Ryan Medicare	18	19	37	0
Unequal middle class/reform	14	16	30	-3
Unequal middle class/jobs	14	16	30	-3
Forward-back obstacle	13	15	28	-2
Forward-back middle class	13	15	28	-2

\*Note: These messages were quarter-splits, with each respondent only getting two each.

## SHIFTS: Party better on economy – new Democratic base (RAE)

For the following issues, overall, do you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue?  
The economy...

	Toward Dem	Toward Rep	Total shift	Net shift
Change Washington	20	10	30	+10
Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street	20	10	30	+10
Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street	18	26	45	-8
Ryan Medicare	18	26	45	-8
Unequal middle class/reform	11	18	29	-7
Unequal middle class/jobs	11	18	29	-7
Forward-back obstacle	11	14	25	-2
Forward-back middle class	11	14	25	-2

\*Note: These messages were quarter-splits, with each respondent only getting two each.

## SHIFTS: Which party better on economy – white blue collar

For the following issues, overall, do you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue?  
The economy...

	Toward Dem	Toward Rep	Total shift	Net shift
Change Washington	12	7	20	+5
Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street	12	7	20	+5
Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street	21	14	35	+7
Ryan Medicare	21	14	35	+7
Unequal middle class/reform	14	15	29	-1
Unequal middle class/jobs	14	15	29	-1
Forward-back obstacle	12	21	33	-9
Forward-back middle class	12	21	33	-9

\*Note: These messages were quarter-splits, with each respondent only getting two each.

Most important:  
Frames impact congressional vote

---

## SHIFTS: frames change congressional vote - Total

*Now, thinking again about your vote for Congress, if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for the Democrat or the Republican?*

	Toward Dem	Toward Rep	Total shift	Net shift
<b>Change Washington</b>	12	4	16	+9
<b>Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street</b>	12	4	16	+9
<b>Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street</b>	8	6	14	+2
<b>Ryan Medicare</b>	8	6	14	+2
<b>Unequal middle class/reform</b>	7	3	10	+4
<b>Unequal middle class/jobs</b>	7	3	10	+4
<b>Forward-back obstacle</b>	5	7	12	-2
<b>Forward-back middle class</b>	5	7	12	-2

*\*Note: These messages were quarter-splits, with each respondent only getting two each.*

## SHIFTS: frames change congressional vote – new Democratic base

*Now, thinking again about your vote for Congress, if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for the Democrat or the Republican?*

	Toward Dem	Toward Rep	Total shift	Net shift
<b>Change Washington</b>	12	5	17	+7
<b>Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street</b>	12	5	17	+7
<b>Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street</b>	8	8	17	0
<b>Ryan Medicare</b>	8	8	17	0
<b>Unequal middle class/reform</b>	7	2	10	+5
<b>Unequal middle class/jobs</b>	7	2	10	+5
<b>Forward-back obstacle</b>	5	8	14	-3
<b>Forward-back middle class</b>	5	8	14	-3

*\*Note: These messages were quarter-splits, with each respondent only getting two each.*

## SHIFTS: frames change congressional vote – white blue collar

*Now, thinking again about your vote for Congress, if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for the Democrat or the Republican?*

	Toward Dem	Toward Rep	Total shift	Net shift
<b>Change Washington</b>	8	4	12	+4
<b>Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street</b>	8	4	12	+4
<b>Pro-middle class/anti-Wall Street</b>	10	3	12	+7
<b>Ryan Medicare</b>	10	3	12	+7
<b>Unequal middle class/reform</b>	6	4	10	+3
<b>Unequal middle class/jobs</b>	6	4	10	+3
<b>Forward-back obstacle</b>	6	6	12	0
<b>Forward-back middle class</b>	6	6	12	0

*\*Note: These messages were quarter-splits, with each respondent only getting two each.*