



Political Insiders Poll



Which two of these five issues will be the most important in the 2010 midterm elections?

Democrats (106 votes)

Afghanistan	14 percent
Cap-and-trade/climate change	4 percent
Deficit/Big Government	37 percent
Economy/jobs	93 percent
Health care reform	48 percent

Afghanistan

"If troop levels go up, liberals become demoralized. If troop levels go down, Democrats get labeled weak. If troop levels remain stable, casualties will rise. All scenarios have electoral impact."

Cap-and-trade/climate change

"Depending on what happens, cap-and-trade could kill Democrats if it is acted on in the spring. Remember the public outrage in July?"

Deficit/Big Government

"The larger narrative of the 2010 election will be whether Democrats are responsible enough to govern. And if you have high deficits and a jobless recovery, then the answer will likely be no."

"The economic anxiety and anger are being manifested entirely via fiscal issues."

Economy/jobs

"While health care takes all the air out of the room, people are hurting, unemployment continues to rise, and Congress seems oblivious. They will wake up but too late to have much of an impact."

"The very second that health care passes, the administration must throw absolutely every idea at the jobs issue and focus on only that issue every single day until November 2, 2010."

"If unemployment is anything near 10 percent, I wouldn't want to be an incumbent."

"This is the great vulnerability of the Republicans. Let's remember that the meltdown occurred under the Republican watch."

"Swing voters will be focused on the direction of the economy."

Health care reform

"Whatever gets enacted on health care will be very unpopular next year due to the fear of the unknown. Challengers will exploit the hell out of that by running against an entirely fictional parade of horrors."

"Health care reform is personal to every voter, unlike climate and federal budget issues."

"[Voters] will be waiting with great anticipation to assess whether the reform that passes will help or hurt them individually."

Republicans (105 votes)

Afghanistan	13 percent
Cap-and-trade/climate change	2 percent
Deficit/Big Government	67 percent
Economy/jobs	89 percent
Health care reform	21 percent

Afghanistan

"Afghanistan is a situation which the administration cannot control and has the potential to blow them up in the midterms."

Deficit/Big Government

"The most powerful argument Republicans will have in 2010 is our ability to criticize the explosion of government spending and deficits. Jobs may trickle back next year, but the red-ink argument isn't going away."

"The problem is that the American people are beginning to tire of runaway government spending while politicians tell them they will curb spending."

"Deficit politics highlight Democrats' regrettable tendency to tax and spend on health care and cap-and-trade."

"Citizens cutting their personal debt in hard times do not appreciate a government that cannot do the same. And by next year, there will be plenty of news stories about billions of stimulus dollars being wasted."

Economy/jobs

"If unemployment is still around 10 percent, they're in trouble—and no amount of blaming W. will work."

"[President Obama] really is dependent on the jobless rate and consumer confidence. If they remain dismal, the top 10 issues will all be one word: 'economy.'"

"Our export sector is not strong enough to drive growth. And domestic demand will remain depressed."

"The administration has taken its eye off the ball on the two issues it campaigned on in 2008."

"Complaining about unemployment ain't enough. Republicans need a jobs-creation plan."

"GOP will run ads of Biden taking credit for the stimulus creating jobs."

"The 'it was much worse than we thought' line has worn old."

Health care reform

"Republicans will still be explaining the reform they are 'for.'"

"[The GOP's] message will be, 'You're doing too much.'"

NationalJournal.com

See which issues were rated highest by prominent bloggers by visiting the Insiders Poll online.

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL

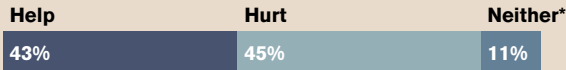


Political Insiders Poll



On balance, does the White House's decision to take on Fox News help or hurt President Obama?

Democrats (106 votes)



*Volunteered.

Help

"They need to find some fights that help excite the base. And our base hates Fox."

"Shows that he is willing to fight. This is what the Republicans did to CBS, and it still suffers from being the 'liberal' voice."

"Letting them relentlessly rip him under the guise of a credible news organization only makes their biased assessments seem all the more legitimate."

"For those of us on the left, it feels good to call out Fox for what they pull. It does seem lame that Obama left it to Anita Dunn as she walks out the door to land the real punches."

Hurt

"The administration has bigger fish to fry. It should forget about Fox and take a stronger stand on real health care reform."

"This Fox News squabble reduces the Obama administration to the level of small-time political operatives whining about their coverage."

"Roosevelt took on the Depression; Kennedy, communism; and Obama, Fox."

"It just looks like a game. No one is interested in games right now."

"To most Americans, Fox carries *American Idol* and the World Series, not grudges against the president."

"The attacks are both beneath the presidency and counter to Obama's brand."

"When you roll around in the mud with a pig, you both get dirty. And the pig really likes it."

Neither

"Fox viewers will still be against Obama. And liberals who hate Fox will still be for Obama."

Republicans (103 votes)



*Volunteered.

Help

"Fox cannot be intimidated, but ambitious reporters and editors at other outlets can be: To get ahead, they know they can't take on Obama, who is a hero in their newsrooms. It has a real chance to work."

Hurt

"It hurts because it is Nixonian and is adding to an already troubling record of trying to demonize any person, group, or organization that might not fully agree with the administration."

"Makes him a politician rather than a leader."

"The upshot is that they've boosted Fox's ratings, caused the White House press corps to rally around Fox, and made themselves seem arrogant and thin-skinned."

"O can talk with Iran, North Korea, but not Fox. C'mon; makes O look very small."

"If you want people to watch something, tell them not to watch it."

"Are there two people outside the Beltway who care about this in his party or ours? But inside the Beltway, the message is, 'You could be next.' Why do smart people make such bad decisions?"

"The president has now turned Fox into a victim. And they are accepting the role."

"The president looks weaker and weaker the more and more he blames others for his problems."

"Looks like the White House is throwing a temper tantrum; not what is expected from a confident leader."

Neither

"This is a classic Beltway issue."

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL

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