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Midterm Elections a Referendum on Trump... Dems with 10-Point Lead on Generic Congressional Ballot Question For Immediate Release

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This NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:

More than two in three registered voters nationally say their impression of President Donald Trump will factor into their vote for Congress, and nearly half of voters say their impression of the president makes them more likely to vote for a Democrat for Congress this November. This as President Trump's job approval rating remains upside down among Americans.

67% of U.S. voters say their opinion of Trump will be either a major (44%) or minor (23%) factor in deciding their vote for Congress. 31% report their impression of the president will not be a factor when casting their ballot. When The Marist Poll asked this question about President Barack Obama prior to the 2014 midterm elections, 47% of registered voters nationally responded that their impression of Obama would play either a major (28%) or minor (19%) role in deciding for whom to vote. A majority (52%), at that time, said their impression of President Obama was not a factor at all.

Not surprisingly, a majority of Democrats (56%) currently say President Trump will heavily influence their decision. An additional 21% say their opinion of the president will be a minor factor when choosing a candidate. Fewer Republicans (41%), though the plurality, think their impression of Trump will be a major factor in determining for whom to vote. 23% say it will play a minor role, and 35% report their opinion of the president will not factor into their decision. There is less consensus among independents. 38% of independents say President Trump will be top of mind when deciding the candidate to support. 26% report the president will impact their decision but to a lesser degree, and 35% of independents say their impression of the president will not factor into their decision at all. A majority of women (51%), including suburban women (54%), say President Trump will be a *major* factor in their vote. In contrast, 37% of men which includes 32% of suburban men share this view.

“For many voters, the midterm elections are the first time they will weigh in on President Trump since 2016,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Voters who see Trump as a *big deal* in deciding their 2018 vote are twice as likely to support a Democrat in their district for Congress.”

47% of voters nationally report their opinion of Trump will make them more likely to vote for a Democrat for Congress this November. 34% say their opinion of the president makes them more likely to vote for a Republican. 15% say it makes no difference to their vote, and 4% are unsure. In 2014, 41% of voters said their impression of President Obama made them more likely to support the Republican on the ballot, and 38% said it made them more likely to support the Democrat. 18%, at that time, said their impression of Obama made no difference to their vote.

91% of Democrats and 80% of Republicans report their impression of President Trump makes them more likely to support their own party’s candidate. Of note, a plurality of independent voters (40%) say they are more likely to support the Democrat, and 29% say they are more likely to back the Republican. In 2014, 41% of independents said their impression of President Obama made them more likely to back the *Republican*. 25% backed the *Democrat*.

“In the face of unprecedented enthusiasm of both Democratic and Republican core voters, independents may be the tipping point on November 6th,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion.

39% of Americans approve of the job the president is doing in office, including 24% who strongly do so. 53% disapprove, including 39% who strongly have this opinion. The president’s approval rating is little changed from early October when 41% of residents approved of how he was performing in his post, and 53% disapproved. Among registered voters, the president’s approval rating is 41%. Earlier this month, it stood at 43%. The proportion of registered voters who disapprove of the job Trump is doing as president is unchanged (53%).

More than three in four registered voters (76%) consider this year’s midterm elections to be very important. Democrats (83%) and Republicans (80%) are similarly energized for the midterms. Among independents, 67% have this view. There has been little change on this question from earlier in October.

The Democrats (50%) have a 10-point advantage over the Republicans (40%) on the generic congressional ballot question. Six percent are undecided. The Democrats’ lead has grown from +6 points in early October. Democrats and Republicans have secured their bases. Independent voters now favor the Democrats by 10 points, up from 5 points just weeks ago.

“Again, the Democrats are in the driver’s seat on the generic congressional ballot question,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “They are benefitting from movement from independents to their side.”

There has been an increase in the proportion of voters who report the Kavanaugh nomination makes no difference to their vote for Congress. 35% of voters report President Trump’s nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court makes no difference to their vote. This is up from 26% earlier this month. 37% of registered voters nationally, compared with 40% previously, say they are more likely to cast their ballot for a candidate who opposed the nomination. 27%, close to 31% last time, report they are more likely to back a candidate who supported the Kavanaugh appointment.

Taking a deeper dive into the issues, voters nationally say the economy and jobs (20%) is their top vote issue. Health care (17%) and immigration (17%) closely follow. Three in ten Republicans (30%) and nearly one in four independents (24%) cite the economy and jobs. 26% of Democrats mention health care as the most important factor in deciding for whom to vote in November.

CNGVYIISI. NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll National Tables October 21st through October 23rd, 2018

| National Registered Voters | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------|------------------------------|----------|------------------|------------------|-------|--------|
| Now, let me list some issues that may factor into deciding your vote for Congress in November. Please tell me which one of these items you think will be the most important factor in deciding your vote: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | The economy and jobs | Health care | Immigration | Federal taxes and spending | Climate change | Guns | Foreign policy and terrorism | Abortion | Opioid addiction | Vol. All equally | Other | Unsure |
| | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % | Row % |
| National Registered Voters | 20% | 17% | 17% | 9% | 7% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 11% | 1% | 1% |

NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll National Registered Voters. Interviews conducted October 21st 2018, through October 23rd 2018, n=738 MOE +/- 4.4 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

When asked about health care, nearly seven in ten voters (69%) say a candidate’s position on health care will be one of many factors in deciding their vote. 18% report it will be the most important factor, and 12% say it will not be a factor at all.

Democrats (28%) are twice as likely as independents (14%) and nearly three times as likely as Republicans (10%) to cite health care as the most influential issue when casting their ballot.

Nearly half of voters (48%), including 91% of Democrats and a plurality (44%) of independents, say a candidate’s position on health care makes them more likely to support a Democrat for Congress. 37% of the national electorate, including 89% of Republicans, say it will make them more likely to back the Republican candidate. Eight percent of registered voters say it makes no difference to their vote.

More than six in ten voters (63%) say a candidate’s stance on tax cuts is just one of many factors when choosing a candidate to support. 11% think it is the most important factor, and 24% report it is not an important factor.

72% of Republicans, 57% of Democrats, and 64% of independents say a candidate’s position

on tax cuts is just one of many issues that will factor into their decision come November.

A plurality of voters (45%) say the issue of tax cuts makes them more likely to vote for a Democrat this November. 39% say it makes them more likely to support a Republican for Congress, and 10% think it makes no difference to their vote. Six percent are unsure.

Partisan allegiances are intact, but there is little consensus among independents. 38% of independent voters say the issue of tax cuts makes them more likely to support the Republican. An identical 38% say it makes them more inclined to back the Democrat. 13% report it makes no difference to their vote, and 11% of independents are unsure.

However, many Americans (60%) prefer reversing the tax cuts passed by Congress last year rather than cutting government spending for entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid (21%) to reduce the federal budget deficit. Most Democrats (80%), a majority of independents (58%), and even a plurality of Republicans (43%) say it is better to reverse the tax cuts than cut funding to entitlement programs. Nearly one in three Republicans (32%) support cuts to entitlement programs, and a notable 24% are unsure.

“If midterm voters are thinking tax cuts when they cast their ballot, President Trump is in for a surprise,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Not only do six in ten Americans want to reverse the tax cuts if it means cutting entitlements, but even Trump voters divide on the issue. 38% prefer cutting entitlements to balance the budget. 36% want to reverse last year’s tax cuts if entitlements are on the chopping block, and 24% are just unsure.”

A plurality of Americans (44%), up from 39% at the end of 2016, describe their household financial situation as being able to live comfortably. An additional 28% say they meet their basic expenses with a little extra left over. One in five (20%) report they just meet their basic expenses, and 8% report not having enough to make ends meet each month.