



To: McLaughlin & Associates VIP List
From: John McLaughlin
Re: National Poll Results – Check & Balance Question

In our November post-election survey conducted on election night, we asked the question *“If Barack Obama were to win the election for President, which general position would you want your member of Congress to take...will vote to help Barack Obama pass his agenda, or will vote to be a check and balance?”* The majority (54% to 36%) preferred their member of Congress to be a check and balance.

In our recent May 2009 survey, we asked a similar question but this time specifically tied the responses to a Democrat and Republican congressman. *“Since Barack Obama won the election for President, who would you prefer to represent you in Congress? A Democrat congressman who will help Barack Obama pass his agenda, or a Republican congressman who will be a check and balance to Barack Obama.”* Despite labeling the candidate as a Republican and Barack Obama’s popularity, a slight majority (51% to 41%) still would prefer a Republican congressman who will be a check and balance to Barack Obama to represent them in Congress. Key swing voter segments, including the majority of undecided voters and ticket splitters and the plurality of Independents, prefer a Republican candidate who will be a check and balance to Barack Obama. This is a dramatic change from our January 15, 2009 national survey when the plurality favored a Democrat congressman who will help Barack Obama pass his agenda (47% to 40%). In total, it is a 17-point swing against the President since our January survey. We have also seen this swing in statewide and congressional polls that we have taken as well.

We first asked this type of question in 1996 for our congressional clients as Bill Clinton was headed for re-election and obtained similar results. Some other pollsters have now copied our question and are getting similar results. Providing a check and balance to Barack Obama is not really a message for Republicans but instead a good tactic to define contrasting policies. Saying you will be “a check and balance” to Barack Obama requires clear issue contrasts. Messages like stopping runaway government spending; fighting against a bigger, more intrusive bureaucracy, and preventing tax increases on families and small businesses will garner majority support. Republicans need to press their issue contrasts.

“If Barack Obama were to win the election for President, which general position would you want your member of Congress to take...will vote to help Barack Obama pass his agenda, or will vote to be a check and balance?” (November 2008 Survey)

Since Barack Obama won the election for President, who would you prefer to represent you in Congress? A Democrat congressman who will help Barack Obama pass his agenda, OR a Republican congressman who will be a check and balance to Barack Obama. (January & May 2009 Surveys)

	<u>November</u> <u>2008</u>	<u>January</u> <u>2009</u>	<u>May</u> <u>2009</u>
Help Pass Agenda	36	47	41
Republican/Check & Balance	54	40	51
Don't Know/Refused	10	13	9

<u>January 2009 X-Tabs</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>	<u>Undecided</u> <u>Generic Vote</u>	<u>Ticket</u> <u>Splitter</u>
Democrat/Help Pass Agenda	47	10	86	35	33	37
Republican/Check & Balance	40	83	9	38	33	36
Don't Know/Refused	13	7	6	28	34	27

<u>May 2009 X-Tabs</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>	<u>Undecided</u> <u>Generic Vote</u>	<u>Ticket</u> <u>Splitter</u>
Democrat/Help Pass Agenda	41	6	75	38	24	31
Republican/Check & Balance	51	89	18	45	53	52
Don't Know/Refused	9	6	8	16	23	17

Methodology: The November national post-election survey was conducted on November 4, 2008 among 1,000 people who voted on election-day or voted by mail-in/absentee ballot. The January national survey was conducted on January 14-15, 2009 among 1,000 likely voters. The May national survey was conducted on May 8-9th, 2009. All interviews were conducted via telephone by professional interviewers. Interview selection was random within predetermined election units – in these cases, the fifty states. These units were structured to correlate with actual voter turnout in a general election. The sample size of 1,000 has an accuracy of +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence interval.