



EMILY's List

**EMILY'S LIST WOMEN'S MONITOR
THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS AND
IMPLICATIONS FOR 2008**

Results Of An In-Depth Post-Election National Survey

Conducted November 2006

By

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INTRODUCTION

Republicans lost on many fronts last month, but one of the untold post-election analysis stories is the GOP's failure to keep the voters who won them a majority in 2004 and what this defection means for both parties moving forward. These "Bush defectors" (those who voted for Bush in 2004 but did not vote Republican for Congress in 2006) represent a significant bloc that not only contributed to Democrats' historic gains in the midterm elections, but also represent a segment of the electorate that will be very much up for grabs as both parties head toward what already appears to be an accelerated presidential campaign calendar for 2008.

Last spring, the EMILY's List Women's Monitor first identified this "Bush defection" trend, which was particularly visible among *women* who had voted for Bush in 2004; at the time (May 2005) one-third of these women were not planning to vote GOP for Congress in the 2006 elections. The current Women's Monitor tracks this important story line with a final, post-election assessment of both the size of and the reasons behind this shift, while also taking a prospective look at these Bush-defecting voters in terms of what they are looking for and thinking about as the country prepares to elect a new president in 2008. One considerable advantage to this current study over more traditional analyses, including examination of exit poll results, is that these data are a collection of respondents' reported behavior in both the 2004 and 2006 elections, allowing trends and shifting allegiances of both voters and nonvoters to be assessed at the individual level.

The survey findings also provide insight into other critical dynamics that both shaped the 2006 elections and set a framework for 2008, including voters' changing perceptions of the political parties, their motives in casting their ballots in 2006, and values' role in driving voters' electoral decisions.

This report begins with a strategic overview of the 2006 elections' major themes, particularly as they set the stage for the future, and then turns to a more in-depth prospective analysis of Bush defectors and their role in shaping the political landscape to come. This report is based on a survey conducted for the EMILY's List Women's Monitor by Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group from November 8 to 19, 2006. The project consisted of a national survey among 1,002 registered voters, including an oversample of women. We also interviewed an oversample of Bush

defectors, who are defined in this project as voters who report supporting Bush in 2004 but not voting Republican for Congress in 2006 (because they either voted Democratic, independent, or third-party for Congress or did not vote at all in the midterm elections). In total, we interviewed 708 Bush defectors. The oversample of Bush defectors is national, but also includes eight select congressional districts and four states where the drop off between Bush's support in 2004 and Republican congressional performance in 2006 was highest.¹ The margin of error for the overall national sample is ± 3.1 percentage points, and it is higher for subgroups.

¹ The oversample was done in Missouri, Montana, Virginia, and Ohio as well as in IN-02, OH-18, IN-09, PA-10, AZ-08, NC-11, IN-02, AZ-05.

I. 2006 OVERVIEW: A FRAMEWORK FOR MOVING FORWARD

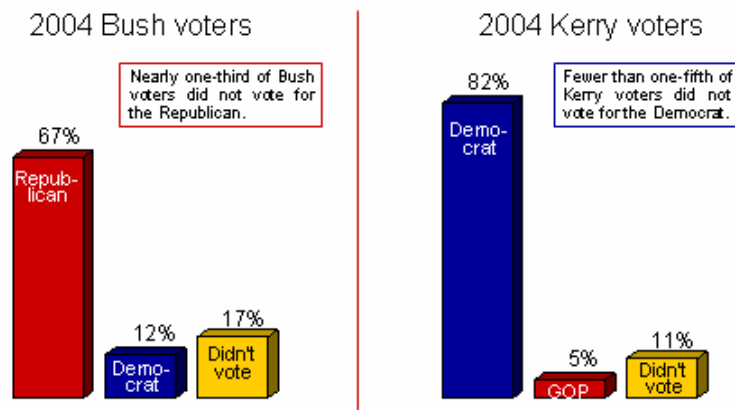
The political dynamics that shaped the 2006 midterm elections provide a framework for both parties as they head toward 2008. Democrats' sweeping victory last month was rooted in a broad array of political forces, not the result of any single factor. A strategic overview of those forces and their implication for the future is the focus of the first section of this report.

A. Changing Dynamics And Shifting Allegiances In The 2006 Electorate

The support that won President Bush reelection in 2004 disintegrated in 2006. **In fact, one-third of 2004 Bush voters did not vote Republican for Congress in 2006, making them almost twice as likely as Kerry voters to drop off from their presidential preference just two years ago.** Among 2004 Bush voters, fully 17% report not voting in 2006 while 12% defected to the Democrats, leaving just 67% of Bush voters supporting Republicans for Congress (an additional 1% supported independent or third-party candidates). By comparison, fully 82% of 2004 Kerry voters report voting Democratic for Congress last month, with just 11% saying they did not vote and 5% moving to the Republicans.

One-Third Of Bush Voters Defected Or Stayed Home In 2006

2006 Vote for U.S. House



This broad defection from Bush continues a trend first identified in last spring's 2005 Women's Monitor. At the time women voters represented the leading edge of the movement away from Bush: just 66% of women Bush voters said they planned to vote Republican for Congress, while 8% were committed to voting Democratic and 26% were undecided. What happened in the interim, as these findings demonstrate, is that these women remained disenchanted with Bush and the Republicans, and men who supported Bush in 2004 joined them in nearly equal proportions. By the time voters went to the polls last month, 35% of 2004 Bush women broke ranks by either defecting to the Democrats (13%) or a third-party candidate (1%), or by staying home (17%), while 33% of 2004 Bush men fell away by voting Democratic (11%), voting for a third-party candidate (2%), or by not voting at all (18%).

THEN <i>(May 2005 Women's Monitor)</i>	NOW <i>(November 2006 Women's Monitor)</i>
<u>Women Bush 2004 Voters</u>	
66% plan to vote Republican	65% voted Republican
8% plan to vote Democratic	13% voted Democratic
26% undecided	17% did not vote
<u>Men 2004 Bush Voters</u>	
72% plan to vote Republican	67% voted Republican
8% plan to vote Democratic	11% voted Democratic
20% not sure	18% did not vote

Adding to the momentum they got from Bush defectors, Democrats gained ground broadly among almost all segments of voters in 2006, but they benefited from major shifts among key voting audiences, including independent voters, non-evangelical churchgoers, Hispanics, rural voters, young voters, and mothers.

Democratic Gains Among Key Audiences			
	<u>Kerry '04</u>	<u>Dem '06</u>	<u>Shift/Gain</u>
	\pm	\pm	\pm
Independents	+10	+29	+19
Rural voters	-35	-12	+23
Catholics	-3	+17	+20
Non-evangelical weekly churchgoers	-17	+4	+21
Hispanics	+22	+45	+23
Voters age 18 to 34	+13	+41	+28
Voters age 65+ (seniors)	-10	+3	+13
Women voters age 65+ (women seniors)	-7	+11	+18
Mothers	-5	+18	+23
Married women	-16	-1	+15
White non-college educated	-24	+5	+19

B. An Election Driven By Distinct Agendas

Republican and Democratic voters were motivated by differing factors in 2006. **For voters who went Democratic, last month's midterm elections truly were a national election that revolved around two preeminent issues: frustration with the war in Iraq and a preference for which party would control Congress. Republican voters, on the other hand, came to the polls with a different agenda. While they shared Democrats' motivation to choose which party would control Congress, their other main considerations were terrorism and national security and issues such as abortion and gay marriage.**

Sixty percent (60%) of voters who voted for Democratic congressional candidates rate their feelings about the war in Iraq and current policies on the war as a "10" on a 10-point scale of importance in their voting decision. Fifty-eight percent (58%) give the same rating about their feelings on whether they wanted the Republicans or the Democrats to be the majority party in control of Congress. These two factors far surpassed other key issues, though "feelings about George Bush and the job he is doing overall as President" was a third consideration, with 44% of Democratic voters rating it as a "10."

Republican voters cast their ballots based on a very different set of

concerns. These voters overwhelmingly prioritized “feelings about terrorism and national security” (57% rated this as a “10”), while “feelings about whether you wanted the Republicans or the Democrats to be the majority party in control of Congress” (46%) and “feelings about issues such as abortion and gay marriage” (43%) were additional considerations.

Democratic And Republican Voters Had Different Agendas

Very important factor in my vote decision for Congress*

	2006 U.S. House vote	
	Democrat	Republican
War in Iraq/current policies on war	60%	41%
Which party would control Congress	58%	46%
George Bush's overall job performance	44%	30%
Republican leadership in Congress	42%	26%
Corruption, scandals, ethics in DC	41%	33%
Terrorism/national security	40%	57%
Economy/economic direction	39%	38%
Privacy issues/gov't role in privacy	39%	28%
Stem cell research	33%	29%
Individual candidates in my district	29%	37%
Issues such as abortion/gay marriage	29%	43%

*Rating of 10 on ten-point scale

In fact, these findings yield consistent and overwhelming evidence that Democratic voters were driven by their objections to the national political climate established by President Bush and Republican leadership in Congress.

- For example, voters who chose Republican candidates are more likely than those who supported Democrats to cite their feelings about the individual candidates running for Congress in their district and their personal qualifications and backgrounds (37% Republican voters; 30% Democratic voters rate this as a “10”), while Democrats are more likely to point to feelings about whether they wanted the Republicans or the Democrats to be the majority party in control of Congress (58% Democratic voters; 46% Republican voters).

- Fully three in four (75%) voters who supported Democratic congressional candidates say they did so because they were looking for a candidate who would serve as a check and balance to President Bush and his policies (only 20% of Democratic voters say that this was not a consideration to them either way). Notably, only 38% of voters who supported Republican congressional candidates say they did so because they were looking for a candidate who would support President Bush and his policies.

C. Values In The 2006 Elections

In the wake of the 2004 elections, much attention was given to so-called “values voters” and the theory that they provided Bush and the Republicans with a crucial margin of victory in 2004. While the very premise of “values voters” is problematic in itself (because all voters have values), it is worth examining values’ role in the 2006 midterm elections, recognizing that these deeply held beliefs guide Americans’ behavior, including their voting preferences, not just for one moment in time or one election cycle, but serve as fundamental orientations with important long-term implications. **The findings from this Women’s Monitor demonstrate that Democrats’ sweep of last month’s midterm elections at least in part was a result of their greatly improved standing among voters in terms of communicating the force of basic values.**

In this current survey, voters were asked to identify one or two values that were most important to them in choosing an elected official.

	<u>%</u>
Personal responsibility and people being responsible for their own welfare	32
Religious faith and a belief in God	31
Caring about people in need and those less fortunate	29
Equal opportunity and giving everyone a fair chance	29
The importance of family	25
Patriotism and love of country	19
Respect for the right to life	13

In 2004, these value orientations largely polarized voters. John Kerry dominated on two of these values dimensions (equal opportunity/giving

everyone a fair chance and caring about people in need and those less fortunate); voters who identified these values as their highest priorities chose Kerry over Bush by more than 40 percentage points. Bush, however, won commandingly on the other four values dimensions: among voters who say personal responsibility, religious faith, family, and patriotism are the most important values for elected leaders to possess and demonstrate, the Bush margin ranges from 19 to more than 40 percentage points.

But last month's elections marked an important change in the values landscape that translated into dramatic improvements for Democrats. On the two values dimensions that Kerry captured in 2004, Democrats improved on their already overwhelming advantage. But on the four values dimensions that Bush dominated in 2004, Democrats made significant inroads in 2006 and were successful in shifting this values terrain back to a more competitive playing field.

	2004 Bush Margin ±	2006 Republican Margin ±	Net Change ±
Religious faith	+37	+12	-25
Patriotism	+43	+17	-26
Personal responsibility	+21	+10	-11
Family	+19	+9	-10

These gains are consistent with the shifting allegiances of many key constituencies from 2004 to 2006. For example, rural voters report having supported Bush over Kerry in 2004 by 35 points; this year the GOP edge among them was down to just 12 points. The GOP edge among married women dropped from 16 points to just one point. Among those who attend religious services at least weekly, President Bush's 2004 28-point advantage narrowed to just nine points for Republicans in 2006. And while Republicans maintain a large margin among evangelical weekly churchgoers, there has been a truly dramatic shift among all other weekly churchgoers. President Bush won them by 17 points in 2004, but Republicans lost them by four points in 2006.

While observation suggests that in 2006 Democratic candidates clearly did a better job of connecting with voters and communicating their shared values, these empirical findings indicate that Republicans also clearly lost ground by overreaching on certain values and alienating key groups of mainstream voters. For example, only 32% of voters side with the view that "government should be actively involved in protecting our traditional values—including the right to life, marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and the importance of religious faith in our society," while 64% say that "questions of religion and morality should be left up to the individual, and it should not be the role of government to impose any religious or moral point of view on the country." Majorities of nearly every swing voting audience agree with the latter view, including Catholics (75%), independents (73%), Hispanics (66%), mothers (64%), married women (60%), non-college-educated women (60%), weekly non-evangelical churchgoers (54%), and rural voters (54%).

D. Changing Perceptions Of The Political Parties

One of this survey's most important findings in assessing the impact of the 2006 elections on the starting position for the 2008 presidential race is voters' shifting perceptions of the political parties. **The Republican Party has seen a near-collapse in terms of the advantages that arguably won it recent elections, leaving the GOP in a position of having to rebuild and re-establish its core identity with voters. At the same time, Democrats have made meaningful improvements in terms of voters' images of the party on key considerations involving competence and leadership, providing the party and its candidates with a solid foundation on which to build.**

In this survey voters were asked to assess both political parties on 11 fundamental qualities. As these findings indicate, Republicans currently hold a tenuous grasp on only one issue. Keeping America safe from terrorism is the only issue on which a majority of American voters describe the GOP as being "in step" with their views. According to these data, the challenge facing Republicans is two-fold. First, the GOP no longer enjoys a distinct or exclusive

advantage on the issue of protecting America from terrorism; indeed, half (51%) of voters now also see Democrats as being in step with their views on national security. Second, on fully six of the 11 qualities tested, a majority of voters see the Republicans as being out of step with their views, including traditionally bedrock Republican issues such as “being responsible in dealing with the budget, taxes, and spending” and “understanding the challenges you face in making ends meet.”

Voters' Perceptions Of The Political Parties				
	<u>Republicans</u>		<u>Democrats</u>	
	<u>In Step</u> %	<u>Out of Step</u> %	<u>In Step</u> %	<u>Out of Step</u> %
Addressing the needs of families on issues such as health care and education	41	56	65	30
Having the right approach to protecting the environment	43	52	65	38
Promoting economic opportunity so that people have a chance to get ahead	48	48	62	32
Respecting the privacy of individuals and families	50	46	61	32
Understanding the challenges you face in making ends meet	40	55	54	39
Having the right approach on Social Security	40	54	51	37
Keeping America safe from terrorism	57	41	51	42
Having the right approach to the situation in Iraq	39	57	46	45
Representing your values on issues such as abortion and gay marriage	44	51	44	48
Having the right approach on taxes	47	50	49	45
Being fiscally responsible in dealing with the budget, taxes, and spending	36	60	49	44

By contrast, Democrats have earned voters' confidence on a broad array of issues—on four of the 11 measures tested, a significant 60%-or-more majority of voters describe Democrats as being in step with their views. And unlike Republicans, Democrats have no major deficits they urgently must address or offset in voters' eyes; in fact, on none of the 11 qualities tested does a majority of voters describe Democrats as being out of step with their views.

II. BUSH DEFECTORS AND 2008

In many ways Bush defectors represent the electorate's leading edge, which will be most up for grabs as both parties head toward 2008. Having helped reelect President Bush in 2004, these voters abandoned the Republicans just two years later by either voting Democratic or by sitting out the midterm elections. What these voters do in 2008 could decide the outcome of the next presidential race and begs important questions: Who are they? What drove them away from Bush and the Republicans? What are they looking for in a presidential candidate?

A. Bush Defectors: A Key Segment Of The Electorate

Bush defectors represent about 16% of the eligible electorate in 2006. Overwhelmingly, Bush defectors left the Republicans in 2006 in one of two ways: when the national sample of Bush defectors is combined with the oversample of Bush defectors in targeted states and congressional districts, half (50%) defected to the Democrats, while a smaller but sizeable plurality (41%) did not vote at all in the midterm elections for Congress. Demographically, Bush defectors do not stand apart from the electorate in any noticeable way, though they are significantly more likely than voters overall to describe themselves as strictly independent (19%), to the extent that they express a partisan preference, they are decidedly more Republican (48%) than Democratic (20%).

These findings suggest that Bush defectors were motivated by several central concerns that, taken together, distinguish them markedly from 2004 Bush voters who stayed with the GOP in 2006 ("Bush-GOP loyalists"). First Bush defectors are actively sending a message to and about President Bush's leadership—a majority (56%) of Bush defectors who voted for a Democrat last month describe their vote as looking for a congressional candidate who would serve as a check and balance for President Bush, the man they elected just two years ago. By contrast, a plurality (43%) of Bush-GOP loyalists say they were looking for a congressional candidate who would support President Bush.

Second, Bush defectors are significantly more focused on corruption and ethics as a voting issue than Bush voters who remained in the Republican column in 2006. In fact, Bush defectors identify their feelings about corruption, scandals, and ethics problems as their top-priority voting issue in 2006 (44% of Bush defectors rate this as a "10" and it is the only one of 11 voting issues that Bush defectors rate higher than Bush-GOP loyalists in explaining their 2006 Congressional vote). Bush defectors and "Bush-GOP loyalists" diverged on other voting considerations as well, including the relative importance of issues such as abortion and gay marriage. The one issue priority that Bush defectors and Bush-GOP loyalists have in common, as these findings consistently demonstrate, is that both sets of voters are extremely concerned about terrorism and national security.

2006 Voting Agendas			
<u>Bush Defectors</u>		<u>Bush-GOP Loyalists</u>	
	<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>
#1 Your feelings about corruption, scandals, and ethics problems in Washington	44	#1 Your feelings about terrorism and national security	60
#2 Your feelings about terrorism and national security	43	#2 Your feelings about whether you wanted the Republicans or the Democrats to be the majority party in control of Congress	49
#3 Your feelings about the war in Iraq and our current policies on the war	36	#3 Your feelings about issues such as abortion and gay marriage	46

Two other things distinguish Bush defectors, especially when compared with Bush-GOP loyalists: Bush defectors express significant dissatisfaction with Republicans on matters involving fiscal discipline and understanding working Americans' financial challenges. In fact, a majority of Bush defectors say that Republicans are out of step on both of these critical issues.

Bush Defectors Reject GOP On Fiscal Discipline/Understanding Americans' Challenges In Making Ends Meet

Republicans are out of step with my views on:

Fiscal responsibility in dealing with budget, taxes, spending



Understanding challenges we face in making ends meet



Finally, Bush defectors and Bush-GOP loyalists also diverge on the critical issues of how to combat terrorism most effectively and the role that government should play in protecting traditional moral values. While both defectors and loyalists identify terrorism as a top-tier voting issue, loyalists overwhelmingly prefer to see the United States take an aggressive and preemptive posture (65%), while defectors are divided almost evenly between preferring a forceful military approach (41%) and an approach that emphasizes building alliances and promoting diplomacy (43%). Additionally, Bush defectors and loyalists separate on the critical issue of government's role in moral decisions and moral values. A majority (59%) of Bush defectors believe that moral and religious issues should be left up to individuals, while a majority of Bush-GOP loyalists (56%) advocate active government intervention in protecting traditional moral values.

Bush Defectors And Bush-GOP Loyalists Differ On Key Issues

<u>Bush Defector</u>	<u>Bush-GOP Loyalists</u>
<u>S</u>	<u>%</u>
%	%

Approach to Terrorism

The best approach for the United States in fighting terrorism is to aggressively hunt down terrorists and defeat them before they can strike us.	41	65
The best approach for the United States in fighting terrorism is to build strong alliances with other countries and to promote democracy through leadership and diplomacy.	43	24

Government Role in Moral Decisions and Values

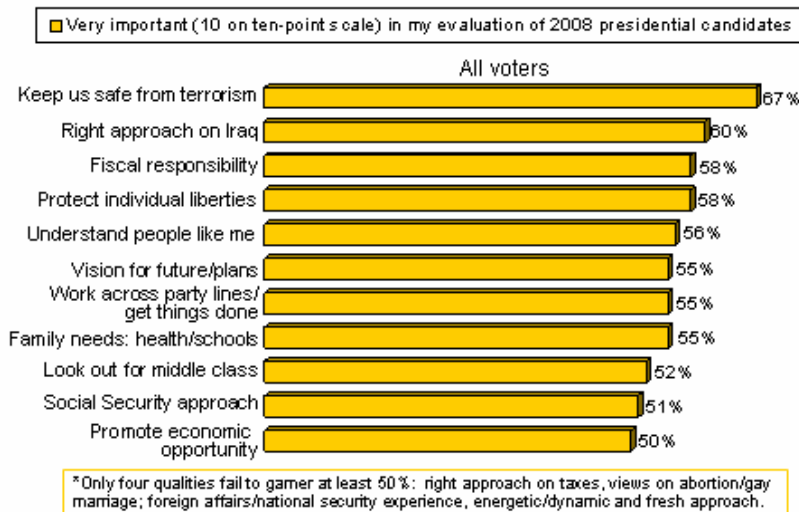
Government should be actively involved in protecting our traditional moral values--including the right to life, marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and the importance of religious faith in our society.	36	56
Questions of religion and morality should be left up to the individual, and it should not be the role of the government to impose any particular religious or moral point of view on the country.	59	40

B. Looking Ahead To 2008

The political dynamics that shaped the 2006 midterm elections give Democrats considerable momentum as both parties head toward 2008. Democrats have gained significant ground with key demographic voting blocs, credentialed themselves on national security with a majority of the electorate, established a favorable identity on a range of other key issue concerns, and made measurable inroads into Republicans' advantage on core values dimensions. The also have benefited from voters' disapproval of Republicans' handling of important issues including privacy and morality and fiscal responsibility as well as Republicans' inability to hold Bush defectors, a sizable portion of their 2004 base.

While this framework holds real potential for Democrats to consolidate and expand their gains from 2006, voters articulate an agenda for 2008 that demands critical attention. Overwhelmingly, voters say they are looking for a specific set of qualities in their next president and keeping America safe from terrorism remains steadfastly at the top of their list. National security has not disappeared from voters' agenda, instead the parties appear for the first time to be on a more even playing field in talking about security issues with a majority of voters saying both Democrats and Republicans are in line with their own views.

Voters' Agenda For A 2008 Presidential Candidate



Finally, in laying down a strategy for winning the 2006 Bush defectors, Democrats should take note that while keeping America safe from terrorism is a top priority for all voters, it is a preeminent concern for Bush defectors (69% rate it as “10”) when they think about 2008. Democrats still have to make up ground with Bush defectors on national security—a majority (75%) of Bush defectors see the Republicans as representing their views, while they are closely divided in their evaluations of Democrats on this issue (43% in step, 46% out of step). Bush defectors also distinguish themselves among swing voting blocs in their desire for a presidential candidate who is able to work across party lines to get things done (60% rate it as a “10”), giving Democrats a critical opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to delivering real results as the majority party in both houses of Congress moving forward from the 2006 midterm elections.