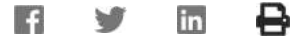


AUGUST 23, 2012



A Closer Look at the Parties in 2012

GOP Makes Big Gains among White Working-Class Voters

As the 2012 party conventions approach, the Democratic Party continues to maintain an advantage in party identification among voters, but its lead is much smaller than it was in 2008.

In more than 13,000 interviews conducted so far in 2012, 35% of registered voters identify with the Democratic Party, 28% with the Republican Party and 33% as independents. The share of Democrats has fallen three points since 2008, while the proportion of Republicans has remained steady.

When the leanings of independent voters are taken into account, the closing of the Democratic advantage is even more noticeable. Currently, independents lean slightly more toward the Republican Party than the Democratic Party (15% vs. 13%). Four years ago, the reverse was true (13% leaned Democratic, 11% Republican).

Overall, the Democrats now have a five-point lead in party affiliation among registered voters when independents who lean to either party are included (48% to 43%). That is down from a 12-point advantage in 2008 (51% to 39%). The current Democratic edge in leaned party identification is comparable to the slim leads they held in 2004 (three points) and 2000 (four points).

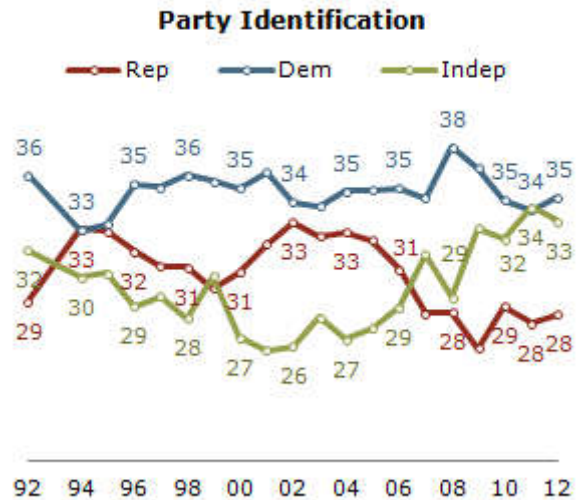
For a detailed analysis of recent trends in party identification, the composition of the parties and the opinions and values of Republicans and Democrats, see the accompanying tables (https://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/legacy-detailed_tables/Detailed%20tables%20for%20Party%20ID.pdf).

White Voters Turn Toward GOP

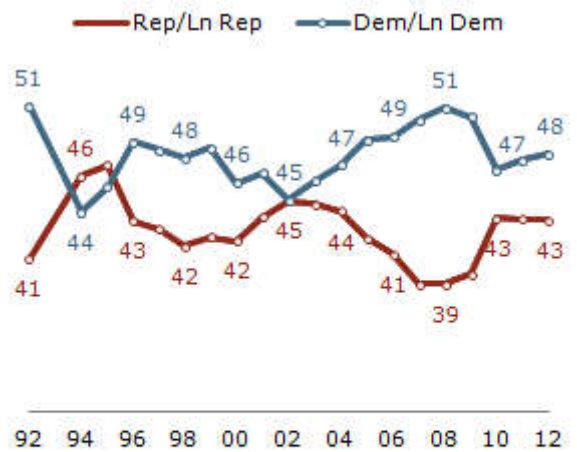
Over the past four years, the shift in party identification has occurred almost entirely among white voters. The Republican Party now has a 12-point advantage over Democrats among non-Hispanic white voters: 52% identify with or lean toward the Republican Party while 40% identify with the Democratic Party or lean Democratic. In 2008, the balance of party identification among whites was almost evenly divided (46% Republican vs. 44% Democrat). The Democratic Party's advantage among blacks and Hispanics, by comparison, has remained largely unchanged.

The Republican Party's current lead among white voters is not unprecedented – their advantage is on par with the GOP's lead among whites from 2002-2004 and from 1994-1995. And all of the GOP gain among whites over the past four years is in leaning among independents. In other words, whites are no more likely to call themselves Republicans today than in 2008 (34% in both years), but they are more likely to lean Republican (17% today, up from 12% in 2008).

Trend in Party Identification: 1992-2012

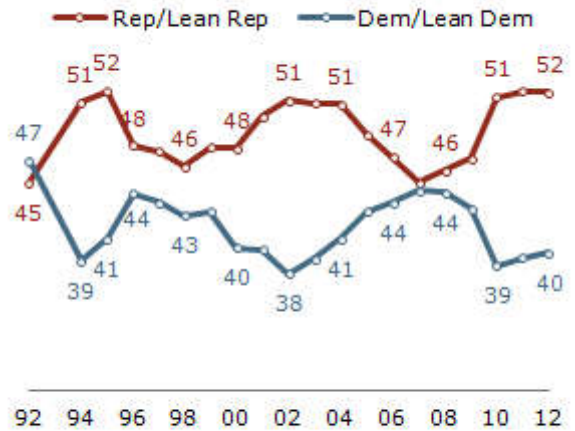


Party Identification Including Leaners



PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Based on registered voters. Figures add to less than 100% because some do not identify as Republican, Democrat or independent or do not lean to either party. Figures for 2012 are based on polls conducted January through July with 13,429 registered voters. Figures for other years are based on all polls conducted in that year.

Party Identification Among Whites



PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Based on white non-Hispanic registered voters interviewed in each year. Percent not identifying with or leaning to either party not shown.

GOP Gains Among Working-Class White Voters

	2008			2012		
	Rep/ Ln Rep %	Dem/ Ln Dem %		Rep/ Ln Rep %	Dem/ Ln Dem %	
All voters	39	51	D+12	43	48	D+5
White	46	44	R+2	52	40	R+12
Black	6	88	D+82	8	87	D+79
Hispanic	28	66	D+38	29	61	D+32
<i>Among whites</i>						
Men	51	40	R+11	57	35	R+22
Women	42	49	D+7	47	44	R+3
18-29	42	49	D+7	46	45	R+1
30-49	49	42	R+7	54	38	R+16
50-64	45	45	Even	51	41	R+10
65+	46	44	R+2	54	38	R+16
\$75k+	52	41	R+11	54	41	R+13
\$30k-75k	47	46	R+1	55	38	R+17
<\$30k	37	52	D+15	43	45	D+2
<i>College grad</i>						
Yes	46	47	D+1	48	46	R+2
No	46	43	R+3	54	37	R+17

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Based on all registered voters interviewed in each year. Figures read across, with the percent not identifying with or leaning to either party not shown. Whites and blacks are non-Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

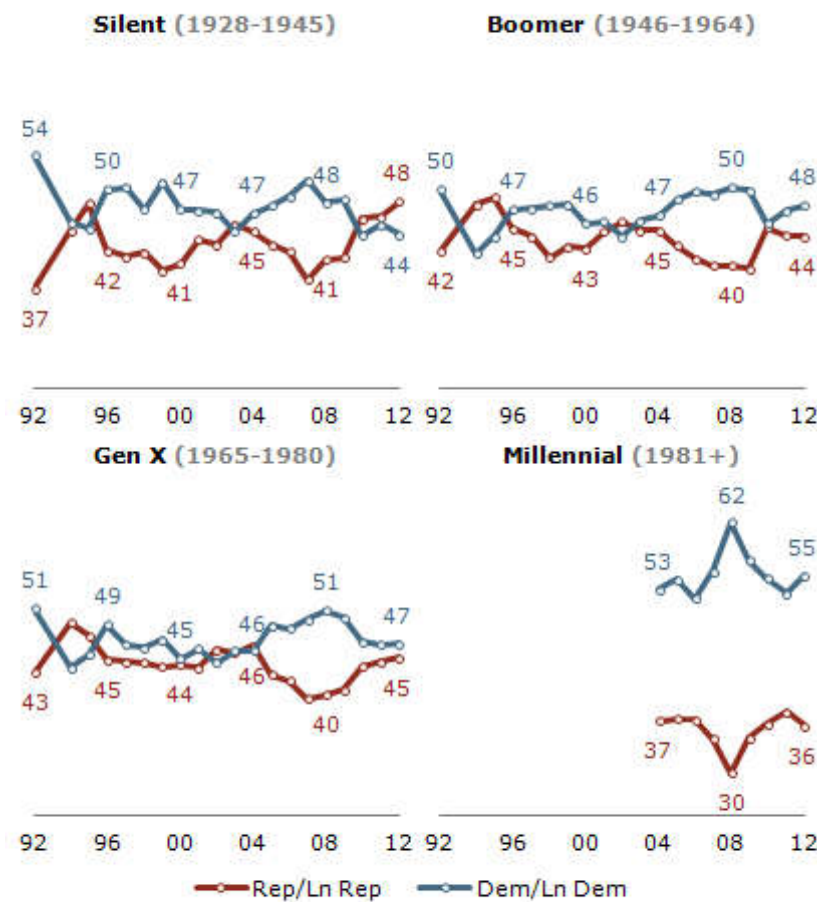
The Republican Party's gains among whites cross many demographic subgroups. The GOP lead among white men has doubled from 11 points in 2008 (51% Republican or lean Republican vs. 40% Democrat/lean Democratic) to 22 points (57% vs. 35%). And white women, who leaned Democratic by a 49% to 42% margin in 2008, now tilt slightly toward

the GOP by a 47% to 44% margin. The two parties now run even among white voters younger than 30, while Republicans have the advantage among all other age groups.

Lower-income and less educated whites also have shifted substantially toward the Republican Party since 2008. The GOP has largely erased the wide lead Democrats had among white voters with family incomes less than \$30,000. And middle-income whites (\$30,000-\$74,999), who were split between the parties four years ago, now favor the GOP by 17 points. By contrast, there has been no shift among higher income whites, who favor the GOP by roughly the same margin today as in 2008.

Similarly, whites without a college degree now tilt decidedly toward the Republican Party – the GOP now holds a 54% to 37% advantage among non-college whites, who were split about evenly four years ago. The partisanship of white college graduates, by contrast, has not changed.

Democrats Maintain Wide Advantage Among Millennial Voters



PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Based on registered voters. Figures add to less than 100% because some do not lean to either party. Figures for 2012 are based on polls conducted January through July. Figures for other years are based on all polls conducted in that year.

The Democratic Party continues to have a wide lead in party identification among Millennials, voters born after 1980. Currently 55% of Millennials identify with or lean to the Democratic Party, compared with 36% who identify or lean to the Republican Party. However, the Democrats’ advantage among Millennial voters has declined from 32 points in 2008 to 19 points today.

The balance of party identification is more evenly divided among other generations. Republicans have a four-point advantage among voters in the Silent Generation, while Democrats have an equivalent lead among Baby Boomers. Generation X is evenly divided (47% Democrat vs. 45% Republican).

GOP Voters: Overwhelmingly White, Mostly Male

The demographic differences between the Republican and Democratic voters are reflected in current profiles of the two parties' bases. In surveys conducted in 2012, nearly nine-in-ten (87%) Republican and Republican-leaning registered voters are white, while just 11% are minorities. In contrast, 61% of Democrats are white, while nearly four-in-ten are African American (21%), Hispanic (10%) or another race (7%).

Men make up a majority (52%) of Republican Republican-leaning voters; among Democratic voters, 43% are men while 57% are women. Republican and Republican-leaning voters also are far more likely than Democratic voters to be married (65% of Republicans vs. 49% of Democrats).

Click here to see detailed tables

(https://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/legacy-detailed_tables/Detailed%20tables%20for%20Party%20ID.pdf)

showing trends in party affiliation, the demographic composition of the parties, and the opinions and values of Republicans and Democrats.

2012 Profiles of the Parties' Bases

	All RVs	Rep/lean Rep	Dem/lean Dem
<i>% who are ...</i>	%	%	%
Men	47	52	43
Women	53	48	57
	100	100	100
White	73	87	61
Black	12	2	21
Hispanic	8	5	10
Other	6	4	7
Married	56	65	49
Unmarried	43	35	50
18-29	15	13	17
30-49	32	33	32
50-64	31	30	31
65+	20	23	19
Conservative	39	65	19
Moderate	36	29	41
Liberal	21	5	37
<i>Family income</i>			
\$75,000 or more	31	34	29
\$30,000-\$74,999	32	34	32
Less than \$30,000	25	19	29
Own home	73	80	66
Rent/Other	27	19	33
White evangelical Protestant	21	34	9
White mainline Protestant	17	20	14
White Catholic	16	18	13
Unaffiliated	18	11	24
Northeast	19	16	21
Midwest	24	24	23
South	36	39	34
West	21	21	22

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Based on polls conducted January through July with 13,429 registered voters. Whites and blacks are non-Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.