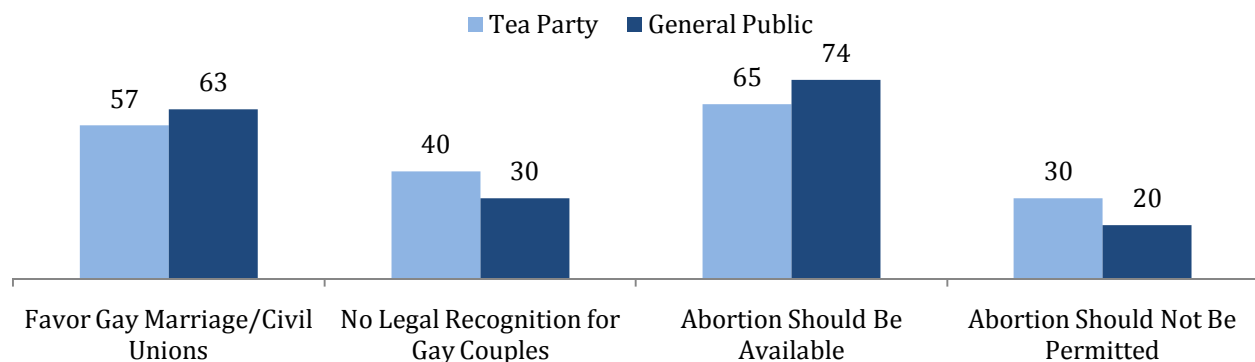


Polling News & Notes

Overlooked Recent Polling and Insights • May 6, 2010

Contra Teixeira, Tea Party Not a “Movement of the Conservative Right”: In a recent blog post, Center for American Progress Fellow Ruy Teixeira [claimed](#) the Tea Party movement “is not by any stretch of the imagination a movement based in the center of the American electorate. It is instead a movement of the conservative right . . .” While Teixeira is correct that Tea Partiers hold different views from other Americans about the role of government and many other policy issues, a closer examination of the data reveals them to be a unique political movement representing a key swing constituency in this year’s elections.

In making his claims, Teixeira relied on data from the April 5-12 [CBS News/New York Times](#) poll that featured an over-sample of 881 self-identified Tea Party supporters. In that poll, Teixeira makes hay of the Tea Partiers’ belief, by a 53%-40% margin, that the *Roe v. Wade* decision was a bad thing, compared to the general public’s belief that it was a good thing, 58%-34%. But he ignores data showing the Tea Partiers are only a few points different from the Americans’ overall beliefs on social issues—57% of Tea Partiers believe gay couples should be able to enter into gay marriages or civil unions, and 65% think abortions should be available.



Tea Partiers have somewhat different views about the appropriate role of government in the economy than strict Republican orthodoxy: 42% prefer reducing the government’s deficit, while 49% would rather cut taxes. By comparison, among the general public, 45% want to close the deficit and 47% cut taxes. But just 17% of Tea Partiers think it was necessary to provide government money to banks to get the economy out of recession—a policy that originated in the waning days of the Bush Administration—while 74% think the economy will improve without government help.

The Tea Party movement represents a significant portion of the electorate. 18% of Americans consider themselves a Tea Party supporter, and 97% of them say they are registered to vote—13 points higher than the national average. Democrats and Republicans would both be well-advised to pay attention to the Tea Party movement and its deep dissatisfaction with government.