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To: Friends of Democracy Corps
From: Stan Greenberg, James Carville, David Walker, and Erica Seifert

New York's 26th Not Alone Alert based on new national survey

Republican leaders and conservative pundits have spun Democrat Kathy Hochul's upset win in New York's 26th Congressional District as exceptional – with peculiar ballot lines, Tea Party independents, quality of the candidates, and Democratic message discipline. We concede: yard signs in Upstate New York did read “Save Medicare: Vote Hochul.” But our national poll completed on Wednesday shows that New York's 26th is not alone. It is an advance indicator of a sharp pull back from Republicans, particularly those in the House.¹

Disapproval of the Republicans in the House of Representatives has surged from 46 percent in February to 55 percent in April to a striking 59 percent now. Disapproval outnumbers approval two-to-one; intense disapproval by three-to-one. For the first time in more than a year, the Democrats are clearly even in the named Congressional ballot – an 8-point swing from the election – and Obama has made a marked gain in his job approval and vote against Mitt Romney—with the President now leading by 4 points. This period captured the introduction of the Republican budget plan and vote by the House—and voters do not like what they see.

Perhaps most notably, this survey flags a major retreat from the Republican approach to deficits and spending, the economy, and jobs. As the Republicans have unveiled their plans and approach during this four-month debate on the deficit, priorities and the economy, they have pushed many voters away.

On Wednesday, Democracy Corps will release a major multi-study report on the economy and economic messaging, but we wanted to release these political findings before the holiday weekend.

¹ This memo is based on a survey of 1,481 likely 2012 nationwide conducted May 21-25, 2011. Margin of error +/- 2.5 at 95% confidence unless otherwise noted. This survey included an oversample of voters in the Rising American Electorate, including 200 unmarried women, 200 youth and 80 people of color. The oversample was commissioned by Women's Voices, Women Vote Action Fund and results focusing on those critical voters will be reported in a separate memo.



Some Teasers for the holiday weekend...

- Since November, the net Congressional vote has shifted 9 points—with Democrats now actually ahead of the Republicans 46 to 45 percent.
- While Obama has not gained on handling the economy, his overall approval is up 5 points to 49 percent – and is ahead of Romney (48 to 44 percent), after trailing by 2 points last month.
- Voters rate the Republican Congress at a chilly (unfavorable) 43 degrees on our thermometer scale—with cool ratings (under 50 degrees) now exceeding warm ratings (over 50 degrees) by 9 points—a 17-point decline since February.
- The Tea Party is contributing to the problem – suffering a drop from 35 percent favorable, 41 percent unfavorable in February to 30 percent favorable, 44 percent unfavorable currently. They are viewed negatively by a net 14 points and are creating a headwind for Republicans.
- Among Independent voters, a group largely responsible for electing the Republican House, criticism of the work of the Republicans in Congress has jumped 15 points from February (now 60 percent).
- Among seniors, we see a 14-point increase in criticism of Republicans in Congress, from 43 percent negative to 57 percent negative.
- On which party would do a better job handling the economy overall, the Republican advantage over Democrats has dropped 8 points in the last month—with only 42 percent now saying that the Republicans would do a better job with that issue, down from 48 percent last month. With nearly all the gains due to a drop in confidence in Republicans, the parties are nearing parity on whom to trust with the economy – a critical change.
- On which party has a *better approach to jobs and the economy*, Republicans have dropped five points in the last month, with just 41 percent saying Republicans have the better approach. Among non-college voters, the Republican advantage on the economy dropped from 19 points to just 2 points since February.
- And on the one issue on which Republicans have bet their entire political program – spending and deficits – just 44 percent say the Republicans have a better approach—a 7-point decline in the last month. That is the judgment on the Ryan budget.