



TIM BRINTON/SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

Can Democrats catch a wave?

There's precedence for a political sea change in a midterm election, but experts are split on whether this year's vote will turn the tide for the minority party

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Iraq Looms Large in a Nationalized Election

Congressional Race Unchanged After Foley's Resignation

October 5, 2006

Iraq has become the central issue of the midterm elections. There is more dismay about how the U.S. military effort in Iraq is going than at any point since the war began more than three years ago. And the war is the dominant concern among the majority of voters who say they will be thinking about national issues, rather than local issues, when they cast their ballot for Congress this fall.

Pew's latest nationwide survey finds 58% of the public saying that the U.S. military effort in Iraq is not going well, and a 47% plurality believes the war in Iraq is hurting, not helping, the war on terrorism. The poll finds extensive public awareness of a leaked intelligence estimate suggesting that the war is spawning more terrorism. More than third of Americans (35%) say they have heard a lot about the intelligence report, and these people are much more likely than others to say the war in Iraq is hurting the war on terror.

The survey, conducted Sept. 21-Oct. 4 among 1,804 Americans, was in the field when news broke that former Rep. Mark Foley sent sexually explicit emails to House pages. The Foley story has not significantly affected the midterm race: In interviewing conducted before news of the scandal surfaced, Democrats led by 51%-38% among registered voters; in the days after Foley resigned, the Democratic advantage was unchanged (50%-37%). Similarly, the scandal's impact on opinions of GOP congressional leaders and the Republican Party's image for honest and ethical governance has been fairly limited.

The survey finds that a majority of voters (51%) say national issues will matter more than local concerns in their vote for Congress. Just 23% say local matters will be more important to their vote. And among those who see national issues as paramount, the situation in Iraq is by far the most important concern; fully 51% cite Iraq as being most important (or second most important) factor in their vote, compared with 37% who mention terrorism, and 35% who cite the economy.

Read the full report at people-press.org

If the election were today, would you...*	Total %	Foley resignation**	
		Before %	After %
Vote Democratic	51	51	50
Vote Republican	38	38	37
Other/Don't know	11	11	13
	100	100	100
	(N=1,503)	(N=777)	(N=726)
Job approval of Republican leaders			
Approve	33	33	34
Disapprove	56	57	54
Don't know	11	10	12
	100	100	100
Governs in a more honest, ethical way			
Republican Party	27	29	26
Democratic Party	41	40	40
Both/Neither/DK	32	31	32
	100	100	100
	(N=1,804)	(N=928)	(N=876)

* Based on registered voters.
 ** Congressman Mark Foley resigned his position on Friday, Sept. 29.

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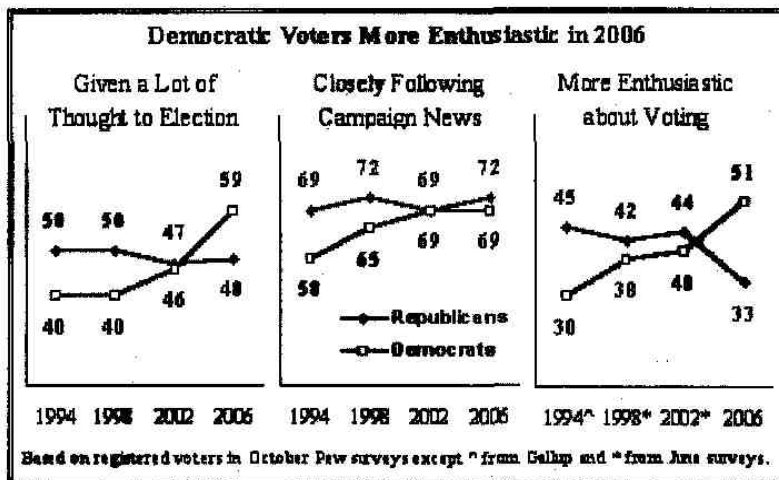
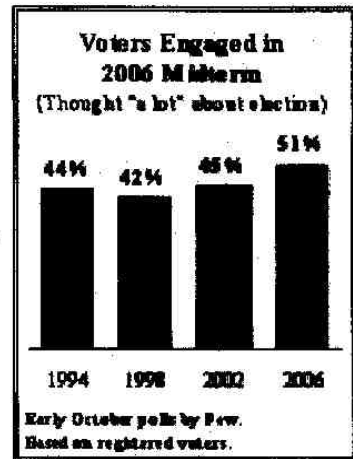
November Turnout May Be High

Democrats Hold Enthusiasm, Engagement Advantage

October 11, 2006

Turnout in the 2006 midterm election may well be higher than normal, given the level of interest expressed by voters. Today, 51% of voters say they have given a lot of thought to this November's election, up from 45% at this point in 2002 and 42% in early October of 1998. Even in 1994 - a recent high in midterm election turnout - just 44% of voters had thought a lot about the election in early October.

The difference this year is due to record-high levels of Democratic enthusiasm about the election. Currently, 59% of Democratic voters say they have given a lot of thought to this election, up from 46% at this point in the 2002 election. Republicans, by comparison, are no more or less engaged this year than four years ago (48% now, 47% in 2002). Democrats are also far more excited about voting this year, with 51% saying they are more enthusiastic about voting than usual, up from 40% in 2002. Just a third of Republicans say they are more enthusiastic about voting than usual, down from 44% four years ago.



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Observation Deck

Findings

Centrists Deliver for Democrats

In an election that proved to be a referendum on Bush and Iraq, political independents cast the deciding votes

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press
November 8, 2006

The political center forcefully asserted itself in Tuesday's midterms. The national exit poll showed that political independents, who divided their votes evenly between George Bush and John Kerry in 2004, swung decisively in favor of the Democrats. With roughly nine-in-ten Republicans and Democrats casting ballots for representatives of their parties, just as they did two years ago, the Democrats' 57%-39% advantage among independents proved crucial.

As expected, the election turned out in large measure to be a referendum on President Bush and the war in Iraq -- bad news for Republicans. About six-in-ten voters (59%) said they were either dissatisfied (30%) or angry (29%) with the president. By more than two-to-one, those dissatisfied with Bush supported the Democratic candidate in their district (69%-29%); among those angry with the president the margin was more than fifteen-to-one (92%-6%).

Bush was much more of a drag on his party's candidates than was former President Clinton in 1994, the year that Republicans won control of Congress. More than a third (36%) of the electorate said they voted to oppose Bush; that compares with 27% who voted to oppose Clinton in 1994, and 21% in 1996, the year Congress impeached the president.

Voters rated a number of issues as extremely important. Roughly four-in-ten (41%) cited corruption and ethics as extremely important -- a reflection of the many scandals that ensnared Republicans this year. Yet there seems little doubt that the war weighed heavily on voters as they cast their midterm ballots. The majority of voters who disapproved of the war overwhelmingly favored Democrats (by 80%-18%). War supporters backed the Republican in their district by virtually the same margin, but they were much smaller in number; just 42% approved of the war compared with 56% who disapproved.

Greatest Democratic Gains in the Center

	2004 House vote		2006 House vote		Change
	Dem %	Rep %	Dem %	Rep %	
<i>Party identification</i>					
Republican	7	93	8	91	+3
Democrat	90	9	93	6	+6
Independent	50	46	57	39	+14
<i>Ideology</i>					
Liberal	83	14	87	11	+9
Moderate	56	43	61	38	+10
Conservative	18	81	20	78	+5

All National Exit Poll data from CNN.

More Vote to Oppose Bush in '06 Than Clinton in '94

	Clinton 1994	Clinton 1996	Bush 2006
Voted today to...	%	%	%
Support the president	17	18	22
Oppose the president	27	21	36
President not a factor	52	60	39
No answer	4	1	3
	100	100	100

2006 Election Exit Polls

Leading Issues

Nationally, three of the four leading issues on the minds of voters favored Democrats:

Issue	% of voters citing it as "extremely important"	Among voters citing it, party vote:	
		Democratic	Republican
Corruption & Ethics	41	60	38
Economy	39	59	39
Terrorism	39	46	53
The War in Iraq	36	60	38

– Source: CNN Exit Poll, reported by the Pew Charitable Trust Poll

Moderate Voters Shift

Democrats did better among moderate voters in states where Senate seats changed parties than in 2004:

State	2004 Presidential Vote	2006 moderates party vote:	
		Democratic	Republican
Missouri	Bush + 7	62	35
Montana	Bush + 20	59	38
Ohio	Bush + 2	65	35
Pennsylvania	Kerry + 3	65	35
Rhode Island	Kerry + 20	52	48
Virginia	Bush + 9	60	40

– Source: CNN Exit Poll, reported by *Congressional Quarterly*

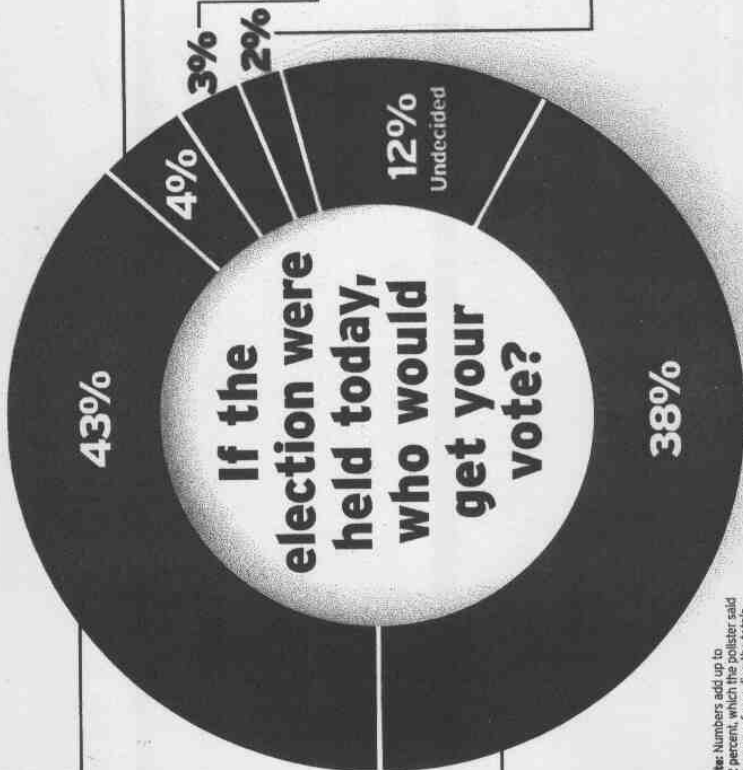
Mary Starrett
Constitution Party



Richard Morley
Libertarian Party



Joe Keating
Pacific Green Party



Ted Kulongoski
Democratic Party



Ron Saxton
Republican Party



Notes: Numbers add up to 102 percent, which the pollster said is because of rounding the totals.

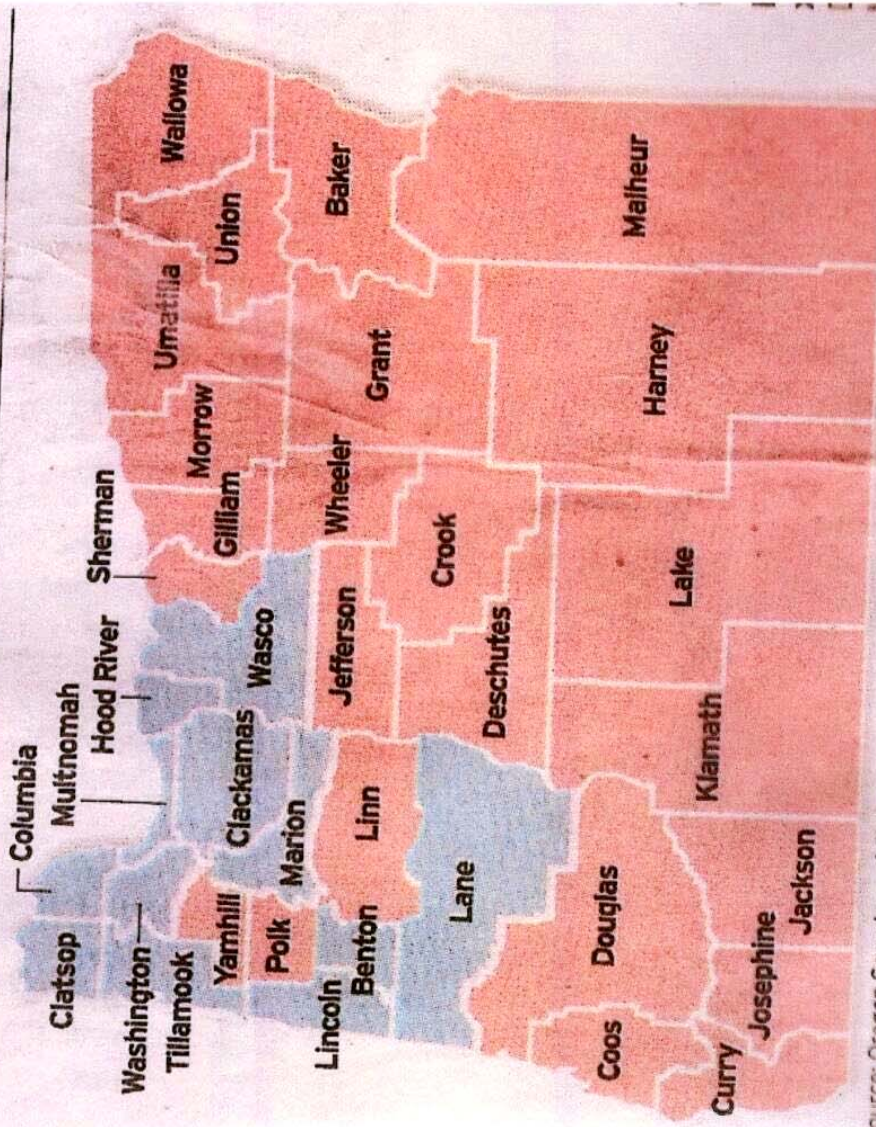
Fall, 2006

**2006 Oregon Ballot Initiatives;
The most controversial proposed measures**

Measure Number	Ballot Title, Description, Sponsors & Opponents
41	<p>“Amends income tax deduction equal to federal exemptions deduction to substitute for state exemption credit.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– An effective state income tax cut of about \$400 million per year– Sponsors; Anti-tax, anti-government groups– Opponents; unions, education groups, other groups supporting public services
43	<p>“Requires 48-hour notice to unemancipated minors parent before providing abortion; authorizes lawsuits, physician discipline.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Parental notification requirement for minors seeking abortions– Sponsors; Oregon Right to Life; religious conservatives– Opponents; Pro-Choice groups; feminists; (perhaps doctors?)
45	<p>“Amends Constitution: Limits state legislators: six years as Representative, eight years as Senator, fourteen year in legislature.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– State legislative term limits (renewal)– Sponsors; anti-government groups, particularly U.S. Term Limits, Libertarians– Opponents; legislators, government reform groups, most newspapers
46/47	<p>“Amends Constitution: Allows laws regulating election contributions, expenditures adopted by initiative or 3/4 of both legislative houses.”</p> <p>“Revises campaign finance laws: limits or prohibits contributions and expenditures; adds disclosure, new reporting requirements.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Campaign contribution & finance limits (renewal)– Supporters: Campaign finance limit activists– Opponents; Most business & labor groups, other big donors, most officials
48	<p>“Amends Constitution: Limits biennial percentage increase in state spending to percentage increase in state population plus inflation.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Stricter state spending limit– Sponsors; anti-government groups, particularly Freedomworks, Libertarians– Opponents; unions, education groups, newspapers, most public officials

Governor results by county

Kulongoski ■ Saxton ■



Source: Oregon Secretary of State

ERIC BAKER/THE OREGONIAN

DISTRICT 15: Albany area
KATY OISON, R 0 15,877 68%

OREGON HOUSE

DISTRICT 1: South coast

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Nov. 12, 2006