

Polling News & Notes

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Americans Want Republicans To Lead Country: In his press conference the day after the GOP won the Senate and strengthened their House majority, President Barack Obama said he would act alone on immigration if House Republicans did not approve a Senate-passed immigration reform bill by year's end. Mr. Obama's indignant tone suggested the president does not see last Tuesday's results as a rebuke to his leadership or policies.

This points to a rocky future for Mr. Obama and Democrats, especially after a new Gallup poll revealed Americans want Republicans to lead the country in a new direction. Gallup found 53% of Americans said they prefer that Republicans ("opposing party in Congress") lead in setting the country's direction. Only 36% told Gallup they prefer the "sitting president" to do so. This 17-point advantage is a stronger endorsement of Republican leadership than the GOP's 8-point advantage after the 2010 midterms, when 49% said they wanted Republicans to set the nation's course while 41% said they wanted Mr. Obama to do so. The 2010 results are close to the public's response after the 1994 midterms, when 40% said President Bill Clinton should lead and 49% said the new Republican majority in Congress should. Unlike Mr. Obama, however, Mr. Clinton listened to voters after his party suffered big losses in 1994 and worked with his loyal opposition in Congress. So when Gallup asked this question again after the 1998 midterms, 60% said they wanted Mr. Clinton to direct the country's path.

Republicans have the support of Americans and an opportunity to set the country on a better course. If they take advantage of this opportunity with the right policies and tone, the GOP will strengthen itself for the 2016 contest.

Americans' Preference for Who Should Lead U.S. Direction

	Prefer sitting president	Prefer opposing party in Congress	President's lead/deficit	President's approval rating
Barack Obama / Republicans in Congress				
November 2014	36%	53%	-17	37%
November 2010	41%	49%	-8	44%
George W. Bush / Democrats in Congress				
November 2006	31%	61%	-30	33%
Bill Clinton / Republicans in Congress				
December 1998	60%	31%	+29	73%
January 1995	40%	49%	-9	47%

Results shown are the first conducted after each midterm election, as available.

GALLUP