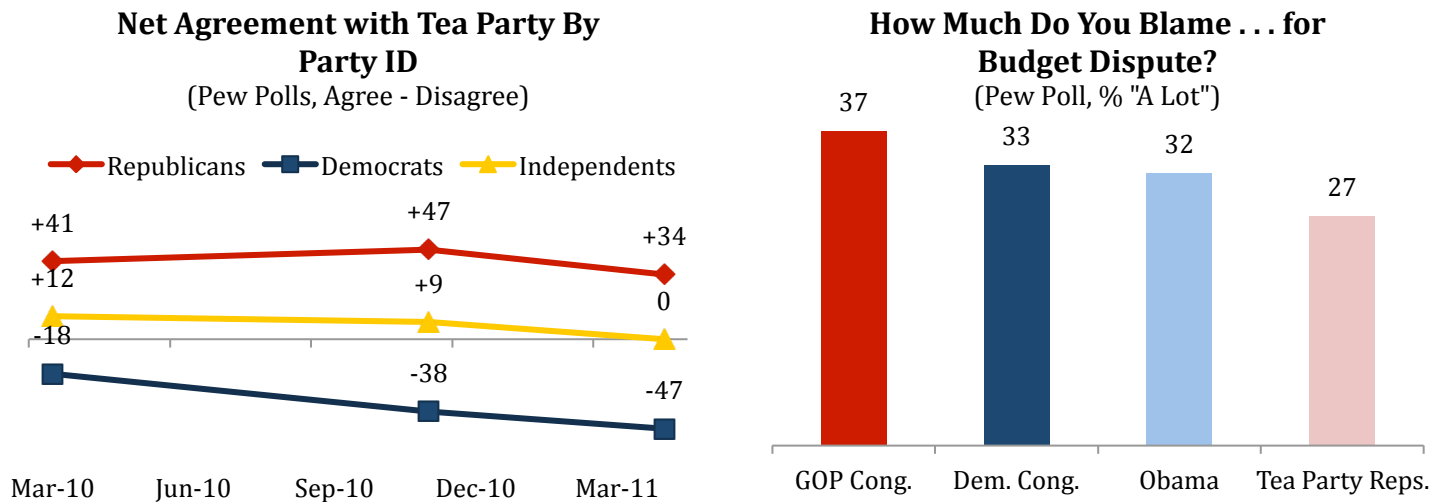


## Polling News & Notes

*Overlooked Recent Polling and Insights • April 14, 2011*

**Amid Budget Showdown, Tea Party Retains Political Strength:** Last week, Democrats wasted little time in blaming the Tea Party for the budget deadlock that nearly led to a government shutdown, [calling](#) the Tea Party “extreme,” and “an anchor round the neck” of negotiations. But what do the polls say about the Tea Party’s political support among the American people?

A recent [NBC News/Wall Street Journal](#) poll found 25% of voters consider themselves members of the Tea Party, essentially unchanged from 28% last September. [Pew polls](#) have also found that voters’ opinions of the Tea Party have remained relatively stable. In an early April poll, 22% of adults said they agreed with the organization, while 29% disagreed and 47% had no opinion. By comparison, last August 28% agreed, 26% disagreed, and 46% had no opinion. Pew polls do reveal, however, that partisan opinions of the Tea Party have shifted. Compared to last year, Democrats are now much more negative. In March 2010, the Tea Party had a net -18 agreeable rating among Democrats (6% agreed, 24% disagreed, 70% no opinion). Today it has dropped to a net -47 rating (4% agree, 51% disagree, 44% no opinion). Among Republicans and independents, the Tea Party has seen smaller, yet measurable losses in support, but still maintains sizeable support from both groups.



Despite the growing polarization in attitudes toward the Tea Party, the Pew poll also found that 50% of Americans believe the Tea Party is a separate and independent movement from the Republican Party, essentially unchanged from 47% last November.

Finally, Pew and the *Washington Post* [found](#) that voters are less likely to hold the Tea Party responsible for the last week’s budget dispute. 27% of Americans said they blamed the Tea Party representatives “a lot,” compared to 37% who blamed Republican congressmen, 33% Democratic congressmen, and 32% President Obama. The Democratic base is more hostile to the Tea Party today than last year, but the Tea Party’s overall political support remains strong.