

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INTERVIEWS: DEAN DEBNAM 888-621-6988 / 919-880-4888 (serious media inquiries only please, other questions can be directed to Tom Jensen)

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POLL: TOM JENSEN 919-744-6312

Most Americans not open to 3rd-party pres. bid

Raleigh, N.C. – A plurality of Americans think that the Democratic Party is too liberal and the Republican Party too conservative. It is no surprise, then, that almost two in five Americans are open to voting for a third-party candidate for president next year, and of those, a strong plurality would want that candidate to be a centrist, someone ideologically between the major parties. At the same time, though, a plurality of all voters plan to stick with one of those two parties rather than seek an alternative.

Overall, 37% say they could conceivably cast a ballot for someone other than Barack Obama or the Republican nominee, while 45% do not see the possibility. Out of the former group, 48% want someone more conservative than the Democrats and more liberal than the GOP, with 29% favoring someone to the right of the GOP and 14% seeking someone to the left of the Democratic Party.

Liberals are by far the least likely to be open to a third-party bid, with only 28% saying yes to that question, compared to 42% of moderates and 37% of conservatives. In that light, and with a leftist the least favored option by those who are amenable to an independent, President Obama has little to worry about a strong challenge from his left, at least in the general election. But conservatives are restless, and the Republicans could have a tough time holding together their base if the Tea Party remains strong but is unable to get its preferred conservative candidate nominated by the GOP. Indeed, 44% of Republicans could see themselves bucking the party, and only 37% pledge to be faithful. Independents are actually only slightly more open than Republicans to an independent candidacy, 51-35, but Democrats reject a possible third-party vote, 28-54.

“Americans frequently say they’ll vote for a generic independent or third-party candidate and that they’re sick of the status quo, but when it comes down to it, our polling and actual election results show that those candidates rarely get much support,” said Dean Debnam, President of Public Policy Polling.

PPP surveyed 632 American voters from January 14th to 16th. The survey’s margin of error is +/-3.9%. Other factors, such as refusal to be interviewed and weighting, may introduce additional error that is more difficult to quantify.

Complete results are attached, and can be found at www.publicpolicypolling.com.



National Survey Results

Q1 Would you be open to supporting a third party candidate for President in 2012?

Yes..... 37%
No..... 45%
Not sure..... 18%

Q2 If you were going to support a third party candidate would you want it to be someone more liberal than the Democratic Party, someone more conservative than the Republican Party, or someone ideologically more conservative than the Democrats but more liberal than the Republicans?

More liberal than Democrats..... 16%
More conservative than Republicans..... 30%
More conservative than Democrats but more liberal than Republicans..... 38%
Something else..... 10%
Not sure..... 6%

Q3 Do you think the Democratic Party is too liberal, too conservative, or about right?

Too liberal..... 47% About right..... 34%
Too conservative... 10% Not sure..... 8%

Q4 Do you think the Republican Party is too liberal, too conservative, or about right?

Too liberal..... 18% About right..... 29%
Too conservative... 45% Not sure..... 7%

Q5 Would you describe yourself as a liberal, moderate, or conservative?

Liberal..... 18%
Moderate..... 41%
Conservative..... 40%

Q6 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman..... 48%
Man..... 52%

Q7 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

Democrat..... 40%
Republican..... 37%
Independent/Other..... 23%

Q8 If you are Hispanic, press 1. If white, press 2. If African-American, press 3. If other, press 4.

Hispanic..... 10%
White..... 74%
African-American..... 12%
Other..... 4%

Q9 If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

18 to 29..... 11%
30 to 45..... 27%
46 to 65..... 43%
Older than 65..... 19%





Crosstabs

| | Base | Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | |
|---|------|------------------------------------|------|----------|
| | | Yes | No | Not sure |
| Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | | | |
| Yes | 37% | 100% | - | - |
| No | 45% | - | 100% | - |
| Not sure | 18% | - | - | 100% |

| | Base | Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | |
|---|------|------------------------------------|-----|----------|
| | | Yes | No | Not sure |
| Desired Ideology of 3rd-Party Candidate | | | | |
| More liberal than Democrats | 16% | 14% | 18% | 15% |
| More conservative than Republicans | 30% | 29% | 32% | 25% |
| More conservative than Democrats but more liberal than Republicans | 38% | 48% | 30% | 35% |
| Something else | 10% | 7% | 12% | 13% |
| Not sure | 6% | 2% | 7% | 12% |

| | Base | Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | |
|-------------------------|------|------------------------------------|-----|----------|
| | | Yes | No | Not sure |
| Dem Ideology | | | | |
| Too liberal | 47% | 56% | 40% | 47% |
| Too conservative | 10% | 10% | 12% | 7% |
| About right | 35% | 25% | 44% | 30% |
| Not sure | 8% | 9% | 4% | 16% |

| | Base | Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | |
|-------------------------|------|------------------------------------|-----|----------|
| | | Yes | No | Not sure |
| GOP Ideology | | | | |
| Too liberal | 18% | 19% | 18% | 15% |
| Too conservative | 45% | 45% | 49% | 37% |
| About right | 29% | 30% | 28% | 31% |
| Not sure | 8% | 6% | 5% | 17% |





Crosstabs

| | Base | Ideology | | |
|---|------|----------|----------|--------------|
| | | Liberal | Moderate | Conservative |
| Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | | | |
| Yes | 37% | 28% | 42% | 37% |
| No | 45% | 53% | 42% | 44% |
| Not sure | 18% | 19% | 16% | 19% |

| | Base | Ideology | | |
|---|------|----------|----------|--------------|
| | | Liberal | Moderate | Conservative |
| Desired Ideology of 3rd-Party Candidate | | | | |
| More liberal than Democrats | 16% | 49% | 12% | 5% |
| More conservative than Republicans | 30% | 9% | 12% | 58% |
| More conservative than Democrats but more liberal than Republicans | 38% | 24% | 61% | 21% |
| Something else | 10% | 13% | 10% | 10% |
| Not sure | 6% | 4% | 5% | 7% |

| | Base | Ideology | | |
|-------------------------|------|----------|----------|--------------|
| | | Liberal | Moderate | Conservative |
| Dem Ideology | | | | |
| Too liberal | 47% | 10% | 32% | 80% |
| Too conservative | 10% | 27% | 10% | 3% |
| About right | 34% | 59% | 47% | 10% |
| Not sure | 8% | 4% | 10% | 7% |

| | Base | Ideology | | |
|-------------------------|------|----------|----------|--------------|
| | | Liberal | Moderate | Conservative |
| GOP Ideology | | | | |
| Too liberal | 18% | 3% | 11% | 32% |
| Too conservative | 45% | 83% | 66% | 7% |
| About right | 29% | 10% | 15% | 52% |
| Not sure | 7% | 4% | 8% | 9% |





Crosstabs

| | Base | Gender | |
|---|------|--------|-----|
| | | Woman | Man |
| Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | | |
| Yes | 37% | 36% | 38% |
| No | 45% | 42% | 48% |
| Not sure | 18% | 22% | 14% |

| | Base | Gender | |
|---|------|--------|-----|
| | | Woman | Man |
| Desired Ideology of 3rd-Party Candidate | | | |
| More liberal than Democrats | 16% | 17% | 16% |
| More conservative than Republicans | 30% | 24% | 35% |
| More conservative than Democrats but more liberal than Republicans | 38% | 41% | 35% |
| Something else | 10% | 12% | 9% |
| Not sure | 6% | 7% | 4% |

| | Base | Gender | |
|-------------------------|------|--------|-----|
| | | Woman | Man |
| Dem Ideology | | | |
| Too liberal | 47% | 40% | 54% |
| Too conservative | 10% | 10% | 11% |
| About right | 34% | 40% | 30% |
| Not sure | 8% | 11% | 5% |

| | Base | Gender | |
|-------------------------|------|--------|-----|
| | | Woman | Man |
| GOP Ideology | | | |
| Too liberal | 18% | 17% | 20% |
| Too conservative | 45% | 46% | 45% |
| About right | 29% | 28% | 30% |
| Not sure | 7% | 9% | 6% |





Crosstabs

| | Base | Party | | |
|---|------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| | | Democrat | Republican | Independent/Other |
| Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | | | |
| Yes | 37% | 24% | 44% | 51% |
| No | 45% | 58% | 37% | 35% |
| Not sure | 18% | 18% | 19% | 14% |

| | Base | Party | | |
|---|------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| | | Democrat | Republican | Independent/Other |
| Desired Ideology of 3rd-Party Candidate | | | | |
| More liberal than Democrats | 16% | 28% | 5% | 12% |
| More conservative than Republicans | 30% | 15% | 49% | 25% |
| More conservative than Democrats but more liberal than Republicans | 38% | 37% | 32% | 49% |
| Something else | 10% | 12% | 11% | 7% |
| Not sure | 6% | 8% | 3% | 6% |

| | Base | Party | | |
|-------------------------|------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| | | Democrat | Republican | Independent/Other |
| Dem Ideology | | | | |
| Too liberal | 47% | 17% | 80% | 50% |
| Too conservative | 10% | 14% | 6% | 12% |
| About right | 34% | 64% | 6% | 28% |
| Not sure | 8% | 6% | 8% | 11% |

| | Base | Party | | |
|-------------------------|------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| | | Democrat | Republican | Independent/Other |
| GOP Ideology | | | | |
| Too liberal | 18% | 12% | 22% | 24% |
| Too conservative | 45% | 67% | 20% | 49% |
| About right | 29% | 13% | 51% | 22% |
| Not sure | 7% | 9% | 7% | 6% |





Crosstabs

| | Base | Race | | | |
|---|------------|----------|-------|------------------|-------|
| | | Hispanic | White | African-American | Other |
| Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | | | | |
| Yes | 37% | 47% | 38% | 23% | 41% |
| No | 45% | 26% | 44% | 70% | 38% |
| Not sure | 18% | 26% | 18% | 7% | 21% |

| | Base | Race | | | |
|---|------------|----------|-------|------------------|-------|
| | | Hispanic | White | African-American | Other |
| Desired Ideology of 3rd-Party Candidate | | | | | |
| More liberal than Democrats | 16% | 26% | 14% | 17% | 24% |
| More conservative than Republicans | 30% | 26% | 33% | 18% | 21% |
| More conservative than Democrats but more liberal than Republicans | 38% | 32% | 40% | 30% | 28% |
| Something else | 10% | 9% | 9% | 22% | 10% |
| Not sure | 6% | 6% | 4% | 13% | 17% |

| | Base | Race | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|-------|------------------|-------|
| | | Hispanic | White | African-American | Other |
| Dem Ideology | | | | | |
| Too liberal | 47% | 41% | 54% | 15% | 37% |
| Too conservative | 10% | 6% | 10% | 7% | 37% |
| About right | 34% | 41% | 29% | 70% | 20% |
| Not sure | 8% | 12% | 7% | 8% | 7% |

| | Base | Race | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|-------|------------------|-------|
| | | Hispanic | White | African-American | Other |
| GOP Ideology | | | | | |
| Too liberal | 18% | 15% | 18% | 17% | 37% |
| Too conservative | 45% | 50% | 43% | 57% | 47% |
| About right | 29% | 18% | 34% | 12% | 10% |
| Not sure | 7% | 18% | 5% | 15% | 7% |





Crosstabs

| | Base | Age | | | |
|---|------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| | | 18 to 29 | 30 to 45 | 46 to 65 | Older than 65 |
| Open to 3rd-Party Pres. Candidate? | | | | | |
| Yes | 37% | 45% | 48% | 30% | 34% |
| No | 45% | 38% | 36% | 51% | 47% |
| Not sure | 18% | 18% | 16% | 18% | 19% |

| | Base | Age | | | |
|---|------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| | | 18 to 29 | 30 to 45 | 46 to 65 | Older than 65 |
| Desired Ideology of 3rd-Party Candidate | | | | | |
| More liberal than Democrats | 16% | 28% | 17% | 16% | 8% |
| More conservative than Republicans | 30% | 30% | 33% | 27% | 33% |
| More conservative than Democrats but more liberal than Republicans | 38% | 25% | 37% | 39% | 43% |
| Something else | 10% | 12% | 5% | 14% | 10% |
| Not sure | 6% | 5% | 8% | 5% | 6% |

| | Base | Age | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| | | 18 to 29 | 30 to 45 | 46 to 65 | Older than 65 |
| Dem Ideology | | | | | |
| Too liberal | 47% | 40% | 53% | 45% | 49% |
| Too conservative | 10% | 18% | 11% | 10% | 7% |
| About right | 34% | 39% | 27% | 39% | 33% |
| Not sure | 8% | 3% | 10% | 6% | 12% |

| | Base | Age | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| | | 18 to 29 | 30 to 45 | 46 to 65 | Older than 65 |
| GOP Ideology | | | | | |
| Too liberal | 18% | 24% | 24% | 14% | 17% |
| Too conservative | 45% | 46% | 43% | 52% | 33% |
| About right | 29% | 26% | 25% | 28% | 37% |
| Not sure | 7% | 4% | 7% | 6% | 13% |

