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August 9, 2011

Anzalone Liszt Research

National Polling Summary

Friends,

Below you will find the weekly Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Newsletter, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

With the debt-ceiling deal now over a week old, this week's newsletter focuses on the political ramifications of the deal, including perceptions of the deal itself and who suffered most from the debate (there don't appear to be any winners, at least not from a public opinion perspective).

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

STORY THIS WEEK: NO DANCING ON THIS CEILING (Lionel Richie, anyone?)

VIEWS ON OVERALL DEAL

Reactions to the debt deal are mixed, with polls showing the public either split on the deal or narrowly opposed to it depending on the question wording. A one day-poll from [USA Today/Gallup](#) immediately following the deal found that without any description, Americans disapproved of the deal by a 7-point margin (39% approve/46% disapprove). Meanwhile, [a CBS/NY Times poll](#) found that Americans were evenly divided on it (46% approve / 45% disapprove) after learning that it included \$2 trillion in cuts and created a special committee for deficit reduction. A more general description in a one-day [CNN/ORC poll](#) which mentioned only that the deal included "major spending cuts" yielded net opposition of 8 points (44% approve/52% disapprove).

The electoral impact for members of Congress appears to be equally mixed, as a vote against the deal has the potential to be just as politically harmful as a vote for it, according to [a United Technologies/National Journal poll](#). By a 27-point margin (18% more likely/45% less likely), Americans say they are less likely to vote for a candidate who voted for a debt ceiling increase, yet an identical share (16% more likely/45% less likely) are less likely to support a candidate who voted to allow the country to default by voting against the debt limit hike.

ELEMENTS OF THE DEAL

Despite the dire predictions of what would happen if the debt ceiling was not increased, when we look beyond the views of the deal itself and at its specific elements, it's clear that about half the country was unconvinced that a debt ceiling increase was necessary. The [CNN/ORC poll](#) finds the public divided on whether the debt ceiling should have been raised at all (48% approve/51% disapprove), with only a narrow majority (52%) believing that failure to increase it would have caused a crisis or major problems.

The public clearly did not have a problem with the fact that the deal cut a trillion dollars in spending over ten years, as [65% approve of such cuts](#). Of the 30% who oppose the cuts, half said that they didn't go far enough,

while the other half felt they went too far.

Although Americans were pleased that the deal cut over a trillion dollars in spending, they were not pleased that the deal did not include any increased taxes on the wealthy or businesses ([60% disapprove](#)).

As we look forward to the upcoming debate over the super committee and its recommendations, the GOP's staunch opposition to tax increases for wealthy continues to be out-of-step with the vast majority of the public. According to the latest [CBS/NYT poll](#), 63% believe taxes should be raised for those earning over \$250,000 in order to reduce the deficit. President Obama and Democrats should therefore continue to highlight Republican opposition to raising taxes for the wealthy in order to both undercut the GOP, and to help bolster public support for the Democrats' position as we move into the next stage of the deficit debate.

APPROVAL OF DEBATE PLAYERS

Though there were certainly winners from a policy perspective in the debt-ceiling fight, no one seems to have helped their cause in the court of public opinion. President Obama fared best in the debate, as Americans were basically split on his performance according to the [CBS/NYT](#) and [CNN/ORC](#) polls, while [the United Technologies/National Journal poll](#) found that Americans felt he acted more responsibly than Republicans during the debate by a 17-point margin (48% to 31%).

The President's approval ratings on the debt deal look considerably better when compared to the abysmal ratings of how both parties in Congress handled the issue. [The CBS/NYT poll](#) finds that two-thirds disapprove of how Democrats in Congress handled the negotiations, with an even higher percentage (72%) disapproving of how Republicans in Congress conducted themselves. Other players fare no better, with the [USA Today/Gallup](#) poll finding low approval ratings on the issue for Tea Party members of Congress (33%), John Boehner (29%), and Harry Reid (27%).

The debt deal appears to have taken a toll on the Tea Party, as the percentage rating it unfavorably has [risen 11 points since April](#). The Tea Party is now rated negatively by a 2:1 margin (20% favorable/40% unfavorable).

While some elements of the party bases might fault their representatives for not sticking to their principles in the debt deal, the public overall does not seem to share that view. According to the [CNN/ORC poll](#), Americans strongly reject the notion that either Republicans (70%) or President Obama and Democrats in Congress (61%) gave up too much in the debt-ceiling deal.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Public still strongly favors focus on job creation to cutting spending: Given all the debate over spending cuts, it's important to remember that both the [public overall and independents](#) still overwhelmingly prefer a focus on job creation to spending cuts.

How Washington can create jobs: Here are five common-sense [ideas to create jobs](#) that are supported by economists and have enjoyed bi-partisan support in the past. We particularly like #3.

Americans still blame Bush for the economy and the deficit: Recent polls show that Americans are still three times more likely to blame the Bush Administration than the Obama administration for the [budget deficit](#), and say Bush is more to [blame for the economy](#) by a 27-point margin.

Bush would get even more of the blame if everyone saw this: [This graph](#) really puts the deficit debate into perspective and strongly pushes back on the notion that the Obama Administration's policies are responsible for our current deficit woes.

Debt-deal winners and losers, beyond public opinion: While our newsletter just focused on how the deal played with the public, here is [the Fix's more comprehensive take](#) on the winners and losers of the debt-ceiling debate.

Widening wealth gap between whites and minorities: [A startling analysis](#) the growing wealth divide between whites and minorities.

PUBLIC POLLING

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
CNN/ORC	8/5-7/11	Adults	44%	54%
Gallup	8/5-7/11	Adults	43%	48%
CNN	8/5-7/11	Adults	44%	54%
Gallup	8/2-4/11	Adults	41%	52%
YouGov/Polimetrix	7/30- 8/2/11	Adults	42%	51%

PARTY SELF ID					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind / other
Pollster.com Trend	8/9/11	Adults	31.8%	26.4%	35.8%

GENERIC HOUSE BALLOT					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Unsure
Public Policy Polling	7/15- 17/11	Registered voters	46%	44%	10%
Democracy Corps	6/18- 6/21	Likely Voters	44%	47%	7%
GWU/Politico Battleground	5/8- 5/12	Likely voters	42%	41%	16%
CNN/Opinion Research Corp.	4/29- 5/1	Registered voters	50%	46%	1%
Quinnipiac	3/22- 3/28	Registered voters	37%	40%	20%

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Right Direction	Wrong Track
Marist/McClatchy	8/2-4/11	Adults	21%	70%

OBAMA POPULAR VOTE SHARE						
Polling Firm	Date	Polly Vote	Polls	Iowa Electronic Markets	Econometric Models	Index Models

PollyVote	8/9/11	51.0%	49.4%	48.9%	50.8%	54.9%
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GOP NATIONWIDE PRIMARY

Polling Firm	Date	Sample
<i>Gallup</i>	<i>7/20-24/11</i>	<i>Republicans and Republican-leaning independents</i>
Romney	17%	
Perry	15%	
Palin	12%	
Giuliani	11%	
Bachmann	11%	
Paul	8%	
Cain	3%	
Gingrich	3%	
Pawlenty	2%	
Huntsman	2%	
Santorum	2%	

