

THE HUFFINGTON POST

College Republicans Report Finds Young Voters Hold Many Positions Opposite Of Party

Luke Johnson - June 3, 2013

WASHINGTON -- A report by the College Republican National Committee released Monday found that most students hold positions closer to Democrats on many issues, underscoring the difficulty in the GOP's push for younger voters. Yet, the report remains vague on solutions for Republicans.

The report's focus groups, conducted after the 2012 election loss for the GOP, found that young people are mostly liberal on a range of issues -- not surprising given the fact that 60 percent of voters aged 18-29 voted for Obama in 2012, according to Tufts University.

The report found that 50 percent wanted to "cut government spending significantly," seemingly a winning issue for Republicans. However, a "large number" of respondents wanted to start with the defense budget.

Fifty-four percent of respondents in a March 2013 survey said taxes should go up on the wealthy, which Republicans have long opposed. Just 3 percent said taxes should be cut for the wealthy.

On health care, 41 percent said Obama's health care reform law would make the health care system better, versus 32 percent who thought it would make things worse. House Republicans have tried 37 times to repeal Obamacare.

On immigration, respondents most frequently said that undocumented immigrants should be given a path to citizenship, while the second-most favored initiative was an "enforcement first" strategy. Republicans are divided on providing a pathway to citizenship, with those such as Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) backing one, while Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) opposes it.

Fifty-one percent said that Republican economic policies played a major role or "the biggest role" in the financial crisis, while larger numbers blamed banks and financial deregulation.

Forty-four percent said that gay marriage should be legal, 26 percent said it should be left up to the states and just 30 percent said that marriage should be only between a man and a woman, the official position of the Republican National Committee.

The responses of individuals from the focus groups were harsher. Respondents described the Republican Party as "closed-minded, racist, rigid, old-fashioned."

The report does not outright call on the Republican party to change its stances on issues to be more amenable to young voters. Instead, it calls for the party to slightly shift its message. For instance, the report states, "focus on the economic issues that affect young people today: education, the cost of health care, unemployment," but does not say to embrace Obamacare. It says, "Don't concede 'caring' and 'open-minded' to the left," but does not call for the outright backing of gay marriage.
