

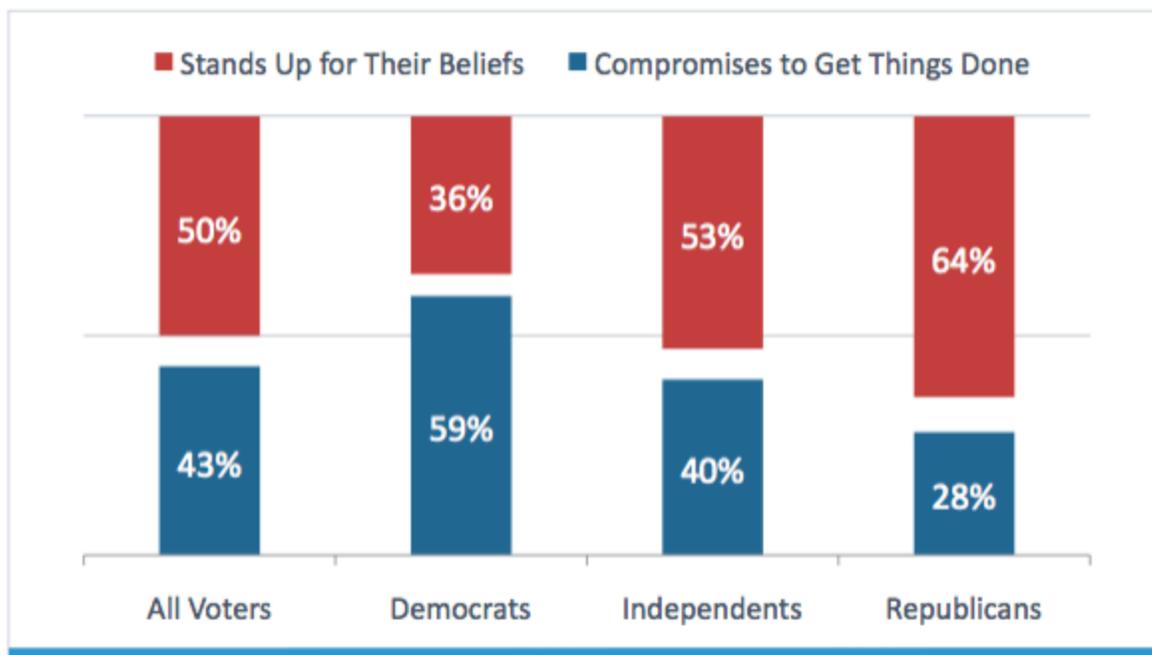
Compromise IS a dirty word

By Chris Cillizza:

“Compromise” stinks. Not as a concept. But as a word.

“Voters do not respond well to it, nor do they side with a candidate who is defined by it,” according to a memo by Democratic pollster Jef Pollock off of new nationwide poll conducted by his firm, Global Strategy Group.

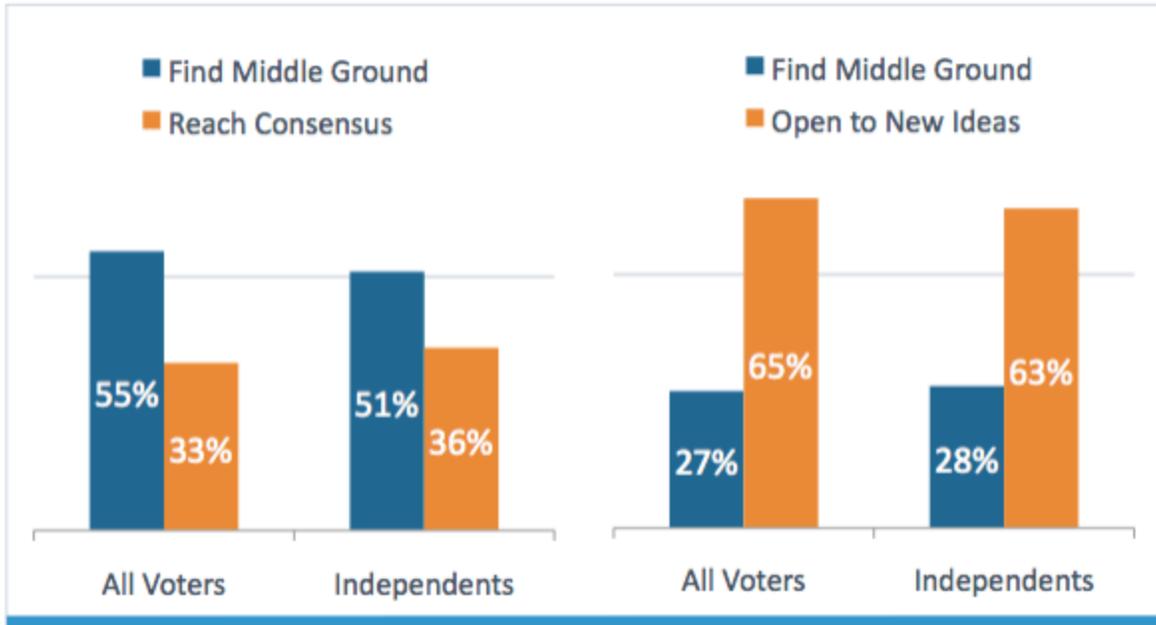
Asked whether they preferred a candidate who “stands up for what he or she believes” or one who “compromises to get things done”, a majority (50 percent) choose the former option.



While the seven-point gap isn't massive, Pollock notes that “its significance is underscored by the fact that the candidate standing up for beliefs wins the contest among every demographic group regardless of gender, age or region.”

The conclusion from that data point, however, should not be that people prefer inaction to action, according to the memo. Instead, what should be concluded is that the word “compromise” — or “consensus” amounts to capitulation in many peoples' minds.

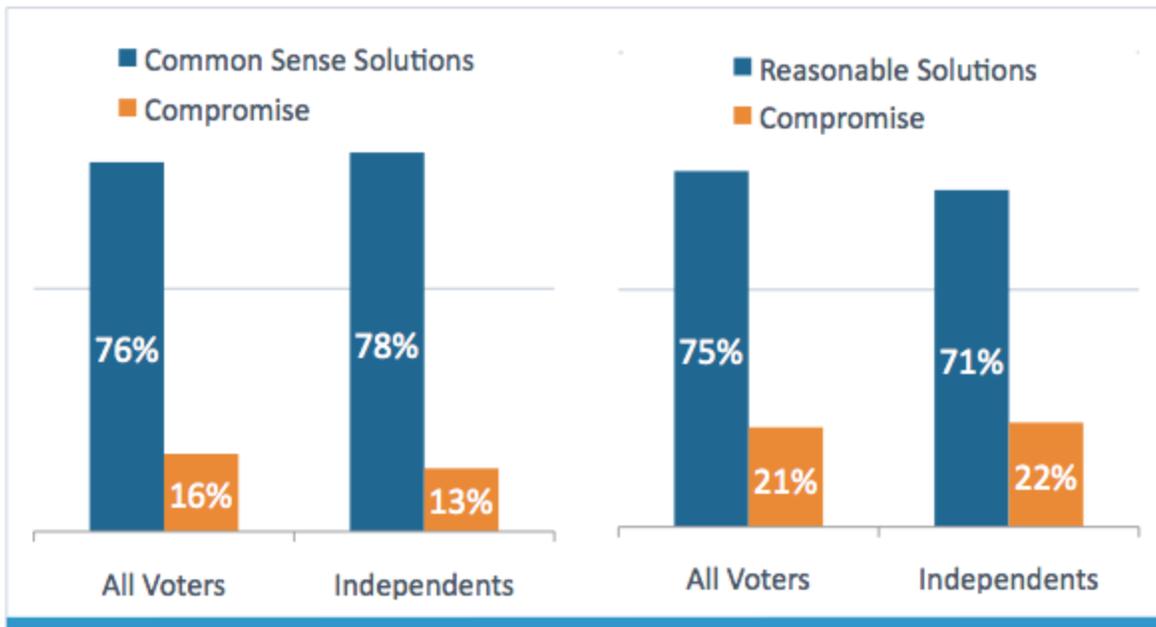
Consider this follow up question in which people were asked to choose between a candidate who “finds middle ground” and one who works to “reach consensus”. The “find middle ground” option won a majority of support. The margin was even wider when respondents were asked to choose between a candidate working to “find a middle ground” and one “open to new ideas” — with more than six in ten choosing the latter concept.



“Voters clearly want leaders who listen and work together but reaching consensus somewhere in the middle ground between right and left is not good enough,” reads the memo. “They want candidates with news ideas that go beyond the stale and stalled partisan agendas of both sides.”

Now, a piece of that conclusion is patently obvious. People like new, fresh ideas — in their politicians and in every other aspect of their lives. New ideas are inherently more appealing than the ones we are familiar with already — whether or not they are better ideas.

But, that point aside, the polling data makes a compelling case that “compromise” is a political loser as White House and Congress begin (again, again) to start talks about the possibility of a grand bargain around the budget deadline and debt ceiling.



“Compromise” is dead. Long live ” common sense solutions”.

© The Washington Post Company