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GOP loses more young, minority and female voters after shutdown

House majority at risk

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By [Seth McLaughlin](#) - The Washington Times

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Emerging from the 2012 elections, the [Republican Party\(/topics/republican-party/\)](#)'s formal postmortem concluded it needed to do a better job reaching women, minorities and young voters. A year later, they are failing on each of those scores — and the government shutdown set them back even more.

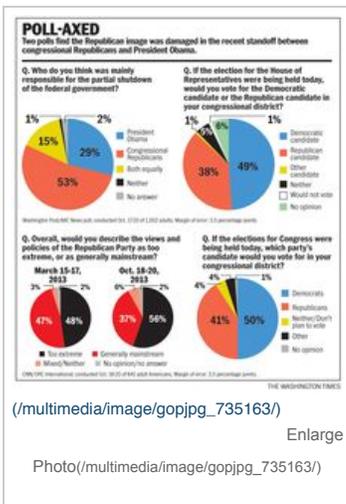
Polling after the 16-day shutdown, which ended last week in a near-complete victory for President Obama, showed the party polling poorly among all three key groups the [party\(/topics/republican-party/\)](#) said it wanted to reach.

Indeed, majorities of women, younger generation and non-white voters now say it's a bad thing that the [Republican Party\(/topics/republican-party/\)](#) controls the House.

"By taking such a hard line on this topic, the [party\(/topics/republican-party/\)](#) reinforced negative perceptions of extremism and unwillingness to compromise," said [Darrell M. West\(/topics/darrell-m-west/\)](#) of the [Brookings Institution\(/topics/brookings-institution/\)](#). "Fiery rhetoric helps with the base but does a poor job reaching out to young people and women."

Overall, the [Republican Party\(/topics/republican-party/\)](#) has struggled to meet the broad goals of its Growth and Opportunity Project — the [Republican National Committee\(/topics/republican-national-committee/\)](#)'s 100-page evaluation of what went wrong with the 2012 elections.

Among the other recommendations were that the [party\(/topics/republican-party/\)](#) improve fundraising, fix its polling and find a way to harness grass-roots supporters.



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But the latest fundraising numbers show national [Democratic Party\(/topics/democratic-party/\)](#) committees narrowly outpacing Republicans, for the first time since the election. The budget showdown continued to expose bitter divisions between rank-and-file voters and the Republican establishment that plagued the [party\(/topics/democratic-party/\)](#) during the presidential primaries.

The split was apparent in [Congress\(/topics/congress/\)](#) , where leaders struck a deal to raise the debt and reopen government without winning any concessions on cutting spending.

Most Republicans in [Congress\(/topics/congress/\)](#) voted against the deal. [Tea party\(/topics/tea-party/\)](#) candidates hoping to unseat incumbents are using the debt vote as ammunition, but some key House Republicans eyeing [Senate\(/topics/senate/\)](#) seats next year voted for the deal. Reps. [Tom Cotton\(/topics/tom-cotton/\)](#) of Arkansas, [Shelley Moore Capito\(/topics/shelley-moore-capito/\)](#) of West Virginia and [Steve Daines\(/topics/steve-daines/\)](#) of Montana were among the 87 House Republicans who joined 198 Democrats to support the debt deal.

[RNC\(/topics/republican-national-committee/\)](#) spokeswoman [Kirsten Kukowski\(/topics/kirsten-kukowski/\)](#) said that once the dust settles from the legislative fight, it will be clear that the [party\(/topics/tea-party/\)](#) is headed in the right direction over the long haul.

“In the short term, everyone agrees this process was messy. We tried but we didn’t win,” [Ms. Kukowski\(/topics/kirsten-kukowski/\)](#) said. “In the long run, we are on the right side of the issues from Obamacare to spending and our debt and we will be rewarded for being the only party with a plan to get them under control. From the [RNC\(/topics/republican-national-committee/\)](#) perspective, we have more field staff on the ground than ever before who are making daily personal contacts on the important issues.”

The Growth and Opportunity Project was meant to look at how 2012 presidential nominee Mitt Romney lost a race that many Republican strategists thought was winnable, against an incumbent president overseeing a sluggish economy and high unemployment.

The report authors concluded that the [party\(/topics/tea-party/\)](#) needed to build the behind-the-scenes political machinery to engage in combat with Democrats, as well as find a way to connect with young, female and minority voters — particularly Hispanics who “wrongly think that Republicans do not like them or want them in the country.”

“We are not a policy committee, but among the steps Republicans take in the Hispanic community and beyond, we must embrace and champion comprehensive immigration reform. If we do not, [our Party\(/topics/tea-party/\)](#) ’s appeal will continue to shrink to its core constituencies only,” the report said.

Led by Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, Republicans helped pushed an immigration bill through the [Senate\(/topics/senate/\)](#) in June. Those efforts have stalled in the House, though, where Republicans are more opposed to granting a path to citizenship to illegal immigrants.

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