

Magma

Beneath an active volcano, magma flows into vents and presses up the main pipe. A Mount St. Helens-sized explosion occurs when the molten rock encounters a pumice blockage or water enters the conduit. Pyroclastic rocks – dust, ash, bombs and blocks – are blown out of the volcano blackening the sky and turning the landscape into a dead zone.

The IAM's online survey suggests that magma is an apt analogy for our members' attitudes. Their anger is red hot. And the steam coming off these numbers sears both political parties and both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

The opening right/wrong track question produced a 75.0 percent wrong track response from IAM members. President Obama's job approval rating was 38.5 percent. **The House of Representatives job approval was 11.3 percent. The United States Senate drew only 5.5 percent as either excellent (.3 of one percent) or good (5.2 %).**

President Obama scored his highest approval ratings on handling the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (45.1 %) and the fight against terrorism (49.1 %). On representing the interests of working and middle class Americans, this Democratic president drew approval from only 27.9 percent of respondents. **On controlling the cost of health insurance, 18.9 percent rated his performance as good or excellent. On having a strong, aggressive jobs program to get people back to work, President Obama received his lowest marks with only 17.0 percent rating him excellent or good and 81.4 percent giving him a not-so-good or poor rating.**

As disappointed as IAM members were in the president's performance, their disdain for the Congress was all too obvious. **Over 54 percent said they would NOT support their member of Congress for re-election. And 57.6 percent said their congressman was a Democrat!**

Machinist Union members were bi-partisan in their disapproval. They felt *neither* party was: controlling the growth of the Federal deficit (67.1 %); standing up forcefully to the big banks (64.1 %); or pushing a strong jobs program to get people back to work (63.6 %). Democrats drew their best marks on standing up for the interests of working people (34.1 %); pushing programs to rebuild America's infrastructure (32.9 %); and making taxes fairer for working people (28.9 %).

On health care legislation, IAM members supported two components of President Obama's plan. Machinists overwhelmingly wanted every employer with a payroll in excess of \$500,000 to provide health insurance (74.5 % to 21.2 %). And three-quarters of respondents wanted the new Federal Insurance Rate Authority to be able to require health insurance companies to lower premiums or pay rebates (75.9 % to 18.3 %).

Machinists adamantly opposed the 40 percent excise tax on health plans for that cost in excess of \$10,200 (individuals) or \$27,500 (family) per year. In fact, 67.9

percent thought it was a lousy idea. And 70.2 percent gave a thumbs-down to the idea of penalties of \$695 (individual) and \$2,085 (family) for those without health care coverage. Machinists wanted a public option (64.9 % to 29.9 %).

On the JOBS Now! front, Machinists were skeptical that President Obama's Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act had created or saved millions of jobs. Only 40.4 percent agreed with that statement; 53.7 percent disagreed. They also rejected the notion that, since Wall Street has rebounded and the gross national product has grown, the recession was all but over for most Americans by a margin of 88.5 to 9.6 percent.

By way of contrast, IAM members overwhelmingly believe that:

- The United States needs an industrial policy (92.9 %);
- Tax policies should discourage outsourcing of American jobs (94.2 %);
- Trade deals like NAFTA and CAFTA should be renegotiated (87.3 %);
- Our country needs strong and enforceable "Buy American" legislation (86.7 %);
- Businesses should get investment tax credits to modernize their plants and purchase new machinery (84.6 %);
- America needs a Roosevelt-Kennedy style jobs program to get American who want to work back to work immediately (80.0 %); and that
- The Federal government should hire jobless Americans to renovate factories and install new equipment (77.8 %).

Two final questions went to the historic branding of the Democratic Party. Over 88 percent agreed with the statement "the Democratic Party doesn't represent working people as strongly as they used to." An identical percentage (88.2 %) said they would "be inclined to support either party if they stood up strongly for the interests of ordinary working people."

And that attitude – the Democrats have abandoned us – is roiling that magma. When asked if they were more or less inclined to support the Democratic Party and its candidates since President Barack Obama took office, 54.4 percent said they were less inclined. (Much less inclined was 40.2 percent.)

Party identification does not drive that attitude. Respondents to this survey considered themselves Democrats (45.5 %), Independents (31.1 %) and Republican (14.8 %). For most Machinists, the Democratic White House, Congress and Senate are seen as turning their backs on the blue collar workforce. They are incensed by that turn of events.

"Don't stand too close to this volcano," warned IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger. "This survey of 1,262 IAM members suggests the lava dome is about to explode. Its pyroclastic rocks will fall on deserving and undeserving politicians alike."