

---

FINGERHUT GRANADOS OPINION RESEARCH  
1901 N. Moore Street  
Suite #1202  
Arlington, VA 22209

Phone: (703) 243-8058  
Fax: (703) 243-8820  
Cell: (202) 276-0858  
E-Mail: [vfingerhut@aol.com](mailto:vfingerhut@aol.com)

---

**The International Association of Machinists and  
Aerospace Workers (IAMAW)**

**Survey of Voter Attitudes Toward Day-to-  
Day Pocketbook Issues in Five (5) Key States**

- \* Jobs**
- \* Utility Regulation**
- \* Insurance Costs**
- \* Commuting**
- \* Educational Equity**

**Prepared by: Vic Fingerhut, President  
Fingerhut Granados Opinion Research**

## **Introduction and Summary**

A survey of voters in five key states with both gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races in 2006 shows that – as found in IAM polls for several years – populist messages persist as powerful campaign themes for progressive candidates.

The findings re-enforced the notion that the basic pocketbook issues of the **JUICE** campaign of the International Association of Machinists not only resonate with base Democratic voters, but with the electorate as a whole, including the often decisive Independent voters.

As noted, the acronym **JUICE** covers the five pocketbook issues of **J**obs, tougher **U**tility regulation, lower **I**nsurance premiums, shorter daily **C**ommutes and more **E**ducational equity.

The survey covered 625 likely voters in the 2006 elections in Ohio, Wisconsin, Maryland, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

While the states covered included four “blue” states and one “red” state from the 2004 elections, three of the blue states only narrowly went for Democrat John Kerry with only 51 percent of the vote. (Indeed, Kerry received only 51 percent of the popular vote in the five states as a whole...only two points higher than his national average.)

The survey confirmed anew that the very foundation of Democratic Party strength in the electorate derives from its (largely inherited) populist credentials and the perception that the Democratic Party is the party that best represents the day-to-day economic concerns of ordinary working people in America – the central focus of the **JUICE** campaign.

Indeed, the identification of the Democratic Party with the economic interests of ordinary working people was overwhelmingly the single most oft-mentioned reason why voters in *all five of these states* indicated they were Democrats (family history was the second most frequently mentioned reason).

A particularly important finding of the survey was that perceptions of the parties and candidates and even issue strengths (and weaknesses) not only overlapped but were remarkably similar at the state and federal levels, particularly on basic pocketbook **JUICE** issues.

**That finding strongly suggests that not only should Democratic candidates and campaigns – at all levels – be heavily focused on these pro-Democratically-valenced areas...but that coordinating these economic populist JUICE messages that clarify and amplify the Democratic positions would measurably help Democratic candidates AT ALL LEVELS.**

The survey also raised some warning flags for the Democrats.

Despite the setbacks in Iraq, voters – particularly swing voters as a group – still believe the Republicans are more capable in the foreign policy area, including not only dealing with terrorism but handling the Iraq issue as well.

In fact, a plurality of voters who are undecided at the moment for the 2006 election or who say they “might change” their vote between now and election day expressed a belief that the Democrats should spend less time on the war issue, and more on what the Democrats were supposed to be good at – defending the economic interests of ordinary working Americans.

Some voters, including some of the vital Independent voters, believe that the Democrats – in recent years – have lost some of their enthusiasm and commitment to the pocketbook needs of American working people.

*If that view becomes more widespread in the electorate, the long-term future of the Democratic Party and its candidates would be devastating.*

Short-term forces at the moment are clearly working in the Democrats’ favor – and campaign focus on the economic pocketbook issues of the **JUICE** campaign in the final weeks of the 2006 campaign should not only solidify but maximize our vote this year.

Equally important to those concerned about achieving a progressive agenda, doing everything we can to focus voter attention on the **JUICE** issues will serve as an important and absolutely critical underpinning for success in the 2008 presidential election.

The hard data below tells the story of the importance of these pocketbook issues to the success of progressive candidates – both in the short- and long-run.

## **The Findings: What Do Voters Want?**

### **1) JOBS!**

Between 83 and 85 percent of these voters would be more inclined to support a candidate who pressed for jobs initiatives that included:

- \* A “Buy American” policy committing state and local governments to buying “American-made” products; and
- \* Tax policies that discouraged the outsourcing of American jobs to foreign countries.

And 74 percent of respondents agree with the statement that, if candidates would “*stand up and fight to protect American jobs from being outsourced or undercut by cheap foreign imports, I would be more inclined to vote for them.*”

### **2) UTILITY REGULATION**

Over three-fourths of the voters would be more inclined to support a candidate who favored:

- \* Tough regulation of utility rates;
- \* An “excess-profits” tax on oil companies; and
- \* Freezing gasoline prices and rolling them back to \$2.25 per gallon.

### **3) INSURANCE RATES**

Democrats have a distinct advantage in the minds of voters when it comes to who they TRUST on insurance rates. In a split sample, we found a:

- \* 20-point advantage for Democrats on dealing with the increased cost of auto insurance; and

- \* 29-point advantage for Democrats on dealing with the increased cost of health insurance.

Not surprisingly, given those numbers, 78 percent of these voters would be more inclined to support candidates that favor extending health care coverage to all working families earning less than \$50,000 a year.

#### **4) COMMUTER WOES**

Voters give their current governor high marks (58 approve and 33 disapprove) in dealing with the transportation needs of their states.

Democrats held an 11-point advantage when the transportation issue was described as “*new and better means of transportation, like high speed rail.*” The Democratic advantage doubled to 22 points when the issue was framed as “*working people trying to get to work.*”

But, again, the high costs of gas trumps all infrastructure improvements – new roads or new mass transit proposals.

#### **5) EDUCATIONAL EQUITY**

At both the state and federal levels, voters have more trust in the Democrats (by margins of 25 and 22 points, respectively) in being concerned about ensuring that all American youngsters get a quality education.

And when framed in the appropriate terms, “*being concerned about ensuring that all American youngsters get a quality education,*” self-identified independent voters have more trust in the Democrats by a massive 49-point, 61-12 percent margin!

## **Which Party Has Credibility to Fight for What Voters Want?**

Overall, the findings were quite clear in this regard.

**The Democratic Party is still the party with considerably higher levels of credibility to support the JUICE policies which voters so strongly support.**

### **Analytical Note**

It is clear that – based on several decades of survey findings in this regard – a considerable amount of Democratic strength is *inherited*, and based upon a perceived Democratic Party role as the party which cares about the interests of ordinary working people.

However, belief and trust in the Democratic Party and its candidates to achieve – or even fight for these goals – is not universal, nor is it spread evenly among all issue areas.

**Indeed, as we will see in the data throughout this survey, voters clearly want Democrats to be stronger, more decisive and more supportive of the economic interests of ordinary working people.**

Nevertheless, as the data below indicates, while the margins vary from issue to issue, the Democratic Party is still seen by a plurality of voters as the most trustworthy party in most of these key day-to-day pocketbook concerns of voters...and Democratic campaigns depart from focus on these issues at their own risk.

The pattern of these findings can be seen in the following tables.

**Which National Party – Democrats or Republicans – Better at...**

Q. 6 “Regardless of how you rate the performance of President Bush, which national party – the Democrats or Republicans – do you think would do a better job when it comes to...”

<b><u>Area:</u></b>	<b><u>Democrats</u></b>	<b><u>Republicans</u></b>	<b><u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic Margin</u></b>
<b><u>JOBS</u></b>				
...handling the economy and economic issues in a way that is sensitive to the needs of ordinary working people in America.....	59	31	10	+28
...protecting American workers from the loss of jobs due to outsourcing and import of foreign imports.....	57	26	18	+31
<b><u>UTILITY REGULATION</u></b>				
...standing up to the big oil companies and fighting against excessive increases in the price of gasoline.....	50	24	26	+26
...fighting against allowing the huge multi-national oil companies from excessively raising gas prices at the same time they are making huge, record profits .....	46	25	29	+21
<b><u>INSURANCE</u></b>				
...controlling the costs of health care insurance .....	57	27	16	+30
<b><u>COMMUTER WOES</u></b>				
...dealing with the transportation needs of working people trying to get to work .....	49	31	20	+18
<b><u>EDUCATION</u></b>				
...being concerned about ensuring that all American youngsters get a quality education .....	56	34	10	+22

The pattern of higher Democratic credibility on these same **JUICE** concerns is reflected at the state level.

**Which State Party – Democrats or Republicans – Better at...**

Q. B4 “Regardless of how you rate the performance of your current governor, which of the two parties in your state – the Democrats or Republicans – would you most trust when it comes to:”

<b><u>Area:</u></b>	<b><u>Democrats</u></b>	<b><u>Republicans</u></b>	<b><u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic Margin</u></b>
<b><u>JOBS</u></b>				
...managing job creation and economic development issues in the state.....	55	35	10	+20
<b><u>UTILITY REGULATION</u></b>				
...working to maintain strong public oversight over utility companies so they just can’t increase utility rates whenever they want to .....	53	30	17	+23
...standing up to the utility companies in the state so ordinary consumers get a fairer deal .....	47	29	24	+18
...fighting against price gouging by the oil companies and the gasoline industry in the state .....	46	24	30	+22
<b><u>INSURANCE</u></b>				
...dealing with the increased cost of <u>health</u> insurance premiums .....	54	25	21	+29
...dealing with the increased cost of <u>auto</u> insurance premiums .....	47	27	27	+20
<b><u>COMMUTER WOES</u></b>				
...dealing with the transportation needs of working people trying to get to work .....	52	30	18	+22
...supporting new and better means of transportation, like high-speed rail .....	44	33	23	+11
<b><u>EDUCATIONAL EQUITY</u></b>				
...being concerned about ensuring that all American youngsters get a quality education .....	58	33	9	+25



## **Who Represents Whom, the Basis of Party Identification**

All these specific **JUICE** items taken together relate to the most crucial ingredients of political choice and party loyalty, namely, **who do voters perceive each party as representing.**

FDR created a Democratic majority in the 1930s by convincing Americans by both his rhetoric and policies that it was the Democratic Party that represented the *basic economic concerns of regular working people.*

The Democratic majority has dwindled in recent years as the conviction grew that the Democrats were *not really concerned enough* about the basic day-to-day concerns of ordinary working people in America – allowing the GOP to make historic gains (such as the control of the House of Representatives for 12 consecutive years since 1994).

Nevertheless, the IAM survey shows that populist positioning of the Democratic Party on these critical **JUICE** issues *compared to the GOP* remains quite strong...at both the national and state levels.

The final weeks of the 2006 campaign – when voter attention is high – give us the opportunity to both:

- \* use this favorable populist positioning to **maximize** our 2006 vote at all levels, and
- \* **re-enforce and expand** our critically-important margins as the party that represents the basic economic needs of ordinary American working families.

That is what the IAM's **JUICE** campaign is all about.

## **General Perceptions of the National and State Parties – Who They Represent**

### The National Parties

Q. 6 “Regardless of how you rate the performance of President Bush, which national party – the Democrats or Republicans – do you think would do a better job when it comes to...”

<u>Area:</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u>	<u>Democratic Margin</u>
...representing the interests of <b>working</b> and middle-income Americans.....	61	30	9	+31
...representing the interests of the American middle class .....	61	31	7	+30
...handling the economy and economic issues in a way that is sensitive to the needs of <b>ordinary working people</b> in America.....	59	31	10	+28

### The Parties in Congress

Q. C6 “Which of the two parties in Congress – the Democrats or Republicans – do you think would do a better job in dealing with the following areas...And if you think that neither would do a good job...tell me that also...first...”

<u>Area:</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u>	<u>Democratic Margin</u>
...representing the interests of <b>working people</b> .....	64	29	7	+35
...being concerned about issues affecting <b>workers</b> at their <b>workplace</b> .....	64	30	7	+34
...representing the interests of <b>working</b> and middle-income people.....	61	31	8	+30
...representing the middle class .....	62	33	5	+29
...trying to make taxes fairer for ordinary working people.....	53	36	11	+17

### General Perceptions of the National and State Parties – Who They Represent

### The State Parties

Q. B4 “Regardless of how you rate the performance of your current governor, which of the two parties in your state – the Democrats or Republicans – would you most trust when it comes to:”

<u>Area:</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u>	<u>Democratic Margin</u>
...representing the interests of ordinary <u>working</u> people in your state.....	62	29	9	+33
...being concerned about issues affecting <u>workers</u> at their <u>workplace</u> .....	61	29	10	+32
...representing the middle class.....	60	34	6	+26

Remarkably, as seen by this data, the perceptions of the two major parties that originated the 1930s under FDR remain incredibly strong today.

*A lesson in the durability of political perceptions.*

### The Critical Swing Voters

Election studies since the 1950s have shown that the most *moveable* voters in the electorate are those voters without strong party moorings.

This has become particularly true in the past decade, with a hardening of attitudes among *strong* partisans along party lines.

This was confirmed in the IAM five state poll.

The most likely *movable* voters in both off-year and presidential elections are what we call the “swing voters.” They are:

- a) persons with no party affiliation who describe themselves as “Independents,” and
- b) “soft” Democrats and Republicans – persons who, when asked whether they consider themselves a very strong (Democrat/Republican), somewhat strong (Democrat/Republican) or not very strong (Democrat/Republican), answer “*not very strong.*”

Since about 70-75 percent of the electorate is made up of fairly strong partisan voters (either Democratic or Republican), the “swing” voter is particularly important.

Indeed, outside of one-party states or regions, or highly popular incumbents, they are the group that determines the outcome of most contested elections.

**The swing voters’ perceptions of the political world are, therefore, not only interesting – but of critical importance in devising and implementing political strategies.**

The tables that follow tell a critical story about the swing voter.

**1) First, swing voters are not only highly variable and movable, they differentiate sharply in their reaction to different issues and formulations.**

Unlike, for example, self-identified Democrats, who overwhelmingly “see” the Democrats as “best” in just about every area of public policy...and every verbal and symbolic formulation of politics in general, the reactions of swing voters are much more varied.

Therefore, it is critical that progressive candidates seeking to run well among the critical swing voter group must present the right issues – the right way – to those swing voters.

**2) JUICE pocketbook issues (jobs, healthcare costs, insurance premium costs, etc.) framed in “working people..and/or working family” terms represent the strongest formulations for Democratic candidates and campaigns.**

**3) These “working people” formulations (for your speeches, mail, and most importantly, your TV and radio spots) are not simply throwaway lines and usages.**

*The data shows they are critical!!*

For example, notice the difference in the swing voters’ reaction to two – *apparently* similar – but slightly differently worded formulations regarding the same issue – the economy.

**Who Swing Voters Think Does a Better Job**

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Neither/ Both/ Not Sure</u>	<u>Democratic Margin</u>
<i>Handling the economy .....</i>	36	27	38	<u>+9</u>
<i>Handling the economy and economic issues in a way that is sensitive to the needs of <u>ordinary working people</u> in America.....</i>	53	17	29	<u>+36 !!</u>
				<b><u>Spread: +27 points</u></b>

Nothing subtle.

When a Democratic candidate or media presentation *doesn't use* this symbolic language (of “working people”), they give away 27 points (that they would otherwise have had).

It is as simple as that.

The critical data for the swing voters on all the relevant issues is seen in the following tables:

**The Critical Swing Voters**

**Which Party Swing\* Voters Trust Most (State Level)**

Q. B4 “Regardless of how you rate the performance of your current governor, which of the two parties in your state – the Democrats or Republicans – would you most trust when it comes to...”

<u>Area</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Neither/ Both/ Not Sure</u>	<u>Democratic Margin</u>
...representing the interests of ordinary <b><u>working people</u></b> in your state .....	59	13	28	+46
...being concerned about issues affecting <b><u>workers</u></b> at their <b><u>workplace</u></b> .....	61	17	23	+44
...representing the <b><u>middle class</u></b> .....	59	18	23	+41
...dealing with the increased cost of health insurance premiums .....	53	12	36	+41
...being concerned about ensuring that <b><u>all American youngsters</u></b> get a quality education .....	56	18	25	+38
...working to maintain strong public oversight over utility companies so they just can’t increase utility rates whenever they want to .....	42	17	40	+25
...dealing with the transportation needs of <b><u>working people</u></b> trying to get to work .....	41	19	40	+22
...fighting against price gouging by the oil companies and the gasoline industry in the state .....	35	14	51	+21
...dealing with the increased cost of auto insurance premiums .....	37	19	44	+18
...managing job creation and economic development issues in the state .....	44	27	30	+17
...managing the state’s economy .....	38	27	35	+11
...standing up to the utility companies in the state so ordinary consumers get a fairer deal .....	33	23	44	+10
...supporting new and better means of transportation, like high-speed rail .....	30	23	47	+7

\* Self-identified Independents, “soft” Democrats and “soft” Republicans.

## The Critical Swing Voters

### Who Swing\* Voters Think Does a Better Job (National Level)

Q. 6 “Regardless of how you rate the performance of President Bush, which national party – the Democrats or Republicans – do you think would do a better job when it comes to...”

**Very Strong Democratic Formulations**

<b><u>Area:</u></b>	<b><u>Democrats</u></b>	<b><u>Republicans</u></b>	<b><u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic Margin</u></b>
...being concerned about issues affecting <b><u>workers</u></b> at their <b><u>workplace</u></b> .....	61	13	25	+48
...representing the interests of the American middle class.....	60	12	29	+48
...representing the interests of <b><u>working</u></b> and middle-income Americans .....	61	14	25	+47
...controlling the costs of health care insurance .....	56	12	32	+44
...representing the interests of <b><u>ordinary working people</u></b> in America .....	59	17	25	+42
...protecting <b><u>American workers</u></b> from the loss of jobs due to outsourcing and import of foreign imports.....	50	13	37	+37
...handling the economy and economic issues in a way that is sensitive to the needs of <b><u>ordinary working people</u></b> in America .....	53	17	29	+36

\* Self-identified Independents, “soft” Democrats and “soft” Republicans

(Table Continued on Next Page)

**The Critical Swing Voters (Continued)**

**Who Swing\* Voters Think Does a Better Job (National Level)**

**Moderately Strong Democratic Formulations**

<b><u>Area:</u></b>	<b><u>Democrats</u></b>	<b><u>Republicans</u></b>	<b><u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic Margin</u></b>
...fighting against allowing the huge multi-national oil companies from excessively raising gas prices at the same time they are making huge, record profits.....	44	16	41	+28
...standing up to the big oil companies and fighting against excessive increases in the price of gasoline .....	40	12	48	+28
...being concerned about ensuring that all American youngsters get a quality education .....	48	21	32	+27
...dealing with the transportation needs of working people trying to get to work .....	37	18	45	+19
...working to maintain public oversight over utility companies so they just can't increase utility rates whenever they want to.....	37	22	42	+15

**Weak and/or Negative Formulations**

<b><u>Area:</u></b>	<b><u>Democrats</u></b>	<b><u>Republicans</u></b>	<b><u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic Margin</u></b>
...handling the economy.....	36	27	38	+9
...handling the war in Iraq.....	30	32	38	(-2)
...dealing with foreign policy issues generally.....	28	30	41	(-2)
...handling the fight against terrorism.....	24	32	44	(-8)

*\* Self-identified Independents, “soft” Democrats and “soft” Republicans*

**An Important Word on the Late Deciders**

The **late deciders** are made up of:

A) persons in the survey who say they have not yet made up their mind about who to support, and



B) persons who do express a preference, but indicate their choice is not yet firm, and might change as the campaign continues.

The late deciders are often composed of many of the same voters in the swing voter group, but their composition shifts from year to year.

For example, in 2006, when the Democrats are generally enjoying a favorable mood, the late deciders may be found largely among Independents-leaning-Republican and “soft” Republicans, because most of the Independents with Democratic leans and “soft” Democrats are *already* planning to vote Democratic.

This is particularly important to understand for the wrap up of the 2006 campaign in terms of which areas progressive candidates should focus on.

This is dramatically seen in the brief illustrative examples below:

### **Late Deciders’ Views of the Two Parties (Representative Examples)**

Q. 6 *“Regardless of how you rate the performance of President Bush, which national party – the Democrats or Republicans – do you think would do a better job when it comes to...”*

**Strong Issue Areas**

<b><u>Area:</u></b>	<b><u>Democrats</u></b>	<b><u>Republicans</u></b>	<b><u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic Margin</u></b>
...being concerned about issues affecting workers at their workplace .....	51	24	24	+27
...controlling the costs of health care insurance.....	46	24	30	+22

**Negative Issue Areas**

<b><u>Area:</u></b>	<b><u>Democrats</u></b>	<b><u>Republicans</u></b>	<b><u>Neither/Both/ Not Sure</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic Margin</u></b>
...dealing with foreign policy issues generally .....	23	46	30	(-23)
...handling the war in Iraq.....	27	45	27	(-18)
...handling the fight against terrorism.....	19	48	33	(-29)

The **JUICE** issues all feed into the “working people/on our side” issues.

Conversely, the bottom three issues take the debate entirely *out* of the working people/**JUICE** issue area.

(The people who are strongly opposed to Bush and the war are already voting for us.)

Continuing to press this issue may or may not advance the cause of a better direction in Iraq, but it will definitely cost votes – which may, in certain races, whether state or federal – be critical.

The electorate as a whole, and particularly the late deciders, also gave us a piece of their mind in reaction to one of the statements tested in the survey:

By a margin of 57-32 percent, the off-year electorate agreed with the statement that:

*“I wish the Democrats would stop spending so much time on the Iraq issue and trying to second-guess the president on the war and the fight against terrorism, and just concentrate on the things the Democrats are supposed to be good at – like fighting the*

*big utility companies, working for lower insurance premiums for working people, and opposing the export and outsourcing of American jobs.”*

Late deciders agreed by a massive 44-point, 66-22 percent margin!

### **Conclusion: A “Slam Dunk” for the Democrats in 2006: Far from it**

Most of the 2006 pre-election polls to date indicate that the Democrats are running as strongly at state and federal levels as they have in several years.

The IAM survey, showing the persistence of the perception that the Democrats are the best party to represent the day-to-day pocketbook interests of ordinary Americans, seems to represent an *even more basic factor* working on the side of progressive candidates.

However, while all these factors are in operation today, they do not mean that we are headed for an inevitable and massive Democratic victory.

First, there are the issues where the GOP still enjoys substantial advantage – foreign policy, terrorism, even Iraq – particularly among the late deciders, as we have just seen.

Second, is the critical fact, mentioned above, of the *nature* of the Democratic advantage on pocketbook issues.

While, there is little belief that the Republicans stand up for ordinary working folks (by a 64-34 percent margin, voters agreed that “*the Republicans are too closely tied to big business and that’s a good reason to vote against them*”), the IAM poll also revealed there is also a sense that the Democrats have lost some of their traditional enthusiasm and commitment to standing up for ordinary working folks.

Thus, at the same time voters reconfirmed their traditional perception that the Republicans were too close to big business, these same voters – by a huge 65-24 percent margin – agreed that “*Democrats like Kennedy and Roosevelt seemed to stand up more strongly for ordinary working people than do the Democratic leaders we have today.*”

What do voters want from a political party today?

Look at these results from the survey:

For the short-term:

By a massive 64-28 percent margin, likely voters said:

*“...If the Democrats said they would stand up more strongly for the interests of working people – whether it be in protecting pensions, fighting the big oil and utility companies or stopping American companies from taking American jobs overseas – I would be more inclined to vote Democratic – not only for Congress...but for state offices like governor as well!!”*

And the long run?

Simply put, American voters see these **JUICE** issues in a politically profound and enduring manner.

Nearly 60 percent of the likely voters in these five states indicated:

*“...If the Democrats stood up more strongly for ordinary American working people, I would not only be more likely to vote for them in the upcoming elections, it might change my attitude as a whole toward the Democrats in a more favorable direction.”*

**The JUICE campaign addresses those needs from both the short- and long-term perspectives.**