

Majority Watch 2006 Evaluation

Majority Watch was launched as a proof of concept to demonstrate polling accuracy and detail. We also sought to show that surveying individual races, rather than national generic polling, was a better predictor of control of Congress.

So how did we do?

Over a two month period, we conducted surveys in 60 predominantly toss-up races. In half of the races our poll result was not statistically significant, reflective of the large number of highly competitive races. But in 30 races outside of the margin of error, our final poll correctly predicted the winner in 26 times, with one race still uncalled — a success rate of 89.6 percent.

Overall, the final Majority Watch poll overstated the net Democratic margin by 1.71 percent. While this is partly accounted for by some outliers, there is also clear evidence from national generic polling that the overall race tightened in the closing weeks of the campaign. Since the last Majority Watch survey occurred two weeks before Election Day, the late Republican rebound was not recorded.

Our final scoreboard predicted Democratic control of 240 house districts; as of November 20, Democrats have won 232 seats, with four races yet to be called.

Final Polls with Lead Outside Margin

26 Correct
3 Incorrect
1 Still too close to call

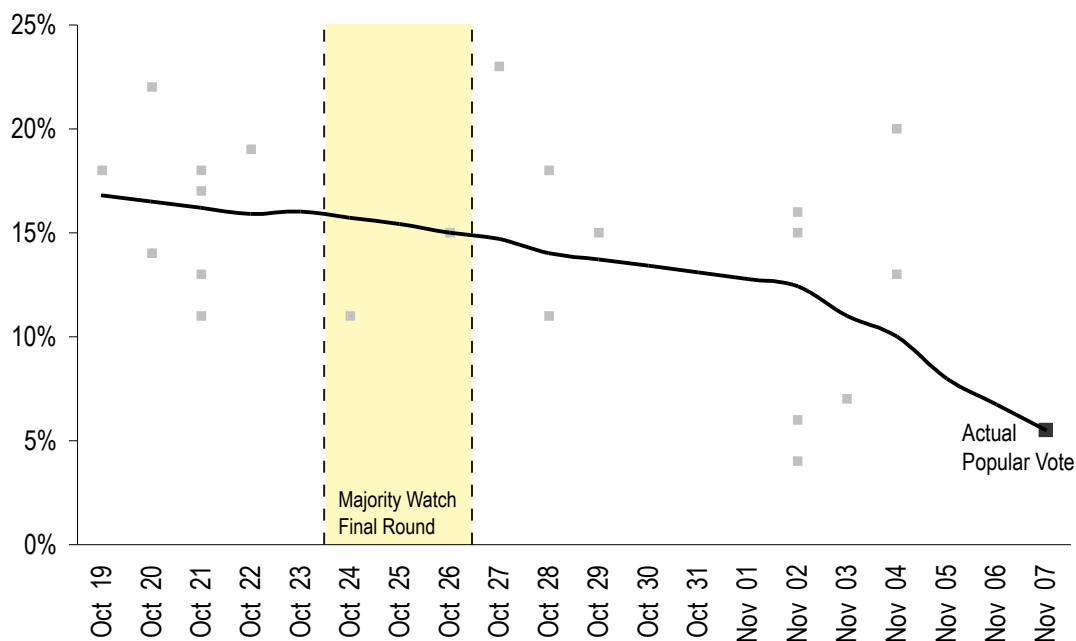
60 District Comparison

Final Majority Watch Survey and Average Actual Vote

	Majority Watch Prediction	Actual Vote
Democratic Vote	49%	50.17%
Republican Vote	46%	48.45%
Margin	3%	1.71%

National Generic Polling Trend and Majority Watch Third Round Timing

Individual national generic ballot surveys and autoregressive trend line



Trend line of autoregressive integrated moving average time series model of Democratic margin in all polls on Real Clear Politics archive from October 19 to November 7 (mid-point). Value for November 7th is preliminary popular vote count (*International Herald Tribune*, November 10, 2006)

District Narrative:

AZ-01: incumbent Rick Renzi (R) was behind in an early October MW poll in the wake of the Foley scandal and subsequent Kolbe disclosures...but MW found Renzi marginally ahead in the final poll.

AZ-08: MW generic polling identified this district as favorable for a Democratic take-over in August. We did not need to go back to get the result right.

CA-04: MW showed incumbent John Doolittle ahead by a significant margin in early October then almost exactly predicted the final result in a late October follow-up.

CA-11: MW showed Republican Richard Pombo failing to win re-election, at 46 percent (he wound up with 47 percent and lost).

CO-04: MW showed Marilyn Musgrave ahead, 47-41, in August, but late October follow-up showed Democratic challenger Angie Paccione with a statistically insignificant lead of 48-45. The actual vote favored Musgrave, 46 percent to 43 percent.

CO-07: three MW tracking polls starting in August showed successful Democratic challenger Ed Perlmutter move from marginally behind to significantly ahead, 51-46. Final vote, two weeks after our last survey: 55 percent to 42 percent.

Connecticut: MW polled the races of three Republican incumbents. Nancy Johnson was in the most trouble, Chris Shays was likely to win re-election, and Rob Simmons losing a closer race. Exactly right.

FL-13: MW poll in August showed this district to be generically favorable to Republicans, but a very marginal race once the nominees were known (and tested in two follow-up MW surveys). MW showed the race to be within the margin of error and as of November 20, a winner had still not been declared.

	<u>R</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>Margin (R-D)</u>
Arizona 1			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	48%	46%	2%
Election Results	51.75%	43.45%	8.31%
Arizona 8			
Majority Watch (August 27-29)	46%	50%	-4%
Election Results	42.18%	54.18%	-12.00%
California 4			
Majority Watch (October24-26)	49%	46%	3%
Election Results	49.31%	45.66%	3.65%
California 11			
Majority Watch (October24-26)	46%	48%	-2%
Election Results	46.23%	53.77%	-7.54%
Colorado 4			
Majority Watch (October24-26)	45%	48%	-3%
Election Results	45.91%	42.76%	3.15%
Colorado 7			
Majority Watch (October24-26)	46%	51%	-5%
Election Results	42.19%	54.82%	-12.63%
Connecticut 2			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	45%	51%	-6%
Election Results	49.97%	50.03%	-0.07%
Connecticut 4			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	52%	43%	9%
Election Results	50.96%	47.58%	3.38%
Connecticut 5			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	43%	51%	-8%
Election Results	43.54%	53.80%	-10.27%
Florida 13			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	47%	49%	-2%
Election Results	50.08%	49.92%	0.17%

FL-16: on October 1 (two days after the resignation of Republican Congressman Mark Foley), MW conducted parallel surveys, one that informed respondents that a vote for Foley would go toward a different to-be-determined Republican nominee, and one with voters simply confronted by the ballot language only. In fact, voters were informed at the polling place that a vote for Foley was vote for Republican Joe Negron, and the “informed voter” MW poll showed that would lead to a narrow 3-point D victory, 50-47. Successful D candidate Tim Mahoney won 50 percent to 48 percent.

FL-22: an August MW poll showed incumbent Clay Shaw (R) significantly ahead, but a late October tracking poll put successful D challenger Ron Klein ahead. Klein won 51 percent to 47 percent.

ID-01: a mid-October MW poll showed Republican Bill Sali winning the open seat, but with only 49 percent of the vote. Sali won, 50 percent to 45 percent.

IL-06: MW polls in August and twice in October showed a very close race, with Democrat Tammy Duckworth ahead by one, then Republican Peter Roskam ahead by one, then Duckworth ahead by one. Roskam won, 51 percent to 49 percent.

IL-08: MW polls in August and then twice in October accurately tracked a growing lead for successful Democratic candidate for reelection Melissa Bean.

IL-10: two October MW polls overstated the vote of the Democratic challenger and understated the vote of the Republican incumbent.

IL-14 and IL-19: MW polls in mid-October, in the immediate wake of the Foley scandal, demonstrated that neither Speaker Dennis Hastert nor Page Board Chairman John Shimkus were in any trouble as a result of the scandal. Both Republicans were easily re-elected.

IN-02, IN-08 and IN-09: September MW polls determined that all three Republican incumbents were in serious trouble, and subsequent October MW polling confirmed that. All three lost.

	R	D	Margin (R-D)
Florida 16			
Majority Watch (October 1)	46%	49%	-3%
Election Results	47.66%	49.55%	-1.88%
Florida 22			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	48%	50%	-2%
Election Results	47.12%	50.88%	-3.76%
Idaho 1			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	49%	42%	7%
Election Results	49.94%	44.80%	5.14%
Illinois 6			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	47%	48%	-1%
Election Results	51.37%	48.63%	2.74%
Illinois 8			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	45%	50%	-5%
Election Results	43.69%	51.18%	-7.48%
Illinois 10			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	46%	48%	-2%
Election Results	53.47%	46.53%	6.94%
Illinois 14			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	52%	42%	10%
Election Results	59.75%	40.25%	19.49%
Illinois 19			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	53%	36%	17%
Election Results	60.65%	39.35%	21.31%
Indiana 2			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	45%	48%	-3%
Election Results	46.03%	53.97%	-7.93%
Indiana 8			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	43%	53%	-10%
Election Results	39.30%	60.70%	-21.40%

IA-01: an August MW poll suggested Democratic candidate Bruce Braley was en route to a relatively easy victory, which was confirmed in the actual vote, 55 percent to 43 percent.

IA-02: an early October MW poll showed incumbent Republican Jim Leach in serious trouble, with a late October follow-up confirming this race as a statistical dead heat. Leach lost, 49 percent to 51 percent.

IA-03: an August MW poll showed incumbent Democrat Leonard Boswell far ahead, and he won, 52 percent to 47 percent.

KY-03: between an early October poll to a late October follow-up, MW polls demonstrated how a tied race turned into a growing lead for Democrat John Yarmouth, who won 51 percent to 48 percent.

KY-04: August and early October MW polls accurately predicted a narrow victory for incumbent Republican Geoff Davis, although a late October MW poll inaccurately showed his Democratic challenger moving narrowly into the lead.

MN-01: two October MW polls showed incumbent Republican Gil Gutknecht in a close contest, with statistically insignificant leads of between one and three points. Two weeks after our last poll, Gutknecht lost 47 percent to 53 percent.

MN-06: a generic August MW poll demonstrated that the district favored Republican candidate Michele Bachmann. At the height of the Foley scandal, the Democratic candidate moved into a lead, which disappeared in the final October poll. Bachmann won.

NV-03: MW polling in August and again in late October showed incumbent John Porter (R) with a small lead. He won, 49%-47%.

NH-02: a late October poll showed Democratic challenger Paul Hodes ahead with 50 percent of the vote. Hodes won, 53 percent to 46 percent.

	<u>R</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>Margin (R-D)</u>
Indiana 9			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	43%	51%	-8%
Election Results	45.53%	49.96%	-4.43%
Iowa 1			
Majority Watch (August 27-29)	41%	54%	-13%
Election Results	43.31%	55.04%	-11.74%
Iowa 2			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	50%	48%	2%
Election Results	48.63%	51.37%	-2.74%
Iowa 3			
Majority Watch (August 27-29)	43%	54%	-11%
Election Results	46.65%	51.80%	-5.15%
Kentucky 3			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	46%	52%	-6%
Election Results	48.18%	50.62%	-2.45%
Kentucky 4			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	46%	50%	-4%
Election Results	51.69%	43.38%	8.31%
Minnesota 1			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	50%	47%	3%
Election Results	47.12%	52.74%	-5.61%
Minnesota 6			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	48%	47%	1%
Election Results	50.05%	42.07%	7.98%
Nevada 3			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	51%	44%	7%
Election Results	48.46%	46.57%	1.88%
New Hampshire 2			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	47%	50%	-3%
Election Results	48.61%	51.31%	-2.70%

NJ-07: a late October poll showed incumbent Republican Mike Ferguson marginally ahead, with less than 50 percent of the vote. Ferguson won, with less than 50 percent of the vote.

NM-01: MW showed incumbent Republican Heather Wilson ahead in August, then behind in early October. We did not continue polling in the race, and Wilson appears to have come back to win.

NY-03: MW polling at the height of anti-Foley feeling showed incumbent Republican Peter King in a two-point squeaker, then late-October MW tracking found King moving to a solid lead. He won, 56 percent to 44 percent.

NY-19, NY-20, and NY-24: MW polling showed Democrats taking over Republican-held seats, as they did on Election Night. MW showed the D ahead by 2 points in NY-19 (he won by 2 points), ahead by 11 points in NY-20 (she won by 6 points) and ahead 9 points in NY-24 (he won by 9).

NY-26: MW polling at the height of the Foley scandal found incumbent Tom Reynolds far behind. MW stopped polling in the district, and a month later, Reynolds won, 51 percent to 49 percent.

NY-25 and NY-29: MW polling understated the Republican vote and overstated the Democratic vote. The same thing happened in OH-01 and OH-15. We will be closely comparing our samples in these races to final canvass data.

NC-08: MW polling showed incumbent Republican Robin Hayes in trouble in early October, then showed a statistically insignificant Democratic lead in late October tracking. As of November 20, Hayes leads challenger Larry Kissell by fewer than 400 votes in a race headed for a recount.

	R	D	Margin (R-D)
New Jersey 7			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	46%	43%	3%
Election Results	49.54%	47.85%	1.69%
New Mexico 1			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	44%	52%	-8%
Election Results	50.30%	49.70%	0.60%
New York 3			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	51%	44%	7%
Election Results	55.84%	44.16%	11.67%
New York 19			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	47%	49%	-2%
Election Results	48.85%	51.15%	-2.30%
New York 20			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	42%	53%	-11%
Election Results	46.93%	53.07%	-6.15%
New York 24			
Majority Watch	43%	52%	-9%
Election Results	45.18%	53.77%	-8.59%
New York 25			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	44%	53%	-9%
Election Results	50.95%	49.05%	1.89%
New York 26			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	39%	56%	-17%
Election Results	51.87%	48.13%	3.73%
New York 29			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	42%	53%	-11%
Election Results	51.53%	48.47%	3.07%
North Carolina 8			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	44%	48%	-4%
Election Results	50.17%	49.83%	0.33%

NC-11: MW polls showed Democratic challenger Heath Shuler winning decisively. The vote favored Shuler, 54 percent to 46 percent.

OH-2: MW polling indicated a narrow victory for Republican incumbent Jean Schmidt. Although the race has not been called by all news organizations, Schmidt leads 51 percent to 49 percent.

OH-06 and OH-12: MW polling indicated easy victories for the Democratic and Republican candidates, respectively. Both were confirmed as the winning candidate won with 61 percent of the vote in each race.

PA-07 and PA-10: MW polling predicted easy Democratic victories over entrenched Republican incumbents. Democrats won both races easily. In **PA-04, PA-06 and PA-08**, MW polling predicted close races with mixed results. That's what occurred on Election Night.

	R	D	Margin (R-D)
North Carolina 11			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	44%	53%	-9%
Election Results	46.23%	53.77%	-7.54%
Ohio 1			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	46%	48%	-2%
Election Results	52.07%	47.93%	4.14%
Ohio 2			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	51%	46%	5%
Election Results	50.58%	49.32%	1.25%
Ohio 6			
Majority Watch (August 27-29)	40%	56%	-16%
Election Results	38.06%	61.94%	-23.87%
Ohio 12			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	51%	46%	5%
Election Results	58.14%	41.86%	16.28%
Ohio 15			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	41%	53%	-12%
Election Results	50.88%	49.11%	1.77%
Ohio 18			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	42%	51%	-9%
Election Results	38.05%	61.95%	-23.90%
Pennsylvania 4			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	51%	47%	4%
Election Results	48.07%	51.93%	-3.87%
Pennsylvania 6			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	46%	51%	-5%
Election Results	50.64%	49.36%	1.28%
Pennsylvania 7			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	44%	51%	-7%
Election Results	43.63%	56.37%	-12.74%

TX-17 and VT-AL: MW polling predicted easy Democratic victories, and the actual vote confirmed both the direction and size of the victories.

VA-10: MW polls in VA-10 in early October sought to determine whether the Foley scandal was affecting the reelection chances of the Republican incumbent closest to Washington. Compared to what we found elsewhere, incumbent Frank Wolfe seemed less severely impacted than other incumbents, and a month later, Wolfe won easily.

WA-05: MW polling indicated incumbent Republican Cathy McMorris would be elected to a second term. She was.

WA-08: MW polling indicated a very close, back and forth race, with incumbent Republican Dave Reichert ahead or behind by 2 to 3 points in each poll. Reichert won by 3 points.

WV-01: August MW polling showed a comfortable lead for incumbent Democrat Allan Mollohan. He was re-elected in a landslide.

WI-08: Three MW polls showed a small but steady advantage for Democrat Steve Kagen. The final survey estimated Kagen's support at 51 percent. Kagen received 51.19 percent of the actual vote.

	R	D	Margin (R-D)
Pennsylvania 8			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	47%	50%	-3%
Election Results	49.70%	50.30%	-0.61%
Pennsylvania 10			
Majority Watch (August 27-29)	43%	50%	-7%
Election Results	46.96%	53.04%	-6.08%
Texas 17			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	38%	55%	-17%
Election Results	40.30%	58.13%	-17.83%
Vermont AL			
Majority Watch (August 27-29)	40%	54%	-14%
Election Results	44.54%	53.22%	-8.68%
Virginia 2			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	45%	50%	-5%
Election Results	51.27%	48.45%	2.82%
Virginia 10			
Majority Watch (October 8-10)	47%	42%	5%
Election Results	55.45%	43.57%	11.88%
Washington 5			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	51%	46%	5%
Election Results	56.31%	43.69%	12.61%
Washington 8			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	47%	49%	-2%
Election Results	51.53%	48.47%	3.06%
West Virginia 1			
Majority Watch (August 27-29)	42%	52%	-10%
Election Results	35.51%	64.49%	-28.98%
Wisconsin 8			
Majority Watch (October 24-26)	45%	51%	-6%
Election Results	48.81%	51.19%	-2.39%