

# Republican Labeling Drops to 25%

By Louis Harris

The Republican Party has lost so much support among voters that the number who call themselves Republicans in the country has now fallen to a low of 25 per cent.

For the first time since the Harris Survey began recording party allegiance a decade ago, the number of voters who view themselves as independents, 28 per cent, is greater than those who classify themselves as Republicans. Those who consider themselves Democrats are still the largest number, 47 per cent, but they, too, have been losing ground in recent years.

Periodically, the Harris Survey has asked nationwide cross-sections of voters this question, most recently among 1,598 households in October:

*Regardless of how you may vote, what do you usually consider yourself—a Republican, a Democrat, or what?*

	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Oct., 1973/.....	25%	47%	28%
Aug. ....	27%	48%	25%
1972 .....	30%	47%	23%
1971 .....	31%	49%	20%
1970 .....	31%	49%	20%
1969 .....	32%	49%	19%
1968 .....	32%	51%	17%

The slippage for both major parties since 1968 has not been uniform and contains some clues to an electorate which is reshaping itself away from traditional lines. By region, for example, the Republicans have been gaining ground in the South but losing ground substantially in the other three areas:

	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
East	26%	43%	31%
1973	36	47	17
1968	—10 Pts.	—4 Pts.	+14 Pts.
Change			
Midwest	28%	44%	28%
1973	37	45	18
1968	—9 Pts.	—1 Pts.	+10 Pts.
Change			
South	21%	53%	26%
1973	17	63	20
1968	+4 Pts.	—10 Pts.	+6 Pts.
Change			
West	26%	49%	25%
1973	35	55	10
1968	—9 Pts.	—6 Pts.	+15 Pts.
Change			

Outside of the South, the Republicans have dropped 9 points in the past 5 years, compared with Democratic losses of no more than 3 points. This net gain of 6 points in party identification for the Democrats could be a key factor in the outcome of many key, swing districts in next year's congressional contests.

At the conclusion of the 1972 election, President Nixon talked about a "new majority" in the country, presumably under the Republican banner. Key to that new majority were union members, persons in small towns, Catholics, suburban residents, and persons in the \$10,000-\$15,000 income group. Here are the shifts which have taken place among these pivotal groups since 1968:

	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
Union Members	18%	56%	26%
1973	24	59	17
1968	—6 Pts.	—3 Pts.	+9 Pts.
Change			
Small Town Residents	25%	46%	28%
1973	38	46	16
1968	—12 Pts.	—	+12 Pts.
Change			
Catholics	19%	48%	33%
1973	23	56	21
1968	—4 Pts.	—8 Pts.	+12 Pts.
Change			
Suburban Residents	26%	42%	32%
1973	35	45	20
1968	—9 Pts.	—3 Pts.	+12 Pts.
Change			
\$10,000-\$15,000 Income	20%	52%	28%
1973	35	53	12
1968	—15 Pts.	—1 Pts.	+16 Pts.
Change			