

A Gloomy Picture for the GOP

By George Gallup

Princeton, N.J.

If the national congressional elections were being held at this time instead of in November, the GOP would be in deep trouble.

The latest nationwide survey shows Republican congressional strength remaining at the lowest point in 38 years of Gallup Poll measurements, and the GOP has been unable to close the gap on the Democrats since October.

The Democrats currently hold a 2-to-1 lead, 58 to 29 per cent, with 13 per cent undecided among registered voters. These results almost exactly match those record-

ed in October surveys, when 58 per cent of registered voters nationwide said they would rather see the Democratic party win in their congressional district compared with 30 per cent who chose the GOP and 12 per cent undecided.

As a matter of fact, not all registered voters actually do vote. Typically in congressional elections of non-presidential election years such as this one, less than 50 per cent of those of voting age vote and only 60 per cent of those registered do so.

Since Gallup surveys have shown that as turnout declines the Republican share of the vote increases, one could expect that in an off-

year election, held today, the Democratic lead among voters would prove to be slightly smaller than it is among those registered to vote.

Despite this qualification, the current standings indicate that, if the elections were being held at this time, the Republican loss of House seats would go far beyond the normal loss an administration suffers in off-year elections.

If the indicated seat losses are reflected in this year's congressional elections, President Nixon could be deprived of the veto power which he successfully exercised on several occasions during 1973.

Percentages of the popular vote cannot be translated

directly into seats, but the distribution of the popular vote in the present survey indicates a house division even exceeding that of the Lyndon Johnson sweep in 1964 when Democrats carried 295 seats to the GOP's 140.

The present standing of the two major parties is revealed in the figures below which show the division of the vote for members of the House if the election were being held at the time of the surveys and if all registered voters went to the polls:

Latest congressional strength—nationwide—among registered voters (January standings)	
Democrats	58%
Republicans	29
Undecided/other	13

©1974 Field Enterprise Inc.