

July 2013

Power in Numbers:  
A Profile of American Voters with Disabilities



maslansky  
+ partners



- + The U.S. Census estimates there are **56.7 million Americans with a disability or chronic condition**
- + Before now the voting patterns and political views of the disability community were largely unknown
- + This survey was designed to help us understand those voting patterns and views

the aim of this survey.

- + This survey captured **1008** members of the disability & chronic conditions community
  1. **663** of those who self-identify as having a disability or chronic condition, OR qualify through **Census Bureau definitions**
  2. **345** family members or caregivers of those with a disability or chronic condition



who was surveyed.

- + The survey was conducted **online (838 completes)** and over the **phone (170 completes)**
- + It was conducted in May-June 2013
  - Representative population samples
  - Mix of disability and chronic condition types with quotas on sensory, mental/cognitive, physical, vision and hearing
  - Margin of error of  $\pm 3\%$  at a 95% confidence level

**how the survey was conducted.**

- + We based the political engagement of our sample on Census Bureau reporting of **voter registration** within the disability and chronic conditions community
- + The best current Census estimates place voter registration for this community at **69%**, that's compared with around 72% of overall population
- + We set quotas to ensure a **community with 74% self-reported registration**, allowing for some measure of over-reporting in the sample

**voter registration.**

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/>

**n=1008** <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/2013/05/why-people-don%E2%80%99t-vote>

- + The results of this survey suggest the disability community:
  - ✓ Votes in high numbers
  - ✓ Is politically diverse
  - ✓ Cares deeply about issues impacting the community
  - ✓ Votes on issues impacting the community
  - ✓ Has a youth segment (18-30) that is even more apt to vote on these issues

snapshot of what we learned.

- + Their self-reported voter turnout **is high**
- + In 2012, the overall voter turnout was reported at **57.5%**

**Q.** In the 2012 presidential election did things come up that kept you from voting, or did you happen to vote?

# 72%

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- + Say **they voted** in the 2012 presidential election

**reported voting in 2012.**

- + A high percentage of this community also plans to vote in the upcoming midterm elections

Q. Do you plan to vote in the next US House and Senate election?

61%

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- + Say they **plan to vote** in the next U.S. House and Senate elections

plan to vote in 2014.



- + This community sees a candidate's **record on supporting** the disability community as important

84%

Q. When choosing a candidate to vote for, how important is their record on supporting services and programs for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

- + Say a candidate's record on supporting services and programs for people with disabilities is "somewhat" or "very important," **with 43% saying "very important"**

84% represents percentage of respondents who said a candidate's record is "very important" or "somewhat important"

**a candidate's record is important.**

- + This community doesn't just see these issues as important, they say they'll actually **vote against candidates they otherwise support** if that candidate supports cuts to services

**Q.** If a candidate you supported was in favor of significant cuts to existing government services for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions would you...?

# 87%

- + Would **consider voting against** a candidate they otherwise supported who was in favor of cuts to services, with **45%** **saying they definitely would**

87% represents percentage of respondents who said they would “definitely vote against” or “maybe vote against” against a candidate

it's enough to change their vote.

- + Beyond going to the polls, they're willing to **“actively support”** those candidates looking to strengthen services and supports

Q. How likely would you be to actively support a candidate who was working to strengthen government services and supports for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

# 85%

- + Would **“actively support”** a candidate working to strengthen government services and supports for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions, with **47% saying they are “very likely”** to support

85% represents percentage of respondents who said they would “very likely” or “somewhat likely” support a candidate

**and enough to gain their support.**

+ The issues they care about **line up with the general public**

The following is a list of issues discussed during the recent election. Please rank the top five (5) in order of importance to you in determining how you will vote in the next national election.	Percent who selected each in their top 5
Healthcare	80%
Economy	73%
Social Security	59%
Education	52%
Taxes	50%
Government ethics & corruption	43%
National Security and War on Terror	40%
Services and Supports for people with disabilities	39%
Immigration	27%
Energy Policy	23%
Foreign Policy	15%

National Survey of 1,000 Likely Voters  
June 16-17, 20-21 & 24-25, 2013

ISSUE	VERY IMPORTANT
Economy	77%
Health care	73%
Job creation	68%
Social Security	68%
Gov. spending	67%
Gov. ethics and corruption	64%
Taxes	62%
Education	59%
National Security	54%
Immigration	51%
Energy	50%
Small business	49%
Gun control	47%
Environment	36%
War in Afghanistan	34%

little difference in priorities.

- + The community is **politically diverse**, with party affiliation tracking closely to the general population according to recent Gallup Poll

**Q.** In politics today, what do you consider yourself?

**Gallup:** In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an Independent?

**Disability  
Community**

<b>Democrat</b>	30%
<b>Republican</b>	23%
<b>Independent</b>	30%

**General Population  
– Gallup 6/1-4**

<b>Democrat</b>	31%
<b>Republican</b>	26%
<b>Independent</b>	41%

it's a bipartisan community.

+ Willingness to act for and against candidates is **consistent among Republican, Democrat and Independent-identifying** members of the community

**Q.** If a candidate you supported was in favor of significant cuts to existing government services for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions would you...?

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Consider voting against	87%	86%	89%	88%

Numbers represents percentage of respondents who said they would “definitely vote against” or “maybe vote against” against a candidate

**Q.** How likely would you be to actively support a candidate who was working to strengthen government services and supports for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Likely to support	85%	84%	90%	85%

Numbers represents percentage of respondents who said they would “very likely” or “somewhat likely” support a candidate

**both Reps & Dems will act.**

- + Younger members (18-30) of the disability community **will act even more strongly** on these issues
- + They have stronger feelings when it comes to **voting for a candidate** working for their cause

**Q.** How likely would you be to actively support a candidate who was working to strengthen government services and supports for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

	TOTAL	18-30
<b>Very likely</b>	47%	54%
<b>Somewhat likely</b>	38%	35%
<b>Only a little likely</b>	11%	7%
<b>Not at all likely</b>	5%	4%

**18-30s feel even more strongly.**

- + These younger members of the community place a **slightly higher** emphasis on a candidate's record on disabilities issues

**Q.** When choosing a candidate to vote for, how important is their record on supporting services and programs for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

	TOTAL	18-30
Very important	43%	47%
Somewhat important	41%	40%
Only a little important	13%	9%
Not at all important	4%	5%

**18-30s focus more on records.**



- + And these members of the community are **quicker to punish** candidates not supporting these issues

**Q.** If a candidate you supported was in favor of significant cuts to existing government services for people with disabilities or other chronic conditions would you...?

	TOTAL	18-30
<b>Definitely vote against them</b>	45%	49%
<b>Maybe vote against them</b>	42%	38%
<b>Probably not vote against them</b>	10%	12%
<b>Definitely still vote for them</b>	3%	2%

**18-30s punish non-support strongly.**

+ Healthcare leads the list of important issues for this community

The following is a list of issues impacting Americans with disabilities or other chronic conditions. Please rank the top five (5) in order of their overall importance for this community.	Percent who selected each in their top 5
Healthcare	83%
Social Security	60%
Long-term Services & Supports	57%
Employment	51%
Medicaid	48%
Education	40%
Family Supports	35%
Housing	29%
Direct Support Workers	27%
Transportation	21%
Technology & Equipment	20%
Accessible Infrastructure	16%
Bioethics	14%

issues impacting the community.

- + 1 in 5 report facing a “significant barrier” to voting in the 2012 election

**Q.** Did an issue connected with a disability, physical, mental or chronic condition contribute to you facing significant barriers to voting in 2012?

	TOTAL
Yes	20%
No	76%

barriers to voting.

- + Of those reporting “significant barriers” the largest issue reported was around transportation

**Q.** What was the biggest barrier you faced?  
[Did an issue connected with a disability, physical, mental or chronic condition contribute to you facing significant barriers to voting in 2012?]

	TOTAL
Transportation issues	26%
Trouble accessing a voting facility	17%
Cognitive barriers to voting or understanding voting options	14%
Difficulty with voting technology	12%
Issues with proper identification	9%
Difficulty using a mail-in ballot	8%
Other	15%

specific barriers.

- + Only 21% approve of Congress' efforts to improve the lives of people with disabilities or other chronic conditions

**Q.** Do you approve or disapprove of the job Congress is doing to improve the lives of people with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

	Total
<b>Approve</b>	21%
<b>Disapprove</b>	43%
<b>Don't know/ Unsure</b>	36%

mixed on Congress' job.

- + Nearly twice that number approve (41%) approve of Obama's efforts to improve the lives of people with disabilities or other chronic conditions

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Obama is doing to improve the lives of people with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

	Total
Approve	41%
Disapprove	31%
Don't know/ unsure	28%

more positive on Obama.

- + A **small segment** currently feel they're part of a movement

Q. Are you part of an organized group or movement to help Americans with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

12%

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- + Say they're **part of a movement**

who feels part of a movement today.

- + While 12% say they're part of a movement today, an additional **19% WANT to be**

Q. Do you want to be part of an organized group or movement to help Americans with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

19%

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+ Say they **want to be**

a sizable segment want to be.



- + 18-30s in the community are more likely to be, or want to be, **part of a support movement** or organization

**Q.** Are you part of an organized group or movement to help Americans with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

	TOTAL	18-30
Yes	12%	18%
No	89%	82%

**Q.** Do you want to be part of an organized group or movement to help Americans with disabilities or other chronic conditions?

	TOTAL	18-30
Yes	19%	35%
No	81%	65%

**18-30 more apt to join movements.**

- + Again, the results of this survey suggest the disability community:
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what we learned.

- + This survey was designed by maslansky + partners, a non-partisan polling and research firm based in New York, Washington, London, and Paris
- + It was conducted by Research Now, a well-established, U.S.-based non-partisan survey house

maslansky  
+ partners

 research  
now™

who we are.