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**Op-Ed Columnist**

## **The Passion of the Right**

**By CHARLES M. BLOW**

In 354 days, the dead will rise. Or so believe Republicans.

They believe that their suffering and forbearance in the face of an overzealous, hyperliberal left will culminate in a 2010 resurrection of the battered Republican brand.

Case in point: After G.O.P. victories in Virginia last week, Representative Eric Cantor, the House Republican whip, [exclaimed](#) that voters are “looking for change. ... The Republican resurgence begins again tonight!”

Unfortunately, he’s probably right, in part at least. They are likely to make significant gains, not because of their anachronous tenets, but because of historical patterns and an electorate exasperated with seeming Democratic ineptitude.

According to a [Gallup poll on Wednesday](#), in a generic 2010 Congressional matchup, Republicans moved ahead of Democrats 48 percent to 44 percent. Now generic polls have to be taken with a grain of salt. That said, they do measure the mood of the populace, and it doesn’t look good for Democrats.

The most striking finding in the poll was the margin for Republicans among independents. It

grew from 1 percentage point in July to 22 percentage points in November. This is important because [according to the most recent](#) NBC News/Wall Street Journal Survey, independents are now nearly as large a group as Democrats and Republicans combined.

And, it gets worse for the Democrats. The Gallup poll was of registered voters, not likely voters who skew more Republican, in part because fewer young people vote in midterm elections.

Let's take a look at how these factors played out in the recent gubernatorial races. In Virginia and New Jersey, the percentage of voters under age 44 dropped 18 and 14 percentage points, respectively, from last November to this November. And what of the all-important independents Obama narrowly won in both states? [They voted overwhelmingly](#) for the Republican candidates.

Cantor is also right that the people want change — still. They trusted Democrats to deliver. The Democrats haven't, not yet at least, and pleas for patience come at a price. If voters' thirst remains unsated, they will change politicians until politicians change policies.

The party that wins the White House generally loses Congressional seats in the midterm, but this Democratic-controlled government has particular issues. Its agenda has been hamstrung by a perfect storm of politics: the Republicans' surprisingly effective obstructionist strategy, a Democratic caucus riddled with conservative sympathizers and a president encircled by crises and crippled by caution.

And, the most important pocketbook issue — jobs — hasn't been the priority that it should be. History may eventually judge these Democrats favorably. Who knows? But real-time anxiety threatens to undermine them.

**Jobs may be a lagging indicator of economic recovery, but consecutive summers of “staycations” may be a leading indicator of political realignment.**

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