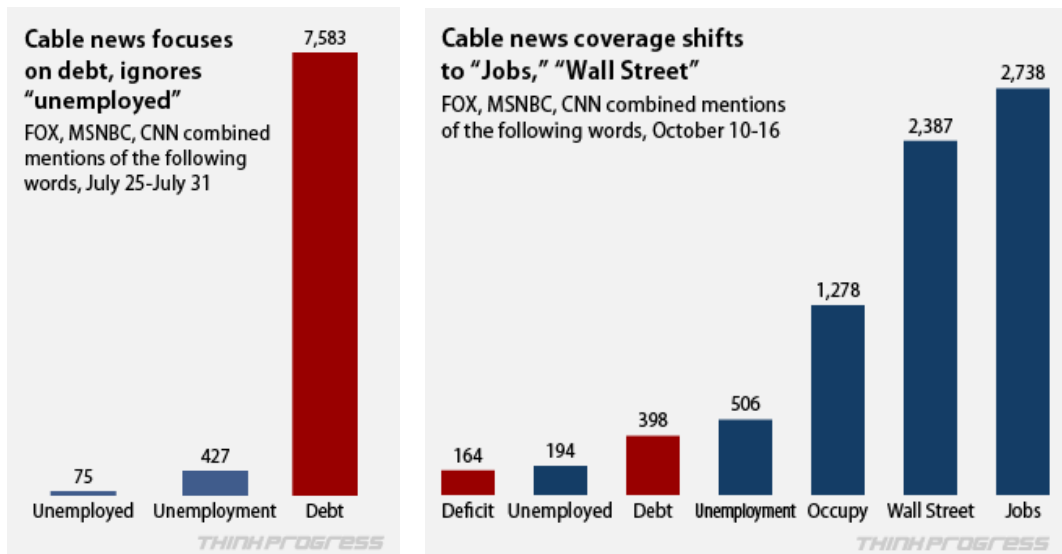


**TO: Interested Parties**  
**FROM: ThinkProgress War Room and Democracy Corps**  
**RE: Economic Messages that Work – Lessons from Occupy Wall Street**  
**DATE: October 21, 2011**

The recent Occupy Wall Street movement has fundamentally changed the conversation about the economy. A study by *Thinkprogress.org* demonstrates that the protests have opened a new media wave about the economy, economic inequality, the unemployed and jobs. A *ThinkProgress.org* review of the media coverage of the last week of July found that the word “unemployed” was mentioned more than 7,000 times on MSNBC, CNN, and Fox News, while “unemployment” was only mentioned 75 times - that dynamic has been turned upside down. An analysis of the same three networks between Oct. 10 and Oct. 16 finds that the word “unemployed” dropped to 398 mentions, while [“occupy” was mentioned 1,278 times, “Wall Street” 2,378, and “jobs” 2,738.](#)



Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a national poll for Democracy Corps and the Center for American Progress Action Fund examining public opinion about the movement and the state of the economy<sup>1</sup>. This memo details some top line results and suggests an opening for expanding the public debate on how our economy currently works and how it should work.

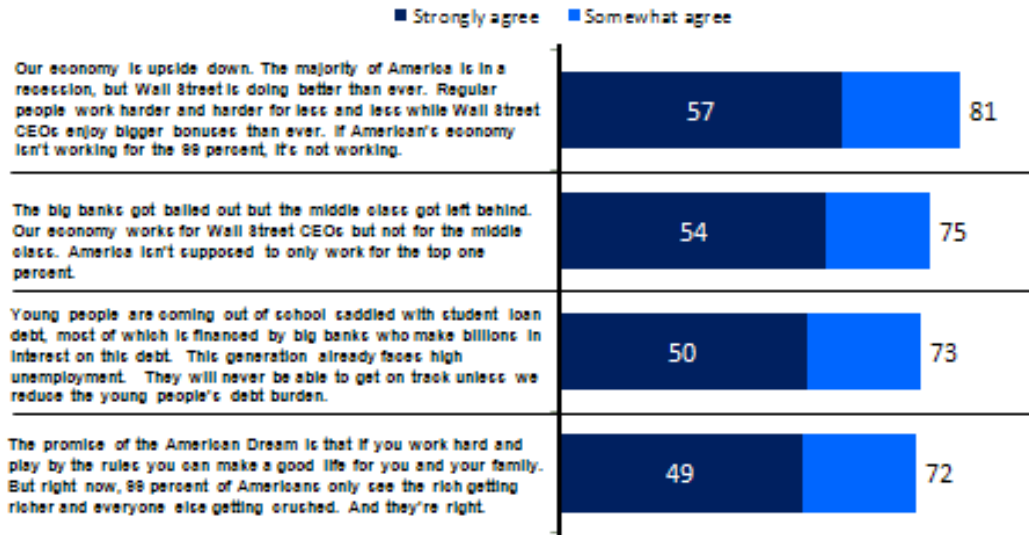
**Broad Support for Economic Messages Demonstrating We Need an Economy for All Americans**

Based on the polling, Americans across the spectrum want an economy that works for all of us, not just the wealthy few.

- **Key Point: Our economy doesn’t work, if it doesn’t work for most Americans**  
*Our economy is upside down. The majority of America is in a recession, but Wall Street is doing better than ever. Regular people work harder and harder for less and less while Wall Street CEOs enjoy bigger bonuses than ever. If American’s economy isn’t working for the 99 percent, it’s not working.*
  
- **Key Point: We need an economy that works for all of us, not just 1%**  
*The big banks got bailed out but the middle class got left behind. Our economy works for Wall Street CEOs but not for the middle class. America isn’t supposed to only work for the top one percent.*
  
- **Key Point: People who work hard and play by the rules are getting crushed**  
*The promise of the American Dream is that if you work hard and play by the rules you can make good life for you and your family. But right now, 99 percent of Americans only see the rich getting richer and everyone else getting crushed. And they’re right.*

<sup>1</sup> Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a national survey for Democracy Corps and the Center for American Progress of 1000 likely 2012 voters (1000 weighted) from October 15-18, 2011. Unless otherwise noted, margin of error= +/- 3.1 percentage points at 95% confidence.

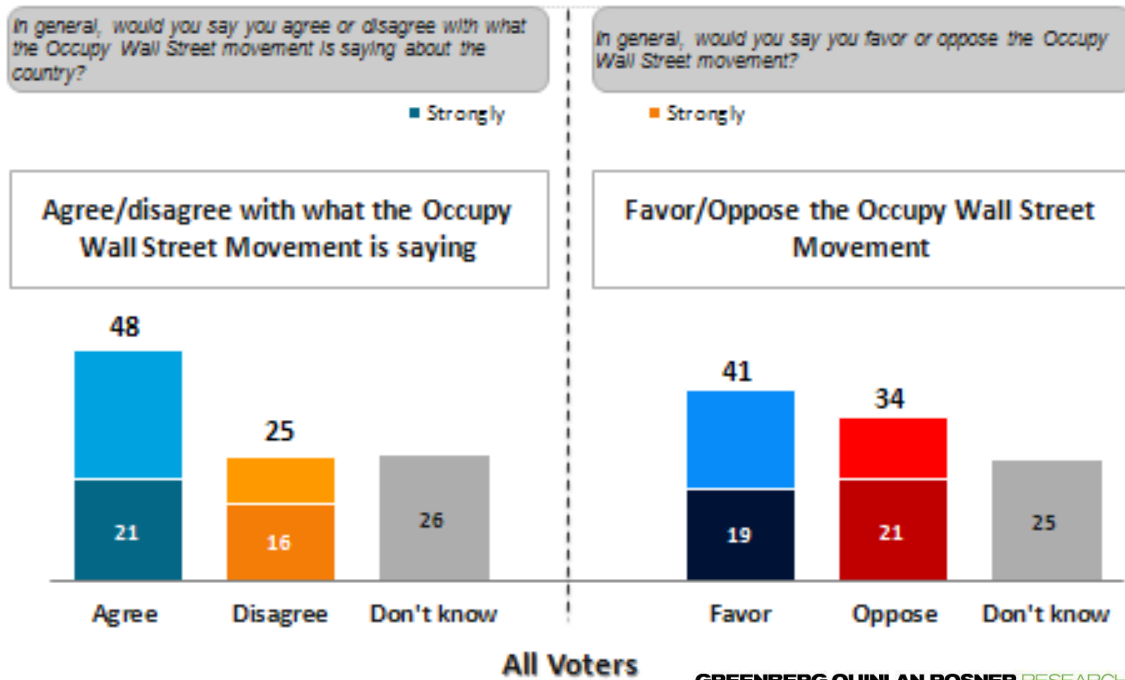
Now I am going to read you a few statements about the American economy and government. After I read each one, please tell me whether you agree or disagree.



GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER RESEARCH

### Americans Support Occupy Wall Street

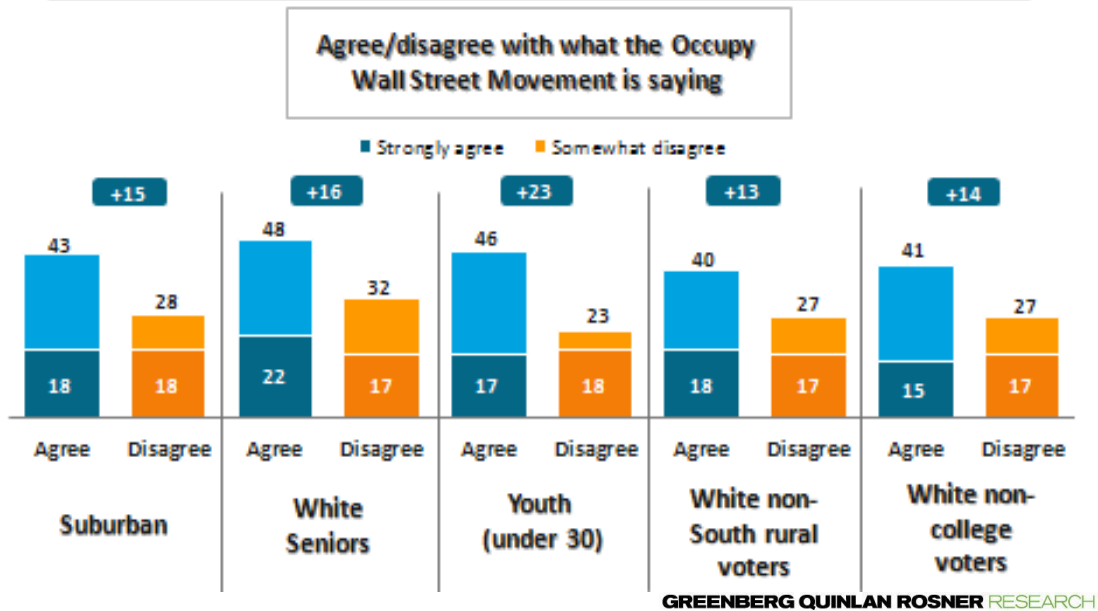
People agree with the message coming out of Occupy Wall Street and support the movement.



GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER RESEARCH

Agreement for Occupy Wall Street cuts across demographic groups of seniors, young people, suburban, blue collar, and people living in rural areas all agree.

In general, would you say you agree or disagree with what the Occupy Wall Street movement is saying about the country?



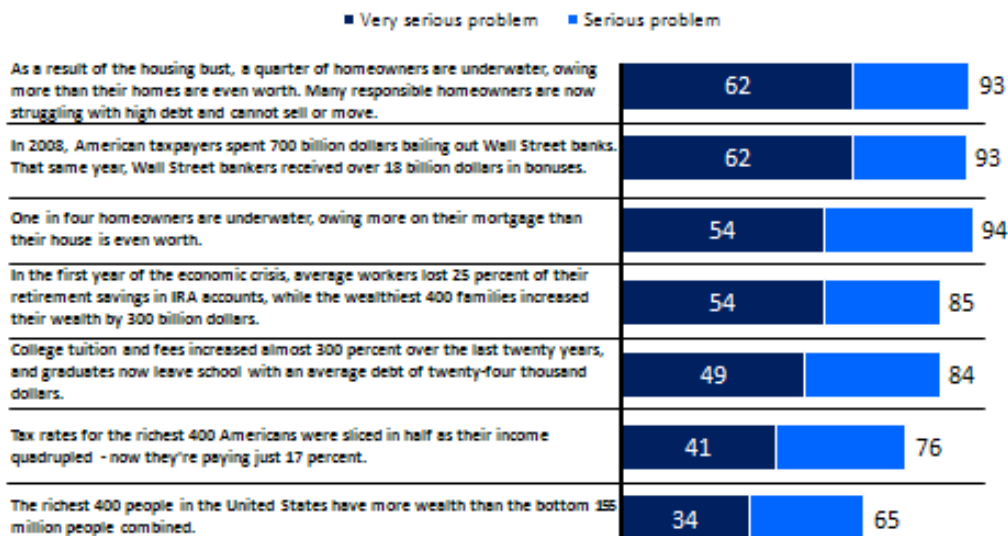
### Key Economic Facts Test Off the Charts

Across demographics and political persuasions, people think the underlying facts motivating the Occupy protests are very serious problems.

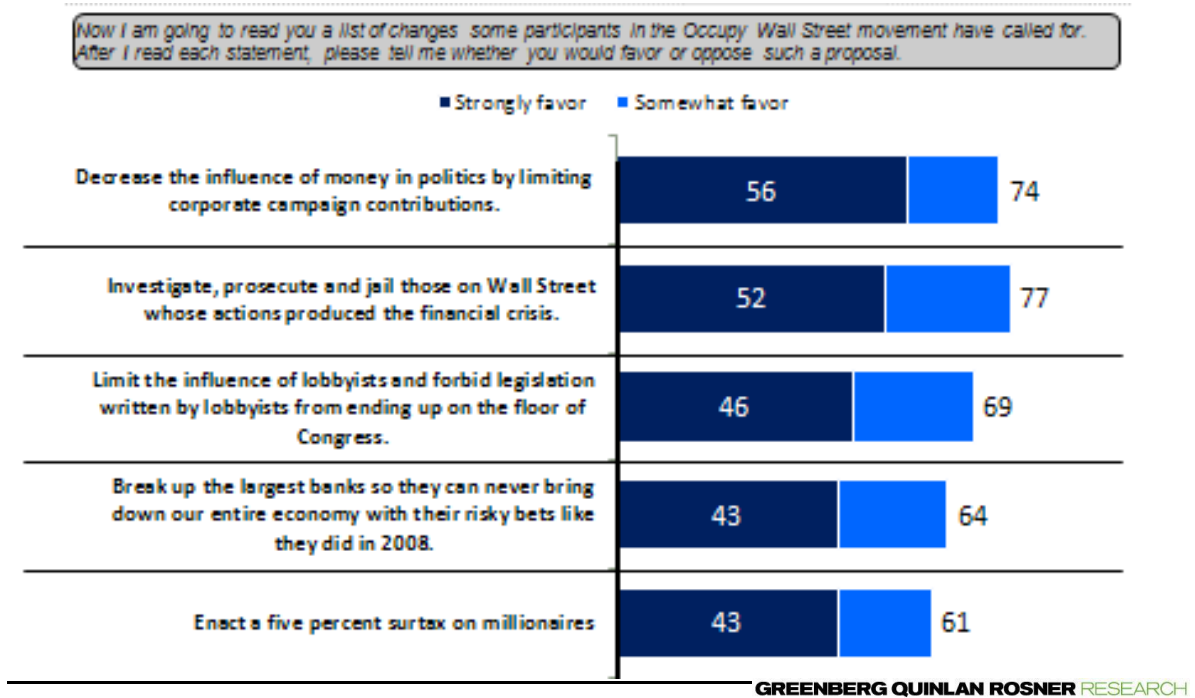
- [One in four homeowners](#) are underwater ó owing more on their mortgage than their house is even worth.
- [College tuition and fees increased almost 300 percent](#) over the last twenty years and graduates now leave school with an average debt of \$24,000.
- [Taxes for the richest 400 Americans were sliced in half](#) as their income quadrupled ó now paying only 17 percent.

While the media paid little attention to this complex reality facing 99 percent of Americans, the Occupy Wall Street movement shattered the media's silence and tapped into the overwhelming frustration many Americans feel about our country only working for the top one percent.

Now I am going to read you a few facts about the American economy. After I read each one, please tell me whether you believe it is a very serious problem, a serious problem, not a very serious problem, or not a problem at all.



It's important to note that voters are very supportive of a surtax on millionaires, supported by 61 percent of all voters, 43 percent strongly. Independents are even more supportive - 64 percent of independents support this, 42 percent strongly.



### Key Takeaways

There are clear messages that resonate with the public and connect to the frustrations felt by the other 99 percent.

#### Conservatives really believe that 1% built our country

- Conservatives really believe that we can fix this country's economy without making most Americans better off.

#### Occupy Wall Street is an important reminder that conservatives are wrong

- These protestors remind us we need an economy that works for all, not just some.

#### Progressives believe the middle class is the back bone of our economy

- The true measure of America's economic success is the well-being of American families, not *just* the stock market and corporate profits.
- The promise of America must be for all Americans, not just the wealthy few.

### Additional Resources about Occupy Wall Street and the 99 Percent

ThinkProgress.org has dedicated a special section of its site to Occupy Wall Street and "The 99 Percent Movement" - <http://thinkprogress.org/tag/99-percent-movement>.

For additional facts about the economic inequality driving the 99 percent to speak out, visit: <http://thinkprogress.org/facts-about-the-99-percent/>.

Recent Center for American Progress issue papers:

- The Legitimate Gripes of the Other 99 Percent Amid the Cacophony of Protest Emerges a Coherent Set of Valid Complaints [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/10/legitimate\\_gripes.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/10/legitimate_gripes.html)
- House Majority Appropriations Bill Attacks the Other 99 Percent Bill Guts Health, Education, and Workplace Support for Middle Class, Preserves Protections for Top 1 Percent [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/10/house\\_approps\\_frame.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/10/house_approps_frame.html)