

President Obama's Job Approval Rating Continues to Move Downward

More than three in five Americans believe things in the country heading off on the wrong track

New York, N.Y. — November 16, 2009 — As President Obama continues his trip through Asia this week, he is trying to sell both himself and his policies on the other side of the world. When he makes it back to the United States, he may have to do the same type of sell here as his approval ratings continue their downward spiral with Americans believing that the country as a whole is moving in the wrong direction. The President, and Congress for that matter, need to do something positive in the eyes of the American public to stand a chance of increasing their approval numbers in the near future.

This month, just over two in five Americans (43%) give the president positive ratings on the job he is doing while 57% give him negative ratings. This is down from last month when 45% gave President Obama positive ratings and 55% gave him negative marks and it continues the steady downward trend that has been happening since June.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,303 adults surveyed online between November 2 and 11, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

When the president's approval rating is broken down by party, it's not surprising that over three-quarters of Democrats (77%) and just one in ten Republicans (10%) give him positive marks. Independents, however, are where the president and his advisors need to be concerned as just 37% of them give President Obama positive ratings and 63% of Independents give him negative ones.

The president is also losing Matures (those ages 64 and older). Almost two-thirds of this oldest generation (65%) are currently giving him negative marks on his overall job performance. But, he cannot rely on the youngest generations to bolster him as 43% of both Echo Boomers (those aged 18-32) and Gen Xers (those aged 33-44) give him positive ratings.

One bright spot for President Obama is that his numbers are not as bad as Congress. Over four in five Americans (83%) give Congress negative ratings on the overall job they are doing while just 17% give them positive ratings. This is almost unchanged from last month when 16% gave them positive marks and 84% gave Congress negative ratings.

The direction of the country as a whole

Last year, right before Barack Obama was elected president, just one in ten Americans (11%) thought things in the country were going in the right direction. By August of this year, that number had risen up so almost half of U.S. adults (46%) thought things were going in the right direction. But, since then, the numbers have been drifting downward. Last month two in five Americans (39%) thought things were going in the right direction and this month that drops a little more to 37% thinking this while 63% believe things are going off on the wrong track.

TABLE 1
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING - TREND

"How would you rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing?"

Base: All adults

	Mar.	April	May	June	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE	55	58	59	54	51	49	45	43
Excellent	17	18	17	14	11	11	10	9
Pretty good	38	40	42	39	39	38	35	33
NEGATIVE	45	42	41	46	49	51	55	57
Only fair	27	26	25	25	25	25	27	29
Poor	18	15	16	21	24	26	28	29

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 2
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING – BY PARTY

"How would you rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Political Party			Generation			
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Echo Boomers (18-32)	Gen X (33-44)	Baby Boomers (45-63)	Matures (64+)
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE	43	10	77	37	43	43	46	35
Excellent	9	1	21	5	6	11	12	8
Pretty good	33	9	56	33	37	32	34	27
NEGATIVE	57	90	23	63	57	57	54	65
Only fair	29	32	20	34	33	33	24	27
Poor	29	58	2	29	24	24	30	38

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 3
CONGRESS' OVERALL JOB RATING

"How would you rate the overall job the Congress is doing?"

Base: All adults

	TREND	Positive*	Negative**
		%	%
2009	Nov.	17	83
	Oct.	16	84
	Sept.	19	81
	Aug.	22	78
	June	25	75
	May	31	69
	April	29	71
	March	29	71
2008	October	10	86
	September	16	81
	August	18	77
	June	13	83
	February	20	76
2007	December	17	79
	October	20	77
	September	22	74
	April	27	69
	February	33	62
2006	September	24	73
	May	18	80
	February	25	71
	January	25	72

*Positive = excellent or pretty good. **Negative = only fair or poor.

Note: Prior to March, 2009, this question was asked by telephone

TABLE 4
RIGHT DIRECTION OR WRONG TRACK

"Generally speaking, would you say things in the country are going in the right direction or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?"

Base: All adults

	TREND	Right Direction	Wrong Track
		%	%
2009	November	37	63
	October	39	61
	September	42	58
	August	46	54
	June	43	57
	March	32	68
	January	19	72
2008	October	11	83
	September	16	77
	June	14	80
	February	23	69
2007	December	18	74
	February	29	62
2006	May	24	69
	February	32	59
2005	November	27	68
	January	46	48
2004	September	38	57
	June	35	59
2003	December	35	57
	June	44	51
2002	December	36	57
	June	46	48
2001	December	65	32
	June	43	52
2000	October	50	41
	June	40	51
1999	June	37	55
	March	47	45
1998	December	43	51
	June	48	44
1997	December	39	56
	April	36	55
1996	December	38	50
	June	29	64
1995	December	26	62
	June	24	65
1994	December	29	63
	June	28	65
1993	June	21	70
	March	39	50
1992	June	12	81
	January	20	75
1991	December	17	75
	January	58	32

Note: Prior to March, 2009 this question was asked via telephone

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States November 2 and 11, 2009 among 2,303 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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