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## Majority of Americans View Obama's Handling of Economy in Negative Light

*But majority do have confidence in his administration to produce policies to help solve economic crisis*

**ROCHESTER, N.Y. – May 28, 2009** – As the economy continues to be the top issue for the government to address, opinion on President Obama's handling of it has drifted slightly down from April. Currently, over half (54%) view the job he is doing on the economy in a negative manner while 46% view it positively. In April, Americans were more evenly split with 51% viewing it negatively and 49% positively.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,681 U.S. adults surveyed online between May 11 and 18, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

When it comes to confidence in the White House and Obama Administration in producing policies to help fix the economic crisis, over half of Americans (55%) say they are confident, while 45% are not confident. This is just slightly down from last month when 57% were confident and 43% were not confident.

Even stronger than confidence is trust in the President to do what is right for the American economy. Almost two-thirds of Americans (64%) say they trust the President to do what is right while 36% say they do not. Almost three in five (58%) say they trust the President's economic advisors to do what is right on the economy and half (50%) trust Democrats in Congress to do what is right. Republicans in Congress, however, are not trusted – only 37% of Americans trust them to do what is right for the American economy while 63% do not trust them.

### Looking at the Economy in the Coming Year

When it comes to where the economy will be in the coming year, two in five Americans (38%) believe it will improve while just over one-third (35%) say it will stay the same and more than one-quarter (27%) believe it will get worse. Those in the East are more optimistic as 42% say the economy will improve in the coming year while Southerners are more pessimistic with three in ten (29%) saying it will get worse.

### Household's Financial Situation in Six Months

While people may have confidence in economic policies, they still do not believe their own finances will be getting better quickly. Specifically:

- In April 23% of Americans said when thinking about their household's current financial situation, they expect things to be better in the next six months while just over one-third (31%) said they expected it to be worse;
- One month later and attitudes have changed slightly. One-quarter of Americans (25%) say they expect things to be better for their household's financial situation six months from now and 30% say it will be worse; almost half (45%) say things will be the same; and,

- There are also regional differences on where the financial situation will be six months from now. Easterners are more positive as 28% say they expect their household's financial situation to be better six months from now. Midwesterners are more negative as one-third (34%) believe their household's financial condition will be worse six months from now while 22% say it will be better.

**So What?**

As job losses continue to mount and people's summer vacation plans are changing due to uncertainty about the economy, attitudes on the President's handling of this situation are not looked at positively. But, there is still a strong sense of faith and confidence in him and his administration to turn things around on the economy. At the moment, Americans believe in him and trust him and his economic advisors. There is still pessimism about where household finances will be six months from now. The true sign that Americans believe the economy has begun to turn around is when this all aligns in the same manner.

**TABLE 1  
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING ON THE ECONOMY**

"How would you rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing on the economy?"  
Base: All adults

	March	April	May
	%	%	%
POSITIVE	47	49	46
Excellent	13	13	10
Pretty good	34	36	36
NEGATIVE	53	51	54
Only fair	30	27	30
Poor	23	24	24

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

**TABLE 2  
CONFIDENCE IN WHITE HOUSE ON ECONOMY**

"How confident are you that the White House and the Administration will produce policies to help fix the economic crisis?"

Base: All adults

	March	April	May
	%	%	%
CONFIDENT (NET)	57	57	55
Very confident	16	17	17
Somewhat confident	41	40	38
NOT CONFIDENT (NET)	43	43	45
Not that confident	23	21	24
Not at all confident	20	22	21

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

**TABLE 3**  
**TRUST IN POLITICAL FIGURES ON THE ECONOMY**

"How much trust do you have in each of the following to do what is right for the American economy?"

Base: All adults

		TRUST (NET)	A great deal of trust	Some trust	DO NOT TRUST (NET)	Not that much trust	No trust at all
President Barack Obama	%	64	36	28	36	16	20
The President's economic advisors	%	58	16	42	42	21	21
The Democrats in Congress	%	50	10	40	50	22	28
The Republicans in Congress	%	37	6	31	63	40	23

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

**TABLE 4**  
**TRUST IN POLITICAL FIGURES ON THE ECONOMY - TREND**

"How much trust do you have in each of the following to do what is right for the American economy?"

*Percent Saying "A great deal of/some trust"*

Base: All adults

		March	May
President Barack Obama	%	66	64
The President's economic advisors	%	59	58
The Democrats in Congress	%	49	50
The Republicans in Congress	%	41	37

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

**TABLE 5**  
**ECONOMY IN ONE YEAR**

"In the coming year, do you expect the economy to...?"

Base: All adults

	April	May	May - Region			
			East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improve	39	38	42	39	35	38
Stay the same	35	35	36	34	36	34
Get worse	26	27	23	27	29	27

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

**TABLE 6**  
**HOUSEHOLDS' FINANCIAL CONDITIONS 6 MONTHS FROM NOW – TREND**

“Thinking about your household’s current financial situation, do you expect it to be better or worse in the next six months?”

Base: All adults

	Feb 2008	March 2008	June 2008	July 2008	Nov 2008	Jan 2009	Mar 2009	April 2009	May 2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>BETTER (NET)</b>	39	33	40	36	24	20	20	23	25
Will remain the same	28	28	25	25	43	48	46	46	45
<b>WORSE (NET)</b>	34	39	36	39	33	32	35	31	30

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

Note: Prior to November, there were three categories for Better and Worse

**TABLE 7**  
**HOUSEHOLDS' FINANCIAL CONDITIONS 6 MONTHS FROM NOW – BY REGION**

“Thinking about your household’s current financial situation, do you expect it to be better or worse in the next six months?”

Base: All adults

	Total	Region			
		East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>BETTER (NET)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>
Will be much better	4	11	1	4	2
Will be somewhat better	20	17	21	21	23
Will remain the same	45	44	44	46	46
<b>WORSE (NET)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>
Will be somewhat worse	22	22	27	21	21
Will be much worse	8	7	7	8	9

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

## Methodology

The Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States May 11 and 18, 2009, among 2,681 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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***The Harris Poll*<sup>®</sup> #54, May 28, 2009**

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