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## Attitude Towards Administration Drift Downwards

*Congress' ratings also drop*

**ROCHESTER, N.Y. – June 29, 2009** – Across the board, attitudes towards some of the key players in the Obama Administration as well as the parties in Congress have declined since last month. The only person to avoid a decline in positive job rating is Defense Secretary Robert Gates, as just over one-quarter of Americans (28%) give him a positive rating again this month while 13% give him a negative rating (down from 15% last month), but over half (58%) are not familiar enough with him to form an opinion.

These are some of the findings of The Harris Poll, a new nationwide survey of 2,177 U.S. adults surveyed online between June 8 and 15, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

### Leaders Ratings

The ratings of other individual leaders in the government vary greatly:

- **Hillary Clinton** is rated 47% positive and 34% negative with 19% not familiar enough with her to have an opinion. This is down from last month when half of Americans (50%) rated her positively;
- **Joe Biden** is rated more negative (38%) than positive (30%). This is down from last month when his ratings were 32% positive and 36% negative;
- **John Roberts** is rated 21% positive and 15% negative, but most people (63%) don't have an opinion about him;
- **Nancy Pelosi** is rated the worse of those individuals measured, with only 18% of people having a positive rating for her and almost half of Americans (49%) negative. This is down from last month when it was 21% positive and 45% negative;
- **Tim Geithner** is rated more negative (24%) than positive (14%), but most people (61%) don't have an opinion about him; and,
- **Ben Bernanke** is also unfamiliar to most people (59%) and is rated somewhat more negative (23%) than positive (18%) ratings.

### Congressional Ratings

One thing which continues to hold steady is the strong negative feelings towards Congress. Three-quarters of Americans (75%) give Congress a negative job rating and only 25% give them a positive rating. Congress is now at its lowest job ratings for the year. The individual parties are not faring any better. Just two in five Americans (21%) have a positive rating for the Democrats in Congress with 43% giving negative ratings and 35% saying they are not familiar enough to have an opinion. Republicans in Congress fare even worse – 12% give them positive ratings while 46% give Republicans negative ones and 42% are not familiar enough to rate them.

**So What?**

While President Obama’s ratings are still positive, we have seen them move downward ([Harris Poll - June 22, 2009](#)). The overall trend seems to be moving towards more negative feelings by Americans to their political leaders and Congress. For Congress, the very brief honeymoon they had earlier this year seems to be over and the administration seems to be ending their honeymoon period. There was a sense of optimism and hope, but the length of time that it may still last seems to be shrinking.

**TABLE 1  
FAMILIARITY OF SENIOR CABINET MEMBERS, CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS AND  
PARTIES IN CONGRESS**

“Are you familiar enough with each of the following to have an opinion regarding them?”

Base: All adults

	<b>FAMILIAR</b>			
	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	85	83	83	81
Vice President Joe Biden	70	67	69	68
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi	68	65	66	66
Democrats in Congress	66	64	64	65
Republicans in Congress	62	61	59	58
Defense Secretary Robert Gates	40	44	43	42
Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke	42	43	43	41
Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner	35	44	41	39
Chief Justice John Roberts	40	N/a	N/a	37

Note: N/a indicates not asked

**TABLE 2**  
**CONGRESS' OVERALL JOB RATING**

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

Base: All adults

	TREND	Positive*	Negative**
		%	%
<b>2009</b>	June	25	75
	May	31	69
	April	29	71
	March	29	71
<b>2008</b>	October	10	86
	September	16	81
	August	18	77
	June	13	83
	February	20	76
<b>2007</b>	December	17	79
	October	20	77
	September	22	74
	April	27	69
	February	33	62
<b>2006</b>	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 3**  
**RATINGS OF SENIOR CABINET MEMBERS, CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS AND PARTIES IN CONGRESS**

"How would you rate the overall job each of the following are doing?"

Base: All adults

	Positive*	Excellent	Pretty Good	Negative**	Only Fair	Poor	Not Familiar
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	47	13	34	34	22	13	19
Vice President Joe Biden	30	4	26	38	18	20	32
Defense Secretary Robert Gates	28	6	23	13	10	4	58
Chief Justice John Roberts	21	6	15	15	11	4	63
Democrats in Congress	21	3	19	43	19	24	35
Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke	18	3	16	23	15	8	59
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi	18	3	15	49	17	31	34
Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner	15	3	11	24	11	13	61
Republicans in Congress	12	1	11	46	24	22	42

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

**TABLE 4**  
**RATING OF VICE-PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN**

How would you rate the job Vice-President Joe Biden is doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	30	38	32
May	%	32	36	31
April	%	34	32	33
March	%	35	35	30

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 5**  
**RATING OF SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY CLINTON**

How would you rate the job Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	47	34	19
May	%	50	33	17
April	%	51	32	17
March	%	49	36	15

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 6**  
**RATING OF DEFENSE SECRETARY ROBERT GATES**

How would you rate the job Defense Secretary Robert Gates is doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	28	13	58
May	%	28	15	57
April	%	30	14	56
March	%	27	13	60

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 7**  
**RATING OF TREASURY SECRETARY TIM GEITHNER**

How would you rate the job Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner is doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	15	24	61
May	%	16	26	59
April	%	18	26	56
March	%	11	24	65

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 8**  
**RATING OF SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN ROBERTS**  
 How would you rate the job Chief Justice John Roberts is doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	21	15	63
March	%	25	16	60

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 9**  
**RATING OF HOUSE SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI**  
 How would you rate the job House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	18	49	34
May	%	21	45	34
April	%	21	44	35
March	%	23	45	32

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 10**  
**RATING OF FEDERAL RESERVE CHAIRMAN BEN BERNANKE**  
 How would you rate the job Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke is doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	18	23	59
May	%	19	24	57
April	%	20	23	57
March	%	14	28	58

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 11**  
**RATING OF DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS**  
 How would you rate the job the Democrats in Congress are doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	21	43	35
May	%	25	39	36
April	%	22	42	36
March	%	25	41	34

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 12**  
**RATING OF REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS**

How would you rate the job the Republicans in Congress are doing?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
June	%	12	46	42
May	%	14	45	41
April	%	14	48	39
March	%	15	47	38

\*Excellent or pretty good. \*\*Only fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

### Methodology

The Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States June 8 and 15, 2009, among 2,177 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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**About Harris Interactive**

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