

## Majority of Americans Still Have Confidence in White House to Fix Economic Crisis

*Three in five Americans do not believe economic stimulus plan is a success*

**ROCHESTER, N.Y. – August 26, 2009** – While President Obama's rating on the [economy](#) continues to decline, Americans still have confidence in the White House and trust the Administration to do what is right for the American economy. But, this level of trust and confidence is on a downward trend over the past few months.

These are some of the results of The Harris Poll of 2,498 U.S. adults surveyed online between August 10 and 18, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

### Confidence and trust in White House and Administration

Over half of Americans (53%) are confident that the White House and the Administration will produce policies to help fix the economic crisis, but just under half (47%) are not confident. In April, 57% of Americans were confident and in May, 55% were confident so there is a steady downward movement in this confidence level.

When it comes to trusting political figures to do what is right on the economy, three in five Americans (61%) trust President Obama to do what is right and over half (54%) trust the president's economic advisors. Members of Congress do not fare as well as over half (55%) do not trust Democrats in Congress to do what is right for the American economy and two-thirds (67%) do not trust Republicans in Congress.

Again, these numbers are showing a downward trend. In March, two-thirds of Americans (66%) trusted President Obama to do what is right and in May that number was 64%. Trust in his economic advisors and both Democrats and Republicans in Congress has also dropped since May.

### Who Americans' Blame for Economic Problems

When it comes to blame for the country's economic problems large majorities of Americans place the blame on Republicans in Congress (85%), former President George W. Bush (83%) and Democrats in Congress (75%). In fact, over half of U.S. adults (52%) place a great deal of blame on President Bush for the country's economic problems. However just one-third (33%) blame President Obama for the country's economic problems with 40% saying he deserves no blame at all.

### Stimulus Plan

While the White House continues to tout the stimulus plan that was passed earlier this year, the American public is of a different mind on it and three in five (59%) say it was not successful and 41% say it was successful. Not surprisingly, 86% of Republicans say it was not successful compared to 38% of Democrats, but 62% of Independents also say the plan has not been successful. There is an interesting regional difference in play as

well as over half of Easterners (51%) say the plan has been successful compared to 40% of Midwesterners, 38% of Southerners and 36% of Westerners.

**So What?**

As the President has focused on health care over the past few weeks, he and his administration have to be careful not to let the good news from various economic sources cloud the pain the American public is still feeling. As it takes longer for this good news to translate into more money in people’s wallets and checking accounts, they are still a bit fearful as to what will happen next. And this fear is translating into a lessening of confidence and trust in the White House and Administration. If President Obama focuses too much attention on health care, he risks having Americans lose even more confidence in him on economic issues. As both are extremely important to the American public, the administration can’t be seen as focusing too deeply on one over the other – a delicate balance needs to be found.

**TABLE 1  
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	August
	%	%	%	%
<b>CONFIDENT (NET)</b>	57	57	55	53
Very confident	16	17	17	16
Somewhat confident	41	40	38	37
<b>NOT CONFIDENT (NET)</b>	43	43	45	47
Not that confident	23	21	24	23
Not at all confident	20	22	21	25

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

**TABLE 2  
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	%	61	36	25	39	14	26
The President’s economic advisors	%	54	17	37	46	20	26
The Democrats in Congress	%	45	10	35	55	24	30
The Republicans in Congress	%	33	4	29	67	38	29

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

**TABLE 3**  
**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	August
President Barack Obama	%	66	64	61
The President's economic advisors	%	59	58	54
The Democrats in Congress	%	49	50	45
The Republicans in Congress	%	41	37	33

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

**TABLE 4**  
**BLAME FOR COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS**

"How much do you blame each of the following for the country's economic problems?"

Base: All adults

		BLAME (NET)	A great deal of blame	Some blame	DO NOT BLAME (NET)	Not that much blame	No blame at all
The Republicans in Congress	%	85	43	42	15	12	3
Former President George W. Bush	%	83	52	31	17	12	5
The Democrats in Congress	%	75	32	44	25	19	6
President Barack Obama	%	33	16	18	67	27	40

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

**TABLE 5**  
**SUCCESS OF STIMULUS PLAN**

"How successful do you think the stimulus plan passed earlier this year has been?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Political Party			Region			
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>SUCCESSFUL (NET)</b>	41	14	62	38	51	40	38	36
Very successful	3	1	6	1	4	2	3	3
Somewhat successful	38	14	56	36	47	38	35	33
<b>NOT SUCCESSFUL (NET)</b>	59	86	38	62	49	60	62	64
Not that successful	31	30	27	34	31	30	30	35
Not at all successful	28	55	11	28	18	30	32	29

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

**Methodology**

The Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States August 10 and 18, 2009, among 2,498 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.***

J36836  
Q708, 711, 713, 728

***The Harris Poll® #94, August 26, 2009***

By Regina A. Corso, Director, The Harris Poll, Harris Interactive

**About Harris Interactive**

Harris Interactive is a global leader in custom market research. With a long and rich history in multimodal research, powered by our science and technology, we assist clients in achieving business results. Harris Interactive serves clients globally through our North American, European and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms. For more information, please visit [www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com).

**Press Contact:**

Harris Interactive  
Corporate Communications  
212-539-9600  
[press@harrisinteractive.net](mailto:press@harrisinteractive.net)