

Over Half of Americans Are Not Confident in White House on Economy

Seven in ten Americans continue to rate job market as bad

New York, N.Y. — October 20, 2009 — As the White House continues to have a very split focus on issues ranging from health care to Afghanistan to education, one area where Americans are losing confidence is in the economy. Over half of U.S. adults (56%) are now not confident that the White House and the Administration will produce policies to help fix the economic crisis, while the remaining 44% are confident. This is down from September when feelings were more divided – 52% of Americans were not confident and 48% were confident.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,293 adults surveyed online between October 5 and 12, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

The economy in the future

Looking ahead, there is also a continuing sense of pessimism in where the economy will be going in the coming year. Now, one-third of Americans (34%) believe the economy will improve while 29% say it will get worse in the coming year and 37% believe it will stay the same. In September, people were more hopeful; 40% believed the economy would improve in the coming year and one-quarter (24%) said it would get worse.

When it comes to the financial situation a little closer to home, things have not changed much from last month. In September, when asked about their household's financial condition in the next six months, 23% of Americans said it would be better, almost half (48%) said it would remain the same and 29% believed their household's financial condition would get worse. This month, 23% still believe it will get better, while 45% say it will remain the same and 31% believe it will get worse in the next six months.

There is a regional difference on household financial condition. Those in the West are more optimistic about the future with over one-quarter (27%) saying things will get better and the same number (27%) believing it will get worse in the next six months. Those in the Midwest are the most pessimistic, however. One in five Midwesterners (20%) say it will get better while one-third (33%) believe their household's financial condition will get worse in the next six months.

The job market

One area where the negativity continues to be strong is the job market. Just one in ten Americans (10%) say the current job market of their region of the country is good with seven in ten (70%) saying it is bad and 20% saying it is neither good nor bad. This is almost unchanged from last month when 10% believed the job market was good and 68% believed it was bad. The Midwest again is the most negative as only 6% feel the job market in their region is good and almost four in five (78%) say it is bad. Easterners are more positive with 13% believing the job market is good and 65% saying it is bad.

So what?

Unemployment is moving ever closer to the 10% mark nationwide and, as it does, Americans are continuing to be anxious about this major part of the economy. Other economic indicators such as the stock market and

corporate profits have improved, but what matters to most people are the tangibles – and employment is definitely a tangible in the minds of Americans. If they haven’t been laid off themselves, they most likely know someone who has. And even if they don’t, the odds are quite good that the fear of the possibility of being laid off is never too far from their thoughts. Until this feeling leaves, they will not change their overall feelings on the economy, which is undermining confidence in the Obama administration’s ability to do much about the current economic situation.

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	June	Aug	Sept	Oct
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
CONFIDENT (NET)	57	57	55	49	53	48	44
Very confident	16	17	17	12	16	13	13
Somewhat confident	41	40	38	37	37	35	31
NOT CONFIDENT (NET)	43	43	45	51	47	52	56
Not that confident	23	21	24	25	23	25	25
Not at all confident	20	22	21	27	25	27	32

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

TABLE 2
ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR

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

Base: All adults

	April	May	Aug	Sept	Oct	Sept. - Region			
						East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improve	39	38	46	40	34	32	34	31	39
Stay the same	35	35	32	36	37	37	35	37	37
Get worse	26	27	22	24	29	30	31	31	24

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

TABLE 3
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
		%	%	%	%
BETTER (NET)	23	22	20	24	27
Will be much better	4	5	3	4	5
Will be somewhat better	19	17	17	19	22
Will remain the same	45	45	47	43	46
WORSE (NET)	31	32	33	33	27
Will be somewhat worse	23	22	24	24	19
Will be much worse	9	11	9	9	8

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

**TABLE 4
ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS - TREND**

"Thinking about your household's financial condition, do you expect it to be better or worse in the next 6 months?"

Base: All adults

	Feb 2008	March 2008	June 2008	July 2008	Nov 2008	Jan 2009	Mar 2009	April 2009	May 2009	June 2009	Aug 2009	Sept 2009	Oct 2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
BETTER (NET)	39	33	40	36	24	20	20	23	25	21	24	23	23
Will remain the same	28	28	25	25	43	48	46	46	45	45	48	48	45
WORSE (NET)	34	39	36	39	33	32	35	31	30	33	28	29	31

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

**TABLE 5
RATING OF CURRENT JOB MARKET IN YOUR REGION**

"How would you rate the current job market of your region of the country?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Region			
		East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%
GOOD (NET)	10	13	6	12	9
Very good	2	4	1	2	*
Somewhat good	9	9	5	11	9
Neither good nor bad	20	22	16	21	21
BAD (NET)	70	65	78	67	70
Somewhat bad	38	36	45	37	34
Very bad	32	29	33	30	36

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

Note: * indicates less than 0.5%

**TABLE 6
RATING OF CURRENT JOB MARKET - TREND**

"How would you rate the current job market of your region of the country?"

Base: All adults

	June 2008	July 2008	Jan 2009	April 2009	June 2009	Aug 2009	Sept 2009	Oct 2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
GOOD (NET)	28	30	6	12	9	8	10	10
Neither good nor bad	18	19	18	20	19	21	22	20
BAD (NET)	53	51	76	68	72	71	68	70

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

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States October 5 and 12, 2009 among 2,293 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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