

Americans Say Political Parties' Policies Not Likely to Solve Economic Woes

Two-thirds of U.S. adults give President Obama negative ratings on economy

NEW YORK, N.Y. – August 30, 2010 – As summer draws to a close, many Americans find that the economic situation they started the summer with is still the same. Their attitude toward the economy, as well as the President's handling of it, reflects the lack of change they are experiencing. Two-thirds of U.S. adults (68%) give President Obama negative ratings on the job he is doing on handling the economy while one-third (32%) give him positive ratings. These numbers are the same as they were in June.

Democrats stand by their president on this issue. Three in five Democrats (60%) give President Obama positive ratings on the economy while three-quarters of Independents (74%) and more than nine in ten Republicans (94%) give him negative marks.

These are some of the results of ***The Harris Poll*** of 2,775 adults surveyed online between August 9 and 16, 2010 by [Harris Interactive](#).

When it comes to the two political parties, Americans do not believe they are likely to have what it takes to solve the U.S.'s economic issues. Over one-third of U.S. adults say the Republican Party's policies (37%) would be likely to solve these issues, while almost the same number (36%) say the Democratic Party's policies are likely to do so. But over two in five say neither the Republicans' policies (44%) nor the Democrats' policies (46%) are likely to solve these economic woes. The Tea Party is also talking about the economy, but they are not seen as having the ideas either. Three in ten (29%) say their policies are likely to solve the economic problems, 44% say they are not likely to do so and over one-quarter of Americans (27%) are not at all sure if the Tea Party's policies will solve the U.S.'s economic woes.

Looking ahead

People are divided as to what the upcoming year will bring economically. Two in five U.S. adults (39%) say the economy will stay the same in the coming year while one-third (32%) say it will get worse and three in ten (29%) believe it will improve. Americans are a little more pessimistic now than they were in June when 30% believed things would improve, 42% thought they would stay the same and 28% said the economy would get worse in the coming year.

Bringing it closer to home, over half of Americans (52%) say they expect their household's financial condition to remain the same in the next six months while just over one-quarter (26%) say it will get worse and just under one-quarter (22%) believe it will get better. These feelings are almost unchanged from June when 52% believed their household's financial condition would remain the same over six months, 21% felt it would get better and 27% thought their household's financial condition would get worse.

While some economists talk about a double dip recession and others say the economic crisis is over, the American public is not of one mind on this issue. In thinking about the current economic crisis, one-third (34%) believe the worst is still to come, one-third (33%) say the worst is over and one-third (32%) are not at all sure. There is a partisan split on this, too. Half of Republicans (50%) believe the worst is still to come while half of Democrats (49%) say the worst is over.

So What?

Presidents' political legacies often live and die with the economy. When the economy is going well, even if the president has other problems, Americans tend to be lenient. But, when it is not going well, a president's successes often fall on deaf ears, as the electorate looks to find a scapegoat for their economic woes. For this president, the economy may be something he inherited, but more than 18 months into his first term, it is now something that is his.

TABLE 1
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING ON THE ECONOMY - TREND

"Now, turning to something different, how would you rate the overall job that President Barack Obama is doing on the economy?"

Base: All adults

	2009								2010					
	March	April	May	June	Aug	Sept	Nov	Dec	Jan	March	April	May	June	Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE (NET)	47	49	46	43	39	40	34	36	31	32	33	36	32	32
Excellent	13	13	10	3	9	7	6	6	5	5	6	6	5	6
Pretty good	34	36	36	34	31	33	27	30	25	27	27	30	27	26
NEGATIVE (NET)	53	51	54	57	61	60	66	64	69	68	67	64	68	68
Only fair	30	27	30	27	25	27	30	30	31	30	31	29	32	29
Poor	23	24	24	30	36	33	37	34	39	37	36	34	37	39

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

TABLE 2
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING ON THE ECONOMY – BY GENERATION AND POLITICAL PARTY

"Now, turning to something different, how would you rate the overall job that President Barack Obama is doing on the economy?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Generation				Political Party		
		Echo Boomers (18-33)	Gen X (34-45)	Baby Boomers (46-64)	Matures (65+)	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE (NET)	32	32	32	34	26	6	60	26
Excellent	6	7	6	6	4	1	14	3
Pretty good	26	24	25	28	22	5	46	23
NEGATIVE (NET)	68	68	68	66	74	94	40	74
Only fair	29	35	29	28	22	22	29	34
Poor	39	33	40	38	52	72	11	40

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

**TABLE 3
ECONOMIC POLICIES**

“How likely do you think it is that the following groups’ policies would solve the U.S.’s economic issues?”

Base: All adults

	Likely (NET)	Extremely likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely (NET)	Not very likely	Not at all likely	Not at all sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Republican Party	37	10	27	44	20	24	19
Democratic Party	36	11	25	46	16	30	18
Tea Party	29	11	18	44	14	30	27

**TABLE 4
ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR - TREND**

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

Base: All adults

	2009					2010		
	April	May	Aug	Sept	Oct	May	June	Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improve	39	38	46	40	34	38	30	29
Stay the same	35	35	32	36	37	34	42	39
Get worse	26	27	22	24	29	28	28	32

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

**TABLE 5
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

	2008				2009									
	Feb	Mar	June	Nov	Jan	Mar	April	May	June	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
BETTER (NET)	39	33	40	24	20	20	23	25	21	24	23	23	18	19
Will remain the same	28	28	25	43	48	46	46	45	45	48	48	45	47	48
WORSE (NET)	34	39	36	33	32	35	31	30	33	28	29	31	35	33

	2010					
	Jan	Mar	April	May	June	Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%
BETTER (NET)	21	21	22	25	21	22
Will remain the same	49	47	50	47	52	52
WORSE (NET)	30	32	29	28	27	26

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

TABLE 6
ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS – BY GENERATION AND POLITICAL PARTY

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

Base: All adults

	Total	Generation				Political Party		
		Echo Boomers (18-33)	Gen X (34-45)	Baby Boomers (46-64)	Matures (65+)	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
BETTER (NET)	22	30	23	23	9	14	33	19
Will be much better	4	8	3	4	1	1	8	3
Will be somewhat better	18	22	20	18	8	12	25	16
Will remain the same	52	52	51	50	55	53	50	52
WORSE (NET)	26	18	26	27	37	33	17	29
Will be somewhat worse	20	14	19	20	30	26	13	22
Will be much worse	6	4	6	7	7	8	4	6

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

TABLE 7
DESCRIBING THE CRISIS

"In thinking about the current economic crisis, which statement is closer to your view?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Political Party			Tea Party	
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Supporter	Member
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The worst is still to come	34	50	17	36	53	64
The worst is over	33	20	49	32	20	11
Not at all sure	32	29	34	33	26	25

Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between August 9 to 16, 2010 among 2,775 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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