

President Obama's Job Approval Holds Steady Over the Summer

Two in five Americans give him positive ratings; three in five give him negative marks

NEW YORK, N.Y. – August 23, 2010 – As President Obama ends his summer, his approval ratings end the summer almost unchanged from when it began. Two in five Americans (40%) give the president positive ratings for the overall job he is doing while three in five (60%) give him negative ratings. In June, 39% of U.S. adults gave the president positive ratings and 61% gave 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](#).

Looking at President Obama's job approval by demographics

While it's probably not surprising that nine in ten Republicans (91%) and Conservatives (88%) give the president negative ratings, the fact that three in ten Democrats (29%) and one-quarter of Liberals (25%) also give him negative marks. Coupling this with over three in five Independents (63%) and just under three in five Moderates (57%) who also give President Obama negative ratings for the job he is doing shows how widespread the dissatisfaction is with the way things are right now.

President Obama's two "best" demographic groups appear when looking at education and region. Regionally, those in the East are divided on the president's job – although half of Easterners (50%) give him positive ratings, half (50%) also give him negative ones. Southerners are on the other side, as just one-third (32%) give the president positive ratings while 68% of Southerners give him negative marks.

Looking at education, those with a post-graduate education are the most likely to think the president is doing a good job, as three in five (60%) give President Obama positive marks on the job he is going. Those with a high school education or less are more likely to think he is doing a poor job as almost seven in ten (68%) give him negative ratings.

Direction of the country

Another area where Americans have been holding steady all summer is in the direction of the country. Just over one-third of U.S. adults (35%) say the country is going in the right direction while just under two-thirds (65%) say things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track. In June, 34% of Americans believed the country was going in the right direction and 66% said things had gotten off on the wrong track.

So What?

In less than 75 days, the midterm elections will be over and the 2012 Presidential campaign season will be in full swing. Every first term president starts office already thinking of his re-election and, unfortunately for the Obama White House, the signs right now must be troubling. But, as summer vacations come to an end, the president and his staff know they have two years to convince the American electorate that they deserve another four years in office.

TABLE 1
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING - TREND

"How would you rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing?"

Base: All adults

	2009									2010					
	Mar	April	May	June	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Mar	April	May	June	Aug
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE	55	58	59	54	51	49	45	43	41	40	41	41	42	39	40
Excellent	17	18	17	14	11	11	10	9	7	9	9	9	10	6	9
Pretty good	38	40	42	39	39	38	35	33	33	31	32	31	32	33	31
NEGATIVE	45	42	41	46	49	51	55	57	59	60	59	59	58	61	60
Only fair	27	26	25	25	25	25	27	29	30	30	28	26	28	29	26
Poor	18	15	16	21	24	26	28	29	30	30	31	33	30	32	34

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

TABLE 2
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING – BY PARTY & IDEOLOGY

"How would you rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Political party			Political Philosophy		
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.
		%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE	40	9	71	37	12	43	75
Excellent	9	*	19	6	1	8	23
Pretty good	31	9	52	31	11	35	52
NEGATIVE	60	91	29	63	88	57	25
Only fair	26	25	22	31	21	33	19
Poor	34	66	7	32	67	24	6

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; * indicates less than .5%

TABLE 3
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING – BY REGION, EDUCATION & GENDER

"How would you rate the overall job President Barack Obama is doing?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Region				Education				Gender	
		East	Midwest	South	West	H.S. or less	Some college	College grad	Post grad	Men	Women
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE	40	50	37	32	45	32	43	43	60	41	39
Excellent	9	11	6	8	10	8	9	7	15	11	7
Pretty good	31	39	32	24	35	24	35	36	44	30	32
NEGATIVE	60	50	63	68	55	68	57	57	40	59	61
Only fair	26	28	24	28	24	30	24	26	19	23	29
Poor	34	22	38	40	31	38	33	31	21	36	32

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

**TABLE 4
RIGHT DIRECTION OR WRONG TRACK**

"Generally speaking, would you say things in the country are going in the right direction or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?"

Base: All adults

	TREND	Right Direction	Wrong Track
		%	%
2010	August	35	65
	June	34	66
	May	36	64
	April	39	61
	March	33	67
	January	37	63
2009	December	37	63
	August	46	54
	March	32	68
	January	19	72
2008	October	11	83
	February	23	69
2007	December	18	74
	February	29	62
2006	May	24	69
	February	32	59
2005	November	27	68
	January	46	48
2004	September	38	57
	June	35	59
2003	December	35	57
	June	44	51
2002	December	36	57
	June	46	48
2001	December	65	32
	June	43	52
2000	October	50	41
	June	40	51
1999	June	37	55
	March	47	45
1998	December	43	51
	June	48	44
1997	December	39	56
	April	36	55
1996	December	38	50
	June	29	64
1995	December	26	62
	June	24	65
1994	December	29	63
	June	28	65
1993	June	21	70
	March	39	50
1992	June	12	81
	January	20	75
1991	December	17	75
	January	58	32

Note: Prior to March, 2009 this question was asked via telephone

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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