

Over Half of Americans Still Not Likely to Vote for President Obama This Fall

People thinking the country is moving in the right direction continues to inch up

NEW YORK, N.Y. – January 27, 2012 – As the calendar moved into a new year, it also moved into an election year and President Obama is starting this year exactly as he ended the last one in terms of his approval ratings. This month, just like in December, just over one-third of Americans (36%) give the President positive ratings for the overall job he is doing and slightly less than two-thirds (64%) give him negative marks. Looking at the possible swing states for the general election (Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia) two-thirds of Americans in these nine states (65%) give the President negative ratings while one-third (35%) give him positive marks. One thing to note is that this survey was conducted prior to the President giving his State of the Union address.

These are some of the results of **The Harris Poll** of 2,016 adults surveyed online between January 16 and 23, 2012 by [Harris Interactive](#).

Not surprisingly, just 6% of Republicans and 12% of Conservatives give President Obama positive ratings. Among Independents almost seven in ten (69%) give him negative ratings as do 58% of Moderates. Among the President's party, while two-thirds of Democrats (66%) give President Obama positive ratings, one-third (34%) give him negative ratings. Among liberals there is a wider gap as 60% give the President positive marks and 40% give him negative ratings.

Vice President Joe Biden fares a little worse. Just one in five Americans (22%) give the Vice President positive ratings for the job he is doing while almost half (45%) give him negative ratings. But, one-third (33%) say they are not familiar enough with him to rate his job performance.

Direction of the Country and Most Important Issue

One thing that continued to rise over the past few months is the direction Americans think the country is going. This month over one-quarter of U.S. adults (27%) say things are going in the right direction while just under three-quarters (73%) say things are going off on the wrong track. In December, one-quarter of Americans (24%) said things in the country were going in the right direction while three-quarters (76%) said things were going off on the wrong track.

One thing that probably won't change for a while is what Americans think is the most important issue for the government to address. More than two in five U.S. adults (42%) say the government should address employment/jobs while three in ten (31%) say one of the two most important issues for the government to address is the economy. One in five (21%) say the government should address healthcare, not Medicare while 12% say they should address the budget and government spending and 10% say taxes.

President Obama's re-election chances

The focus for the past few months has been on the Republicans as they decide which of the four remaining candidates will challenge President Obama this fall. But, looking at the President's re-election chances, if the election for president were to be held today, over half of Americans (52%) would be unlikely to vote to re-elect

President Obama, two in five (41%) would be likely to vote for him and 7% are not at all sure. This is very similar to last month when 51% said they would be unlikely to vote to re-elect the President and 42% said they would be likely to do so. Looking at this by party, nine in ten Republicans (91%) and over half of Independents (52%) would be unlikely to vote for him as would 20% of Democrats. Also, in the likely 2012 swing states, 53% say they would be unlikely to vote for the President while 40% say they would be likely to vote for him.

When it comes to what Americans think will happen on Election Day, over one-third (36%) think President Obama will be re-elected while 41% think he will not be re-elected; one in five (22%) are not at all sure. Last month, 44% did not think he would be re-elected while just over one-third (35%) thought he would be re-elected.

So What?

Jobs and the economy are still the main issues that Americans want to see addressed. In his State of the Union address, the President definitely offered up his plans for help to grow the economy and to get more people back to work. But, two questions that remain are if they will actually work and will people believe in them. If so, this should give President Obama's re-election the shot it desperately needs right now. If it doesn't, this will be a long election year.

**TABLE 1
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING - TREND**

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

Base: All adults

	TREND	Positive*	Negative**
		%	%
2012	January	36	64
2011	December	36	64
	November	34	66
	October	33	67
	September	32	68
	August	32	68
	July	38	62
	June	38	62
	May 19th	45	55
	May 9th	46	54
	April	38	62
	March	39	61
	Feb.	42	58
	Jan.	44	56
2010	Dec.	36	64
	Nov.	38	62
	Oct.	37	63
	Sept.	38	62
	Aug.	40	60
	June	39	61
	May	42	58
	April	41	59
	March	41	59
	Jan.	40	60
2009	Dec.	41	59
	Nov.	43	57
	Oct.	45	55
	Sept.	49	51
	Aug.	51	49
	June	54	46
	May	59	41
	April	58	42
	March	55	45

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

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 Ideology			2012 Swing States
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
POSITIVE	36	6	66	31	12	42	60	35
Excellent	6	1	12	3	1	6	12	9
Pretty good	30	5	54	29	11	36	48	26
NEGATIVE	64	94	34	69	88	58	40	65
Only fair	30	26	24	37	23	36	25	33
Poor	34	68	9	32	65	22	16	33

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; 2012 Swing States are Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia

TABLE 3
RATING OF VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN - TREND

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

Base: All adults

			Positive*	Negative**	Not Familiar
2012	Jan.	%	22	45	33
	Oct.	%	30	46	24
	May	%	35	43	22
	Jan.	%	33	39	29
2010	Oct.	%	26	46	28
	June	%	26	45	29
	March	%	29	44	28
	Jan.	%	28	39	33
2009	Dec.	%	30	42	28
	Sept.	%	30	41	30
	Aug.	%	33	38	29
	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 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
		%	%
2012	January	27	73
2011	December	24	76
	November	20	80
	October	20	80
	August	16	84
	July	25	75
	May	39	61
	January	37	63
2010	December	29	71
	April	39	61
2009	August	46	54
	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

TABLE 5
VOTING FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA

"If the election for president were to be held today, how likely would you be to vote for the current president, Barack Obama?"

Base: All adults

	2011										2012
	May 9	May 19	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Likely	46	43	41	42	37	39	40	40	42	41	
Very likely	33	32	30	30	27	26	26	30	29	30	
Somewhat likely	14	11	11	12	10	13	13	10	13	11	
Unlikely	47	49	52	52	55	53	54	53	51	52	
Somewhat unlikely	7	8	7	8	7	7	8	6	8	7	
Very unlikely	40	41	45	44	48	47	46	47	43	45	
Not at all sure	6	8	6	6	7	8	6	7	7	7	

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

TABLE 6
VOTING FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA – BY POLITICAL PARTY

"If the election for president were to be held today, how likely would you be to vote for the current president, Barack Obama?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Political Party			Political Ideology			2012 Swing States
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Likely	41	6	74	41	14	48	66	40
Very likely	30	3	58	27	10	33	55	30
Somewhat likely	11	3	15	14	4	15	11	10
Unlikely	52	91	20	52	80	45	26	53
Somewhat unlikely	7	7	5	9	5	9	5	7
Very unlikely	45	84	15	43	74	36	21	46
Not at all sure	7	3	6	7	6	7	8	7

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; 2012 Swing States are Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia

TABLE 7
LIKELIHOOD OF OBAMA'S RE-ELECTION

"If you had to say now, do you think that President Obama will be re-elected, or not?"

Base: All adults

	2011						2012	Political Party		
	July	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%				
I think he will be re-elected.	35	30	30	32	35	36	10	61	34	
I do not think he will be re-elected.	42	47	49	46	44	41	75	20	44	
Not at all sure.	23	23	21	23	20	22	15	19	23	

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

TABLE 8
MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

"What do you think are the two most important issues for the government to address?"

Spontaneous, unprompted replies

Base: All adults

	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'09	'10	'10	'11	'11	'11	'12
	May	Jan	Feb	Aug	Dec	Dec	June	Oct	Aug	June	Oct	Oct	Mar	Nov	Jan	Nov	Jan	May	Sept	Jan
Employment/jobs	5	3	4	4	7	8	8	10	3	7	5	5	21	24	31	36	33	33	50	42
The economy (non-specific)	8	9	7	5	32	34	25	28	19	14	13	64	50	34	32	33	24	29	27	31
Healthcare (not Medicare)	10	11	12	15	5	10	14	18	11	12	25	22	25	47	45	30	35	18	17	21
Budget deficit/National debt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	3	X	X	8	12	17	13	12
Taxes	14	16	12	13	6	5	11	8	5	4	3	6	4	4	4	7	6	4	7	10
Budget/Government spending	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	5	6	2	6	11	7	10	13	9	11	9
Education	15	14	21	25	12	11	13	7	8	7	6	6	5	5	5	6	7	7	5	8
Immigration	2	1	*	1	1	1	2	2	3	20	12	3	4	5	5	8	8	10	6	6
Downsizing government	X	X	X	1	*	X	X	1	*	1	1	*	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	4
Environment	3	2	3	3	1	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	3
Foreign policy (non-specific)	3	5	4	3	2	4	2	3	2	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3
Social security	6	6	24	16	3	2	4	4	10	5	3	3	1	2	1	4	3	3	7	3
Human/civil/women's rights	2	1	*	1	1	1	*	1	1	1	2	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Wars/Armed conflicts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	3	2
Military/defense	2	2	2	4	4	1	5	3	1	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
(Programs for) the poor/ poverty	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	*	4	4	4	*	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
National security	X	X	2	2	6	3	6	5	2	2	2	5	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	2
Housing	X	X	X	X	X	2	1	1	*	*	1	2	2	6	1	1	2	1	2	2
Terrorism	X	X	X	X	22	17	11	7	7	4	4	3	4	3	6	2	2	4	1	2
Gas and oil prices	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	10	8	2	1	1	1	*	1	1	12	2	2
Abortion	2	2	2	6	1	1	1	4	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*	1
Bipartisanship	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	2	1
Obama/president	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	*	*	1	1	1	*	1	1	1
Ethics in government	*	*	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	1
Homelessness	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	*	1	1	3	*	*	1	1	*	1	*	*	1
Business accountability/bailouts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	*	*	1
Homeland/domestic security/public safety	X	X	X	X	8	9	3	6	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Medicare	4	5	5	6	1	1	4	3	2	1	3	2	*	*	*	2	1	2	1	1
Welfare	14	8	4	2	1	1	3	*	3	1	2	*	*	1	*	1	1	*	1	1
Inflation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	2	3	*	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	1
Energy	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	4	4	1	4	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
(The) war	X	X	X	X	12	18	8	35	41	27	24	14	9	9	2	4	3	*	1	*
Infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	1	1	*
Afghanistan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	1	*	*	*
Religion (decline of)	*	1	*	1	2	1	1	1	*	1	1	*	*	*	*	1	*	*	*	*
Same sex rights	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	2	*	*	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*
Iraq	*	*	1	X	X	11	3	9	6	8	14	7	2	4	2	1	*	*	*	*
Judicial/Legal Issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	2	1	1	*	1	1	1	*	*	*	x	*
Programs for the elderly (not Medicare/Social Security)	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	*	*	*	1	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Crime/violence	19	13	8	10	1	2	3	1	3	2	2	1	*	1	1	*	1	1	*	X
Income gap/Wealth distribution/Middle class	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	x	X
Overspending/wasting money	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	x	X
Other	8	19	2	19	3	8	8	8	1	6	5	15	5	3	1	6	5	3	6	7
Not sure/refused/no issue	9	12	16	18	11	10	12	9	8	6	8	4	4	3	2	2	4	4	3	3

* = Less than 0.5%, X = Not mentioned as specific issue
Note: Prior to March, 2009, this question was asked via telephone

Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between January 16 and 23, 2012 among 2,016 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.

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