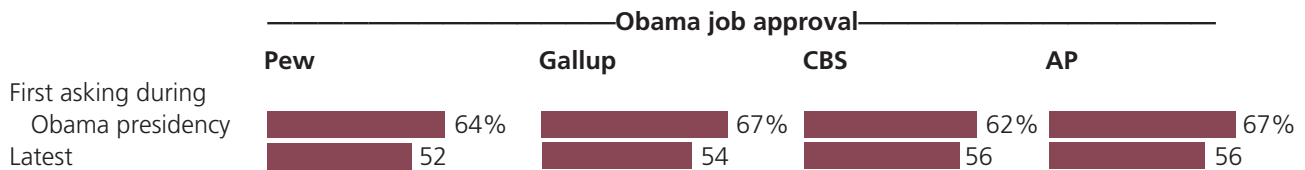


AEI Political Report

Keeping up with Obama

At the ten-month mark in his presidency, Barack Obama's approval ratings have slipped, settling in the still positive low- to mid-50s range. His ratings on handling most issues and on most personal qualities have declined, too. Still, a solid 58 percent say that he has the same priorities for the country that they do, down barely from 62 percent that gave the response in July. People remain optimistic that his policies will improve economic conditions, but they are more pessimistic that his policies will reduce the budget deficit over the long term.

Q: Do you . . . ?



Note: Question wording varied slightly.

Source: Pew Research Center, February and September–October 2009; The Gallup Organization, January and October 2009; CBS News, October 2009; CBS News/*New York Times*, February 2009; GfK-Roper/Associated Press, February and October 2009.

Q: And please tell me if you . . . ?

Approve of the way Barack Obama is handling

	The economy	Iraq	Health care	Terrorism	The environment
April	58%	59%	53%	59%	60%
October	50	50	48	53	54

	The deficit	Energy	Taxes	Immigration	Afghanistan	Unemployment
April	49%	60%	54%	47%	60%	59%
October	40	55	47	39	46	48

Source: GfK-Roper/Associated Press, latest that of October, 2009.

Q: As I read some pairs of opposite phrases, tell me which one best reflects your impression of Barack Obama . . .

	Trustworthy	Warm and friendly	Able to get things done
February	76%	87%	70%
September	64	78	58

	Someone who cares about people like me	A strong leader	A good communicator
February	81%	77%	92%
September	68	65	83

Note: Not all categories shown.

Source: Pew Research Center, latest that of September 2009.

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Q: Do you think . . . ?

	October	July
Barack Obama has the same priorities for the country as I have	58%	62%
Does not	38	31

Note: In October, eighty-five percent of Democrats, 54 percent of independents, and 26 percent of Republicans said Obama had the same priorities for the country that they did.
Source: CBS News, latest that of October 2009.

Q: Do you think Obama's views on most issues are . . . for you?

	September	April	January
Obama's views on most issues are too liberal	39%	33%	29%
Too conservative	5	4	4
Just about right	53	62	65

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, latest that of September 2009.

Q: Are you . . . ?

	September–October	March–April
Generally optimistic that Barack Obama's policies will improve economic conditions	57%	66%
Reduce the budget deficit	48%	54%

Source: Pew Research Center, latest that of September-October 2009.

Political Parties

Positive views about the Democratic Party have fallen a little in recent months. The October NBC News/Wall Street Journal survey showed no uptick in Republican Party fortunes, but a Gallup survey taken at about the same time shows some movement in the GOP's direction.

Q: Now I'm going to read you the names of several public figures, and I'd like you to rate your feelings toward each one as . . . ?

	Positive feeling	Negative feeling
The Republican Party		
February 2009	26%	47%
September 2009	28	43
The Democratic Party		
February 2009	49%	31%
September 2009	41	39

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, latest that of September 2009.

Q: Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of . . . ?

	Favorable	Unfavorable
The Republican Party		
May 2009	34%	59%
September 2009	40	56
The Democratic Party		
May 2009	53%	41%
September 2009	51	45

Source: The Gallup Organization, latest that of September 2009.

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Q: Overall, which party do you . . . ?

Trust the Democrats to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years	48%
Trust the Republicans	28

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, September 2009.

The Senate: Looking Ahead

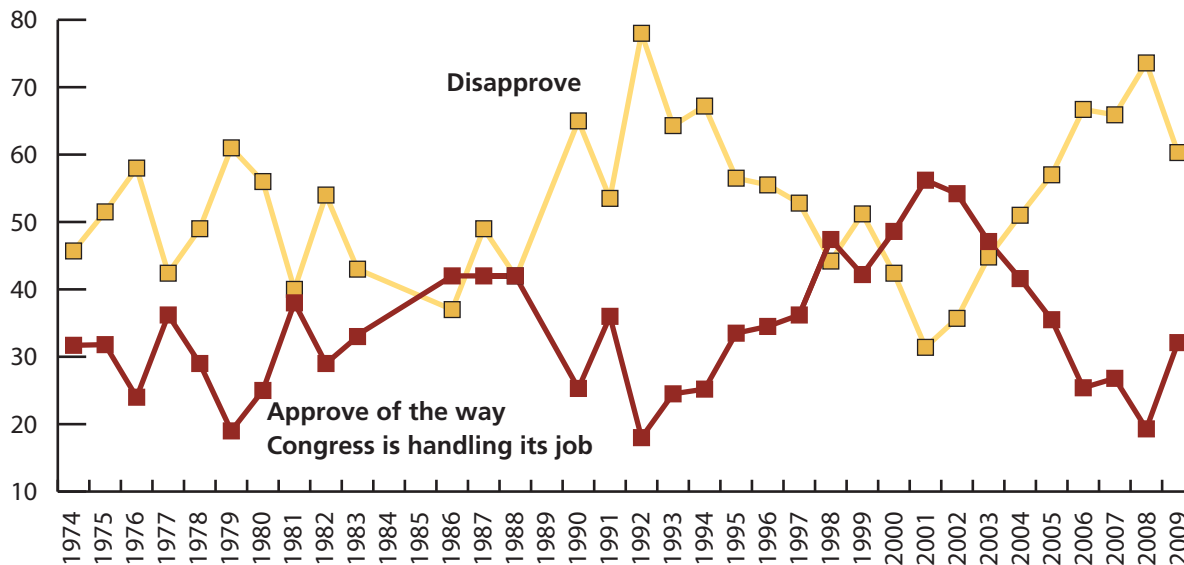
- In 2010, Democrats will have 18* seats up, the Republicans, 18
- In 2012, Democrats will have 24** seats at up, the Republicans, 9
- In 2014, Democrats will have 20 seats up, the Republicans, 13

Note: *This does not include the open seat in Massachusetts, which will be decided by a special election. **This includes the two independents who usually caucus with the Democrats.

Congressional Update

Gallup reminds us that “low public approval of Congress is the norm.” In October, 21 percent approved of the body, below Gallup’s average 36 percent found across the past two decades. The recent decline in approval of the body is being driven by Democrats. In May, 63 percent of them approved of the way Congress was handling its job. Today, 36 percent do.

Q: Do you approve or disapprove of the way...?



Note: Yearly averages.
Source: The Gallup Organization.

Q: Do you . . . ?

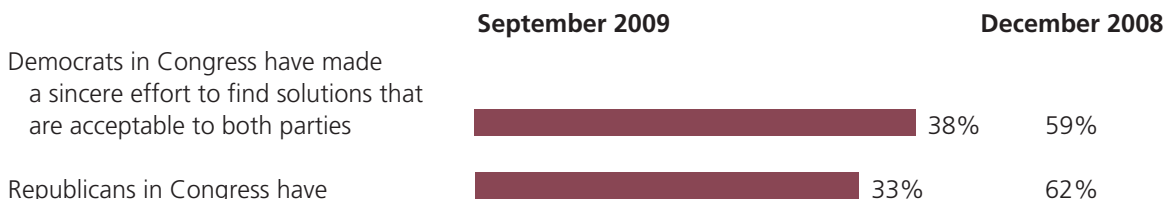
	September–October	February
Approve of the job Democratic leaders in Congress are doing	33%	48%
Approve of the job Republican leaders in Congress are doing	24%	34%

Note: The current Republican approval number is the lowest in the 15 years Pew has been asking the question.
Source: Pew Research Center, latest that of September–October, 2009.

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Q: Do you think . . . ?



Source: The Gallup Organization, latest that of September 2009.

Q: These days, how much attention do you feel Congress pays to what regular Americans think when it decides what to do . . . ?



Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, September 2009.

Mixed Signals on Afghanistan

The polls provide contradictory evidence about public opinion on aiding Afghanistan. What nearly all of them show is that the President has problems with his own party on the issue. People have more trust in the military than in President Obama to make the right decisions about troop levels there. Poll responses today differ on increasing, decreasing, or keeping the number of troops there about the same. Americans don't believe things are going well for the United States there.

Q: Do you think . . . ?



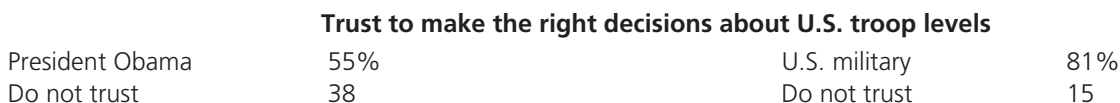
Note: Seventy-two percent of Republicans, 38 percent of Democrats, and 56 percent of independents said the U.S. was doing the right thing. Source: Quinnipiac University, September–October 2009.

Q: When Barack Obama was a candidate campaigning for the presidency, he spoke of the urgent need to finish the fight in Afghanistan, which he called the central front on the war on terrorism. Do you think that, as president . . . ?



Note: Fifty-eight percent of Democrats, 14 percent of Republicans, and 35 percent of independents said he was doing what it takes to win. Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, September 2009.

Q: Do you . . . ?



Source: Quinnipiac University, September–October 2009.

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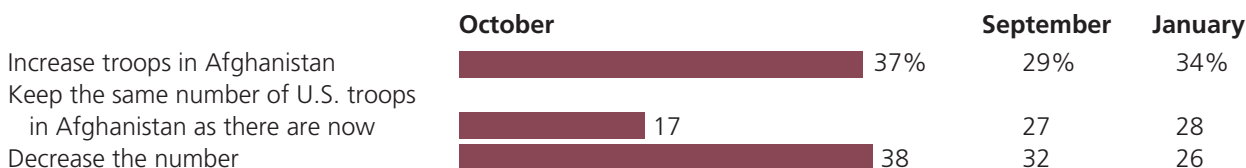
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Q: Do you think . . . ?



Note: Sixty percent of Republicans, 29 percent of Democrats, and 47 percent of independents said we needed to increase the troops in order to win. Source: Quinnipiac University, September–October 2009.

Q: From what you have seen or heard about the situation in Afghanistan, what should the United States do now—should the U.S. . . . ?



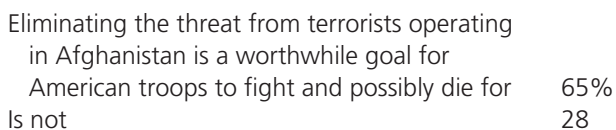
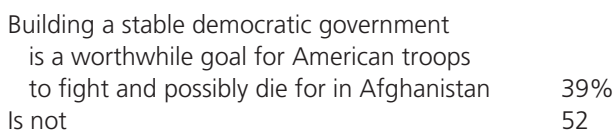
Note: An early October Gallup/USA Today poll asked people whether they would favor or oppose a decision by President Obama to send more U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Forty-eight percent said they would favor the decision, and 45 percent were opposed. In a mid-October Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll, 46 percent supported and 46 percent opposed sending additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Source: CBS/New York Times, latest that of October 2009.

Q: What is your impression of how the war in Afghanistan is going for the United States right now . . . ?



Source: CBS/New York Times, September 2009. CBS News, March 2009.

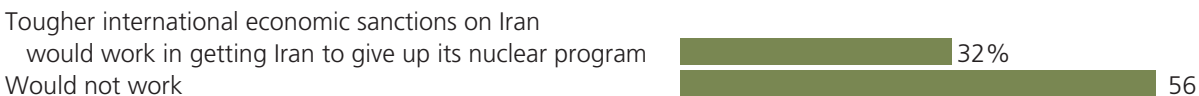
Q: Do you think . . . ?



Source: Quinnipiac University, September–October 2009.

Action on Iran?

Q: Do you think . . . ?



Source: Pew Research Center, October 2009.

Q: In your opinion, which is . . . ?



Source: Pew Research Center, October 2009.

Health Care Reform Hits the Home Stretch

Recent polls differ on the level of support for health care reform proposals being debated in Congress, but none has shown majority support for the effort. What is clear is that Americans believe health care reform will add to the deficit. They also believe they will probably have to make changes in their own health care plans. Recent polls also differ on whether people feel they personally will be helped or hurt if Congress passes and the president signs legislation.

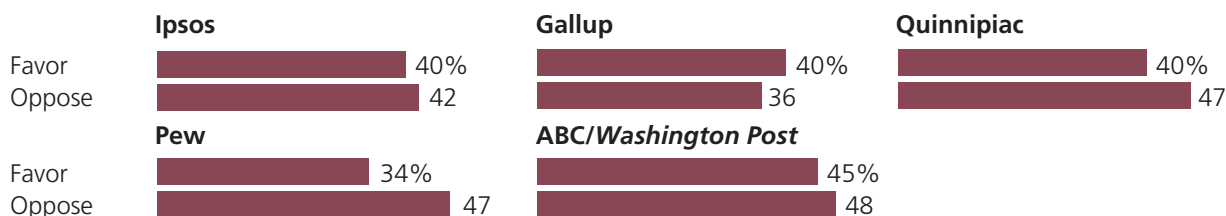
Q: As of right now, do you favor or oppose the health care reform proposals presently being discussed? (Ipsos/McClatchy, October 2009)

Q: Would you advise your member of Congress to vote for or against a health care bill this year, or do you not have an opinion? (Gallup, October 2009)

Q: Do you support or oppose President Obama's health care reform plan? (Quinnipiac, October 2009)

Q: As of right now, do you generally favor or generally oppose the health care proposals being discussed in Congress? (Pew, September–October 2009)

Q: Overall, given what you know about them, would you say you support or oppose the proposed changes to the health care system being developed by Congress and the Obama administration? (ABC News/Washington Post, October 2009)



Q: President Obama says his health care plan will not add one dime to the deficit today or in the future—do you believe this is possible . . . ?

Yes, possible 28% No, not possible 67%

Note: In the new ABC News/Washington Post poll, 68 percent said they thought health care reform would increase the federal deficit. Of that group, 31 percent said increasing the deficit would be worth it, 37 percent said it would not be worth it.
Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, September 2009.

Q: President Obama has pledged that health insurance reform will not add to our federal budget deficit over the next decade. Do you think . . . ?

President Obama will be able to keep his promise that any health care plan Congress passes will not add to the deficit 19%

Will not 71

Source: Quinnipiac University, October 2009.

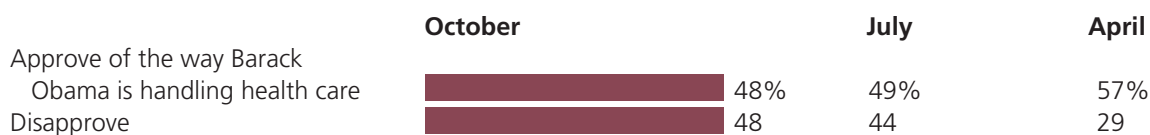
Q: President Obama says under his health care plan if you have health coverage you like that you won't have to make a change if you don't want to—do you . . . ?

Believe I won't have to make changes 36%

Believe I will probably have to make some changes 60

Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, September 2009.

Q: Do you . . . ?

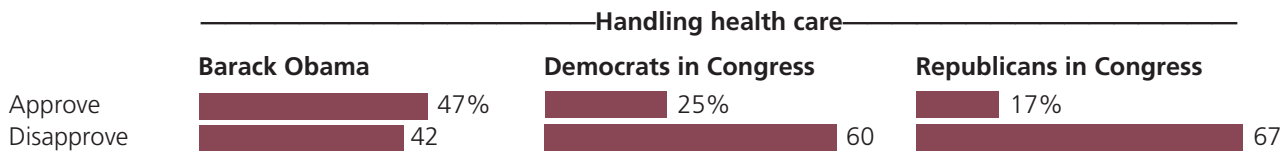


Source: ABC News/Washington Post, latest that of October 2009.

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Q: Do you . . . ?



Note: A Fox News/Opinion Dynamics question from mid-October found that 51 percent would prefer the current health care system and that 34 percent would favor the plan proposed by Democrats in Congress.
Source: CBS News, October 2009.

Q: From what you have heard or read, do you think the . . . ?

Health care reforms under consideration in Congress will mostly help you personally	18%
Hurt you	31
Will not have much of an effect	45

Source: CBS News, October 2009.

Q: Do you think . . . ?

I and my family will be better off if the President and Congress passed health care reform	42%
Worse off	23
Would not make much difference	28

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, September 2009.

Q: How concerned are you that . . . ?

Very/somewhat concerned that Congress will fail to pass health care reform legislation and leave many Americans uninsured	70%	Very/somewhat concerned that Congress will pass health care reform legislation that will be bad for me and my family	74%
Not very/not at all concerned	20	Not very/not at all concerned	26

Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, October 2009.

Q: Next, please tell me whether you . . . ?

	Favor	Oppose
Imposing a surcharge on federal income taxes for individuals with annual incomes over \$280,000 and families with incomes over \$350,000	59%	38%
Reducing payments to Medicare providers, such as hospitals and doctors	36	61
Imposing a tax on insurance plans that have the most expensive benefit packages	34	61

Source: Gallup/USA Today, October 2009.



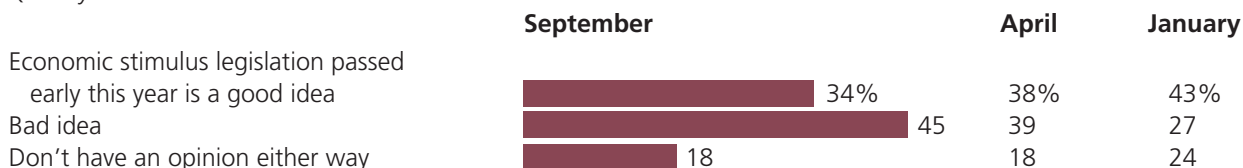
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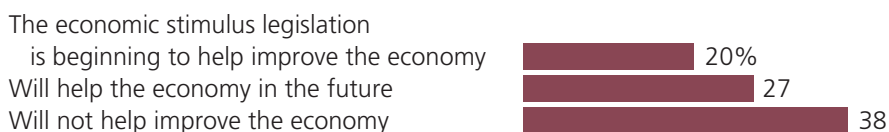
Thumbs Down on a Second Stimulus

Q: Do you think . . . ?



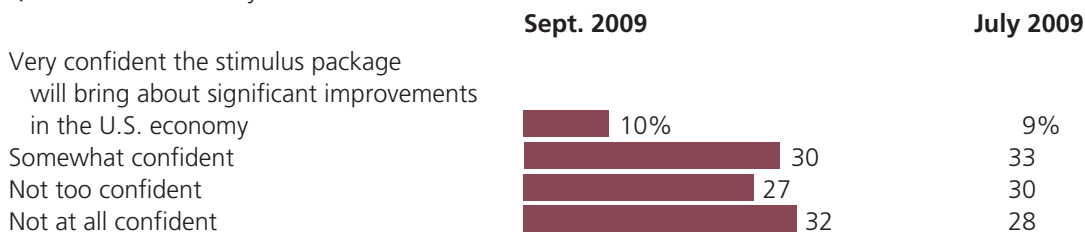
Note: Not all askings shown. The January question asked about the "recently proposed economic stimulus legislation."
Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, latest that of September 2009.

Q: Do you think . . . ?



Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, September 2009.

Q: How confident are you . . . ?



Source: GfK-Roper/Associated Press, latest that of September 2009.

Q: As you may know, there has been some discussion about the possibility of passing a second, additional economic stimulus plan. Would you . . . ?



Source: Gallup/USA Today, August 2009.

Who's Glenn Beck?

Q: Now I'm going to read you the names of several public figures, and I'd like you to rate your feelings toward each one as . . . ?



Note: An October poll by the Pew Research Center found that 40 percent could identify Glenn Beck as a TV and radio host.
Source: NBC/Wall Street Journal, September 2009.

POLL POTPOURRI

Still Dreaming About California

Q: If you could live in any state in the country, except the state that you live in now, what state would you choose to live in?

Top five

California	1
Florida	2
Hawaii	3
Texas	4
Colorado	5

Source: Harris Interactive, August 2009.

Government Waste: The Feds Win the Prize

Gallup asked people recently how much of every dollar that goes to the federal government in Washington is wasted, and the mean response was 50 cents. That's the highest response recorded on the question since Gallup first asked it in 1979. Republicans and independents (54 and 55 cents, respectively) were likely to see more waste in Washington than Democrats (41 cents).

How much of every dollar is wasted by (mean response)

Washington	50 cents
Your state government	42 cents
Your local government	37 cents

Source: The Gallup Organization, August–September 2009.

Are Photos ID-eal?

In a June Fox News and Opinion Dynamics poll, 83 percent said it was a good idea to show photo identification at polling places because it helps avoid fraud, while 15 percent said it was a bad one because it could discriminate against people who don't have a driver's license or other ID.

Showing photo identification at polling places is a good idea because it helps avoid fraud

National response	83%
Responses of	
Democrats	76%
Republicans	92
Independents	84

Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, June 2009.

Whatever . . . you know?

Q: Which one of the following words or phrase . . . ?

Most annoying words in conversation

Whatever	47%
You know	25
It is what it is	11
Anyway	7
At the end of the day	2

Source: The Marist Poll, August 2009.

John Edwards, How Low Can He Go?

Q: Next, we'd like to get your overall opinion of some people in the news. As I read each name, please say if you . . . ?

Have a favorable opinion of

Barack Obama	56%	Hillary Clinton	62%	John Edwards	21%
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Note: Barack Obama's favorable rating was 78 percent in January. Clinton's current rating is among her best in the seventeen years Gallup has asked Americans about her. Gallup reports that it "has never before found as steep a decline in consecutive measurements for a prominent figure" as it has for John Edwards using this format, which it launched in 1992.

Source: The Gallup Organization, October 2009.