

Americans Give President Obama Negative Marks on Handling of Economy

Also continue to believe job market in their region is bad

New York, N.Y. — September 22, 2009 — While much of the focus of President Obama has been on health care reform over the past few weeks, the issue of the economy is still on his plate. Currently, three in five Americans (60%) would rate the job the president is doing on the economy as negative while two in five (40%) would rate his job as positive. This is virtually unchanged from last month when 39% rated President Obama's economic job performance as positive and 61% rated it as negative.

These are some of the results of The Harris Poll of 2,334 adults surveyed online between September 8 and 15, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

Confidence in the White House

Confidence in the White House and the Administration to produce policies to help fix the economic crisis has dropped in the past month. In August, over half of Americans (53%) had confidence while 47% did not have confidence. One month later, over half of Americans (52%) now are not confident that the Obama Administration can produce policies to help fix the economic crisis while 48% are confident they will.

Financial conditions ahead

Overall, two in five Americans (40%) expect the economy to improve in the coming year while just over one-third (36%) say they expect it to stay the same and one-quarter (24%) believe it will get worse. In August, almost half (46%) of Americans believed the economy would improve in the coming year.

When it comes to household's financial situation, about half of Americans (48%) believe it will remain the same in the next six months while one-quarter (23%) say it will get better and three in ten (29%) believe it will get worse. This is almost unchanged from last month when 48% said it would remain the same, 24% said it would get better and 28% of Americans believed their household's financial situation would get worse.

The job market

When it comes to the job market, attitudes are mostly negative. Two-thirds of Americans (68%) say the current job market in their region of the country is bad while just one in ten (10%) say it is good and 22% believe it is neither good nor bad. Last month, 71% of Americans said the job market in their region was bad and 8% said it was good. Those in the West and Midwest are most negative about the job markets in their region (77% and 70% saying it is bad respectively) while 15% of Southerners say it is good.

So what?

While health care may be the topic of the day, week, and month for the White House, the president and his team need to be careful to not forget about the economy, especially the job market. While people are hearing about how things are getting better, that is not translating into jobs. It's also not translating into confidence – Americans are continuing to give President Obama negative ratings on his handling of the economy and are not

confident his team will produce policies to fix things. This negativity may bleed into other issues the White House is promoting, hurting their chances for success.

**TABLE 1
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING ON THE ECONOMY**

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

Base: All adults

	March	April	May	June	Aug	Sept
	%	%	%	%	%	%
POSITIVE (NET)	47	49	46	43	39	40
Excellent	13	13	10	3	9	7
Pretty good	34	36	36	34	31	33
NEGATIVE (NET)	53	51	54	57	61	60
Only fair	30	27	30	27	25	27
Poor	23	24	24	30	36	33

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

**TABLE 2
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
	%	%	%	%	%	%
CONFIDENT (NET)	57	57	55	49	53	48
Very confident	16	17	17	12	16	13
Somewhat confident	41	40	38	37	37	35
NOT CONFIDENT (NET)	43	43	45	51	47	52
Not that confident	23	21	24	25	23	25
Not at all confident	20	22	21	27	25	27

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

**TABLE 3
ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR**

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

Base: All adults

	April	May	Aug	Sept	Sept. - Region			
					East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improve	39	38	46	40	43	42	38	39
Stay the same	35	35	32	36	38	36	37	33
Get worse	26	27	22	24	19	22	25	28

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

TABLE 4
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	25	21	24	22
Will be much better	3	4	2	5	2
Will be somewhat better	20	22	19	19	20
Will remain the same	48	48	50	46	49
WORSE (NET)	29	27	29	30	29
Will be somewhat worse	22	20	23	22	22
Will be much worse	7	7	6	7	7

Note: Percentages may not add 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

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

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

Note: Prior to November, there were three categories for Better and Worse

TABLE 6
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	11	5	15	7
Very good	1	2	1	2	1
Somewhat good	9	9	4	13	6
Neither good nor bad	22	22	25	23	16
BAD (NET)	68	67	70	62	77
Somewhat bad	39	41	36	35	46
Very bad	29	26	33	27	31

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

Note: * indicates less than 0.5%

**TABLE 7
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
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
GOOD (NET)	28	30	6	12	9	8	10
Neither good nor bad	18	19	18	20	19	21	22
BAD (NET)	53	51	76	68	72	71	68

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

Note: Prior to January, there were three categories for Good and Bad

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States September 8 and 15, 2009 among 2,334 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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