

# BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSIM WORLD

## Global Opinion Report No. 104

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## **Prelude**

This week report consists of 26 surveys. Three of these surveys are multi-country in nature while the rest of 23 are national surveys.

### **Respect for Public Opinion and Global Warming**

Half of the surveys in this report are from North America raising various issues in United States and Canada. The dominant focus still remains on economic issues followed by state of the nation in U.S. State of the nation address got reasonable attention in the last week surveys. The Gallup review of the address shows that President Obama speech focused on several of the important concerns shown in opinion polls. Should it be considered that public opinion is getting lot of respect from the U.S. government? This is true at least for the local issues facing the nation. But what about various multi-country surveys which reveals that publics across the world want their governments to pay attention to the 'public opinion'.

Just take the case of global warming. Publics across the world seem ready to deal with this concern even if it slows down the economy. In our several analyses we pointed out the U.S. government reluctance towards dealing with this concern. But a look at the Americans priorities for the last several years provides us some understanding. On the list of top priorities for 2010 of the American citizens, global warming is at the bottom i.e. number 21.<sup>1</sup> Why global warming is such a low profile issue for Americans? This is a very difficult question to answer but the above scenario at least, explains the U.S. government reluctance in taking concrete steps in this matter. But it also shows that U.S. government respects its citizen's opinion.

It will be very interesting if someone can provide the top priorities of the citizens of China, India, Russia and EU and then we can make a comparison on the subject. I look forward for a healthy debate.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1472/public-priorities-president-congress-2010>

## Summary of Polls

### EAST ASIA

#### Half of Thais Support No-Confidence Motion

Half of people in Thailand want opposition parties to table a no-confidence motion in order to clear questions about an alleged corruption scandal in the Public Health Ministry, according to a poll by Suan Dusit University. 49.5 per cent of respondents share this view.

January 26, 2010

### JAPAN & KOREA

#### Japanese Cabinet Reaches Tipping Point

For the first time since it was elected, more people disapprove than approve of the performance of the government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), according to a poll by Kyodo News. 41.5 per cent of respondents are content with the sitting cabinet, while 44.1 per cent are disappointed with its work.

January 28, 2010

### SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

#### Kenyans Prefer Pure Presidential System

A pure presidential system is the political structure of choice for people in Kenya, according to a poll by Synovate. 49 per cent of respondents would prefer to have this system in the country.

January 30, 2010

### EAST EUROPE

#### Romanians Say Country on Wrong Track

Most people in Romania are pessimistic about their country's future, according to a poll by IRES. 70 per cent of respondents say Romania is headed in the wrong direction.

January 26, 2010

#### Devastating Lead for Ruling United Russia

Russia's ruling party is practically the only powerful political group in the country, according to a poll by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center. 55 per cent of respondents would vote for United Russia (YR) in the next election to the State Duma, up two points since December.

January 25, 2010

### WEST EUROPE

#### Britons Send Mixed Messages on Islamic Veils

Most people in Britain hold a critical opinion on the veils worn by some Muslim women, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 67 per cent of respondents say that garments that conceal a woman's face represent an affront to British values, while 25 per cent disagree with this notion.

January 27, 2010

#### Conservatives Steady at the Top in Britain

The Conservative party remains the most popular choice for voters in Britain, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 40 per cent of respondents would vote for the Tories in the next election to the House of Commons.

January 30, 2010

#### French OK with Fillon, Critical of Sarkozy

People in France are content with the leadership of their prime minister but remain critical of their president, according to a poll by Ifop published in *Le Journal du Dimanche*. 53 per cent of respondents are satisfied with the performance of François Fillon, up three points since December.

January 26, 2010

## NORTH AMERICA

### The State of the Union Speech and Public Opinion

Gallup looks at how a number of key points and policy proposals that President Barack Obama made in his State of the Union address Wednesday night relate to the views of the American people.

January 29, 2010

### Americans With Postgraduate Education Still Back Obama

Barack Obama's job approval rating, which has averaged 50% since Dec. 1, continues to be significantly above that average among Americans with postgraduate education (58%). Among educational groups, only postgraduates show a rating above the majority level.

January 28, 2010

### More Americans Reliant on Government Healthcare in 2009

With healthcare legislation hanging in the political balance, Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index data find an increasing number of Americans are relying on government-based health insurance, while fewer are getting coverage through an employer.

January 28, 2010

### Americans Agree: Quality Jobs Remain Hard to Find

As the Obama administration and Congress shift their focus to the economy and jobs after the State of the Union, Gallup polling suggests they need to consider quality as well as quantity. One in 10 Americans (9%) believe now is a "good time" to find a "quality job" -- a situation that has persisted over the past year, and a huge deterioration in job-market conditions from January 2007, when nearly half of Americans (48%) expressed optimism about finding a quality job.

January 28, 2010

### Americans on the State of the Nation: Better, but Not Great

Americans' opinions about the state of the nation have improved in several respects since President Barack Obama took office a year ago. Still, today's ratings are on the order of less bad rather than positive. Twenty-three percent of Americans are now satisfied with the way things are going in the country, up from 13% in early January 2009. However, 76% remain dissatisfied -- well above the average 57% dissatisfied since 1979.

January 27, 2010

### The Public's Political Agenda

As Barak Obama begins his second year in office, the public's priorities for the president and Congress remain much as they were one year ago. Strengthening the nation's economy and improving the job situation continue to top the list. And, in the wake of the failed Christmas Day terrorist attack on a Detroit-bound airliner, defending the country from future terrorist attacks also remains a top priority.

January 25, 2010

### It's All About Jobs, Except When It's Not

As the Obama administration redoubles its effort to communicate its concerns about unemployment in the face of sagging approval ratings, a look at the connection between the rise and fall of joblessness and the political fortunes of past presidents in the modern era is instructive. Recent history shows that the public response to all presidents has been shaped to some degree by rising or falling unemployment.

January 26, 2010

### Americans Lean Against Letting More Haitians Into U.S.

With the situation in Haiti still dire after the Jan. 12 earthquake, and with a growing number of Haitians reportedly seeking entry into the U.S., a new USA Today/Gallup poll finds that the majority of Americans do not think the U.S. should increase the number of Haitian immigrants it accepts.

January 25, 2010

### In U.S., Religious Prejudice Stronger Against Muslims

More than 4 in 10 Americans (43%) admit to feeling at least "a little" prejudice toward Muslims -- more than twice the number who say the same about Christians (18%), Jews (15%) and Buddhists (14%).

January 25, 2010

### Two Thirds of Americans Disapprove of Congress

Most people in the United States chide the performance of the sitting Congress, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 65 per cent of respondents disapprove of the work of current federal legislators, up one point since December.

January 30, 2010

### Few Americans Say Economy is Good Right Now

People in the United States remain skeptical about a financial recovery, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 85 per cent of respondents rate the economic conditions in the U.S. today as poor or very poor.

January 29, 2010

### Americans Would Deny Re-Election to Obama

Just three-in-ten people in the United States believe Barack Obama deserves to be re-elected in 2012, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 30 per cent of respondents would grant their president second term in office.

January 28, 2010

### Obama Falls Below 50% Mark in U.S.

Public support for United States president Barack Obama is at the lowest point of his tenure, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 47 per cent of respondents approve of Obama's performance, down three points since December.

January 26, 2010

### About Half of Canadians OK with Economy

People in Canada are divided on their assessment of their country's finances, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 48 per cent of respondents rate the economic conditions in Canada as "good" or very good", while 45 per cent deem them "bad" or "very bad."

January 26, 2010

## AUSTRALASIA

### New Zealanders Endorse Ruling Conservatives

Most people in New Zealand would vote for the governing National party, according to a poll by Roy Morgan International. 53 per cent of respondents would support the conservative party in the next election to the House of Representatives, down one point since mid-December.

January 28, 2010

## MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS

### As Asian Economies Falter, Trust in Gov't Remains High

Citizens living in developing Asian countries have generally become less positive about the economic conditions in their countries since the onset of the global economic crisis. This drop is accompanied by increase in the confidence in the national governments.

January 28, 2010

### U.S., Britain and Canada Endorse Death Penalty

Most people in the United States, Britain and Canada support relying on the death penalty for homicide convictions, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 84 per cent of respondents in the U.S., 67 per cent in Britain, and 62 per cent in Canada share this view.

January 25, 2010

### Yemenis' Economic Situations Among Worst in Region

Gallup surveys show the economic situation in Yemen is one of the most dismal in the Middle East and North Africa and many Yemenis expect it to get worse. Only Palestinians (64%) are more likely than Yemenis (59%) to say economic conditions in their country are getting worse.

January 26, 2010

## EAST ASIA

### Half of Thais Support No-Confidence Motion

January 26, 2010

Half of people in Thailand want opposition parties to table a no-confidence motion in order to clear questions about an alleged corruption scandal in the Public Health Ministry, according to a poll by Suan Dusit University. 49.5 per cent of respondents share this view.

Thailand has experienced more than three years of political instability, including the dissolution of the lower house, a cancelled national election, a military coup and the enactment of a new constitution. In December 2007, Thailand held a legislative ballot. Final results gave the People's Power Party (PPP) 232 of the 480 seats, followed by the Democratic Party (PP) with 165 mandates. In January 2008, PPP leader Samak Sundaravej became prime minister.

Samak's government faced fierce opposition and major street protests led by the civic organization People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). The group accused Samak of being a puppet of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was deposed in a 2006 military coup.

In August 2008, the PAD occupied the Government House in Bangkok, demanding Samak's resignation. Samak stepped down in September after the national Constitutional Court found that he violated conflict of interest laws when he received payments for hosting two television cooking shows. Somchai Wongsawat—who had been serving as deputy prime minister—took over as acting head of government.

In late November, PAD activists took over Bangkok's international airport—where the government had been working from after its offices were invaded in August—demanding Somchai's resignation. The airport was forced to shut down entirely, stranding thousands of tourists.

In December, the Constitutional Court ordered the PPP and its two coalition partners, the Machima Thipatai party and the Chart Thai party, to disband after it found them guilty of voter fraud in the 2007 ballot. The court also banned Somchai and executives from the three parties from participating in politics for five years. Somchai accepted the verdict and stepped down. Protesters at the airport ended the siege. PP leader Abhisit Vejjajiva became prime minister, with the support of 235 lawmakers in the House of Representatives.

In March 2009, Thaksin accused Privy Council president Prem Tinsulanonda of masterminding the 2006 military coup, and openly called for a "people's revolution" to topple the Abhisit government. In April, the National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD)—whose followers wear red shirts at rallies—organized protests in Bangkok and Chonburi, ultimately forcing the cancellation of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit. After Abhisit implemented a state of emergency, Thai soldiers fired live rounds into the air and used tear gas to disperse crowds of protesters.

In June, the so-called yellow shirts activists from the PAD formally created a political party, the New Politics Party, and chose labour activist Somsak Kosaisuk as its leader.

The government recently held an inquiry into the alleged misuse of funds by the Public Health Ministry. Earlier this month, former deputy permanent secretary for public health Banlu Siripanich released the inquiry report, implicating four politicians and seven government officials in the alleged misuse of millions of dollars given to the ministry through the Thai Khem Khaeng (Strong Thailand) government stimulus scheme.

Opposition parties are considering tabling a no-confidence motion against Abhisit over the Public Health Ministry scandal.

On Jan. 18, Abhisit said the government will not take action on the Banlu report until the findings are carefully read, adding, "The problem is a conflict at the ministry which has gone unsolved for a long time. We should not let it affect the ministry's work."

An early legislative election is expected to take place in 2010.

## **Polling Data**

Which of these statements do you agree with the most?

The no-confidence motion should happen soon so the government would clarify the irregularities found in the administration to the public	49.5%
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This would not be the right time for a no-confidence motion because the government still has many problems to tackle and people should give the government more time to run the country	32.2%
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*Source: Suan Dusit University*

*Methodology: Interviews with 3,326 adults across Thailand, conducted in January 2010. No margin of error was provided.*

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## **JAPAN & KOREA**

### **Japanese Cabinet Reaches Tipping Point**

January 28, 2010

For the first time since it was elected, more people disapprove than approve of the performance of the government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), according to a poll by Kyodo News. 41.5 per cent of respondents are content with the sitting cabinet, while 44.1 per cent are disappointed with its work.

The government's approval rating has dropped by 5.7 points since December.

In August 2009, Japanese voters renewed the House of Representatives. Final results gave the DPJ a victory with 308 of the 480 lower house seats at stake. Yukio Hatoyama, the DPJ leader, was sworn in as prime minister in September.

Aside from a brief period in the 1990s, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) had administered Japan's government for more than five decades.

The former LDP-led government was marred by corruptions scandals. The new government has been the subject of suspicions as well.

In December, Hatoyama was criticized after it was revealed that political donations registered under the names of several individuals actually came from his mother. The Japanese prime minister has acknowledged receiving a monthly contribution of about \$164,000 U.S. from his mother, but vowed to pay back taxes and penalties amounting to about \$6.5 million U.S.

Earlier this month, three current and former aides of Ichiro Ozawa, the DPJ's secretary general, were arrested and charged with falsifying information in party fundraising reports. The three men were identified as Mitsutomo Ikeda, current DPJ lawmaker Tomohiro Ishikawa, and Takanori Okubo.

On Jan. 21, LDP leader Sadakazu Tanigaki asked Hatoyama if he would quit if an investigation proves that he lied about the political donations involving his mother. The prime minister suggested that he would, saying, "If different facts emerge, then I have no right to wear my Diet badge."



## Polling Data

Do you approve or disapprove of Yukio Hatoyama's cabinet?

	Jan. 2010	Dec. 2009	Nov. 2009
Approve	41.5%	47.2%	63.7%
Disapprove	44.1%	38.1%	25.1%

*Source: Kyodo News*

*Methodology: Telephone interviews with 1,027 Japanese adults, conducted on Jan. 17 and Jan. 18, 2010. No margin of error was provided.*

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## SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

### Kenyans Prefer Pure Presidential System

January 30, 2010

A pure presidential system is the political structure of choice for people in Kenya, according to a poll by Synovate. 49 per cent of respondents would prefer to have this system in the country.

Conversely, 31 per cent of respondents would like their country to have a hybrid presidential and parliamentary system, and 18 per cent would prefer a solely parliamentary structure.

Kenyans voted in presidential and legislative elections in December 2007. Official results gave incumbent Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU) 46.64 per cent of all cast ballots, followed by opposition candidate Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) with 44.28 per cent.

Odinga's camp complained about irregularities in the ballot count, claiming that Kibaki's total was inflated by 300,000 votes. The allegations practically paralyzed Kenyan politics, and saw the return of violent incidents that had marred the electoral campaign.

By late February 2008, post-election violence in Kenya had claimed more than 1,000 lives. On Feb. 28—following the mediation by former United Nations (UN) secretary-general Kofi Annan—Kibaki and Odinga reached a preliminary power-sharing deal. The terms entailed the creation of the post of prime minister, who would "coordinate and supervise" government affairs. Kenya would also have two deputy prime ministers, one nominated by each member of the coalition. Kibaki remained as president, and Odinga became prime minister.

A parliamentary committee has been tasked with settling the issue of what political system Kenya should operate under.

On Jan. 26, Ahmed Abdika, chairman of the committee, said that the group has "agreed in principle on the presidential system," adding, "We are working on modalities of checks and balances."

## Polling Data

In the proposed constitution, which of the following leadership systems do you prefer to have?

Pure presidential	49%
Hybrid system	31%
Pure parliamentary	18%
None / Not sure	2%

*Source: Synovate*

*Methodology: Interviews with 2,000 Kenyan adults, conducted from Jan. 19 to Jan. 21, 2010.*

*Margin of error is 2.2 per cent.*

## **EAST EUROPE**

### **Romanians Say Country on Wrong Track**

January 26, 2010

Most people in Romania are pessimistic about their country's future, according to a poll by IRES. 70 per cent of respondents say Romania is headed in the wrong direction.

Romania held a legislative election in November 2008. Final results gave the coalition of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Conservative Party (PC) 33.09 per cent of the vote and 114 seats in the lower house, followed by the Democratic Liberal Party (PD-L) with 32.36 per cent and 115 mandates. President Traian Basescu nominated PD-L leader Emil Boc to take over as prime minister from Calin Popescu Tariceanu.

In October 2009, the Romanian government collapsed following a defeat in a confidence vote. Opposition parties rejected Boc's government for proposing pension reforms aimed at securing funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In November, Basescu earned a new term in office, defeating PSD candidate Mircea Geoana in the second round of the presidential election with 50.33 per cent of all cast ballots.

On Jan. 21, Basescu vowed to introduce a "vote by correspondence" system for Romanians living abroad, and said he would "work towards opening new consulates" in several cities to better assist them.

### **Polling Data**

Do you think Romania is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Right direction	21%
Wrong direction	70%

*Source: IRES*

*Methodology: Interviews with 1,486 Romanian adults, conducted from Dec. 18 to Dec. 21, 2009.*

*Margin of error is 2.7 per cent.*

## Devastating Lead for Ruling United Russia

January 25, 2010

Russia's ruling party is practically the only powerful political group in the country, according to a poll by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center. 55 per cent of respondents would vote for United Russia (YR) in the next election to the State Duma, up two points since December.

The Communist Party (KPRF) is a very distant second with only seven per cent, followed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) with four per cent, and the opposition movement A Just Russia with three per cent.

Russian voters renewed the State Duma in December 2007. United Russia—whose candidate list was headed by then president Vladimir Putin—secured 64.1 per cent of the vote and 315 of the legislature's 450 seats. On that same month, Putin endorsed Dmitry Medvedev as a presidential candidate, and Medvedev said it would be of the "utmost importance" to have Putin as prime minister.

In March 2008, Medvedev easily won Russia's presidential election with 70.28 per cent of the vote. In May, Medvedev was sworn in as president. His nomination of Putin as prime minister was confirmed by the State Duma in a 392-56 vote.

On Jan. 19, Medvedev commented on the results of the first round of neighbouring Ukraine's presidential election. The Feb. 7 run-off will feature pro-Kremlin candidate Viktor Yanukovich and current Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. The Russian president declared: "I hope that when the final results are compiled in Ukraine, a workable, effective leadership will appear disposed to the development of constructive, friendly and comprehensive relations with the Russian Federation."

### Polling Data

Which party would you vote for in the election to the State Duma?

	Jan. 2010	Dec. 2009	Nov. 2009
United Russia (YR)	55%	53%	53%
Communist Party (KPRF)	7%	8%	8%
Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR)	4%	5%	4%
A Just Russia	3%	4%	4%

*Source: All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center*

*Methodology: Interviews with 1,600 Russian adults, conducted on Jan. 9 and Jan. 10, 2010.*

*Margin of error is 3.4 per cent.*

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## WEST EUROPE

### Britons Send Mixed Messages on Islamic Veils

January 27, 2010

Most people in Britain hold a critical opinion on the veils worn by some Muslim women, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 67 per cent of respondents say that garments that conceal a woman's face represent an affront to British values, while 25 per cent disagree with this notion.

However, 58 per cent of respondents believe the government should not be allowed to tell individuals what they can and cannot wear.

About 1.5 million Muslims currently reside in Britain.

On Jan. 17, Lord Pearson of Rannoch, leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), said his party wants to ban some garments that are worn by Muslim women, declaring, "We are taking expert advice on how we could do it. It makes sense to ban the burqa—or anything which conceals a woman's face—in public buildings. But we want to make it possible to ban them in private buildings. It isn't right that you can't see someone's face in an airport."

#### Polling Data

As you may know, there has been a lot of talk recently about the outfits of Muslim women in the UK and across Europe. Thinking about this, do you agree or disagree with each one of the following statements?

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Garments that conceal a woman's face are an affront to British values	67%	25%	8%
The Government should not be allowed to tell individuals what they can and cannot wear	58%	36%	6%

*Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 2,001 British adults, conducted on Jan. 20 and Jan. 21, 2010. Margin of error is 2.2 per cent.*

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### Conservatives Steady at the Top in Britain

January 30, 2010

The Conservative party remains the most popular choice for voters in Britain, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 40 per cent of respondents would vote for the Tories in the next election to the House of Commons.

The governing Labour party is second with 24 per cent, followed by the Liberal Democrats with 19 per cent. 17 per cent of respondents would vote for other parties.

In June 2007, Gordon Brown officially became Labour leader and prime minister, replacing Tony Blair. Brown had worked as chancellor of the exchequer. Blair served as Britain's prime minister since May 1997, winning majority mandates in the 1997, 2001 and 2005 elections to the House of Commons.

Since December 2005, David Cameron has been the leader of the Conservative party. In December 2007, current parliamentarian Nick Clegg became the new leader of the Liberal Democrats.

On Jan. 26, the Office of National Statistics showed that the UK economy grew by 0.1 per cent in the last quarter of 2009, ending six consecutive quarters of contraction. Lib-Dem shadow chancellor Vince Cable called for caution, saying, "The British economy has had the economic equivalent of a heart attack and is still very weak. With both the construction and banking sectors in trouble, we are not out of the woods yet."

The next election to the House of Commons must be held on or before Jun. 3. Sitting prime ministers can dissolve Parliament and call an early ballot at their discretion.

### **Polling Data**

If a General Election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? - Decided Voters with Leaners

	<b>Jan. 27</b>	<b>Jan. 10</b>	<b>Dec. 18</b>
Conservative	40%	40%	40%
Labour	24%	24%	24%
Liberal Democrats	19%	20%	20%
Other	17%	17%	16%

*Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 2,004 British adults, conducted on Jan. 26 and Jan. 27, 2010. Margin of error is 2.2 per cent.*

### **French OK with Fillon, Critical of Sarkozy**

January 26, 2010

People in France are content with the leadership of their prime minister but remain critical of their president, according to a poll by Ifop published in *Le Journal du Dimanche*. 53 per cent of respondents are satisfied with the performance of François Fillon, up three points since December.

Conversely, only 38 per cent of respondents are satisfied with the way French president Nicolas Sarkozy is handling his duties.

In May 2007, Sarkozy, candidate for the centre-right Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) and former interior minister, won the presidential run-off with 53.06 per cent of the vote. Sarkozy

appointed Fillon—who had been his adviser and presidential campaign leader—as prime minister.

On Jan. 25, Fillon offered positive economic news, saying, "We're going to review the growth rate when the new budget is presented. We'll be close to doubling our official forecast, which was 0.75 per cent growth."

### **Polling Data**

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Nicolas Sarkozy's performance as president?

	<b>Jan. 2010</b>	<b>Dec. 2009</b>	<b>Oct. 2009</b>
Satisfied	38%	37%	38%
Dissatisfied	61%	62%	61%

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with François Fillon's performance as prime minister?

	<b>Jan. 2010</b>	<b>Dec. 2009</b>	<b>Oct. 2009</b>
Satisfied	53%	50%	51%
Dissatisfied	45%	47%	46%

*Source: Ifop / Le Journal du Dimanche*

*Methodology: Telephone interviews with 1,880 French adults, conducted from Jan. 14 to Jan. 22, 2010. No margin of error was provided.*

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## **NORTH AMERICA**

### **The State of the Union Speech and Public Opinion**

*Gallup reviews public opinion on 22 issues raised in State of the Union*

January 29, 2010

Gallup looks at how a number of key points and policy proposals that President Barack Obama made in his State of the Union address Wednesday night relate to the views of the American people.

#### **1. Hope for the Future**

"I have never been more hopeful about America's future than I am tonight."

Most Americans are optimistic about the future of the country, but they have been more optimistic at other times in the past, generally when the economy was doing well.

#### **2. Bank Bailout**

"Our most urgent task upon taking office was to shore up the same banks that helped cause this crisis. ... We all hated the bank bailout. I hated it. You hated it. It was about as popular as a root canal."

February 2009 polling showed that giving aid to U.S. banks and financial companies in danger of failing was the least popular of five different government steps to aid the economy. A majority of 59% of Americans opposed the idea of a bank bailout. The images of banks and bankers have also fallen significantly in recent years -- Americans' confidence in banks last year dropped to a record low (22%), as did the perceived honesty and ethics of bankers.

### **3. Economic Stimulus**

"Because of the steps we took, there are about 2 million Americans working right now who would otherwise be unemployed. ... The plan that has made all of this possible, from the tax cuts to the jobs, is the Recovery Act. That's right -- the Recovery Act, also known as the stimulus bill."

As Obama signed the \$787 billion stimulus bill into law in February 2009, 59% of Americans were in favor of the legislation.

More recently, however, Americans seem to have doubts about the effectiveness of the plan. In August, fewer than half (41%) believed the stimulus plan was making the economy better, while the slight majority thought it was either having no effect (33%) or making the economy worse (24%). At that time, a slim majority also said the government should have spent less to stimulate the economy. Also at that time there was broad opposition to the government's passing a new stimulus bill (29% in favor and 65% opposed). Asked about the best way to create jobs last November, very few Americans mentioned more stimulus spending.

### **4. Economy Is Growing**

"After two years of recession, the economy is growing again."

The majority of Americans continue to say the economy is getting worse rather than better -- although a greater proportion of Americans say it is getting better than did so when Obama took office. The percentage "getting better" is 38% today, compared with 18% in January 2009. The last time the majority of Americans said the economy was getting better was July 2004.

### **5. Jobs as No. 1 Focus**

"Jobs must be our No. 1 focus in 2010."

The percentage of Americans mentioning jobs or unemployment as the nation's most important problem is double today what it was a year ago (22% vs. 11%) and now nearly ties mentions of the economy in general as the perceived top problem. Assessments of the job market are bleak and have been so for a long time. Only 9% of Americans say now is a good time to find a quality

job. Gallup's Job Creation Index is essentially the same now as it was when Obama took office, with no sign of meaningful job growth.

## **6. Small Business**

"We should start where most new jobs do -- in small businesses ... I'm proposing that we take \$30 billion of the money Wall Street banks have repaid and use it to help community banks give small businesses the credit they need to stay afloat. I'm also proposing a new small-business tax credit ... Let's also eliminate all capital gains taxes on small business investment."

Americans have a much more positive view of small business than of big business. In fact, confidence in small business is second only to confidence in the military at the top of the list of Gallup's annual Confidence in Institutions assessment. Confidence in big business is the lowest of any institution tested. From a slightly different perspective, new Gallup research also shows that almost twice as many Americans have a positive view of small business as they do of big business (95% vs. 49%). More than 8 out of 10 Americans also agree that when small businesses make a profit, it is good for the U.S. economy.

## **7. Clean Energy**

"We should put more Americans to work building clean energy facilities and give rebates to Americans who make their homes more energy-efficient."

In March 2009, Gallup found three-quarters of Americans (77%) in favor of the government's promoting energy production from alternative sources of energy. More recently, Gallup found a solid majority of Americans saying they had taken steps in the past year to make their homes more energy efficient, though most cited economic savings, not the environment, as the reason.

## **8. Bipartisanship**

"I've been told that addressing our larger challenges is too ambitious ... I've been told that our political system is too gridlocked, and that we should just put things on hold for a while. ... How long should we wait? How long should America put its future on hold?"

The percentage of Americans believing Obama has made "a sincere effort to work with the Republicans in Congress" slid to 60% in September 2009 from 80% who expected Obama to make a sincere effort just after the November 2008 election. At the same time, barely a third believed either caucus in Congress was making the same effort toward the other party.

## **9. Nuclear Power**

"We need more production, more efficiency, more incentives. And that means building a new generation of safe, clean nuclear power plants in this country."



Americans generally support the expanded use of nuclear power as a means of producing electricity. Last year, 59% of Americans -- a new high -- were in favor of more use of nuclear power.

## **10. Offshore Drilling**

"It means making tough decisions about opening new offshore areas for oil and gas development."

Americans have in the past supported drilling in areas -- including off the coasts of the United States -- that the U.S. is not currently using as a means of oil production.

## **11. Climate Change**

"I know that there are those who disagree with the overwhelming scientific evidence on climate change."

Just a little over half of Americans believe the effects of global warming have already begun. Well under half say global warming will pose a threat in their lifetimes. Most Americans believe that the threat of climate change or global warming is generally correct or underestimated. But last year, the percentage who said the threat was exaggerated increased to 41%. Also last year, Americans' reported concern about global warming dipped after showing a steady increase from 2005 to 2008.

## **12. Export and Trade**

"Third, we need to export more of our goods. Because the more products we make and sell to other countries, the more jobs we support right here in America. So tonight, we set a new goal: We will double our exports over the next five years ... To help meet this goal, we're launching a National Export Initiative."

In recent years, Americans have been more likely to view foreign trade as a threat to the economy from foreign imports than as an opportunity to increase U.S. exports. Before that, however, Americans generally took the latter view.

## **13. Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

"We need to invest in the skills and education of our people. ... we [will] renew the Elementary and Secondary Education Act."

Americans' top two recommendations in 2009 for how to improve K-12 education in the U.S. are improving the quality of teachers (17%) and focusing more on basic curriculum (10%). Four percent mentioned improving standards for testing students, while 3% recommended abolishing the No Child Left Behind Act (which relies on extensive standardized testing).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act includes No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Gallup research from August showed that of those who are familiar with NCLB, a large majority say either that it has had no effect on students' education or that it has made it worse. A bit of better news for supporters of NCLB is that parents of school-aged children are a little more positive about the impact of the law than are those who do not have children in school. Of potential importance is the fact that those who claim to be very familiar with NCLB are most strongly convinced that it has had a negative impact.

#### **14. Healthcare Reform**

"We still need health insurance reform. ... We are closer than ever to bringing more security to the lives of so many Americans. ... I know that with all the lobbying and horse-trading, the process left most Americans wondering, "What's in it for me?" ... I want everyone to take another look at the plan we've proposed. ... Here's what I ask Congress, though: Don't walk away from reform. ... Let us find a way to come together and finish the job for the American people."

The healthcare reform Congress worked on in 2009-2010 struggled to gain public backing. While access to healthcare and affordability remain the most urgent health problems in the country in Americans' eyes, less than a majority now say that ensuring all Americans have healthcare is the government's responsibility. Fifty-five percent of Americans favor shelving the current plan and beginning work on a new plan. Americans who object to passing healthcare legislation are not just focused on "what's in it for me" but rather are most likely to object on the grounds of costs and too much government involvement.

#### **15. The Federal Deficit**

"... a massive fiscal hole in which we find ourselves. ... So tonight, I'm proposing specific steps to pay for the trillion dollars that it took to rescue the economy last year. ... I've called for a bipartisan fiscal commission [to focus on the deficit]."

Americans are concerned about the amount of money the government is spending, and say President Obama's proposals to address the problems facing the country require too much spending. In fact, 58% of Americans disapprove of his handling of the deficit -- tied with healthcare for his most negative issue rating. The deficit has increased as a problem in Americans' eyes, but still ranks well behind the economy, unemployment, and healthcare. Obama has gotten poor marks for his handling of the federal budget deficit.

#### **16. Distrust in Government**

"We face a deficit of trust -- deep and corrosive doubts about how Washington works that have been growing for years."

Only 17% of Americans have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in Congress, almost at the bottom of a list of institutions tested in Gallup's annual update of confidence in institutions. This

lack of trust, however, has not been "growing for years" in a straight linear fashion. Confidence in Congress is actually up slightly from the previous two years, and is no worse than it was in the 1991-1994 time frame.

## **17. Lobbyists**

"We have to take action ... to end the outsized influence of lobbyists."

Americans have no love lost for lobbyists. In 2007, when lobbyists were included in Gallup's annual ratings of the honesty and ethics of professions for the first time, they were at the very bottom of the list. Additional research that year found that Americans believed that presidential candidates should refuse lobbyist money.

## **18. Campaign Finance and Lobbying Reform**

"With all due deference to separation of powers, last week the Supreme Court reversed a century of law that I believe will open the floodgates for special interests ... to spend without limit in our elections. I don't think American elections should be bankrolled by America's most powerful interests."

It is highly likely Americans agree that elections should not be bankrolled by special interests. What's unclear is whether Americans agree that this will be the effect of the recent Supreme Court decision, which gives companies broad latitude in funding independent expenditures on behalf of specific candidates. Gallup polling last fall found Americans in general agreement with the court's rationale in this case, which is that campaign spending is a matter of free speech. However, by 52% to 41%, more think limiting campaign donations ought to be the greater priority over protecting this First Amendment right.

## **19. Iraq**

"As a candidate I promised that I would end this war, and that is what I am doing as president. We will have all of our combat troops out of Iraq by the end of this August."

Roughly 6 in 10 Americans believe sending troops to Iraq was a mistake. In September -- several months after Obama had issued his plans to speed up the United States' withdrawal from Iraq -- Gallup found 56% of Americans approving of Obama's handling of the Iraq situation, his highest issue rating of seven tested in that survey.

## **20. Haiti**

"Our destiny is connected to those beyond our shores. ... That's why, as we meet here tonight, over 10,000 Americans are working with many nations to help the people of Haiti recover and rebuild."

Most Americans (63%) are committed to the United States' remaining in Haiti as long as necessary to ensure that basic services are restored and life is back to normal for the people there. Nearly three-quarters (73%) think the U.S. is doing enough to respond to the crisis, and, in line with this, the slight majority is opposed to increasing the number of Haitian immigrants allowed into the U.S.

## **21. Don't Ask, Don't Tell**

"This year I will work with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are."

Although 50% of Americans were opposed to lifting the ban on gays serving in the military at the time President Bill Clinton instituted the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy in 1993 (43% were in favor), 69% in November 2009 said that openly gay men and women should be allowed to serve in the military.

## **22. Immigration**

"We should continue the work of fixing our broken immigration system -- to secure our borders and enforce our laws, and ensure that everyone who plays by the rules can contribute to our economy and enrich our nation."

Americans returned to a tougher stance on immigration in 2009, with a higher percentage saying immigration should be decreased than said this in 2008, and a smaller percentage calling immigration a "good thing" for the country.

In 2007 -- amid a major push for immigration reform laws in Washington -- Gallup found 20% generally in favor requiring illegal immigrants to leave the country and 78% in favor of some sort of path to citizenship.

## **Survey Methods**

Gallup surveys 1,000 national adults, aged 18 and older, every day and also conducts additional surveys. In most cases, the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 2$  to  $\pm 4$  percentage points. For detailed survey methods on any results reported here, please visit the original story.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on land-line telephones (for respondents with a land-line telephone) and cellular phones (for respondents who are cell-phone only).

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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## Americans With Postgraduate Education Still Back Obama

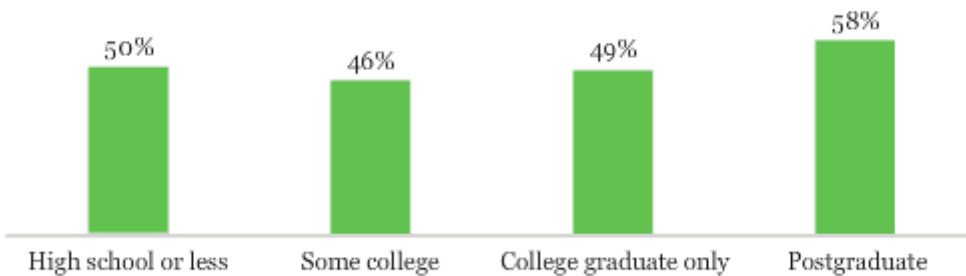
*Whites show greater disparity in support by education than blacks do*

January 28, 2010

Barack Obama's job approval rating, which has averaged 50% since Dec. 1, continues to be significantly above that average among Americans with postgraduate education (58%). Among educational groups, only postgraduates show a rating above the majority level.

### *Barack Obama Job Approval, by Education*

December 2009-January 2010 Gallup Daily tracking



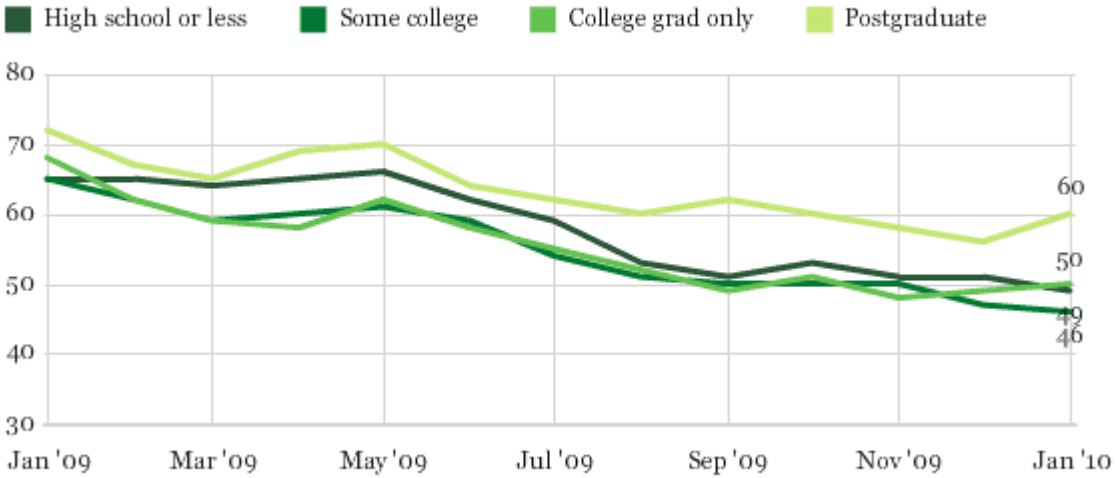
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These findings are based on aggregated data from Gallup Daily tracking in December 2009 and January 2010, consisting of more than 25,000 interviews, and at least 4,900 in each educational group.

Postgraduates were a key constituency in Obama's winning 2008 presidential-primary and general-election coalitions, and have been Obama's top supporters among educational groups throughout his presidency.

*Barack Obama Job Approval, by Education*

Monthly averages



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"Roughly 9 in 10 blacks approve of Obama, regardless of their educational background."

Since July, when Obama last registered an approval rating of 60%, the gap in his approval rating between postgraduates and other educational groups has grown, with his support declining proportionately less among postgraduates than among the other groups.

*Changes in Obama Approval Rating Among Educational Groups*

Based on Gallup Daily tracking

	Less than high school	Some college	College graduate only	Postgraduate
January-July 2009	64%	60%	60%	67%
August 2009-January 2010	51%	49%	50%	59%
Change (pct. pts.)	-13	-11	-10	-8

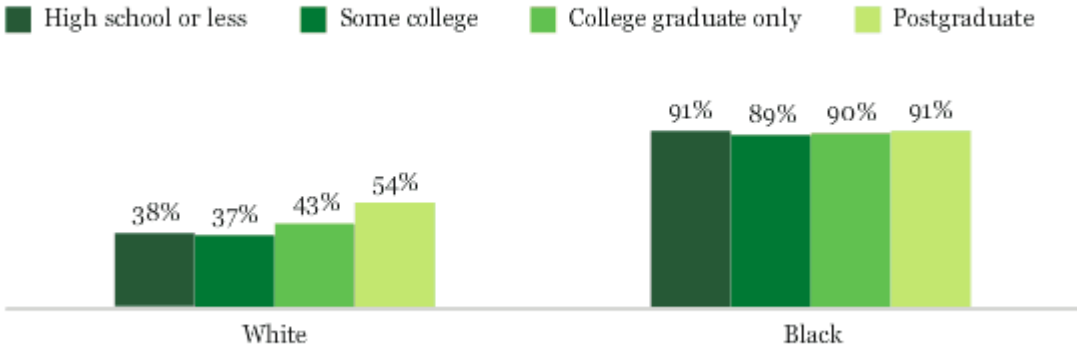
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**Educational Relationship Varies by Group**

The relationship between educational attainment and support for Obama is not the same within all demographic subgroups. For example, the educational effects are quite pronounced among non-Hispanic whites, with double-digit gaps between postgraduates and those without postgraduate education. In contrast, there are essentially no educational differences among blacks. Roughly 9 in 10 blacks approve of Obama, regardless of their educational background.

*Barack Obama Job Approval, by Education and Race*

December 2009-January 2010 Gallup Daily tracking

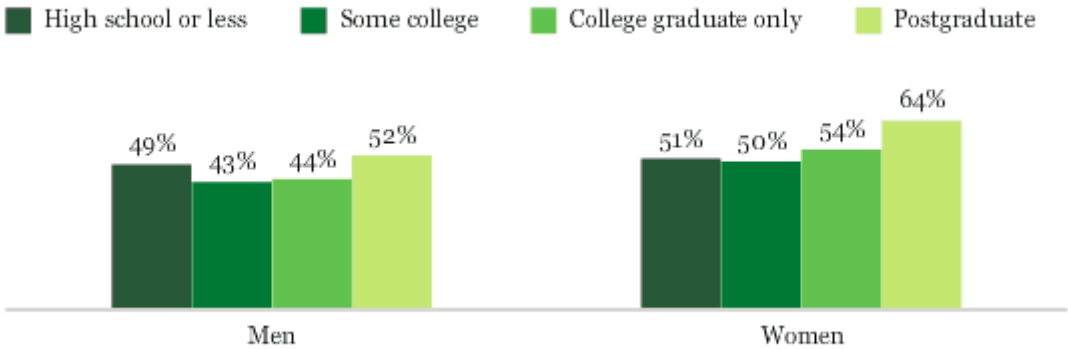


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Postgraduate men and women are Obama's greatest supporters among gender and educational groups. Obama fares especially well among women with postgraduate education (64%). Whereas postgraduates are the only educational group among men that shows at least 50% approval for Obama, all four educational groups among women do. Also, there are essentially no gender differences among those with a high school education or less, but notable gender gaps at higher education levels.

*Barack Obama Job Approval, by Education and Gender*

December 2009-January 2010 Gallup Daily tracking



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**Bottom Line**

The support of postgraduates, who tend to be more liberal and Democratic in their political orientation, was important to Obama's being elected president. Since he has become president, postgraduates have been among his more reliable supporters, backing him at higher levels than do those in other educational groups.

**Survey Methods**

Results are based on telephone interviews with 25,387 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted Dec. 1, 2009-Jan. 26, 2010, as part of Gallup Daily tracking. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 1$  percentage point.

For results based on the sample of 6,626 adults with a high school education or less, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 1$  percentage point.

For results based on the sample of 8,009 adults with some college education, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 1$  percentage point.

For results based on the sample of 5,709 college graduates with no postgraduate education, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 2$  percentage points.

For results based on the sample of 4,964 adults with postgraduate education, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 2$  percentage points.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on land-line telephones and cellular phones.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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### **More Americans Reliant on Government Healthcare in 2009**

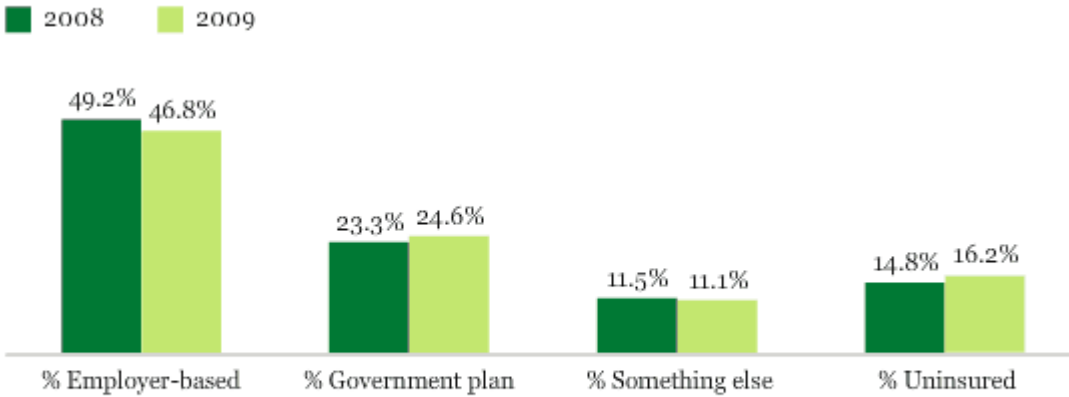
*Three-quarters of insured seniors use Medicare, Medicaid, or military/veterans' benefits*

January 28, 2010

With healthcare legislation hanging in the political balance, Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index data find an increasing number of Americans are relying on government-based health insurance, while fewer are getting coverage through an employer. The percentage of Americans with Medicaid, Medicare, or military/veterans' coverage increased to an average of 24.6% last year, from 23.3% in the year prior. The percentage with employer-based healthcare dropped to an average of 46.8% in 2009, from 49.2% in 2008. Also, as Gallup reported previously, more Americans went uninsured in 2009 than was in 2008.



*Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2008 vs. 2009*



Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

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Gallup and Healthways ask approximately 1,000 Americans each day if they have health insurance. Respondents who say that they do have health insurance are then asked if they get their primary health coverage through an employer or union, Medicare, Medicaid, military/veterans' coverage, or through something else.

**Snapshot of the Insured**

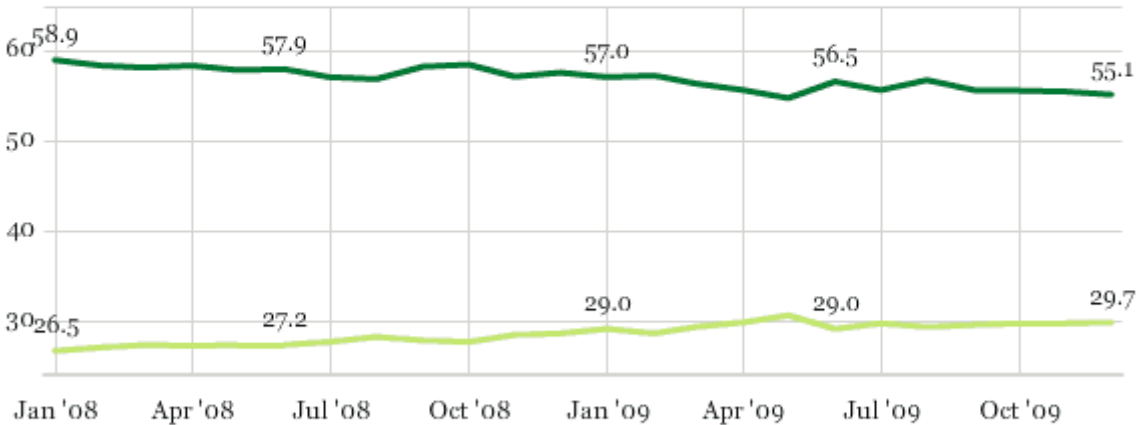
Monthly averages reveal that among Americans who report that they are insured, the percentage with Medicaid, Medicare, or military/veterans' coverage increased fairly steadily from January of 2008 to December of 2009, while those with employer-based health insurance declined over that period.

*Is your primary health insurance coverage through an employer or union, through Medicare, Medicaid, military or veterans' coverage, or something else?*

Among insured adults aged 18 and older

■ % Employer-based

■ % Government program (Medicaid, Medicare, or military/veterans' coverage)



Monthly averages from January 2008-December 2009

Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

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As would be expected, there is a distinct difference in health insurance type by age as Americans aged 65 and older qualify for Medicare. More than three-quarters of insured seniors report that they get their health coverage through a government plan (Medicare, Medicaid, or military/veterans' benefits). The majority of Americans aged 18 to 64 who have health insurance are covered through their employer or union. This number however declined slightly last year, as did the percentage of elderly Americans reporting employer-based health coverage. At the same time, the percentage of 18- to 64-year-olds reliant on a government plan for their healthcare increased somewhat from 14.5% in 2008 to 15.7% in 2009.

*Insurance Coverage by Age, 2008 vs. 2009*

Among insured adults

	<b>2008 Average</b>	<b>2009 Average</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>AGES 18-64</b>			
Employer-based	69.7%	68.6%	-1.1
Government program	14.5%	15.7%	+1.2
Something else	14.8%	14.6%	-0.2
<b>AGES 65 and Older</b>			
Employer-based	12.9%	11.8%	-1.1
Government program	77.0%	77.7%	+0.7
Something else	8.7%	8.6%	-0.1

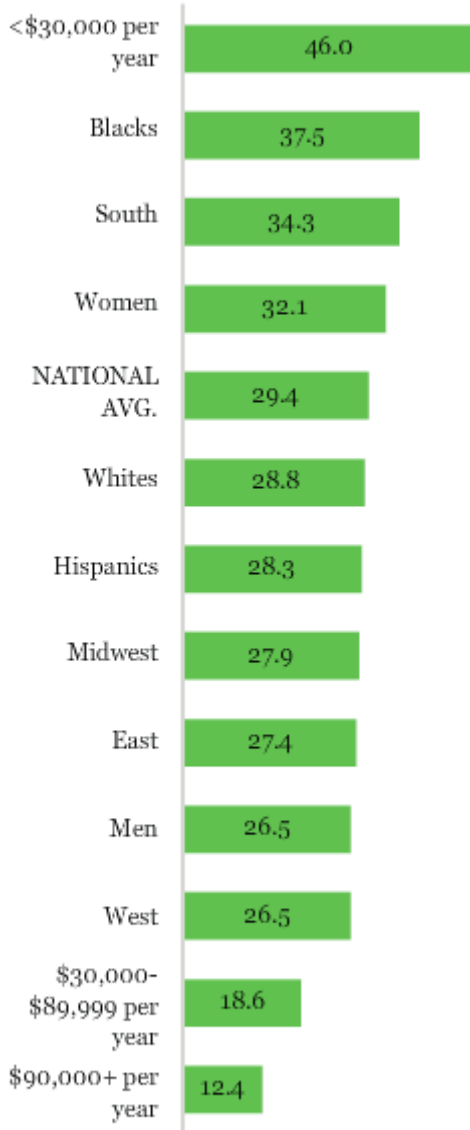
Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

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In addition to age, there are differences in reliance on government health insurance by several other demographic groups. Insured Americans who have an annual incomes of less than \$30,000 are among the most likely to say their primary health coverage is through Medicare, Medicaid, or military/veterans' benefits (46%). At the other end of the spectrum are those people who make \$90,000 or more per year, 12.4% of whom report getting coverage through a government plan. When it comes to employer-based health insurance, 75.5% of higher income Americans and 36.7% of lower income Americans report they are covered through their employer or union.

*Percentage With Health Coverage Through a Government Plan by Demographic Groups*

Among insured adults aged 18 and older

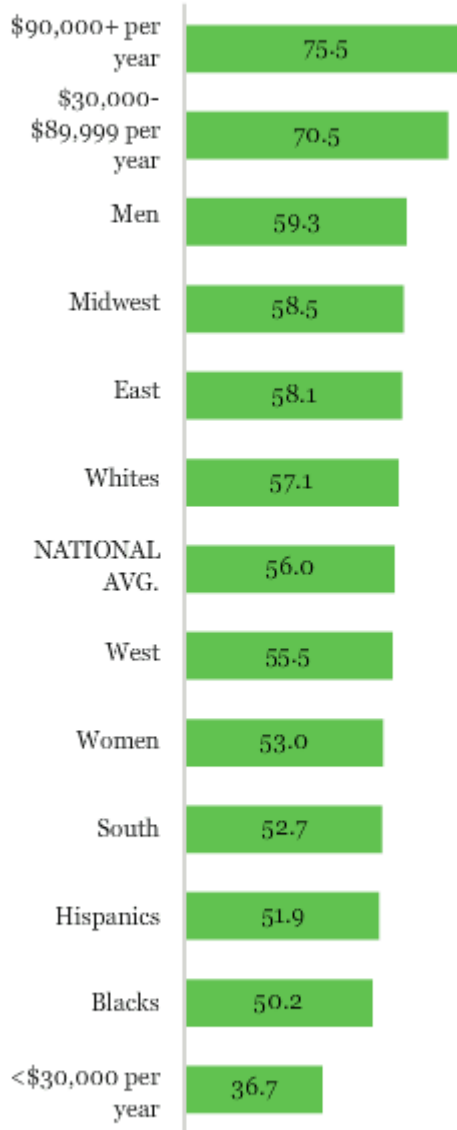


2009  
Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

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*Percentage With Employer-Based Health Coverage by Demographic Groups*

Among insured adults aged 18 and older



2009  
Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

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**Bottom Line**

In his State of the Union address, President Obama said he took on healthcare reform to help the middle class and those Americans who are struggling to get coverage as well as to reduce costs.

The president claimed healthcare reform could reduce the federal deficit by as much \$1 trillion over the next decade, an important selling point considering that the increasing number of citizens reliant on some form of government health insurance could put additional budget strain on the federal government. The Gallup data emphasize the extent to which the health insurance landscape can change in a relatively short period of time with more Americans relying on government care and fewer getting coverage through their employer from 2008 to 2009.

## **Survey Methods**

For the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, Gallup is interviewing no fewer than 1,000 U.S. adults nationwide 350 days per year. All monthly samples are near 30,000 per month. For monthly results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 1$  percentage point.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on landline telephones and cellular phones.

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## **Americans Agree: Quality Jobs Remain Hard to Find**

*One in 10 Americans think now is a "good time" to find a quality job*

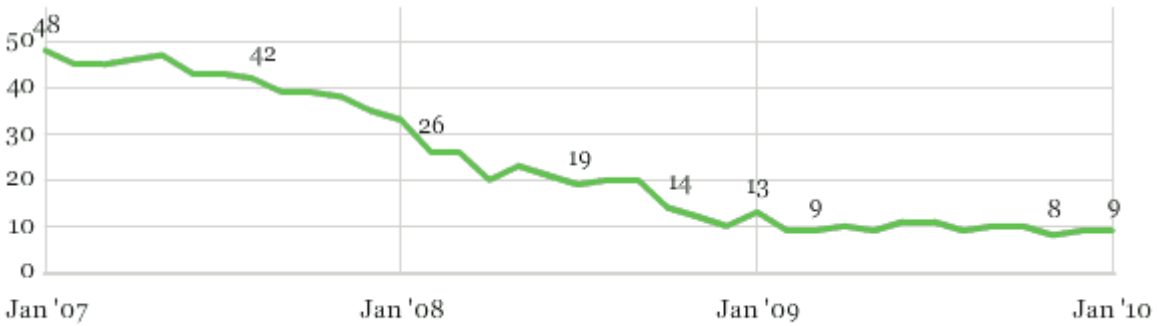
January 28, 2010

As the Obama administration and Congress shift their focus to the economy and jobs after the State of the Union, Gallup polling suggests they need to consider quality as well as quantity. One in 10 Americans (9%) believe now is a "good time" to find a "quality job" -- a situation that has persisted over the past year, and a huge deterioration in job-market conditions from January 2007, when nearly half of Americans (48%) expressed optimism about finding a quality job.

### Finding a Quality Job Nationwide

Thinking about the job situation in America today, would you say that it is now a good time or a bad time to find a quality job?

■ % "Good time"

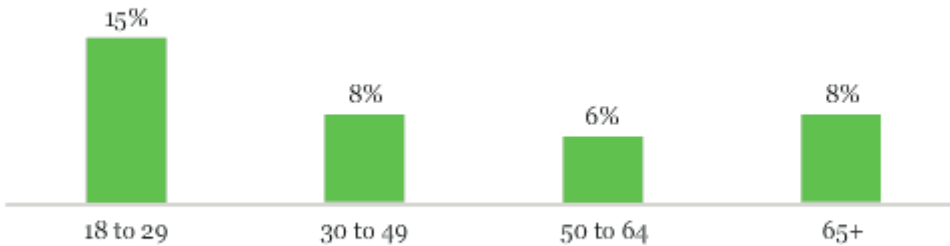


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While Americans disagree about many things -- and rarely reflect an overwhelming consensus about anything concerning the economy -- their views about the lack of quality jobs are a clear exception; the total lack of optimism about the prospects of finding a quality job in January 2010 is consistent across ages, incomes, genders, and regions of the country.

### Finding a Quality Job, by Age

% "Good time" to find a quality job

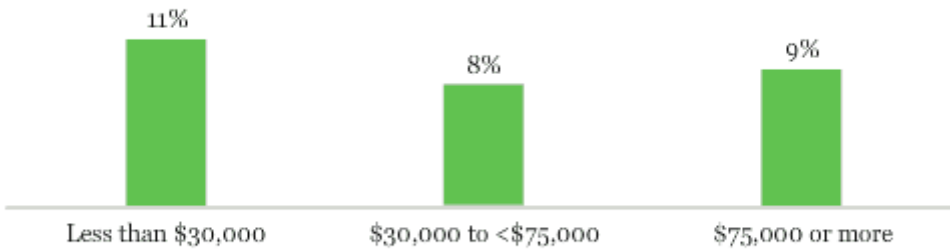


USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 8-10, 2010

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### *Finding a Quality Job, by Income*

% "Good time" to find a quality job

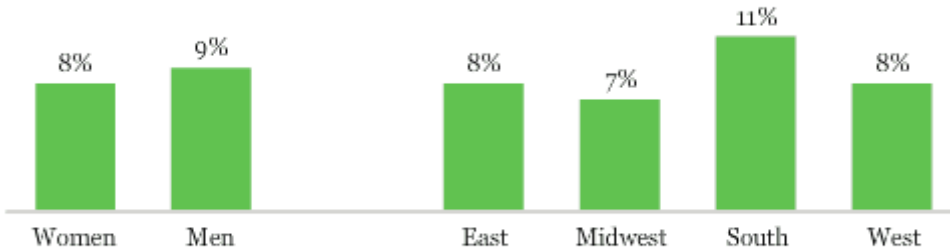


USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 8-10, 2010

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### *Finding a Quality Job, by Gender and by Region*

% "Good time" to find a quality job



USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 8-10, 2010

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## **Commentary**

Modeling based on Gallup's Job Creation Index suggests that the U.S. unemployment rate is likely to exceed 10.0% when reported on Feb. 5, while Gallup's consumer spending measure provides little reason to expect improvement in discretionary spending anytime soon. Hiring about three-quarters of a million census takers may temporarily help with the unemployment statistics, but these temporary, low-paying jobs reflect the much larger challenge: a lack of quality jobs.

Given this year's approaching midterm elections, and the time it takes for policy changes to affect the economy, it may be tempting for the president and Congress to seek some kind of quick fix to create jobs and reduce the unemployment rate. And a 1930s-style jobs corps, like adding census takers, could have its supporters.

However, Gallup's quality job data show the real problem offers much more of a challenge than can be met by just increasing the number of part-time and low-paying jobs. The objective should not be simply to get the unemployment rate below double digits. Instead, it should be to return to the conditions of January 2007: a time when one in two Americans were optimistic about finding a "quality" job. In turn, this means the "pivot" in the nation's capital should include not only an intense focus on creating high-paying private-sector jobs but also on improving education so there are highly educated employees to fill those jobs.

*On Feb. 10, 2010, at its world headquarters in Washington, D.C., Gallup for the first time will release the findings from its daily U.S. employment tracking, including insights into the U.S. workforce's state of mind.*

### **Survey Methods**

Results are based on telephone interviews with 1,023 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted Jan. 8-10, 2010. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 4$  percentage points.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on land-line telephones (for respondents with a land-line telephone) and cellular phones (for respondents who are cell-phone only).

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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### **Americans on the State of the Nation: Better, but Not Great**

*Though up from January 2009, satisfaction with U.S. remains low*

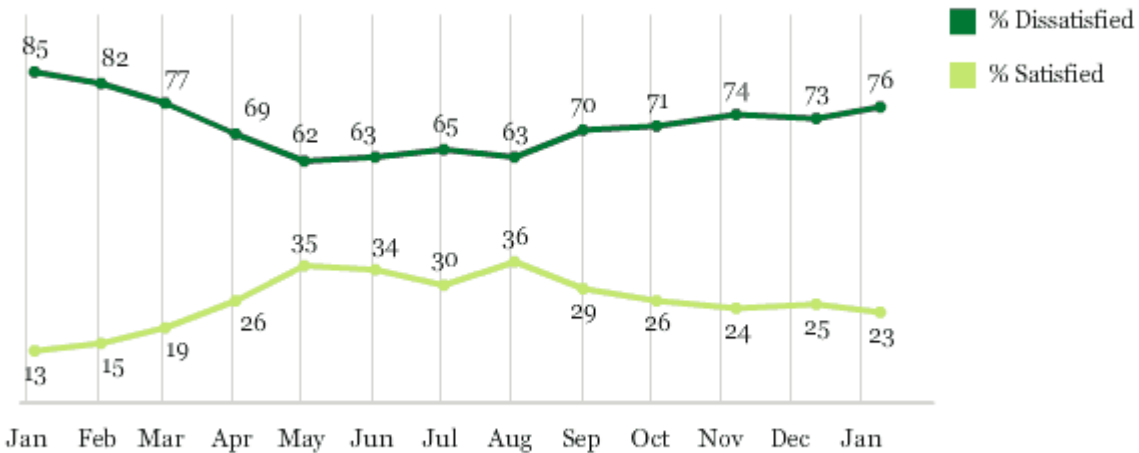
January 27, 2010

Americans' opinions about the state of the nation have improved in several respects since President Barack Obama took office a year ago. Still, today's ratings are on the order of *less bad* rather than positive. Twenty-three percent of Americans are now satisfied with the way things are going in the country, up from 13% in early January 2009. However, 76% remain dissatisfied -- well above the average 57% dissatisfied since 1979.



*U.S. Satisfaction, January 2009-January 2010*

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States at this time?



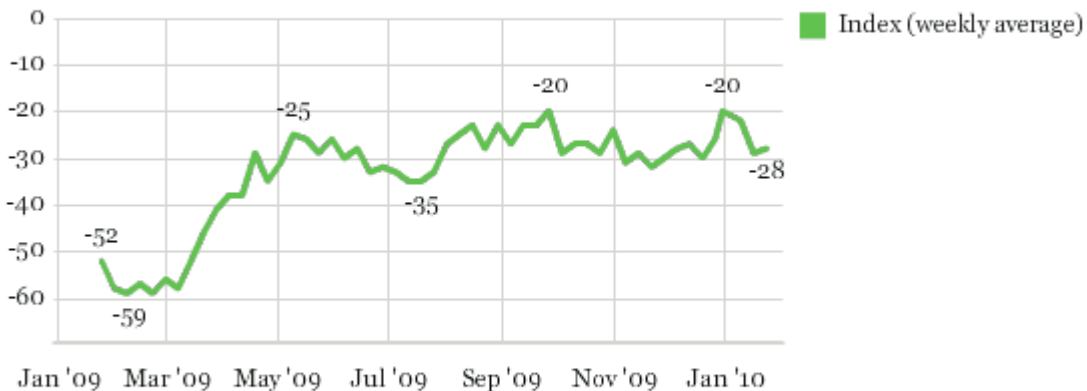
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Consumer attitudes about the economy show a similar pattern. Americans' confidence in the economy nearly collapsed during the Wall Street crisis in the fall of 2008, and has since rebounded some, but it remains profoundly negative.

At the start of Obama's term, Gallup's Economic Confidence Index registered -52; today it is -28. But the high point for this indicator over the past two decades was +56 in January 2000.

*Gallup Economic Confidence Index, January 2009-January 2010*

% Positive about economic conditions minus % negative



Gallup Daily tracking

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Additionally, while the year-to-year comparisons show some improvement in public optimism about the country and the economy, these levels actually peaked at various points in 2009, and have since declined. Hence, the recent momentum has not been in Obama's favor.

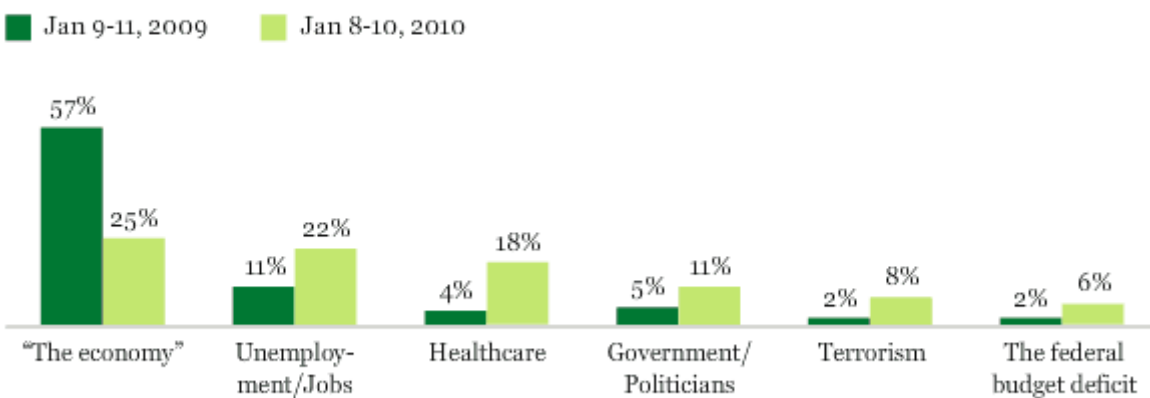
Americans are substantially less likely today to mention "the economy," generally, when asked what they think is the most important problem facing the country: 25% now name it, compared with 57% in January 2009. However, this decline is partially offset by an increase in the percentage citing unemployment or jobs -- currently 22%, up from 11%.

Another reason the economy may be less top-of-mind for Americans is that the healthcare reform effort in Washington has steered a segment of the populace toward that issue. Nearly one in five Americans (18%, including 24% of Democrats) name healthcare today as the nation's top problem, up sharply from 4% at the start of Obama's term.

The Gallup trend also documents slight increases over the past year in mentions of government/politicians, terrorism, and the federal budget deficit as the most important problem.

*Most Important Problem, January 2009 vs. January 2010*

What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?



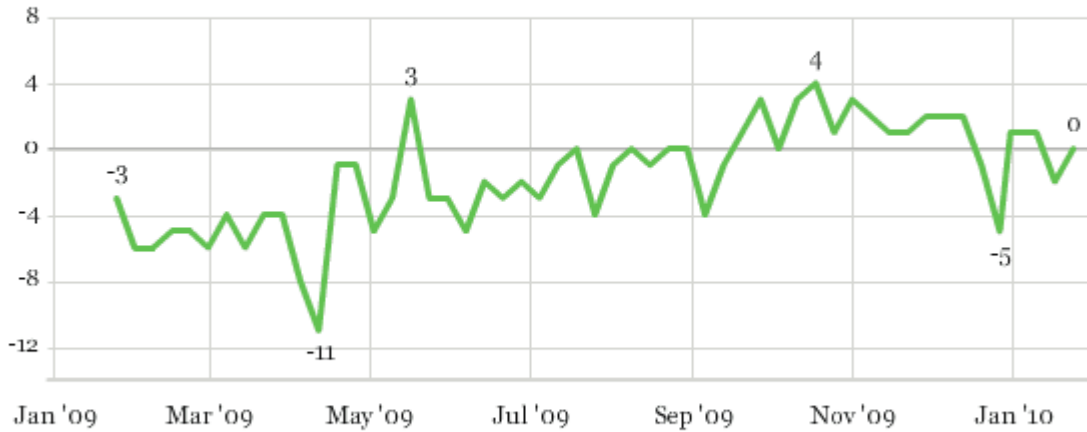
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In line with Americans' increased focus on unemployment over the past year, Gallup's national Job Creation Index (based on the percentage of employed Americans saying their companies are hiring workers minus those saying their companies are laying workers off) suggests the job market is little better today than it was when Obama took office. The index for the most recent week (Jan. 18-24) stands at 0 (with equal percentages of workers saying their employers are expanding versus reducing their workforces), versus -3 for the comparable week in January 2009. Similarly, 9% of Americans today say now is a good time to find a quality job, compared with 13% in January 2009.

*Gallup Job Creation Index, January 2009-January 2010*

% Of workers saying employer is hiring minus % saying employer is laying off

■ Net Job Creation Index (weekly average)



Gallup Daily tracking

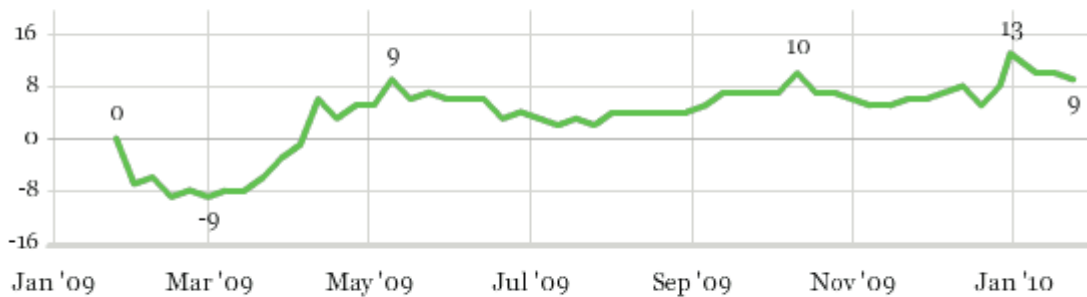
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On a more personal level, Americans are slightly more upbeat about their own standard of living today than they were last January. The percentage of Americans now saying their standard of living is "getting better" exceeds the percentage "getting worse" by 9 points; this compares with a 0 score on the same index a year ago.

*Perceptions of Personal Standard of Living, January 2009-January 2010*

Right now, do you feel your standard of living is getting better or getting worse?

■ Net improved (% getting better minus % getting worse) -- weekly average



Gallup Daily tracking

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**Bottom Line**

In reviewing the state of the nation Wednesday night and charting his course for the coming year, President Obama can rightly point out real improvements in Americans' evaluations of the country and the economy since he took office. However, his deteriorating approval ratings -- dropping from 68% when he took office to 48% today -- are a meaningful indicator that those improvements fall well short of what Americans expected from him.

### **Survey Methods**

Results are based on telephone interviews with 1,023 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted Jan. 8-10, 2010. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 4$  percentage points.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on land-line telephones (for respondents with a land-line telephone) and cellular phones (for respondents who are cell-phone only).

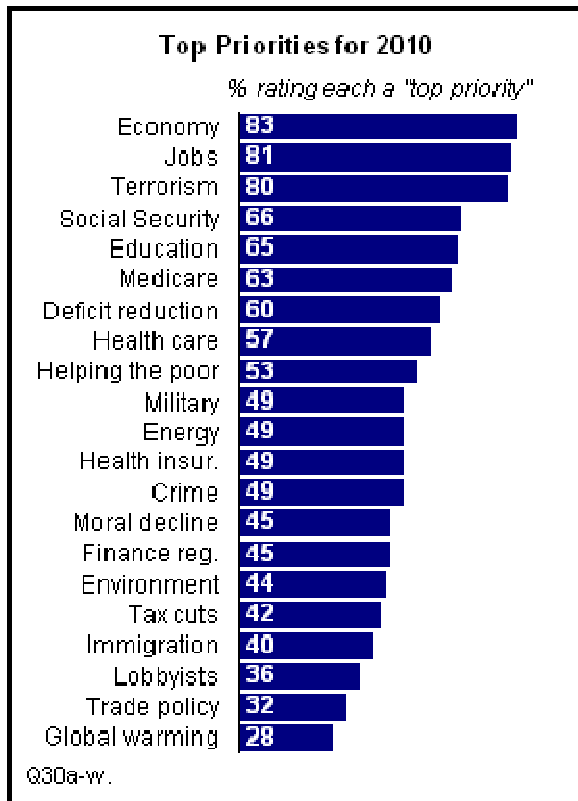
In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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### **The Public's Political Agenda**

January 25, 2010

As Barak Obama begins his second year in office, the public's priorities for the president and Congress remain much as they were one year ago. Strengthening the nation's economy and improving the job situation continue to top the list. And, in the wake of the failed Christmas Day terrorist attack on a Detroit-bound airliner, defending the country from future terrorist attacks also remains a top priority.



At the same time, the public has shifted the emphasis it assigns to two major policy issues: dealing with the nation's energy problem and reducing the budget deficit. About half (49%) say that dealing with the nation's energy problem should be a top priority, down from 60% a year ago. There has been a modest rise in the percentage saying that reducing the budget deficit should be a top priority, from 53% to 60%.

Other policy priorities show little change from a year ago. For example, despite the ongoing debate over health care reform, about as many now call reducing health care costs a top priority (57%) as did so in early 2009 (59%). In fact, the percentage rating health care costs a top priority is lower now than it was in both 2008 (69%) and 2007 (68%).

In addition, the percentage placing top priority on providing health insurance to the uninsured stands at 49%. That is little changed from a year ago and off its high of 61% in January 2001. Notably, there is now a wider partisan gap in opinion about this issue than for any of the other 20 issues in the survey: fully 75% of Democrats rate providing health insurance to the uninsured as a top priority compared with just 26% of Republicans.

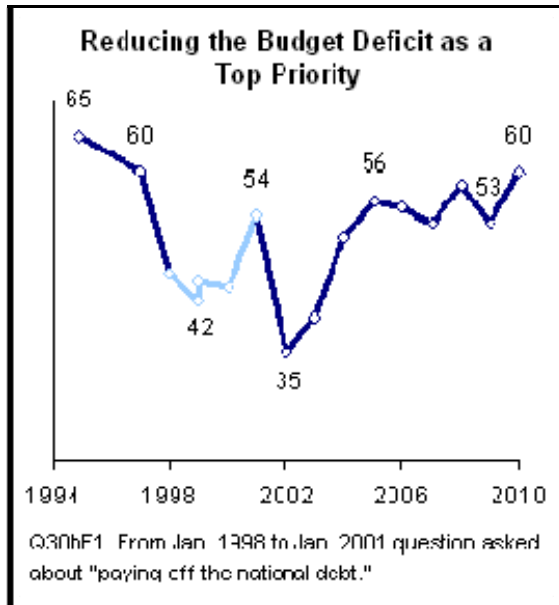
More than six-in-ten Americans say securing the Social Security system (66%) and securing the Medicare system (63%) should be top priorities for Obama and Congress. About as many (65%) say that improving the educational system should be a top policy priority. For all three items, public evaluations are not significantly different than they were one year ago.

In the wake of the financial crisis, the public does not place increased financial regulation among its top policy priorities. Fewer than half (45%) say stricter regulation of financial institutions should be a top priority for the president and Congress.

<b>Top Domestic Priorities for Obama and Congress</b>											
<i>Percent considering each as a "top priority"</i>	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Jan 2003	Jan 2004	Jan 2005	Jan 2006	Jan 2007	Jan 2008	Jan 2009	Jan 2010	09-10 change
Strengthening nation's economy	81	71	73	79	75	66	68	75	85	<b>83</b>	-2
Improving the job situation	60	67	62	37	68	65	57	61	82	<b>81</b>	-1
Defending US against terrorism	--	83	81	78	75	80	80	74	76	<b>80</b>	+4
Securing Social Security	74	62	59	35	70	64	64	64	63	<b>66</b>	+3
Improving educational system	78	66	62	71	70	67	69	66	61	<b>65</b>	+4
Securing Medicare	71	55	56	37	67	67	63	60	60	<b>63</b>	+3
Reducing budget deficit	--	35	40	51	56	55	53	58	53	<b>60</b>	+7
Reducing health care costs	--	--	--	--	--	--	68	69	59	<b>57</b>	-2
Dealing with problems of poor	63	44	48	50	59	55	55	51	50	<b>53</b>	+3
Strengthening the military	48	52	48	48	52	42	46	42	44	<b>49</b>	+5
Dealing with US energy problem	--	42	40	46	47	50	57	59	60	<b>49</b>	-11
Providing health ins. to uninsured	61	43	45	54	60	59	56	54	52	<b>49</b>	-3
Reducing crime	76	53	47	53	53	62	62	54	46	<b>49</b>	+3
Dealing with moral breakdown	51	45	39	45	41	47	47	40	45	<b>45</b>	0
Stricter rules for financial institutions	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	<b>45</b>	--
Protecting the environment	63	44	39	49	49	57	57	56	41	<b>44</b>	+3
Reducing middle class taxes	66	43	--	44	48	51	48	46	43	<b>42</b>	-1
Dealing with illegal immigration	--	--	--	--	--	--	55	51	41	<b>40</b>	-1
Reducing influence of lobbyists	--	--	--	--	--	--	35	39	36	<b>36</b>	0
Dealing with global trade	37	25	--	32	32	30	34	37	31	<b>32</b>	+1
Dealing with global warming	--	--	--	--	--	--	38	35	30	<b>28</b>	-2

Q30a-w.

## Budget Deficit and Energy



The priority given to reducing the budget deficit has risen seven points over the last year; in early 2009, 53% of the public called deficit reduction a top priority compared with 60% in the current survey. Both Republicans (+10 points) and Democrats (+8 points) have become more likely to say this is a top priority.

Emphasis on the budget deficit has increased since 2002, when it reached a low ebb following several years of budget surpluses (from 1998 to 2001 the question was worded "paying off the national debt"). Currently, the priority given to reducing the budget deficit is not significantly higher than it was in 2008 (58% top priority) or 1997 (60% top priority) and it lags slightly behind the high of 65% in December 1994.

**Partisan Views of the Budget Deficit**

% rating deficit 'top priority'	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D
	%	%	%	diff
Jan 2010	61	60	60	+1
Jan 2009	51	52	57	-1
Jan 2008	52	64	57	-12
Jan 2007	42	57	53	-15
Jan 2006	45	62	56	-17
Jan 2005	48	64	54	-16
Jan 2004	44	57	55	-13
Jan 2003	38	48	33	-10
Jan 2002	27	41	38	-14
Jan 1997	66	54	62	+12

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In the past two years, there has been no difference between the priority Republicans and Democrats place on reducing the budget deficit. In the current survey, a single point separates Republicans (61% top priority) from Democrats (60% top priority). In 2009, partisans were equally close in their views. This is a dramatic change from much of the previous decade. Throughout the Bush administration, Democrats expressed far more concern than Republicans over the deficit. The opposite was true in 1997, when Bill Clinton was in office. At that time significantly more Republicans than Democrats said reducing the budget deficit should be a top priority.

Six-in-ten independents say this should be a top priority, matching the views of Republicans and Democrats. Independents' concern over the budget deficit has been stable over the past three years.

While concern over the budget deficit has gone up, the percentage giving priority to dealing with the nation's energy problem has declined significantly -- and this decline has taken place among Republicans, Democrats and independents alike. In the current survey, 49% rate energy a top priority, down 11 points from 60% in 2009. In the late 2000s, about six-in-ten consistently gave top priority to dealing with the nation's energy problem. The current number is more in line with views from the early years of that decade, when the percentage that said dealing with the nation's energy problem should be a top priority ranged from the low-to-mid 40s.

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### **It's All About Jobs, Except When It's Not**

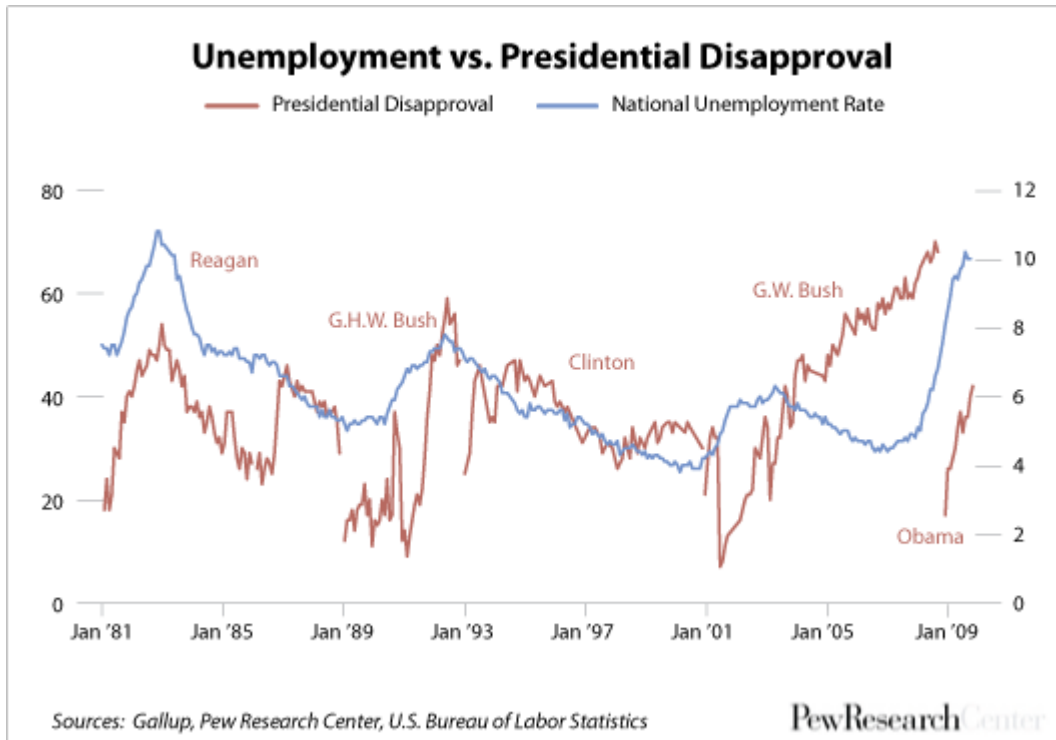
*Unemployment and Presidential Approval Ratings 1981-2009*

January 26, 2010

As the Obama administration redoubles its effort to communicate its concerns about unemployment in the face of sagging approval ratings, a look at the connection between the rise and fall of joblessness and the political fortunes of past presidents in the modern era is instructive. Recent history shows that the public response to all presidents has been shaped to some degree by rising or falling unemployment. However, only Ronald Reagan's ratings in his first term have borne as close a connection as have Obama's to changes in the unemployment rate.

In fact, the relationship between unemployment and presidential approval varies from crystal clear to murky. Indeed since 1981 there have been a number of times when the ties between changes in joblessness rates and public judgments of the president have been weak or even indiscernible. But the link is strongest when unemployment rises precipitously. And it weakens, or even disappears entirely, when other concerns -- such as national security -- become dominant public issues.





The correlation coefficients shown in the accompanying table measure the degree to which unemployment and presidential approval and disapproval ratings varied together over the past 30 years (coefficient of 1 or -1 indicating a total positive or negative correspondence between two variables, a zero coefficient indicating no relationship).

<b>Correlations Between Unemployment Rates and Overall Approval Ratings</b>		
	Approval	Disapproval
<b>Reagan</b>		
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i>	-0.91	0.86
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</i>	0.58	-0.57
<b>G.H.W. Bush</b>		
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i>	-0.57	0.77
<b>Clinton</b>		
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i>	-0.25	-0.34
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</i>	0.06	-0.26
<b>G.W. Bush</b>		
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i>	0.16	0.09
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</i>	-0.27	0.40
<b>Obama</b>		
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i>	-0.83	0.94

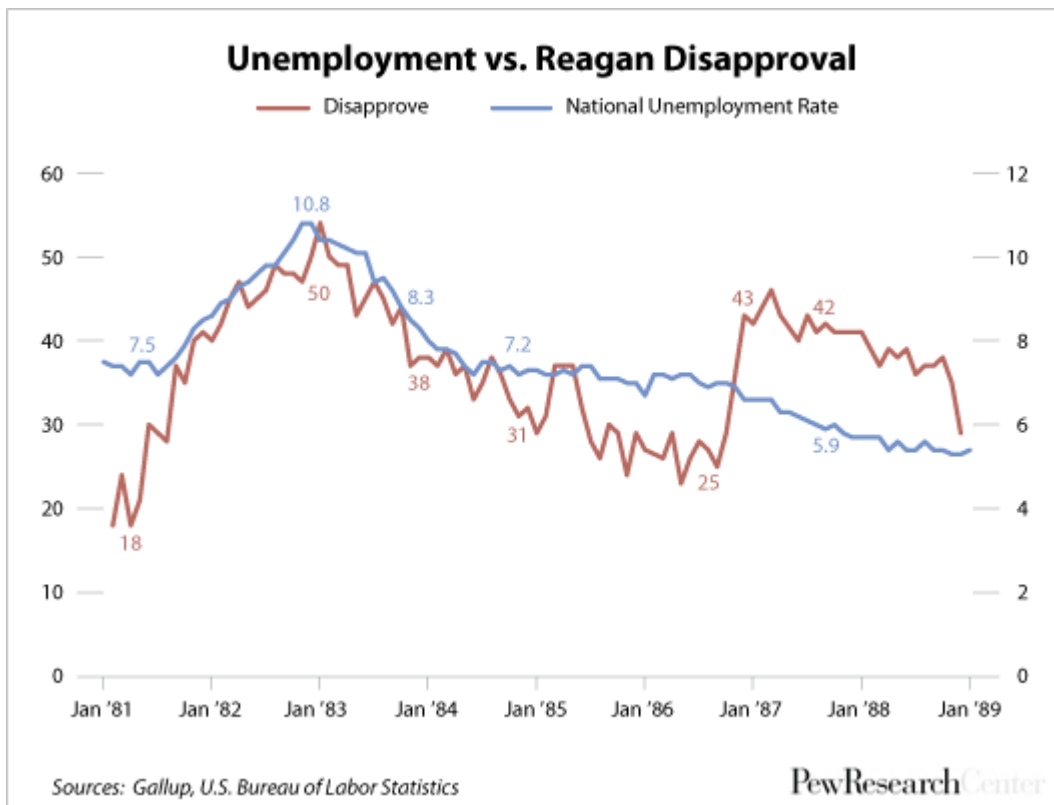
The data reveal an extremely high correlation between Ronald Reagan's approval ratings and unemployment rates during his first term -- approval falling and disapproval rising as joblessness rose -- but not during his second term. The relationships also hold for George H.W. Bush, although not nearly as strongly as for Reagan in his first term.

For both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, however, other factors clearly dominate and the correlation between unemployment and political support is weak or even non-existent. Thus far, Obama's experience looks quite similar to Reagan's in his first term in office, not surprising as both saw unemployment rise to double digits on their watch.

But a closer look at the trajectory of both unemployment and job approval ratings over the course of a presidential term does reveal a number of surprises in recent years.

### Ronald Reagan

It is not an exaggeration to say that the rise and fall of the unemployment rate more than any other factor shaped general public reaction to Reagan in his first term. As unemployment rose from 7.5 % at the start of 1981 to more than 8.6% by January 1982, his job disapproval rating rose from 18% to 40% over this period.



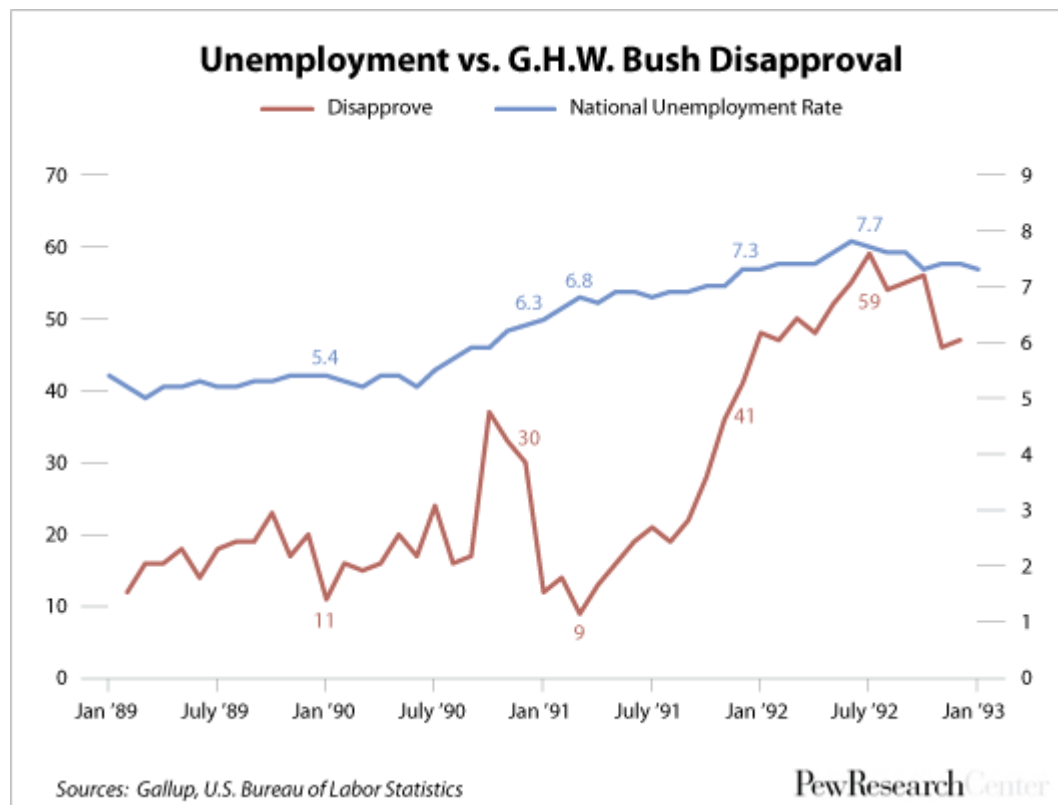
By the end of 1982, unemployment stood at nearly 11% and 50% of the public was telling Gallup that it disapproved of how the president was handling his job. Fortunately for Reagan,

1983 saw unemployment begin to decline. By year's end, his approval scores began to recover, setting the stage for his successful run for reelection in 1984.

Throughout Reagan's second term, unemployment rates continued to decline, falling below 6% by September 1987. However, Reagan did not reap the political benefit of higher approval ratings. Opinion of the president fell sharply in December 1986 in response to the Iran-Contra scandal, and the correspondence between views of Reagan job performance and the unemployment rate all but disappeared.

### George H. W. Bush

Unemployment rose appreciably over the course of the first President Bush's second year in office -- from 5.4% in January 1990 to 6.3% by the end of the year. But the lead up to the invasion of Iraq produced a typical rally around the president in times of foreign crisis that kept Bush's approval ratings quite healthy. America's quick and relatively painless Gulf War victory sent his approval scores to record highs in the first quarter of 1991 obviating the political impact of a steady rise in unemployment ... but not for long. Over the course of the remainder of the year, Bush's approval rating tumbled, falling from a high of 86% in March to 50% in December. Over that period, the unemployment rate rose from 6.4% to 7.3%.

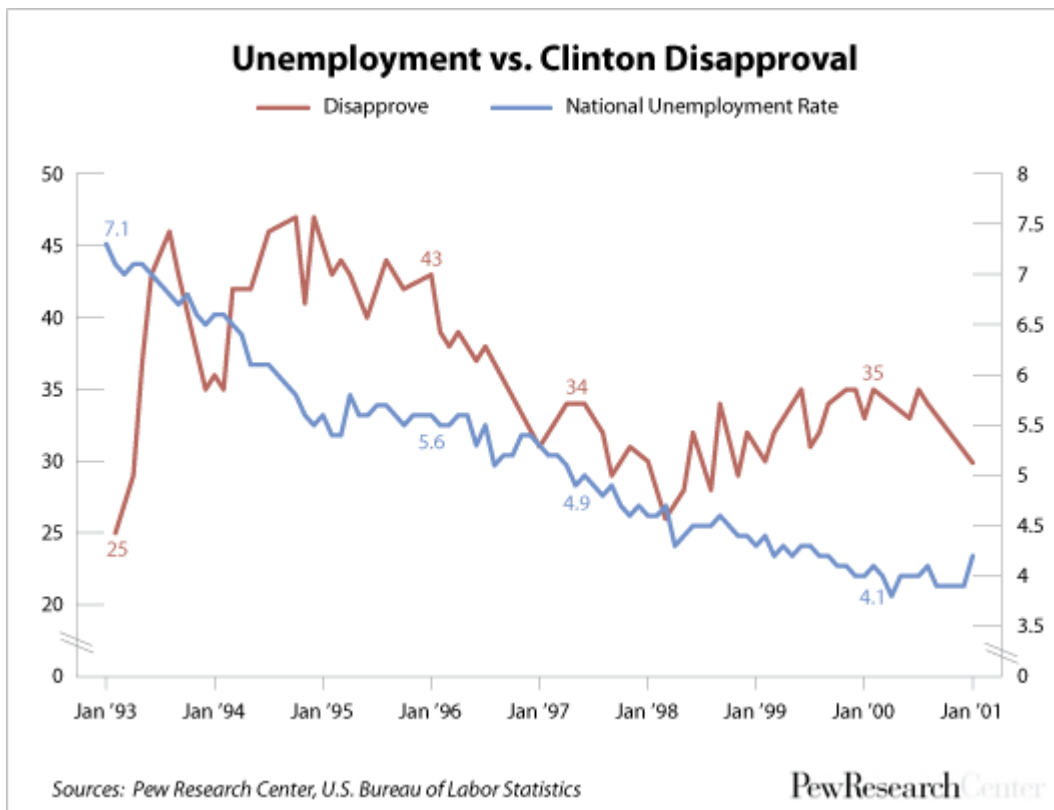


Unemployment remained high in 1992, but the president's ratings fell even more sharply over the course of this election year. Bush was seen by the public to be out of touch with financially

struggling Americans, and blamed by a majority of Americans for not trying hard enough to fix the economy.

## Bill Clinton

For much of Clinton's first term, unemployment rates and public judgments of the president were not in close correspondence. Unemployment declined from above 7% at the time he took office to 5.5% by the end of 1994. However, Clinton's ratings were quite mixed for much of this time reflecting political difficulties (the collapse of health care reform, and bitter fights over his crime bill and economic packages), as well as controversies over his past personal and financial involvements. However, Clinton's ratings began to improve in the fall of 1995 as a result of a successful showdown with Newt Gingrich over a shutdown of the federal government. Unemployment remained low in 1996, and Clinton's ratings rose.



The importance of the unemployment rate to Clinton's approval ratings in his second term can be inferred from the fact that neither varied very much: Unemployment remained low and Clinton's approval scores remained high -- this last despite the extraordinary Lewinsky scandal and his subsequent impeachment.

## George W. Bush

Like his father's experience in his first term in office, George W. Bush's ratings were driven largely by the public's response to national security concerns. In the end, however, a spike in unemployment contributed to Bush's leaving office with one of the lowest approval scores of the modern era. When Bush was inaugurated in January 2001, unemployment stood at 4.2%. The rate rose markedly following the Sept. 11 attacks, peaking at 6.3% in June 2003, not beginning a gradual decline until late that year. Nonetheless, Bush's ratings remained high throughout as the public rallied behind the president, first in response to the attacks, and subsequently during the early stages of the Iraq war.

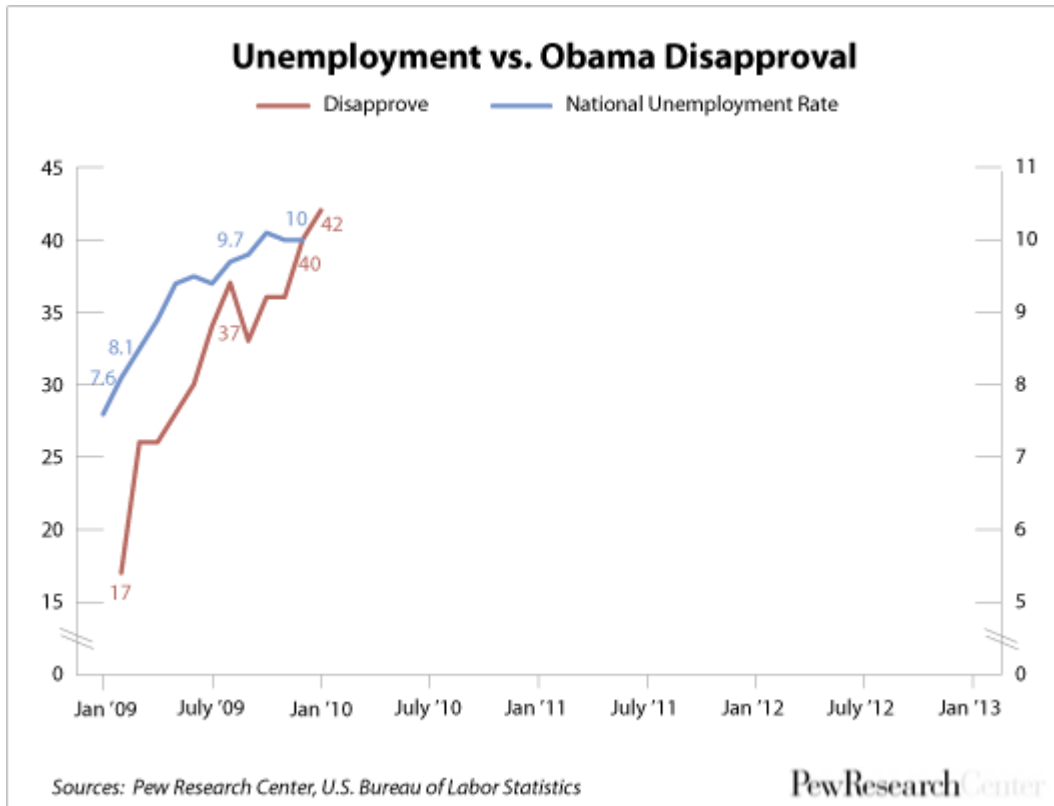


In his second term, unemployment declined at first, but Bush's ratings plummeted as the public grew disillusioned with the war in Iraq and criticism of the president's handling of Hurricane Katrina and a variety of other matters took a toll on the president's ratings. When unemployment soared in 2008, Bush's already low ratings fell even lower.

## Barack Obama

When Barack Obama took office, 7.6% of Americans were unemployed (nearly identical to the unemployment rate Reagan inherited some 30 years earlier). As with Reagan, a rising joblessness appears to have taken a substantial toll on the president's job approval ratings. From

a post-inauguration high of 64%, Obama's approval rating fell to roughly 50% by the end of the year as unemployment rose to 10.0%.



As the past 30 years have shown, shifts in the public's judgments about presidential performance are not always the product of rising or falling unemployment rates; other factors can intervene. However, there is nothing now on the horizon that seems likely to diminish the impact that unemployment is having on views of Obama. His situation continues to parallel Reagan's, whose ratings recovered only when jobless rates began to decline.

This is not to suggest that no matter what the president does, it will have little impact on public opinion unless it moves the unemployment numbers. Yes, the public's bottom line on the Obama presidency is likely be driven by economic trends, but other factors may well influence personal confidence in the president and his administration. This, in turn, can influence how quickly and decisively public optimism returns if and when the economic outlook improves -- as well as shape the level of political backlash the president experiences while the economy remains in the dumps.

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## Americans Lean Against Letting More Haitians Into U.S.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) support keeping U.S. personnel there until basic services are restored

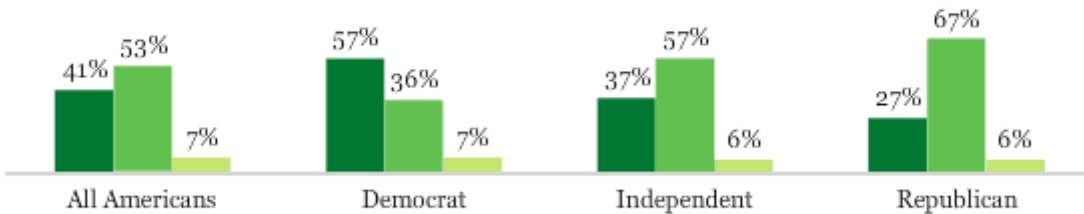
January 25, 2010

With the situation in Haiti still dire after the Jan. 12 earthquake, and with a growing number of Haitians reportedly seeking entry into the U.S., a new *USA Today*/Gallup poll finds that the majority of Americans do not think the U.S. should increase the number of Haitian immigrants it accepts. There is a political divide, with 57% of Democrats in favor, and most independents (57%) and Republicans (67%) opposed.

*In response to the earthquake, do you think the United States should or should not increase the number of immigrants from Haiti allowed into the U.S.?*

Among all Americans and by political party

■ Yes, should   ■ No, should not   ■ No opinion



USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 23-24, 2010

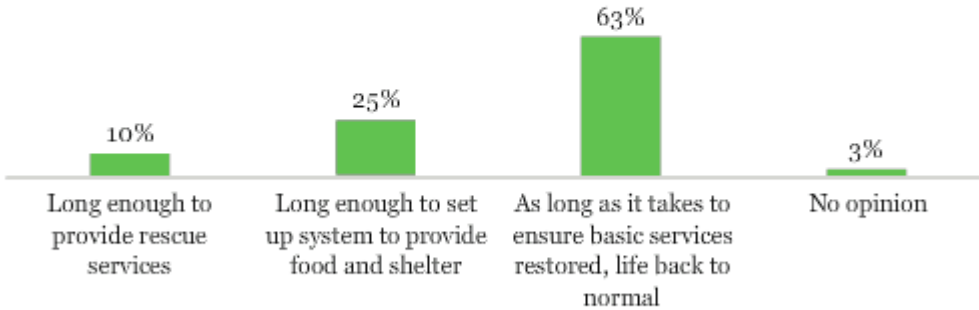
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"The large majority of Americans (73%) think the U.S. is doing enough to help the victims.."

The results from the Jan. 23-24, 2010, survey come amid reports that immigration advocates and some members of Congress are urging the Obama administration to relax some of the restrictions on Haitian immigration. According to *The Washington Post*, discussions center on Haitians with relatives already legally in the U.S. and on injured children who are at risk of death without better medical care. The question used in this survey did not specify these types of special conditions; rather, it asked generally about increasing "the number of immigrants from Haiti allowed into the U.S."

Americans strongly support continued U.S. government assistance in Haiti, with 63% saying the U.S. should keep troops and government workers in the country as long as it takes to ensure basic services are restored and life is more or less back to normal for the Haitian people. Here, political adversaries agree, with majorities of Democrats (69%), independents (63%), and Republicans (56%) in favor.

*How long do you think the U.S. should keep a large number of troops and other government workers in Haiti -- only long enough to provide emergency rescue services, only long enough to help put a system in place for providing food and shelter for the victims, or as long as it takes to ensure basic services are restored and life is more or less back to normal for the Haitian people?*

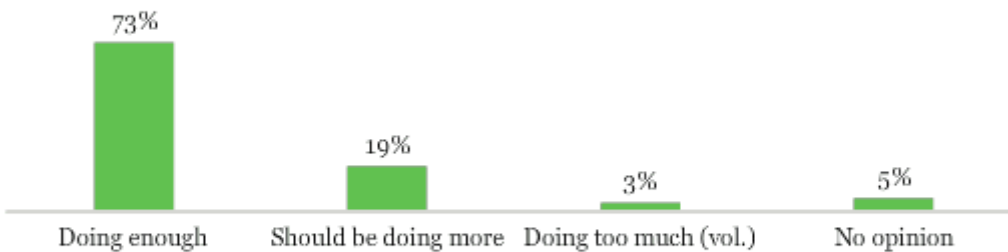


USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 23-24, 2010

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Americans are for the most part satisfied with U.S. efforts to help in Haiti. The large majority (73%) think the U.S. is doing enough to help the victims. Two in 10 (19%) say it should be doing more, while 3% volunteer that it is doing too much. The question does not distinguish between public- and private-sector work.

*Do you think the United States is doing enough to help the victims of the earthquake in Haiti, or do you think the United States should be doing more?*



USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 23-24, 2010

(vol.) = Volunteered response

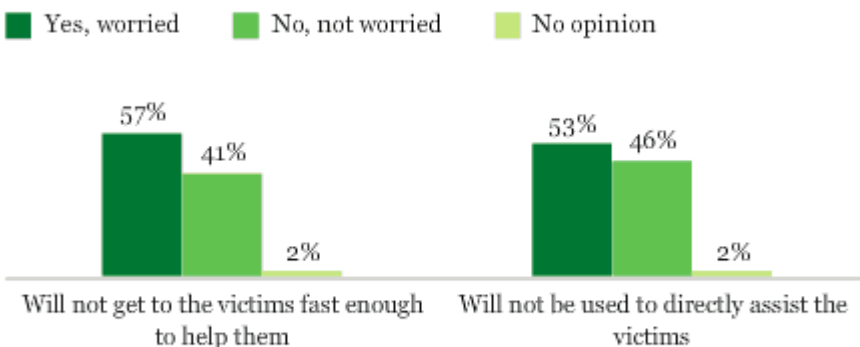
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Americans, according to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, have -- as of Monday -- donated more than \$438 million to help with rescue, relief, and recovery efforts in Haiti. The majority of Americans, regardless of whether they have donated money to Haiti, say they worry that their



money will not get to the victims fast enough or that it will not be used to directly assist the victims.

*Are you worried or not worried that any money you donate to assist the victims of the earthquake in Haiti -- [RANDOM ORDER]?*



USA Today/Gallup, Jan. 23-24, 2010

GALLUP®

### Bottom Line

Americans for the most part see the U.S. doing enough to help earthquake victims in Haiti, and nearly two-thirds support keeping U.S. troops and government personnel in the country until life is more or less back to normal. But Americans stop short of supporting increased immigration to the U.S. from Haiti as a means of assisting the earthquake victims. While the Gallup question does not ask about certain specific circumstances Haitians might face, the results suggest increasing immigration from Haiti would likely carry political risk.

### Survey Methods

Results are based on telephone interviews with 1,067 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted Jan. 23-24, 2010. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 4$  percentage points.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on land-line telephones and cellular phones.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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## In U.S., Religious Prejudice Stronger Against Muslims

43% of Americans admit to feeling some prejudice toward followers of Islam

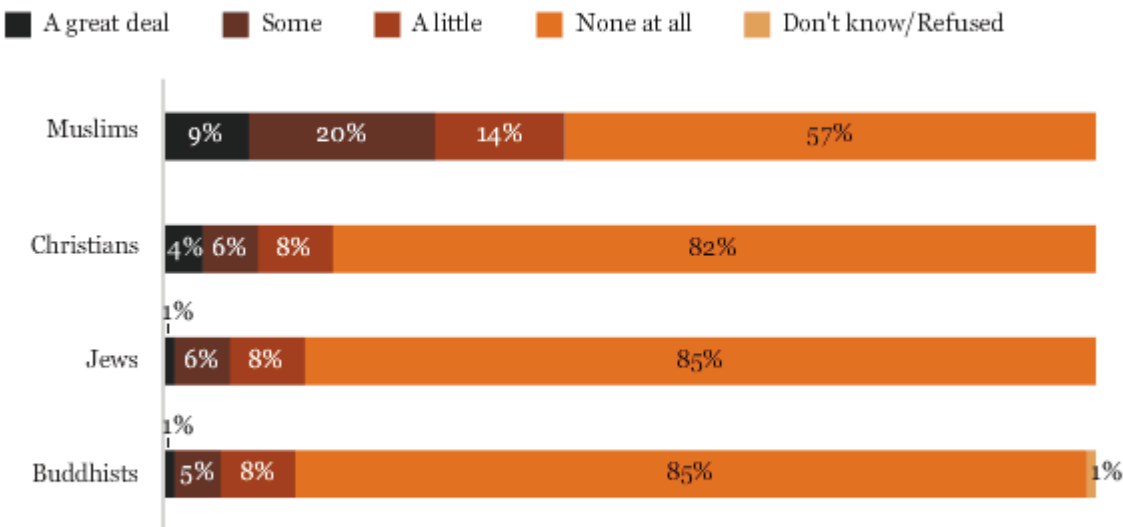
Analysis by the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies

January 25, 2010

More than 4 in 10 Americans (43%) admit to feeling at least "a little" prejudice toward Muslims -- more than twice the number who say the same about Christians (18%), Jews (15%) and Buddhists (14%). The findings are based on a new Gallup Center for Muslim Studies report, "Religious Perceptions in America: With an In-Depth Analysis of U.S. Attitudes Toward Muslims and Islam," released Thursday.

### Americans Express the Most Prejudice Toward Muslims

Thinking honestly about your feelings, how much prejudice, if any, do you feel toward each of the following religious groups?



Oct 31-Nov 13, 2009

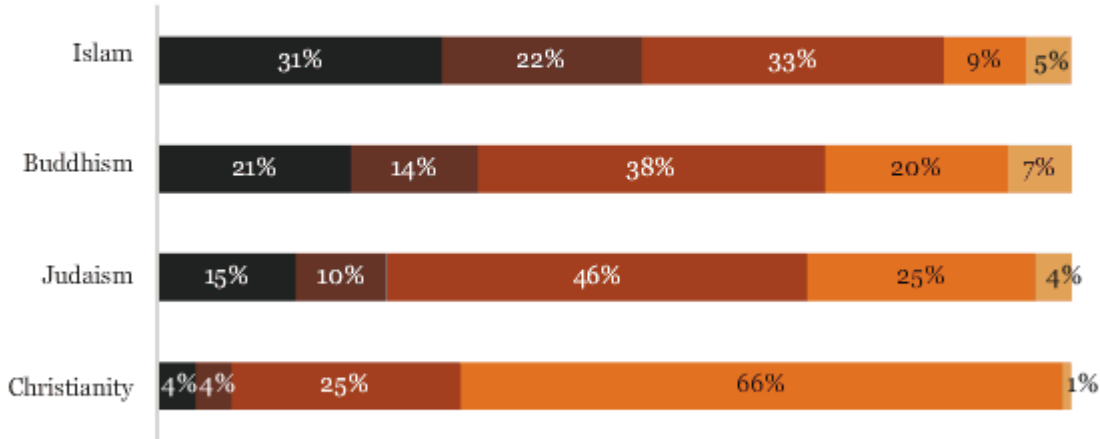
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In a separate question asking Americans to express their overall view about each of the four religions evaluated, Islam is the most negatively viewed. Nearly one-third of Americans (31%) say their opinion of Islam is "not favorable at all" versus 9% who say their opinion is "very favorable." This stands in contrast to Americans' views of Christianity and Judaism, which are far more likely to be "very favorable" than "not favorable at all," while Buddhism draws almost equally positive and negative opinions at the extremes. Gallup conducted the nationwide U.S. survey between Oct. 31 and Nov. 13, 2009, spanning the Fort Hood shooting in which a U.S.-born Muslim military doctor killed 13 people on the Army base on Nov. 5.

*Islam Is the Most Negatively Viewed Religion*

What is your opinion of each of the following religions? (among American respondents)

Not favorable at all    
  Not too favorable    
  Somewhat favorable    
  Very favorable  
 Don't know/Refused



Oct 31-Nov 13, 2009

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The new report further explores variables that are associated with extreme prejudice ("a great deal") toward followers of Islam as well as variables that may be related to lack of prejudice. To download the full report, go to [www.muslimwestfacts.com](http://www.muslimwestfacts.com). Key findings from the report will also be released next month in Cairo, Egypt. The Gallup Center for Muslim Studies conducts its Washington, D.C., and Cairo launches with its Muslim West Facts partner, the Coexist Foundation.

**Survey Methods**

Results for this Gallup Panel study are based on telephone interviews with 1,002 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted Oct.31-Nov.13, 2009. Gallup Panel members are recruited through random selection methods. The panel is weighted so that it is demographically representative of the U.S. adult population. For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ±3.4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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## Americans Would Deny Re-Election to Obama

January 28, 2010

Just three-in-ten people in the United States believe Barack Obama deserves to be re-elected in 2012, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 30 per cent of respondents would grant their president second term in office.

Conversely, 39 per cent of respondents think the Obama has not earned his re-election, and 32 per cent are not sure.

In American elections, candidates require 270 votes in the Electoral College to win the White House. In November 2008, Democratic nominee Obama secured a majority of electoral votes, defeating Republican contender John McCain. In January 2009, Obama became the first African American president in U.S. history.

On Jan. 25, Obama spoke about his first year in office, and declared: "I'd rather be a really good one-term president than a mediocre two-term president."

### Polling Data

At this point, do you think Barack Obama deserves to be re-elected as President in 2012?

Yes, he deserves to be re-elected	30%
No, he does not deserve to be re-elected	39%
Not sure	32%

*Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,003 American adults, conducted on Jan. 22 and Jan. 23, 2010. Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.*

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## Two Thirds of Americans Disapprove of Congress

January 30, 2010

Most people in the United States chide the performance of the sitting Congress, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 65 per cent of respondents disapprove of the work of current federal legislators, up one point since December.

American voters renewed the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate in November 2006. In January 2007, the Democratic Party took control of the lower house for the first time since 1994, with 233 lawmakers. Democratic California congresswoman Nancy Pelosi became the first female speaker of the House.

A new congressional election took place in November 2008. The Democrats received 53.04 per cent of the vote and secured 257 seats in the lower house, while the Republicans got 44.16 per cent of the vote and won 178 seats.

In November 2009, lawmakers in the lower house of Congress approved a reform bill known as the Affordable Health Care for America Act in a 220-215 vote. In December, the Senate passed

its own version of the bill in a 60-39 vote. The differences between the two bills are expected to be reconciled by both houses this year.

On Jan. 25, U.S. president Barack Obama admitted faults in the process of drafting the health care bill, saying, "The health care debate as it unfolded, legitimately raised concerns. (...) It's an ugly process, and it looks like there are a bunch of backroom deals."

### **Polling Data**

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the United States Congress?

	<b>Jan. 2010</b>	<b>Dec. 2009</b>	<b>Nov. 2009</b>
Approve	24%	25%	27%
Disapprove	65%	64%	62%
Not sure	11%	10%	10%

*Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,003 American adults, conducted on Jan. 21 and Jan. 22, 2010. Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.*

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### **Few Americans Say Economy is Good Right Now**

January 29, 2010

People in the United States remain skeptical about a financial recovery, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 85 per cent of respondents rate the economic conditions in the U.S. today as poor or very poor.

Since 2007, defaults on so-called subprime mortgages—credit given to high-risk borrowers—in the U.S. caused volatility in domestic and global financial markets and ultimately pushed the U.S. economy into a recession. A recession is defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth. The crisis has affected the global financial and credit systems, and triggered layoffs in companies around the world.

In 2008, the federal government—then under the leadership of U.S. president George W. Bush—took control of mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Other financial institutions—including Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch, Lehman Brothers, American International Group (AIG), IndyMac Bancorp and Washington Mutual—have been sold, placed under bankruptcy protection, or received emergency loans from the Federal Reserve.

The U.S. economy grew at an annual rate of 2.2 per cent from July to September 2009—the first quarterly gain after four consecutive declines. The country's unemployment rate stands at 10 per cent.

On Jan. 27, during his State of the Union address, U.S. president Barack Obama discussed the effect of the economic crisis, saying, "One year later, the worst of the storm has passed. But the devastation remains. One-in-ten Americans still cannot find work. Many businesses have shuttered. Home values have declined. Small towns and rural communities have been hit

especially hard. And for those who'd already known poverty, life has become that much harder. This recession has also compounded the burdens that America's families have been dealing with for decades."

### **Polling Data**

How would you rate the economic conditions in the United States today?

	<b>Jan. 2010</b>	<b>Aug. 2009</b>	<b>May 2009</b>
Very Good / Good	12%	9%	7%
Poor / Very Poor	85%	89%	90%
Not sure	3%	1%	2%

*Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,003 American adults, conducted on Jan. 21 and Jan. 22, 2010. Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.*

### **Obama Falls Below 50% Mark in U.S.**

January 26, 2010

Public support for United States president Barack Obama is at the lowest point of his tenure, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 47 per cent of respondents approve of Obama's performance, down three points since December.

In American elections, candidates require 270 votes in the Electoral College to win the White House. In November 2008, Democratic nominee Obama secured a majority of electoral votes, defeating Republican contender John McCain. In January 2009, Obama became the first African American president in U.S. history.

Since 2007, defaults on so-called subprime mortgages—credit given to high-risk borrowers—in the United States caused volatility in domestic and global financial markets and ultimately pushed the U.S. economy into a recession. A recession is defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth. The crisis has affected the global financial and credit systems.

Yesterday, Obama introduced measures to help families—including the introduction of a cap on student loan payments and doubling the child-care tax credit—declaring, "Too many Americans have known their own painful recessions long before any economists declared that there was a recession. (...) We also need to reverse the overall erosion in middle-class security, so that when this economy does come back, working Americans are free to pursue their dreams again."

### **Polling Data**

Do you approve or disapprove of Barack Obama's performance as president?

	Jan. 2010	Dec. 2009	Nov. 2009
Approve	47%	50%	51%
Disapprove	44%	44%	42%
Not sure	8%	6%	7%

*Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,003 American adults, conducted on Jan. 21 and Jan. 22, 2010. Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.*

## **About Half of Canadians OK with Economy**

January 26, 2010

People in Canada are divided on their assessment of their country's finances, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 48 per cent of respondents rate the economic conditions in Canada as "good" or very good", while 45 per cent deem them "bad" or "very bad."

Canadians renewed the House of Commons in October 2008. The Conservative party—led by Stephen Harper—received 37.6 per cent of the vote, and secured 143 seats in the 308-member lower house. Harper assembled a minority administration. The Tories also earned a minority mandate after the 2006 election, ending more than 12 years of government by the Liberal party.

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In January 2009, Canadian finance minister Jim Flaherty presented the federal budget, which predicts a \$70 billion U.S. budget deficit over the next five years, and includes a \$33 billion U.S. economic stimulus package, as well as tax relief aimed at the lower and middle class.

Canada's unemployment rate stood at 8.5 per cent in December 2009.

On Jan. 15, Flaherty discussed the current state of affairs, saying, "The IMF [International Monetary Fund] and others think we will have reasonable growth, the best economic growth in the G-7, in the next several years. (...) I see speculation. I don't see a lot of evidence. I see editorial comment without numbers, without analysis. I don't get to speculate. I get to deal with budget-making."

### **Polling Data**

How would you rate the economic conditions in Canada today?

	Jan. 17	Oct. 21	Sept. 1	Jul. 22
Approve	47%	50%	51%	51%
Disapprove	44%	44%	42%	42%
Not sure	8%	6%	7%	7%

Very Good	1%	2%	1%	1%
Good	47%	47%	46%	42%
Poor	39%	40%	44%	47%
Very Poor	6%	7%	5%	7%

*Source: Angus Reid Strategies*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,001 Canadian adults, conducted from Jan. 15 to Jan. 17, 2010. Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.*

## AUSTRALASIA

### New Zealanders Endorse Ruling Conservatives

January 28, 2010

Most people in New Zealand would vote for the governing National party, according to a poll by Roy Morgan International. 53 per cent of respondents would support the conservative party in the next election to the House of Representatives, down one point since mid-December.

The opposition Labour party is second with 30 per cent, followed by the Greens with eight per cent. Support is lower for New Zealand First, the Maori Party, ACT, United Future, and the Progressives.

New Zealanders renewed the House of Representatives in November 2008. Final results gave the conservative National party 45.50 per cent of the vote and 59 seats in the 122-member legislature. The Labour party garnered 33.77 per cent of the vote and 43 mandates. The remaining seats went to other parties and independents.

Also in November 2008, National leader John Key formed a government with the support of ACT, United Future and the Maori Party. Helen Clark announced her resignation as Labour leader, and was supplanted by former trade and defence minister Phil Goff.

In April 2009, the Greens and National signed a memorandum of understanding, under which both parties established a "good faith working relationship" with no prerequisite policy commitments.

New Zealand troops are currently engaged in Afghanistan in a "non-combat" mission. Earlier this month, the government became the target of criticism as a photo journalist released pictures of two Kiwi soldiers engaged in the battlefield in Kabul.

On Jan. 25, Green Party lawmaker Keith Locke suggested that the government's credibility on Afghanistan is on the line and that it will face questions on this matter when Parliament resumes its duties in February. Locke expressed his concern, saying, "We have been given far too little information about what the [Special Air Service] SAS is doing in our name in Afghanistan, and not all the information we are given appears to be accurate."

### Polling Data



If an election were held today which party would receive your party vote?

	<b>Jan. 17</b>	<b>Dec. 13</b>	<b>Nov. 29</b>
National	53%	54%	53.5%
Labour	30%	27.5%	30.5%
Greens	8%	9.5%	7%
New Zealand First	2.5%	4%	2.5%
Maori Party	2.5%	1.5%	3.5%
ACT	2%	1.5%	1.5%
United Future	0.5%	0.5%	--
Progressives	0.5%	--	--

*Source: Roy Morgan International*

*Methodology: Telephone interviews with 1,758 New Zealand voters, conducted from Jan. 4 to Jan. 17, 2010. No margin of error was provided.*

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## **MULTI-COUNTRY POLLS**

### **As Asian Economies Falter, Trust in Gov't Remains High**

*Export-reliant developing economies still trust financial institutions*

January 28, 2010

Citizens living in developing Asian countries have generally become less positive about the economic conditions in their countries since the onset of the global economic crisis. The drop is especially precipitous in export-heavy countries such as Vietnam and Malaysia where the economy is highly integrated with international markets. For example, in Vietnam, 68% in May 2009 said economic conditions in their country were getting better -- down 26 percentage points from the 94% who said so in 2007 when Asian markets were still vigorous. Views of economic conditions in Malaysia show similar deterioration, dropping 23 points during the same period.

*Are economic conditions in your country, as a whole, getting better or getting worse?*

Percentage responding "getting better"

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Change from 2007 to 2009</b>
Vietnam	94%	83%	68%	-26
Malaysia	54%	26%	31%	-23
Bangladesh	64%	41%	54%	-10
Philippines	38%	22%	29%	-9
Cambodia	62%	65%	55%	-7
Thailand	25%	16%	34%	+9
Sri Lanka	47%	36%	64%	+17

2009

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Although the decline is less steep in some other developing countries in Asia where exports are a significant economic driver -- including Bangladesh (down 10 points), the Philippines (9 points), and Cambodia (7 points) -- their citizens, too, are pessimistic about the direction of their respective economies.

Among export-oriented, developing Asian countries for which Gallup has 2009 data, there are two nations -- Thailand and Sri Lanka -- in which the respondents are more optimistic about economic conditions than they were in 2007. Thailand's limited exposure to toxic assets and the introduction of stimulus packages worth \$43.4 billion has led the pro-investment Abhisit government to project a positive growth of 2.5% in 2010, a forecast that may be boosting expectations among Thais. It should also be noted that the Thai survey was fielded in October, several months later than the other countries and after the global markets had begun to stabilize. And almost certainly, high levels of positivity in Sri Lanka are more attributable to the end of a 26-year civil war last May than they are to any economic swings.

Yet, unlike the more expected scenario in which poor economic performance is mirrored by lower confidence in national government, the majority of respondents in all seven developing countries continue to exhibit trust in their governing bodies. A significant rebound in confidence is noted in Malaysia and Thailand where trust in national government had reached unusually low levels in 2008.

*In your country, do you have confidence in the following institutions? National government*

Percentage responding "yes"

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Sri Lanka	73%	72%	92%
Cambodia	64%	74%	90%
Vietnam	91%	87%	86%
Bangladesh	73%	76%	83%
Malaysia	75%	66%	82%
Philippines	62%	57%	60%
Thailand	48%	41%	51%

2009

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Strong majorities of Asians in the developing countries surveyed demonstrate similar confidence in their banks and financial institutions. While that confidence has remained stable among populations in most countries, among Cambodians it has nearly doubled in the last two years -- rising from 45% in 2007 to 87% in 2009 -- as the number of banks has increased and many retail operations, such as ATM services, credit cards, and home mortgages, have sprung up.

*In your country, do you have confidence in the following institutions? Financial institutions and banks*

Percentage responding "yes"

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Thailand	79%	78%	80%
Malaysia	85%	86%	89%
Bangladesh	81%	76%	89%
Cambodia	45%	73%	87%
Sri Lanka	84%	85%	82%
Philippines	74%	76%	77%
Vietnam	63%	71%	67%

2009

GALLUP®

One explanation for the disconnect between a faltering economy and citizens' continued high levels of confidence in their governments and banks is that, unlike the 1997 Asian financial crisis

where citizens blamed their national government and financial sector for causing the problems, this global crisis is likely seen as having its origins in the U.S. and Europe where consumer demand for Asian exports has plummeted.

## Survey Methods

Results are based on face-to-face interviews with 1,000 adults, aged 15 and older, conducted in May-August 2007, February-September 2008, and April-October 2009 in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error ranges between  $\pm 3.0$  and  $\pm 4.4$  percentage points. The margin of error reflects the influence of data weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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## U.S., Britain and Canada Endorse Death Penalty

January 25, 2010

Most people in the United States, Britain and Canada support relying on the death penalty for homicide convictions, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 84 per cent of respondents in the U.S., 67 per cent in Britain, and 62 per cent in Canada share this view.

Since 1976, 1,193 people have been put to death in the United States, including five this year. More than a third of all executions have taken place in the state of Texas. Fifteen states and the District of Columbia do not engage in capital punishment.

Britain began a five-year moratorium on all death penalties from criminal convictions in 1965, and made the suspension permanent in 1969. Execution for any of five military offences—including "Serious Misconduct in Action" and "Obstructing Operations or Giving False Air Signals"—was repealed in 1998, though the last instance of its invocation occurred in 1942.

The last execution in Canada took place in 1962, and the country abolished the death penalty altogether in 1976.

Michael Victor Lane, a British motivational speaker, is facing prosecution in the U.S. for the alleged murder of a woman and the alleged attempted murder of a transsexual in Las Vegas. On Jan. 14, Robert Daskas, deputy Clark County district attorney, said that Lane's situation "could potentially be a death penalty case." Prosecutors have one month to decide whether they will pursue a death sentence for Lane.

## Polling Data

Would you support punishing each of the following crimes with the death penalty? - Homicide (murder)

	CAN	USA	BRI
Yes	62%	84%	67%

No	29%	14%	23%
Not sure	10%	3%	10%

*Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,001 Canadian adults, 1,004 American adults, and 1,049 British adults, conducted from Aug. 13 to Aug. 16, 2009. Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.*

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### **Yemenis' Economic Situations Among Worst in Region**

*Seven percent think it is a good time to find a job*

January 26, 2010

Foreign ministers meet Wednesday in London to discuss international support for Yemen's economic development and security. Gallup surveys show the economic situation in Yemen is one of the most dismal in the Middle East and North Africa and many Yemenis expect it to get worse. Only Palestinians (64%) are more likely than Yemenis (59%) to say economic conditions in their country are getting worse.

*Right now, do you think the economic conditions in your country as a whole, are getting better or getting worse?*

	<b>Getting better</b>	<b>Getting worse</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Yemen	19	59
Palestinian Territories	20	64
Lebanon	23	47
Egypt	26	47
Iraq	38	14
Jordan	41	39
Israel	44	26
Kuwait	48	13
Syria	49	16
Algeria	51	19
Bahrain	52	8
Morocco	53	6
Saudi Arabia	57	23
United Arab Emirates	58	11
Tunisia	64	8
Qatar	65	14

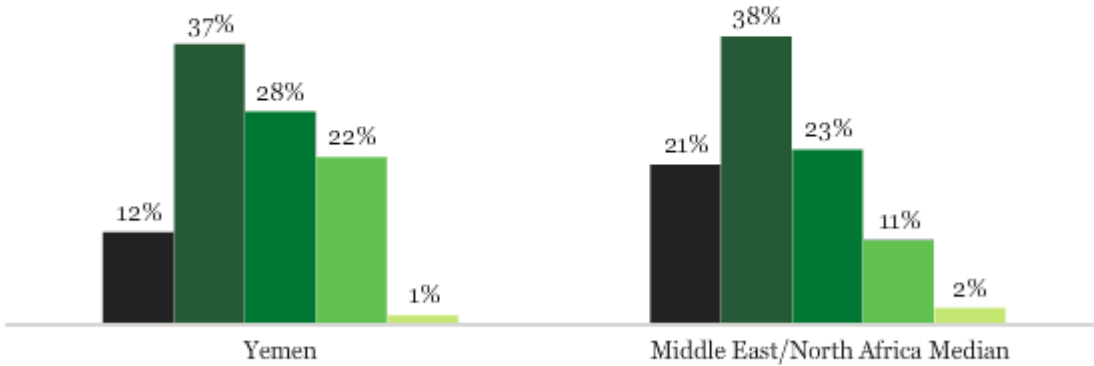
Surveys for all countries except Israel conducted between August and September 2009. Survey in Israel conducted November 2009.

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Yemenis, more than 40% of whom reportedly live on less than \$2 a day, are among the most likely in the region to report struggling to make ends meet. At the time of Gallup's survey in early August and September, half of Yemenis said they were finding it difficult (28%) or very difficult (22%) to get by on their present household incomes. Across the rest of the Middle East and North Africa, only Palestinians are more likely to report as much difficulty in getting by, with 23% saying they are finding it difficult and 40% finding it very difficult.

*Which one of these phrases comes closest to your own feelings about your households income these days?*

- Living comfortably on present income
- Getting by on present income
- Finding it difficult on present income
- Finding it very difficult on present income
- Don't know/Refused



August-September 2009

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According to the United Nations' World Food Program, roughly half (48%) of Yemeni households are estimated to be food insecure, similar to the 45% who tell Gallup they were unable to afford food for their families at times in the past year. The percentage of Yemenis reporting an inability to buy food is three times higher than the median percentage for the Middle East/North Africa region (15%).

*Have there been times in the past 12 months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?*

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Refused



August-September 2009

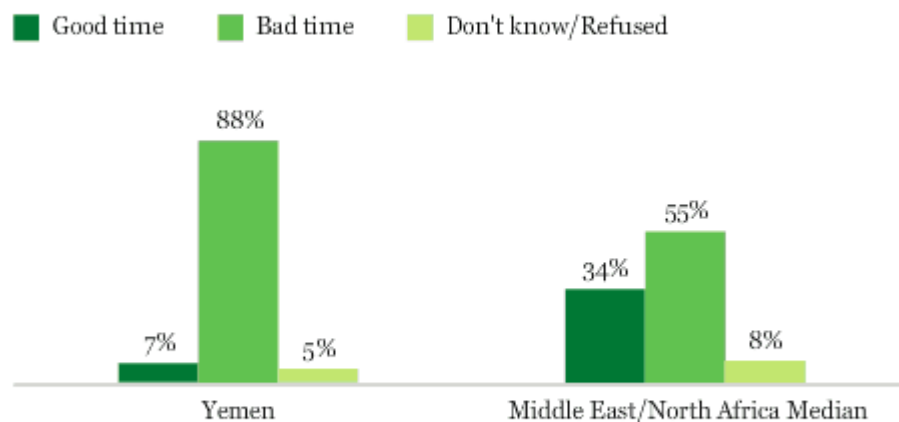
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Between 2007 and 2009, the number of Yemenis who reported struggling to afford food surged at least 15 percentage points, from 30% in 2007 to 45% in the fall 2009 survey -- likely reflecting the global rise in food prices. Food prices have abated since last year, but they remain higher than before the crisis, making food unaffordable for many poor families.

### Yemenis Grim About Job Climate, Creation

The jobs outlook in Yemen, where unemployment is estimated to be 35% or higher, is the bleakest in the region. At the time of the survey, 7% of Yemenis said it was a good time to find a job in their communities, with Palestinians the next lowest at 10%. Yemenis' dour estimation of the jobs situation prevails regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas, or their age, education, and gender. Yemeni youth, who make up a larger percentage of the unemployed, are no grimmer about the situation than older Yemenis.

*Thinking about the job situation in the city or area where you live today, would you say that it is now a good time or a bad time to find a job?*



August-September 2009

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Given that they are universally pessimistic about the jobs situation, it is not surprising that relatively few Yemenis are satisfied with efforts to increase the number of quality jobs. Fewer than one in five Yemenis (19%) say they are satisfied with these efforts, similar to sentiment among Egyptians (22%), Palestinians (20%), and Iraqis (19%). Only the Lebanese are less likely to be satisfied, with 11% saying this.

### Bottom Line

Yemen's Foreign Minister Abubakr al-Qirbi, who visited the United States last week, said that "a security or military solution alone is not sufficient" to tackle the threat of terrorism and is calling on the international community to pay more attention to his country's economic and development



needs. Western and Gulf donors for the most part have responded positively to this call, but as U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said last week, they expect to see results on the ground if, and when, they provide development aid. Gallup's surveys show conditions on that ground are currently among the most dismal in the region, and there is much room for improvement.

### **Survey Methods**

Results are based on face-to-face with approximately 1,000 adults, aged 15 and older, in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Kuwait, and Tunisia. All surveys were conducted between August and November 2009. For results based on the total samples of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error ranges from  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points in Bahrain to  $\pm 3.7$  in the Palestinian Territories. For results based on the total sample of Yemeni adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.7$  percentage points. The margin of error reflects the influence of data weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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