



**Talking Transition:
63% Approve of Obama's Performance**

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This Marist Poll reports:

- **Obama Transition on the Right Track, According to 63% of Voters:** A considerable majority of registered voters in the United States are giving President-elect Barack Obama high marks for the job he's doing during his transition into office. 63% say they approve of his performance while just 10% of voters disapprove. 27% are on the fence, reporting they are unsure about how the president-elect is doing. In the wake of this year's bitter campaign battle, prominent partisan differences linger. 86% of Democrats approve of President-elect Obama's job performance. 36% of Republicans agree while a large proportion of the GOP -- 42% -- is unsure about how the future president is doing. Independent voters align with the Democrats. 61% give President-elect Obama a thumbs-up for how he is handling the transition period.

Question Wording: Do you approve or disapprove of the job President-elect Barack Obama is doing on the transition?

	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
Registered voters	63%	10%	27%
Democrats	86%	2%	12%
Republicans	36%	22%	42%
Independents	61%	9%	30%

- **President-elect Obama Meets Majority's Expectations:** 83% of registered voters in the United States say the president-elect is doing better than or about what they expected him to do during the transition. This includes 56% who say Obama is meeting their expectations, and 27% who feel Obama is doing better than they anticipated. Democrats are more likely than other voters to think the President-elect Obama is doing better than they thought he would.

Question Wording: Is he doing a better job than you expected with the transition, worse than you expected or about what you expected?

	About or Better Than Expected	Better Than Expected	About As Expected	Worse Than Expected	Unsure
Registered voters	83%	27%	56%	4%	13%
Democrats	93%	35%	58%	2%	5%
Republicans	76%	20%	56%	6%	18%
Independents	81%	26%	55%	3%	16%

- Majority See Obama Taking Country in Right Direction:** President-elect Obama ran on a platform of change. So, has he been delivering during his transition period? A majority of registered voters -- 55% -- say the direction in which he's moving the nation is one for the better while 10% think he is changing the country for the worse. Nearly one-quarter of voters say they don't believe Obama's vision is creating any change. Most Democrats -- 83% -- feel the president-elect is moving the nation in a better direction while just 1% says he will make things worse. Looking at Republicans, 19% feel Obama is improving the country's course. Yet, just 22% of Republican voters feel the president-elect is making matters worse. 43% of Republicans say Obama is maintaining the status quo and not laying the groundwork for change. Independent voters are in the middle with 54% saying Obama is starting on a road toward change for the better and 11% reporting his vision is one for the worse.

Question Wording: Overall, would you describe the direction in which President-elect Barack Obama is moving the country as:

	Change for the Better	Change for the Worse	No Real Change at All	Unsure
Registered voters	55%	10%	24%	11%
Democrats	83%	1%	12%	4%
Republicans	19%	22%	43%	16%
Independents	54%	11%	20%	15%

- Voters High on Hillary:** Nearly two-thirds of registered voters nationwide say they approve of President-elect Obama's choice of Hillary Clinton as the next Secretary of State. 65% believe she is the right person for the job while 27% disapprove. Democrats make the difference here. 85% of Democrats think Clinton is the appropriate choice. That's compared with 40% of Republicans.

Independents are more likely to agree with Democrats on this question. 68% approve of Clinton's new role while 23% disapprove.

Question Wording: Do you approve or disapprove of Barack Obama's choice of Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State?

	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
Registered voters	65%	27%	8%
Democrats	85%	11%	4%
Republicans	40%	50%	10%
Independents	68%	23%	9%

- Michelle Obama...More Than a Fair First Lady:** Many voters expect great things from Michelle Obama as the country's next first lady. In fact, 60% of registered voters believe Mrs. Obama will be either excellent or good in the role while just 9% think she will perform poorly. First ladies aren't exempt from partisan politics. 86% of Democrats feel Michelle Obama will be an above average first lady compared with 35% of Republicans who say she will do either an excellent or good job. 56% of Independents report Mrs. Obama will do well in her new role. Women, though, have higher expectations than do men. 66% of women compared with 53% of men believe Michelle Obama will excel as first lady.

Question Wording: Do you think Michelle Obama will make an excellent, good, fair, or poor first lady?

	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unsure
Registered voters	60%	30%	30%	19%	9%	12%
Party						
Democrats	86%	50%	36%	9%	1%	4%
Republicans	35%	13%	22%	30%	19%	16%
Independents	56%	24%	32%	18%	8%	18%
Gender						
Men	53%	24%	29%	22%	10%	15%
Women	66%	35%	31%	16%	8%	10%

- Redefining Role of First Lady?** While 41% of registered voters believe Michelle Obama will change the overall role of first lady for the better, many don't think she will revolutionize the position. This includes 41% of voters nationally who say she will not alter the position in any way, and just 5% who think she will worsen it. Another 13% are unsure. Once again,

impressions between the parties split. 57% of Democrats report Mrs. Obama will improve the role of first lady compared with 18% of Republicans and 46% of Independents. Men and women see eye-to-eye here. 39% of men and 42% of women think Michelle Obama will change the position of first lady for the better.

Question Wording: Will Michelle Obama change the overall role of the first lady for the better, the worse, or will not change the overall role of the first lady at all?

	Better	Worse	No Change	Unsure
Registered voters	41%	5%	41%	13%
Party				
Democrats	57%	1%	34%	8%
Republicans	18%	11%	55%	16%
Independents	46%	6%	34%	14%
Gender				
Men	39%	5%	43%	13%
Women	42%	6%	39%	13%

- **Striking a Balance:** Nearly half of registered voters in the United States -- 47% -- think Michelle Obama will positively affect how people view the balance between work and family life while just 4% believe she will negatively change perceptions on this topic. 36% feel she will neither create change for the better nor the worse. This issue resonates with women. A majority of women -- 54% -- say Michelle Obama will improve how people perceive the work-family balance while only 40% of men share this sentiment.

Question Wording: Will Michelle Obama change how people view the balance between work and family for the better, the worse, or will not change?

	Better	Worse	No Change	Unsure
Registered voters	47%	4%	36%	13%
Gender				
Men	40%	4%	42%	14%
Women	54%	4%	30%	12%

- **Fashion Forward?** Nearly one-half of registered voters in the United States don't believe Michelle Obama will break new ground in the fashion world. 49% say she will not impact fashion at all while 28% believe she will improve current styles. Just 5% think Mrs. Obama will change fashion for the worse. 31% of women say Mrs. Obama is fashion forward while 26% of

men think her style will improve today's trends. Older women feel Mrs. Obama will positively impact fashion compared with women under 45 years old.

Question Wording: Will Michelle Obama change fashion for the better, the worse, or will she not change fashion at all?

	Better	Worse	No Change	Unsure
Registered voters	28%	5%	49%	18%
Gender				
Men	26%	5%	51%	18%
Women	31%	6%	46%	17%
Women by age				
Under 45	26%	5%	54%	15%
45 and over	34%	6%	42%	18%

Nature of the Sample: 883 Registered Voters

This survey was conducted on December 9th and December 10th, 2008. 883 registered voters within the continental United States were interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. The results of the entire survey are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations.