



President Obama's Approval Rating & The 2010 Midterm Elections

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This Marist Poll Reports:

Obama Approval Rating Below 50%...Disapproval Among Majority of Independents

Fewer registered voters nationwide -- 44% -- currently *approve* of President Barack Obama's job performance than *disapprove* -- 47%. When Marist last asked about the president's approval rating in December, 46% thought well of Obama's job performance while 44% gave him low marks.

Perhaps, particularly concerning for Mr. Obama is the drop in support among Independents. For the first time since taking office, a majority of Independents -- 57% -- disapproves of how he is doing in the role. 29% approve, and 14% are unsure.

Not surprisingly, Democrats and Republicans are polarized. 81% of Democrats approve of the president's job performance while a similar proportion of Republicans -- 80% -- disapproves.

"If attracting Independents and bipartisanship are the aim, then the president clearly has a lot of ground to cover in year two," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist Institute for Public Opinion.

Disappointer in Chief?

47% of registered voters nationwide report President Obama has fallen below their expectations. 42% say he has met their expectations while just 7% think he has exceeded them. Slightly more members of the electorate currently think the president has let them down compared with Marist's December survey. At that time, 42% thought Mr. Obama missed the mark while 44% said he met their expectations. 9% reported Obama surpassed their expectations.

Majorities within both parties walk the partisan line here. 57% of Democrats report the president has met their expectations while 65% of Republicans see him as falling short. While these proportions are little changed from December, Independents' impressions of the president have slipped. 53% of Independents report Mr. Obama has not risen to the

occasion. This compares with 43% who thought he had fallen below their expectations in Marist's December survey.

On the Promise of Change...

President Obama campaigned on the promise of change, but is the change he has created an improvement? American voters now divide. 38% think the direction in which Mr. Obama is moving the country is for the worse, and 37% believe he is changing the nation for the better. 22% say there has been no change at all, and 3% are unsure.

In Marist's last survey, a plurality of the electorate -- 44% -- thought Obama was changing the country for the better. 35% disagreed and thought he was making things worse. 18% said the president had not brought about any change, and 3% were unsure.

Impressions have shifted across party lines. Democrats have become less positive and Independents have become more negative. Looking at Democrats, 69% report the president is improving the nation compared with 76% who thought so two months ago.

Independents who were previously divided have soured toward Mr. Obama. 45% today report the president is changing the country for the worse while 26% think the opposite is true. In Marist's previous survey, 36% saw him as making a positive impact on the nation, and the same proportion -- 36% -- believed he was negatively altering the country. 63% of Republicans view the change Mr. Obama is making as negative.

Obama Still Favorable, BUT...

50% of voters nationwide have a favorable impression of President Obama while 44% have an unfavorable view of him. 6% are unsure. Although Mr. Obama's favorability rating is still positive, it has dropped since Marist's December survey. Then, 55% thought well of the president, and 41% did not. 4% were unsure.

The president's favorability rating has moved little among Democrats and Republicans, but it has slipped among Independents. In fact, a majority -- 52% -- have an *unfavorable* view of Mr. Obama compared with 43% two months ago.

The Good News? Economic Conditions Still Viewed as "Inherited"

62% of registered voters still believe today's current economic conditions are mostly inherited from the Bush Administration while 29% say they are a result of Obama's own policies. 9% are unsure. These proportions are relatively unchanged since Marist's last survey.

"With this part of voters' mindset, it's no wonder the White House would like to make 2010 a choice between President Obama and past GOP policies," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist Institute for Public Opinion. "Not a referendum on the president."

And, In a VERY Hypothetical Matchup....

Looking at a three-way 2012 presidential contest between President Obama, former Governor of Alaska Sarah Palin, and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Obama

receives 44% of the vote, Republican Palin garners 29%, and Independent Bloomberg nets 15%.

A Bloomberg candidacy helps Mr. Obama's cause. Although Palin receives majority support -- 57% -- from the GOP, Bloomberg snatches 20% of the vote within the party. Among Democrats, Bloomberg only receives 4%. Democrats are firmly behind Obama with 84% tossing their support to him. Looking at Independents, 31% back Obama, and 27% support Palin. 24% report they would cast their ballot for Bloomberg.

Congressional Incumbents, Beware! Voters Divide Over 2010 Candidates

Members of the U.S. Congress face re-election this year, and they may want to listen up. Registered voters nationwide divide about whether they would support their current elected official or vote for someone else. If the 2010 election for Congress were held today, 44% say they would vote to elect someone new while 42% would like to see their congressperson stick around. 14% are unsure.

"The winds of change are still blowing around the nation. If your working address is the U.S. Capitol, you have to watch these figures closely," states Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist Institute for Public Opinion.

Independents are particularly up in arms. 50% of Independents report they would vote for someone else while 34% want to support their current representative. Republicans divide with 48% saying they would oust the incumbent, and 45% reporting they don't want a change. A majority of Democrats -- 51% -- would support their current member of Congress while 35% would choose an alternative.

D.C. Politicians, "Are You Listening?"

There's more bad news for Beltway insiders. 56% of registered voters view the 2010 midterm elections as more about sending a message to D.C. politicians. 36% report the election will be more about local issues important to their state or community. 8% are unsure.

This "send a message to Washington" sentiment is stronger among Republicans and Independents. 62% of GOP members and 61% of Independents want Washington politicians to catch on. This compares with a plurality -- 48% -- of Democrats who share this view.

Congressional Dems Most Vulnerable

Of registered voters who believe this year's midterm elections are more about sending a message to Washington politicians, approximately one-third say it's directed at the Democrats in Congress. 21% want President Obama to get the message, and 18% want this sentiment directed to Congressional Republicans. 29% want all to pay attention.

"Country Moving in Wrong Direction," Says Majority

54% of Americans nationwide say, in general, the country is headed in the wrong direction. 38% believe they are moving along the right track, and 8% are unsure.

Residents have become more pessimistic about the country's path compared with The Marist Poll's December survey. At that time, Americans divided with 46% reporting the country was moving in the right direction and 46% saying it was headed in the wrong direction. 8% were unsure.

Nature of the Sample: 1072 U.S. Residents

This survey of 1072 United States residents was conducted on February 1st through February 3rd, 2010. Residents 18 years of age and older 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. To increase coverage, this land-line sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cell phone numbers. The two samples were then combined. Results are statistically significant at $\pm 3.0\%$. There are 910 registered voters. The results for this subset are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Marist Poll February 2010 National Survey Tables

		Registered Voters		
		Do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president?		
		Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		44%	47%	9%
Party ID	Democrat	81%	10%	9%
	Republican	15%	80%	6%
	Independent	29%	57%	14%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	83%	9%	8%
	Democrat women	79%	11%	9%
	Republican men	13%	83%	4%
	Republican women	16%	77%	7%
	Independent men	26%	62%	12%
	Independent women	34%	50%	16%
Ideology	Liberal	74%	15%	12%
	Moderate	48%	43%	9%
	Conservative	26%	67%	8%
Region	Northeast	54%	32%	13%
	Midwest	33%	53%	13%
	South	45%	48%	8%
	West	44%	50%	6%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	52%	39%	10%
	\$50,000 or more	38%	54%	8%
Education	Not college graduate	43%	46%	11%
	College graduate	45%	48%	6%
Age	18 to 29	48%	41%	11%
	30 to 44	45%	44%	11%
	45 to 59	43%	49%	8%
	60 or older	42%	49%	9%
Gender	Men	38%	53%	9%
	Women	49%	41%	10%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=910 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Registered Voters			
		Overall, has Barack Obama met your expectations, exceeded your expectations, or fallen below your expectations as president?			
		Met your expectations	Exceeded your expectations	Fallen below your expectations	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		42%	7%	47%	4%
Party ID	Democrat	57%	14%	26%	4%
	Republican	29%	3%	65%	4%
	Independent	38%	4%	53%	5%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	55%	19%	23%	3%
	Democrat women	58%	11%	28%	4%
	Republican men	33%	4%	61%	2%
	Republican women	25%	1%	68%	6%
	Independent men	38%	5%	51%	6%
	Independent women	38%	2%	55%	4%
	Ideology	Liberal	61%	8%	27%
Moderate		45%	6%	45%	4%
Conservative		32%	7%	57%	4%
Region	Northeast	51%	4%	42%	2%
	Midwest	39%	6%	48%	7%
	South	40%	7%	49%	3%
	West	41%	11%	44%	5%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	46%	8%	43%	4%
	\$50,000 or more	42%	7%	48%	3%
Education	Not college graduate	41%	8%	46%	5%
	College graduate	45%	5%	47%	3%
Age	18 to 29	56%	9%	31%	5%
	30 to 44	50%	5%	43%	2%
	45 to 59	40%	7%	50%	3%
	60 or older	33%	8%	52%	6%
Gender	Men	41%	9%	46%	4%
	Women	43%	6%	47%	5%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=910 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Registered Voters			
		Overall, would you describe the direction in which President Barack Obama is moving the country as:			
		Change for the better	Change for the worse	No change at all	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		37%	38%	22%	3%
Party ID	Democrat	69%	10%	18%	3%
	Republican	9%	63%	27%	1%
	Independent	26%	45%	24%	5%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	66%	14%	20%	1%
	Democrat women	71%	7%	17%	4%
	Republican men	6%	62%	31%	2%
	Republican women	12%	64%	23%	0%
	Independent men	24%	48%	24%	4%
	Independent women	29%	41%	24%	7%
Ideology	Liberal	63%	15%	21%	1%
	Moderate	40%	28%	29%	3%
	Conservative	22%	58%	18%	3%
Region	Northeast	44%	30%	22%	3%
	Midwest	34%	38%	23%	4%
	South	37%	41%	19%	3%
	West	32%	38%	26%	3%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	42%	33%	21%	4%
	\$50,000 or more	33%	40%	26%	1%
Education	Not college graduate	37%	34%	25%	4%
	College graduate	37%	43%	18%	2%
Age	18 to 29	38%	23%	35%	5%
	30 to 44	37%	34%	25%	3%
	45 to 59	37%	41%	20%	2%
	60 or older	36%	43%	17%	4%
Gender	Men	30%	43%	24%	3%
	Women	43%	33%	20%	4%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=910 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Registered Voters		
		Overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of Barack Obama?		
		Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure-Never Heard
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		50%	44%	6%
Party ID	Democrat	84%	12%	4%
	Republican	19%	76%	5%
	Independent	39%	52%	9%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	82%	14%	4%
	Democrat women	85%	11%	4%
	Republican men	20%	77%	3%
	Republican women	18%	75%	7%
	Independent men	35%	57%	8%
	Independent women	45%	44%	10%
Ideology	Liberal	81%	15%	4%
	Moderate	57%	38%	6%
	Conservative	28%	66%	5%
Region	Northeast	62%	31%	8%
	Midwest	43%	52%	5%
	South	49%	47%	4%
	West	47%	43%	10%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	55%	38%	7%
	\$50,000 or more	47%	49%	4%
Education	Not college graduate	49%	43%	7%
	College graduate	51%	46%	4%
Age	18 to 29	54%	37%	8%
	30 to 44	53%	42%	5%
	45 to 59	48%	46%	6%
	60 or older	47%	48%	5%
Gender	Men	45%	50%	5%
	Women	55%	39%	6%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=910 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Registered Voters		
		Do you think the current economic conditions are mostly something President Obama inherited or are they mostly a result of his own policies?		
		Economic conditions mostly inherited	Economic conditions mostly result of his own policies	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		62%	29%	9%
Party ID	Democrat	84%	13%	2%
	Republican	43%	44%	13%
	Independent	55%	33%	12%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	80%	17%	2%
	Democrat women	87%	11%	3%
	Republican men	46%	41%	13%
	Republican women	41%	47%	12%
	Independent men	54%	31%	15%
	Independent women	57%	35%	8%
	Ideology	Liberal	84%	14%
Moderate		76%	17%	8%
Conservative		41%	48%	11%
Region	Northeast	73%	21%	6%
	Midwest	62%	25%	12%
	South	56%	35%	8%
	West	62%	31%	7%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	60%	29%	11%
	\$50,000 or more	64%	29%	7%
Education	Not college graduate	60%	32%	8%
	College graduate	66%	26%	8%
Age	18 to 29	62%	33%	5%
	30 to 44	67%	25%	8%
	45 to 59	65%	27%	8%
	60 or older	56%	34%	10%
Gender	Men	59%	31%	10%
	Women	65%	28%	7%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=910 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Registered Voters			
		If the 2012 presidential election were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:			
		Barack Obama, the Democrat	Sarah Palin, the Republican	Michael Bloomberg, the Independent	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		44%	29%	15%	12%
Party ID	Democrat	84%	8%	4%	4%
	Republican	11%	57%	20%	11%
	Independent	31%	27%	24%	19%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	77%	14%	3%	6%
	Democrat women	87%	5%	5%	3%
	Republican men	11%	54%	26%	9%
	Republican women	12%	60%	16%	13%
	Independent men	28%	27%	23%	22%
	Independent women	34%	27%	25%	14%
Ideology	Liberal	75%	11%	5%	9%
	Moderate	52%	15%	21%	13%
	Conservative	24%	49%	15%	11%
Region	Northeast	51%	18%	20%	12%
	Midwest	42%	33%	14%	12%
	South	44%	31%	14%	11%
	West	41%	28%	16%	16%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	51%	29%	13%	7%
	\$50,000 or more	40%	27%	19%	14%
Education	Not college graduate	43%	29%	15%	13%
	College graduate	46%	28%	15%	11%
Age	18 to 29	47%	28%	12%	13%
	30 to 44	45%	25%	20%	10%
	45 to 59	43%	28%	17%	12%
	60 or older	44%	32%	12%	11%
Gender	Men	37%	31%	17%	15%
	Women	51%	26%	13%	10%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=910 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Registered Voters		
		If the 2010 election for congress were held today, would you support your current congressperson who represents your district in Washington D.C. or would you vote for someone else?		
		Support current congress person	Vote for someone else	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		42%	44%	14%
Party ID	Democrat	51%	35%	14%
	Republican	45%	48%	8%
	Independent	34%	50%	16%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	49%	39%	11%
	Democrat women	52%	32%	16%
	Republican men	49%	46%	5%
	Republican women	41%	49%	10%
	Independent men	34%	52%	14%
	Independent women	35%	46%	19%
	Ideology	Liberal	47%	37%
Moderate		39%	48%	14%
Conservative		46%	43%	11%
Region	Northeast	37%	45%	18%
	Midwest	35%	48%	16%
	South	49%	38%	13%
	West	44%	49%	8%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	46%	39%	15%
	\$50,000 or more	42%	48%	10%
Education	Not college graduate	43%	43%	14%
	College graduate	42%	45%	13%
Age	18 to 29	46%	42%	12%
	30 to 44	37%	48%	15%
	45 to 59	48%	36%	16%
	60 or older	42%	47%	11%
Gender	Men	42%	46%	12%
	Women	43%	41%	16%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=910 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Registered Voters		
		Do you see the 2010 elections in the fall as being:		
		More about sending a message to the politicians in Washington	More about local issues important to your state or community	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		56%	36%	8%
Party ID	Democrat	48%	42%	9%
	Republican	62%	31%	6%
	Independent	61%	33%	6%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	53%	39%	9%
	Democrat women	46%	44%	10%
	Republican men	59%	35%	6%
	Republican women	66%	28%	6%
	Independent men	64%	30%	6%
	Independent women	56%	38%	7%
	Ideology	Liberal	51%	42%
Moderate		55%	38%	7%
Conservative		60%	32%	8%
Region	Northeast	50%	42%	8%
	Midwest	60%	28%	12%
	South	58%	37%	5%
	West	55%	36%	9%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	55%	36%	9%
	\$50,000 or more	58%	37%	5%
Education	Not college graduate	56%	35%	9%
	College graduate	57%	37%	6%
Age	18 to 29	43%	52%	5%
	30 to 44	51%	43%	6%
	45 to 59	58%	35%	7%
	60 or older	65%	23%	12%
Gender	Men	58%	34%	8%
	Women	55%	37%	8%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=910 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Registered Voters Who Think 2010 Elections are About Sending a Message to Politicians in Washington			
		Is it about sending a message to:			
		President Obama	The Democrats in Congress	The Republicans in Congress	All
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters Who Think 2010 Elections are About Sending a Message to Politicians in Washington		21%	32%	18%	29%
Party ID	Democrat	19%	25%	40%	15%
	Republican	23%	46%	7%	24%
	Independent	20%	28%	11%	41%
Party ID by Gender	Democrat men	14%	28%	38%	19%
	Democrat women	23%	23%	42%	12%
	Republican men	20%	51%	6%	23%
	Republican women	26%	42%	7%	25%
	Independent men	17%	27%	9%	48%
	Independent women	25%	31%	14%	30%
Ideology	Liberal	22%	22%	40%	16%
	Moderate	21%	27%	17%	35%
	Conservative	19%	41%	11%	29%
Region	Northeast	20%	30%	24%	26%
	Midwest	18%	34%	16%	32%
	South	26%	28%	21%	26%
	West	15%	43%	11%	32%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	16%	34%	24%	26%
	\$50,000 or more	25%	33%	13%	29%
Education	Not college graduate	23%	28%	21%	28%
	College graduate	18%	39%	13%	30%
Age	18 to 29	37%	22%	25%	16%
	30 to 44	19%	26%	25%	30%
	45 to 59	22%	37%	13%	28%
	60 or older	15%	36%	16%	33%
Gender	Men	17%	34%	16%	34%
	Women	24%	31%	20%	24%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Registered Voters Who Think 2010 Elections are About Sending a Message to Politicians in Washington "N=511 MOE +/- 4.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		USA Residents		
		In general, thinking about the way things are going in the country, do you feel things are going in the right direction or that things are going in the wrong direction?		
		Right direction	Wrong direction	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
USA Residents		38%	54%	8%
Registered Voters		38%	56%	6%
Party ID	Democrat	71%	25%	5%
	Republican	16%	80%	4%
	Independent	24%	68%	8%
Ideology	Liberal	60%	32%	8%
	Moderate	43%	49%	7%
	Conservative	25%	72%	3%
Region	Northeast	50%	42%	8%
	Midwest	31%	61%	9%
	South	35%	58%	7%
	West	39%	52%	8%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	41%	51%	8%
	\$50,000 or more	38%	57%	5%
Education	Not college graduate	37%	54%	9%
	College graduate	39%	55%	6%
Age	18 to 29	40%	45%	15%
	30 to 44	40%	57%	3%
	45 to 59	37%	57%	7%
	60 or older	36%	56%	9%
Gender	Men	35%	56%	9%
	Women	41%	52%	7%

February 2010 Marist Poll National Residents "N=1072 MOE +/- 3%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.