

THE START OF THE 110TH CONGRESS
January 1 - 3, 2007

Americans are upbeat about the next two years with the new, Democratic-controlled Congress taking office in Washington, but they are doubtful that Congress and President George W. Bush will be able to work together - both in general and in addressing Americans' top priority for Congress, the situation in Iraq.

And as Democrats take control of Congress, the President's approval rating remains low, as it was last month, with just 30% of Americans approving of the way he is handling his job overall. Even after the execution of Saddam Hussein, his approval rating for handling Iraq remains low at only 23%.

Two-thirds of Americans say they feel optimistic about the next two years with the Democrats in control of Congress, while just a quarter are pessimistic. Partisanship factors into these views, with 84% of Democrats reporting they are optimistic. Nearly half of Republicans are optimistic.

FEELINGS ABOUT NEW CONGRESS

	All	Dems	Reps	Inds
Optimistic	68%	84%	47%	67%
Pessimistic	25	10	47	23

In addition, nearly half expects that this Congress will accomplish more than Congress usually does in a two-year period. But some see problems ahead: a third thinks this Congress will accomplish less than usual. Those expectations are strongly tied to partisanship.

CONGRESS WILL ACCOMPLISH ... THAN USUAL?

	All	1/2003	1/1999	1/1995
More	49%	48%	38%	52%
Less	32	30	42	30
Same (vol.)	10	9	7	9

Previous Congresses have fared both better and worse in public expectations at the start of their terms. In early 1995, just after the 1994 elections that gave control of Congress to the Republicans, slightly more people had high expectations: 52% expected Congress to accomplish more than usual. Expectations were at their lowest in January 1999, in the midst of the impeachment of President Bill Clinton, as Republicans retained control. Then, just 38% expected that Congress to accomplish more than usual.

IRAQ: THE HIGHEST PRIORITY

Americans couldn't be clearer when asked their priority for the new Congress - 45% volunteer Iraq. The economy/jobs and health care are tied for a distant second place, volunteered by just 7%, followed by immigration (6%).

WANT NEW CONGRESS TO CONCENTRATE ON:

War in Iraq	45%
Economy/jobs	7
Health care	7
Immigration	6

Most Americans think the Democrats in Congress will try to start bringing U.S. troops home from Iraq -- something a majority of Americans would like to see happen. 35% expect the Democrats to decrease U.S. troops in Iraq, and another 36% expect them to try to remove all U.S. troops.

ON IRAQ, EXPECT DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS TO:

Increase U.S. troops	12%
Keep same number of troops	8
Decrease U.S. troops	35
Remove all U.S. troops	36

Nevertheless, less than one in 10 Americans believes the Democrats in Congress have developed a clear plan for dealing with the situation in Iraq.

DO DEMOCRATS HAVE CLEAR PLAN FOR IRAQ?

Yes	8%
No	82

Only one in 5 Americans think President George W. Bush has a clear plan for dealing with the situation in Iraq - just 20% say he does. The public's views on this question have gotten somewhat more negative since 2005. 51% of Republicans think President Bush does not have a plan for Iraq, as do nine in 10 Democrats.

DOES PRES. BUSH HAVE CLEAR PLAN FOR IRAQ?

	Now	10/2006	7/2005
Yes	20%	26%	28%
No	76	69	62

Half of Americans doubt the President and the Democratic members of Congress will be able to work together to deal with the situation in Iraq. 41% expect they will work together in a fair and non-partisan manner. Democrats are somewhat divided on this question, while more than half of both Republicans and Independents do not think the President and the Democrats will work together on Iraq.

**WILL PRES. BUSH AND DEMOCRATS
WORK TOGETHER ON IRAQ?**

Yes	41%
No	51

When asked about cooperation in general, Americans give similar answers.

This poll was conducted after the December 29th execution of Saddam Hussein and during the controversy over the execution. Americans don't expect the execution to improve the situation in Iraq. In fact, 40% believe the execution will result in MORE attacks on U.S. troops, while half think the level of attacks will stay the same. Just 5% say Saddam's execution will lead to fewer attacks against U.S. troops.

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S EXECUTION AFFECT ATTACKS AGAINST U.S. TROOPS

Increase	40%
Decrease	5
Stay the same	50

And as for the future stability of Iraq, nearly six in ten Americans think Saddam Hussein's execution will have no effect. 21% think the country will become more stable, while a similar number - 18% - think it will become less stable.

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S EXECUTION AFFECT STABILITY OF IRAQ

More stable	21%
Less stable	18
No difference	59

OTHER ISSUES

When it comes to domestic issues, two thirds of Americans expect the new Congress will raise the minimum wage, something Democrats have made a priority.

EXPECT MINIMUM WAGE TO:

Go up	68%
Go down	0
Stay the same	30

42% expect immigration reform to be enacted, and a similar percentage - 39% - expects taxes to go up now that the Democrats control Congress, up from 32% in November.

EXPECT IMMIGRATION REFORM TO PASS:

Yes	42%
No	42

EXPECT TAXES TO:

Go up	39%
Go down	8
Stay the same	48

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

The President has started off 2007 with an overall job approval rating similar to his rating at the end of 2006. 30% of Americans now approve of the job Bush is doing as President. 31% approved in December.

BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING

	Now	12/2006
Approve	30%	31%
Disapprove	63	63

30% is the lowest approval rating measured for this President in CBS News polls. The President is being hurt by public dismay over the war in Iraq.

President Bush's approval rating is lower than that of President Bill Clinton's in January 1995 when the Republicans took control of Congress, one of Clinton's low points. Back then, 42% of Americans approved of the job Clinton was doing as President.

PRESIDENTIAL JOB RATING

	G.W. Bush Now	Clinton 1/1995
Approve	30%	42%
Disapprove	63	46

Much of the President's low approval rating stems from the situation in Iraq -- the issue Americans want the new Congress to concentrate on first. Only 23% approve of George W. Bush's handling of Iraq; 72% disapprove. Last month, just 21% approved of his handling of the situation there -- the lowest number ever.

BUSH'S JOB HANDLING IRAQ

	Now	12/2006
Approve	23%	21%
Disapprove	72	75

The President has received only a slight bump in support from his base on this measure since last month. In December, just 47% of Republicans approved of Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq; in this poll 51% of Republicans approve. Still, this number is significantly lower than the 70% of Republicans who approved in November.

APPROVE OF BUSH'S JOB HANDLING IRAQ

	Now	12/2006	11/14/2006
Republicans	51%	47%	70%
Democrats	6%	5%	3%
Independents	18%	17%	23%

President Bush's approval rating on the economy is up some from last month, perhaps reflecting the general optimism, and the fact that six in ten Americans rate the economy as being in good condition. Today, 41% of Americans approve of Bush's handling of the economy, up 5 points from December and his highest rating on this issue since July 2005. In addition, 43% now approve of his handling of terrorism.

BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATINGS

	Now	12/2006
Economy	41%	36%
Terrorism	43%	41%

GERALD RUDOLPH FORD

Americans fondly remember former President Gerald Rudolph Ford, who passed away on December 26th. In this poll, 69% approve of the way he handled his job as president; just 4% disapprove.

PRES. FORD JOB RATING

(Now)	
Approve	69%
Disapprove	4
Don't know	27

Having endured the Watergate scandal and President Richard Nixon's resignation, the American public welcomed Gerald Ford as he assumed the presidency in August 1974 with an approval rating of 71% -- but that was the highest level it would reach.

Approval of Ford's presidency was short-lived; his job approval rating fell when he pardoned Nixon shortly after he took office and never really recovered. Most Americans felt that his pardon of Nixon was a mistake, and the poor economy and U.S. pullout from Vietnam probably also contributed to his lagging approval ratings.

APPROVE OF FORD'S JOB AS PRESIDENT

(From Gallup Polls)

Highest - 8/16/74	71%
Lowest - 1/10/75 & 3/28/75	37%
Took office - 8/16/74	71%
After Nixon pardon - 9/27/74	50%
After election - 12/10/76	53%

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 993 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone January 1-3, 2007. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

CBS NEWS POLL
The Start of the 110th Congress
January 1-3, 2007

q1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				
	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Dec06a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	30	68	7	24	31
Disapprove	63	25	87	68	63
DK/NA	7	7	6	8	6

q2 Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

Right direction	27	57	13	19	24
Wrong track	68	38	82	76	70
DK/NA	5	5	5	5	6

q3 Of all the problems facing the country today, which one do you want the new Congress to concentrate on first?

War in Iraq	45	37	57	39
Economy / jobs	7	6	6	9
Health Care	7	7	8	5
Immigration	6	9	4	7
Education	4	3	5	5
Defense / Military	3	2	4	3
Terrorism (general)	2	5	0	2
Poverty / Homelessness	2	1	1	3
Social Security	2	3	1	1
Environment	2	1	2	2
Taxes/IRS	2	2	1	2
Other	12	16	7	15
DK/NA	6	8	4	7

q4 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the economy?

Approve	41	79	22	31	36
Disapprove	51	16	72	58	52
DK/NA	8	5	6	11	12

q5 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq?

Approve	23	51	6	18	21
Disapprove	72	42	91	77	75
DK/NA	5	7	3	5	4

q6 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the campaign against terrorism?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Dec06a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	43	81	20	37	41
Disapprove	51	17	74	54	52
DK/NA	6	2	6	9	7

q7 Over the coming year, do you think President George W. Bush and the Democrats in Congress will or will not be able to work together?

Will be able	41	50	41	35	40
Will not be able to	51	42	50	59	51
DK/NA	8	8	9	6	9

q8 Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about the next two years with the Democratic Party in control of Congress?

Optimistic	68	47	84	67	65
Pessimistic	25	47	10	23	28
DK/NA	7	6	6	10	7

q9 Do you think that in the next two years the new Congress will accomplish more or less than Congress usually does in a typical two-year period?

More	49	32	73	39	47
Less	32	52	10	38	34
Same (vol.)	10	9	10	11	9
DK/NA	10	7	7	12	10

q10 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q11 How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

Very good	8	18	3	6	8
Fairly good	50	68	44	44	50
Fairly bad	26	9	33	33	26
Very bad	14	5	20	14	13
DK/NA	2	0	0	3	3

q12 BLANK

q13-q30 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q31 Looking back, do you approve or disapprove of the way Gerald Ford handled his job when he was President?

					Aug96a
Approve	69	73	68	67	41
Disapprove	4	3	5	4	24
DK/NA	27	24	27	29	35

q32 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q33 Do you think George W. Bush and the Democratic members of Congress will be able to work together to deal with the situation in Iraq in a fair and non-partisan manner?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Yes	41	46	44	35
No	51	51	47	55
DK/NA	8	3	9	10

q34-35 BLANK

q36 With the Democrats in control of Congress, what do you think they will try to do in Iraq -- increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq, keep the same number of U.S. troops as there are now, decrease the number of U.S. troops in Iraq or will the Democrats try to remove all U.S. troops from Iraq?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Dec06a
	%	%	%	%	%
Increase	12	5	9	19	6
Keep the same number	8	8	9	8	9
Decrease	35	36	37	32	42
Remove all troops	36	43	36	30	37
Don't know/No answer	9	8	9	11	6

q37 So far, do you think the Democrats in Congress have developed a clear plan for dealing with the situation in Iraq, or haven't they developed one?

Have developed a clear plan	8	10	11	4
Have not developed one	82	83	76	88
Don't know/No answer	10	7	13	8

q38 With the Democrats in control of Congress, do you think your taxes will go up, go down or stay about the same?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Nov06b
Go up	39	59	16	47	32
Go down	8	6	12	6	9
Stay about the same	48	32	66	44	54
DK/NA	5	3	6	3	5

q39 With the Democrats in control of Congress, do you think the minimum wage will go up, go down, or stay about the same?

Go up	68	65	77	62	66
Go down	0	0	0	0	1
Stay about the same	30	34	23	35	30
DK/NA	2	1	0	3	3

q40 BLANK

q41 With Democrats in control of Congress, do you think the Congress will pass immigration reform, or not?

Yes	42	36	49	39
No	42	51	28	48
DK/NA	16	13	23	13

q42-q44 BLANK

q45-q52 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q53 So far, do you think George W. Bush has developed a clear plan for dealing with the situation in Iraq, or hasn't he developed one?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				
	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Oct06d
	%	%	%	%	%
Has developed a clear plan	20	43	6	18	26
Has not developed one	76	51	91	80	69
Don't know/No answer	4	6	3	2	5

q62 As you may know, Saddam Hussein has been executed by Iraqi authorities. Now that he has been executed, do you think attacks against U.S. troops in Iraq will increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Increase	40	30	46	42
Decrease	5	8	2	5
Stay same	50	58	47	49
Don't know/No answer	5	4	5	4

q63 Now that Saddam Hussein has been executed, do you think Iraq will become more stable, less stable, or won't it make any difference to Iraq's stability?

Increase	21	28	18	18
Decrease	18	13	19	20
No difference	59	56	60	59
Don't know/No answer	2	3	3	3

q54-q61 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	993	
Total Republicans	287	266
Total Democrats	335	344
Total Independents	371	383