

## GEORGE W. BUSH'S JOB PERFORMANCE

*Based on CBS News Polls unless otherwise noted*

In a CBS News Poll conducted in December, 24% of Americans said they approved of the overall job being done by George W. Bush; 68% disapproved. This approval rating is slightly higher than the President's lowest rating of 20% which occurred in November 2008 (just before the presidential election). That is the lowest of any president since Gallup began asking about presidential approval in 1938.

Interestingly, President Bush enjoyed a record high approval rating of 90% following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in 2001-- the highest of any president.

### GEORGE W. BUSH – HIGHS AND LOWS

	<u>Latest</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
	12/2008	11/2008	10/01
Approve	24%	20%	90%
Disapprove	68	72	5

Bush 43 edged out his father, George H.W. Bush, for the highest rating of any president. Bush 41 received an 88% approval rating in 1991 amid the success of the first Gulf War.

Harry Truman comes closest to President Bush's record low approval rating of 20%. In February 1952, just 22% of Americans approved of the job Truman was doing as president.

### HIGHEST RATINGS OF PAST PRESIDENTS

	Approve	Disapprove
<b>George W. Bush (10/2001)</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>5</b>
George H. W. Bush (3/1991)	88%	8
Harry Truman (6/1945)	87%	3 (Gallup)
Franklin Roosevelt (1/1942)	84%	10 (Gallup)
John F. Kennedy (4/1961)	83%	5 (Gallup)
Dwight Eisenhower (12/1956)	79%	11 (Gallup)
Lyndon Johnson (2/1964)	79%	9 (Gallup)
Bill Clinton (1/1998)	73%	24
Gerald Ford (8/1974)	71%	3 (Gallup)
Richard Nixon (11/1969)	67%	19 (Gallup)
Ronald Reagan (4/1981)	67%	18
Jimmy Carter (4/1977)	64%	20

### LOWEST RATINGS OF PAST PRESIDENTS

	Approve	Disapprove
<b>George W. Bush (11/2008)</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>72</b>
Harry Truman (2/1952)	22%	65 (Gallup)
Richard Nixon (8/1974)	24%	66 (Gallup)
Jimmy Carter (7/1979)	26%	56
George H. Bush (7/1992)	31%	59
Lyndon Johnson (8/1968)	35%	52 (Gallup)
Bill Clinton (9/1994)	36%	51
Gerald Ford (1/1975)	37%	39 (Gallup)

## LOWEST RATINGS OF PAST PRESIDENTS (continued)

	Approve	Disapprove
Ronald Reagan (1/1983)	41%	47
Dwight Eisenhower (3/1958)	48%	36 (Gallup)
Franklin Roosevelt (8/1939)	48%	43 (Gallup)
John F. Kennedy (9/1963)	56%	29 (Gallup)

### GEORGE W. BUSH: A HISTORIC LOOK AT HIS APPROVAL RATINGS

In February 2001, the CBS News Poll took its first measure of the job Bush was doing as president and 53% of Americans approved. That rating soared to 90% a few weeks after the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001.

The 43<sup>rd</sup> President's overall ratings tapered off some but remained high throughout the remainder of 2001 and 2002. And in March 2003, after the initial days of the U.S. war in Iraq, 68% of Americans approved of the job Bush was doing as president.

By the fall of 2003, as the fighting in Iraq continued, Bush's approval rating began to decline somewhat. In November of that year, 49% approved of the job he was doing (the first time his approval rating was below 50%). The President, however, did experience an uptick in his approval immediately after the capture of Saddam Hussein in December 2003.

Bush's rating began to take a hit as the prison abuse at Abu Ghraib came to light in the spring of 2004. In May 2004, just 41% of Americans approved of the job Bush was doing as President – his lowest rating to date at that point in time.

Heading into the 2004 presidential election, 49% of Americans approved of the President's job. Just after he was re-elected, 51% approved – the last time a majority approved of the job Bush was doing.

For the most part, the President's job rating continued to decline throughout his second term. In October 2005, Bush's approval rating dipped below 40% for the first time, and in January 2007, fewer than 30% of Americans approved of the job Bush was doing.

In a poll conducted just before the 2008 presidential election, only 20% of Americans said they approved of the job Bush was doing as President – the lowest rating of any president. 72% disapproved.

The last time a majority of Americans approved of the job Bush was doing was in November 2004, right after his reelection for a second term.

#### GEORGE W. BUSH JOB RATING – KEY TRENDS

	12/08	11/08	9/08	1/07	10/05	5/04	12/03	11/03	3/03	10/01	2/01
Approve	24	20%	22%	28%	37%	41%	60%	49%	68%	90%	53%
Disapprove	68	72	70	64	58	52	33	42	26	5	21
Don't know	8	8	8	8	5	7	7	9	6	5	26

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