



CBS News Poll
For release: Monday July 18, 2011
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The Debate Over the Debt Ceiling
July 15-17, 2011

More Americans disapprove than approve of how President Barack Obama is handling the negotiations with members of Congress about raising the debt ceiling, but Democrats and Republicans in Congress fare even worse. 43% approve of how the President is handling the talks, and 48% disapprove. Approval drops to 31% for the Democrats in Congress. Just 21% approve of the Republicans' handling of the negotiations, while 71% disapprove.

Handling of Debt Ceiling Negotiations

	Approve	Disapprove
President Obama	43%	48
Democrats in Congress	31%	58
Republicans in Congress	21%	71

Even half of Republicans, 51%, disapprove of how members of their party in Congress are handling the negotiations. Far fewer Democrats disapprove of how their own party (32%) or President Obama (22%) is handling the talks.

The Obama administration has warned that not raising the debt ceiling could have negative consequences for the economy and that the government might not be able to make Social Security payments to Americans. Some are skeptical; 36% think the administration is making things sound worse than they would be if the debt ceiling is not raised. But slightly more, 40%, thinks the administration is describing the impact of not raising the debt ceiling accurately, and another 14% think the administration is making things sound better than they would be. There are partisan differences.

When the Obama Administration Talks
About the Debt Ceiling, Is It ...?

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Making things sound worse	36%	51%	20%	40%
Describing things accurately	40	21	59	35
Making things sound better	14	19	13	11

Expectations are that the two sides will come to an agreement and the debt ceiling will be raised before the August 2 deadline. 66% expect that to happen, while just 31% do not.

Agreement on Debt Ceiling Before Aug. 2?

Probably will	66%
Probably will not	31

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 810 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone July 15-17, 2011. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus four percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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q4 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the current negotiations on the debt ceiling?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **			
	*** Party ID ***			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Approve	43	15	69	37
Disapprove	48	81	22	52
DK/NA	9	4	9	11

q5 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Democrats in Congress are handling the current negotiations on the debt ceiling?

Approve	31	8	56	23
Disapprove	58	84	32	66
DK/NA	11	8	12	11

q6 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Republicans in Congress are handling the current negotiations on the debt ceiling?

Approve	21	42	11	17
Disapprove	71	51	82	73
DK/NA	8	7	7	10

q22 When the Obama administration talks about what could happen if the debt ceiling is not raised, do you think it is making things sound better than it really would be, making things sound worse than they really would be, or is it describing the situation accurately?

Making things sound better	14	19	13	11
Making things sound worse	36	51	20	40
Describing things accurately	40	21	59	35
DK/NA	10	9	8	14

q25 Do you think Barack Obama and the Republicans in Congress probably will or probably will not reach an agreement on raising the debt ceiling before the August 2 deadline?

Probably will	66	65	70	63
Probably will not	31	30	28	33
DK/NA	3	5	2	4

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	810	
Total Republicans	214	193 (24%)
Total Democrats	272	282 (35%)
Total Independents	324	335 (41%)