



CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL
For release: Thursday, September 24, 2009
6:30 PM EDT

THE STIMULUS, THE ECONOMY AND THE PRESIDENT
September 19-23, 2009

Though still a minority, more Americans now than in July see the stimulus package as having made the economy better. The public remains more optimistic about its eventual positive impact, but many are still waiting to see it produce the jobs that it promised.

Overall ratings of the economy are just slightly better than last month, and have been slowly - if incrementally - edging upward over the summer. Still, more are apt to say the economy is stabilizing than improving.

Meanwhile, the president's overall approval rating stands at 56%, the same as last month.

THE STIMULUS

More Americans than in July say the stimulus is making things better. But a plurality is still waiting to see an impact.

THE IMPACT OF THE STIMULUS PACKAGE SO FAR

Table with 3 columns: Impact (Better, No impact, Worse), Now, 7/2009. Data: Better (36%, 25%), No impact (46, 57), Worse (13, 13)

And even more Americans think the stimulus will help in the long run. 47% think so, up slightly from July.

IN THE LONG RUN, IMPACT OF THE STIMULUS PACKAGE WILL BE:

Table with 3 columns: Impact (Better, No impact, Worse), Now, 7/2009. Data: Better (47%, 44%), No impact (24, 28), Worse (21, 22)

Similarly, most Americans say the stimulus will eventually create jobs, but very few people - less than one in ten - think it has created jobs already.

IMPACT OF THE STIMULUS PACKAGE HAS...

Table with 2 columns: Impact (Created jobs already, Will create jobs eventually, Will never create jobs), Percentage (7%, 52, 38)

## **POLITICS OF THE ECONOMY, AND THE STIMULUS**

President Obama still rates higher than Congressional Republicans on ideas for dealing with the economy. By 53% to 27%, Americans think the President's approach is better.

### **WHO HAS BETTER IDEAS ON THE ECONOMY?**

President Obama	53%
Republicans in Congress	27

However, Americans remain split on the President's handling of the economy, with evaluations down slightly from last month.

### **PRESIDENT OBAMA HANDLING THE ECONOMY**

	Now	8/2009
Approve	50%	53%
Disapprove	40	41

On one particular issue, taxes, 56% of Americans think President Obama will eventually have to break his campaign pledge and raise taxes on households who earn under \$250,000 per year.

## **RATING THE ECONOMY**

Americans still overwhelmingly say the economy is in bad shape. Evaluations have nudged up just a bit, continuing their incremental ticks upward over the summer.

### **CONDITION OF THE ECONOMY**

	Now	8/2009	7/2009	6/2009
Good	22%	20%	18%	15%
Bad	77	79	82	84

In terms of the economy's direction, Americans are more inclined to describe a plateau than an upward movement. More now than last month say things are steadying. Fewer say it is worsening than said so in August.

### **THE ECONOMY IS GETTING...**

	Now	8/2009
Better	36%	36%
Worse	17	25
Staying same	46	38

Americans volunteer the economy as the nation's top problem - long the most-mentioned issue. But it has ceded some ground to health care, which has moved up to 19%, perhaps echoing the political debate.

**COUNTRY'S MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM**

	Now	7/2009
Economy & jobs	41%	56%
Health care/health insurance	19	12
Budget/national debt/deficit	3	3

Americans' evaluations of their own family's finances have changed little since last month. Most - 60% - say their financial situation is staying the same; only one in ten says their situation is improving, about the same as said so in August.

Americans' concern about household job loss has remained fairly constant since last month, too, with about three in ten very concerned right now.

**VIEWS OF PRESIDENT OBAMA**

In the last few weeks President Barack Obama made a speech to Congress, appeared on news programs and talk shows, and has spoken at smaller events around the country. Most Americans say the number of appearances is about right. One third think he's making too many, including 53% of Republicans.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA'S APPEARANCES**

	All	Dems	Reps	Inds
About right number	58%	76%	37%	52%
Too many	35	18	53	40
Too few	4	3	4	5

The president's overall approval rating stands now at 56%, the same as last month.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA'S APPROVAL RATING**

	Now	8/2009
Approve	56%	56%
Disapprove	33	35

On specific issues, views are mixed. The president's rating on handling the economy is down slightly, despite somewhat more positive evaluations of the national economy.

Fewer than half approve of his handling of Afghanistan, though more approve (44%) than disapprove (35%). Most approve of his handling of Iraq.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA'S APPROVAL RATINGS**

	Now	8/2009	7/2009	4/2009
Overall	56%	56%	58%	68%
Iraq	54%	--	60%	63%
Economy	50%	53%	51%	61%
Health Care	47%	40%	46%	--
Afghanistan	44%	48%	--	56%

First Lady Michelle Obama receives positive ratings from the American public: 50% now have a favorable opinion of her, while just 7% view her unfavorably. 41% are undecided or don't have an opinion.

The percentage that views Mrs. Obama favorably (50%) is down from a high of 67% in late April, as President Barack Obama marked his first 100 days in office (he reached his highest approval rating to date at that time), but it is similar to the ratings the First Lady received earlier in the year. Her unfavorable rating remains quite low, while the number who are undecided or don't know enough about her has risen.

	<b>OPINION OF MICHELLE OBAMA</b>				
	Now	4/27/09	4/6/09	3/2009	2/2009
Favorable	50%	67%	50%	53%	49%
Not favorable	7	3	5	7	5
Undecided/Don't know	41	30	42	38	44

-----  
This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1042 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone September 19-23, 2009. Phone numbers were dialed from random digit dial samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. 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.

This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

**CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL**  
**The Stimulus, the Economy and the President**  
**September 19-23, 2009**

q1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				
	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Aug09a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	56	23	85	47	56
Disapprove	33	67	8	38	35
DK/NA	11	10	7	15	9

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?

					Jul09b
Right direction	41	14	63	36	42
Wrong track	53	81	30	59	49
DK/NA	6	5	7	5	9

q3 What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

Economy and jobs	41	32	46	40	56
Health Care	19	16	24	16	12
Budget Deficit /Nat'l debt	3	4	2	3	3
Moral Values/Family Values	3	2	2	3	2
War/Peace(General)	2	2	2	2	1
Iraq	2	3	1	3	0
The President/Barack Obama	2	3	0	3	0
Other	24	34	20	25	23
DK/NA	4	4	3	5	3

q4 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the economy?

					Aug09a
Approve	50	21	79	39	53
Disapprove	40	73	13	47	41
DK/NA	10	6	8	14	6

q5 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the situation with Iraq?

					Jul09a
Approve	54	41	71	46	60
Disapprove	29	41	17	34	26
DK/NA	17	18	12	20	14

q6 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the situation with Afghanistan?

					Aug09a
Approve	44	32	58	38	48
Disapprove	35	45	26	38	30
DK/NA	21	23	16	24	22

q7 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling health care?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

\*\*\* Party ID \*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Aug09a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	47	12	73	42	40
Disapprove	45	80	22	47	47
DK/NA	8	8	5	11	13

q8-9 SEPARATE RELEASE

q10 How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Aug09a
Very good	1	2	1	1	2
Fairly good	21	17	27	17	18
Fairly bad	49	44	50	51	43
Very bad	28	38	22	29	36
DK/NA	1	0	0	2	1

q11 Do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Better	36	32	48	28	36
Worse	17	28	9	20	25
Same	46	40	43	52	38
DK/NA	1	0	0	0	1

q12 Regardless of how you usually vote, who do you think is more likely to make the right decisions about the nation's economy -- Barack Obama or the Republicans in Congress?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jul09b
Barack Obama	53	18	87	42	56
Republicans in Congress	27	61	3	29	25
Both (Vol.)	1	1	1	2	3
Neither (Vol.)	9	11	2	14	9
DK/NA	10	9	7	13	7

q13 So far, do you think the government's stimulus package has made the economy better, made the economy worse, or has it had no impact on the economy so far?

Better	36	26	47	31	25
Worse	13	27	4	14	13
No impact	46	42	44	50	57
DK/NA	5	5	5	5	5

q14 In the long run, do you think the government's stimulus package will make the economy better, will make the economy worse, or will it have no impact on the economy in the long run?

Better	47	26	70	38	44
Worse	21	38	5	25	22
No impact	24	28	20	26	28
DK/NA	8	8	5	11	6

q15 From what you know so far, which comes closest to your own view?  
 1. The economic stimulus package has already created a substantial number of new jobs in the U.S. OR 2. It will create a substantial number of new jobs but hasn't done that yet OR 3. It will not create a substantial number of new jobs?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **					
*** Party ID ***					
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jul09b
	%	%	%	%	%
Has already created jobs	7	5	10	6	4
Will but hasn't yet	52	31	68	49	53
Will not create new jobs	38	61	19	41	41
DK/NA	3	3	3	4	2

q16 As you may know, one of Barack Obama's campaign promises last year was that he would not raise taxes on households earning less than \$250,000 a year. Do you think he will be able to keep that campaign promise, or not?

Will keep campaign promise	35	13	56	28
Will not	56	80	33	63
DK/NA	9	7	11	9

q17 These days, as President Obama explains his proposals, do you think he is making too many public appearances and speeches, making too few public appearances and speeches, or making about the right number of public appearances and speeches?

Too many	35	53	18	40
Too few	4	4	3	5
Right number	58	37	76	52
DK/NA	3	6	3	3

q18 Is your opinion of Michelle Obama favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Michelle Obama yet to have an opinion

					Apr09b
Favorable	50	34	69	41	67
Not favorable	7	15	1	8	3
Undecided	15	23	6	19	12
Haven't heard enough	26	26	22	31	18
Refused	2	2	2	1	0

q93 Do you think your household's financial situation is getting better, getting worse or staying about the same?

					Aug09a
Getting better	12	17	11	10	10
Getting worse	28	28	26	31	30
Same	60	55	63	59	59
DK/NA	0	0	0	0	1

q94 How concerned are you that in the next 12 months you or someone else in your household might be out of work and looking for a job -- very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned at all?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

\*\*\* Party ID \*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Aug09a
	%	%	%	%	%
Very concerned	30	28	31	30	26
Somewhat concerned	28	24	33	25	28
Not at all concerned	42	48	36	44	45
DK/NA	0	0	0	1	1

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>	
Total Respondents	1042		
Total Republicans	289	234	(22%)
Total Democrats	357	385	(37%)
Total Independents	396	423	(41%)