



CBS NEWS POLL  
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**PRESIDENT OBAMA AT ONE YEAR**

January 14-17, 2010

President Barack Obama completes his first year in office with his job approval rating rising in the past week, to 50% now. His handling of the U.S. response to the earthquake in Haiti receives widespread approval.

But his overall rating is lower than when he took office. His current standing is similar to that of several recent presidents after their first years in office.

President Obama's falling approval ratings during his first year may have much to do with views of who is - and isn't - benefiting from his efforts. Americans say financial companies and banks have been big winners so far, while the middle class and small businesses have gotten short shrift. Fewer Americans now than when he took office say the President cares about them personally.

Americans think the President has had limited success in meeting his campaign themes of bringing change to Washington and getting past partisanship. A sharp partisan divide clouds many policy evaluations in this poll.

**APPROVAL RATINGS**

President Obama's job approval rating is now 50%, up from last week's all-time low of 46%. When he took office a year ago, 62% approved.

	<b>PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB APPROVAL RATING</b>					
	Now	1/11/2010	12/2009	10/2009	4/2009	2/2009
Approve	50%	46%	50%	56%	68%	62%
Disapprove	40	41	39	34	23	15

The recent four-point rise in President Obama's overall job approval rating may reflect the widespread approval of his handling of the U.S. response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti last week; 80% approve, and just 8% disapprove. Majorities of Republicans, Democrats and independents approve on this measure.

But when it comes to overall approval, the President has maintained his early high approval ratings only among Democrats (four in five approve). Only four in ten independents and a quarter of Republicans now approve. A year ago, 56% of independents approved of the job President Obama was doing, as did 36% of Republicans.

At 50%, President Obama's approval rating is similar to that of Presidents Ronald Reagan (49%), Jimmy Carter (51%) and Bill Clinton (54%) one year into their presidencies. All were plagued by economic troubles - and Mr. Clinton also attempted to reform health care.

The President's current marks are lower than those given to other Presidents: George W. Bush (82%), George H.W. Bush (76%), John F. Kennedy (79%) and Dwight D. Eisenhower (70%).

**PRESIDENTIAL JOB APPROVAL: AFTER THE FIRST YEAR**

	Approve	Disapprove	
Obama	50%	40	Now
G.W. Bush	82%	11	(1/2002)
Clinton	54%	35	(1/1994)
G.H.W. Bush	76%	13	(1/1990)
Reagan	49%	38	(1/1982)
Carter	51%	29	(1/1978)
Nixon	63%	23	(1/1970, Gallup)
Kennedy	79%	10	(1/1962, Gallup)
Eisenhower	70%	18	(1/1954, Gallup)

The President's approval rating on handling domestic issues such as the economy and health care were at all-time lows last week. They have since risen, but remain below the 50% mark. 60% approve of his handling of terrorism.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA'S APPROVAL RATINGS**

	Now	1/11/2010	12/2009	10/2009
Overall	50%	46%	50%	56%
Haiti earthquake	80%	--	--	--
Terrorism	60%	52%	--	--
Foreign policy	49%	--	--	48%
Iraq	48%	--	--	--
Afghanistan	46%	46%	48%	42%
Economy	46%	41%	47%	54%
Health care	40%	36%	42%	47%

**FIRST YEAR WINNERS AND LOSERS**

The poll suggests that Americans believe President Obama has focused too much on helping American industry and not enough on helping Americans themselves.

49% say President Obama has done too much for the banks and 37% think he's done too much for U.S. auto makers. At the same time, 54% say

he's done too little for the middle class, six in ten think he's done too little for small businesses, and a plurality says he's done too little for homeowners.

**HOW MUCH HAS OBAMA DONE FOR...**

	Too much	Too little	Right amount
The banks	49%	9	34
The auto industry	37%	13	41
Homeowners	9%	44	40
The middle class	3%	54	37
Small business	0%	62	28

Independents (along with Republicans) strongly believe that President Obama has not done enough for the middle class, and say he has done too much for the banks.

**INDEPENDENTS: HOW MUCH HAS OBAMA DONE FOR...**

	Too much	Too little	Right amount
The middle class	4%	62	26
The banks	49%	9	35

Democrats are more likely to say he has done the "right amount" for the middle class.

The view that the President has done "too little" for the middle class predominates among all income groups, from the lowest - those making under \$30,000 up to the highest, those over \$100,000.

**IMPACT OF OBAMA'S POLICIES**

As it has been throughout the Obama administration - and for part of the previous one -- the economy is the nation's top issue, and here the news is good for the President. 39% say Obama's policies have helped the economy, while 25% say they have hurt. Three in ten say those policies have had no impact.

**OBAMA'S POLICIES ON THE ECONOMY HAVE...**

	All	Dems	Reps	Inds
Helped	39%	66%	18%	29%
Hurt	25	6	44	28
Had no impact	30	20	34	38

But Americans are split on the issue that has taken up much of the first year's agenda -- the potential impact of health care reform. Democrats are the most optimistic.

**IF HEALTH CARE PASSES, HEALTH SYSTEM WOULD GET:**

	All	Dems	Reps	Inds
Better	41%	63%	20%	35%
Worse	35	11	59	40
No impact	14	15	11	14

On terrorism, however, 41% of Americans think the Obama administration's policies have had no impact on the U.S.' safety level. Among the rest, more think the country is safer rather than less safe.

**OBAMA'S POLICIES ON TERROR HAVE MADE U.S....**

	All	Dems	Reps	Inds
Safer	28%	38%	25%	20%
Less safe	22	7	33	28
Had no impact	41	43	36	44

From a policy standpoint, partisan perceptions dominate these first-year evaluations. There are clear partisan divides on the economy, health care and terrorism, with Republicans highly critical of the President and Democrats supportive.

One goal of the Obama campaign was to improve America's image abroad. More say he's done so than hasn't - yet the percent who think he's improved that image is down from July.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA CHANGED U.S. IMAGE IN WORLD FOR...**

	Now	7/2009
Better	50%	60%
Worse	20	12
No impact	26	23

**VIEWS OF THE PRESIDENT**

Change in Washington was a central element of Barack Obama's presidential campaign, and a year after taking office few think he has accomplished that goal. Six in ten say President Obama has not changed Washington; just 35% say he has. He receives some credit for bringing different groups of Americans together; half say he has united the country, but 37% think he has divided it.

**CHANGE AND UNITY: OBAMA'S IMPACT SO FAR...**

	Yes	No
Brought change to Washington	35%	59
Brought Americans together	50%	37

A strong majority (69%) says President Obama cares a lot or some about them - but that is down from when he took office, and the percentage that thinks he does not care about them has doubled.

**DOES OBAMA CARE ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU?**

	Now	8/2009	2/2009
A lot/some...	69%	72%	83%
Not much/none	29	26	14

70% see President Obama as a strong leader -- but even more saw him that way when he took office a year ago.

<b>IS OBAMA A STRONG LEADER?</b>			
	Now	10/2009	2/2009
Yes	70%	72%	85%
No	28	24	10

51% think President Obama says what he believes as opposed to just what people want to hear.

#### **THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY: EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIONS**

More than half of Americans think President Obama has accomplished about what they expected him to in his first year in office, but some voice disappointment. 26% think the President has accomplished less than they expected, while only 14% say he has exceeded their expectations.

<b>OBAMA HAS ACCOMPLISHED:</b>	
More than expected	14%
Less than expected	26
About as expected	56

There is disappointment about the President's fulfillment of the goals he laid out during his campaign. Less than one in five says he has kept all or most of his campaign promises. 75% say he has kept just some or hardly any of them.

<b>HAS OBAMA KEPT CAMPAIGN PROMISES?</b>	
All of them	2%
Most of them	17
Some of them	43
Hardly any	32

At the start of his presidency, two in three Americans expected Barack Obama to be a good or very good president. A year later, just 46% say he has been good or very good, while 54% say he has been average or poor.

	<b>TYPE OF PRESIDENT OBAMA IS/WILL BE:</b>			
	<u>Barack Obama</u>		<u>George W. Bush</u>	
	Now	1/2009	2/2002	1/2001
Very good	14%	28%	34%	14%
Good	32	40	37	29
Average	33	20	23	42
Poor	21	4	5	12

Expectations for George W. Bush at the onset of his first term were lower, and after a year in office and just a few months after the 9/11 attacks, far more rated him good or very good.

Three in four Democrats think President Obama has been a good or very good president, compared to just 24% of Republicans and 32% of independents.

Despite these evaluations, 62% of Americans remain optimistic about the next three years with Barack Obama as President - but that's down from 79% a year ago.

**FEELINGS ABOUT PRESIDENCY**

	Now	4/2009	1/2009
Optimistic	62%	72%	79%
Pessimistic	33	22	16

**VIEW OF CONGRESS**

As the capitol gears up for what looks to be a hard fought midterm election year, approval of the job Congress is doing is at just 23%. A majority of Democrats, Republicans, and independents all disapprove of the job Congress is doing.

**CONGRESSIONAL JOB APPROVAL**

	Now	11/2009	2/2009
Approve	23%	26%	26%
Disapprove	63	60	62

Though they are more popular than the Republicans, favorable views of the Democrats in Congress have dropped slightly since last fall. Now 44% of Americans have a favorable opinion of the Democrats in Congress, while 48% view them unfavorably - back in September, more viewed them favorably than not. But the Republicans remain more unpopular overall; just a third of Americans view the Republicans in Congress favorably.

**OPINION OF THE PARTIES IN CONGRESS**

	<u>Democratic Party</u>		<u>Republican Party</u>	
	Now	9/2009	Now	9/2009
Favorable	44%	47%	34%	30%
Not favorable	48	41	56	57

77% of Democrats view the Democrats in Congress favorably, while only 55% of Republicans feel the same about their own Congressional delegation. Independents view both parties in Congress unfavorably.

**THE VICE PRESIDENT, THE FIRST LADY, AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, First Lady Michelle Obama, and Vice President Joe Biden all receive favorable job approval ratings. Three in four Americans approve of the way Hillary Clinton is handling her job as Secretary of State, and a similar percentage (78%) approves of how Michelle Obama is handling her role as First Lady - though approval has dropped slightly from 84% last April. Although just 46%

approve of the way Vice President Joe Biden is handling his job, only 27% disapprove, while 27% don't have an opinion.

**JOB APPROVALS**

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
Hillary Clinton	77%	15	8
Michelle Obama	78%	11	11
Joe Biden	46%	27	27

While majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents alike all approve of how Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama are handling their jobs, Republicans and independents are divided over Biden.

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,090 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone January 14-17, 2010. 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 Poll**  
**President Obama at One Year**  
**January 14-17, 2010**

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	Jan10a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	50	25	81	40	46
Disapprove	40	65	13	47	41
DK/NA	10	10	6	13	13

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?

					Dec09a
Right direction	36	21	59	26	37
Wrong track	55	74	30	64	56
DK/NA	9	5	11	10	7

q3-4 BLANK

q5 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling foreign policy?

					Nov09b
Approve	49	27	77	39	50
Disapprove	38	58	13	48	36
DK/NA	13	15	10	13	14

q6 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the economy?

					Jan10a
Approve	46	28	73	33	41
Disapprove	48	69	21	59	47
DK/NA	6	3	6	8	12

q7 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the situation with Iraq?

					Sep09b
Approve	48	36	65	42	54
Disapprove	38	52	21	44	29
DK/NA	14	12	14	14	17

q8 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the situation with Afghanistan?

					Jan10a
Approve	46	36	56	45	46
Disapprove	39	51	26	43	38
DK/NA	15	13	18	12	16

q9 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling health care?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jan10a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	40	15	67	33	36
Disapprove	54	77	29	60	54
DK/NA	6	8	4	7	10

q10 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the threat of terrorism?

Approve	60	47	78	52	52
Disapprove	33	47	15	38	35
DK/NA	7	6	7	10	13

q11 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the U.S. response to the earthquake in Haiti?

Approve	80	77	87	75
Disapprove	8	8	5	10
DK/NA	12	15	8	15

q12 In his first year in office, do you think Barack Obama has accomplished more than you expected, less than you expected, or about what you expected him to accomplish by now?

More	14	9	21	10
Less	26	34	15	31
About expected	56	52	62	54
DK/NA	4	5	2	5

q13 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

					Nov09b
Approve	23	19	32	17	26
Disapprove	63	73	52	67	60
DK/NA	14	8	16	16	14

q14 SEPARATE RELEASE

q15 In general, is your opinion of the Democrats in Congress favorable or not favorable?

					Sep09b
Favorable	44	22	77	29	47
Not favorable	48	73	17	60	41
DK/NA	8	5	6	11	12

q16 In general, is your opinion of the Republicans in Congress favorable or not favorable?

Favorable	34	55	20	31	30
Not favorable	56	37	72	55	57
DK/NA	10	8	8	14	13

q17 Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about the next three years with Barack Obama as President?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Apr09b*
	%	%	%	%	%
Optimistic	62	40	88	55	72
Pessimistic	33	55	9	39	22
DK/NA	5	5	3	6	6

\*"...next **four years**..."

q18 What kind of President do you think Barack Obama has been so far: a very good President, a good President, an average President, or a poor President?

Very good	14	4	28	8
Good	32	20	49	24
Average	33	41	18	42
Poor	21	35	5	25
DK/NA	0	0	0	1

q19 How many of his campaign promises do you think Barack Obama has been able to keep--all of them, most of them, some of them, or hardly any of them?

All of them	2	1	3	3
Most of them	17	7	32	11
Some of them	43	29	50	45
Hardly any of them	32	56	11	35
DK/NA	6	7	4	6

q20 BLANK

q21 Do you think Barack Obama has strong qualities of leadership, or not?

					Oct09a
					%
Has	70	50	88	67	72
Does not have	28	46	12	30	24
DK/NA	2	4	0	3	4

q22 How much do you think Barack Obama cares about the needs and problems of people like yourself--a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

					Aug09a
A lot	41	20	70	30	45
Some	28	31	21	34	27
Not much	14	21	5	17	13
Not at all	15	26	4	17	13
DK/NA	2	2	0	2	2

q23 Do you think Barack Obama says what he believes most of the time, or does he say what he thinks people want to hear?

					Sep08b*
Yes, says what he believes	51	29	78	41	51
No, says what people want	44	68	18	52	46
DK/NA	5	3	4	7	3

\*Among registered voters

q24 BLANK

q25 So far, do you think Barack Obama's policies have generally helped the economy, generally hurt the economy, or have Barack Obama's policies had no impact on the economy so far?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **			
	*** Party ID ***			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Helped	39	18	66	29
Hurt	25	44	6	28
No impact	30	34	20	38
DK/NA	6	4	8	5

q26 Since he has been President, do you think Barack Obama has brought real change to the way things are done in Washington, or not?

Brought change	35	24	50	28
Has not	59	70	45	64
DK/NA	6	6	5	8

q27 Since Barack Obama has been President, do you think the United States' image in the world has gotten better, gotten worse, or has Barack Obama's presidency had no effect on the United States' image in the world?

					Jul09a
					%
Better	50	26	75	43	60
Worse	20	38	6	20	12
No effect	26	30	17	32	23
DK/NA	4	6	2	5	5

q28 So far, do you think Barack Obama's presidency has brought different groups of Americans together, or do you think it has divided them?

Brought groups together	50	34	69	44
Divided them	37	52	20	41
DK/NA	13	14	11	15

q29-31 BLANK

q32 If health care legislation passes this year, would you say that Barack Obama will have made the U.S. health care system better, made it worse, or will he not have changed the U.S. health care system?

Better	41	20	63	35
Worse	35	59	11	40
Not changed	14	11	15	14
DK/NA	10	10	11	11

q33 In his first year in office, do you think Barack Obama has done too much for the nation's banks and financial institutions, too little, or has he done the right amount for the nation's banks and financial institutions?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Too much	49	58	42	49
Too little	9	13	7	9
Right amount	34	19	44	35
DK/NA	8	10	7	7

q34 In his first year in office, do you think Barack Obama has done too much for the U.S. auto industry, too little, or has he done the right amount for the U.S. auto industry?

Too much	37	47	23	44
Too little	13	16	9	15
Right amount	41	29	60	32
DK/NA	9	8	8	9

q35 In his first year in office, do you think Barack Obama has done too much for homeowners, too little, or has he done the right amount for homeowners?

Too much	9	12	4	11
Too little	44	47	46	41
Right amount	40	33	46	40
DK/NA	7	8	4	8

q36 In his first year in office, do you think Barack Obama has done too much for the middle class, too little, or has he done the right amount for the middle class?

Too much	3	3	1	4
Too little	54	67	35	62
Right amount	37	22	59	26
DK/NA	6	8	5	8

q37 In his first year in office, do you think Barack Obama has done too much for small business owners, too little, or has he done the right amount for small business owners?

Too much	0	0	0	1
Too little	62	76	47	66
Right amount	28	17	44	23
DK/NA	10	7	9	10

q38 Do you think the policies of the Obama Administration have made the United States safer from terrorism, less safe from terrorism, or have the policies of the Obama Administration not affected the U.S.' safety from terrorism?

					Aug09a
					%
Safer	28	25	38	20	25
Less safe	22	33	7	28	23
No effect	41	36	43	44	42
DK/NA	9	6	12	8	10

q39-41 SEPARATE RELEASE

q42 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as Vice President?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jul09a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	46	36	65	33	47
Disapprove	27	38	13	33	26
DK/NA	27	26	22	34	27

q43 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Michelle Obama is handling her role as First Lady?

					Apr09b
Approve	78	71	88	75	84
Disapprove	11	16	7	10	6
DK/NA	11	13	5	15	10

q44 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Hillary Clinton is handling her job as Secretary of State?

Approve	77	61	91	75
Disapprove	15	26	6	14
DK/NA	8	13	3	11

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1,090	
Total Republicans	311	302 (28%)
Total Democrats	361	389 (36%)
Total Independents	418	399 (33%)