

**The Economy, the President and the General Election**  
 January 12-17, 2012

- For the first time in nearly a year, more Americans now say the economy is getting better than say it's getting worse. Most still think the economy is bad, but the percentage that says it is in good shape is growing.
- Still, most don't think President Obama has made real progress fixing the economy and more than half disapprove of his handling of it.
- Looking ahead to the general election, Obama leads all of his potential Republican rivals except for Mitt Romney in head to head match-ups. The two are tied with 45% each among registered voters.

**Good Economic News?**

Amid some good economic news this month on the unemployment front, Americans are now somewhat more optimistic about the country's economic picture. For the first time since last February, more Americans now say the economy is getting better (28%) than say it's getting worse (23%). 49% say it's staying the same.

	<b>Direction of the Economy</b>					
	Now	1/9/2012	12/2011	11/2011	10/2011	2/2011
Getting better	28%	25%	24%	18%	14%	32%
Getting worse	23	29	30	32	36	22
The same	49	45	45	50	49	45

The public continues to say the economy is in bad shape, but 21% rate it at least fairly good – a number that has been inching up recently and is now the highest since March of last year.

	<b>Condition of the Economy</b>					
	Now	1/9/12	12/2011	11/2011	10/2011	3/2011
Good	21%	19%	19%	13%	14%	23%
Bad	79	80	81	86	86	77

Americans still say President Obama needs to do more on the economy. Most (60%) do not think he has made real progress fixing it; just 35% say he has. However, these assessments have improved since December.

**Has President Obama Made Real Progress Fixing the Economy?**

	Now	12/2011
Yes	35%	28%
No	60	68

A majority of Americans continue to disapprove of the President's handling of the economy: 54% disapprove; while 40% approve.

Handling terrorism remains a strong area for the President. 61% approve of the job he is doing on that issue. His ratings are lower on handling foreign policy in general.

**President Obama Job Ratings – Issues**

Terrorism	61%	29
Foreign policy	48%	35
Economy	40%	54

President Obama's overall approval rating now stands at 47%; 45% disapprove of the job he is doing. Aside from an uptick after the killing of Osama bin Laden last spring, the President's approval rating has held fairly steady at just below 50% for much of the last year and a half.

**President Obama's Overall Job Rating**

	Now	1/9/2012	12/2011	11/2011	5/2011	1/2011
Approve	47%	45%	47%	43%	57%	49%
Disapprove	45	47	44	47	37	39

Two-thirds of Americans still think the country is off on the wrong track, while 29% say the country is headed in the right direction.

**Direction of the Country**

	Now	1/9/12	12/2011	10/2011	9/2011	6/2011
Right direction	29%	29%	25%	21%	19%	28%
Wrong track	66	65	69	74	73	63

**Re-Election Prospects?**

With less than 10 months to go before the presidential election, the percentage of Americans that say they have a clear idea of what President Obama wants to accomplish in a second term has risen 11 points: from 32% in December to 43% today. Still, more than half – 54% - say they do not have a clear idea of what he wants to accomplish.

**Clear Idea of What Pres. Obama Wants to Accomplish If Re-elected?**

	Now	12/2011
Clear idea	43%	32%
Not a clear idea	54	66

Looking ahead to November, President Obama leads all of the possible Republican candidates except for one: Mitt Romney. If the November presidential election were held today, 45% of registered voters say they would support Barack Obama, while 45% would vote for Mitt Romney. The President leads Ron Paul by four points.

## Who Would You Vote For in November if the Candidates Were...?

(Among registered voters)

Mitt Romney	45%
Barack Obama	45
Ron Paul	42%
Barack Obama	46
Newt Gingrich	39%
Barack Obama	50
Rick Santorum	38%
Barack Obama	49
Rick Perry	38%
Barack Obama	50

Independents show a preference for Ron Paul and Mitt Romney over Barack Obama, but choose President Obama over Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum or Rick Perry.

Voters divide in their overall opinions of President Obama: 38% view him favorably, but more - 45% - have an unfavorable impression of him. While opinions of the President among registered voters are mixed, they are more positive than voters' views of any of the Republican candidates running for president.

### Opinion of Barack Obama

(Among registered voters)

	Now	9/2011
Favorable	38%	40%
Not favorable	45	45
Undecided	17	14

### Congress and the President

Americans give the President mixed marks, but they are clearly unhappy with Congress. Only 13% approve of the job Congress is doing, barely above the all-time low of 9% reached in the fall. 79% disapprove.

### Job Rating of Congress

	Now	1/9/2012	12/2011	11/2011
Approve	13%	12%	11%	9%
Disapprove	79	80	83	83

The public is critical of both parties in Congress. Just 19% approve of the job Republicans in Congress are doing, and that number rises only marginally to 26% for Democrats. Interestingly, a majority of self-identified Republicans (58%) actually disapprove of their own party's performance in Congress. Democrats are more divided about their party.

### Parties in Congress

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Republicans in Congress				
Approve	19%	32%	10%	19%
Disapprove	73	58	85	71
Democrats in Congress				
Approve	26%	7%	49%	17%
Disapprove	65	84	45	71

Half of all Americans do not think Barack Obama shares their priorities for the country: 44% think he does and 50% think he does not. Still, the President does much better than the Republicans in Congress on this measure; 66% do not think the Republicans share their priorities.

### Do They Share Your Priorities for the Country?

	Barack Obama		Republicans in Congress	
	Now	4/2011	Now	4/2011
Yes	44%	43%	26%	32%
No	50	53	66	60

More Americans trust President Obama than Republicans in Congress to handle health care, job creation, and Medicare and Social Security. The President has a slight edge over Republicans in Congress on handling the national economy, and both are trusted about equally to handle the federal budget deficit.

### Who Do You Trust More to Make the Right Decisions About...?

	Barack Obama	Republicans in Congress
Health care	48%	39
Creating jobs	47%	38
Medicare and Social Security	47%	39
The national economy	44%	40
The federal budget deficit	43%	42

When asked whose approach they prefer when it comes to dealing with the tough choices involved in cutting programs to reduce the budget deficit and still maintaining needed federal programs, more Americans choose President Obama than the Republicans in Congress. In April 2011, Americans were divided.

### Whose Approach is Better to Reduce the Deficit and Maintain Needed Federal Programs?

	Now	4/2011
Barack Obama	47%	43%
Republicans in Congress	38	42

Few Americans blame the Obama administration the most for the size of the current federal budget deficit. When asked who is most to blame, 43% pick the Bush administration over either Congress (19%) or the Obama administration (14%).

### Blame Most for the Budget Deficit

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Bush Administration	43%	16%	67%	40%
Congress	19	23	14	21
Obama Administration	14	34	3	11
Someone else	9	9	7	11

### Gridlock in Washington

85% of Americans want to see both the Democrats and Republicans compromise some of their positions in order to get things done, and they see differences between Barack Obama and the Republicans in Congress in this regard. Most Americans – six in 10 – think Barack Obama is trying to work with Republicans in Congress in order to get things done, while just 27% think the Republicans in Congress are trying to work with Barack Obama.

### Are They Trying to Work With Each Other?

	Barack Obama	Republicans in Congress
Yes	60%	27%
No	33	67

46% blame the Republicans in Congress more for the difficulties in reaching agreements and passing legislation in Congress, while 30% blame President Obama more.

### Who Do You Blame More for Gridlock in Washington?

	Now	12/2011
Republicans in Congress	46%	42%
Barack Obama and Democrats	30	26
Both equally (vol.)	16	22

### Recess Appointments

The latest scuffle between the President and Republicans in Congress has involved the appointment of the director of the new consumer protection agency and the filling of three labor board vacancies without a vote in the Senate. 24% of Americans think the President's actions were acceptable, while more – 33% - think they were not acceptable. However, 43% don't know enough about the issue to say.

### Is It Acceptable For President Obama to Make Recess Appointments?

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Acceptable	24%	11%	36%	21%
Not acceptable	33	55	15	35
Don't know	43	34	49	44

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This poll was conducted by telephone from January 12-17, 2012 among 1,154 adults nationwide, including 1,021 interviews were conducted with registered voters. Phone numbers were dialed from 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 margin of error for the sample of registered voters could be plus or minus three points. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES NATIONAL POLL  
 The Economy, the President, and the General Election  
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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	Jan12a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	47	9	78	42	45
Disapprove	45	83	16	47	47
DK/NA	8	8	6	11	8

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	29	9	50	24	29
Wrong track	66	89	44	72	65
DK/NA	5	2	6	4	6

q3 In deciding who you would like to see elected President this year, which one of the following issues will be most important to you: 1. Abortion, or 2. The federal budget deficit, or 3. The economy, or 4. Health care, or 5. Illegal immigration, or. 6. Something else? IF SOMETHING ELSE, ASK: What is that?

Economy	56	60	57	53
Federal budget deficit	15	22	9	16
Health care	14	6	18	14
Illegal immigration	5	1	7	5
Abortion	3	2	1	6
Something else, (SPECIFY)	6	6	7	5
DK/NA	1	3	1	1

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

Approve	48	20	72	45	46
Disapprove	35	62	14	38	37
DK/NA	17	18	14	17	17

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

Approve	40	9	71	34	38
Disapprove	54	87	24	59	55
DK/NA	6	4	5	7	7

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

					Dec11a
Approve	61	32	84	59	57
Disapprove	29	55	10	29	31
DK/NA	10	13	6	12	12

q7 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				
	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jan12a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	13	13	15	10	12
Disapprove	79	79	78	80	80
DK/NA	8	8	7	10	8

q8 Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Democrats in Congress are handling their job?

					Nov11a
Approve	26	7	49	17	22
Disapprove	65	84	45	71	66
DK/NA	9	9	6	12	12

q9 Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Republicans in Congress are handling their job?

Approve	19	32	10	19	19
Disapprove	73	58	85	71	71
DK/NA	8	10	5	10	10

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

					Jan12a
Very good	1	0	2	0	1
Fairly good	20	7	27	20	18
Fairly bad	47	48	49	45	46
Very bad	32	45	22	33	34
DK/NA	0	0	0	2	1

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

Better	28	16	43	24	25
Worse	23	30	15	24	29
Same	49	54	42	51	45
DK/NA	0	0	0	1	1

q12-q20 SEPARATE RELEASE

q21 Is your opinion of Barack Obama favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Barack Obama yet to have an opinion?

	*** REGISTERED VOTERS ***				Sep11a
Favorable	38	8	70	31	40
Not favorable	45	82	13	48	45
Undecided	14	8	13	19	12
Haven't heard enough	3	2	4	2	2
Refused	0	0	0	0	1

q22-q39 SEPARATE RELEASE

q40 If the 2012 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and Newt Gingrich, the Republican, would you vote for Barack Obama or Newt Gingrich?

\*\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jan12a
	%	%	%	%	%
Obama	50	15	82	46	49
Gingrich	39	76	10	38	41
Other (Vol.)	1	1	0	2	1
Won't vote (Vol.)	4	4	4	5	4
Depends (Vol.)	1	1	1	2	1
Don't know/No answer	5	3	3	7	4

q41 If the 2012 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and Jon Huntsman, the Republican, would you vote for Barack Obama or Jon Huntsman?

Obama	47	10	81	41	48
Huntsman	36	74	8	34	41
Other (Vol.)	1	2	0	1	0
Won't vote (Vol.)	5	4	4	6	3
Depends (Vol.)	2	1	2	3	1
Don't know/No answer	9	9	5	15	7

q42 If the 2012 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and Ron Paul, the Republican, would you vote for Barack Obama or Ron Paul?

Obama	46	12	79	39	46
Paul	42	74	11	49	45
Other (Vol.)	1	0	0	1	0
Won't vote (Vol.)	5	8	5	3	3
Depends (Vol.)	2	2	3	0	1
Don't know/No answer	4	4	2	8	5

q43 If the 2012 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and Rick Perry, the Republican, would you vote for Barack Obama or Rick Perry?

Obama	50	12	83	47	49
Perry	38	76	10	37	42
Other (Vol.)	0	0	0	1	0
Won't vote (Vol.)	4	5	2	6	2
Depends (Vol.)	1	1	2	1	0
Don't know/No answer	7	6	3	8	7

q44 If the 2012 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and Mitt Romney, the Republican, would you vote for Barack Obama or Mitt Romney?

Obama	45	7	80	38	45
Romney	45	87	11	46	47
Other (Vol.)	1	0	0	1	0
Won't vote (Vol.)	4	2	3	6	2
Depends (Vol.)	2	1	2	2	1
Don't know/No answer	3	3	4	7	5



q45 If the 2012 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and Rick Santorum, the Republican, would you vote for Barack Obama or Rick Santorum?

\*\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jan12a
	%	%	%	%	%
Obama	49	10	82	45	47
Santorum	38	80	9	36	43
Other (Vol.)	1	0	0	1	1
Won't vote (Vol.)	3	1	4	4	2
Depends (Vol.)	2	2	1	3	1
Don't know/No answer	7	7	4	11	6

q46 Do you think Barack Obama has the same priorities for the country as you have, or doesn't he?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

					Dec11a
Yes	44	10	77	36	41
No	50	88	17	55	54
DK/NA	6	2	6	9	5

q47 Do you think the Republicans in Congress have the same priorities for the country as you have, or don't they?

					Apr11a
Yes	26	50	10	25	32
No	66	43	83	66	60
DK/NA	8	7	7	9	8

q48 Who do you trust more to make the right decisions about the nation's economy -- the Republicans in Congress or Barack Obama?

					Aug11a
Republicans in Congress	40	85	13	37	33
Barack Obama	44	5	76	39	47
Both (vol.)	1	0	0	1	3
Neither (vol.)	9	5	4	16	14
DK/NA	6	5	7	7	3

q49 Who do you trust more to make the right decisions about the federal budget deficit -- the Republicans in Congress or Barack Obama?

					Apr11a
Republicans in Congress	42	84	13	42	44
Barack Obama	43	6	77	36	39
Both (vol.)	1	0	2	1	2
Neither (vol.)	9	4	4	16	12
DK/NA	5	6	4	5	3

q50 Who do you trust more to make the right decisions about Medicare and Social Security -- the Republicans in Congress or Barack Obama?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Apr11a
	%	%	%	%	%
Republicans in Congress	39	79	12	37	40
Barack Obama	47	10	78	42	45
Both (vol.)	1	0	1	2	1
Neither (vol.)	8	5	4	13	9
DK/NA	5	6	5	6	5

q51 Who do you trust more to make the right decisions about creating jobs -- the Republicans in Congress or Barack Obama?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jan11c
Republicans in Congress	38	80	11	36	44
Barack Obama	47	9	77	44	44
Both (vol.)	1	1	1	1	1
Neither (vol.)	9	7	5	13	5
DK/NA	5	3	6	6	6

q52 Who do you trust more to make the right decisions about health care -- the Republicans in Congress or Barack Obama?

Republicans in Congress	39	82	11	37
Barack Obama	48	8	81	44
Both (vol.)	0	0	0	0
Neither (vol.)	9	6	5	13
DK/NA	4	4	3	6

q53 When it comes to dealing with the tough choices involved both in cutting programs to reduce the budget deficit and still maintaining needed federal programs, whose approach do you prefer -- the Republicans in Congress or Barack Obama's?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Apr11a
Republicans in Congress	38	77	10	39	42
Barack Obama	47	11	79	41	43
Both (vol.)	0	0	0	0	2
Neither (vol.)	7	5	5	10	7
DK/NA	8	7	6	10	6

q54 Who do you think is mostly to blame for most of the current federal budget deficit -- 1. the Bush administration, 2. the Obama administration, 3. Congress, or 4. someone else?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Aug11a
Bush administration	43	16	67	40	44
Obama administration	14	34	3	11	15
Congress	19	23	14	21	15
Someone else	9	9	7	11	10
All of the above (vol.)	6	11	3	6	9
Combination (vol.)	4	4	4	5	3
DK/NA	5	3	2	6	4

q55 These days, who do you blame more for the difficulties in reaching agreements and passing legislation in Congress--the Republicans in Congress or Barack Obama and the Democrats in Congress?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Dec11a
	%	%	%	%	%
Republicans in Congress	46	11	78	40	42
Barack Obama and Democrats	30	59	8	31	26
Both (Vol.)	16	21	9	19	22
Don't know/No answer	8	9	5	10	10

q56 Do you have a clear idea of what Barack Obama wants to accomplish if he were elected to a second term as President, or not?

Clear idea	43	33	61	34	32
Not a clear idea	54	64	36	63	66
Don't know/No answer	3	3	3	3	2

q57 Since he took office, has Barack Obama made real progress in fixing the economy or hasn't he made real progress in fixing the economy?

Made real progress	35	8	59	30	28
Hasn't made real progress	60	90	34	63	68
Don't know/No answer	5	2	7	7	4

q58 Do you think Barack Obama is trying to work with Republicans in Congress in order to get things done, or isn't he?

					Feb10a
Work with Republicans	60	33	84	57	62
Not work with Republicans	33	62	12	35	32
DK/NA	7	5	4	8	6

q59 Do you think Republicans in Congress are trying to work with Barack Obama in order to get things done, or aren't they?

Work with Obama	27	43	14	28	29
Not work with Obama	67	49	82	65	62
DK/NA	6	8	4	7	9

q60 Which do you think is better for the country? Should the Democrats and Republicans compromise some of their positions in order to get things done, or stick to their positions even if it means not getting as much done?

					Sep11a
Compromise	85	80	89	84	85
Stick to positions	11	14	8	12	10
Depends (vol.)	na	na	na	na	5
DK/NA	4	6	3	4	0

q61 President Obama recently appointed the director of the new consumer protection agency and filled three labor board vacancies without a vote in the Senate. Do you think it is acceptable for the President to make such appointments without a Senate vote, do you think it is unacceptable, or don't you know enough about it to say?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Acceptable	24	11	36	21
Not acceptable	33	55	15	35
Don't know enough	41	32	46	42
DK/NA	2	2	3	2

q62-q68 SEPARATE RELEASE

q69 Is your opinion of the Tea Party movement favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about the Tea Party movement yet to have an opinion?

					Sep11a
Favorable	22	44	8	20	21
Not favorable	30	12	45	28	29
Undecided	22	24	17	25	21
Haven't heard enough	25	19	29	26	28
Refused	1	0	0	1	1

q70 Is your opinion of the Occupy Wall Street movement favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about the Occupy Wall Street movement yet to have an opinion?

					Oct11a1
Favorable	21	13	27	20	25
Not favorable	28	47	14	27	20
Undecided	23	16	25	26	17
Haven't heard enough	27	24	33	23	36
Refused	1	1	0	3	2

q71-q83 SEPARATE RELEASE

q84 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?

					Jan12a
					%
Very concerned	36	31	44	33	34
Somewhat concerned	28	25	25	33	28
Not at all concerned	35	44	30	33	38
DK/NA	1	0	1	1	0

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1154	
Republicans	322	286 (25%)
Democrats	400	403 (35%)
Independents	432	465 (40%)
	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Registered Voters	1021	911
Republicans	302	253 (28%)
Democrats	359	325 (36%)
Independents	360	333 (36%)