

The President, the Economy and the 2012 Campaign
 June 24-28, 2011

- President Barack Obama’s overall approval rating is now 47%, similar to what it was three weeks ago.
- The President continues to receive a low approval rating for his handling of the economy, but few blame him for its condition.
- At this early stage in the 2012 campaign, most Republican voters wish they had more choices for President, and two thirds are not yet enthusiastic about any particular candidate in the Republican field.

The President

Americans continue to be divided over how Barack Obama is handling his job as president. 47% now approve, while 44% disapprove. His approval rating is similar to earlier this month, and down from 57% in the aftermath of Osama bin Laden’s killing.

Barack Obama’s Overall Job Rating

	Now	3 weeks ago	5/2011	4/2011	6/2010
Approve	47%	48%	57%	46%	47%
Disapprove	44	43	37	45	43

President Obama’s ratings on handling the economy remain negative. 52% disapprove of the job he is doing on that issue, while just 39% approve. More Americans have disapproved than approved of his handling of the economy for much of the last 18 months.

Barack Obama’s Handling of the Economy

	Now	3 weeks ago	5/2011	6/2010
Approve	39%	37%	34%	45%
Disapprove	52	56	55	48

The Economy and Direction of the Country

Most disapprove of how President Obama is dealing with the economy, but few Americans blame him for its current condition, which some think he inherited. Only 8% think the Obama administration deserves most of the blame for the state of the nation’s economy. More say George W. Bush’s administration (26%) and Wall Street and financial institutions (25%) are mostly to blame. 11% blame Congress.

Most to Blame for the Condition of the Economy

	Now	3/2010
Bush administration	26%	28
Wall Street	25	22
Congress	11	10
Obama administration	8	7
All of the above (vol.)	7	7

Americans continue to be unhappy with the direction of the country. 63% say the country is off on the wrong track, while only 28% think it is headed in the right direction. These views have held fairly steady for more than a year.

	Direction of the Country	
	Now	6/2010
Right direction	28%	32%
Wrong track	63	60

Campaign 2012: The Republican Field

Dissatisfaction with the country's direction and mediocre approval ratings for the President should provide opportunities for Republican presidential candidates. And while Republicans are more enthusiastic than Democrats about the upcoming election, Republican voters are not yet especially enthusiastic about the field of candidates so far and want more choices.

Only 23% of Republican voters are satisfied with the candidates running for their party's nomination for president, while a solid majority of 71% wishes they had more choices. At this point in 2007, a smaller majority of Republican voters were looking for more candidate choices.

	Republican Candidates for President (Among Republican voters)	
	Now	6/2007
Satisfied	23%	29%
Want more choices	71	60

That may explain why 67% of Republicans could not name a candidate they feel enthusiastic about right now. No candidate (or potential candidate) breaks into double-digits. 7% of Republicans volunteer that they feel enthusiastic about Mitt Romney, and the same percentage (7%) name Michele Bachmann. 2% are enthusiastic about Herman Cain. All other candidates are mentioned by 1% or less.

Any Candidate You Feel Enthusiastic About? (Among Republican Voters)

No one	67%
Mitt Romney	7
Michele Bachmann	7
Herman Cain	2

Enthusiasm and Attention

Registered voters overall are not especially enthusiastic about this election compared to past ones – at least at this early stage. Just 27% are more enthusiastic about voting in the 2012 presidential election compared to past elections. More than half say their level of enthusiasm is about the same. However, voter enthusiasm today is similar to what it was early in the 2008 campaign. In the fall of 2007, virtually the same percentage – 28% - were more enthusiastic about voting. That number grew to 41% in the spring of 2008 as voters became more engaged.

But there is a partisan enthusiasm gap: 33% of Republican voters are more enthusiastic about voting in 2012 compared to past elections, 9 points higher than the percentage of Democrats who feel that way (24%). Still, half of Republicans say they are just as enthusiastic about voting in 2012 as they have been in past elections. Tea Party supporters are especially energized – 44% of them say they feel more enthusiastic about voting in the upcoming presidential election.

**Enthusiastic About Voting in 2012 Compared to Past Elections
(Among registered voters)**

	All	Reps	Dems	Inds	Tea Party	10/2007
More	27%	33%	24%	27%	44%	28%
Less	18	17	19	18	15	24
Same	54	50	57	54	41	47

With more than six months to go before primary voting begins, only 27% of voters are paying a lot of attention to the 2012 campaigns. Republicans and Democrats are paying about the same amount of attention. In June of 2007, six months before the start of the 2008 primaries, findings were very similar – just one-quarter of voters were paying a lot of attention.

**How Much Attention Are You Paying to 2012 Race?
(Among registered voters)**

	Now	6/2007
A lot	27%	25%
Some	39	46
Not much/none	33	29

41% of Tea Party supporters are paying a lot of attention to the race.

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 979 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone June 24-28, 2011. 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
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q1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				Jun11a
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	47	11	76	47	48
Disapprove	44	84	15	42	43
DK/NA	9	5	9	11	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?

Right direction	28	13	44	25	31
Wrong track	63	82	45	66	60
DK/NA	9	5	11	9	9

q3 RELEASD SEPARATELY

q4 BLANK

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

Approve	39	11	63	38	37
Disapprove	52	83	30	51	56
DK/NA	9	6	7	11	7

q6-12 RELEASD SEPARATELY

q13 Who do you think is mostly to blame for the current state of the nation's economy ? 1. the Bush administration, 2. the Obama administration, 3. Wall Street and financial institutions, 4. Congress, or 5. someone else?

					Mar11b
Bush administration	26	10	46	19	28
Obama administration	8	19	2	6	7
Wall Street	25	26	23	26	22
Congress	11	16	10	9	10
Someone else	8	9	3	12	7
All of the above (Vol.)	7	6	5	9	7
Combination (Vol.)	12	12	8	14	14
Don't know/No answer	3	2	3	5	5

q14-25 RELEASD SEPARATELY

q26 How much attention have you been able to pay to the 2012 presidential campaign -- a lot, some, not much, or no attention so far?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **					
*** Party ID ***					
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jun11a
	%	%	%	%	%
A lot	27	28	27	26	25
Some	39	39	39	40	39
Not much	24	22	26	25	23
None	9	11	8	9	11
DK/NA	1	0	0	0	2

q27 Are you generally satisfied with the candidates now running for the Republican nomination for President, or do you wish there were more choices?

Republican Voters	
Satisfied	23
More choices	71
DK/NA	6

q28 Thinking about the candidates running for the Republican nomination for president, is there any one candidate that you feel enthusiastic about right now, or not?

IF YES, ASK: Who is that?

Republican Voters	
No/No one	67
Mitt Romney	7
Michele Bachmann	7
Herman Cain	2
John McCain	2
Rick Perry	1
Tim Pawlenty	1
Rick Santorum	1
Sarah Palin	1
Ron Paul	1
Other	3
DK/NA	7

q29 Compared to past Presidential elections, how would you describe your level of enthusiasm about voting in the 2012 Presidential election next year -- are you more enthusiastic than usual, less enthusiastic, or about the same as usual?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **				
*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
More	27	33	24	27
Less	18	17	19	18
Same	54	50	57	54
DK/NA	1	0	0	1

	<u>Unweighted</u>	<u>Weighted</u>	
Total Respondents	979		
Total Registered Voters	886	794	
Registered voters- Republicans	257	233	(29%)
Registered voters- Democrats	318	285	(36%)
Registered voters- Independents	311	276	(35%)