



CBS NEWS POLL  
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**THE PRESIDENT, HEALTH CARE AND TERRORISM**  
**January 6-10, 2010**

President Barack Obama's job approval rating has fallen to its lowest level yet in CBS News Polls, and for the first time is below the 50% mark -- just 46% now approve of the job he is doing as president.

Domestic issues - and not his response to terrorist threats -- are driving the President's loss of popularity; his approval ratings on handling the economy and health care are also at all-time lows. At the same time, more than half approves of the President's handling of terrorism and the administration's response to the Christmas Day terror attempt, despite the public's increased worries about the possibilities of more attempted attacks.

Both parties in Congress receive even lower marks than the President on handling health care, and few Americans think the reforms in Congress hit the right note on expanding coverage, lowering costs and regulating the health insurance industry.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA**

President Obama's approval rating has dipped below the 50% mark for the first time in CBS News Polls. 46% now approve of the overall job Mr. Obama is doing as President, while 41% disapprove. Last month, 50% of Americans approved of how the President was handling his job.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB APPROVAL RATING**

	Now	12/2009	10/2009	4/2009
Approve	46%	50%	56%	68%
Disapprove	41	39	34	23

He still receives strong support from Democrats (eight in ten approve), but his approval rating among Republicans is only 13%, and just 42% of independents approve. The President's approval rating among independents has declined 10 points in recent months.

**INDEPENDENTS: PRES. OBAMA'S OVERALL JOB RATING**

	Now	12/2009	10/2009	6/2009	4/2009
Approve	42%	43%	52%	58%	65%
Disapprove	40	41	35	25	24

Domestic issues appear to be driving the President's approval rating downward. Just 41% now approve of his handling of the economy, the nation's most pressing issue; 47% disapprove. And his marks on handling health care, with reforms still under debate in Congress, are even lower - just 36% approve, and 54% disapprove. Both of these

approval ratings -- the economy and health care -- are the lowest of Mr. Obama's presidency.

The President receives slightly higher ratings for his handling of the war in Afghanistan and the threat of terrorism. 46% approve of President Obama's handling of Afghanistan, and 52% approve of how he is handling the threat of terrorism.

#### PRESIDENT OBAMA'S APPROVAL RATINGS

	Now	12/2009	10/2009
Overall	46%	50%	56%
Terrorism	52%	--	--
Afghanistan	46%	48%	42%
Economy	41%	47%	54%
Health care	36%	42%	47%

#### HEALTH CARE

While the President receives his poorest ratings on health care to date, Congress doesn't fare any better on the issue. About six in ten Americans continue to disapprove of how both Democrats and Republicans in Congress are handling health care reform.

#### HANDLING OF HEALTH CARE REFORM

	President Obama	Congressional Democrats	Congressional Republicans
Approve	36%	29%	24%
Disapprove	54	57	61

Approval among each party's own supporters is also low. Just 48% of Democrats approve of how Democrats in Congress are handling health care, while only 43% of Republicans approve of how their party in Congress is handling it.

Moreover, there is little consensus that the reforms under consideration represent the right approach. Only about one in five Americans thinks the reforms in Congress strike the right balance when it comes to expanding coverage, controlling costs and regulating insurance companies.

The public is divided on whether the reforms go too far or not far enough in providing health coverage to as many Americans as possible, and about four in ten think the reforms do not do enough to lower costs or regulate insurance companies.

### HEALTH CARE REFORM IN CONGRESS

	Covering Americans	Controlling Costs	Regulating health insurance cos.
Go too far	32%	24%	27%
Not far enough	35	39	43
About right	22	21	18

### TERRORISM

Fear of another terrorist attack has increased since the attempted attack on a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam on Christmas Day. Now, 26% think another attack on the United States within the next few months is very likely, up from 12% just before the latest incident. This is the highest percentage that has felt an attack was very likely since March 2003, just after the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In July 2004, following the train bombings by terrorists in Madrid, 24% felt another attack was very likely.

#### LIKELIHOOD OF ANOTHER TERRORIST ATTACK AGAINST THE U.S.

	Now	12/2009	7/2004	3/2003
Very likely	26%	12%	24%	27%
Somewhat likely	40	35	47	48
Not very/not at all likely	30	51	27	21

And while most Americans have at least a fair amount of confidence that the government will protect its citizens from future attacks, just 15% are very confident. In the aftermath of the 9/11/2001 attacks, more expressed confidence.

#### CONFIDENCE IN GOVT TO PROTECT AGAINST ATTACKS

	Now	7/2007	9/2005	9/2002	9/2001
A great deal	15%	17%	19%	20%	35%
A fair amount	56	49	40	56	53
Not much/none	27	32	40	22	11

Few Americans - just 19% -- think the U.S. intelligence agencies are doing all they could to monitor the actions of suspected terrorists. 76% think they could be doing more.

#### U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES DOING ALL THEY CAN TO MONITOR SUSPECTED TERRORISTS?

Yes	19%
No, could be doing more	76

### AIRPORT SECURITY MEASURES

Most Americans support conducting full body scans on travelers using a digital x-ray machine, a device some airports are now using. 74% agree these machines should be used because they provide a detailed check for hidden weapons and explosives and reduce the need for physical searches. Just 20% think these machines should not be used because they would produce an image of a passenger's naked body and are an invasion of privacy.

### **FULL BODY X-RAY SCANS AT AIRPORTS**

Should be used	74%
Should not be used	20

76% of men and 73% of women think these scanners should be used.

Racial and ethnic profiling of passengers at airports receives less support. 51% think added security checks for passengers from certain ethnic or racial groups is justified, but 38% think it is not. In 2006, views were about the same.

### **ADDITIONAL SECURITY CHECKS FOR CERTAIN ETHNIC/RACIAL GROUPS?**

	Now	8/2006
Justified	51%	49%
Not justified	38	46

Men (54%) are more likely than women (48%) to think such profiling is justified. Older Americans are also more apt to support it. Partisanship factors into people's views as well: 62% of Republicans, but just 42% of Democrats, support this type of profiling at airports.

Those who spend the most time in the air - roughly one in ten Americans - are more apt to support profiling. 62% of self-described frequent fliers think profiling by airport security is justified, compared to 49% of those who fly occasionally or never.

69% of frequent fliers think full-body x-ray scanners should be used, compared to slightly more - 75% - of those who fly less often.

Additional airport security checks are viewed as going only so far in preventing terrorism. Four in five Americans think if the government required even more comprehensive screening procedures in airports that would be effective in stopping future attacks, but few - just a quarter -- see that as very effective.

### **MORE AIRPORT SCREENING -- EFFECTIVE AT STOPPING TERRORISM?**

Very effective	24%
Somewhat effective	55
Not too/not at all effective	16

Americans' feelings about flying have not changed as a result of the recent terrorism attempt. Now, 16% say they are afraid to fly, while another 26% say it bothers them slightly. 55% are not at all afraid. Those figures have remained steady since 2002.

### **THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AND TERRORISM**

Some Republicans have criticized President Obama's and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano's responses to the attempted attack on Christmas Day, but most Americans don't share that opinion. 57% of Americans approve of the way the Obama administration has responded to the attempted terrorist attack, and 29% disapprove. Views are highly partisan; 75% of Democrats approve, while just 41% of Republicans and 55% of independents do.

**OBAMA ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE TO TERROR ATTEMPT**

	All	Reps	Dems	Inds
Approve	57%	41%	75%	55%
Disapprove	29	45	15	28

President Obama's approval rating on handling terrorism has not changed much since he took office. Now, 52% approve of the job he is doing handling terrorism, and 35% disapprove. In June, slightly more, 57%, approved, but disapproval has also risen.

**PRES. OBAMA'S RATING ON TERRORISM**

	Now	6/2009	4/2009	2/2009
Approve	52%	57%	55%	52%
Disapprove	35	24	28	17

**GUANTANAMO BAY**

There is one administration decision about terrorism that most Americans oppose. President Obama has vowed to close the Guantanamo Bay military prison facility, but over half of Americans think the U.S. should continue to keep it open. 32% think it ought to be closed and the prisoners there transferred somewhere else. The percentage that would like it to remain open has increased in the last year.

**WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN TO GUANTANAMO?**

	Now	11/2009	2/2009	7/2006
Keep it open	55%	50%	46%	51%
Close it	32	39	44	34

Three in four Republicans want it kept open, while just a third of Democrats do.

**THE ECONOMY**

The American public continues to volunteer the economy and jobs as the most important problem facing the country, with health care a distant second. In the wake of the attempted terror attack on Christmas Day, the percentage that cites terrorism as the most pressing issue has risen since early last month.

**MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM**

	Now	12/2009
Economy and jobs	44%	47%
Health care	14	12
War/Iraq/Afghanistan	8	8
Terrorism	7	0
Nat'l debt/deficit	3	2

The public's overall assessment of the condition of the national economy remains grim; 82% of Americans say the economy is in bad shape.

	<b>CONDITION OF THE ECONOMY</b>					
	Now	12/2009	11/2009	8/2009	4/2009	2/2009
Good	17%	22%	19%	20%	16%	5%
Bad	82	77	79	79	84	94

Looking ahead, 31% of Americans think the economy is getting better, while 19% think it is getting worse, but that is down four points from December. 49% now say the economy is staying the same.

	<b>THE ECONOMY IS GETTING...</b>					
	Now	12/2009	11/2009	8/2009	4/2009	2/2009
Better	31%	29%	32%	36%	20%	5%
Worse	19	23	25	25	34	51
Staying the same	49	47	42	38	43	42

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,216 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone January 6-10, 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.

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**The President, Health Care and Terrorism**  
**January 6-10, 2010**

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

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				Dec09a
	Total	*** Party ID ***			
	%	Rep	Dem	Ind	%
Approve	46	13	81	42	50
Disapprove	41	79	11	40	39
DK/NA	13	8	8	18	11

q2 BLANK

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Dec09a
Economy / jobs	44	47	48	41	47
Health Care	14	15	15	11	12
Terrorism (general)	7	6	5	8	0
War/Iraq/Afghanistan	8	4	9	9	8
Budget Deficit/Nat'l Debt	3	3	1	4	2
Poverty / Homelessness	2	1	0	5	3
Defense / Military	2	2	3	1	1
Other	17	20	14	19	22
DK/NA	3	2	5	2	5

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

Approve	41	11	72	38	47
Disapprove	47	80	20	46	43
DK/NA	12	9	8	16	10

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

Approve	46	32	57	47	48
Disapprove	38	52	28	36	38
DK/NA	16	16	15	17	14

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

Approve	36	10	59	35	42
Disapprove	54	84	29	53	50
DK/NA	10	6	12	12	8

q7 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the threat of terrorism?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jun09a
Approve	52	29	75	49	57
Disapprove	35	62	19	31	24
DK/NA	13	9	6	20	19

q8 BLANK

q9 How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Dec09b
	%	%	%	%	%
Very good	2	2	2	1	1
Fairly good	15	9	20	15	17
Fairly bad	50	45	54	51	46
Very bad	32	44	23	32	34
DK/NA	1	0	1	1	2

q10 Do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

					Dec09a
Better	31	16	45	29	29
Worse	19	29	8	21	23
Same	49	55	45	49	47
DK/NA	1	0	2	1	1

q11 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Democrats in Congress are handling health care?

					Nov09b
Approve	29	7	48	29	30
Disapprove	57	86	39	53	59
DK/NA	14	6	13	18	11

q12 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Republicans in Congress are handling health care?

Approve	24	43	10	23	23
Disapprove	61	42	79	59	62
DK/NA	15	15	11	18	15

q13 BLANK

q14 As you may know, for the past eight years the United States has been holding a number of suspected terrorists at a U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Based on what you have heard or read, do you think the U.S. should continue to operate the prison, or do you think the U.S. should close the prison and transfer the prisoners somewhere else?

Continue to operate	55	77	37	55	50
Close it	32	14	52	30	39
DK/NA	13	9	11	15	11

q15 Do you think the changes to the health care system under consideration in Congress go too far in trying to provide health insurance to as many Americans as possible, don't go far enough, or are the changes about right?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Go too far	32	63	16	26
Don't go far enough	35	17	42	40
About right	22	10	34	20
Not clear yet (vol.)	2	3	1	2
Don't know/No answer	9	7	7	12

q16 Do you think the changes to the health care system under consideration in Congress go too far in trying to control costs, don't go far enough, or are the changes about right?

Go too far	24	46	13	18
Don't go far enough	39	30	42	43
About right	21	6	30	22
Not clear yet (vol.)	2	4	1	2
Don't know/No answer	14	14	14	15

q17 Do you think the changes to the health care system under consideration in Congress go too far in trying to regulate the health insurance industry, don't go far enough, or are the changes about right?

Go too far	27	54	14	21
Don't go far enough	43	26	50	48
About right	18	9	27	17
Not clear yet (vol.)	2	2	1	2
Don't know/No answer	10	9	8	12

q18-q37 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q38 How likely do you think it is that there will be another terrorist attack in the United States within the next few months--very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

Very likely	26	36	23	23	12
Somewhat likely	40	44	32	43	35
Not very likely	22	15	33	17	37
Not at all likely	8	3	9	10	14
DK/NA	4	2	3	7	2

Q39 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q40 How much confidence do you have in the ability of the U.S. government to protect its citizens from future terrorist attacks -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

					Jul07b
A great deal	15	11	18	17	17
A fair amount	56	51	63	55	49
Not very much	23	32	17	21	24
None at all	4	6	2	5	8
DK/NA	2	0	0	2	2

q41 How do you feel about flying in an airplane - would you tell me whether you're afraid of it, whether it bothers you slightly, or whether you're not at all afraid?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Aug06a
	%	%	%	%	%
Afraid of it	16	12	16	18	14
Bother slightly	26	32	25	23	34
Not at all afraid	55	54	57	55	48
DK/NA	3	2	2	4	4

q42 Do you approve or disapprove of how the Obama Administration has responded to the attempted terrorist attack on Flight 253 on Christmas Day?

Approve	57	41	75	55
Disapprove	29	45	15	28
DK/NA	14	14	10	17

q43 Do you think U.S. intelligence agencies are doing all they could reasonably be expected to do to monitor the actions of suspected terrorists, or could they be doing more?

Doing all they can do	19	18	20	18
Could be doing more	76	78	77	74
Depends (vol.)	1	2	2	1
DK/NA	4	2	1	7

q44 If the federal government requires more comprehensive screening procedures in place at airports, how effective do you think these measures would be in stopping future terrorist attacks on airplanes -- very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not effective at all?

Very effective	24	17	28	25
Somewhat effective	55	65	53	52
Not too effective	12	12	11	13
Not effective at all	4	3	4	5
Don't know/no answer	5	3	4	5

q45 Do you think it would be justified or not justified for people of certain racial or ethnic groups to be subject to additional security checks at airport checkpoints?

					Aug06a
Justified	51	62	42	50	49
Not justified	38	26	48	38	46
Depends (Vol.)	6	7	4	8	3
Don't know/No answer	5	5	6	4	2

q46 Some airports are considering whether to use new "full-body" digital x-ray machines to electronically screen passengers in airport security lines. Supporters of the machines say they provide a detailed check for hidden weapons and explosives, and reduce the need for physical searches, so the machines SHOULD be used at airports. Opponents of these machines say they produce x-ray images of a passengers naked body that security officials can see, which are an invasion of privacy, and so the machines SHOULD NOT be used at airports. Which comes closer to your own view do you think these new x-ray machines should or should not be used at airports?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Should	74	74	73	76
Should not	20	21	22	18
DK/NA	6	5	5	6

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1216	
Total Republicans	348	309 (25%)
Total Democrats	393	363 (30%)
Total Independents	475	544 (45%)