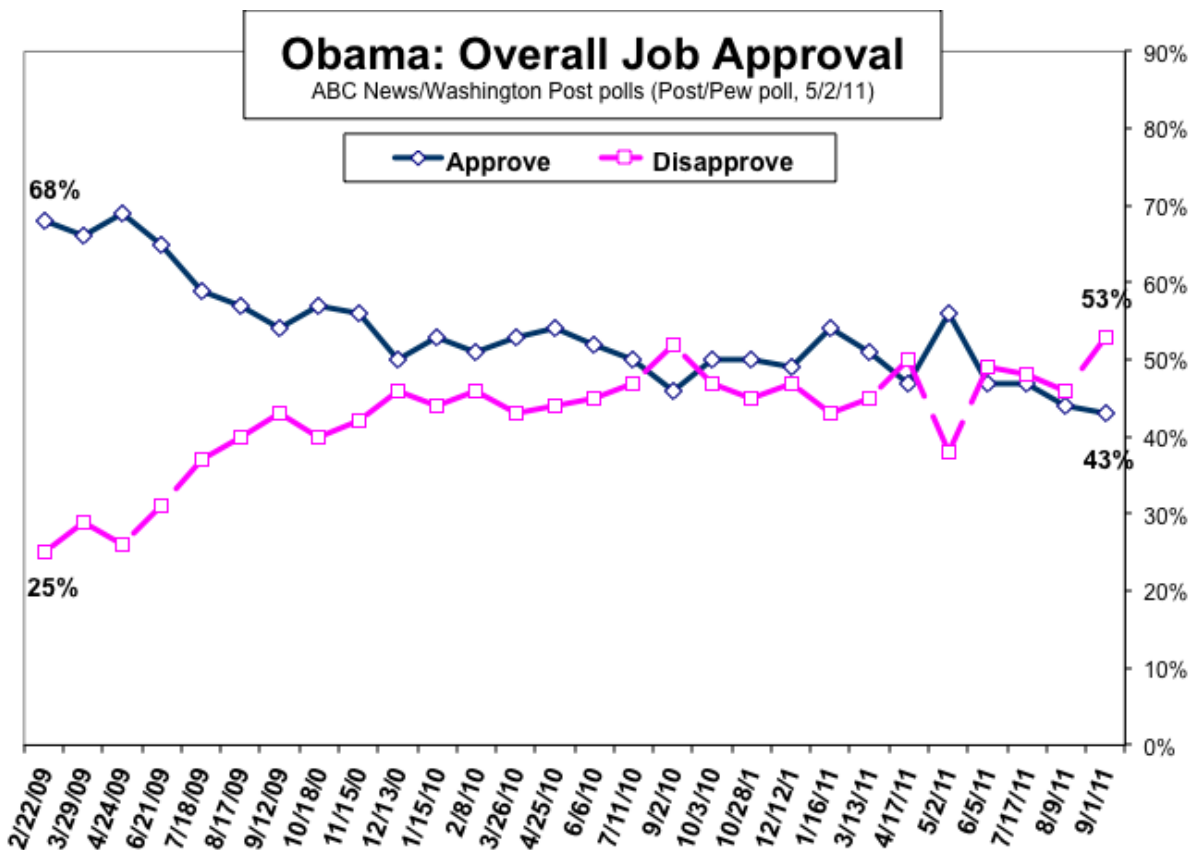


Summer of Discontent Slams Obama – And Congressional Republicans to Boot

More than half of Americans now disapprove of Barack Obama’s job performance, six in 10 rate his work on the economy and job creation negatively and more than one in three say they’ve become worse off financially under his presidency – a high in ABC News/Washington Post polls since Ronald Reagan trademarked the question a generation ago.

Those results and others underscore the depths of this summer of economic discontent. With unemployment stubbornly over 9 percent, 77 percent say the country is headed seriously off on the wrong track, up 17 points this year to the most since the end of George W. Bush’s presidency.

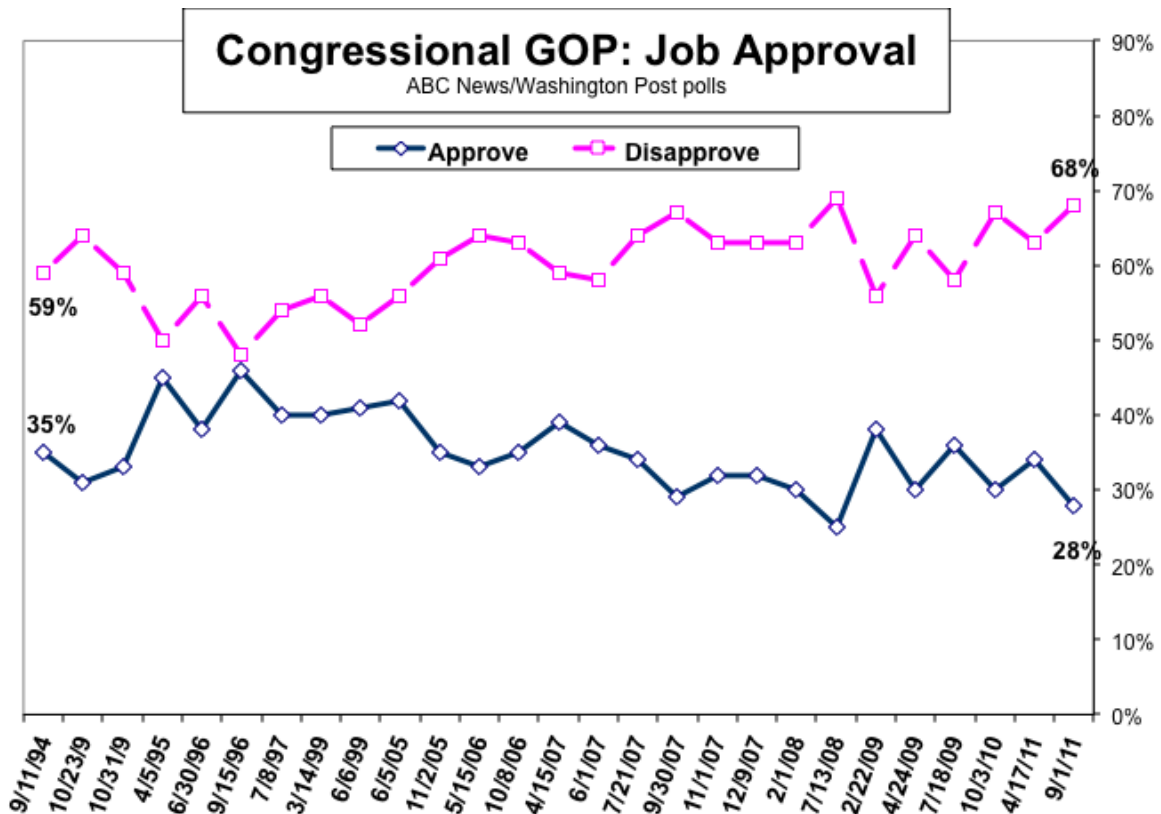


In a further sign of the deep hazards to Obama, Americans by a 2-1 margin, 34 percent to 17 percent, now say his administration’s efforts have done more to harm rather than help the nation’s economy. The number who say his economic program has improved the economy has plummeted by half since January. And 47 percent say it’s had no effect.

Obama has scheduled a major address on the employment situation Thursday evening before a joint session of Congress. He'll face a tough public audience: In this poll, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), a record 62 percent disapprove of his work on the economy, as many disapprove of his work on job creation specifically, and by 50-45 percent slightly more describe themselves as pessimistic rather than optimistic about employment in the year ahead.

The intensity of the public's sentiment on these issues is striking. Nearly half, 47 percent, "strongly" disapprove of Obama's performance on the economy; just 15 percent strongly approve, a record low. It's about the same on his handling of job creation and the federal budget deficit. Overall, 38 percent strongly disapprove of his job performance, matching the record. Twenty-one percent strongly approve.

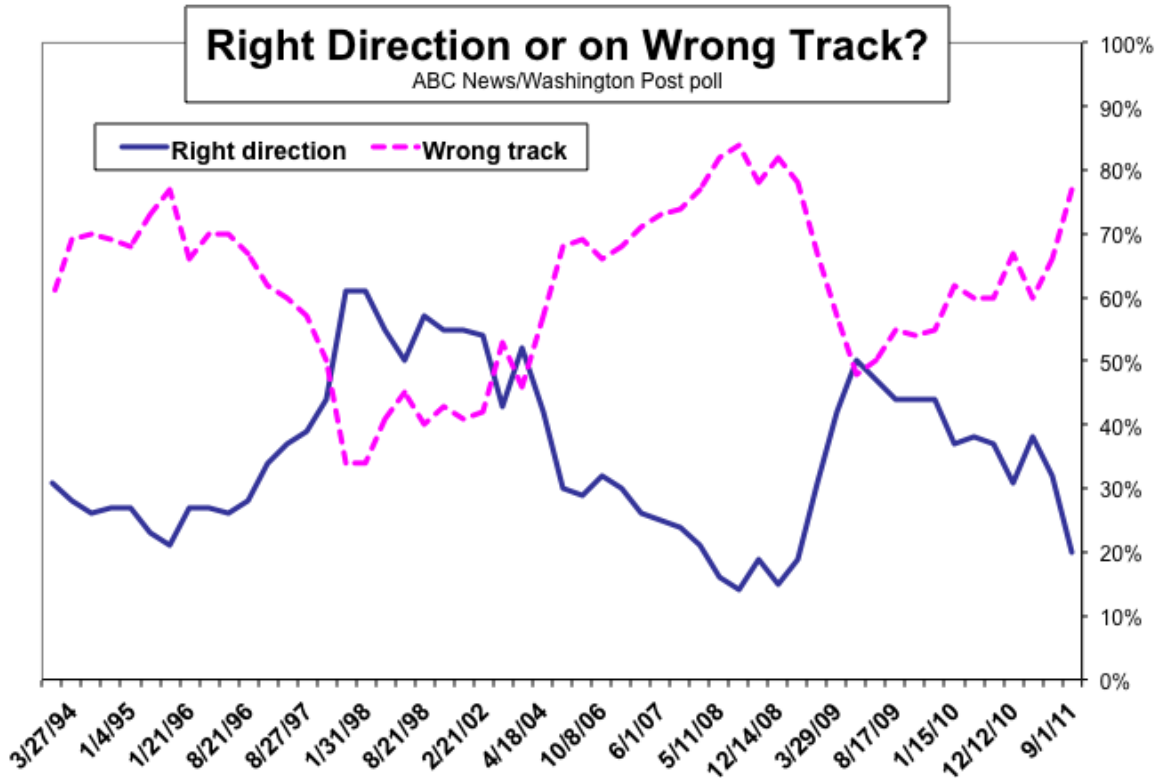
COMPANY – Yet there's company in the president's misery. Sixty-eight percent disapprove of the way the Republicans in Congress are doing their jobs, a point from the record high in ABC/Post data since 1994. (And 15 points more than Obama's 53 percent disapproval.) Notably, cutting through partisan predispositions, 33 percent of Americans disapprove of Obama and the Republicans in Congress alike.



Moreover, for all Obama's weak ratings, he still runs about evenly with the Republicans in Congress in trust to handle the economy, 42 percent vs. 39 percent; job creation, 40-40 percent;

and the federal deficit, 39-42 percent. Meanwhile record numbers, 16 or 17 percent, volunteer that they trust neither Obama nor the GOP to handle any of these.

The political hazards are clear, for Obama particularly and incumbents more generally. Office-holders are at risk when economic discontent runs high – and the number of Americans who say the country’s headed in the wrong direction is 6 points higher now than it was just before the 2010 midterm elections, and as high as it was heading into the 1992 election, when economic anger cost the first President Bush a second term.



STAGNATION – It’s no surprise. An already weak economic recovery seems now to have halted entirely. For the first time in 11 months, the economy failed to add any new jobs in August. The unemployment rate has hovered around 9 percent or higher for 29 months, a record in federal data going back to 1948. Add those who’ve given up looking for work or settled for a part-time job and unemployment is 16.2 percent.

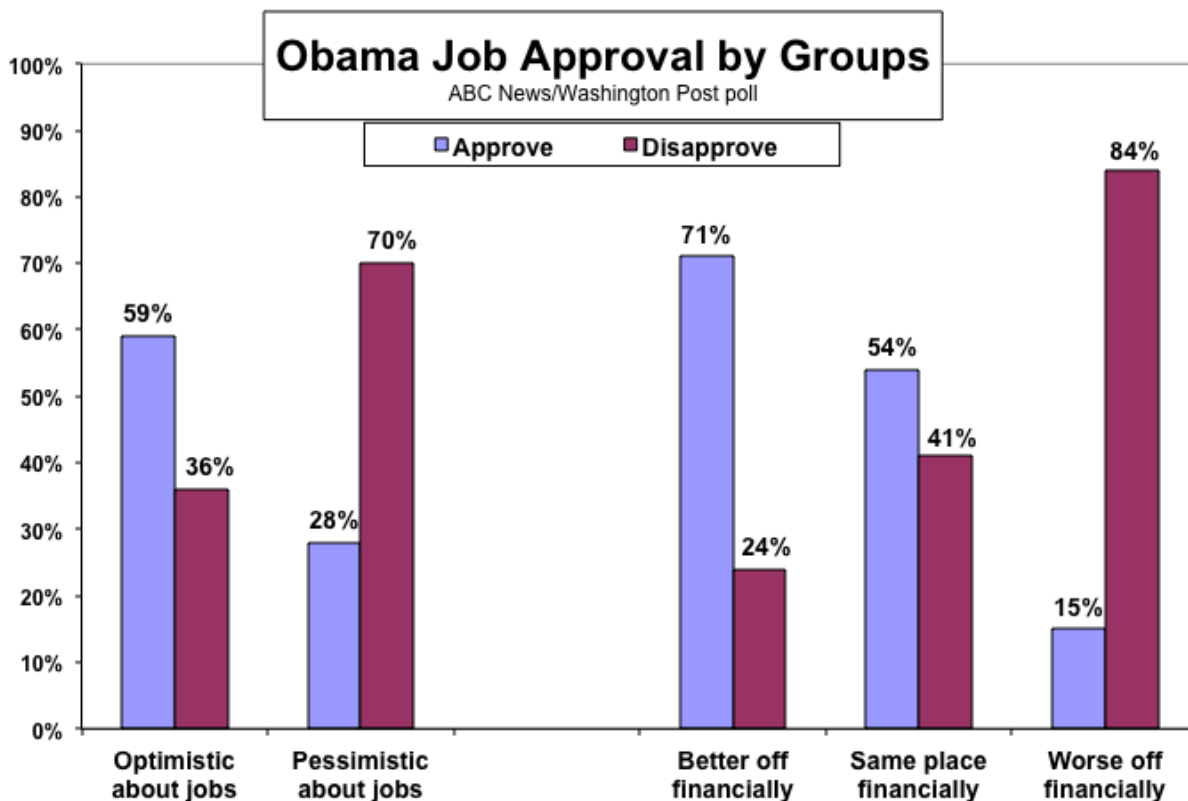
Employed Americans are taking a beating, too. Average hourly earnings and number of hours worked both declined last month. Earnings have gained just 1.9 percent in the past year – a weak rate of wage growth that’s unlikely to spur the consumer spending needed for a strong recovery.

As noted, 35 percent of Americans say they’re worse off financially now than they were when Obama became president, the most (by a scant 2 points) in the 22 times ABC and the Post have asked the question since 1986. Ronald Reagan posed the question in a 1980 presidential debate en route to defeating incumbent Jimmy Carter.

Looking ahead, while employment pessimists slightly outnumber optimists (by five points, 50-45 percent), the gap widens among strong believers. Twenty-eight percent are strongly pessimistic about the jobs situation in the year ahead; 18 percent, strongly optimistic.

POLITICAL PERIL: OBAMA – The political impacts are profound. Among Americans who are optimistic about jobs in the year ahead, 59 percent approve of Obama’s job performance overall and 53 percent approve of his handling of the economy. Among pessimists, these dive to 28 and 21 percent approval, respectively.

Moreover, among the relatively few Americans who say they’re better off now than they were when Obama took office, 71 percent approve of his job performance and his handling of the economy alike. But among those who’ve gotten worse off his approval on these items plummets to 15 percent and 8 percent, respectively.



Obama also continues to suffer on the basic political question of the right size and role of government. Fifty-six percent of Americans say they prefer a smaller government with fewer services; by contrast, 70 percent think Obama favors a larger government with more services. It’s a disconnect his political opponents are likely to raise throughout the election campaign.

Yet Obama could be in worse shape. Among those whose financial condition has held steady since he took office (half the public), the president has 54 percent approval overall and 45 percent on the economy. And his approval rating among all Americans, at 43 percent, is higher

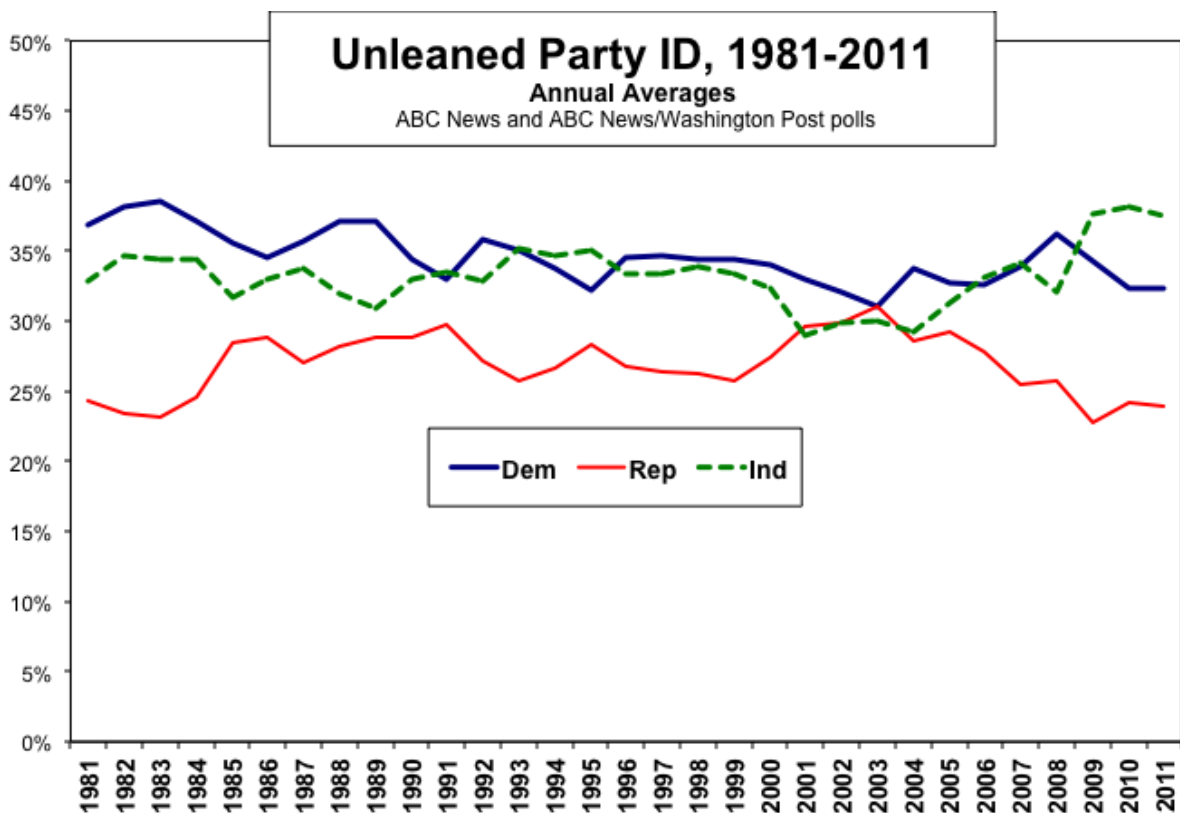
than the presidential lows at previous times of deep economic discontent – 23 percent for George W. Bush in October 2008, 33 percent for his father in August 1992.

A chief difference is that Obama is holding tougher in his base, with an approval rating among Democrats of 73 percent. While that’s a career low, it’s better than either George W. Bush or his father did among Republicans (57 percent and 64 percent approval, respectively) at their overall career lows.

Obama also could be weaker in the center. He’s at a career-low 39 percent approval among independents, the keystone of national politics. By contrast, at his career low overall, George W. Bush saw 18 percent from independents; George H.W. Bush, 28 percent.

The president, further, benefits from one considerable bright spot in his ratings: With the 9/11 anniversary approaching, and Osama bin Laden dead, 62 percent of Americans approve of the way Obama is handling the threat of terrorism.

AND THE GOP – While congressional Republicans may have less to lose specifically from the economy, they have plenty of their own woes. Their brand continues to struggle; just 24 percent of Americans in this survey identify themselves as Republicans, matching the 2010-11 average after bottoming out at an average 23 percent in ABC/Post polls in 2009. That’s down from an average 31 percent in 2003, before the first Iraq war, then profound dissatisfaction with George W. Bush, soured the party’s fortunes. With both parties down, independents are ascendant.

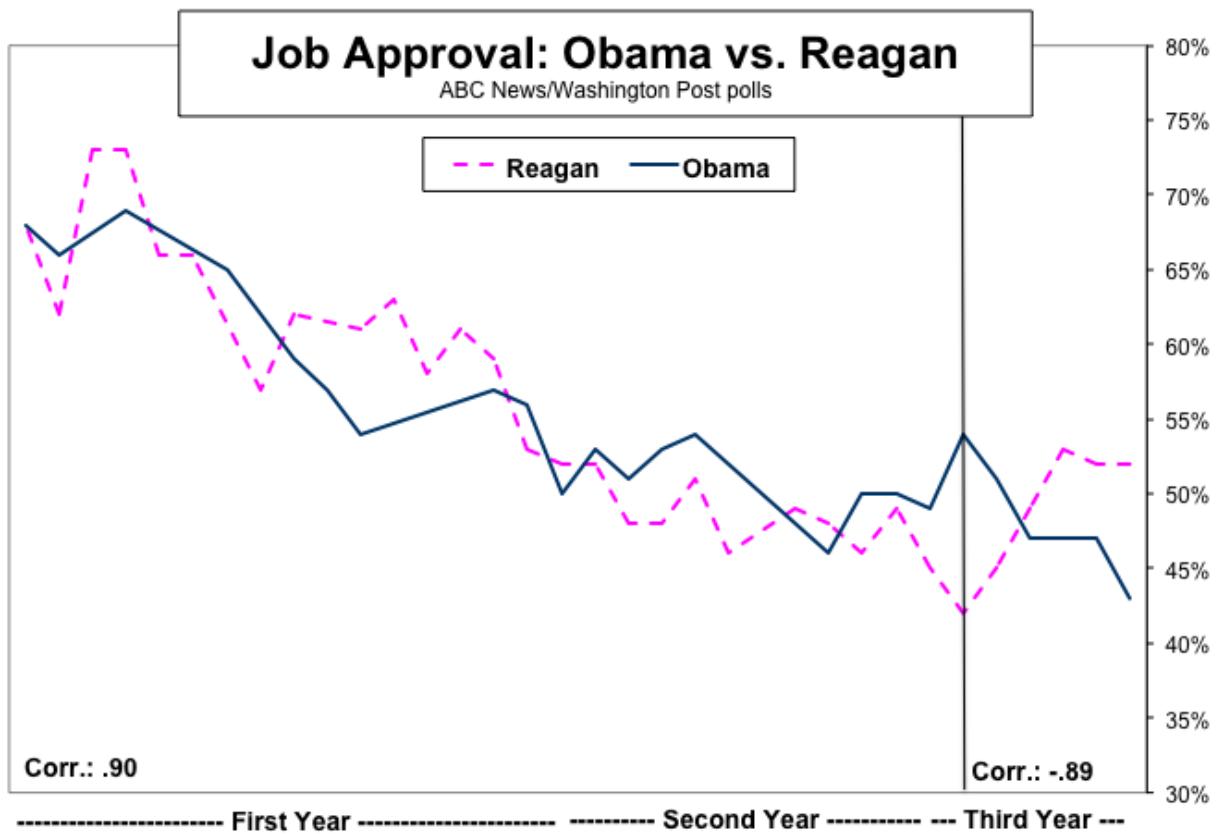


The Republicans in Congress, specifically, are hurting badly. Their approval rating is below a majority in almost every major demographic group except strong supporters of the Tea Party political movement and conservative Republicans. (It's down by 16 points among conservative Republicans since April.) Among all Americans, 44 percent "strongly" disapprove of the GOP's performance. Seven percent strongly approve.

Republicans also have lost ground against Obama in trust to handle the economy. In June they held a numerical edge, 45-42 percent. Since then preference for the GOP has dropped by 6 points, to 39 percent, while Obama has held steady at 42 percent. Likewise what in June had been an 8-point GOP advantage in trust to handle the deficit has shrunk to 3 points, 42 vs. 39 percent, now.

vs. REAGAN – After a close match for their first two years in office, Obama is now moving in the opposite trajectory of Reagan in his third year. The comparison's apt because Reagan is the last president to have taken office in the teeth of a recession. The difference is that by this point in his first term recovery had begun. (Unemployment, while 9.2 percent, was moving down.)

During their first two years, Obama and Reagan's approval ratings correlated at a remarkable .90 (where 1 is a perfect positive relationship and -1 is a perfect negative one). In the third year so far, in sharp contrast, they've correlated at -.89.



After bottoming out at 42 percent approval in January 1983, Reagan by now was at 52 percent and gaining, on his way to his landslide re-election in 1984. Obama's challenge is that economic recovery, which came to Reagan's rescue, does not appear in sight.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone August 29 to September 1, 2011, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points for the full sample and 5.5 points for leaned Republicans. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y, with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Analysis by Julie E. Phelan and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

*= less than 0.5 percent.

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/1/11	43	21	22	53	16	38	3
8/9/11*	44	18	26	46	9	37	10
7/17/11	47	25	22	48	14	35	5
6/5/11	47	27	20	49	13	37	4
5/2/11**	56	29	27	38	14	24	6
4/17/11	47	27	21	50	12	37	3
3/13/11	51	27	24	45	12	33	4
1/16/11	54	30	23	43	15	28	3
12/12/10	49	24	25	47	15	32	4
10/28/10	50	27	23	45	11	34	5
10/3/10	50	26	24	47	13	34	3
9/2/10	46	24	22	52	14	38	3
7/11/10	50	28	22	47	12	35	3
6/6/10	52	30	22	45	12	33	4
4/25/10	54	31	23	44	11	33	3
3/26/10	53	34	20	43	8	35	3
2/8/10	51	29	22	46	12	33	3
1/15/10	53	30	24	44	13	32	2
12/13/09	50	31	18	46	13	33	4
11/15/09	56	32	23	42	13	29	2
10/18/09	57	33	23	40	11	29	3
9/12/09	54	35	19	43	12	31	3
8/17/09	57	35	21	40	11	29	3
7/18/09	59	38	22	37	9	28	4
6/21/09	65	36	29	31	10	22	4
4/24/09	69	42	27	26	8	18	4
3/29/09	66	40	26	29	9	20	5
2/22/09	68	43	25	25	8	17	7

*Washington Post

**Washington Post/Pew Research Center

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling [ITEM]? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

9/1/11 - Summary Table*

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
a. The economy	36	15	21	62	15	47	2
b. Creating jobs	36	15	21	62	18	45	2
c. The federal budget deficit	36	18	18	60	14	46	4
d. The threat of terrorism	62	33	29	32	12	21	6

*Full sample asked items a-b; half sample asked item c; other half sample asked item d.

Trend:

a. The economy

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/1/11	36	15	21	62	15	47	2
7/17/11	39	18	22	57	15	43	3
6/5/11	40	20	20	59	10	49	2
5/2/11*	40	18	22	55	16	39	4
4/17/11	42	23	19	57	11	46	2
3/13/11	43	22	21	55	13	41	2
1/16/11	46	22	24	51	13	38	2
12/12/10	43	21	22	54	15	39	3
10/28/10 RV	44	21	23	54	15	39	3
10/3/10	45	22	23	53	13	41	2
9/2/10	41	20	21	57	13	44	2
7/11/10	43	20	23	54	13	41	4
6/6/10	50	26	24	49	12	37	2
4/25/10	49	24	25	49	10	39	2
3/26/10	45	23	22	52	12	40	3
2/8/10	45	22	23	53	15	38	2
1/15/10	47	22	24	52	13	39	1
12/13/09	46	23	24	52	12	40	2
11/15/09	51	26	25	47	12	36	2
10/18/09	50	29	22	48	13	35	1
9/12/09	51	28	24	46	13	33	2
8/17/09	52	27	25	46	13	33	2
7/18/09	52	29	23	46	10	35	3
6/21/09	56	28	28	41	13	27	3
4/24/09	58	31	28	38	13	25	4
3/29/09	60	34	25	38	12	26	3
2/22/09	60	NA	NA	34	NA	NA	6

*Washington Post/Pew Research Center

b. Creating jobs

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/1/11	36	15	21	62	18	45	2
7/17/11	41	16	25	52	13	39	7
2/8/10	47	25	22	51	15	35	3

c. The federal budget deficit

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/1/11	36	18	18	60	14	46	4
7/17/11	38	22	16	60	14	45	2
6/5/11	33	16	17	61	12	49	6
4/17/11	39	21	18	58	11	47	3
3/13/11	39	18	20	55	13	42	6
1/16/11	43	21	22	52	11	41	6
12/12/10	38	16	22	55	19	36	7
9/2/10	39	18	20	58	13	45	3
7/11/10	40	20	20	56	11	45	4
6/6/10	39	22	17	56	13	42	6
4/25/10	40	20	20	55	14	42	5
3/26/10	43	22	21	52	14	38	5
2/8/10	40	17	23	56	16	40	4
1/15/10	38	18	20	56	15	41	6
12/13/09	37	16	21	56	12	44	6
11/15/09	42	19	23	53	10	43	5
10/18/09	45	20	25	51	14	37	4
9/12/09	39	17	22	55	13	42	6
8/17/09	41	19	22	53	12	41	5
7/18/09	43	19	24	49	11	38	8
6/21/09	48	22	26	48	13	35	5
4/24/09	51	NA	NA	43	NA	NA	7
3/29/09	52	NA	NA	43	NA	NA	5

d. The threat of terrorism

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/1/11	62	33	29	32	12	21	6
6/5/11	60	35	25	34	13	21	6
5/2/11*	69	42	27	21	9	12	10
2/8/10	56	28	28	39	14	25	5
1/15/10	55	31	23	42	14	28	4
11/15/09	53	31	22	41	14	27	6
9/12/09	55	31	24	34	12	23	11
6/21/09	57	NA	NA	36	NA	NA	7
4/21/09**	57	NA	NA	26	NA	NA	17

*Washington Post-Pew Research Center

**Pew Research Center

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Republicans in Congress are doing their job? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/1/11	28	7	21	68	24	44	3
4/17/11	34	NA	NA	63	NA	NA	3
10/3/10	30			67			3
7/18/09	36			58			6
4/24/09	30			64			6
2/22/09	38			56			6
7/13/08	25			69			6
2/1/08	30			63			7
12/9/07	32			63			5
11/1/07	32			63			6
9/30/07	29			67			4
7/21/07	34			64			2
6/1/07	36			58			6
4/15/07	39			59			2
10/8/06	35			63			2

5/15/06	33	64	3
11/2/05	35	61	4
6/5/05	42	56	2
6/6/99	41	52	7
3/14/99	40	56	4
7/8/97	40	54	6
9/15/96 RV	46	48	6
6/30/96	38	56	6
4/5/95	45	50	5
10/31/94	33	59	7
10/23/94	31	64	5
9/11/94	35	59	6

4. Do you think things in this country (are generally going in the right direction) or do you feel things (have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track)?

	Right direction	Wrong track	No opinion
9/1/11	20	77	3
6/5/11	32	66	2
1/16/11	38	60	3
12/12/10	31	67	2
10/28/10 RV	27	71	2
6/6/10	37	60	3
3/26/10	38	60	2
1/15/10	37	62	1
11/15/09	44	55	2
10/18/09	44	54	2
8/17/09	44	55	1
6/21/09	47	50	3
4/24/09	50	48	2
3/29/09	42	57	1
2/22/09	31	67	2
1/16/09	19	78	3
12/14/08	15	82	3
10/25/08 LV	13	85	2
10/11/08 RV	8	90	2
9/22/08 RV	14	83	3
8/22/08	19	78	2
6/15/08	14	84	2
5/11/08	16	82	2
1/12/08	21	77	2
11/1/07	24	74	2
6/1/07	25	73	2
1/19/07	26	71	3
11/4/06 RV	39	59	2
10/22/06	30	68	2
10/8/06	32	66	2
5/15/06	29	69	2
11/2/05	30	68	2
10/24/04 LV	41	55	4
4/18/04	42	57	1
4/30/03	52	46	2
9/26/02	43	53	4
2/21/02	54	42	4
2/14/99	55	41	4
11/1/98	55	43	2
8/21/98	57	40	4
7/12/98	50	45	6
4/4/98	55	41	4
1/31/98	61	34	5
1/30/98	61	34	5

1/19/98	44	50	6
8/27/97	39	57	4
6/8/97	37	60	3
3/9/97	34	62	4
10/17/96 RV	40	55	5
10/16/96 RV	42	53	5
10/15/96 RV	43	52	5
10/14/96 RV	44	51	5
10/13/96 RV	44	51	5
9/04/96 RV	40	54	6
8/21/96	28	67	5
6/30/96	26	70	5
3/17/96	27	70	3
1/21/96	27	66	6
1/3/96	21	77	3
4/5/95	23	73	3
1/4/95	27	68	6
10/31/94	27	69	4
7/20/94	26	70	4
3/27/94	28	69	3
1/23/94	31	60	10
11/14/93	25	69	6
8/8/93	26	71	3
6/20/93	26	71	3
4/26/93	27	71	2
3/11/93	36	57	7
2/28/93	37	59	4
1/17/93	31	63	6
12/14/92	35	60	5
10/27/92 RV	22	76	2
10/4/92 RV	18	78	4
6/7/92	14	83	3
4/9/92	16	81	3
3/11/92	18	79	4
1/15/92	19	78	3

Call for full trend.

5. Who do you trust to do a better job [ITEM] - (Obama) or (the Republicans in Congress)?

9/1/11 - Summary Table*

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. Handling the economy	42	39	1	16	2
b. Creating jobs	40	40	1	17	2
c. Handling the federal budget deficit	39	42	1	16	2

*Full sample asked item a; half sample asked item b; other half sample asked item c.

Trend:

a. Handling the economy

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/1/11	42	39	1	16	2
6/5/11	42	45	2	9	2
3/13/11	46	34	2	15	4
1/16/11	46	41	3	7	3
12/12/10	44	45	2	7	2
4/25/10	49	38	1	9	2
2/8/10	47	42	1	7	2

12/13/09	48	36	1	12	3
11/15/09	52	37	1	8	1
9/12/09	48	37	1	12	2
7/18/09	56	33	1	9	2
6/21/09	55	31	2	9	2
4/24/09	61	24	2	11	2
3/29/09	58	25	1	14	2
2/22/09	61	26	1	9	3

b. Creating jobs

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/1/11	40	40	1	17	2
6/5/11	43	42	2	11	2
2/8/10	48	41	2	8	2

c. Handling the federal budget deficit

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/1/11	39	42	1	16	2
6/5/11	39	47	2	10	2
3/13/11	45	36	2	14	4
1/16/11	44	41	4	8	2
12/12/10	39	47	2	9	4
4/25/10	45	41	1	10	3
2/8/10	45	43	1	9	1
9/12/09	50	36	1	12	1
7/18/09	54	35	*	9	2
6/21/09	56	30	2	9	2

6. Generally speaking, would you say you favor (smaller government with fewer services), or (larger government with more services)?

	Smaller govt. fewer services	Larger govt. more services	No opinion
9/1/11	56	38	6
10/28/10 RV	57	37	5
4/25/10	56	40	4
1/15/10	58	38	4
6/21/09	54	41	4
1/16/09	53	43	4
6/15/08	50	45	5
11/1/07	50	44	5
6/20/04	50	46	4
11/4/02 LV	61	34	5
11/3/02 LV	60	34	5
11/2/02 LV	62	34	3
7/15/02	53	42	6
1/27/02	54	41	5
10/9/00 RV	58	32	10
10/1/00 RV	58	33	9
7/23/00	59	34	7
4/2/00	56	38	7
8/16/98	59	35	6
8/5/96	63	32	5
2/28/93	67	30	2
7/8/92	55	38	7
7/13/88	49	45	6
7/8/84	49	43	7

7. What about Obama - would you say Obama favors (smaller government with fewer services), or (larger government with more services)?

	Smaller govt. fewer services	Larger govt. more services	No opinion
9/1/11	18	70	12
10/28/10 RV	14	75	10
4/25/10	15	77	8

8. Do you think Obama's economic program is making the economy (better), making it (worse) or having no real effect?

	Better	Worse	No effect	No opinion
9/1/11	17	34	47	2
2/9/11*	27	28	38	7
1/16/11	35	24	39	2
9/2/10	30	33	36	1
4/25/10	39	26	32	2
1/15/10	35	23	41	2
10/18/09	41	22	35	2
8/17/09	43	23	32	2

*Washington Post/Kaiser/Harvard

9. Would you say you, yourself are better off financially than you were in when Obama became president, not as well off, or in about the same shape as then financially?

	Better off	Not as well off	About the same	No opinion
9/1/11	15	35	50	*
7/18/09	8	27	64	*

Compare to:

G.W. Bush				
10/5/04 LV	30	30	40	1
10/29/03	22	27	50	1
9/13/03	21	30	49	*
8/11/03*	17	25	58	1
Clinton				
6/11/00	34	14	50	2
7/19/98	30	15	52	3
3/1/98	32	9	57	1
6/23/96	29	22	49	0
2/27/94	12	17	71	*
G.H.W. Bush				
1/17/93	27	28	44	1
8/9/92	22	32	45	1
6/7/92	19	32	49	*
3/11/92	20	33	46	1
2/2/92	19	31	49	*
12/15/91	17	33	49	*
10/21/91	20	27	53	1
3/4/91	19	18	63	1
Reagan				
1/16/89	42	18	39	1
1/18/87	37	23	40	1
9/8/86	41	20	39	1

*Washington Post

10. Thinking about the next 12 months, would you say you feel (optimistic) or (pessimistic) about the chances that the jobs situation in this country will improve? Would you say you are very optimistic/pessimistic or somewhat optimistic/pessimistic?

	---- Optimistic ----			---- Pessimistic ----			
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Very	No opinion
9/1/11	45	18	28	50	23	28	4

11-29 held for release.

*** END ***