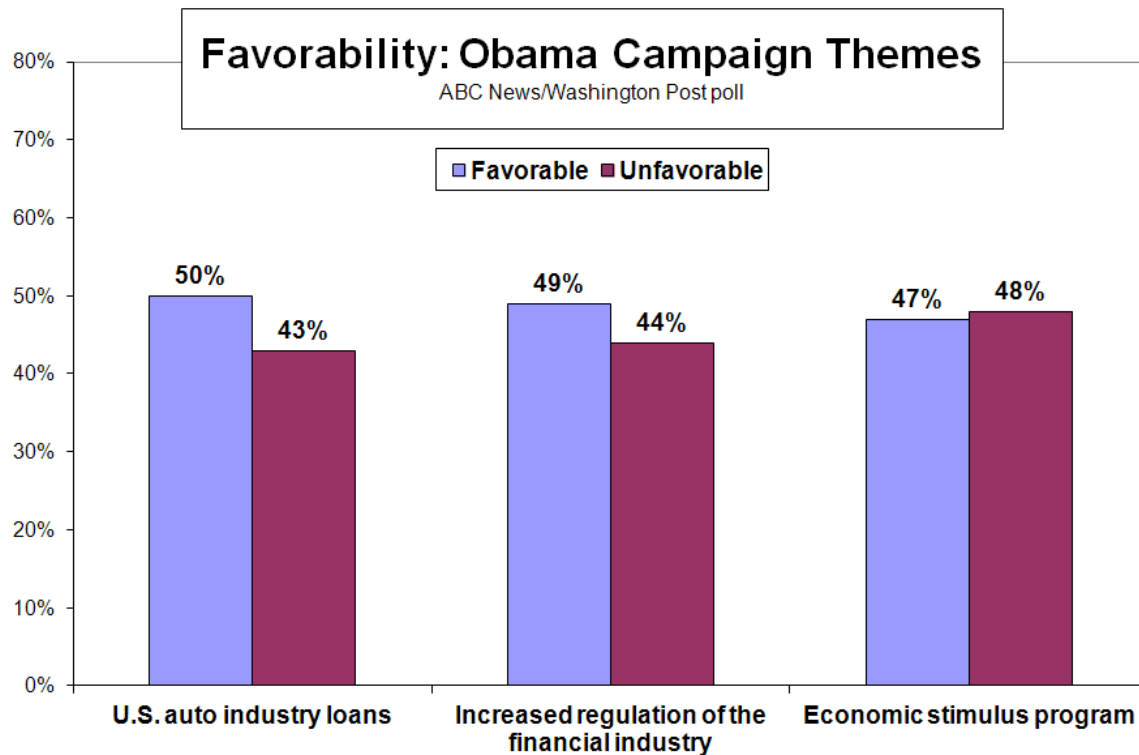


## Mixed Views on Three Key Issues Mark Obama's Campaign Challenges

Americans give Barack Obama mixed marks on three prominent issues he's touted in his bid for re-election, with no scores above 50 percent on either the auto industry bailout, greater regulation of financial institutions or – most basic – the administration's economic stimulus program.

Middling ratings on each of these denote some of the president's challenges in the campaign now officially under way. While he's substantially more popular personally than the presumptive Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, Obama is vulnerable on key issues.

This ABC News/Washington Post poll finds that Americans divide almost exactly evenly on the administration's economic stimulus program, with 47 percent seeing it favorably overall, 48 percent unfavorably. It's a bit better for Obama on the auto industry loans, 50-43 percent, and financial industry regulation, 49-44 percent. But none of these reaches majority favorability – and the intensity of sentiment on the stimulus is much more strongly negative than positive.



PARTISANSHIP – Obama has cited his performance on these issues, among others, in making his case for re-election. But this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds responses sharply divided by political allegiance and ideological preference.

In likely the president’s biggest risk, independents rate the economic stimulus negatively by 50-44 percent. They’re less negative (indeed slightly positive) on the automaker loans and regulation of financial institutions – but it’s the economy that dominates voter concerns. Political independents are the key swing voters in national elections – and at 41 percent of the population they outnumber Democrats and Republicans alike in this survey, 33 and 23 percent, respectively.

Among partisans, anywhere from 66 to 74 percent of Democrats and liberals have positive views of Obama’s work on these issues, compared with a paltry 16 to 26 percent of Republicans and 24 to 35 percent of conservatives. Moderates are more positive than negative on all three, but again most closely on the economic stimulus.

	Favorable-unfavorable ratings		
	Economic stimulus	Automaker loans	Financial industry regulations
All	47-48%	50-43	49-44
Democrats	74-23	67-26	69-25
Republicans	16-80	26-66	24-72
Independents	44-50	52-42	51-42
Liberals	72-22	66-25	70-24
Moderates	52-44	56-38	57-36
Conservatives	24-72	35-60	30-66
Liberal Democrats	86-10	74-16	81-14
Conservative Republicans	7-90	14-78	14-82

As noted, intensity of sentiment on the stimulus is against the president: Among all Americans, many more rate the economic stimulus strongly unfavorably, 31 percent, as strongly favorably, 18 percent. It’s a similar 31 vs. 15 percent among independents. Strong sentiment on the automaker loans and financial industry regulations is more evenly divided.

An ABC/Post poll last month found Obama leading Romney head-to-head in trust to handle six key issues, including international affairs, protecting the middle class and social issues. But, in a result reinforced by this survey, it was 47-43 percent, Romney-Obama, in trust to handle the economy.

Obama’s on much better ground in personal popularity, 56-40 percent favorable-unfavorable in a mid-April ABC/Post poll, compared with Mitt Romney’s 35-47 percent. But trust on the issues – particularly on the economy – can matter more.

OTHER SPLITS – Obama’s handling of the three issues tested in this survey is more popular with elements of his 2008 coalition, including African-Americans, college graduates and young adults.

Among whites and seniors, however, he’s numerically underwater or worse, most notably on the economic stimulus. And while Hispanics view his work on these issues favorably, it’s only by slight majorities.

	Favorable-unfavorable ratings		
	Economic stimulus	Automaker loans	Financial industry regulations
All	47-48%	50-43	49-44
Men	43-52	48-45	48-47
Women	51-44	52-40	51-41
18-29	54-37	57-34	55-36
65+	41-53	46-47	42-49
College grad	55-43	56-38	57-38
Non-grad	44-50	48-44	46-46
Whites	39-56	44-49	44-49
Hispanics	52-42	55-33	52-38
Blacks	86-9	76-16	79-16

While there’s a broad gender gap in support for Obama vs. Romney, it’s more muted on these policy issues. Women are more apt than men to see the economic stimulus favorably, but by a single-digit gap, 8 percentage points. It’s narrower still on the other issues. Were women to focus more on the stimulus than on other issues, Obama’s advantage among them could be at risk.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone May 2-6, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,006 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gregory Holyk.

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

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Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the Obama administration’s (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat? (ITEMS SCRAMBLED)

5/6/12 - Summary Table

	---- Favorable ----			--- Unfavorable ---			No
	NET	Strgly	Smwht	NET	Smwht	Strgly	op.
a. Economic stimulus program	47	18	29	48	17	31	5
b. Loans to the U.S. auto industry	50	23	27	43	16	26	7
c. Increased regulation of financial institutions	49	21	29	44	18	26	7

\*\*\* END \*\*\*