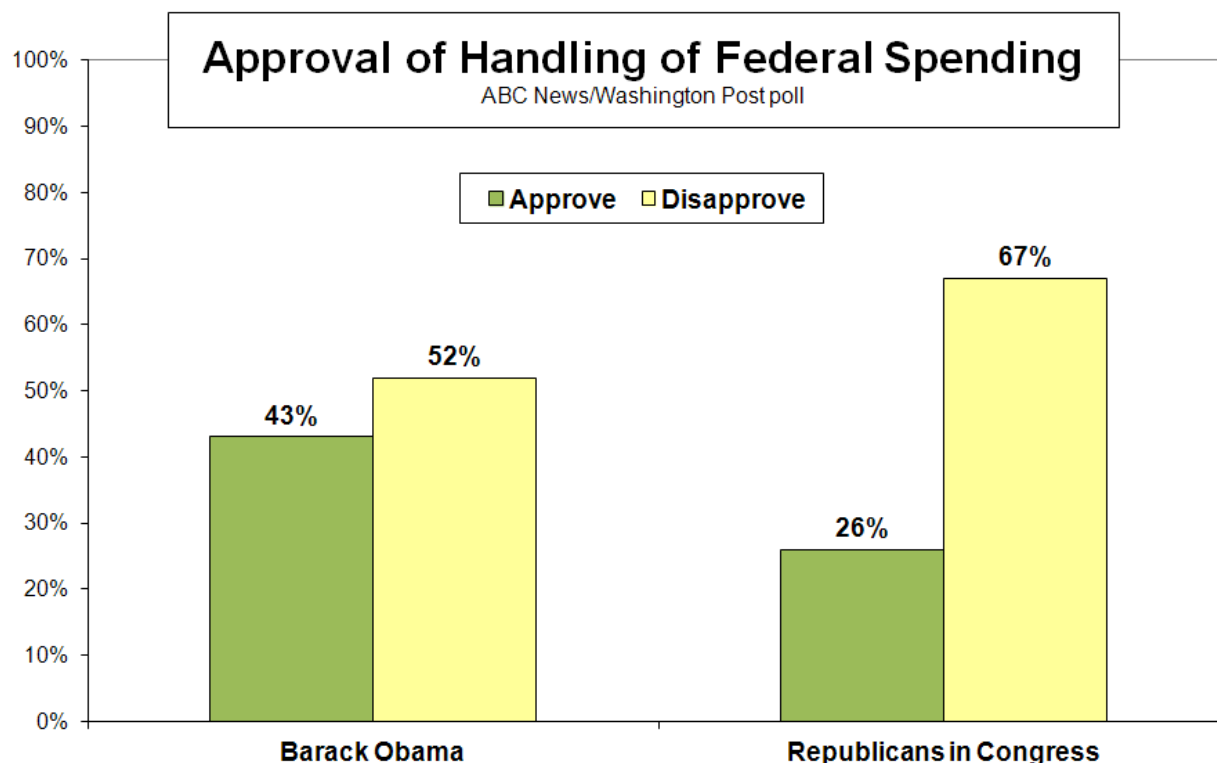


On the Brink of the Budget Sequester, More Damage for the GOP than Obama

Most Americans think both Barack Obama and the Republicans in Congress are mishandling government spending – but, on the brink of across-the-board budget cuts, it’s the GOP that receives disproportionately more flak, including from its own partisan and ideological base.

While 52 percent of adults in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll disapprove of Obama’s handling of federal spending, that jumps to 67 percent disapproval for the GOP, a substantial 15-point gap in the president’s favor.

Majorities even of Republicans and conservatives rate the Republican Party negatively on its handling of the budget. Obama, by contrast, retains broad support in his partisan corner. And his approval among independents, though weak, is 13 percentage points better than the GOP’s.



In tune with previous results on their ongoing budget battles, results of this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), indicate that both sides face damage if the looming budget sequester takes effect. But the risk to the Republicans continues to look greater.

The president’s 43 percent approval rating on spending, weak as it is, outshines the congressional Republicans’ paltry 26 percent. That includes single-digit “strong” approval for the GOP, 9 percent, vs. 21 percent for Obama.

But strong disapproval is more closely matched for both sides, indicating that the public overall is not amused by the latest budget standoff, in which \$85 billion in automatic spending cuts are to take effect this Friday, the first wave of \$1.2 trillion in cuts during the next decade.

ECHO – The results echo previous ABC/Post polls. Obama’s approval rating for handling the last budget crisis in January was 21 points better than House Speaker John Boehner’s, and the president held a 14-point lead over the Republicans in trust to handle the issue.

In December, more said they’d blame the Republicans than Obama if a deal weren’t reached. And nearly two-thirds favored a combination of spending cuts and tax increases to trim the deficit, vs. 29 percent who preferred just spending reductions – an issue that remains the crux of the debate.

GROUPS – While 74 and 68 percent of Democrats and liberals, respectively, approve of the president’s handling of the issue, 51 percent of Republicans and 57 percent of conservatives disapprove of the performance of GOP lawmakers.

Even among “very” conservative Americans, 54 percent disapprove of the congressional Republicans’ approach. And in terms of intensity, strong approval of the president on spending among Democrats and liberals is more than double that of the GOP among Republicans and conservatives.

Fifty-three percent of independents disapprove of the president’s work on spending, and he just breaks even among moderates. But many more in both groups disapprove of congressional Republicans on the issue – 64 percent of independents and 71 percent of moderates.

	Approve-disapprove of handling of federal spending	
	Barack Obama	Republicans in Congress
All	43-52%	26-67
Democrats	74-22	14-81
Republicans	12-88	44-51
Independents	39-53	26-64
Liberals	68-27	13-81
Moderates	49-46	23-71
Conservatives NET	20-75	37-57
Somewhat cons.	25-69	34-60
Very cons.	13-85	41-54
Whites	33-64	24-71
Blacks	87-11	23-71

Hispanics	51-37	34-49
Less than \$50K	48-47	26-66
\$50K-plus	37-59	27-69
18-29	53-38	32-57
30-plus	41-55	24-70

Broad majorities of whites disapprove of how both sides are handling spending, but even in this group – which Obama lost by 20 points in November – his approval rating is 9 points better than the Republicans’. And the president outpaces congressional Republicans by 17 points among Hispanics and by 64 points among blacks.

Among other groups, while majorities across income brackets and age groups disapprove of the Republicans’ performance on spending, Obama breaks even among lower- to middle-income earners and garners majority approval among young adults, two of his core support groups.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Feb. 20-24, 2013, among a random national sample of 1,021 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.

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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 approve or disapprove of the way (ITEM) is handling federal spending? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

2/24/13 - Summary Table

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	op.
a. Barack Obama	43	21	22	52	14	38	5
b. Republicans in Congress	26	9	17	67	23	43	7

*** END ***