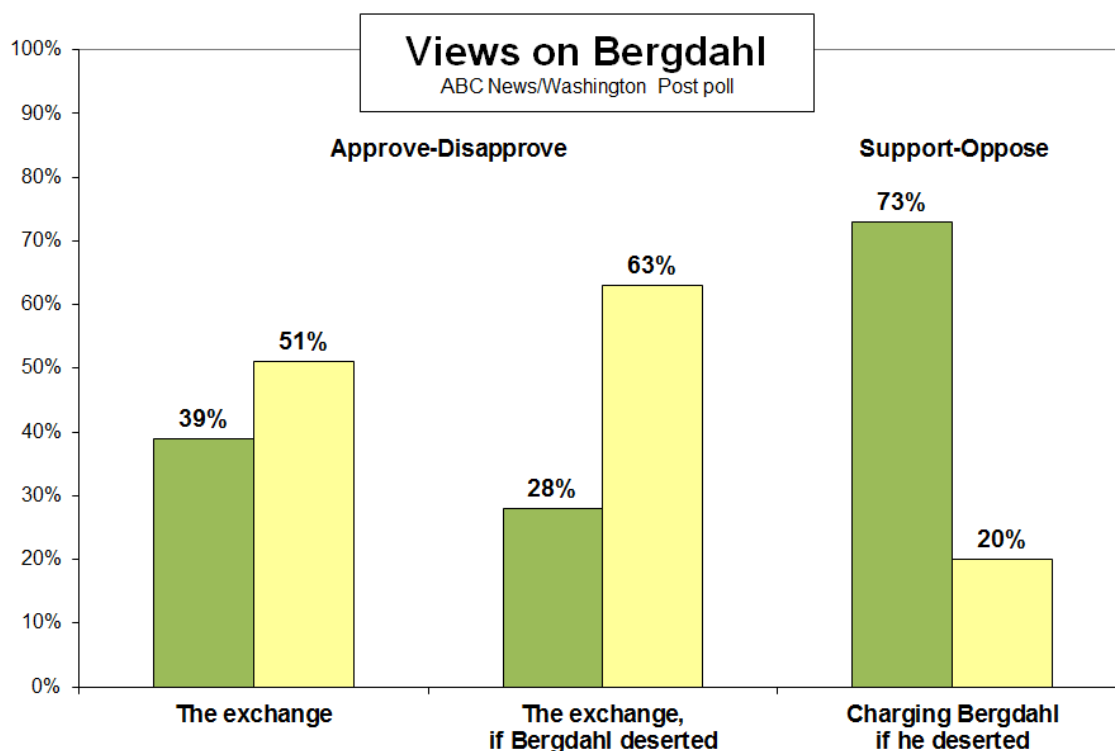


Most Favor Charges if Bergdahl Deserted

More Americans disapprove than approve of the prisoner exchange that freed Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl from Taliban captivity – especially if it’s established that he deserted his post. And if he did desert, nearly three-quarters say Bergdahl should be charged with a crime.

Fifty-one percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll are critical of the deal, in which the Obama administration exchanged five Taliban detainees for Bergdahl; 39 percent approve, and strong disapprovers outnumber strong approvers by 2-1.

Moreover, if it’s found that Bergdahl deserted his post before his capture five years ago, as some reports have suggested, disapproval of the exchange rises to 63 percent, and more, 73 percent, support charging him with a military crime.



The May 31 prisoner exchange has been fraught with controversy, with the president criticized for not informing Congress of the swap in advance and for negotiating with Bergdahl’s captors. The president, in response, has said it’s his responsibility not to leave U.S. service members behind.

GROUPS – Views of the administration’s actions divide sharply by partisanship and ideology in this poll, produced by ABC for [Langer Research Associates](#). Six in 10 Democrats and liberals support the prisoner swap; moderates split about evenly. Fifty-six percent of independents disapprove of the exchange, rising to seven in 10 conservatives and 78 percent of Republicans.

When the charges of desertion are taken into account, disapproval increases, by as many as 14 percentage points, in partisan and ideological groups.

While political predispositions color attitudes on the administration’s action, they play little role in views of whether Bergdahl should be charged with a crime if it’s found that he deserted his post. Support for taking action in that case ranges from 69 to 82 percent across the political and ideological spectrums.

	- Approve-Disapprove - Prisoner If Bergdahl exchange deserted	Support-Oppose Charging Bergdahl if he deserted
All	39-51%	28-63% 73-20%
Democrats	62-30	48-43 70-21
Republicans	16-78	10-84 82-14
Independents	35-56	23-68 71-23
Liberals	62-31	47-45 69-22
Moderates	44-45	30-58 73-20
Conservatives	24-70	16-78 77-19

Opinions also differ by age. While half of those younger than 40 favor the prisoner swap, that drops to just a third of their elders. And support for charging Bergdahl with a crime bottoms out at 56 percent among under-30s, rising to more than three-quarters of older adults.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone June 4-8, 2014, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,023 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.

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. Do you approve or disapprove of the Obama administration releasing five Taliban prisoners in exchange for the Taliban releasing U.S. soldier Bowe Bergdahl? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

----- Approve ----- ----- Disapprove ----- No

	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
6/8/14	39	17	23	51	16	36	9

2. (IF APPROVE OF PRISONER EXCHANGE) It's been reported that Bergdahl may have deserted his post before he was captured by the Taliban five years ago. If that's true, do you approve or disapprove of this prisoner exchange? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	-----	Approve	-----	-----	Disapprove	-----	No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
6/8/14	71	32	39	27	15	12	2

1/2 NET:

		-----	Disapprove	-----	No	
	Approve	NET	Initially	If Bergdahl deserted	Don't know	opinion
6/8/14	28	63	51	10	1	9

3. If it's found that Bergdahl deserted his post, would you support or oppose his being charged with a military crime? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	-----	Support	-----	-----	Oppose	-----	No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
6/8/14	73	48	25	20	10	10	7

*** END ***