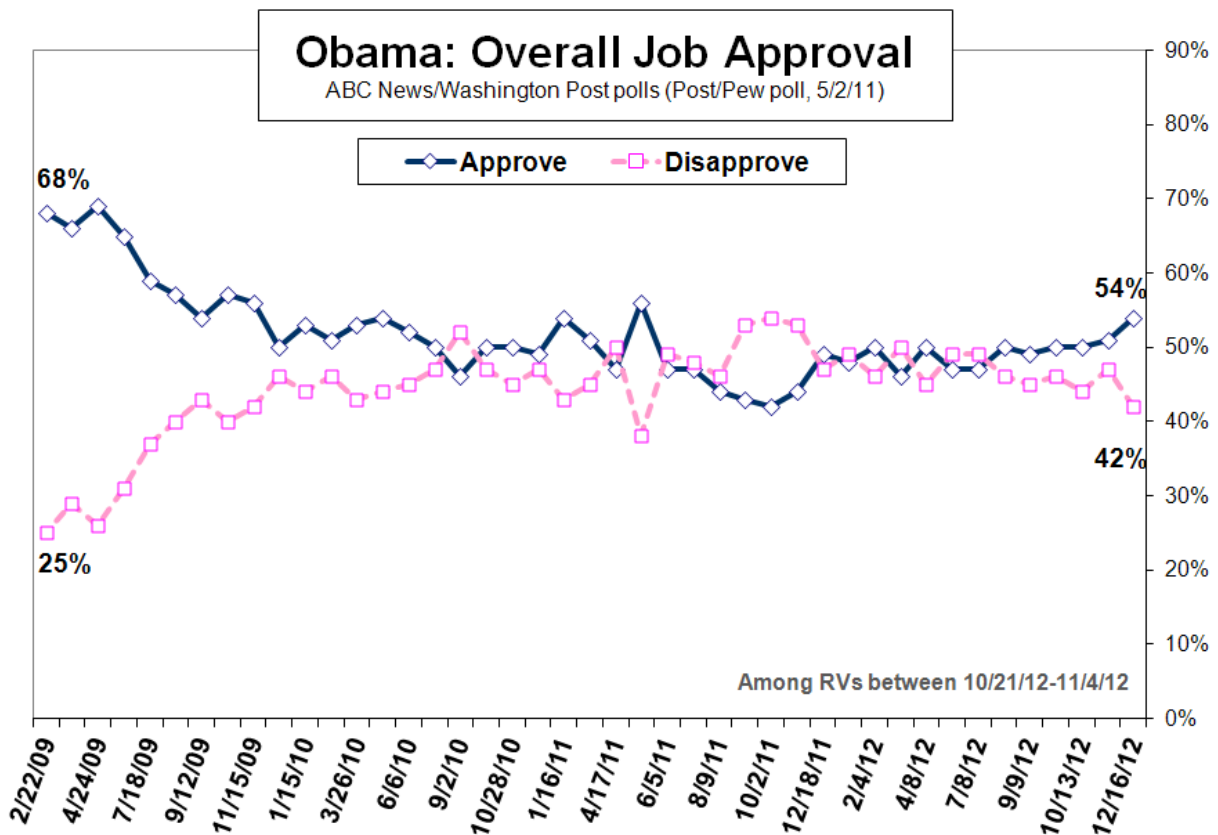


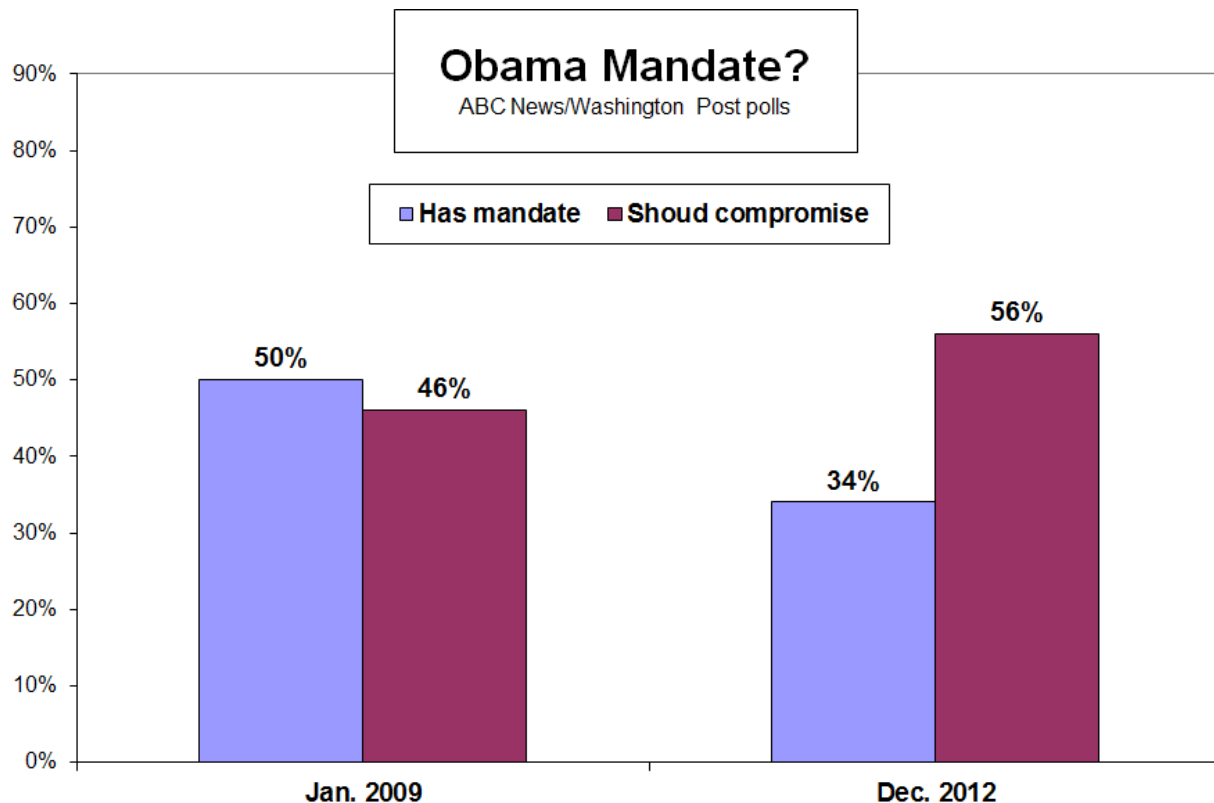
## Obama Holds Most Cards in Cliff Talks, But With No Mandate – and Risks Aplenty

President Obama holds most of the cards in fiscal cliff negotiations with the Republican leaders of Congress, with more Americans approving of his handling of the talks and more prepared to blame the GOP if the brinksmanship fails. But another factor constrains the president: His lack of a mandate in the public's mind.

Overall, the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll shows the impact of Obama's successful re-election campaign. His job approval rating, at 54 percent, is his highest (excepting a brief bin Laden bounce) in nearly two years. And even while weakly rated on the economy, he leads the Republicans in trust to handle it by 18 percentage points, his widest margin since July 2009.



But for all his advantages, Americans by a wide 22-point margin, 56-34 percent, say Obama does not have “a mandate to carry out the agenda he presented during the presidential campaign,” but rather should “compromise on things the Republicans strongly oppose,” a sign of risk for the president if the talks should collapse.



The sense Obama has a mandate, notably, is 16 points lower than it was after the 2008 election, suggesting a more restricted range of political possibilities in his second term. The decrease is broadly based, occurring across groups save Democrats and nonwhites.

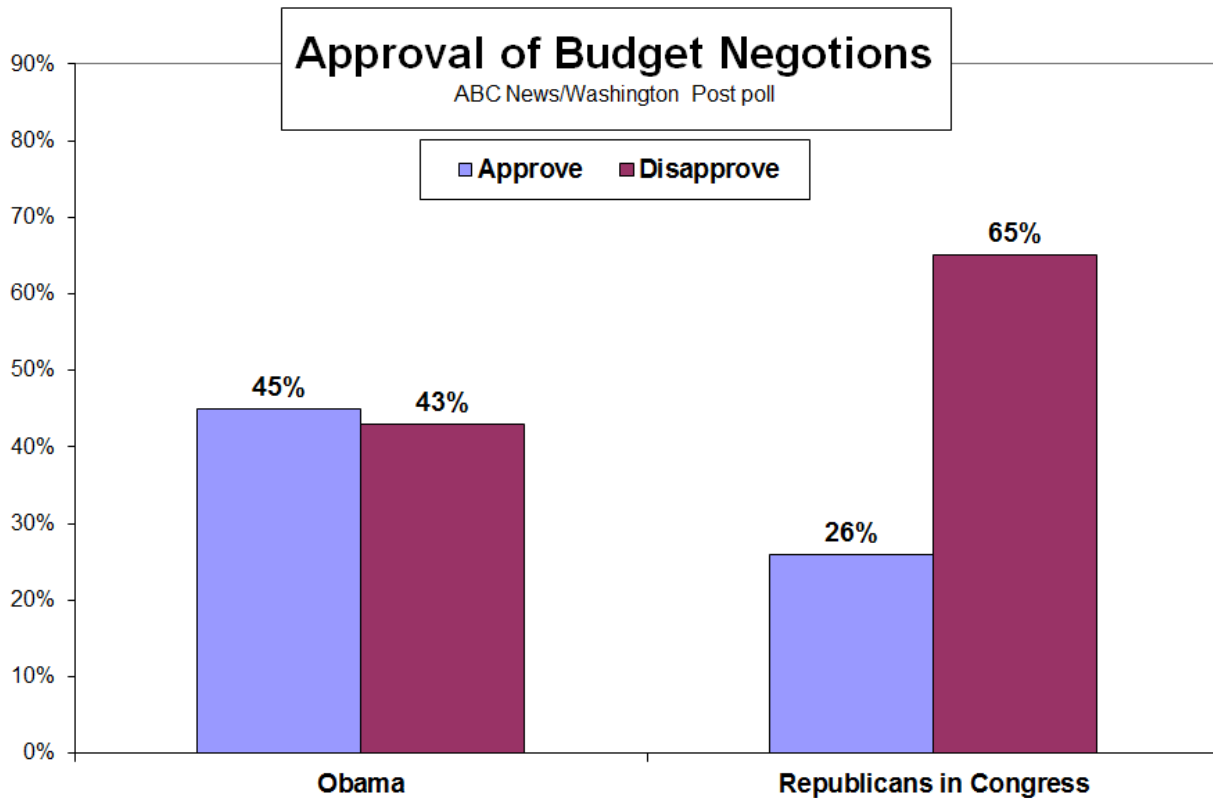
Reflecting the GOP's challenges in opposing tax cuts on the wealthy, Obama leads especially widely, by 26 points, 58-32 percent, in trust to protect the middle class – a perception he wielded to great effect against Mitt Romney in the 2012 campaign. Obama's lead on the economy is double what it was at the start of the year, higher notably among moderates and independents.

More generally, this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), shows a 12-point advantage for Obama in trust to handle the main problems the nation faces over the next few years. That includes a 9-point edge among political independents.

**WATCH OUT FOR THE CLIIIIFFFF** – There's risk for both sides on the fiscal cliff, with broad worry about the potential consequences of a budget crisis, and most solutions unpopular. While Obama holds the high ground on taxing the wealthy, for instance, the Republicans can point to plurality preference that a budget deal rely more heavily on spending cuts than on tax increases.

Obama gets just an even split on his handling of the budget negotiations, 45-43 percent, approve-disapprove – but that's far better than the more than 2-1 negative rating on the issue for the Republican leaders of Congress: 26 percent approve, 65 percent disapprove. One reason: Obama

has 75 percent approval in his own party; the Republicans, just 53 percent in theirs. And the president’s rating doubles the GOP’s among independents.



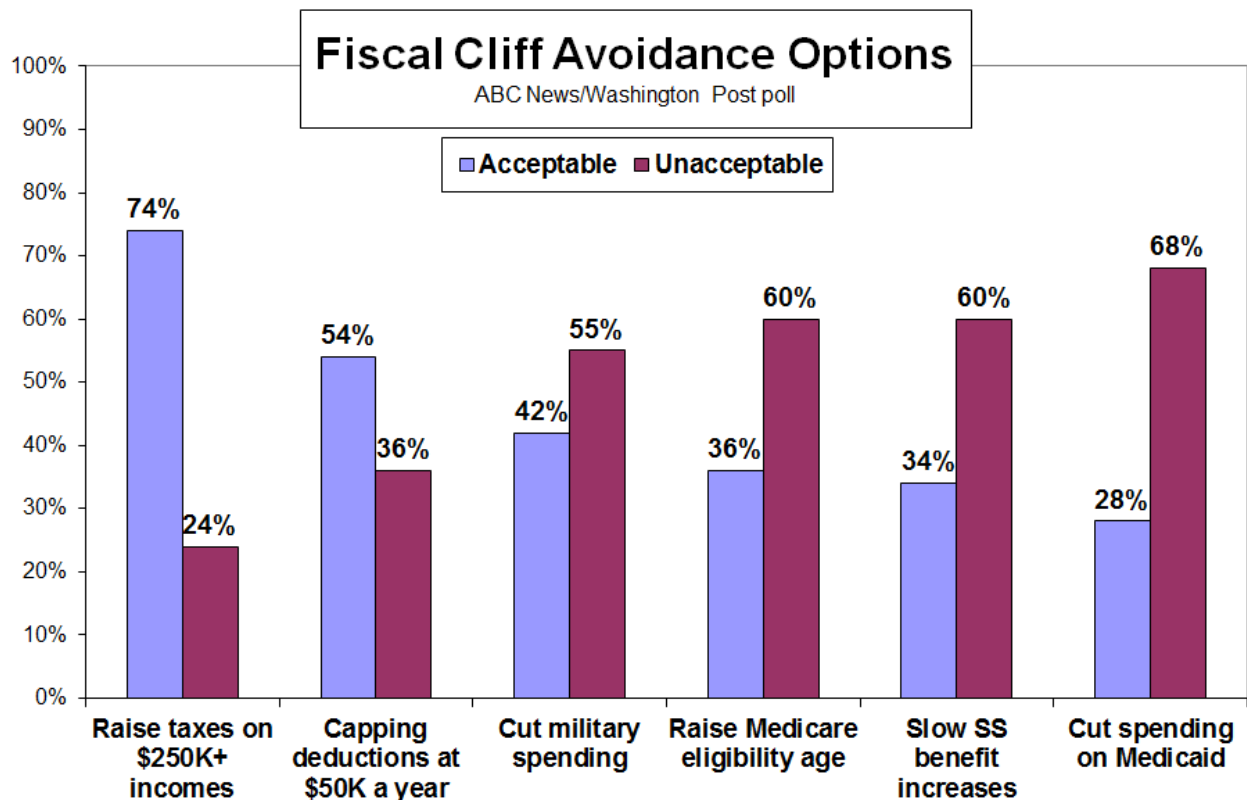
Obama also holds an advantage in perceived flexibility: While 57 percent say he hasn’t been willing enough to compromise, many more, 76 percent, say that about the GOP leaders. Indeed, 28 percent say Obama is “too willing” to compromise, while just half as many say that about the GOP.

Perhaps surprisingly, more than half, 53 percent, are optimistic the two sides will agree on a budget plan – though just 14 percent think it’s “very” likely. (Optimism peaks among Democrats and liberals.) If a deal is not reached, more think the GOP will be to blame than Obama by a 16-point margin, 47-31 percent, while an additional 18 percent say both sides will share the blame.

**IMPACTS and OPTIONS** – A vast majority (89 percent) expresses concern about what may happen to the national economy if a budget deal is not reached, with 58 percent very concerned. Three-quarters or more also express concern about how a lack of an agreement will impact their personal finances, the government’s ability to operate effectively and the U.S. military.

In terms of options for a solution, as noted, the Republicans have some pushback to Obama’s advantages. Assuming a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, a plurality, 47 percent, says spending cuts should be the biggest slice of the pie. A fairly close 41 percent favor an equal division; just one in 10 wants more tax increases than cuts in spending.

On the other hand, most of the current spending cuts being discussed in Washington are seen as broadly unacceptable to the public, making the negotiations look like an exercise in picking the least-worse options. Nearly seven in 10 say they would find cuts to Medicaid unacceptable, six in 10 say the same about raising the age for Medicare coverage and for slowing the rate of increases in Social Security benefits, and 55 percent rule out military cuts.



Indeed the only budget-deal items tested that are perceived as broadly acceptable are those that would raise revenue: Three-quarters of Americans say raising tax rates on incomes greater than \$250,000 would be acceptable, and 54 percent back capping the amount of money people can claim in tax deductions at \$50,000.

**PRESIDENT and PARTY** – This survey, as noted, marks out Obama’s broader political standing. His approval rating for handling the economy, while just 50 percent, is its highest in two and a half years. And he’s on par with the GOP in trust to handle taxes, 46-42 percent, and the deficit, 45-41 percent.

Some of this rubs off on Obama’s party: While just 39 percent approve of the way the Democrats in Congress are doing their job, that’s up from a record low of 27 percent a year ago. And it’s 14 points better than the approval rating for the Republicans in Congress.

Finally, matching his approval rating, 54 percent of Americans view the outcome of the election positively. And more are enthusiastic about the outcome, albeit just 23 percent, than the 13 percent who are angry about it.

**GROUPS** – Traditional partisan and ideological differences dominate preferences on the deficit. Fifty-two percent of Democrats favor an even split of spending cuts and tax increases, while 50 percent of independents and 71 percent of Republicans would mostly cut spending. Twenty-two percent of Democrats would mostly increase taxes, vs. only 7 and 1 percent of independents and Republicans, respectively.

Cutting Medicaid spending and increasing the Medicare eligibility age are seen as unacceptable by half of Republicans and strong conservatives, groups that usually favor spending cuts. Majority opposition to cutting military spending, meanwhile, is driven by Republicans and strong conservatives, among whom broad majorities say it's an unacceptable option. Democrats and liberals favor these cuts, but at lower levels than the opposition among others.

	-- Acceptable-unacceptable option to avoid the fiscal cliff --					
	Cut \$ to Medicaid	Medicare age 67	Cut \$ to military	Raise taxes on \$250K+	Cap tax deductions	Slow SS rates
All	28-68%	36-60	42-55	74-24	54-36	34-60
Dems	14-85	32-65	55-42	89-10	61-31	26-68
Reps	46-50	47-49	22-76	51-47	44-45	40-54
Inds	29-68	35-62	48-50	77-21	57-35	36-56
Liberals	14-85	30-69	59-37	87-12	54-35	29-65
Moderates	27-70	39-58	48-49	81-18	59-33	38-57
Cons. NET	40-56	39-56	28-70	56-41	50-39	33-58
Swt cons.	33-62	37-59	31-67	60-37	49-43	34-59
Very cons.	47-50	41-52	26-74	52-45	53-35	33-58

By contrast to the other proposals, raising taxes on the well-off gains favor across the board, including bare majorities of Republicans and strong conservatives, as well as 77 percent of independents and 81 percent of moderates. Capping tax deductions lacks support that high – but, at the same time, does no worse than an even split among Republicans.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Dec. 13-16, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,002 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3.5 points, including design effect. Partisan divisions are 31-24-38 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

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 Gary Langer.

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

Media contacts: David Ford, (212) 456-7243, and Julie Townsend, (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	
12/16/12	54	33	21	42	9	32	5	
11/4/12 RV	52	33	10	46	10	36	2	
11/3/12 RV	51	33	10	47	10	37	2	
11/2/12 RV	51	32	11	47	11	36	2	
11/1/12 RV	50	31	11	48	11	37	2	
10/31/12 RV	50	30	11	48	11	37	2	
10/30/12 RV	50	28	12	48	12	37	2	
10/29/12 RV	50	28	11	48	11	36	2	
10/28/12 RV	51	28	11	46	11	36	3	
10/27/12 RV	50	28	11	46	11	36	3	
10/26/12 RV	51	29	10	46	10	36	3	
10/25/12 RV	50	29	9	47	9	37	3	
10/24/12 RV	50	29	10	48	10	38	3	
10/23/12 RV	50	29	21	47	9	37	3	
10/22/12 RV	50	30	20	47	10	38	3	
10/21/12 RV	51	31	20	47	10	37	2	
10/13/12	50	30	21	44	10	34	6	
9/29/12	50	26	24	46	12	34	4	
9/9/12	49	29	20	45	11	35	6	
8/25/12	50	27	23	46	13	33	4	
7/8/12	47	24	24	49	15	34	4	
5/20/12	47	26	21	49	13	36	3	
4/8/12	50	30	20	45	10	35	6	
3/10/12	46	28	18	50	11	39	4	
2/4/12	50	29	22	46	11	36	3	
1/15/12	48	25	23	48	11	37	4	
12/18/11	49	25	24	47	13	34	4	
11/3/11	44	22	22	53	15	37	3	
10/2/11	42	21	21	54	14	40	4	
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?

12/16/12 - Summary Table\*

	----- Approve -----			---- Disapprove ----			No
	NET	Strngly	Smwht	NET	Smwht	Strngly	op.
a. The economy	50	27	23	48	10	38	3
c. Taxes	48	31	17	45	12	33	7
d. Budget negotiations to avoid the so-called "fiscal cliff"	45	27	18	43	10	33	11

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

2b. held for release.

Trend:

a. The economy

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	50	27	23	48	10	38	3
10/13/12 RV	47	26	21	51	10	41	2
9/29/12 RV	47	23	25	52	10	41	1
9/9/12 RV	45	24	21	53	8	45	2
8/25/12	44	20	23	54	12	42	3
7/8/12	44	21	23	54	13	41	2
5/20/12	42	20	22	55	11	44	2
4/8/12	44	23	21	54	12	42	2
3/10/12	38	20	18	59	9	50	2
2/4/12	44	23	22	53	11	41	3
1/15/12	41	19	22	57	11	46	2
12/18/11	41	17	24	56	13	43	2
11/3/11	38	18	20	61	13	48	2
10/2/11	35	17	19	61	13	48	4
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

c. Taxes

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	48	31	17	45	12	33	7
2/4/12	47	20	27	47	17	30	6
1/15/12	45	21	24	47	13	34	8
11/3/11	41	21	20	53	18	35	6
10/2/11	42	22	20	51	14	37	7
7/17/11	45	24	21	47	13	34	8
1/16/11	50	23	27	44	14	31	6
8/17/09	51	23	28	40	12	28	8
4/24/09	56	NA	NA	38	NA	NA	6

d. Budget negotiations to avoid the so-called "fiscal cliff"

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	45	27	18	43	10	33	11
12/9/12	49	27	22	42	11	30	10

3. Do you think Obama has a mandate to carry out the agenda he presented during the presidential campaign, or should he compromise on the things the Republicans strongly oppose?

	Has mandate	Should compromise	No opinion
12/16/12	34	56	11
1/16/09	50	46	4

Compare to: Bush/Democrats

	Has mandate	Should compromise	No opinion
4/22/01	35	60	5
1/15/01	41	52	7

4. Which comes closest to describing the way you feel about the outcome of the 2012 presidential election: enthusiastic; satisfied but not enthusiastic; dissatisfied but not angry, or angry?

	----- Satisfied -----			--- Dissatisfied ---			No
	NET	Enthus.	Satis.	NET	Dissat.	Angry	opin.
12/16/12	54	23	31	44	31	13	2
12/15/00*	49	14	35	50	37	12	1

\*\*"outcome of this election"

5. Do you approve or disapprove of the way [ITEM] are doing their job?

12/16/12 - Summary Table



	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
a. The Democrats in Congress	39	56	5
b. The Republicans in Congress	25	70	5

Trend:

a. The Democrats in Congress

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
12/16/12	39	56	5
3/10/12	34	60	6
1/15/12	33	62	5
12/18/11	27	66	7
4/17/11	36	60	4
10/3/10	36	61	3
7/18/09	47	48	5
4/24/09	45	49	6
2/22/09	50	44	6
7/13/08	35	57	8
2/1/08	39	54	7
12/9/07	40	53	6
11/1/07	36	58	6
9/30/07	38	57	5
7/21/07	46	51	2
6/1/07	44	49	6
4/15/07	54	44	2
10/8/06	48	50	3
5/15/06	39	58	4
11/2/05	41	54	5
6/5/05	42	56	3
6/6/99	51	42	7
3/14/99	51	42	7
7/8/97	45	49	6
4/5/95	36	60	4
10/31/94	39	53	8
10/23/94	36	59	5
9/11/94	41	53	6

b. The Republicans in Congress

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
12/16/12	25	70	5
3/10/12	23	71	6
1/15/12	21	75	4
12/18/11	20	72	7
9/1/11	28	68	3
4/17/11	34	63	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

6. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Republican leaders of Congress are handling budget negotiations to avoid the so-called "fiscal cliff"?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
12/16/12	26	65	9

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

12/16/12 - Summary Table\*

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. Coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years	50	35	1	11	3
b. Handling the economy	54	36	1	7	1
c. Protecting the middle class	58	32	1	7	3
d. Handling taxes	46	42	1	9	3
e. Handling the federal budget deficit	45	41	2	10	3

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

Trend:

a. Coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	50	35	1	11	3
12/12/10	43	38	2	12	4

Compare to:

	Bush	Democrats	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
12/11/06	31	57	1	8	2
1/18/04	45	44	1	6	3
4/30/03	55	37	1	4	3
10/27/02 LV	53	37	1	5	4
9/26/02 LV	52	43	2	1	1
9/26/02	54	38	3	3	3
7/15/02	53	37	4	3	3
1/27/02	62	31	2	3	2

	Clinton	Republicans	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
1/26/00	45	46	*	7	2
2/14/99*	52	35	2	7	3
2/12/99	53	30	3	11	4
1/19/99	50	32	3	8	7
11/7/98	47	38	4	9	2

9/28/98	51	38	2	6	3
8/21/98	48	38	2	9	3
7/12/98	48	38	1	6	6
5/12/98	47	39	3	8	3
1/31/98	52	35	3	4	6
1/19/98	48	40	2	8	2
3/9/97	49	38	4	8	2
1/15/97**	51	37	3	7	2
1/29/95	40	46	4	8	2
1/4/95	30	54	3	9	4
12/15/94	34	49	3	9	6

\*1999 and previous: "next few years"

\*\*"The Clinton administration"

b. Handling the economy

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	54	36	1	7	1
1/15/12	43	41	1	12	3
12/18/11	44	40	1	13	2
11/3/11	42	42	1	12	2
10/2/11	43	42	1	11	2
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

c. Protecting the middle class

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	58	32	1	7	3
1/15/12	48	35	*	13	3
12/18/11	50	35	1	10	3
11/3/11	45	41	1	11	2
4/17/11	51	39	1	8	1
1/16/11*	51	37	1	8	3
12/12/10	53	38	1	6	2

\*1/16/11 and previous: "Helping the middle class"

d. Handling taxes

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	46	42	1	9	3
1/15/12	40	42	1	13	4
12/18/11	46	41	1	10	2
10/2/11	39	46	1	11	2
4/17/11	47	42	1	8	2
1/16/11	44	42	2	9	4
12/12/10	43	44	1	7	5

e. Handling the federal budget deficit

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	45	41	2	10	3
1/15/12	40	41	1	14	4
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

8-14 held for release.

15. Overall, what do you think is the best way to reduce the federal budget deficit - (by cutting federal spending), (by increasing taxes), or by a combination of both?

	Cutting federal spending	Increasing taxes	Combination of both	No opinion
12/16/12	29	4	65	2
7/17/11	32	4	62	3
6/5/11	37	4	57	2
4/17/11	36	3	59	2
3/13/11	31	3	64	3
12/12/10	36	2	60	1

16. If deficit reduction comes both from (cutting spending) and from (increasing taxes), should it be more from (cutting spending), or more from (increasing taxes), or should it be half from each?

	Cutting spending	Increasing taxes	Half from each	No opinion
12/16/12	47	10	41	2
6/5/11	52	8	39	2

17. In order to strike a budget deal that avoids the so-called "fiscal cliff", would you accept [ITEM], or is this something you would find unacceptable? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

12/16/12 - Summary Table

	NET	Accept Strngly	----- Smwht	NET	Unacceptable Smwht	---- Strngly	No op.
a. Cutting spending on Medicaid, which is the government health insurance program for the poor	28	13	16	68	16	53	3
b. Cutting military spending	42	23	20	55	14	41	3
c. Raising taxes on Americans with incomes over 250-thousand dollars a year	74	54	20	24	9	15	2
d. Raising the age for Medicare coverage from 65 to 67	36	19	17	60	14	46	3

e. Changing the way Social Security benefits are calculated so that benefits increase at a slower rate than they do now	34	13	21	60	18	41	7
f. Capping the amount of money people can claim in tax deductions at no more than 50-thousand dollars a year	54	29	25	36	17	19	10

Trend:

a. Cutting spending on Medicaid, which is the government health insurance program for the poor

	----- Accept -----			----- Unacceptable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	28	13	16	68	16	53	3
7/17/11*	26	11	16	72	18	54	2
4/17/11	30	14	16	69	17	52	2

\*7/17/11 and previous: "In order to reduce the national debt, would you support or oppose..."

b. Cutting military spending

	----- Accept -----			----- Unacceptable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	42	23	20	55	14	41	3
7/17/11*	43	23	20	56	17	39	2
4/17/11	42	22	20	56	15	41	2

\*7/17/11 and previous: "In order to reduce the national debt, would you support or oppose..."

c. Raising taxes on Americans with incomes over 250-thousand dollars a year

	----- Accept -----			----- Unacceptable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	74	54	20	24	9	15	2
11/25/12*	60	42	18	37	14	23	3
7/17/11*	72	55	17	27	10	17	1
4/17/11	72	54	18	27	10	17	1

\*"Overall, do you support or oppose raising taxes on income over 250-thousand dollars a year?"  
\*7/17/12 and previous: "In order to reduce the national debt, would you support or oppose..."

d. Raising the age for Medicare coverage from 65 to 67

	----- Accept -----			----- Unacceptable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	36	19	17	60	14	46	3
11/25/12*	30	14	16	67	18	49	3

\*"Overall, do you support or oppose raising the age for Medicare coverage from 65 to 67?"

e. Changing the way Social Security benefits are calculated so that benefits increase at a slower rate than they do now

	----- Accept -----			----- Unacceptable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	34	13	21	60	18	41	7
7/17/11*	42	18	24	53	14	38	5

\*"In order to reduce the national debt, would you support or oppose..."

f. Capping the amount of money people can claim in tax deductions at no more than 50-thousand dollars a year

	----- Accept -----			----- Unacceptable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/16/12	54	29	25	36	17	19	10

18. How likely do you think it is that (Obama) and (Republicans in Congress) will agree on a budget plan that avoids the fiscal cliff - very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?

	----- Likely -----			----- Unlikely -----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Very	opinion
12/16/12	53	14	38	45	26	19	2

19. If a budget agreement is not reached, who do you think will be mainly to blame - (the Republicans in Congress) or (Obama)?

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	31	47	18	*	3
12/2/12*	27	53	12	2	6
11/11/12*	29	53	10	2	7

\*Washington Post-Pew Research Center

20. How concerned are you, if at all, about what may happen to [ITEM] if Obama and Congress cannot reach a budget agreement - very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not concerned at all?

12/16/12 - Summary Table

	--- Concerned ----			--- Not concerned ----			No
	NET	Very	Smwht	NET	Not too	At all	op.
a. The national economy	89	58	30	10	7	3	1
b. Your personal finances	78	46	32	21	11	10	1
c. The government's ability to operate effectively	79	48	30	20	11	9	2
d. The U.S. military	75	44	31	23	14	9	2

21. Has the leadership of the Republican Party been too willing or not willing enough to compromise with Obama on the budget deficit?

	Too willing	Not willing enough	About right (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	14	76	2	8
7/17/11	14	77	3	6
3/13/11	16	71	5	8

22. Has Obama been too willing or not willing enough to compromise with the leadership of the Republican Party on the budget deficit?

	Too willing	Not willing enough	About right (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	28	57	5	10
7/17/11	29	58	8	6
3/13/11	30	52	10	8

23-27 held for release, 28-31 previously released.

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