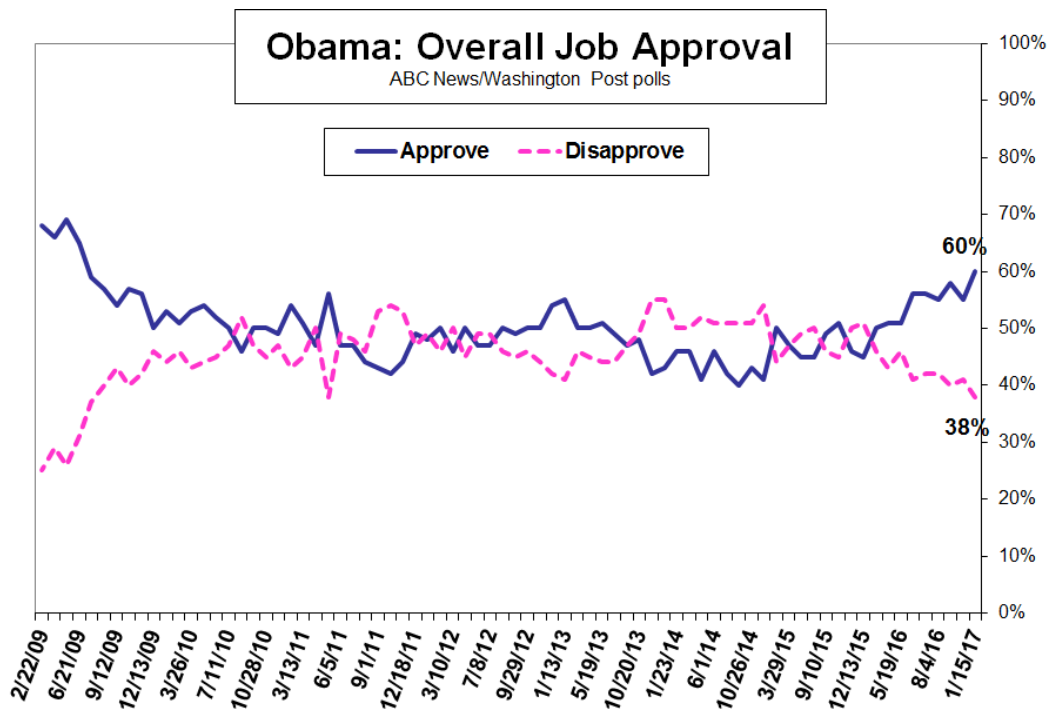


## Obama Leaves on a High Note – Yet with Tepid Career Ratings

Boosted by an improving economy, Barack Obama leaves office with his highest levels of job approval and personal popularity since the early days of his presidency. Yet his career-average ratings are in the lower tier.

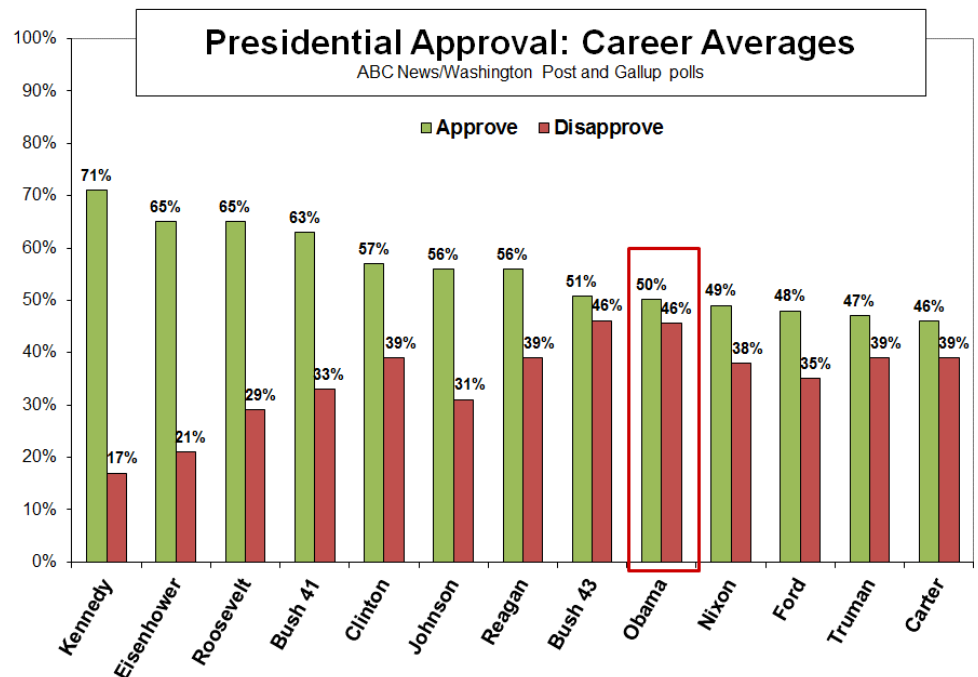
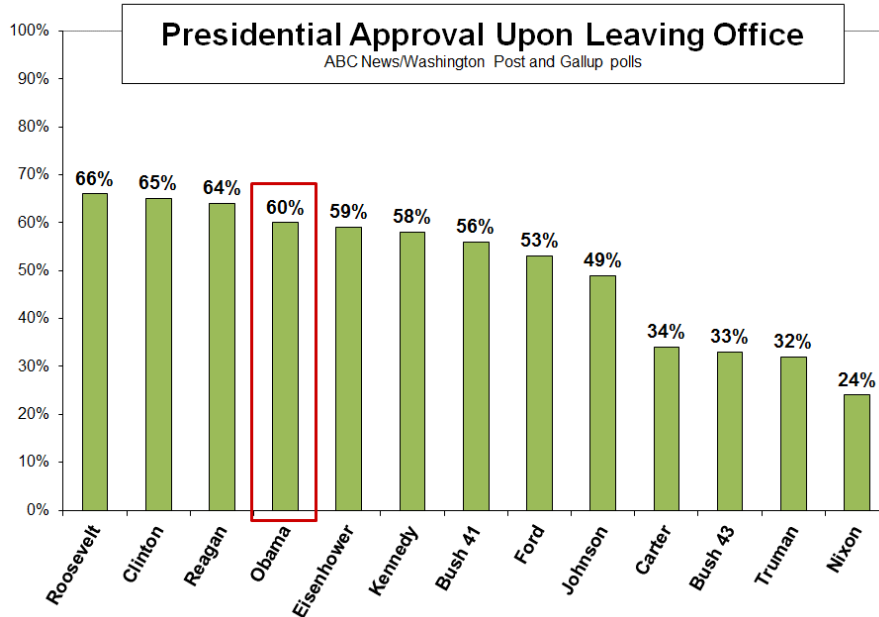
Sixty percent of Americans in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll approve of Obama's job performance, the most since June 2009, five months after he took office. Sixty-one percent approve of his handling of the economy, a career high. And as many express a favorable opinion of him personally, the most since November 2009.



These ratings stand in contrast to Donald Trump's; as reported Tuesday, just 40 percent approve of his handling of the transition, about half the average for recent incoming presidents, and an identical 40 percent see him favorably, a third lower than Obama's rating and the lowest for any president-elect in polls dating to Jimmy Carter in 1977.

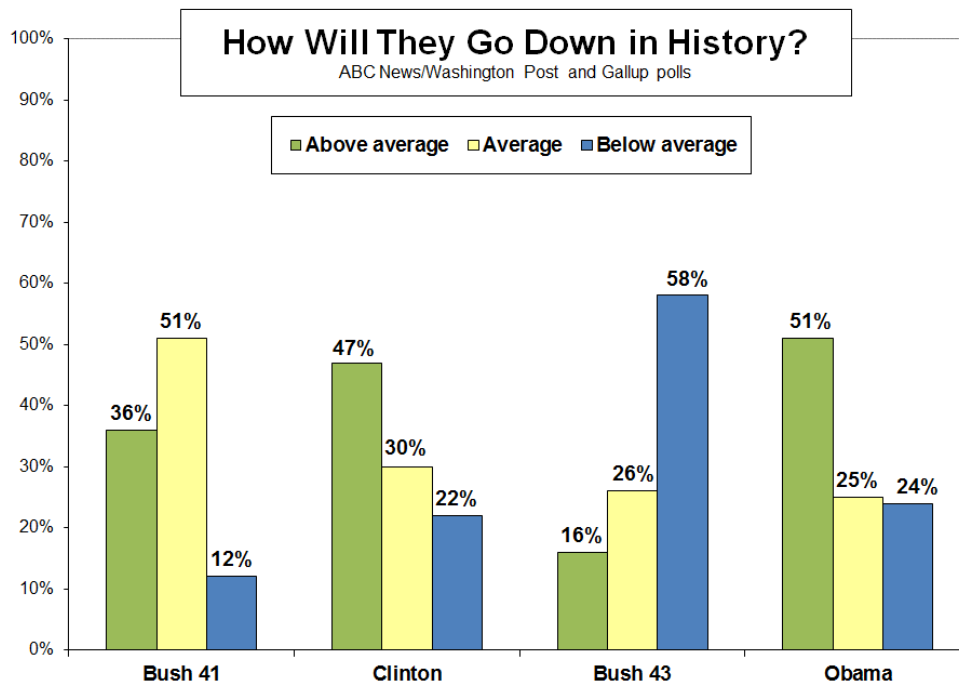
Obama's end-of-presidency rating is in the top tier of ABC/Post polls, and Gallup polls before them, back to the days of Franklin Roosevelt – just behind Roosevelt, Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan, and alongside Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy.

Yet Obama’s ratings in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), reflect a turnaround for him, not his norm. His average job approval rating across his presidency, 50 percent, is in the lower tier, alongside George W. Bush, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Harry Truman and Carter.



In another measure, 51 percent think Obama will go down in history as an above-average president. That’s slightly more than said so about Bill Clinton (47 percent) and many more than ho said so about George H.W. Bush (36 percent) or, especially, George W. Bush (16 percent).

(Twenty-six percent think Obama will be seen as an “outstanding,” president; next closest is Clinton, 15 percent.)



Obama also finishes comparatively well in other areas. His approval rating for handling health care, 52 percent, is, like his overall approval, its highest since June 2009. And he has 53 percent approval on handling terrorism, his best on this score since January 2012.

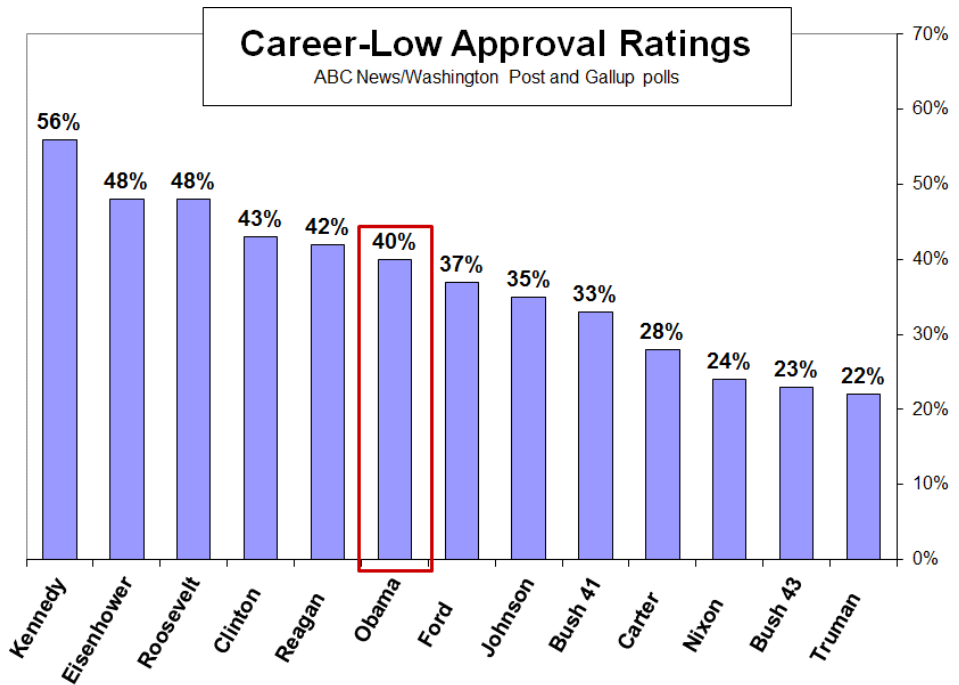
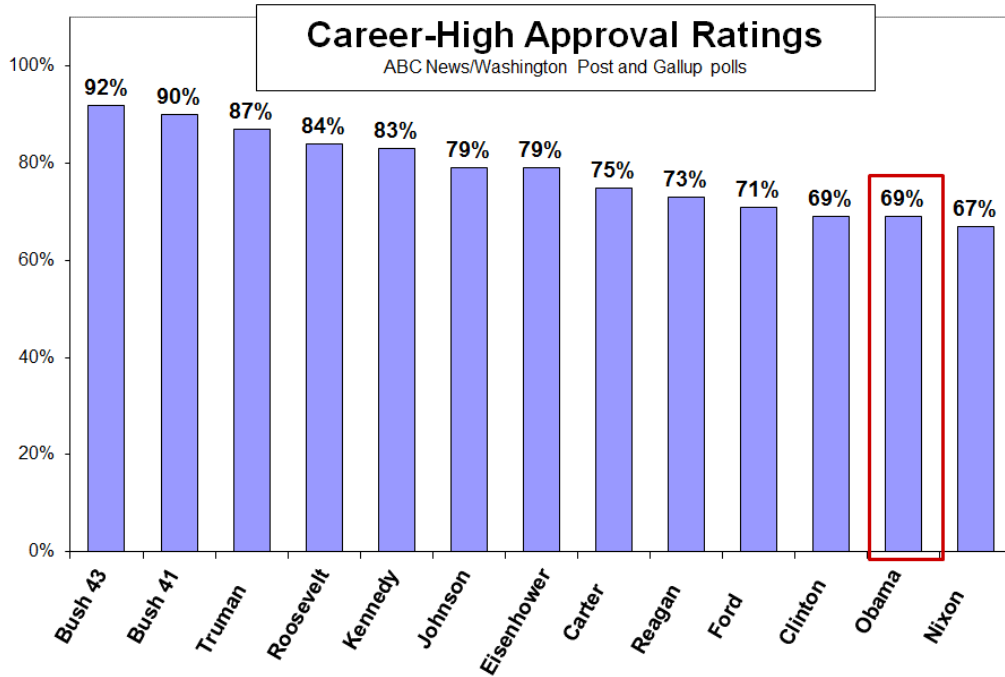
Intensity of sentiment, likewise, is unusually favorable to Obama as he leaves office. Forty-two percent of Americans approve “strongly” of his work as president, while 27 percent strongly disapprove; that 15-point positive gap is its biggest since April 2009. There’s also a 16-point positive gap in his approval on the economy, a career high. On health care and terrorism, by contrast, strong sentiment is about equal among approvers and disapprovers alike.

**BACK STORY** – Obama entered office confronted with the deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression; the long lag in recovery defined his central challenge. His final-lap gain in approval reflects the fact that more Americans than at any point since 2006 now say the economy is in excellent or good shape – even though just 51 percent hold that view.

Obama’s fall from broad approval at the start of his presidency was relatively swift. From a peak of 69 percent three months after taking office, he fell to 50 percent approval by the end of his first year in office, then as low as 42 percent in October 2011.

He recovered, albeit just back to 50 percent, in time to win re-election, but then headed back down, to a career low 40 percent in October 2014. Obama regained approval levels in the mid-50s in his second term only recently, starting last June.

Notably, Obama neither hit the heights nor plumbed the depths of previous presidents. George W. Bush, George H.W. Bush and Harry Truman saw the highest approval ratings on record, 92, 90 and 87 percent, respectively – about 20 points better than Obama’s best. Yet Truman and George W. Bush also saw the lowest approval ratings on record, 22 and 23 percent, respectively – 18 and 17 points worse than Obama’s worst.



**GROUPS** – As has been the case throughout his career, evaluations of Obama’s performance in office range from near-unanimous praise to overwhelming disapproval within groups – even as he’s hit new highs in approval among many of them.

Approval peaks among blacks and Democrats, with nearly all (92 and 90 percent, respectively) approving of the president’s performance. It’s also high among liberals (85 percent), Hispanics (85 percent), those living in urban areas (75 percent) and those without a religious affiliation (72 percent). Democratic approval of Obama has been high throughout his presidency, ranging from 95 percent in March of his first year to a low of 73 percent in September 2011.

On the other side, 18 percent of Republicans approve – few, but better than his low, 7 percent in March 2015. Twenty-six percent of strong conservatives approve, rising to 45 percent of “somewhat” conservatives.

	Final ratings – Obama approval	
	Approve	Disapprove
All	60%	38%
Men	58	39
Women	62	37
Whites	47	50
Nonwhites	84	15
Blacks	92	7
Hispanics	85	15
College graduate	67	30
Not college graduate	58	40
Democrats	90	9
Republicans	18	80
Independents	61	37
Liberals	85	15
Moderates	68	30
Conservative	39	58
Somewhat conservatives	45	52
Very conservatives	26	72
Evangelical white		
Protestants	30	68
Non-evangelical white		
Protestants	47	51
White Catholics	51	46
No religious affiliation	72	27
States Trump won	54	44
States Clinton won	69	30
Wanted to win:		
Trump	19	79
Clinton	97	2
Other/none	64	33

Approval also falls below half among whites, 47 percent, ranging from 40 percent among white men without a college degree to 67 percent among college-educated white women. A majority of whites haven't approved of Obama's work in office since July 2009; this final in-office reading matches the closest he's gotten to drawing even among whites since November of that year.

Other notable lows include 30 percent approval from evangelical white Protestants and 35 percent among those who say the economy is currently not so good or poor – still nearly half the public.

In the middle are independents, with 61 percent approving – a marked improvement from a year ago, when fewer than half said the same. Obama also has seen gains among moderates, now at 68 percent approval, the highest since June 2009 and up 11 points since late September.

Finally, the president's legacy loomed large over the November elections, and this appears in his final ratings. Essentially all Americans who wanted Hillary Clinton to win the election approve of Obama's work in office (97 percent), as do 64 percent of those who didn't like either major-party candidate.

Among those who preferred Trump, by contrast, Obama's approval rating drops to 19 percent. Seventy-nine percent of the incoming president's supporters disapprove of the work carried out by his predecessor.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Jan. 12-15, 2017, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,005 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 31-23-37 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. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

Media contacts: [Heather Riley](#) or [Julie Townsend](#).

Full results follow.

1, 5-8, 10-25 previously released; 9 held for release.

\*= less than 0.5 percent

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama has handled his job as president?

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

	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
1/15/17	60	42	19	38	11	27	2
11/14/16*	56	37	19	40	12	28	4
9/22/16	55	34	21	41	9	32	4
9/8/16	58	34	24	40	9	30	3
8/4/16	55	34	22	42	10	32	3
7/14/16	56	33	24	42	9	33	2
6/23/16	56	34	21	41	8	33	3
5/19/16	51	30	21	46	11	35	3
3/6/16	51	31	20	43	11	33	6
1/24/16	50	31	18	46	11	36	4
12/13/15	45	24	22	51	12	39	3
11/19/15	46	24	22	50	10	40	4
10/18/15	51	28	23	45	10	35	4
9/10/15	49	27	22	46	9	37	5
7/19/15	45	26	20	50	13	37	5
5/31/15	45	22	23	49	11	38	6
3/29/15	47	26	21	47	11	36	6
1/15/15	50	24	26	44	9	35	6
12/14/14	41	21	20	54	13	41	5
10/26/14	43	21	22	51	12	39	6
10/12/14	40	20	20	51	12	39	8
9/7/14	42	24	18	51	12	39	6
6/1/14	46	23	23	51	14	37	3
4/27/14	41	23	19	52	12	40	6
3/2/14	46	25	22	50	12	38	3
1/23/14	46	23	23	50	9	41	4
12/15/13	43	23	20	55	14	41	3
11/17/13	42	22	21	55	11	44	3
10/20/13	48	28	20	49	10	39	3
9/15/13	47	25	22	47	11	37	6
7/21/13	49	25	24	44	12	32	7
5/19/13	51	32	20	44	10	33	5
4/14/13	50	27	23	45	10	35	5
3/10/13	50	29	21	46	11	36	4
1/13/13	55	32	23	41	8	33	4
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; 11/14/16 and previous: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling his job as president?"

\*\*Washington Post/Pew Research Center

### 3. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama has handled [ITEM]?

1/15/17 - Summary Table

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No op.
	NET	Strongly	Smwht	NET	Smwht	Strongly	
a. The economy	61	41	20	38	13	25	1
b. The threat of terrorism	53	31	22	42	10	31	5
c. Health care	52	35	17	45	9	36	3

Trend:

#### a. The economy

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
1/15/17	61	41	20	38	13	25	1
6/23/16*	55	34	21	42	10	32	2
1/24/16	50	32	17	46	13	33	4
12/13/15	48	26	22	48	14	34	3
11/19/15	48	24	24	48	14	34	4
9/10/15	49	26	22	47	11	36	5
7/19/15	47	25	22	48	13	35	5
5/31/15	47	25	23	48	14	34	4
3/29/15	49	29	20	46	12	34	5
1/15/15	48	26	21	48	10	38	5
12/14/14	44	24	20	52	14	38	4
10/26/14	42	21	20	52	14	38	7



10/12/14	44	25	19	51	12	39	4
9/7/14	42	22	19	54	15	39	5
6/1/14	43	21	21	53	15	38	4
4/27/14	42	20	21	54	13	41	4
3/2/14	43	23	20	54	14	41	2
1/23/14	43	22	21	55	13	42	3
12/15/13	42	24	18	55	14	40	4
11/17/13	41	22	20	57	14	42	2
10/20/13	44	23	20	54	12	42	2
9/15/13	45	25	20	51	14	37	4
7/21/13	45	22	22	49	14	35	6
5/19/13	48	26	22	48	10	37	4
4/14/13	44	22	22	53	12	41	3
3/10/13	44	24	20	52	10	42	4
1/13/13	50	24	25	47	10	37	3
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

\*6/23/16 and previous: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling the economy?"

\*\*Washington Post/Pew Research Center

b. The threat of terrorism

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

	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
1/15/17	53	31	22	42	10	31	5
6/23/16*	50	27	23	45	9	36	5
1/24/16	45	23	22	48	10	38	7
12/13/15	43	19	23	53	9	44	4
11/19/15	40	21	19	54	11	43	6
1/15/15	47	22	25	45	14	31	8
12/14/14	43	21	22	48	14	34	9
10/12/14	42	21	21	50	15	35	8
1/23/14	50	29	21	42	14	28	8
1/15/12	56	36	20	38	10	28	6
11/3/11	60	37	23	34	12	22	6
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	"	"	26	"	"	17

\*6/23 and previous: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling the threat of terrorism?"

\*\*Washington Post-Pew Research Center

\*\*\*Pew Research Center

c. Health care

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
1/15/17	52	35	17	45	9	36	3
7/8/12*	41	25	16	52	11	41	7
1/16/11	43	26	18	52	11	41	5
7/11/10	45	27	19	50	10	40	5
4/25/10	49	29	20	49	9	40	1
3/26/10	48	33	15	49	6	43	3
2/8/10	43	24	19	53	11	43	3
1/15/10	44	24	21	52	9	43	4
12/13/09	44	27	18	53	10	43	3
11/15/09	47	28	19	49	8	41	3
10/18/09	48	30	18	48	10	38	4
9/12/09	48	32	15	48	10	38	4
8/17/09	46	27	19	50	8	42	5
7/18/09	49	25	24	44	11	33	7
6/21/09	53	27	26	39	10	29	9
4/24/09	57	NA	NA	29	NA	NA	13

\*7/8/12 and previous: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling health care?"

4. How do you think Barack Obama will go down in history - as an outstanding president, above average, average, below average, or poor?

	--- Above average ----				--- Below average --			No
	NET	Outstanding	Above	Avg.	NET	Below	Poor	opinion
1/15/17	51	26	25	25	24	10	14	1
G.W. Bush:								
1/16/09	16	4	11	26	58	22	36	*
Clinton:								
1/7/01	47	15	32	30	22	11	11	1

G.H.W. Bush:  
 1/11/93\* 36           6           30           51    12           8           4           1  
 \*Gallup

Compare to (4-point scale with "average" volunteered):

	---	Above average	-----	Avg.	---	Below average	--	No
	NET	Outstanding	Above	(vol.)	NET	Below	Poor	opinion
G.H.W. Bush:								
1/17/93	43	5	38	33	22	17	5	1
12/14/92	41	6	35	27	30	19	11	2
Reagan:*								
1/16/89	63	18	45	21	16	10	6	1
Carter:*								
12/80	14	3	11	37	46	31	15	3
Ford:*								
12/76	25	5	20	50	20	15	5	3
*Gallup								

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