

ABCNews.com blog item – 9/19/12

Politicians, Pundits and Polls

Whatever its charms, the 2012 campaign isn't doing much for politics as a career choice: Seven in 10 Americans in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll express an unfavorable opinion of politicians, underscoring the public's broad discontent with its leadership choices in general.

Just 26 percent in the national survey express a favorable view of politicians, while 71 percent see them unfavorably. While that negative assessment peaks among independents, it crosses party lines, making dislike of politicians one view on which bipartisanship prevails.

Politicians score well behind their inevitable companions – pundits, seen unfavorably by 59 percent (with 20 percent undecided, suggesting that to some extent it's an unfamiliar term), and public opinion polls, which draw an even split. (Rating of polls, of course, are only among people who agree to participate in them.)

Favorable-unfavorable views		
Politicians	Pundits	Polls
26-71%	21-59	46-47

Negative views toward politicians in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), reflect the public's sour mood overall, fueled by unrelieved economic dissatisfaction more than four years into the worst downturn since the Great Depression; vast majorities rate the economy negatively and two-thirds say the country is headed seriously off on the wrong track. Neither Barack Obama nor Mitt Romney has broken through: Obama last week had just a 49 percent job approval rating among all adults; and just 40 percent saw Romney favorably overall (44 percent among registered voters).

Skepticism about politics peaks, naturally, among political independents, a group that's grown in recent years to outnumber Democrats and Republicans alike. Just 17 percent of independents see politicians favorably, vs. 29 percent of Republicans and 36 percent of Democrats. That marks the challenges candidates face in reaching out to independents – often key swing voters, but also a group that's particularly dubious about the enterprise of politics in the first place.

Favorable views of politicians also are lower in another more centrist group, political moderates, than they are among either conservatives or liberals. There's a regional difference, with Northeasterners most tolerant of politicians, Westerners least so. And politicians do better in popularity among racial minorities than among whites – though again, not well in either group.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Sept. 12-16, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,026 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 4 points, including design effect. 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 Gary Langer.

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 (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

9/16/12 - Summary Table

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	op.
a. Public opinion polls	46	11	35	47	27	20	8
b. Political pundits	21	5	16	59	34	25	20
c. Politicians	26	6	19	71	35	36	4

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