

Job Ratings for Political Leaders Show Public's Disillusionment

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Majorities give political parties in Congress negative job ratings

Dissatisfaction with the state of the country continues to grow, as does some disenchantment with the President and Congress.

Because of this, it is not surprising at all that Americans have negative opinions of how members of the Cabinet and other political leaders in Washington are performing.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is perceived as doing the best job. Just under half (45%) of Americans give her positive job ratings while one-third (35%) give her negative ones and one in five (19%) are not familiar enough with her to have an opinion.

Not only does she have the highest positive ratings, Hillary Clinton is also the best known of these political figures.

These are some of the results of The Harris Poll of 2,227 adults surveyed online between June 14 and 21, 2010 by Harris Interactive.

These figures are somewhat reversed for Vice President Joe Biden as 45% of Americans have a negative view of his job performance. Just one-quarter (26%) have a positive view, while three in ten (29%) are not familiar with him.

Two other Cabinet members are on this list, but neither is well-known to the American public. Over half are not familiar (56%) with Defense Secretary Robert Gates, while 23% of Americans give him positive ratings and 20% negative marks on the job he is doing.

Greater numbers are unfamiliar with Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner (61%), but only 10% of Americans give the job he is doing positive marks and three in ten (29%) give him negative ones.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has definitely been in the news, yet over half of Americans (55%) say they are not familiar enough with him to have an opinion. Those who do have an opinion are more negative as three in ten Americans (29%) give the job he is doing negative marks while 17% give him positive marks.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts has the public split, with one in five giving him positive ratings (18%) and 19% giving him negative ratings; however, almost two-thirds (64%) are not familiar with him.

Looking at Congress, half of Americans (49%) give Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi negative ratings while just one in five (20%) give her positive marks and 31% are not familiar with her.

The political parties in Congress do the worst as over half of U.S. adults give both Democrats (54%) and Republicans (52%) negative overall job ratings. One in ten (11%) give Republicans positive ratings and 14% give Democrats positive ratings.

So what?

There seems to be enough disenchantment to spread around the political environs. People are unhappy, they need someone to blame and those in power are the ones feeling the heat at the moment.

How this translates at the ballot boxes in November is still unknown. The next four months should be interesting to watch as politicians scramble for their political lives.

There might be one bright spot for Republicans and Democrats in Congress - they are both at such low points in job approval, there might not be any place to go but up.

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States June 14 to 21, 2010 among 2,227 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates.

These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population.

Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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