

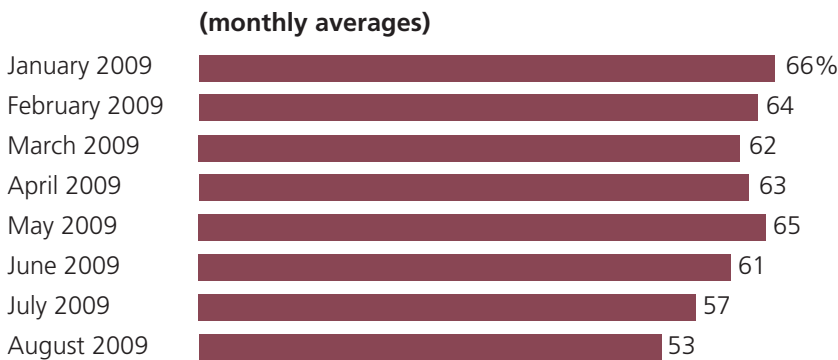
AEI Political Report

Obama Update

President Obama's ratings are slipping as is the confidence Americans have in him to make the right decisions about the country's future. There has been noticeable erosion on his handling of health care and the deficit, but not on his handling of the war in Afghanistan. Despite the drops, people still have more confidence in him than they do in the Republicans or Democrats in Congress.

Q: Do you . . . ?

Approve of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president



Source: The Gallup Organization, latest that of August 2009.

Health care

April	57%
August	46

Afghanistan

April	63%
August	60

The economy

February	60%
August	52

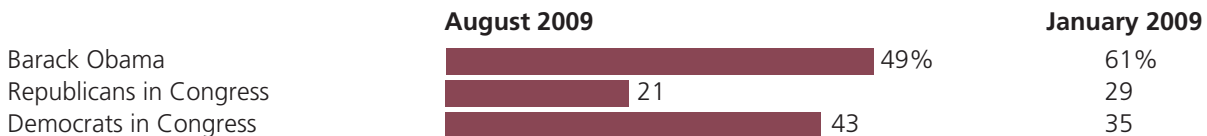
The deficit

March	52
August	41

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, latest that of August 2009.

Q: How much confidence do you have in . . . ?

Have a great deal/good amount of confidence in _____ to make the right decisions about the country's future



Source: ABC News/Washington Post, latest that of August 2009.

Q: Do you . . . ?



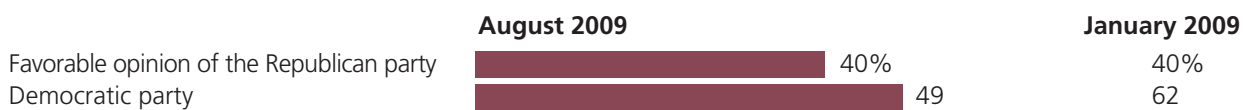
Note: Fifty-five percent of Democrats approved and 40 percent disapproved. Twenty-two percent of Independents approved and 70 percent disapproved. Thirteen percent of Republicans approved and 82 percent disapproved.

Source: The Gallup Organization, August 2009.

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Q: On another subject . . . Is your overall opinion of . . . ?



Source: Pew Research Center, August 2009.

Q: Do you think . . . ?

The policies being proposed by Barack Obama will move the country in the right direction



Source: CNN/Opinion Research Corporation, August 2009.

Q: Barack Obama promised in his campaign to change the way Washington works. Based on what you have heard of read about his administration, do you think . . . ?



Q: Do you view . . . ?

President Obama's new style of diplomacy and worldview is broadly in line with my beliefs

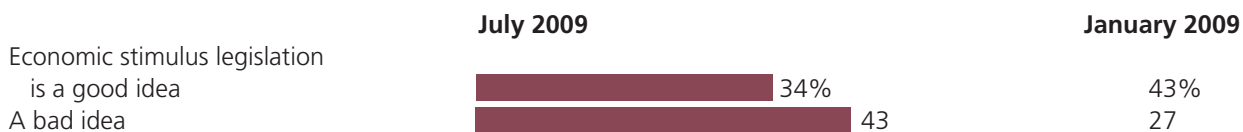


Source: Zogby International, August 2009.

The Verdict on the Economic Stimulus Plan

Americans' skepticism of the economic stimulus plan has grown, and they are strongly opposed to a second stimulus package. Fifty-seven percent in an August Gallup poll said the stimulus had had no effect or made things worse in the short term. When asked about the long term, 60 percent thought it would have no effect or make things worse.

Q: Do you think that the recently passed economic stimulus legislation is . . . ?



Note: *In January 2009, the question was phrased, ". . . recently proposed economic stimulus legislation . . ."

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, latest that of July 2009.

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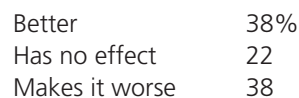
Q: Next, we'd like you to think about the \$787 billion dollar economic stimulus plan passed earlier this year and its effects on the U.S. economy both in the short term and in the long term. First. . .

Economic stimulus plan

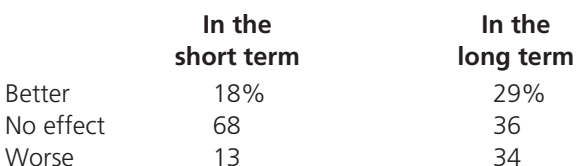
In the short term, has made the economy



In the long term, will make the economy

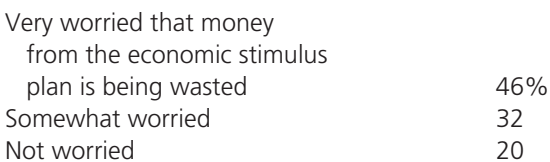


Your family's financial situation



Source: Gallup/USA Today, August 2009.

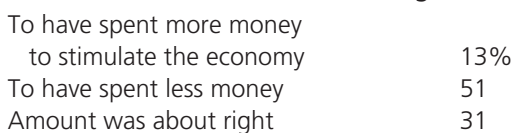
Q: Are you . . . ?



Source: Gallup/USA Today, August 2009.

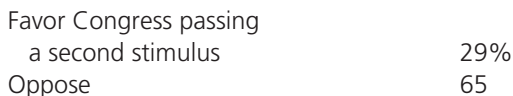
Q: Regardless of whether you favor or oppose the economic stimulus bill that Congress passed, do you think . . . ?

It would have been better for the government



Source: The Gallup Organization, August 2009.

Q: As you may know, there has been some discussion about the possibility of passing a second, additional stimulus plan. Would you . . . ?



Source: Gallup/USA Today, August 2009.

Deficits Matter, When They Matter

Deficits don't usually have much political intensity, but concern about them is rising today and the concern is clearly affecting how Americans view Washington's activities. The president's rating on handling the deficit has dropped from 52 percent in March to 41 percent in August in the ABC News/Washington Post poll, and Democrats have lost significant ground on the issue as the NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll on the next page shows.

Q: Which of the following comes closer to your point of view?



Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, July 2009.

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Q: For each of the following goals, please tell me how much . . .

	Will concern me		
	A great deal	Quite a bit	Not at all
If Congress			
Adds significantly to the budget deficit	53%	19%	5%
Fails to increase regulation of banks and financial institutions	43	22	11
Cannot pass a bill that will reform health care	38	20	22
Cannot pass a bill that would reduce emissions of gases such as carbon dioxide that cause global warming	30	20	23

Note: Category "just some" not shown.

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, July 2009.

Q: When it comes to reducing the federal deficit, which party do you think . . . ?

	July 2009	January 2008
Democrats would do a better job reducing the deficit	25%	42%
Republicans would	31	20

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, latest that of July 2009.

Congressional Losses in Midterm Elections

Our friend Stuart Rothenberg recently wrote about claims of losses for the president's party in midterm contests. "Averages are meaningless when you have a wide range of outcomes, as there have been in midterm elections since 1960," said Stu in a recent *Roll Call* column. In only 5 of the 12 midterms since 1960 have there been losses of more than 20 seats. Stu drew on *Vital Statistics on Congress*, by our own Norm Ornstein, who with Tom Mann of Brookings and Michael Malbin of the Campaign Finance Institute, has published the volume regularly since 1980.

Midterms since 1960

Losses of at least 20 seats for the president's party

2006 (30 seats)
1994 (52 seats)
1982 (26 seats)
1974 (49 seats)
1966 (47 seats)

Moderate losses for the president's party

1978 (15 seats)
1970 (12 seats)

Note: Each entry is the difference between the number of seats won by the president's party in that midterm election and the number of seats won by that party in the preceding general election.
Source: Stuart Rothenberg, "Midterms, History and the Expectations Game for the House in 2010," *Roll Call*, July 23, 2009; and Norman J. Ornstein, Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J. Malbin, *Vital Statistics on Congress: 2001–2002*, AEI Press, 2002.

Small losses or gains (swings of fewer than 10 seats)

2002 (8 seat gain for the president's party)
1998 (5 seat gain)
1990 (8 seat loss)
1986 (5 seat loss)
1962 (4 seat loss)



Top Conservative and Liberal States

Gallup recently combined all its daily interviews conducted from January 2 to June 30. The large sample of more than 160,000 adults enabled Gallup to look at some key questions by state. Gallup notes that despite the Democratic Party's national strength in partisan identification and representation in Congress and the White House, more people continue to say that they are conservative than liberal. Conservatives outnumber liberals by a statistically significant margin in 47 of 50 states.

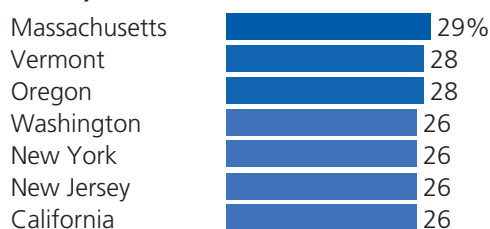
Q: How would you describe your political views . . . ?

Top conservative states

(Based on self-reported ideological identification)



Top liberal states



Note: The District of Columbia is the most liberal location (37 percent).

Source: The Gallup Organization, January–June 2009.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan has little intensity now for most Americans. Americans are worried that the war is going badly, and for that reason more people are asking whether it was worth fighting.

Q: What is your impression of how . . . ?



Note: In December 2008, 27 percent stated the war was going well. Sixty-two percent said badly.

Source: CBS News, August 2009.

Q: Thinking now about Afghanistan, all in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you . . . ?



Note: In January 2009, 38 percent stated the war was worth fighting. Sixty-one percent responded that the war was not worth fighting.

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, August 2009.

Q: Do you think the United States made a mistake . . . ?



Source: Gallup/CNN/USA Today, latest that of July 2009.

Health Care Odds

We covered health care attitudes extensively in the July issue of Political Report (www.aei.org/outlook/100058). Here we provide a few updates.

Q: *Do you think Obama . . . ?*

	August 2009	December 2008
Will be able to make significant improvements in this country's health care system	49%	68%
Will not	46	28

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, latest that of August 2009.

Q: *Which would make you feel more secure . . . ?*

Current health care system	52%
The health care system proposed by President Obama	44

Source: CNN/Opinion Research Corporation, August 2009.

Q: *If the president and Congress do pass health care reform, do you think . . . ?*

	Better	Worse	Would stay about the same
The quality of your own care			
August	29%	31%	36%
February	29	14	52
The cost of health care for you and your family			
August	34	30	30
February	39	16	39
Your choice of doctors and hospitals			
August	21	33	40
February	24	18	52
The quality of health care in America			
August	37	36	22
February	47	17	28
The overall cost of health care			
August	40	35	21
February	46	19	23

Note: Not all categories shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, latest that of August 2009.

Killing Al-Qaeda Leaders

Q: *Do you think . . . ?*

Having the CIA kill Al-Qaeda leaders is a

Good idea	53%
Bad idea	30

Note: Men and women differed sharply, with 62 percent of men and 45 percent of women saying it was a good idea.

Source: Quinnipiac University, July–August 2009.

Q: *Do you think . . . ?*

The CIA should have informed

Congress about this plan	59%
Should not	31

Source: Quinnipiac University, July–August 2009.

Industries in the News

Gallup started asking about people's confidence in central institutions in 1973. As we approach the anniversary of the Lehman bankruptcy, we show below how people's views have changed on banks and big companies. We include the military and Congress to provide some perspective.

Q: Now I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one



Source: The Gallup Organization, latest that of June 2009.

Q: On another subject, for each of the following business sectors in the United States, please say whether your overall view is . . .

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Computer industry	62%	23%	11%
Health care industry	36	15	48
Pharmaceutical industry	31	18	49
Banking	28	20	51
The federal government	29	15	54
The auto industry	24	16	59

Note: Selected industries shown.

Source: The Gallup Organization, August 2009.

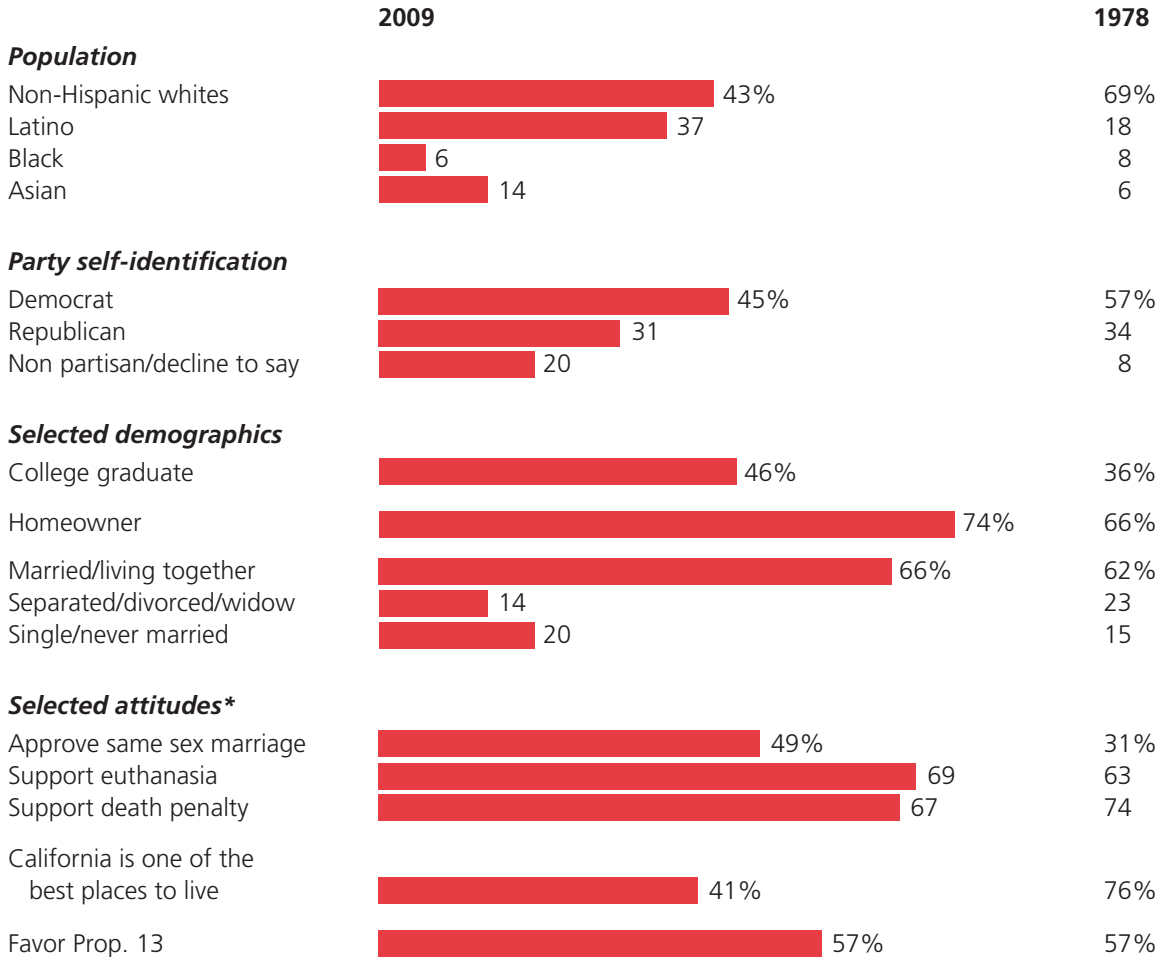


AEI POLITICAL REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

Karlyn Bowman, Senior Fellow; **John Fortier**, Research Fellow; **Norman Ornstein**, Resident Scholar;
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California Changes

California may no longer be the political bellwether it once was. It's been a reliably Democratic state for some time. Still, the state is changing in significant ways. Below we show some of the ways from a recent Field Poll comparison.

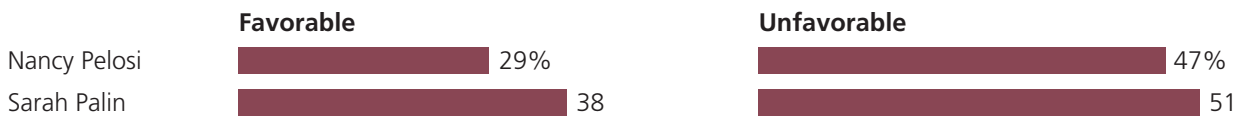


Note: *The same sex marriage question shown here was asked for the first time in 1977, the euthanasia and death penalty questions in 1975, the "California as a place to live" question in 1977, and Prop. 13, in 1978. Sample is self-identified registered voters. Source: The Field Poll, August 2009.

Pelosi and Palin

It's a comparison that neither will like, but Sarah Palin and Nancy Pelosi have similar high negatives. Palin's positives are higher than Pelosi's.

Q: Please tell me whether you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of . . . ?



Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, July 2009.

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Sex Scandals

Fox News and Opinion Dynamics pollsters asked people to think back over their lifetimes and tell the pollsters which political party had had more sex scandals. A substantial 28 percent volunteered “no difference.” A plurality of Democrats said Democrats have more sex scandals.

Q: Thinking back over your lifetime, which political party would you say has had more sex scandals—Democrats or Republicans?

	Democrats have had more sex scandals	Republicans have	No difference
National response	39%	19%	28%
Responses of Democrats	32%	28%	27%
Republicans	56	9	23
Independents	30	16	40

Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, July 2009.

Abortion Attitude Stability

Gallup recently updated a question on attitudes toward abortion that the organization has asked 45 times since 1975. The responses to this question have been remarkably stable. Thirty-one percent of Democrats in another question called themselves pro-life, and 28 percent of Republicans say they are pro-choice.

Q: Do you think abortions should be . . . ?

Abortion should be

	2009	1975
Legal under any circumstance	21%	21%
Legal under certain circumstances	57	53
Illegal in all circumstances	18	23

Source: Gallup/*USA Today*, 2009; The Gallup Organization, 1975.

Q: With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself . . . ?

Consider myself

	National Response	Responses of	
		Democrats	Republicans
Pro-choice	46%	62%	28%
Pro-life	47	31	68

Source: The Gallup Organization, latest that of July 2009.

Nap Time

The Pew Research Center recently explored how many Americans had taken a nap in the past 24 hours. They didn’t specify what was meant by a nap.

Q: In the past 24 hours, did you . . . take a nap, or not?

Have taken a nap in the past 24 hours 34%

Responses by age:

18–29 year olds	33%
30–49 year olds	35
50–69	32
70–79	34
80+	52

Source: Pew Research Center, February–March 2009.

