



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on November 27, 2013

Obama Continues to Drop in Polls, Opening Up Senate Races in 2014

President Obama's luster as leader of the Democrat party continues to fade as one poll after another shows declining ratings in the areas of competence and trust. [The latest Quinnipiac poll](#) taken among Ohio voters, which was released on Wednesday, showed his job approval rating there dropping to the lowest in any Quinnipiac University poll nationally or in any state. Said Peter Brown, the poll's assistant director:



President Barack Obama's popularity is at a record low in Ohio and the first time his approval rating has fallen below 40 percent in the state. This is a state considered to be a national bellwether where he got 51 percent of the vote just 12 months ago. Only 30 percent of men, 38 percent of women and 27 percent of white voters, along with 83 percent of black voters, give him a thumbs up.

Clearly much of the reason for the president's decline in Ohio is "Obamacare." Ohio voters oppose the Affordable Care Act 59 - 35 percent. Perhaps more significantly, voters say 45 - 16 percent they expect their own health care to be worse rather than better a year from now.

If voters still feel that way about their own situation come November 2014, that is likely to create a political playing field beneficial for Republicans. Voters still blame the Republicans more for the government shutdown, but that issue's salience is being dwarfed by the opposition to "Obamacare."

This poll is no fluke. [The CNN/ORC poll released on Monday](#) found that 53 percent of those polled said that the president is not honest or trustworthy, the first time a clear majority now holds that opinion of the president. A remarkable 56 percent said that they did not "admire" Obama, they disagreed with him on major issues, and that the president didn't "inspire confidence" in them.

A poll by Gallup showed Obama's overall job rating falling four points from September, from 45 percent to 41 percent. A poll by *ABC News/Washington Post* showed his disapproval rating [spiking to 55 percent](#), the highest level on record since 2009. The president's job approval rating summary provided by RealClearPolitics.com [confirms these results](#), with more than a 15-point spread between those approving (40 percent) and those disapproving (55.4 percent).

Unless the president reverses this course toward increasing distrust and credibility, those hoping to ride his coattails into the November 2014 elections may be in for great disappointments. Although still a year away, pollsters and readers of the political tea leaves, [John Giokaris](#) at PolicyMic.com and [Larry Sabato](#), director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics, have started to weigh in with their prognostications for various Senate races.

The Republicans need to win six seats in order to gain control of the Senate, and back in early November, before the polls' bad news for Obama had been measured, Giokaris said Republicans could take over the Senate. Sabato's "Crystal Ball" is slightly less sanguine but still estimates a close but



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improving chance for the same outcome. Of the 33 Senate seats up for reelection, there are nine where Republicans' chances are between fair and good:

West Virginia:

Democrat Senator Jay Rockefeller is retiring, leaving the way open (according to both Giokaris and Sabato) for Rep. Shelley Moore Capito to change the seat from D to R.

South Dakota:

Senator Tim Johnson is retiring and every poll taken so far shows former Republican Governor Mike Rounds most likely to join Republican John Thune next year. Both seers agree.

Montana:

Democrat Max Baucus is retiring here as well, giving Republicans a 75 percent chance of replacing him, [according to Nate Silver](#). Both Giokaris and Sabato agree.

Arkansas:

Democrat Mark Pryor is running for reelection but is being challenged by a Tea Party favorite, Tom Cotton. Cotton sports a [Freedom Index rating of 70](#) (Pryor's is 21), and in 2010, the Senate election in the state was "the most lopsided defeat for Democrats" that year, according to Giokaris, when Democrat incumbent Blanche Lincoln lost to Republican John Boozman by more than 20 points. Cotton, wrote Giokaris, "can look forward to joining his Republican colleague in the Senate." Sabato rates the state as a "Toss-up."

Louisiana:

This race is going to be close, according to both handicappers, with Democrat Mary Landrieu (FI of 20) running neck-and-neck in early polling with two potential challengers, including Rep. Bill Cassidy (FI of 69). Sabato picks the race as "Leans Democrat," but this was before the recent spate of negative polls on Obama. In addition, Republicans have been sweeping state-wide elections for the last two cycles, and Louisiana is now considered a "red" state by Giokaris.

North Carolina:

Democrat Kay Hagan (FI of 14) is running for reelection in a state that went for Obama in 2008 but supported Romney in 2012, and "is polling below 50% against any and all potential GOP challengers in the 2014 election," according to Giokaris. Sabato rates the state as "Leans Democrat" but again that was before the avalanche of negative polls for Obama.

Alaska:

Democrat Senator Mark Begich (FI of 17) is running again and, at present, seems to be well in control of his destiny, according to Giokaris. Sabato, on the other hand, rates Alaska as a "Toss-up" as a strong Republican candidate could push Begich aside in his run for a second term.

Michigan:

Democrat Senator Carl Levin (FI of 13) is hanging it up at the age of 80 and, according to Giokaris, should predictably be replaced by another hard-left senator. But something is going on in the state. In 2010, the GOP gained a majority in both chambers of the state house as well as the governor's mansion, and the early candidates for Levin's seat from both parties are polling dead even. The wild card is that more than 20 percent of likely voters are undecided. Sabato rates Michigan as "Leans Democrat."



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Virginia:

Democrat Senator Mark Warner (FI of 14) is polling above 50 percent against all potential challengers for his seat, at least in the early going. But there are two bright spots: Republicans hold a majority in the state legislature and Democrat Terry McAuliffe barely beat dark horse Republican Ken Cuccinelli for the governor's seat in a race that was supposed to be a slam dunk for McAuliffe. Sabato considers Virginia a "Safe Democrat" for the Senate race in 2014, but, once again, that was before the implosion in the polls of the leader of the Democrat party.

According to the polls, a takeover of the Senate by the Republicans appears increasingly possible, bordering on probable. That is no assurance that the growth of government will be stopped or even slowed. But victories in the freedom fight are few and far between these days and a Republican majority in the Senate would no doubt be considered by many as a victory. The victory would be especially delicious if such a victory is gained with the help of the current president of the United States.

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