



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 18, 2009

Obama, Dems Slip Sharply in Polls

Nearing the end of his first year in office, President Obama and his Democratic Party are taking a beating in polls by NBC News/Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post/ABC.

After defying the laws of political gravity for much of his first term, Obama and his party's poll numbers are starting to reflect increasing public unhappiness over the economy, healthcare, and Afghanistan.

For the first time in his presidency, Obama's overall approval rating has fallen below 50% to 47%. More of those polled also see the Democrat party in a negative light, and believe the country is "on the wrong track", with a negative 55% rating, the highest since inauguration.



In addition, more than six out of ten say the country is "in a state of decline," and a remarkable two-thirds are not confident that life for their children's generation "will be better than it was for them."

While the polls showed dissatisfaction with the Democrat party with a 35% approval/45% disapproval rating, the Republic party fared even worse, with 28% approving, 43% disapproving.

In addition to Obama's decline in overall performance, fewer than four out of ten say they are confident he has the right set of goals and policies, and only one out of three is confident that he has the right priorities to fix the economy.

The NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll was conducted by a GOP pollster, Bill McInturff, and a Democratic pollster, Peter D. Hart.

Hart said, "This survey underscores what I consider a dramatic and unmistakable change in the political landscape. For Democrats, the red flags are flying at full mast." Hart went on to say, "All of this says that optimism has crashed through the floor boards."

McInturff added, "The sagging economy is beginning to drag him down. This is increasingly becoming President Obama's economy."

In contrast, the Tea Party movement is perceived much more positively, with an approval rating of 41% vs. a 23% negative rating. As pointed out at [NewsMax.com](#), if the Tea Party were a real political party, it would be the most popular party in America.

Joe Scarborough, the host of MSNBC's Morning Joe, said, "This is stunning to me just because it shows how angry Americans are — the Tea Party is more popular than both major parties."

This was reinforced by NBC chief political correspondent Chuck Todd who observed, "It's a bad poll for the president. Candidates [who] align themselves against Washington and Wall Street are going to have good success...in 2010."



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The most important issue facing the administration is the economy. With unemployment at about 10% (officially), and approaching 20% ([unofficially](#)) there is considerable angst for many about the future.

And while the announced troop deployment to Afghanistan was supported by 55% of those polled, 58% are less confident that the war will be concluded successfully, and only 39% think U.S. troops will begin to be withdrawn by Obama's stated date of July, 2011.

The real issue dragging down Obama's numbers, however, is the intense debate over healthcare. Those who believe that his health reform plan is a good idea has dropped to its lowest level, with only 32% of those polled supporting it.

And for the first time the polls showed more people saying that they prefer the status quo by a 44% to 41% margin.

GOP pollster McInturff said, "This is the survey where the wheels came off the bus."

The Washington Post/ABC poll shows that "a majority of Americans believe that if this bill passes, their health-care costs will rise, the federal deficit will increase, the costs of the overall health-care system will climb, and their own care would be better if the system stays as is. What most voters hear from Washington these days is squabbling over health reform involving a government role [they don't trust and don't want.](#)"

According to Matthew Dowd, writing in the *Washington Post*:

"Obama, who many say is the best orator ever to occupy the White House, has pushed for this legislation constantly over the past six months. In that time, support for Obama's handling of health-care reform has dropped by more than 30 [percentage] points."

Commenting on the political impact such poll results might have in 2010, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee chairman Chris Van Hollen, had this to say: "We told our members to fasten their seatbelts and get ready from the start. While there may be additional Democratic retirements [seats lost] this year, we do not expect a large surge on the order of 1994 [when Democrats lost 52 seats and control of Congress]."

On the other hand, Obama's core constituency is losing heart. Joni Reynolds, an African American writing in the liberal *The Daily Voice*, said:

"When President Obama was elected last year we believed things were going to change. He talked about how he was going to change the way Washington did business. He was the idealistic former community organizer with a real vision for the country.

"He assembled a powerful coalition of progressives, minorities and people who had long given up on changing the system from the inside. He talked about universal health care, ending the war in Iraq and finding a way to combat unemployment.

"Now we sit here a year later and we can hardly recognize the man we voted for last fall.

"President Obama...will be remembered for the bank bailouts. The banks were too big to fail so we had to bail them out. Obama told us if we did not, unemployment would skyrocket. Well we did it but unemployment skyrocketed anyway, and those same banks developed new ways to stick it to the consumers.

So what was the point?



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“Hopefully, he will enjoy this term because he cannot keep ignoring us and expect us not to ignore him in 2012.”

Photo: AP Images



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