



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on January 24, 2014

Poll Shows 53 Percent Think Obama Administration Incompetent

More than half of the respondents in a [Quinnipiac University poll](#) released Wednesday said the Obama administration is not competent in running the government. Only 42 percent of them answered “Yes” when asked, “Do you think in general the Obama administration has been competent in running the government or don’t you think so?” The “No” responses came from 53 percent of those queried, while five percent said they didn’t know or had no answer.



The survey was conducted January 15-19 by the Polling Institute of Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut. Pollsters questioned 1,933 registered voters nationwide in interviews conducted over both landlines and cellphones.

The numbers reflect months of bad news about problems with the ObamaCare website, reports of people losing their previous health insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act, and economic reports showing fewer new jobs than had been predicted in an economy that remains weak four and a half years after the last recession was officially declared over.

The president’s ratings remain low on “character measures” as well, according to the poll, with 49 percent of respondents saying he is not “honest and trustworthy” and 46 percent saying he is. Ironically in a poll where a majority judges the president’s administration not competent, a plurality, albeit a narrow one, judges the chief executive to be a “strong leader”; 49 percent say he is and 48 percent say he is not.

A somewhat larger plurality (48-41 percent) give Obama thumbs up for his handling of terrorism, though he gets negative ratings on overall foreign policy (40-49 percent) and on dealing with Iran (39-47 percent). On the issue the voters rated as their top concern, they gave Obama a 39-56 percent negative rating on his handling of the economy. The president fares even worse regarding the centerpiece of what is expected to be the Obama legacy, with only 36 percent in favor and 59 percent opposed to his approach to healthcare.

The president’s overall approval rating is negative as well, with 40 percent saying they approve of his handling of the job, and 54 percent registering their disapproval. The overall numbers cover a sharp divide based on party affiliations, with 79 percent of Democrats expressing approval and 16 percent voicing disapproval of the Democratic president. Only eight percent of Republicans approved of the president’s job performance, while 89 percent disapproved. Obama drew a negative rating from Independents as well, with 36 percent saying they approve of his performance versus 58 percent who disapprove. In the breakdown by ideology, the president held a narrow margin of approval, 48-47 percent, among those who call themselves moderates. Those describing themselves as liberals approved of his job performance by a hefty 73-20 percent, while conservatives disapproved by 78-17 percent.

The results on the competence question reflected a similar breakdown by party affiliation. Among



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Democrats, 80 percent judged the administration to be competent, with 17 percent finding it incompetent. Only four percent of Republicans expressed confidence in the competence level at the White House, while 86 percent found the administration lacking in that regard. Only 39 percent of Independents said they found the Obama team competent, compared to 58 percent judging it incompetent.

Since Obama, now in the second year of his second term, is not eligible to run again, the polling numbers may seem academic to all but the president, who obviously would like to leave office with the nation thinking highly of him and his legacy. And voter confidence, or lack of it, in the incumbent administration can affect his ability to get Congress to pass current and future legislative initiatives as well as the fortunes of his party's candidates in this year's congressional and state house races. It could also affect the candidacy of his party's nominee in the next presidential election, as was the case in 2008 when the unpopularity of President George W. Bush negatively affected public perceptions of Republican nominee Sen. John McCain. The public's view of the competence and trustworthiness of the administration in power can also affect the general confidence level of the country on issues people most care about, the economy being foremost among them.

“‘It's the economy, Mr. President,’ say dissatisfied American voters who are not yet willing to give President Obama a thumbs up on his presidency,” said Tim Mallory, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute. “If — and it's a big IF — the president can convince the American people that the economy is getting better and that Obamacare will be good for them, it will go a long way to rebuilding his sagging job approval ratings.”

Photo of President Barack Obama: AP Images



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