



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 16, 2013

The President's Approval Ratings Continue to Drop

On Wednesday, August 7, *Fox News* reported that President Obama's approval rating was "in a summer swoon," with [just 42 percent of Americans approving of his performance](#). This was down four percentage points from July and seven points from his 2013 high.



One week later, Gallup [echoed those findings](#) with its comprehensive rating of the president on the economy, which had dropped another seven points from the week earlier, to just 35 percent approval. When Gallup quizzed 2,059 adults on the president's performance since the first week in June on the question of taxes, [they found that](#) he had lost five points, on the federal budget deficit he had lost five points, on terrorism he had lost three points, on foreign affairs he had lost three points, and he even slipped a little on immigration, by one point. By all measures, then, the president has not had a good summer.

Said Gallup:

Between the June and August surveys, Obama's overall approval rating dipped three points, from 47% to 44%. This is consistent with the four-point-decline shown separately in Gallup Daily tracking....

Hence, it seems clear that Obama's approval rating has sagged....

Until the economy makes more impressive gains ... Americans may not reward him with higher approval.

Gallup is not alone. [The Ipsos poll](#) conducted for Reuters and published on Tuesday, showed his core approval rating dropping as well. When asked, "Would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?" just one-quarter of respondents said "right direction" while nearly 60 percent said "wrong direction." When those who identified themselves as Independents responded, just 12 percent said "right direction" while 73 percent said "wrong direction."

And when respondents were asked, "Do you approve or disapprove about the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?" just 21 percent strongly approved, while 33 percent strongly disapproved. And when those identified as Independents were asked that same question, just four percent strongly approved, while 40 percent strongly disapproved.

The Economist magazine hired YouGov to ask the same question of its sample of respondents, [with nearly identical results](#). In June, those strongly approving of Obama's performance as president was 20



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percent, but by August that number had dropped to 14 percent. In June, 35 percent of those polled by YouGov strongly disapproved, but by August that had increased to 39 percent.

Rasmussen's "[approval index](#)" — the difference between those strongly approving and those strongly disapproving — rose to 19 on August 15, up from 11 just one week earlier.

Does any of this matter? Jonathan Bernstein of the *Washington Post* [thinks so](#). First, there is the history of midterm elections. When a president's approval ratings are high, his party's strength in congress improves, i.e., Bill Clinton in 1998 and George W. Bush in 2002. But when the president's ratings are low, as Obama's are now, his party suffers greatly in the midterms, i.e., Obama in 2010, Bush in 2006, and Clinton in 1994.

Secondly there is the "bureaucrat factor," where an agency employee, perceiving that the president's approval will carry over into the next term, will continue to press for policies receptive to the current administration. On the contrary, when that perception reverses, that employee will likely hunker down and stall and dither, assuming the "job protection" mode.

Over the past 30 days, the president's overall job approval rating, according to the average of six pollsters provided at [Realclearpolitics.com](#) has fallen by 7.5 points, and the trend south is accelerating. The stock market apparently has noticed as well, having lost nearly 400 points in just the last three days. If trends like these continue, it's going to be a long, hot, and dry summer for the president.

Photo of President Barack Obama: AP Images

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