

RELEASE IN PART B6

**From:** sbwhoep [redacted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2010 10:05 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** fyi: poll just out, relevant to your work in China, it's the economy, stupid. Sid

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<http://www.cbsnews.com/blogs/2010/01/11/politics/politicalhotsheet/entry6084818.shtml?tag=stack>  
 January 11, 2010 6:30 PM

## Obama's Approval Rating Dips to New Low



(CBS)

President Obama's job approval rating has fallen to 46 percent, according to a new **CBS News poll**.

That rating is Mr. Obama's lowest yet in CBS News polling, and the poll marks the first time his approval rating has fallen below the 50 percent mark. Forty-one percent now say they disapprove of Mr. Obama's performance as president.

In last month's CBS News poll, 50 percent of Americans approved of how the president was handling his job, while thirty-nine percent disapproved.

### **Analysis: The Irony Behind Obama's Poll Numbers**

Mr. Obama still receives strong support from Democrats (eight in ten approve of his performance), but his approval rating among Republicans is only 13 percent. More importantly, Mr. Obama's approval rating among independents has declined 10 points in recent months – and it now stands at just 42 percent.

Domestic issues – and not his response to terrorist threats - appear to be driving the president's approval rating downward.

Just 41 percent now approve of his handling of the economy, which Americans say is the nation's most pressing issue. Forty-seven percent disapprove. The president's marks on handling health care, with reforms still under debate in Congress, are even lower – just 36 percent approve, while 54 percent disapprove. Both of these approval ratings are the lowest of Mr. Obama's presidency.

Meanwhile, both parties in Congress receive even lower marks than the president on handling health care. Few Americans think the reforms in Congress hit the right note on expanding coverage, lowering costs and regulating the health insurance industry. ([Read more on the health care poll results](#))



(CBS)

The president receives slightly higher ratings for his handling of the war in Afghanistan and the threat of terrorism than on domestic issues. Forty-six percent approve of Mr. Obama's handling of Afghanistan, and 52 percent approve of how he is handling the threat of terrorism.

While some Republicans have criticized the president and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano's responses to the attempted Christmas Day terror attack, most Americans don't share their opinion.

In the poll, 57 percent of Americans approve of the way the Obama administration has responded to the attempted attack, and 29 percent disapprove. Views are highly partisan – 75 percent of Democrats approve, while just 41 percent of Republicans and 55 percent of independents do.

### **More Findings from the Poll:**

- Fear of another terrorist attack has increased since the attempted attack on a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam on Christmas Day. Now, 26 percent think another attack on the United States within the next few months is very likely, up from 12 percent just before the latest incident. This is the highest percentage that has felt an attack was very likely since March 2003, just after the U.S. invasion of Iraq.
- While most Americans (56 percent) have at least a fair amount of confidence that the government will protect its citizens from future attacks, just 15 percent are very confident. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, more expressed confidence.
- Few Americans – just 19 percent - think U.S. intelligence agencies are doing all they could to monitor the actions of suspected terrorists. Seventy-six think they could be doing more.
- Most Americans support conducting full body scans on travelers using a digital x-ray machine, a device some airports are now using. Seventy-four percent agree these machines should be used because they provide a detailed check for hidden weapons and explosives and reduce the need for physical searches. Just 20 percent think these machines should not be used because they would produce an image of a passenger's naked body and are an invasion of privacy.
- Over half of Americans think the U.S. should continue to keep the Guantanamo Bay prison open. Thirty-two percent think it ought to be closed and the prisoners there transferred somewhere else.
- The American public continues to volunteer the economy and jobs as the most important problem facing the country (44 percent), with health care a distant second (14 percent). In the wake of the attempted terror attack on Christmas Day, the percentage that cites terrorism as the most pressing issue has risen to seven percent from zero percent early last month.
- The public's overall assessment of the condition of the national economy remains grim – 82 percent of Americans say the economy is in bad shape. Looking ahead, 31 percent of Americans think the economy is getting better, while 19 percent think it is getting worse. Forty-nine percent now say the economy is staying the same.