



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

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Conservatives' Ratings of GOP Slip
DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S FAVORABLES RISE, CONGRESS STILL UNPOPULAR

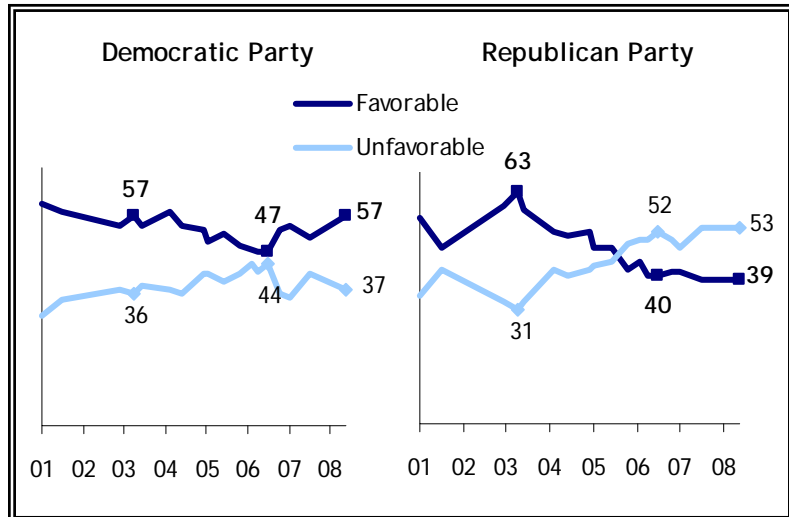
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Conservatives' Ratings of GOP Slip

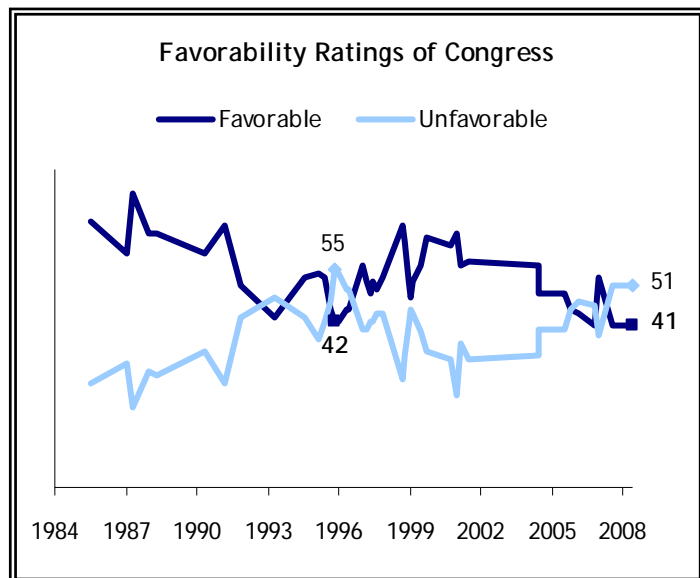
DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S FAVORABLES RISE, CONGRESS STILL UNPOPULAR

The overall image of the Democratic Party has improved over the past year, although the Democratic-led Congress remains widely unpopular. A majority of Americans (57%) say they have a favorable view of the Democratic Party, up six points since July 2007 and 10 points since July 2006.



In contrast, views of the Republican Party remain at historic lows. Currently, 53% of Americans express unfavorable views of the Republican Party while only 39% say they have a favorable opinion of the party. These ratings are unchanged from July 2007, and have changed little since April 2006.

Public attitudes toward Congress remain very negative. Currently, just 41% of the public expresses a favorable opinion of Congress, with 51% unfavorable; that is identical to opinions of Congress in July 2007. Views of Congress were more positive in January 2007, shortly after the Democrats won control of the House and Senate (53% favorable vs. 38% unfavorable).



In historical terms, positive opinions of Congress are about as low as they were in October 1995, during the standoff between former President Clinton and the GOP-led Congress that led to a government shutdown. In October 1995, 42% expressed favorable views compared with 55% who held unfavorable opinions.

Currently, majorities of Republicans (62%) and independents (58%) have unfavorable opinions of Congress. By contrast, a majority of Democrats express a favorable opinion of Congress (54%), compared with 40% who have an unfavorable view. There has been virtually no change in these partisan ratings of Congress since last year.

Fewer Republicans Rate Their Party Favorably

Although the overall favorability of the Republican Party has not changed since July 2007, Republicans' views of their own party are down 10 points since last year; currently, 73% of Republicans have a favorable view of their party compared with 83% in July 2007. Virtually all of this decline has come among conservative Republicans. Currently, 74% of conservative Republicans have a favorable view of the party compared with 87% last July.

Independents express slightly more favorable opinions of the GOP than they did last summer. However, far more independents express positive opinions of the Democratic Party than of the Republican Party. A majority of independents (52%) express favorable views of the Democratic Party while only 38% of independents rate the Republican Party favorably, a gap of 14 percentage points. Positive ratings of the Democratic Party among independents have increased 11 points since July 2006 (from 41% to 52%).

The Democratic Party receives much higher ratings from Democrats than the GOP receives from Republicans. Nearly nine-in-ten Democrats (88%) express favorable opinions of the Democratic Party, compared with 73% of Republicans who view their party favorably. In addition, somewhat fewer Democrats than Republicans have a favorable opinion of the opposing party. Just 17% of Democrats express positive opinions of the Republican Party. By comparison, 24% of Republicans (24%) say they have a favorable view of the Democratic Party, up from 18% in July 2007.

Conservative Republicans Feel Less Favorably Toward GOP

	July 2007 %	May 2008 %	Change
Republicans	83	73	-10
Cons	87	74	-13
Mod/Liberal	73	72	-1
Independents	31	38	+7
Democrats	16	17	+1
Cons/Mod	21	20	-1
Liberal	8	12	+4

Partisans' Views of the Parties

<i>Percent "favorable"</i>	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
<i>Republican Party</i>			
May 2008	73	17	38
July 2007	83	16	31
July 2006	81	14	35
July 2005	88	19	40
June 2004	93	20	48
June 2003	93	29	54
December 2002	93	28	55
July 2001	89	22	46
<i>Democratic Party</i>			
May 2008	24	88	52
July 2007	18	86	48
July 2006	17	82	41
July 2005	21	88	42
June 2004	24	86	53
June 2003	27	88	55
December 2002	27	88	52
July 2001	20	91	56

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,505 adults, 18 years of age or older, from May 21-25, 2008. The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,505	3.0 percentage points
Republican sample	412	5.5 percentage points
Democratic sample	521	5.0 percentage points
Independent sample	508	5.0 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of eight projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MAY POLITICAL/BELIEVABILITY SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
 May 21-25, 2008
 N=1505

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 17 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

NO QUESTIONS 18 THROUGH 21

ASK ALL:

Q.22 Now I'd like your opinion of some people and groups in the news. (First,) would you say your overall opinion of... **(INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-c FOLLOWED BY ROTATED ITEMS d AND e)** is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? **(INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE")**

	-----Favorable-----			-----Unfavorable-----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never Heard of	Can't Rate
a. The Republican Party								
Late May, 2008	39	7	32	53	20	33	*	8=100
July, 2007	39	7	32	53	22	31	0	8=100
Early January, 2007	41	9	32	48	21	27	1	10=100
Late October, 2006	41	9	32	50	20	30	*	9=100
July, 2006	40	10	30	52	23	29	1	7=100
April, 2006	40	10	30	50	21	29	*	10=100
February, 2006	44	11	33	50	24	26	*	6=100
Late October, 2005	42	12	30	49	24	25	*	9=100
July, 2005	48	13	35	43	18	25	*	9=100
June, 2005	48	11	37	44	20	24	0	8=100
December, 2004	52	15	37	42	17	25	0	6=100
June, 2004	51	12	39	40	14	26	0	9=100
Early February, 2004	52	14	38	42	16	26	*	6=100
June, 2003	58	14	44	33	10	23	0	9=100
April, 2003	63	14	49	31	10	21	*	6=100
December, 2002	59	18	41	33	11	22	*	8=100
July, 2001	48	11	37	42	15	27	*	10=100
January, 2001	56	13	43	35	13	22	*	9=100
September, 2000 (RVs)	53	11	42	40	12	28	0	7=100
August, 1999	53	8	45	43	12	31	*	4=100
February, 1999	44	7	37	51	15	36	0	5=100
January, 1999	44	10	34	50	23	27	0	6=100
Early December, 1998	46	11	35	47	20	27	*	7=100
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	52	9	43	42	14	28	0	6=100
Early September, 1998	56	9	47	37	11	26	*	7=100
March, 1998	50	10	40	43	12	31	*	7=100
August, 1997	47	9	38	47	11	36	*	6=100
June, 1997	51	8	43	42	11	31	1	6=100
January, 1997	52	8	44	43	10	33	*	5=100
October, 1995	52	10	42	44	16	28	*	4=100
December, 1994	67	21	46	27	8	19	*	6=100
July, 1994	63	12	51	33	8	25	*	4=100
May, 1993	54	12	42	35	10	25	0	11=100
July, 1992	46	9	37	48	17	31	*	6=100

Q.22 CONTINUED...

	-----Favorable-----			-----Unfavorable-----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never Heard of	Can't Rate
b. The Democratic Party								
Late May, 2008	57	14	43	37	14	23	*	6=100
July, 2007	51	13	38	41	14	27	0	8=100
Early January, 2007	54	15	39	35	12	23	*	11=100
Late October, 2006	53	13	40	36	11	25	*	11=100
July, 2006	47	13	34	44	13	31	2	7=100
April, 2006	47	12	35	42	14	28	*	11=100
February, 2006	48	14	34	44	17	27	0	8=100
Late October, 2005	49	14	35	41	15	26	*	10=100
July, 2005	50	15	35	41	14	27	*	9=100
June, 2005	52	12	40	39	13	26	*	9=100
December, 2004	53	13	40	41	14	27	*	6=100
June, 2004	54	12	42	36	11	25	0	10=100
Early February, 2004	58	14	44	37	9	28	*	5=100
June, 2003	54	11	43	38	10	28	0	8=100
April, 2003	57	13	44	36	11	25	*	7=100
December, 2002	54	15	39	37	10	27	*	9=100
July, 2001	58	18	40	34	10	24	*	8=100
January, 2001	60	18	42	30	9	21	1	9=100
September, 2000 (RVs)	60	16	44	35	12	23	*	5=100
August, 1999	59	14	45	37	9	28	*	4=100
February, 1999	58	11	47	37	11	26	0	5=100
January, 1999	55	14	41	38	12	26	0	7=100
Early December, 1998	59	18	41	34	10	24	0	7=100
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	56	11	45	38	9	29	*	6=100
Early September, 1998	60	13	47	33	8	25	*	7=100
March, 1998	58	15	43	36	10	26	*	6=100
August, 1997	52	11	41	42	10	32	0	6=100
June, 1997	61	10	51	33	8	25	*	6=100
January, 1997	60	13	47	35	7	28	*	5=100
October, 1995	49	9	40	48	11	37	0	3=100
December, 1994	50	13	37	44	13	31	*	6=100
July, 1994	62	13	49	34	7	27	*	4=100
May, 1993	57	14	43	34	9	25	0	9=100
July, 1992	61	17	44	33	9	24	*	6=100
c. Congress								
Late May, 2008	41	6	35	51	17	34	0	8=100
July, 2007	41	6	35	51	16	35	0	8=100
Early January, 2007	53	11	42	38	9	29	1	8=100
Late October, 2006	41	5	36	46	15	31	*	13=100
February, 2006	44	6	38	47	14	33	0	9=100
Late October, 2005	45	7	38	45	13	32	*	10=100
July, 2005	49	6	43	40	11	29	*	11=100
June, 2005	49	6	43	40	10	30	*	11=100
June, 2004	56	7	49	33	7	26	*	11=100
July, 2001	57	7	50	32	8	24	*	11=100
March, 2001	56	6	50	36	10	26	1	7=100
January, 2001	64	10	54	23	5	18	1	12=100
September, 2000 (RVs)	61	8	53	32	5	27	*	7=100
August, 1999	63	8	55	34	7	27	*	3=100

Q.22 CONTINUED...

	-----Favorable-----			-----Unfavorable-----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	Never Heard of	Can't Rate
June, 1999	56	9	47	39	9	30	*	5=100
February, 1999	52	4	48	44	8	36	0	4=100
January, 1999	48	7	41	45	15	30	0	7=100
Early December, 1998	52	11	41	41	12	29	0	7=100
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	62	7	55	33	8	25	0	5=100
Early September, 1998	66	7	59	27	5	22	0	7=100
October, 1997	53	5	48	44	11	33	0	3=100
August, 1997	50	6	44	44	11	33	0	6=100
June, 1997	52	4	48	42	8	34	0	6=100
May, 1997	49	5	44	42	10	32	*	9=100
February, 1997	52	6	46	40	9	31	*	8=100
January, 1997	56	6	50	40	8	32	*	4=100
June, 1996	45	6	39	50	12	38	*	5=100
April, 1996	45	6	39	50	13	37	0	5=100
January, 1996	42	4	38	54	16	38	*	4=100
October, 1995	42	4	38	55	13	42	0	3=100
August, 1995	45	5	40	47	13	34	*	7=100
June, 1995	53	8	45	42	11	31	*	5=100
February, 1995	54	10	44	37	10	27	0	9=100
July, 1994	53	7	46	43	9	34	*	4=100
May, 1993	43	8	35	48	13	35	0	9=100
November, 1991	51	7	44	43	9	34	0	6=100
March, 1991	66	16	50	26	7	19	0	8=100
May, 1990	59	6	53	34	9	25	1	6=100
May, 1988	64	8	56	28	5	23	0	8=100
January, 1988	64	6	58	29	4	25	0	7=100
May, 1987	74	10	64	20	4	16	*	6=100
January, 1987	59	7	52	31	8	23	0	10=100
July, 1985	67	9	58	26	5	21	*	7=100

QUESTION 22 ITEMS d AND e PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 23 THROUGH 29 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 30 THROUGH 32 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTION 33

QUESTIONS 34 AND 35 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS B.1 THROUGH B.4 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE