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Little Change in Views of Importance of State of the Union

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Little Change in Views of Importance of State of the Union

A plurality of the public (43%) views Barack Obama's upcoming State of the Union as about as important as past years' addresses. About a third (32%) say Obama's speech will be more important than those in past years, while 15% say it will be less important.

Opinions about the importance of Obama's State of the Union are little changed from last year or 2011. Last year, 46% expected the address to be about as important as those of past years; 36% said it would be more important and 14% said it would be less important.

These views also are in line with expectations for most of George W. Bush's State of the Unions. The exceptions were 2002 and 2003, following the 9/11 attacks and before the Iraq war, when majorities viewed Bush's State of the Union as more important. In 2008, when Bush gave his final State of the Union, just 19% viewed it as more important.

As in past years, there are wide partisan differences in opinions about the importance of Obama's State of the Union address. Far more Democrats (46%) than independents (28%) or Republicans (21%) say Obama's speech this year will be important than those in prior years.

Importance of State of the Union

	More important	Less important	Same	DK
Obama	%	%	%	%
Feb 2013	32	15	43	9=100
Jan 2012	36	14	46	5=100
Jan 2011	28	11	53	8=100
Jan 2010	39	9	45	7=100
Bush				
Jan 2008	19	27	46	8=100
Jan 2007	32	16	43	9=100
Jan 2006	30	14	47	9=100
Jan 2005	34	9	47	10=100
Jan 2004	34	9	49	8=100
Jan 2003	52	6	35	7=100
Jan 2002	54	4	36	6=100
Clinton				
Jan 2000	16	22	53	9=100
Jan 1999	27	16	51	6=100

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Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Partisan Gap in Views of Importance of Obama's Speech

Importance of speech compared to past years	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
More important	32	21	46	28
Less important	15	27	4	17
Same	43	39	44	47
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013.
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About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 7-10, 2013, among a national sample of 1,004 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (500 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 504 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 254 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,004	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	283	7.0 percentage points
Democrats	324	6.5 percentage points
Independents	334	6.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
February 7-10, 2013, OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,004

NO QUESTIONS PEW.1-PEW.3

ASK ALL:

PEW.4 As you may know, Barack Obama will give his annual State of the Union address in a few weeks ... Do you consider this year's State of the Union address to be MORE important than past years', LESS important, or about as important as past years'?

	<u>More important</u>	<u>Less important</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
Obama				
February 7-10, 2013	32	15	43	9
January 11-16, 2012	36	14	46	5
January 20-23, 2011 ¹	28	11	53	8
January 5-9, 2011	34	11	49	6
January 6-10, 2010	39	9	45	7
Bush				
January, 2008	19	27	46	8
January, 2007	32	16	43	9
January, 2006	30	14	47	9
January, 2005	34	9	47	10
Mid-January, 2004	34	9	49	8
January, 2003	52	6	35	7
January, 2002	54	4	36	6
Clinton				
January, 2000	16	22	53	9
January, 1999	27	16	51	6

PEW.5, PEW.7-PEW.10 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTION PEW.6

¹ In 1999-2007 and 2010-2011, question began "Now thinking about Barack Obama's/George W. Bush's/Bill Clinton's upcoming State of the Union address" In 2008, 2012 and 2013 question began "As you may know, George W. Bush/Barack Obama will give his annual State of the Union address in a few weeks"