

FEBRUARY 14, 2013

Wide Racial Gap in Views of Postal Service Decision

Most Approve of Ending Saturday Mail Delivery

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Wide Racial Gap in Views of Postal Service Decision

Most Approve of Ending Saturday Mail Delivery

A majority of Americans (54%) approve of the U.S. Postal Service's recent decision to halt Saturday delivery of letters, while 32% disapprove of the decision. The planned end of Saturday mail delivery is a rare government decision that garners bipartisan support – 58% of independents approve of the action, as do 57% of Republicans and 51% of Democrats.

Most Americans say they have heard or read at least a little about the Postal Service's announcement that they plan to stop Saturday delivery of letters to address budget shortfalls. Majorities of those who have heard a lot (67%) or a little (56%) about the action approve of it.

But those who have heard nothing at all about the decision – 16% of the public – disapprove of stopping Saturday mail delivery by more than two-to-one (60% disapprove vs. 25% approve).

The national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted Feb. 7-10 among 1,004 adults, finds that blacks are the only major demographic group in which a majority (55%) opposes the Postal Service decision to halt Saturday delivery. Whites approve of the decision by more than two-to-one (61% to 26%).

Wide Support for Ending Saturday Mail among Those Aware of Policy

<i>Postal Service decision to stop Saturday delivery ...</i>	Approve %	Disapprove %	Other/DK %
Total	54	32	13=100
<i>Heard about decision ...</i>			
A lot (34%)	67	22	11=100
A little (47%)	56	31	14=100
Nothing (16%)	25	60	15=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Blacks Opposed to Eliminating Saturday Mail Delivery

<i>Postal Service decision to stop Saturday delivery ...</i>	Approve %	Disapprove %	Other/DK %
Total	54	32	13=100
White	61	26	14=100
Black	29	55	15=100
18-29	38	47	14=100
30-49	54	33	13=100
50-64	64	25	11=100
65+	58	25	17=100
Republican	57	29	14=100
Democrat	51	37	12=100
Independent	58	30	13=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Fewer blacks than whites have heard about the Postal Service's announcement that it is stopping Saturday deliveries because of budget problems. Nearly three-in-ten blacks (29%) say they heard nothing at all about the announcement, compared with 12% of whites.

People younger than 30 are far less aware of the Postal Service announcement than older people – 42% of those 18-to-29 heard nothing at all about it, compared with just 10% of those 30 and older. Those under 30 also are the only age group in which a majority does not support the decision (38% approve).

Those who use the mail infrequently, or don't use it at all, are more supportive of the decision to end Saturday delivery than are those who send or receive letters on a weekly basis.

Among the third of Americans (34%) who seldom or never use the mail for personal letters, 61% approve of the decision to end Saturday delivery and just 21% disapprove. Opinion is more evenly divided among the 40% who send or receive personal letters weekly or more: 50% approve of the decision while 44% disapprove.

Frequent Letter Writers Are Less Supportive of USPS Decision

<i>Postal Service decision to stop Saturday delivery ...</i>	App-rove %	Dis-approve %	Other/DK %
Total	54	32	13=100
<i>Send/receive letters ...</i>			
Weekly (40%)	50	44	7=100
Monthly (25%)	53	30	17=100
Seldom/Never (34%)	61	21	18=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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

PEW.4 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

PEW.5 How much, if anything, have you read or heard about the Postal Service announcing they will stop Saturday delivery of letters in order to address budget shortfalls? Have you heard ... **[READ]**

Feb 7-10

2013

34	A lot
47	A little
16	Nothing at all
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTION PEW.6

ASK ALL:

PEW.7 Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the Postal Service's decision to stop Saturday delivery of letters?

Feb 7-10

2013

54	Approve
32	Disapprove
11	Neutral/No reaction (VOL.)
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.8 How often do you send or receive personal letters through the mail ... **[READ]**

Feb 7-10

2013

25	More than once a week
15	Once a week
25	Once or twice a month
24	A few times a year
10	Never
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

PEW.9-PEW.10 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED