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*NEWS Release*  
1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel (202) 419-4350  
Fax (202) 419-4399

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**The Economy, Health Care Reform and Gates Grease the Skids**  
**OBAMA'S RATINGS SLIDE ACROSS THE BOARD**

Also inside...

- Majority disapproval on economy, deficit
- But most still optimistic policies will work
- Health care, economy trump deficit
- Reservations about current health care bills
- Continued support for Sotomayor

*FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:*

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research  
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press  
202-419-4350  
<http://www.people-press.org>

## The Economy, Health Care Reform and Gates Grease the Skids **OBAMA'S RATINGS SLIDE ACROSS THE BOARD**

Barack Obama's approval ratings have suffered major declines. The president's overall job approval number fell from 61% in mid-June to 54% currently. His approval ratings for handling the economy and the federal budget deficit have also fallen sharply, tumbling to 38% and 32%, respectively. Majorities now say they *disapprove* of the way the president is handling these two issues. The new poll also finds significant declines over the last few months in the percentage of Americans giving Obama high marks for dealing with health care, foreign policy and tax policy.

Three factors have likely contributed to more negative views of Obama. First, criticisms of the government's economic policies are mounting. For the first time since Obama took office, as many say the government is on the wrong track (48%) as on the right track (46%) in handling the nation's economic problems. In May, 53% said the government was on the right track on the economy, while 39% said it was on the wrong track.

Secondly, the latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted July 22-26 among 1,506 adults reached on landlines and cell phones, finds that many of the health care proposals being debated in Congress are sparking negative reactions, especially from those following the debate most closely. By a 44% to 38% margin, more Americans generally oppose than favor the health care proposals now before Congress. Opposition rises to 56% among people who say they have heard a lot about legislation to overhaul the health care system. Concerns about the costs and increased government involvement in the health care system are volunteered most often by Americans critical of the health care proposals.

	Feb	Apr	June	July	Apr-July change
	%	%	%	%	
<b>Overall Job</b>					
Approve	64	63	61	54	-9
Disapprove	17	26	30	34	+8
<i>Job handling...</i>					
<b>Health care</b>					
Approve	--	51	--	42	-9
Disapprove	--	26	--	43	+17
<b>Economy</b>					
Approve	56	60	52	38	-22
Disapprove	24	33	40	53	+20
<b>Budget deficit</b>					
Approve	--	50	--	32	-18
Disapprove	--	38	--	53	+15

<i>Gov't handling of economic problems*</i>	Feb	Mar	May	July
	%	%	%	%
Right track	47	50	53	46
Wrong track	34	39	39	48
Don't know	19	11	8	6
<hr/>				
<i>Health care proposals currently before Congress</i>	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Generally favor	38	12	61	34
Generally oppose	44	76	20	49
Don't know	18	12	19	18

\* Pew Research Center's Weekly News Interest Index survey, July 17-20, N=1,002.

Thirdly, Obama's comments on the arrest of Henry Louis Gates Jr. appear to have played some role in his ratings decline. News about the arrest of the prominent African American Harvard professor at his Cambridge home was widely followed by the public and 79% are aware of Obama's comments on the incident. Analysis of the poll data found that the president's approval ratings fell among non-Hispanic whites over the course of the interviewing period as the focus of the Gates story shifted from details about the incident to Obama's remarks about the incident.<sup>1</sup> Interviews Wednesday and Thursday of last week found 53% of whites approving of Obama's job performance. This slipped to 46% among whites interviewed Friday through Sunday as the Gates story played out across the nation.

Consistent with this trend, a small re-contact survey conducted Monday night finds a mostly negative reaction, particularly among whites, to Obama's comments on the controversy, even though the public is closely divided over who was at fault in the original dispute. Based on what people have heard about the incident in Cambridge, 27% of blame Gates, 25% fault the police officer, 13% volunteer both or neither, and 36% offer no opinion. However, more people disapprove (41%) than approve (29%) of the president's handling of the situation. And by a margin of about two-to-one, more whites disapprove (45%) than approve (22%).

**No Consensus on Gates Dispute, But Obama's Handling Criticized**

<i>Obama's handling of H.L. Gates situation**</i>	White	
	Total	non-Hisp
	%	%
Approve	29	22
Disapprove	41	45
Don't know	30	33
<i>Who was more at fault?</i>		
Henry Louis Gates	27	29
James Crowley	25	22
Both equally (Vol.)	10	10
Neither (Vol.)	3	4
Don't know (Vol.)	36	35

\*\* Results of a re-contact survey of 480 respondents (including 391 white non-Hispanics) conducted Monday, July 27.

More generally, the new survey shows that since June, Obama's overall job approval ratings dropped among most political and demographic groups. The greatest declines are apparent among Republicans and independents, poorer people, especially poorer whites, and 30 to 49 year olds. When looking at Obama's approval ratings on specific issues, the president has lost ground, in most cases, among Republicans, Democrats and independents. Some of the larger declines are among members of his own party.

Yet Obama is widely liked by the public on a more personal level, with close to three-quarters (74%) saying they like the kind of person he is and the way he leads his life. Asked

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis of media coverage by the *Project for Excellence in Journalism* showed that last week, prior Obama's remarks, the Gates case was the No. 3 story filling 12% of the newshole and trailing the economy and the health care debate. But it built momentum subsequently and was the top story in the second half of the week, filling 25% of the newshole from July 23-26.

why, among the most frequent responses offered are impressions that he is honest, has integrity, is a good father and is intelligent.

### A Reserve of Confidence in Obama

While the American public has grown more critical of Obama’s handling of the economy and budget deficit over the last few months, majorities continue to express optimism about his ability to fix the economy and deal with the budget deficit in the long term. As in June and April, more than six-in-ten (63%) say they are optimistic that Obama’s policies will improve the economy, and more than half (55%) say they are optimistic that he can reduce the budget deficit over time. The views of political independents account in part for the disparity between Obama’s sinking approval ratings and the continued optimism that he will succeed. Independents remain largely optimistic, but critical of the way the president is currently dealing with the economy and budget deficit. In contrast, partisans tend to see it just one way – Democrats mostly approve of Obama’s performance and are overwhelmingly optimistic about his policies. Republicans mostly disapprove and are pessimistic.

<b>Continued Optimism about Economic Policy</b>				
<b>Obama’s economic policies...</b>				
	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
	%	%	%	%
<i>Will improve economy</i>				
Optimistic	--	66	65	63
Pessimistic	--	26	28	28
Don’t know	--	8	7	9
<i>Will reduce deficit in long term</i>				
Optimistic	--	54	55	54
Pessimistic	--	36	36	36
Don’t know	--	10	9	9
<i>Effect on economy so far</i>				
Made things better	14	26	26	24
Made things worse	15	17	16	21
No effect so far/Too soon	68	53	53	49
<i>Obama is...</i>				
Trying to address too many issues at once	35	34	--	41
Focusing on too few issues	4	4	--	3
Doing about right	56	56	--	48

In addition, relatively few Americans (21%) believe that Obama’s policies have made the economy worse. About as many, 24% say his policies have made things better. As in previous polls, the largest share (49%) say administration policies have not yet had an effect or that it is too soon to tell. Similarly, although there has been a small uptick in the share saying Obama is trying to address too many issues at once (from 34% in April to 41% today), a plurality (48%) believes he is neither taking on too many nor too few issues.

The poll also finds that while the public is expressing broader disapproval of how Obama is dealing with the budget deficit, majorities continue to give a higher priority to spending *more* to make health care accessible and affordable, to help the economy recover and to improve education, rather than to reducing the budget deficit. Partisan divisions on these issues remain strong – with most Republicans putting deficit reduction first and most Democrats giving priority to additional spending. Most independents continue to see spending on health care and on education as higher priorities than deficit reduction. They are split as to whether economic stimulus spending or deficit reduction is more important right now.

## Reactions to Health Care Proposals

Although the public has a more negative than positive general reaction to the health care proposals being debated on Capitol Hill, there is broad support for many of the core elements of the legislation currently before Congress. Nearly two-in-three (65%) favor requiring that all Americans have health insurance, with the government aiding those who cannot afford it. Nearly as many (61%) favor requiring employers who do not provide insurance to pay into a government health care fund. And there is broad support (79%) for prohibiting insurance companies from denying insurance to people with pre-existing conditions.

But reactions to the methods proposed to make sure more people have access to health care coverage are mixed. A thin 52% majority favor a government health insurance plan to compete with private plans. There is broad support (63%), however, for raising the taxes on affluent people to help pay for changes to the health care system. On the other hand, there is equally strong opposition (62%) to new taxes on employees with health insurance benefits above a certain value. Most (58%) also oppose putting tighter restrictions on what medical procedures Medicare and Medicaid will cover.

The poll found that groups that oppose the general legislative proposals – such as Republicans, the elderly and more affluent people – do so by wider margins than backers – such as Democrats, the young and less affluent people – support the proposals.

By a margin of 50% to 23% Americans say that Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor should be confirmed. Her level of public support is much greater than was the case for Samuel Alito (33%) and about the same as support for Chief Justice John G. Roberts (46%) at roughly the same point in their confirmation processes.

<b>Greater Consensus on Goals than on How to Pay for Health Care Reform</b>			
<b>Health care proposals:</b>	<u>Favor</u> %	<u>Oppose</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
Requiring ins. companies to sell health coverage to people, even if they have pre-existing medical conditions	79	15	6
Requiring that all Americans have health ins. with the gov't providing financial help for those who can't afford it	65	29	6
A government health insurance plan to compete with private health ins. plans	52	37	10
<b>Ways to pay for changes:</b>			
Raising taxes on families with incomes of more than \$350,000 and individuals earning more than \$280,000	63	32	5
Requiring employers to pay into a gov't health care fund if they do not provide health insurance to their employees	61	33	6
Tighter restrictions on what medical procedures Medicare and Medicaid will cover	33	58	9
Taxing employees whose health ins. benefits are above a certain value	25	62	13

## SECTION ONE: OPINIONS ABOUT OBAMA

Obama's overall job approval among the public has declined substantially since last month. While a majority (54%) continues to approve of the job he is doing, his rating is down seven points from June (61%).

The drop in approval is particularly steep among 30-to-49-year-olds; today, only about half (49%) of those in this age group approve of Obama's job performance, a 14-point decline from one month ago. Among other age groups, there has been no significant shift in approval of the president.

Americans with lower annual family incomes (less than \$30,000) also hold significantly less positive views of the president's performance today than they did in June (55% approve today vs. 65% in June). By contrast, there has been little change in the opinions of the more affluent (those with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more) over the past month.

As was the case last month, about half of whites (48%) approve of how Obama is handling his job. There has been essentially no shift in opinion among affluent whites, as a 54% majority continues to approve of Obama's job performance. However, among whites with annual family incomes of less than \$75,000, Obama's approval ratings have declined substantially (from 57% in June to 47% today). Assessments of Obama's performance remain high among African Americans (85%).

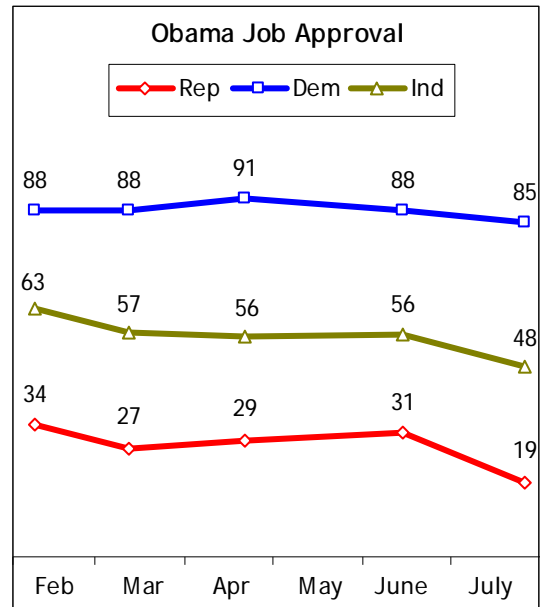
	June		July		Jun-July change in approval	July N
	App- rove %	Dis- app %	App- rove %	Dis- app %		
Total	61	30	54	34	-7	1506
Men	59	32	51	35	-8	705
Women	63	28	57	33	-6	801
White	52	38	48	41	-4	1170
Black	93	3	85	8	-8	124
18-29	68	19	63	26	-5	183
30-49	63	28	49	37	-14	420
50-64	60	35	58	34	-2	478
65+	50	38	48	39	-2	399
College grad+	64	29	57	34	-7	594
Some college	57	33	52	40	-5	370
HS or less	61	28	54	31	-7	530
\$75k or more	58	35	55	34	-3	449
\$30k-74,999	62	32	55	36	-7	490
Less than \$30k	65	24	55	30	-10	344
Republican	31	62	19	72	-12	373
Cons Rep	20	74	11	81	-9	250
Mod/Lib Rep	54	39	32	57	-22	115
Democrat	88	8	85	8	-3	505
Cons/Mod Dem	85	10	82	10	-3	314
Lib Dem	93	4	95	5	+2	163
Independent	56	29	48	37	-8	532
<i>Among whites</i>						
\$75k or more	52	37	54	37	+2	376
Less than \$75k	57	31	47	41	-10	626

Q2. Figures read across

## Drop off in Approval Seen Primarily Among Republicans, Independents

Obama's job rating among independents and Republicans is now significantly lower than at any other point in his presidency. While Democrats are less supportive of Obama on a number of specific issues, overall job approval among Democrats is little changed from earlier in the year.

Republican assessments of Obama's job performance – already negative since February – have taken a sharp turn for the worse over the past month. Just 19% of Republicans say they approve of his overall job performance, a 12-point drop since June.



At the same time, independent opinion also has become less positive. While a plurality of independents approves of the job Obama is doing (48% approve, 37% disapprove), this is an eight-point decline in approval since June. By contrast, Democrats continue to approve of Obama's job performance at levels similar to those seen over the course of the last six months.

## Approval on Issues

While the balance of opinion about Obama's overall job performance remains positive (54% approve, 34% disapprove), opinion of how the president is handling most specific issues tested is significantly more negative.

On balance, the public approves of Obama's handling of foreign policy (47% approve, 32% disapprove), and holds similar opinions about Obama's handling of the situations in Afghanistan (47% approve, 33% disapprove) and Iraq (47% approve, 38% disapprove). More also approve than disapprove of his performance on energy policy (46% vs. 31%).

	Approve %	Dis-approve %
Overall job	54	34
<i>Job handling...</i>		
Foreign policy	47	32
Afghanistan	47	33
Iraq	47	38
Energy policy	46	31
Health care	42	43
Tax policy	39	42
Economy	38	53
Budget deficit	32	53

Figures read across. Q2 & Q4a-hF2.

However, majorities of the public disapprove of Obama's handling of the economy (53%) and the budget deficit (53%), while opinion is split on Obama's handling of health care (42% approve, 43% disapprove) and tax policy (39% approve, 42% disapprove).

## Bipartisan Declines in Approval on Issues

The drops in Obama's ratings for specific issues are greater than his overall rating decline in large part because they cross party lines. Since April, Obama's approval on most of the issues tested has declined more among fellow Democrats than among Republicans.

Just less than four-in-ten Americans (38%) now say they approve of Obama's handling of the economy, down from 52% in June and 60% in April. In total, this rating has dropped 22 points from April to July.

Democrats started at a very high approval rate for Obama's handling of the economy – 86% in April – but that rating has dropped 24 points to 62%. Republicans and independents started off at lower approval levels, but both show sizeable declines. In April, 30% of Republicans approved of the president's approach to the economy; that is now down to 13%. Among independents, 56% approved of Obama's handling of the economy in April. That has dropped to 33%.

<i>Approve of job handling...</i>	<u>Feb</u> %	Mid <u>Apr</u> %	<u>June</u> %	<u>July</u> %	<i>Apr-July change</i>
<b>Economy</b>					
Total	56	60	52	38	-22
Republican	34	30	20	13	-17
Democrat	75	86	80	62	-24
Independent	54	56	50	33	-23
<b>Foreign policy</b>					
Total	52	61	57	47	-14
Republican	26	33	37	27	-6
Democrat	70	83	78	66	-17
Independent	55	63	53	43	-20
<b>Health care</b>					
Total	--	51	--	42	-9
Republican	--	21	--	12	-9
Democrat	--	71	--	65	-6
Independent	--	50	--	38	-12
<b>Budget deficit</b>					
Total	--	50	--	32	-18
Republican	--	19	--	8	-11
Democrat	--	77	--	53	-24
Independent	--	45	--	27	-18
<b>Tax policy</b>					
Total	--	50	--	39	-11
Republican	--	22	--	13	-9
Democrat	--	77	--	65	-12
Independent	--	45	--	31	-14
Q4a-eF1.					

Approval ratings for Obama's handling of the federal budget deficit show a similar pattern. His performance rating on this issue dropped 18 points since April, going from 50% to 32%. Among Democrats, the decline was from 77% in April to 53% in July, a drop of 24 points. In April, 45% of independents approved of Obama's handling of the deficit; now just 27% approve. Meanwhile, Republicans started off with a low rate of approval – 19% in April – and dropped lower – to 8% in July, a decline of 11 points.



## Ratings for Foreign Policy Issues

Approval for Obama’s handling of foreign policy has slipped from 61% in April to 47% – a decline of 14 points. Among independents, the drop is 20 points – 63% to 43%. Among Democrats, the drop is 17 points – from 83% to 66%. Among Republicans, 27% approve.

On two specific foreign policy issues – Obama’s handling of Iraq and Afghanistan – public approval stands at 47% on each. There is no direct comparison with the April survey. About six-in-ten (62%) Democrats approve of Obama’s handling of Iraq, compared with 38% each of Republicans and independents. A comparable share of Democrats (59%) approves of Obama’s handling of the situation in Afghanistan, compared with 46% of independents and 40% of Republicans.

<b>Approval on Afghanistan, Iraq</b>			
	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Afghanistan</b>			
Approve	40	59	46
Disapprove	39	25	32
<b>Iraq</b>			
Approve	38	62	38
Disapprove	49	26	43
Q4fF1 & Q4hF2. Figures read down			

On Obama’s handling of health care, approval declined 9 points from 51% in April to 42% in July. Among independents, approval on health care is down from 50% in April to 38%, a drop of 12 points. Among Republicans, 21% approved of his handling of the issue in April. Now that is down to 12%. About two-thirds of Democrats (65%) approve of his handling of health care.

Approval for Obama’s handling of tax policy also is down since April, from 50% to 39%. Among Democrats, that rating is down 12 points, dropping from 77% to 65%. Among independents, 31% approve of his handling of tax policy, down from 45% in April. And among Republicans, approval on this issue dropped from 22% to 13% since April.

On energy policy, 46% say they approve of how Obama is handling the issue. That includes 64% of Democrats, 45% of independents and 23% of Republicans.

## Public Overwhelmingly Likes Obama Personally

Although Barack Obama’s job approval ratings have declined over the past month, most Americans say they like “the kind of person he is and the way he leads his life.” Nearly three-quarters (74%) personally like Obama, while just 12% say they dislike him.

Obama is particularly well-liked by African Americans, nearly all (98%) of whom say they like his personality and the way he leads his life. Obama’s personal appeal extends to most Democrats (92%) and independents (71%) and a smaller majority (55%) of Republicans. Among moderate and liberal Republicans, more than three-quarters (78%) personally like the president; conservative Republicans are the only group with fewer than half (43%) who say they like Obama personally.

Those who say they personally like Obama cite a variety of reasons. Two-in ten (20%) mention honesty, integrity or forthrightness. About as many (16%) volunteer Obama’s relationship with his family and 13% say they see Obama as “down-to-earth.” Mentions of Obama’s intellect, communication skills and the notion that he is “trying” were each offered by 10% of those making favorable assessments of Obama personally.

	<u>Like</u>	<u>Don't like</u>
Total	74	12
White	71	14
Black	98	1
18-29	80	9
30-49	70	14
50-64	79	10
65+	70	15
Republican	55	24
Cons Rep	43	35
Mod/Lib Rep	78	7
Democrat	92	4
Cons/Mod Dem	91	4
Lib Dem	94	4
Independent	71	13

Q5.

%	
20	Honest/Has integrity/Direct
16	Family man/Good father/His family
13	Down to earth/"Regular guy"/ Relates to middle class
10	Intelligent/Educated
10	Good speaker/Communicator
10	Trying/Has a plan
48	Other positive personal characteristic

Q5aF1 (open ended question). Percentages based on those who like Obama personally. Figures add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed. (N=556).

## Public Remains Optimistic About Obama

Despite the drop in Obama's overall public approval rating, and, more specifically, approval for his handling of the economy, more than six-in-ten (63%) say they are optimistic that his policies will improve economic conditions in the country. That's about the same as the 65% that said they were optimistic about his economic policies in June and the 66% that said the same in April.

Among partisans, only about a third of Republicans (32%) say they are optimistic that Obama's policies will improve economic conditions, down from 43% in June. The share saying they are pessimistic rose from 51% to 60%. Among Democrats and independents there has been no significant change. More than eight-in-ten (84%) Democrats say they are optimistic that Obama's policies will improve economic conditions. Last month, 85% said the same thing. Among independents, 64% say they are optimistic, compared with 63% in June.

A majority of the public (54%) also says they are optimistic that Obama's policies will reduce the federal budget deficit over the long term. That share is unchanged from June (55%) and April (54%).

Among Democrats, 79% say they are optimistic that Obama's policies will reduce the budget deficit over the long term; 78% said the same last month. Among independents, 52% say they are optimistic the president's policies will bring down the deficit, the same share as in June. Nearly seven-in-ten (68%) Republicans say they are pessimistic that Obama will reduce the deficit over the long term.

<b>Continued Optimism Despite Drops in Obama Approval</b>			
<b>Obama's policies will...</b>	Early		
	<u>April</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
<i>Improve economic conditions</i>	%	%	%
Optimistic	66	65	63
Pessimistic	26	28	28
Don't know	8	7	9
<i>Reduce deficit over long term</i>			
Optimistic	54	55	54
Pessimistic	36	36	36
Don't know	10	9	9

Q10F2 & Q11F2. Figures read down.

Obama's policies will improve economic

<b>Most Independents Remain Optimistic</b>			
<b>Obama's policies will...</b>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
	%	%	%
<i>Improve economic conditions</i>			
Optimistic	32	84	64
Pessimistic	60	8	28
<i>Reduce deficit over long term</i>			
Optimistic	24	79	52
Pessimistic	68	13	38

Q10F2 & Q11F2. Figures read down.

## Limited Effect on Economy So Far

About half (49%) of the public continues to say that Obama's policies so far have not made economic conditions better or worse. The share saying his policies have had no effect so far – including those who said it was too soon to tell – stood at 53% in June.

<i>So far, Obama's economic policies have...</i>	Mid		
	<u>April</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
	%	%	%
Made things better	26	26	24
Made things worse	17	16	21
Had no effect/Too soon	53	53	49
Don't know	4	4	6

Q12F1.

But the proportion that says that Obama's policies have made the economy worse is inching up – from 16% in June to 21% in July. That change comes mostly among independents: 16% said Obama's policies were making the economy worse in June, while 27% say that now. The overall share that says Obama's policies have made economic conditions better remains at about a quarter (24%). It had been 26% in June and in mid-April.

Not surprisingly, Republicans are most likely to say that Obama's policies are making the economy worse (35%). Only 5% of Democrats agree. About four-in-ten Democrats (42%) say Obama's policies have made economic conditions better, while 44% say there has been no effect so far. Among independents, 21% say the policies have made economic conditions better, while 45% say there has been no effect so far. More than half (54%) of Republicans say administration policies have had no effect so far.

## Doing Too Much?

With Obama pushing forward on a wide range of initiatives, the share of Americans that says he is trying to address too many issues at once has increased since the spring. Four-in-ten (41%) say he is trying to do too much; 34% said the same in mid-April. Still, a plurality (48%) says he is doing about right, though that share declined from 56% in April. Small shares in each survey (4% in April, 3% in July) say he is focusing on too few issues.

<i>So far, do you think Obama is...</i>	Mid	
	<u>April</u>	<u>July</u>
	%	%
Addressing too many issues	34	41
Focusing on too few issues	4	3
Doing about right	56	48
Don't know	6	8

Q13F1.

The number saying Obama is trying to do too much is up across partisan lines. Two-thirds of Republicans (66%) say he trying to address too many issues at once, an increase from 56% in mid-April. Just over two-in-ten (22%) say he is doing about right, down from 30% this spring.

About four-in-ten independents (41%) say Obama is trying to do too much; 46% say he is doing about right, a modest decline from the 54% that said the same in April. Most Democrats (69%) say he is tackling about the right amount, while 25% say he is addressing too many issues. In April, 83% of Democrats said he was doing about right, while 15% said he was trying to address too many issues at once.

A plurality of the public says that Obama is listening more to liberals in his party than Democratic moderates (41% vs. 31%). Last month, 39% said he was listening more to his party's liberals, while 35% said he was listening more to its moderates.

<i>Obama is listening more to...</i>	Mid				
	<u>Jan</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
Liberals in his party	34	44	40	39	41
Moderates in his party	44	30	33	35	31
Don't know	22	26	27	26	27

Q14.

Not surprisingly, Republicans are more than twice as likely as Democrats to say that Obama is listening to liberals in his party more than to party moderates (69% vs. 28%). In June, 59% of Republicans and 27% of Democrats said Obama was listening more to liberals in his party. Four-in-ten Democrats (41%) now say he is listening more to party moderates. Just 17% of Republicans agree, down from 25% in June. Among independents, 41% say Obama is listening more to his party's liberals, while 32% say he is listening to party moderates. That's about the same as in June.

### Sotomayor Maintains Broad Backing

The Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearings in July for Sonia Sotomayor do not appear to have changed many minds about President Obama's Supreme Court nominee. Half of the public says Sotomayor, a veteran appeals court judge of Puerto Rican descent, should be confirmed by the Senate. That matches the share that said she should be confirmed just before the hearings.

About a quarter (23%) say she should not be confirmed, roughly the same as the 25% that said she should not be confirmed in June. Another quarter (27%) say they do not know or refused to answer.

<i>Should Senate confirm?</i>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>
Total	50	23	27
Men	52	25	23
Women	48	21	31
College grad+	59	23	18
Some college	51	26	24
HS or less	44	22	34
Republican	35	44	21
Democrat	70	6	25
Independent	45	26	29

Q9F2. Figures read across.

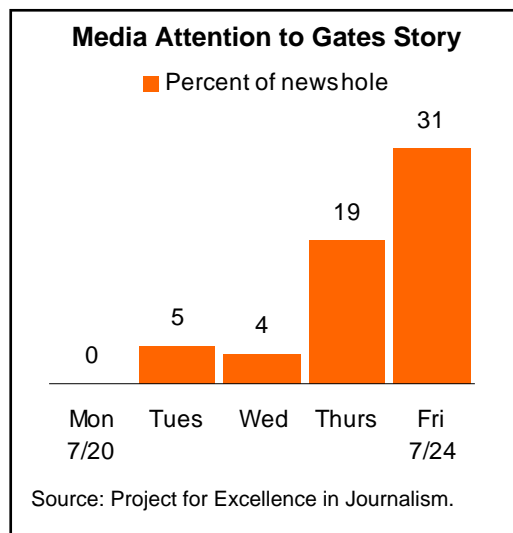
With the panel's 13-6 vote on the nomination on July 28, Sotomayor appears headed for confirmation by the full Senate. Her public support is comparable to support for Chief Justice John G. Roberts just before he was confirmed in September 2005. At that time, 46% said Roberts should be confirmed, while 21% said he should not. Sotomayor has more support than Samuel

Alito did shortly before he was confirmed in January 2006. At that point, 33% said Alito should be confirmed, while 19% opposed his confirmation. Close to half (48%) expressed no opinion on Alito.

Not surprisingly, Sotomayor's support is strongest among Democrats, with 70% saying she should be confirmed and 6% saying she should not be. Among independents, 45% say she should be confirmed, while 26% oppose her confirmation. A plurality of Republicans (44%) say Sotomayor should not be confirmed, while 35% say she should be.

## SECTION TWO: HENRY LOUIS GATES JR'S ARREST

The developing story about the arrest of Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Barack Obama's comments on the incident occurred while the latest Pew Research Center survey was being conducted. On the first night of interviewing, Wednesday, July 22, Barack Obama commented that the police had "acted stupidly" in his prime-time press conference. By Friday, both Henry Louis Gates and James Crowley – the police officer involved – publicly commented on the issue, and on Friday afternoon Obama followed up on his original remarks by saying he had spoken with Crowley by phone, and had used an unfortunate "choice of words" in his press conference.



An [analysis](#) of the press coverage by the Project for Excellence in Journalism finds that media attention to the story built substantially over the week, to a peak of 31% of the overall newshole on Friday.

Further analysis of the content of the stories found that the news stories through Thursday focused primarily on the facts surrounding Gates' arrest itself, but by Friday had turned to a focus on Obama's statements and the appropriateness of his involvement in the issue.

An analysis of public responses over the course of the survey period suggests that Obama's job approval and personal image may have slipped somewhat – among whites – over the five days the survey was conducted. In interviews conducted Wednesday and Thursday night – largely before the analysis of Obama's comments became the main part of the story – 53% of white non-Hispanics approved of Obama's overall job performance, compared with 46% of those interviewed Friday through Sunday. Disapproval among whites edged up from 36% on the first two nights to 42% Friday through Sunday. And the share of whites who say they like the kind of person Obama is slipped from 75% to 69% over the same period.

### Job Approval Edges Down Among Whites

	App- rove %	Dis- approve %	DK %	N
<i>All Adults</i>				
Total	54	34	12	1506
Wed/Thu	56	33	12	608
Fri/Sat/Sun	54	34	12	898
<i>White non-Hispanic</i>				
Total	48	41	11	1170
Wed/Thu	53	36	11	473
Fri/Sat/Sun	46	42	12	697
<i>Non-white or Hispanic</i>				
Total	69	18	13	306
Wed/Thu	63	22	14	117
Fri/Sat/Sun	74	14	13	189

Q2. Figures read across. The Wed/Thu and Fri/Sat/Sun subsamples of the overall survey are weighted independently to ensure that each reflects a comparable demographic base.

Whether these changes in Obama's ratings over the interviewing period are a response to his handling of the Gates affair can only be inferred, not explicitly proven. But a small follow-up study confirms that the vast majority of Americans were aware of Obama's statements and the general reaction – particularly among whites – was relatively negative. A small re-contact survey conducted Monday night found 46% saying they have heard a lot about Obama's comments regarding the Gates incident and another 33% have heard a little – just 19% had heard nothing at all about the issue. And substantially more say they disapprove (41%) than approve (29%) of how Obama has handled the situation.

Whites disapprove by a two-to-one margin (45% disapprove, 22% approve). The negative reaction among whites to Obama's involvement in this incident reaches across party lines. Republicans, not surprisingly, disapprove of Obama's handling of the situation by a 67% to 15% margin. But 40% of white independents also disapprove compared with just 18% who approve. And even among white Democrats, 83% of whom approve of Obama's performance overall, nearly as many disapprove (30%) as approve (37%) of how he's handled this issue.

There is an overwhelmingly negative reaction to Obama's handling of the Gates issue among whites who heard a lot about Obama's comments. Seven-in-ten (70%) whites who heard a lot disapprove of how Obama handled the situation, while just 23% approve. In part, this reflects the fact that Republicans were more likely to have heard a lot about Obama's comments.

There is no public consensus with regard to who is to blame for the original incident. When asked who, if anyone, was more at fault in the conflict between Henry Louis Gates and Officer James Crowley, 27%

	Total	White non-Hisp
<i>Heard about Gates incident</i>	%	%
A lot	46	47
A little	33	32
Nothing at all	19	20
Don't know	2	2
<i>Obama's handling of this situation</i>		
Approve	29	22
Disapprove	41	45
Don't know	30	33
<i>Who, if anyone, was more at fault?</i>		
Henry Louis Gates	27	29
James Crowley	25	22
Both equally (Vol.)	10	10
Neither (Vol.)	3	4
Don't know (Vol.)	36	35
N	480	391

CB2-4. \* Based on callback interviews with 480 respondents conducted Monday, July 27.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Heard	
<i>Heard about Gates incident</i>	%	%	%	A	Little/none
A lot	55	40	47		
A little	25	43	26		
Nothing at all	17	17	26		
<i>Obama's handling of this situation</i>	Rep	Dem	Ind	lot	none
Approve	15	37	18	23	22
Disapprove	67	30	40	70	21
Don't know	14	33	41	6	58
<i>Who, if anyone, was more at fault?</i>					
Henry Louis Gates	50	15	27	47	14
James Crowley	13	32	17	21	24
Both equally (Vol.)	6	13	12	14	7
Neither (Vol.)	2	6	4	4	2
Don't know (Vol.)	29	35	40	14	52
N	118	106	142	218	164

CB2-4. \* Based on white, non-Hispanics interviewed Monday, July 27.



say Gates and 25% say Crowley. Nearly half say they don't know (36%), or blame both (10%) or neither (3%) parties. The balance tilts slightly toward faulting Gates among whites (29% vs. 22% who blame Crowley) though 10% blame both and another 39% do not assign blame to either.

Reactions to Gates' arrest are closely linked to partisanship among whites. Half of white Republicans (50%) say Gates was at fault, compared with just 15% of white Democrats. Roughly a third (32%) of white Democrats fault Crowley, compared with just 13% of Republicans.

## SECTION THREE: PRIORITY REMAINS ON SPENDING, NOT DEFICIT

Despite President Obama's falling ratings for dealing with the budget deficit, it is not clear that the public's deficit concerns are uniformly resolute. When asked to think about budget tradeoffs, most Americans continue to place a higher priority on increased federal spending for health care, education and economic recovery than on reducing the budget deficit. For example, on the critical issue of health care, 55% say spending more to make health care accessible and affordable should be a higher priority, while 40% prioritize deficit reduction. These findings are largely unchanged from a 59% to 35% margin on this question in April.

### Health, Education and Economy Remain Higher Priorities than Deficit Reduction

	April	July
<i>Higher priority...</i>	%	%
Spending more on <b>health care</b>	59	55
Reducing the budget deficit	35	40
Don't know	6	5
Spending more on <b>education</b>	58	57
Reducing the budget deficit	38	38
Don't know	4	5
Spending more on <b>new energy tech.</b>	49	41
Reducing the budget deficit	45	52
Don't know	6	7
	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
	%	%
Spending more on <b>economic recovery</b>	48	53
Reducing the budget deficit	46	38
Don't know	6	9

Q16/Q17a-d. Figures read down.

Similarly, more favor increased spending to improve education over deficit reduction by a 57% to 38% margin, also virtually unchanged from three months ago. And on the broad issue of spending more to help the economy recover, just more than half (53%) prioritize stimulus spending, while 38% put a higher priority on cutting the deficit.

The one issue tested that has slipped as a priority is increased spending on new energy technology. The number prioritizing this over deficit reduction has fallen from 49% in April to 41% today, with a majority (52%) now rating deficit reduction as the higher priority.

The biggest partisan difference – 40 points – is over health care. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Democrats see spending more on health care as the priority, while 23%

place a higher priority on deficit reduction. By contrast, 63% of Republicans put deficit reduction ahead of increased health care spending, while 32% favor such spending over trimming the

### Budget Tradeoffs by Party

	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D
<i>Higher priority...</i>	%	%	%	<i>Diff</i>
Spending more on <b>health care</b>	32	72	54	-40
Reducing the budget deficit	63	23	42	+40
Don't know	5	5	4	
Spending more on <b>education</b>	43	69	56	-26
Reducing the budget deficit	54	26	40	+28
Don't know	4	4	5	
Spending more on <b>new energy tech.</b>	29	48	42	-19
Reducing the budget deficit	67	43	53	+24
Don't know	4	9	6	
Spending more on <b>economic recovery</b>	43	68	47	-25
Reducing the budget deficit	52	23	43	+29
Don't know	5	9	9	

Q16/Q17a-d. Figures read down.

deficit. Just over half (54%) of independents place a higher priority on health care spending while 42% say deficit reduction is more important.

Partisan views are similar, though less polarized, when it comes to education. Most Democrats (69%) and independents (56%) see increased spending on education as more important than deficit reduction, while most Republicans (54%) disagree. Democrats stand apart from both Republicans and independents in saying that stimulus spending is a higher priority than deficit reduction. By a 68% to 23% margin Democrats see spending to help the economy recover as more important than reducing the deficit. By contrast, independents are split about evenly (47% place a higher priority on economic stimulus, 43% on deficit reduction), and a slim majority (52%) of Republicans see deficit reduction as the bigger priority.

No partisan group prioritizes spending on new energy technology over deficit reduction. Democrats are now divided (48% spending, 43% deficit). In April 58% of Democrats saw energy spending as more important. The share of independents placing a higher priority on new energy spending also fell from 49% to 42% since April. Republican views have been more stable – currently 67% say deficit reduction should take priority over spending on new energy technology, virtually unchanged from April.

In addition to the partisan differences, opinion also varies by income and age. Those with lower incomes are more likely to support increased spending on health care than those with higher incomes. Nearly seven-in-ten (69%) with family incomes less than \$30,000 prioritize increased spending on health care compared with 44% of those earning \$75,000 or more. There is a similar pattern when it comes to prioritizing spending on education and economic stimulus over deficit reduction.

Younger people are more likely to favor spending in all four areas (health care, education, energy and economic stimulus) over deficit reduction than older people. The difference is largest for education. Currently 69% of those under 30 prioritize spending to improve education while just 27% say reducing the deficit should be the priority. By comparison, 46% of those 65 and older say spending on education is more important, while nearly as many (45%) say the same about deficit reduction.

	<b>Health Care Spending vs. Deficit Reduction</b>	
	<i>Higher priority...</i>	
	<u>Health care</u>	<u>Deficit</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Total	55	40
Men	50	46
Women	60	35
18-29	61	37
30-49	52	45
50-64	57	39
65+	51	35
College grad+	51	45
Some college	51	45
HS or less	60	34
<i>Household income</i>		
\$75,000 or more	44	53
\$30,000 to 74,999	56	41
Less than \$30,000	69	24
Q16/17a. Figures read across.		

## SECTION FOUR: HEALTH CARE OVERHAUL

### Public Generally Opposes Health Care Proposals

Public attention to the health care overhaul debate in Congress continues to grow. This week’s Pew Research Center News Interest Index survey finds that, for the first time, the health care debate in Washington is the public’s top news story. When asked specifically about the bills in Congress to overhaul the health care system, 41% say they have heard a lot about the bills, 47% a little, and only 10% have heard nothing at all.

The public’s current impression of the health care legislation before Congress is more negative than positive. By a slim margin, more Americans say they “generally oppose” (44%) the health care proposals being discussed in Congress right now than “generally favor” them (38%); 18% offer no opinion.

Americans who say they have heard a lot about the health care bills in Congress oppose them by a wide margin (56% to 36% margin). Those who have heard little or nothing about the bills are divided about evenly (40% favor, 35% oppose) with 24% offering no opinion.

Not surprisingly, there is a huge partisan divide on the issue of health care reform. Republicans oppose the health proposals being discussed in Congress by a 76% to 12% margin; Democrats favor them by a 61% to 20% margin. There is currently more opposition (49%) than support (34%) among independents.

	Generally favor %	Generally oppose %	DK %	N
Total	38	44	18	1506
<i>Heard about health care bills in Congress</i>				
A lot	36	56	8	712
A little/Nothing at all	40	35	24	777
<b>Republican</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>373</b>
Heard a lot	6	87	6	198
Heard a little/Nothing	17	65	18	173
<b>Democrat</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>505</b>
Heard a lot	72	17	11	216
Heard a little/Nothing	55	22	23	283
<b>Independent</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>532</b>
Heard a lot	27	70	3	253
Heard a little/Nothing	38	35	27	274

Figures read across. Q49.

These partisan divisions are magnified among Americans who are tracking the issue closely. Republicans who have heard a lot about the health care proposals more universally oppose them than those who have heard a little or nothing at all (87% vs. 65%). And nearly three-quarters (72%) of the Democrats who have heard a lot about the proposals favor them compared with 55% of the Democrats who have heard little or nothing.

But, critically, increased attention to the health care legislation among independents is associated with more opposition, not more support. Independents who have heard a lot about the

bills oppose them by a 70% to 27% margin. Independents who have heard little or nothing are divided evenly (38% favor, 35% oppose). Overall, the more attentive independents have a lot more in common with Republicans than with Democrats when it comes to the current legislation in Congress, which tips the overall public balance of opinion in the direction of opposition.

Besides party, income level and whether respondents have health insurance are factors in opinions about the health care legislation being debated on Capitol Hill. More people with higher family incomes oppose the health care proposals than favor them (51% oppose, 35% favor), while those with family incomes less than \$30,000 are more divided (44% favor, 36% oppose). Nearly half (48%) of those with health insurance oppose the proposals, compared with only 30% of those who don't have insurance, a plurality (44%) of whom favor the health care proposals being discussed in Congress. There are also some differences in opinion by race and age but no significant differences by gender or education.

	Generally favor %	Generally oppose %	DK %	N
Men	37	46	16	705
Women	39	42	19	801
White, non-Hispanic	33	49	18	1170
Black, non-Hispanic	50	31	19	124
18-29	44	39	17	183
30-49	34	47	19	420
50-64	45	41	13	478
65+	29	48	23	399
<i>Household income</i>				
\$75,000 or more	35	51	14	449
\$30,000-74,999	37	47	16	490
Less than \$30,000	44	36	20	344
Have health insurance	37	48	15	1319
No health insurance	44	30	26	184
Figures read across. Q49.				

In general, groups that, on balance, oppose the health care legislation tend to do so by substantially larger margins than groups that favor such legislation. For example, Republicans oppose the legislation by a 64-point margin (76% oppose, 12% favor) while Democrats favor the legislation by a 41-point margin (61% favor vs. 20% oppose). The same is true along income lines, with those earning \$75,000 or more opposing the bills before Congress by a 16-point margin (51% oppose vs. 35% favor) and those earning less than \$30,000 favoring the proposals by a slim 8-point margin (44% favor, 36% oppose). Even when it comes to age, people age 65 and older oppose the reforms before Congress by a 19-point margin (48% oppose vs. 29% favor), while Americans under age 30 are almost evenly divided (44% favor, 39% oppose).

## Costs and Government Involvement Biggest Concerns

Two concerns are offered most frequently by people who say they oppose the health care legislation before Congress: the cost and the extent of government involvement. About a quarter (26%) of those who oppose the current reform bills cite the cost and impact on the budget and taxes as the main reason they are against the legislation. Another 18% say the changes would lead to too much government involvement and bureaucracy. A smaller number oppose the current proposals because they believe they would reduce health care quality and access, while restricting people's choices. There are also expressions of skepticism about the political process: 8% say the bills are too complex and haven't been explained clearly and 4% express distrust of Congress, Obama and the political decision makers involved.

Of those who favor the health care proposals being discussed in Congress, 42% cite the prospect of providing universal health coverage or covering more people as the reason for their opinion. Another 14% say controlling costs and affordability are the main reasons they back a health care overhaul, while 13% refer more generally to the need for some kind of change.

<b>Why People <u>Oppose</u> the Health Proposals Before Congress</b>	
Too expensive/increase deficit and taxes	26
Don't want gov't involvement	18
Will reduce quality/Take away choice	9
Hasn't been explained/Too complex	8
Redistributive/Free-ride/People should earn it	6
Won't work/Current system works	6
Distrust Congress/Obama/politics	4
Other	30
Don't know/Refused	11
N	688
<b>Why People <u>Favor</u> the Health Proposals Before Congress</b>	
Universal coverage/Covering more people	42
Control costs/Increase affordability	14
Need to do something/Change/Right direction	13
Personal experience/reasons	9
Help poor/unemployed with health care	7
Other	16
Don't know/Refused	11
N	558
Q50 (open ended question). Percentages based on those who generally oppose (top) or generally favor (bottom) the health proposals. Figures add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.	

## Public Supports Addressing Many Health Care Reform Goals

While there is more skepticism than support when it comes to the overall proposals before Congress, many of the specific elements being discussed are broadly favored. More than three-quarters (79%) favor requiring insurance companies to sell health coverage to people, even if they have pre-existing medical conditions, and 65% favor requiring that all Americans have health insurance with the government providing financial help for those who can't afford it. A slim majority (52%) also favors a government health insurance plan to compete with private health insurance plans, while 37% oppose a government option.

The public is more divided in opinion about the various ways to pay for changes to the health care system. A majority (63%) favors raising taxes on families with incomes of more than \$350,000 and individuals earning more than \$280,000. A similar number (61%) favors requiring employers to pay into a government health care fund if they do not provide health insurance coverage to their employees.

However, 62% oppose taxing employees whose health insurance benefits are above a certain value. A majority (58%) also opposes tighter restrictions on what medical procedures Medicare and Medicaid will cover.

<b>Greater Consensus on Goals than on How to Pay for Health Care Reform</b>			
<i><b>Health care proposals:</b></i>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>
	%	%	%
Requiring ins. companies to sell health coverage to people, even if they have pre-existing medical conditions	79	15	6
Requiring that all Americans have health ins. with the gov't providing financial help for those who can't afford it	65	29	6
A government health insurance plan to compete with private health ins. plans	52	37	10
<i><b>Ways to pay for changes:</b></i>			
Raising taxes on families with incomes of more than \$350,000 and individuals earning more than \$280,000	63	32	5
Requiring employers to pay into a gov't health care fund if they do not provide health insurance to their employees	61	33	6
Tighter restrictions on what medical procedures Medicare and Medicaid will cover	33	58	9
Taxing employees whose health ins. benefits are above a certain value	25	62	13
Figures read across. Q51a-c & Q52a-d.			

## Partisan Division on Health Care

On virtually every proposal tested, Democrats are substantially more supportive of change than Republicans. The widest gap is over the proposal to mandate insurance with government assistance to those who can't afford it – something 87% of Democrats favor compared with 41% of Republicans. Independents fall between, with 60% supporting this idea.

Developing a government health care option is also divisive, with 66% of Democrats, 50% of independents and only 36% of Republicans favoring the idea. There are similarly wide divisions over the proposal to tax higher income households as a means to pay for changes to the health care system and requiring employers to pay into a government health fund if they don't provide insurance for their employees.

There are only a few areas of relative agreement across party lines. Most Democrats (87%) and Republicans (72%) and independents (76%) favor

requiring insurance companies to cover those with pre-existing conditions. And there is virtually no partisan difference on tightening what medical procedures are covered by Medicare and Medicaid, something which few Democrats (37%) Republicans (31%) or independents (29%) support.

The less affluent are more supportive of three of the key proposals than wealthier Americans. Nearly three-fourths (74%) of those earning less than \$30,000 favor requiring Americans to have health insurance if the government provides financial help for those who can't afford it, compared with 60% of those earning \$75,000 or more. There is a similar difference on the issue of raising taxes on individuals and families with high incomes (70% with family incomes of \$30,000 or less favor this compared with 57% of those earning \$75,000 or more). There is a slightly smaller difference on the issue of requiring employers to pay into a government health care fund; 66% of those earning \$30,000 or less favor this proposal, compared with 58% of those earning \$75,000 or more.

Partisan Views about Health Care Proposals				
Percent who favor ...	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D
	%	%	%	Diff
<b>Health care proposals:</b>				
Requiring that all Americans have health health ins. with the gov't providing financial help for those who can't afford it	41	87	60	-46
A government health insurance plan to compete with private health ins. plans	36	66	50	-30
Requiring ins. companies to sell health coverage to people, even if they have pre-existing medical conditions	72	87	76	-15
<b>Ways to pay for changes:</b>				
Raising taxes on families with incomes of more than \$350,000 and individuals earning more than \$280,000	46	81	57	-35
Requiring employers to pay into a gov't health care fund if they do not provide health insurance to their employees	46	78	54	-32
Taxing employees whose health ins. benefits are above a certain value	12	35	25	-23
Tighter restrictions on what medical procedures Medicare and Medicaid will cover	31	37	29	-6
Q51a-c & Q52a-d.				



## Attentive Independents Skeptical of Most Reform Proposals

How much people have heard about the bills before Congress is a factor in how they evaluate the various proposals. This is especially true for Republicans and independents; and in both cases those who are hearing the most about the reform proposals express more opposition to the proposals now before Congress. This is not surprising when it comes to Republicans – as more attentive partisans often track with their party’s positions more strongly. But the fact that independents who are hearing more tend to agree with the Republicans is a notable pattern.

For example, independents who have heard a lot about the health care proposals are divided in their opinions about requiring Americans to have health insurance (47% favor and 47% oppose). But among independents who have heard little or nothing overall, 68% favor this idea while only 26% oppose it. A similar pattern is evident on the issue of a government health insurance plan; 57% of independents who have heard a lot oppose this proposal while 58% of those who have heard less favor it.

Independents who have heard a lot are also more likely to oppose various ways of paying for health care reform. At least half of independents who have heard a lot about the proposals oppose raising

taxes on the wealthy (53%) and requiring employers who don’t offer health insurance coverage to pay into a government fund (50%), while majorities who have heard a little or nothing favor these ways of paying for health care reform.

<b>The More Independents Have Heard About Reform Proposals, the More They Oppose</b>			
		<i>Independents who have heard</i>	
		<u>A lot</u>	<u>Little/none</u>
		<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Health care proposals:</b>			
Requiring ins. companies to sell health coverage to people, even if they have pre-existing medical conditions	Favor	77	76
	Oppose	18	16
Requiring that all Americans have health ins. with the gov’t providing financial help for those who can’t afford it	Favor	47	68
	Oppose	47	26
A government health insurance plan to compete with private health ins. plans	Favor	39	58
	Oppose	57	31
<b>Ways to pay for changes:</b>			
Raising taxes on families with incomes of more than \$350,000 and individuals earning more than \$280,000	Favor	45	66
	Oppose	53	30
Requiring employers to pay into a gov’t health care fund if they do not provide health insurance to their employees	Favor	45	61
	Oppose	50	33
Tighter restrictions on what medical procedures Medicare and Medicaid will cover	Favor	32	27
	Oppose	62	63
Taxing employees whose health ins. benefits are above a certain value	Favor	19	28
	Oppose	70	55
N		253	274
Q51a-c & Q52a-d by Q48.			

## Reps Trust Private Insurance Companies; Dems Trust the Government

By a slim margin, the public trusts private insurance companies more than the government when it comes to deciding what kinds of medical procedures should be covered by health insurance (38% vs. 32%). Nearly one-in-five (19%) say they trust neither, another 2% volunteer another response and 8% are unsure.

About six-in-ten Republicans (61%) trust private insurance companies compared with only 14% who trust the government when it comes to deciding what medical procedures health insurance should cover. Conservative Republicans are even more likely to trust private insurance companies (67%) than moderate to liberal Republicans (51%).

### Who do you trust more to decide what medical procedures health insurance should cover?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Private insurance companies	38	61	27	36
The government	32	14	49	30
Neither (VOL)	19	20	13	24
Both (VOL)	1	*	1	1
Other (VOL)	2	3	2	2
Don't know	8	2	9	7

Q53. Figures read down.

By comparison, nearly half (49%) of Democrats trust the government, including 43% of conservative to moderate Democrats and 61% of liberal democrats. About a quarter (27%) of Democrats says they trust private insurance companies more than government. Independents are more divided: 36% say they trust private insurance companies more and 30% say the government.

## DETAILED TABLES:

Q2.Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	June 2009			July 2009			(N)	Jun-Jul Change
	Approve	Dis- approve	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Approve	Dis- approve	(VOL.) DK/Ref		
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
<b>TOTAL</b>	61	30	9	54	34	12	1506	-7
<b>SEX</b>								
Male	59	32	10	51	35	13	705	-8
Female	63	28	9	57	33	10	801	-6
<b>AGE</b>								
18-49	64	25	10	54	33	13	603	-10
50+	56	36	8	54	36	10	877	-2
<b>DETAILED AGE</b>								
18-29	68	19	12	63	26	11	183	-5
30-49	63	28	9	49	37	14	420	-14
50-64	60	35	6	58	34	9	478	-2
65+	50	38	12	48	39	13	399	-2
<b>SEX BY AGE</b>								
Men 18-49	64	25	11	54	32	13	302	-10
Men 50+	52	40	8	48	39	13	391	-4
Women 18-49	65	25	10	54	33	13	301	-11
Women 50+	59	32	9	59	33	8	486	0
<b>RACE</b>								
White non-Hispanic	52	38	10	48	41	11	1170	-4
Total non-white	80	12	8	69	18	13	306	-11
Black non-Hispanic	93	3	4	85	8	7	124	-8
<b>REGION</b>								
East	69	23	8	61	26	13	278	-8
Midwest	61	28	10	58	31	11	396	-3
South	55	33	11	48	41	10	556	-7
West	62	31	7	54	32	14	276	-8
<b>EDUCATION</b>								
College grad	64	29	7	57	34	9	594	-7
Some college	57	33	10	52	40	8	370	-5
HS or less	61	28	11	54	31	15	530	-7
<b>INCOME</b>								
\$75,000+	58	35	7	55	34	11	449	-3
\$30,000-\$74,999	62	32	6	55	36	9	490	-7
<\$30,000	65	24	11	55	30	15	344	-10
<b>DETAILED INCOME</b>								
\$100,000+	56	36	8	56	36	8	282	0
\$75,000-\$99,999	60	34	6	53	30	16	167	-7
\$50,000-\$74,999	61	33	6	55	37	7	223	-6
\$30,000-\$49,999	62	31	6	54	36	10	267	-8
\$20,000-\$29,999	60	29	10	52	37	11	142	-8
<\$20,000	68	21	12	57	26	17	202	-11

## DETAILED TABLES continued:

Q2.Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	June 2009			July 2009			(N)	<i>Jun-Jul Change</i>
	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Dis- approve</u> %	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u> %	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Dis- approve</u> %	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u> %		
<b>RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE</b>								
Total White NH Prot.	46	44	10	40	50	10	642	-6
White NH evang. Prot.	35	55	10	29	60	11	338	-6
White NH mainline Prot.	57	33	10	53	37	9	303	-4
Total Catholic	63	28	9	59	29	11	329	-4
White NH Catholic	58	34	8	55	33	12	266	-3
Unaffiliated	71	21	9	62	23	15	215	-9
<b>CHURCH ATTENDANCE</b>								
More than once a week	39	52	8	36	56	9	217	-3
Once a week	58	33	9	51	40	9	380	-7
Once or twice a month	63	28	9	57	28	15	233	-6
A few times a year	66	24	10	54	32	14	245	-12
Seldom/Never	69	23	8	64	25	11	400	-5
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>								
Married	56	37	8	47	42	11	870	-9
Not married	66	23	11	64	24	12	626	-2
<b>MARITAL STATUS BY SEX</b>								
Married men	53	39	8	44	45	12	427	-9
Married women	59	35	7	49	40	11	443	-10
Unmarried men	65	24	11	61	23	16	276	-4
Unmarried women	66	23	11	67	24	9	350	+1
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>								
Employed	59	31	10	55	34	12	843	-4
Not employed	63	28	9	53	35	12	654	-10
<b>HEALTH INSURANCE</b>								
Yes	58	33	9	53	36	11	1319	-5
No	70	16	13	58	28	14	184	-12
<b>HEALTH CARE PROPOSALS</b>								
Generally Favor	n/a	n/a	n/a	83	8	9	558	n/a
Generally Oppose	n/a	n/a	n/a	28	63	9	688	n/a
<b>PARTY ID</b>								
Republican	31	62	7	19	72	10	373	-12
Democrat	88	8	4	85	8	7	505	-3
Independent	56	29	14	48	37	16	532	-8
<b>PARTY AND IDEOLOGY</b>								
Conservative Republican	20	74	5	11	81	8	250	-9
Mod/Lib Republican	54	39	7	32	57	11	115	-22
Mod/Cons Democrat	85	10	5	82	10	8	314	-3
Liberal Democrat	93	4	3	95	5	0	163	+2

## DETAILED TABLES continued:

Q2.Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	June 2009			July 2009			(N)	<i>Jun-Jul Change</i>
	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Dis- approve</u> %	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u> %	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Dis- approve</u> %	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u> %		
<b>AMONG REPUBLICANS</b>								
Male	32	62	6	16	74	10	172	-16
Female	31	61	8	21	69	10	201	-10
18-49	40	53	7	22	66	11	156	-18
50+	21	72	7	15	78	8	211	-6
<b>AMONG DEMOCRATS</b>								
Male	88	9	3	84	8	8	193	-4
Female	88	7	5	85	9	7	312	-3
18-49	92	5	3	85	7	8	184	-7
50+	84	10	6	84	9	7	317	0
<b>AMONG INDEPENDENTS</b>								
Male	57	27	16	46	37	17	298	-11
Female	56	31	13	49	37	14	234	-7
18-49	60	23	17	49	35	16	230	-11
50+	52	39	10	46	40	14	294	-6
<b>AMONG WHITES</b>								
Male	48	41	10	47	41	12	556	-1
Female	56	34	10	49	40	11	614	-7
18-49	55	33	11	48	40	12	430	-7
50+	49	42	9	49	41	10	726	0
East	61	32	7	57	30	14	229	-4
Midwest	56	34	10	55	34	11	340	-1
South	44	43	13	38	53	10	402	-6
West	53	40	7	49	39	13	199	-4
College grad	60	32	8	53	40	7	478	-7
Some college or less	49	40	11	46	41	13	687	-3
\$75,000+	54	39	7	54	37	10	376	0
\$30,000-\$74,999	52	41	8	47	44	9	393	-5
<\$30,000	56	33	11	48	37	15	233	-8

## 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 1,506 adults, 18 years of age or older, from July 22-26, 2009 (1,129 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 377 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 114 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. 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/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2008 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2008 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 sample.

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:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus...</b>
Total sample	1,506	3.0 percentage points
Form 1	760	4.0 percentage points
Form 2	746	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	373	6.0 percentage points
Democrats	505	5.0 percentage points
Independents	532	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.

Results for the re-contact survey are based on telephone interviews conducted by landline and cell phone under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The interviews were conducted among a sample of 480 adults, 18 years of age or older, on July 27, 2009. The sample was based on respondents previously interviewed in the main survey from July 22-26, 2009.

The data were weighted using demographic weighting parameters derived from the March 2007 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, along with an estimate of current patterns of telephone status in the U.S. derived from the 2007 National Health Interview Survey. In order to assure comparability of the re-contacted cases with the original sample, the data were also weighted to match the distribution of the July 22-26 sample results on presidential approval and leaned party affiliation. This step helps to minimize bias that could occur because certain types of respondents may have been easier or harder to re-interview. The weighting used an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distributions of all weighting parameters.

The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the re-contact survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus...</b>
Total sample	480	5.5 percentage points
White Non-Hispanics	391	6.0 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 seven 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:

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Michael Remez, Senior Writer  
Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian, Jocelyn Kiley and  
Kathleen Holzward, Research Associates  
Alec Tyson and Jacob Poushter, Research Analysts

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**JULY 2009 POLITICAL SURVEY / MEDIA UPDATE**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
 July 22-26, 2009  
 N=1506

**RANDOMIZE ORDER OF Q.1 AND Q.2**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.1 All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

	Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>		Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
July, 2009	28	66	6	September, 2002	41	55	4
June, 2009	30	64	5	Late August, 2002	47	44	9
May, 2009	34	58	8	May, 2002	44	44	12
April, 2009	23	70	7	March, 2002	50	40	10
January, 2009	20	73	7	Late September, 2001	57	34	9
December, 2008	13	83	4	Early September, 2001	41	53	6
Early October, 2008	11	86	3	June, 2001	43	52	5
Mid-September, 2008	25	69	6	March, 2001	47	45	8
August, 2008	21	74	5	February, 2001	46	43	11
July, 2008	19	74	7	January, 2001	55	41	4
June, 2008	19	76	5	October, 2000 (RVs)	54	39	7
Late May, 2008	18	76	6	September, 2000	51	41	8
March, 2008	22	72	6	June, 2000	47	45	8
Early February, 2008	24	70	6	April, 2000	48	43	9
Late December, 2007	27	66	7	August, 1999	56	39	5
October, 2007	28	66	6	January, 1999	53	41	6
February, 2007	30	61	9	November, 1998	46	44	10
Mid-January, 2007	32	61	7	Early September, 1998	54	42	4
Early January, 2007	30	63	7	Late August, 1998	55	41	4
December, 2006	28	65	7	Early August, 1998	50	44	6
Mid-November, 2006	28	64	8	February, 1998	59	37	4
Early October, 2006	30	63	7	January, 1998	46	50	4
July, 2006	30	65	5	September, 1997	45	49	6
May, 2006	29	65	6	August, 1997	49	46	5
March, 2006	32	63	5	January, 1997	38	58	4
January, 2006	34	61	5	July, 1996	29	67	4
Late November, 2005	34	59	7	March, 1996	28	70	2
Early October, 2005	29	65	6	October, 1995	23	73	4
July, 2005	35	58	7	June, 1995	25	73	2
Late May, 2005	39	57	4	April, 1995	23	74	3
February, 2005	38	56	6	July, 1994	24	73	3
January, 2005	40	54	6	March, 1994	24	71	5
December, 2004	39	54	7	October, 1993	22	73	5
Mid-October, 2004	36	58	6	September, 1993	20	75	5
July, 2004	38	55	7	May, 1993	22	71	7
May, 2004	33	61	6	January, 1993	39	50	11
Late February, 2004	39	55	6	January, 1992	28	68	4
Early January, 2004	45	48	7	November, 1991	34	61	5
December, 2003	44	47	9	Late February, 1991 (Gallup)	66	31	3
October, 2003	38	56	6	August, 1990	47	48	5
August, 2003	40	53	7	May, 1990	41	54	5
April 8, 2003	50	41	9	January, 1989	45	50	5
January, 2003	44	50	6	September, 1988 (RVs)	50	45	5
November, 2002	41	48	11				



**Q.1 CONTINUED ...**

	Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
May, 1988	41	54	5
January, 1988	39	55	6

**RANDOMIZE ORDER OF Q.1 AND Q.2**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.2 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
July, 2009	54	34	12
June, 2009	61	30	9
Mid-April, 2009	63	26	11
Early April, 2009	61	26	13
March, 2009	59	26	15
February, 2009	64	17	19

**NO QUESTION 3**

**ASK ALL:**

Thinking about some issues...

Q.4 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling **[INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]** How about **[NEXT ITEM]**?

	<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a. The economy			
July, 2009	38	53	9
June, 2009	52	40	8
Mid-April, 2009	60	33	7
February, 2009	56	24	20
b. Health care policy			
July, 2009	42	43	14
Mid-April, 2009	51	26	23
c. The nation's foreign policy			
July, 2009	47	32	21
June, 2009	57	31	12
Mid-April, 2009	61	22	17
February 2009	52	17	31
d. The federal budget deficit			
July, 2009	32	53	15
Mid-April, 2009	50	38	12

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=760]:**

e.F1 Tax policy			
July, 2009	39	42	18
Mid-April, 2009	50	33	17

**Q.4 CONTINUED ...**

		<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
f.F1	The situation in Iraq July, 2009	47	38	15

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=746]:**

g.F2	Energy policy July, 2009	46	31	22
h.F2	The situation in Afghanistan July, 2009	47	33	19

**ASK ALL:**

Q.5 What is your opinion of Barack Obama personally – do you like the kind of person he is and the way he leads his life or don't you like the kind of person he is and the way he leads his life?

74	Like
12	Don't like
14	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF FORM 1 AND IF LIKE OR DISLIKE(Q5=1,2) [N=652]:**

Q.5a What is it about Barack Obama personally that you (like/don't like)? [OPEN END; RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE. PROBE FOR CLARITY—DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL MENTIONS. IF MORE THAN ONE MENTION, RECORD IN ORDER OF MENTION]

**BASED ON THOSE WHO SAY THEY LIKE OBAMA PERSONALLY [N=556]**

20	Honest/Has integrity/Direct
16	Family man/Good father/His family
13	Down to earth/"Regular guy"/Relates to the middle class
10	Intelligent/Educated
10	Good speaker/Communicator
10	Trying/Has a plan
7	Demeanor/Temperament/Way he carries himself
5	Leadership
5	Charismatic
4	Approve of his positions/policies/job he's doing
3	New/Different/Not like other politicians
2	Way he thinks
2	Cares/Compassion
1	Work ethic/Hard worker
1	Youthful
1	African American/Multiracial
17	General/Other specific positive character trait
4	Other/Everything
9	Don't know/Refused

Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple response.

**DUE TO INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF CASES [N=96], PERCENTAGES NOT SHOWN FOR THOSE WHO DISLIKE OBAMA PERSONALLY**

**QUESTIONS 6 AND 7 AND A HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=746]:**

Q.8F2 How much, if anything, have you heard about Barack Obama's choice of Sonia Sotomayor to be the next Supreme Court justice? **[READ]**

		June <u>2009</u>
46	A lot	39
33	A little [OR]	38
19	Nothing at all	21
2	Don't know/Refused <b>[VOL. DO NOT READ]</b>	2

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=746]:**

Q.9F2 From what you've seen and heard so far, do you think the Senate should or should not confirm Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court?

		<i>Sonia Sotomayor</i> June <u>2009</u>	<i>Samuel Alito</i> Jan <u>2006</u>	Early Dec <u>2005</u>	Nov <u>2005</u>	<i>Harriet Miers</i> Early Oct <u>2005</u>	<i>John Roberts</i> Mid-Sept <u>2005</u>	Early Sept <u>2005</u>
50	Should	50	33	32	40	33	46	35
23	Should not	25	19	19	23	27	21	19
27	Don't know/Refused	25	48	49	37	40	33	46

**RANDOMIZE ORDER OF Q.10F2 AND Q.11F2:**

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=746]:**

Q.10F2 Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic that Barack Obama's policies will improve economic conditions in the country?

		June <u>2009</u>	Early April <u>2009</u>
63	Optimistic	65	66
28	Pessimistic	28	26
9	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	7	8

**RANDOMIZE ORDER OF Q.10F2 AND Q.11F2:**

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=746]:**

Q.11F2 Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic that Barack Obama's policies will reduce the budget deficit over the long term?

		June <u>2009</u>	Early April <u>2009</u>
54	Optimistic	55	54
36	Pessimistic	36	36
9	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	9	10

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=760]:**

Q.12F1 Since taking office, have Barack Obama's economic policies made economic conditions better, worse, or not had an effect so far?

		June <u>2009</u>	Mid-April <u>2009</u>	March <u>2009</u>
24	Better	26	26	14
21	Worse	16	17	15
46	No effect so far	49	47	64
3	Too soon/early to tell <b>(VOL.)</b>	4	6	4
6	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	4	4	3

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=760]:**

Q.13F1 So far, do you think Barack Obama is **[READ AND RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 & 2, WITH OPTION 3 ALWAYS LAST]**

		Mid-April <u>2009</u>	March <u>2009</u>
41	Trying to address too many issues at once	34	35
3	Focusing on too few issues [OR]	4	4
48	Doing about right	56	56
8	Don't know/Refused <b>[VOL. DO NOT READ]</b>	6	5

**ASK ALL:**

Q.14 When it comes to national policy, who do you think Barack Obama is listening to more... **[READ, RANDOMIZE]**

		June <u>2009</u>	Mid-April <u>2009</u>	March <u>2009</u>	Jan <u>2009</u>
41	Liberal members of his party [OR]	39	40	44	34
31	Moderate members of his party	35	33	30	44
27	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	26	27	26	22

**NO QUESTION 15**

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY:**

Q.16 If you were setting government priorities these days, would you place a higher priority on reducing the budget deficit or **[INSERT FIRST ITEM, RANDOMIZE]**? Would you place a higher priority on reducing the budget deficit or **[INSERT NEXT ITEM]**?

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY:**

Q.17 If you were setting government priorities these days, would you place a higher priority on **[INSERT FIRST ITEM, RANDOMIZE]** or reducing the budget deficit? Would you place a higher priority on **[INSERT NEXT ITEM]** or reducing the budget deficit?

**BASED ON TOTAL:**

		Spending <u>more</u>	Reducing the budget <u>deficit</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	Spending more to make health care more accessible and affordable			
	July, 2009	55	40	5
	Early April, 2009	59	35	6
b.	Spending more to improve the education system			
	July, 2009	57	38	5
	Early April, 2009	58	38	4
c.	Spending more to develop new energy technology			
	July, 2009	41	52	7
	Early April, 2009	49	45	6
d.	Spending more to help the economy recover			
	July, 2009	53	38	9
	June, 2009 <sup>2</sup>	48	46	6

<sup>2</sup> In June, 2009, question was not asked as part of a list.

**NO QUESTIONS 18 THROUGH 24, 26 THROUGH 29, 36 THROUGH 38, 41 THROUGH 47**

**QUESTIONS 25, 30 THROUGH 36, 39 AND 40 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

On a different subject...

Q.48 How much, if anything, have you heard about the bills in Congress to overhaul the health care system?

[READ]

- 41 A lot
- 47 A little [OR]
- 10 Nothing at all
- 1 Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]

**ASK ALL:**

Q.49 As of right now, do you generally favor or generally oppose the health care proposals being discussed in Congress?

- 38 Generally favor
- 44 Generally oppose
- 18 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF Q.49=1,2 [N=1246]:**

Q.50 What would you say is the main reason you (favor/oppose) the health care proposals being discussed in Congress? [OPEN END; RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE. PROBE FOR CLARITY—DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL MENTIONS. IF MORE THAN ONE MENTION, RECORD IN ORDER OF MENTION; UP TO THREE MENTIONS]

**BASED ON THOSE WHO FAVOR [N=558]**

- 42 Support greater/universal coverage  
Control costs/Increase affordability/
- 14 Boost economy
- 13 Need to do something/change
- 9 Personal experiences/reasons
- 7 Help poor/unemployed with health care
- 2 Help children with health care
- 1 Trust/support Obama/Democrats
- 1 Help elderly with health care
- Insurance companies do a bad job/
- 1 Reduce insurance companies' influence
- 11 Other
- 11 Don't know/Refused

**BASED ON THOSE WHO OPPOSE [N=688]**

- Too expensive/Can't afford it/Will  
26 increase deficit and taxes
- Do not want Gov't in health care/
- 18 Socialism/Bureaucracy
- Will reduce quality & access/Take away  
9 choice
- Hasn't been explained/Too complex/
- 8 Not well thought out
- Redistributive/Free-ride/People should  
6 earn own health care
- 6 Won't work/Current system works
- Distrust Congress/Obama/  
4 political process
- 3 Does not work in other countries
- 3 Hurts business/economy/Costs jobs
- 3 Will worsen care for some/Not be fair
- 2 Moving too fast
- Will hurt/won't help me/
- 2 Like what I have
- Disproportionately benefits immigrants  
1 and minorities
- 16 Other
- 11 Don't know/Refused

Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple response.

**ASK ALL:**

Q.51 Now I'd like to ask you about some of the specific proposals being considered to address health care. (First,) Would you favor or oppose [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? What about [NEXT ITEM]?

		<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
a.	Requiring that all Americans have health insurance, with the government providing financial help for those who can't afford it July, 2009	65	29	6
b.	A government health insurance plan to compete with private health insurance plans July, 2009	52	37	10
c.	Requiring insurance companies to sell health coverage to people, even if they have pre-existing medical conditions July, 2009	79	15	6

**ASK ALL:**

Q.52 And thinking about some ways to pay for changes to the health care system... Would you favor or oppose [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? What about [NEXT ITEM]?

		<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
a.	Requiring employers to pay into a government health care fund if they do not provide health insurance to their employees July, 2009	61	33	6
b.	Raising taxes on families with incomes of more than \$350,000 and individuals earning more than \$280,000 July, 2009	63	32	5
c.	Taxing employees whose health insurance benefits are above a certain value July, 2009	25	62	13
d.	Tighter restrictions on what medical procedures Medicare and Medicaid will cover July, 2009	33	58	9

**ASK ALL:**

Q.53 Who do you trust more when it comes to deciding what kinds of medical procedures should be covered by health insurance? [READ AND RANDOMIZE] [INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: PROBE ONCE BEFORE ACCEPTING A VOLUNTEERED RESPONSE]

- 38 Private insurance companies [OR]
- 32 The government
- 1 Both [VOL. DO NOT READ]
- 19 Neither [VOL. DO NOT READ]
- 2 Other [VOL. DO NOT READ]
- 8 Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]

**ASK ALL:**

Q.54 Are you, yourself, now covered by any form of health insurance or health plan or do you not have health insurance at this time? [**READ IF NECESSARY:** A health plan would include any private insurance plan through your employer or a plan that you purchased yourself, as well as a government program like Medicare or Medicaid]

**ASK IF COVERED IN Q54 (Q54=1) [N=1319]:**

Q.55 Which of the following is your MAIN source of health insurance coverage? Is it a plan through an employer, a plan you purchased yourself, are you covered by Medicare or Medicaid, some other government program, or do you get your health insurance from somewhere else? [**INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: DO NOT NEED TO READ FULL LIST IF RESPONDENT INTERRUPTS TO ANSWER 1 OR 2, BUT VERIFY** "So your main source of health insurance coverage is not by Medicare, Medicaid or any other form of government insurance?"]

		June <u>2009</u>
81	Covered by health insurance	81
	45 Plan through an employer	
	9 Plan you purchased yourself	
	14 Medicare	
	3 Medicaid	
	4 Other government program	
	4 Somewhere else	
	1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	
19	Not covered by health insurance	18
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	*

**NO QUESTIONS 56, 59 THROUGH 64**

**QUESTIONS 57 AND 58, 65 AND 66 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

**IF ANSWERED 3, 4, 5 OR 9 IN PARTY, ASK:**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

				(VOL.) No	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) DK/ Ref	<i>Lean</i> <u>Rep</u>	<i>Lean</i> <u>Dem</u>
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>preference</u>	<u>party</u>			
July, 2009	22	34	37	5	*	2	15	14
June, 2009	25	34	34	3	*	3	11	16
May, 2009	23	39	29	4	*	4	9	14
April, 2009	22	33	39	3	*	3	13	18
March, 2009	24	34	35	5	*	2	12	17
February, 2009	24	36	34	3	1	2	13	17
January, 2009	25	37	33	3	*	2	11	16
December, 2008	26	39	30	2	*	3	8	15
Late October, 2008	24	39	32	2	*	3	11	15
Mid-October, 2008	27	35	31	4	*	3	9	16
Early October, 2008	26	36	31	4	*	3	11	15
Late September, 2008	25	35	34	3	1	2	13	15
Mid-September, 2008	28	35	32	3	*	2	12	14
August, 2008	26	34	34	4	*	2	12	17
July, 2008	24	36	34	3	*	3	12	15
June, 2008	26	37	32	3	*	2	11	16
Late May, 2008	25	35	35	2	*	3	13	15
April, 2008	24	37	31	5	1	2	11	15

**PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED ...**

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)		
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No	Other	DK/	<i>Lean</i>	<i>Lean</i>
				<u>preference</u>	<u>party</u>	<u>Ref</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
March, 2008	24	38	29	5	*	4	9	14
Late February, 2008	24	38	32	3	*	3	10	17
Early February, 2008	26	35	31	5	*	3	11	14
January, 2008	24	33	37	4	*	2	12	18
<b><i>Yearly Totals</i></b>								
2008	25.3	35.8	31.7	3.8	.3	3.1	10.5	15.4
2007	25.4	32.9	33.7	4.6	.4	3.1	10.7	16.7
2006	27.6	32.8	30.3	5.0	.4	3.9	10.2	14.5
2005	29.2	32.8	30.3	4.5	.3	2.8	10.2	14.9
2004	29.7	33.4	29.8	3.9	.4	2.9	11.7	13.4
2003	29.8	31.4	31.2	4.7	.5	2.5	12.1	13.0
2002	30.3	31.2	30.1	5.1	.7	2.7	12.6	11.6
2001	29.2	33.6	28.9	5.1	.5	2.7	11.7	11.4
<i>2001 Post-Sept 11</i>	<i>30.9</i>	<i>31.8</i>	<i>27.9</i>	<i>5.2</i>	<i>.6</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>11.7</i>	<i>9.4</i>
<i>2001 Pre-Sept 11</i>	<i>28.2</i>	<i>34.6</i>	<i>29.5</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>.5</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>11.7</i>	<i>12.5</i>
2000	27.5	32.5	29.5	5.9	.5	4.0	11.6	11.6
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.5	33.2	31.9	4.6	.4	2.4	11.8	13.5
1997	28.2	33.3	31.9	4.0	.4	2.3	12.3	13.8
1996	29.2	32.7	33.0	5.2	--	--	12.7	15.6
1995	31.4	29.7	33.4	5.4	--	--	14.4	12.9
1994	29.8	31.8	33.8	4.6	--	--	14.3	12.6
1993	27.4	33.8	34.0	4.8	--	--	11.8	14.7
1992	27.7	32.7	35.7	3.9	--	--	13.8	15.8
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	4.5	--	--	14.6	10.8
1990	31.0	33.1	29.1	6.8	--	--	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--



**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**JULY 2009 POLITICAL SURVEY / MEDIA UPDATE CALLBACK**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
July 27, 2009  
N=480

**ASK ALL:**

Q.1 Generally, how would you say things are these days in your life – would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?

**RESULTS NOT SHOWN**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.2 How much, if anything, have you heard about Barack Obama’s comments regarding the arrest of Henry Louis Gates, a black Harvard professor, at his home after a dispute with a police officer? **[READ]**

46	A lot
33	A little [OR]
19	Nothing at all
2	Don’t know/Refused <b>[VOL. DO NOT READ]</b>

**ASK ALL:**

Q.3 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama has handled this situation? **[IF NECESSARY CLARIFY: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama has handled the dispute between Gates and the police officer?”]**

29	Approve
41	Disapprove
30	Don’t know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

Q.4 From what you’ve read and heard about what happened during the original incident, who, if anyone, would you say was more at fault? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

27	Henry Louis Gates, the professor [OR]
25	James Crowley, the police officer
10	Both equally <b>[VOL. DO NOT READ]</b>
3	Neither/No one is at fault <b>[VOL. DO NOT READ]</b>
36	Don’t know/Refused <b>[VOL. DO NOT READ]</b>