

November 21, 2013

Anzalone Liszt Grove Research National Polling Summary

Friends,

Below you will find the Anzalone Liszt Grove Research National Polling Summary, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week we focus on reaction to Obamacare and President Obama's popularity.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

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Amidst the rocky launch of the healthcare.gov website and dismay over insurance policy cancellations, President Obama's approval [rating](#) (42% approve / 55% disapprove) has slid to the lowest level of his five-year presidency. But as history indicates, presidential popularity rarely stays [constant](#). The younger President Bush's approval ratings vacillated between 19% and 92% in his two terms, Clinton's clocked in between 36% and 73% and Reagan's fluctuated between 35% and 68%.

In fact, political scientists refer to it as the "[Decay Curve](#)" of presidential popularity. Through analysis of Gallup poll results from President Truman onwards, academics find that in general, presidents begin their terms with high approval ratings which then erode considerably for their first three years in office, followed by a bounce back in their fourth year. Second-term presidents see the same effect, but with both a steeper erosion and a higher comeback.

So while the President's current approval ratings reflect genuine unease over the current state of affairs, this dip does not necessarily signify a death knell for Democrats' chances in 2014 or a long-term strain on the President's legacy.

Falling support on Obamacare, leadership and trust fuel drop in President's popularity

Americans have been [divided](#) on support for Obamacare since it passed three years ago. In the past several weeks, however, the public has soured on the legislation. A recent Gallup [poll](#) finds 55% of Americans disapprove of the healthcare law, while 40% approve. Among those who disapprove, almost 1 in 5 (19%) cite "lost insurance" or "President lied about plan" as their

reason for disapproving. Another 1 in 5 (21%) believe the law will make healthcare less affordable, while the most cited reason (from 37% of those who disapprove) was “government interference.”

The public’s frustration with the hiccups in the implementation of Obamacare seems to have had an impact on the President’s [job approval](#). In mid-September, prior to the launch of the Health Insurance Marketplace, President Obama had an even approval rating of 47% approve – 47% disapprove. Since then, it has slid five points to 42% approve – 55% disapprove in the latest ABC/Washington Post poll.

What’s more, the President’s personal [favorability](#) fell six points during October as well, to 41% positive – 45% negative. This is reflected in a change of view on two key aspects of the President’s [image](#). For much of his presidency, President Obama has been seen as both a “strong and decisive leader” and “honest and trustworthy.” Now for the first time ever, less than half of Americans (47%) see him as a strong and decisive leader, while 50% see him as honest and trustworthy, down from 60% last summer.

Despite frustration, few want repeal of Obamacare

Despite recent problems with the rollout of Obamacare, fewer than two in five Americans (38%) want to see the law [repealed](#) – practically unchanged since this summer. A majority of Americans either want Congress to “wait and see how things go before making any changes” (35%) or think Congress should “provide more money to ensure it’s implemented effectively” (23%).

Americans are also divided on whether the recent problems with Obamacare are temporary or emblematic of larger flaws in the law. When asked to choose between two options, 46% said “the law is experiencing temporary problems and will ultimately produce a better health care system for the country,” while 52% thought “the law is fundamentally flawed and will do more to hurt the nation’s health care system than improve it.” Among core Democratic groups such as minorities, college-educated white women, and young adults, a [majority](#) believe the law will ultimately improve healthcare.

And despite skepticism about the law’s impact on the country overall (42% make things better / 51% make things worse), majorities believe it will make things [better](#) for the poor (59%) and those who currently do not have health insurance (63%).

Plus, Congress and the Republican Party are still much less popular

President Obama is far from alone in record-low approval ratings. Less than one in 10 Americans (9%) approve of the way Congress is handling its job, according to the latest [poll](#) from Gallup. Not only do traditionally loathed government agencies like the DMV and the IRS garner more [respect](#) from Americans, but so do hemorrhoids and dog poop.

And when it comes to the parties in Congress, Congressional Republicans fare worse than Congressional Democrats. A mere 20% of voters [approve](#) of the job Republicans in Congress are doing, while 73% disapprove. To be clear, Congressional Democrats aren't well liked either – voters approve 30% - 62% – but they do have a net 21-point advantage over their Republican counterparts.

Given Obama's current approval ratings, many political pundits have seen fit to make [comparisons](#) to the 2006 midterm election, which saw the party of unpopular President Bush six years into his presidency lose 30 seats in Congress. The difference between then and now, however, is that the unpopularity of today's Republican Party takes away any advantage they would otherwise have.

One month before the Democratic wave in 2006, President Bush's approval [rating](#) stood at 37% approve – 59% disapprove. His party's [favorability](#) was equally poor – 37% viewed the Republican Party favorably and 55% viewed it unfavorably. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party had a net-positive rating: 52% favorable – 38% unfavorable. Today on the other hand, while President Obama's standing is lower than in the past and the Democratic Party isn't hugely popular (43% favorable), the Republican Party is far more underwater – only 30% view it [favorably](#).

A tough road ahead

Two recent public polls have found a wide shift on the generic Congressional ballot in the last month. After a nine-point Democratic advantage at the start of the government shutdown on Oct. 1, Quinnipiac's latest [poll](#) finds a dead-even race (39% Republican – 39% Democratic). Similarly, a Fox News [poll](#) finds an 11-point shift in the ballot, from an eight-point Democratic edge immediately after the end of the shutdown to the current three-point Republican advantage (43% Republican – 40% Democratic). With the midterm elections still a year away though, there is plenty of time for momentum to swing back to the Democrats.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Roll Call reveals the 10 most [vulnerable](#) House members

Campaigns & Elections puts out The [Influencers](#) 50 List

Gallup finds that a majority of Americans still believe JFK was killed in a [conspiracy](#)

The National Journal summarizes congressional [gridlock](#) in one chart

The Monkey Cage shows how we are really living in a [Purple](#) America

The Sunlight Foundation maps out political [contributions](#) by county

US News and World Report details some effects of the recent [food stamp](#) cuts

Mother Jones [explains](#) how Minnesota Democrats have taken their state back

The Fix has six things Americans think they know about [Obamacare](#)

Public Polling

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
RCP Average	11/6 - 11/19	--	40.4	55.3
CBS News	11/15 - 11/18	1010 A	37	57
Gallup	11/16 - 11/18	1500 A	41	53
ABC/Wash Post	11/14 - 11/17	RV	41	56
FOX News	11/10 - 11/12	1006 RV	40	55
Quinnipiac	11/6 - 11/11	2545 RV	39	54

GENERIC CONGRESSIONAL VOTE

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Democrats	Republicans
RCP Average	10/27 - 11/17	--	41.2	40.2
FOX News	11/10 - 11/12	1006 RV	40	43
Quinnipiac	11/6 - 11/11	2545 RV	39	39
PPP (D)	10/29 - 10/31	649 RV	44	38
GWU/Battleground	10/27 - 10/31	1000 LV	44	41

PARTY SELF ID

Polling Firm	Date	Dem	Rep	Ind/Other
Pollster.com Trend	Nov. 19	30.9%	23.0%	37.3%

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