

SEPTEMBER 9, 2013

Obama Job Approval Slips into Negative Territory

Opposition to Syrian Airstrikes Surges

A Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Survey

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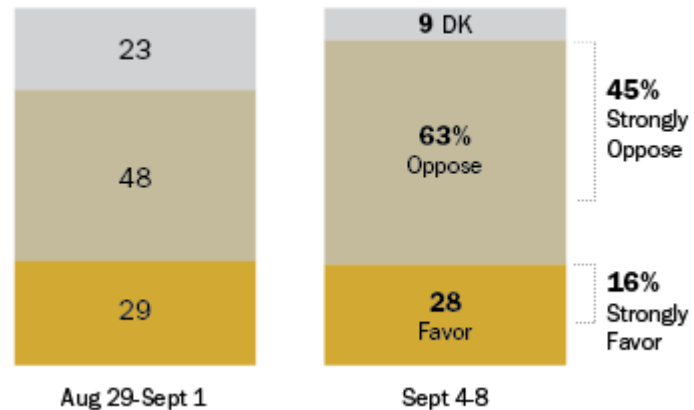
Obama Job Approval Slips into Negative Territory

Opposition to Syrian Airstrikes Surges

Over just the past week, the share of Americans who oppose U.S. airstrikes in Syria has surged 15 points, from 48% to 63%, as many who were undecided about the issue have turned against military action. By contrast, the share of Americans who support airstrikes remains virtually unchanged: Just 28% favor U.S. military airstrikes against Syria in response to reports that its government used chemical weapons.

Most Oppose U.S. Airstrikes against Syria

Growing opposition to Syrian airstrikes



PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY Sept. 4-8, 2013.

The new survey by the Pew Research Center and USA TODAY, conducted Sept. 4-8, 2013 among 1,506 adults nationwide, finds that this growing opposition to Syrian airstrikes is intense: 45% say they oppose airstrikes very strongly. That is roughly three-times the percentage (16%) that strongly favors airstrikes.

Republicans, in particular, have turned against Syrian airstrikes. [A week ago](#), Republicans were divided about evenly: 35% favored and 40% opposed military airstrikes in response to the government's alleged use of chemical weapons. Today, Republicans oppose airstrikes by an overwhelming 70% to 21% margin, with 51% saying they are strongly opposed.

Republicans Increasingly Oppose Airstrikes

<i>U.S. airstrikes against Syria</i>	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
Sept 4-8				
Favor	28	21	35	28
Oppose	63	70	53	66
Don't know	9	9	12	6
	100	100	100	100
Aug 29-Sept 1				
Favor	29	35	29	29
Oppose	48	40	48	50
Don't know	23	24	23	20
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY Sept. 4-8, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Opposition has grown among independents as well, with two-thirds (66%) now opposed, up from half (50%) last weekend. Today, 50% of independents strongly oppose airstrikes, compared with just 15% who are strongly in favor.

Despite Obama's efforts to raise support for military action, Democrats continue to oppose airstrikes. Currently, 53% of Democrats oppose military airstrikes against Syria while 35% support them; the margin is little changed from a week ago (29% favored, 48% opposed).

As the debate over military action in Syria intensifies, Barack Obama's standing with the public has declined. Obama's overall job approval has slipped into negative territory (44% approve, 49% disapprove) for the first time since early last year. Public ratings of his handling of foreign policy – once an area of relative strength for the president – have slipped and now just 33% approve of his handling of the issue. And when it comes to Obama's handling of Syria in particular, more disapprove than approve by nearly two-to-one (56% vs. 29%).

As Obama prepares for his prime-time address on Syria on Tuesday, a majority of Americans (54%) say he has not explained clearly why the United States should launch military airstrikes against the country while 35% say he has. As with overall support for the operation, Obama has made little headway in offering a clear rationale for military action. A week ago, 32% said he had explained clearly the reasons for airstrikes and 48% said he had not.

And the public, by roughly two-to-one (61% to 30%), believes that Congress – not the president – should have final authority over whether the U.S. conducts airstrikes in Syria. Fully 75% of Republicans and 64% of independents say Congress should be the ultimate arbiter of whether the U.S. launches airstrikes. Democrats are divided, with 47% saying Congress should have final authority and 45% the president.

Most Say Obama Has Not Given Clear Explanation for Airstrikes

<i>Has Obama explained clearly why the U.S. should launch airstrikes?</i>	Aug 29-Sept 1	Sept 4-8	Change
	%	%	
Explained clearly	32	35	+3
Not clearly enough	48	54	+6
Don't know	<u>20</u>	<u>12</u>	-8
	100	100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY Sept. 4-8, 2013.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Majority Says U.S. Must Show Disfavor with Chemical Weapons Use

The public thinks that the United States must do something to register its disapproval of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Six-in-ten agree that the U.S. must act to show that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable. However, even among those who express this view just 42% favor U.S. airstrikes against Syria while 51% are opposed.

A narrow majority of the public (54%) says the U.S. has a moral obligation to stop the violence against civilians. But an even higher percentage (75%) says that U.S. airstrikes in Syria are likely to make things in the Middle East worse. And just 39% say the U.S. will lose credibility around the world if it does not act in Syria.

The public is divided over whether the situation in Syria is a threat to U.S. security: 45% say it is, while 50% say it is not.

And the public generally thinks that there are no good policy options for dealing with Syria. About six-in-ten (61%) agree there are no good options for the U.S. in how it deals with Syria, while 34% disagree.

Public Sees No Good Options for Dealing with Syria

<i>% agree with each statement about Syria</i>	Agree %	Disagree %	DK %
U.S. airstrikes in Syria are likely to make things in the Middle East worse	75	19	6=100
There are no good options for the U.S. in how it deals with Syria	61	34	4=100
The U.S. must act to show that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable	60	36	4=100
The U.S. has a moral obligation to stop the violence against civilians	54	43	4=100
The situation in Syria is a threat to the security of the U.S.	45	50	6=100
The U.S. will lose credibility around the world if it does not act	39	56	5=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY Sept. 4-8, 2013.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.
 Question asked Sept. 5-8 only, N=1242.

Large majorities of the supporters of military airstrikes against Syria agree with arguments being made in favor of the use of force. Fully 92% say the U.S. must show that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and 83% think the U.S. has a moral obligation to stop violence against civilians in Syria.

Most of those who favor airstrikes also say U.S. international credibility will be weakened if the U.S. does not act (70% agree) and that the Syria situation is a threat to U.S. security (66%).

Yet a majority of the supporters of U.S. military action (57%) also say that airstrikes in Syria are likely to make things in the Middle East worse.

Among opponents of airstrikes, 84% say military action is likely to make things worse in the region. And most reject the idea that failure to act in Syria will undermine U.S. credibility (70%) and that the situation there threatens U.S. security (59%).

Notably, opponents of U.S. airstrikes are divided over whether the United States must act to demonstrate that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable (47% agree/49% disagree).

The only statement on which majorities of supporters and opponents of airstrikes agree is that the United States lacks good options in Syria. About seven-in-ten supporters (72%) of U.S. airstrikes think the U.S. has no good options as do a smaller majority of opponents (57%).

Views of Supporters, Opponents of U.S. Airstrikes in Syria

<i>% agree with each statement about Syria</i>	Agree %	Disagree %	DK %
<u>Among those favoring airstrikes:</u>			
The U.S. must act to show that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable	92	7	*=100
The U.S. has a moral obligation to stop the violence against civilians	83	16	1=100
No good options for U.S. in dealing with Syria	72	25	3=100
U.S. will lose int'l credibility if it does not act	70	27	3=100
Syria situation is threat to U.S. security	66	31	3=100
U.S. airstrikes in Syria likely to make things in Middle East worse	57	38	5=100
<u>Among those opposing airstrikes:</u>			
U.S. airstrikes in Syria likely to make things in Middle East worse	84	12	4=100
No good options for U.S. in dealing with Syria	57	39	4=100
The U.S. must act to show that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable	47	50	4=100
The U.S. has a moral obligation to stop the violence against civilians	42	54	4=100
Syria situation is threat to U.S. security	36	59	5=100
U.S. will lose int'l credibility if it does not act	26	70	4=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY Sept. 4-8, 2013.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.
 Question asked Sept. 5-8 only, N=1242.

Majority Says Congress Has Final Authority on Airstrikes

By two-to-one, more Americans say the final authority for deciding whether the United States should conduct military airstrikes against Syria rests with Congress (61%), not President Obama (30%).

Majorities of both Republicans (75%) and independents (64%) say Congress has the final authority on this decision, while Democrats are divided: 47% say Congress has the final authority, 45% say Obama does.

In the fall of 2002, as Congress was debating the authorization of military action in Iraq, 54% of the public said Congress had the final authority on that decision, while 40% said President Bush had that authority. In contrast to public opinion today, a majority of Republicans said President Bush had the final authority then (58% Bush, 32% Congress), while most Democrats said the final authority rested with Congress (26% Bush, 71% Congress).

Who Has the Final Authority?

Who should have the final authority for deciding whether U.S. should ...

Conduct military airstrikes against Syria (Sept 2013)

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D diff
	%	%	%	%	
Congress	61	75	47	64	+28
President Obama	30	19	45	27	-26
Depends/DK (Vol.)	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	-2
	100	100	100	100	

Invade Iraq with ground troops (Oct 2002)

Congress	54	32	71	57	-39
President Bush	40	58	26	37	+32
Depends/DK (Vol.)	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	+6
	100	100	100	100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY Sept. 4-8, 2013.
2002 survey by Gallup/CNN/USA Today.

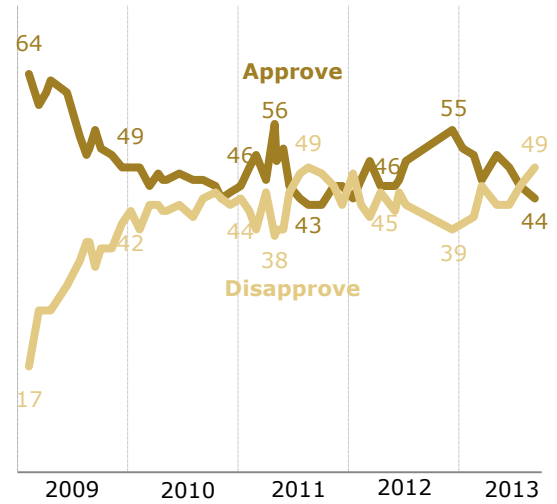
Obama's Job Rating Matches Low

Obama's job approval rating has dropped over the last few months and has now edged into negative territory. Today, 44% of Americans approve of the way he is handling his job, while 49% disapprove. As recently as June, more approved of his performance than disapproved (49% vs. 43%). Obama's current job rating matches previous lows in the summer and fall of 2011.

Independents' ratings of Obama have followed a similar trajectory. Currently 36% of independents approve of Obama's performance while 55% disapprove. Earlier this year independents' views were more divided.

Obama's job approval rating among Democrats and Republicans is little changed. About eight-in-ten Democrats (79%) – including 85% of liberal Democrats – continue to approve of the job Obama is doing. And while just 14% of Republicans today approve of Obama's performance, this is consistent with his ratings among Republicans over the course of his administration.

Obama's Job Approval Declines



PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY Sept. 4-8, 2013.

Foreign Policy Rating at All-Time Low

For the first time, a majority of Americans give Obama a negative rating for his handling of foreign policy, and most disapprove of his handling of the situation in Syria in particular. Currently, 33% approve of how the president is handling foreign policy overall, while 57% disapprove. In January 2012, opinions were mixed, with 46% approving and 45% disapproving of Obama's foreign policy.

Opinions of Obama's handling of foreign policy – once an area of relative strength for the president – are now more negative than his rating on the economy (43% approve).

The drop in Obama's foreign policy approval reflects growing skepticism among Republicans and independents. Only 9% of Republicans approve of how Obama is dealing with foreign policy, down from 26% in January 2012. Among independents, approval of the president's foreign policy is down 15 percentage points, from 42% in January 2012 to 27% in the current poll. Meanwhile, Democrats continue to give Obama positive marks on foreign policy; 62% approve of how Obama is handling it, compared with 68% last year.

The public also gives Obama mostly negative marks for his handling of the situation in Syria. About three-in-ten (29%) approve and 56% disapprove of how Obama is dealing with this issue. Obama receives more negative reviews for his handling of Syria than he has for any other specific foreign policy issue. For example, in June 2013, the public was divided on Obama's handling of Iran, Israel and China while, in March 2012, slightly more approved than disapproved of his handling of Afghanistan.

Republicans are particularly critical of the president's handling of Syria – just 14% approve and 77% disapprove of how Obama is dealing with this situation – but independents also give him negative marks (26% approve and 59% disapprove).

Foreign Policy Approval

<i>Obama job rating on ...</i>	Approve %	Disapprove %	DK %
Foreign policy			
Sept 2013	33	57	11=100
Jan 2012	46	45	10=100
Nov 2011	46	40	13=100
Jun 2010	45	40	15=100
Nov 2009	44	38	18=100
Feb 2009	52	17	31=100
Syria			
Sept 2013	29	56	15=100
<i>Iran (6-13)</i>	45	41	13=100
<i>Israel (6-13)</i>	41	39	20=100
<i>China (6-13)</i>	39	37	24=100
<i>Afghanistan (3-12)</i>	49	42	9=100
<i>Libya (4-11)</i>	41	46	13=100
<i>Iraq (1-11)</i>	46	41	12=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY Sept. 4-8, 2013.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Democrats, on balance, approve of the way Obama is handling Syria, but his rating on this particular issue is far less positive than his overall foreign policy rating. About half (47%) of Democrats approve and 33% disapprove of Obama's handling of the situation in Syria.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted September 4-8, 2013 among a national sample of 1,506 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (751 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 755 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 401 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

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

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,506	2.9 percentage points
Republican	396	5.7 percentage points
Democrat	472	5.3 percentage points
Independent	569	4.8 percentage points
Favor Syria airstrikes	443	5.4 percentage points
Oppose Syria airstrikes	931	3.7 percentage points
Question 8 agree list (asked Sept. 5-8 only)	1,242	3.2 percentage points

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

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

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL TABLE

Pew Research Center, Jul 17-21, 2013 and Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Sep 4-8, 2013

Q2: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handing his job as president?

	July 2013				September 2013			
	Approve %	Disapprove %	(VOL.) DK/Ref %	July N	Approve %	Disapprove %	(VOL.) DK/Ref %	Sept N
TOTAL	46	46	7	1480	44	49	8	1506
SEX								
Men	42	50	8	738	42	50	8	730
Women	51	43	6	742	46	47	8	776
AGE								
18-49	51	40	9	582	47	43	10	637
50+	41	54	5	873	39	56	5	854
DETAILED AGE								
18-29	52	37	12	233	52	35	13	245
30-49	51	42	7	349	44	48	7	392
50-64	41	54	5	468	40	55	5	456
65+	41	54	5	405	39	57	4	398
GENDER BY AGE								
Men 18-49	46	43	11	330	48	43	9	343
Men 50+	36	59	5	399	34	61	6	382
Women 18-49	57	36	7	252	47	43	10	294
Women 50+	46	50	5	474	44	52	4	472
RACE								
White, non-Hispanic	33	60	7	1047	31	61	8	1080
Black, non-Hispanic	93	5	3	153	87	10	3	171
Hispanic	69	22	9	166	63	28	9	152
EDUCATION								
College grad+	54	40	6	582	47	47	6	578
Some college	39	53	9	408	42	51	7	439
High school or less	47	46	7	481	43	47	9	483
FAMILY INCOME								
\$75,000+	47	48	5	428	42	52	5	453
\$30,000-\$74,999	42	51	7	480	41	51	7	496
Less than \$30,000	53	38	8	414	47	42	10	415
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE								
Total Protestants	41	53	7	743	39	53	8	770
White NH evang. Prot.	17	77	6	276	19	72	9	287
White NH mainline Prot.	33	59	8	276	35	59	7	260
Total Catholic	52	40	8	313	45	50	5	358
White NH Cath.	38	55	7	193	28	68	5	257
Unaffiliated	52	40	8	277	53	39	8	247
ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES								
Weekly or more	41	53	6	584	42	50	8	619
Less than weekly	50	42	8	883	45	48	8	870
REGION								
Northeast	55	41	4	246	47	47	6	270
Midwest	43	50	7	320	39	53	8	348
South	43	49	7	542	41	52	7	560
West	48	43	9	372	51	40	9	328

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL TABLE (CONT.)*Pew Research Center, Jul 17-21, 2013 and Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Sep 4-8, 2013*

Q2: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handing his job as president?

	July 2013				September 2013			
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	July <u>N</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	Sept <u>N</u>
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
REGISTERED VOTER								
Yes, certain	45	50	6	1183	43	52	5	1201
Not registered	51	38	11	297	46	40	14	305
PARTY ID								
Republican	14	84	2	318	14	80	5	396
Democrat	82	13	5	446	79	14	7	472
Independent	39	53	9	644	36	55	9	569
PARTY WITH LEANERS								
Rep/Lean Rep	15	82	3	578	14	80	6	657
Dem/Lean Dem	76	16	8	716	74	18	8	696
IDEOLOGY								
Conservative	31	66	3	517	27	67	6	614
Moderate	51	41	8	578	46	45	9	533
Liberal	68	23	8	319	71	23	6	320
PARTY AND IDEOLOGY								
Conservative Republican	10	89	1	218	8	87	5	274
Mod/Lib Republican	23	74	3	97	27	67	6	116
Mod/Cons Democrat	78	17	6	257	75	19	6	283
Liberal Democrat	88	7	4	178	85	7	8	180
AMONG WHITES								
Men	28	63	9	516	27	65	8	528
Women	38	57	5	531	35	57	8	552
18-49	36	55	9	335	31	58	11	393
50+	31	64	5	695	31	64	5	677
College grad+	48	47	5	435	38	56	5	467
Some college or less	26	66	8	608	27	64	9	610
Male college grad+	41	53	6	214	34	61	5	239
Female college grad+	55	40	5	221	43	52	5	228
Male some college or less	22	68	11	300	23	68	9	287
Female some college or less	30	64	6	308	31	60	9	323
\$75,000+	41	54	5	325	35	60	5	369
\$30,000-\$74,999	31	62	7	355	31	62	7	351
Less than \$30,000	30	60	10	251	29	60	12	260
Republican	6	92	2	270	9	85	6	345
Democrat	75	20	5	250	72	20	8	256
Independent	28	63	9	488	26	65	9	433
Northeast	41	53	6	170	34	59	8	199
Midwest	35	58	7	257	31	61	9	290
South	25	67	8	368	24	69	7	380
West	37	56	7	252	40	52	9	211

SYRIAN AIRSTRIKES TABLE

Pew Research Center, Aug 29-Sep 1, 2013 and Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Sep 4-8, 2013

Q5: Would you favor or oppose the U.S. conducting military airstrikes against Syria in response to reports that the Syrian government used chemical weapons?

	Aug 29-Sep 1				Sep 4-8			
	Favor %	Oppose %	(VOL.) DK/Ref %	N	Favor %	Oppose %	(VOL.) DK/Ref %	N
TOTAL	29	48	23	1000	28	63	9	1506
SEX								
Men	39	46	15	462	34	60	6	730
Women	19	49	31	538	23	66	11	776
AGE								
18-49	29	47	24	365	29	63	9	637
50+	29	49	21	595	28	64	8	854
DETAILED AGE								
18-29	27	49	24	129	27	64	9	245
30-49	30	45	25	236	30	62	9	392
50-64	30	49	21	271	25	68	6	456
65+	28	50	22	324	32	57	11	398
GENDER BY AGE								
Men 18-49	40	46	14	180	36	59	5	343
Men 50+	39	46	15	268	33	61	6	382
Women 18-49	18	48	34	185	22	66	12	294
Women 50+	21	52	27	327	24	66	10	472
RACE								
White, non-Hispanic	29	47	24	732	26	66	8	1080
Black, non-Hispanic	22	53	25	124	36	52	12	171
Hispanic	--	--	--	61	34	62	4	152
EDUCATION								
College grad+	26	44	30	378	27	65	9	578
Some college	32	50	18	301	30	63	8	439
High school or less	29	49	22	304	28	63	9	483
FAMILY INCOME								
\$75,000+	25	44	31	138	28	65	8	453
\$30,000-\$74,999	32	47	21	271	27	65	7	496
Less than \$30,000	29	49	23	591	32	59	9	415
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE								
Total Protestants	--	--	--	--	30	60	9	743
White NH evang. Prot.	--	--	--	--	27	66	7	280
White NH mainline Prot.	--	--	--	--	28	64	8	250
Total Catholic	--	--	--	--	27	66	7	358
White NH Cath.	--	--	--	--	22	69	9	257
Unaffiliated	--	--	--	--	27	68	5	246
ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES								
Weekly or more	--	--	--	--	27	63	10	619
Less than weekly	--	--	--	--	29	63	7	870
REGION								
Northeast	31	50	19	187	25	67	8	270
Midwest	31	45	24	250	28	64	8	348
South	29	49	22	366	28	63	9	560
West	26	46	28	197	32	60	8	328

SYRIAN AIRSTRIKES TABLE (CONT.)

Pew Research Center, Aug 29-Sep 1, 2013 and Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Sep 4-8, 2013

Q5: Would you favor or oppose the U.S. conducting military airstrikes against Syria in response to reports that the Syrian government used chemical weapons?

	Aug 29-Sep 1				Sep 4-8			
	Favor %	Oppose %	(VOL.) DK/Ref %	N	Favor %	Oppose %	(VOL.) DK/Ref %	N
REGISTERED VOTER								
Yes, certain	28	48	24	802	28	63	9	1201
Not registered	34	46	21	198	28	63	8	305
PARTY ID								
Republican	35	40	24	226	21	70	9	396
Democrat	29	48	23	301	35	53	12	472
Independent	29	50	20	352	28	66	6	569
PARTY WITH LEANERS								
Rep/Lean Rep	32	43	25	351	23	70	7	657
Dem/Lean Dem	33	46	21	442	35	55	10	696
IDEOLOGY								
Conservative	--	--	--	--	27	65	9	614
Moderate	--	--	--	--	31	62	7	533
Liberal	--	--	--	--	29	63	8	320
PARTY AND IDEOLOGY								
Conservative Republican	--	--	--	--	20	70	10	274
Mod/Lib Republican	--	--	--	--	25	69	6	116
Mod/Cons Democrat	--	--	--	--	37	51	11	283
Liberal Democrat	--	--	--	--	33	56	11	180
AMONG WHITES								
Men	37	48	15	336	31	64	5	528
Women	20	47	33	396	21	68	11	552
18-49	25	46	28	234	26	67	8	393
50+	32	49	20	483	26	66	8	677
College grad+	26	45	30	304	26	66	8	467
Some college or less	30	48	22	424	26	66	8	610
Male college grad+	31	53	17	137	29	63	8	239
Female college grad+	21	38	41	167	23	68	8	228
Male some college or less	41	45	14	196	31	65	4	287
Female some college or less	20	51	29	228	20	68	12	323
\$75,000+	--	--	--	97	25	68	7	369
\$30,000-\$74,999	30	50	20	220	25	69	6	351
Less than \$30,000	28	47	25	415	28	63	9	260
Republican	33	43	25	204	20	70	9	345
Democrat	35	41	24	188	38	50	13	256
Independent	26	54	20	266	25	70	4	433
Northeast	27	54	19	136	22	69	9	199
Midwest	28	45	27	207	28	65	7	290
South	33	48	19	249	24	67	9	380
West	24	42	34	140	31	62	7	211

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
SEPTEMBER 2013 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
September 4-8, 2013
N=1,506

ASK ALL:

Q.1 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]**

	Approve	Dis- Approve	(VOL.) DK/Ref		Approve	Dis- Approve	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Sep 4-8, 2013 (U)	44	49	8	Jan 5-9, 2011	46	44	10
Jul 17-21, 2013	46	46	7	Dec 1-5, 2010	45	43	13
Jun 12-16, 2013	49	43	7	Nov 4-7, 2010	44	44	12
May 1-5, 2013	51	43	6	Oct 13-18, 2010	46	45	9
Mar 13-17, 2013	47	46	8	Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	47	44	9
Feb 13-18, 2013 (U)	51	41	7	Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	47	41	12
Jan 9-13, 2013	52	40	7	Jun 8-28, 2010	48	41	11
Dec 5-9, 2012	55	39	6	Jun 16-20, 2010	48	43	9
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	50	43	7	May 6-9, 2010	47	42	11
Jun 7-17, 2012	47	45	8	Apr 21-26, 2010	47	42	11
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	46	42	11	Apr 8-11, 2010	48	43	9
Apr 4-15, 2012	46	45	9	Mar 10-14, 2010	46	43	12
Mar 7-11, 2012	50	41	9	Feb 3-9, 2010	49	39	12
Feb 8-12, 2012	47	43	10	Jan 6-10, 2010	49	42	10
Jan 11-16, 2012	44	48	8	Dec 9-13, 2009	49	40	11
Dec 7-11, 2011	46	43	11	Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	51	36	13
Nov 9-14, 2011	46	46	8	Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	52	36	12
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	43	48	9	Sep 10-15, 2009	55	33	13
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	49	7	Aug 20-27, 2009	52	37	12
Jul 20-24, 2011	44	48	8	Aug 11-17, 2009	51	37	11
Jun 15-19, 2011	46	45	8	Jul 22-26, 2009	54	34	12
May 25-30, 2011	52	39	10	Jun 10-14, 2009	61	30	9
May 5-8, 2011	50	39	11	Apr 14-21, 2009	63	26	11
May 2, 2011 (WP)	56	38	6	Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	61	26	13
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	47	45	8	Mar 9-12, 2009	59	26	15
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	51	39	10	Feb 4-8, 2009	64	17	19
Feb 2-7, 2011	49	42	9				

See past presidents' approval trends: [George W. Bush](#), [Bill Clinton](#)

NO QUESTION 2**ASK ALL:**

Now, thinking about how Barack Obama is handling some issues...

Q.3 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling **[INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]**. How about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[REPEAT INTRODUCTION AS NECESSARY]**

	Approve	Disapprove	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. The economy			
Sep 4-8, 2013 (U)	43	52	5
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	50	5
Feb 13-18, 2013 (U)	40	56	4
Mar 7-11, 2012	43	53	4
Jan 11-16, 2012	38	59	4
Nov 9-14, 2011	35	58	6
Aug 17-21, 2011	34	60	6
May 2, 2011	40	55	4

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	39	56	6
Jan 6-9, 2011	42	51	7
Jun 16-20, 2010	43	51	5
May 6-9, 2010	41	51	8
Apr 21-26, 2010	38	54	8
Mar 10-14, 2010	41	52	7
Jan 6-10, 2010	42	51	7
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	42	52	5
Jul 22-26, 2009	38	53	9
Jun 10-14, 2009	52	40	8
Apr 14-21, 2009	60	33	7
Feb 4-8, 2009	56	24	20

QUESTION 3 ITEMS b,c HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**NO ITEMS d-e.****ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=744]:**

f.F1	The nation's foreign policy			
	Sep 4-8, 2013 (U)	33	57	11
	Jan 11-16, 2012	46	45	10
	Nov 9-14, 2011	46	40	13
	Jun 16-20, 2010	45	40	15
	Mar 10-14, 2010	42	40	18
	Jan 6-10, 2010	44	40	16
	Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	44	38	18
	Jul 22-26, 2009	47	32	21
	Jun 10-14, 2009	57	31	12
	Apr 14-21, 2009	61	22	17
	Feb 4-8, 2009	52	17	31

NO ITEMS g-h.**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=762]:**

i.F2	The situation in Syria			
	Sep 4-8, 2013 (U)	29	56	15

QUESTION 4 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Thinking now about Syria ...

Q.5 Would you favor or oppose the U.S. conducting military airstrikes against Syria in response to reports that the Syrian government used chemical weapons?

ASK IF FAVOR OR OPPOSE (Q.5=1,2) [N=1,374]:

Q.5a Do you [favor/oppose] very strongly, or not so strongly?

(U)		
Sep 4-8		Aug 29-Sep 1
<u>2013</u>		<u>2013</u>
28	Favor	29
16	Very strongly	--
12	Not so strongly	--
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	--
63	Oppose	48
45	Very strongly	--
18	Not so strongly	--
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	--
9	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	23

ASK ALL:

Q.6 Do you think Barack Obama has explained clearly why the U.S. should launch military airstrikes against Syrian military targets or has he not explained the reasons clearly enough?

	Explained <u>clearly</u>	Not clearly <u>enough</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Sep 4-8, 2013 (U)	35	54	12
Aug 29-Sept 1, 2013	32	48	20
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:			
March, 2003: <i>Do you think George W. Bush has explained clearly what's at stake as to why the U.S. might use military force to end the rule of Saddam Hussein, or do you think he has not explained the reasons clearly enough?</i>	49	47	4
February, 2003	53	40	7
January, 2003	42	53	5
December, 2002	48	45	7
Late October, 2002	48	45	7
Mid-September, 2002	52	37	11
Late August, 2002	37	52	11
<i>New York Times August, 1990: Do you think George Bush has explained clearly what's at stake and why the U.S. is sending troops to Saudi Arabia, or do you think he has not explained the reasons clearly enough?</i>	50	41	9

ASK ALL:

Q.7 In your view, who should have the final authority for deciding whether the United States should conduct military airstrikes against Syria **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

(U)	
Sep 4-8	
<u>2013</u>	
61	Congress
30	President Obama
2	Depends (VOL.)
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.7 TRENDS FOR COMPARISON...*Invade Iraq with ground troops...*

Gallup/CNN/USA Today:

October

2002

54	Congress
40	President Bush
2	Depends (VOL.)
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Send ground troops to serve in a combat situation in Yugoslavia...

Gallup/CNN/USA Today:

April

1999

64	Congress
31	President Clinton
1	Depends (VOL.)
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

Q.8 As I read some statements about the situation in Syria, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each. First, **[INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE]**: do you agree or disagree? How about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[REPEAT AS NECESSARY: Do you agree or disagree?]**

BASED ON INTERVIEWS SEPTEMBER. 5-8 ONLY [N=1,242]:

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
a. The U.S. has a moral obligation to stop the violence against civilians			
Sep 5-8, 2013 (U)	54	43	4
Jun 12-16, 2013 ¹	49	46	4
b. The U.S. must act to show that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable			
Sep 5-8, 2013 (U)	60	36	4
c. The U.S. will lose credibility around the world if it does not act			
Sep 5-8, 2013 (U)	39	56	5
d. The situation in Syria is a threat to the security of the U.S			
Sep 5-8, 2013 (U)	45	50	6
e. U.S. airstrikes in Syria are likely to make things in the Middle East worse			
Sep 5-8, 2013 (U)	75	19	6
f. There are no good options for the U.S. in how it deals with Syria			
Sep 5-8, 2013 (U)	61	34	4

NO QUESTIONS 9, 11-14, 18-28, 30-34, 40, 42-43, 46-54, 57-59, 62, 68, 70-77**QUESTIONS 10, 15-17, 29, 35-39, 41, 44-45, 55-56, 60-61, 63-67, 69, 78-85 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

¹ In June 2013, the question was worded "The U.S. has a moral obligation to do what it can to stop the violence in Syria."

ASK ALL:

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

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

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

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Sep 4-8, 2013	26	32	38	3	1	1	17	15
Jul 17-21, 2013	19	29	46	3	*	2	19	18
Jun 12-16, 2013	23	33	39	3	*	2	17	15
May 1-5, 2013	25	32	37	2	1	3	14	16
Mar 13-17, 2013	26	33	34	3	1	3	14	15
Feb 13-18, 2013	22	32	41	2	*	2	15	19
Jan 9-13, 2013	25	32	38	2	*	2	15	16
Dec 17-19, 2012	21	32	38	4	*	4	15	14
Dec 5-9, 2012	23	33	38	3	1	2	14	19
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012	26	34	34	3	1	3	13	16
Oct 24-28, 2012	28	33	33	4	*	2	12	16
Oct 4-7, 2012	27	31	36	3	1	3	15	15
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2	14	16
Yearly Totals								
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=657]:

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Not
	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	Haven't heard of	Refused	heard of/ DK
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--

TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2013	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 ²	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21

Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:

(U)	Pew Research Center/USA Today polls
(WP)	Pew Research Center/Washington Post polls

² In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."