

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
FEBRUARY 2009 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
FEBRUARY 4-8, 2009
N=1,303

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]**

		----- Gallup -----				
		Bush	Clinton	Bush	Reagan	Carter
		<u>Feb 2001</u>	<u>Feb 1993</u>	<u>Feb 1989</u>	<u>Feb 1981</u>	<u>Feb 1977</u>
64	Approve	53	56	63	55	71
17	Disapprove	21	25	13	18	9
<u>19</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>26</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>20</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=660]:

Q.2F1 What ONE WORD best describes your impression of Barack Obama? Just the one word that best describes him. [OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS “DON’T KNOW”. ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE].

NOTE: The numbers listed represent the number of respondents who offered each response; the numbers are not percentages.

<u>February 2009</u>		--Based on RVs-- <u>September 2008</u>	
33	Intelligent/Intellectual	55	Inexperienced
17	Change	36	Change
16	Honest	20	Intelligent/Intellectual
15	Confident	20	Young/Youthful
15	Inexperienced	15	Charismatic
14	Hope/Hopeful	14	New
13	Smart	12	Energetic/Energy
13	Socialist	12	Hope/Hopeful
12	Good	12	Liberal
11	Charismatic	10	Honest
10	Great	9	Fresh
9	Fantastic	9	Scary
9	Leader	8	Different
9	Trying	7	Enthusiastic
8	Determined	7	Unqualified
8	Different	6	Committed
8	Liberal	6	Good
8	President	6	Innovative
8	Sincere	6	Inspiring/Inspiration
7	Arrogant	6	Liar
7	Awesome	6	Socialist
7	Competent	5	Dishonest
7	Energetic	5	Fake
6	Dedicated	5	Leader
6	Excellent	5	Phony
6	Fresh/Refreshing	5	Unknown
6	Naive	4	Arrogant
5	Committed	4	Idealist
5	New	4	Interesting
5	Outstanding	4	Opportunist
5	Young	4	Uncertain
4	Amazing	(N=629)	
4	Capable		
4	Dynamic		
4	Enthusiastic		
4	Fair		
4	Integrity		
4	Okay		
4	Good speaker		
4	Strong		
4	Surprising		

Q.3F2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Thinking about some issues...

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

		(VOL.)		
		<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
a.	The economy	56	24	20=100
	TREND FOR COMPARISON <i>G.W Bush Feb 2001</i>	50	22	28=100

Q4b AND Q4c HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ROTATE Q.5 AND Q.6

ASK ALL:

Q.5 Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Republican leaders in Congress are doing? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the job the Republican leaders in Congress are doing? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	Don't <u>know</u>		<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
February, 2009	34	51	15=100	February, 1999	37	51	12=100
Early October, 2006	33	56	11=100	January, 1999	38	50	12=100
June, 2006	30	53	17=100	Early December, 1998	38	49	13=100
March, 2006	32	50	18=100	November, 1998	41	48	11=100
January, 2006	33	52	15=100	Early September, 1998	44	37	19=100
Early November, 2005	33	50	17=100	Early August, 1998	43	37	20=100
Early October, 2005	32	52	16=100	June, 1998	42	38	20=100
Mid-September, 2005	36	49	15=100	May, 1998	40	41	19=100
Mid-May, 2005	35	50	15=100	April, 1998	41	40	19=100
Mid-March, 2005	39	44	17=100	March, 1998	43	39	18=100
Early February, 2004	41	42	17=100	January, 1998	43	41	16=100
January, 2003	48	37	15=100	November, 1997	41	43	16=100
June, 2002	50	34	16=100	August, 1997	42	44	14=100
May, 2002	49	34	17=100	June, 1997	33	50	17=100
February, 2002	56	24	20=100	May, 1997	40	44	16=100
Early September, 2001	43	39	18=100	April, 1997	40	44	16=100
June, 2001	40	40	20=100	February, 1997	44	42	14=100
May, 2001	45	36	19=100	January, 1997	38	47	15=100
April, 2001	45	30	25=100	November, 1996	40	43	17=100
January, 2001	43	36	21=100	July, 1996	38	48	14=100
July, 2000	36	46	18=100	June, 1996	36	50	14=100
May, 2000	40	42	18=100	April, 1996	39	46	15=100
March, 2000	38	43	19=100	March, 1996	35	51	14=100
February, 2000	40	43	17=100	February, 1996	33	53	14=100
January, 2000	39	41	20=100	January, 1996	36	54	10=100
December, 1999	38	42	20=100	October, 1995	36	51	13=100
October, 1999	34	50	16=100	September, 1995	36	50	14=100
Late September, 1999	34	46	20=100	August, 1995	38	45	17=100
August, 1999	40	44	16=100	June, 1995	41	45	14=100
July, 1999	36	45	19=100	April, 1995	44	43	13=100
June, 1999	37	46	17=100	March, 1995	43	39	18=100
May, 1999	38	44	18=100	December, 1994	52	28	20=100
March, 1999	38	47	15=100				

ROTATE Q.5 AND Q.6

ASK ALL:

Q.6 Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Democratic leaders in Congress are doing? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the job the Democratic leaders in Congress are doing? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
February, 2009	48	38	14=100
August, 2008	31	58	11=100
January, 2008	31	53	16=100
November, 2007	35	50	15=100
October, 2007	31	54	15=100
July, 2007	33	54	13=100
June, 2007	34	49	17=100
April, 2007	36	43	21=100
March, 2007 ¹	37	42	21=100
February, 2007	41	36	23=100
Mid-January, 2007	39	34	27=100
Early October, 2006	35	53	12=100
June, 2006	32	50	18=100
March, 2006	34	46	20=100
January, 2006	34	48	18=100
Early November, 2005	36	44	20=100
Early October, 2005	32	48	20=100
Mid-September, 2005	36	45	19=100
Mid-May, 2005	39	41	20=100
Mid-March, 2005	37	44	19=100
Early February, 2004	38	42	20=100
June, 2002	47	36	17=100
May, 2002	42	37	21=100
February, 2002	49	30	21=100
Early September, 2001	49	30	21=100
June, 2001	50	28	22=100

NO QUESTIONS 7-8

1 In March 2007 the question was worded: "Do you approve or disapprove of the policies and proposals of the Democratic leaders in Congress?"

ASK ALL:

Q.9 As I read some pairs of opposite phrases, tell me which one best reflects your impression of Barack Obama so far. (First,) does Barack Obama impress you as... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]

		<u>Bush</u> <u>Feb 2001</u>	<u>Clinton</u> <u>Jan 1993</u>
a.	76 Trustworthy or	60	63
	15 NOT trustworthy	28	29
	1 Neither particularly (VOL.)	4	3
	<u>8</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100

		<u>Bush</u> <u>Feb 2001</u>	<u>Clinton</u> <u>Jan 1993</u>
b.	87 Warm and friendly or	67	90
	8 Cold and aloof	21	7
	2 Neither particularly (VOL.)	6	1
	<u>3</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100

		<u>Clinton</u> <u>Jan 1993</u>
c.	92 A good communicator or	84
	6 NOT a good communicator	11
	* Neither particularly (VOL.)	1
	<u>2</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>4</u>
	100	100

		<u>Bush</u> <u>Feb 2001</u>
d.	70 Able to get things done or	60
	15 NOT able to get things done	18
	2 Neither particularly (VOL.)	7
	<u>13</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>15</u>
	100	100

		<u>Bush</u> <u>Feb 2001</u>	<u>Clinton</u> <u>Jan 1993</u>
e.	79 Well informed or	62	79
	15 NOT well informed	27	14
	1 Neither particularly (VOL.)	4	2
	<u>5</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100

		<u>Bush</u> <u>Feb 2001</u>
f.	81 Well organized or	66
	12 NOT well organized	22
	1 Neither particularly (VOL.)	3
	<u>6</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>9</u>
	100	100

Q.9 CONTINUED...

NO ITEM g

- h. 81 Someone who cares about people like me or
14 Someone who doesn't care about people like me
1 Neither particularly (VOL.)
4 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100
- i. 77 A strong leader or
13 NOT a strong leader
1 Neither particularly (VOL.)
9 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100

NO ITEM j

		Bush
		<u>Feb 2001</u>
k.	38 Liberal,	7
	40 Middle of the road or	39
	13 Conservative	44
	2 None particularly (VOL.)	2
	<u>7</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	8
	100	100

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Finally, I am going to read some opposite phrases. Tell me which one best reflects your impressions of Bill Clinton, so far? Does Bill Clinton impress you as ...

<u>Jan</u>	
<u>1993</u>	
68	Liberal or
19	Conservative
6	Neither particularly (VOL.)
<u>7</u>	Don't know (VOL.)
100	

ASK ALL:

Q.10 Do you think that [READ AND ROTATE]:

- 66 Barack Obama has a new approach to politics in Washington [OR]
25 Barack Obama's approach to politics in Washington is 'business as usual'?
9 Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]
100

QUESTION 11 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 12 AND 13

QUESTIONS 14 THRU 22 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.23 How much, if anything, have you heard about the economic stimulus plan being proposed by President Obama that may cost about \$800 billion? **[READ]**

		Jan ² <u>2009</u>
46	A lot	33
45	A little	53
7	Nothing at all	13
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]	<u>1</u>
100		100

IF HEARD 'A LOT' OR 'A LITTLE' (Q.23=1,2), ASK [N=1,203]:

Q.24 From what you've read and heard, do you think this plan is a good idea or a bad idea?

		Jan ³ <u>2009</u>
51	Good idea	57
34	Bad idea	22
<u>15</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>21</u>
100		100

IF 'BAD IDEA' (2 IN Q.24) ASK [N=454]:

Q.25 What is the MAIN REASON you think this plan is a bad idea? **[RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE. PROBE FOR CLARITY – DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL MENTIONS. IF MORE THAN ONE MENTION, RECORD IN ORDER OF MENTION]**

61 Ineffective [NET]

- 34 Wrong priorities/Won't work
- 21 Too much Pork/special interests
- 6 Money won't solve the problem/Just a band aid
- 3 Insufficient oversight/accountability

27 Price tag [NET]

- 13 Costs too much
- 14 Too much national debt/deficit spending/Spending money we don't have

- 9 Should not be the government's role
- 7 Bank bailouts were unsuccessful
- 5 Other
- 7 Don't know/Refused/Non-response/uncodeable

IF 'DON'T KNOW' (9 IN Q.24) ASK [N=187]:

Q.26 What, if anything, troubles you about Obama's economic stimulus plan, or haven't you heard enough about it to say? **[RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE. PROBE FOR CLARITY – DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL MENTIONS. IF MORE THAN ONE MENTION, RECORD IN ORDER OF MENTION]**

Q.26 RESULTS NOT SHOWN; USED FOR QUALITATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

² In January 2009, the question referred to the "economic stimulus package being proposed by President-elect Obama."
³ In January 2009, the question referred to "this proposal."

ASK ALL:

Q.27 What do you think will do more right now to stimulate the economy and create jobs [**READ AND ROTATE**]:?

- 48 Tax cuts to individuals and businesses [OR]
 - 39 Spending on programs and infrastructure projects
 - 4 Both equally [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
 - 9 Don't know/Refused [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
- 100

ASK ALL:

Q.A There has been some discussion about whether or not the stimulus plan should require that spending be limited to American made products and services. Which comes closer to your view on such a requirement? [**READ AND ROTATE**]

- 66 It's a good idea because it keeps jobs in America [OR]
 - It's a bad idea because other countries might retaliate
 - 24 by not buying American products and services
 - 2 Both [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
 - 2 Neither [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
 - 6 Don't know/Refused [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
- 100

ASK ALL:

Q.28 In developing a plan to stimulate the economy and create jobs, are [**ROTATE**; Barack Obama and Republican leaders in Congress, Republican leaders in Congress and Barack Obama] working together or not working together?

IF 'NOT WORKING TOGETHER' (2 IN Q.28) ASK:

Q.29 Who do you think is most to blame for them not working together? [**READ AND ROTATE**]

- 43 Working together
 - 45 Not working together
 - 7 Barack Obama to blame
 - 27 Republican leaders in Congress to blame
 - 5 Both to blame [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
 - 1 Neither to blame [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
 - 2 Democrats/Democratic leaders [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
 - 1 Other to blame [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
 - 2 Don't know who is to blame [**VOL. DO NOT READ**]
- 12
100 Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)

QUESTIONS 30 THROUGH 48 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.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)		
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No	Other	DK/	<i>Lean</i>	<i>Lean</i>
				Preference	Party	Ref	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Dem</i>
February, 2009	24	36	34	3	1	2=100	13	17
January, 2009	25	37	33	3	*	2=100	11	16
December, 2008	26	39	30	2	*	3=100	8	15
Late October, 2008	24	39	32	2	*	3=100	11	15
Mid-October, 2008	27	35	31	4	*	3=100	9	16
Early October, 2008	26	36	31	4	*	3=100	11	15
Late September, 2008	25	35	34	3	1	2=100	13	15
Mid-September, 2008	28	35	32	3	*	2=100	12	14
August, 2008	26	34	34	4	*	2=100	12	17
July, 2008	24	36	34	3	*	3=100	12	15
June, 2008	26	37	32	3	*	2=100	11	16
Late May, 2008	25	35	35	2	*	3=100	13	15
April, 2008	24	37	31	5	1	2=100	11	15
March, 2008	24	38	29	5	*	4=100	9	14
Late February, 2008	24	38	32	3	*	3=100	10	17
Early February, 2008	26	35	31	5	*	3=100	11	14
January, 2008	24	33	37	4	*	2=100	12	18
Yearly Totals								
2008	25.3	35.8	31.7	3.8	.3	3.1=100	10.5	15.4
2007	25.4	32.9	33.7	4.6	.4	3.1=100	10.7	16.7
2006	27.6	32.8	30.3	5.0	.4	3.9=100	10.2	14.5
2005	29.2	32.8	30.3	4.5	.3	2.8=100	10.2	14.9
2004	29.7	33.4	29.8	3.9	.4	2.9=100	11.7	13.4
2003	29.8	31.4	31.2	4.7	.5	2.5=100	12.1	13.0
2002	30.3	31.2	30.1	5.1	.7	2.7=100	12.6	11.6
2001	29.2	33.6	28.9	5.1	.5	2.7=100	11.7	11.4
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6=100	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	28.2	34.6	29.5	5.0	.5	2.1=100	11.7	12.5
2000	27.5	32.5	29.5	5.9	.5	4.0=100	11.6	11.6
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9=100	13.0	14.5
1998	27.5	33.2	31.9	4.6	.4	2.4=100	11.8	13.5
1997	28.2	33.3	31.9	4.0	.4	2.3=100	12.3	13.8
1996	29.2	32.7	33.0	5.2=100			12.7	15.6
1995	31.4	29.7	33.4	5.4=100			14.4	12.9
1994	29.8	31.8	33.8	4.6=100			14.3	12.6
1993	27.4	33.8	34.0	4.8=100			11.8	14.7
1992	27.7	32.7	35.7	3.9=100			13.8	15.8
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	4.5=100			14.6	10.8
1990	31.0	33.1	29.1	6.8=100			12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34=100					
1987	26	35	39=100					