



THE PULSE OF AMERICA

May 2010

★ ★ Pessimism about the direction of the country remains consistently negative.

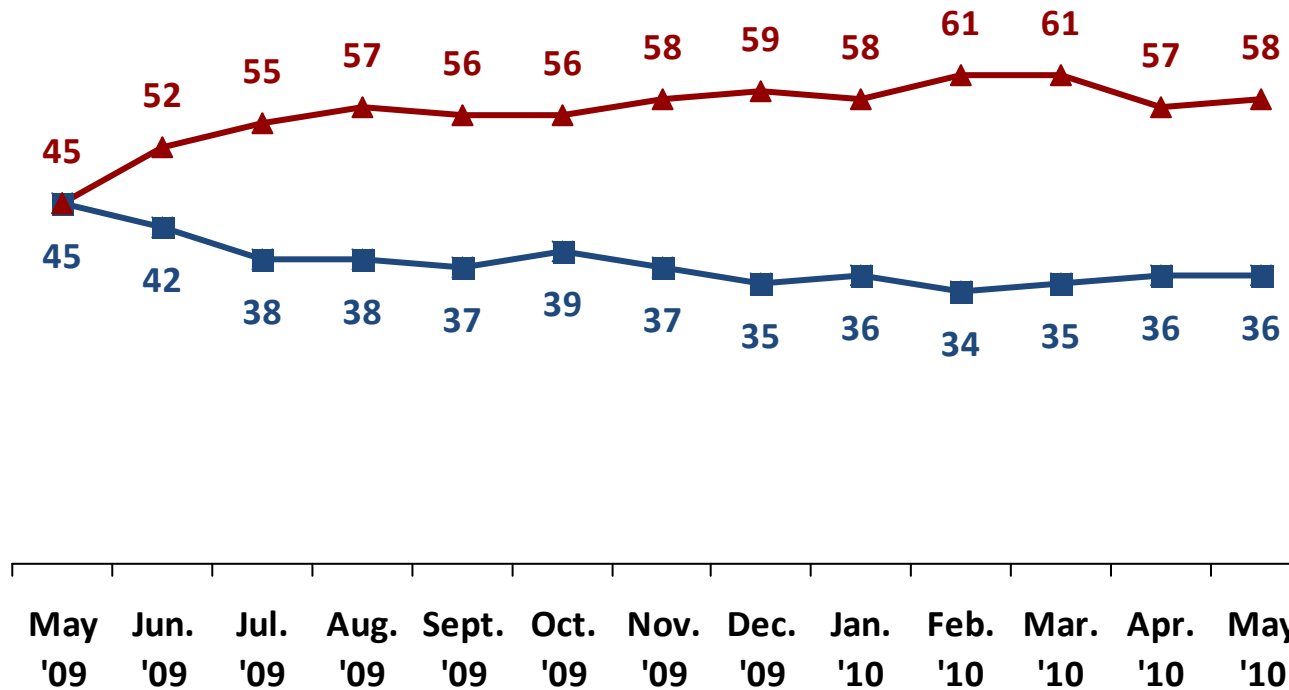
DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

“In general, would you say things in this country are headed in the right direction or off on the wrong track?”

- We are in one of the longest sustained periods of voter dissatisfaction in modern history. Except for a few weeks in the spring of 2009, perceptions of the direction of the country have been strongly “wrong track” since the invasion of Iraq in 2003.
- This helps explain why we are in the middle of a third successive “change” election.

DIRECTION OF COUNTRY MONTHLY AVERAGES
National Sample of Likely Voters, Registered Voters, All Adults

■ Right Direction ▲ Wrong Track



Real Clear Politics Average

★ ★ While stable, President Obama's job approval rating is below the 55% average approval rating of the last eleven presidents during their sixth quarter.

PRESIDENTIAL JOB APPROVAL

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?"

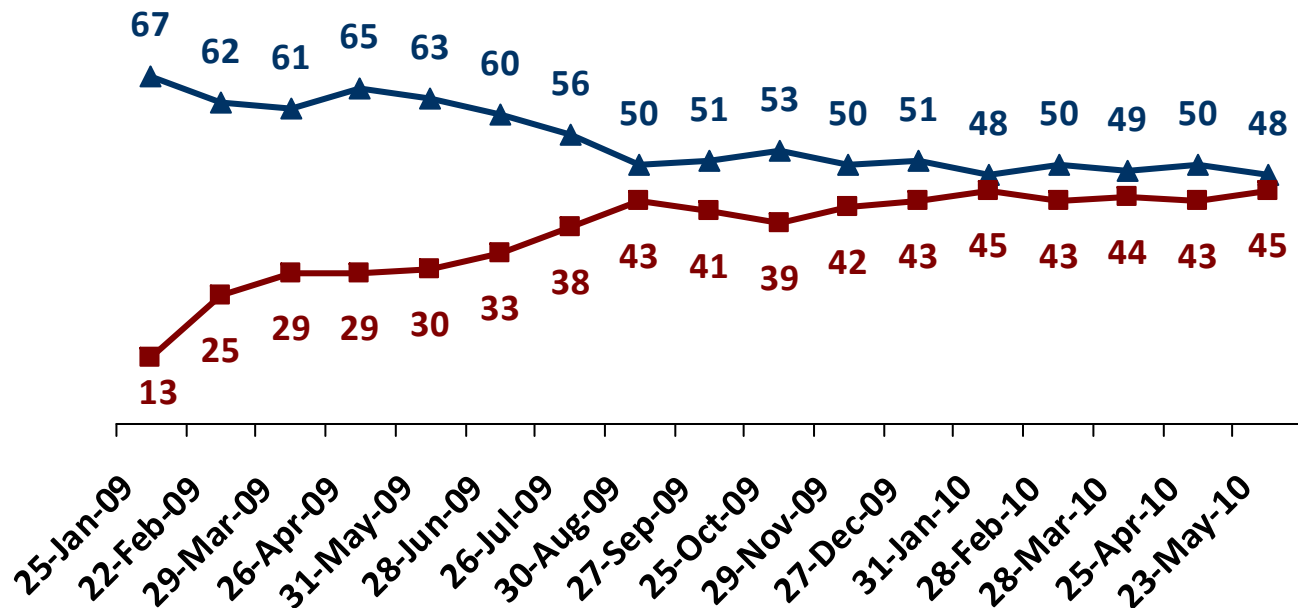
PRESIDENT OBAMA JOB APPROVAL MONTHLY AVERAGES
National Sample of Adults

▲ Approve ■ Disapprove

- The work that President Obama has done in recent months -- including helping to pass landmark healthcare legislation -- has not caused a significant, lasting shift in the way Americans evaluate the job he is doing as president.

- His recent ratings rank on the low end compared with other presidents at this time in their presidencies. Generally speaking, those near the bottom -- including Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan, and Jimmy Carter -- were dealing with struggling economies.

Average Quarterly Approval across Presidents since Franklin D. Roosevelt					
Q1=66	Q2=63	Q3=62	Q4=61	Q5=59	Q6=55



* Based on Gallup weekly tracking polls, of which, only the last poll of each month is represented on the graph. Gallup

★ ★ Congressional job approval ratings remain perilous for incumbents with less than six months until Election Day.

CONGRESSIONAL JOB APPROVAL

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?”

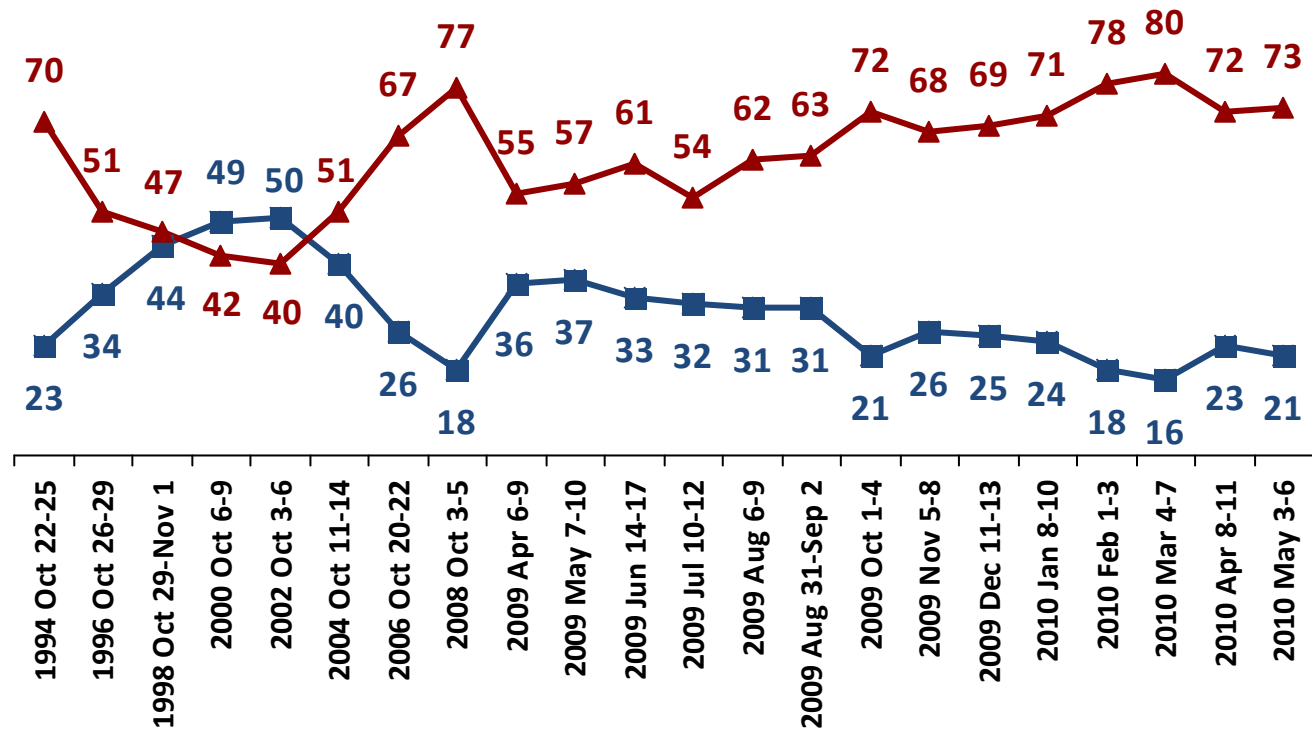
- Gallup analysis of historical data suggests that the party in control of Congress generally loses a relatively greater proportion of seats when approval is below 40% -- a number this Congress has yet to hit.

- As a point of reference, 26% of Americans approved of Congress in October 2006, just before control shifted from Republicans to Democrats, and 23% approved in October 1994, just before control shifted from Democrats to Republicans.

CONGRESSIONAL JOB APPROVAL 1994 - 2010

National Sample of Adults

■ Approve ▲ Disapprove



★ ★ Republican candidates now hold an eight-point lead over Democrats among likely voters.

GENERIC BALLOT

“If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party’s candidate would you vote for in your district – the Democratic Party’s candidate or the Republican Party’s candidate?”

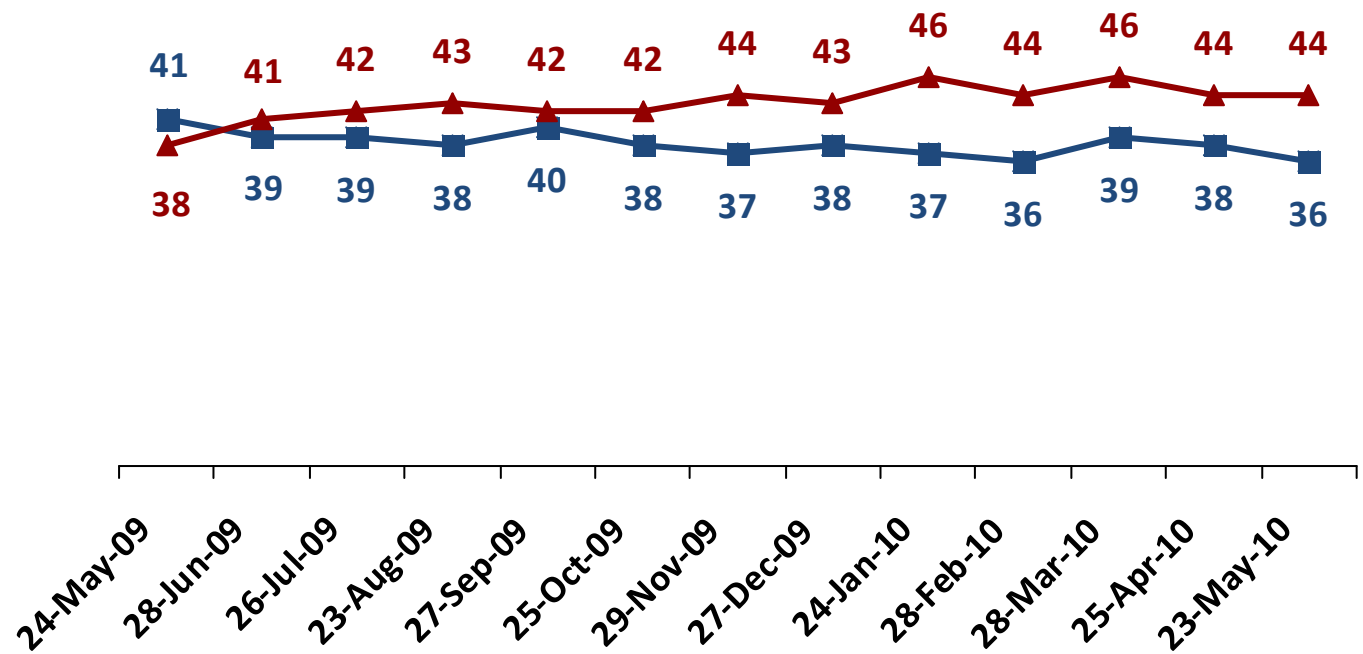
- This month’s data continues the Republican Party’s near year-long edge over the Democratic Party, according to Rasmussen surveys of likely voters.

- While solid majorities of Democrats and Republicans support their own party, the plurality (41%) of voters not affiliated with either major party now prefer the Republican candidate, while 20% like the Democrat. These findings have remained fairly consistent over the last few months.

GENERIC BALLOT MONTHLY AVERAGES

National Sample of Likely Voters

■ Democratic Candidate ▲ Republican Candidate



★ ★ Concern over government spending and debt has almost doubled since the beginning of the year.

• While “job creation and economic growth” remains the top issue for the federal government to address, Americans have grown significantly more concerned about the deficit and spending over the last five months.

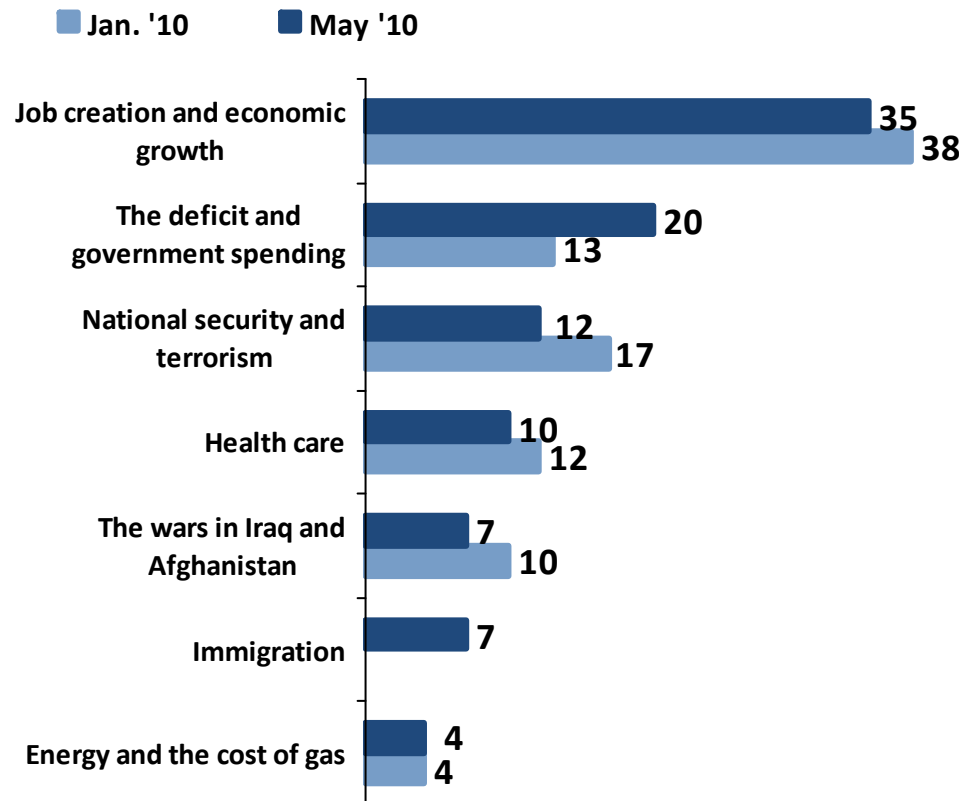
• Immigration was added to the list of issues in May, which may account for slight declines in concern over national security and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

“Let me list some issues that have been proposed for the federal government to address. Please tell me which one of these items you think should be the top priority for the federal government.”

TOP ISSUE PRIORITIES FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS

National Sample of Adults



★ ★ A slight majority of Americans believe controlling the border ought to be the priority in immigration reform.

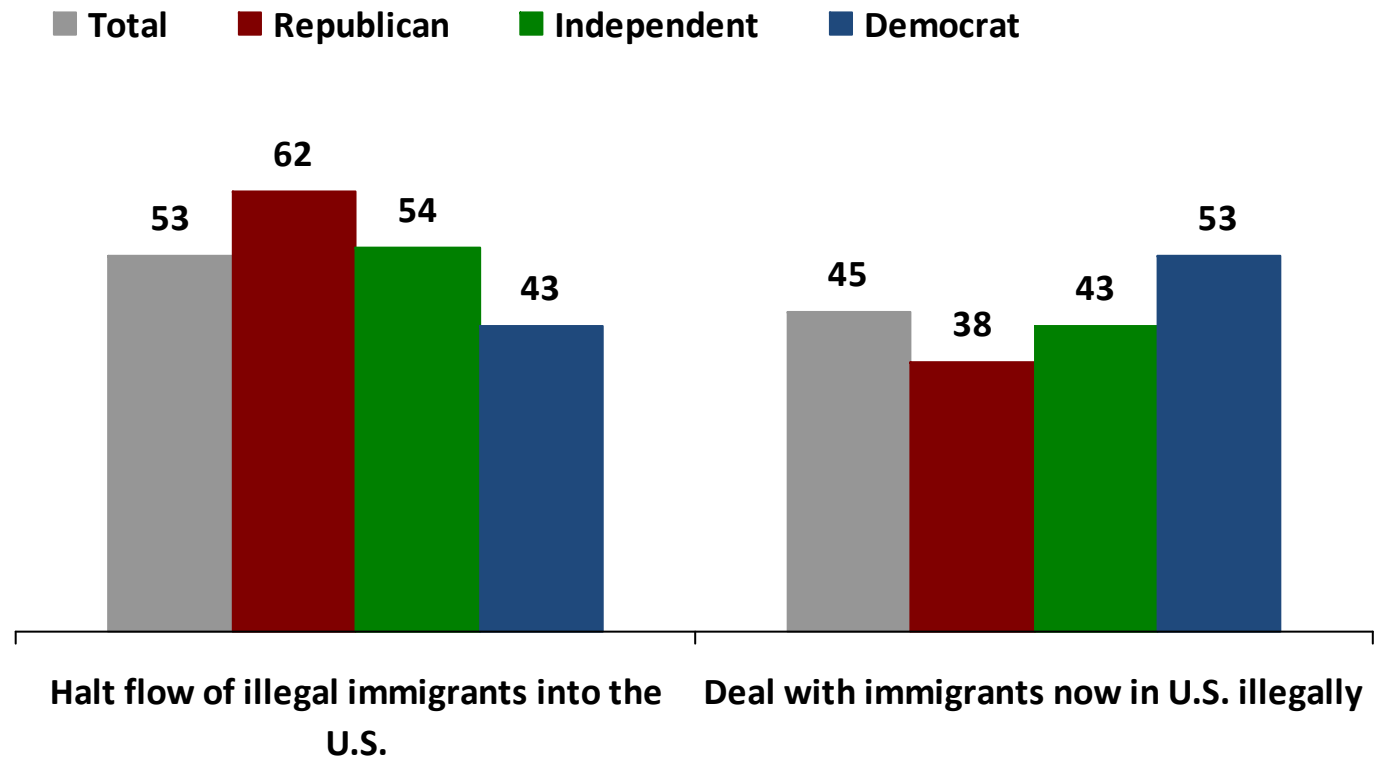
- When asked to say which of the two goals the U.S. government should have as its main focus, Americans are generally divided, although the slight edge goes to halting the flow of illegal immigrants.

- Preferences by party show that Democrats generally favor first dealing with immigrants who are already here, whereas Republicans favor border control. Independents' views mirror those of adults overall, with a slight majority (54%) favoring border control.

IMMIGRATION POLICY PRIORITY

"If you had to choose, what should be the main focus of the U.S. government in dealing with the issue of immigration – [developing a plan for halting the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S. (or) developing a plan to deal with immigrants who are currently in the U.S. illegally]?"

PREFERRED APPROACH TO IMMIGRATION POLICY
National Sample of Adults



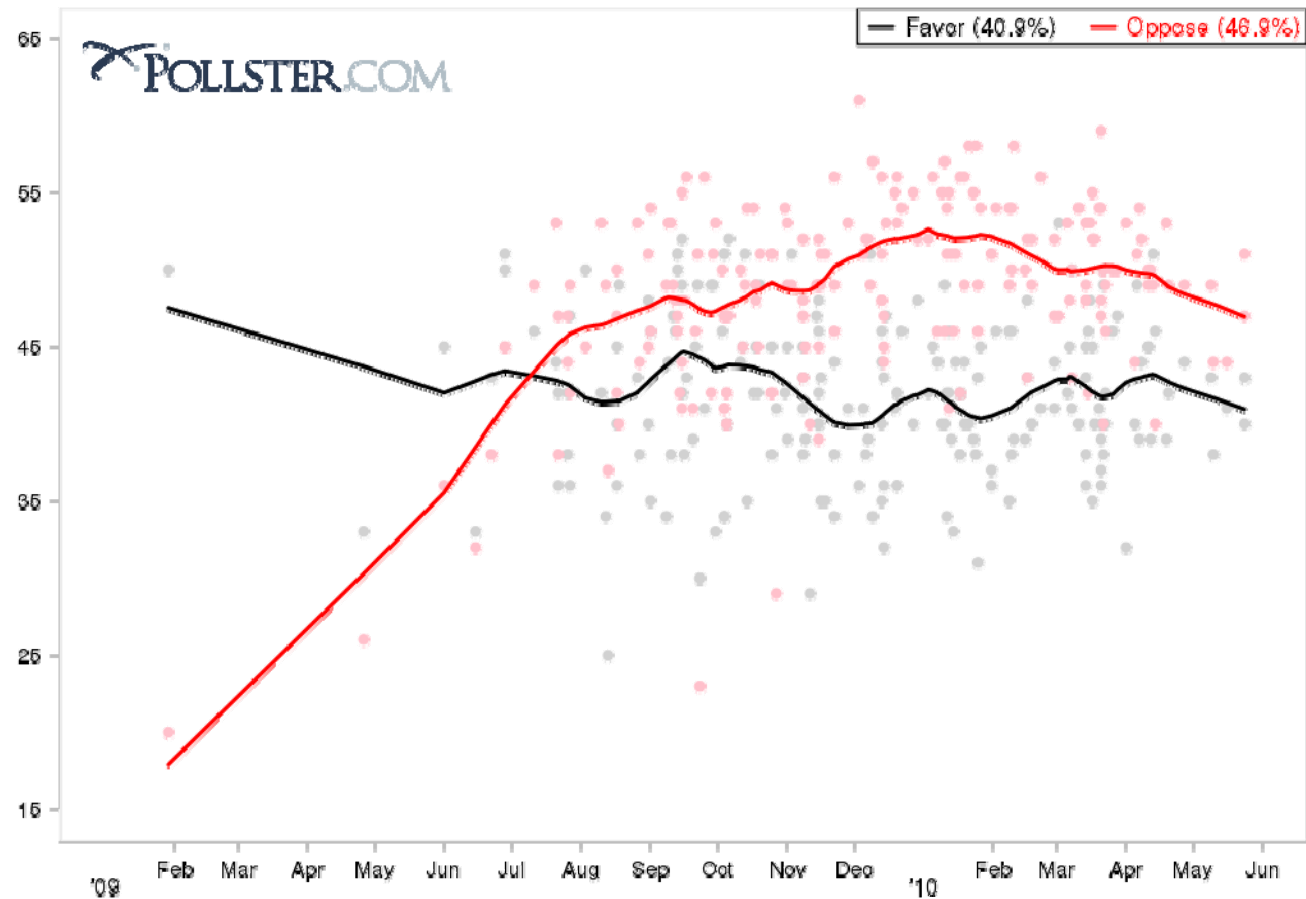
★ ★ Support for health care reform declined as Congress moved from the rhetorical goal of reform to the specific legislative product.

• Many Americans liked the idea of reforming the health care system. However, national polling data shows that opposition rose significantly as specific aspects and implications of reform became clear.

SUPPORT FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

Variations of: "From everything you have heard or read so far, do you favor or oppose Barack Obama's health care reform plan?"

SUPPORT FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM 2009 - 2010
National Sample of Adults



★ ★ Half of Americans think British Petroleum is not doing enough in response to the Gulf Coast oil spill.

RESPONSE TO GULF COAST OIL SPILL

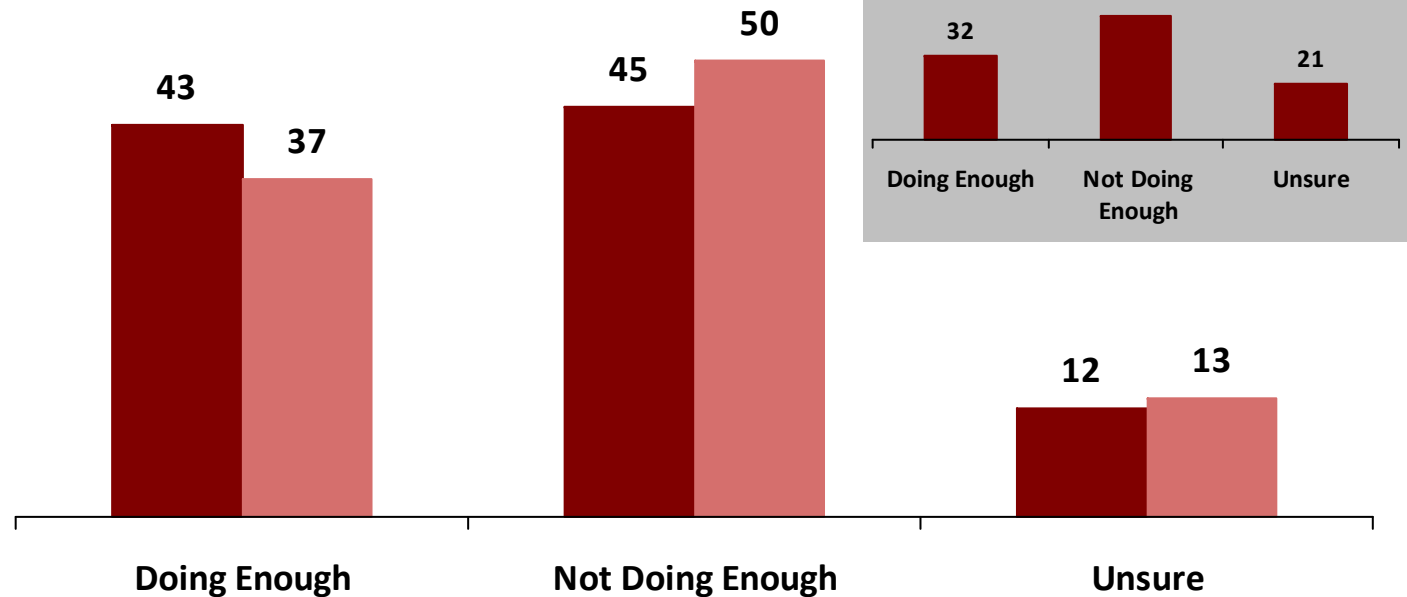
“Do you think that the federal government/British Petroleum is doing enough or is not doing enough to deal with the environmental problems caused by the recent Gulf Coast oil spill?”

- Public opinion is more closely divided on whether or not the government is doing enough to deal with the environmental problems caused by the Gulf Coast oil spill.

- For comparison, however, the public’s perception of the government’s response to the Gulf oil spill is significantly more positive than that of the government’s handling of the Hurricane Katrina disaster five years ago.

RESPONSE TO GULF COAST OIL SPILL: GOVERNMENT VS BRITISH PETROLEUM *National Sample of Adults*

■ Federal government ■ British Petroleum



★ ★ Americans tracked the Gulf Coast oil leak much more closely than any other major news story in mid-May.

- The percentage of Americans who say they followed news about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico very closely has grown sharply – along with the scope and potential impact of the crisis – since the initial explosion on an off-shore oil rig on April 20 that left 11 dead.

NEWS INTEREST vs. NEWS COVERAGE

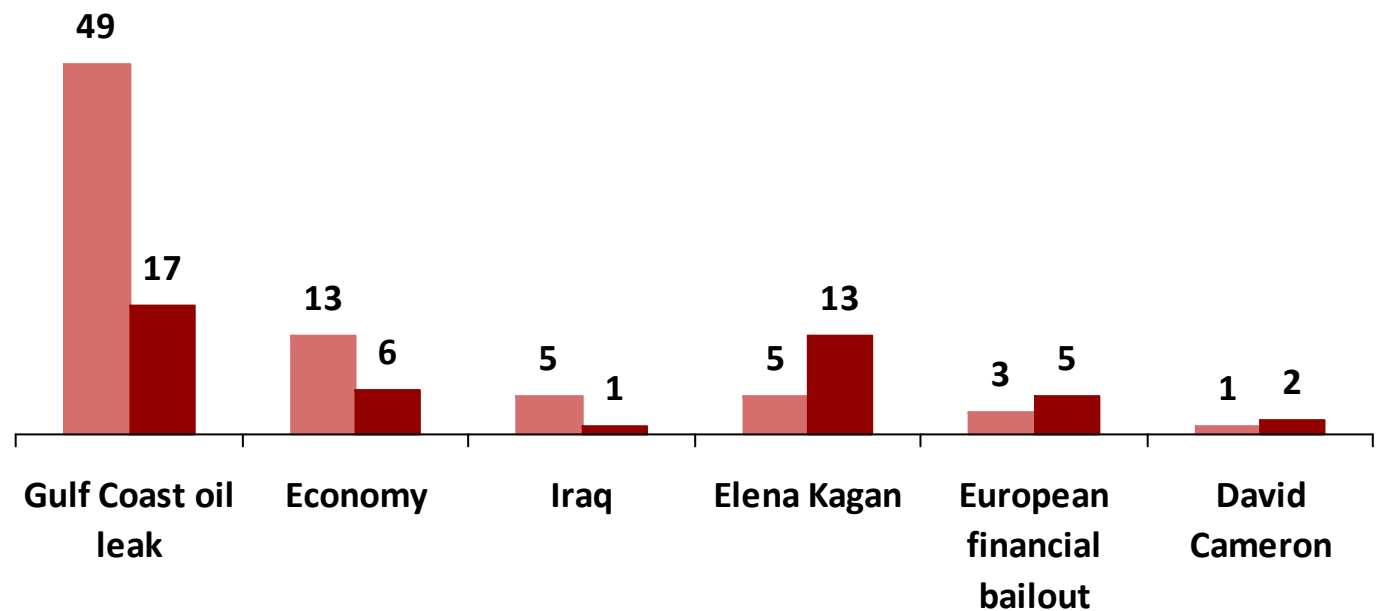
News Interest: “Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you’ve been following MORE closely?”

News Coverage: Data collected through weekly monitoring of news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets

NEWS INTEREST VS NEWS COVERAGE (May 10-16, 2010)

National Sample of Adults

■ Percent who named story as most closely followed
 ■ Percent of news coverage devoted to story



★ ★ Overall, “willingness to compromise” is seen as the most positive attribute heading into the midterm election.

- On balance, Democrats, Independents, and adults overall are more likely than not to vote for a candidate who will compromise with people they disagree with. Among Republicans, however, this attribute is seen as a net negative.
- While incumbency is viewed as a net negative attribute by all but Democrats, the public overall does not necessarily see a lack of experience in elected office as a positive attribute.
- There is a wide partisan divide on support for the health care bill, with Republicans overwhelmingly viewing this as a liability and Democrats viewing this as an attribute. Support for the bank bailout is viewed as a liability across all partisan subgroups.

POLITICAL NUGGET

“Would you be more likely or less likely to vote in November for a candidate who...”

NET IMPACT OF CANDIDATE ATTRIBUTES ON VOTE [% “More Likely” - % “Less Likely”]
National Sample of Adults

