

Media Relations

UNH Survey Center: Obama Approval Rating Remains Unchanged In New Hampshire

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DURHAM, N.H. -- More New Hampshire adults continue to disapprove of President Barack Obama's job performance than approve. Obama's handling of the economy and health care continue to drag down his popularity.

These findings are based on the latest WMUR Granite State Poll, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. Five hundred twenty (520) randomly selected New Hampshire adults were interviewed by telephone between Jan. 27 and Feb. 6, 2011. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/- 4.3 percent.

Presidential Approval

After enduring the 2010 elections which were brutal to Democrats in New Hampshire and across the country, President Barack Obama has yet to recover his popularity in New Hampshire. In the most recent Granite State Poll, 46 percent of New Hampshire adults say they approve of the job Obama is doing as president, 49 percent disapprove, and 4 percent are neutral. These figures are similar to his national ratings, a recent Gallup poll (Feb. 3) showed 46 percent of U.S. residents approved of the job Obama is doing as president.

"Political scientists consider 46 percent the 'break even' point for reelection," said Andrew Smith, director of the UNH Survey Center. "Presidents with approval ratings above 46 percent typically get reelected while an approval rating below 46 percent typically results in electoral defeat."

Obama's approval rate for 2011 has remained largely consistent with 2010. Approval among Democrats remains high, in the high 80s, but Obama's approval ratings among Independents (46 percent), and Republicans (13 percent) remain problematic. All changes in Obama's approval rating since September, 2010 are within the margin of sampling error.

Obama's personal favorability has remained largely unchanged in recent months. Obama is currently viewed favorably by 47 percent of New Hampshire adults, 44 percent have an unfavorable opinion of him, and 8 percent are neutral or don't know enough about him to say. Obama's net favorability rating, the percentage having a favorable opinion minus the percentage having an unfavorable opinion, is +3 percent, up from -1 percent in September.

Democrats continue to like Obama with 89 percent saying they have a favorable opinion of him, while political independents are nearly split with 48 percent expressing favorable views. Only 13 percent of Republicans have a favorable opinion of the president.

Economic Approval Rating

As the recession drags on, more Granite Staters disapprove of the Obama Administration's handling of the economy. Currently, 42 percent of New Hampshire adults approve of how Obama is handling the economy, 55 percent disapprove, and 3 percent are neutral. As with other approval measures, there is a considerable partisan gap in approval of Obama's handling of the economy. Most Democrats (83 percent) approve of Obama's job handling of the economy while only 42 percent of independents and 8 percent of Republicans approve.

Presidential Approval – Health Care Policy

Obama's handling of health care also remains a problem. Currently, only 39 percent of New Hampshire residents approve of Obama's handling of health care policy, 56 percent disapprove, and 4 percent are

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neutral. Support among independents continues to decline, from 45 percent in July to 39 percent in the most recent poll. Support among Democrats (80 percent) and Republicans (8 percent) remains largely unchanged.

Most New Hampshire adults still oppose the health care legislation passed in early 2010. In the most recent Granite State Poll, only 38 percent of New Hampshire adults favor the legislation, 52 percent oppose it, and 10 percent are neutral or don't know enough about it to say. Support for the health care reform law has remained largely the same among all political groups. Currently, 77 percent of Democrats, 34 percent of Independents and 8 percent of Republicans favor the 2010 health care reform law.

A small majority of New Hampshire adults think Congress should repeal the health care law that was passed last year – 52 percent favor repeal of the law, 41 percent believe Congress should let it stand and 7 percent are unsure. As with other health care related issues, views on repealing health care are quite partisan with 83 percent of Republicans favoring repeal while 79 percent of Democrats think Congress should let the bill stand. More than half (53 percent) of politically independent New Hampshire adults favor a repeal.

Right Direction – Wrong Track

Granite Staters remain pessimistic about the direction the county is heading. Currently, 37 percent of New Hampshire adults think things in this country are generally going in the right direction, 54 percent think things are seriously off on the wrong track, and 9 percent don't know. This measure is relatively stable since July 2010. Democrats are still the most optimistic about the county's direction, with 60 percent saying the country is going in the right direction, but this is down from 66 percent in September 2010.

For complete tabular results, visit http://www.unh.edu/survey-center/news/pdf/gsp2011_winter_presapp021011.pdf.

The UNH Survey Center has conducted survey research projects at the University of New Hampshire since 1976. The center has grown rapidly during the past 30 years and now conducts approximately 40 to 50 major survey projects each year. More information: <http://www.unh.edu/survey-center/>.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

PHOTO

Andrew Smith, director of the UNH Survey Center.
http://www.unh.edu/news/img/Andy_Smith.jpg

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