

Political Mood Sours

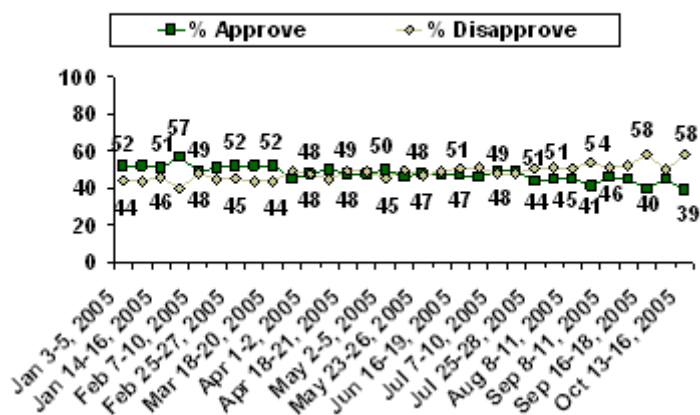
Bush approval at 39%; Congress approval 29%; satisfaction 31%

by David W. Moore

PRINCETON, NJ -- In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, higher gas prices, continued fighting in Iraq, and controversy over the Harriet Miers nomination to the Supreme Court, a new CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup survey finds the public in the most dour mood ever measured during the Bush presidency. The public's approval of the way President George W. Bush is handling his job is at 39%, a record low, though just a point lower than two ratings -- in mid-September and mid-August of this year. The public's approval of Congress is at 29%, the first time it's dropped below the 30% level since 1994. And overall satisfaction with the way things are going is at 31%, the lowest level since January 1996.

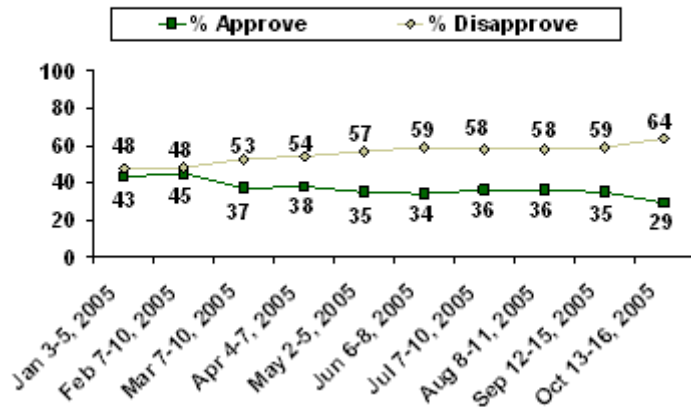
Since mid-August, Bush's approval has fluctuated between a low of 40% and a high of 46%. Bush began the year with a 52% approval rating. It reached a high of 57% just after his state of the union speech, but then averaged between 47% and 48% from April through July. In August and September, it averaged 44%, and now for the first time in his presidency it has dropped to below 40%.

Bush's Overall Job Approval Rating
Selected Trend: January 2005 – October 2005



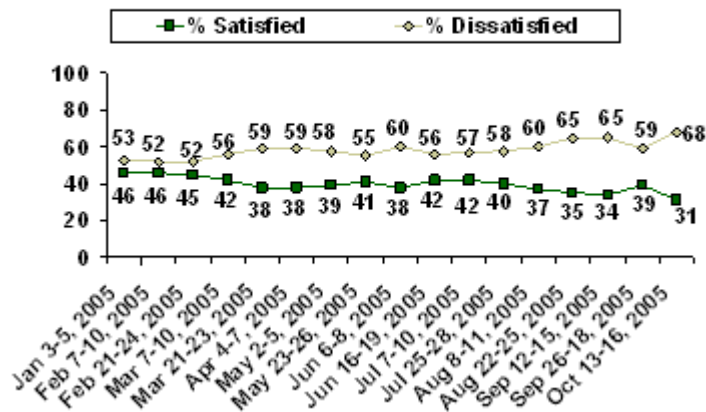
If the public is less than content about the president's performance, the public is downright sour about the performance of Congress. Just 29% of Americans approve of the way Congress is handling its job, the first time the approval rating has been close to this negative in eight years. In April 1997, only 30% of Americans approved of Congress' performance. The last time Gallup measured less than 30% approval was in December 1994.

Congressional Job Approval January 2005 – October 2005



These low numbers for the president and the Congress are similar to the low rating the public gives overall for the direction of the country. Just 31% of Americans say they are satisfied with the way things are going in the country, while 68% are dissatisfied. Since January 2004, a majority of Americans have expressed dissatisfaction, though the most recent dissatisfaction numbers represent a nine-point jump in just the last two weeks.

U.S. Satisfaction Selected Trend: January 2005 – October 2005



Harriet Miers Nomination

Bush's nomination of Harriet Miers has not been wildly welcomed by any major segment of the public. Among political activists, the nomination has split the Republican Party, with many conservatives disappointed that Bush did not nominate a person with more of a conservative judicial record. Among the general public, reaction to Miers is much less positive than it was to John Roberts, though the lower ratings are not found solely among conservatives and Republicans.

The public is about evenly split between having a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Miers (31% to 26%), with 43% of Americans expressing no opinion.

Next, we'd like to get your overall opinion of some people in the news. As I read each name, please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of these people -- or if you have never heard of them.

U.S. Supreme Court nominee, Harriet Miers

Never
Favorable Unfavorable heard of No opinion

2005 Oct 13-16 31% 26 17 26

However, when asked whether the Senate should confirm her appointment to the Supreme Court, Americans say yes by a margin of 44% to 36%.

As you may know, Harriet Miers is the person nominated to serve on the Supreme Court. Would you like to see the Senate vote in favor of Miers serving on the Supreme Court, or not?

BASED ON 485 NATIONAL ADULTS IN FORM A

	Yes, vote in favor	No, would not	No opinion
2005 Oct 13-16	44%	36	20

Trends for Comparison

John Roberts: As you may know, John Roberts is a federal judge who has been nominated to serve as chief justice on the Supreme Court. Would you like to see the Senate vote in favor of Roberts serving as chief justice on the Supreme Court, or not?

	Yes, vote in favor	No, would not	No opinion
	%	%	%
2005 Sep 16-18 ^	60	26	14
2005 Sep 8-11	58	27	15
2005 Aug 28-30 ^	52	26	22
2005 Aug 5-7 †	51	28	21
2005 Jul 22-24 †	59	22	19

^ WORDING: As you may know, John Roberts is a federal judge who has been nominated to serve on the Supreme Court. Would you like to see the Senate vote in favor of Roberts serving on the Supreme Court, or not?

† WORDING: As you may know, John Roberts is the person nominated to serve on the Supreme Court. Would you like to see the Senate vote in favor of Roberts serving on the Supreme Court, or not?

Similarly, when asked if Bush should withdraw the Miers nomination or continue to support it, Americans back Miers by a 46% to 36% margin.

Would you like to see President Bush -- [ROTATED: withdraw his nomination of Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court, (or) continue to support his nomination of Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court]?

BASED ON 527 NATIONAL ADULTS IN FORM B

	Withdraw	Continue	No
	nomination	to support	opinion
2005 Oct 13-16	36%	46	18

The public was much more positive about Roberts' nomination, with 59% supporting it soon after Bush's announcement, and a majority giving support throughout the hearing process.

An analysis of support by party and ideology, however, shows that Miers' lower support is found among all the major partisan groups, and not just among conservatives and Republicans.

For example, 61% of conservatives support Miers' nomination, compared with 74% of conservatives who supported Roberts -- a difference of 13 percentage points. But moderates show a 17-point greater level of support for Roberts (55% vs. 38%) and liberals show a 12-point advantage for Roberts (40% vs. 28%).

As you may know, Harriet Miers is the person nominated to serve on the Supreme Court. Would you like to see the Senate vote in favor of Miers serving on the Supreme Court, or not?

BASED ON 485 NATIONAL ADULTS IN FORM A

	Yes, vote in favor	No, would not	No opinion
	%	%	%
Miers			
Conservatives	61	21	18
Moderates	38	42	20
Liberals	28	49	23
Roberts			
Conservatives	74	12	14
Moderates	55	24	21
Liberals	40	36	24
Difference, in pct. pts.			
Conservatives	-13	+9	+4
Moderates	-17	+18	-1
Liberals	-12	+13	-1

Survey Methods

Results are based on telephone interviews with 1,012 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted Oct. 13-16, 2005. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ±3 percentage points.

For results based on the 485 national adults in the Form A half-sample and 527 national adults in the Form B half-sample, the maximum margins of sampling error are ±5 percentage points.

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

. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
2005	%	%	%
2005 Oct 13-16	39	58	3
2005 Sep 26-28	45	50	5
2005 Sep 16-18	40	58	2
2005 Sep 12-15	45	52	3
2005 Sep 8-11	46	51	3
2005 Aug 28-30	45	52	3
2005 Aug 22-25	40	56	4
2005 Aug 8-11	45	51	4
2005 Aug 5-7	45	51	4
2005 Jul 25-28	44	51	5
2005 Jul 22-24	49	48	3
2005 Jul 7-10	49	48	3
2005 Jun 29-30	46	51	3
2005 Jun 24-26	45	53	2
2005 Jun 16-19	47	51	2
2005 Jun 6-8	47	49	4
2005 May 23-26	48	47	5
2005 May 20-22	46	50	4
2005 May 2-5	50	45	5
2005 Apr 29-May 1	48	49	3
2005 Apr 18-21	48	49	3
2005 Apr 4-7	50	45	5
2005 Apr 1-2	48	48	4
2005 Mar 21-23	45	49	6

2005 Mar 18-20	52	44	4
2005 Mar 7-10	52	44	4
2005 Feb 25-27	52	45	3
2005 Feb 21-24	51	45	4
2005 Feb 7-10	49	48	3
2005 Feb 4-6	57	40	3
2005 Jan 14-16	51	46	3
2005 Jan 7-9	52	44	4
2005 Jan 3-5	52	44	4

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
2005	%	%	%
2005 Oct 13-16	29	64	7
2005 Sep 12-15	35	59	6
2005 Aug 8-11	36	58	6
2005 Jul 7-10	36	58	6
2005 Jun 6-8	34	59	7
2005 May 2-5	35	57	8
2005 Apr 4-7	38	54	8
2005 Mar 7-10	37	53	10
2005 Feb 7-10	45	48	7
2005 Jan 3-5	43	48	9
2004			
2004 Dec 5-8	41	50	9
2004 Nov 7-10	41	52	7
2004 Oct 11-14	40	51	9
2004 Sep 13-15	41	52	7
2004 Aug 9-11	40	52	8
2004 Jul 8-11	40	53	7
2004 Jun 3-6	41	52	7
2004 May 2-4	41	52	7
2004 Apr 5-8	43	51	6
2004 Mar 8-11	42	51	7
2004 Feb 9-12	41	51	8
2004 Jan 12-15	48	45	7
2003			
2003 Dec 11-14	43	50	7
2003 Nov 3-5	43	51	6
2003 Oct 6-8	41	51	8
2003 Sep 8-10	40	53	7
2003 Aug 4-6	45	46	9
2003 Jul 7-9	49	45	6
2003 Jun 12-15	50	41	9
2003 May 5-7	49	44	7
2003 Apr 7-9	58	33	9
2003 Mar 3-5	48	44	8
2003 Feb 3-6	50	39	11
2003 Jan 13-16	49	40	11
2002			
2002 Dec 5-8	50	40	10
2002 Nov 11-14	47	39	14
2002 Oct 3-6	50	40	10
2002 Sep 5-8	52	40	8
2002 Aug 5-8	46	43	11
2002 Jul 26-28	53	36	11
2002 Jul 9-11	54	36	10
2002 Jun 3-6	52	38	10

2002 May 6-9	57	33	10
2002 Apr 8-11	57	34	9
2002 Mar 4-7	63	28	9
2002 Feb 4-6	62	28	10

3. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States at this time?

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion
2005	%	%	%
2005 Oct 13-16	31	68	1
2005 Sep 26-28	39	59	2
2005 Sep 12-15	34	65	1
2005 Aug 22-25	34	62	4
2005 Aug 8-11	37	60	3
2005 Jul 25-28	40	58	2
2005 Jul 7-10	42	57	1
2005 Jun 16-19	42	56	2
2005 Jun 6-8	38	60	2
2005 May 23-26	41	55	4
2005 May 2-5	39	58	3
2005 Apr 4-7	38	59	3
2005 Mar 21-23	38	59	3
2005 Mar 7-10	42	56	2
2005 Feb 21-24	45	52	3
2005 Feb 7-10	46	52	2
2005 Jan 3-5	46	53	1
2004			
2004 Dec 5-8	45	53	2
2004 Nov 7-10	44	54	2
2004 Oct 29-31 ^	44	53	3
2004 Oct 11-14	41	57	2
2004 Sep 13-15	41	56	3
2004 Aug 9-11	44	55	1
2004 Jul 8-11	41	57	2
2004 Jun 3-6	39	59	2
2004 May 2-4	36	62	2
2004 Apr 5-8	41	57	2
2004 Mar 8-11	39	60	1
2004 Feb 9-12	45	54	1
2004 Jan 12-15	46	53	1
2004 Jan 2-5	55	43	2
2003			
2003 Dec 11-14	50	48	2
2003 Nov 3-5	44	54	2
2003 Oct 6-8	41	57	2
2003 Sep 8-10	40	58	2
2003 Aug 4-6	46	52	2
2003 Jul 7-9	50	48	2
2003 Jun 12-15	47	51	2
2003 May 5-7	54	45	1
2003 Apr 7-9	55	41	4
2003 Mar 22-23	60	38	2
2003 Mar 3-5	36	61	3
2003 Feb 17-19	39	58	3
2003 Feb 3-6	40	58	2
2003 Jan 13-16	42	56	2

^ Asked of a half sample