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Public Approval of Congress Declines; Bush Approval Steady

Lowest rating for Congress in a Gallup Poll since fall 1999

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GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

PRINCETON, NJ -- A new Gallup survey, conducted March 7-10, shows a drop in public approval of the way Congress is handling its job, but no change in President George W. Bush's approval rating. A majority of Americans are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country, little changed from last month, and about the same level it has been for over a year. The situation in Iraq heads the list of the most important problems facing the country, while Social Security, terrorism, the economy in general, and healthcare essentially tie for second.

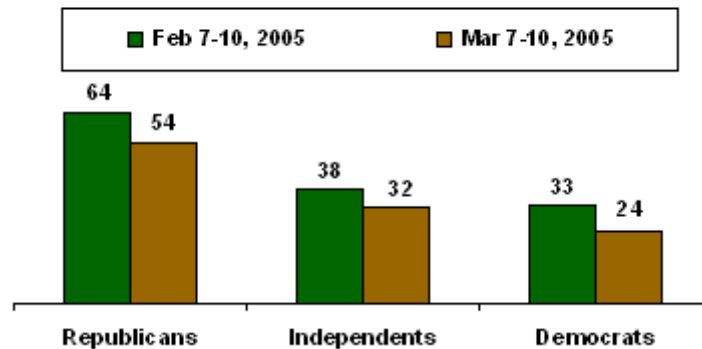
According to the poll, 37% of Americans approve, but 53% disapprove, of the way Congress is handling its job. Last month, the comparable figures were 45% approve to 48% disapprove. The current figures are the lowest that Gallup has measured since September 1999, though approval was as low as 40% just last October.

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

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
2005	%	%	%
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

The decline in approval comes across the political spectrum. Compared with last month, Republicans show a decline of 10 points, independents 6 points, and Democrats 9 points. The lower approval rating would thus appear to be less related to any specific bill that Congress has passed, which would cause a more partisan response, and more to the fact that members are facing some controversial issues. Typically, news coverage does not portray Congress in a favorable light when members spend a great deal of time debating legislative issues and arguing with each other.

**Percentage Who Approve of Job Congress Is Doing
compared by party**



At the same time, Bush's approval rating remains at 52%, the same as it was two weeks ago, and three points higher than what Gallup measured a month ago. Bush's approval has averaged 52% since the beginning of the year.

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

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
2005	%	%	%
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

The poll also shows that 56% of Americans are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country today, while only 42% are satisfied. Americans were dissatisfied last month as well, by 52% to 45%.

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 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

^ Asked of a half sample

This measure has been remarkably consistent for over a year, since mid-January 2004.

As is typically the case, Americans who identify with the party of the president are more satisfied than other partisans. In the current survey, 69% of Republicans are satisfied, compared with just 36% of independents, and only 18% of Democrats.

When asked what they think is the most important problem facing the United States today, 25% of Americans say the situation in Iraq, 12% say Social Security, 10% say the economy in general, and 9% each say terrorism and healthcare.

What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today? [Open-ended]

	Mar 7-10, 2005	Feb 7-10, 2005	Jan 3-5, 2005	Dec 5-8, 2004
	%	%	%	%
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS (NET)	28	29	31	29
1 Economy in general	10	12	12	12
2 Unemployment/Jobs	8	7	11	10
3 Federal budget deficit/ Federal debt	3	5	3	3
4 Fuel/Oil prices	2	1	1	2
5 Taxes	2	2	2	2
6 Wage issues	2	*	1	*
7 High cost of living/Inflation	1	2	1	1
8 Lack of money	1	1	2	1
9 Gap between rich and poor	*	1	1	1
10 Corporate corruption	*	*	*	1
11 Foreign trade/Trade deficit	*	*	1	*
12 Recession	*	--	*	--
NON-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS (NET)	80	83	76	76
1 Situation in Iraq/War	25	24	25	23
2 Social Security	12	12	4	2
3 Terrorism	9	9	8	12
4 Poor healthcare/hospitals; high cost of healthcare	9	10	9	7

5	Education/poor education/ access to education	6	5	4	3
6	Dissatisfaction with government/ Congress/politicians/candidates; Poor leadership; corruption	6	7	7	6
7	National security	5	4	3	4
8	Ethics/Moral/Religious/Family decline; dishonesty; lack of integrity	4	6	6	10
9	Poverty/Hunger/Homelessness	3	4	5	2
10	Foreign aid/Focus overseas	3	4	3	1
11	Immigration/Illegal aliens	3	3	2	2
12	International issues/problems	2	3	2	3
13	Crime/Violence	2	1	2	1
14	Lack of respect for each other	2	1	2	2
15	Children's behavior/way they are raised	2	*	*	1
16	Drugs	1	1	2	2
17	Judicial system/Courts/Laws	1	1	2	2
18	Environment/Pollution	1	1	1	1
19	Unifying the country	1	1	1	2
20	Welfare	1	1	1	*
21	Care for the elderly	1	1	*	*
22	Medicare	1	1	1	*
23	Lack of energy sources; the energy crisis	*	*	*	*
24	Homosexuality/Gay issues	*	1	*	*
25	Abortion	*	1	1	1
26	Cancer/Diseases	*	--	*	*
27	Abuse of power	*	*	*	*
28	Overpopulation	*	--	*	*
29	Race relations/Racism	*	*	1	*
30	Election year/Presidential choices/Election reform	*	*	*	*
31	Guns/Gun control	*	*	*	--
	The media	--	1	*	1
	Child abuse	--	--	--	*
	Other non-economic	1	2	3	3
	No opinion	3	2	4	2
	Total	133%	138%	134%	145%

Totals add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

* Less than 0.5%

The pattern of responses is little changed over the past several months, except for the emergence of Social Security as one of the top concerns -- following the major emphasis given this issue by the president and Congress in recent weeks.

Survey Methods

Results in the current survey are based on telephone interviews with 1,004 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted March 7-10, 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.

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.

First,

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

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
2005	%	%	%
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
2004			
2004 Dec 17-19	49	46	5
2004 Dec 5-8	53	44	3
2004 Nov 19-21	55	42	3
2004 Nov 7-10	53	44	3
2004 Oct 29-31	48	47	5
2004 Oct 22-24	51	46	3
2004 Oct 14-16	51	47	2
2004 Oct 11-14	48	49	3
2004 Oct 9-10	47	49	4
2004 Oct 1-3	50	48	2
2004 Sep 24-26	54	44	2
2004 Sep 13-15	52	45	3
2004 Sep 3-5	52	46	2
2004 Aug 23-25	49	47	4
2004 Aug 9-11	51	46	3
2004 Jul30-Aug1	48	49	3

2004 Jul 19-21	49	47	4
2004 Jul 8-11	47	49	4
2004 Jun 21-23	48	49	3
2004 Jun 3-6	49	49	2
2004 May 21-23	47	49	4
2004 May 7-9	46	51	3
2004 May 2-4	49	48	3
2004 Apr 16-18	52	45	3
2004 Apr 5-8	52	45	3
2004 Mar 26-28	53	44	3
2004 Mar 8-11	50	47	3
2004 Mar 5-7	49	48	3
2004 Feb 16-17	51	46	3
2004 Feb 9-12	51	46	3
2004 Feb 6-8	52	44	4
2004 Jan29-Feb1	49	48	3
2004 Jan 12-15	53	44	3
2004 Jan 9-11	59	38	3
2004 Jan 2-5	60	35	5

**No
Approve Disapprove opinion**

2003	%	%	%
2003 Dec 15-16	63	34	3
2003 Dec 11-14	56	41	3
2003 Dec 5-7	55	43	2
2003 Nov 14-16	50	47	3
2003 Nov 10-12	51	45	4
2003 Nov 3-5	54	43	3
2003 Oct 24-26	53	42	5
2003 Oct 10-12	56	40	4
2003 Oct 6-8	55	42	3
2003 Sep 19-21	50	47	3
2003 Sep 8-10	52	43	5
2003 Aug 25-26	59	37	4
2003 Aug 4-6	60	36	4
2003 Jul 25-27	58	38	4
2003 Jul 18-20	59	38	3
2003 Jul 7-9	62	34	4
2003 Jun 27-29	61	36	3
2003 Jun 12-15	63	33	4
2003 Jun 9-10	62	34	4
2003 May30-Jun1	64	32	4

2003 May 19-21	66	30	4
2003 May 5-7	69	28	3
2003 Apr 22-23	70	26	4
2003 Apr 14-16	71	24	5
2003 Apr 7-9	69	26	5
2003 Apr 5-6	70	27	3
2003 Mar 29-30	71	26	3
2003 Mar 24-25	69	27	4
2003 Mar 22-23	71	25	4
2003 Mar 14-15	58	38	4
2003 Mar 3-5	57	37	6
2003 Feb 24-26	57	37	6
2003 Feb 17-19	58	37	5
2003 Feb 7-9	61	34	5
2003 Feb 3-6	59	35	6
2003 Jan 31-Feb2	61	35	4
2003 Jan 23-25	60	36	4
2003 Jan 20-22	58	36	6
2003 Jan 13-16	61	34	5
2003 Jan 10-12	58	37	5
2003 Jan 3-5	63	32	5

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

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
2005	%	%	%
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
2002 Jan 7-9	62	29	9

No

Approve Disapprove opinion

2001

	%	%	%
2001 Dec 6-9	72	19	9
2001 Nov 8-11	73	19	8
2001 Oct 11-14	84	10	6
2001 Sep 7-10	42	44	14
2001 Aug 16-19	50	37	13
2001 Aug 3-5	47	42	11
2001 Jul 19-22	49	37	14
2001 Jun 11-17	51	34	15
2001 May 10-14	49	34	17
2001 Apr 6-8	55	32	13
2001 Mar 5-7	55	28	17
2001 Feb 1-4	53	32	15

2001 Jan 10-14	50	40	10
2000			
2000 Dec 2-4	56	34	10
2000 Oct 6-9	49	42	9
2000 Aug29-Sep5	48	42	10
2000 May 18-21	39	52	9
2000 Jan 7-10	51	42	7
1999			
1999 Sep 23-26	37	56	7
1999 Jul 13-14	39	51	10
1999 Jun 11-13	41	53	6
1999 Apr 13-14	45	47	8
1999 Feb 12-13	41	54	5
1999 Jan 15-17	50	46	4
1998			
1998 Dec 15-16	42	52	6
1998 Nov 13-15	41	54	5
1998 Oct29-Nov1	44	47	9
1998 Oct 9-12	47	46	7
1998 Oct 6-7	44	48	8
1998 Sep 11-12	55	36	9
1998 May 8-10	44	48	8
1998 Apr 17-19	49	40	11
1998 Feb 13-15	57	33	10
1998 Jan30-Feb1	56	35	9
1998 Jan 16-18	42	47	11
1997			
1997 Dec 18-21	39	52	9
1997 Oct 27-29	36	53	11
1997 Aug 22-25	41	48	11
1997 Jul 25-27	34	57	9
1997 May 6-7	32	58	10
1997 Apr 18-20	30	59	11
1997 Feb 24-26	37	48	15
1997 Jan31-Feb2	36	51	13
1997 Jan 10-13	41	49	10
1996			
1996 Oct 26-29	34	51	15
1996 Aug 5-7	39	49	12
1996 May 9-12	30	65	5
1996 Apr 9-10	35	57	8

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 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 Oct29-31 ^	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
2002			
2002 Dec 5-8	46	51	3
2002 Nov 11-14	48	48	4

2002Oct31-Nov3	48	47	5
2002 Oct 3-6	47	49	4
2002 Sep 5-8	47	51	2
2002 Aug 5-8	47	50	3
2002 Jul 26-28	48	49	3
2002 Jul 22-24	49	47	4
2002 Jul 9-11	49	48	3
2002 Jun 3-6	52	44	4
2002 May 6-9	56	40	4
2002 Apr 8-11	61	37	2
2002 Mar 4-7	61	37	2
2002 Feb 4-6	61	37	2

**No
Satisfied Dissatisfied opinion**

2001	%	%	%
2001 Dec 6-9	70	28	2
2001 Nov 8-11	65	33	2
2001 Oct 11-14	67	29	4
2001 Sep 14-15	61	36	3
2001 Sep 7-10	43	55	2
2001 Aug 16-19	48	49	3
2001 Jul 19-22	51	46	3
2001 Jun 11-17	51	46	3
2001 May 10-14	46	50	4
2001 Apr 6-8	50	47	3
2001 Mar 5-7	53	44	3
2001 Feb 1-4	51	45	4
2001 Jan 10-14	56	41	3
2000			
2000 Dec 2-4	51	46	3
2000 Nov 13-15	58	41	1
2000 Oct 6-9	62	36	2
2000Aug29-Sep5	59	38	3
2000 Aug 18-19	63	33	4
2000 Jul 14-16	61	35	4
2000 Jun 22-25	56	39	5
2000 May 18-21	55	42	3
2000 Apr 3-9	59	37	4
2000 Feb 25-27	65	32	3
2000 Jan 7-10	69	28	3
1999			
1999 Sep 23-26	52	45	3

1999 Aug 24-26	62	35	3
1999 Jun 11-13	55	42	3
1999 May 23-24	51	46	3
1999 Apr 26-27	51	45	4
1999 Apr 13-14	58	39	3
1999 Feb 12-13	71	26	3
1999 Jan 15-17	70	28	2
1998			
1998 Dec 28-29	50	48	2
1998 Oct 29-Nov 1	60	34	6
1998 Aug 21-23	63	34	3
1998 Aug 10-12	60	36	4
1998 May 8-10	59	36	5
1998 Apr 17-19	58	38	4
1998 Feb 20-22	64	32	4
1998 Feb 13-15	59	37	4
1998 Jan 30-Feb 1	63	35	2
1997			
1997 Dec 18-21	50	46	4
1997 Aug 22-25	50	48	2
1997 May 6-7	46	51	3
1997 Jan 10-13	50	47	3