

RESULTS OF NEW SURVEY FIND PERCEPTIONS OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S LEGACY DEPEND ON WHO YOU ASK

While there are deep partisan differences, the public overall has a favorable view of the president, though many feel he has failed to keep his promise of uniting the country.

CHICAGO, January 9, 2017— As President Barack Obama prepares to leave the White House after nearly eight years, most Americans have positive views of him and his administration, albeit with lukewarm opinions about some aspects, according to the latest Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll. For example, even as Obama leaves the presidency with key economic indicators having improved, most Americans do not perceive an improved situation. The survey also found deep divisions among the public when evaluating the actions of Obama over the last eight years.

In the latest national poll conducted by [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#), Democrats are very positive and Republicans are extremely negative concerning the Obama presidency. While less than half of whites have a favorable impression of the president, non-whites are overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Most college graduates give Obama a good grade for his stewardship, but less educated Americans are more critical. The racial and education differences hold even when controlling for party identification.

“When looking at President Obama’s legacy, it is clear that while a majority of Americans have a positive opinion of Obama, they are less enthusiastic with some aspects of his administration, including his ability to unite the country,” said [Trevor Tompson](#), director of The AP-NORC Center. “Indeed, those divisions are showcased in the vast differences in how Americans perceive Obama’s success depending on whether they have a college education, if they are a Democrat or Republican, or their racial and ethnic identity.”

Some of the poll’s key findings are:

- Overall, 57 percent of Americans have a favorable opinion of the president, and 37 percent have an unfavorable view. Ninety percent of Democrats, 79 percent of blacks, and 63 percent of college graduates all have a positive impression of Obama. Only 49 percent of whites and 21 percent of Republicans have a favorable opinion of the president.
- Only 32 percent of Americans say Obama has kept his campaign promises, although 44 percent say he tried but was unable. Twenty-two percent of the public, including 49 percent of Republicans and 23 percent of independents, say Obama did not keep his promises. Only 2 percent of Democrats agree.
- One of those promises was to bring the country together. Only 27 percent of Americans think Obama has been successful in uniting the country, while 44 percent say the United States has become more divided and another 28 percent say there has been no change.

- Fifty-two percent of the public regard Obama as a great or good president. Among Democrats, 84 percent say the president has been great or good; 45 percent of independents and only 12 percent of Republicans agree.
- While 46 percent say the country has become better off under Obama's watch, most don't see a positive change -- 33 percent say the country is worse off and 20 percent do not see any difference.
- While many measures indicate a stronger economy than Obama inherited, most people do not regard their personal situation as having improved. Forty-one percent say they and their family are better off in the wake of eight years of the Obama administration, but 32 percent feel there has been no change and 26 percent say their circumstances have deteriorated.
- Forty-three percent of black Americans say Obama's actions in office have made most blacks better off, while 49 percent say his administration has had no effect—neither good nor bad. Only 5 percent of blacks say Obama has had a detrimental effect on most blacks.

About the Survey

The survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, with funding from NORC at the University of Chicago. Data were collected using AmeriSpeak Omnibus®. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. Interviews for this survey were conducted between December 14 and 19, 2016, with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,017 completed the survey—846 via the web and 171 via telephone. The final stage completion rate is 30.5 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 34.3 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 95 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 9.9 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct,



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analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

About AmeriSpeak Omnibus

AmeriSpeak Omnibus is a once-a-month, multi-client survey using a probability sample of at least 1,000 nationally representative adults age 18 and older. Respondents are interviewed online and by phone from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel—the most scientifically rigorous multi-client household panel in the United States. AmeriSpeak households are selected randomly from NORC's National Sample Frame, the industry leader in sample coverage. The National Frame is representative of over 99 percent of U.S. households and includes additional coverage of hard-to-survey population segments, such as rural and low-income households, that are underrepresented in other sample frames. More information about AmeriSpeak is available at AmeriSpeak.norc.org.

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