

Polling News & Notes

Overlooked Recent Polling and Insights • January 5, 2012

Public Sentiment Better Four Years Ago: When asked in his teleconference with 2012 Iowa Caucus attendees if he still believes in his 2008 slogan of hope and change, President Barack Obama replied, “In some ways, I’m actually more optimistic now than I was when I first ran, because we’ve already seen change take place.”

The rest of America, however, does not possess the same sense of hope or positive change. According to Pew Center for the People and the Press [polls](#), public sentiment on the state of the nation is worse today than it was at this point before the 2008 election. In December 2007, 66% of Americans were dissatisfied with national conditions, compared to 78% in October 2011. This is a reflection of the deteriorating economy, as 91% of Americans rate it as only fair/poor today, up from 73% in January 2008. Now 61% of households rate their personal finances as only fair/poor (versus 49% in January 2008), and the percentage that say jobs are difficult to find increased from 48% in November 2007 to 79% in June 2011.

State of the Nation, 2007-2011			
		2007-08	2011
		%	%
National conditions Dec 07 / Oct 11	Satisfied	27	17
	Dissatisfied	66	78
Presidential job approval Dec 07 / Dec 11	Approve	31	46
	Disapprove	60	43
State of the economy Jan 08 / Dec 11	Excellent/Good	26	8
	Only fair/Poor	73	91
Economy a year from now Jan 08 / Dec 11	Better	20	28
	Worse	26	18
	Same	48	50
Personal finances Jan 08 / Dec 11	Excellent/Good	49	38
	Only fair/Poor	49	61
Job situation Nov 07 / Jun 11	Plenty of jobs available	41	14
	Jobs are difficult to find	48	79
PEW RESEARCH CENTER.			

Top National Problems Then and Now			
%	Jan 2008	%	Dec 2011
34	NET: Econ Issues	55	NET: Econ Issues
20	Economy	21	Unemployment
5	Unemployment	19	Economy
3	Energy/Gas prices	9	Deficit/Debt
3	Inflation		
27	Wars	10	Gov't/Politics
10	Health care	9	Budget/Deficit
6	Gov't/Politics	4	Partisanship
6	Immigration	4	Health care
4	Education	4	Wars
PEW RESEARCH CENTER.			

Pew also shows voters believe the economy is an even more important issue today than it was in 2008. In January 2008, 34% of Americans said they consider economic issues (20% economy; 5% unemployment) to be the top national problem. That jumped to 55% (21% unemployment; 19% economy) in December 2011.

Mr. Obama will continue pushing his “promises kept” rhetoric, but with Americans saying they are worse off today where it matters most to them (economy, unemployment) than they were four years ago, he will have a hard time convincing voters.