Ipsos Poll Conducted for Reuters

Core Political Approval 01.07.14

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted for Thomson Reuters from January 3-7, 2014. For the survey, a sample of 1,451 Americans, including 580 Democrats, 504 Republicans, and 226 Independents ages 18+ were interviewed online. The precision of the Reuters/Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.9 percentage points for all adults, 4.6 percentage points for Democrats, 5.0 percentage points for Republicans, and 7.4 percentage points for Independents. For more information about credibility intervals, please see the appendix.

The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, education, and ethnicity. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Figures marked by an asterisk (*) indicate a percentage value of greater than zero but less than one half of one per cent. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. To see more information on this and other Reuters/Ipsos polls, please visit http://polling.reuters.com/.

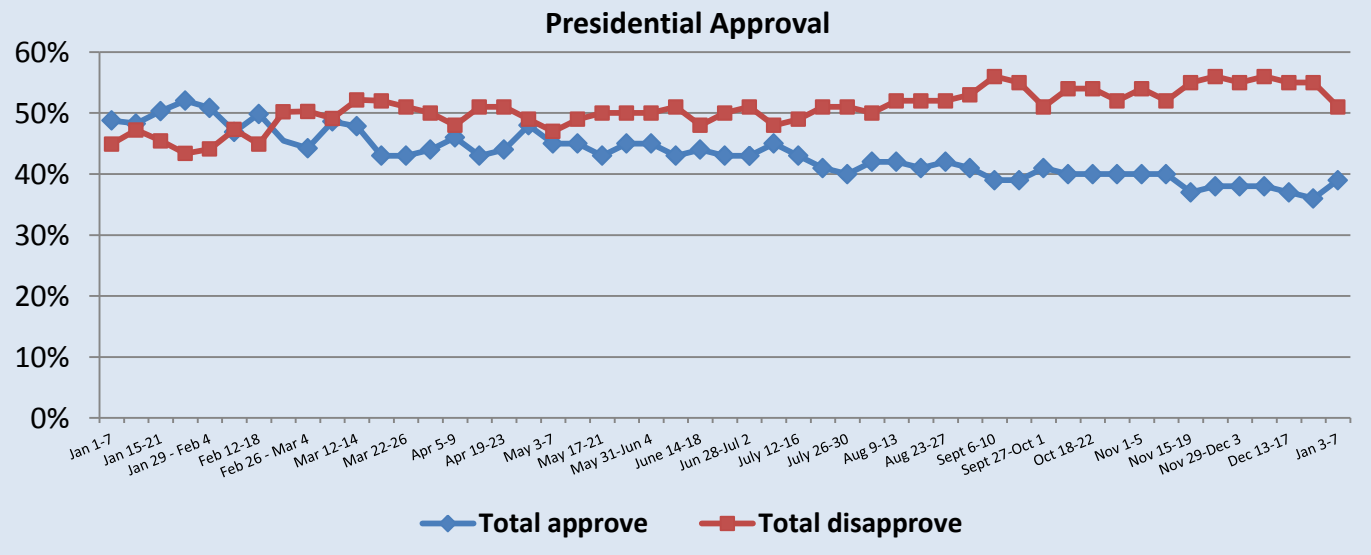
CORE POLITICAL APPROVAL

Q1. Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?

	All adults	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Right direction	22%	42%	7%	10%
Wrong track	60%	39%	85%	75%
Don't know	19%	19%	8%	15%

Q2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove about the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?
Q2a. Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/disapprove)? (*Asked of those who selected "approve" or "disapprove"*) Q2b. If you had to choose, do you lean more towards approve or disapprove? (*Asked of those who selected "don't know"*)

	All adults	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Strongly approve	14%	27%	1%	9%
Somewhat approve	21%	38%	6%	16%
Lean towards approve	4%	5%	1%	2%
Lean towards disapprove	3%	4%	1%	3%
Somewhat disapprove	14%	10%	15%	20%
Strongly disapprove	34%	11%	70%	43%
Not sure	10%	5%	6%	7%
Total approve	*39%*	*70%*	*8%*	*27%*
Total disapprove	*51%*	*25%*	*86%*	*66%*



Q3. In your opinion, which political party has a better plan, policy or approach to each of the following? *(Data based on interviewing from December 29, 2013-January 7, 2014; n=797)*

All adults *(n=797)*	Democratic Party	Republican Party	Independents	Other	None	Don't know
Healthcare	31%	21%	5%	2%	17%	23%
The war on terror	22%	22%	6%	3%	19%	28%
Iran	20%	19%	6%	2%	19%	34%
The US Economy	25%	24%	10%	2%	16%	22%
Immigration	27%	23%	6%	3%	15%	26%
Social Security	27%	21%	6%	3%	18%	25%
Medicare	30%	19%	5%	3%	18%	25%
Taxes	26%	22%	9%	2%	17%	24%
Gay marriage	38%	11%	7%	2%	16%	26%
Jobs and employment	23%	24%	7%	3%	20%	22%
The federal government deficit	19%	24%	9%	2%	22%	25%
Supporting small businesses	24%	25%	8%	2%	14%	28%
Education	27%	19%	7%	3%	16%	28%
Foreign policy	23%	22%	8%	2%	16%	29%
Women's rights	37%	12%	6%	3%	15%	28%
The environment	34%	12%	9%	3%	18%	24%
Israel	18%	21%	5%	3%	18%	35%
Syria	17%	16%	6%	2%	22%	37%

PARTY ID	All Adults
Strong Democrat	13%
Moderate Democrat	21%
Lean Democrat	7%
Lean Republican	5%
Moderate Republican	14%
Strong Republican	8%
Independent	16%
None of these	9%
Don't know	6%
Total Democrat	*41%*
Total Republican	*27%*

How to Calculate Bayesian Credibility Intervals

The calculation of credibility intervals assumes that Y has a binomial distribution conditioned on the parameter θ\, i.e., Y|θ~Bin(n,θ), where n is the size of our sample. In this setting, Y counts the number of "yes", or "1", observed in the sample, so that the sample mean ($\bar{y}$) is a natural estimate of the true population proportion θ. This model is often called the likelihood function, and it is a standard concept in both the Bayesian and the Classical framework. The Bayesian [1] statistics combines both the prior distribution and the likelihood function to create a posterior distribution. The posterior distribution represents our opinion about which are the plausible values for θ adjusted after observing the sample data. In reality, the posterior distribution is one's knowledge base updated using the latest survey information. For the prior and likelihood functions specified here, the posterior distribution is also a beta distribution (π(θ/y)~β(y+a,n-y+b)), but with updated hyper-parameters.

Our credibility interval for ϑ is based on this posterior distribution. As mentioned above, these intervals represent our belief about which are the most plausible values for ϑ given our updated knowledge base. There are different ways to calculate these intervals based on π(θ/y). Since we want only one measure of precision for all variables in the survey, analogous to what is done within the Classical framework, we will compute the largest possible credibility interval for any observed sample. The worst case occurs when we assume that *a*=1 and *b*=1 and y=*n/2*. Using a simple approximation of the posterior by the normal distribution, the 95% credibility interval is given by, approximately:

$$\bar{y} \mp \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$$

For this poll, the Bayesian Credibility Interval was adjusted using standard weighting design effect 1+L=1.3 to account for complex weighting[2]

Examples of credibility intervals for different base sizes are below. Ipsos does not publish data for base sizes (sample sizes) below 100.

Sample size	Credibility intervals
2,000	2.5
1,500	2.9
1,000	3.5
750	4.1
500	5.0
350	6.0
200	7.9
100	11.2

[1] *Bayesian Data Analysis, Second Edition, Andrew Gelman, John B. Carlin, Hal S. Stern, Donald B. Rubin, Chapman & Hall/CRC | ISBN: 158488388X | 2003*

[2] *Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for unequal Pi . Journal of Official, Statistics, 8, 2, 183200.*