



CBS News Poll
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Frustrated with Congress, Americans See More Gridlock
 July 18-22, 2013

- 76% of Americans now disapprove of Congress; 59% say they are frustrated with Congress and how it is working.
- 56% of Americans see more gridlock than usual in Washington these days, and the inability to work together is the top reason they disapprove of Congress. Majorities assign both parties blame for gridlock.
- While the economy is the issue Americans most want Congress to deal with, they don't see Congress putting in the effort to improve it: most, 56%, say Congress is not trying to do things to help the economy.
- Just over half see Republicans in Congress as too extreme; 43% say the same about Democrats in Congress.

A majority of Americans – 59% - describe themselves as frustrated with Congress and how it is working nowadays. Most Republicans, Democrats and independents are frustrated.

What Describes Your View of Congress and How it's Working?

Enthusiastic	1%
Satisfied	18
Dissatisfied	20
Frustrated	59

Congress continues to get a low approval rating – just 17% approve, and three in four disapprove. For the last two years, fewer than one in five has approved. Approval is low among self-identified Republicans (17%), Democrats (20%) and independents (16%).

Job Approval of Congress

	Now	6/2013	4/2013	7/2012	10/2011	6/2011
Approve	17%	13%	17%	12%	9%	20%
Disapprove	76	80	75	79	84	70

The poll also explored the reasons behind these views of Congress. Among those who disapprove of Congress, the most widely mentioned reason for their disapproval is that Congress is not working together, is in gridlock and fighting (volunteered by 27% of those who disapprove). Other reasons mentioned include that Congress is ineffective, is self-serving, and is not doing anything.

Why Disapprove of Congress?

(asked of those who disapprove)

Not working together/gridlock/fighting	27%
Ineffective/incompetent	14
Self-serving	13
Not doing anything/moving too slow	13

Among the much smaller group who approve, the most common reason given is that Congress is doing a good job (volunteered by 44% of those who approve).

Why Approve of Congress?

(asked of those who approve)

Doing a good job/satisfied	44%
Working on key issues	13
Holding administration policies in check	7

The public is critical of both parties in Congress, although Congressional Democrats fare slightly better than Republicans.

Six in ten Democrats approve of their own party's members of Congress, while over half of Republicans disapprove of the job Congressional Republicans are doing.

Parties in Congress

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Republicans in Congress				
Approve	25%	40%	17%	24%
Disapprove	67	56	79	64
Democrats in Congress				
Approve	36%	11%	61%	30%
Disapprove	55	84	33	57

While most Americans do not approve of Congress overall, when it comes to their own representative they are much more positive. 50% approve of the job the representative from their own district is doing, and 30% disapprove. Historically, Americans have given a more positive assessment to their own member of Congress than to the body as a whole.

Job Rating of Own Member of Congress

	Now	10/2010	5/2010	4/2010	10/2008
Approve	50%	40%	47%	46%	43%
Disapprove	30	40	39	36	31
Don't know	19	20	14	18	26

Gridlock in Congress

Most Americans (including more than half of Republicans, Democrats and independents alike) say that in recent years there is more gridlock in Washington than usual.

Is There More or Less Gridlock Than Usual?

	All	Reps	Dems	Inds
More	56%	51%	63%	54%
Same	31	39	24	31
Less	6	6	7	5

Both sides get at least some blame for gridlock, but Congressional Republicans receive slightly more. 63% give President Obama and the Democrats in Congress at least some blame, while 74% say Republicans shoulder at least some of it. 33% assign little or no blame to the President and Democrats; comparatively fewer, 20%, give little or no blame to Republicans.

How Much Do You Blame ... for Gridlock?

	Obama & Democrats	Cong. Republicans
A lot of blame	27%	35%
Some blame	36	39
Not much/none	33	20

It is fitting, perhaps, that in an era of partisan gridlock, Democrats in the poll place a lot of blame on Congressional Republicans (54%), while most Republicans in the poll put a lot of blame on the President and Congressional Democrats (55%).

As has often been the case in the past, Americans call for compromise from both parties: 83% want the President and Democrats to compromise, and 80% want the Republicans in Congress to do so.

But compromise can be hard to achieve, especially since so many Americans see each party as mostly concerned with trying to block the other.

Two-thirds of Americans believe the Republicans in Congress are mainly concerned with denying the President and Democrats political gain; just 28% say they oppose the President and Democrats because of real policy differences.

When Republicans Oppose Pres. Obama and Dems Is It...?

Mainly due to policy differences	28%
Mainly to stop Dems from political gain	64

And a majority – albeit a slimmer one – say the same about Democrats.

When Democrats Oppose Republicans Is It...?

Mainly due to policy differences	39%
Mainly to stop Reps from political gain	52

Nearly nine in ten Americans think Congress is putting their own political interests ahead of the best interests of the country.

Perceptions of extremism are on the rise for both parties. Just over half, 53%, now say Congressional Republicans are too extreme, up from 46% in 2005. 43% call Congressional Democrats too extreme, up from 35%.

Are Congressional Dems, Reps Too Extreme?

	<u>Cong. Democrats</u>		<u>Cong. Republicans</u>	
	Now	7/2005	Now	7/2005
Yes, too extreme	43%	35%	53%	46%
No, not	51	58	41	47

Congress: Working on the Important Issues?

By a large margin, Americans want Congress to concentrate on the economy now – 40% say that. The budget deficit is mentioned by 16%, and 15% say health care. 12% pick education.

Most Important Issue for Congress to Concentrate on Now

The economy	40%
Budget deficit	16
Health care	15
Education	12

When asked directly whether Congress is trying to do things to improve the economy, a 56% majority say it is not, and just 39% say it is. There is little difference by party on this question.

Is Congress Trying to Improve the Economy?

Is trying	39%
Is not trying	56

Nearly two in three Americans are skeptical as to whether Congress can address and solve the most important issues and problems facing the country. Majorities of Republicans, Democrats and independents are not confident.

But it isn't just Congress that Americans lack confidence in – 48% are not confident in the President to address these major problems either.

Confidence in ... to Address and Solve Issues Facing Country

	Congress	Barack Obama
Very confident	5%	16%
Somewhat confident	30	35
Not very confident	41	21
Not at all confident	23	27

The Filibuster

On the Senate side, the recent deal over filibuster rules ended one of the most glaring examples of gridlock, but Americans still – by a slim majority – think the filibuster rule is a good thing -- 52%, versus 35% who think it is bad. Democrats are more inclined than Republicans to call it bad.

Divided or Same Party Control?

Asked whether in principle, it is better to have the President and Congress from the same or different parties, Americans split: 38% would prefer divided control and 41% prefer the same party. But principle gives way to pragmatism here, as it has historically: most Democrats, who control the White House, would rather have Congress of the same party, and most Republicans would prefer divided control. In years when Republicans had the White House, Democrats wanted divided government.

Immigration

As Congress continues to tackle immigration reform, there is widespread support for providing a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants in the U.S. if they meet certain requirements, including a waiting period, paying fines and back taxes, passing criminal background checks and learning English. 78% favor that; just 20% oppose. Support cuts across partisan lines.

Path to Citizenship for Illegal Immigrants in U.S. if Conditions Met

	All	Reps	Dems	Inds
Favor	78%	70%	87%	76%
Oppose	20	28	11	23

Still, Americans think securing the nation's border should be a higher priority over addressing the status of illegal immigrants. Majorities of Republicans and independents say border security should take priority, while Democrats are more divided.

Which Should be a Higher Priority?

	All	Reps	Dems	Inds
Securing the border	56%	76%	43%	56%
Addressing status of illegal immigrants	37	19	49	36

Health Care

President Obama touted the Affordable Care Act in a speech last week, but Americans remain skeptical. As they have since the health care law was enacted in 2010, more disapprove than approve of it.

View of the Health Care Law

	Now	3/2013	7/2012	3/2010
Approve	36%	35%	36	32%
Disapprove	54	48	50	53
Don't know	10	17	14	15

Most Americans want either the entire law repealed (39% and the highest in CBS News Polls) or a repeal of the individual mandate (18%). Fewer want to see the law kept as is or expanded.

What Should Congress do about the Health Care Law?

	Now	10/2012	7/2012
Expand it	20%	22%	17%
Keep entire law	16	21	15
Repeal individual mandate	18	19	27
Repeal entire law	39	29	34

As might be expected there are partisan differences here. Most Republicans disapprove of the health care law and want to see it repealed, while Democrats support the law and prefer it be kept as is or be expanded.

More than three years after the health care bill was signed into law, 52% of Americans say they are confused about the effect it will have on them. Fewer than half - 44% - say they have a good understanding of the law - a percentage that hasn't changed much since March 2010, shortly after the law was enacted.

Understand How Health Care Law Will Affect You?

	Now	3/2012	3/2010
Yes, understand	44%	47%	41%
No, it's confusing	52	48	53

From what Americans have heard or read, more think the health care law will personally hurt them (38%) rather than help them (13%). More than four in 10 think the health care law will have no impact on them personally.

This poll was conducted by telephone from July 18-22, 2013 among 1,036 adults nationwide. Data collection was conducted on behalf of CBS News by Social Science Research Solutions of Media, PA. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups may be higher. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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Q1-7 RELEASED SEPARATELY

Q8. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS				May13b
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	17	17	20	16	13
Disapprove	76	77	73	79	80
Don't know/No answer	6	6	7	6	7

Q8a. What is the main reason why you approve of the way Congress is handling its job?

AMONG THOSE WHO APPROVE OF CONGRESS IN Q8

Doing good job/Satisfied/Right direct.	44
Working on issues/econ/health care	13
Holding admin. policies in check	7
Working together/more than before	2
Other	16
Don't know/No answer	18

Q9. What is the main reason why you disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

AMONG THOSE WHO DISAPPROVE OF CONGRESS IN Q8

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Not working together/Gridlock/fight	27	21	35	25
Ineffective/incompetent	14	11	12	16
Not doing anything/moving too slow	13	15	12	12
Self-serving/not for needs of people	13	15	11	16
Other key issues	4	6	3	3
Don't work with/work against Obama	3	--	9	1
Immigration	3	3	2	2
Wasting money/spending too much	2	2	1	3
Jobs/Unemployment	2	1	1	3
Going in wrong direction	2	3	1	3
Lack of leadership	1	3	*	*
Republicans obstruct	1	1	3	*
Support Obama/puppets	1	3	*	1
Other partisanship	1	1	*	1
Economy is suffering	1	2	1	1
Healthcare	1	3	--	1
Other	6	6	5	7
Don't know/No answer	5	6	3	6

Q10. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Republicans in Congress are handling their job?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS				Apr13b
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	25	40	17	24	22
Disapprove	67	56	79	64	69
Don't know/No answer	8	3	4	12	9

Q11. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Democrats in Congress are handling their job?

Approve	36	11	61	30	28
Disapprove	55	84	33	57	61
Don't know/No answer	9	5	6	13	10

Q12. How about the representative in Congress from your district? Do you approve or disapprove of the way your representative is handling his or her job?

					Oct10a
Approve	50	54	57	44	40
Disapprove	30	32	25	33	40
Don't know/No answer	19	14	18	23	20

Q13. When you think about Congress and how it is working nowadays, which best describes how you feel -- enthusiastic, satisfied, dissatisfied or frustrated?

Enthusiastic	1	*	1	2
Satisfied	18	10	26	17
Dissatisfied	20	18	19	21
Frustrated	59	70	52	59
Don't know/No answer	2	1	3	2

Q14. Which ONE of the following do you think is the most important thing for Congress to concentrate on right now: (the economy), (the federal budget deficit), (illegal immigration), (health care), (education), (the environment), (abortion), or something else?

The Economy	40	45	42	36
The Budget deficit	16	25	9	16
Health care	15	12	16	15
Education	12	4	16	14
Illegal immigration	8	4	7	10
The Environment	3	*	3	4
Abortion	2	6	1	*
Something else	3	3	4	3
Don't know/No answer	2	1	2	2

Q17-20b RELEASED SEPARATELY

Q21. Do you think Congress is, or is NOT, trying to do things that will improve the economy?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS			
	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
Is trying	39	44	38	37
Is not trying	56	50	55	59
Don't know/No answer	5	6	6	5

Q23. Do you think it is better for the country to have a president who comes from the same political party that controls Congress or do you think it is better to have a president from one political party and Congress controlled by another?

	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	Oct10e*
Better when same party	41	31	54	37	36
Better when different party	38	50	28	38	37
Don't know/No answer	21	19	17	24	27

*among registered voters.

Q24. In recent years, do you think there has been more gridlock in Washington than there usually is, less gridlock than there usually is, or is the amount of gridlock in Washington about the same as it usually is?

More gridlock	56	51	63	54
Less gridlock	6	6	7	5
Same	31	39	24	31
Don't know/ No answer	7	4	6	10

Q25. These days, how much do you blame the Republicans in Congress for gridlock in Washington – a lot, some, not much or not at all?

A lot	35	15	54	31
Some	39	47	28	42
Not much	13	23	9	11
Not at all	7	9	4	9
Don't know/No answer	6	5	5	7

Q26. These days, how much do you blame Barack Obama and the Democrats in Congress for gridlock in Washington – a lot, some, not much or not at all?

A lot	27	55	7	27
Some	36	32	38	37
Not much	19	10	28	18
Not at all	14	1	23	13
Don't know/No answer	4	2	4	5

Q27. How confident are you in the ability of Congress to address and solve the important problems and issues facing the country today? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident	5	2	7	5
Somewhat confident	30	31	38	25
Not very confident	41	44	39	40
Not at all confident	23	24	15	28
Don't know/ No answer	1	--	1	2

Q28. How confident are you in the ability of Barack Obama to address and solve the important problems and issues facing the country today? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident	16	2	34	11
Somewhat confident	35	16	51	33
Not very confident	21	28	9	27
Not at all confident	27	54	6	28
Don't know/ No answer	1	--	--	1

Q31. When most members of Congress address the important issues facing the country today, do you think they are (putting their own political interests first), or are they (putting the country's best interests first)?

Own political interests	88	90	86	90
Country's best interests	8	9	10	6
Don't know/No answer	4	1	4	4

Q33. What do you think Barack Obama and the Democrats in Congress should do- (compromise some of their positions in order to get things done), or (stick to their positions even if it means not getting as much done)?

					Jan13a
					%
Compromise	83	90	81	81	84
Stick to positions	12	7	15	13	11
Depends	2	1	2	2	1
Don't know/No answer	3	2	1	4	4

Q35. What do you think the Republicans in Congress should do – (compromise some of their positions in order to get things done), or (stick to their positions even if it means not getting as much done)?

Compromise	80	68	90	78	80
Stick to positions	15	27	6	14	14
Depends	2	2	1	3	2
Don't know/No answer	3	2	2	5	4

Q38. These days, when Republicans in Congress oppose policies proposed by Barack Obama and the Democrats, is it mostly because of a disagreement about policy or is it mostly because they want to stop Barack Obama and the Democrats from gaining political advantage?

Disagreement	28	52	15	25
Stop political advantage	64	40	77	67
Don't know/ No answer	8	9	8	8

Q39. These days, when Barack Obama and Democrats in Congress oppose policies proposed by the Republicans, is it mostly because of a disagreement about policy or is it mostly because they want to stop the Republicans from gaining political advantage?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Disagreement	39	29	52	33
Stop political advantage	52	64	36	58
Don't know/ No answer	9	6	12	8

Q40. Regardless of your overall opinion of them, do you think most Democrats in Congress are too extreme in their political views, or do you think they're not too extreme in their political views?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS				Jul05b
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	
Too extreme	43	69	24	43	35
Not too extreme	51	24	70	49	58
Don't know/No answer	7	6	6	8	7

Q41. Regardless of your overall opinion of them, do you think most Republicans in Congress are too extreme in their political views, or do you think they're not too extreme in their political views?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS				Jul05b
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	
Too extreme	53	27	69	54	46
Not too extreme	41	68	26	38	47
Don't know/No answer	6	5	4	9	7

Q42a. Under current rules, legislation and appointments in the U.S. Senate may be blocked by a procedure known as a filibuster, which can halt legislation and appointments unless sixty senators out of 100 vote to end the filibuster. In general, do you think the filibuster rule in the U.S. Senate is a good thing or a bad thing?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Good thing	52	64	43	52
Bad thing	35	27	39	36
Don't know/ No answer	13	9	18	12

Q46. As you may know, automatic spending cuts to military and domestic programs are in effect because President Obama and Republicans in Congress could not agree on a plan to reduce the federal budget deficit. These automatic spending cuts are commonly referred to as the Sequester. So far, do you think these cuts have helped the economy, hurt the economy, or have they not had much effect on the economy one way or the other?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Help	7	9	9	6
Hurt	43	46	46	40
No effect	44	44	40	46
Don't know/ No answer	6	1	6	8

Q47. Would you favor or oppose providing a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants in the U.S. if they met certain requirements including a waiting period, paying fines and back taxes, passing criminal background checks, and learning English?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS				Apr13b*
	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	
Favor	78	70	87	76	83
Oppose	20	28	11	23	14
Don't know/ No answer	2	2	2	2	3

*varied wording: omitted "a waiting period"

Q48. Which should be the higher priority now (Securing the nation's border), or (Addressing the status of illegal immigrants currently in the U.S.)?

Securing the border	56	76	43	56
Addressing status	37	19	49	36
Both	5	4	5	4
Neither	1	*	*	1
Don't know/ No answer	1	1	1	2

Q49. From what you've heard or read, do you approve or disapprove of the health care law that was enacted in 2010?

					Mar13c
Strongly approve	15	3	31	10	18
Somewhat approve	21	8	31	20	17
Somewhat disapprove	18	20	13	21	13
Strongly disapprove	36	66	15	37	35
Don't know/ No answer	10	4	10	12	17

Q50. What would you like to see Congress do when it comes to the health care law? 1. Expand the health care law. 2. Keep the entire health care law as it is. 3. Repeal the part of the law that requires Americans to obtain health insurance if they don't have it, but keep the rest of the law intact, or 4. Repeal the entire health care law.

					Oct12c
Expand the law	20	4	35	16	22
Keep entire law in place	16	9	24	14	21
Repeal the mandate only	18	16	20	18	19
Repeal the entire law	39	68	15	43	29
Don't know/ No answer	7	2	6	9	8

Q50a. From what you've heard or read, do you think the 2010 health care law will mostly help you personally, will mostly hurt you personally, or don't you think it will have much of an effect on you personally?

					Mar12b
Help	13	3	24	9	19
Hurt	38	57	20	41	31
No effect	43	36	49	43	43
Don't know/No answer	6	3	6	6	7

Q50b. Do you feel you have a good understanding of how the 2010 health care law will affect you and your family, or is it confusing to you?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS				Mar12b
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Understand	44	47	41	45	47
Confusing	52	51	55	50	48
Don't know/No answer	4	2	4	5	5

Q51-58 SEPARATE RELEASE

	<u>Unweighted</u>	<u>Weighted</u>
Total Respondents	1036	
Total Republicans	264	234
Total Democrats	335	343
Total Independents	437	460