

POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

A Third of Americans Regard Obama and Palin as Out of Touch

Independent voters have a more nuanced view of Obama, but rely mostly on negative words to describe Palin.

[NEW YORK – Sept. 9, 2010] – More than half of Americans praise the intelligence of Barack Obama, but some cracks are appearing in the second year of his mandate, as a third of respondents believe that their president is out of touch, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,000 American adults, respondents were asked to select up to six words or phrases from a list to describe two politicians and two media personalities. This exercise, which has been used by Angus Reid Public Opinion in the past to review perceptions in [Canada](#) and [Britain](#), facilitates an analysis based on emotional responses.

Barack Obama

At least three-in-ten respondents used one of seven words of phrases to describe Barack Obama. More than half of respondents (52%) said the U.S. President is intelligent. The three other positive responses were strong (32%), honest (31%) and compassionate (30%). Still, three negative words of phrases were used to describe Obama: out of touch (33%), arrogant (31%) and inefficient (30%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Words used to describe Barack Obama: Intelligent (52%), Out of touch (33%), Strong (32%)**
- **Words used to describe Sarah Palin: Foolish (37%), Out of touch (32%), Arrogant (31%),**
- **Words used to describe Jon Stewart: Intelligent (26%), In touch (20%), Honest (19%)**
- **Words used to describe Glenn Beck: Arrogant (28%), Intelligent (25%), Foolish (21%)**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From September 1 to September 2, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,000 American adults who are Springboard America panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of the United States.

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Across party lines, at least half of Democrats think Obama is intelligent, strong, honest and compassionate, while most Republicans brand him as arrogant, out of touch, dishonest and inefficient. Independents have a more nuanced view, with 57 per cent calling Obama intelligent, and 39 per cent believing he is out of touch.

Sarah Palin

More than a third of respondents think Sarah Palin is foolish (37%). Three other negative words or phrases used to describe the former Republican Vice Presidential nominee are out of touch (32%), arrogant (31%), and inefficient (27%). About one-in-four respondents rely on two positive words: strong (27%) and intelligent (26%).

Across party lines, more than two-in-five Democrats regard Palin as foolish, out of touch and arrogant, while almost half of Republicans consider her intelligent, down to earth, strong and honest. Two-in-five Independents say Palin is foolish, and three-in-ten think she is arrogant and out of touch.

Jon Stewart

Almost half of respondents (47%) could not provide any words to describe Jon Stewart. The Comedy Central host is seen as intelligent (26%), in touch (20%) and honest (19%).

The word used the most by Democrats is intelligent, while Republicans countered with arrogant. One third of Independents also perceive Stewart as intelligent.

Glenn Beck

Two-in-five respondents (39%) did not know enough about Glenn Beck to choose any words or phrases. The conservative radio and television host is clearly a polarizing figure, with at least one-in-five Americans regarding him as arrogant (28%), intelligent (25%) and foolish (21%).

A third of Democrats think Beck is arrogant, while two-in-five Republicans consider him intelligent. Independents are almost evenly split when using these two words, with 30 per cent branding Beck as arrogant, and 28 per cent saying he is intelligent.

Analysis

Partisan views paint a very clear picture of perceptions of the current president and one of his possible rivals in the 2012 election. Democrats maintain very positive views of Obama after his first year and a half in office, while Republicans regard Palin as a person who is honest and has the human touch. Independents—always a key voting component in presidential elections—are more likely to regard Obama as intelligent, but provide a scathing review of both politicians as being out of touch.

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For the two television personalities, the ratings are significantly lower. Stewart seems to be connecting well with Democrats, while Beck earns a considerable amount of positive reviews from Republicans. However, while Independents are more likely to use positive words to describe Stewart, some negative phrases appear when they ponder how they feel about Beck.

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Political Personalities

Here are some words that people may use to describe a person. Please select up to six words you think describe Barack Obama.

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Down to earth	28%	42%	11%	25%
Arrogant	31%	11%	63%	32%
Open	21%	32%	8%	19%
Secretive	27%	15%	44%	32%
Efficient	21%	34%	5%	19%
Inefficient	30%	14%	51%	37%
Compassionate	30%	50%	10%	23%
Uncaring	15%	5%	31%	16%
Honest	31%	50%	12%	24%
Dishonest	25%	7%	53%	26%
Strong	32%	53%	10%	26%
Weak	18%	9%	33%	19%
Exciting	7%	13%	1%	5%
Boring	9%	6%	14%	7%
In touch	22%	35%	6%	19%
Out of touch	33%	14%	56%	39%
Intelligent	52%	67%	31%	57%
Foolish	17%	9%	32%	15%
None of these / I don't know who this person is	3%	3%	0%	2%

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Political Personalities

Here are some words that people may use to describe a person. Please select up to six words you think describe Sarah Palin.

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Down to earth	26%	12%	49%	28%
Arrogant	31%	42%	14%	33%
Open	21%	14%	37%	18%
Secretive	14%	15%	8%	16%
Efficient	11%	6%	21%	10%
Inefficient	27%	37%	12%	26%
Compassionate	20%	10%	39%	20%
Uncaring	16%	23%	7%	14%
Honest	20%	8%	46%	17%
Dishonest	23%	35%	6%	19%
Strong	27%	15%	48%	28%
Weak	21%	29%	9%	16%
Exciting	14%	7%	28%	13%
Boring	17%	27%	4%	15%
In touch	16%	8%	33%	14%
Out of touch	32%	45%	14%	31%
Intelligent	26%	13%	49%	27%
Foolish	37%	49%	13%	43%
None of these / I don't know who this person is	7%	8%	3%	7%

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Political Personalities

Here are some words that people may use to describe a person. Please select up to six words you think describe Jon Stewart.

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Down to earth	17%	24%	11%	14%
Arrogant	15%	10%	22%	15%
Open	18%	25%	8%	18%
Secretive	3%	2%	6%	1%
Efficient	8%	12%	5%	6%
Inefficient	4%	3%	8%	3%
Compassionate	5%	6%	4%	7%
Uncaring	5%	4%	8%	3%
Honest	19%	27%	9%	19%
Dishonest	5%	3%	8%	5%
Strong	12%	19%	6%	10%
Weak	4%	2%	8%	2%
Exciting	16%	22%	10%	18%
Boring	7%	4%	11%	4%
In touch	20%	26%	12%	20%
Out of touch	7%	4%	13%	4%
Intelligent	26%	30%	18%	32%
Foolish	11%	7%	18%	10%
None of these / I don't know who this person is	47%	42%	51%	48%

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Political Personalities

Here are some words that people may use to describe a person. Please select up to six words you think describe Glenn Beck.

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Down to earth	13%	6%	27%	15%
Arrogant	28%	35%	17%	30%
Open	16%	9%	32%	15%
Secretive	6%	7%	3%	9%
Efficient	7%	5%	15%	4%
Inefficient	9%	14%	4%	8%
Compassionate	11%	6%	22%	12%
Uncaring	13%	20%	6%	12%
Honest	17%	9%	30%	18%
Dishonest	15%	21%	5%	16%
Strong	17%	10%	28%	19%
Weak	7%	9%	6%	5%
Exciting	10%	6%	22%	7%
Boring	9%	12%	6%	8%
In touch	16%	9%	31%	13%
Out of touch	16%	23%	7%	16%
Intelligent	25%	11%	44%	28%
Foolish	21%	28%	9%	21%
None of these / I don't know who this person is	39%	41%	31%	37%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record can be found at:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at
<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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