



Poll: Bush approval mark nears low

Congress receives poor marks too in latest Gallup poll

(CNN) -- President Bush's job approval rating dropped to near its lowest point and Congress received poor marks as well in a national poll released Monday.

Forty-six percent of 1,006 adults polled over the weekend said they approved of the overall job Bush is doing, according to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll.

Over the past year, Bush's rating has hovered near 50 percent, with a low of 45 percent in March and a high of 57 percent just after his second inauguration and the State of the Union in February.

The 46 percent figure is down about 4 percentage points since a poll taken at the beginning of May.

The approval rating poll question, asked by telephone on May 20-May 22, had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Pollsters split some questions on specific issues between two "half groups" of respondents. Those questions had a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

On domestic issues, the president's approval ratings are at an all-time low -- 40 percent of respondents approve of his work on the economy and 33 percent approve of his plans for Social Security changes.

Bush fared best among respondents when they were asked if they approved or disapproved how he was handling terrorism.

But while 55 percent of the people taking part in the poll approved, that figure was down 2 percentage points from a poll taken in April.

On the Iraq war, the president's approval mark remained low -- just 40 percent of those agreed with the way he is handling the situation.

Most of those surveyed (52 percent) said they think Bush has "the personality and leadership qualities a president should have."

But many said they differ on the issues that matter most to them -- 57 percent disagreed with the president, while 40 percent said they agreed.

Congressional ratings

Both Democrats and Republicans in the Senate fared badly on the judicial nominees issue.

When asked to choose, 58 percent of respondents in the split part of the poll said Republican leaders were behaving like "spoiled children" on the matter while 31 percent picked "responsible adults."

Democratic leaders were viewed almost in the same light, with 54 percent of respondents disapproving and 36 percent approving.

On a separate question asked of half the respondents, 48 percent said they favored the Democrats in the dispute and 40 percent favored the GOP.

Several questions involving Congress were put to all respondents. Those questions had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

On the question of their interest in the filibuster issue, 37 percent said they had not been following it at all and 20 percent picked "not too closely."

All respondents were also asked whether they would change the filibuster and/or preserve it.

Thirty-five percent sided with changing Senate rules, 19 percent agreed on keeping the filibuster, and 34 percent wanted filibuster rules to remain intact but for nominees to receive a full Senate vote.

On the federal judiciary itself, 29 percent of all respondents said judges were too liberal, 19 percent said they were too conservative and 44 percent said they were "about right."

The poll also indicated Americans might want a change in Congress, with 47 percent of all respondents saying the country would be better off if Democrats were in control, compared with 36 percent who favored Republicans. Nine percent picked "neither."

Republicans control the Senate with 55 seats, Democrats have 44 seats and one senator lists himself as independent.

In the 435-member House of Representatives, Republicans hold 231 seats to the Democrats' 202. One member is an independent and there is one vacancy at the moment.
