



TO: Sunday Show Producers

FR: David Axelrod, Senior Strategist

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Public polling released this week makes clear that Americans strongly agree with the President's plan to create jobs and provide economic security for the middle class and believe that leaders in both parties should move quickly to pass the American Jobs Act.

Members of the media have focused on the President's approval ratings as if they existed in a black box. Following the intransigence of the Republicans during the debt debate, the approval rating of the GOP brand dropped to a historic low. The approval rating of Congress dropped to a near historic low. Americans are still dealing with the impact of the financial crisis and recession and the long-term economic trends that have seen wages stagnate for many, and that is manifested in their anger towards Washington. There's no doubt that Americans are calling on leaders in Washington to take immediate action to address their economic challenges -- exactly what the President is advocating for.

According to a CNN poll released on Wednesday, a plurality of Americans approve of the President's jobs plan. Two thirds believe we should cut taxes for the middle class and rebuild America's roads and bridges. Three quarters believe we need to put our teachers and first responders back to work. More Americans trust the President to handle the economy than Congressional Republicans by a margin of 9 points.

Despite what you hear in elite commentary, the President's support among base voters and in key demographic groups has stayed strong. According to the latest NBC-WSJ poll, Democrats approve of his performance by an 81%-14% margin. That's stronger than President Clinton's support among Democrats at this point in his term and, according to Gallup, stronger than any Democratic President dating back to Harry Truman through this point in their presidency. 92 percent of African Americans approve. And a PPP poll out this week showed the President winning 67 percent of Hispanics against Romney and 70 percent against Perry, a higher percentage than he captured against Senator McCain in 2008.

The base is mobilized behind the President. 12,000 individuals applied to join the campaign as volunteer summer fellows, more than in 2008. 1,100 students across the country are organizing their campuses in support of the campaign as fellows this fall. We had 552,462 individuals give to the campaign in the second quarter -- more than we had in all of 2007. Of our 552,462 total donors to the 2012 campaign so far, more than 260,000 of them are completely new to the Obama organization and have never given before.

The Republicans have yet to choose a nominee, and therefore, most Americans have yet to learn much about their records or visions for the country. Their candidates are busy courting the Tea Party, signing off on any economic pledge it might demand – no revenue increases under any circumstances, ending Medicare as we know it, draconian cuts that will hamper job creation. And Americans are increasingly rejecting the Tea Party's agenda and its ideological rigidity – following the debt negotiations, an AP poll found the Tea Party's approval rating sinking to 28-46. When Americans learn the details of the Republican candidates' plans, the choice about America's future will come into clear view.

Despite the Republican candidates just beginning to undergo the media scrutiny that occurs during a presidential campaign, from North Carolina to Nevada, the President remains ahead or in a dead heat with the Republican candidates in the battleground states that will decide the election in 2012. And ultimately it is in those battleground states where voters will choose, 14 months from now, between two candidates, their records, and their visions for the country.

*This is the first in a series of memos on the state of our campaign.*