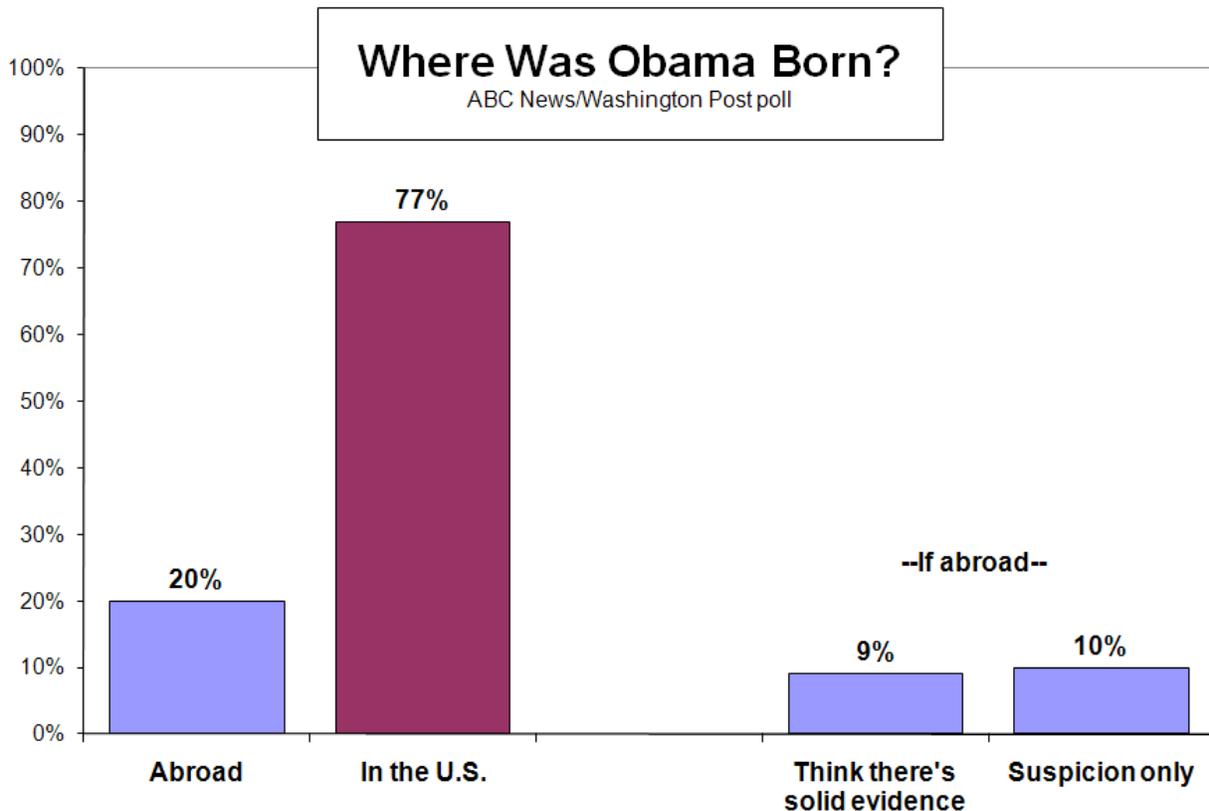


## Half of ‘Birthers’ Call it ‘Suspicion’; A Third Approve of Obama Anyway

Fourteen percent of Americans say without prompting that they think Barack Obama was born in another country, rising to one in five when those with no opinion are offered that as a possibility. But for many it’s not a firm belief – and some appear not to hold it against him.

Among those inclined to think Obama was born abroad, half also say that’s their suspicion only, not a judgment based on solid evidence, the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll finds. And perhaps surprisingly, about a third of so-called “birthers” nonetheless approve of Obama’s work in office and express a favorable opinion of him personally.

Still it’s mostly Obama critics who suggest he was born abroad; two-thirds of those who express that view also disapprove of his work in office and view him unfavorably overall. That, along with other data, supports the notion that some of this view is an expression of antipathy toward Obama, rather than a firm belief he was born in another country.



Obama's birthplace has been the subject of some controversy since the election campaign, given the Constitution's requirement that the president be a "natural born citizen." The debate has persisted despite research by organizations such as [Factcheck.org](http://Factcheck.org), which in November 2008 reproduced his birth announcement, published in the Honolulu Advertiser in 1961, and said members of its staff had personally examined his birth certificate. It declared: "The evidence is clear: Barack Obama was born in the U.S.A."

The story returned to the news when the Hawaii legislature last week [approved a bill](#) authorizing the state Health Department to ignore repeated requests for information on Obama's birth records. The department's director had testified it was taking time and resources to respond "to these often convoluted inquiries." The bill's on the governor's desk.

**THE QUESTION** – This ABC/Post poll posed the question neutrally; first: "On another subject, where was Barack Obama born, as far as you know?" Sixty-eight percent said the United States (or a location within the country), 14 percent said another country and 19 percent had no opinion.

Those with no opinion were asked, "Is it your best guess that Obama was born in the United States, or in another country?" (The order of those phrases was rotated). That produced an additional 6 percent of Americans taking the "other country" option, for a total of 20 percent. The number saying he was born in the United States rose to 77 percent, with the remaining 3 percent still expressing no opinion.

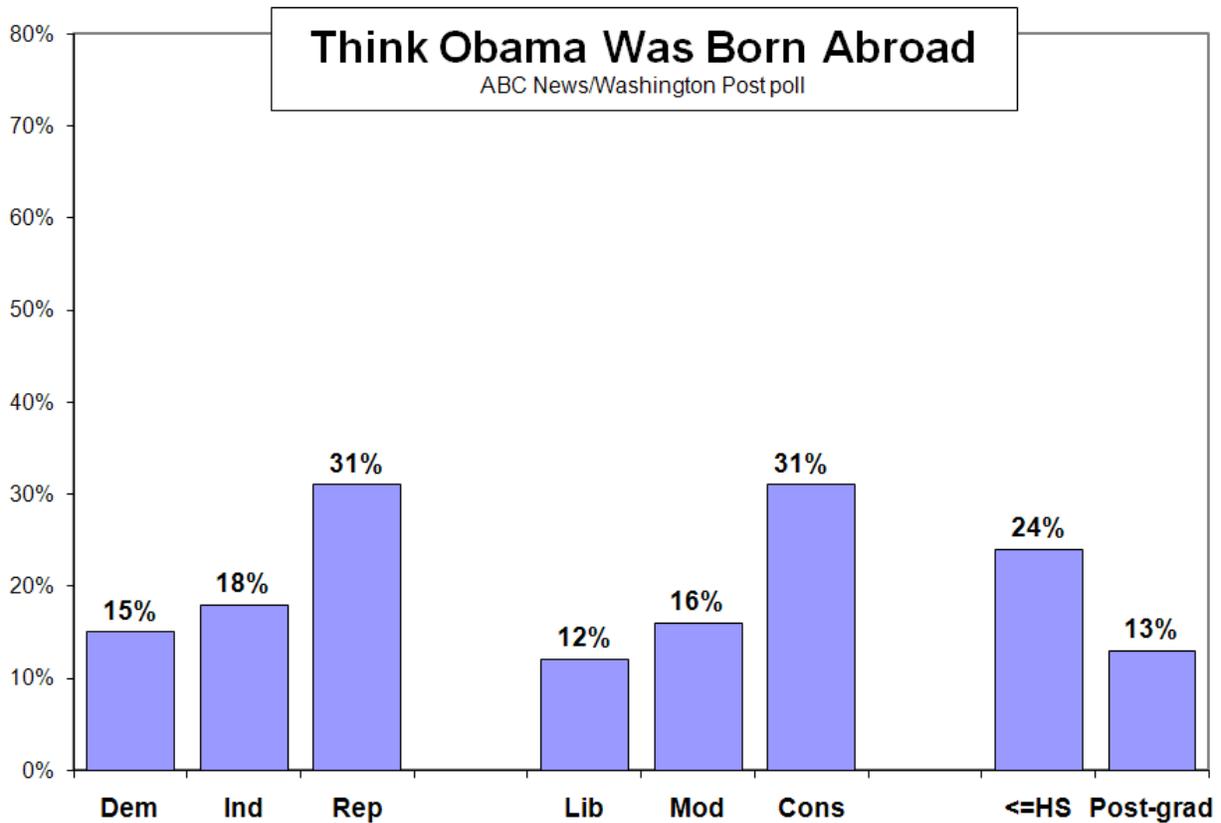
The other-country group includes 9 percent of Americans who said, in a follow-up question, that they think there's "been solid evidence" Obama was born in another country. The rest, 10 percent, called it their "suspicion only." (This could reflect a [phenomenon](#) in which some people may answer polling questions with something other than literal intent – rather, to express broader support for, or opposition to, an individual, group or policy.)

**GROUPS** – In addition to Obama disapprovers, people who are more apt than others to say Obama was born in another country include conservatives, Republicans, supporters of the Tea Party political movement (31 percent in each group), evangelical white Protestants (33 percent), and supporters of John McCain in 2008 (30 percent) – all groups broadly critical of Obama.

There's also an educational element, with people who haven't gone beyond high school nearly twice as apt as those with postgraduate degrees to suggest Obama was born abroad.

% saying Obama was born in another country	
Democrats	15%
Independents	18
Republicans	31
Liberals	12
Moderates	16
Conservatives	31
2008: Obama	11
2008: McCain	30

<=High school 24  
 Post-graduate 13



At the same time, 15 percent of Democrats say they think Obama was born elsewhere, as do 12 percent of liberals. And among people who say this, 31 percent approve of his job performance regardless, with an additional 3 percent expressing no opinion of his work in office. Similarly, among people who think Obama is foreign-born, 34 percent also express a favorable opinion of him overall; 64 percent, unfavorable.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 22-25, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3.5-point error margin. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

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Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

32 and 32a. On another subject, where was Barack Obama born, as far as you know? (IF DON'T KNOW) Is it your best guess that Obama was born in the United States, or in another country?

NET table

	---United States---			--- Other country ---			
	NET	Initial	Best guess	NET	Initial	Best guess	No opinion
4/25/10	77	68	9	20	14	6	3

32b. (IF ANOTHER COUNTRY)(Do you think there's been solid evidence of that), or (is that your suspicion only)?

NET table

		----- Other country -----				
	U.S.	NET	Solid evidence	Suspicion only	No opin.	No opinion
4/25/10	77	20	9	10	1	3

(Q11 held for release; others previously released.)