



# REASON-RUPE

## Public Opinion Survey

### FALL 2011 TOPLINE RESULTS

UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 1st

1. How would you rate the job performance of President Obama? Would you say you approve or disapprove of his performance?

Strongly Approve	24
Somewhat Approve	23
Somewhat Disapprove	14
Strongly Disapprove	34
Don't Know	5
Total	100
<i>Net Approve</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Net Disapprove</i>	<i>48</i>

2. How would you rate the job performance of Congress? Would you say you approve or disapprove of Congress's job performance?

Strongly Approve	3
Somewhat Approve	11
Somewhat Disapprove	20
Strongly Disapprove	61
Don't Know	5
Total	100
<i>Net Approve</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Net Disapprove</i>	<i>81</i>

5. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The federal government should have a spending cap that prevents it from spending more than it takes in during a given year."

Strongly Agree	62
Somewhat Agree	15
Somewhat Disagree	8
Strongly Disagree	12
Don't Know	3
Total	100
<i>Net Agree</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Net Disagree</i>	<i>20</i>

*Nationwide telephone poll conducted August 9th-18th of both mobile and landline phones, 1200 adults, margin of error +/- 3%. Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding error.*

For more information on this survey, please visit <http://reason.com/poll> or email [polling@reason.org](mailto:polling@reason.org)

5.1 Would you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment to require a balanced federal budget?

Favor Strongly	50
Favor Somewhat	19
Oppose Somewhat	9
Oppose Strongly	17
Don't Know	6
Total	100
<i>Net Favor</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Net Oppose</i>	<i>26</i>

6. Which of the following options comes closest to your view about the best way to reduce the national debt?

Increase Taxes/ No Spending Cuts	7
Mainly Increase Taxes/ Some Spending Cuts	8
Equal Emphasis on Both	23
Mainly Decrease Spending/ Some Tax Increase	20
Decrease Spending/ No Tax Increase	37
Don't Know	5
Total	100
<i>Primarily Spending Cuts (some tax increases)</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Equal Emphasis on Both</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Primarily Tax Increases (some spending cuts)</i>	<i>15</i>

7. Do you believe reducing government spending will mostly help, mostly harm, or have no impact on the economy?

Mostly Help	57
Mostly Harm	21
No Impact	15
Don't Know	6
Total	100

8. To reduce federal spending, would you favor or oppose closing the U.S. Postal Service and allowing people to use private firms such as FedEx or UPS to deliver all mail and packages?

Favor Strongly	11
Favor Somewhat	11
Oppose Somewhat	15
Oppose Strongly	58
Don't Know	5
Total	100
<i>Net Favor</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Net Oppose</i>	<i>73</i>

9. If the federal government raised taxes, do you believe they would use that money to reduce the deficit or do you believe they would spend that money on new programs instead?

Reduce Deficit	27
Spend on New Programs	62
Don't Know	12
Total	100

10. Do you think the federal government should increase taxes on the wealthy?

Yes	69
No	28
Don't Know	3
Total	100

{IF 10 YES} 10a. OPEN- What household income would you use to define someone who is wealthy and thus should pay higher taxes? (For the typical household)

1% Percentile	50000
25% Percentile	200000
50% Percentile ( <i>Median</i> )	250000
75% Percentile	500000
99 % Percentile	\$10 Billion

11. Do you expect your taxes to increase, decrease, or stay the same over the next five years?

Increase a Lot	32
Increase a Little	36
Stay the Same	22
Decrease a Little	4
Decrease a Lot	2
Don't Know	4
Total	100
<i>Net Increase</i>	69
<i>Net Decrease</i>	6

12. "People like me should be primarily responsible for saving enough money to meet basic expenses in retirement"; OR, "People like me should primarily expect help from the government to meet basic expenses in retirement"

Primarily Responsible for Saving Enough for Retirement	60
Primarily Expect Help from Government for Retirement	33
Don't Know	7
Total	100

13. “People like me should be primarily responsible for saving enough money to purchase health insurance in retirement”; OR, “People like me should primarily expect help from the government to pay for health insurance in retirement”.

Primarily Responsible for Health Insurance in Retirement	43
Primarily Expect Help from Gov't for Health Insurance	50
Don't Know	7
Total	100

14. Who do you believe should receive Social Security benefits? “All who have paid into the system”; OR, “Only those in financial need”?

All Who Have Paid into the System	80
Only Those in Financial Need	16
Don't Know	4
Total	100

15. Who do you believe should receive Medicare benefits? “All who have paid into the system”; OR, “Only those in financial need”?

All Who Have Paid into the System	71
Only Those in Financial Need	23
Don't Know	6
Total	100

16. A plan has been proposed that would allow workers to opt out of Social Security, meaning they could choose to not pay Social Security taxes and not receive Social Security benefits. Would you favor or oppose allowing workers to opt out of Social Security and rely on their own private retirement savings?

Favor Strongly	35
Favor Somewhat	19
Oppose Somewhat	10
Oppose Strongly	31
Don't Know	6
Total	100
<i>Net Favor</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Net Oppose</i>	<i>41</i>

17. Would you favor or oppose a similar plan that would allow workers to opt out of Medicare?

Favor Strongly	36
Favor Somewhat	21
Oppose Somewhat	10
Oppose Strongly	27
Don't Know	6
Total	100
<i>Net Favor</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Net Oppose</i>	<i>37</i>

18. Would you be willing to have your current or future Social Security benefits reduced as part of a plan to balance the federal budget or ensure the Social Security program remains in place for future retirees?

Yes	37
No	57
Don't Know	6
Total	100

{If 18: NO} 18a. Would you be more willing to accept reductions in your current or future Social Security benefits if you were still guaranteed to receive at least the amount of money that you have contributed into the system?

Yes	43
No	53
Don't Know	4
Total	100

DERIVED: Would you be willing to accept reductions in your current or future Social Security benefits as part of a plan to balance the federal budget or if you were still guaranteed to receive at least the amount of money that you have contributed into the system?

Yes	61
No	30
Don't Know	9
Total	100

19. Would you be willing to have your current or future Medicare benefits reduced as part of a plan to balance the federal budget or ensure Medicare remains in place for future retirees?

Yes	43
No	51
Don't Know	6
Total	100

{If 19: NO} 19a. Would you be more willing to accept a reduction in your current or future Medicare benefits if you were still guaranteed to receive at least the amount you have contributed into the system?

Yes	32
No	66
Don't Know	2
Total	100

DERIVED: Would you be willing to accept reductions in your current or future Medicare benefits as part of a plan to balance the federal budget or if you were still guaranteed to receive at least the amount of money that you have contributed into the system?

Yes	59
No	33
Don't Know	8
Total	100

20. Americans can currently retire with full Social Security benefits at the age of 65. Do you think the retirement age should be raised?

Yes	30
No	67
Don't Know	3
Total	100

21. OPEN – What do you think the Social Security retirement age should be?

Mean ( <i>Average</i> )	65
1% Percentile	54
25% Percentile	65
50% Percentile ( <i>Median</i> )	65
75% Percentile	67
99 % Percentile	75

22. Do you currently receive Social Security benefits?

Yes	21
No	78
Refused	0
Total	100

DERIVED: RETIREES: Expect to get regular or reduced Social Security benefits?

Get Back Less	23
Get Back Regular	64
Don't Know	13
Total	100

DERIVED: NON-RETIREES: Expect to get regular or reduced Social Security benefits?

Get Back Less	45
Get Back Regular	49
Don't Know	6
Total	100

DERIVED: COMBINED RETIREES & NON-RETIREES: Expect to get regular or reduced Social Security benefits?

Get Back Less	40
Get Back Regular	52
Don't Know	8
Total	100

23. Do you currently receive Medicare benefits?

Yes	20
No	80
Refused	1
Total	100

DERIVED: RETIREES: Expect to get regular or reduced Medicare benefits?

Get Back Less	19
Get Back Regular	66
Don't Know	15
Total	100

DERIVED: NON-RETIREES: Expect to get regular or reduced Medicare benefits?

Get Back Less	46
Get Back Regular	47
Don't Know	7
Total	100

DERIVED: COMBINED RETIREES & NON-RETIREES: Expect to get regular or reduced Medicare benefits?

Get Back Less	40
Get Back Regular	51
Don't Know	9
Total	100

24. The Congressional Tea Party Caucus has opposed any bill that would increase federal tax revenues; do you favor or oppose their approach?

Favor Strongly	24
Favor Somewhat	13
Oppose Somewhat	15
Oppose Strongly	38
Don't Know	10
Total	100
<i>Net Favor</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Net Oppose</i>	<i>53</i>

26. Do you think the Tea Party has had a positive or negative impact on the way Washington, DC works?

Positive Impact	34
Negative Impact	45
No Impact	7
Don't Know	14
Total	100

27. If the Tea Party ran its own candidate against President Obama and the Republican nominee in the 2012 presidential election, would you consider voting for him or her?

Yes	37
No	49
Don't Know	14
Total	100

28. Some people believe the Tea Party movement is primarily about cutting spending and limiting government; others believe that social issues, such as abortion, gay marriage, and immigration are equally important to the Tea Party. Which do you think is more accurate?

Cutting Spending	55
Social Issues	27
Don't Know	19
Total	100

As you may know, September 11th will mark the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The Department of Homeland Security was created shortly after 9/11 to coordinate the government's anti-terrorism efforts.

29. How confident are you that the Department of Homeland Security will prevent another terrorist attack on US soil? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, slightly confident, or not at all confident?

Very Confident	15
Somewhat Confident	40
Slightly Confident	21
Not at All Confident	22
Don't Know	2
Total	100

31. Do you think the TSA has made air travel safer?

Yes	69
No	26
Don't Know	5
Total	100



32. Are you confident that the TSA would catch a terrorist trying to board an airplane at a US airport?

Yes	49
No	44
Don't Know	7
Total	100

33. Would you favor or oppose replacing TSA airport security screeners with screeners from private companies working under government supervision?

Favor Strongly	21
Favor Somewhat	20
Oppose Somewhat	17
Oppose Strongly	31
Don't Know	11
Total	100
<i>Net Favor</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Net Oppose</i>	<i>47</i>

34. Thinking about the increased security measures that have been introduced by federal, state, and local governments since 9/11, I am going to read you several statements. For each statement, please tell me if you agree or disagree with that particular statement:

34a. "We are safer now"

Agree Strongly	25
Agree Somewhat	36
Disagree Somewhat	18
Disagree Strongly	18
Don't Know	4
Total	100
<i>Net Agree</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>Net Disagree</i>	<i>36</i>

34b. "We have less personal freedom now"

Agree Strongly	40
Agree Somewhat	22
Disagree Somewhat	18
Disagree Strongly	18
Don't Know	3
Total	100
<i>Net Agree</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>Net Disagree</i>	<i>36</i>

34c. "We have less privacy now"

Agree Strongly	55
Agree Somewhat	24
Disagree Somewhat	11
Disagree Strongly	8
Don't Know	2
Total	100
<i>Net Agree</i>	79
<i>Net Disagree</i>	19

34d. "Today's security measures may be inconvenient, but they are generally worth it"

Agree Strongly	49
Agree Somewhat	32
Disagree Somewhat	8
Disagree Strongly	8
Don't Know	3
Total	100
<i>Net Agree</i>	81
<i>Net Disagree</i>	16

34e. "We have given up too much freedom and privacy in the name of security"

Agree Strongly	35
Agree Somewhat	20
Disagree Somewhat	23
Disagree Strongly	20
Don't Know	2
Total	100
<i>Net Agree</i>	55
<i>Net Disagree</i>	43

35. About how many air trips, if any, have you taken on a commercial airliner in the past twelve months -- counting each round trip as one trip?

Mean (Average)	2
1% Percentile	0
25% Percentile	0
50% Percentile ( <i>Median</i> )	1
75% Percentile	3
99 % Percentile	30

DERIVED: About how many air trips, if any, have you taken on a commercial airliner in the past twelve months -- counting each round trip as one trip?

1. 3+ trips	28
2. 1-2 trips	28
0. 0 trips	45

36. Now that Osama bin Laden is dead, is the war on terror over?

Yes	2
No	96
Don't Know	2
Total	100

37. Today, do you feel that the United States uses its military force in foreign conflicts...too often, not often enough, or the right amount?

Too Often	61
Not Often Enough	9
Right Amount	25
Don't Know	6
Total	100

38. The United States is expected to have troops in Afghanistan until the end of 2014. Will keeping troops in Afghanistan for the next few years make the United States...more safe, less safe, or make no difference?

More Safe	19
Less Safe	12
No Difference	65
Don't Know	5
Total	100

39. Overall, would you say the war in Iraq has been worth it or not worth it for the United States?

Worth It	32
Not Worth It	62
Don't Know	6
Total	100

40. I would like to read you two statements about the current housing market and ask which one you agree with more:

“Statement A: The troubled housing market is the result of a lack of government oversight. Without proper government regulation, banks and lenders misled homebuyers into home mortgages they did not understand and could not afford.”

OR

“Statement B: The troubled housing market is the result of misguided government regulations, incentives, and subsidies. These regulations inflated housing prices and shielded lenders and borrowers from the consequences of their risky choices.”

Statement A	56
Statement B	35
Don't Know	9
Total	100

41. As you may know, President Obama has announced that he is running for re-election in 2012. Would you say you will definitely vote for him, you will consider voting for him, or you definitely will not vote for him?

Definitely Vote for Him	25
Consider Voting for Him	29
Definitely Not Vote for Him	42
Don't Know	4
Total	100

42. OPEN: If you could choose any American, who would you like to see run for president in 2012? (*top vote getters*)

President Obama	17
Hillary Clinton	6
Rick Perry	5
Mitt Romney	4
Sarah Palin	3
Ron Paul	2
Colin Powell	2
Mike Huckabee	1
Chris Christie	1
Donald Trump	1
Warren Buffet	1
Bill Clinton	1
Newt Gingrich	1
Michele Bachmann	1

43. Are you registered to vote?

Yes	91
No	9
Refused	0
Total	100

44. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?

Republican	25
Democrat	31
Independent	38
Other	2
Don't Know/ Refused	5
Total	100

{If INDEPENDENT} 44a. Do you think of yourself as CLOSER to the Republican Party, Democratic Party, or some other party? {If SOME OTHER PARTY} Which party?

Closer to Republican Party	27
Closer to Democratic Party	32
Other	1
Neither	36
Don't Know/ Refused	4
Total	100

DERIVED: Party Identification with Leaners

Democrat	31
Leans Democrat	13
Pure Independent	14
Leans Republican	12
Republican	25
Don't Know	6
Total	100

45. {If 44: Republican OR 44: Independent AND 44a: Closer to Republican Party} If you were voting today in the 2012 Republican primary for president, which one of the following candidates would you favor?

Mitt Romney	20
Rick Perry	18
Sarah Palin	12
Rudy Giuliani	8
Michele Bachmann	8
Ron Paul	7
Herman Cain	4
Newt Gingrich	3
Tim Pawlenty	2
Jon Huntsman	1
Rick Santorum	1
Gary Johnson	0
Undecided/ Don't Know/ Refused	16
Total	100

DERIVED: Party ID 5 with Tea Party

Tea Party	28
Democrat	29
Leans Democrat	11
Pure Independent	10
Leans Republican	5
Republican	11
Don't Know	5
Total	100

## DERIVED: Party ID 3 with Tea Party

Tea Party	28
Democrat	40
Pure Independent	10
Republican	16
Don't Know	5
Total	100

46. Would you consider voting for an independent or third party candidate for president in 2012?

Yes	53
No	25
Maybe	19
Don't Know/ Refused	4
Total	100

47. Generally speaking, would you support or oppose an independent or third party candidate who described him or herself as “conservative on economic issues” *and* “liberal on social issues”?

Support Strongly	18
Support Somewhat	30
Oppose Somewhat	12
Oppose Strongly	25
Don't Know	16
Total	100
<i>Net Support</i>	48
<i>Net Oppose</i>	37

I am going to read you two statements. After I read both statements, please tell me which comes closer to your own opinion. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your own views:

48. Some people say that “people get ahead by their own hard work”; others say “that lucky breaks or help from other people are more important”. Which do you think is more important?

Hard Work	81
Luck/ Help from Other People	15
Don't Know	5
Total	100

49. Some people say that “people generally get rich at the expense of others”; others say “that wealth can grow so there’s enough for everyone”. Which better describes your own views?

Get Rich at Expense of Others	46
Wealth Can Grow/ Enough for Everyone	48
Don't Know	6
Total	100

50. If you had to choose only one of these two values to teach your kids, which would it be? “To work hard and be self-reliant”; OR, “to learn how to share with others”

Work Hard and Be Self-Reliant	63
Learn How to Share with Others	29
Don't Know/ Refused	8
Total	100

I am going to read you two statements. After I read both statements, please tell me which comes closer to your own opinion. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your own views:

51. “The less government the better”; OR, “there are more things that government should be doing”.

Less Government the Better	48
More Things Government Should Be Doing	45
Don't Know	7
Total	100

52. “The government should be doing more to regulate businesses”; OR, “Too often, government regulation of businesses does more harm than good”.

Government to Do More to Regulate Businesses	38
Regulation of Businesses Does More Harm than Good	54
Don't Know	8
Total	100

53. “We need a strong government to handle today’s complex economic problems”; OR, “People would be better able to handle today’s problems within a free market with less government involvement”.

Strong Government to Handle Complex Economic Problems	48
Free Market with Less Government Involvement	46
Don't Know	6
Total	100

54. Some people think the government should promote traditional values in our society. Others think the government should not favor any particular set of values. Which comes closer to your own view?

Should Promote Traditional Values	46
Should Not Promote Any Particular Set of Values	49
Don't Know	5
Total	100

55. Thinking about your overall political philosophy, would you describe yourself as...conservative, moderate, liberal, libertarian, progressive, or something else?

Conservative	31
Moderate	30
Liberal	15
Libertarian	4
Progressive	9
Other	1
Don't Know/ Refused	11
Total	100

DERIVED: Ideology based on 4 role of gov questions

Liberal	25
Libertarian	26
Conservative	32
Communitarian	17
Total	100

DERIVED: Ideology based on 3 role of gov questions

Liberal	29
Libertarian	23
Conservative	28
Communitarian	20
Total	100

DERIVED: Ideology based on 2 role of gov questions

Liberal	27
Libertarian	24
Conservative	28
Communitarian	21
Total	100

DERIVED: Ideology based on 2a role of gov questions

Liberal	29
Libertarian	23
Conservative	27
Communitarian	22
Total	100

DERIVED: Ideological Landscape Average  
(from Role of Government Questions 51-54)

Liberal	28
Libertarian	24
Conservative	28
Communitarian	20



56. Do you consider yourself to be a supporter of the Tea Party movement or not?

Yes	28
No	63
Don't Know	9
Total	100

{If 56: NO} Did you ever consider yourself in the past to be a supporter of the Tea Party movement?

Yes	6
No	94
Don't Know	1
Total	100

DERIVED: Tea Party Supporter

TP Supporter	28
Past TP Supporter	4
Not TP Supporter	59
Don't Know	10
Total	100

57 GENDER

Male	48
Female	52
Total	100

58 AGE GROUP

18 to 29	17
30 to 44	29
45 to 54	21
55 to 64	21
65 or Older	13
Total	100

59 RACE/ETHNICITY

White	65
Black	13
Hispanic/ Latino	16
Asian	5
Native American	1
Other	1
Total	100

## 60 ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Less than \$25,000	15
\$25,000 to \$49,999	19
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20
\$75,000 to \$99,999	16
\$100,000 to \$199,999	15
\$200,000 or More	5
Don't Know/ Refused	11
Total	100

## 61 LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Less than High School Graduate	3
High School Graduate	21
Some College	30
College Graduate	25
Post Graduate	16
Refused	5
Total	100

## 62 EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employed Full-Time	40
Employed Part-Time	8
Self-Employed	9
Homemaker	7
Retired	17
Student	5
Unemployed	10
Refused	5
Total	100

## DERIVED: Employment Status

Employed Full-Time PRIVATE	28
Employed Full-Time PUBLIC	11
Employed Part-Time PRIVATE	6
Employed Part-Time PUBLIC	2
Self-Employed	9
Homemaker	7
Retired PREVIOUS PRIVATE	8
Retired PREVOIUS PUBLIC	8
Student	5
Unemployed	10
Refused	6
Total	100

## CENSUS REGION

Northeast	18
Midwest	22
South	36
West	23
Total	100

## 63 MARITAL STATUS

Married	56
Live with a Partner	2
Single	23
Divorced/ Separated	9
Widowed	5
Refused	5
Total	100

## 64 ARE YOU, OR IS ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY, A MEMBER OF A UNION?

Yes	21
No	74
Refused	5
Total	100

## 65 RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

Protestant	42
Catholic	25
Jewish	2
Muslim	1
Other	5
No Religion	15
Refused	10
Total	100

## 66 HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES?

Once a Week or More	35
A Few Times a Month	16
A Few Times a Year	21
Never	18
Refused	10
Total	100

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Q3 FALL 2011 POLL**

The Reason-Rupe Q3 2011 poll collected a nationally representative sample of 1200 respondents, aged 18 and older from all 50 states and the District of Columbia using live telephone interviews from August 9<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2011. The margin of sampling error for this poll is  $\pm 3$  percent. The margin of error for the GOP presidential race numbers is  $\pm 4.79\%$ . Interviews were conducted with respondents using both landline (790) and mobile phones (410). Landline respondents were randomly selected within households based on the adult who had the most recent birthday. Sample was weighted by gender, age, ethnicity, and Census region, based on the most recent US Census data. The sampling frame included landline and mobile phone numbers generated using Random Digit Dialing (RDD) methods and randomly selected numbers from a directory-listed sample. Click [here](#) for full methodological details. NSON Opinion Strategy conducted the poll's fieldwork

View [full methodology](#)