



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: STEVEN LAW/CARL FORTI
CROSSROADS GPS

FROM: GLEN BOLGER

RE: VOTER ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE OBAMA JOBS PLAN

DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2011

Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies completed a national survey on September 17-19, 2011 among 800 likely voters, including 120 who have cell phones only. Crossroads GPS bought some questions on the survey, which has a margin of error of $\pm 3.46\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.

Key Findings

1. ***The political environment remains problematic for President Obama.***

Only 16% say the country is going in the right direction, while 77% say it is pretty seriously off on the wrong track. The pessimism clearly affects President Obama, who has a 43% approve/53% disapprove rating. Intensity is a challenge – just 19% strongly approve, while 41% strongly disapprove.

2. ***Attitudes toward the President's jobs plan are polarized.***

We asked:

“As you may know, Barack Obama recently outlined a number of proposals concerning the economy and unemployment that he calls his jobs plan. Based on what you have seen, read or heard about his jobs plan, do you favor or oppose it?”

Compared to last week's public polls, support remains anemic (43% favor) while opposition is growing (42%). By intensity, 25% strongly favor, while 29% strongly oppose.

While his political base supports the plan (76% favor/8% oppose among Democrats), swing voters are opposed – Independents break 33% in favor/53% opposed. Republicans break 13% favor/76% oppose.

By ethnicity, whites are not supportive (37% favor/49% oppose), Hispanics are mildly supportive (47% favor/35% oppose), and African Americans back it strongly (79% favor/8% oppose).

3. ***Obama to Congress: “Pass this bill!” Voters to Congress: “Whoa, Nellie!”***

Asked whether Congress should pass the jobs plan right now or take a closer look at it, voters urge caution:

“Still thinking about the President’s jobs plan, do you think that Congress should pass the jobs plan right now, or should Congress take a closer look at the jobs plan to make sure the ideas will work before money is spent on them?”

25% PASS RIGHT NOW
69% TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Not only do Independents want Congress to do some homework on it (17% pass right now/75% take a closer look), but Democrats split 47% to 47% on timing. Not surprisingly, only 5% of Republicans say pass it right now, while 89% tell Congress to chill out.

Just 52% of voters who favor the Obama jobs plan say pass it now, while 45% think Congress should take a closer look. More importantly, there are 14% who do not have an opinion on the President’s jobs plan yet, among whom only 4% say pass it now, while 96% say take a closer look. So fence-sitters on the plan would prefer Congress take a closer look. Not surprisingly, only 3% of those who oppose the President’s jobs plan want to pass it right now, while 92% say take a closer look.

4. ***The electorate is divided about Obama’s plans for taxes.***

We asked the following:

“Now I would like to read you two statements about raising taxes. After I read each statement, please tell me which one comes closest to your own opinion.

46% Some people say that raising taxes in a bad economy is not a good idea. They say tax increases hurt those who create the most jobs - small businesses and business owners.
...while...

48% Other people say that corporations and the rich are not paying their fair share of taxes. They say tax increases will help cut the deficit and pay for important programs.”

As could be expected, Republicans break 75% raising taxes in a bad economy is not a good idea/19% rich are not paying their fair share, and Democrats are the opposite – only 18% say raising taxes in a bad economy is not a good idea, while 78% say the rich are not paying their fair share of taxes.

Independents are evenly divided – 49% say raising taxes in a bad economy is not a good idea, while 45% say the rich are not paying their fair share.

The Bottom Line

Since President Obama has been out there campaigning for his jobs plan, opposition has grown and support has not moved upward. The biggest challenge the President has is that Independents oppose the plan by twenty points.

Voters reject the idea that Congress should pass the bill right now, and instead support Congress taking a closer look at the jobs plan to make sure the ideas will work before money is spent on them. There is clear consensus on Congress slowing down and doing it right.

And, nearly half of the electorate think Obama's math is fuzzy – 46% say now is not the time to raise taxes in a bad economy because it will hurt small businesses and business owners, while a similar 48% say that corporations and the rich are not paying their fair share of taxes and that tax increases will help cut the deficit and pay for important programs.