



CONTACT: Pam Haynes
Communication Specialist
336-841-9055; phaynes@highpoint.edu

HPU POLL: PUTTING OBAMA’S 43 PERCENT APPROVAL RATING INTO HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

HIGH POINT, N.C., Nov. 22, 2011 – The latest HPU Poll finds an approval rating for Barack Obama at 43 percent. When put into historical perspective, Obama’s job performance rating is similar to that of former President Jimmy Carter’s job performance rating at the same time in his campaign – the fall before he failed to gain re-election, but lower than that of former President Ronald Reagan, who won a second term election.

The HPU Poll compares its most recent ratings with those fielded by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Carolina Poll in 1979, the fall before President Carter faced re-election, and in 1983, the fall before President Reagan was re-elected. The questions that North Carolinians answered in the HPU Poll were the same as those asked three decades ago in the Carolina Poll.

HPU Poll: Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

Approve	43 percent
Disapprove	48
(Don’t know/refuse)	9

HPU Poll, compared to the same question from the Carolina Poll in 1983: How would you rate the job Barack Obama has been doing as president? Would you say excellent, pretty good, only fair or poor?

	Obama 2011	Reagan 1983
Excellent	13 percent	12 percent
Pretty good	23	45
Only fair	30	30

Poor	32	12
(Don't know/refused)	2	1

HPU Poll, compared to the same question from Carolina Poll in 1979: On the whole, do you think Barack Obama has been doing a good job or poor job as president?

	Obama 2011	Carter 1979
Good	44 percent	47 percent
Poor	46	46
(Don't know/refused)	9	7

“This new data puts the upcoming presidential election in some historical perspective since President Reagan won a second term and President Carter did not,” said Assistant HPU Poll Director Sadie Leder. “We are still a long way out from Election Day and a lot may happen between now and then, but these results may be suggestive of the challenges ahead for President Obama.”

“Both Carter and Reagan are relevant because they present good comparisons to Obama’s situation,” adds Martin Kifer, director of the HPU Poll. “Both Carter and Reagan won the presidency with North Carolina within their electoral majorities just as Obama did in 2008.”

The High Point University Survey Research Center fielded the survey from Nov. 6-10 and 12-17, 2011. The responses came from 703 adults with landline and cellular telephones in North Carolina selected by a Random Digit Dial (RDD) method, giving the survey a margin of sampling error of approximately 4 percentage points. For smaller subsamples the margin of sampling error is larger. In addition to sampling error, factors such as question wording and other methodological choices in conducting survey research can introduce additional error into the findings of opinion polls.

Further results and methodological details from the survey and can be found at the Survey Research Center Web site, <http://src.highpoint.edu/>, or from Dr. Martin Kifer, the center’s director, at mkifer@highpoint.edu or 336-841-9333.

The Carolina Polls from which this press release takes additional findings is archived at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Odum Institute (<http://arc.irss.unc.edu/dvn/dv/odvn>). They were fielded in October 1979 and 1983. In 1979, the responses came from 612 adults with landline phones in North Carolina, giving the survey a margin of sampling error of approximately 4 percentage points. In 1983, the responses came from 586 adults with landline phones in North Carolina, giving the survey a margin of sampling error of approximately 4.1 percentage points. All frequencies reported in this release are from data downloaded from the Odum Institute’s archive, using provided case weights.

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