

The Political Environment for Health Care Reform

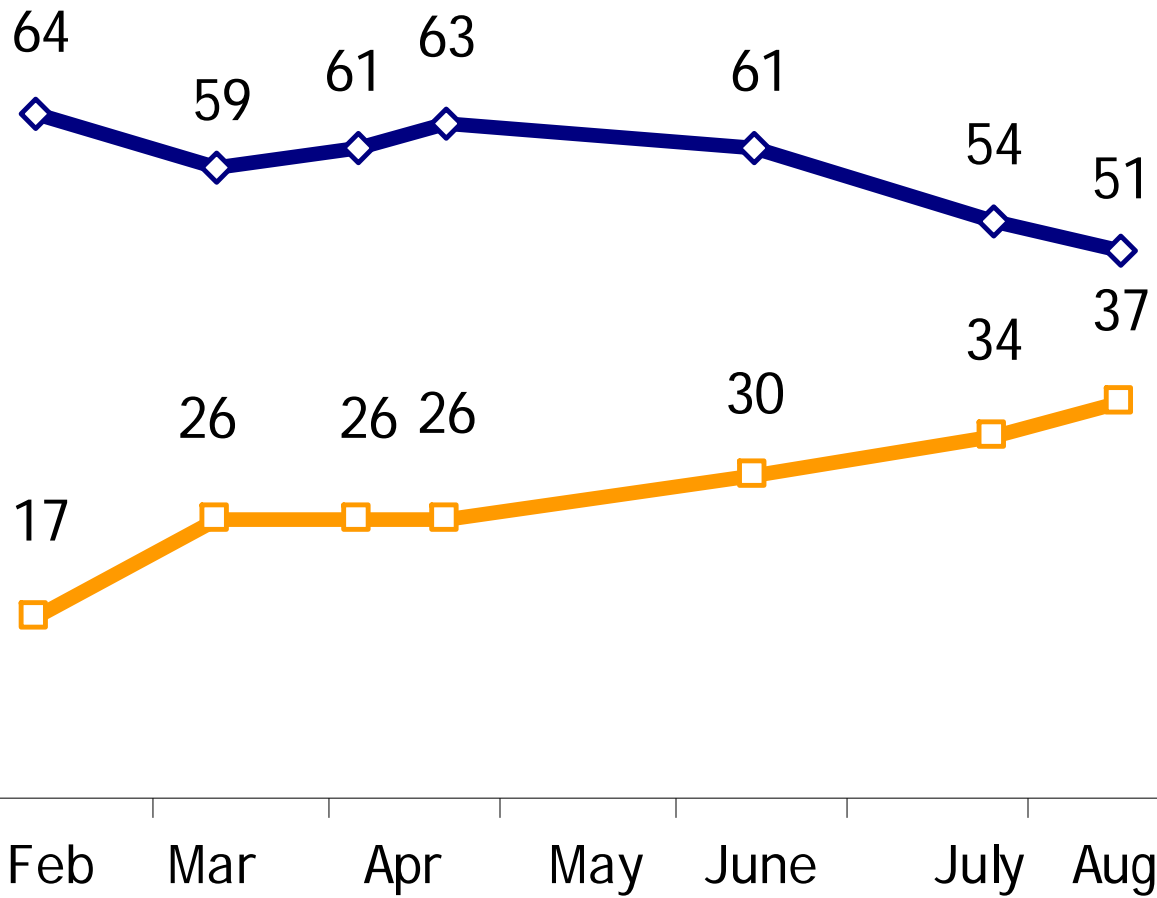
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Political climate for reform has gotten worse in recent weeks

- Obama's approval rating has fallen
- Democratic Party favorability has fallen
- Impossible to disentangle cause-and-effect with health care reform debate and Obama & party ratings
- But the slide in ratings complicates the chances for an ambitious bill

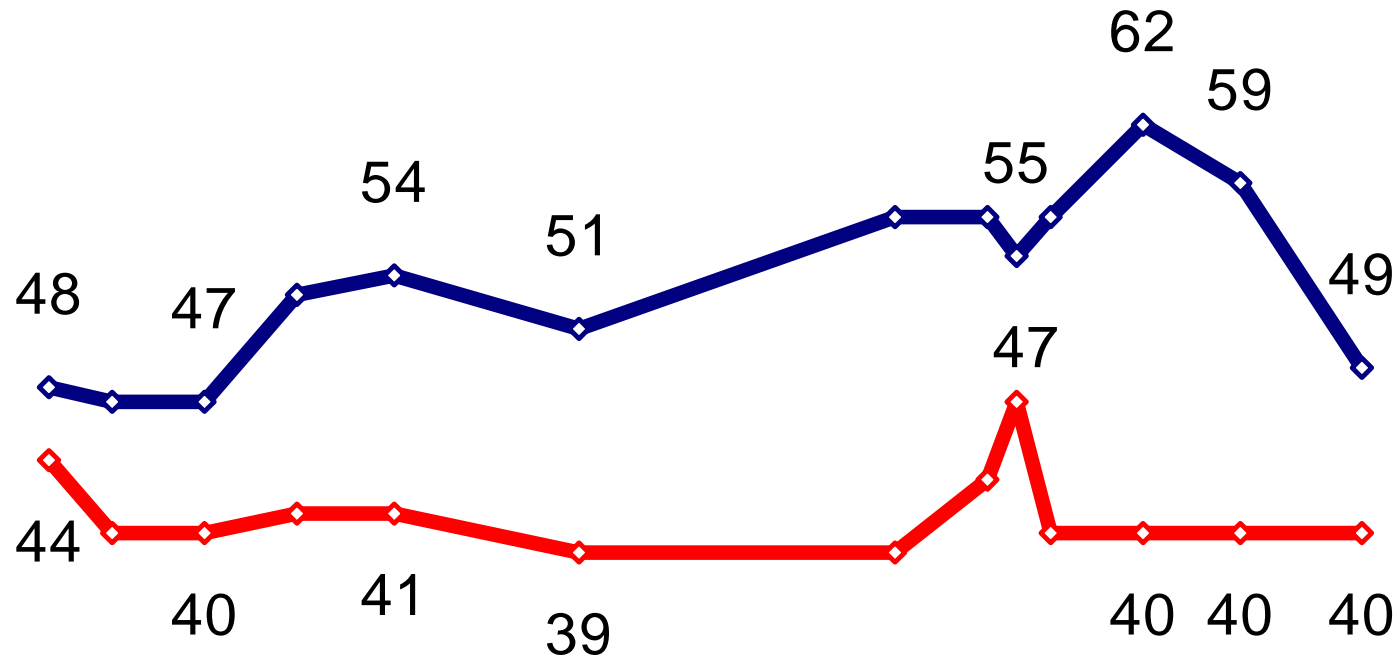
Obama Job Approval

—◇— Approve —□— Disapprove



Democratic Party Favorability Falls Sharply

—◆— Democratic Party —◆— Republican Party

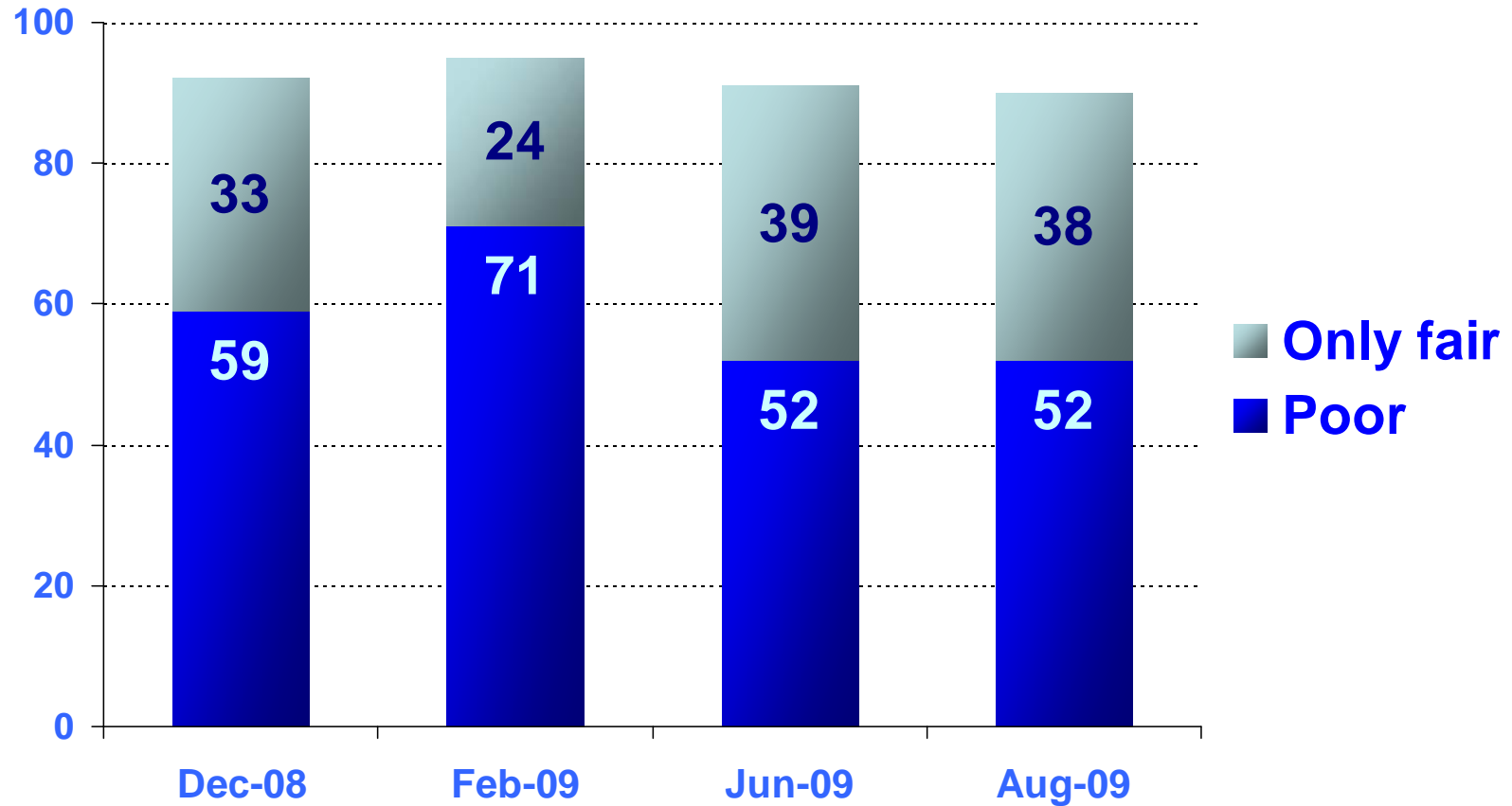


Feb 2006 Jan 2007 Sept 2008 Jan 2009 Aug 2009

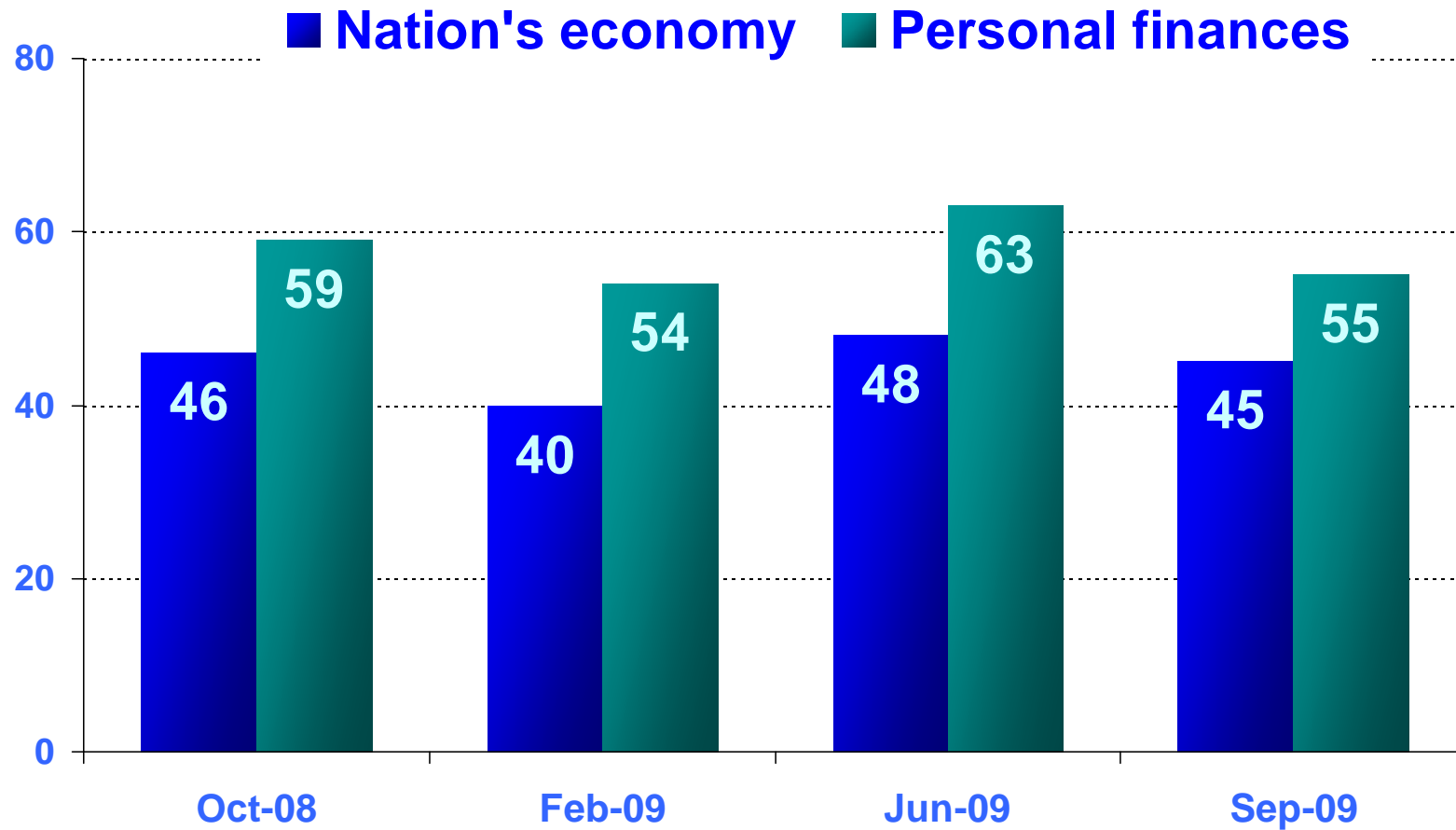
Economic anxieties show no sign of lessening

- Ratings of the national economy remain dismal
- Ratings of personal finances are somewhat better, but are not improving
- And optimism about personal finances has declined since June
- Obama and the Democrats are increasingly having to “own” the economy

Little Movement in Economic Ratings



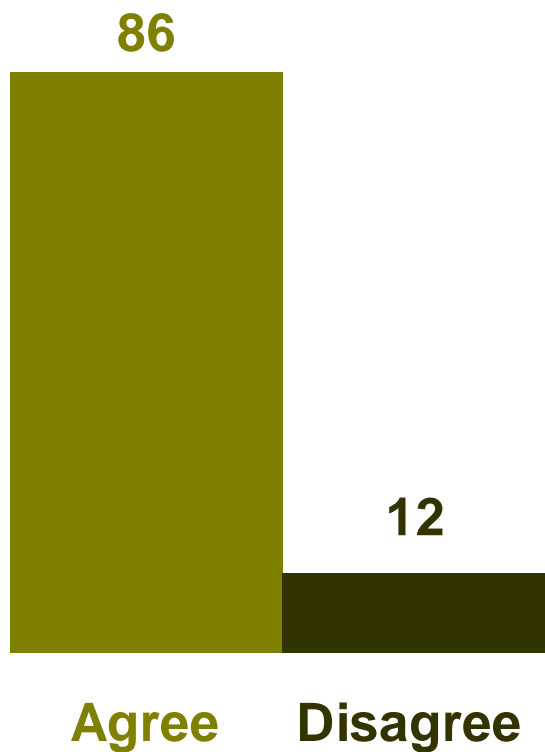
Optimism about Economy Sags



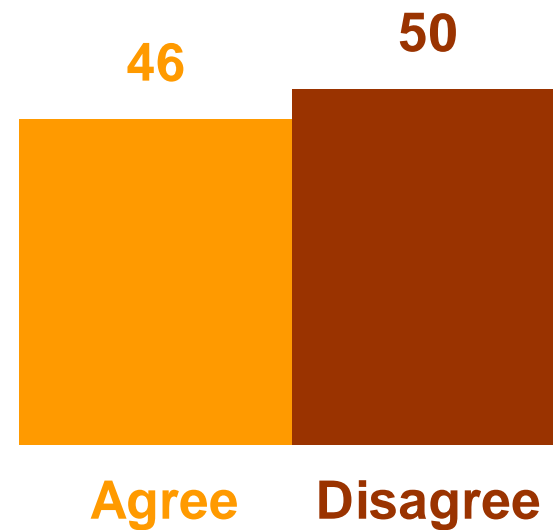
Ambivalence about government makes reform a harder sell

- Still a lot of support for fixing health care
- But skepticism about whether government can do a good job with reform
- Pew Values Survey in late spring found no growth in appetite for activist government
- And no growth in anti-business attitudes

The government needs to do more to make **health care** affordable and accessible



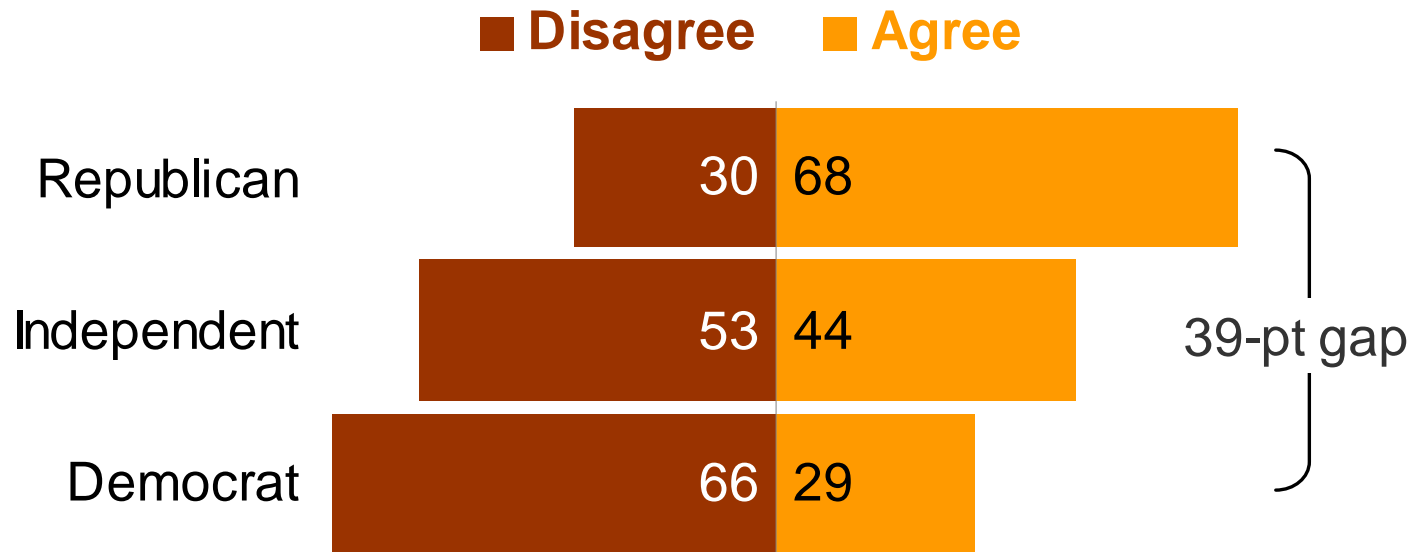
I am concerned about the government becoming too involved in **health care**



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The Largest Partisan Divide in the Values Survey

I am concerned about the government becoming too involved in health care

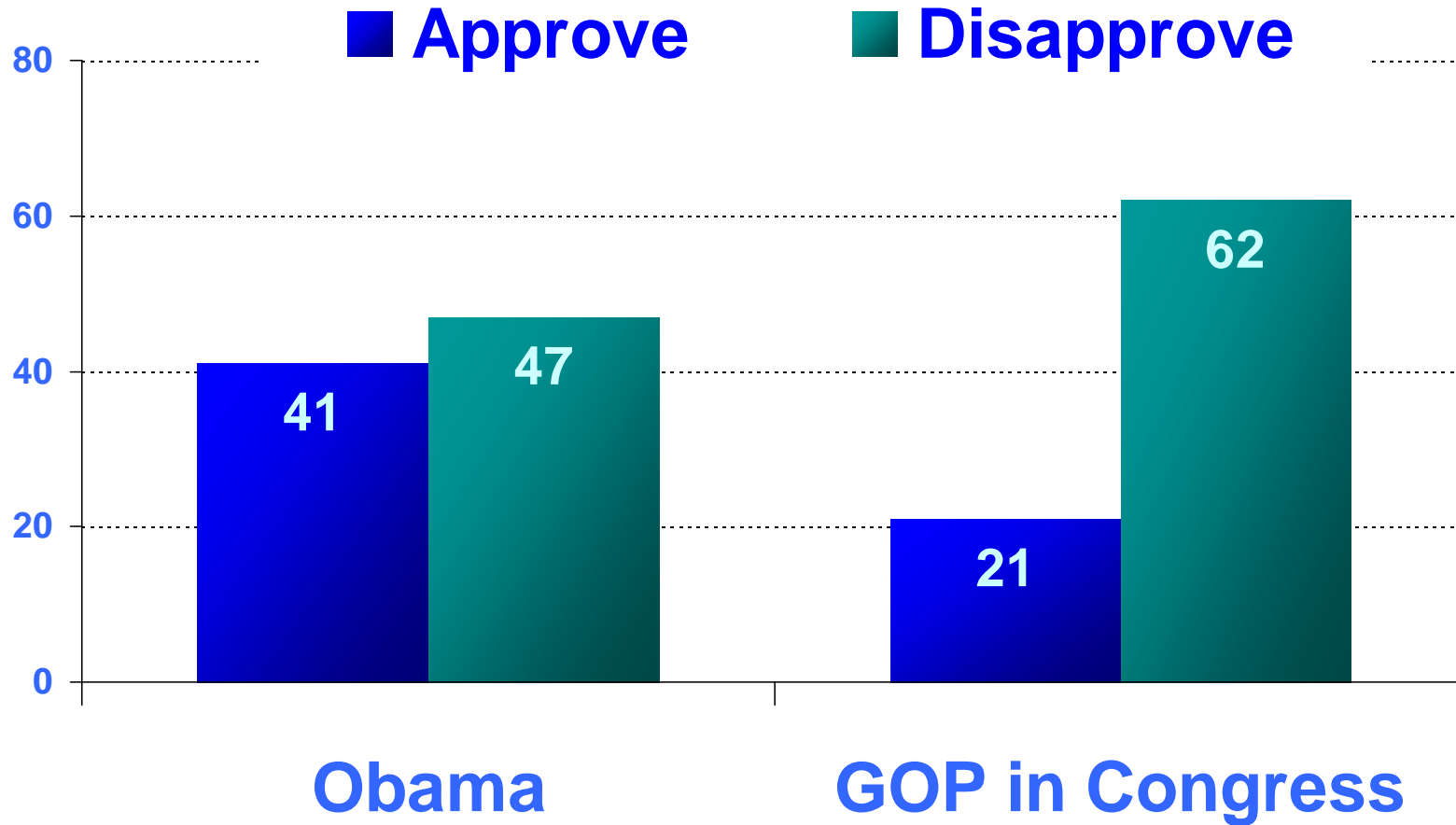


Obama is getting worse marks on health care than he is overall

- He's also getting lower marks on handling the economy than handling his overall job
- But his ratings on health care are still much higher than those of the Republicans

Handling of Health Care

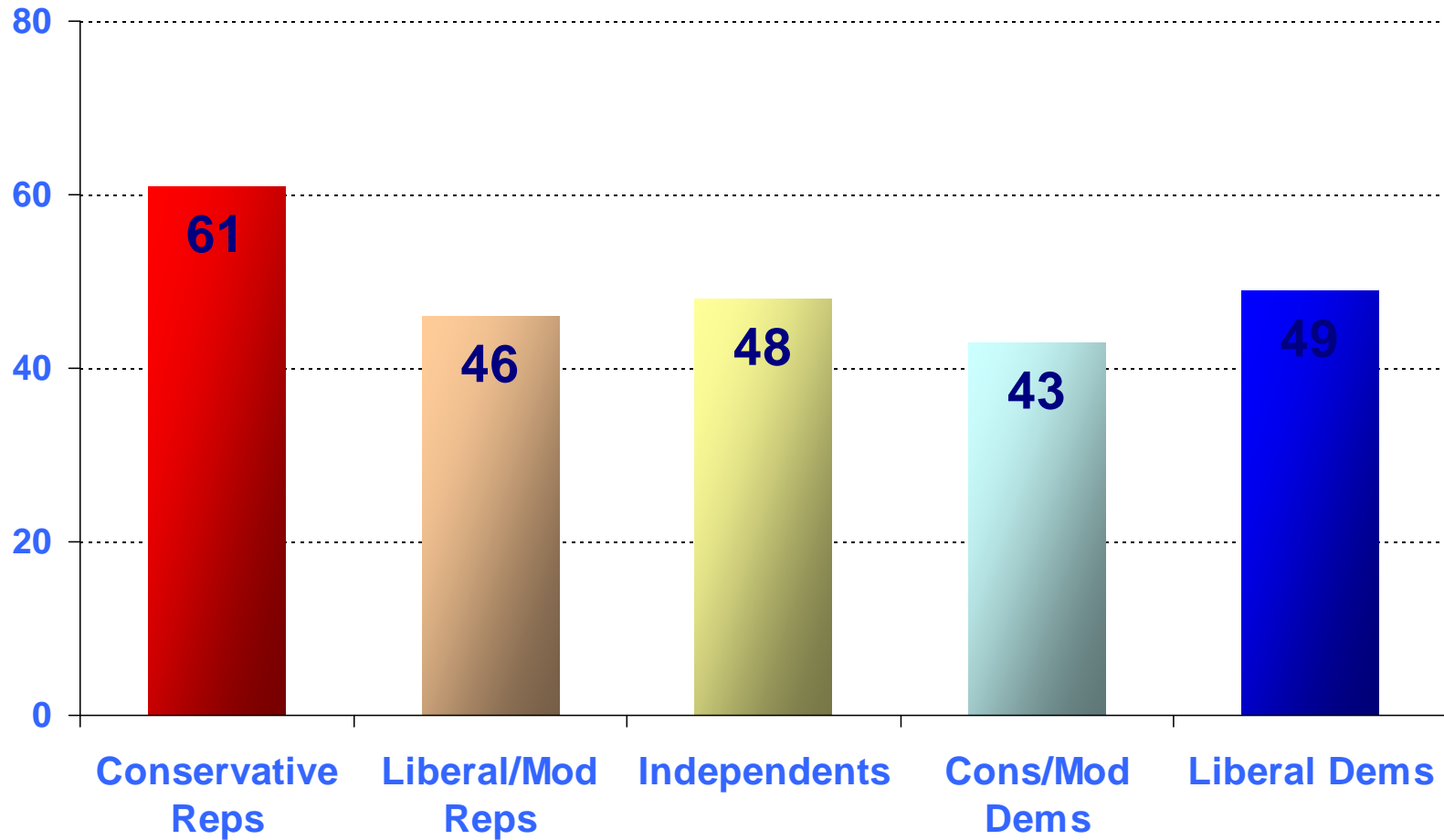
(NBC/WSJ)



Opponents of reform have the advantage of greater intensity

- A higher percentage of conservative Republicans than other groups have heard a lot about the proposed reforms
- More people say they would be angry at the passage of health care reform than would be angry at the failure to pass reform

Heard “a lot” about health care bills



Republicans Have Stronger Reactions to Health Care Outcomes

*If bills proposed by Obama and Congress **pass** would you be...*

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
	%	%	%	%
Very happy	15	5	27	9
Pleased	29	13	42	26
Disappointed	22	29	13	27
Angry	18	38	5	19
Don't know	16	15	13	20
N	1011	253	356	343

And Failure to Pass Would Elicit Less Intense Reaction

<i>If bills fail, would you be...</i>	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Rep</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Ind</u> %
Very happy	18	38	5	18
Pleased	21	30	11	24
Disappointed	31	11	51	32
Angry	9	6	13	8
Don't know	21	15	21	18
N	999	272	304	363

A few final observations

- Reform's prospects are hurt by the fact that only a minority of Americans think the system needs a complete overhaul
- Many people who have health coverage have anxieties about the effect of reform on *their* health care
- Still, there is broad support for many of the principles in most of the reform bills
- And Obama still has a lot of personal political capital