

# Latest Gallup: Dissatisfaction with U.S. Government Soars. “15 Years of Unmitigated Rotten Government”

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Region: [USA](#)

Global Research, March 13, 2015

*The latest Gallup poll shows that even as Americans are more satisfied with the American economy, they are more dissatisfied with the government; and that this government-dissatisfaction is so high that for the first time while Gallup has been following this matter, the ratio of dissatisfaction with government is swamping the ratio of dissatisfaction with both of the other two matters that Americans are dissatisfied with: the economy, and unemployment.*

In this Gallup report, dated March 12th, dissatisfaction with government has slightly risen, while dissatisfaction regarding all other matters has either gone down, or else remained constant.

When asked “What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?” 18% now say “government.” 11% say “economy.” 10% say “unemployment.” And 7% say “immigration/illegal aliens.” “Healthcare” was also 7%. All other issues were lower than 7%.

What has actually soared is the *ratio* of dissatisfaction with the government, divided by the highest *other* issue of dissatisfaction. This ratio has recently skyrocketed.

Dissatisfaction with government has previously been as high as 20% in April 2014, but at those times dissatisfaction with other issues was higher than it is now (for example, dissatisfaction with the economy was 16% in April 2014, whereas now it’s only 11% — the economy has improved).

For some reason(s), Americans are *especially* frustrated with their government right now. Perhaps Americans, who previously preferred divided control of government (a ‘Democratic’ President and a solid-Republican Congress — both houses being now Republican), and who now have what the polls had previously shown that Americans wanted on that (divided government), are starting to change their minds about divided government: they don’t like it, after all.

Here is additional support for this hypothesis: This particular poll happens to have been taken during March 5th through 8th. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech to the U.S. Congress occurred right before that, on March 3rd, and it represented a historically unprecedented affront and insult to a sitting U.S. President, both from the opposition political party (in this case, by Republicans), and also from a supposedly-allied foreign government (Israel).

Another Gallup poll, released just a day earlier, on March 11th, was headlined, [“Americans’](#)

[Views of Netanyahu Less Positive Post-Visit,”](#) and it found that Netanyahu’s speech caused his “favorable” rating to plunge, from 32% down to 17%, among Democrats, and to edge upward slightly from 60% to 62% among Republicans. Among the population overall, his favorable rating declined, from 45% down to 38%.

German radio, Deutsche Welle, headlined on March 10th, [“Republicans to Obama: We really don’t like you,”](#) and reported:

If there was any doubt how Republicans felt about President Obama and a nuclear deal with Iran after last week’s congressional spectacle featuring the Israeli premier, there shouldn’t be after their letter to Tehran.

Last week’s unprecedented event of having a foreign leader in the final stages of a close election campaign speak before a joint session of Congress without consulting the White House seemed like a tough act to follow — especially when the sole purpose of that speech was to bash the Obama administration’s nuclear talks with Iran. That event was orchestrated by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

By [now] publishing an open letter to Iran’s leadership and lecturing Tehran about the US Constitution and legislators’ opposition to a nuclear agreement, however, the Republican-controlled Senate may have succeeded in besting the performance of the lower house.

“I think there is no precedent in the history of the Republic for Senators to write to a foreign leader in this way,” Nigel Bowles, director of the Rothermere American Institute at the University of Oxford, told DW.

So: perhaps this historically unprecedented desire by the opposition political party to sabotage a sitting American President explains the reason why Americans’ dissatisfaction with their government is increasing, even when dissatisfaction with other matters is not rising.

It’s hard to explain the increase in government-dissatisfaction any other way. Whereas in February, Gallup had found that 17% of Americans were dissatisfied with their government and that 16% were dissatisfied with their economy, in March Gallup found that 18% of Americans were dissatisfied with their government and that only 11% were dissatisfied with their economy. Even with the economy’s apparent improvement, dissatisfaction with the government was still edging up. Perhaps Netanyahu’s speech, and the 46 Senate Republicans telling Iran that a treaty signed by this President would bind only him and *not* the U.S. Government, can explain this rise in dissatisfaction with the government.

On March 10th, veteran foreign-affairs journalist Robert Parry, a partisan Democrat, [said](#),

“Yes, I know many Republicans and their overwhelmingly white ‘base’ don’t consider the African-American Obama the legitimate President despite his two election victories. But never in American history has a major political party as brazenly challenged the constitutional authority of a sitting president to conduct foreign policy.”

According to my hypothesis, the people who would be the most dissatisfied with our government now would likely be independents — the people who are dissatisfied with both

political parties. I therefore requested from Gallup a party-breakdown of that 18%; and they kindly provided those figures: the 18% overall figure consisted of: 21% of Independents, 18% of Republicans, and 14% of Democrats. That fits.

In our hyper-partisan era, perhaps one might think of Democrats as being people who dislike Republicans, Republicans as being people who dislike Democrats, and Independents as being people who dislike both. Since our government consists of both, Independents tend to dislike government. That does not mean they dislike democracy. Perhaps they tend to question whether we still have a democracy. By contrast, Democrats and Republicans tend to think that their party should run the Government. Democrats want a “democracy”; Republicans want a “republic” (presumably meaning an elite to run the country); and Independents are largely dissatisfied with the way that both parties are functioning.

As of February 8-11, [Gallup's findings regarding party-affiliation](#) were: 43% Independents, 29% Democrats, and 25% Republicans.

However, this is a far more partisan era than most in U.S. history. And the percentage of independents is higher now than before. Usually, Republicans are dissatisfied with the government when a Democrat is President, and Democrats are dissatisfied with the government when a Republican is President. Independents used to be in the middle on that. Until recently, Independents weren't so much rejecting the government as they were simply “moderates” between the two parties — on the fence. That was a less partisan time. For example, on 10 January 2006, when Republican G.W. Bush was President, Gallup [reported](#) that, “Ten percent of Republicans mention government dissatisfaction as the most important problem, while 12% of independents and 14% of Democrats do so.” Americans were far more satisfied with their government then, than they are today; and, whereas Democrats were the most-dissatisfied group with it then, they are the least-dissatisfied group with it now. And, whereas Independents were in the middle then for government-dissatisfaction, they are at the top in that, today, in our far-more-polarized political environment. The general sense back in 2006, even after the catastrophic invasion of Iraq, and after the dismal handling of 2005 Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, was far more favorable toward the American government, than today's environment is.

Fifteen years of unmitigated rotten government have had an impact on the public's perceptions about the government. And this impact has not been favorable.

*Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).*

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