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## **NATIONAL: LITTLE FAITH IN NEW CONGRESS**

### *Negative views of Obama and Congress persist*

*West Long Branch, NJ* – The American public does not hold much hope for breaking Washington’s partisan gridlock in the new year. With a Democrat in the White House and both chambers of Congress about to be controlled by Republicans, the latest **Monmouth University Poll** finds that a plurality of Americans feel the state of the country will likely be no different than it is now.

Less than half of Americans are hopeful that the new Republican-controlled Congress and Democratic President Barack Obama will be able to work together – with just 17% being very hopeful and 28% somewhat hopeful. Another 19% are not too hopeful and one-third (33%) are not at all hopeful that the legislative and executive branches of government can work together next year. There is practically no partisan difference in this opinion. Nearly identical numbers of Democrats (44%), Republicans, (44%) and independents (47%) are at least somewhat hopeful of a better working relationship in Washington, with only about 1-in-6 of each group being very hopeful.

A plurality (46%) of Americans say the state of the country will not change under the new Congress. The remainder are divided – 27% say it will get better and 22% say it will get worse. Republicans (44%) are somewhat more likely to say things will get better and Democrats are somewhat more likely to say things will get worse (34%).

“Republicans taking control of the Senate may herald a new day among politicians, but for most Americans it seems more like re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

Just 23% of Americans feel the country is heading in the right direction while a whopping 69% say things are on the wrong track. President Obama gets an upside-down 41% approve to 49% disapprove job rating. Congress does even worse at 17% approve to 73% disapprove.

The public holds basically the same opinion of both chambers of Congress – 60% say they have performed about the same, while 15% say the House of Representatives has been doing a better job for the country and 14% say the Senate has been doing a better job.

The poll looked ahead to 2016 and the hypothetical possibility that both the next president and Congressional leadership may come from the same party. About half (49%) of the public believes that this outcome would help get things done in Washington, 35% say it would make no difference, and another 10% feel that one-party control of the executive and legislative branches would actually make gridlock worse. Republicans (70%) – perhaps being more optimistic about their prospects for winning both Congress and the White House – are more likely than Democrats (41%) or independents (44%) to feel that one-party control would improve Washington gridlock.

Most Americans are aware that Republicans won control of the Senate (71%) and kept control of the House (67%) in last month’s mid-term elections. This marks some improvement in awareness of DC politics. A *Monmouth University Poll* taken last year found fewer Americans knew that the House was controlled by the GOP (49%) and the Senate by Democrats (45%). Of course, that poll was taken in the summer of an off-year, when the public is less attuned to politics than it is during an election season.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from December 10 to 14, 2014 with 1,008 adults in the United States. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

**The questions referred to in this release are as follows:**

(\* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

**1. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president?**

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Approve	<b>41%</b>	42%	38%	14%	33%	79%	37%	46%	41%	41%	42%	34%	58%
Disapprove	<b>49%</b>	50%	43%	82%	52%	14%	54%	44%	42%	54%	50%	58%	27%
(VOL) No opinion	<b>10%</b>	8%	18%	3%	15%	7%	9%	11%	17%	6%	8%	9%	15%

TREND:	December 2014	July 2013
Approve	41%	42%
Disapprove	49%	51%
(VOL) No opinion	10%	6%
Unwtd N	1,008	1,012

**2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the U.S. Congress is doing?**

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Approve	<b>17%</b>	15%	23%	19%	13%	20%	15%	18%	20%	17%	13%	14%	24%
Disapprove	<b>73%</b>	75%	60%	75%	75%	70%	77%	68%	64%	77%	77%	75%	63%
(VOL) No opinion	<b>11%</b>	9%	16%	6%	11%	10%	8%	13%	15%	7%	10%	10%	13%

TREND:	December 2014	July 2013
Approve	17%	14%
Disapprove	73%	76%
(VOL) No opinion	11%	10%
Unwtd N	1,008	1,012

3. Would you say things in the country are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/ Hispanic
Right direction	23%	21%	29%	10%	19%	40%	25%	21%	21%	23%	23%	20%	29%
Wrong track	69%	71%	58%	87%	74%	45%	69%	68%	66%	72%	68%	73%	59%
(VOL) Depends	5%	5%	8%	2%	5%	9%	4%	7%	8%	3%	5%	4%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	4%	1%	1%	6%	2%	4%	5%	1%	4%	3%	5%

TREND:	December 2014	July 2013
Right direction	23%	28%
Wrong track	69%	63%
(VOL) Depends	5%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	4%
Unwtd N	1,008	1,012

4. As you may know, Congress is divided into two chambers. Which one has been doing a better job for the country – the Senate or the House of Representatives – or have they performed about the same?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/ Hispanic
Senate	14%	15%	11%	7%	9%	27%	16%	13%	14%	15%	13%	14%	14%
House	15%	16%	12%	28%	14%	8%	18%	13%	15%	13%	18%	17%	11%
Performed the same	60%	59%	66%	53%	66%	58%	58%	62%	57%	64%	59%	56%	67%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	10%	12%	12%	11%	8%	8%	13%	14%	8%	9%	13%	8%

TREND:	December 2014	July 2013
Senate	14%	14%
House	15%	18%
Performed the same	60%	60%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	8%
Unwtd N	1,008	1,012

[QUESTIONS 5 AND 6 WERE ROTATED]

5. Do you know which party won control of the Senate in last month's elections? [If YES: Which one – Democrat or Republican?]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/ Hispanic
Yes, Republican	71%	76%	47%	74%	68%	72%	75%	66%	55%	76%	80%	73%	63%
Yes, Democrat (incorrect)	4%	4%	5%	5%	2%	8%	5%	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%	5%
No, don't know	24%	19%	48%	22%	30%	19%	20%	29%	38%	21%	15%	22%	32%

6. Do you know which party won control of the House of Representatives in last month's elections? [If YES: Which one – Democrat or Republican?]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/ Hispanic
Yes, Republican	67%	73%	41%	70%	65%	72%	75%	59%	50%	74%	76%	71%	60%
Yes, Democrat (incorrect)	5%	4%	8%	2%	4%	7%	5%	4%	7%	3%	3%	4%	4%
No, don't know	29%	23%	51%	27%	31%	21%	19%	37%	43%	24%	19%	25%	36%

7. Next year, Republicans will control both the Senate and the House. How hopeful are you that the new Congress and President Obama will be able to work together – very hopeful, somewhat hopeful, not too hopeful, or not at all hopeful?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Very hopeful	<b>17%</b>	17%	18%	17%	18%	17%	17%	17%	15%	20%	15%	15%	24%
Somewhat hopeful	<b>28%</b>	26%	38%	27%	29%	27%	26%	29%	30%	25%	28%	28%	29%
Not too hopeful	<b>19%</b>	20%	15%	24%	19%	17%	20%	18%	24%	16%	18%	22%	14%
Not at all hopeful	<b>33%</b>	35%	25%	27%	33%	36%	34%	32%	27%	36%	35%	33%	28%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>3%</b>	3%	4%	4%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%

8. Under the new Congress, do you think the state of the country will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Better	<b>27%</b>	28%	25%	44%	26%	15%	29%	26%	24%	30%	27%	28%	26%
Worse	<b>22%</b>	23%	15%	11%	20%	34%	21%	23%	18%	26%	21%	20%	25%
Stay the same	<b>46%</b>	45%	51%	41%	50%	48%	46%	47%	52%	41%	47%	47%	46%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>5%</b>	4%	9%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%	6%	3%	5%	5%	3%

9. Looking ahead to the next election – if both the new president and the Congressional leadership come from the same party – do you think that would help get things done in Washington, would that make gridlock even worse, or would that make no difference?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Help get things done	<b>49%</b>	51%	44%	70%	44%	41%	52%	47%	46%	50%	52%	55%	35%
Gridlock even worse	<b>10%</b>	9%	14%	5%	10%	15%	9%	11%	11%	12%	7%	11%	10%
No difference	<b>35%</b>	35%	35%	21%	41%	36%	33%	36%	38%	34%	33%	29%	47%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>6%</b>	6%	6%	4%	5%	8%	6%	6%	5%	4%	8%	5%	8%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from December 10 to 14, 2014 with a national random sample of 1,008 adults age 18 and older. This includes 677 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 331 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
27% Rep	49% Male	32% 18-34	66% White
42% Ind	51% Female	36% 35-54	12% Black
31% Dem		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Unweighted N	1,008	887	121	279	393	311	496	512	208	325	470	794	163
moe	3.1%	3.3%	8.9%	5.9%	5.0%	5.6%	4.4%	4.3%	6.8%	5.4%	4.5%	3.5%	7.7%

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