

Obama's job approval rating bound to decline further Critical media coverage drives down public support for the President

Barack Obama's job approval rating has been eroded by a steady flow of negative coverage in the main evening news shows. Since taking office in January, Obama's job approval figures have decreased by over 40 points, down to +14 from a starting point of +56.

"This speedy reversal of fortunes results from the media coverage in two different ways," explains Roland Schatz, founder and editor-in-chief of the Zurich-based research institute MEDIA TENOR. "Since the middle of February, coverage of Obama on ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox has been overwhelmingly negative with critical coverage dominating 107 out of 136 days."

U.S. citizens have become disillusioned with Obama so quickly because reporting was so enthusiastic during the election campaign and after the vote, he says. "As soon as people realized that Obama cannot, after all, walk on water, his halo was bound to fade," concludes Schatz.

Out of 22,382 statements about or by the President that were aired between January 15th and July 29th, 3,012 were critical of Obama and only 1,763 rated him positively. In contrast, in the weeks before his inauguration the picture was slightly positive. At the end of July, as the media focused on the problems of health-care reform, reporting became more critical.

"Barack Obama has tackled many tough issues at the same time, and, as he cannot possibly succeed in the short term where others have failed again and again, his media image will deteriorate further in the next months," predicts Schatz. With his high number of targets, Obama raised expectations, a gambit which now come back to haunt him.

MEDIA TENOR International analyzes U.S. politicians, parties and the U.S. government on an ongoing basis in the main evening news programs of ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox. Job approval ratings were taken from the Gallup poll (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/113980/gallup-daily-obama-job-approval.aspx>); the chart shows the balance of approve and disapprove, and the values are the result of a three-day rolling average.