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PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB APPROVAL RATING IS AT 63%

Voters Have Enormous Confidence in Obama to Bring "Change" and are "Inspired" by His Election and Inauguration

Poll Finds Broad Support for and Confidence in Stimulus Package

But Most Don't Expect Economic Recovery until Mid-way through Obama's First Term

New York, January 27, 2009 – With one week into a new presidential administration, a substantial majority of Americans approve of the job Barack Obama is doing as president.

The Diageo/*Hotline* Poll of 800 registered voters conducted by FD from January 21-24, 2009, finds that 63% of voters say they approve of the job Barack Obama is doing as President, with 42% saying they "strongly approve."

Voters Are Confident He Will Bring "Real Change" to Washington

The Poll finds that 75% of voters are "confident" that President Obama will bring "real change to the way things are done in Washington, D.C." This represents a nine-point increase from the 66% of voters who said they were "confident" in his ability to bring real change in the Diageo/*Hotline* Poll conducted immediately after the Presidential Election.

The Poll also finds that 76% of voters hold a favorable impression of President Obama, while only 15% of voters hold an unfavorable impression.

President Obama's Inauguration Address is Rated Highly and Inspired Both Optimism and Activism

More than two-thirds of voters (68%) said they watched his Inauguration speech last week. And, among those who watched the speech, 78% of voters said that, compared to Inaugural speeches given by past presidents in their lifetimes, it was either the "best Inaugural speech" or "better than most." Furthermore, the Diageo/*Hotline* survey finds that 83% of those who watched the speech said it made them "more optimistic" that the U.S. will meet its challenges.

"How would you rate his speech, compared to past Inaugural speeches given by previous presidents in your lifetime?"

<u>Inauguration Speech Rating</u>	<u>Total</u>
The best Inaugural speech	33%
Better than most but not the best	45%
About the same as past speeches	16%
Worse than most but not the worst	1%
The worst Inaugural speech	1%

Moreover, the Poll finds that the election and Inauguration of President Obama has inspired Americans to become more involved in civic life: two-thirds of all voters (67%) say they are now inspired "to become more involved in helping the country meet its challenges."

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The Economy Remains the Top Issue and Voters Don't See Recovery from Recession for a Couple of Years. There Is Substantial Support for the Stimulus Package. But, the Second \$350 Billion of TARP is a "Bad Idea."

Not surprisingly, "the Economy" remains at the top of voters' minds. A whopping 76% of voters say it is the most important issue facing the country. And, most voters do not see a quick road to economic recovery. Specifically, nearly seven-out-of-ten voters (69%) think that recovery will take longer than one year but less than four, virtually the length of President Obama's first term.

Expected Length of the Recession

<u>Length of Recession</u>	<u>Total</u>
Less than 12 months	3%
More than 12 months but less than 2 years	26%
Between 2 and 4 years	43%
More than 4 years	25%
Don't Know	3%

Against this backdrop, the Diageo/*Hotline* Poll finds that a majority of voters approve of the proposed \$825 billion stimulus package, even if that means increasing the deficit to pay for it.

Specifically, when voters are asked if they support or oppose the stimulus package and no details of the plan are given to them, 54% of voters support the stimulus package. When voters are given the specifics of the stimulus package, 66% of voters support it.

Additionally, substantial majorities of voters are both confident that, if passed, the money allocated to the stimulus package "will be spent and managed wisely" (57% say they are confident) and that it also "will be effective in turning around the economy" (65% say they are confident).

Confidence in the Stimulus Package

<u>Confidence that Stimulus Spending will be Spent Wisely</u>	<u>Total</u>
TOTAL CONFIDENT	57%
TOTAL NOT CONFIDENT	41%

N=401, Margin of Error= +/-4.9%

<u>Confidence that Stimulus Spending will be Effective</u>	<u>Total</u>
TOTAL CONFIDENT	65%
TOTAL NOT CONFIDENT	32%

N=399, Margin of Error= +/-4.9%

"Coming into his first significant challenge in getting his stimulus package passed, President Obama is in the driver's seat. He has the confidence of the American public and they not only support his stimulus plan, but they overwhelmingly believe it will help turn the economy around," commented Amy Walter, Editor-in-Chief of *The Hotline*. "The question is: 'Can he sustain this goodwill through what could be a vigorous fight over the specifics of this plan?'"

Voters' positive feelings evaporate, however, when it comes to the second half (\$350 billion) of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). Specifically, 56% of voters say it was a "bad

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idea” for the Senate to pass the second half of TARP spending, while only 32% of voters say it was a “good idea.”

To obtain poll results referenced in this release, please visit www.diageohotlinepoll.com at Noon EDT on Tuesday, January 27.

To obtain complete poll results, please visit www.diageohotlinepoll.com at Noon EDT on Wednesday, January 28.

To schedule an interview with Ed Reilly, contact Selin Kent at (212) 850-5735 or selin.kent@fd.com.

Methodology: The Diageo/*Hotline* Poll was conducted by telephone from January 21-24, 2009, among a random, representative sample of 800 registered voters, age 18 and older (margin of error +/- 3.5%).

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