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Subject: Gas Prices Take Toll on Americans - ALR's National Polling Summary

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Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Summary

Friends,

Below you will find the weekly Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Newsletter, which provides a take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week, we take a look at how Americans are responding to higher gas prices, how much they are blaming President Obama for the increases, and what they want to do to solve the problem.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

STORY THIS WEEK: GAS PRICES TAKE TOLL ON AMERICANS

Spring and summer gas price hikes are no novelty, but this year is as bad, or worse than, most years. Spec oil prices are jumping to reflect turmoil in the Middle East. This is [very good for oil companies' bottom line](#) for one, made \$5.48 billion dollars this quarter in part due to increased margins on oil. However, gas prices have hurt average Americans. At \$3.88/gallon, regular unleaded gas is up more than \$1.00 per gallon nationally since last April [according to the AAA](#), and it is approaching record prices from the summer of 2008 (\$4.19 regular unleaded).

How much does this hurt Americans' pocketbooks? The average American drives more than 13,000 [miles](#) in a car or truck that gets them 22.6 or 18.1 [miles per gallon](#), according to the US government. This near average American driver is consuming something on the order of 600-700 gallons of gas per year-in fact, consumed more than [138 billion gallons](#) of gasoline in 2010, according to the Energy Information Administration or about 450 gallons per person (including children and other non-drivers). So, \$1 higher gas prices are costing the average American driver about \$50-\$60 per month, or \$600-\$700 per year on top of the more than \$2000 they were already spending.

Survey data backs up the economic facts and figures: 71% of [Americans told the Washington Post](#) that they are feeling the financial strain from recent price increases, and 43% said the increases have been a serious hardship.

(To back up evidence that spring and summer gas hikes are a regular occurrence, we would note in the article that the Washington Post has asked the same question about rising gas prices in the spring or summer of years since 2000-they only missed 2003 and the past two years during the economic downturn). Responses ranged from a low of 36% saying gas price hikes have caused them a hardship (May 2000) to a high of 77% (May 2008), and the current result is on the high end of Americans feeling the pinch.

The public is taking out its frustration over high prices on Obama, as [even he suggested](#). According to Pew, his [job approval has dipped](#) in the last couple months. We can't definitively link this drop to the recent gas price hikes (they may just be coincidental), but Gallup has noted that gas price hikes [were linked with voters' support for both Presidents Bush as well as President Carter and President Nixon](#). The media has often linked gas prices to presidential approval before, too: a Google search for "president gas prices poll" reveals articles linking the two phenomena together not only this year but in [2005](#) and [2006](#) for President Bush.

Voters tend to think that the President can do a lot about gas prices. Angus Reid found in [2006 and 2008](#) that 62% and 65% of voters respectively thought the president could do a lot about gas prices, compared to 30% who thought it was beyond his control. Gallup also found [solid majorities](#) in 2001, 2006, and 2008 that said President Bush was not doing enough to solve the country's energy problems-certainly bigger than just gas prices, but the best public-polling proxy we have for them-and Gallup found [in late March](#) that 65% of voters thought President Obama was not doing enough to solve the country's energy problems either.

As far as remedies, voters strongly back Obama's effort to end oil company tax breaks (he proposes rolling back [billion in tax breaks this year](#)). Seventy four percent of [voters say](#) that would be an acceptable way to fix the problem while 22% say it would be an unacceptable way to do so. Other actions voters support to with respect to energy include, [according to Pew](#):

- Increasing federal funding for research on wind, solar, and hydrogen technology (74% favor / 21% oppose)
- Spending more on subway, rail, and bus systems (61% favor / 31% oppose)
- Providing incentives for those who buy hybrid or electric vehicles (58% favor / 35% oppose)
- Allowing more offshore drilling (57% favor / 37% oppose)

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Boehner's numbers fall: John Boehner's short-lived honeymoon period after the midterm elections is over, and Americans [are split on him](#). 34% are favorable towards him while 66% are unfavorable.

Obama's high-profile challengers face bleak prospects: [According to Gallup](#), 54% of voters say they will vote for Obama or consider it, but far fewer say the same about his high-profile challengers. Romney (48%), with Huckabee (46%), Trump (35%), and Palin (34%) trailing him. Not great signs for candidates who have not had a single negative ad run against them nationally or been the focus of a sustained campaign.

Donald Trump is not a credible candidate for President: The public has largely not cared much for Donald Trump, but they have further soured on him since his recent foray into the right-wing fringe of politics. The same Gallup poll finds voters largely do not like Donald Trump (36% favorable / 64% unfavorable).

In the time it took you to read this, Apple released a new iPhone: While this study should be taken with a grain of salt (it is a [non-representative survey](#) done by a company looking to sell smartphones), Reuters reports that 62% of smartphone owners believe their smartphone is out of date or will be by the time their current one comes up.

At work, most baby boomers find their age irrelevant or a net plus: [The AP finds](#) that more baby boomers (defined as being born between 1946 and 1964) find their age an asset than a liability in the workplace. Sixty one percent say their age is not an issue. The same baby boomers feel they have faced age discrimination at work (18%) as the overall US population 18 and over (18% of adults say they have faced discrimination at work).

PUBLIC POLLING

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
Gallup	4/23-26/11	Adults	43%	48%
CBS/NY Times	4/15-20/11	Adults	46%	45%
Gallup	4/17-19/11	Adults	42%	49%

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Right Direction	Wrong Track
CBS/NY Times	4/15-20/11	Adults	26%	70%
Marist	4/10-14/11	Reg Voters	31%	64%
Ipsos/Reuters	4/7-11/11	Adults	25%	69%

Republican Party Favorability				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Favorable	Unfavorable
NBC/WSJ	Apr 2011	Adults	31%	44%
NBC/WSJ	Jan 2011	Adults	34%	40%
NBC/WSJ	Dec 2010	Adults	38%	37%

Democratic Party Favorability				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Favorable	Unfavorable
NBC/WSJ	Apr 2011	Adults	38%	39%
NBC/WSJ	Jan 2011	Adults	39%	37%
NBC/WSJ	Dec 2010	Adults	37%	41%

PARTY SELF ID					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind / other
Pollster.com Trend	4/5/11	Adults	31%	24%	39%

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