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Political Blame for Flight Delays Spread Evenly

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE
PEOPLE & THE PRESS**

Michael Dimock

Director

Carroll Doherty

Associate Director

Alec Tyson

Research Associate

1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel (202) 419-4372
Fax (202) 419-4399
www.people-press.org

Political Blame for Flight Delays Spread Evenly

As Washington sprang into action late last week to end the furlough of federal air-traffic controllers and delays at airports across the country, the public blamed both sides for the situation. Nearly equal percentages say congressional Republicans (34%) and the Obama administration (32%) are more to blame for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) budget cuts and airport delays. Another 10% volunteer that both sides are to blame, while 20% offer no opinion.

The national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted April 25-28 among 1,003 adults, finds that the public has paid relatively little attention to the story: just 15% say they followed news about airport delays and the furlough of air-traffic controllers very closely, a plurality (40%) say they did not follow the story closely at all.

Independents are evenly divided over whether Republicans in Congress (31%) or the Obama administration (31%) are more to blame for budget cuts at the FAA and delays at airports across the country. Partisans take opposing views with broad majorities of Republicans (67%) saying the Obama administration is more to blame, and a comparably large percentage of Democrats (62%) saying Republicans in Congress are more to blame.

Those paying very close attention to the story are about as likely to blame the Obama administration (47%) as Republicans in Congress (40%). Those following the story less closely also are divided, (33% blame Congressional Republicans, 29% the Obama administration); nearly a quarter (23%) of those not following the story very closely say they don't know who is more to blame, compared with just 5% of those following very closely.

Public Divides Blame for Flight Delays and FAA Situation

More to blame for FAA and flight delay situation ...

	Reps in Congress	Obama admin	(Vol.) Both	Other/DK
	%	%	%	%
Total	34	32	10	24=100
Republican	5	67	10	18=100
Democrat	62	8	7	23=100
Independent	31	31	12	25=100
<i>Following delays</i>				
Very closely	40	47	8	5=100
Less closely	33	29	10	27=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER April 25-28, 2013.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

The public spreads the political blame for the flight delays and FAA situation more evenly than they did for broader debates over the sequester and fiscal cliff. In a [Pew Research Center/Washington Post survey](#) conducted Feb. 21-24, 2013, days before automatic spending cuts took effect, more said Republicans in Congress (45%), rather than President Obama (32%), would be more to blame if an agreement to prevent the sequester was not reached before the deadline.

Similarly, in the weeks before the fiscal cliff deadline late last year, the public said Republicans in Congress (53%) would be more to blame than President Obama (27%) for not reaching an agreement before the Dec. 31 deadline.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted April 25-28, 2013 among a national sample of 1,003 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (500 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 503 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 237 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,003	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	253	7.4 percentage points
Democrats	324	6.5 percentage points
Independents	362	6.2 percentage points
<i>Following news about flight delays</i>		
Very closely	173	8.9 percentage points
Less closely	826	4.1 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
April 25-28, 2013, OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,003

ASK ALL:

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. The investigation into the terrorist bombings at the Boston Marathon					
April 25-28, 2013	49	33	9	9	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
April 18-21, 2013: <i>A terrorist bombing at the Boston Marathon</i>	63	22	10	5	*
November 4-7, 2010: <i>News about recent plots in the United States and Europe</i>	29	31	19	20	*
October 28-November 1, 2010	28	33	17	21	1
June 24-27, 2010: <i>The man who attempted to bomb Times Square pleading guilty</i>	18	28	26	27	1
May 7-10, 2010: <i>The investigation and arrests following an attempted car bombing in Times Square in New York</i>	37	32	16	15	*
January 8-11, 2010: <i>The government's response to an attempted terrorist attack on a Detroit-bound plane on Christmas</i>	37	36	14	12	*
November 13-16, 2009: <i>The investigations into the shootings at Fort Hood Army post in Texas</i>	35	37	16	11	1
November 6-9, 2009: <i>A shooter killing 13 people at Fort Hood Army post in Texas</i>	44	34	14	8	*
September 25-28, 2009: <i>News about recent terrorist plots in the United States</i>	32	38	17	14	0
May 11-14, 2007: <i>The arrest of six men charged with plotting an attack on the Fort Dix Army base</i>	19	29	20	31	1
July, 2002: <i>Defending against terrorist attacks in the U.S.</i>	51	33	9	6	1
June, 2002: <i>The arrest of a man for planning a "dirty bomb" attack on the U.S.</i>	30	30	24	15	1
June, 2002: <i>Defending against terrorist attacks in the U.S.</i>	45	35	12	7	1
April, 2002	46	36	10	7	1
Early April, 2002	49	35	10	5	1
January 2002: <i>Reports on the failed suicide bombing of an American Airlines jet coming from Paris</i>	20	34	22	23	1
December, 2001: <i>Terrorism attacks on the United States</i>	60	29	7	3	1
Mid-November, 2001	66	25	6	2	1
Early November, 2001	63	26	6	3	2
Mid-October, 2001	78	16	4	1	1
Early October, 2001: <i>News about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington</i>	73	22	4	1	*
Mid-September, 2001	74	22	3	1	*

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
January, 2000: <i>The recent arrests of suspected terrorists in the U.S.</i>	23	36	23	17	1
b. Debate over immigration policy in the U.S.					
April 25-28, 2013	19	25	24	32	*
April 18-21, 2013	21	22	25	31	1
April 4-7, 2013	23	22	22	32	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
January 31-February 3, 2013: <i>Debate in Washington over immigration policy</i>	23	25	22	29	1
June 28-July 1, 2012: <i>The Supreme Court decision on Arizona's immigration law</i>	29	21	19	30	1
April 26-29, 2012: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	21	24	26	27	1
May 12-15, 2011	18	22	27	32	1
September 2-6, 2010	30	31	19	20	1
August 12-15, 2010	27	31	19	21	1
July 29-August 1, 2010: <i>A court ruling that stops most of Arizona's immigration law from going into effect</i>	40	32	17	10	1
July 8-11, 2010: <i>The U.S. Justice Department challenging the legality of Arizona's recent immigration law</i>	30	27	19	23	1
July 1-5, 2010: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	34	30	20	14	1
May 7-10, 2010: <i>A new Arizona law that gives police more authority to question people they suspect might be illegal immigrants</i>	38	27	13	21	1
April 30-May 3, 2010	36	31	13	20	*
October 12-15, 2007: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	23	29	19	29	*
June 29-July 2, 2007: <i>The debate in Congress over new immigration policy</i>	26	30	21	23	*
June 22-25, 2007	24	28	22	26	*
June 15-18, 2007	22	32	21	25	*
June 8-11, 2007	24	29	20	26	1
May 24-27, 2007	27	31	22	19	1
April 12-16, 2007: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	21	29	24	26	*
August, 2006	34	40	16	9	1
June, 2006	36	41	15	7	1
May, 2006	44	33	13	9	1
April, 2006	39	34	16	10	1
December, 1994: <i>Passage of Proposition 187, the California law that bars education, health and welfare benefits from illegal immigrants and their children</i>	26	32	22	20	*
c. Flight delays at airports due to the furlough of air-traffic controllers					
April 25-28, 2013	15	21	24	40	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
August 4-7, 2011: <i>The partial shutdown of the Federal Aviation Administration due to disagreements in Congress</i>	17	24	22	36	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
d. Charges that Syria has used chemical weapons against anti-government groups April 25-28, 2013	18	25	24	33	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
March 28-31, 2013: <i>Political violence in Syria</i>	13	22	25	40	1
December 13-16, 2012	14	26	26	33	1
December 6-9, 2012	19	28	23	29	1
November 29-December 2, 2012	15	23	23	39	1
August 16-19, 2012	12	24	26	37	2
July 19-22, 2012	17	24	23	36	1
June 28-July 1, 2012	13	19	26	42	*
June 14-17, 2012	15	24	21	40	1
May 31-June 3, 2012	12	25	25	37	1
April 12-15, 2012: <i>International efforts to stop political violence in Syria</i>	14	23	25	37	1
April 5-8, 2012	15	21	27	37	1
March 15-28, 2012: <i>Political violence in Syria</i>	16	26	27	30	1
March 8-11, 2012	17	23	23	37	1
February 23-26, 2012	18	24	21	35	1
February 9-12, 2012	17	23	23	36	*
January 12-15, 2012	12	17	26	45	1
August 4-7, 2011: <i>Political violence following uprisings in Syria</i>	10	19	26	44	1
June 2-5, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests and violence in some Middle Eastern countries</i>	18	25	25	32	*
May 5-8, 2011: <i>Political violence following uprisings in Syria</i>	14	27	30	28	1
April 28-May 1, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests and violence in some Middle Eastern countries</i>	18	29	25	27	1
February 3-6, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries</i>	32	35	16	18	*
January 27-30, 2011	17	26	21	35	*

PEW.2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**NO QUESTION PEW.3****ASK ALL:**

PEW.4 As you may know, the Federal Aviation Administration's budget was cut as part of across-the-board reductions in federal spending and there have been delays at airports across the country. Who do you think is more to blame for this situation?¹ **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**

Apr 25-28

2013

34	Republicans in Congress
32	The Obama administration
1	The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) (VOL.)
10	Both (VOL.)
3	Neither (VOL.)
20	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTIONS PEW.5-PEW.7**PEW.8-PEW.13 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

¹ On the first night of interviewing, April 25, 2013, the question began "As you may know, the Federal Aviation Administration's budget has been cut ..."