



## TOP STRATEGISTS REACT TO OBAMA'S HEALTH CARE SPEECH, RATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN CLARUS POLL

Immediately after President Obama's speech to a Joint Session of Congress last night, Clarus Research Group surveyed 44 of the nation's top political, legislative and communications strategists - representing a broad array of expertise in politics, government, media consulting, lobbying, and public relations.

### **The Results:**

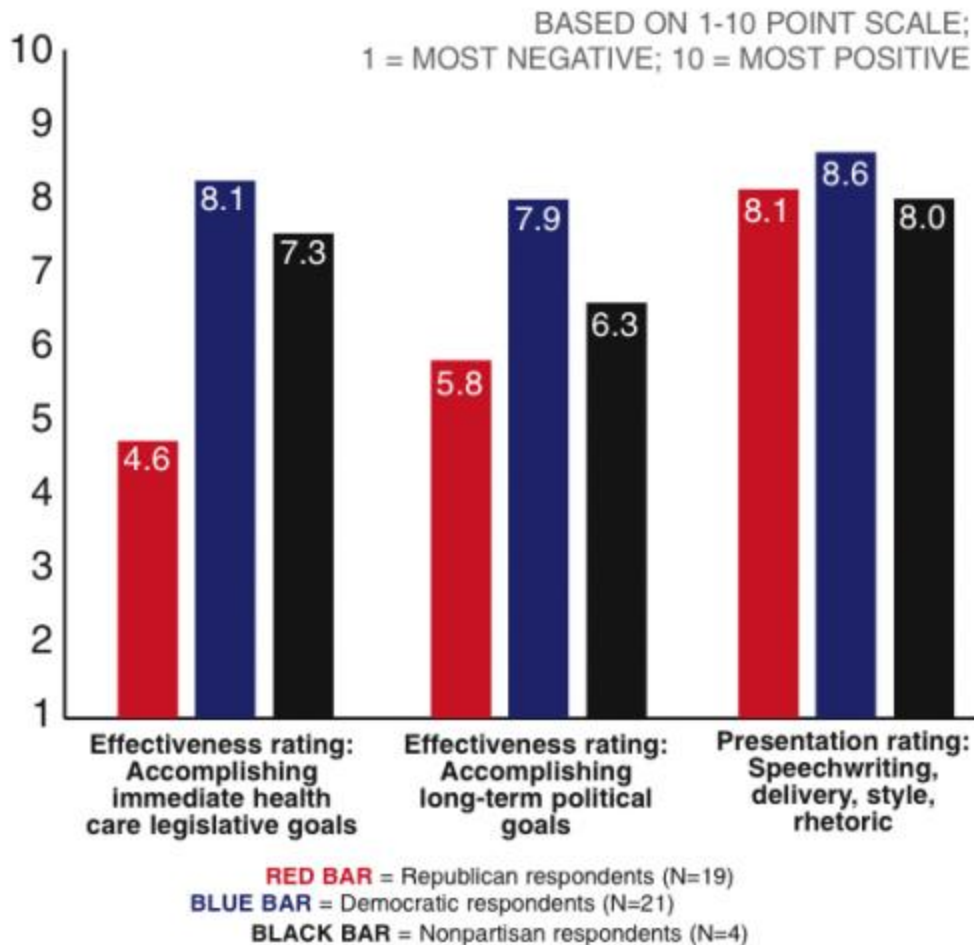
- “Democrats were very happy with the speech, but most reactions were short of wild enthusiasm,” said Ron Faucheux, president of Clarus. Democrats gave Obama an average rating of 8.0 on a 10-point scale.
- “While Democrats thought it was a solid, effective – even great – speech, some expressed doubts about its long-term political effect,” said Faucheux. “Some Democrats also expressed fear the speech was too late in coming.”
- “Republicans were predictably negative on the substance, but thought Obama's delivery was impressive,” said Faucheux. Republicans gave Obama an average rating of 6.2.
- Nonpartisans gave Obama an average rating of 7.2. Said Faucheux, “They thought the speech was more effective at accomplishing Obama's immediate legislative goal of passing health care reform than his long-term political goals, including re-election.”
- Respondents from all three groups gave Obama high marks for presentation. Interestingly, Republicans gave Obama a rating in this category almost as high as did independents and even Democrats.

For detailed results, see chart below. Comments from respondents follow.

*Clarus Research Group is a nonpartisan, full-service survey research firm based in Washington, D.C. For more information about the firm and its clients, go to [www.ClarusRG.com](http://www.ClarusRG.com).*

# CLARUS SNAPSHOT

Reaction to President Obama's health care speech last night among top political, legislative and communications strategists



## Selected comments from Republicans:

- The speech was too short on details.
- He's in love with his own oratory.
- He was more effective early on when he showed determination to succeed.
- Turning this into a moral imperative to fulfill Ted Kennedy's last breath insults the intelligence of a lot of voters.
- If the speech encourages Blue Dogs to take the plunge and support a health care bill, then it was a great success.
- Classic Obama in delivery, tone and effort to straddle the middle of the road.
- Obfuscation rather than searching for real solutions, and his demonstration of bipartisan cooperation is nonexistent.
- Speech too long; no details.

- Redefined centrist bona fides, although support for public option undercuts that a bit.
  - He faked at tort reform.
  - Good delivery, well written. But when the policy is wrong, it doesn't matter how good the rhetoric is.
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#### **Selected comments from Democrats:**

- This same speech would have been twice as effective if it had been given three months ago.
  - Great speech, but wanted to hear more of the moral/emotional pull up front.
  - A very reassuring speech, well delivered. Had it been the opening salvo in the health care debate months ago, the Republicans would now be on the defense.
  - Best speech to a Joint Session I've ever heard.
  - Too soft on the opposition's efforts to kill any reform.
  - Somewhere between Ted Kennedy and Jimmy Carter.
  - Some of the wonky details probably caused eyes to glaze over.
  - Republicans acted like churlish adolescents. It is one thing to be in opposition, it is quite another to be rude and disrespectful.
  - Superb and engaging.
  - Speech very well constructed and emotional.
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#### **Selected comments from Nonpartisans:**

- Solid performance, but too late. He lost control of the issue two months ago.
  - He needed to hit one out of the park tonight and he did just that.
  - He may not have changed the dynamic, but he set his markers effectively. He needs to take the issue away from both Pelosi and Republican hardliners.
  - A medical insurance tax increase? The one McCain proposed that Democrats savaged? Huh?
  - Shallow on cutting health care costs, waste.
  - Strong speech, but not a "game changer."
  - Does the rhetoric hold up when the details are ironed out? That's the big question.
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*Clarus Research Group is a full-service polling and research firm that offers public opinion surveys, focus groups, dial sessions, market studies, membership surveys, message testing and development, and micro-targeting for grass roots programs.*

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