

**Editorial: Economic optimism still alive in America**  
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After President Barack Obama took office, there was much debate regarding his tone. Some observers believed he was too gloomy and pessimistic about the financial crisis he inherited; others believed he properly reflected the sobering reality of the severe downturn.

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Deluding ourselves into false optimism serves no benefit. Giving way and falling into a state of depression doesn't help, either.

While partisans continue to disagree on whether Obama's initiatives will lead to recovery, few Americans believe that all is lost. At least that's the good news reported by the Economic Mobility Project, an initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

According to a poll last month, despite the fact that three-quarters of Americans describe their economic situation as "only fair" or poor, nearly 80 percent believe it's still possible to improve their economic standing. And 72 percent believe that their family's economic circumstances will improve within the next 10 years.

That sort of optimism has been a hallmark of Americans. But the Economic Mobility Project, a collaboration of bipartisan think tanks, is instructive in highlighting realities that must be addressed to ensure equal opportunity for all, especially the most disadvantaged.

The project found that over generations, 42 percent of children born to parents on the bottom rung of the income ladder remain there adults, while 39 percent of children born to parents on the top rung remain there as adults.

A majority of Americans believe that government can and should aid economic mobility, through policies that make college more affordable, invest in early childhood education, make retirement saving easier and provide job training and financial education.

As we maneuver through this crisis, it's important to consider how policy changes can affect the American dream, and prove that our optimism isn't misplaced.