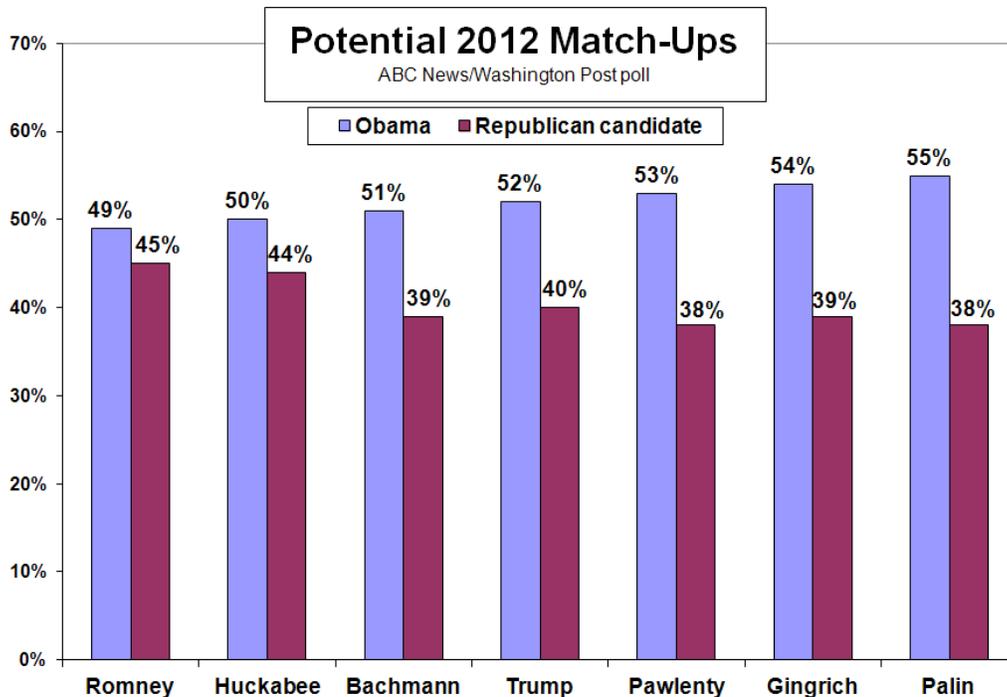


Obama Struggles; Ditto for GOP Lineup

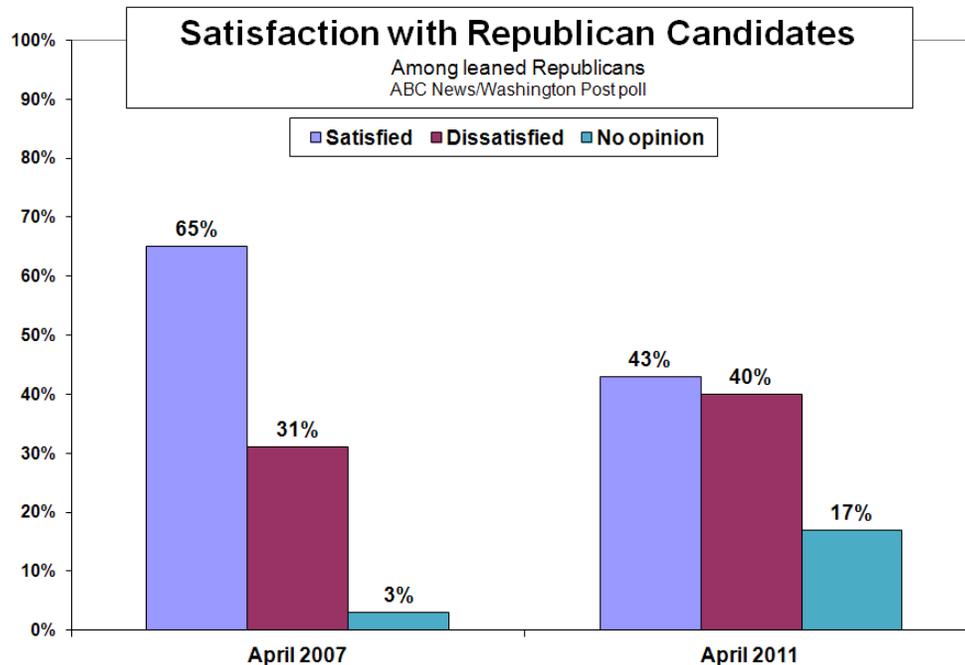
Barack Obama's gotten no bounce from his re-election campaign announcement, with his job approval rating dropping by 7 points since January, his personal popularity at a career low and 57 percent of Americans disapproving of his handling the economy. Yet he leads the potential GOP field.

There are chances for the Republicans in next year's elections, with Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee, in particular, nipping very close to Obama in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll. Economic pessimism, its highest in two years amid soaring gas prices, raises serious political peril for the president. But he benefits from two factors: personal approval that, while down, still exceeds his job rating – and substantial doubts about the opposing party's lineup.



Just 43 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say they're satisfied with the choice of candidates for the GOP nomination for president next year. That compares with 65 percent satisfaction with the field at exactly this point four years ago. Today nearly as many leaned Republicans are dissatisfied with the field as are satisfied, and far more have no opinion of their potential candidates – 17 percent now vs. 3 percent at this point in 2007.

Some of this very likely reflects the late-breaking lineup, with none of the potential major GOP candidates yet to join the race officially. By this time in 2007 all but John McCain were in, and he joined a week later.



In any case, the Republican options haven't lit any fires: Asked open-ended whom they'd support for the nomination today, a third of leaned Republicans have no preference and 12 percent say they wouldn't support anyone. Sixteen percent back Romney in this poll, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#). All other possible runners are in single digits – Donald Trump, 8 percent; Huckabee, 6 percent; Sarah Palin, 5 percent; others, 2 percent or less.

Trump, while far from broadly popular, is a newly launched possible candidate who possesses celebrity and a willingness to wade into controversy, e.g., by questioning Obama's nationality. A television personality and wealthy real estate developer, he does best (14 percent support) among leaned Republicans with incomes over \$100,000 a year; he also does slightly better with strong supporters of the Tea Party political movement, who hold Obama in particular antipathy.

Romney, for his part, does well among more-educated leaned Republicans (29 percent support among college graduates vs. 11 percent among non-graduates) and among those with higher incomes (30 percent among leaned Republicans with incomes more than \$100,000). A Mormon, he gets as much support from evangelical as from non-evangelical Protestants. But there's a hint in the data that he may do slightly better with moderates than with conservatives in the party, a potential challenge in low-turnout primaries where conservatives tend to dominate.

Compared with four years ago, satisfaction with the choice of candidates is lower especially among higher-income and more-educated leaned Republicans. And satisfaction today is lower among moderate Republicans (35 percent satisfied) than among conservatives, 47 percent. Compared with 2007, though, it's down sharply in both groups.

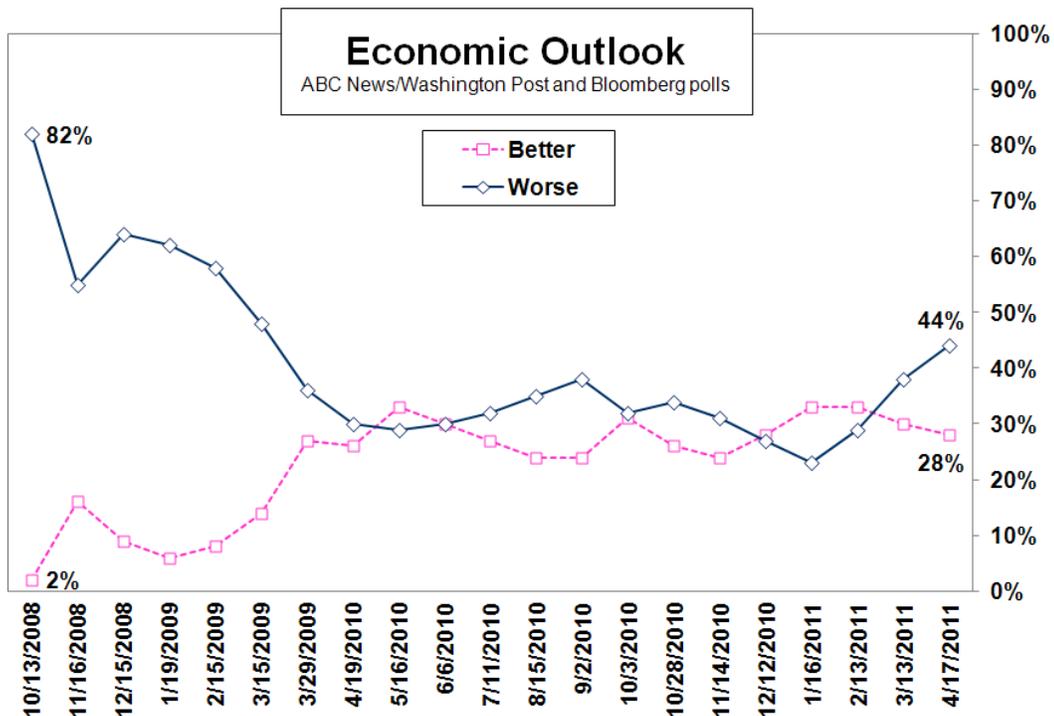
MATCH-UPS – In a head-to-head matchup among all adults Obama leads Trump by 12 points, 52-40 percent; Michele Bachmann by an identical 12 points; Tim Pawlenty and Newt Gingrich by 15 points apiece; and Palin by 17. Closer, as noted, are Huckabee, who trails Obama by 50-44 percent; and Romney, who comes within a scant 4 points, with 45 percent to Obama’s 49.

Notably, both Romney and Huckabee move numerically ahead of Obama, by 49-44 percent and 48-45 percent, respectively, among independents, the quintessential swing voters in national elections. All other Republicans tested in this poll trail Obama among independents.

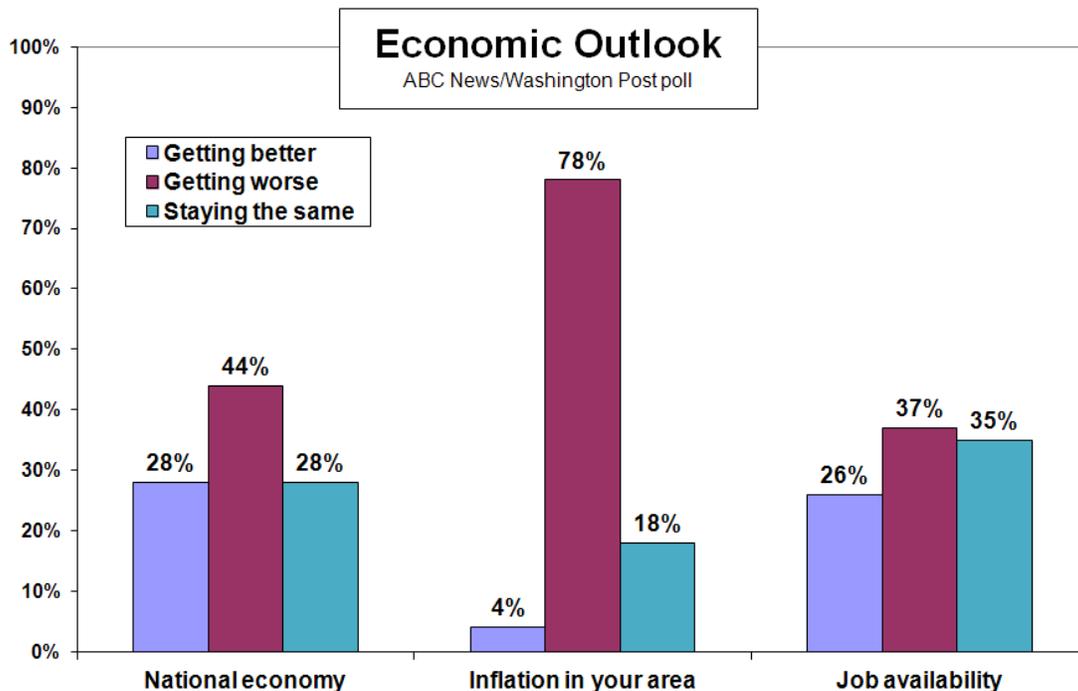
Romney outperforms other potential GOP candidates in higher-income brackets, leading Obama by 11 points among people in \$100,000-plus households, a group in which Obama ran evenly against John McCain in 2008.

Obama won independents by 52-44 percent in '08; now, as noted, more favor Romney. Obama’s support among whites is about the same now as in 2008 (he’s losing them to Romney by 13 points), but he’s somewhat down from his levels in some other groups, including young voters (60 percent, vs. 66 percent in 2008), liberals (84 percent, vs. 89 percent in 2008) and, notably, moderates (53 percent, vs. 60 percent in 2008).

ECONOMY – Obama remains most imperiled, and Republicans best assisted, by the public’s long running – and now heightened – economic discontent. Forty-four percent say the economy’s getting worse, the most since March 2009; these pessimists (disproportionately Republicans) favor any of the possible GOP candidates for president over Obama by double digits.



Beyond the economy overall, and despite declining unemployment, more say the availability of jobs in their area is getting worse (37 percent) than better (26 percent). And most striking is the weight of rising prices: Seventy-eight percent of Americans say inflation is getting worse in their area, and nearly as many, 71 percent, continue to say the rising price of gasoline is causing them financial hardship – “serious” hardship for more than four in 10.



As noted, 57 percent now disapprove of Obama’s handling of the economy, matching the most of his career; 46 percent “strongly” disapprove, a new high and double the number of strong approvers. Overall disapproval of Obama’s work on the economy has risen by 6 points since January, shortly before improved economic views were hammered down by this year’s steep, 74-cent run-up in gas prices.

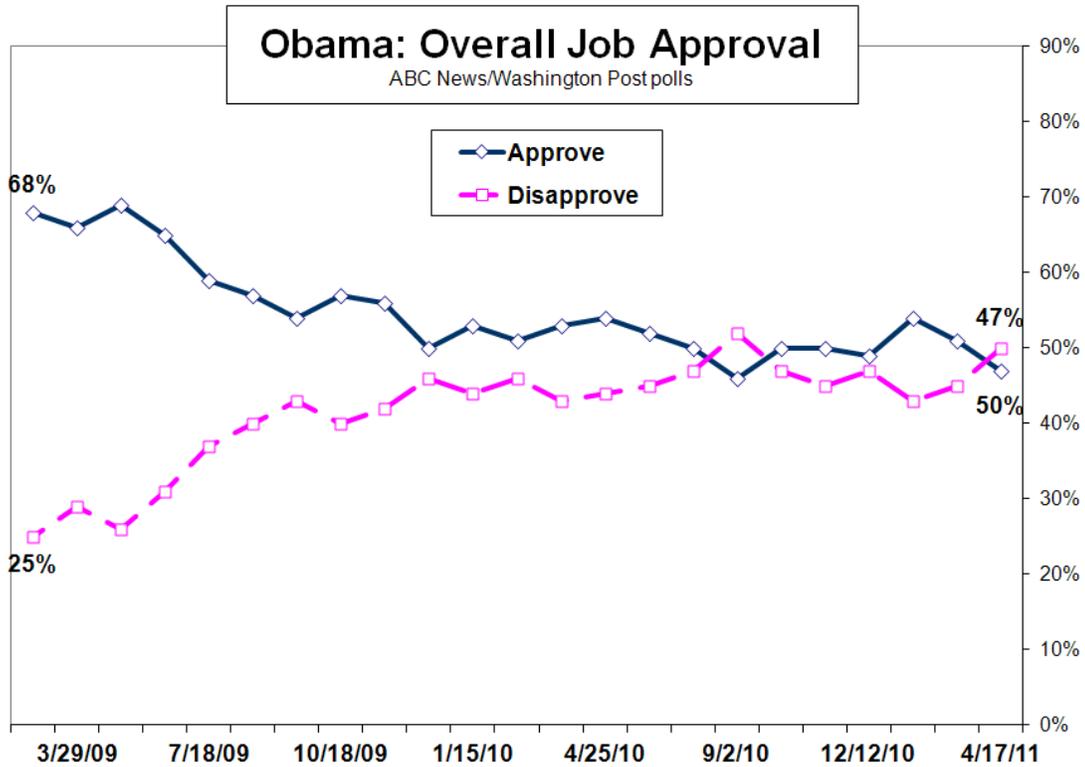
Views that the economy is worsening have increased by 21 points just this year, up particularly in the West, where gas prices are highest, as well as among men, independents and Republicans.

APPROVAL and FAVORABILITY – Where the economy leads, presidential approval usually follows. For the first time since September numerically more Americans now disapprove than approve of Obama’s job performance, 50 percent vs. 47 percent; at 37 percent, the number who “strongly” disapprove is a point from the record, and exceeds strong approvers by 10 points.

Obama’s job rating is down by 11 points this year in the West, and down by 14 points among higher-income Americans, who may have a case of tax jitters given the president’s declaration that he won’t renew upper-income tax breaks next year.

Obama’s job rating has closely matched that of Ronald Reagan, the last president to take office in the midst of a recession; the two have correlated at a remarkable .86 to date, and Reagan in

April 1983 had 49 percent approval, 2 points from Obama's today. But mid-1983 was the point at which the economy began to recover and Reagan to rise; he exceeded 50 percent approval in May 1983 and held it steadily for the next three and a half years. With gas forecast to hit \$5 this summer, an economy fueled-boost for Obama is hard to see.



Obama gets some aid, albeit limited, from another quarter, personal popularity. Fifty-two percent express a favorable opinion of the president overall. That's down 5 points from a year ago to a low for his presidency. Nonetheless it's a majority, while his job approval is not; and equal numbers see him "strongly" favorably as strongly unfavorably, in contrast to his job approval.

While the power of incumbency is substantial, history is littered with presidents driven into the shoals by the storm of economic discontent. Today, with his intention to seek-election in hand, 28 percent of Americans say they'll definitely support Obama, and 25 percent will consider it – enough, combined, to put him over the top. But 45 percent say they definitely will not vote to re-elect the president – enough to put him at serious risk, and to make the 2012 contest a hot one.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 14-17, 2011, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y, with sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

*= less than 0.5 percent

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
4/17/11	47	27	21	50	12	37	3
3/13/11	51	27	24	45	12	33	4
1/16/11	54	30	23	43	15	28	3
12/12/10	49	24	25	47	15	32	4
10/28/10	50	27	23	45	11	34	5
10/28/10 LV	46	31	15	52	8	44	2
10/3/10	50	26	24	47	13	34	3
9/2/10	46	24	22	52	14	38	3
7/11/10	50	28	22	47	12	35	3
6/6/10	52	30	22	45	12	33	4
4/25/10	54	31	23	44	11	33	3
3/26/10	53	34	20	43	8	35	3
2/8/10	51	29	22	46	12	33	3
1/15/10	53	30	24	44	13	32	2
12/13/09	50	31	18	46	13	33	4
11/15/09	56	32	23	42	13	29	2
10/18/09	57	33	23	40	11	29	3
9/12/09	54	35	19	43	12	31	3
8/17/09	57	35	21	40	11	29	3
7/18/09	59	38	22	37	9	28	4
6/21/09	65	36	29	31	10	22	4
4/24/09	69	42	27	26	8	18	4
3/29/09	66	40	26	29	9	20	5
2/22/09	68	43	25	25	8	17	7

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling [ITEM]? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

a. The economy

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
4/17/11	42	23	19	57	11	46	2
3/13/11	43	22	21	55	13	41	2
1/16/11	46	22	24	51	13	38	2
12/12/10	43	21	22	54	15	39	3
10/28/10 RV	44	21	23	54	15	39	3
10/28/10 LV	42	23	19	55	10	45	2
10/3/10	45	22	23	53	13	41	2
9/2/10	41	20	21	57	13	44	2
7/11/10	43	20	23	54	13	41	4
6/6/10	50	26	24	49	12	37	2
4/25/10	49	24	25	49	10	39	2
3/26/10	45	23	22	52	12	40	3
2/8/10	45	22	23	53	15	38	2
1/15/10	47	22	24	52	13	39	1

12/13/09	46	23	24	52	12	40	2
11/15/09	51	26	25	47	12	36	2
10/18/09	50	29	22	48	13	35	1
9/12/09	51	28	24	46	13	33	2
8/17/09	52	27	25	46	13	33	2
7/18/09	52	29	23	46	10	35	3
6/21/09	56	28	28	41	13	27	3
4/24/09	58	31	28	38	13	25	4
3/29/09	60	34	25	38	12	26	3
2/22/09	60	NA	NA	34	NA	NA	6

2b-d held for release.

3-7 held for release.

8. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of Barack Obama? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
4/17/11	52	33	20	45	13	32	2
4/25/10	57	37	21	41	12	29	2
1/15/10	58	38	20	40	13	27	2
11/15/09	61	39	21	38	11	27	1
9/12/09	63	40	23	35	12	24	2
4/24/09	72	46	26	26	11	15	2
1/16/09	79	50	29	18	9	9	3
11/2/08 LV	63	47	16	33	7	26	4
10/23/08 LV	63	47	16	34	7	27	3
10/11/08 RV	64	44	20	33	12	21	3
9/7/08 RV	58	35	23	36	12	24	7
8/22/08 RV	62	37	25	34	13	21	4
6/15/08	63	35	28	33	12	21	4
4/13/08	56	28	28	39	14	25	5
1/12/08	63	31	32	30	14	16	7
11/1/07	51	21	30	36	16	20	13
2/25/07	53	21	33	30	16	14	16
1/19/07	45	NA	NA	29	NA	NA	25
12/11/06	44	21	22	23	17	6	33

9-20 held for release.

21. Changing topics: For each item I name, please tell me if it's getting BETTER, getting WORSE, or staying about the same. How about [ITEM]? Is that getting MUCH better/worse or SOMEWHAT better/worse?

4/17/11 - Summary Table

	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same	No opinion
a. The national economy	28	44	28	*
b. Inflation in your area, meaning the prices you pay for things you buy	4	78	18	*
c. The availability of jobs in your area	26	37	35	1

*Full sample asked item a; half sample asked item b; other half sample asked item c.

Trend where available:

a. The national economy

	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same	No opinion
4/17/11	28	44	28	*
3/13/11*	30	38	31	1
2/13/11	33	29	37	1
1/16/11	33	23	42	1
12/12/10	28	27	42	3
11/14/10	24	31	43	1
10/28/10**	26	34	39	1
10/3/10	31	32	37	*
9/2/10	24	38	38	1
7/11/10	27	32	41	*
6/6/10	30	30	39	1
3/29/09	27	36	36	1
3/15/09	14	48	36	2
2/15/09	8	58	31	3
1/19/09	6	62	31	1
12/15/08	9	64	25	1
11/16/08	16	55	28	1
10/13/08	2	82	13	2

*1/16/11 through 3/13/11 by Bloomberg.

**10/28/10 and previous: "the nation's economy"
Call for full trend.

b-c. No trend.

22. Have recent price increases in gasoline caused any financial hardship for you or others in your household, or not? (IF YES) Has that been a serious hardship, or not serious?

	----- Yes -----				
	NET	Serious	Not serious	No	No opinion
4/17/11	71	43	29	28	*
3/13/11	71	44	26	29	1
7/28/08	72	45	27	28	*
6/15/08	77	51	25	23	0
5/11/08	63	34	29	37	*
4/13/08	67	38	29	32	1
5/21/07	58	27	30	42	*
4/15/07	67	36	31	33	*
7/19/06	60	29	30	39	1
5/15/06	57	31	26	43	*
4/9/06	70	44	26	30	*
9/11/05	64	34	30	36	*
8/28/05	66	36	30	34	*
8/21/05	53	26	27	47	*
4/24/05	64	34	30	36	*
3/20/05	57	29	28	43	*
5/23/04	64	37	27	36	0
4/18/04	54	31	23	46	0
4/28/02	53	20	33	47	*
4/29/01	48	17	30	52	*
6/25/00*	44	NA	NA	56	*
5/24/00	36			64	*
4/2/00	39			61	*
3/12/00	41			59	*
2/15/00	40	"	"	60	*

*6/25/00 and previous by Gallup; slightly different wordings.

23-32 held for release.

33. As you may know, Obama has announced that he is running for re-election in 2012. Would you say you will definitely vote for him, you'll consider voting for him, or you definitely will not vote for him?

	Definitely will	Will consider	Definitely will not	No opinion
4/17/11	28	25	45	2
12/12/10*	26	30	43	2
11/23/09**	24	31	41	4

*"If Obama runs...would you..."

**"Thinking ahead to 2012, at this point would you..."

34. (ASKED OF LEANED REPUBLICANS) Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the choice of candidates for the Republican nomination for President next year - are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

	---- Satisfied -----			--- Dissatisfied ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Very	
4/17/11	43	5	38	40	30	10	17
11/1/07	69	16	54	28	22	7	2
9/7/07	68	19	49	26	21	6	5
7/21/07	65	13	53	32	26	6	3
6/1/07	68	11	56	28	22	6	4
4/15/07	65	16	49	31	27	5	3
2/25/07	73	14	58	24	20	5	3

35. (ASKED OF LEANED REPUBLICANS) If the 2012 Republican presidential primary or caucus in your state were being held today, for whom would you vote? (OPEN END; SINGLE RESPONSE) Which candidate would you lean toward?

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE

	4/17/11
Michele Bachmann	1
Haley Barbour	1
Chris Christie	1
Mitch Daniels	1
Jim DeMint	*
Newt Gingrich	2
Mike Huckabee	6
Jon Huntsman	*
Sarah Palin	5
Ron Paul	2
Tim Pawlenty	1
Mike Pence	1
Rick Perry	0
Mitt Romney	16
Rick Santorum	*
John Thune	0
Donald Trump	8
Other	5
No one/None of them	12
Anyone/Any of them	4
Would not vote	-
No opinion	33

36. If the 2012 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were (Barack Obama, the Democrat) and (ITEM, the Republican), for whom would you vote? Would you lean toward (Obama) or toward (ITEM)? (ORDER SCRAMBLED)

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE

4/17/11 - Summary Table

	Obama	Rep.	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opin.
a. Sarah Palin	55	38	1	3	2	1
b. Newt Gingrich	54	39	*	3	2	1
c. Mitt Romney	49	45	*	3	1	2
d. Mike Huckabee	50	44	*	2	1	2
e. Tim Pawlenty	53	38	*	4	1	3
f. Donald Trump	52	40	*	4	3	1
g. Michele Bachmann	51	39	*	4	2	3

Trend where available:

a. Sarah Palin

	Obama	Palin	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
4/17/11	55	38	1	3	2	1
12/12/10	54	39	1	3	3	1

END