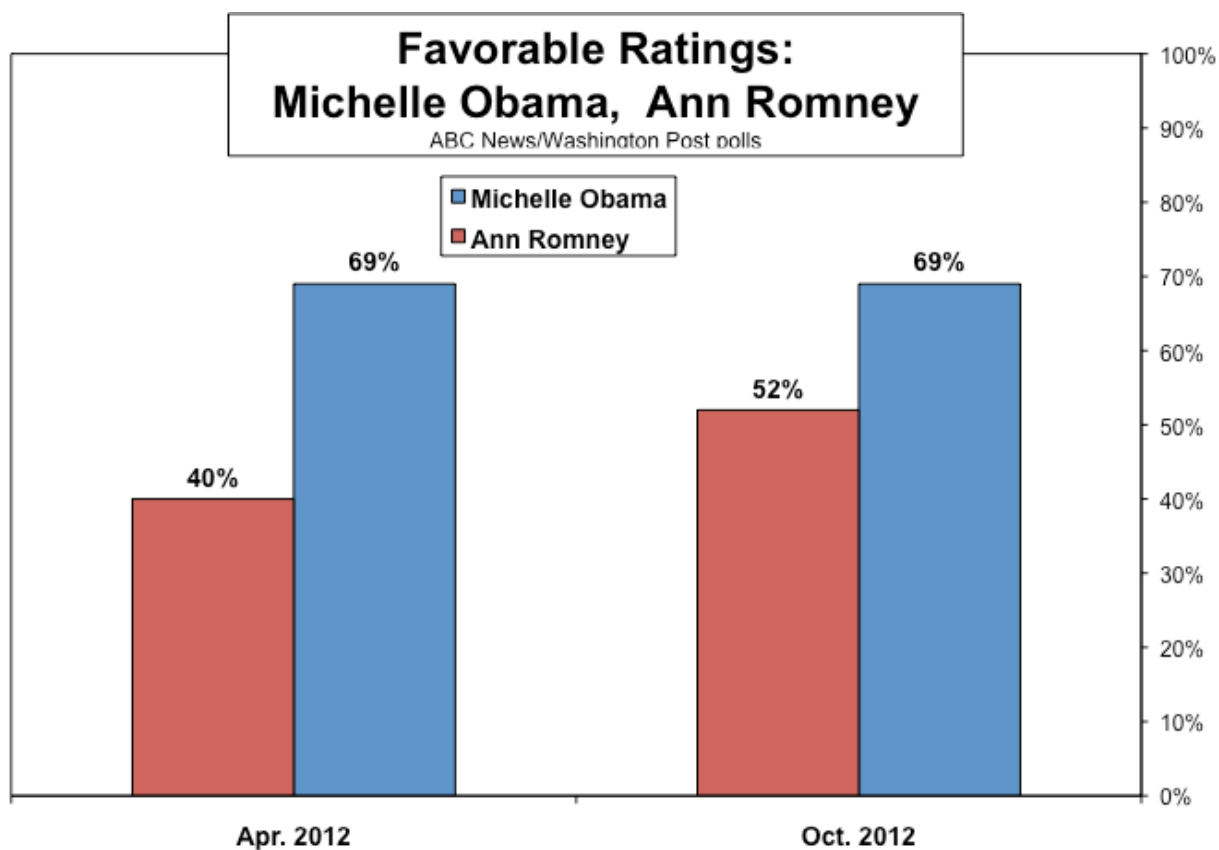


In the Battle of the Spouses, Romney's Up, But Obama Leads

Ann Romney's popularity has jumped since April as her national exposure has increased, but Michelle Obama maintains a clear advantage in the battle of the spouses – with both women rated more favorably than their campaign-scarred husbands.

Fifty-two percent of Americans in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll see Ann Romney favorably, vs. 69 percent for Michelle Obama, a 17-point edge for the first lady. Still, favorable views of Romney have gained 12 points since April, while views of Obama are unchanged.



More favorable ratings for Romney coincide with a 14-point decline in the number of adults who have yet to form an opinion of her, from 30 percent in April to 16 percent now. Her unfavorable rating has held steady, at three in 10, suggesting that virtually all of those who've made up their minds about her since spring have done so favorably.

Twenty-six percent view Obama unfavorably in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), with just 6 percent undecided, both essentially unchanged since April.

The popularity of presidential candidates' spouses does not drive vote preferences. But every advantage can count in a close race, and spouses can play a very public role in the campaigns.

Obama's popularity is roughly on par with two previous first ladies in data since 1992 – Barbara Bush that year (73 percent saw her favorably) and Laura Bush in 2004 (66 percent favorable, among registered voters); Hillary Clinton was considerably less popular, with 47 percent of registered voters seeing her favorably in fall 1996.

Romney, for her part, has a rating similar to those of several other challengers' wives once they were reasonably well-known – Cindy McCain (47 percent, among registered voters), Tipper Gore (57 percent) and Elizabeth Dole (51 percent of registered voters) in available data.

Michelle Obama and Ann Romney are rated very similarly among registered voters as among all adults (67 and 56 percent favorable, respectively) and both do better than their spouses: As [reported Tuesday](#), Barack Obama had a 55 percent popularity rating, Mitt Romney 47 percent, among registered voters in this survey.

Like their husbands, each spouse appeals most to her party's base. Ann Romney's gains in popularity since April, while broadly based, have been best among Republicans (+19 points) and conservatives (+20 points). Michelle Obama, for her part, continues to be rated most favorably by African-Americans, Democrats and liberals.

Obama has maintained some degree of bipartisan support – she is seen favorably by 43 percent of Republicans and half of conservatives. Romney does less well across the aisle; about one-third of Democrats and liberals view her favorably.

Obama also fares better in the middle. Two-thirds of independents rate her favorably, while half say the same about Romney. But Romney has some room to improve in this group, with nearly two in 10 still to make up their minds.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Oct. 4-7, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,018 adults. Results have a margin of sampling error of 4.0 points, including design effect. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Julie Phelan.

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

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Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

10/7/12 - Summary Table

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
a. Michelle Obama	69	44	25	26	11	14	6
b. Ann Romney	52	19	33	31	15	16	16

Trend:

a. Michelle Obama

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
10/7/12	69	44	25	26	11	14	6
4/22/12	69	38	30	24	12	12	7
11/15/09	71	45	26	16	8	9	12
3/29/09	76	46	33	16	9	7	8
1/16/09	72	38	34	17	10	7	11
8/22/08 RV	51	26	25	30	14	16	19
6/15/08	48	21	27	29	11	18	23

b. Ann Romney

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
10/7/12	52	19	33	31	15	16	16
4/22/12	40	11	28	30	17	13	30

*** END ***