

Michelle Obama, Ann Romney, Hillary Clinton: In Personal Popularity, the Women Rule

Michelle Obama and Ann Romney outscore their husbands in personal popularity in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll, while Hillary Clinton, for her part, has hit a new high in favorability data stretching back to her entry on the national stage 20 years ago.

Clinton and Obama both are far better known than Romney (all three women henceforth are referred to chiefly by their last names), helping boost them to much higher popularity ratings overall. All three are rated unfavorably by roughly similar numbers, ranging from a quarter to three in 10 Americans.

All told, Obama is seen favorably by 69 percent of the public, unfavorably by 24 percent – not her best rating (76-16 percent in March 2009) but a broadly positive one. Her favorability rating is 13 points higher than her husband's; her unfavorable score, 16 points lower.

Romney's rating is 40-30 percent favorable-unfavorable in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). While much less positive than Obama's, some of that has to do with Romney's shorter time in the spotlight: Thirty percent are undecided about her, compared with 7 percent undecided about Obama.

Romney, in any case, does better than her husband's 35-47 percent rating last week. She's a scant 5 points higher than Mitt Romney in favorability, but a broader 17 points lower in unfavorable ratings. As noted last week, Mitt Romney's basic popularity ratings are the weakest for any presumptive presidential nominee in ABC/Post polls during primary seasons since 1984.

Clinton's ratings are much like Obama's – 65-27 percent favorable-unfavorable, a numerical high for Clinton by a single point. That reflects a turnaround from the 2008 presidential campaign, in which she lost the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama. At this time four years ago she was seen unfavorably by 54 percent of Americans, favorably by 44 percent.

Clinton likely is boosted by her current position: As secretary of state, she's prominent as a representative of U.S. interests and concerns overseas, without engaging in the controversial to-and-fro of domestic politics. Note too that her husband, also largely outside the fray of domestic politics these days, had an equally positive 67-29 percent favorable-unfavorable rating in a Pew poll last month, much like his wife's, and also Michelle Obama's, today.

Popularity: Women and their Husbands
(Favorable-unfavorable ratings)

Michelle Obama	69-24%	Barack Obama	56-40
Ann Romney	40-30	Mitt Romney	35-47
Hillary Clinton	65-27	Bill Clinton*	67-29

*Pew poll; rest are ABC/Post

There are differences in intensity of sentiment. Michelle Obama is viewed strongly favorably by 38 percent of Americans, strongly unfavorably by 12 percent. Hillary Clinton’s ratings are 33 percent strongly positive vs. 13 percent strongly negative – the latter its lowest by 13 points, and a shift from generally much greater negative intensity in past years. Intensity of views on Ann Romney are evenly divided – 11 percent strongly favorable, 13 percent strongly unfavorable.

GROUPS – Being a step away from the main political fray isn’t the same as being out of politics; indeed there are sharp partisan differences in views of these three women. Obama and Clinton both are viewed favorably by a near-unanimous 90 percent of Democrats, but by far fewer Republicans – 44 and 39 percent, respectively. Romney, by contrast, is rated favorably by 64 percent of Republicans, but 24 percent of Democrats.

In the political center, roughly two-thirds of independents express positive views of Obama and Clinton alike. Forty-two percent hold favorable opinions of Romney, again with many undecided.

	Favorable-unfavorable ratings		
	Michelle Obama	Ann Romney	Hillary Clinton
All	69-24%	40-30	65-27
Men	67-26	40-32	61-31
Women	71-22	40-28	68-23
Whites	62-30	46-25	60-33
Blacks	95-2	15-47	87-7
Nonwhites (net)	84-11	28-41	75-15
Democrats	90-8	24-53	90-6
Republicans	44-47	64-11	39-55
Independents	67-27	42-24	63-25
Liberals	87-8	29-44	80-11
Moderates	78-15	37-27	74-17
Conservatives (net)	53-41	52-25	51-44
Somewhat conservatives	59-34	51-26	55-40
Very conservatives	43-53	54-23	45-50
Liberal Democrats	94-4	25-53	91-4
Conservative Republicans	39-56	70-10	35-62

There are ideological differences as well, although notably, all three women are rated favorably by roughly equal numbers – from 51 to 53 percent – of conservatives. Obama and Clinton go much higher in popularity among political moderates and liberals, while Romney heads the other way.

There’s a gender gap for Clinton – a 7-point better rating among women than men – but not a significant one for Obama and none at all for Romney – a striking contrast to her husband. Mitt Romney’s favorability rating last week was 17 points lower among women than among men.

Among other differences, Obama, the first African-American first lady, soars to a remarkable 95 percent favorability among blacks, and 84 percent among nonwhites overall, compared with 62 percent among whites. Clinton also is broadly popular with blacks, who are disproportionately likely to be Democrats; Romney, by contrast, lags in popularity among blacks particularly and nonwhites more generally.

Romney is notably more popular among adults age 50 and older (48 percent favorable) than among those younger than 40, among whom 31 percent see her favorably.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone April 18-22, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,008 adults. 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 SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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? (ITEMS SCRAMBLED)

a. Michelle Obama

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
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 opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
4/22/12	40	11	28	30	17	13	30

c. Hillary Clinton

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
4/22/12	65	33	32	27	14	13	8
8/22/08 RV	52	29	23	44	14	30	4
6/15/08	54	26	28	43	17	26	3
4/13/08	44	22	23	54	15	39	2
1/12/08	58	32	26	40	11	29	2

11/1/07	50	28	22	46	11	35	4
2/25/07	49	25	24	48	13	35	3
1/19/07	54	31	23	44	14	30	3
12/11/06	56	27	29	40	11	29	4
5/15/06	54	29	25	42	11	31	4
3/5/06	52	27	25	46	12	33	2
6/5/05	51	NA	NA	46	NA	NA	3
6/1/03	44	15	29	48	16	32	8
9/2/99	49	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	7
6/6/99	59			35			6
3/14/99	60			36			4
2/14/99	63			31			6
11/1/98	64			31			5
8/21/98	64			28			8
8/19/98	64			32			4
4/4/98	58			33			10
1/30/98	60			30			10
1/19/98	52			39			9
3/9/97	47			44			9
9/4/96	RV 47			42			12
6/30/96	44			47			9
1/21/96	28			36			36
1/19/96	32			34			34
10/31/94	47			44			8
5/15/94	54			41			5
3/27/94	53			39			8
1/23/94	55			34			11
11/14/93	58			33			9
8/8/93	59			33			8
4/26/93	54			26			20
2/23/93	59			24			18
1/17/93	51			20			29
7/8/92	30			26			43
3/18/92	28	"	"	22	"	"	51

*** END ***