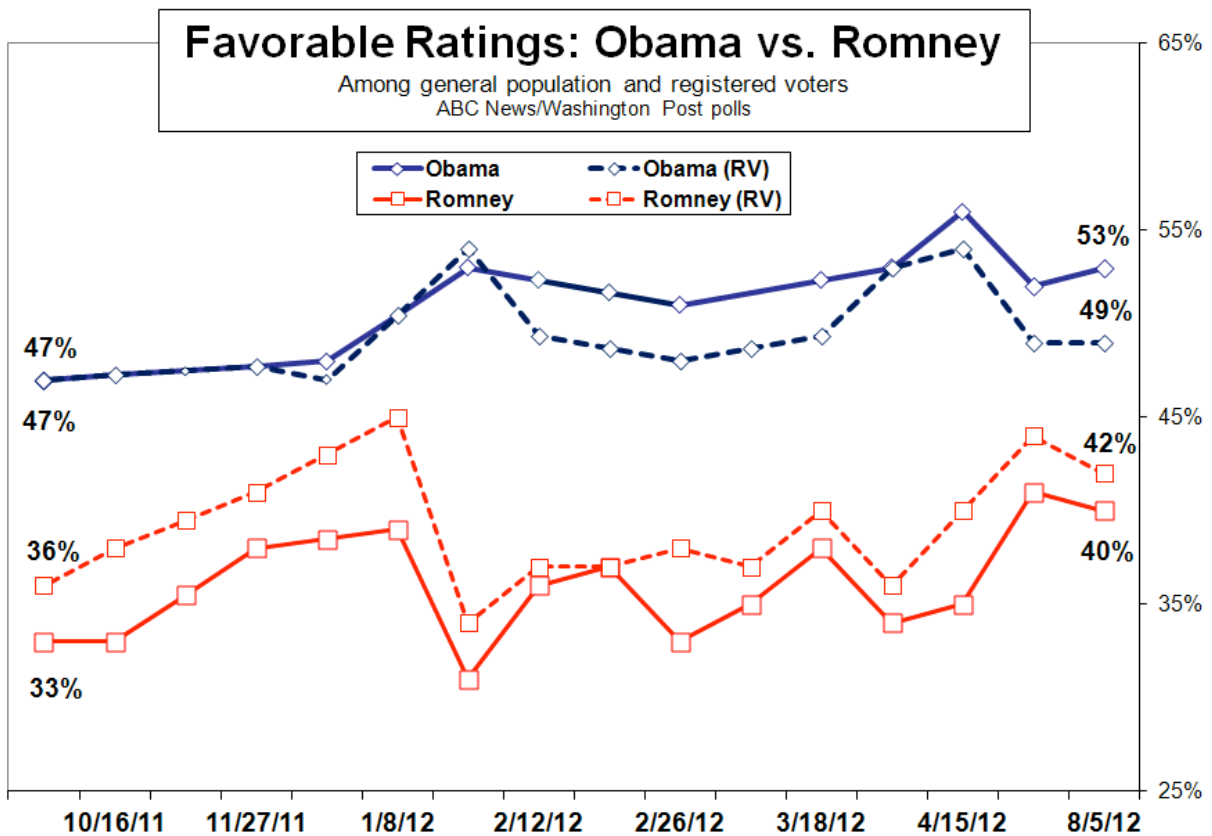


Romney's Popularity Stays Low, Obama's is Better, but with Challenges

Mitt Romney is laboring under the lowest personal popularity ratings for a presumptive presidential nominee in midsummer election-year polls back to 1984. But Barack Obama has his own challenges in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll, notably among registered voters, and with much weaker numbers among men than women.

Forty percent of Americans overall view Romney favorably, 49 percent unfavorably – leaving him underwater, at least numerically, in 10 straight ABC/Post polls this year. A new high of 30 percent now see him “strongly” unfavorably, nearly double his strongly favorable score.

Romney finished the primary season with the lowest favorability for a presumptive nominee in ABC/Post polls back 28 years; the question was whether that represented a post-primary campaign hangover from which he'd recover. The answer: not yet.



Indeed, while indecision about Romney has fallen from 37 percent last September to 11 percent now, the trend among those who've made up their minds has been largely negative: His favorability rating has gained 7 percentage points in the past year, but his unfavorable score is up by 18.

OBAMA – Obama, for his part, is seen more positively than negatively among all adults, 53-43 percent favorable-unfavorable, but slips to nearly an even split, 49-47 percent, among registered voters. That's still better than Romney's 42-50 percent among registered voters, but less sharply so.

“Strongly” unfavorable views of Obama and Romney are roughly the same, 31 and 30 percent, respectively in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). But an additional 29 percent see Obama strongly favorably, while Romney's strong favorability, as noted, is weaker, 16 percent.

Obama's advantage rests with women, among whom 58 percent see him favorably, vs. 47 percent of men – the widest gender gap in this measure of the season. Romney, by contrast, does better among men than women – 44 percent favorable vs. 36 percent. As such, the two candidates essentially are tied among men, while among women Obama does 22 points better.

CHALLENGERS and INCUMBENTS – With three months of campaigning ahead, these views don't predict the election outcome. Romney's 40 percent favorable rating is an insignificant, single point below George H.W. Bush's in mid-August 1988, yet Bush went on to win.

But there are differences. Negative views of Romney are 11 points higher than they were for Bush 24 years ago. (Twenty-two percent had yet to form an opinion of Bush, double the undecided on Romney.) And Bush's 41 percent was an election-year low, while Romney's 40 percent is a point from his high this cycle.

On incumbents, favorable views at this point in the race have varied widely in the past. Obama's rating is lower than that of most previous incumbents; but even among registered voters, his rating now is no worse than George W. Bush's 47 percent in midsummer 2004, a race Bush won.

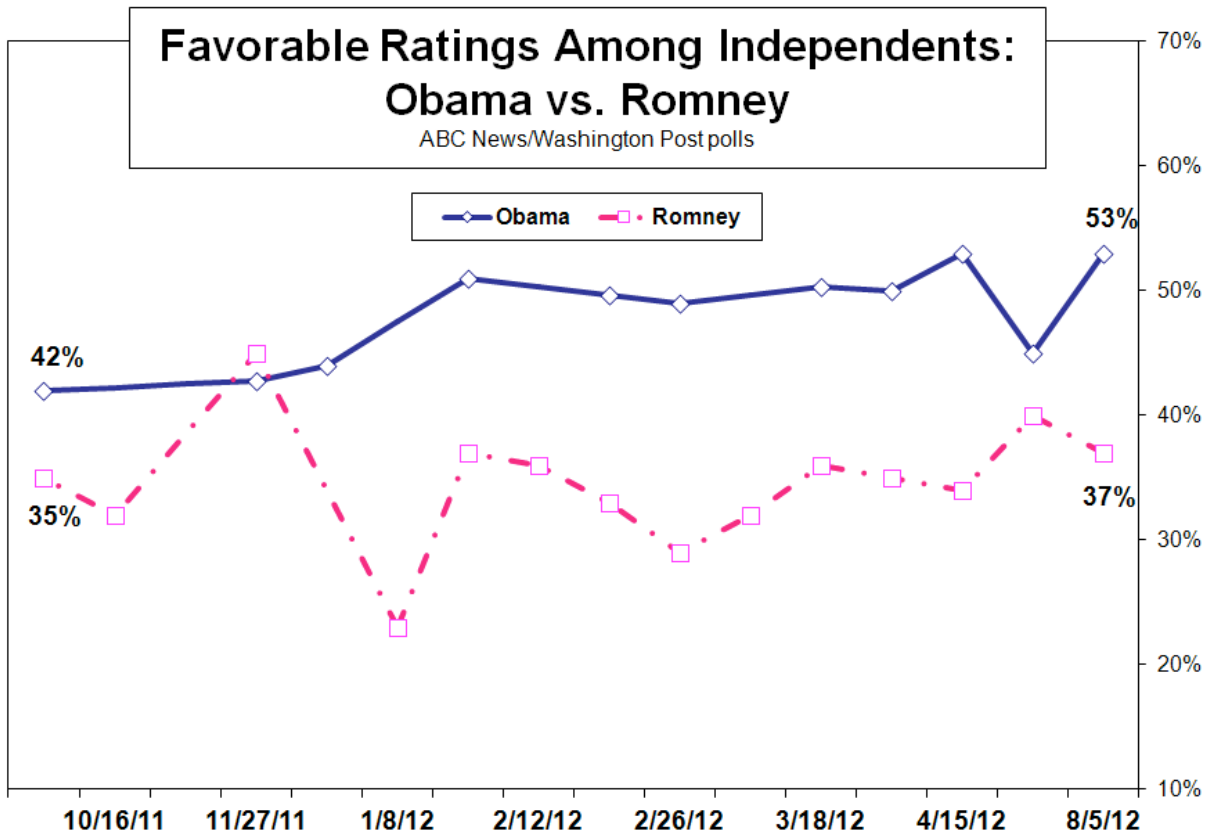
			Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
Mitt Romney		8/5/12	40%	49	11
Barack Obama		8/5/12	53	43	4
Barack Obama	RV	8/22/08	62	34	4
John McCain	RV	8/22/08	59	37	4
John Kerry	RV	8/1/04	51	32	16
George W. Bush	RV	8/1/04	47	45	8
George W. Bush		7/23/00	62	29	9
Al Gore		7/23/00	54	35	11
Bill Clinton	RV	9/4/96	58	38	4
Bob Dole	RV	9/4/96	50	38	12
Bill Clinton	RV	8/21/92	57	32	12

George Bush	RV	8/21/92	55	40	5
Mike Dukakis		8/15/88	49	27	24
George Bush		8/15/88	41	38	22
Walter Mondale		8/30/84*	53	40	7
Ronald Reagan		8/30/84	70	28	2

*LA Times poll. All others ABC/Post and Washington Post polls.

INDEPENDENTS – Obama’s gained back ground he’d lost among independents, customarily swing voters in national elections. In late May he fell numerically underwater among independents for the first time since December (45-52 percent favorable-unfavorable). He’s now back far in front of Romney in this group, largely because of gains among independent women.

Among all independents, Obama’s favorability rating is now 16 points higher than Romney’s (53 percent vs. 37 percent). At the same time, that narrows among independents who are registered to vote – 46 percent favorable for Obama, 38 percent for Romney – indicating, among other factors, the potential importance of voter registration drives in the few months ahead.



GROUPS – Among partisans, Romney’s caught up with Obama in popularity within his own party; 83 percent of Republicans rate Romney positively, as do 84 percent of Democrats for Obama. That’s Romney’s best-ever rating with the party faithful, up 25 points since mid-March.

Romney’s rated favorably by fewer conservatives, 65 percent, though this, too, is a new high. Obama does better among liberals, 84 percent positive (a new high for him), though there are fewer of them. Moderates make a difference – 56 percent see Obama favorably, just 36 percent Romney.

Among other groups, Obama’s more popular among adults younger than 40 and people earning less than \$50,000, while Romney does better among 30-plus year-olds and the highest-income earners.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Aug. 1-5, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,026 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 4 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 Gregory Holyk.

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

Media contacts: [David Ford](#), (212) 456-7243, and [Julie Townsend](#), (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

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

8/5/12 - Summary Table

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
a. Barack Obama	53	29	24	43	12	31	4
b. Mitt Romney	40	16	23	49	19	30	11

Trend:

a. Barack Obama

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No op.
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
8/5/12	53	29	24	43	12	31	4
5/27/12	52	29	23	45	14	31	3
4/15/12	56	30	26	40	14	26	5
3/25/12	53	31	23	43	15	28	3
2/26/12	51	26	25	45	13	32	3
1/22/12	53	27	25	43	14	29	4
12/11/11	48	23	25	49	16	33	3
9/18/11	47	22	25	46	15	31	7

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

b. Mitt Romney

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	op.
8/5/12	40	16	23	49	19	30	11
5/27/12	41	15	26	45	21	24	14
4/15/12	35	12	23	47	24	23	18
3/25/12	34	8	26	50	25	25	16
3/18/12	38	10	28	42	19	23	20
3/4/12	35	9	26	45	20	25	20
2/26/12	33	6	27	46	22	24	21
2/19/12	37	10	27	44	21	23	19
2/12/12	36	9	27	43	18	24	22
1/22/12	31	6	25	49	25	23	21
1/8/12	39	10	28	34	18	16	28
11/27/11	38	9	29	38	20	17	25
10/16/11	33	8	26	36	20	15	31
9/18/11	33	5	27	31	16	14	37

*** END ***