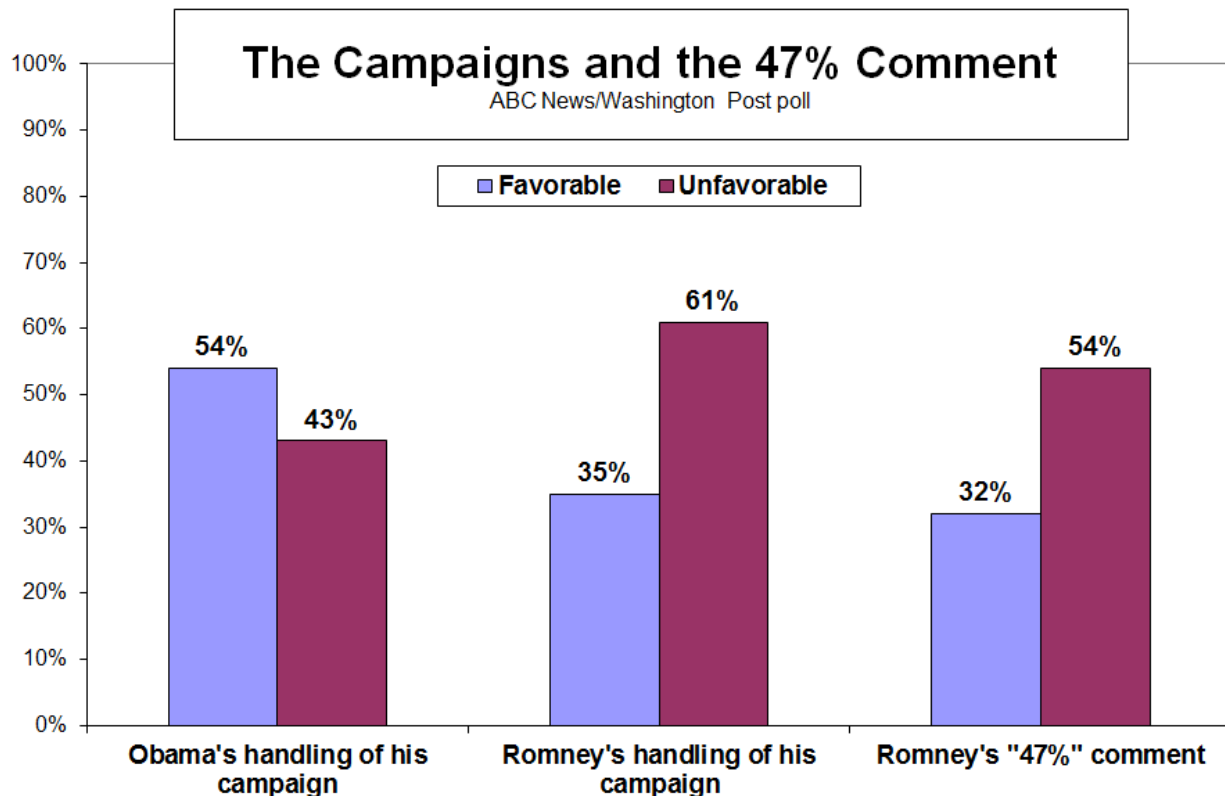


## **Criticism of Romney's Campaign Grows; Six in 10 Rate His Efforts Negatively**

Public criticism of Mitt Romney's race for the White House has risen sharply, with six in 10 Americans expressing a negative opinion of how he's handling his campaign and a majority responding unfavorably to his comments on people who don't pay income taxes.

Sixty-one percent in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll hold an unfavorable view of how Romney's handling his presidential campaign, up by 12 percentage points since mid-July. Far fewer, 35 percent, rate Romney's performance positively, essentially unchanged.

Barack Obama's ratings for handling his campaign are substantially better, 54-43 percent, favorable-unfavorable. And while ratings of Romney's campaign have grown more negative, favorable ratings of Obama's campaign efforts have gained 8 points since July.

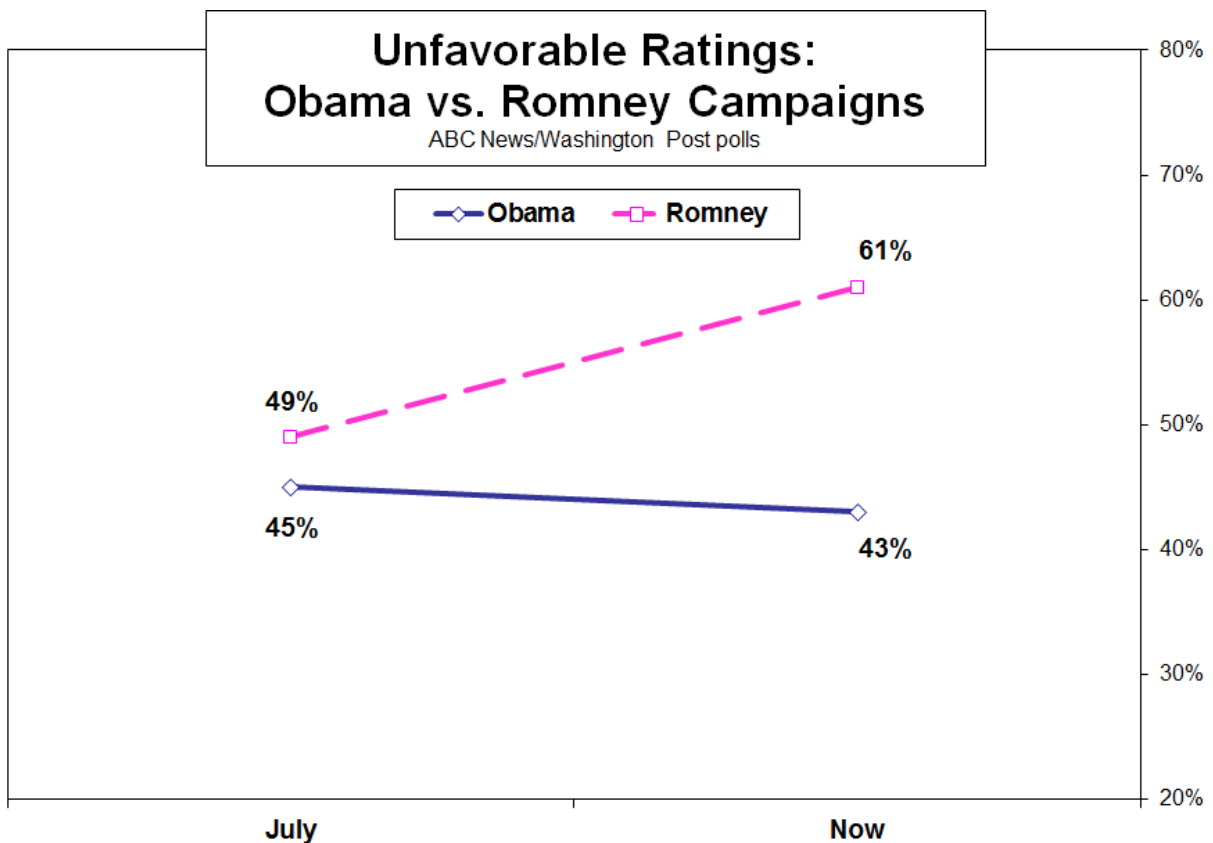


These ratings follow controversy last week about Romney's remark at a Florida fundraiser that 47 percent of Americans don't pay income taxes, see themselves as "victims" and lack personal

responsibility. Fifty-four percent in this survey, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), see his “recent comments about people who don’t pay income taxes” negatively; 32 percent respond favorably, with the rest unsure.

There’s also an intensity problem for Romney: Americans disproportionately see his handling of his campaign “strongly” unfavorably rather than strongly favorably, 36 percent vs. 10 percent; it’s a similar split on his comment on those who don’t pay taxes. Strong sentiment on Obama’s campaign, by contrast, is evenly balanced.

As damaging as Romney’s remark may have been, it appears not to be solely responsible for Romney’s weak grade on handling his campaign, since ratings of his campaign performance overall are 7 points more negative than are responses to that comment. Indeed, even among those who see the “47 percent” remark favorably, nearly three in 10 also respond negatively to Romney’s handling of his campaign overall.



In a sign of particular trouble for Romney, negative views of his campaign have grown by 18 points since midsummer among independents, who often are swing voters. In July, 46 percent of independents rated Romney’s handling of his campaign negatively; it’s 64 percent today. Romney’s positive score among independents, at 32 percent, far trails Obama’s, 50 percent.

Even among Republicans, more than one in four rates Romney’s efforts negatively – 27 percent. While essentially unchanged since July, that’s substantially more than the share of Democrats who respond negatively to Obama’s work on his campaign, 11 percent.

As well as among independents, negative views of Romney’s handling of his campaign have grown especially sharply among adults under age 40 – up by 23 points since July, to 69 percent negative – and among women, with negative responses up by 18 points. And there’s a large gap among income groups: a 16-point rise in negative ratings of Romney’s campaign among people with household incomes less than \$100,000 a year, vs. essentially no change among those with incomes of \$100,000 or more.

Less than well-off adults also are more critical of Romney’s “47 percent” comment, responding negatively rather than positively by 57-28 percent. Those with incomes of \$100,000 or more, by contrast, divide evenly – they’re 18 points more supportive of the remark.

	Favorable-unfavorable views of				
	Obama’s campaign Now	Obama’s campaign July	Romney’s campaign Now	Romney’s campaign July	Romney’s 47% comment
All	54-43%	46-45	35-61	38-49	32-54
Registered voters	53-45	46-46	36-61	39-49	33-54
Democrats	89-11	75-18	13-86	16-74	15-76
Republicans	20-78	14-79	70-27	66-24	64-24
Independents	50-46	47-46	32-64	41-46	27-57
Liberals	74-25	66-21	18-80	18-66	18-73
Moderates	59-36	52-38	29-68	35-53	22-65
Conservatives	34-64	32-64	54-43	54-37	53-33
Liberal Dems.	93- 7	77-13	11-89	10-77	14-77
Conservative Reps.	17-83	9-89	75-23	72-21	72-17
Men	49-47	42-49	39-58	38-51	38-49
Women	58-39	50-41	31-64	38-46	26-59
18-39	62-35	48-39	29-69	38-46	26-56
40-plus	49-47	45-49	38-57	38-50	35-54
Whites	45-51	34-56	39-56	42-44	34-50
Nonwhites	74-24	72-21	24-73	30-56	27-63
Less than \$50K	60-36	48-42	32-64	35-48	27-58
\$50-100K	47-50	44-48	30-65	41-50	30-54
Less than \$100K NET	56-40	47-44	31-64	36-48	28-57
\$100K-plus	42-56	48-46	47-52	42-50	46-47

Obama, for his part, gets especially positive grades for handling his campaign, 60 percent, from people with household incomes of \$50,000 or less; that falls to less than half of those who are better off financially. Still his rating is 17 points better than Romney’s even in the \$50,000-\$100,000 range; only among \$100,000-plus earners does Romney’s campaign rival Obama’s.

Among other groups, Obama's campaign efforts are rated positively by majorities of women, adults younger than 40, moderates (as well as liberals) and (especially) nonwhites; those compare with even splits among men and among people 40 and older. Among whites, Obama's 45-51 percent rating, favorable-unfavorable, is not positive – but beats Romney's 39-56 percent.

While these results are among all adults, they're essentially identical among those who report being registered to vote: Negative on Romney's campaign by 61-36 percent; negative on his tax comment by 54-33 percent; and positive on Obama's campaign efforts by 53-45 percent.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Sept. 19-23, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,012 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 4 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 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?

9/23/12 - Summary Table

Full question wording:

- a. The way Barack Obama is running his presidential campaign
- b. The way Mitt Romney is running his presidential campaign
- c. Romney's recent comments about people who don't pay income taxes

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No op.
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
a. Obama's campaign	54	28	26	43	16	27	3
b. Romney's campaign	35	10	24	61	25	36	4
c. Romney's comments	32	16	16	54	17	37	14

Trend:

- a. The way Barack Obama is running his presidential campaign

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/23/12	54	28	26	43	16	27	3
7/15/12	46	22	24	45	13	32	9

- b. The way Mitt Romney is running his presidential campaign

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/23/12	35	10	24	61	25	36	4
7/15/12	38	12	26	49	21	27	14

c. No trend.

\*\*\* END \*\*\*