

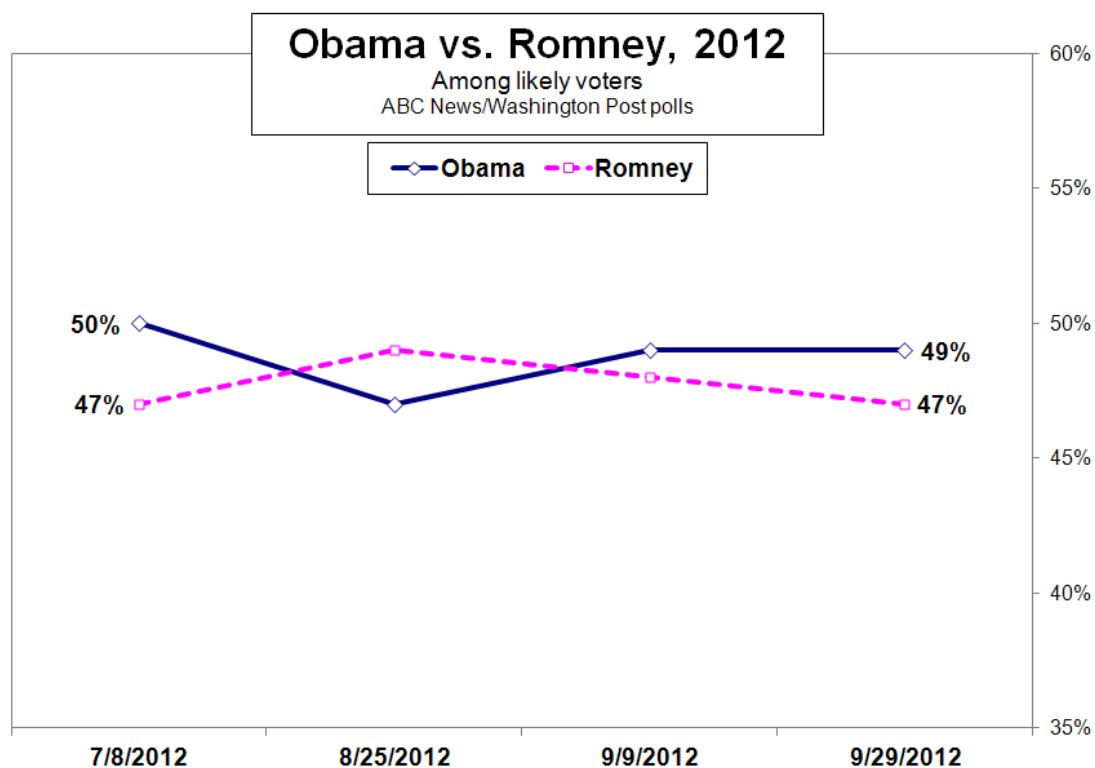
Obama Leads on Expectations – But the Race Itself Stays Close

Registered voters by 2-1 think Barack Obama will win the upcoming presidential debates and go on to prevail in the November election. But expectations aside, the race remains close, with strengths and vulnerabilities for both candidates in the campaign ahead.

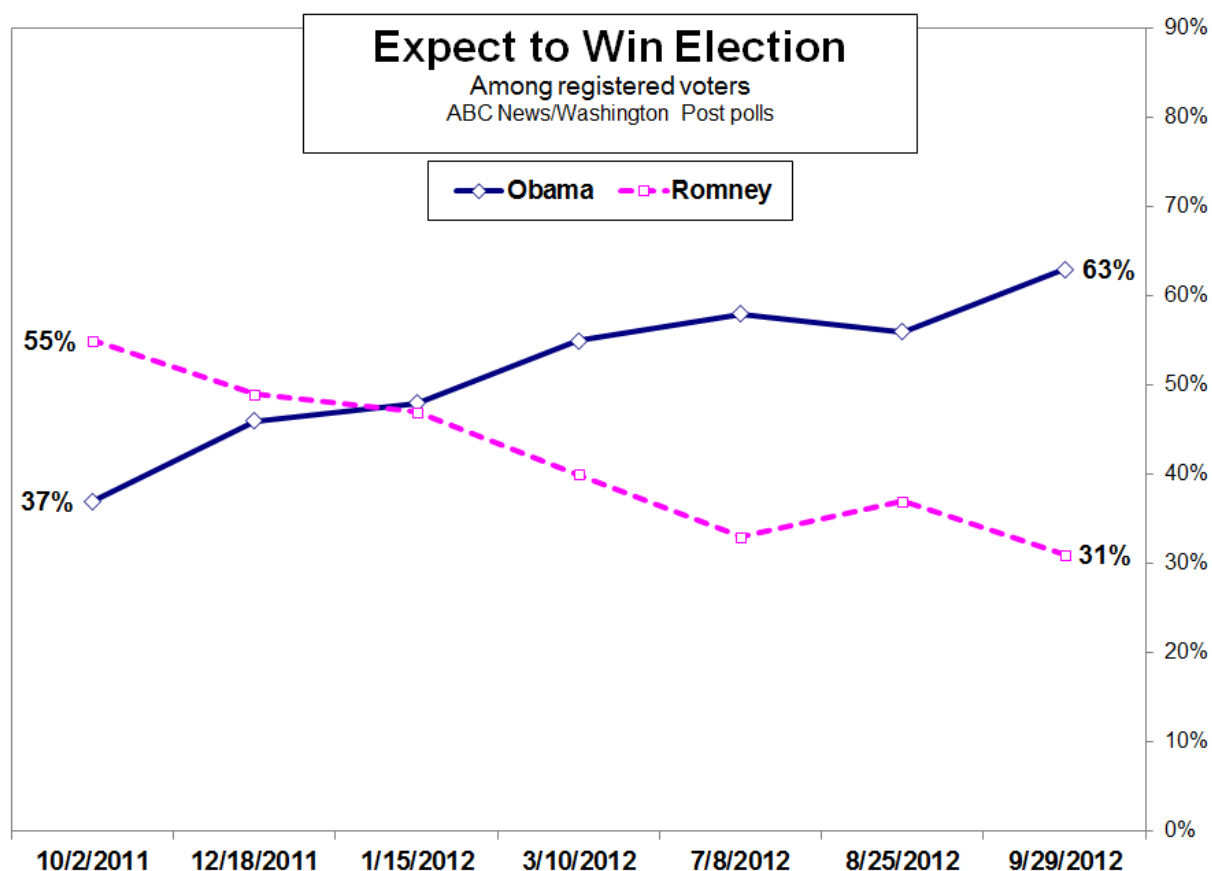
After a challenging period for Romney, registered voters by 63-31 percent expect Obama to win re-election, his widest advantage in expectations in ABC News/Washington Post polls to date. A year ago, in sharp contrast, Americans by an 18-point margin thought he'd lose.

Potential voters by a similar 56-29 percent also expect Obama to win the debates beginning Wednesday night in Denver – a result that ratchets up the pressure on the president to perform, leaving Romney, whatever his difficulties, greater opportunity to exceed expectations.

The contest between them, regardless, is far closer than those prognostications would suggest. Registered voters in this survey, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), divide by 49-44 percent between Obama and Romney, with the race a virtual tie, 49-47 percent, among those most likely to vote.



While those standings are essentially unchanged from their immediate post-convention levels, some results indicate a slight tailwind for Obama. Ratings of the economy, while very negative, have grown less intensely so since late August (39 percent say it's in poor shape, down from 45 percent). Obama's 47 percent approval rating for handling the economy, while still underwater, is numerically its highest in more than two years. And views that the nation is headed seriously off on the wrong track have eased by 9 percentage points to the fewest since January 2011.

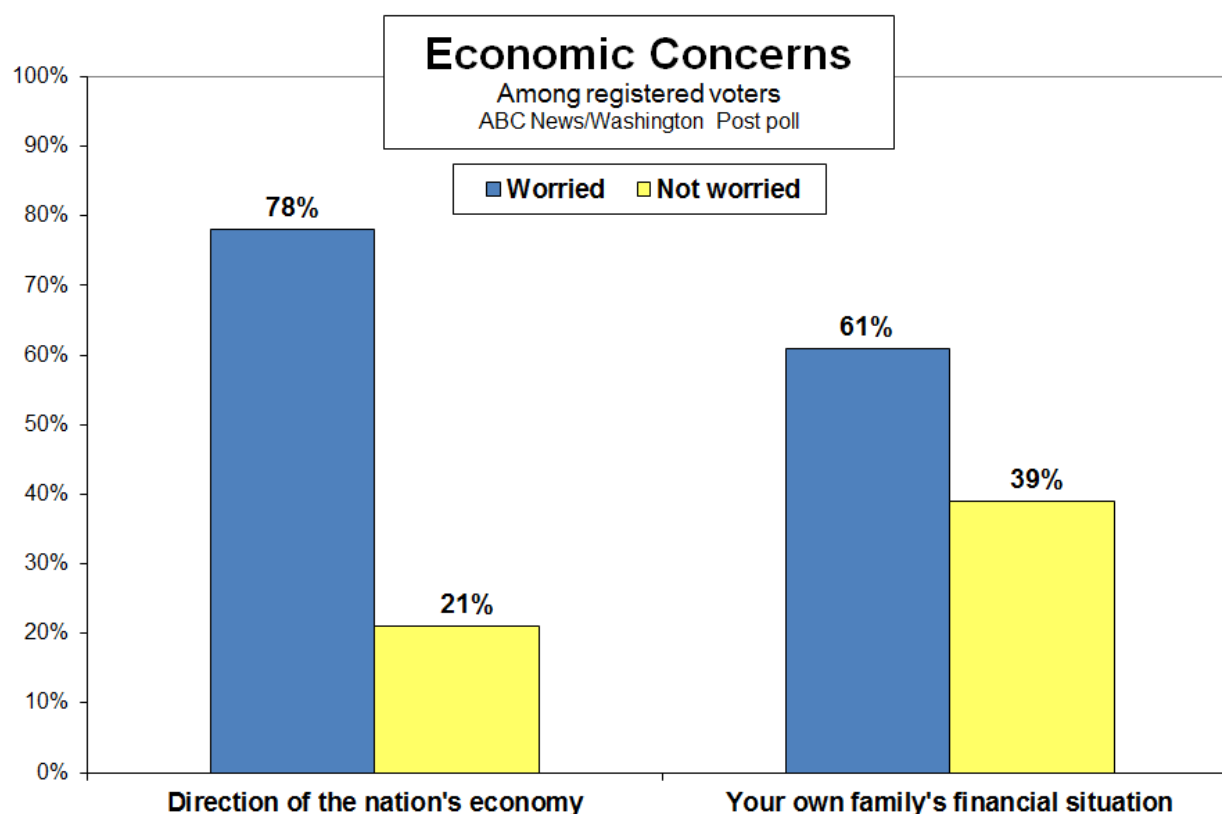


ASSETS – Obama enjoys other key assets. Sixty-six percent say his policies have favored the middle class, while 57 percent think Romney's, instead, would favor the wealthy – not a significant change since Romney's "47 percent" comment, but still a deep disadvantage for the Republican. And registered voters by 52-39 percent think Obama better understands the economic problems of average Americans, again not significantly different from early September, but numerically his widest lead over Romney in this measure since February.

And there's the controversial comment itself – Romney's assertion at a surreptitiously recorded fundraiser that 47 percent of Americans don't pay income taxes, see themselves as victims and lack personal responsibility. Registered voters, however, by 57-39 percent say it's fair that some people (chiefly senior citizens, people on disability, students, the working poor and the unemployed) don't pay income taxes. And it cuts to vote: Among the majority that sees this as

fair, Obama leads by 20 points. Among those who think such people ought to pay at least some taxes, though, it's Romney by 17.

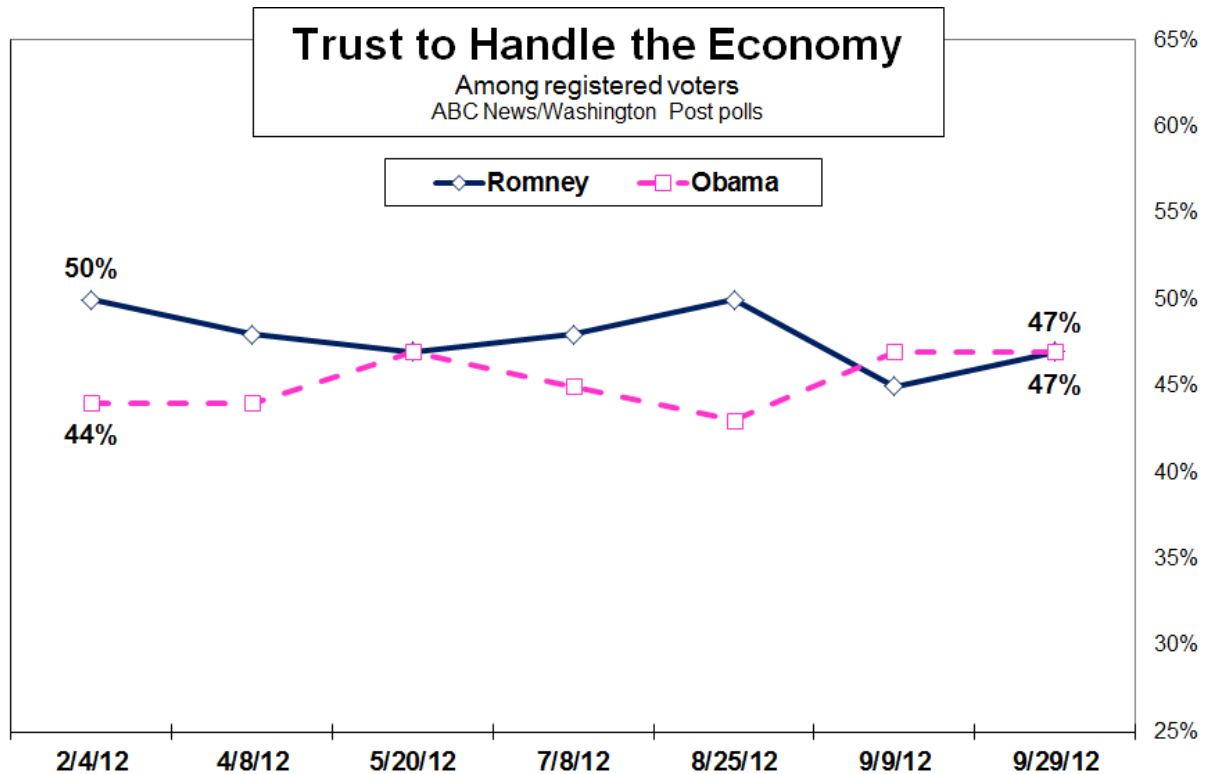
Yet there are substantial liabilities for Obama as well. Seventy-eight percent of registered voters are worried about the economy's direction in the next few years. Six in 10 are worried about their own family's financial situation. Fewer than half, 47 percent, are confident the economy will improve if Obama is re-elected. Just 28 percent are persuaded that the federal economic stimulus program in fact helped the economy (about as many think it hurt). Obama's job approval rating among registered voters, 49 percent, remains less than a majority. And "wrong track" sentiment, while down, is still 60 percent – high enough to threaten an incumbent.



Moreover, back to the "47 percent" comment, there's a tilt Romney's way on the question of government dependency: Registered voters by 51-43 percent say government programs to help poor people do more to increase dependency than to get people back on their feet. (On programs to help the unemployed those views are reversed.)

Results such as these keep Romney in the hunt. He leads by nearly 50 points, for instance, among registered voters who say the country's headed off on the wrong track, by 72 points among those who rate Obama's economic performance negatively, by 43 points among those who question the effect of government programs for the poor and by nearly 60 points among those who are "very" worried about the economy's direction.

But – with the clock ticking – Romney has not taken full advantage of these opportunities. Among those who are “somewhat” rather than “very” worried about the economy, Obama leads by 60-36 percent. And despite Obama’s difficulties on the economy, he runs evenly with Romney among registered voters overall in trust to handle it, 47-47 percent.



BASELINES – Still, Romney’s made progress on some baseline attitudes. Last February, 66 percent of registered voters said he had not paid his fair share of taxes; today that’s dropped sharply, to 48 percent. That’s mainly because Republicans and Republican-leaning independents have moved to his side on this question since he clinched the GOP nomination.

There’s also been an 8-point increase since last winter in the number of registered voters who see Romney’s wealth as more of a positive than a negative, to 51 percent, again chiefly because of movement among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents.

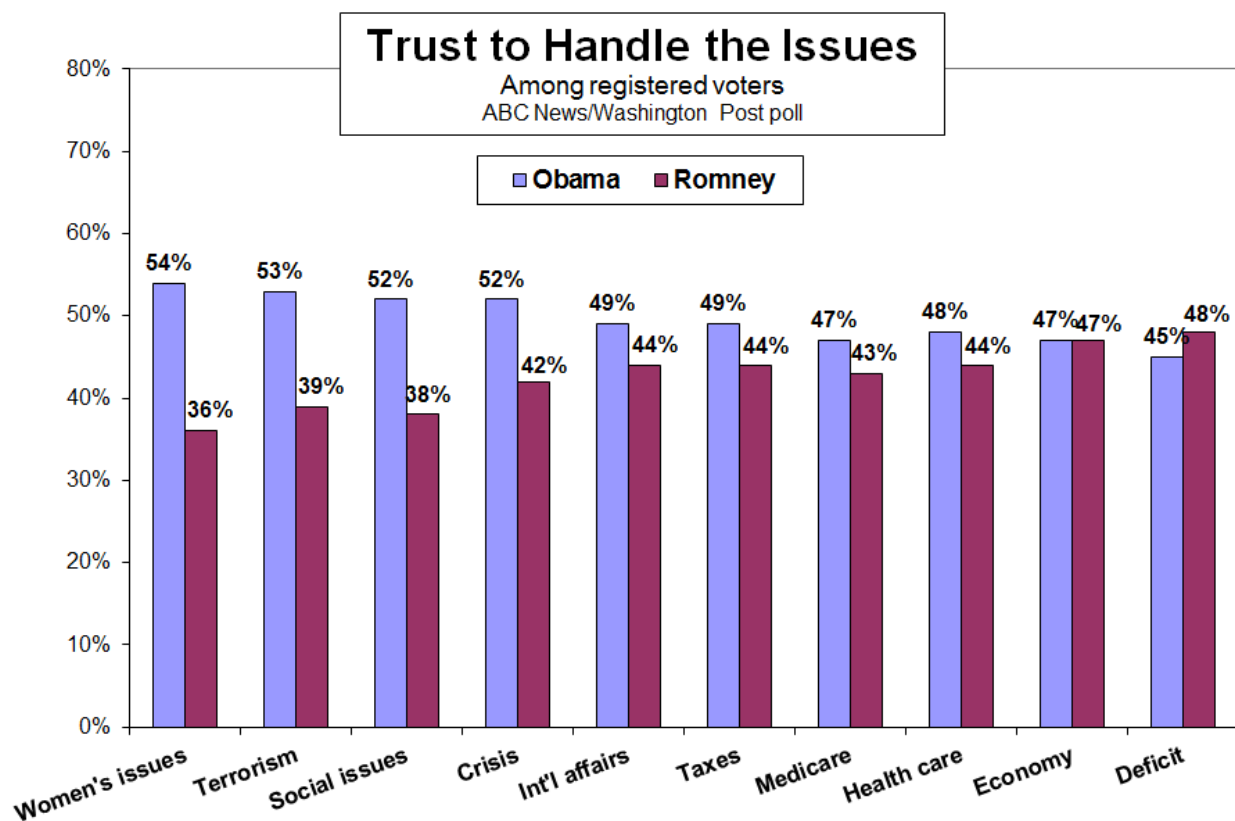
There’s also been a slight, 5-point decline since late August in the number who see unfairness in the economic system as a bigger problem than over-regulation of the free market; the division is now 49-42 percent. And while registered voters by 52-43 percent think the government should try to address the gap between wealthy and less well-off Americans, that’s narrowed from 58-37 percent last year, when economic discontent was at a higher pitch.

All these cut sharply to vote, indicating their potential importance in the debates ahead. Registered voters who think the government should try to reduce the wealth gap favor Obama

over Romney by 75-21 percent; those who say otherwise favor Romney, 72-20 percent. Those more concerned with unfairness in the economic system are for Obama by 77-18 percent, while those more focused on over-regulation back Romney, by an identical margin.

TRUST ON ISSUES – Trust on individual issues generally is stable, with surprising strength for Obama in two areas. Repeating results from early September, he's competitive with Romney in trust to handle taxes and the federal deficit. Both traditionally are stronger for Republicans.

At the same time, Romney remains competitive vs. Obama in trust to handle health care, usually a better issue for Democrats, but less so given the country's divisions over the Affordable Care Act. The candidates likewise are closely matched on Medicare, 47-43 percent, likely with ACA-related concerns counteracting broad skepticism of Paul Ryan's plans for Medicare.



Ratings on international affairs are inconclusive; on one hand Romney's narrowed the gap in trust to handle them, now 49-44 percent, Obama-Romney; on the other, measuring the two separately, 64 percent say Obama knows enough about world affairs to serve effectively, while fewer, 51 percent, say the same about Romney.

There also remain issues on which Obama clearly leads, vs. no such for Romney. Those include trust to handle terrorism (53-39 percent), a major crisis (52-42 percent), social issues such as abortion and gay marriage (52-38 percent) and women's issues (54-36 percent).

PERSONALLY SPEAKING – Romney’s lack of an advantage in trust on the economy leaves room for personal attributes to come into play, and on these he’s generally vulnerable. One has worsened for him: Registered voters by 52-40 percent say they’d prefer Obama as the captain if they were on a ship in a storm, opening up from a 46-43 percent split last month.

In other, lighthearted measures, Obama leads Romney by anywhere from 14 to 25 points on whom registered voters would rather go camping with, have as a dinner guest, see as a contestant on Dancing with the Stars, or whose music playlist they’d rather hear. Helpfully for Romney, though, the two are even on another measure – one that requires the greatest level of personal responsibility: Whom you’d rather have babysit for your kids.

Apart from babysitting, these measures add up to personal likeability, and on a direct measure of that attribute Obama retains his single biggest advantage, 62-29 percent over Romney. However it’s empathy, not likeability, that far more strongly predicts vote preference, and on that, as noted, Obama’s advantage is 13 points, not 33.

	Obama	Romney	Difference
Seems more friendly and likeable	62%	29	+33
Better understands Americans’ economic problems	52	39	+13
Prefer to see on Dancing with the Stars	51	26	+25
Prefer as a dinner guest	54	32	+22
Prefer to listen to their music playlist	46	30	+16
Prefer on a camping trip	48	34	+14
Prefer as ship’s captain	52	40	+12
Prefer to have babysit your kids	41	41	0

GROUPS AND TURNOUT – Patterns among groups generally fit their recent norms. There’s a gender gap among registered voters – a 10-point Obama lead among women, vs. essentially a tied race among men. Obama trails by 13 points among white voters, but leads overwhelmingly among nonwhites, with 77 percent support. And independents – often swing voters in national elections – divide precisely evenly.

What matters, critically, is who turns out. Among Obama’s supporters in this survey, 51 percent describe themselves as very enthusiastic about their choice – notably fewer than its level at this time four years ago, 61 percent. Indeed Romney has closed the enthusiasm gap from early September; then he trailed Obama by 10 points in very enthusiastic supporters. Today it’s an insignificant 3 points.

Romney also has ramped up his get-out-the vote efforts. In late August, 31 percent of Obama’s supporters said they’d been contacted by his campaign, while just 18 percent of Romney’s backers said they’d heard from their candidate. Today Obama’s outreach number is essentially the same, while Romney’s has advanced, virtually to parity: Twenty-six percent of his supporters now say they’ve heard from him.

Among the particular challenges for Obama are young voters: A mainstay of his support in 2008, they’re far less likely now to say they’re certain to turn out.

Getting out the vote, for both candidates, may carry the extra burden of battling expectations. Among Obama's supporters, 96 percent expect him to win – raising the risk that some will feel secure enough not to bother turning out. Among Romney's, at the same time, 28 percent pick Obama to win – suggesting the possibility they'll be demotivated. Between the two, fighting expectations may be hardest for Romney: In fall season election polling since 1984, when most Americans have expected one candidate to win, he has.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Sept. 26-29, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,101 adults, including 929 registered voters and 813 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points for registered voters and 4 points for likely voters, 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 Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Partisan divisions in this survey, Democrats-Republicans-independents, are 31-25-36 percent among the general population, 33-28-34 percent among registered voters and 33-30-33 percent among likely voters. Partisan divisions in the 2008 exit poll were 39-32-29 percent.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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.

*= less than 0.5 percent

1. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) How closely are you following the 2012 presidential race: very closely, somewhat closely, not so closely, or not closely at all?

		---- Closely -----			---- Not closely -----			No
		NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not so	At all	opinion
9/29/12	RV	86	47	39	14	8	6	0
9/9/12	RV	80	44	36	19	11	9	*
5/20/12	RV	82	38	44	18	9	8	*
2/4/12*	RV	79	37	43	20	12	8	*
1/15/12	RV	76	33	43	24	14	10	*

*2/4/12 and previous "not too closely" instead of "not so closely"

2. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) I'd like you to rate the chances that you will vote in the presidential election in November: Are you absolutely certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or less than that?

		Certain	Probably	Chances	Less than	Don't think	Already	No
		to vote	vote	50/50	that	will vote	voted	op.
						(vol.)	(vol.)	
9/29/12	RV	84	7	7	2	*	0	*
9/9/12	RV	83	7	6	4	*	NA	0
8/25/12	RV	81	8	6	3	1	NA	*
7/8/12	RV	81	9	8	2	*	NA	*

Call for full trend.

3. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) If the presidential election were being held today and the candidates were (Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats) and (Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan, the Republicans), for whom would you vote? Which candidates are you leaning toward, (Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats) or (Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan, the Republicans)? (ASKED IF ALREADY VOTED) For whom did you vote?

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE - among likely voters

		Obama	Romney	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	LV	49	47	*	2	1
9/9/12	LV	49	48	*	1	2
8/25/12	LV	47	49	1	1	1
7/8/12*	LV	50	47	*	2	2

*7/18/12: "Barack Obama, the Democrat" and "Mitt Romney, the Republican".

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE - among registered voters

		Obama	Romney	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	49	44	1	3	1	1
9/9/12	RV	50	44	1	2	1	2
8/25/12	RV	46	47	2	3	2	1
7/8/12*	RV	47	47	*	2	*	4
5/20/12	RV	49	46	*	3	1	1
4/8/12	RV	51	44	*	2	3	1
3/10/12	RV	47	49	*	1	2	2
2/4/12	RV	51	45	*	1	1	1
1/15/12	RV	46	48	*	2	2	2
12/18/11	RV	47	47	*	2	2	1
11/3/11	RV	46	47	*	3	2	1
10/2/11	RV	46	48	*	2	1	2
9/1/11	RV	45	49	*	2	2	2
7/17/11	RV	49	47	*	2	1	1
6/5/11	RV	46	49	*	2	1	2
4/17/11	RV	49	45	*	3	1	1

*7/18/12 and prior: "Barack Obama, the Democrat" and "Mitt Romney, the Republican".

4. (IF SUPPORT OBAMA OR ROMNEY) Will you definitely vote for (OBAMA/ROMNEY), or is there a chance you could change your mind and vote for (CANDIDATE NOT NAMED)? (IF CHANCE CHANGE MIND) Would you say (there's a good chance) you'll change your mind, or would you say (it's pretty unlikely)?

		Definitely vote for	- Chance change mind - NET	Good	Unlikely	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	86	13	3	10	1
9/9/12	RV	85	13	4	8	2
8/25/12	RV	83	15	6	9	2
7/8/12*	RV	79	19	6	13	2

*7/8/12 and prior: "Will you definitely vote for (NAMED CANDIDATE), or is there a chance you could change your mind and vote for someone else?"
Call for full trend.

		Definitely vote for	- Chance change mind - NET	Good	Unlikely	No opinion
Obama:						
9/29/12	RV	84	15	5	10	1
9/9/12	RV	86	11	4	7	3
8/25/12	RV	84	14	6	8	2
7/8/12	RV	81	17	4	13	2

Romney:						
9/29/12	RV	88	12	1	10	1
9/9/12	RV	85	14	5	9	*
8/25/12	RV	82	16	5	10	3
7/8/12	RV	77	21	8	13	2

5. (IF SUPPORT/VOTED OBAMA OR ROMNEY) Would you say you are very enthusiastic about supporting (Obama/Romney), somewhat enthusiastic, not so enthusiastic, or not enthusiastic at all?

		---- Enthusiastic ---			--- Not enthusiastic ----			No
		NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	opinion
9/29/12	RV	89	49	40	11	6	4	*
9/9/12	RV	90	51	39	9	5	5	*
8/25/12	RV	85	45	40	14	10	4	1
7/8/12	RV	88	44	44	12	8	4	*
5/20/12	RV	84	39	45	16	9	6	*

Obama:								
9/29/12	RV	91	51	40	9	7	2	0
9/9/12	RV	93	56	38	7	3	3	0
8/25/12	RV	88	48	39	11	7	4	1
7/8/12	RV	91	51	40	8	5	3	1
5/20/12	RV	93	51	41	7	4	4	0

Romney:								
9/29/12	RV	87	48	39	13	6	7	*
9/9/12	RV	87	46	40	13	7	6	1
8/25/12	RV	83	42	41	17	12	4	*
7/8/12	RV	85	38	47	15	11	4	*
5/20/12	RV	75	26	48	25	15	9	1

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

		----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
		NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/29/12		50	26	24	46	12	34	4
9/29/12	RV	49	25	24	49	12	37	2
9/9/12		49	29	20	45	11	35	6
9/9/12	RV	48	27	21	50	10	39	2
8/25/12		50	27	23	46	13	33	4
8/25/12	RV	47	26	21	50	13	37	3
7/8/12		47	24	24	49	15	34	4
5/20/12		47	26	21	49	13	36	3
4/8/12		50	30	20	45	10	35	6
3/10/12		46	28	18	50	11	39	4
2/4/12		50	29	22	46	11	36	3
1/15/12		48	25	23	48	11	37	4
12/18/11		49	25	24	47	13	34	4
11/3/11		44	22	22	53	15	37	3
10/2/11		42	21	21	54	14	40	4
9/1/11		43	21	22	53	16	38	3
8/9/11*		44	18	26	46	9	37	10
7/17/11		47	25	22	48	14	35	5
6/5/11		47	27	20	49	13	37	4
5/2/11**		56	29	27	38	14	24	6
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
10/3/10	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

*Washington Post

**Washington Post/Pew Research Center

7. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is [ITEM]? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

9/29/12 - Summary Table

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Smwt	NET	Smwt	Strongly	opinion
a. Handling the economy	47	23	25	52	10	41	1
b. Handling international affairs	49	28	20	48	12	36	3

Trend:

a. Handling the economy

		----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
		NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/29/12	RV	47	23	25	52	10	41	1
9/9/12	RV	45	24	21	53	8	45	2
8/25/12	RV	43	20	22	56	11	45	2
8/25/12		44	20	23	54	12	42	3
7/8/12		44	21	23	54	13	41	2
5/20/12		42	20	22	55	11	44	2
4/8/12		44	23	21	54	12	42	2
3/10/12		38	20	18	59	9	50	2
2/4/12		44	23	22	53	11	41	3
1/15/12		41	19	22	57	11	46	2
12/18/11		41	17	24	56	13	43	2
11/3/11		38	18	20	61	13	48	2
10/2/11		35	17	19	61	13	48	4
9/1/11		36	15	21	62	15	47	2
7/17/11		39	18	22	57	15	43	3
6/5/11		40	20	20	59	10	49	2
5/2/11*		40	18	22	55	16	39	4
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
10/3/10		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

*Washington Post/Pew Research Center

b. Handling international affairs

		----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
		NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/29/12	RV	49	28	20	48	12	36	3
5/20/12		48	30	18	46	15	31	6
4/8/12		47	24	23	44	11	33	9
1/15/12		49	26	23	44	10	33	7
11/3/11		47	26	21	45	13	31	8
11/15/09		60	30	30	37	13	23	3
10/18/09		57	34	23	36	15	21	7
9/12/09		57	32	25	33	12	21	10
6/21/09		61	NA	NA	32	NA	NA	7
4/24/09		67			27			6
3/29/09		62	"	"	27	"	"	11

8. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Do you think things in this country (are generally going in the right direction) or do you feel things (have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track)?

		Right direction	Wrong track	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	38	60	2
8/25/12	RV	29	69	2
8/25/12		31	67	3
7/8/12		33	63	4
4/8/12		33	64	3
1/15/12		30	68	2
11/3/11		22	74	3
9/1/11		20	77	3
6/5/11		32	66	2
1/16/11		38	60	3
12/12/10		31	67	2
10/28/10	RV	27	71	2
6/6/10		37	60	3
3/26/10		38	60	2
1/15/10		37	62	1
11/15/09		44	55	2
10/18/09		44	54	2
8/17/09		44	55	1
6/21/09		47	50	3
4/24/09		50	48	2
3/29/09		42	57	1
2/22/09		31	67	2

1/16/09	19	78	3
12/14/08	15	82	3
10/25/08 LV	13	85	2
10/11/08 RV	8	90	2

Call for full trend.

9. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) I am going to mention four phrases and ask you which one best describes how you feel about the way the federal government works. Do you feel enthusiastic, satisfied but not enthusiastic, dissatisfied but not angry, or angry?

		NET	Positive Enthusi- astic	Satis- fied	NET	Negative Dissat- isfied	Angry	None/ Other	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	28	4	25	71	44	27	NA	1
2/4/12		24	2	22	75	49	26	NA	*
11/3/11		20	2	18	80	49	31		*
7/17/11		20	2	18	80	54	25		1
6/5/11		30	3	27	69	44	25		1
10/28/10		27	4	23	72	51	21		1
10/3/10		29	4	25	71	46	25		*
9/2/10		22	2	20	78	52	25		*
7/11/10		36	4	32	64	43	21		1
6/6/10		30	2	28	69	45	25		1
4/25/10		30	4	26	69	51	18		1
2/8/10		32	3	29	67	48	19		*
10/29/03		42	2	41	57	42	15		*
11/4/02	LV	49	4	45	50	41	9		1
11/3/02	LV	50	5	45	49	40	9		1
11/2/02	LV	51	6	45	49	40	9		1
10/27/02		50	4	47	49	42	7		1
2/21/02		56	7	49	43	36	7		1
12/15/00		59	4	55	39	34	6		1
2/14/99		52	3	48	47	35	12		1
9/28/98		50	4	46	49	36	12		1
8/16/98*		41	2	39	57	46	11	"	1
1/19/98		46	2	43	53	45	8	1	*
8/27/97		34	2	33	64	52	11	2	1
3/17/96		29	2	27	70	54	16	NA	*
5/14/95		48	3	45	50	41	9	"	1
1/4/95		29	2	27	69	53	16	*	1
11/6/94	RV	28	2	26	70	49	21	1	1
10/31/94		26	1	25	73	55	18	1	1
10/23/94		28	1	26	71	52	20	*	*
10/9/94		25	2	24	72	53	19	2	*
9/11/94		26	2	25	73	53	20	NA	*
3/27/94		30	1	29	68	48	20	1	1
2/28/93		33	4	29	66	50	16	*	*
10/4/92	RV	17	1	16	81	56	25	1	1
7/8/92		23	1	22	76	53	23	*	1
6/7/92		21	1	20	79	58	21	*	1
4/9/92		21	1	20	79	55	24	1	*
3/18/92		22	1	21	77	54	23	1	*
3/11/92		18	1	17	80	60	20	1	1

*After 8/16/98: No "None/other" option recorded.

10. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Regardless of who you support, which candidate do you trust to do a better job [ITEM] - (Obama) or (Romney)?

9/29/12 - Summary Table*

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. Handling the economy	47	47	*	4	2
b. Handling taxes	49	44	*	4	2
c. Dealing with the federal budget deficit	45	48	*	5	3
d. Handling health care policy	48	44	*	6	2
e. Dealing with social issues such as abortion and gay marriage	52	38	1	5	4
f. Handling terrorism	53	39	2	2	4
g. Handling international affairs	49	44	*	2	4
h. Handling Medicare, the government health insurance program for seniors	47	43	*	6	3
i. Addressing women's issues	54	36	2	4	6
j. Handling an unexpected major crisis	52	42	1	2	3

*Full sample asked item a-c; half sample asked items d-f; other half sample asked items g-j.

Trend:

a. Handling the economy

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	47	47	*	4	2
9/9/12 RV	47	45	*	3	4
8/25/12 RV	43	50	*	4	3
7/8/12 RV	45	48	1	3	3
5/20/12 RV	47	47	*	3	3
4/8/12 RV	44	48	1	4	3
2/4/12 RV	44	50	1	3	2

b. Handling taxes

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	49	44	*	4	2
9/9/12 RV	50	43	1	2	4
8/25/12 RV	43	48	*	5	3
7/8/12 RV	46	46	*	5	3
4/8/12 RV	48	43	1	4	4
2/4/12 RV	49	45	*	2	4

c. Dealing with the federal budget deficit

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	45	48	*	5	3
9/9/12 RV	44	47	0	7	3
8/25/12 RV	38	51	0	7	3
7/8/12 RV	43	51	1	3	2
4/8/12 RV	37	54	1	6	2
2/4/12 RV	39	52	*	4	4

d. Handling health care policy

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	48	44	*	6	2
9/9/12 RV	47	44	1	4	4
8/25/12 RV	47	45	*	6	2
7/8/12 RV	48	44	1	5	3
4/8/12 RV	49	40	*	5	6

e. Dealing with social issues such as abortion and gay marriage

		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	52	38	1	5	4
9/9/12	RV	50	39	1	5	4
8/25/12	RV	52	38	1	5	4
4/8/12	RV	47	39	1	6	7

f. Handling terrorism

		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	53	39	2	2	4
9/9/12	RV	51	40	3	4	3
4/8/12	RV	47	43	1	4	5
2/4/12	RV	54	38	2	2	4

g. Handling international affairs

		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	49	44	*	2	4
9/9/12	RV	51	38	*	2	9
8/25/12	RV	46	41	1	6	5
4/8/12	RV	56	37	*	3	4
2/4/12	RV	55	38	1	3	4

h. Handling Medicare, the government health insurance program for seniors

		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	47	43	*	6	3
9/9/12	RV	48	43	*	4	5
8/25/12	RV	42	45	1	7	5

i. Addressing women's issues

		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	54	36	2	4	6
9/9/12	RV	55	34	1	3	7
8/25/12	RV	51	35	1	7	6
4/8/12	RV	54	37	1	4	4

j. Handling an unexpected major crisis

		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	52	42	1	2	3

Compare to:

		Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
11/3/08	LV	49	45	2	2	2
11/2/08	LV	49	46	2	2	2
11/1/08	LV	51	45	1	1	1
10/31/08	LV	50	46	2	1	2
10/30/08	LV	49	46	1	1	2
10/29/08	LV	48	47	2	1	2
10/28/08	LV	47	48	1	2	3
10/27/08	LV	46	48	2	2	3

10/19/08	LV	49	45	1	2	2
10/11/08	LV	52	43	1	3	1
9/29/08	RV	44	50	1	2	3
9/22/08	RV	46	47	2	2	3
9/7/08	RV	37	54	2	3	3
8/22/08	RV	41	52	2	2	3
7/13/08	RV	42	51	3	2	3

11. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Regardless of who you may support, who do you think [ITEM] - (Obama) or (Romney)?

9/29/12 - Summary Table

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. Better understands the economic problems people in this country are having	52	39	2	6	1
b. Seems like the more friendly and likeable person	62	29	5	3	2

Trend:

a. Better understands the economic problems people in this country are having

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	52	39	2	6	1
9/9/12 RV	50	40	3	4	3
8/25/12 RV	47	40	1	9	2
7/8/12 RV	51	40	2	5	2
5/20/12 RV	48	40	2	8	2
4/8/12 RV	49	38	2	8	2
2/4/12 RV	52	37	2	7	2

b. Seems like the more friendly and likable person

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	62	29	5	3	2
9/9/12 RV	61	27	5	3	3
8/25/12 RV	61	27	6	4	2
7/8/12 RV	63	26	5	2	4
4/8/12 RV	64	28	3	2	3

12. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Please tell me whether the following statement applies to (Obama/Romney), or not? He knows enough about world affairs to serve effectively as president.

	----- Obama -----			----- Romney -----		
	Yes	No	No opin.	Yes	No	No opin.
9/29/12 RV	64	34	2	51	43	6

Compare to:

	----- Obama -----			----- McCain -----		
	Yes	No	No opin.	Yes	No	No opin.
9/22/08 RV	56	39	4	72	25	3
7/13/08 RV	56	42	2	74	24	2
7/13/08	56	42	2	72	24	3

	----- Gore -----			----- Bush -----		
	Yes	No	No opin.	Yes	No	No opin.

9/6/00	RV	73	25	2	54	40	6
7/23/00	RV	67	29	4	52	42	5
7/23/00		66	29	5	52	42	6
4/2/00		71	23	6	57	36	7
2/27/00		70	25	5	55	39	6
2/6/00		69	26	5	52	42	6
1/16/00		65	28	8	49	40	10
12/15/99		68	27	6	54	38	8
11/14/99		NA	NA	NA	59	36	6

13. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Changing topics, would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor?

		----- Positive -----			----- Negative -----			No
		NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Not so good	Poor	opinion
9/29/12	RV	18	2	16	81	42	39	*
8/25/12	RV	15	1	14	85	40	45	*
8/25/12		15	1	14	84	39	45	1
8/5/12*		13	1	12	87	42	44	*
5/20/12		17	1	16	83	47	36	*
2/4/12		11	*	11	89	46	42	*
11/3/11		10	1	9	89	43	47	*
7/17/11		10	1	9	90	40	50	*
6/5/11		11	1	10	89	46	44	*
1/16/11		13	1	12	87	45	41	*
10/28/10		9	*	9	90	41	49	1
10/3/10		9	1	8	90	40	50	*
9/2/10		8	*	7	92	40	53	0
7/11/10		10	1	9	90	44	46	0
6/6/10		12	*	11	88	43	45	0
1/16/09		5	1	5	94	32	62	*
9/22/08		9	*	9	91	34	57	*
4/13/08		10	1	9	90	39	51	*
2/1/08		19	1	18	81	43	38	0

*Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation
Call for full trend.

14. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Thinking about the federal government's economic stimulus program, do you think the economic stimulus program has (helped) the national economy, (hurt) the national economy, or hasn't made much difference? (IF HELPED/HURT) Is that a great deal or somewhat?

		----- Helped -----			----- Hurt -----			No	No
		NET	Great deal	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Great deal	diff.	op.
9/29/12	RV	28	9	20	27	8	19	43	2
3/13/11	RV	31	9	22	21	6	15	46	2
3/13/11		28	8	20	21	6	14	49	2
6/6/10		30	9	21	20	7	13	49	1
11/15/09		37	12	25	23	6	17	39	1
9/12/09		32	10	22	19	5	13	47	2
6/21/09		28	8	20	19	6	13	52	2
4/24/09		33	10	23	16	6	10	49	2

15. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) How do you feel about [ITEM] - very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried or not worried at all?

9/29/12 - Summary Table

	----- Worried -----	----- Not worried -----	No
NET	Very	Smwt.	NET
			Not too
			At all
			op.

a. The direction of the nation's economy over the next few years	78	37	40	21	15	7	1
b. Your own family's financial situation	61	21	40	39	22	17	*

Trend:

a. The direction of the nation's economy over the next few years

		NET	----- Worried ----- Very Smwt.	NET	----- Not worried ----- Not too At all	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	78	37 40	21	15 7	1
4/25/10		73	31 41	27	19 8	1
10/18/09		74	34 40	26	17 9	*
7/18/09		77	36 42	22	16 6	*
1/16/09		81	35 46	18	15 4	*
10/19/08	LV	85	44 42	14	9 5	1
10/11/08		88	49 39	11	8 3	1
9/22/08		79	40 39	17	13 5	3
1/5/03		67	27 40	31	22 10	1
11/4/02	LV	76	34 42	23	17 6	1
11/3/02	LV	75	33 42	24	17 7	1
11/2/02	LV	73	32 41	26	19 8	1
10/27/02		75	27 48	23	16 7	2

b. Your own family's financial situation

		NET	----- Worried ----- Very Smwt.	NET	----- Not worried ----- Not too At all	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	61	21 40	39	22 17	*
10/18/09		60	23 37	40	24 16	*
7/18/09		63	23 41	37	25 12	0
1/16/09		70	27 43	30	20 10	*
10/19/08	LV	66	24 43	33	21 12	*
10/11/08		69	25 43	31	21 10	*
9/22/08		60	22 38	40	26 14	*

16. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Do you think government programs to help [ITEM] do more to (make people dependent on such assistance) or do more to (help people in need to get back on their feet)?

9/29/12 - Summary Table

	Make people dependent	Help people in need	No opinion
a. The poor	51	43	7
b. The unemployed	42	53	5

17. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) What do you think is the bigger problem in this country - (unfairness in the economic system that favors the wealthy), or (over-regulation of the free market that interferes with growth and prosperity)?

		Unfairness	Over-regulation	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	49	42	3	1	5
8/25/12	RV	54	36	5	2	3
8/25/12		56	34	5	1	3
5/20/12		56	34	5	2	3
4/8/12		52	37	4	2	5
1/15/12		55	35	5	2	4

18. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) If [ITEM], how confident are you, if at all, that the country will get back on track economically in the next year or two - very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?

9/29/12 - Summary Table

	--- Confident ---			--- Not confident ---			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not so	At all	opinion
a. Obama is re-elected	47	14	34	53	18	35	*
b. Romney is elected	51	12	39	47	21	27	1

Trend:

a. Obama is re-elected

	--- Confident ---			--- Not confident ---			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not so	At all	opinion
9/29/12 RV	47	14	34	53	18	35	*
9/9/12 RV	46	19	27	53	17	36	1
8/25/12 RV	42	14	28	58	18	40	1

b. Romney is elected

	--- Confident ---			--- Not confident ---			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not so	At all	opinion
9/29/12 RV	51	12	39	47	21	27	1
9/9/12 RV	49	14	35	50	19	31	1
8/25/12 RV	46	11	35	52	21	32	1

19. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Do you think Obama does more to favor the (middle class) or more to favor the (wealthy)?

		Favor middle class	Favor wealthy	Treat equally (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	66	17	5	12
8/25/12	RV	62	23	6	9
8/25/12		61	24	6	8

20. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) As president do you think Romney would do more to favor the (middle class) or more to favor the (wealthy)?

		Favor middle class	Favor wealthy	Treat equally (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	35	57	3	4
8/25/12	RV	32	58	5	5
8/25/12		30	60	5	6

21. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Do you think of Romney's wealth as more of a (positive because it suggests he has achieved the American dream) or as more of a (negative because it suggests he benefited from opportunities that are not available to most people)?

		Positive	Negative	No opinion
9/29/12	RV	51	42	7
2/4/12	RV	43	46	11
2/4/12		43	44	13

22. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) I'd like to ask you about the distribution of wealth in this country - that is, the gap between how much money wealthy people have compared with how much money the rest of the population has. Do you think this gap is larger than it's been historically, smaller, or about the same?

	Larger	Smaller	Same	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	57	5	34	3
11/3/11 RV	62	4	30	4
11/3/11	61	5	31	3

23. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Do you think the federal government should or should not pursue policies that try to reduce the gap between wealthy and less well-off Americans? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Should pursue -----			--- Should not pursue ---			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/29/12 RV	52	31	21	43	13	30	5
11/3/11 RV	58	41	16	37	11	26	5
11/3/11	60	43	18	35	11	24	5

24. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Many people who don't pay income taxes are senior citizens on social security; people on disability; or students, the unemployed, and the working poor who do not earn enough to owe taxes on their income. Do you think such people should pay at least some income taxes or is it fair that they do not pay income taxes? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	---- Should pay some ----			---- Fair not to pay ----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/29/12 RV	39	21	18	57	18	39	3

25. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Romney paid about a 14 percent federal tax rate on income of about 14 million dollars last year. Do you think he is or is not paying his fair share of taxes? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	--- Paying fair share ---			- Not paying fair share -			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/29/12 RV	46	33	13	48	10	38	6
2/4/12* RV	30	16	14	66	15	51	4
2/4/12*	30	15	15	66	16	50	4

* "... income of about 22 million..."

26. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) How interested, if at all, are you in the upcoming presidential debates - very interested, somewhat interested, not so interested or not at all interested?

	-- Interested --			-- Not interested --			No opinion
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not so	At all	
9/29/12 RV	83	51	32	17	8	9	*

27. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Regardless of how you intend to vote, who do you think will win the debates - (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Neither (vol.)	Tie (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	56	29	*	3	11

28. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Have you personally been contacted by a representative of the [CANDIDATE] campaign, either by phone, in-person, or online asking you for your support, or not?

9/29/12 - Summary Table

	Yes	No	No opinion
a. Obama	23	76	1
b. Romney	20	79	1

Trend:

a. Obama		Yes	No	No opinion
9/29/12 RV		23	76	1
8/25/12 RV		20	79	1
8/25/12		18	81	1

b. Romney		Yes	No	No opinion
9/29/12 RV		20	79	1
8/25/12 RV		13	86	*
8/25/12		11	88	*

Compare to:

Have you personally been contacted by a representative of the [CANDIDATE] campaign, either by phone or in-person, asking you for your support, or not?

		Yes	No	No opinion
10/22/08 Obama	LV	21	78	1
10/22/08 McCain	LV	14	85	1
9/26/04 Bush	LV	18	82	*
9/26/04 Kerry	LV	17	82	1

29. (IF CONTACTED BY OBAMA CAMPAIGN) When was the last time you were contacted, within the last week, within the last month or longer ago than that?

	Within last week	Within last month	Longer ago	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	53	34	10	3

28/29 NET:

	NET	Last week	Last month	Longer	Not contacted	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	23	12	8	2	76	1

30. (IF CONTACTED BY ROMNEY CAMPAIGN) When was the last time you were contacted, within the last week, within the last month or longer ago than that?

	Within last week	Within last month	Longer ago	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	55	34	9	1

28/30 NET:

	NET	Last week	Last month	Longer	Not contacted	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	20	11	7	2	79	1

31. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Just your best guess, who do you think will win the presidential election this year - (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Other (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	63	31	*	6
8/25/12 RV	56	37	*	8
8/25/12	59	34	*	7
7/8/12	58	34	1	8

Compare to: Just your best guess, who do you think will win the presidential election this year - (Obama) or (the Republican candidate)?

	Obama	Rep. candidate	No opinion
3/10/12	54	40	6
1/15/12	46	49	5
12/18/11	46	49	5
10/2/11	37	55	8

32. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) On a ship in a storm, who would you rather have as the captain, (Obama) or (Romney)?*

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	52	40	1	6	1
9/9/12 RV	46	43	*	7	4

*Half sample asked Q32-34; other half sample asked Q35-37.

33. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Who would you rather invite to dinner at your home, (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	54	32	6	7	1
9/9/12 RV	52	33	7	6	2

34. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Who would you rather go on an overnight camping trip with, (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	48	34	4	12	2

35. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Who would you rather have babysit your children, (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	41	41	3	13	2

36. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Whose music playlist would you rather listen to, (Obama)'s or (Romney)'s?

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	46	30	1	9	14

37. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) Who would you rather see as a contestant on Dancing with the Stars, (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/29/12 RV	51	26	4	11	8

*** END ***