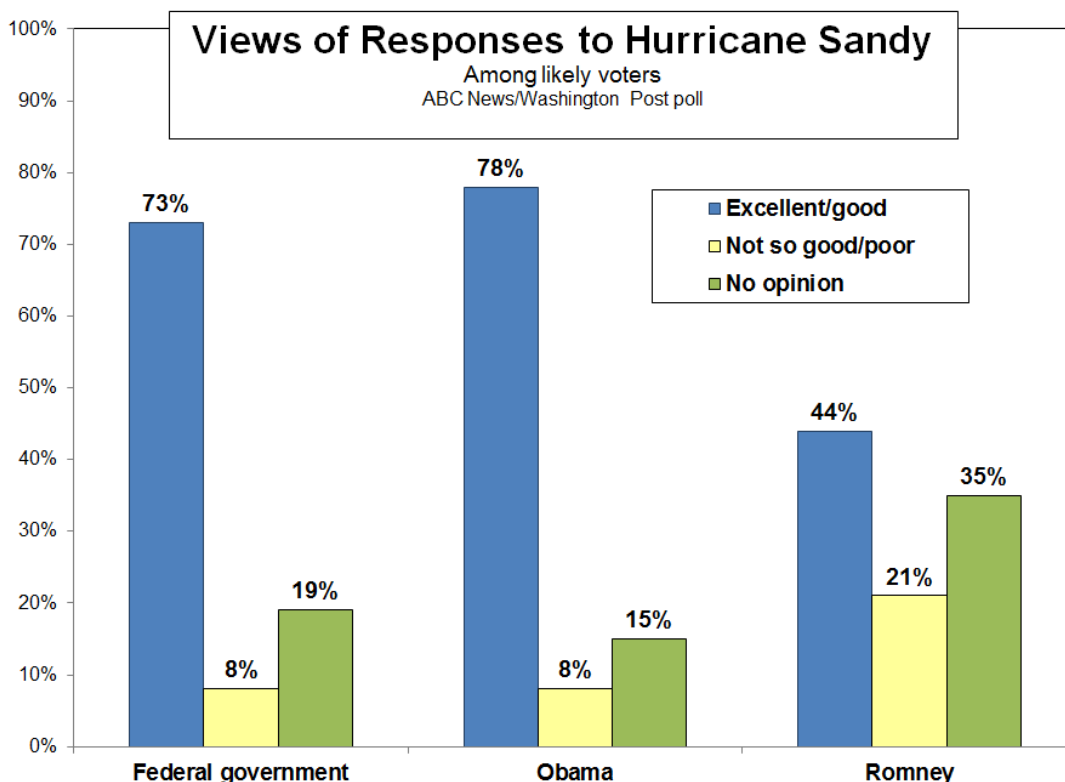


Storm Response Earns Obama Praise Amid the Election's Deadlock Drama

Likely voters of all political stripes give broadly positive ratings to Barack Obama's response to the devastating storm that smashed the East Coast this week. Whether it makes a difference in the long-deadlocked presidential election is another question.

Initially, the latest ABC News/Washington Post daily tracking poll finds essentially no change: Likely voters are back to exactly an even split in preferences, 49-49 percent between Obama and Mitt Romney – within a point or two of where the race has been all along.

Regardless, in interviews conducted last night, 78 percent rate Obama's response to the hurricane positively (as excellent or good), while just 8 percent see it negatively. Romney, who naturally has had a far less prominent role in this issue, is rated positively for his response to the hurricane by 44 percent, negatively by 21 percent, with many more, 35 percent, expressing no opinion.



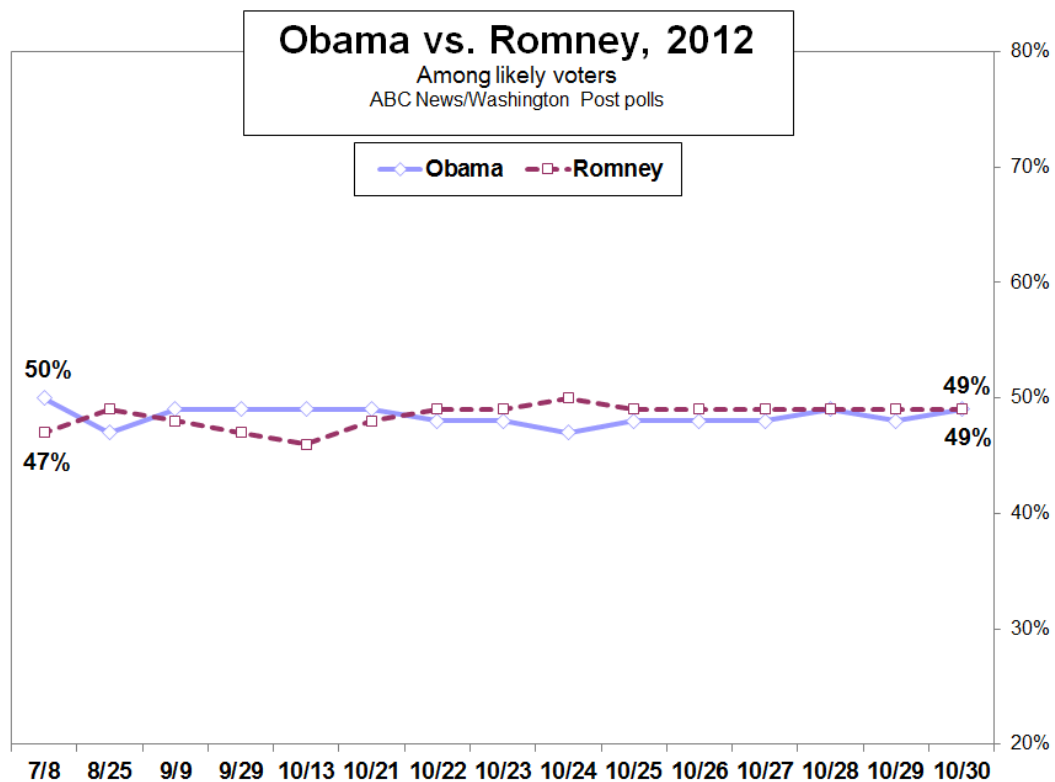
The federal government's overall response to the storm is rated about as well as Obama's, 73 percent positive in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). These ratings are far higher than the government's, or George W. Bush's, a week after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The future, of course, is uncertain, and these ratings can change depending on the pace of recovery. Notably, many in each case rate the responses to date as “good” rather than “excellent,” leaving room for reconsideration as the efforts progress.

PARTISAN? – Views on Obama’s response to the hurricane exhibit some bipartisanship in an otherwise highly partisan period; he’s rated positively on the issue by 63 percent of Republicans as well as more than 80 percent of Democrats and independents, and by nearly as many conservatives (73 percent) as moderates and liberals (eight in 10). The federal government’s response more broadly is rated essentially equally favorably across partisan and ideological lines.

Partisanship roars back in views of Romney’s response; these likely are based on political predispositions, given his lack of an official role in the effort itself. His 70 percent positive score among Republicans drops to 40 among independents and 24 percent among Democrats.

This survey was conducted the past four nights, including interviews after Hurricane Sandy made landfall Monday night. Out of a national sample of 1,288 likely voters, 102 were interviewed Monday and Tuesday in the Northeast. Results in this group are in accord with comparable data from nights before the storm struck.



ELECTION – Partisanship in the election itself is profound, with Obama and Romney each supported by at least 90 percent of likely voters within their parties. Depending on turnout, that can leave things up to independents, a movable group that’s less rooted in partisan preferences.

Their latest direction gives some ground to Obama: Independents now divide by 51-46 percent, Romney-Obama, matching the president's best in this group since July. He's gained 8 percentage points among independents, and Romney's lost 7, since last week.

That shift among independents doesn't tell the whole story because the makeup of the eventual electorate, and precise vote preferences among groups, are yet to be settled. But as with so many other measures, it underscores the unusual closeness of the contest.

MORE GROUPS – Among other divisions are the continued sharp differences by race. Whites in this survey favor Romney by 58-40 percent, including white men by 62-36 percent. Nonwhites, for their part, back Obama by 79-20 percent. The question again is turnout proportions; nonwhites accounted for a record 26 percent of voters in the 2008 exit poll.

Turnout's a question, as well, among young voters, a particularly strong group for Obama this year as in 2008, but one that seems less engaged this time around. At this point in 2008, 63 percent of adults under age 30 reported being registered to vote; that compares with 57 percent now. The falloff has occurred specifically among young men; just half now report being registered, down 13 points from this time last year.

Time, of course, is running short. Eighteen percent of likely voters in fact say they've already voted, and about as many more intend to do so between now and Election Day.

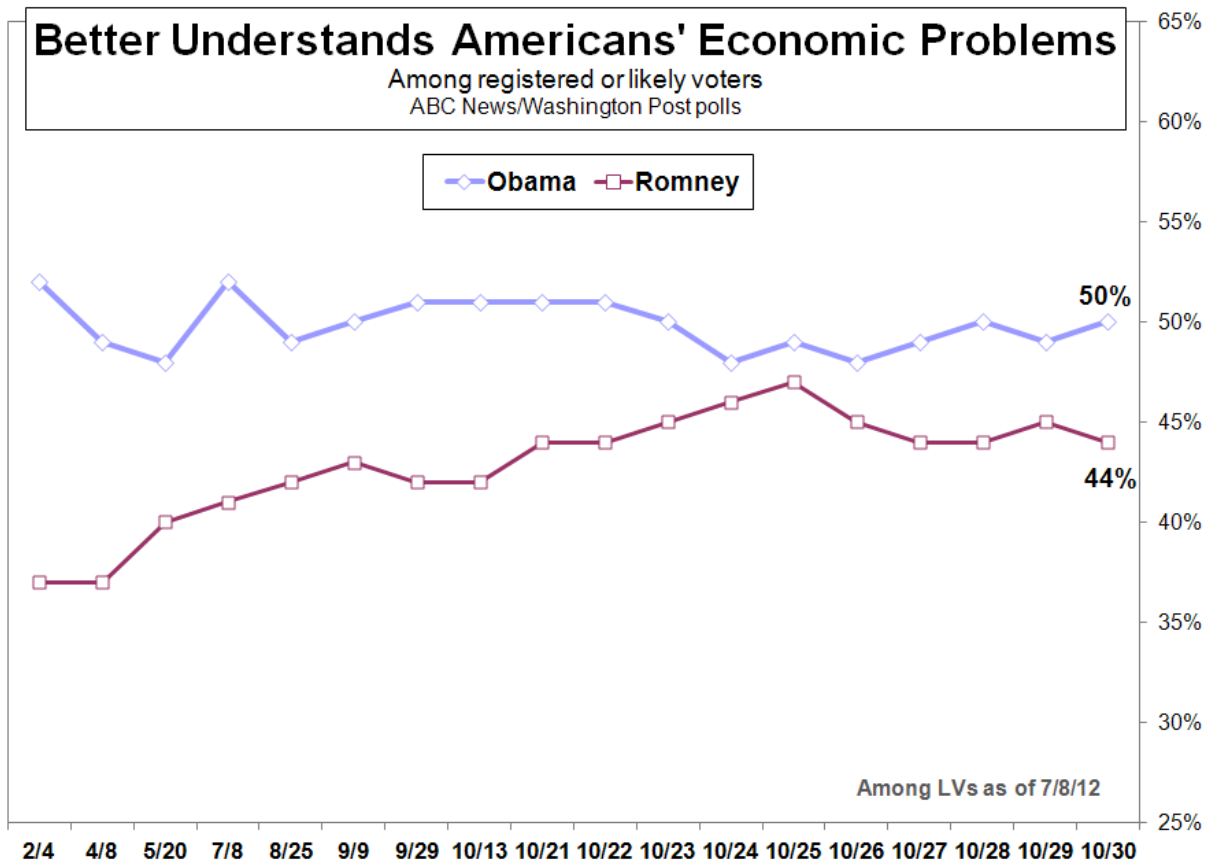
But the differences between these two groups, too, have tightened. Those who've voted early or intend to do so, previously looking better for Obama, now divide by a narrow 51-48 percent; and Election-Day likely voters, previously better for Romney, today split by 47-51 percent. It's close in both, just like it's close overall.

FIRST/SECOND TERM – Another result looks at whether likely voters are focused more on what Obama has done in his first term – when the economy's been in dire straits – or on what he might do in a second term. The division is 27-47 percent, with an additional 17 percent saying they're focused on both.

Vote preferences among these groups are telling. Among those focused on Obama's first term, Romney leads by a 17-point margin, 58-41 percent. By contrast, among those who are more interested in what Obama would do in a second term, or who say both matter equally, it's a 16-point Obama lead, 57-41 percent. Those results explain both candidates' broad themes – for Obama, a focus on what's ahead; for Romney, one on what's gone wrong, particularly economically.

ECONOMY and EMPATHY – Results specifically on the economy also reflect the dynamics of this contest. Trust to handle the economy has been Obama's greatest vulnerability, yet Romney has been unable to capitalize on it fully; the two continue to run essentially evenly in trust to handle it, 49-47 percent, Romney-Obama. Romney had opened a 9-point lead on the economy last week; it didn't hold.

But then there's empathy, which has been Obama's strong suit – understanding the economic problems of average Americans. On this they're now at 50-44 percent, Obama-Romney, better for Obama from last week, but well down from his double-digit lead on empathy last summer.



There's a telling contrast between these sentiments and those four years ago. At this time in the 2008 election Obama led John McCain by 10 points among likely voters, 52-42 percent, in trust to handle the economy, and by a broad 18 points, 56-38 percent, in economic empathy. That's why the 2008 election was not a particularly close one – and why this year's is another story entirely.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 27-30, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,288 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3 points, including design effect. (Question 26 was asked Oct. 29-30 among 623 likely voters; those results have a 4.5-point error margin. Question 28 was asked Oct. 30 among 344 likely voters; those results have a 6-point error margin.) 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 33-28-36 percent among likely voters. Partisan divisions in the 2008 exit poll were 39-32-29 percent. “Battleground states” as designated by the ABC News Political Unit are Colorado, Florida, Iowa,

Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin.

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?

	NET	---- Closely ----		NET	---- Not closely ----		No
		Very	Smwt		Not so	At all	opinion
10/30/12 LV	99	66	33	1	1	*	0
10/29/12 LV	99	69	30	1	1	*	0
10/28/12 LV	99	69	30	1	1	*	*
10/27/12 LV	99	68	31	1	1	*	*
10/26/12 LV	99	66	33	1	1	*	0
10/25/12 LV	95	62	33	5	3	2	*
10/24/12 LV	94	63	32	5	3	2	*
10/23/12 LV	93	63	31	6	4	2	*
10/22/12 LV	92	64	28	8	5	3	*
10/21/12 LV	92	64	28	8	5	3	*
10/13/12 LV	93	60	33	6	4	2	*
9/29/12 LV	92	54	38	8	6	2	0
9/9/12 LV	87	51	36	13	8	5	1
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
Call for full trend.

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 to vote	Probably vote	Chances 50/50	Less than that	Don't think will vote (vol.)	Already voted (vol.)	No op.
10/30/12 RV	75	6	3	2	1	13	*
10/29/12 RV	76	5	4	2	*	12	*
10/28/12 RV	77	5	4	2	1	11	*
10/27/12 RV	79	5	5	2	*	9	*
10/26/12 RV	79	6	5	2	*	8	*
10/25/12 RV	79	6	6	2	1	6	*
10/24/12 RV	79	7	6	2	1	6	*
10/23/12 RV	80	6	6	2	1	5	*
10/22/12 RV	82	5	6	2	1	4	*
10/21/12 RV	84	6	4	2	*	4	*
10/13/12 RV	85	7	4	1	1	1	1
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		*
7/8/12	RV	81	9	8	2	*	"	*

Call for full trend.

2x. (IF CERTAIN TO VOTE) Do you think you'll (vote in person at your polling place on Election Day), or (vote before Election Day by early voting or mail-in ballot)?

	Vote in person	Early voting/ mail-in ballot	Already voted (vol.)	No opinion
10/30/12 LV	60	22	18	1
10/29/12 LV	61	21	17	1
10/28/12 LV	60	22	15	2
10/27/12 LV	62	24	12	2
10/26/12 LV	62	25	11	2
10/25/12 LV	61	29	8	1
10/24/12 LV	62	29	8	1
10/23/12 LV	62	28	7	2
10/22/12 LV	64	27	6	2
10/21/12 LV	66	27	5	2
10/13/12 LV	67	30	2	1

Call for full trend.

3. (IF CERTAIN TO VOTE) 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
10/30/12 LV	49	49	1	*	1
10/29/12 LV	48	49	1	*	1
10/28/12 LV	49	49	1	1	1
10/27/12 LV	48	49	1	1	1
10/26/12 LV	48	49	1	1	1
10/25/12 LV	48	49	1	1	1
10/24/12 LV	47	50	1	1	1
10/23/12 LV	48	49	*	1	1
10/22/12 LV	48	49	*	2	1
10/21/12 LV	49	48	*	2	1
10/13/12 LV	49	46	1	1	2
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: VPs not included

6. (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?

	NET	Enthusiastic Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	No opinion
Obama:							
10/30/12 LV	96	64	32	3	2	1	*
10/29/12 LV	97	65	32	3	2	1	*
10/28/12 LV	95	66	30	4	2	1	1
10/27/12 LV	95	64	31	4	3	1	1

10/26/12	LV	94	61	33	4	3	1	1
10/25/12	LV	94	59	35	5	3	2	1
10/24/12	LV	96	60	35	4	3	1	*
10/23/12	LV	95	60	35	4	3	1	*
10/22/12	LV	96	62	34	4	3	1	*
10/21/12	LV	96	64	32	4	3	1	*
10/13/12	LV	95	60	35	4	4	1	*
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:

10/30/12	LV	95	61	35	4	3	1	*
10/29/12	LV	95	61	34	4	3	2	*
10/28/12	LV	94	61	33	5	4	1	*
10/27/12	LV	95	59	36	5	3	2	*
10/26/12	LV	93	59	35	6	5	2	*
10/25/12	LV	93	58	35	7	5	2	1
10/24/12	LV	93	60	33	7	5	2	1
10/23/12	LV	93	62	31	6	5	1	1
10/22/12	LV	93	62	32	6	4	2	1
10/21/12	LV	93	58	35	6	5	1	1
10/13/12	LV	93	62	31	7	4	2	1
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

Call for full trend.

6x. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Have you voted for president in any year before this 2012 election, or is this the first year you'll be voting for president?

	Voted before	First time	No opinion	
10/30/12	LV	94	6	0
10/29/12	LV	96	4	0
10/28/12	LV	96	4	0
10/27/12	LV	93	7	0
10/26/12	LV	92	8	0

Call for full trend.

7. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) 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 opinion	
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly		
10/30/12	LV	50	30	20	49	10	39	1
10/29/12	LV	50	30	20	49	10	39	1
10/28/12	LV	51	31	20	47	9	39	1
10/27/12	LV	50	30	20	48	8	40	2
10/26/12	LV	50	30	19	48	8	41	2
10/25/12	LV	49	30	19	49	8	41	2
10/24/12	LV	49	30	18	50	9	41	1
10/23/12	LV	50	30	19	49	9	40	2
10/22/12	LV	49	31	18	49	9	40	2
10/21/12	LV	50	31	19	48	8	40	2
10/13/12	LV	50	32	18	48	9	40	2
9/29/12	RV	49	25	24	49	12	37	2
9/9/12	RV	48	27	21	50	10	39	2

8/25/12	RV	47	26	21	50	13	37	3
8/25/12		50	27	23	46	13	33	4
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

Call for full trend.

12a. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Regardless of who you support, which candidate do you trust to do a better job handling the economy - (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion	
10/30/12	LV	47	49	1	2	2
10/29/12	LV	46	49	1	2	2
10/28/12	LV	47	49	1	2	2
10/27/12	LV	45	50	1	3	2
10/26/12	LV	44	51	1	3	2
10/25/12	LV	44	51	1	3	1
10/24/12	LV	43	52	1	3	2
10/23/12	LV	44	50	1	3	2
10/22/12	LV	45	50	1	2	2
10/21/12	LV	46	48	1	3	2
10/13/12	LV	48	47	*	2	3
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

13a. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Regardless of who you may support, who do you think better understands the economic problems people in this country are having - (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion	
10/30/12	LV	50	44	1	3	1
10/29/12	LV	49	45	2	3	1
10/28/12	LV	50	44	2	3	1
10/27/12	LV	49	44	2	4	1
10/26/12	LV	48	45	2	4	1
10/25/12	LV	49	47	1	3	1
10/24/12	LV	48	46	2	3	1
10/23/12	LV	50	45	2	2	1
10/22/12	LV	51	44	2	2	1
10/21/12	LV	51	44	2	3	1
10/13/12	LV	51	42	2	4	1
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

18. (ASKED OF LIKELY 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?

10/30/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	Yes	No	No opinion
a. Obama	28	69	2
b. Romney	26	71	3

Trend:

a. Obama

	Yes	No	No opinion
10/30/12 LV	28	69	2
10/29/12 LV	28	70	2
10/28/12 LV	26	72	2
10/27/12 LV	23	75	2
10/26/12 LV	23	75	2
10/25/12 LV	22	76	2
10/13/12 LV	27	71	2
9/29/12 RV	23	76	1
8/25/12 RV	20	79	1

b. Romney

	Yes	No	No opinion
10/30/12 LV	26	71	3
10/29/12 LV	25	72	3
10/28/12 LV	24	74	2
10/27/12 LV	23	75	2
10/26/12 LV	23	75	2
10/25/12 LV	23	75	2
10/13/12 LV	22	75	3
9/29/12 RV	20	79	1
8/25/12 RV	13	86	*

18o. (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
10/30/12 LV	65	25	9	2
10/29/12 LV	64	24	10	2
10/28/12 LV	63	25	9	3
10/27/12 LV	62	28	8	2
10/26/12 LV	62	27	9	2
10/25/12 LV	61	29	6	4
10/13/12 LV	54	37	9	*
9/29/12 RV	53	34	10	3

18/18o NET:

	NET	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not contacted	No op.
		Last week	Last month	Longer	Don't know		
10/30/12 LV	28	18	7	2	1	69	2
10/29/12 LV	28	18	7	3	1	70	2
10/28/12 LV	26	16	7	2	1	72	2
10/27/12 LV	23	14	6	2	1	75	2
10/26/12 LV	23	14	6	2	1	75	2
10/25/12 LV	22	13	6	1	1	76	2
10/13/12 LV	27	15	10	2	*	71	2
9/29/12 RV	23	12	8	2	NA	76	1

18r. (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
10/30/12 LV	64	26	6	4
10/29/12 LV	63	26	7	5
10/28/12 LV	64	26	7	4
10/27/12 LV	63	25	8	4
10/26/12 LV	58	32	8	2
10/25/12 LV	57	33	8	2
10/13/12 LV	57	35	7	1
9/29/12 RV	55	34	9	1

18/18r NET:

	NET	Last week	Last month	Longer	Don't know	Not contacted	No op.
10/30/12 LV	26	17	7	2	1	71	3
10/29/12 LV	25	16	6	2	1	72	3
10/28/12 LV	24	15	6	2	1	74	2
10/27/12 LV	23	14	6	2	1	75	2
10/26/12 LV	23	13	7	2	*	75	2
10/25/12 LV	23	13	8	2	*	75	2
10/13/12 LV	22	13	8	2	*	75	3
9/29/12 RV	20	11	7	2	NA	79	1

28. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) How would you rate [ITEM] overall response to the Hurricane that hit the east coast this week, excellent, good, not so good or poor?

10/30/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Not so good	Poor	No op.
a. The federal government's	73	25	48	8	8	1	19
c. Obama's	78	35	42	8	4	4	15
d. Romney's	44	14	30	21	13	8	35

26. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) In thinking about your vote for president, what's more important - the things Obama has done as president in his first term, or the things you think he would do if elected to a second term?

	Things Obama has done in first term	Things Obama will do in second term	Both (vol.)	No opinion
10/30/12 LV	27	47	17	9
7/8/12 LV	30	52	13	5

*** END ***