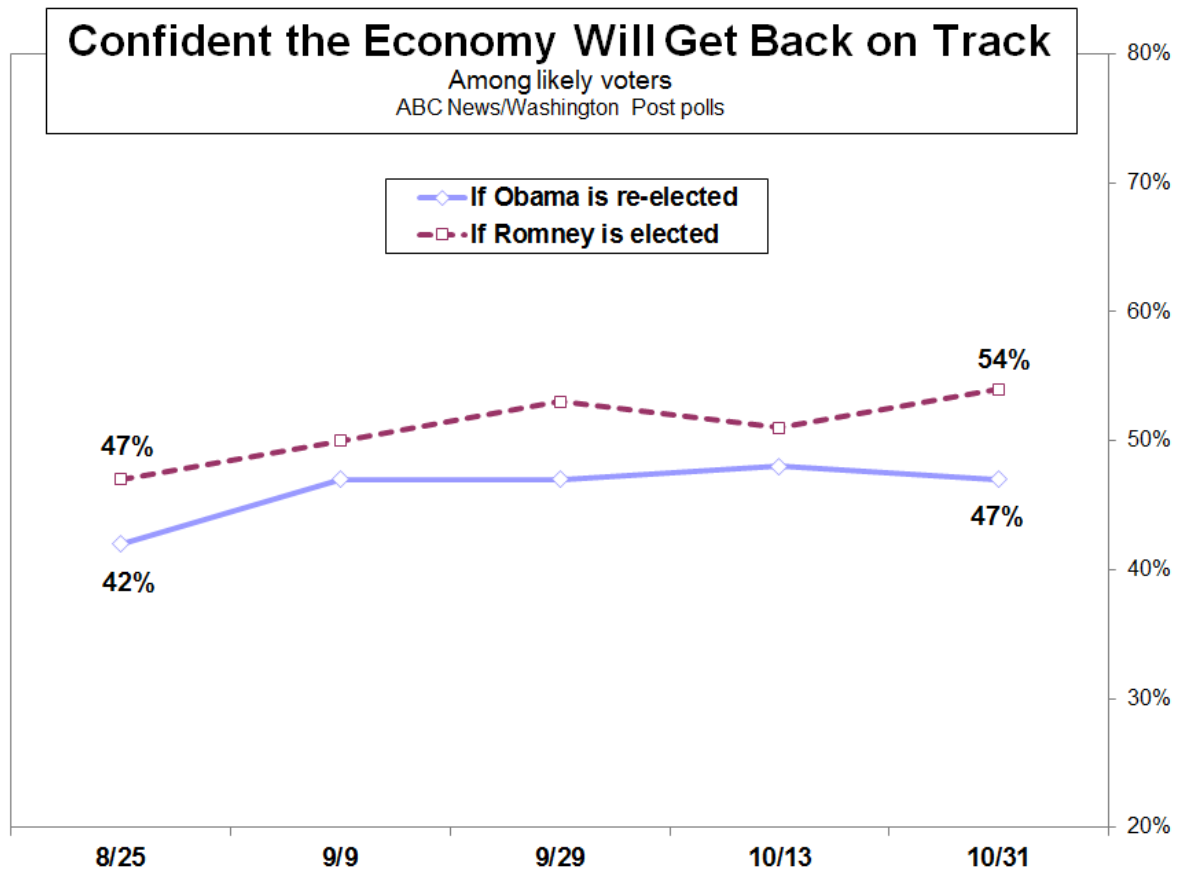


Romney Leads in Confidence on Recovery – But Obama Escapes Most Economic Blame

More likely voters think the economy would improve under Mitt Romney than under Barack Obama – but they disproportionately blame Obama’s predecessor for its troubles in the first place, an example of the mixed sentiments that undergird the deadlocked 2012 election.

Fifty-four percent in the latest ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll express at least some confidence the economy would improve under Romney; fewer, 47 percent, think the same if Obama’s re-elected. Then again, far fewer in either case are “very” confident of economic gains – 19 percent if Romney wins, 21 percent if it’s Obama – hardly a rousing endorsement of either.

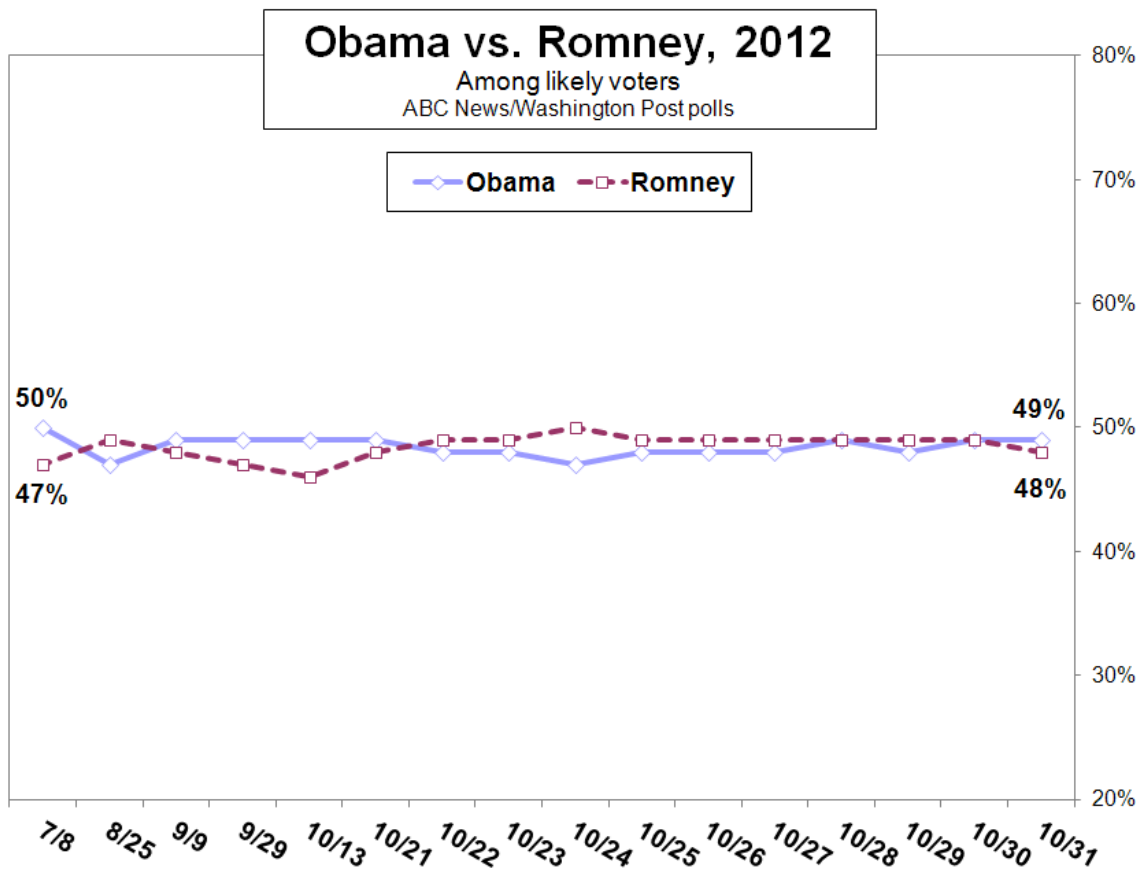


While Obama falls 7 percentage points short of Romney in this measure, he does far better in another: Despite his tenure at the helm, just 36 percent of likely voters say Obama is chiefly

responsible for the country's current economic problems. Fifty-one percent instead still blame his Republican predecessor, George W. Bush, three years and nine months after he left office.

Such views feed into the overall razor-close division in vote preferences, with 49 percent support for Obama, 48 percent for Romney in this latest four-day tracking poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). That's essentially where the race has been not just for weeks, but months.

The 1-point difference between the candidates is insignificant, given sampling error. Indeed – and not to imply false precision – taking it to two decimals, Obama has 48.56 percent support, Romney 48.49 percent – seven-hundredths of a percentage point difference between them. (If this sounds familiar, it was the same difference, albeit toward Romney, in results reported Oct. 23.)



Three of the four nights of this survey include the period when Hurricane Sandy approached and then hit the East Coast. Out of a national sample of 1,293 likely voters, 151 were interviewed those nights, Monday through Wednesday, in the Northeast. Results in this group are in accord with comparable data from nights before the storm struck.

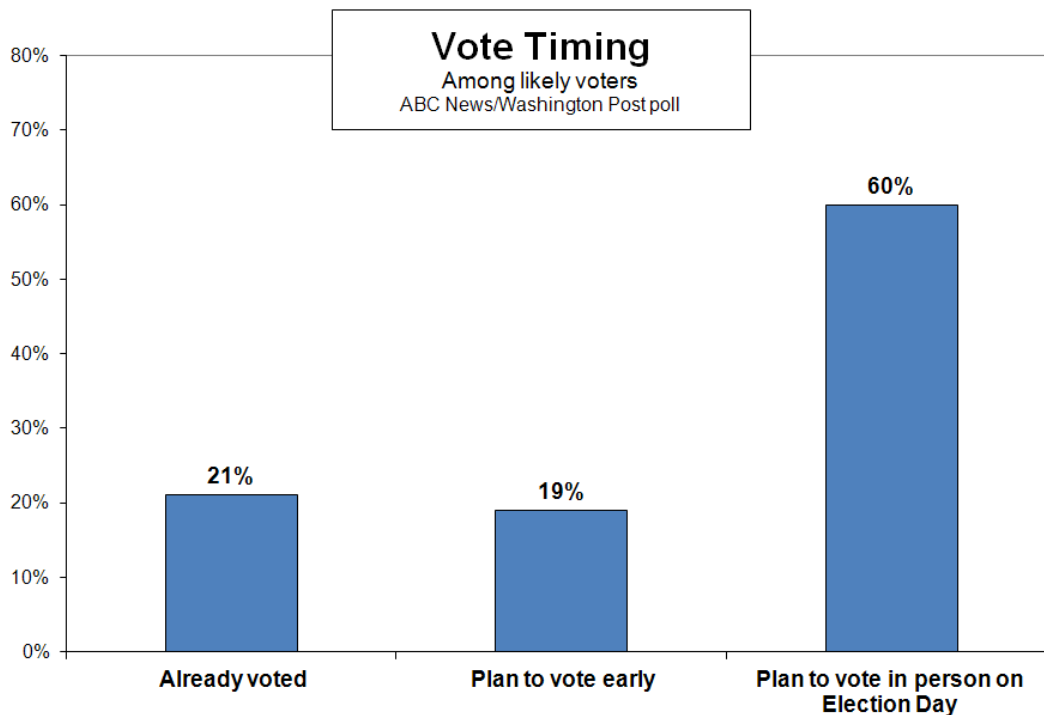
STORM – While there’s been no apparent effect on vote preferences, Obama continues to get broadly positive grades for his response to the storm. Seventy-nine percent rate his handling of the situation positively, including 69 percent of Republicans and 73 percent of conservatives, as well as more than eight in 10 in other political and ideological groups.

As yesterday, Romney’s ratings are far more divided, likely reflecting partisan predispositions given his lack of an official role in the storm response. His handling of the situation is rated positively by 49 percent overall, ranging from 78 percent of Republicans to 47 percent of independents and 24 percent of Democrats. He’s rated negatively by 24 percent, chiefly Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents.

The federal government receives ratings for its response much like Obama’s – 78 percent positive. As noted yesterday, these are far higher than similar ratings a week after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Where they go from here depends on the course of recovery and the patience of the populace.

It’s possible the storm damage could impact the vote another way: Obama’s support consistently has been strongest in the Northeast, Romney’s in the South – both reflecting longstanding partisan and ideological patterns. If fewer Northeasterners can get to the polls, that conceivably could influence the national popular vote overall. (Any impact on the electoral college, though, is harder to discern.) In the Midwest and the West, meanwhile, Obama and Romney are essentially tied.

VOTING and GROUPS – Early voting, in any case, is progressing quickly; 21 percent of “likely voters” in this survey in fact say they’ve voted already, and 19 percent say they plan to do so. If all follow through, it’ll leave just six in 10 to vote on Election Day itself.

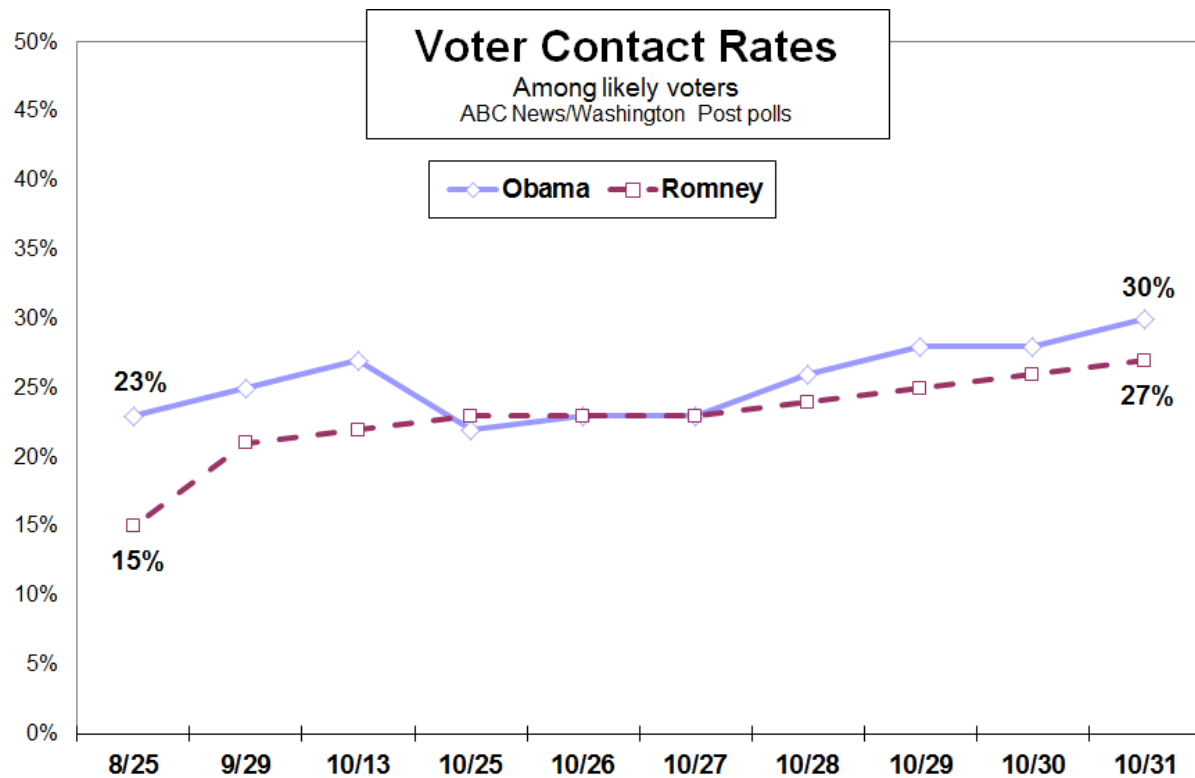


Unlike in 2008, though, preferences among these groups is very evenly divided – Obama +3 points among those who've voted early or plan to do so; Romney +2 among Election-Day likely voters. Those non-significant differences compare with a wide Obama +18 among early voters in 2008, vs. +2 among Election-Day voters that year.

The closer race shows another way: Among likely voters who supported Obama in 2008, he's retaining 83 percent this year – but 14 percent are moving to Romney. Romney, by contrast, is retaining more of John McCain's supporters, 94 percent, and losing just 5 percent to Obama. That said, Obama's making it back among new voters: Seven percent of likely voters say they did not vote in 2008, and they favor Obama widely, by 62-34 percent.

Among other groups, preferences among independents – often swing voters – have squeezed to essentially a dead heat, 49-46 percent, Romney-Obama; that's tightened from a record 58-38 percent in Romney's favor last week. It hasn't meaningfully changed total results because of slight changes in the numbers who identify themselves as independents, Democrats and Republicans – proportions that are not fixed, but that can move in step with other attitudes.

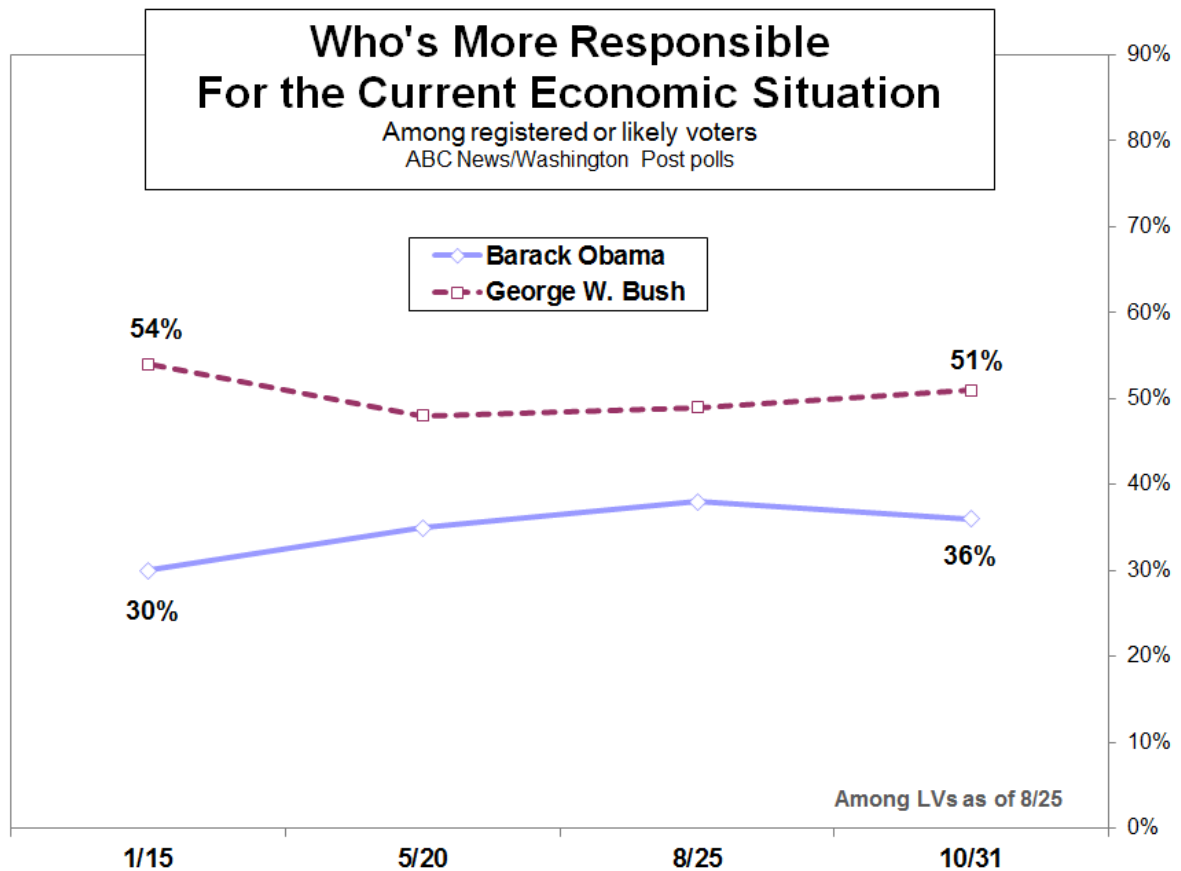
CONTACT – All this underscores the critical importance of turnout. Both campaigns are hitting it hard: Among all likely voters nationally, 30 percent have been contacted by a representative of the Obama campaign asking for their support, 27 percent by someone from the Romney camp.



Obama retains an edge in contact efficiency: Among those he's contacted, 71 percent are his supporters; among those contacted by Romney, 62 percent support him. Obama had a bigger advantage in contact efficiency in 2008, however, as well as in contacts overall.

Contact numbers soar in the 11 battleground states identified by the ABC News Political Unit; there 47 percent have been contacted by Obama's campaign, 36 percent by Romney's. That's an edge for Obama, but it fades when three states, Pennsylvania, Minnesota and North Carolina, are excluded. In the eight remaining states (see the end of this analysis for the list), Obama's side has contacted 51 percent, Romney's, 45 percent, not a significant difference.

CONFIDENCE and BLAME – One perplexing element of the election is how Obama has remained competitive despite the economy's long-running troubles. Part of the answer rests on who's blamed for it in the first place. Independents, for instance, blame Bush rather than Obama for current economic problems by a 19-point margin, 51-32 percent. And that widens to a 27-point margin among political moderates.



In the battleground states, Bush gets more economic blame than Obama, by 50-37 percent. Even in strong Republican states it's an even split.

That continued blame on Bush enables Obama to deflect some of the economic ill-will that otherwise would be headed his way. It also helps lessen the impact of his 7-point disadvantage, noted above, in confidence the economy would recover under his leadership vs. Romney’s. Notably, Obama’s disadvantage in confidence hits 10 points among independents.

On other economic measures the two remain close – a 2-point gap (toward Romney, but non-significant), in trust to handle the economy; a 5-point gap (toward Obama, marginally significant) in better understanding Americans’ economic problems. Of all the reasons the race has stayed so tight, the failure of either candidate to seize and hold an advantage on these measures probably explains it best.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 28-31, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,293 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3 points, including design effect. (Question 27 was asked Oct. 29-31 among 959 likely voters; those results have a 3.5-point error margin. Question 28 was asked Oct. 30-31 among 645 likely voters; those results have a 4.5-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 32-28-36 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?

	---- Closely -----			---- Not closely -----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not so	At all	opinion
10/31/12 LV	99	67	32	1	1	*	0
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.	
10/31/12	RV	73	6	3	2	1	16	0
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	
10/31/12	LV	60	19	21	*
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
10/31/12 LV	49	48	1	1	1
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?

	---- Enthusiastic ----			--- Not enthusiastic ---			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	opinion
Obama:							
10/31/12 LV	95	64	31	4	3	1	*
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:							
10/31/12 LV	94	62	32	5	3	2	1
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
10/31/12 LV	93	7	0
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
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
10/31/12 LV	50	32	18	49	10	39	1
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 LV	48	27	21	51	10	41	1
9/9/12 LV	49	30	19	50	9	41	1
8/25/12 LV	48	27	21	50	11	39	2
7/8/12 LV	51	29	23	46	7	40	2
5/20/12 RV	48	29	20	49	11	38	3
4/8/12 RV	51	32	19	45	10	36	4
3/10/12 RV	46	29	18	51	10	40	3
2/4/12 RV	50	28	21	47	10	38	3
1/15/12 RV	48	26	22	48	10	38	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
10/31/12 LV	47	49	*	3	2
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	
10/31/12	LV	50	45	1	3	1
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

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?

10/31/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	NET	Positive Excellent	Good	NET	Negative Not so good	Poor	No op.
a. The federal government's	78	27	51	5	4	1	16
c. Obama's	79	35	44	9	4	5	12
d. Romney's	49	13	35	24	13	11	27

23. (ASKED OF LIKELY 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?

10/31/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	NET	Confident Very	Smwt	NET	Not confident Not so	At all	No opinion
a. Obama is re-elected	47	21	27	52	16	36	1
b. Romney is elected	54	19	34	45	19	27	1

Trend:

a. Obama is re-elected

		--- Confident ---			--- Not confident ---			No
		NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not so	At all	opinion
10/31/12	LV	47	21	27	52	16	36	1
10/13/12	LV	48	19	29	51	13	38	1
9/29/12	LV	47	15	32	53	14	38	*
9/9/12	LV	47	21	26	52	14	38	1
8/25/12	LV	42	13	29	57	16	41	1

b. Romney is elected

		--- Confident ---			--- Not confident ---			No
		NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not so	At all	opinion
10/31/12	LV	54	19	34	45	19	27	1
10/13/12	LV	51	20	31	49	19	29	*
9/29/12	LV	53	14	39	46	17	29	1
9/9/12	LV	50	16	34	49	19	30	1
8/25/12	LV	47	13	35	51	20	31	2

27. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Who do you think is more responsible for the country's current economic problems - (Barack Obama) or (George W. Bush)?

		Obama	Bush	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/31/12	LV	36	51	5	6	3
8/25/12	LV	38	48	8	4	1
5/20/12	RV	35	48	7	7	2
1/15/12	RV	30	54	8	6	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?

10/31/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	Yes	No	No opinion
a. Obama	30	68	2
b. Romney	27	71	2

Trend:

a. Obama

	Yes	No	No opinion
10/31/12 LV	30	68	2
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 LV	25	75	*
8/25/12 LV	23	77	1

b. Romney

	Yes	No	No opinion
10/31/12 LV	27	71	2
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 LV	21	78	1
8/25/12 LV	15	85	1

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
10/31/12 LV	66	25	7	2
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 LV	53	33	11	3

18/18o NET:

	NET	Last week	Last month	Longer ago	Don't know	Not contacted	No op.
10/31/12 LV	30	19	7	2	1	68	2
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 LV	25	13	8	1	1	75	*

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
10/31/12 LV	60	30	7	3
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 LV	55	34	9	1

18/18r NET:

	NET	Last week	Last month	Longer ago	Don't know	Not contacted	No op.
10/31/12 LV	27	16	8	2	1	71	2
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	LV	21	11	7	2	*	78	1

*** END ***