

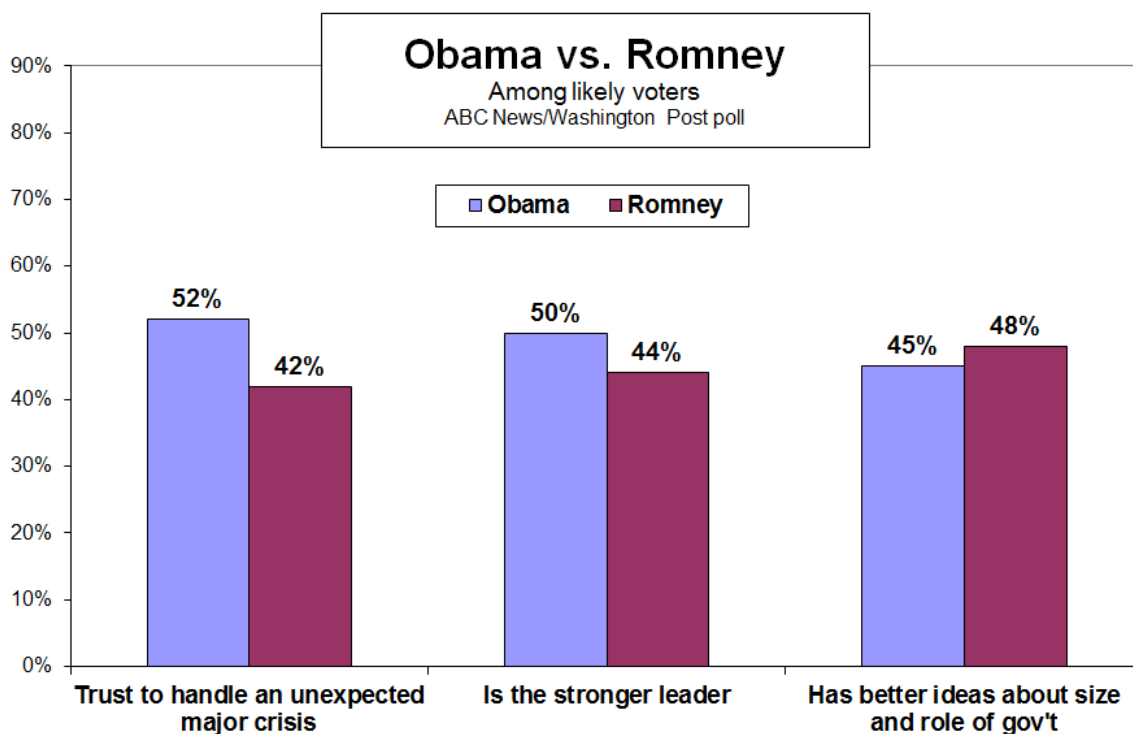
## **Leadership Ratings Help Obama; 50 Percent Job Approval, Not So Much**

Barack Obama has maintained a sizable advantage over Mitt Romney in trust to handle a major crisis and regained his lead in being seen as the stronger leader, wielding the benefits of incumbency to stay competitive, economic discontent aside, in the razor-close 2012 election.

Obama also has managed essentially an even split with Romney in views of which candidate has better ideas on the size and role of government – another case, as with the economy, on which Romney has been unable to capitalize fully on a vulnerability of the president’s.

Romney’s held his ground nonetheless, notably with record levels of support within the Republican Party and broad backing in some of its key constituencies, and in the final weekend of the race the contest remains deadlocked, with 49 percent support for Obama among likely voters, 48 percent for Romney in the latest ABC News/Washington Post daily tracking poll.

There’s no clear evidence that Obama’s response to Hurricane Sandy has directly helped him; while he holds a 10-point lead over Romney in trust to handle a major crisis, 52-42 percent, that’s the same as it was earlier this fall, long before the storm struck.

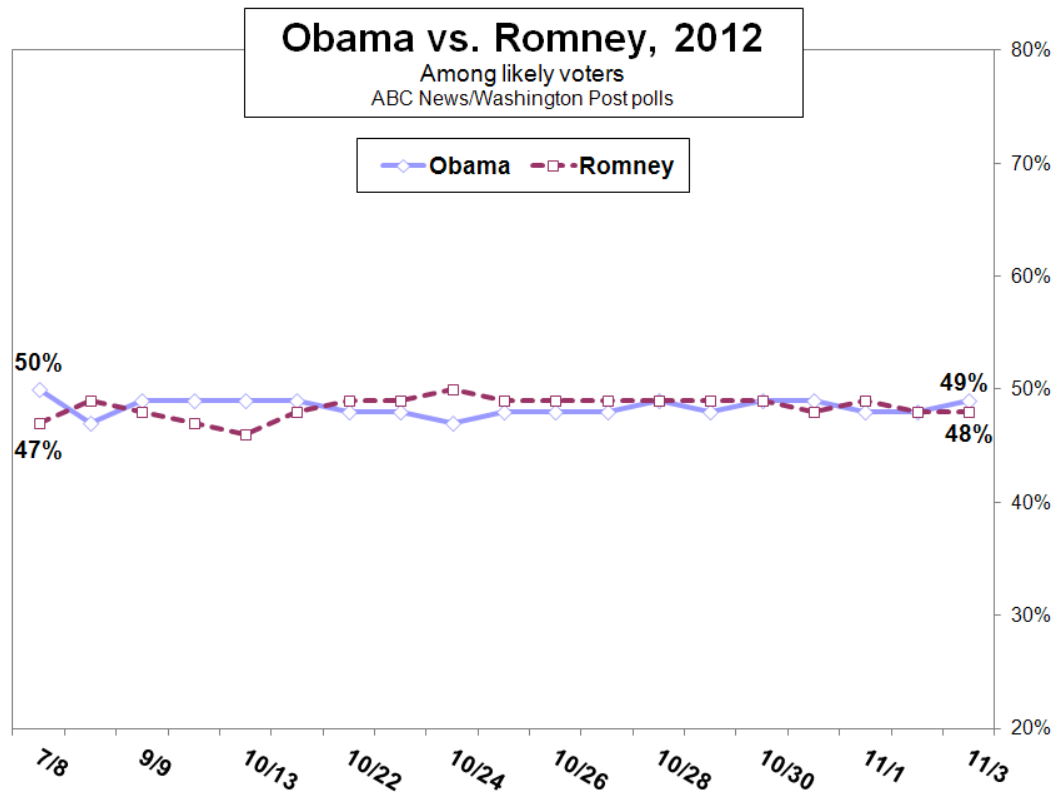


Still, Obama has improved in a related gauge: This poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that he now leads Romney by 6 percentage points among likely voters, 50-44 percent, in being seen as the stronger leader. That re-establishes an edge for Obama that Romney had reeled in to a nonsignificant 2 points after the first presidential debate.

A third result further underscores the difficulties Romney's experienced in achieving a clear breakthrough. Earlier ABC/Post polling found a broad sense that Obama favors a larger government, while Romney is seen as favoring a smaller one; the latter is a view most likely voters profess to share. Yet asked in this poll who has better ideas about the right size and role of government, it's a 48-45 percent split, Romney-Obama – not a significant difference, despite Romney's built-in opportunity.

The economy is another such issue, indeed the key one. Romney opened a 9-point lead in trust to handle the economy the week before last, but his momentum didn't hold; it's a nonsignificant 3 points, 49-46 percent, now. And in economic empathy – better understanding the economic problems of average Americans – Obama holds a 6-point lead, again having recovered from a tighter division 10 days ago.

Certainly Obama faces difficulties of his own. His overall job approval rating is steady at 50 percent – passable enough to run competitively, but a good indication of why the contest is so close. There's a strong correlation to vote preferences: Among likely voters who approve of Obama's job performance, 93 percent back him for re-election; among disapprovers, 93 percent favor Romney. As a referendum on the incumbent, it's a squeaker.

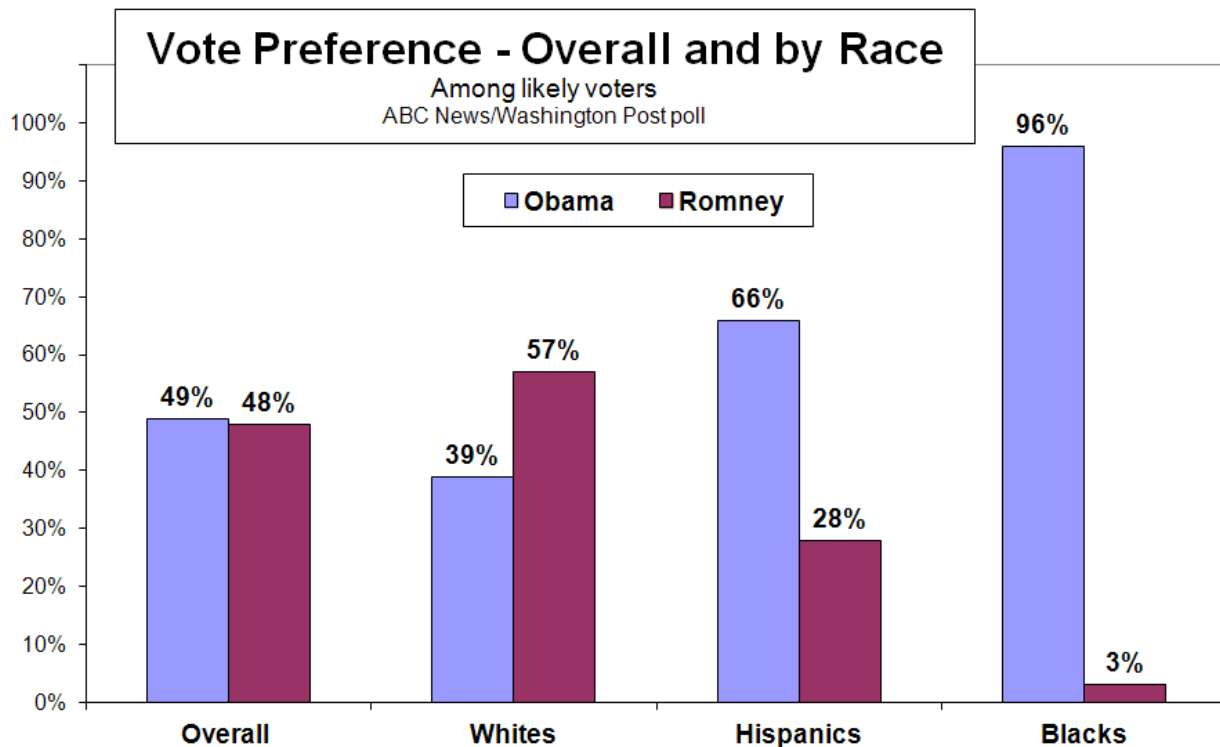


That brings it down to turnout (in an election in which 27 percent of likely voters say in fact they've already voted) and there Obama has a potential advantage. He holds a 7-point lead over Romney in the share of his supporters who say they're very enthusiastic about their choice – 69 percent of Obama's backers, 62 percent of Romney's. That's Obama's biggest lead in strong support, numerically, since just after the conventions.

**GROUPS** – Romney, as noted, is remarkably strong in his base, with 97 percent support among Republicans; if it holds that would be an in-party high for any candidate in exit polls back to 1976. Obama has 91 percent of Democrats, losing more of them to Romney (7 percent) than Romney's losses among Republicans (3 percent to Obama). Independents split essentially evenly, but Obama's support among independents, 46 percent, matches his high.

Romney has 82 percent support among evangelical white Protestants, surpassing John McCain's total in this group four years ago; their turnout this year is one potentially important element of the race. Among whites overall, it's Romney by 57-39 percent; that compares to 55-43 percent for McCain vs. Obama four years ago.

The reason Obama won in 2008, while losing whites by 12 points, was his 80-18 percent support among nonwhites, a record 26 percent of the electorate four years ago. He has a similar margin now, 76-21 percent, including 96 percent support among blacks and 66 percent among Hispanics.



Among the many groups worth watching in a race this close, another is white women with college degrees. They back Obama by a 9-point margin in the latest data, while all other whites – less-educated white women, and white men regardless of their education – favor Romney by 60-35 percent. That difference contributes to the gender gap overall – Obama +7 among women, Romney +6 among men, a division, among the many, that keeps the popular vote estimate where it’s been: for all intents and purposes, a tie.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2012, among a random national sample of 2,069 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of sampling error of 2.5 points, including design effect. (Question 12j and 13f-g were asked Nov. 1-Nov. 3 among 1,748 likely voters; those results have a 3-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, Democrats-Republicans-independents, are 33-29-34 percent among likely voters; they were 39-32-29 percent in the 2008 exit poll.

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. (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
11/3/12	LV	98	67	31	1	1	*	*
11/2/12	LV	99	67	31	1	1	*	*
11/1/12	LV	99	68	31	1	1	*	0
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: 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.
11/3/12	RV	68	6	4	2	1	19	*
11/2/12	RV	70	5	4	2	1	18	*
11/1/12	RV	72	6	4	2	1	16	*
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
11/3/12	LV	58	14	27	1
11/2/12	LV	58	16	25	*
11/1/12	LV	60	18	22	*
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

Other      Neither      No

		Obama	Romney	(vol.)	(vol.)	opinion
11/3/12	LV	49	48	2	1	2
11/2/12	LV	48	48	1	1	2
11/1/12	LV	48	49	1	1	1
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:								
11/3/12	LV	95	69	26	5	2	3	1
11/2/12	LV	95	69	27	4	2	2	1
11/1/12	LV	95	66	30	4	2	1	1
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:								
11/3/12	LV	94	62	32	5	3	2	*
11/2/12	LV	94	63	31	5	3	2	*
11/1/12	LV	95	62	33	5	3	2	*
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
11/3/12	LV	93	7	0
11/2/12	LV	92	8	0
11/1/12	LV	92	8	0
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
11/3/12	LV	50	34	16	49	9	39	1
11/2/12	LV	50	34	17	48	10	39	1
11/1/12	LV	50	33	17	49	10	39	1
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	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.

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

11/3/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. Handling the economy	46	49	*	3	2
j. Handling an unexpected major crisis	52	42	1	2	3

Trend:

a. Handling the economy

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
11/3/12 LV	46	49	*	3	2
11/2/12 LV	46	49	*	2	2
11/1/12 LV	46	50	*	2	2
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

j. Handling an unexpected major crisis

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
11/3/12 LV	52	42	1	2	3
10/13/12 LV	52	43	2	2	1
9/29/12 RV	52	42	1	2	3

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

11/3/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. Better understands the economic problems people in this country are having	50	44	2	3	2
f. Is the stronger leader	50	44	1	2	3
g. Has better ideas about the right size and role of the federal government	45	48	1	3	3

Trend:

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



		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
11/3/12	LV	50	44	2	3	2
11/2/12	LV	50	44	1	3	1
11/1/12	LV	50	45	1	3	1
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

f. Is the stronger leader

		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
11/3/12	LV	50	44	1	2	3
10/13/12	LV	49	47	1	1	2
9/9/12	RV	50	42	2	2	5
7/8/12	RV	46	44	3	2	6
4/8/12	RV	48	42	1	5	5

g. Has better ideas about the right size and role of the federal government

		Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
11/3/12	LV	45	48	1	3	3
10/13/12	LV	44	48	1	4	4

29. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) For each item I name, please tell me if it will be a major factor in your vote, a minor factor, or not a factor.

11/3/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	NET	----- A factor -----		Not a factor	No opinion
		Major	Minor		
a. Romney's performance in the debates	62	26	35	38	1
b. Obama's handling of the hurricane response	51	23	28	48	1

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?

11/3/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

Yes	No	No opinion
-----	----	------------

a. Obama 30 68 2  
 b. Romney 28 70 2

Trend:

a. Obama

	Yes	No	No opinion
11/3/12 LV	30	68	2
11/2/12 LV	29	69	2
11/1/12 LV	29	69	2
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 RV	23	76	1
8/25/12 RV	20	79	1

b. Romney

	Yes	No	No opinion
11/3/12 LV	28	70	2
11/2/12 LV	27	71	2
11/1/12 LV	27	71	2
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 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
11/3/12 LV	65	26	7	2
11/2/12 LV	64	28	7	1
11/1/12 LV	64	27	7	1
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 RV	53	34	10	3

18/18o NET:

	NET	Last week	Last month	Longer	Don't know	Not contacted	No op.
11/3/12 LV	30	19	8	2	1	68	2
11/2/12 LV	29	18	8	2	*	69	2
11/1/12 LV	29	19	8	2	*	69	2
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	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
11/3/12	LV	64	24	8	3
11/2/12	LV	65	26	8	2
11/1/12	LV	64	27	5	3
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	RV	55	34	9	1

18/18r NET:

		----- Yes -----					Not contacted	No op.
		NET	Last week	Last month	Longer	Don't know		
11/3/12	LV	28	18	7	2	1	70	2
11/2/12	LV	27	17	7	2	1	71	2
11/1/12	LV	27	17	7	1	1	71	2
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	RV	20	11	7	2	NA	79	1

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