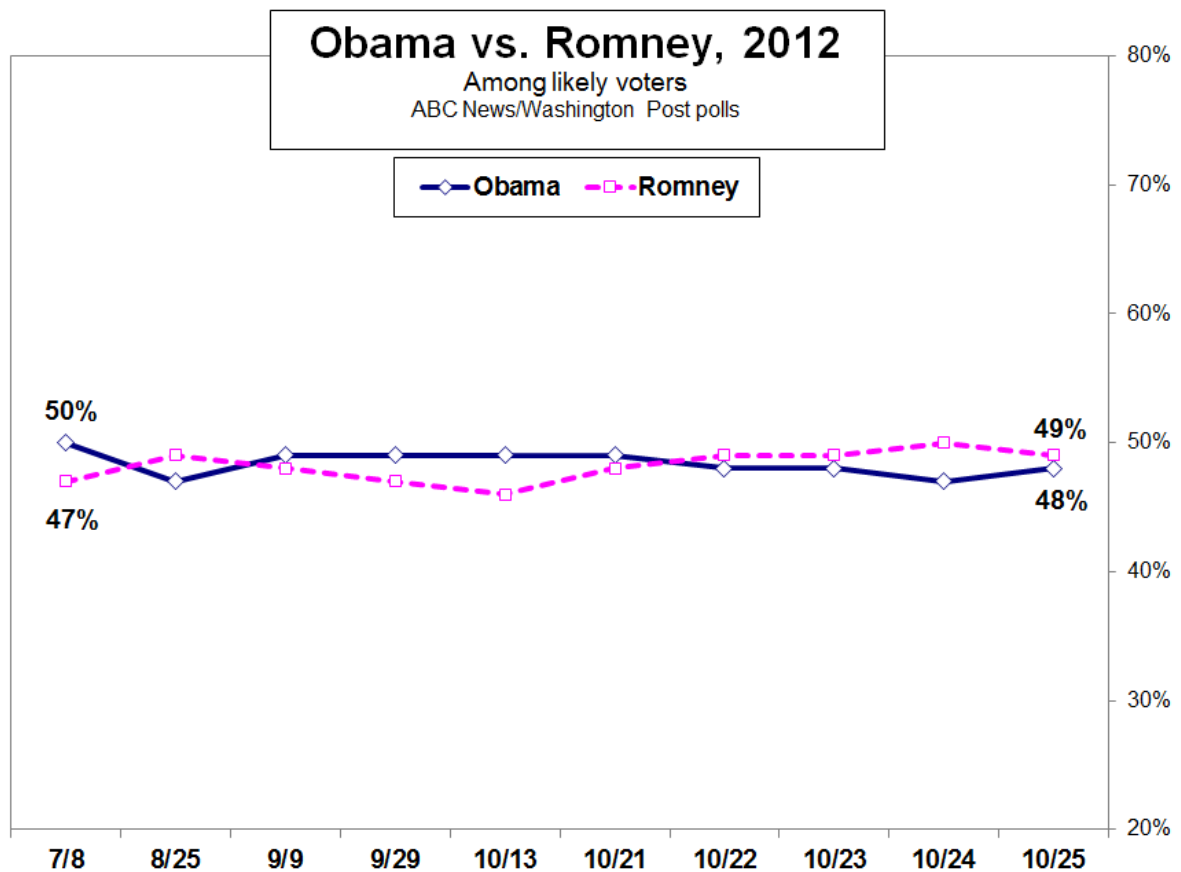


Candidates Tie in Voter Outreach, A Closer Ground Game than in '08

Barack Obama and Mitt Romney are running essentially evenly not only in vote preferences but also in voter contact, a critical element of a race so close the campaigns' ground games could well make the difference.

As their field teams go into overdrive, some underlying shifts toward Romney paused in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll. Still the race itself is essentially unchanged – 49-48 percent among likely voters, compared with 50-47 percent yesterday.

After advances earlier this week, there's no further gain for Romney on key economic measures in today's poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). And strong enthusiasm among his supporters, which rose sharply after the first debate, has been essentially stable since – neither losing nor gaining more ground, and even with Obama, but not ahead.



Those results make the campaigns' get-out-the-vote efforts potentially pivotal. While 22 percent of likely voters personally have been contacted by Obama's campaign, as many, 23 percent, have been contacted by Romney's side. That's tightened from a 5-point Obama advantage in contacts in mid-October; Obama similarly had a 7-point advantage over John McCain in contacts at about this point in 2008.

More important, Romney has caught up in the efficiency of his outreach as well. Among likely voters who've been contacted by his campaign, 63 percent in fact are Romney supporters. That's on pace with Obama, who's had 65 percent efficiency in his campaign contacts. It's a measure on which Obama led Romney by 17 percentage points just two weeks ago, and was ahead of McCain by 22 points at this time in 2008. Efficiency matters because contacts are meant to encourage turnout; the campaigns want to reach, and encourage, their supporters.

Romney also has sharpened his turnout efforts in the 10 states now designated by the ABC News Political Unit as battlegrounds (see the end of this report for the list). There 40 percent of likely voters have been contacted by the Obama campaign, 39 percent by Romney's. Efficiency is numerically better for Obama, but within the margin of error for this subset of the population.

Obama led Romney by 13 points in contact in these states two weeks ago; again, Romney has caught up – not ahead, but even.

VOTING – Voter contacts matter all the more given the increasing prevalence of early and absentee voting. Just 61 percent of likely voters in this survey say they plan to vote on Election Day; the rest either plan to vote early or, in the case of 8 percent, already have done so.

And there's a difference in these groups: Among people who say they plan to vote early (or have done so), Obama leads in vote preferences by 55-42 percent. Among those who plan to hold off 'til Election Day itself, those numbers reverse – a 10-point Romney advantage, 54-44 percent.

TRACKING TRENDS – The ABC/Post tracking poll, based on a four-day rolling average of results, showed improving trends for Romney through Wednesday night; as reported yesterday, these took him to his first clear lead over Obama in trust to handle the economy, and his first virtual dead heat in who better understands Americans' economic problems.

Those now have stabilized. Romney, for instance, went from an insignificant +2 points in trust to handle the economy in four nights of interviews completed Sunday to +9 points in those completed Wednesday; it's +7 now. On empathy, Romney went from -9 points in mid-October to -7 Sunday and -2 Wednesday; in the latest interviews it's steady at -2, with no further advance. Both are key measures to watch in an election framed by the longest, deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression.

GROUPS – Those shifts in sentiment, as reported previously, occurred chiefly among white men, especially those who lack a college degree. Romney is at another new high in the latest poll among white men, with 66 percent support, lifting him to 60 percent among whites overall, tying his best of the contest. Whites account for 75 percent of all likely voters.

Political independents have shifted as well, to a campaign record 58-38 percent, Romney-Obama. As with the other results, that reflects a move toward Romney among lower-income white independents and among independent men. Additionally, more conservative independents say they'll vote, and prefer Romney.

One apparent impetus, as noted yesterday, is that independents are disproportionately likely to say their opinions of Romney improved as a result of his performance in the debates.

Leading among independents doesn't tip the race to Romney because Democrats slightly outnumber Republicans, by 4 points among likely voters, and Obama wins nearly all Democrats (as does Romney with Republicans). Democrats outnumbered Republicans by 7 points in the 2008 exit poll.

Obama's at a new high among blacks in this poll, with an almost unanimous 97 percent support, lifting him to 82 percent among nonwhites overall, also his best to date. And a wide gender gap continues – Romney +18 points among men, Obama +13 among women. The result among women is typical; it's Romney's lead among white men that's making the race so close. They constitute 37 percent of likely voters. The question is whether that's enough to keep Romney's post-debate momentum moving.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 22-25, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,382 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3 points, including design effect. The survey was produced for ABC News by Langer Research Associates of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Partisan divisions in this survey, Democrats-Republicans-independents, are 34-30-32 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, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin.

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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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
10/25/12 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.	
10/25/12	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	
10/25/12	RV	61	29	8	1
10/24/12	RV	62	29	8	1
10/23/12	RV	62	28	7	2
10/22/12	RV	64	27	6	2
10/21/12	RV	66	27	5	2
10/13/12	RV	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	
10/25/12	LV	48	49	1	1	
10/24/12	LV	47	50	1	1	
10/23/12	LV	48	49	*	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:								
10/25/12	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:								
10/25/12	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.

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
10/25/12	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 handling the economy - (Obama) or (Romney)?

	Obama	Romney	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
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

13. (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
10/25/12 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?

10/25/12 - Summary Table (among likely voters)

	Yes	No	No opinion
a. Obama	22	76	2
b. Romney	23	75	2

Trend:

a. Obama			
	Yes	No	No opinion
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

10/25/12 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
10/25/12 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	Yes Last month	Longer	Don't know	Not contacted	No op.
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
10/25/12 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	Yes Last month	Longer	Don't know	Not contacted	No op.
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 ***