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For The People & The Press

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2012

No Clear Winner Expected in VP Debate

Biden Viewed Unfavorably, Divided Opinions about Ryan

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Kohut

President, Pew Research Center

Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock

Associate Directors

Scott Keeter

Director of Survey Research

1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel (202) 419-4350

Fax (202) 419-4399

www.people-press.org

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Biden Viewed Unfavorably, Divided Opinions about Ryan

Ahead of Thursday's vice presidential debate, more voters view Joe Biden unfavorably than favorably, while opinions about Paul Ryan are more evenly divided. Biden's image is far less positive than it was shortly before his 2008 debate with Sarah Palin; Ryan is viewed less favorably than Palin was just prior to the last vice-presidential debate.

The national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Oct. 4-7 among 1,511 adults, including 1,201 registered voters, finds that 39% of voters view Biden favorably, while 51% offer an unfavorable impression of the vice president. Just more than four-in-ten (44%) view Ryan favorably, while about as many (40%) have an unfavorable view.

A separate survey, also conducted Oct. 4-7, among 1,006 adults and 812 registered voters, finds that voters are divided over who will do better in Thursday's vice presidential debate. Four-in-ten (40%) say Ryan will do a better job while 34% expect Biden to do better.

Biden's image is little changed since September, but he is viewed less favorably than before his faceoff against Palin four years ago. In late September 2008, 53% of voters viewed Biden favorably and just 31% expressed an unfavorable opinion. At the time, Palin's favorable rating was higher than Ryan's is today (51% vs. 44%).

Surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center and the Washington Post before the party conventions this summer found that people have very different one-word impressions of the vice presidential candidates. [More people used negative words than positive ones to describe Biden](#), while [one-word impressions of Ryan were mixed](#).

Biden's Unfavorable Rating Higher than Ryan's

<i>Favorability just prior to VP debate</i>	Favorable	Unfavorable	DK/Can't rate
Oct 2012	%	%	%
Joe Biden	39	51	10=100
Paul Ryan	44	40	15=100
Late Sept 2008			
Joe Biden	53	31	16=100
Sarah Palin	51	40	9=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 4-7, 2012. Based on registered voters. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

The current survey finds that just 35% of independent voters have a favorable opinion of Biden, while 52% view him unfavorably. As many independent voters view Ryan favorably (42%) as unfavorably (42%).

The separate survey on expectations for Thursday's debate finds that 54% of voters say they are very likely to watch the debate. Interest in the upcoming debate is far lower than it was for the Biden-Palin debate four years ago (69% very likely to watch), though higher than for the debate between Dick Cheney and John Edwards in 2004 (41% very likely).

By a 42% to 25% margin, more independents expect Ryan to do better than Biden in the debate. Most members of both parties predict victory for their party's candidate, but Republicans are more confident than Democrats. Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) Republican voters say Ryan will do the better job in the debate. Fewer Democrats (62%) expect Biden to do better.

Independents Divided on Ryan; More Negative on Biden

<i>Among registered voters ...</i>	All %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
Paul Ryan				
Favorable	44	82	10	42
Unfavorable	40	10	73	42
DK/Can't rate	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>
	100	100	100	100
Joe Biden				
Favorable	39	10	77	35
Unfavorable	51	86	15	52
DK/Can't rate	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 4-7, 2012. Based on registered voters. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Republicans More Confident than Democrats Ahead of VP Debate

	All voters %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
<i>How likely to watch debate?</i>				
Very likely	54	64	55	48
Somewhat likely	23	20	27	20
Not likely	22	15	16	30
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Who will do better job?</i>				
Paul Ryan	40	78	15	42
Joe Biden	34	6	62	25
Both/Neither	3	5	1	4
Don't know	<u>23</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>28</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 4-7 2012 Omnibus. Based on registered voters. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About the Surveys

Some of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted October 4-7, 2012, among a national sample of 1,511 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (906 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 605 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 291 who had no landline telephone). Data collection was managed by Princeton Survey Research Associates International and conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the 2010 Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Total	1,511	2.9 percentage points
Registered voters	1,201	3.3 percentage points
<i>Among registered voters</i>		
Republican voters	403	5.7 percentage points
Democratic voters	396	5.7 percentage points
Independent voters	364	6.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

Additional analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted October 4-7, 2012 among a national sample of 1,006 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (601 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 405 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 206 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for

the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Total	1,006	3.7 percentage points
Registered voters	812	4.1 percentage points
<i>Among registered voters</i>		
Republican voters	224	7.8 percentage points
Democratic voters	280	7.0 percentage points
Independent voters	268	7.2 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
EARLY OCTOBER 2012 POLITICAL SURVEY
TOPLINE
October 4-7, 2012
N=1,511

NO QUESTIONS 1-4, 6, 9-14, 16-19, 23-25, 29-33, 36-38, 41, 44-51, 53-55

QUESTIONS 5, 7-8, 15a-b, 20-22, 26-28, 34, 64-69 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 35, 39-40, 42-43, 52, 56-63 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.15 Is your overall opinion of **[INSERT NAME, RANDOMIZE a-b, FOLLOWED BY c-d]** very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? How about **[NEXT NAME]**? **[IF NECESSARY: Just in general, is your overall opinion of [NAME] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?] [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]**

	-----Favorable-----			-----Unfavorable-----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
c. Joe Biden								
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	13	24	46	26	21	5	11
Sep 12-16, 2012	41	15	26	43	22	21	4	11
Jun 7-17, 2012	40	10	30	37	18	19	6	17
Jan 11-16, 2012	38	10	28	41	18	22	9	12
Oct 28-Nov 30, 2009	50	13	36	29	13	16	8	13
Mid-Apr 2009	51	14	37	28	10	18	8	13
Jan 2009	63	22	41	20	7	13	6	11
Mid-October, 2008	55	20	34	35	10	19	6	10
Early October, 2008 (callback)	61	20	41	30	10	20	1	8
Late September, 2008	49	15	34	30	10	20	8	13
Mid-September, 2008	48	14	34	30	11	19	8	14
April, 2006	28	7	21	20	5	15	38	14
Late October, 2005	21	4	17	20	6	14	43	16
September, 1987	22	4	18	15	4	11	25	38
d. Paul Ryan								
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	17	21	40	23	17	7	15
Sep 12-16, 2012	35	15	20	44	23	21	8	13

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

BASED ON LIKELY VOTERS [N=1,112]:

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
				No preference	Other party			
Oct 4-7, 2012	36	31	30	1	1	1	14	14
Sep 12-16, 2012	29	39	30	1	*	2	14	13

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1,201]:

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
				No preference	Other party			
Oct 4-7, 2012	33	32	31	1	1	1	14	14

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.) No	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>preference</u>	<u>party</u>			
Sep 12-16, 2012	28	37	31	1	*	2	14	13
Jul 16-26, 2012	25	38	33	2	1	2	15	12
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	27	36	34	1	*	2	15	15
Jun 7-17, 2012	28	35	35	1	*	1	17	14
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	28	35	31	2	*	3	13	12
Apr 4-15, 2012	28	34	35	1	*	1	16	12
Mar 7-11, 2012	28	38	31	1	1	1	15	14
Feb 8-12, 2012	32	34	31	1	*	1	13	15
Jan 11-16, 2012	24	33	38	2	*	2	17	14
Jan 4-8, 2012	31	32	32	3	*	2	15	12

BASED ON GENERAL PUBLIC:

				(VOL.) No	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>preference</u>	<u>party</u>			
Oct 4-7, 2012	27	31	36	3	1	3	15	15
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2	14	16
Jul 16-26, 2012	22	33	38	4	*	3	14	15
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	17
Jun 7-17, 2012	24	33	39	2	*	2	17	17
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	24	32	36	4	*	4	13	14
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	31	39	3	*	2	15	15
Mar 7-11, 2012	24	34	36	3	1	2	16	17
Feb 8-12, 2012	26	32	36	4	1	2	13	17
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2	17	16
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4	14	14
Yearly Totals								
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
October 4-7, 2012 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,006

QUESTIONS PEW.1, PEW.8-PEW.11, PEW.16-PEW.17 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS PEW.2-PEW.7, PEW.12, PEW.15

ASK ALL:

Next,

PEW.13 How likely is it that you will watch next week's vice-presidential debate between Paul Ryan and Joe Biden?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=812]:

Oct 4-7 <u>2012</u>		<i>Palin/Biden</i> <u>Sept 2008</u>	<i>Cheney/Edwards</i> <u>Early Oct 2004</u>
54	Very likely	69	41
23	Somewhat likely	14	29
22	Not likely	16	29
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	1

ASK ALL:

PEW.14 Regardless of which presidential candidate you support, who do you think will do the better job in the vice presidential debate **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=812]:

Oct 4-7 <u>2012</u>	
40	Paul Ryan
34	Joe Biden
3	Neither/Both (VOL.)
23	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)