



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
For The People & The Press

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2012

Democrats' Views Little Changed Since September

---

## Republicans Increasingly Positive About Campaign

---

**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](http://www.people-press.org)

---

## Democrats' Views Little Changed Since September Republicans Increasingly Positive About Campaign

Republicans express increasingly positive opinions about the presidential campaign and are now about as likely as Democrats to view the campaign as interesting and informative. In early September, shortly after the party conventions, far more Democrats than Republicans said the campaign was interesting and informative.

The new survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Oct. 18-21 among 1,005 adults, finds that 63% of the public says the campaign is interesting, while 28% say it is dull. Last month, 53% found the campaign interesting. From January through June, majorities said the campaign was dull, and no more than about four-in-ten found it interesting.

Over the past month, the increase in the percentage saying the campaign is interesting has come entirely among Republicans and independents. In the new survey, conducted before Monday's debate, 73% of Republicans say the campaign is interesting, up 23 points since early September and by far the highest percentage of the year. More independents also view the campaign as interesting (56% today, 45% in September).

The percentage of Democrats who say the campaign is interesting, which jumped 19 points between June and September, is unchanged since then (66%).

---

### More Republicans See Campaign as Interesting, Informative

<i>% saying campaign is ...</i>	<b>June</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Sept-Oct change</b>
<b>Interesting</b>	%	%	%	
Total	34	53	63	+10
Republican	33	50	73	+23
Democrat	45	66	66	0
Independent	27	45	56	+11
<b>Informative</b>				
Total	40	53	59	+6
Republican	39	49	69	+20
Democrat	48	68	65	-3
Independent	38	50	50	0
<b>Too negative</b>				
Total	53	51	55	+4
Republican	52	63	56	-7
Democrat	54	42	50	+8
Independent	55	56	59	+3
<b>Too long</b>				
Total	56	50	49	-1
Republican	57	62	42	-20
Democrat	53	43	49	+6
Independent	59	50	51	+1

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 18-21, 2012.

---

Compared with a month ago, far more Republicans also view the campaign informative (69% now, 49% then.). And substantially fewer say the campaign is “too long” than did so in September (42% now, 62% then). In fact, the percentage of Republicans who say the campaign is too long is now about as low as it was in January (49%) at the start of the GOP primaries.

Democrats’ and independents’ views about whether the campaign is informative and too long are little changed since September. On both measures, opinions among Democrats turned much more positive between June and September. (For more, see [“Democrats Now More Positive on Campaign 2012,”](#) Sept. 12, 2012.)

The new survey also finds no substantial partisan differences in opinions about whether the presidential campaign is too negative: 59% of independents, 56% of Republicans and 50% of Democrats say the campaign is too negative. A month ago, far more Republicans (63%) than Democrats (42%) said the campaign was too negative.

There is broad agreement that the presidential campaign is important: 86% say it is important compared with just 13% who say it is unimportant. Democrats (91%) and Republicans (90%) are more likely than independents (81%) to view the campaign as important.

### Comparisons to 2008

Overall, fewer Americans say the campaign is interesting than did so at a comparable point in the 2008 campaign (63% today, 71% in October 2008). But while the percentage saying the campaign is interesting has increased dramatically since earlier in the year, it peaked early in 2008 during the primaries (70% in February), fell in the spring, and then recovered in the fall.

### Fewer Democrats See Campaign as Interesting than in 2008

<i>% saying campaign is ...</i>	<b>Oct 2008</b>	<b>Oct 2012</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Interesting</b>	%	%	
Total	71	63	-8
Republican	70	73	+3
Democrat	80	66	-14
Independent	65	56	-9
<b>Informative</b>			
Total	63	59	-4
Republican	57	69	+12
Democrat	70	65	-5
Independent	61	50	-11
<b>Too negative</b>			
Total	55	55	0
Republican	47	56	+9
Democrat	62	50	-12
Independent	57	59	+2
<b>Too long</b>			
Total	57	49	-8
Republican	63	42	-19
Democrat	50	49	-1
Independent	61	51	-10

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 18-21, 2012.

Fewer Democrats (66%) say the campaign is interesting than did so in October 2008 (80%). By comparison, about the same percentage of Republicans finds the campaign is interesting as did four years ago (73% today, 70% then).

Overall opinions about other aspects of the campaign are only modestly changed from four years ago. But more Republicans say the campaign is informative than did so in October 2008 (69% now, 57% then), while fewer Republicans view the presidential campaign as too long (42% now, 63% then). Fewer Democrats (50%) see the campaign as too negative than did so in October 2008 (62%).

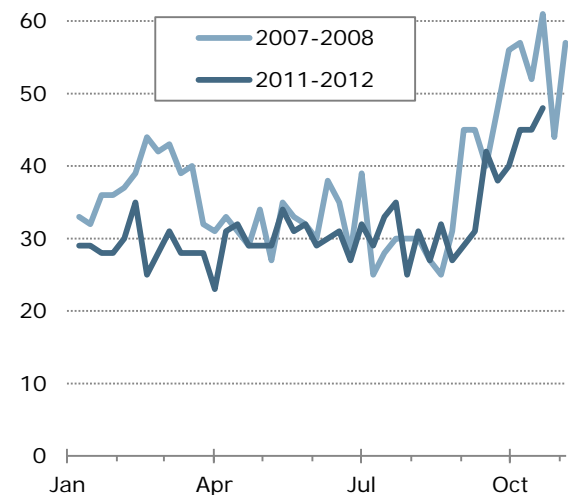
### Interest in Campaign News

Public interest in news about the campaign is lower than it was in October 2008. Currently 48% say they are following news about the election very closely. That is the highest percentage this year, though not significantly different from the previous two weeks, (45% in Oct. 12-14 and Oct. 4-7).

At a comparable point in mid-October 2008 (Oct. 17-20), 61% said they were following campaign very closely – the highest percentage of the campaign. Interest fell to 44% the following week, before rebounding to 57% the weekend before the election.

#### Campaign News Interest: 2008-2012

*% following campaign news very closely*



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 18-21, 2012.

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted October 18-21, 2012, among a national sample of 1,005 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (601 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 404 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 224 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:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,005	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	291	6.9 percentage points
Democrats	303	6.7 percentage points
Independents	350	6.3 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**  
**October 18-21, 2012 OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,005**

**PEW.1-PEW.2, PEW.3a-b, PEW.3d, PEW.8-PEW.9 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**NO QUESTIONS PEW.4, PEW.6-PEW.7**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.3 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE;] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
c. News about candidates for the 2012 presidential election					
October 18-21, 2012	48	28	12	11	1
October 12-14, 2012	45	26	13	14	1
October 4-7, 2012	45	23	15	17	*
September 27-30, 2012	40	30	14	14	1
September 20-23, 2012	38	29	16	17	*
September 13-16, 2012	42	25	18	15	1
September 7-9, 2012	31	31	18	19	1
August 31-September 3, 2012	29	29	20	20	1
August 23-26, 2012	27	31	19	22	1
August 16-19, 2012	32	27	19	22	1
August 9-12, 2012	27	27	21	24	1
August 2-5, 2012	31	25	19	23	1
July 26-29, 2012	25	28	21	25	1
July 19-22, 2012	35	22	17	25	1
July 12-15, 2012	33	24	20	23	*
July 5-8, 2012	29	26	20	25	*
June 28-July 1, 2012	32	24	19	25	*
June 21-24, 2012	27	30	17	25	1
June 14-17, 2012	31	30	15	24	*
June 7-10, 2012	30	29	16	25	1
May 31-June 3, 2012	29	28	19	23	1
May 24-27, 2012	32	28	16	24	1
May 17-20, 2012	31	26	19	23	*
May 10-13, 2012	34	23	18	24	*
May 3-6, 2012	29	27	19	24	*
April 26-29, 2012	29	29	18	23	1
April 19-22, 2012	29	29	20	20	1
April 12-15, 2012	32	28	16	23	1
April 5-8, 2012	31	27	18	23	*
March 29-April 1, 2012	23	29	21	27	*
March 22-25, 2012	28	28	18	25	1
March 15-18, 2012	28	31	17	24	*
March 8-11, 2012	28	27	21	23	*
March 1-4, 2012	31	24	20	24	1
February 23-26, 2012	28	29	18	24	1
February 16-20, 2012	25	29	19	25	2
February 9-12, 2012	35	25	18	20	1
February 2-5, 2012	30	27	20	21	1
January 26-29, 2012	28	30	21	21	1
January 19-22, 2012	28	30	17	24	*
January 12-15, 2012	29	29	18	23	1
January 5-8, 2012	29	30	16	25	*
December 15-18, 2011	26	24	20	29	1

## PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
December 8-11, 2011	27	27	18	28	*
December 1-4, 2011	25	28	20	26	1
November 17-20, 2011	24	31	21	23	1
November 3-6, 2011	22	31	20	26	1
October 27-30, 2011	21	26	21	30	1
October 20-23, 2011	21	28	22	28	1
October 13-16, 2011	26	29	22	23	1
October 6-9, 2011	25	25	23	27	1
September 29-October 2, 2011	27	26	21	25	*
September 22-25, 2011	25	26	23	25	1
September 15-18, 2011	24	28	21	27	1
September 8-11, 2011	22	26	21	31	*
September 1-4, 2011	22	23	22	32	1
August 25-28, 2011	22	22	22	33	1
August 18-21, 2011	27	26	19	28	1
August 11-14, 2011	19	24	20	36	1
August 4-7, 2011	18	21	22	37	1
July 28-31, 2011	17	27	21	35	1
July 21-24, 2011	17	22	28	32	*
July 14-17, 2011	18	26	27	28	1
July 7-10, 2011	16	23	27	33	1
June 30-July 3, 2011	21	28	24	25	2
June 23-26, 2011	19	26	24	31	*
June 16-19, 2011	23	29	23	25	*
June 9-12, 2011	18	30	22	30	1
June 2-5, 2011	21	31	22	26	*
May 26-29, 2011	20	27	24	28	*
May 19-22, 2011	15	27	24	32	1
May 12-15, 2011	15	22	26	35	1
May 5-8, 2011	16	24	27	32	1
April 21-25, 2011	18	26	23	32	1
April 14-17, 2011	20	23	29	27	1
March 24-27, 2011	13	19	26	41	1
March 10-13, 2011	15	21	26	38	0
February 10-13, 2011	16	19	24	40	*
February 3-6, 2011	15	20	23	42	*

[SEE TRENDS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS:](http://www.people-press.org/files/2011/11/NII-Election-Trends.pdf) <http://www.people-press.org/files/2011/11/NII-Election-Trends.pdf>

## ASK ALL:

PEW.5 Overall, how would you describe the presidential election campaign so far – is it **[READ ITEM a. FIRST, THEN RANDOMIZE ITEMS b. THRU e.]**

a.	<u>Interesting</u>	<u>Dull</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Neither</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
October 18-21, 2012	63	28	5	4
September 7-9, 2012	53	37	5	6
June 21-24, 2012	34	56	4	5
March 22-25, 2012	38	52	4	7
January 12-15, 2012	36	55	3	5
October 20-23, 2011	35	51	4	10
October 10-13, 2008	71	25	3	1
September 12-15, 2008	68	26	5	1
April 18-21, 2008	59	35	5	1
February 15-18, 2008	70	25	4	1
October 12-15, 2007	37	55	5	3
April, 2007	34	52	6	8
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	66	28	5	1
Early September, 2004 (RV)	50	42	6	2
June, 2004	33	57	4	6

## PEW.5 CONTINUED...

	<u>Interesting</u>	<u>Dull</u>	(VOL.) <u>Neither</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
June, 2000	28	65	4	3
July, 1996	21	73	3	3
	<u>Too negative</u>	<u>Not too negative</u>	(VOL.) <u>Neither</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
b.				
October 18-21, 2012	55	37	3	5
September 7-9, 2012	51	39	3	6
June 21-24, 2012	53	37	3	8
March 22-25, 2012	52	34	3	11
January 12-15, 2012	50	41	1	7
October 20-23, 2011	44	41	4	11
October 10-13, 2008	55	41	3	1
September 12-15, 2008	43	51	4	2
April 18-21, 2008	50	44	4	2
February 15-18, 2008	28	66	3	3
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	57	38	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	62	32	1	5
June, 2004	45	46	2	7
Mid-March, 2004	47	47	2	4
	<u>Informative</u>	<u>Not informative</u>	(VOL.) <u>Neither</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
c.				
October 18-21, 2012	59	34	2	4
September 7-9, 2012	53	39	2	6
June 21-24, 2012	40	52	1	6
March 22-25, 2012	40	50	1	8
January 12-15, 2012	48	45	2	6
October 20-23, 2011	40	49	2	9
October 10-13, 2008	63	34	2	1
September 12-15, 2008	54	41	3	2
February 15-18, 2008	65	31	2	2
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	73	22	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	63	33	1	3
June, 2004	48	46	2	4
Mid-March, 2004	53	42	2	3
	<u>Too long</u>	<u>Not too long</u>	(VOL.) <u>Neither</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
d.				
October 18-21, 2012	49	43	4	3
September 7-9, 2012	50	41	3	6
June 21-24, 2012	56	35	2	7
March 22-25, 2012	58	31	3	8
January 12-15, 2012	57	35	2	6
October 20-23, 2011	50	39	2	9
October 10-13, 2008	57	39	3	1
April 18-21, 2008	65	29	5	1
February 15-18, 2008	57	40	*	3
October 12-15, 2007	66	28	3	3
April, 2007	59	32	3	6
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	51	43	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	53	42	2	3
June, 2004	52	42	2	4
Mid-March, 2004	52	44	1	3
	<u>Important</u>	<u>Unimportant</u>	(VOL.) <u>Neither</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
e.				
October 18-21, 2012	86	13	*	1
June 21-24, 2012	79	19	*	1
January 12-15, 2012	74	23	1	2



**PEW.5 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Important</u>	<u>Unimportant</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Neither</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
February 15-18, 2008	90	10	*	*
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	96	3	1	*
Early September, 2004 (RV)	90	9	*	1
June, 2004	79	18	1	2
Mid-March, 2004	81	17	1	1