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Obama 50%-Romney 47%

Obama Gains Edge in Campaign's Final Days

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Obama Gains Edge in Campaign's Final Days

Barack Obama has edged ahead of Mitt Romney in the final days of the presidential campaign. In the Pew Research Center's election weekend survey, Obama holds a 48% to 45% lead over Romney among likely voters.

The survey finds that Obama maintains his modest lead when the probable decisions of undecided voters are taken into account. Our final estimate of the national popular vote is Obama 50% and Romney 47%, when the undecided vote is allocated based on several indicators and opinions.

Obama Slightly Ahead, But Race Is Still Close

| | Sept 12-16 | Oct 4-7 | Oct 24-28 | Oct 31- Nov 3 | Estimate w/ undecideds allocated |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--|
| Likely voters* | % | % | % | % | % |
| Obama | 51 | 45 | 47 | 48 | 50 |
| Romney | 43 | 49 | 47 | 45 | 47 |
| Other | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| DK/Refused | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | -- |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| N | 2,192 | 1,112 | 1,495 | 2,709 | |
| Registered voters | | | | | |
| Obama | 51 | 46 | 47 | 49 | |
| Romney | 42 | 46 | 45 | 42 | |
| Other | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | |
| DK/Refused | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | |
| N | 2,424 | 1,201 | 1,678 | 3,151 | |

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2012.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

* Based on nine-question turnout scale and assumes 58% of the voting population will cast a vote.

A week ago the race was deadlocked, with each candidate drawing support from 47% of the likely electorate. Interviewing for the final pre-election survey was conducted Oct. 31-Nov. 3 among 2,709 likely voters. The previous survey was conducted Oct. 24-28, before Hurricane Sandy made landfall along the East Coast.

Obama's handling of the storm's aftermath may have contributed to his improved showing.

Fully 69% of all likely voters approve of the way Obama is handling the storm's impact. Even a plurality of Romney supporters (46%) approve of Obama's handling of the situation; more important, so too do 63% of swing voters.

Voter turnout, which may be lower than in 2008 and 2004, remains one of Romney's strengths. Romney's supporters continue to be more engaged in the election and interested in election news than Obama supporters, and are more committed to voting.

The survey also indicates that voters in the nine battleground states are as closely divided as the national electorate: 49% of likely voters in battleground states support Obama while 47% back Romney.

There are many good signs in the poll for Obama. He has regained much of the ground he lost following his lackluster performance in the first presidential debate. In mid-September, Obama led Romney by eight points among likely voters, but in early October, shortly after the debate, he trailed by four points.

Romney Supporters More Engaged, Certain to Vote

| | Sept 12-16 | Oct 4-7 | Oct 24-28 | Oct 31- Nov 3 |
|---|---------------|------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Given a lot of thought to the election | % | % | % | % |
| All voters | 70 | 73 | 78 | 81 |
| Romney supporters | 73 | 82 | 82 | 87 |
| Obama supporters | 69 | 67 | 78 | 79 |
| | R+4 | R+15 | R+4 | R+8 |
| Following campaign news very closely | | | | |
| All voters | 44 | 47 | 61 | 55 |
| Romney supporters | 44 | 53 | 66 | 61 |
| Obama supporters | 46 | 44 | 60 | 54 |
| | O+2 | R+9 | R+6 | R+7 |
| Definitely plan to vote | | | | |
| All voters | 84 | 85 | 84 | 88 |
| Romney supporters | 86 | 90 | 88 | 92 |
| Obama supporters | 84 | 83 | 83 | 86 |
| | R+2 | R+7 | R+5 | R+6 |

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2012. THOUGHT, CAMPNII & SCALE10. Based on registered voters.

Battleground States Divided

| | All likely voters | Blue States | Red States | Battleground States |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|---------------------|
| <i>Vote preference ...</i> | % | % | % | % |
| Obama | 48 | 54 | 38 | 49 |
| Romney | 45 | 36 | 54 | 47 |
| Other/Don't know | <u>7</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>5</u> |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| N | 2709 | 1228 | 888 | 708 |

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 31-Nov.3, 2012. Based on likely voters. Battleground states: CO, FL, IA, NC, NV, NH, OH, VA, WI. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Nearly four-in-ten (39%) likely voters support Obama strongly, while 9% back him only moderately. A third of likely voters support Romney strongly, compared with 11% who back him moderately. In past elections, dating to 1960, the candidate with the higher percentage of strong support has usually gone on to win the popular vote.

Similarly, a much greater percentage of Obama supporters than Romney supporters are voting *for* him rather than *against* his opponent (80% for Obama vs. 60% for Romney), another historical indicator of likely victory. And far more registered voters expect an Obama victory than a Romney victory on Nov. 6 (52% vs. 30%).

Obama's increases in likely voter support are most notable among women, older voters, and political moderates. Women now favor Obama by a 13-point margin (53% to 40%), up from six points a week ago and reflecting a shift toward Obama since early October. Right after the first presidential debate, the women's vote was split evenly (47% each). Men, by comparison, favor Romney by a 50% to 42% margin, with little change in the past month.

Romney continues to lead among voters age 65 and older, by a nine point margin (51% to 42%) in the current survey. But that is only about half of the 19-point lead he held among seniors just a week ago. Political moderates now favor Obama by 21 points (56%-35%).

Most Expect Obama Victory

Who is most likely to win the election?

| | Mar | June | Sept | Oct | Nov |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <i>All Voters</i> | % | % | % | % | % |
| Obama | 59 | 52 | 53 | 49 | 52 |
| Romney | 32 | 34 | 24 | 31 | 30 |
| Other/ Don't know | <u>9</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>23</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>18</u> |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| <i>Among Obama Supporters</i> | | | | | |
| Obama | 86 | 81 | 82 | 82 | 83 |
| Romney | 8 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Other/ Don't know | <u>6</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>14</u> |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| <i>Among Romney Supporters</i> | | | | | |
| Obama | 26 | 21 | 22 | 17 | 16 |
| Romney | 64 | 63 | 53 | 64 | 66 |
| Other/ Don't know | <u>10</u> | <u>16</u> | <u>26</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>18</u> |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2012. Q15.
Based on registered voters.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Another notable gain for Obama, perhaps reflecting Hurricane Sandy's effect on the race, comes in a region he was already secure in: the Northeast. He has increased his lead over Romney from nine points (52%-43%) to 21 points (56%-35%) there over just the past week. While the storm's impact on many parts of the Northeast has been substantial, an analysis of the polling data shows no substantial underrepresentation of voters in the most heavily affected counties.

Early voting makes up a large share of votes cast, but there is no sign that they are breaking decisively toward either candidate. Among the 34% of likely voters say they have already cast their ballot, 48% say they supported Obama, 46% Romney. That is roughly the same margin as among likely voters who plan to vote on Election Day (47% Obama, 45% Romney).

Strength of Candidate Support: 1960-2012

| | | Strong | Not strong | Total |
|-------------|-----------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | % | % | % |
| 2012 | Romney | 33 | 11 | 45 |
| | Obama | 39 | 9 | 48 |
| 2008 | McCain | 24 | 18 | 42 |
| | Obama | 36 | 13 | 49 |
| 2004 | Bush | 39 | 9 | 48 |
| | Kerry | 32 | 13 | 45 |
| 2000 | Bush | 32 | 14 | 46 |
| | Gore | 26 | 17 | 43 |
| 1996 | Dole | 20 | 18 | 38 |
| | Clinton | 29 | 23 | 52 |
| 1988 | Bush | 27 | 26 | 53 |
| | Dukakis | 22 | 19 | 41 |
| 1984 | Reagan | 39 | 18 | 57 |
| | Mondale | 25 | 14 | 39 |
| 1980 | Reagan | 25 | 22 | 47 |
| | Carter | 20 | 24 | 44 |
| 1976 | Ford | 26 | 23 | 49 |
| | Carter | 26 | 22 | 48 |
| 1972 | Nixon | 41 | 20 | 61 |
| | McGovern | 19 | 16 | 35 |
| 1968 | Nixon | 25 | 17 | 42 |
| | Humphrey | 22 | 18 | 40 |
| 1964 | Goldwater | 15 | 14 | 29 |
| | Johnson | 42 | 22 | 64 |
| 1960 | Nixon | 35 | 13 | 48 |
| | Kennedy | 33 | 16 | 49 |

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2012. Based on likely voters. All measures from pre-election or late October surveys. Gallup Poll findings 1960-1988.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted October 31–November 3, 2012, among a national sample of 3,815 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (2,262 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,553 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 784 who had no landline telephone). Data collection was managed by Princeton Survey Research Associates International and conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source and Abt SRBI. 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, population density to parameters from the 2010 Census. The sample also is weighted to match respondents' reported 2008 presidential vote to the average of previous Pew Research Center surveys conducted between March 2011 and October 2012.¹ 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 | 3,815 | 1.8 percentage points |
| Registered voters | 3,151 | 2.0 percentage points |
| Likely voters | 2,709 | 2.2 percentage points |
| <i>Among registered voters</i> | | |
| Obama supporters | 1,552 | 2.9 percentage points |
| Romney supporters | 1,343 | 3.1 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.

¹ Updated May 15, 2013: This sentence was not in the standard methodology statement published on Nov. 4, 2012.

Likely Voter Scale

Likely voter estimates are based on a 9-item turnout scale that includes the following questions: thought, campnii, precinct, oftvote, where, plan1/plan3, folgov, pvote08a and scale10. The turnout estimate used in identifying likely voters is 58%. More details about the Pew Research Center's methodology for estimating likelihood to vote are available at <http://www.people-press.org/files/2011/01/UnderstandingLikelyVoters.pdf>.

Battleground States

Battleground states were identified using ratings for each state from: The Cook Political Report, MSNBC, The New York Times, Real Clear Politics, Karl Rove, CNN, Pollster.com, and the Washington Post. The ratings by these different groups yield 9 battleground states (rated as tossup or lean Republican or Democrat) and 42 safe states, including Washington, D.C. Battleground states are: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia and Wisconsin. Solid or likely Republican states are: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming. Solid or likely Democratic states are: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Washington D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

Hurricane Sandy

The poll was conducted in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, which affected a large area of the Northeastern coastal region of the United States. To assess the potential impact of the storm damage on the representativeness of the poll's results, respondents living in counties judged to be highly affected were grouped into one stratum. The assignment of counties was based on a combination of ratings of storm impact from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and reports of the percentage of households without power in each county. Pew Research polling over the course of 2012 prior to the storm found that an average of 5.7% of interviews (on an unweighted basis) were obtained from counties affected by the storm. In the current poll, 5.8% of respondents interviewed live in the affected counties.

Sample Composition

The following table shows the profile of all adults interviewed, compared with population parameters from government surveys, as well as the profile of registered and likely voters interviewed.

| Group | Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 Political Weighted | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Population Parameter | General Public | Registered Voters | Likely Voters |
| <u>Gender</u> | % | % | % | % |
| Men | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 |
| Women | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | |
| 18-24 | 13 | 13 | 9 | 7 |
| 25-34 | 18 | 17 | 15 | 15 |
| 35-44 | 17 | 16 | 16 | 15 |
| 45-54 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 55-64 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 19 |
| 65+ | 17 | 17 | 19 | 20 |
| <u>Education</u> | | | | |
| College grad + | 28 | 29 | 34 | 37 |
| Some college | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 |
| High school or less | 44 | 41 | 35 | 32 |
| <u>Race/Ethnicity</u> | | | | |
| White non-Hispanic | 68 | 67 | 72 | 74 |
| Black non-Hispanic | 12 | 11 | 12 | 12 |
| Hispanic | 14 | 13 | 8 | 7 |
| Other non-Hispanic | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| <u>Region</u> | | | | |
| Northeast | 18 | 19 | 19 | 18 |
| Midwest | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 |
| South | 37 | 37 | 37 | 37 |
| West | 23 | 22 | 21 | 21 |
| <u>Phone use</u> | | | | |
| Landline only | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Dual – landline and cell | 58 | 58 | 64 | 68 |
| Cell phone only | 35 | 33 | 27 | 25 |
| Unweighted N | -- | 3,815 | 3,151 | 2,709 |

Population parameters for all adults from the March 2011 Current Population Survey except phoneuse, which is based on projections from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. All figures are based on weighted data. Don't know responses for the current survey are not shown. Whites, blacks and other race are non-Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.