# ELECTIONS MANDATES UPDATES

## NARROW OBAMA WIN NOW UNIQUENESS

**Obama Slightly Ahead Now**

**Trinko 12** (Katrina, National Review reporter & member of USA Today's Board of Contributors, The National Review, “Obama Ahead By Six Points” 6/24/12 <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/312192/obama-ahead-six-points-nationally-katrina-trinko>)

**The new NBC/Wall Street Journal poll shows 49 percent of voters supporting Barack Obama and 43 percent Mitt Romney**. Among those polled, 44 percent were Democrats or leaned toward being Democrats, while 35 percent were or leaned Republican. **In voters hailing from the twelve battleground states, Obama had an 8-point lead, 49 percent to 41 percent**. ¶ **Neither candidate is having a field day** in likeability, reports NBC:¶ But what did change was an increase in negative views about both Obama and Romney. The president’s favorable/unfavorable score in the poll is 49 percent to 43 percent, a slight change from June when it was 47 percent to 38 percent.¶ Moreover, 33 percent view Obama very positively, while 32 percent view him very negatively – which is his highest “very negative” number in poll.¶ By comparison, Romney’s overall favorable/unfavorable score is 35 percent to 40 percent, with 24 percent viewing him “very” negatively – also his highest mark here.¶ In fact, Romney would be the first GOP presumptive presidential nominee since 1996 to head into his nominating convention with a net-negative favorable/unfavorable score.¶

**Narrow Obama Lead, Romney Closing In**

**Silver 12** (Nate, American statistician, sabermetrician, psephologist, and writer, created the FiveThirtyEight political blog, which now appears in The Times, 8/3/12, The New York Times “A Good Week For Obama” <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/03/aug-3-a-good-week-for-obama-in-forecast/>

**The past week of polling and economic data** was relatively newsworthy by our forecast model’s standards, and most of the news **was good for President Obama**.¶ On Tuesday, Mr. Obama was helped in the forecast by a report showing an increase in personal income — one of the economic variables that the forecast model uses, and a reasonably good predictor of voter preferences in past elections. On Wednesday, he polled strongly in a number of swing states. And on Friday, Mr. Obama got a respectable — although by no means wonderful — employment report, which estimated that 163,000 jobs were created in July.¶ The forecast model uses the jobs number directly in its forecast. It also incorporates the S&P 500 index, which was up sharply on Friday — partly on the jobs news and partly because investors were in a better mood about the situation in Europe. Mr. Obama’s probability of winning the Electoral College increased slightly on the economic news, to 71.1 percent from 70.2 percent.¶ Mr. **Obama’s lead in the popular vote is quite narrow: the forecast projects him to win 50.7 percent of the vote, against 48.3 percent for Mitt Romney.** (Interestingly, this is the exact margin by which George W. Bush defeated John Kerry in 2004.) Mr. Obama has some chance of winning the Electoral College despite losing the popular vote — but the reverse outcome is less likely.¶ Meanwhile, the comparatively encouraging economic reports of the past week make it less likely that there is another shoe to drop on Mr. Obama in the form of a further economic downturn. The economy is bad enough as it is, but voters in past elections have judged incumbents by the amount of progress in the economy, rather than how productive it is in an absolute sense.¶ So far, Mr. **Obama seems to have persuaded a slim plurality of voters that there are enough hopeful signs to warrant another term for him**. Mr. **Romney still has plenty of ammunition to make the counterargument**, but the flow of economic data this week made it a little harder for him.

**Obama Leading, But Election Still Up For Grabs**

**Joseph 12** (Cameron, staff reporter for National Journal, where he covers politics. He has filled many roles at the National Journal Group, The Hill, 7/29/12 “Election Up For Grabs With 100 Days To Go” <http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/240869-election-up-for-grabs-with-100-days-to-go>

With 100 days until the 2012 election, President Obama has a tenuous lead, but the struggling economy hurts his bid for a second term.¶ **Obama leads Mitt Romney by a narrow margin in most national polls, and has a slightly wider lead in most swing states**, giving Romney little room for error. But while Obama continues to lead Romney in personal likability — a major asset — there are few signs that Obama’s sustained summer attack on Romney’s business background has changed the contours of the race.¶ The president, Romney and their allies have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on advertising since the general election campaign officially began, though neither side has been able to move the needle much.¶ Polls have been remarkably unchanged during that period. Obama leads Romney by slightly more than one percentage point nationally, according to Real Clear Politics’ average of the national polls. That is nearly identical to where the polls had the race three months ago.¶ **In the swing states Obama has continued to hold a slight lead**, and there is little hard evidence that the heavy spending by both sides has changed many voters’ minds.¶ The three swing states that have seen the most advertising by both sides are Florida, Ohio and Virginia — **states Romney likely needs to sweep to win the presidency**. At the beginning of May, Obama held a narrow lead in most polls in Virginia, a slightly wider one in Ohio, and the two were tied in Florida. Months later, the same is true in each state.¶ Obama’s reelection campaign suffers from a weak economy. Polls show Romney leads the president when voters are asked who they think would do a better job on that key issue.¶ More from The Hill:¶ ♦ Conservative group hits GOP over farm bill energy subsidies¶ ♦ Pelosi warns against complacency in fighting AIDS¶ ♦ Hill Poll: Voters say Romney, Obama equal on character issues¶ ♦ House bill would fire federal workers who don't pay their taxes¶ ♦ Cantor: Pelosi’s remark on Jewish Republicans ‘deeply insulting’¶ ♦ Cheney: Obama worse than Jimmy Carter ¶ ♦ Federal court allows company to ignore birth-control mandate¶ ♦ GOP fears ex-lawmaker’s run will help Obama win Virginia¶ The president got more bad news on Friday, with the announcement that growth in the Gross Domestic Product slowed to 1.5 percent in the last three months.¶ Despite voters’ worries about the economy, they continue to give Obama the edge on personal popularity. In a recent NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, Obama led Romney by 20 points on the question of whether voters liked each of them on an individual level. Two thirds said they liked Obama, whether or not they disagreed with his policies, while just 47 percent said the same about Romney.¶ Just 35 percent of voters held a positive opinion of Romney overall, with 40 percent negative, while 49 percent had positive opinions of Obama and 43 percent felt negatively about him. Both candidates saw slight upticks in their negative numbers since the ad onslaught began.¶ While polling in many swing states has been limited, there has been no direct evidence that Obama’s attacks on Romney’s tenure at Bain Capital have significantly wounded Romney. Barely over one-third of voters nationally had an opinion of the company in the NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, and there have been few signs of momentum in the swing states for either candidate.¶ Though Obama and his allies outspent Romney and his allies on advertising in June, the former Massachusetts governor and outside GOP groups have kept pace in July. They have also spent more on election ads in the aggregate — and are likely to hold the upper hand in the final 100 days.¶ Romney and the Republican National Committee (RNC) had $112 million in the bank at the end of June after out-raising Obama and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) for the month. Although Obama and the DNC continued to lead with $135 million in the bank, the pro-Romney super-PACs and outside groups have much more money than those supporting Obama and will more than even the playing field in the fall.

**Obama Ahead By the Slimmest Of Margins, Any Mistake Is Detrimental**

**Huey-Burns** (Caitlin is a reporter for Real Clear Politics, 7/12/12, Real Clear Politics, “Obama Holds A Slim Lead In The National Polls” <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/07/11/obama_holds_slim_lead_over_romney_in_national_poll.html>

 **Barack Obama edges Mitt Romney by three points nationwide**, according to a new poll that finds unmarried voters fueling the president's lead.¶ Obama attracts 46 percent of registered voters to Romney's 43 percent, a Quinnipiac University poll released Wednesday shows. Both win ample support from their respective bases, but Romney edges Obama 43 percent to 41 percent among independent voters. In a Quinnipiac poll released in April, Obama led by four points.¶ While there have been questions during the 2012 campaign about how Romney might fare among women in November, the pollsters find the marriage gap to be larger than the gender gap.¶ For example, the president leads, 51 percent to 39 percent, among women, while Romney leads, 47-40, among men. But Obama leads, 54 percent to 34 percent, among unmarried voters, while Romney leads, 51 percent to 38 percent, among married voters. The president leads by nine points among unmarried men and 29 points among unmarried women. Romney leads by 19 points among married men, and seven points among married women.¶ The gap may be reflective of the differing economic conditions married versus unmarried voters experience, the pollsters suggest.¶ "Married people are more likely to be older, more financially secure and more socially conservative than unmarried voters. The married column includes more Republicans and more white voters,” said Peter Brown, assistant director for the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute, in a statement released with the results. "Married voters are more likely to focus on the economy and health care, while single voters are more focused on issues such as gay rights and reproductive issues.”¶ Still, **voters overall disapprove of the way the president is handling the economy by a 55 percent to 40 percent margin. But they are split over which candidate would do a better job on the issue**: 45 percent say Obama while 46 percent say Romney. Forty-seven percent of voters say Romney would better handle their personal economic futures while 44 percent say the president would do a better job. **Half of the voters surveyed find Obama’s economic plans unfavorable, while 44 percent have a favorable view. But the numbers are similar for Romney:** 46 percent to 40 percent have an unfavorable view of his plans for the economy.¶ The demographic data presented in this poll reflects national trends. Obama holds a 29-point leads among Hispanic voters, and wins over black voters with 92 percent of the support. Romney leads among white voters by 13 points. College educated white voters are split, with 46 percent supporting Obama and 47 percent backing Romney, but whites without a college degree go for Romney over the president by a 20-point margin.¶ Quinnipiac University surveyed 2,722 registered voters from July 1-8. The sampling error is plus or minus 1.9 percentage points.

## NARROW ROMNEY WIN NOW UNIQUENESS

**Romney Leads Obama By A Narrow Margin**

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The **Rasmussen Reports daily** Presidential Tracking Poll for Saturday **shows Mitt Romney attracting 46% of the vote, while President Obama earns support from 44%.** Six percent (6%) prefer some other candidate, and four percent (4%) are undecided.¶ The president continues to lead in the [Rasmussen Reports Electoral College Projections](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/archive/2012_electoral_college_scoreboard).¶ Matchup results are updated daily at 9:30 a.m. Eastern (sign up for free [daily e-mail update](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/daily_updates)). See [tracking history](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/archive/2012_presidential_election_matchups2).¶ In his weekly newspaper column, Scott Rasmussen notes that “[Americans have come to view the government as a burden that is weighing down the economy and the nation](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/political_commentary/commentary_by_scott_rasmussen/the_heavy_burden_of_government) ... Too many politicians, from both political parties, believe the government’s job is to run the country. A healthier view is to recognize that our government was designed to play a support role rather than take the lead.” In his book, [In Search of Self-Governance](http://www.amazon.com/In-Search-Self-Governance-Scott-Rasmussen/dp/1449593542), Scott wrote that “the American people do not want to be governed from the left, the right, or the center. They want to govern themselves.”¶ If you’d like Scott to speak to your organization, meeting, or conference, please contact [Premiere Speakers.](http://premierespeakers.com/scott_rasmussen)¶ The [Indiana Senate race](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/elections/election_2012/election_2012_senate_elections/indiana/election_2012_indiana_senate) remains a Toss-Up despite the state’s strong Republican tendencies. Still, the [Rasmussen Reports Senate Balance of Power](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/archive/2012_senate_balance_of_power) ratings suggest that the Republicans are likely to end up with 48 Senate seats while the Democrats are likely to have 47. Five races are pure Toss-Ups.¶ [There are three times as many fiscal conservatives as fiscal liberals in America](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/july_2012/28_conservative_on_both_fiscal_social_issues). The number of social conservatives and social liberals is much closer to even. Overall, 28% are both fiscal and social conservatives. Sixteen percent (16%) are moderates in both areas; 13% are fiscal moderates, social liberals; 12% are both fiscal and social liberals; and 10% are fiscal conservatives but social moderates.

**Romney Slightly Ahead In Polls Now**

**Montopoli 12** ( CBS Senior Political Reporter, 7/18/12 CBS Political Hot Sheet, Obama Romney In Dead Heat

<http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-57475178-503544/obama-romney-in-dead-heat-in-presidential-race/?tag=contentMain;contentBody>

**Forty-seven percent of registered voters nationwide who lean towards a candidate back Romney, while 46 percent support the president**. Four percent are undecided. The 1 percentage point difference is within the survey's three-point margin of error.¶ Romney leads by eight points among men; the president leads by five points among women. ¶ The president's supporters are more likely to strongly back their candidate. Fifty-two percent strongly favor Mr. Obama, while just 29 percent of Romney voters strongly back the presumptive Republican nominee. ¶ More than one in three Romney voters say they are supporting Romney primarily because they dislike Mr. Obama. Only eight percent of Obama supporters say their support for the president is tied to their dislike of Romney.¶ Republicans are more enthusiastic than Democrats when it comes to voting in this election, though just one in three registered voters overall are more enthusiastic than they were in the past. Roughly half of Republicans say they are more enthusiastic compared to past elections - up from 36 percent in March - while just 27 percent of Democrats say they same.¶ One in five registered voters with a candidate choice said they still might change their mind. The percentage of those willing to switch was essentially the same for both candidates.¶ Forty-five percent of registered voters say they are paying close attention to the campaign, and another 38 percent say they are paying some attention. Seventeen percent say they are paying little or no attention.¶ **Fifty-four percent of registered voters cite the economy and jobs as "extremely" important in their presidential vote, more than any other issue. Here Romney has the edge: 49 percent of registered voters say he would do a better job handling the economy and jobs**, while 41 percent cite Mr. Obama.¶ Romney is also seen as better on the federal budget deficit (50 percent to 36 percent), taxes (47 percent to 42 percent) and illegal immigration (46 percent to 38 percent). Mr. Obama as seen as better on foreign policy (47 percent to 40 percent) and social issues (48 percent to 37 percent). Views of the candidates on health care and terrorism were split.¶ Thirty-eight percent of registered voters say Mr. Obama cares a lot about their needs and problems, compared to 25 percent who say the same of Romney. Registered voters were slightly more likely to say that Mr. Obama says what he believes (45 percent) than to say that Romney says what he believes (37 percent).¶ Only 28 percent believe Mr. Obama has fulfilled his promise to deliver positive change for the country. Fifty-eight percent say he has not delivered change, while 7 percent say he has delivered change that has been bad for the country.¶ Mr. Obama's overall approval rating stands at 44 percent, with 46 percent disapproving. His approval rating on the economy is just 39 percent - 55 percent disapprove - and his approval rating on foreign policy is 41 percent. His approval rating on the economy has dropped five points since April.¶ Both candidates have net unfavorable ratings. Forty-eight percent of registered voters view the president unfavorably, while 36 percent view him favorably. Romney is viewed unfavorably by 36 percent and favorably by 32 percent. Nearly one in three say they do not yet have an opinion about the presumptive Republican nominee.¶ Seven in 10 Americans say the economy is in bad shape. While 24 percent say it is getting better - down from 33 percent in April - 30 percent say it is getting worse. That marks the highest percentage who say the economy is getting worse since December. ¶ Two in five Americans say they are very concerned someone in their household will lose their job.

**Romney Predicted To Win Now**

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The question in November is how many voters will accept Obama's warped message of resignation and resentment—how many will be like Ron Brownstein's swing voters—and how many will be repulsed by it. That, in turn, will depend on what Mitt Romney does to fight back, not just against the details of the negative attacks on him, but against the world view behind them.¶ When it comes to his record and his biography, I suspect that Mitt Romney has not yet begun to fight, and that is the other big development I'm predicting for the final months of the general election.¶ I have been speculating for some time—and others have begun to say the same thing—that Romney's election strategy can be described as "rope-a-dope." This was a sports reporter's coinage for Muhammad Ali's strategy in the famous 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" against George Foreman. Foreman was a large man known as a hard hitter, so Ali's strategy was to goad Foreman into throwing a frenzy of punches while Ali adopted a protective position and leaned against the ropes so they would help absorb the energy of the blows. Foreman fell for it and punched away in a fury, tiring himself out in the early rounds only to find himself fatigued while Ali was still fresh. Ali dominated the later rounds and knocked Foreman down long enough for the referee to call him out.¶ The analogy here is that **Romney is letting the Obama campaign punch itself out, spending like crazy on a blitz of negative advertising early on, before swing voters have made up their minds** or even paid much attention to the race. Meanwhile, Romney has been holding his fire and money, saving it for when it will really count.¶ Why is the Obama campaign falling for this? Because they have no other option. Here we have to refer back to the established rules of the horse-race analysis. When a president is running for re-election, it is inherently a referendum on the incumbent, so if his approval ratings are below 50%, he's in trouble. If a majority disapproves of his performance, that means they are going to be likely to cast their votes for the challenger. Obama is below 50% now. He's been around 47% in the RealClearPolitics average for a long time now, and since some of the polls tend to overestimate support for Democrats, the real number is probably a few points lower.¶ But this just means that voters are willing to consider the challenger, and you can still convince them to stop considering him. Which means that an embattled incumbent has only one way to win: convince voters that the challenger is not an acceptable alternative.¶ Hence the negative campaign against Romney. He needs to be made out as a corporate Snidely Whiplash who lays off workers, outsources their jobs to China, hides his profits in Swiss bank accounts, and lies about it to cover it all up. So that is exactly the story Obama's negative ads have been trying to tell. The attack ad in which Romney ties the girl to the railroad tracks is coming next.¶ There is no evidence that these negative ads have worked so far—the variation in the candidates' RCP poll averages has been within the range of static for at least a month—so the Obama campaign is turning the volume up to eleven. They have poured $100 million into advertising in swing states over the past month, three-quarters of which has gone into negative ads. And they have increased the seriousness of the accusations, to the point of hinting that Romney might be a felon.¶ But there is a big problem with dumping all these negative ads so early. If you bring up a charge in May or June, the Romney campaign and dozens of commentators and bloggers will have time to refute the attacks, or at least come up with convincing attempts to explain them away. You also run the risk of over-reaching—as in the Romney felony charge—and creating a story, not about Romney's wrongdoing, but about your campaign's unfair attacks. But most of all, these charges become "old news," so when the Obama campaign tries to bring them up again in October, once everyone is finally paying attention, the charges lose their impact because the press and the pundits have already heard it before. This business is called "news" for a reason, because it moves forward on things that are new.¶ So why has the Obama campaign launched their attack on Romney so early and allowed it to become so vicious? I think they realize that they are running out of time. If they don't "define" Romney in hopelessly negative terms now—and by "now," I mean now—the game is over. While I've been using the rope-a-dope analogy, Washington Post blogger Jennifer Rubin has come up with a somewhat grander analogy. Here is her description of Obama's strategy.¶ "Extend the Republican primary by running ads hitting Romney and encouraging Democrats to vote against Romney in Michigan and elsewhere. Then, before Romney could fully get his bearings, unload a barrage of negative attacks, scare-mongering, and thinly disguised oppo attacks through the mainstream media, taking advantage of many political reporters’ relative ignorance about the private equity field and their inclination to accept whole-hog President Obama’s version of 'facts.'¶ "The extent of that effort is only now becoming clear. The Associated Press reports: 'President Barack Obama’s campaign has spent nearly $100 million on television commercials in selected battleground states so far, unleashing a sustained early barrage designed to create lasting, negative impressions of Republican Mitt Romney before he and his allies ramp up for the fall.' Think of it like the Confederacy’s artillery barrage on the third day of Gettysburg before Pickett’s Charge—you have to in essence disable the other side before the charge begins, or it's curtains."¶ For those not versed in Civil War history, Pickett's Charge ends badly. I'll refer you to this scene from the magisterial 1993 film Gettysburg, which captures the point at which General Lee realizes the full scope of the debacle.¶ It's worth looking at why specifically the Obama campaign is running out of time. It has to do with money and with the calendar.¶ Obama started out with a distinct money advantage, since he could start raising money for the general election while Romney was still spending money on the primaries. But he is rapidly blowing his money advantage. In recent months, he has raised less than Romney and spent a lot more, particularly on his huge spree of negative ads.¶ Jack Wakeland first pointed this pattern out to me and speculated that Obama is running his campaign finances about as well as he has been running the nation's finances. The result is that it now looks as if Romney and his supporters will be able to outspend Obama by a significant margin in the final months of the race. And if there's one thing we learned from the primaries, it is that Romney can win when he's able to outspend his rivals.¶ Then there is the calendar. Outside of Washington and the media, most voters are not paying much attention to the race yet. And in exactly eight days, the Olympics begin.¶ The Olympics are the crucial dividing point, because they will dominate the airwaves and the news, sucking away whatever attention anyone is now paying to the election. So Obama's negative campaign blitz has to have whatever effect it's going to have in those eight days. But what happens when the Olympics start? To begin with, the Olympics provide an opportunity for Mitt Romney to highlight the best part of his record, his successful turnaround of the 2002 Winter Olympics. And he can do so without having to do very much or spend much money. It will be natural, after all, for the sports reporters covering the Olympics to mention Romney's history with the movement.¶ Obama can still be in the news during the Olympics just by showing up in London or doing something to root on the U.S. teams, but that's just a marginal bit of extra public exposure, not a message about his leadership. For Romney, by contrast, the Olympics are a leadership message. He can claim that his competence helped save a beloved institution whose appeal cuts across partisan lines. Remember that it was not his business success that launched Romney's political career. It was the Olympics: he ran for governor of Massachusetts in the afterglow of the 2002 games. Yet Romney's history with the Olympics has barely been mentioned yet, precisely because the Obama campaign can't find anything negative to say about it. Well, now it's going to be mentioned.¶ And what happens after the Olympics? There are only two weeks between the end of the Olympics and the beginning of the Republican National Convention. It is logical that Romney would use those two weeks to announce his vice-presidential running mate. There is some speculation that he would do so earlier, but with so few days left to the Olympics, I'm not sure he would risk having the announcement be overshadowed. So it's slightly more likely he will make the announcement a few days after the Olympics, which will have the effect of dominating the news for the period between the games and the convention.¶ Then the Republicans get to go first with their convention, giving them a chance to present all of the positive aspects of Romney's personal life and his professional achievements, just as most voters are beginning to tune in to the election. Which means that they have the opportunity to wipe out more than $100 million in Obama's negative advertising.¶ So what this means is that the Obama campaign has only eight days left to have it all their way. After that they will be upstaged for more than a month, and probably outspent for the rest of the campaign. If they want to make Romney seem unacceptable to swing voters, the next eight days are the whole game.¶ **The big picture is that the Obama campaign is reaching its full tide. This is its moment of maximum impact, and everything after this is a pushback from the Romney campaign**. So the fact that Obama is still just even in the polls, at the full extent of his effort, means that we can expect that everything from here on out will be a loss. From now on, the campaign will be about Romney making his own positive case, building back his image, setting his own message, firing back in the debates, and sending it all of home with giant advertising buys that Obama won't be able to match.¶ Jennifer Rubin's reference to Pickett's Charge reminded me of another scene from Gettysburg. An actor who has been serving as a spy for the Confederacy asks General Longstreet for a musket so that he can, for once, fight honorably as a regular soldier. Longstreet then explains to him why he thinks Pickett's Charge—which he hasn't been able to talk Lee out of—will fail. It is, he explains, like a mathematical equation, as he ticks off the casualties Pickett's division will take at each stage of the assault. He briefly entertains hope that the artillery barrage will cause the Yankees to panic and break, then he concludes that they won't, so "it's mathematical after all."¶ In much the same way, the numbers are against Obama**. In political science, unemployment above 8%, economic growth below 2%, and approval ratings below 50%—all of it adds up to defeat. But the Obama campaign will entertain the hope that maybe, just maybe, they can vilify their opponent and create a negative impression of him** in the minds of voters, or dredge up some scandal that knocks him out of the race before we even get to the conventions. They can hold on to that hope. And they're right: maybe it will happen. **This has been a very unpredictable election from the beginning. But if something doesn't happen, and happen soon, the numbers kick in, and it's mathematical after all**.¶ So far, the polls show that the negative ads haven't broken Romney's campaign. But there is a deeper ideological reason why this campaign is not likely to succeed. Remember that this is not just a negative campaign against Romney. It is a negative campaign against capitalism and against success. And it's not just that the Obama campaign overreaching with their negative attacks on Romney. They are also overreaching with their negative attacks on success.