# \*\*\*Uniqueness\*\*\*

**Obama Will Win – General**

**Models prove Obama will win – even if growth is slow, it’s good enough**

**Dorning, 7/27/12** (Mike, “Obama Holds Slim Re-Election Edge in Slow GDP Growth Modeled,” Bloomberg, http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-07-27/slow-growth-leaves-room-for-obama-to-win-re-election)RK

The slow growth reported for the second quarter is enough to allow President Barack Obama an edge in his re-election bid, according to a forecasting model based on the economy and polling data. The U.S. economy grew at a 1.5 percent annual rate from April through June, in line with forecasts and slowing from a revised 2.0 percent rate during the first three months of the year, the Commerce Department reported today. “**It puts Obama just barely above** the **break-even** point,” said Alan Abramowitz, a political science professor at Emory University in Atlanta and developer of the forecasting model. “Mainly it tells me we’re heading to a very close election and Obama is a slight favorite.” Abramowitz said today his model projects Obama will receive 50.5 percent of the popular vote in November and has a two- thirds probability of winning. The model doesn’t project the Electoral College outcome, and it is possible to win the popular vote without an electoral-vote victory, as occurred in the 2000 contest between Al Gore and George W. Bush. In three-quarters of the 16 presidential elections since World War II, the outcome has been within 1.5 percentage points of this model’s projection, Abramowitz said. Opinion Polls The forecast is based on the initial second-quarter gross domestic product report and the Gallup Poll’s presidential job- approval rating for the last three days of June, when the figure for Obama was 48 percent. Abramowitz uses GDP as a broad measure of the economy and second-quarter data because the political impact of earlier economic performance already is reflected in public opinion polling. The economy has been the focal point of this year’s presidential campaign. GDP isn’t the only indicator. Obama also is running for re-election at a time of slow job growth, with unemployment holding at over 8 percent for the longest stretch since World War II. The presidential candidates have struggled to frame public perceptions of the state of the economy. Republican challenger Mitt Romney stresses the weakness of the recovery in comparison with historical norms, while the Obama White House emphasizes continued progress out of a downturn he inherited from his predecessor that was the worst since the Great Depression. The messaging contest played out again with release of the Commerce Department report today. Campaign Views Columbia University Business School Dean Glenn Hubbard, a top Romney economic adviser, called the growth rate“quite disappointing.” In a conference call with reporters arranged by Romney’s campaign, Hubbard said the report demonstrates a recovery that “lacks wind and oxygen.” Alan Krueger, chairman of Obama’s Council of Economic Advisers, said the report shows the economy is moving “in the right direction.” He added in a statement that “additional growth is needed to replace the jobs lost in the deep recession that began at the end of 2007.” A number of election-forecasting models have been developed that attempt to predict presidential election results based on economic data -- either alone or in combination with polls -- though the authors differ on the best economic measures. Other forecasters have drawn on predictors including income growth, payroll growth, unemployment rate changes, leading economic indicators, stock market performance and consumer confidence. Typically, they concentrate on the trajectory of the economy during the election year, though some also give lesser weight to the economy’s performance earlier in a president’s term. Quarter Examined Abramowitz concentrates on GDP growth because it is “a very broad measure of the performance of the economy that correlates with a lot of other things.” Third-quarter GDP growth is no better than second-quarter growth as a predictor of an election outcome, and by the time it is available polling data alone is a superior predictor, Abramowitz said. The first estimate of third-quarter growth this year will be released Oct. 26 -- 11 days before the election. There’s a lag in the time it takes the public to incorporate objective economic data in political perceptions, and late in the campaign there are fewer undecided voters “open to persuasion,” he said. Strong economic growth historically has helped presidents win re-election, though it hasn’t always been a prerequisite. 4.7% Average Among the seven U.S. presidents returned to office since World War II, GDP growth has averaged 4.7 percent during the first nine months of their re-election year, above the overall 3.2 percent average since quarterly figures first were issued in 1947. So far this year, the average growth rate has been 1.75 percent as Obama approaches the Nov. 6 election. Ronald Reagan, whose experience with a deep recession early in his term has parallels to challenges Obama confronts, presided over an economy that grew at an average 6.3 percent rate during the first nine months of 1984. As Bill Clinton headed to re-election in 1996, growth averaged 4.5 percent. Even so, a weak economy hasn’t necessarily meant defeat. Dwight Eisenhower, who like Obama remained personally popular with voters, was re-elected despite a sluggish economy in 1956. GDP grew at an average 0.3 percent annual rate during the first nine months of a year in which Eisenhower won a landslide victory with 57 percent of the vote. Bush was also re-elected with below-normal growth, averaging 2.8 percent during the first nine months of 2004. High growth hasn’t always translated into re-election for incumbents. Two of the three presidents defeated for re-election since World War II lost even with above-average growth during the first three quarters of their election years. Voters rejected Gerald Ford in 1976 with growth averaging 4.8 percent amid discontent over the Watergate scandal and his pardon of predecessor Richard Nixon. George H.W. Bush was ousted in 1992, though growth averaged 4.3 percent. The public was still angry over the 1990-1991 recession, and the unemployment rate continued to climb through June of the election year.

**Obama will win, but it’ll be close**

**Silver 7/26** (Nate, FiveThirtyEight, Nate Silvers Political Calculus, The New York Times, “July 26: The Calm Before Critical Economic News,” July 26, 2012, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/26/july-26-the-calm-before-critical-economic-news/)//PC

Thursday was a rare day of decent economic news for President Obama. The Department of Labor showed initial unemployment claims declining, and the stock market was up more than 200 points as investors bought into assurances by the chief of the European Central Bank that he would do “whatever it takes” to save the euro zone.¶ A series of critical economic reports is set to be released in the next week, including the government’s initial estimate of second-quarter G.D.P. growth on Friday, and the monthly jobs report a week from Friday.¶ In addition, the Federal Reserve will hold a meeting next week, during which it could plausibly choose to enact a third round of quantitative easing.¶ The polling news was mixed for the candidates. A survey in Missouri showed Mitt Romney well ahead there, and another in New Jersey showed a smaller lead for Mr. Obama than others in the state. But Mr. Obama got a stronger number in a Nevada poll, a more critical state in the Electoral College, which put him ahead by five points there.¶ Mr. Obama’s chances of winning the Electoral College rose in our model, to 66.4 percent from 65.0 percent, mostly because the stock market gain slightly bolstered the model’s economic index.

**Obama will win – polls, ads, identifies with voters**

**Giroux 7/25** (Greg, Analyst for Bloomberg News, “Obama Leads Romney By Six Points In Poll Citing Economy,” July 25, 2012, Bloomberg, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-25/obama-leads-romney-by-six-points-in-poll-citing-economy.html)//PC

President Barack Obama leads Republican challenger Mitt Romney among registered voters even as a majority disapprove of his handling of the U.S. economy, a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll shows.¶ The poll, released yesterday, gave Obama a 49 percent to 43 percent edge over Romney. The president led Romney, a former Massachusetts governor, by 47 percent to 44 percent in the same survey conducted last month.¶ Fifty-three percent in the latest poll disapprove of the president’s stewardship of the economy compared with 44 percent who approve. Just 32 percent of respondents said that things are generally headed in the right direction compared with 60 percent who say things are on the wrong track. About 27 percent say the economy will get better in the next year, the smallest share since November 2011, the poll found.¶ Obama’s edge is attributable in part to voters who view him more favorably than Romney. About 49 percent say they have a very positive or a somewhat positive feeling toward Obama compared with 43 percent who have a very negative or somewhat negative impression. Romney’s positive rating is 35 percent and his negative rating is 40 percent.¶ Voters identify more with Obama than Romney, the poll shows. About 50 percent say that the president has a background and set of values they can identify with compared with 42 percent who say that about Romney.¶ Attacks Ads¶ Obama’s campaign and its allies have been airing television ads thousands of times attacking Romney’s tenure at the private- equity firm Bain Capital LLC. About 43 percent of poll respondents say they have a less favorable opinion of Romney after seeing, reading or hearing something about him or his campaign in the past two weeks compared with 28 percent who have a more favorable feeling.¶ Voters prefer Obama to Romney as someone who looks out for the middle class and as a good commander in chief, the poll found. Romney gets better marks for having good ideas for improving the economy.¶ The president has a 15-point edge over Romney on the question of who would be better at handling foreign policy, the survey said. Romney planned to leave tonight for a trip to the U.K., Israel and Poland.¶ The survey was conducted July 18-22 and questioned 1,000 registered voters. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

# Obama Will Win – A2 Economy

**Obama will win – the economy is up in key swing states, but it's still close**

**Cillizza 7/22** (Chris, American political reporter for The Fix for the Washington Post, regular contributor to the Post on political issues, an MSNBC political analyst “In swing states, economic picture a little brighter for Obama,” July 22, 2012, The Washington Post – The Fix, http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-swing-states-economic-picture-a-little-brighter-for-obama/2012/07/22/gJQA8Icq2W\_story.html)//PC

Nationally, the economic picture is decidedly dismal — a sullen state of affairs that has led many political observers to conclude that President Obama is an underdog in his bid for a second term.¶ But in the 12 (or so) swing states — where Democrats and Republicans will spend the lion’s share of their time and money in the 100 or so days between now and Nov. 6 — the economic picture is considerably sunnier.¶ In seven of those 12 states — Iowa, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin — the unemployment rate is below the June national average of 8.2 percent. In some, it is considerably less than the national average; the June rates in New Hampshire, Iowa and Virginia were below 6 percent. Even in Ohio, a state hit hard by the collapse of the manufacturing sector, the unemployment rate is a full percentage point below the U.S. average. Republicans note that the unemployment rate rose between May and June in Colorado, Iowa, New Hampshire and Virginia, among other swing states.¶ In the four swing states where the rate is above the national average — Florida, Michigan, Nevada and North Carolina — the trend line is headed downward. Nevada’s June unemployment rate was an eye-popping 11.6 percent, but that was down from 13.8 percent in June 2011. Ditto Florida (10.7 percent in June 2011, 8.6 percent now), Michigan (10.6 percent in 2011, 8.6 percent now) and North Carolina (10.6 percent in 2011, 9.4 percent now).¶ Viewed even more narrowly, of the eight states that the Fix considers the truest swing states this fall — Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Ohio, Nevada, New Hampshire, Virginia and Wisconsin — the unemployment rate is below the U.S. average in five, above it in two and right at the national number in one (Colorado).¶ If you allocated the electoral votes of those eight swing states solely based on the unemployment rate in each — giving the states with rates below the national average to Obama and those above it to Republican challenger Mitt Romney — the incumbent would claim 51 electoral votes, compared with 35 for Romney. Colorado and its nine electoral votes would be a push.¶ Add that total to the states already solidly behind or leaning toward each candidate on the Fix electoral map and Obama takes 288 electoral votes, more than the 270 he needs to win.¶ Now, simply assigning states to one of the two candidates based on the unemployment rate alone is a too-blunt measure. After all, the candidates — and the campaigns they run — matter.¶ But the state-by-state unemployment numbers are a reminder that the 2012 election — like all presidential contests — is a national election in name only. That is, although the U.S. unemployment rate matters as a broad thematic, the rates in the eight to 12 swing states may well be more telling indicators of whether Obama can sell voters on his plans for the economy. That handful of states is where the election will be decided; the unemployment rates in places such as California (10.7 percent in June) and North Dakota (2.9 percent) are, essentially, meaningless.¶ Even in the places where the unemployment rate is higher than the national average — particularly Florida — the downward trend line could (and we emphasize “could”) allow the incumbent to convince undecided voters that things are slowly but surely getting better.¶ On the other hand — and, yes, in politics there is always another hand — the highest the national unemployment rate has ever been when a president has won reelection is 7.2 percent, for Ronald Reagan in 1984. Of the 12 swing(ish) states, six had rates above 7.2 percent, while a seventh — Ohio — had exactly that 7.2 percent rate.¶ Make no mistake: The weak national economy has badly imperiled Obama’s chances of winning a second term in November. But the economic story in the swing states is slightly better for the incumbent, giving him and his team a glimmer of hope as they work to win in the fall.

**Obama Will Win – Ohio**

**Obama winning Ohio**

**Easley, 7/27/12** (Jonathan, “Poll: Obama widens lead in Ohio,” The Hill, http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/polls/240721-poll-obama-widens-lead-in-ohio)RK

President Obama has opened up an 8-point lead in the critical battleground state of Ohio, according to a We Ask America poll released on Friday. Obama leads Mitt Romney 48 percent to 40, according to the poll. That’s a larger lead than most other recent polls show for Obama, but not far from the Real Clear Politics average of polls, which shows Obama leading Romney by 5 in the Buckeye State. While the overall economy continues to struggle — GDP growth slowed to an anemic 1.5 percent in June — Ohio has seen a significant drop in its unemployment rate, which now sits well below the national average of 8.2 percent. Ohio’s unemployment rate has fallen 1.5 percentage points in the last year, to 7.3 percent. By some estimates, Obama will need to win about half of the electoral votes supplied by the swing states of Florida, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Virginia, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Iowa, Pennsylvania and New Hampshire if he is to secure a second term. The president won all of those states in 2008. Ohio has the second most Electoral College votes at stake among those 12 battleground states. The We Ask America poll of 1,115 likely voters was conducted on July 24 and has a 3 percent margin of error.

# Obama Will Win - Polls

**Obama will win, but the election is still close**

**Cillizza 7/18** (Chris, American political reporter for The Fix for the Washington Post, regular contributor to the Post on political issues, an MSNBC political analyst, “Why President Obama’s reelection is no sure thing — in 2 charts,” July 18, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/why-president-obamas-reelection-is-no-sure-thing--in-2-charts/2012/07/18/gJQAXWWwtW\_blog.html?wprss=rss\_the-fix)//PC

[Charts omitted]

Judging from the coverage of the presidential race over the past few weeks — questions about Mitt Romney’s staff, his exact departure date from Bain Capital and whether or not he should release his tax returns — you could be forgiven for thinking that it’s time for President Obama to break out the champagne and start celebrating his likely re-election in November. But to draw that conclusion ignores the broader currents at work in the political waters, currents that will make it very tough for President Obama to win a second term almost no matter what Romney does between now and this fall. Once you step back from the day to day knife fight of the campaign — and make no mistake that Obama is getting in more and better swipes than Romney at this point — you’re reminded that the overarching dynamic of this race is the sputtering economy and a continued lack of confidence within the electorate that things are or will get better. Two charts tell that story — and make clear why any celebrating among Obama partisans is premature. The first is Gallup’s Economic Confidence Index — an average of peoples’ current economic outlook and what they think the future holds — that, as of this week, sits at -27. That’s the lowest the number has been since late January and is part of a prolonged negative confidence dip that began in late May. The second chart comes courtesy of James Pethokoukis of the American Enterprise Institute and details the correlation between the University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment rating and president’s re-election percentages. The chart makes clear that Obama’s score on the Michigan Consumer Sentiment chart (currently in the low 70s) — puts him in the ignominious company of people like George H.W. Bush and Jimmy Carter. Both of those men lost their reelection bids. (Worth noting: The Bush and Carter scores were as of October of their reelection years, meaning Obama has some time still to improve his number.) It’s easy to lose sight of the big picture amid the daily brawl of the campaign. And, candidates and campaigns absolutely do matter — and right now Obama has the edge on that front. But as these two charts make clear the ground on which this campaign is and will almost certainly continue to be fought is shaky (at best) for Obama.

**Obama will win the election – most recent polls prove**

**McGuire 7/20** (Michael, The Examiner, “Obama 48, Romney 44: Gallup Poll,” July 20, 2012, The Examiner.com, http://www.examiner.com/article/obama-48-romney-44-gallup-poll)//PC

President Barack Obama has increased his lead, slightly, over Mitt Romney.¶ A Gallup Poll released Friday showed an increase of two percent for Obama and a decrease of two percent for Romney, with Obama leading 48-44.¶ The data is based on a seven-day rolling average.¶ “Those who are undecided are further asked if they lean more toward Obama or Romney and their leanings are incorporated into the results,” Gallup reported.” Each seven-day rolling average is based on telephone interviews with approximately 3,050 registered voters; Margin of error is ±2 percentage points.”¶ A Rasmussen Poll released Friday also shows Obama ahead of Romney, but by a smaller margin of 47-46.¶ “An analysis of the voters not committed to either candidate shows two distinguishing characteristics: They aren’t impressed with the president, and they aren’t paying much attention to the campaign,” Rasmussen said.¶ In a separate poll, Rasmussen reported Obama leads Romney, 48-44, in Pennsylvania.¶ Some consider Pennsylvania one of the swing states in the presidential election.

# Obama Will Lose - Economy

**Obama will lose now, only a risk of a link turn – the economy is key to the election**

**Podhoretz 7/19** (John, the editor of Commentary Magazine, and a former editorial-page editor of The Post. He is also the co-founder of the Weekly Standard “Why Bam’s losing: W’s 2004 trick won’t work,” July 19, 2012, nypost, http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/why\_bam\_losing\_6hphTPplSqc4KPBJcKn4nO)//PC

I hinted at it in June, and now I’m saying it outright in July: President Obama is going to lose this election if something doesn’t change in a significant way.¶ How can I possibly assert such a thing if election-prediction savant Nate Silver of The New York Times currently gives Obama a 66 percent chance of winning? Well, Silver has a fancy-shmancy mysterious data machine full of yummy variables.¶ I’m applying common sense.¶ Less than four months until the election, the Real Clear Politics average of all national surveys has Obama at 46.2 percent, vs. 45 percent for Mitt Romney.¶ That’s not a good number for an incumbent. If there is one politician in America everybody knows and has heard and has an opinion of, it’s the president, Barack Obama. The general rule of thumb for someone seeking re-election is that he is in some trouble if he’s under 50 percent.¶ Granted, the RCP average had George W. Bush at 42.7 percent at this point in 2004 and he went on to win. So why is 2012 different?¶ Here’s why: In 2004, the central issues facing the country were a net negative for Bush in July. By November, those issues had become a net positive for him, and Bush won.¶ It’s hard to see how the central issue facing the country in 2012 is going to become a net positive for Obama.¶ The key to 2004 wasn’t Bush’s head-to-head numbers against John Kerry but rather the public’s approval or disapproval of the war in Iraq and his handling of the War on Terror.¶ In July, the CBS News poll showed that 45 percent of the public thought Iraq was the right thing to do. That was when Bush was at 42.7 percent against Kerry.¶ By September, after Bush’s successful convention address and a speech on the third anniversary of 9/11, that number had risen to 54 percent in the CBS poll (a few points lower in ABC’s poll).¶ By choosing anti-war war hero John Kerry as their nominee, the Democrats had made sure the election was going to turn on Iraq — and it did. A majority supported the war on Election Day. On that day, 51 percent voted for Bush.¶ If Bush hadn’t rallied the country around Iraq and reminded them of his stewardship in the War on Terror beginning in late August, it’s likely he would have lost.¶ Let’s return to the present. The issue today is the economy. Not to mention the economy. Also, the economy. In every poll, more than 50 percent say the economy is the No. 1 issue; health care comes in second, somewhere between 10 and 20 percent.¶ How is Obama faring on economic questions? Terribly. Much worse than his head-to-head numbers. In this week’s New York Times poll, 39 percent of the public rates him favorably on his handling of the economy, vs. 55 percent who disapprove. It’s pretty much the same in other polls.¶ This is even worse for him than it looks because the poll sample itself — the registered voters interviewed by the pollsters — is tilted in the president’s favor. Of those interviewed, 32 percent said they were Democrats, 25 percent Republicans and 37 percent independents.¶ That 7-point Democratic advantage was the spread on Election Day 2008 — after the collapse in George W. Bush’s support, the Republican scandals of 2006, the financial meltdown and the Obama surge. Does anyone seriously believe that, in 2012, Democrats will have anywhere near that advantage?¶ If you follow the 2004 model, Obama needs to have something to bring the country to his side — affirmatively — before the election. And given the dominance of the economy as an issue, it would have to be the economy.¶ How’s that looking for him? This week’s jobless claims are up far more than anticipated. After horrible retail-sales numbers, most economic forecasters downgraded their expectations for overall growth somewhere around 1.5 percent annualized for the second quarter.¶ James Pethokoukis of the American Enterprise Institute notes that the only two presidents to face re-election with the consumer-confidence numbers Obama has to show for himself were Jimmy Carter and the first George Bush — both one-termers.¶ In 2004, the election was a referendum on the incumbent, and the incumbent convinced Americans he had done the right things.¶ In 2012, what is the incumbent going to do — talk about somebody else’s tax returns for the next 109 days?

**Obama will lose – prefer it, it's predictive**

**Tracinski 7/19** (Robert, Real Clear Politics, writes daily commentary at TIADaily.com. He is the editor of The Intellectual Activist and a contributor to RealClearMarkets.“How the Election Will Play Out (and Why Romney Will Win),” July 19, 2012, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/07/19/how\_the\_election\_will\_play\_out\_and\_why\_romney\_will\_win\_114848.html)//PC

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.

Obama’s chance of reelection looks slim – consumer confidence

Rasmussen Reports 7/27 (a media company specializing in the collection, publication and distribution of public opinion information, 2012, Daily Presidential Tracking Poll, Politics, http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\_content/political\_commentary/commentary\_by\_scott\_rasmussen/declining\_views\_of\_the\_economy\_put\_obama\_s\_reelection\_at\_risk)

Consumer confidence fell to the lowest levels of 2012 this past week. Most Americans believe that both the economy and their own personal finances are getting worse. Just 25 percent believe the economy is getting better, and only 22 percent say the same about their personal finances.

Still, the lows of 2012 aren't nearly as bad as they were in the previous three years. But the trend is discouraging. It looks like yet another year starting with improved outlooks for the economy that fade by summer, and it's clearly taking a toll on the American people.

In the summer of 2009, 58 percent thought the economy would be stronger within five years. By the summer of 2010, only 50 percent had such long-term optimism. By last summer, just 46 percent were that upbeat. And now only 40 percent think the economy will be stronger in five years.

That's a pretty depressing trend.

It's especially depressing when you realize that every single night during those four years, a majority of Americans believed the country was in a recession.

Think about that for a moment. Regardless of what the economists say, most Americans believe we are in a recession and have been for more than four years. Despite that dismal starting point, just 40 percent think things will get better in five years.

This suggests that underlying perceptions of the economy have taken a darker turn. Back in 2009, most Americans thought the country was experiencing a normal business-cycle recession. It was harsher than most but expected to be a short-term matter. Throughout 2009, a plurality of Americans thought the economy would be better within a year.

Now, a plurality believes it will get worse over the next year, and many Americans are wondering if our nation will ever make it back. Only 14 percent now believe today's children will be better off than their parents. That's an all-time low.

This is the landscape for Election 2012. The economy is the big issue. People don't like President Obama's track record on the economy, but they're not sure Mitt Romney will do any better.

Some analysts have looked at the landscape and said it's just like the last time we had a president running for re-election. Like Obama today, George W. Bush in 2004 was a polarizing president leading the government of a divided nation. Bush's job approval ratings at this point in 2004 were pretty similar to where Obama's numbers are today.

However, one huge difference between 2004 and 2012 is that President Bush had trends moving in his direction. The big issue that year was the war on terror. In the summer of 2004, just 44 percent thought the United States and its allies were winning that war. In the five weeks running up to the election, however, confidence that our side was winning ranged from 49 percent to 52 percent.

As confidence in Bush's handling of the war improved, so did his job approval rating. That enabled him to post a narrow victory over Sen. John Kerry.

For this president to earn a similar victory over a wealthy Massachusetts challenger in 2012, he will need to improve his own job approval rating between now and Election Day. For that to happen, perceptions of the economy will have to reverse their current downward trend.

**Obama will lose now, economics is the key issue**

**Rasmussen 7/27** (Scott, Boston Herald, Founder and president of Rasmussen Reports, Scott Rasmussen is a political analyst and New York Times bestselling author, “Obama’s job approval sags with economy,” July 27, 2012, Boston Herald, http://www.bostonherald.com/news/opinion/op\_ed/view/20220727obamas\_job\_approval\_sags\_with\_economy/)//PC

Consumer confidence fell to the lowest levels of 2012 this past week. Most Americans believe that both the economy and their own personal finances are getting worse. Just 25 percent believe the economy is getting better, and only 22 percent say the same about their personal finances.¶ Still, the lows of 2012 aren’t nearly as bad as they were in the previous three years. But the trend is discouraging. It looks like yet another year starting with improved outlooks for the economy that fade by summer, and it’s clearly taking a toll on the American people.¶ In the summer of 2009, 58 percent thought the economy would be stronger within five years. By the summer of 2010, only 50 percent had such long-term optimism. By last summer, just 46 percent were that upbeat. And now only 40 percent think the economy will be stronger in five years.¶ That’s a depressing trend.¶ It’s especially depressing when you realize that every single night during those four years, a majority of Americans believed the country was in a recession.¶ Think about that. Most Americans believe we are in a recession and have been for more than four years. Despite that dismal starting point, just 40 percent think things will get better in five years.¶ This suggests that underlying perceptions of the economy have taken a darker turn. Back in 2009, a plurality thought the economy would be better within a year.¶ Now a plurality believes it will get worse over the next year. Only 14 percent now believe today’s children will be better off than their parents. That’s an all-time low.¶ This is the landscape for Election 2012. The economy is the big issue. People don’t like President Barack Obama’s track record, but they’re not sure Mitt Romney will do any better.¶ Some analysts have said it’s just like the last time we had a president running for re-election. George W. Bush’s job approval ratings at this point in 2004 were pretty similar to where Obama’s numbers are today.¶ However, President Bush had trends moving in his direction. The big issue was the war on terror. In the summer of 2004, just 44 percent thought the U.S. and its allies were winning that war. In the five weeks running up to the election, however, confidence that our side was winning ranged from 49 percent to 52 percent.¶ As confidence in Bush’s handling of the war improved, so did his job approval rating. That enabled him to post a narrow victory over Sen. John Kerry.¶ For this president to earn a similar victory over a wealthy Bay Stater in 2012, he will need to improve his own job approval rating between now and Election Day. For that to happen, perceptions of the economy will have to reverse their current downward trend.¶ Scott Rasmussen is founder and CEO of Rasmussen Reports and its polling organization.

Obama will lose – economic problems

Reis and Lee 7/27 (Patrick, MJ, 2012, Politico, “New GDP numbers add to old worries for Obama”, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0712/79053.html#ixzz21r2P0oVE)

Fresh evidence of a significantly slowing U.S. economy Friday posed new headaches for President Barack Obama’s re-election bid – coming on top of weak readings in recent weeks on employment numbers and concerns that the seemingly endless European debt crisis will keep the American economy from getting off the mat.

The economy grew at an annual rate of 1.5 percent in second quarter compared to a 2 percent rate in the first quarter of 2012, the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis reported on Friday.

And the report offered little hope for a dramatic uptick in the third quarter – a number that will be released just five weeks before the Nov. 6 election.

“Nobody is going to be really happy with the economy going into the end of the year,” said Mark Zandi, chief economist of Moody’s Analytics

The sluggish growth number will only ratchet up anticipation for the new monthly employment numbers that will be released next Friday.

The Romney campaign and congressional Republicans on Friday were quick to jump on the GDP number and point to it as evidence that the president’s economic policies have failed. Romney has made charges of Obama’s failed economic stewardship the central plank of his campaign to unseat him.

“If we keep up at this rate, over the next year or two, we will simply never get back to full employment,” Glenn Hubbard, a top economic adviser to the Romney campaign, told CNBC. “It’s not good news.”

**Obama Will Lose – Europe**

**<<<ADD EUROPE COLLAPSING NOW>>>**

**Europe collapse kills Obama**

**Swanson, 12** (Ian, “It's the economy, candidates,” The Hill, 4/26/12, Academic OneFile)RK

A strong stock market helps incumbent presidents, and Obama was certainly boosted earlier this year after the Dow Jones average soared from 11,231 on Nov. 25 to 13,252 on March 15. The bullish market was sparked by the sense that Europe had rallied around a deal to control its debt crisis, but has since stalled amid talk of Spanish loan defaults and serious doubts that the crisis is over. The herky-jerky nature of the markets in the last month hasn't been enough to really injure Obama, but a **significant drop in the summer could be devastating.** Whether the world sees one is the great unknown for the two candidates and the Federal Reserve, which on Wednesday said: "Strains in global financial markets continue to pose significant downside risks to the economic outlook."

**Obama Will Lose – Jewish Vote**

**Obama losing the Jewish vote**

**Tobin, 12** (Jonathan S., “Jews, Money, and 2012,” Commentary, vol. 133, is. 3, ProQuest)RK

The mere fact that the administration finds it necessary to conduct outreach with one of its core constituency groups is proof that it understands there is a problem. But by the end of 2011, it was clear that this new determination to demonstrate closeness with Israel did not overcome the impression on the part of most American friends of the Jewish state that Obama was the least friendly president to Israel in a generation. The 2011 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion conducted by the American Jewish Committee in September indicated a majority disapproved of Obama's handling of U.S.-Israel relations by 53 to 40 percent. These figures, along with others, confirmed that most American Jews believe the Palestinians seek the destruction of Israel and reaffirmed that groups such as J Street represent only a small minority of American Jewish opinion. The Democrats' September loss of New York's 9th congressional district seat in Brooklyn and Queens (previously held by the disgraced Anthony Weiner) was rightly seen as a **referendum** on the administration's hostility to Israel. Even more troubling for Democrats was a Pew Research study released in February 2012 that measured identification with the two major parties between 2008 and 2011. hi 2008, Democrats led among Jews by a hefty 72 to 20 percent. By the end of 2011, the margin was down to 65 to 29 percent. The net gain of 9 percent for the GOP was the biggest shift in affiliation of any religious group, except the Mormons, who were moved by Mitt Romney's candidacy to become even more Republican. While a sour economy and general dissatisfaction with the incumbent gave the GOP a net 4 percent gain for the entire population, the much larger shift to the right among Jews cannot be explained by any factor other than concern for the president's policy toward Israel. In reply, Democrats can argue that despite the problems that have plagued U.S.-Israel relations in the past three years, the basics of the alliance have been unchanged. As far as American Jews who worry about Israel are concerned, however, the damage is already done. No matter what Obama says or does in 2012, there is no disguising that his disputes with Netanyahu betray an attitude toward Israel lacking the emotional fervor that characterized the friendship of presidents such as Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, or George W. Bush. Obama's approach to Israel is based neither on shared values nor on deeply held faith. Rather it appears to be rooted in a neutral view of the Middle East in which Israel and its antagonists are morally equivalent. Given Obama's history of friction with Israel, the fear among Jews and the hope among Arabs is that a reelected Obama will be even more hostile to the Jewish state than he has been in the past. More than policy differences, these visceral evaluations of the president's sentiments constitute the biggest obstacle Obama will face in looking to match his 2008 Jewish-vote totals and prevent any drop in contributions.

**<<<INSERT JEWISH VOTE KEY>>>**

**Obama Will Lose - Businesses**

**Obama is alienating business**

**Walsh, 7/20** (Michael A., “Bam’s brave new world, Behind ‘you didn’t build that’,” New York Post, 7/20/12, http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/bam\_brave\_new\_world\_NnkAuO9KuuEdqUiuycPTjI)RK

‘If you’ve got a business — you didn’t build that. Somebody else made that happen”: President Obama’s words last week are likely to haunt his campaign and possibly cost him the election. The line insulted millions of entrepreneurs, small-business owners, garage inventors and plain old dreamers. (The Post reported this week on a few of the New Yorkers who took exception.) Of course, Obama supporters have relentlessly pointed out that the instantly viral head-scratcher was preceded by some no-man-is-an-island boilerplate. “If you’ve been successful, you didn’t get there on your own. . . somebody along the line gave you some help,” the president said. And: “There was a great teacher somewhere in your life. Somebody helped to create this unbelievable American system that we have that allowed you to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges.” But “you didn’t build that” still stands as an all-too-telling summation of Obama’s worldview. Forget mentors, friends, family — the kind of built-in support network we all have, people working together, sharing talents and responsibilities, and helping each other. What used to be known as “society.” In the president’s brave new world, that’s now called “government.” And you’re nothing without it. No wonder Mitt Romney leapt on the statement Tuesday: “The idea that Steve Jobs didn’t build Apple, that Henry Ford didn’t build Ford Motor . . . is not just foolishness, it is insulting to every entrepreneur, every innovator in America, and it’s wrong,” he said. And: “I find it extraordinary that a philosophy of that nature would be spoken by a president of the United States.” Why the surprise? This is what Obama and the dominant wing of the Democratic Party believe — that it’s really government that creates wealth and takes care of its children. The same week he informed us that “you didn’t build that,” the president quietly gutted Bill Clinton’s successful 1996 welfare reform by effectively — and unilaterally — removing the law’s work requirements. This, when half the population already receives some form of government benefits, and a record number of Americans are now on food stamps. It also explains Obama’s failed effort to jumpstart a US solar-power industry with billions upon billions of subsidies to the likes of now-defunct Solyndra. That’s why the party was so wowed by Elizabeth Warren, who’s trying to unseat Sen. Scott Brown in Massachusetts. Democrats loved lines of hers like this: “There is nobody in this country who got rich on his own. Nobody. You built a factory out there? Good for you. But I want to be clear: You moved your goods to market on the roads the rest of us paid for . . . but part of the underlying social contract is you take a hunk of that and pay forward for the next kid who comes along.” In other words, it takes a village — on steroids. That’s simply not true. The American people existed long before the American government did. They created our unique, republican form of federal democracy, handing the central government a few enumerated powers in order to prevent it from interfering in the business of the states or the lives of the citizens. What’s good in the government comes from the people; what’s good in the people does not come from government. But it’s abundantly clear that Obama believes there’s no such thing as a self-made man, no such creature as the lone genius (Jobs, or Thomas Edison) who transforms everyone’s life through the force of his vision. The telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the light bulb, the MacBook, the iPhone and the iPad all disprove his thesis. Great inventions are most often conceived by private individuals, sitting alone in a room, not government bureaucrats. And that’s why Obama’s “gaffe” could well become a focal point of the election — a sharp line of demarcation between a party that stands for collectivism and one that not only celebrates the individual but also gets out of his way. The president’s been promising “fundamental transformation” of the country since 2008. Altering the relationship between citizen and state is certainly part of that. Which is why Romney gets to the heart of the matter when he asks: “Do we believe in an America that is great because of government or do we believe in an America that is great because of free people allowed to pursue their dreams?” And that’s the fall election in a nutshell.

# Obama Lose - Independents

**Romney will win – Obama's campaign tactics fail to sway independents**

**Battenfeld 7/20** (Joe, columnist for the Boston Herald, “Mitt Romney hits stride in Hub, as Obama’s options dwindle,” July 20, 2012, http://www.bostonherald.com/news/columnists/view/20120720mitt\_romney\_hits\_stride\_in\_hub\_as\_obamas\_options\_dwindle/)//PC

Now, what will you do, Mr. President?¶ The Obama campaign’s attempt to portray Mitt Romney as the villainous Bane from “The Dark Knight Rises” appears to be a big flop. And the problem for Obama is, he really doesn’t have a Plan B.¶ The latest New York Times¶ CBS poll shows the $100 million worth of attack ads against Romney’s Bain Capital tenure haven’t moved many voters. And that was before Obama insulted voters by telling them they never built a business on their own.¶ There’s an air of desperation in the Obama camp right now. That’s because while the race is a dead heat, Romney has an 8-point lead, according to the recent poll, when voters are asked who would do a better job fixing the economy.¶ The former Massachusetts governor is also showing signs of coming out of his summer campaign slumber. He actually ventured out of his North End campaign headquarters yesterday to hold an event in Roxbury for the first time since, well, ever.¶ Romney’s campaign has insisted all along that the Bain attack wasn’t working and it appears they may be right.¶ “I think the big reason it isn’t is the only people who are paying attention are either hard-core Democrats or hard-core Republicans and others who haven’t decided aren’t paying attention right now,” said Andy Smith of the University of New Hampshire Survey Center.¶ “I don’t think the effort was designed to sway voters so much as it was a way to get the Democratic base motivated again,” Smith added. “To give them something to be angry about again.”¶ And that is a sad statement about the Obama campaign. The president can’t possibly run positive ads about his record, so his only option is to fire up Democratic voters to hate Romney. But even many Democrats are troubled by Obama’s relentlessly negative — and mostly misleading — campaign.¶ So what does the Obama campaign do next? Start attacking Romney’s record as governor of Massachusetts? Oh, wait, the Democrats already tried that.¶ No, it appears the only Obama campaign strategy right now is to keep hammering on Romney’s business record, and somehow convince voters that the exact date of Romney’s departure from Bain Capital is more important than the 8 percent unemployment rate.¶ Good luck with that one.

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Obama will lose key independents – they think he’s too extreme

Bedard 7/6 (Paul, The Examiner, 2012, “Voters say Obama is extreme”, Proquest)

In the broadening fight for voters in the political middle road, a fast-growing number of Americans consider President Obamas views extreme especially men, Christians and older voters, according to a new Rasmussen Reports poll. A majority view Mitt Romney as mainstream.

The percentage of those who view Obama as an extremist has surged 7 points since May, a potentially troubling political turn as both he and Romney begin reaching out to independent voters. For his part, only 31 percent of likely voters polled June 29 and 30 saw Romney as extreme, virtually unchanged from a month ago, Rasmussen said.

For two months, the percentage of those who view Obama as extreme has increased, reaching 47 percent in the latest poll. Just 43 percent consider the president in the mainstream.

Likely affecting the poll was the recent Supreme Court decision endorsing Obamacare and the associated debate over taxes, as well as the presidents backing of gay marriage and decision to stop deporting the children of illegal immigrants.

**A2 Obama Losing Youth Votes**

**Obama still has the youth vote**

**Abramowitz, 7/6/12** – Alan, W. Barkley Professor of Political Science at Emory (“Are Young Americans Turning Against Obama, Part II,” Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alan-abramowitz/obama-youth-vote\_b\_1654501.html?utm\_hp\_ref=@pollster)RK

In my post I presented evidence from a recent Gallup Poll as well as the 2010 national exit poll that found post-millennials to actually be more liberal and more likely to vote Democratic than members of the millennial generation. I can now provide additional confirmation of these findings, based on evidence from the 2012 Gallup Tracking Poll. Gallup does not normally separate 18 to 24 year-olds from 25 to 29 year-olds in their weekly breakdown of presidential candidate support by age groups among registered voters. In response to my request, however, Gallup generously provided me with the following results based on interviews with registered voters from early May through early July: 18-24 Obama 57, Romney 34 N=1470 25-29 Obama 53, Romney 35 N=1135 Contrary to the claims made in the New York Times article, post-millennials were significantly more supportive of President Obama than millennials. This is not surprising since the post-millennial generation is even more racially diverse than the millennial generation, a trend that is certain to continue with future generations of voters.

**They’re wrong – young voters still support Obama**

**Abramowitz, 7/3/12** – Alan, Alben W. Barkley Professor of Political Science at Emory (“Are Young Americans Turning Against Obama?” Huffington Post, http://www.pandora.com/station/play/958622407555458698)RK

Are Young Americans Turning Against Obama? It's the latest hot political trend identified by the media in 2012. According to an article recently published on the front page of the New York Times, the youngest Americans, those just entering the electorate, have become disillusioned with President Obama. This "post-millennial" generation is supposedly more conservative and more opposed to activist government than the "millennial generation" that preceded them, providing an opening for Mitt Romney and other Republican candidates to win them over to their side. Other than anecdotes based on interviews with a handful of members of the post-millennial generation, the main evidence cited in the Times story for this trend was an online survey of young Americans conducted earlier this year by the Harvard Institute of Politics. That sounds impressive but there are reasons to be skeptical about the findings from the Harvard survey. Evidence from other recent surveys, including the 2010 National Exit Poll, seems to contradict the conclusion that members of the post-millennial generation are more conservative and less supportive of the president than their millennial brethren. It is difficult to find public opinion surveys that separate results for 18 to 24 year-olds from those for 25-29 year-olds. The Gallup tracking poll, for example, only provides weekly results on presidential approval and presidential candidate choice for 18-29 year-olds. Gallup's most recent compilation of results for presidential candidate choice over the three weeks from June 4 through June 24 showed Barack Obama leading Mitt Romney by 56 percent to 33 percent among registered voters under the age of 30 while trailing Romney by 46 percent to 45 percent among all registered voters. Obama's 23 point margin over Mitt Romney among registered voters under the age of 30 was somewhat smaller than his 32 point margin over John McCain in the 2008 National Exit Poll. But the decline in support for Mr. Obama was very similar to that in other age groups. There is no evidence here that Obama has lost support disproportionately among younger voters. According to the Gallup tracking poll, Americans under the age of 30 were less certain about voting than older Americans but that is nothing new. Despite the enthusiasm of many young people for Mr. Obama in 2008, Americans under the age of 30 turned out at a lower rate than any other age group. Americans under the age of 30 made up about the same proportion of voters in 2008 as in 2004 and there is no clear evidence that younger Americans are likely to comprise a smaller proportion of the electorate in 2012 than in 2008. Evidence from a March, 2012 Gallup poll also raises doubts about the claim that members of the post-millennial generation are more conservative and less supportive of President Obama than members of the millennial generation. In this survey, 60 percent of 18 to 24 year-olds approved of the president's performance compared with 50 percent of 25 to 29 year-olds and 35 percent of 18 to 24 year-olds described themselves as conservative compared with 49 percent of 25 to 29 year-olds. But while the evidence from this Gallup poll appears to contradict the claim that post-millennials are more conservative and less supportive of the president than millennials, it is based on a rather small number of respondents in each age group. For a much larger sample of millennial and post-millennial voters, we can turn to the 2010 National Exit Poll. If post-millennials have become disillusioned with President Obama since 2008, the signs of that certainly should have been evident in the 2010 midterm election in which Democrats suffered heavy losses. However, the evidence from the 2010 NEP shows very clearly that post-millennials were more positive about the President, more liberal, more supportive of activist government, more opposed to repeal of health care reform, and more likely to vote for Democratic House candidates than millennials. And both post-millennials and millennials were much more positive about thepPresident, much more liberal, much more supportive of activist government, much more opposed to repeal of health care reform and much more likely to vote for Democratic House candidates than voters over the age of 30. For example, 60 percent of post-millennials wanted government to do more to solve the country's problems compared with 53 percent of millennials and 38 percent of other voters; 65 percent of post-millennials approved of President Obama's job performance compared with 60 percent of millennials and 42 percent of other voters; and 59 percent of post-millennials voted for a Democratic House candidate compared with 55 percent of millennials and 45 percent of other voters. Conclusion: Much Ado About Nothing? Stories of dramatic shifts in voter behavior from one election to the next make for exciting news copy. But claims about large swings in voter attitudes should generally be treated skeptically, especially when they are based on very limited evidence. In this case, the story of post-millennial voters becoming increasingly conservative and open to voting for Republican candidates clearly deserves to be taken with a large grain of salt especially since **other evidence appears to directly contradict these conclusions.**

**Romney Winning – General**

**Romney winning – multiple polls prove**

**Portnoy, 7/27/12** (Howard, “New tracking poll has Romney ahead of Obama by 5 points,” Examiner.com, http://www.examiner.com/article/new-tracking-poll-has-romney-ahead-of-obama-by-5-points)RK

It’s too early for Republicans to start popping corks or for Democrats to start hanging crepe, but a new Rasmussen Reports daily Presidential Tracking Poll should buoy the former and depress the latter. The survey shows Mitt Romney capturing **49% of the vote**, while President Obama enjoys support from 44% of the electorate. Taken in isolation the survey might be seen as an outlier. But a Gallup survey, released on Wednesday, seems to lend some external credence. It shows Democratic voting enthusiasm sharply down from 2008 and the same metric for Republicans markedly up. Whereas 61% of Dems claimed to be enthusiastic at the time of Obama’s first run, only 39% are enthusiastic now. For Republicans, the corresponding percentages are 35 and 51. The Rasmussen poll also gives Romney a 6-point advantage—49% to Obama’s 43%—on the question of which candidate is better equipped to handle the economy. Consistent with this trend are a government report released today suggesting a slowdown in GDP growth and a new low in consumer confidence for 2012. When asked about the best solution to the spurring economic growth, 21% of likely voters said they favor an increase in government spending, while three times as many, or 64%, believe the government should cut spending.

# Romney Winning - Fundraising

**Romney is winning the funding race now – that’s key to the election**

**Smiley 7/9** (Brett, writer for New York Magazine, “Romney Campaign’s June Fund-raising Haul Beats Obama’s by $35 Million,” July 7, 2012, NY Mag, http://nymag.com/daily/intel/2012/07/romneys-huge-june-fund-raising-haul.html)//PC

New campaign fund-raising figures reveal that Mitt Romney's campaign and the Republican National Committee pulled in an impressive $106.1 million in June, topping the Obama campaign's and the Democratic National Committee's mark of $71 million over the same period. The Democrats' haul is their best monthly figure this election cycle and 18 percent higher than May's draw according to The Wall Street Journal, while Romney's total is the best of the 2012 presidential campaign so far. While the respective fund-raising machines aren't exactly David and Goliath, an Obama campaign official has sounded the alarm.¶ Reuters reports that, based on federal disclosures Monday, Romney and the RNC have raised (at least) $389 million to date, a few shades under the $512 million Obama and the DNC have pulled in. But with the Obama campaign rapidly spending money to open offices in battleground states and on TV ads to counter negative ads funded by super-PACs, the cash advantage may have tipped to Romney. All of this doesn't consider the massive super-PAC contributions made by the wealthy and obscenely wealthy Romney supporters to groups including American Crossroads and Restore Our Future.¶ "This is no joke," Obama campaign's chief operating officer Ann Marie Habershaw wrote in an e-mail to supporters. "If we can't keep the money race close, it becomes that much harder to win in November."¶ The numbers indicate that Romney's campaign is building its house with much bigger bricks than Obama's. Reuters reports that nearly 80 percent of Romney's June contributions came from just 6 percent of the donations it received, much of them apparently maximum general election contributions in the amount of $2,500. And of the June haul, roughly $22.3 million, or about 20 percent, came in donations of $250 or less. Meanwhile for Obama, more than 98 percent of donations to the campaign in June were less than $250, with an average donation of $52.54. ¶ The Times reports that several top Obama donors said privately that Obama’s attacks on Romney’s private equity career and his criticisms of tax rates for the wealthy have made life difficult for those trying to get rich businesspeople to open their checkbooks for the president. And Obama has ruffled at least a few feathers with those attacks, too. “I just got back from Rhode Island on my boat,” said Obama fund-raiser R. Donahue Peebles, referencing criticism of Romney’s boating vacation last week in New Hampshire. “I can hold 12 people on my boat. I don’t feel that I’m out of touch with Americans or that I am a bad person. I find it offensive, and I’m a supporter.”¶ With the Democratic boat-owning bloc apparently miffed, it looks like Obama's campaign is going to have to continue squeezing supporters who wallow in diaper-infested pools.

**Republicans leading super-PAC fundraising**

**Geiger, 7/24/12** (Kim, “GOP 'super PACs' enjoy massive fundraising, cash advantage,” Los Angeles Times, http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-pn-gop-super-pacs-enjoy-massive-fundraising-cash-advantage-20120724,0,2738940.story)RK

WASHINGTON – Republican-aligned “super PACs” are headed into the final months of the 2012 campaign having outpaced super PACs on the left in fundraising by nearly three to one, enjoying a cash advantage that’s sure to have Democrats spooked. Even after a costly GOP presidential primary campaign, Republican-aligned super PACs ended June with almost $80 million in the bank – more than Democratic super PACs have raised in the entire campaign cycle, according to an analysis by the nonpartisan Sunlight Foundation. Democratic super PACs entered July with just less than $28 million cash on hand. The disparity could spell trouble for Democrats with time running out for the party’s wealthy donors to fill the gap. Although super PACs do not officially align themselves with either party, researchers at the Sunlight Foundation categorized each one based on the group’s spending patterns. Since the beginning of 2011, Republican-aligned super PACs have raised $227 million compared with less than $80 million for those supporting Democrats, the analysis found. The disparity was easier for Democrats to dismiss in the early months of the year, when the primary campaign led Republican super PACs to outspend Democratic super PACs by $90 million. But Republican super PACs have maintained their fundraising edge throughout the campaign cycle, building on the enthusiasm of wealthy donors whose willingness to write big checks appears endless. Meanwhile, Democratic super PACs have tried to keep pace with Republicans in advertising spending, despite a base that seems unable – or unwilling – to make up the fundraising difference as the general election nears. Democratic super PACs raised just $36.1 million from April through June, compared with Republican super PACs’ $69.4 million haul. Priorities USA Action, the super PAC dedicated to reelecting Obama, raised just $6.1 million in June and ended the month with $10.6 million cash on hand. It was the group's best month of the campaign. Restore Our Future, the super PAC supporting Mitt Romney’s candidacy, ended June with $21.6 million in the bank after raising $20.7 million that month.

Romney is ahead in fundraising

Overby 7/21 (Peter, NPR, 2012, “Romney Sprints Ahead In Race for Cash”, http://www.npr.org/2012/07/21/157145294/romney-sprints-ahead-in-race-for-cash)

The presidential campaign of Republican Mitt Romney surged ahead of President Obama last month in fundraising efforts. While Obama continued to get more money from small donors, those who give $200 or less, Romney showed new strength there. Also, big donors have enabled Romney to quickly build a strong cash reserve. At first glance, it seems that Obama has a nice cushion of cash. Obama for America, his campaign committee, reported almost $98 million cash-on-hand, compared to less than $23 million in the kitty at Romney for President. But that's not the whole story. Spending far outstripped fundraising last month on the Obama campaign, according to monthly reports filed Friday with the Federal Election Commission. At the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics, Bob Biersack compares 2012 with the contest four years ago, between Obama and Sen. John McCain. "The Obama campaign's about $42 .5 million behind where they were at the same time in 2008. Romney's about $12.5 million ahead of where McCain was through June of 2008," he says. The trend is even more dramatic when you look across the breadth of the Obama and Romney organizations.

**Romney will win – campaign funds**

**Blake 7/20** (Aaron, The Fix from the Washington Post, covers national politics at the Washington Post, where he writes regularly for the Fix, summa cum laude graduate of the University of Minnesota “Romney laps Obama in campaign cash,” July 20, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/romney-has-likely-passed-obama-in-campaign-cash/2012/07/20/gJQAISZayW\_blog.html?wprss=rss\_the-fix)//PC

Mitt Romney and the Republican National Committee have grown a more than $25 million cash advantage over President Obama, according to just-filed Federal Election Commission reports.¶ Romney; who trailed Obama by $90 million at the end of March, now leads the incumbent president $170 million to $144 million in cash on hand, thanks to a surge in GOP fundraising and heavy spending by the Democrats early in the 2012 campaign.¶ President Obama’s campaign spent $38 million on ads and $58 million overall in June, while Romney’s campaign spent less than half that and continue to build up its reserves for the fall campaign.¶ Obama’s campaign raised $46 million in June, including a $17 million transfer from a joint fundraising committee with the Democratic National Committee, but it spent $58 million and saw its cash on hand fall to $97.5 million.¶ That $97.5 million figure is far more than Romney’s official campaign had at the end of June: $22.5 million. But the Romney effort is stashing huge reserves in its joint fundraising committee — nearly $58 million — and the Republican National Committee has nearly $90 million on hand, meaning that between the three, the Romney effort has about $170 million in cash.¶ Obama, meanwhile, doesn’t have such large cash reserves in his joint committee or the DNC. His joint committee has just $9 million, and the DNC’s June report showed $37.5 million cash on hand.¶ Romney outraised Obama $106 million to $71 million in June — the second straight month he has done that.¶ Around the time Romney became the presumptive GOP nominee in early April, Obama and the Democrats had a $132 million to $42 million edge in cash on hand over Romney and the RNC.¶ Since then, though, Romney has outraised Obama, and Obama has spent heavily on a TV advertising blitz in key swing states

**Romney has a 3 to 1 funding advantage over Obama**

**Cillizza 7/23** (Chris, American political reporter for The Fix for the Washington Post, regular contributor to the Post on political issues, an MSNBC political analyst, “The scariest chart of the day for Democrats,” July 23, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/the-scariest-chart-of-the-day-for-democrats/2012/07/23/gJQAvu3y4W\_blog.html?wprss=rss\_the-fix)//PC

Democrats — from President Obama on down — have spent months worrying (publicly and privately) that the massive influx of cash to Republican-aligned super PACs could create a massive inequality in spending over the final months of the 2012 campaign.¶ Those fears are now well on their way to being realized as Republican super PACs continue to rake in sums well in excess of what their Democratic counterparts are collecting.¶ The Sunlight Foundation, which does great things with data visualization, did the math and graphed out the total amount of itemized — $200 and above — contributions to Democratic and Republican aligned super PACS since the start of 2011.¶ Here’s their chart:¶ Republican super PACs have brought in $228 million since January 2011 while Democratic super PACs have collected $80 million in that time. The Fix is no math major but that’s roughly a three to one advantage for conservatives.¶ That chasm is even more consequential when you consider that former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney and the Republican National Committee ended June with $170 million in the bank as compared to $144 million for President Obama and the Democratic National Committee.¶ It’s now an absolute certainty that Republicans — from Romney’s campaign to the RNC to super PACs — will outspend the Democratic combined money efforts between now and November 6. The only question that remains is how wide that gap will be — and whether it will be determinative in the final outcome.

**Romney has the funding advantage**

**Giroux and Salant 7/21** (\*Greg – Analyst for Bloomberg News, \*\*Jonathan D. – Political Reporter at Bloomberg News, “Obama Outspends Romney 2-1 With $43 Million in Funds for Ads,” July 21, 2012, Bloomberg, http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-07-20/obama-raises-45-dot-9-million-in-june-to-33-million-for-romney)//PC

Barack Obama has more money in his campaign bank account than Republican challenger Mitt Romney, and the president is using his funds early -- outspending the former Massachusetts governor by about 2-to-1 last month.¶ Obama entered July with $97.5 million in the bank, and used a part of it to run 35,347 television ads in the 14-day period ending July 16, according to New York-based Kantar Media’s CMAG. The Romney campaign, which began July with $22.5 million, aired 16,946 spots during that period. Since more than 97 percent of those commercials were negative, that meant voters saw twice as many campaign-funded ads attacking Romney rather than Obama.¶ Romney’s side has been able to take in more money than Obama’s during the last two months as both men raise money jointly with their political parties, which can take in larger donations than the candidate committees alone. The difference is that Obama can directly control his money, while Romney must rely more on party leaders.¶ “It is always better to have money controlled by the campaign, but the parties air spots that are consistent with the candidates’ messages,” said Tobe Berkovitz, a professor of communication at Boston University. “Party-run spots rarely cause problems for their candidates.”¶ Obama Spends¶ Obama continued to draw down his campaign account, spending $58.1 million last month with $43 million for advertising, including broadcast and online. Romney spent $27.5 million during the month, less than half as much as Obama, with $11.1 million going for media.¶ “President Obama’s campaign will never have a more substantial advertising advantage than it has had over the past few weeks, yet there is no evidence to suggest that the ballot has moved,” Romney’s pollster, Neil Newhouse, said in a July 16 memo.¶ Obama raised $45.9 million last month and has now taken in more than $307 million for his campaign. Romney brought in $33 million and has now raised more than $156 million.¶ Romney received $79,355 from employees of London-based Barclays Plc (BARC), whose chairman, chief executive officer and chief operating officer all resigned after the bank agreed to pay $456 million for manipulating the London interbank offered rate, or Libor, a benchmark interest rate. The former CEO, Robert Diamond, also dropped out as a co-host of a London fundraiser for Romney. A Barclays lobbyist, Patrick Durkin, is a Romney fundraiser.¶ Bank Contributions¶ Barclays was followed in contributions by employees of Morgan Stanley (MS) (MS), Bank of America Corp. (BAC) (BAC) and JPMorgan Chase & Co. (JPM) (JPM) Employees of those three companies and those of Goldman Sachs Group are the four biggest sources of contributions to Romney’s presidential campaign, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, a Washington-based research group that tracks campaign donations.¶ Employees of Microsoft Corp. (MSFT) (MSFT) and Google Inc. (GOOG) (GOOG), among the top four givers to Obama’s campaign to date, were his two biggest sources of donations last month, giving $41,124 and $38,086 respectively, according to a computer-assisted analysis of FEC data. IBM Corp. employees contributed $36,059.¶ Obama also released an updated list of his top fundraisers, adding 60 names to those who have raised more than $500,000 for his campaign, including Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley. Romney has refused to identify his top fundraisers except for the registered lobbyists he is required to report in FEC filings.¶ Combined Totals¶ The combined bank balances of the Romney campaign committee, the Republican National Committee and the joint fundraising committee totaled $170 million at the end of June, compared with $144 million for Obama’s side. While Obama’s campaign accounts for 68 percent of the money his side has to spend, Romney directly controls only 13 percent of his funds.¶ Romney’s money advantage increases when super-political action committees are included. Restore Our Future, the pro- Romney super-PAC, had $21.6 million in the bank at the end of June. American Crossroads, which is also supporting Romney, had a balance of $31.5 million.¶ Priorities USA Action, the super-PAC formed by former Obama aides, reported $2.8 million cash on hand.¶ “As long as the super-PAC and the parties stick with a message similar to the candidate they support, then Romney has the money advantage,” said David Primo, a political science professor at the University of Rochester in New York. “The danger for Romney is that one of the super-PACs supporting him pursues an alternative and harmful strategy, causing the additional funding to hurt, not help.”¶ Adelson Donations¶ Restore Our Future amassed $20.7 million in June, largely through big checks from familiar Republican donors. Las Vegas casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson and his wife gave $10 million. The Adelson family had supported Newt Gingrich’s failed run for the Republican nomination, with $21.5 million in contributions to a super-PAC that backed the former U.S. House speaker’s candidacy.¶ Houston home builder Bob Perry gave $2 million, bringing his total donations to $6 million. William Koch, the brother of energy billionaires David and Charles Koch, contributed $1 million through his Oxbow Carbon LLC. Through personal checks and his companies, William Koch has donated $3 million in all.¶ Perry also gave $2 million to American Crossroads, co- founded by two former aides to President George W. Bush, Karl Rove and Ed Gillespie, the latter now an adviser to Romney. He earlier gave $2.5 million to the super-PAC. American Crossroads raised $5.8 million last month.¶ Priorities USA Action raised $6.2 million. Irwin Jacobs, the former chairman of Qualcomm Inc. (QCOM) (QCOM), contributed $2 million, and actor Morgan Freeman donated $1 million.

# Romney Winning - Polls

Romney will with the election – biggest lead in a month by either president

Rasmussen Reports 7/27 (a media company specializing in the collection, publication and distribution of public opinion information, 2012, Daily Presidential Tracking Poll, Politics, http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\_content/politics/obama\_administration/daily\_presidential\_tracking\_poll)

The Rasmussen Reports daily Presidential Tracking Poll for Friday shows Mitt Romney attracting 49% of the vote, while President Obama earns support from 44%. Three percent (3%) prefer some other candidate, and four percent (4%) are undecided.

The numbers are similar to the 49% to 43% advantage Romney enjoys on the question of who is trusted more to handle the economy.

Seventy percent (70%) of voters see Obama as politically liberal, while 67% see Romney as a conservative. However, the president is seen as more extreme ideologically. Forty-three percent (43%) see him as Very Liberal, while just 24% believe Romney is Very Conservative. Most voters are either politically Moderate or Somewhat Conservative. Sixty-two percent (62%) place Romney in that group while just 25% say the same for Obama.

Matchup results are updated daily at 9:30 a.m. Eastern (sign up for free daily e-mail update).

Romney’s five-point advantage is the largest enjoyed by either candidate in just over a month. As with any such change in the race, it remains to be seen whether it marks a lasting shift or is merely statistical noise.

**Romney Winning – Economy**

**Obama will lose – economy**

**Crutsinger, 7/27/12** (Martin, “Unemployment Could Stay High as US Economy Slows,” ABC News, http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/us-economic-growth-slowed-15-pct-rate-q2-16868245)RK

High unemployment isn't going away — not as long as the economy grows as slowly as it did in the April-June quarter. Weak consumer spending held growth to an annual rate of just 1.5 percent, even less than the 2 percent rate in the first quarter. And few expect the economy to accelerate in the second half of the year as Europe's financial woes and a U.S. budget crisis restrain businesses and consumers. The growth estimate Friday from the government suggested that the U.S. economy could be at risk of stalling three years after the recession ended. Economists generally say even 2 percent annual growth would add only about 90,000 jobs a month. That's too few to keep up with population growth and drive down the unemployment rate, which is stuck at 8.2 percent. The figures came in the Commerce Department's quarterly report on gross domestic product. GDP measures the country's total output of goods and services, from the purchase of a cup of coffee to the sale of fighter jets. "The main takeaway from today's report, the specifics aside, is that the U.S. economy is barely growing," said Dan Greenhaus, chief economic strategist at BTIG LLC. "It's no wonder the unemployment rate cannot move lower." Sal Guatieri, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets, expects the unemployment rate to end this year — and next year — at 8.3 percent. He said he foresees no decline in unemployment because of how tepid he thinks economic growth will remain: 2.2 percent for all of 2012 and 2 percent for 2013. Stocks rose as investors shrugged off the sluggish U.S growth and focused instead on pledges from European leaders to preserve the union of the 17 countries that use the euro. The Dow Jones industrial average closed up more than 187 points. Broader indexes also jumped. The lackluster economy is raising pressure on President Barack Obama in his re-election fight with Mitt Romney, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee. But few think the Fed, the White House or Congress can or will do anything soon that might rejuvenate the economy quickly. Many lawmakers, for example, refuse to increase federal spending in light of historically large budget deficits. No president since Franklin D. Roosevelt, in the depths of the Great Depression, has been re-elected when the unemployment rate exceeded 8 percent. Presidents Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush were ousted when unemployment was well below 8 percent. Polls show that management of the economy is the only issue on which those surveyed express more confidence in Romney, with his business background, than Obama.

**Romney Winning/Gaining**

**Obama will lose now – economy is the key factor**

**Stein, 7/18/12** (Sam, “Obama Approval Rating Dragged Down By Economy, New Poll Shows,” The Huffington Post, 07/18/12, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/18/obama-approval-rating-economy\_n\_1684611.html)RK

President Barack Obama trails Mitt Romney, 47 percent to 46 percent. After weeks of bad news for the presumptive Republican nominee, the poll result would seem to be unexpectedly tight. And the most logical explanation for why Obama has failed to open up a national lead seems to rest on the economic polling data. Romney leads Obama among respondents by a margin of 49 percent to 41 percent on who can best handle the economy and jobs. People who think the economy is getting better dropped from 33 percent in April **to 24 percent now** -- owed largely to a series of bad jobs reports. **Obama** is perceived as the candidate who can best help the middle class, with 52 percent citing the president on that question, including 15 percent of Republicans. But even then, he **gets a heaping of blame for not turning the economy around.** Almost two-thirds of respondents said the president's policies contributed to the economic downturn. Only 17 percent of respondents said the president's policies on the economy were "improving it now." The economy, in short, **is drowning out the political conversation** surrounding Romney's private equity career, at least on the national level. Romney's years at Bain Capital made 14 percent of voters more likely to vote for him and 23 percent less likely to vote for him. A fuller 60 percent of voters said it didn't matter. Romney's wealth made 5 percent of voters more likely to vote for him, 20 percent of voters less likely to vote for him, and didn't matter to 73 percent.

**Economy trumps everything – means Obama will lose**

**Ward, 7/18/12** (Jon, “Mitt Romney Adviser Says Sluggish Economy Is 'Riptide Taking Obama Out To Sea',” Huffington Post, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/18/mitt-romney-economy-obama_n_1684850.html)RK>

The Romney campaign sent the poll to reporters, touting it as evidence that the Obama campaign's attacks on the Republican have failed. A senior Romney campaign official made the point more explicitly to The Huffington Post, stressing that voters consider issues not related to the economy **to be distractions.** "The economy is a great riptide that is taking Obama out to sea. And they're going around pouring sand all over the beach, but they're not teaching him how to swim," said the Romney aide, spoke about the campaign's strategic thinking on the condition of anonymity. "Until they start talking about what this race is about, its all chaff." A few hours after Romney himself said he found calls for him to release more than two years of tax returns "amusing," the campaign official said continued news coverage of the tax return issue doesn't worry them. "This race is not controlled by what's in the news," the adviser said. Voters, the adviser said, are most concerned with the economy, and if media coverage doesn't speak to that, then they tune it out. "You don't turn on CNN to see how the war is going," the campaign aide said. The New York Times/CBS News survey released late Wednesday backed up that interpretation to some degree. The economy and jobs were "extremely important" to 54 percent of the 1,089 adults surveyed, **the highest percentage of any issue.** Second, at 46 percent, was health care, followed by the federal budget and deficit at 43 percent. The survey showed Romney leading Obama head-to-head, 47 percent to 46 percent. More importantly, the poll showed that the sluggish economy -- which has ground to a halt after modest growth earlier in the year -- is **dragging down Obama**'s job approval and overshadowing the relentless and withering broadsides against Romney over the past week by the Obama campaign. Opinions of Obama's handling of the economy have gone south since April, with approval dropping five percentage points from 44 percent to 39 percent, and disapproval rising from 48 percent to 55 percent. In addition, those surveyed said they trusted Romney to do a better job on the economy and jobs, 49 percent to 41 percent. And even after a week of nonstop news coverage of Obama campaign attacks on Romney's career at Bain Capital and loud calls for the Republican to release more tax returns, three out of five respondents said Romney's private equity career made no difference to their vote, while only one out of five said it made them less likely to vote for Romney.

**Obama’s falling in Virginia now**

**Stein, 7/19/12** (Sam, “Mitt Romney Ties It Up In Virginia: Poll,” The Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/19/mitt-romney-virginia\_n\_1685486.html)RK

Wednesday night's CBS/New York Times poll showing President Barack Obama in a deadlocked race against Mitt Romney is being treated as a cause for some alarm for his re-election campaign. But this morning's Quinnipiac University poll out of Virginia should, in all likelihood, make the team in Chicago even more nervous. Republican challenger Mitt Romney wipes out President Barack Obama’s lead in Virginia and the two candidates are deadlocked 44 – 44 percent in the race for the Old Dominion’s 13 electoral votes, according to a Quinnipiac University poll released today. This compares to a 50 – 42 percent lead for President Obama in a March 20 survey by the independent Quinnipiac University and a 47 – 42 percent Obama lead June 7. The takeaway from this poll is similar to the one drawn from the CBS/New York Times data: the **economic news is overwhelming everything else**, including the attacks on Mitt Romney's tenure at Bain Capital and his refusal to release his tax returns. By a narrow 47 – 44 percent, voters say Romney would do a better job on the economy. The difference is that the Obama campaign can live with the idea that the Bain capital attacks don't resonate nationally. It is, however, deeply invested in them working in **critical swing states like Virginia.**

**Romney Losing Nevada**

**Romney behind in Nevada**

**Murray, 30/5/12** (Sara, “Election 2012: Presidential Challenger Chases Key Nevada Votes,” Wall Street Journal, ProQuest)RK

Mitt Romney is playing catch-up in Nevada, where a damaged economy offers him a chance to pick up crucial electoral votes but his skimpy campaign organization sits uneasily beside a local Republican Party dominated by Ron Paul supporters. Mr. Romney, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, is walking a narrow path toward the 270 electoral votes needed for victory this fall. He **will have to flip states -- such as Nevada**, which has six votes -- that President Barack Obama won in 2008. Yet a visit Tuesday was his first to the state since early February, when he easily won Nevada's caucuses with 50% of the vote, and comes weeks after Mr. Obama stopped in the state to trumpet housing policies aimed at preventing foreclosures. So the Romney team is circumventing the state party by expanding a joint campaign operation with the Republican National Committee. It is ramping up its outreach to Hispanics and preparing to announce next month a team of elected officials that will help as surrogates. Outside groups are chipping in. During his visit, Mr. Romney criticized the president's handling of the economy, particularly the times Mr. Obama has warned corporations and families about spending money in Las Vegas instead of being more fiscally responsible. "I'm counting on you guys to go out there and make sure that you elect a president who tells people to come to Las Vegas, not to stay away from Las Vegas," he said. Mr. Romney's message that Mr. Obama's economic policies have failed may be well suited to a state with 11.7% unemployment -- the highest in the nation -- along with widespread mortgage foreclosures and personal bankruptcies. "The thing that's obviously working for him here is the economy," said David Damore, a political-science professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. But "the Republicans have absolutely no infrastructure in the state," he said. That bare-bones operation may signal challenges the Romney team will face elsewhere. Looking at a brutal primary schedule last year, the campaign scrimped. A handful of staffers ran each campaign, and when each race ended, they closed up shop and moved on to the next. Democrats have a robust operation in Nevada. The Obama campaign, parts of which remain from 2008, can also rely on Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's grass-roots organization, set up ahead of the 2010 midterm elections amid fiery anti-incumbent sentiment. Despite the sluggish economic recovery, the Obama campaign says its economic message will resonate with voters. "The president is talking about jobs in the economy, where his opponent has a history of firing people and sending jobs overseas," said Roberta Lange, head of the Nevada Democratic Party. Darren Littell, a spokesman for Team Nevada, the Romney campaign's joint effort with the RNC, said Nevada has been "hit harder than any other state" and that Mr. Obama "just hasn't lived up to the promise. I think that folks are going to remember that." Mormon voters -- whose faith Mr. Romney shares and who make up 11% of the state's population and reliably turn out to vote -- may buoy his efforts. But he has to expand his appeal to other voters and check the president's advantage with Hispanics, who make up more than a quarter of the state's population. Election watchers have put the Silver State in the tossup category. Although Mr. Obama won it handily in 2008, George W. Bush notched victories there in 2000 and 2004. Mr. Romney doesn't have anything like that organization, and Mr. Paul's supporters have snapped up Republican Party leadership positions at the state and county levels. Outside conservative groups have attempted to help the GOP catch up in Nevada. Crossroads GPS has launched a $25 million television-ad blitz with spots attacking the president in states including Nevada. Americans for Prosperity has picked up the ground-game side, identifying and registering voters. Earlier this month, Restore Our Future, the super PAC that supports Mr. Romney, ran ads in swing states, Nevada among them. Statewide, there are about 20% more registered Democrats than Republicans.

**A2 Polls - Generic**

**There are too many factors for polls to be accurate**

**Hillygus, 11** – D. Sunshine, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Initiative on Survey Methodology at Duke University (“The Evolution of Election Polling in the United States,” Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. 75, no. 5, Oxford Journals)RK

Of course, the very task of assessing accuracy raises questions about how best to measure it. Should a forecast be called “accurate” if it correctly predicts the winner, the winner’s vote share, or the margin of victory? In 1996, CBS News correctly predicted Clinton as the winner, but they forecast an 18-percent margin of victory over Dole, rather than the 8 percent that he actually received. In contrast, Gallup was off by just 2 percentage points in predicting the margin of victory in 2000, but they predicted the wrong winner of the popular vote because they overestimated support for minor-party candidates. In 2004, Fox News nailed Kerry’s vote share of 48 percent, but they incorrectly predicted him to be the winner. As these examples make clear, **conclusions about accuracy vary based on the particular yardstick used**, and they can be affected by factors like **sample size,** treatment of **undecided** and minor-party **voters,** and field **dates** (Blumenthal 2008). In the aftermath of the 1948 polling debacle, a group of social scientists—led by Frederick Mosteller—outlined eight different metrics for assessing polling accuracy (Mosteller et al. 1949); more recently, Martin, Traugott, and Kennedy (2005) have added a ninth. Most commonly used are “Mosteller Measure 3,”, the average absolute error on all major candidates between the prediction and the actual results, and “Mosteller Measure 5,” the absolute value of the difference between the margin separating the two leading candidates in the poll and the difference in their margins in the actual vote. Increasingly, scholars are also using Martin et al.’s predictive accuracy measure, which is based on the natural logarithm of the odds ratio of the outcome in the poll and the outcome in the election. By all measures, 2008 was considered a banner year for the polling industry and, by some metrics, could be labeled the most accurate since 1956 (Panagopoulos 2009). As a whole, the polling industry has a strong track record (Traugott 2005), but there have been some embarrassing failures throughout history. Most famously, the polls predicted that Republican Thomas Dewey would beat incumbent Democratic president Harry Truman in the 1948 election. More recently, the polls got it wrong in the 2008 election when they predicted that Barack Obama would defeat Hillary Clinton in the New Hampshire Democratic primary. Predicting election outcomes is a difficult and high-stakes business, so it is important to understand why some polls get it right and some get it wrong. Like any survey, the quality of predictions can be affected by sampling error and nonsampling errors, including coverage error, nonresponse error, measurement error, processing error, and adjustment error (Groves et al. 2009). It is most recognized that random sampling error can produce fluctuations in polling estimates based on chance alone, simply because a poll includes a sample of respondents rather than the full population. Such error is expressed with the margin of error that is typically reported alongside polling estimates, and the simple (but costly) solution is to increase the sample size. Of greater concern are the systemic errors introduced by the pollsters (or analysts) and respondents that can bias the election forecasts. Pollsters must make a variety of design decisions—about the mode, timing, sampling method, question formulation, weighting, etc.—and each of these methodological decisions can potentially bias the results. Research has found, for instance, that the number and type (weekend vs. weekday) of days in the field were associated with predictive accuracy, reflecting nonresponse bias (Lau 1994). Mokrzycki, Keeter, and Kennedy (2009) found that telephone polls excluding cell-phone-only households had a slight bias against the Democratic candidates, an illustration of coverage bias. Highlighting the importance of measurement error, Crespi and Morris (1984) demonstrated that question order produced different estimates of candidate support. As other essays in this issue discuss in more detail, there are a wide variety of other methodological decisions that can directly affect data quality; for pre-election polling, the definition of likely voters and the treatment of undecided voters are of particular concern. Election forecasts can go astray simply because they must predict future behavior. In his 1937 essay, Crossley wrote that “The greatest difficulty of all is the fact that the election itself is not a census, but an application of the sampling principle. Every poll is therefore a sample of a sample” (p. 25). In other words, it is an unknown population to whom pollsters are trying to generalize because we do not know who will show up on Election Day. Different elections can have different cross-sections of voters, a point highlighted in 2008 when an unusually large proportion of minorities and young people turned out to vote for Barack Obama. As such, one of the most consequential methodological decisions made by the pollster or analyst is the selection of likely voters. Forecasts can vary wildly based on the particular method used to define the population of expected voters (Crespi 1988). Erikson, Panagopolous, and Wlezien (2004) found, for instance, that a 19-point swing in support from Gore to Bush in the 2000 presidential campaign was an artifact of Gallup’s likely-voter screen. Every survey firm has its own (often proprietary) method for defining likely voters, typically relying on self-reported measures of voter registration or vote history, but rarely do those models engage the most up-to-date scholarly research on political participation. For instance, pollsters typically use a single likely-voter model for the entire country, but political science research has shown that state-level factors such as registration requirements, early voting rules, and competitiveness can affect an individual’s likelihood of voting. Once an assumption is made about likely voters, the task of the pre-election poll is to predict how voters will cast their ballots. The standard polling question asks, “If the election were being held today, for whom would you vote?” In making a forecast, pollsters or analysts must make a decision about how to deal with the respondents who say they are undecided, a pool of voters that varies based on the timing of the poll and the methodology used (Fenwick et al. 1982). Hoek and Gendall (1997) found that reducing the proportion of undecided voters through various assignment mechanisms did not necessarily improve the accuracy of estimates. Thus, while it is widely recognized that undecided respondents contribute to polling error, there is still no consensus about what to do with them. Respondents are another source of error in pre-election polls. An accurate election prediction relies on respondents providing honest answers to the turnout and vote intention questions. Extensive research has documented overreporting of turnout (and turnout intention), primarily the result of social desirability bias (e.g., Belli et al. 1999). In 2008, the presence of an African American on the ticket increased concern that respondents would lie to pollsters about their vote preference. Previous elections had found evidence of a “Bradley effect,” in which pre-election polls overestimate support for a black candidate because white voters tell pollsters they are undecided or will support the black candidate when they do not intend to do so. In the end, research found no evidence that polls systematically overestimated Obama support (Hopkins 2009); in fact, polls were more likely to underestimate support for Obama, likely reflecting higher turnout among groups often not considered likely voters (Silver 2008). Future research should consider the variety of other reasons that respondents might not give incomplete or untruthful answers to the vote choice questions, such as privacy concerns or respondent competence. Polling predictions can also be jeopardized by individuals changing their minds about their turnout and vote intention between the time of the survey interview and Election Day. Although scholarly research often emphasizes the stability of vote intention, panel data has found that **more than 40 percent of respondents** change their vote intention at least once during the campaign (Hillygus and Shields 2008). There remains debate, however, about the source of these individual-level dynamics. Gelman and King (1993) argued that movements in poll numbers reflect predictable movement toward the fundamentals, but others have shown that specific campaign events produce movements in the polls (Johnston et al. 1992). In an analysis of the dynamics of pre-election polling, Wlezein and Erikson (2002) attributed as much as 50 percent of the variability in poll numbers simply to sampling error, but they also found that campaign shocks produced real movements—early in the campaign the effects dissipated quickly, but there were smaller, persistent shocks late in the campaign. There remains much to be learned about who in the electorate is most likely to change their minds, when they are most likely to do so, and in response to what stimuli, and such findings will have clear implications for election forecasting. Voter instability is considered the primary explanation for the polling debacle of 1948. Pollsters called the election for Dewey weeks before the election, but a sizeable chunk of voters changed their vote and turnout intention in the final weeks, and they overwhelmingly supported Truman (Crespi 1988). To minimize sources of error, pollsters now continue to do election polling as late as the night before the election, and it is this final poll that is used in the post-election assessments of polling accuracy.5 Unfortunately, it is often difficult to attribute differences in predictions across pollsters to any one factor because of the sheer number of design decisions that are made by each survey firm. One of the greatest obstacles to a better understanding of variation in polling predictions is the lack of methodological transparency. An American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) committee examining the performance of polls in the 2008 primaries ultimately concluded that they lacked sufficient information to fully assess what went wrong in New Hampshire (Traugott et al. 2009). The experience of the committee helped invigorate a new transparency initiative that urges disclosure of methodological decisions. AAPOR president Peter Miller explained: Despite decades of work, transparency in public opinion and survey research remains an elusive goal. Often it remains too difficult to get information about how surveys are conducted. Too many researchers do not know how to document their work, or are reluctant to disclose their methods for fear of criticism by non-transparent competitors. Too many significant questions about survey practice remain unaddressed because getting information about how studies are done is onerous or impossible. Too many members of the public have become cynical about survey research because they do not understand how different methods underlie conflicting findings.6 In a world in which there is more variation in polling methodologies, it is more important than ever for survey quality to be evaluated. And this is only possible with methodological transparency. The importance of transparency was recently highlighted by two separate cases in which polling firms were found to have made up or manipulated released survey results during the 2008 election.7

**Model based predictions aren’t accurate**

**Hillygus, 11** – D. Sunshine, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Initiative on Survey Methodology at Duke University (“The Evolution of Election Polling in the United States,” Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. 75, no. 5, Oxford Journals)RK

One criticism of these models is that, like the national-poll-based forecasts, they typically predict the two-party popular vote rather than the Electoral College outcome. Given the two-party system of the United States, the popular vote typically falls within a rather narrow range of values. A naïve prediction based on a coin toss would predict a 50-percent vote share, which gets pretty close to the right answer in many election years. Another criticism is that once we account for the confidence intervals around the point estimate, it becomes evident that most models predict a **wide range of possible outcomes,** including victory by the opposing candidate (Lewis-Beck 2005). There are only a handful of presidential elections for which the necessary aggregate data are available to estimate the statistical models, so predictions are **inherently imprecise.** Moreover, according to Greene (1993), the tendency for models to be fitted to previous outcomes—that is, selecting model specification based on past elections—means that the models **underestimate the true level of uncertainty.** Vavreck (2009) argued that economic models have sometimes failed because they have not taken into account the content of the campaign, especially the candidates’ messages about the economy and their attention to other issues.

**A2 Polls – Too Far Away**

**Election still too far away for polls to matter**

**Blumental, 7/18/12** – Mark, (“Likely Voter Polls: Mitt Romney's Hidden Edge?” Huffington Post, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/18/mitt-romney-polls_n_1680827.html)RK>

Another reason not to obsess over the relatively small differences between registered and likely voter samples is that polls taken before the party conventions remain imperfect predictors of the ultimate outcome. Political scientists Chris Wlezien and Bob Erikson have examined the issue for "The Timeline of Presidential Election Campaigns," their forthcoming book on election forecasting. A chart from their book (reproduced below with permission) shows that the predictive power of head-to-head polls will rise significantly after the party conventions, but remains more iffy now, more than 110 days before the election. [Graphic Omitted] A look back at polling trends in recent elections explains why. In almost every election dating back to 1980, the margins separating the top candidates in horse race polls **shifted significantly after the party conventions.** Only in 1996 did those margins remain roughly the same throughout the year. In other years, the shifts in voter preferences that occurred after the party conventions, shifts that have benefited both Democratic and Republican candidates, would have overwhelmed the relatively modest differences that earlier likely voter screens would have produced. In the end, if all pollsters applied likely voter screens right now, Romney's numbers would be slightly better, but there is a long way to go before any horse race poll should be considered an accurate forecast of the outcome.

**National polls don’t predict anything**

**Silver, 7/19/12** – Nate, statistician and manager of five thirty-eight (“Better Numbers for Romney in Virginia,” NY Times, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/)RK

Most of the action on Wednesday was in the state polls. An NPR national survey showed Mr. Obama two points ahead nationally, right in line with how our model already saw the race. The national tracking polls **haven’t shown a consistent enough trend** recently to be attention-worthy, but there were a half-dozen polls released at the state level.

**A2 Polls – Biased For Obama**

**Polls are biased toward Obama – Romney will win**

**Geraghty, 7/13/12** (Jim, “Why Are So Many Pollsters Oversampling Democrats?” The National Review Online, http://www.nationalreview.com/campaign-spot/309347/why-are-so-many-pollsters-oversampling-democrats)RK

My regular correspondent Number-Cruncher checks in, groaning about the latest Pew poll and that organization’s strange habit of including an unrealistic percentage of Democrats in their sample. The latest one from Pew poll is a shining example of why our side gets so frustrated with polls. Every time a Pew poll comes out, the numbers appear out of whack. Of course if you are a number-cruncher and look to the cross-tabs, the results are clearly flawed. Pew, to its credit, tells us its history since 1988. Basically in 1988 they did a good job, calling the race almost perfectly, possibly even overestimating Bush support by 0.4% (keep in mind they round so 50-42 could be 7.6%). But since then, their results have been downhill. Starting in 1992, EVERY Pew poll appears to lean to one direction — always towards the Democrat, and by an average of more than 5 percentage points. Worse this is a reflection of the “final” poll which even the Democratic firm, Public Policy Polling, usually gets right. October 1988 — Bush 50 Dukakis 42; Actual Result Bush +7.6 (Call this one spot on.) Late October 1992 — Clinton 44 Bush 34; Actual Result :Clinton +5.5 (Skew against Republican candidate +5.5) November 1996 — Clinton +51 Dole 32; Actual Result Clinton +8.5 (Skew against Republican candidate +10.5) November 2000 — Gore 45; Bush 41 (Skew against Republican Candidate +3.5) November 2004 — Kerry 46; Bush 45 (Skew against Republican Candidate +3.4) November 2008 — Obama 50 McCain 39 (Skew against Republican + 3.8) After being wrong in the same direction so consistently, wouldn’t you think that Pew might attempt to adjust their sampling techniques to adjust their techniques to avoid under-sampling Republican voters? Keep in mind the polls I have highlighted are the last polls in the race. I find it interesting that not one of their poll statisticians came out and said, ‘Boss, these results look whacked out because the electorate is going to be more than 24 percent Republican, and self-identified Democrats aren’t going to outpace Republicans by 9 percentage points.’ The Democrats couldn’t even reach that margin in 2008 . . . and you wonder why so many people think Obama is going to win. Didn’t Einstein once say the definition of insanity was “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”. So I ask are the people at Pew insane or just biased? \*\*\*\* On another polling annoyance, I turn to your favorite punching bag PPP-D. Here is the trend with PPP-D. They do a terrific job polling our primaries (this is not sarcasm). Their closing polls are usually okay. But their tracks, should be involving a Republican versus Democrat race be viewed with healthy skepticism. The latest poll release in NC showing Obama +1 indicated a Democrat advantage of +12. I don’t know what they are smoking over there but I want some (just kidding) . . . As I tracking every public poll, I have found it amazing on how many pollsters are oversampling Democrats. On average, every poll is indicating a partisan ID similar to 2008. Based on my analysis, the average gap is +6.4% Democrat which compares to the +7% which was in 2008. Alas, for the RCP poll average to be correct you have to assume the self-identified party preference turnout will be similar to 2008, if the turnout is similar to 2004 or 2000 or 2010, Obama’s polling leads may as well be part of his “story telling.” For the pollsters that look at preference, Rasmussen has indicated that the self-identified party ID (for Adults – not likely voters) is about +1.4% Republican. Based on my track **if the election were held today Romney wins by 5 percentage points.** I’ll make a quite modest defense of PPP on North Carolina, in noting that there are a lot of conservatives down there who are still registered Democrats. The margin in the 2008 exit polls was 42 percent Democrat, 31 percent Republican. According to the latest voter-registration statistics, the state has 2,729,427 registered Democrats (43.4 percent) 1,972,428 registered Republicans (31.3 percent) and 6,284,428 total registered voters. Of course, not all registered voters actually cast ballots each year, and quite a few of those registered Democrats are pretty conservative. So yes, D+12 is probably too disproportionate, but the parties will probably not be evenly split on Election Day, even if Romney wins handily.

**Polls are biased against the GOP**

**Blumental, 7/18/12** – Mark, (“Likely Voter Polls: Mitt Romney's Hidden Edge?” Huffington Post, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/18/mitt-romney-polls_n_1680827.html)RK>

WASHINGTON -- Are national pollsters oversampling Democrats? That's a charge made by some conservative pundits, and they may have a point: If the most recent polls could accurately predict which self-identified registered voters actually would cast ballots in November, their horse race numbers on the presidential election likely would tip a few points more Republican. Nevertheless, pollsters generally are reluctant to impose their educated guesses about voter turnout on their results at this stage of the race. That hesitation, and the reasons for it, reveal important details about the assumptions pollsters make and about the limitations of horse race polls generally. Consider the criticism leveled at the Pew Research Center poll released last week that showed President Barack Obama leading presumptive Republican nominee Mitt Romney by a seven-point margin (50 to 43 percent) among 2,373 registered voters. Some conservative pundits attacked the survey for a sample they said included too many Democrats. A correspondent quoted by National Review contributor Jim Geraghty took the critique a step further, claiming that "every" final pre-election poll conducted by Pew Research since 1992 "appears to lean to one direction -- always toward the Democrat, and by an average of more than 5 percentage points." The biggest flaw in that argument is that it focuses only on results among registered voters released by Pew Research and overlooks Pew's final poll results released since 1996 among respondents deemed most likely to vote. In those four presidential elections, the Pew Research likely voter subgroup has been both more Republican in its composition than the registered voter sample, and a generally accurate forecast of the eventual result. [Graphic Omitted] The consistent difference between the registered and likely voter samples raises the question: If likely voter screens applied at the end of the campaign nudged the horse race numbers in a more accurate (and more Republican) direction, why not apply such screens now? The historical pattern of voter screens producing more Republican results remains as valid as ever. For example, when IPSOS pollster Chris Jackson used a likely voter screen to narrow April and May samples, he found that a 7 percentage point Obama lead over Romney among registered voters (42 to 35 percent) narrowed to just three points among the most likely to vote (46 to 43 percent). Similarly, the Pew Research Center has reported that Republicans held a significant advantage throughout 2012 on measures of voter engagement. On its most recent survey, for example, Pew found that Romney supporters were more likely than Obama supporters to say they had given quite a lot of thought to the election (70 percent versus 62 percent).

**A2 Polls Biased For Obama**

**Bias against Republicans is small**

**Silver, 7/19/12** – Nate, statistician and manager of five thirty-eight (“Does Romney Have an Edge From Likely Voter Polls?,” NY Times, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/19/does-romney-have-an-edge-from-likely-voter-polls/#more-32315)RK

But it would also be possible to overestimate how much difference this might make. In the past six presidential election years, the shift to likely voter models has always helped the Republican candidate, **but the difference has also always been small**, usually amounting to a net of one or two percentage points in the margin between the two candidates. There’s also another important question to answer: Are likely voter polls actually more accurate than registered voter ones? To study this, I looked for as many instances as I could in our polling database for when pollsters included both registered voter and likely voter numbers in the same survey release. In other words, I looked for cases where the pollster said “Michael Dukakis leads George Bush by two points among registered voters, but trails him by one point among likely voters.” But we’re not comparing, say, a Quinnipiac University survey of registered voters with a Rasmussen Reports survey of likely voters. We want cases where the same polling firm released both sets of numbers at the same time. This is the optimal way to study this problem, in my view. The “house effects” that different polling firms exhibit can be substantial. Each cycle, some pollsters will have results that are consistently more favorable to either the Democratic or Republican candidate than the consensus of surveys, even before applying their likely voter adjustment. Often, these effects are fairly large — three percentage points in one direction or another, and occasionally more — so they can swamp any impact from the use of a likely voter model. These house effects could lead you to falsely attribute the differences to the use of a likely voter model when instead they have some other cause. Unfortunately, polling firms are not always in the habit of releasing both registered voter and likely voter numbers in the same survey, even though this gives you a lot more of an idea about the assumptions behind the poll. (Perhaps a few polling firms would prefer that you not know how the sausage was made.) Moreover, in some cases where polling firms have released this data, it has been lost to the ages: polling databases sometimes preserve only the likely voter number. Still, we have a reasonably robust database of polls that did print both sets of numbers. The database includes national and state surveys. The key is in how the two sets of numbers, the registered voter and likely voter results, compare with each other, rather than what they are in any absolute sense. As you can see from the chart below, they tend to follow a pretty consistent pattern. Over the past six presidential election cycles, likely voter polls have been 0.7 points to 2.5 points more favorable to the Republican candidate than registered voter polls. If you look at the four years in which our database has the most robust coverage (1992, 2000, 2004 and 2008), the band of outcomes has been even narrower. The likely voter models shifted the results to the Republican candidate by a net of 1.1 percentage points to 2.1 percentage points. Why do Republicans have this advantage? Because, for many years, the demographic groups that have tended to vote Republican have also tended to have demographic characteristics — for instance, being older, whiter and wealthier — that correlate with having a higher propensity to vote. At the same time, **it is probably not realistic to expect large shifts** in the numbers in presidential election years. In those years, 83 percent to 90 percent of Americans who say they are registered to vote claim to have actually voted. Those numbers may be a pinch high since voters can exaggerate their propensity to vote, as well as their propensity to be registered. But the actual figure is probably about 80 percent. With these relatively strong participation rates, polling firms should generally not be removing all that many registered voters from their pool when they draw up their sample of likely voters, so the partisan advantage for one or another candidate isn’t likely to change all that much. Midterm election years, when voting participation is much lower, are a different story, and can produce much larger skews. In 2010, for instance, likely voter polls produced a net swing to Republican candidates of about six points. There have also been some midterm election years where, in contrast to the trend in presidential election years, the shift to likely voter models helped Democrats by a point or so. But the results have been pretty consistent in presidential election years: a shift of one or two points toward the Republican candidate has been typical. The way our forecast model accounts for this is to default to applying a shift of 1.5 percentage points toward the Republican candidate whenever it encounters a registered voter poll. This default estimate may change once we get a sufficient number of polls that present a direct comparison of likely and registered voter numbers. So far, we have not had very many of these surveys, so the model has not shifted very far from the default. (It is now giving Mr. Romney a 1.6-point push when it encounters a registered voter poll.) But this may be putting the cart before the horse. Are pollsters actually successful at predicting who will vote and who won’t? Are the likely voter polls truly more accurate? My research suggests that they generally are, but it isn’t a slam dunk. In measuring the difference between the actual popular vote margin between the Democratic and Republican candidates and the one implied by the poll, likely voter polls were more accurate in 1992, 1996, 2004 and 2008, while registered voter polls were a bit better in 1988 and 2000. On average over the past six presidential cycles, likely voter models have missed the final margin between the candidates (in their state or in the country as a whole, depending on where they surveyed) by an average of 5.2 points. Registered voter polls have missed it by an average of 5.7 points. So the likely voter models have provided somewhat more accuracy.

**A2 Zogby Polls**

**Zogby’s polls are terrible – give them no creidibility**

**Silver, 09** – Nate, statistician and manager of five thirty-eight (“The Worst Pollster in the World Strikes Again,” Five Thirty-Eight, 3/24/09 http://www.fivethirtyeight.com/2009/03/worst-pollster-in-world-strikes-again.html

So a Zogby poll that put Obama's numbers at roughly 50-50 would be a significant outlier. Outliers are nothing new, however, when it comes to Zogby polls. They are, in fact, the rule and not the exception. Let me qualify this a bit: Zogby International conducts two types of polls. One type are conventional telephone polls. Zogby's telephone polls, while prone to somewhat wild fluctuations and subject to their share of erratic results (such as predicting a 13-point win for Barack Obama in the California primary; Obama lost by 9 points), are actually not terrible, and did fairly well on November 4th. Zogby, however, also conducts Internet-based polls. These polls are conducted among users who volunteer to participate in them, first by signing up at the Zogby website (you can do so yourself here) and then by responding to an e-mail solicitation. These Internet polls, to the extent they rely on voluntary participation, violate the most basic precept of survey research, which is that of the **random sample**. And as you might infer, **they obtain absolutely terrible results.** Because I'm writing this post ahead of time, I'm not 100% certain that the particular poll in question is an Internet poll. Zogby, which is probably aware of the poor reputation of its Internet polls, has begun to go to some length to conceal their origin, usually reserving notification that the poll was conducted online for the fine print. However, I'm about 99.8% certain that this is an Internet poll, as all of the polling that Zogby has recently conducted on Presidential approval have been of the Internet variety. And that polling, by the way, has produced some very strange results: in an Internet poll conducted from January 22-26, for example, in the immediate aftermath of Barack Obama's inauguration, Zogby had Obama's job approval at 52/29, while the average of polls from five other agencies (Gallup, Hotline, Rasmussen, FOX and Democracy Corps) conducted at the same time put the numbers at avergae of 62/19. Let's take a look at the track record of Zogby's Internet polling. Zogby conducted his last series of Internet polls for last year's Presidential election in mid-October. He missed 3 of 11 states, and was off on the final margin by an average of 5.4 points. [graphic omitted] These are not good results -- the average miss on election day among all presidential polls in these states was around 2,5 points; Zogby Interactive's average error was twice that. And Zogby is probably fortunate that he confined his polling to these 11 states only. When he had conducted a broader series of Internet polling back in June, it had produced some truly head-scratching results: [graphic omitted] Note that Zogby had Barack Obama winning states such as Arkansas, Arizona and South Carolina, results which no other pollster saw at any point during the election cycle. He also had Obama polling within 5 points of John McCain in Oklahoma, which Obama would go on to lose by 31 points, and Tennessee, which he'd lose by 15. Did the Zogby Internet polls just have a bad year? No. If anything, their performance was much improved from 2006, when Zogby had surveyed a wider number of contests. Below are the Internet polls that Zogby put out on October 27, 2006 in advance of that year's senatorial elections. His average miss was 8.7 points, including six misses of 10 points or more, and one miss of almost 30 points: [graphic omitted] Zogby's gubernatorial polling that year was similarly error-prone. His Internet polls missed the margin in 19 gubernatorial contests by an average of 7.7 points, and he called 5 of the 19 election wrong, including a couple of states (like Arkansas, Colorado and Wisconsin) where the outcome was never in much doubt. [graphic omitted] All told, between 48 contests that he's surveyed over the past two election cycles, Zogby's Internet polls have been off by an average of 7.6 points. This is **an extreme outlier** with respect to absolutely anyone else in the polling community. These Internet polls, simply put, are **not scientific** and **should not be published** by any legitimate news organization, at least not without an asterisk the size of an Alex Rodriguez steroidal syringe. But I'll bet you that Matt Drudge already has the siren cued up by now.

size has a smaller margin of error. But there are multiple methods for aggregating polls, and it is not yet clear which one is best.

# A2 Individual Polls

**Prefer poll averages over individual polls**

**Silver 7/19** (Nate, FiveThirtyEight, Nate Silvers Political Calculus, The New York Times, “July 18: New Polls, but Little Change in Horse Race,” 7/19/12, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/19/july-18-new-polls-but-little-change-in-horse-race/)//PC

Polls from major news organizations, including The New York Times, have a lot going for them. They make a real effort to take a true random sample of Americans — including the substantial number of Americans who rely exclusively on cellphones. They usually have strong standards of disclosure and transparency. They include long and detailed survey batteries, in addition to reporting the horse-race numbers. In an era of constrained news media budgets, they aren’t cutting a lot of corners. All of that counts for a lot, in my view. At the same time, all polls are subject to sampling error – the variance that inevitably creeps in because you are surveying just a subset of the population rather than everyone in America. And all polling firms need to make decisions about the right way to identify registered or likely voters, the right way to conduct demographic weighting, the right way to phrase questions, the right way to characterize undecided voters and so on. These are difficult decisions, and they introduce a lot of uncertainty into polling. They can also introduce “house effects,” which are persistent tendencies to show more favorable results for one party or one candidate than the consensus of polling firms. To be sure, these house effects can also be introduced – intentionally or not — by poor pollsters who do take shortcuts, who have partisan agendas or who just don’t know what they’re doing. But even relatively strong polling firms can have them. And no polling firm – however strong – can rid itself of sampling variance, although it can reduce it by taking a larger sample of voters. The point is simply this: even very good polls can have more random noise than people usually realize. On Wednesday night, there was a lot of cognitive dissonance in my Twitter feed when The New York Times and Fox News came out with polls at about the same time. The New York Times poll, conducted in conjunction with CBS News, showed Mitt Romney with a nominal one-point lead over President Obama. The Fox News poll had Mr. Obama 4 points ahead instead. It’s easy to drive yourself to exhaustion by trying to determine which of these polls is “right.” Some analysts are always trying to unlock the Da Vinci Code by looking at the demographic subsamples in polls – a noble idea in theory, but a problematic one in practice (indeed, I think it is often counterproductive) because the demographic subsamples in polls are subject to considerably more statistical noise than the top-line results. To be sure, I do not take the view that all polls are created equal. Nor does our forecast model, which weights certain polls more heavily based on their methodological standards and their past accuracy. It’s my view that you’ll almost always be better served by taking some kind of an average of the polls, by looking at more polls rather than fewer (including looking at state polls) and by looking at the trend lines within individual polls, which allow for more apples-to-apples comparisons.

# A2 Too Soon To Predict

**It's not too soon – voters don’t switch candidates, independents and swing states not key – empirics prove**

**Abramowitz 7/19** (Alan I., Senior Columnist for Sabatos Crystal Ball, B.A. with high honors in political science from the University of Rochester, attended graduate school at Stanford University, completing an M.A. in 1972 and a PhD degree in 1976, “It Don’t Mean a Thing if It Ain’t Got That Swing: in Search of the Elusive Swing Voter,” July 19, 2012, http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/it-dont-mean-a-thing-if-it-aint-got-that-swing/)//PC

As pollsters and political commentators have focused on the outlook for the November general election, swing voters have invariably been getting a lot of attention. According to a recent AP/GfK Poll, swing voters — those who are undecided or uncertain about which candidate they will support — make up 27% of the electorate. In what is expected to be a close race, which way they swing will go a long way toward deciding the winner. The AP/GfK estimate that swing voters make up 27% of the American electorate is consistent with the results of other recent polls in which voters were asked how certain they were about their candidate choice. But there are good reasons to question whether there are nearly that many voters whose candidate preference is actually changeable. Evidence from a 2008-2009 panel survey conducted by the American National Election Studies shows that the proportion of voters who actually shift their preference during the course of a presidential campaign is much smaller than the proportion who claim to be uncertain about their choice. Moreover, most of the shifts that do take place appear to be explained by voters’ prior party loyalties rather than anything that happens during the campaign. The 2008-2009 ANES panel study involved an Internet-based survey of a sample of Americans that was designed to represent the characteristics of the voting-age population. Respondents were questioned several times between January 2008 and September 2009, including immediately after the presidential election. This makes it possible to directly measure stability and change in respondents’ candidate preferences. The question asking about candidate preference in a presidential contest between Barack Obama and John McCain was first asked in the June 2008 wave of the survey. In an attempt to simulate an actual election, the format of the question did not include “undecided” or “other” options so respondents were forced to choose between Obama and McCain. However, a follow-up question asked how sure respondents were about their candidate choice — extremely sure, very sure, moderately sure, slightly sure or not sure at all. In the June wave of the survey, Barack Obama led John McCain by 51% to 49%. At that time, 75% of respondents were either extremely or very sure about their choice, while 14% were moderately sure and 11% were slightly sure or not sure at all. Based on these results, one might conclude that 25% of respondents who were less than very sure about their choice should be classified as swing voters — a percentage similar to that found in recent polls on candidate preference in the 2012 presidential election. However, based on the data from the ANES panel survey, this estimate appears to greatly overstate the volatility of the electorate. As the results displayed in Table 1 show, only 8% of respondents switched candidates between June and November. These switches basically canceled each other out: 9% of McCain supporters switched to Obama while 7% of Obama supporters switched to McCain. Ninety-two percent of respondents ended up voting for the same candidate in November that they supported in June. The results were almost identical for voters in the 15 swing states (Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin) where the Obama and McCain campaigns focused their efforts. Nine percent of voters in the swing states switched candidates between June and November compared with 7% of voters in all other states. Table 1: Stability and change in presidential candidate preference between June and November 2008 Source: American National Election Studies 2008-2009 Panel Survey Ninety-seven percent of respondents who were extremely or very sure about their choice in June ended up voting for the same candidate in November, but so did 82% of those who were only moderately sure and 66% of those who were slightly or not at all sure. Moreover, the strongest predictor of whether respondents stuck with their original choice or switched sides was not anything that happened during the campaign, but whether that original choice was consistent with their party identification. As the results displayed in Table 2 show, voters whose original candidate choice conflicted with their party identification — Democrats supporting McCain or Republicans supporting Obama — were much more likely to switch sides than voters who started out supporting their party’s nominee. Only 1% of Democrats supporting Barack Obama in June ended up voting for John McCain, and only 4% of Republicans supporting McCain in June ended up voting for Obama. In contrast, 32% of Democrats supporting John McCain in June ended up voting for Obama and 39% of Republicans supporting Obama in June ended up voting for McCain. Table 2: Stability and change in presidential candidate preference between June and November 2008 by consistency of June preference with party identification Source: American National Election Studies 2008-2009 Panel Survey These results show that most of the movement that took place between June and November involved wayward partisans returning home. Such shifts accounted for 62% of all candidate switches while pure independents switching candidates accounted for 13% and partisans moving to the opposing party’s nominee accounted for 25%. Based on these results, it appears that the main effect of the campaigns was to activate voters’ partisan predispositions. The data from the ANES panel survey can be used to classify voters into four basic types. Stayers, those who did not change between June and November, accounted for 92% of the electorate; returning partisans accounted for 5%; departing partisans accounted for 2%; and shifting independents accounted for 1%. And the net result of all of the movement between June and November was an increase of one point in support for Obama. Despite the dramatic events that transpired between June and November, including John McCain’s selection of Sarah Palin as his running mate and a major financial crisis, the preferences of American voters barely budged. Are independents swing voters? Another very common assumption about the American electorate is that independents are very likely to be swing voters. Indeed, the terms independent and swing voter are often used interchangeably. However, evidence from the ANES 2008-2009 panel survey indicates that only a small minority of independents are actually open to persuasion during the presidential campaign. In January 2008, 32% of respondents in the ANES panel survey described themselves as independents. And these independent voters were, in fact, less certain about their presidential vote choice in June than voters who identified with a party. Only 61% of independent voters were extremely or very sure about their choice compared with 81% of partisan voters. However, despite their lower level of subjective certainty, independent voters were only slightly less stable in their candidate preferences between June and November than party identifiers: 11% of independents switched sides, compared with 7% of partisans. Fully 89% of independents maintained the same candidate preference over this five month period, including 90% of independents who leaned toward a party and 88% of “pure independents” who expressed no party preference whatsoever. Based on these results, the popular image of independents as unstable voters moving back and forth between candidates in response to news stories and campaign events is a major distortion of reality. Implications There is every reason to expect that the patterns of stability and change within the American electorate in 2012 will be similar to those found in 2008. In fact, with an incumbent president running for reelection, voter preferences could turn out to be even more stable this year than they were four years ago. The evidence from the 2008-2009 ANES panel survey indicates that the impression one often gets from pundits and pollsters of a fickle electorate that easily moves back and forth between presidential candidates in response to news stories and campaign events is highly misleading. With the two major parties deeply divided on a wide range of policy issues and party loyalties stronger than at any time since the end of World War II, the vast majority of American voters, including the vast majority of independents, know how they are going to cast their ballots well before the fall campaign begins.

Issues now will decide the election

Voice of America 12 (USA Votes 2012, June 7, “Romney Rising, Obama Slipping”, http://blogs.voanews.com/2012-election/2012/06/07/romney-rising-obama-slipping/)

So yes, five months is a long time for the voters to decide. But recent presidential election history shows that many voters begin to make up their minds at this point in the election cycle, and that relatively few minds can be changed between now and Election Day.

If it’s true that the cement is beginning to set, the Obama White House may not have a lot of time to change the dynamics of a race that shapes up as a straight up or down vote on how this president has handled the national economy.

**Now is key – the next 4 to 6 weeks are critical to the election**

**Cillizza and Blake 7/20** (Chris – American political reporter for The Fix for the Washington Post, regular contributor to the Post on political issues, an MSNBC political analyst and Aaron – covers national politics at the Washington Post, where he writes regularly for the Fix, summa cum laude graduate of the University of Minnesota, “Is the 2012 election the 2004 election all over again?,” July 20, 2012, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/is-the-2012-election-the-2004-election-all-over-again/2012/07/19/gJQAaaU2wW_blog.html?wprss=rss_the-fix>)//PC

A few months back, we wrote that the election most analogous to the 2012 contest was the 2004 race between President George W. Bush and Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry .¶ And, as the race has played itself out since then, we feel more and more confident in that comparison.¶ Consider:¶ \* An incumbent president with a job approval score and ballot performance that is consistently under 50 percent.¶ \* A challenger with a resume that seems to fit the times but who has struggled to capi­tal­ize on the weaknesses of the incumbent — and yet remains very much in the game due to the same weaknesses of the incumbent.¶ \* A political environment dominated by a single issue (the Iraq war in 2004, the economy in 2012) on which the incumbent is struggling to convince voters he has the right plan going forward.¶ \* A deeply polarized electorate with next-to-no undecided voters who remain entirely unconvinced by either candidate.¶ It’s an uncanny — although not entirely perfect — comparison. The political environment is probably worse for President Obama than it was for Bush — problems at home always trump problems abroad — while the current president is a more gifted and nimble candidate than the man he followed into office.¶ Even with those differences, however, the race at this point, all the way down to the polling data on the horse race, looks damn similar.¶ In a July 25, 2004, Washington Post-ABC News poll, Bush took 48 percent to Kerry’s 46 percent among registered voters. In a July 8, 2012, Post-ABC poll, Obama and Romney were tied at 47 percent.¶ So, if you buy the premise that the 2012 election — at least to this point — looks a lot like the 2004 election, then what lessons can the two campaigns learn from how that one turned out?¶ Let’s start by looking at how the polling in the race between Bush and Kerry played out from now-ish until the election.¶ For much of the summer of 2004, Bush hovered in the mid-40s and slightly behind Kerry. But beginning around Aug. 1 in Post-ABC polling, Bush started to move slowly but steadily up in the ballot test — a trend line that led him to a narrow victory on Election Day.¶ Here’s a chart of Post-ABC polling on the Bush-Kerry race from March through September 2004.¶ What happened to change the race? Republicans’ all-out assault on Kerry — on everything from his Vietnam credentials to his love of windsurfing — began to take hold in the electorate. In so doing, the Bush team was able to create a “devil you know vs. devil you don’t” choice for the small number of people who still hadn’t made up their minds about whom to vote for.¶ That is exactly what the Obama team is trying to do with a flurry of ads painting Mitt Romney’s time at Bain — supposedly the core strength of Romney’s campaign — as indicative of his inability to relate to average Americans (and that he’s a bad singer to boot). Romney, in turn, is doing everything he can to turn the focus back to Obama and the state of the economy.¶ It’s a critical time for both candidates. While most Americans tend to zone out of politics over the summer — and all the way through the two party conventions — the groundwork for the sprint to November is being laid now. (Remember that August is when Bush started making his move.)¶ If the 2012 election continues to follow the 2004 model, look for Obama to begin gaining steam over the next month-to-six weeks as the body blows his campaign have been landing against Romney begin to have their desired effect.¶ If, on the other hand, the economic news continues to be grim — or gets grimmer — then the 2004 analogy will likely no longer be operable. Bush won because peoples’ feelings about Iraq weren’t so negative as to swamp everything else at play in the election (that came two years later). A sour economic picture over the next few months could very well wipe out any attempt by the Obama team to turn this election into a choice between a damaged incumbent and what they hope will be a disqualified challenger.

# Too Soon To Predict

**Too soon to predict – advertisements, economy, swing states, Black Swan Event**

**Cook 7/17** (Charlie, Editor and Publisher of The Cook Political Report, and political analyst for National Journal, writes a regular column for Washington Quarterly, published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, political analyst for NBC News. Widely regarded as one of the nation's leading authorities on U.S. elections and political trends, “The Romney campaign risks defeat by not promoting its candidate as a three-dimensional, trustworthy human being,” July 17, 2012, http://www.nationaljournal.com/columns/off-to-the-races/analysis-romney-campaign-risks-defeat-20120716)//PC

This presidential election is starting to confound me. The fundamentals are pulling strongly in favor of Mitt Romney, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that President Obama’s campaign seems consistently a half step, sometimes a full step or two, ahead of the Romney effort. If this is going to be a close race, as polls suggest it will be, campaigns matter. Even if someone believes (as I do) that fundamental forces matter most—that issues like the state and direction of the economy and the economic well-being of voters and how they perceive the country to be doing are the most important thing—if a race is close enough, a campaign with the sharper plan and crisper execution can sometimes prevail. Just look at the 51-48 percent squeaker that President George W. Bush won over Sen. John Kerry. None of the measurements of the economy—change in real disposable personal income, economic growth, unemployment rates (measured in various ways), and consumer confidence—are where a president needs them to be to get reelected. Those old enough to remember the television show Lost in Space will recall that it featured a robot that would warn its boss of imminent risks by calling out, “Danger, Will Robinson!’’ The economic numbers are definitely screaming, “Danger, Will Robinson!” right now. In one private, unpublished analysis of nonpartisan polling this year, only 15 percent of undecided voters thought the country was headed in the right direction, while 71 percent thought it was off on the wrong track. Obama’s approval rating was 24 percent (59 percent disapproved); on handling the economy, his approval was just 22 percent (68 percent disapproved). To be fair, the undecided voters don’t like either party or either candidate—just barely over a quarter personally viewed Obama positively, and Romney’s personal positive ratings were only about a third of that. One question is how many of the undecided voters will actually vote at all, given their contempt for both sides and each candidate. But if they do vote, I’d rather not be the incumbent, given their sour outlook on things. Add in the lethargic nature of younger voters this year, with some surveys suggesting that fewer young people may vote than in either of the last two elections. Additionally, Latino voters seem anything but energized. Obama may well cover the same 67 percent performance among Latinos he got last time, but polls show they seem significantly less interested in voting. This is not good for a Democrat who needs a big Hispanic turnout in several key states. Taken together, this ought to be a steep uphill fight for Obama. Voters seem perfectly open to the option of firing the president, but the Obama camp has given voters—specifically in swing states where wall-to-wall advertising is running—reason to hesitate about hiring Romney. Puzzlingly, the Romney campaign has offered very little to build up its candidate as a real human being, someone of character who’s worthy of being entrusted with the Oval Office. The strategic decision by the Romney campaign not to define him personally—not to inoculate him from inevitable attacks—seems a perverse one. Given his campaign’s ample financial resources, the decision not to run biographical or testimonial ads, in effect to do nothing to establish him as a three-dimensional person, has left him open to the inevitable attacks for his work at Bain Capital, on outsourcing, and on his investments. It’s all rather inexplicable. Aside from a single spot aired in the spring by the pro-Romney super PAC Restore Our Future, not one personal positive ad has been aired on Romney’s behalf. The view that any day or dollar spent on talking about anything other than the economy is a waste has been taken to such an extreme that Romney has no positive definition other than that of being a rich, successful, and presumably smart businessman. People see and feel the reasons for firing Obama every day in the economic statistics and the struggle that so many Americans face daily. The Romney campaign seems focused on reinforcing a message that hardly needs reinforcing, while ignoring a clear and immediate danger to its own candidate’s electability. The attacks on Bain, outsourcing, and his investments are sticking to Romney like Velcro, and it’s hard to see how that will change until he picks his running mate. Romney has lost control of the debate and the dialogue. Instead of voters focusing on the economy, they are now hearing about investments and accounts in Switzerland and the Cayman Islands, as well as about outsourcing and layoffs. The election is still more than three months away, and yet it has a different feel than it did just a month ago. Just as some Democrats in mid-June were starting to sound as if they were giving Obama up for dead, Republicans are now despairing. We have to remind ourselves that this election still has a long way to go. Each side will have up and down weeks, and there will be many twists and turns along the campaign trail—and that isn’t even allowing for some big, unexpected, Black Swan event that could always happen. But, if I were a Republican, I would be very concerned about the events of the past two weeks, questioning both strategy and tactics as well as the underlying assumptions that have led to the campaign decisions made so far. It would appear that a certain overconfidence has built up in the Romney camp, a smugness that would appear to come from beating an incredibly weak group of underfinanced, poorly organized rivals. In a couple of cases, these included candidates whose campaigns couldn’t even manage to get their names on the ballot in the state in which they were legal residents (Virginia). Maybe it won’t matter, maybe the economy is so lousy and unlikely to improve that voters will opt to fire Obama after all. But this election is starting to look enough like 2004 that Karl Rove should be demanding royalties from the Obama campaign, and others may conclude that no presidential campaign should ever again be based in Boston.

Too many variables – can’t predict elections

Jones 6/26 (Jeffery M., 2012, GALLUP, “Likability Top Characteristic for Both Romney and Obama”, http://www.gallup.com/poll/155351/Likability-Top-Characteristic-Romney-Obama.aspx)

Thus, while Americans may rate Obama better on characteristics related to empathy, Romney seems better positioned in terms of perceived competence. The two are essentially even when it comes to leadership qualities.

Implications

Americans have definite opinions about the personal and presidential qualities of Obama and Romney, but there still may be some opportunity for the candidates to change those perceptions during the remaining months of the campaign.

The campaigns will also attempt to leverage the candidates' current strengths, and reinforce these in voters' minds. Obama clearly has the advantage in terms of likability and empathy. Since neither candidate currently has an advantage in leadership, Romney's best argument for convincing voters to support him may be his ability to manage government.

Being able to manage government could be a particularly persuasive argument in an election year likely to be decided on economic issues. The downside for Romney is currently that is his only clear advantage over Obama in terms of personal qualities, so he would have little else to fall back on in that area.

And while the large likability deficit is a concern for Romney's campaign, the fact is most Americans still see him as likable, which may make his trailing on this dimension less of a hindrance to getting elected.

Can’t predict elections – too many events can affect them and the race will remain even

Newport 7/2 (Frank, 2012, GALLUP, “Obama Now Leads Romney 48% to 43%”, http://www.gallup.com/poll/155465/Obama-Leads-Romney.aspx)

A number of upcoming events have the potential to affect the standing of the two U.S. presidential candidates between now and the Nov. 6 election -- including monthly unemployment reports, Romney's announcement of his vice presidential running mate, the two major-party conventions, and the three scheduled presidential debates in October. The race has been close among registered voters so far this election cycle, but President Obama is now showing a slightly more sustained lead in recent days than he has previously. However, the history of the 2012 presidential race so far has been one of essential parity, suggesting the real possibility that the race will revert back to even in the days ahead.

# Voter Turnout Low

**Voter turnout low – ID laws hurts Obama**

**Charles 7/18** (Deborah, Chicago Tribune, “New voter ID laws could impact millions, study says,” July 18, 2012, Chicago Tribune, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-07-18/news/sns-rt-us-usa-campaign-voteridbre86h1o0-20120718\_1\_new-voter-id-laws-keesha-gaskins-high-voter-turnout)//PC

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - New laws in 10 states requiring voters to show photo identification will make it more difficult for millions of Americans to cast ballots and likely will drive down turnout among minorities, the poor and elderly, a study said Wednesday.¶ The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University Law School said that one in 10 Americans lack the necessary government-issued photo IDs that now are required in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin.¶ Most of the new laws were passed by Republican-controlled legislatures, and the voting blocs that analysts say the laws are most likely to affect typically favor Democrats.¶ About one-quarter of African Americans, 16 percent of Hispanics and 18 percent of Americans over age 65 do not have the type of ID that the voting laws require, the Brennan Center report said.¶ "These new laws will make it more difficult for millions of Americans to vote," said Larry Norton of the Brennan Center's Democracy Program. "The idea that we're forcing certain people to go through these very difficult extra hoops is antithetical to some of the founding principals of this country."¶ The report said that more than 10 million eligible voters live more than 10 miles from the nearest full-time state ID-issuing office. About 500,000 of them do not have access to a vehicle, and most live in rural areas with limited public transportation, the report said.¶ A BACKLASH FROM 2008?¶ "What this report demonstrates is the potential impact on voters and possibly some potential impact on the upcoming election," said Keesha Gaskins, a co-author of the report. "We really are talking about a population of individuals that really could influence the outcome."¶ The states with restrictive voter ID requirements account for 127 electoral votes -- nearly half the 270 needed to win the presidency -- in the November 6 presidential election between Obama and Republican candidate Mitt Romney.¶ A separate study released this week by the National Urban League said that even a small drop in turnout by African Americans, whose overwhelming support for Obama helped him win election in 2008, could have a big impact in several key states in November.¶ The National Urban League, a civil rights group, has claimed that the new voter ID requirements pushed largely by Republicans were a response to the high voter turnout among Democrats in 2008.¶ Conservative groups and Republican-led legislatures that have backed the new rules say they will help ensure fair voting and reduce fraud.¶ They also dismiss claims that it is difficult for many people to travel to get a photo ID, saying it is similar to finding a way to get to the polls on Election Day.¶ A QUESTION OF ACCESS¶ But rights groups and the Brennan Center, which has joined in lawsuits in several states to oppose the laws, say the new rules unfairly target minorities and low-income voters.¶ The new report described how state-run ID offices are open at irregular hours, such as one in Wisconsin that is open only on the fifth Wednesday of every month even though there are only four months of the year that have five Wednesdays.¶ In Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas, the report said, many ID offices are open only part-time in areas with relatively large populations of blacks and Hispanics.¶ States with such laws are required to provide free photo IDs to eligible voters who do not have one, but the costs of obtaining birth certificates and other needed documentation, along with travel to the ID office, make it difficult for some voters, the report said.¶ Many of the new laws are being contested in court. A panel of federal judges last week finished hearing arguments about Texas' law by questioning the state's attorney over whether minorities are unfairly hurt by the requirements.¶ Rights groups and the Obama campaign also are challenging various laws that change rules for early, in-person voting in the days before Election Day. The Obama campaign filed a lawsuit in Ohio this week to block a Republican-backed law that stops in-person early voting three days before election day for most Ohioans.¶ At a Romney campaign event in Ohio, Republicans dismissed claims that the law will discourage Ohio voters from going to the polls.¶ "The other side of the aisle is talking about access to voting," Ohio state Representative Randy Gardner said in Bowling Green. "Voters will have 784 hours to vote. There's no partisan divide here ... Every Ohioan who wants to vote will freely and clearly have that right."

# Voter Enthusiasm Low

Democratic voter enthusiasm is low

Jones 7/25 (Jeffery M., 2012, GALLUP, “Democratic Voting Enthusiasm Down Sharply From 2004, 2008”, http://www.gallup.com/poll/156194/Democratic-Voting-Enthusiasm-Down-Sharply-2004-2008.aspx)

PRINCETON, NJ -- Democrats are significantly less likely now (39%) than they were in the summers of 2004 and 2008 to say they are "more enthusiastic about voting than usual" in the coming presidential election. Republicans are more enthusiastic now than in 2008, and the same as in 2004.

These results are based on a July 19-22 USA Today/Gallup poll. They suggest a shift in Republicans' and Democrats' orientation to voting in the coming presidential election compared with the last two, with Republicans expressing more voting enthusiasm. The current 51% to 39% Republican advantage in voter enthusiasm is slightly larger than the 53% to 45% GOP advantage Gallup measured in February of this year.

The voting enthusiasm measure gives a sense of Americans' motivation to turn out and vote but probably also their expectations of their preferred party's chances of winning. Thus, the Republican advantage may indicate a greater likelihood of voting among Republicans but also greater optimism about a Republican victory than was the case in 2008. In turn, Democrats are probably less optimistic about their chances of winning than they were in 2008.

Gallup has found a relationship between voting enthusiasm and the outcome of midterm congressional elections, with the party that has the advantage generally faring better in the elections. That pattern also held in the 2008 presidential election, with Democrats reporting greater enthusiasm throughout the year and Barack Obama winning the election. The 2004 data provided less guidance as to the eventual winner, as the Republicans (68%) and Democrats (67%) had similar scores at the time of the election, which George W. Bush won narrowly.

# \*\*\*Links\*\*\*

# Transportation Link

Transportation bills are important to reelection – shows that Washington can deal with a gridlock

Myers 7/9 (Snider, Politico, 2012, Frontrunner – Washington News Section, “Members Of Congress Tout Their Roles In Transportation Bill’s Package”, LexisNexis Academic)

Politico (7/9, Meyers, Snider, 25K) reports, "The transportation package grants lawmakers both pre-election leverage and a chance to show they can make deals in gridlocked Washington. Not only did the vote cross party lines, it came mere months ahead of a presidential election when everyone had declared substantive legislation dead." According to Politico, "Numerous lawmakers admit they don't even like the transportation legislation," which "doesn't solve a long-term funding problem, eliminates a Keystone XL pipeline rider Republicans wanted and zaps money from Democrat-backed alternatives such as bike paths and walkways. But it all comes down to reelection."

Tea party image on transportation issues will hurt the Republican party

Eachus 4/10 (Ron, former legislator and a former chairman of the Oregon Public Utility Commission, 2012, Statesman Journal, “Transportation act a fiasco”, ProQuest)

The failure of the Republican-controlled House to pass its own version of its leadership's highly touted bill, and its rejection of the bipartisan Senate bill, runs counter to the GOP claim it is more capable of governing and is the party to turn to for economic turnaround.

The brinksmanship and one more stop-gap measure undermine the GOP narrative that they can provide the "certainty" the economy needs to expand.

And it highlights the Republican Party's Tea Party problem. According to polls, the Tea Party is becoming a liability for the GOP and the Tea Party influence was one big factor in the transportation bill fiasco.

Mass transit and funding of the highway trust caused some consternation in GOP ranks, but a bigger hurdle was the Tea Party view that the bill cost too much and that the federal government should turn over transportation programs to the states. An amendment to turn the Highway Trust Fund over to the states failed 30-67 in the Senate.

Tea Party adherents aren't a majority in GOP ranks but they hold sway over the party. They are uncompromising. Their numbers provide enough margin to deter anything they don't like. And their rhetoric is caustic enough to drown out others and define the party image.

**Transportation Infrastructure is unpopular with the public – no sense of alarm and distrust of USFG tax money spending – state spending is comparatively popular**

**Orski 5/23** (Ken, editor/publisher of Innovation NewsBriefs a transportation newsletter now in its 23rd year of publication ,magna cum laude graduate of Harvard College and holds a J.D. degree from Harvard Law School, former federal transportation official, regular contributor to InfrastructureUSA.org, “Advocates of Higher Spending Are Facing a Skeptical Audience,” May 23, 2012, examiner.com, http://www.examiner.com/article/advocates-of-higher-spending-are-facing-a-skeptical-audience)//PC

“It is our belief that once citizens become aware of the significant costs and risks associated with a compromised transportation system operating at less than optimal capacity, they will feel more compelled to demand calls for action that will, in turn, prompt policymakers to act.”¶ So concludes a new report from the Miller Center, a University of Virginia-based think tank whose 2009 report, Well Within Reach: America’s New Transportation Agenda, attained a celebrity status by being featured in a White House briefing hosted by President Obama. The new report, entitled Are We There Yet? presents the results of discussions held at a November 2011 Miller Center-hosted conference at its Washington DC offices. The gathering was noteworthy for bringing together five former secretaries of transportation— Norman Mineta, Sam Skinner (who served as co-chairmen of the conference), Mary Peters, Rodney Slater and James Burnley. Sixty invited experts participated in the day-long discussions which featured a wide range of points of view.¶ The report, in the words of Miller Center’s president, former Virginia Governor Gerald Baliles, is intended to provide “a road map for effectively capturing the nation’s attention and uniting the American people behind a compelling message about the urgent need for investment, innovation and improvement in our transportation system.” It proposes to do so through a coordinated four-pronged communication campaign that would link local transportation investment opportunities and benefits to national-level policy decisions.¶ Appeals for Action Fall on Deaf Ears¶ But the report’s belief in the compelling need to increase federal spending on transportation, nor the sense of frustration about a lack of progress on transportation legislation that was palpable among the conference participants, do not seem to be shared by the public or the politicians.¶ Infrastructure Investment did not even make the top ten list of public priorities in the latest Pew Research Center survey of domestic concerns cited at the conference. Calls by two congressionally mandated commissions to vastly increase transportation infrastructure spending have gone ignored. So have repeated pleas by advocacy groups such as Building America’s Future, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Transportation for America.¶ Why do appeals to increase infrastructure spending fail to resonate with the public? One widely held view is that people simply do not trust the federal government to spend their tax dollars wisely. As proof, evidence is cited that a great majority of state and local transportation ballot measures do get passed. They get approved because voters know precisely where their tax money is going. The Miller Center report agrees that focusing on specific local projects has the best potential for garnering support for greater transportation investment. However, whether an emphasis on local transportation issues would translate into expanded support for federal involvement, as the report suggests, is open to question.¶ Failure of Negative Communication Strategies¶ Another reason why the public does not share the report’s sense of urgency is that people see no cause for alarm. State DOTs and transit authorities take great pride in maintaining their systems in good condition and, by and large, they succeed. Potholes are rare, transit service is generally reliable, and train wrecks and collapsing bridges, happily, are few and far between. The revenue from the Highway Trust Fund arguably provides sufficient resources to keep the existing transportation system in a state of good repair.¶ The oft-cited “D” that the American Society of Civil Engineers has given America’s infrastructure (along with an estimate of $2.2 trillion price tag needed to fix it) is taken with a few grains of salt. The engineers’ lobby has a vested interest in increasing infrastructure spending as do the legions of road and transit builders, rail and road equipment manufacturers, construction firms, and their Washington lobbyists that urge Congress to raise spending levels on transportation.¶ “Should I believe the pundits or my own eyes?” asked Charles Lane, editorial writer for the Washington Post who had traveled thousands of miles across America without seeing any evidence of “crumbling infrastructure.” He wrote about his experience in a Washington Post commentary last year (“The U.S. infrastructure argument that crumbles upon examination,” Washington Post, October 31, 2011)¶ Lane’s skepticism is shared by many elected representatives in Congress. For the Republican leadership and the rank-and-file the goals of reigning in spending and reducing the deficit, as reflected in the adopted FY 2013 House budget, take precedence over what they feel are often politically inspired and inadequately documented concerns about deteriorating infrastructure. For the congressional conservatives, the better solution lies in narrowing the scope of the federal-aid program and shifting more responsibility for transportation to states and metropolitan areas.

**Plan unpopular with the public – mistrust of government funding for transportation**

**MG 11** (MuniNet Guide interviewing Dr. David Ellis, research scientist and senior economist for the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), Ph.D. in Urban & Regional Sciences, a master’s degree in Urban Planning, and bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Economics from Texas A & M University, his research focuses on transportation finance, congestion cost, and the economic impact of transportation investment, “The Road to Infrastructure Improvement Is Paved with Public Support,” December 14, 2011, http://www.muninetguide.com/articles/funding-for-infrastructure-improvement-requires-communicatin-476/)//PC

Increased fuel efficiency over the past few decades is inarguably good for the environment, consumers, and businesses. It’s hard to find a downside to cleaner air and cost savings. However, along with these benefits, increased fuel efficiency has created a challenge for the nation’s roads and highways: how to make up for lost gas tax revenues, particularly in light of increasing construction costs. ¶ Dr. David Ellis, a research scientist and senior economist with the Texas Transportation Institute and a visiting associate professor of Landscape Architecture & Urban Planning at Texas A & M University, says part of the challenge in obtaining adequate funding for infrastructure projects is in effectively communicating transportation issues to the public. ¶ In the interview that follows, Dr. Ellis explains these issues, and why it is so important that the public understands them.¶ MuniNet: Why the urgent need for infrastructure investment?¶ Ellis: Texas, like many other states, has experienced increases in population, registered vehicles, and miles travelled. At the same time, the number of state-maintained roads has remained relatively constant. This mismatch has created a situation where demand exceeds supply by a continually larger margin. The result is that we need more and better roads at a time when, right now, we can least afford them. ¶ Increased fuel efficiency - a clear gain for the environment and for individuals’ wallets - has eroded a major source of infrastructure funding: the gas tax. At the same time, the taxes that are being collected have lost their purchasing power, as construction costs continue to rise.¶ The implications of this gap in infrastructure funding are wide-ranging, yet the public is lacking in its understanding of the gravity of the problem. The truth is: While citizens don’t want to pay for infrastructure improvement funding, there is a high cost associated with doing nothing.¶ MuniNet: How does the public show its support (or lack of support) for infrastructure improvement?¶ Ellis: The public shows its support by encouraging elected representatives - members of Congress, state representatives, mayors, city council members - to engage in conversation about transportation-related issues. Elected officials represent the people’s interest as they understand them. Generally speaking, the public has made it pretty clear that they aren’t in favor of paying for infrastructure improvements. While many people recognize growing congestion and an increasing number of roadways are in disrepair, voters have repeatedly rejected measures to approve spending to fix the problem(s). ¶ As an example, Texas residents were recently polled to see whether they would approve a $50 per year increase in vehicle registration fees if they were assured that all the proceeds would be used for roadway improvements. An overwhelming 70 percent of those polled said they would not support the increase. That sentiment has been echoed in states and cities around the nation. ¶ It used to be the case that people trusted that government does what it says it intends to do. But times are changing, and many people have lost faith in government leadership - at the federal, state and local levels, in many cases.

# Transportation Link – Florida

Transportation issues are extremely important in Florida – key swing state

Wright et. Al 11 (James D., Director, Jana J. Janski, Associate Director, Rachel E. Morgan, Project Manager, University of Central Florida Institute for Social and Behavioral Sciences, August 11, “Transportation Issues in Central Florida: 2011 Survey of Public Opinion”, http://www.metroplanorlando.com/research/public-opinion-research/)

Transportation issues are important to the vast majority. Very large majorities agree (54%) or agree strongly (34%) that “improving Central Florida’s transportation system is important to me.” Almost three-quarters do NOT agree that “what is now being done to improve our transportation system is adequate to address our problems.” Transportation issues are seen by area residents as matters of public policy deserving of greater attention. It appears that Central Florida residents are still looking to policy makers for more aggressive efforts to find solutions to transportation problems and the means to fund them.

Residents feel that too little is spent on transportation. Almost two in three agree (53%) or agree strongly (12%) that improvements in the transportation system mean that “we will have to increase funding through taxes and/or fees.” One question asked, “Given that state and local governments in Florida must divide their budgets among many competing needs, would you say that generally, government spends too much, too little, or about the right amount on transportation?” Two-thirds (68%) said that too little was currently being spent. Only 8% thought that too much was being spent; the remainder felt that current expenditures were “about right.”

# Short Sea Shipping Link

**SSS unpopular among the public – even if they win the public likes SSS, financial unpopularity outweighs**

**GAO 5** (US Government Accountability Office, Report to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, “Short Sea Shipping Option Shows Importance of Systematic Approach to Public Investment Decisions,” July 2005, Government Accountability Office (GAO), http://www.gao.gov/assets/250/247275.pdf)//PC

Transportation stakeholders representing both the public and private ¶ sectors believe that incorporating short sea shipping into the surface ¶ transportation system can produce numerous public benefits, but ¶ stakeholders also note that numerous factors may limit the development of ¶ short sea shipping services in the United States. Potential benefits of new ¶ applications of short sea shipping, according to these transportation ¶ stakeholders, include improved freight mobility, improved air quality, and ¶ reduced public expenditures on large infrastructure projects. For example, ¶ some transportation officials in the Northeast believe that a short sea ¶ shipping service operating out of the Port Authority of New York and New ¶ Jersey could relieve congestion in and around New York City because ¶ cargo could move by ship rather than by truck. Transportation officials ¶ note, however, that numerous legal, operational, and acceptance-related ¶ factors, such as laws that increase start-up costs, necessary modifications ¶ to port facilities, and a **general reluctance** among shippers to try new ¶ modes, may present obstacles to a wider development of short sea shipping ¶ services. For example, ports may be mainly set up to lift containers from ¶ large cargo ships using cranes, but short sea shipping operations may instead use trucks to roll containers on and off barges or small ships—an ¶ approach requiring new truck ramps and holding areas. The effect of such ¶ factors, however, remains somewhat unclear, given that few new ¶ applications of short sea shipping have been developed. For the two ¶ operations we examined, many of these factors were apparently not ¶ insurmountable, although there were indications that some factors may ¶ interfere with further development. For example, operators of a service ¶ between several ports in the Gulf of Mexico said the federal requirement to ¶ use a U.S.-built ship for domestic shipping was limiting their ability to ¶ expand capacity, because there are a limited number of U.S.-built ships ¶ available on the market. Sponsors of a service between the Port Authority ¶ of New York and New Jersey and the Port of Albany said that shipper ¶ reluctance to use the service was limiting their ability to attract more ¶ business, even though the subsidized service is being offered at a lower ¶ cost than trucking. ¶ The Department of Transportation has established short sea shipping as a ¶ high priority component of the federal freight transportation strategy and ¶ has drafted a policy proposal to provide targeted incentives for short sea ¶ shipping projects. The department has been exploring the potential of the ¶ option to reduce congestion and expand capacity of the freight ¶ transportation system, but its efforts to date have been narrowly focused—¶ that is, they have been focused on the option itself and not on the impact of ¶ this option on other transportation modes or of federal involvement in its ¶ development. Nonetheless, the Department of Transportation is already ¶ contemplating a potential role for the federal government; it has developed ¶ policy proposals that would include short sea shipping as a central ¶ component of increased federal investment in the maritime sector. Before ¶ determining that federal involvement is appropriate, a more ¶ comprehensive understanding of key issues should be explored. If a federal ¶ role does exist, key issues that are pertinent to this role are (1) how to go ¶ about providing federal support to privately owned and operated ¶ infrastructure and (2) whether and how to increase funding levels for ¶ freight improvement projects. Considering the implications of these ¶ broader issues can help guide the agency in defining the federal role and ¶ ensure that the federal approach for short sea shipping development is part ¶ of an integrated federal approach to addressing the nation’s congestion and ¶ capacity problems. ¶ As the federal role is being defined and clarified, public transportation ¶ decision makers at the state and local levels are also actively considering ¶ short sea shipping and other options to address the freight mobility¶ challenges affecting their jurisdictions. Increased funding constraints and ¶ compartmentalized funding programs, however, create challenges for ¶ public decision makers in setting transportation priorities and linking ¶ resources to results to ensure that limited public dollars are wisely and ¶ effectively spent. A systematic investment approach to guide public ¶ investment decisions at all levels—federal, state, and local—could help ¶ public decision makers in making those difficult choices. Building on the ¶ perspectives gained from our past work in federal investment strategies ¶ and the work of transportation experts, we developed a four-step approach ¶ that may be helpful. The first step of the approach involves determining ¶ whether public support for a proposed project is warranted by considering ¶ whether it is expected to produce public benefits, such as reduced ¶ congestion, improved air quality, and economic development opportunities. ¶ If a rationale for public involvement can be established, the second step ¶ involves a closer scrutiny of the proposed project through an analysis of ¶ the costs and expected benefits of the proposed project to determine if the ¶ project is the most cost-effective option among alternatives. The third step ¶ of the approach involves determining the level and type of public support ¶ to be provided. This step involves recognizing that **public support does not ¶ necessarily mean financial support**, but when financial support is provided, ¶ it should be structured in such a way to minimize distortion of any ¶ competition. The final step involves the evaluation of ongoing and ¶ completed projects to determine if intended benefits have been achieved ¶ and to hold decision makers accountable for their public investment ¶ decisions. ¶ We recommend that the Secretary of Transportation and the Administrator, ¶ Maritime Administration, (1) ensure that a comprehensive understanding ¶ of key issues is developed before defining a federal role that would involve ¶ any substantial federal investment in short sea shipping projects and (2) ¶ use current mechanisms to encourage decision makers at all levels to take ¶ a more systematic approach to making decisions about freight mobility ¶ projects. In commenting on a draft of this report, the Department of ¶ Transportation generally agreed with its contents and agreed with the ¶ recommendations. The department also provided technical comments that ¶ we incorporated, as appropriate.

# HSR Link

**High speed rail unpopular with the public – California proves, it had the best chance of HSR**

**Weikel and Vartabedian 11** (Dan and Ralph, reporters for the LA Times, “Californians would reject bullet train in revote, polls finds,” December 6, 2011, LA Times, http://articles.latimes.com/2011/dec/06/local/la-me-train-poll-20111207)//PC

With the cost of the state's high-speed rail project rising dramatically, a new public opinion poll shows that a clear majority of California's registered voters would reject the proposal if given a second chance to vote on it today.¶ Released Tuesday, the poll by Field Research Corp. in San Francisco found that 64% of those surveyed want another public vote on the $98-billion project and that 59% of respondents would oppose it because of changes in its cost and completion date.¶ The estimated price tag for the 520-mile system between San Francisco and Los Angeles is now $98 billion to $117 billion — at least triple the initial projection of $33 billion and over double a more recent estimate of $43 billion. Planners have extended the construction deadline from 2020 to 2033.¶ "If there were a revote, its chances of passage given this poll are not very good," said Mark DiCamillo, director of the Field Poll.¶ Meanwhile in Washington, a barrage of sharp criticism was leveled at Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, who appeared Tuesday at a hearing by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on the Obama administration's high-speed rail program.¶ Committee Chairman Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.), who has long asserted that he supports the concept of high-speed rail, said **the California project was the one hope for a true bullet train** but now appears to be in "disarray."¶ Voters approved the project when they passed Proposition 1A by almost 53% in November 2008. The ballot measure authorized $9 billion in state bonds to help pay for construction.¶ The California High-Speed Rail Authority wants to begin work next year on a length of track between Merced and Bakersfield in the Central Valley.¶ Project supporters and rail officials said voters should not give up on the project because it has attracted $3 billion in federal aid, will create 100,000 jobs and will modernize California's increasingly congested transportation networks.¶ "It is easy to understand voter frustration on a lot of things at this very moment, but it shouldn't dictate the future of California's transportation infrastructure," said state Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, (D-Sacramento). "A knee-jerk reaction to a snapshot in time would be a mistake."¶ At the congressional hearing, LaHood, the lone Republican on President Obama's Cabinet, lectured the committee that the U.S. population will grow by tens of millions in coming decades. "We need to do something or we will be crushed under the weight of our own expansion," he warned.¶ LaHood has urged Gov. Jerry Brown not to back down from the bullet train project. "We will not be dissuaded by naysayers," LaHood told the committee. "We will not."¶ The committee repeatedly raised concerns that California is more than $85 billion short of the funding needed to complete the system. LaHood repeated a now-standard rationale that the interstate highway system did not have all the money on hand when construction began about five decades ago.¶ "We have problems with the route that was chosen," Mica told LaHood, adding that only the northeast corridor between Boston and Washington has the population density to economically support high-speed trains.¶ In the California poll, Field Research interviewed a random sample of 1,000 registered voters from Nov. 15 to 27. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.4 percentage points.¶ Of voters who approved the ballot proposition, the poll found that 53% would still vote for it today, 37% would say no and 10% are undecided.¶ Republicans and nonpartisans were the most opposed to high-speed rail, with 73% and 61% respectively saying they would vote no. Forty-nine percent of Democrats also said they would reject the project, with 40% saying they would approve it and 11% undecided.¶ The results are similar to those of a public opinion survey done earlier this year by Probolsky Research, a polling firm based in Newport Beach that specializes in politics and government affairs.¶ Probolsky's survey found that 62.4% of likely voters in California would reject the high-speed rail project if given a second chance to vote on it. The proposal also came in last in a list of voters' spending priorities.¶ Both polls indicate that support has been eroding for the project during the last 16 months. In July 2010, the high-speed rail authority released a more favorable poll by Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates and Public Opinion Strategies. It found that 76% of Californians supported the project, including 34% who wanted high-speed rail to proceed as quickly as possible.¶ The growing costs and declining support for the project, however, have prompted calls for a revote. They include legislation proposed by state Sen. Doug LaMalfa (R-Richvale) that would give voters a chance to withdraw the previously approved funding.¶ Many voters feel "they've really been had," LaMalfa said.

**HSR is unpopular with the public – Spending and California Proves**

**Huet 11** (Ellen, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer, “High-speed rail would fail in new vote, poll finds,” December 6, 2011, San Francisco Chronicle, http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/High-speed-rail-would-fail-in-new-vote-poll-finds-2347344.php)//PC

About two-thirds of California voters would like a second chance to decide whether to sell $9 billion in bonds to help pay for the state's high-speed rail system - and most of them would reject the measure in a new election, according to a Field Poll released today.¶ The idea of putting the bond measure before voters next year was endorsed by 64 percent of poll respondents. And 59 percent said they would vote it down, while 31 percent said they still support the bond measure. Ten percent were undecided.¶ The poll follows recent announcements that the project, which aims to take travelers from San Francisco to Los Angeles in about 2 hours and 40 minutes, will cost more than expected and take longer to complete.¶ The California High-Speed Rail Authority said in early November that the project could cost $98.5 billion, more than double previous estimates. Officials also pushed the projected completion date from 2020 to 2033.¶ The voters' position on the project is a departure from November 2008, when the bond measure passed with 52.6 percent approval.¶ The new Field Poll finds support for another vote on the issue is strong regardless of voters' political affiliations and how they voted on the 2008 measure.¶ Among Republicans, 73 percent would vote against the train funding; 49 percent of Democrats would say no.¶ Poll results also show that some supporters of the 2008 measure have changed their minds. Of those who voted for the bond, 37 percent now say they would vote against it, and 10 percent are undecided.¶ Of those who voted against, 96 percent are still against it.¶ A rail authority spokeswoman declined to comment on the voter sentiment.¶ The rail authority's public outreach efforts may not have turned public opinion to its side, but high-speed rail remains a topic of high public awareness. The poll reports that 77 percent of respondents have heard of the project.¶ The authority recently acknowledged that it spent $7.2 million on public relations efforts last fiscal year, and an additional $2.6 million is budgeted for this year.¶ The poll's findings are based on a survey conducted in English and Spanish between Nov. 15 and 27 of a random sample of 515 registered California voters. The margin of error is 4.4 percentage points.

**HSR is unpopular among the public**

**RF 11** (The Reason Foundation, “77 Percent of Americans Oppose Raising the Gas Tax, Reason-Rupe Transportation Poll Finds,” December 20, 2011, Reason Foundation, http://reason.org/news/show/reason-rupe-transportation-infrastr)//PC

A majority of Americans believe new transportation projects should be paid for with user-fees instead of tax increases, according to a new national Reason-Rupe poll of 1,200 adults on cell phones and land lines.¶ The Reason-Rupe poll finds 77 percent of Americans oppose increasing the federal gas tax, while just 19 percent favor raising the tax, which is currently 18.4 cents a gallon. The public thinks the government wastes the gas tax money it already receives. Sixty-five percent say the government spends transportation funding ineffectively, and just 23 say the money is spent effectively.¶ The survey shows Americans believe new roads and highways should be paid for by the people driving on them: 58 percent of Americans say new roads and highways should be funded by tolls. Twenty-eight percent say new road capacity should be paid for by tax increases. ¶ The Reason-Rupe poll finds broad support for user-fees. If a toll road would save drivers a “significant” amount of time, 59 percent of Americans say they would pay to use it. And 57 percent favor converting carpool lanes, or high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, into high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes. Voters are much-less supportive of variably-priced toll lanes, however. Half of those surveyed oppose, and 39 percent favor, variably-priced tolls that rise and fall with traffic levels.¶ In terms of transportation spending priorities, 62 percent want to prioritize funding for road and highway projects, while 30 percent want to prioritize funding for mass transit projects.¶ As the debate over high-speed rail continues in California and elsewhere, a solid majority of Americans, 55 percent, say the private sector should build high-speed train systems where it thinks riders will pay to use rail. Just 35 percent of Americans believe federal and state governments should build high-speed rail systems where they think the trains are needed. ¶ As governments at all levels look for ways to pay for transportation projects, public officials should note that 55 percent of Americans support using public-private partnerships to build critical infrastructure projects. Just 35 percent oppose using public-private partnerships to fund highways, airports and other infrastructure. ¶ The National Transportation Safety Board has called for a ban on cell phones while driving and 69 percent of Americans tell Reason-Rupe that talking on a cell phone while driving should be illegal. Even more, 89 percent, say texting while driving should be illegal. The poll did not ask about using hands-free devices.

# Military Ocean Terminals Link

**Defense spending unpopular with the public – recent polls prove**

**Stimson 12** (Stimson Center is a nonproﬁt, nonpartisan institution devoted to enhancing international peace and security through a unique combination of rigorous analysis and outreach.“What Kind Of Defense Budget Would The American Public Make?,” May 10, 2012, Stimson, <http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/what-kind-of-defense-budget-would-the-american-public-make/)//PC>

With the United States facing large budget deficits, a major debate is underway in Washington, DC, over whether defense spending will be subject to cuts.¶ Unless Congress succeeds in agreeing on a new budget, current law calls for the 'sequestration' provision to kick in, which would cut defense spending 10 percent. Many voices on both sides of the aisle have expressed substantial concern over that prospect.¶ But how does the American public feel about the potential of cutting defense to mitigate the deficit? If a representative sample of Americans were at the table when decisions were being made, what would they say?¶ A new study conducted by the Program for Public Consultation (PPC) in collaboration with the Stimson Center and the Center for Public Integrity shows that the American public favors deeper defense cuts. A representative sample of Americans were shown the size of the defense budget from different perspectives and presented with arguments that experts make for and against cutting it. ¶ Other polls on defense spending have mostly asked whether respondents favor or oppose defense cuts, and generally found smaller numbers favoring reductions. Steven Kull, director of PPC, comments, "This suggests that Americans generally underestimate the size of the defense budget, and that when they receive neutral information about its size they are more likely to cut it to reduce the deficit."¶ Majorities said that defense spending was more than they expected when it was presented in comparison to other items in the discretionary budget (65 percent), to historical defense spending levels in constant dollars (60 percent), and to the defense spending of potential enemies and allies (56 percent). ¶ Additional findings:¶ Nuclear weapons received a 27 percent average cut¶ Ground force capabilities were slashed $36.2 billion¶ Eight in 10 respondents favored cutting the Obama administrations proposed budget of $88 billion on war spending in Afghanistan for 2013. (Average cut: 40 percent)¶ Six in 10 respondents favored reducing healthcare costs by having military families and retirees increase their co-pay for drug prescriptions

**The public wants defense cuts, the plan is unpopular – there is a consensus**

**Smith 12** (R. Jeffrey, national investigative editor, national security correspondent, national investigative correspondent, and a foreign staff bureau chief based in Rome for the Washington Post, in 2006, he won the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting, along with two colleagues at the Washington Post, “Public overwhelmingly supports large defense spending cuts,” May 10, 2012, Huffington post, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/the-center-for-public-integrity/public-overwhelmingly-sup_b_1506062.html)//PC>

While politicians, insiders and experts may be divided over how much the government should spend on the nation's defense, there's a surprising **consensus** among the public about what should be done: They want to cut spending far more deeply than either the Obama administration or the Republicans.¶ That's according to the results of an innovative, new, nationwide survey by three nonprofit groups, the Center for Public integrity, the Program for Public Consultation and the Stimson Center. Not only does the public want deep cuts, it wants those cuts to encompass spending in virtually every military domain -- air power, sea power, ground forces, nuclear weapons, and missile defenses.¶ According to the survey, in which respondents were told about the size of the budget as well as shown expert arguments for and against spending cuts, two-thirds of Republicans and nine in 10 Democrats supported making immediate cuts -- a position at odds with the leaderships of both political parties.¶ The average total cut was around $103 billion, a substantial portion of the current $562 billion base defense budget, while the majority supported cutting it at least $83 billion. These amounts both exceed a threatened cut of $55 billion at the end of this year under so-called "sequestration" legislation passed in 2011, which Pentagon officials and lawmakers alike have claimed would be devastating.¶ "When Americans look at the amount of defense spending compared to spending on other programs, they see defense as the one that should take a substantial hit to reduce the deficit," said Steven Kull, director of the Program for Public Consultation (PPC), and the lead developer of the survey. "Clearly the polarization that you are seeing on the floor of the Congress is not reflective of the American people."¶ A broad disagreement with the Obama administration's current spending approach -- keeping the defense budget mostly level -- was shared by 75 percent of men and 78 percent of women, all of whom instead backed immediate cuts. That view was also shared by at least 69 percent of every one of four age groups from 18 to 60 and older, although those aged 29 and below expressed much higher support, at 92 percent.¶ Disagreement with the Obama administration's continued spending on the war in Afghanistan was particularly intense, with 85 percent of respondents expressing support for a statement that said in part, "it is time for the Afghan people to manage their own country and for us to bring our troops home." A majority of respondents backed an immediate cut, on average, of $38 billion in the war's existing $88 billion budget, or around 43 percent.¶ Despite the public's distance from Obama's defense budget, the survey disclosed an even larger gap between majority views and proposals by House Republicans this week to add $3 billion for an extra naval destroyer, a new submarine, more missile defenses, and some weapons systems the Pentagon has proposed to cancel. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney has similarly endorsed a significant rise in defense spending.¶ When it comes to military forces, respondents on average favored at least a 27 percent cut in spending on nuclear arms -- the largest proportional cut of any in the survey. They also supported, on average, a 23 percent cut for ground forces, a 17 percent cut for air power and a 14 percent cut for missile defenses. Modest majorities also said they favored dumping some major individual weapons programs, including the costly F-35 jet fighter, a new long-range strategic bomber, and construction of a new aircraft carrier.¶ "Surveyed Americans cut to considerably deeper levels than policymakers are willing to support in an election season," said Matthew Leatherman, an analyst with the Budgeting for Foreign Affairs and Defense Project at the Stimson Center, a nonprofit research and policy analysis organization that helped develop the survey.¶ While Republicans generally favored smaller cuts, they overwhelmingly agreed with both independents and Democrats that current military budgets are too large. A majority of Republicans diverged only on cutting spending for special forces, missile defenses, and new ground force capabilities.¶ The survey, which was conducted in April, was designed differently than many polls on defense spending, which have asked respondents only if they support a cut. Its aim was instead to probe public attitudes more comprehensively, and so it supplied respondents with neutral information about how funds are currently being spent while exposing them to carefully-drafted, representative arguments made by advocates in the contemporary debate. The respondents then said what they wished to spend in key areas.¶ The survey's methodology and the number of respondents -- 665 people randomly selected to represent the national population -- render its conclusions statistically reliable to within 5 percent, according to the Program on Public Consultation, which conducted it.¶ Somewhat surprisingly, all of the pro and con arguments about cutting defense spending attracted majority support, suggesting that respondents found many elements in the positions of each side that they considered reasonable. It also suggests that the survey fairly summarized contrasting viewpoints.¶ Sixty-one percent agreed, for example, with a statement that the U.S. has special defense responsibilities because it is an exceptional nation, while 72 percent said the country is "playing the role of military policeman too much." Fifty-four percent agreed that cutting defense spending is problematic because it will cause job losses, while 81 percent -- in one of the largest points of consensus -- agreed with a statement that the budget had "a lot of waste" and that members of Congress regularly approve unneeded spending just to benefit their own supporters.¶ The survey suggested, in short, that most people do not see the issue in starkly black or white terms, but instead hold complex views about the appropriate relationship between defense spending and America's role in the world. "Most Americans are able to hold two competing ideas in their mind and, unlike Congress, thoughtfully recognize the merits of both," Kull explained. "And then [they] still come to hard and even bold decisions."¶ The survey also showed that Americans react differently when given data on the current defense budget in different contexts -- providing some insight into how partisans on each side of the debate might tailor their arguments to attract support.¶ When framed, for example, in the context of military spending by other countries, or the portion of the so-called annual discretionary budget devoted to defense, or the amount of money spent for defense during the Cold War, most respondents said they were surprised by how large the U.S. budget is now. But when compared to the overall size of the U.S. economy, or the size of the other two leviathans in the federal budget -- U.S. spending on Medicare or Social Security -- most respondents said they were not surprised.¶ By far the most durable finding -- even after hearing strong arguments to the contrary -- was that existing spending levels are simply too high. Respondents were asked twice, in highly different ways, to say what they thought the budget should be, and a majority supported roughly the same answer each time: a cut of at least 11 to 13 percent (they cut on average 18 to 22 percent).¶ In one exercise, a larger group chose to cut the defense budget (62 percent supported this) than to cut non-defense spending (50 percent) or to raise taxes (27 percent). They then chose to cut deeply as a means to address the deficit. In yet another exercise, respondents first read pro and con arguments for the nine major mission areas that now compose almost 90 percent of the budget; then a majority of Republicans and Democrats selected lower levels in eight of the nine areas.¶ For example, two-thirds of the respondents, including 78 percent of Democrats, 64 percent of Republicans, and 57 percent of independents, cut spending on nuclear arms. Respondents on average also sought to cut ground forces the largest dollar amount. The sole program that attracted average support for more spending was the Pentagon's effort to develop new capabilities for ground forces, but the suggested increase was slight and mostly embraced by Republicans and independents.¶ Majorities took these steps even though they expressed slightly higher support, on average, for statements in favor of these programs than critical of them. Most notably, they said they were convinced that air power is important (77 percent), special forces are valuable (79 percent), and missile defense efforts are worth pursuing (74 percent), while giving arguments for the Navy and ground forces less backing (69 percent and 57 percent, respectively).¶ While most programs got either a trim or a buzz cut in the public salon, several won outright support. A majority opposed cutting the controversial V-22 Osprey, an aircraft that takes off like a helicopter and flies like a plane. Even after being told its cancellation would save $1 billion, a clear majority backed its continued production. And even while most respondents favored killing the new strategic bomber, they solidly backed continuing to use bombers to carry nuclear arms as part of a "triad" of forces, alongside land and sea based missiles.¶ Whether the weight of public attitudes will be felt in Congress and the White House is unclear. As close students of Washington know, legislative outcomes here are often determined not by average views, but by the passionate convictions of noisy minorities. As a result, it's worth noting which arguments attracted not just support from solid majorities but high rankings as "very convincing."¶ These are summaries of some of those arguments: It is time to let the Afghanis fend for themselves (43 percent called this very convincing). There is a lot of waste in the defense budget (39 percent very convincing). Special forces are useful and effective (36 percent very convincing). We are playing the role of world policeman too much (29 percent very convincing). Missile defenses could help defend us (27 percent very convincing). Air power is critical (26 percent very convincing). Nuclear arms serve little purpose now (26 percent very convincing). Defense spending weakens other parts of the economy (25 percent very convincing).¶ "Americans' views as expressed in this survey are a big reason why policymakers -- after the election -- are likely to tighten the Pentagon's strategy and cut national defense spending more deeply," said Leatherman, the Stimson Center analyst.

**Defense spending is unpopular, the public wants defense cuts**

**Bennett 12** (John T., National Security & Foreign Policy reporter-writer-analyst for US news and world report, “Worries About Defense Cuts Grow As Public Sours on Pentagon Spending,” May 15, 2012, http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/dotmil/2012/05/15/worries-about-defense-cuts-grow-as-public-sours-on-pentagon-spending)//PC

The Pentagon could draw the short straw after Election Day, when Congress returns for a lame-duck session ripe for compromises with the White House on a number of spending and tax measures.¶ Proponents of robust defense spending are growing increasingly concerned what is being called "taxmaggeddon" in Washington, a term being bandied about the District for a period later this year when a slew of tax laws will expire. The Heritage Foundation has concluded if all those laws are allowed to run out, Americans' taxes could collectively rise by nearly $500 billion.¶ But the political fallout for both parties and the White House—even if President Obama already has been defeated—would be too great. That means Republicans and Democrats alike would go to great lengths to find federal spending cuts, and the Pentagon's nearly $600 billion annual budget would suddenly resemble a fatty slab of meat ripe for trimming.¶ [Photo Gallery: Obama's Secret Trip]¶ At the same time, lawmakers will be trying stave off a rarely used budget process called sequestration, a process set to kick in Jan. 1 that would cut $1.2 trillion from both national defense and domestic programs.¶ As politicans scramble in November and December to pinpoint budget cuts, some Pentagon veterans and analysts say the annual defense budget already wears a sizable bull's-eye. That is largely because poll after poll finds the American people willing to shrink the defense budget.¶ "I worry defense will again become a less-important priority," Thomas Donnelly of the American Enterprise Institute said during a forum in Washington. "**It looks like a steep uphill climb to convince the American people to spend more on defense."**¶ Retired Lt. Gen. David Barno agreed, saying defense will be a "relatively low priority" when lawmakers return to Washington in early November.¶ A new poll conducted by the University of Maryland and the Stimson Center suggests American voters' have an appetite for shrinking the annual Pentagon budget.¶ Respondents were given information about the size of the yearly defense budget in several ways. After digesting that data, in "three of the five cases a majority of respondents said that the size of the defense budget was more than they expected," according to a study accompanying the poll results. "When asked for their conclusion, a large majority favored cutting defense."¶ Under a debt-paring bill passed last summer, the Pentagon already is enacting a $350 billion cut to planned spending over the next 10 years. Senior members of both parties on Capitol Hill along with White House officials say they want to avoid the automatic cuts, which would reduce national defense spending by another $500 billion over the same span.¶ Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has said he has yet to instruct the armed services to begin planning for the second round of cuts. Michele Flournoy, who until three months ago was the No. 3 civilian official at the Pentagon, said during the forum that she believes "people in the Congress and the White House [already] should be doing this planning."¶ [Senior DOD Official Extends Hand to North Korea, Warns Others]¶ "Both political parties want to sustain American military preeminence," Barno said during the forum in Washington. And while "most" of the American people do, too, the former commander of U.S. troops in Afghanistan says "a debate among the American people" on that very issue has begun.¶ Matthew Leatherman, a Stimson Center analyst who helped with the new poll and study, says "the message to Washington is clear: The Pentagon is on the right path, but policymakers can best represent the American people by leading the way to greater savings."¶ "Many Pentagon and congressional leaders oppose cuts beyond $350 billion, but this survey suggests that Americans believe policymakers still are moving too tentatively," says Leatherman. "Three-quarters of those surveyed [would] cut spending further. … That includes scaling back in Afghanistan and reducing the ground force, while sparing special operations forces from the toughest cuts."¶ Many Washington insiders of all political stripes agree that progress on the tax laws, avoiding the automatic cuts, or even raising the debt ceiling is unlikely until after Election Day.¶ On further defense cuts, conservative Republicans are holding firm that slashing domestic entitlement programs should happen in order to stave off military cuts. Democrats are pushing for, as described by Flournoy, "a balanced" package of "tax reforms, spending cuts and things that drive U.S. competitiveness."¶ The former Pentagon policy chief urged Congress to, at the least, approve a measure that "de-triggers sequestration," and find other ways to achieve the $1.2 trillion in cuts that would be achieved through the automatic reductions.¶ Amid the uncertainty, one thing is crystal clear, Flournoy mused: "A lot of productive work will come between the election and the time when sequestration would kick in. I think a lot of minds will become very, very focused."

# Air Force Link

**Air force defense spending is uniquely unpopular – recent polls confirm**

**Kull et al 12** - A Study by the Program for Public Consultation, in collaboration with the Stimson Center and the Center for Public Integrity (Steven – Director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), faculty member of the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Matthew Leatherman – Bacehlors degrees in Political Science and American history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel hill and a Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University, an analyst with the Stimson Center, R. Jeffrey Smith – reporter at the Washington Post and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting in 2006, Clay Ramsay – Program on International Policy Attitudes Research Director and Center for International And Security Studies at Maryland fellow, Evan Lewis – Research Associate at PIPA, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland, Abe Medoff – Research Assistant/Office Manager at PIPA. He holds an MA in Security Policy Studies and a BA in International Affairs from The George Washington University, Russell Rumbaugh – director of the Budgeting for Foreign Affairs and Defense program, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Chicago and a Masters of Science in Security Studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stephan Subias – CISSM, “Consulting the American People on National Defense Spending,” May 10, 2012, http://www.public-consultation.org/pdf/DefenseBudget\_May12\_rpt.pdf)//PC

4A. Air Power ¶ A large majority (72%) made cuts in existing air power capabilities, including majorities of ¶ Democrats (85%), and Republicans (61%), with the sample as a whole cutting it an average of ¶ 17%. Two thirds cut new capabilities in this area--three quarters of Democrats and six in ten ¶ Republicans--with the whole sample cutting it an average of 19%. ¶ When presented with arguments for and against reducing spending on air power capabilities, both ¶ arguments were found convincing by majorities. However, more found the argument against reducing ¶ spending convincing. And when asked to set a level, respondents chose to reduce air power spending ¶ significantly. ¶ First respondents were given a brief summary of air power’s role: ¶ This includes bombers, fighters, cargo planes, and other aircraft, and the personnel to ¶ maintain and operate them. These forces give the US the capability to control airspace, strike ¶ hostile forces or other targets on the ground, and help protect U.S. ground forces. Planes and ¶ satellites also provide intelligence. ¶ They were shown the 2012 spending level for maintaining existing capabilities--$113 billion—and ¶ the level for developing new capabilities--$30 billion. Then respondents reviewed the argument for ¶ preserving spending levels on these capabilities: ¶ Reducing spending on air power capabilities could limit our ability to strike any target on ¶ short notice and with precision. It could limit US military access in some regions, such as ¶ Asia where the US has growing interests, but has limited ground forces. Furthermore, the Air ¶ Force has played a key role in successfully tracking and targeting al Qaeda. Clearly air ¶ power is critical and should not be compromised. ¶ A large 77% majority found this argument convincing, though only 26% said it was very convincing. ¶ Only 22% found it unconvincing. (There were no meaningful differences by party.) ¶ The argument in favor of reducing spending focused on US superiority relative to possible rivals: ¶ America’s air power is already by far the most powerful and advanced in the world. China’s ¶ air force is several decades behind the US, while Russia’s air force has been deteriorating for ¶ the last two decades. Nonetheless, the defense industry is always coming up with new, ¶ fancier, and more expensive technologies. We have more than enough to defend our own ¶ territory and that of key allies. Enough is enough. ¶ A lesser majority of 62% found this argument convincing (18% very), while 38% found it ¶ unconvincing. ¶ Respondents were then asked to specify two spending levels--for maintaining existing air capabilities, ¶ and for developing new air capabilities. ¶ Budgeting Existing Air Power Capabilities ¶ A majority of respondents (72%) and majorities of Democrats (85%), Republicans (61%) and ¶ independents (63%) reduced the budget for existing air power capabilities. ¶ On average, respondents reduced spending to maintain existing capabilities by 17% ($19 billion). ¶ Republicans’ average reduction was 9% ($11 billion); Democrats’ was 22% ($25 billion); and ¶ independents’ was 19% ($21 billion). ¶ A majority made at least a 12% cut ($13 billion). Among Republicans, a majority reduced by 3% ($3 ¶ billion); and among Democrats and independents alike, a majority reduced by 12%. ¶ Budgeting New Air Power Capabilities ¶ A majority of respondents (66%) reduced spending on new capabilities for air power. This was also ¶ true among partisan groups: 74% of Democrats, 60% of Republicans, and 60% of independents. ¶ Respondents’ average cut to funds for developing new air power capabilities was 19%, or $6 billion. ¶ Republicans made an average reduction of 11% ($3 billion), while Democrats on average cut it 27% ¶ ($8 billion) and independents 18% ($5 billion). ¶ A majority made at least a 17% cut ($5 billion), and these figures corresponded also to the majority ¶ among Republicans. While a majority of Democrats made at least a 33% cut ($10 billion), a majority ¶ of independents reduced by 23% or more ($7 billion).

# Navy Link

**Naval defense spending is unpopular among the public, perceived as unnecessary – polls prove**

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4C. Naval Forces ¶ Roughly seven in ten Americans cut the budget for existing capabilities for naval forces, ¶ including 85% of Democrats and 65% of Republicans, with an average cut of 13%. Seven in ¶ ten also made cuts to the budget for new capabilities, including 84% of Democrats and 63% of ¶ Republicans, with an average cut of 20%. ¶ Unlike the approach respondents took with ground forces, with naval forces respondents tended to cut ¶ development of new capabilities more deeply than existing capabilities. ¶ The role of US naval forces was introduced as follows: ¶ We will now address American naval forces. Naval forces include ships, submarines, aircraft ¶ carriers and their jets, and the personnel who operate and maintain them. Their missions ¶ include projecting US power from the seas, patrolling commercial sea-lanes, gathering ¶ intelligence, and on occasion responding to humanitarian disasters. Naval forces are stationed ¶ in the US and in bases in East Asia, the Persian Gulf, and other parts of the world. ¶ They were shown the amounts of 2012 spending for current naval forces--$113 billion—and ¶ development of new naval forces--$24 billion. Then they reviewed the argument in favor of ¶ preserving the existing levels of spending: ¶ Reductions in American naval power would be seen as a signal that the US is not committed ¶ to maintaining its preeminent global role. The Navy protects shipping lanes that are ¶ important for commerce, as well as for security, including lanes used to deliver oil from the ¶ Persian Gulf. It is also capable of quickly responding to humanitarian crises caused by ¶ natural disasters. As China continues to rise, we need to increase our naval force in East Asia ¶ to ensure that our Asian allies in the region do not draw closer to China and restrict our ¶ military or commercial access in the region. ¶ This argument was found convincing by a large 69% majority (very, 19%). Both Republicans and ¶ Democrats found it convincing by large margins (76% and 64% respectively; independents, 66%).¶ Twenty-nine percent found it unconvincing (very, 6%). ¶ The pro argument for cutting spending on this area sought to focus on the magnitude of US naval ¶ power compared to that of other countries viewed as potential threats: ¶ America’s naval power is so much greater than that of all other countries that the US can ¶ safely trim these forces without any risk to US national security or its interests. Besides ¶ hundreds of ships, the US has 11 large aircraft carriers that roam the world, while China and ¶ Russia only have one each. Other countries can do their part, policing sea-lanes in their own ¶ areas and, in the event of a crisis, we can send our forces. We don’t need to be the cops on the ¶ beat everywhere at once. ¶ Sixty-eight percent found this argument convincing as well—virtually the same number as found the ¶ argument against cutting convincing, with about as many (22%) finding it very convincing. ¶ Democrats were distinct in finding it more persuasive (78%), but 59% of Republicans also found it ¶ convincing (independents, 63%). A third (32%) found it unconvincing. ¶ Though the responses to the arguments were approximately balanced, the sample went on to cut the ¶ budget for naval forces. ¶ Budgeting Existing Naval Force Capabilities ¶ Roughly seven in ten respondents (73%) cut the budget for existing capabilities for naval forces. This ¶ included 85% of Democrats, 65% of Republicans, and 64% of independents. ¶ On average, the budget for existing capabilities was cut 13% ($15 billion). While both Democrats ¶ and Republicans cut it by 11% on average ($12 billion), independents cut much deeper—21% ($24 ¶ billion). ¶ A majority of respondents cut naval forces by 12% or more (at least $13 billion). Majorities of ¶ Democrats and independents were identical to the majority of the whole sample. Republicans were ¶ lower with a majority cutting 3% or more ($3 billion). ¶ Budgeting New Naval Force Capabilities ¶ A large majority (70%) made cuts to the budget for new capabilities for naval forces, including 84% ¶ of Democrats, 63% of Republicans, and 55% of independents. ¶ In the naval case, the amount for future capabilities was cut more sharply than that for current ¶ capabilities. On average, this area was cut 20% ($5 billion). Average cuts were made by ¶ Republicans (11%, $3 billion), Democrats (27%, $7 billion), and independents (18%, $4 billion). ¶ A majority cut at least 17% ($4 billion) or more, and these exact figures were also true of a majority ¶ of Republicans and independents. Among Democrats, a majority cut 25% or more ($6 billion).

# Nuclear Weapons/Deterrence Link

**Nuclear weapons and deterrence capabilities are unpopular and perceived as unnecessary – polls prove**

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4D. Nuclear Weapons ¶ Two thirds decreased the budget for nuclear weapons, including eight in ten Democrats and ¶ two thirds of Republicans, with the sample as a whole cutting it an average of 27%--the largest ¶ area percentage cut. ¶ Respondents were introduced to the role of the nuclear arsenal and nuclear-armed forces with this ¶ description: ¶ The United States has bombers, submarines, and land-based missiles, armed with nuclear ¶ weapons. Ballistic missile submarines are always on patrol, and nuclear-capable bombers are ¶ stationed at, or rotate through, bases around the world. Nuclear weapons are primarily meant ¶ to deter nuclear attacks by another state, by threatening nuclear retaliation after an attack. ¶ Some nuclear weapons are also designed for first use in highly limited circumstances. ¶ They were informed of the total 2012 amount for operating and maintaining these forces, which is ¶ $19 billion. ¶ Then they were offered arguments for preserving, and for reducing, the nuclear weapons budget. The ¶ argument for maintaining this area’s budget relied on the strategic importance and low cost of nuclear ¶ weapons. ¶ America’s nuclear arsenal is our country’s ultimate insurance policy against aggression. It ¶ helps protect our influence in a world with many threats and at a relatively modest cost. It ¶ provides assurance to our allies, decreasing incentives to develop their own nuclear weapons, ¶ and communicates our resolve to be a global power. It also deters threatening actions by our ¶ enemies. Developing newer models of nuclear warheads, as well as more modern bombers, ¶ more accurate missiles, and submarines to carry them, ensures that the deterrent remains ¶ reliable, useable, and therefore credible. ¶ About two thirds (65%) found this argument convincing (very, 22%). Democrats and independents ¶ were similar, but slightly lower than the full sample at 61% and 60% respectively. Republicans were ¶ notably higher at 74%. Thirty-four percent found it unconvincing. ¶ The argument for reducing spending focused on the great magnitude of the US nuclear arsenal and its ¶ asymmetry with the kinds of enemies the US has faced in recent years: ¶ America’s nuclear arsenal consists of thousands of weapons, most far more destructive than ¶ the one that obliterated Hiroshima. The idea that we need thousands of weapons to deter an ¶ adversary is absurd: We can effectively destroy a country with a small number of weapons. ¶ Their use is also highly unlikely against today’s foes—some of whom use crude road bombs. ¶ Advanced conventional arms can accomplish virtually every mission that nuclear arms can, ¶ without killing thousands of civilians and producing long-lasting nuclear fallout. ¶ This argument was found convincing by 67%--not very differently from how the opposing argument ¶ was rated (very, 26%). Republicans and Democrats responded to the argument quite similarly, with ¶ 66% and 72% respectively, finding it convincing (independents, 62%). ¶ In setting their own budget, two thirds (68%) decreased the budget for nuclear weapons. Majorities of ¶ all partisan groups made cuts: 78% of Democrats, 64% of Republicans, and 57% of independents. ¶ The sample cut an average $5 billion or 27% from the nuclear weapons budget. Republicans cut $4 ¶ billion or 18% ($3.5 billion); Democrats cut $7 billion or 35%; and independents cut $5 billion or ¶ 26%. ¶ At least $4 billion or 21% was cut by a majority. Among both Republicans and independents, ¶ majorities made the same cuts as the majority of the full sample. A majority of Democrats cut $6 ¶ billion or 32%.

# F-35 Link

**F-35 is unpopular – independents specifically want to cut the program, they’re key to the election – polls prove**

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F-35 Joint Strike Fighter ¶ Respondents were informed that the F-35 “is designed to produce a jet fighter with more advanced ¶ features, especially high stealth capabilities” and that there is a proposal to cancel the program and ¶ buy and upgrade current fighters instead. The question included the arguments: ¶ Some say the F-35 is a more sophisticated plane than we need, that it has many design ¶ problems, and is way over budget already, with more overruns likely. Others say that ¶ alternative aircraft, even after upgrading, will not be stealthy enough and will have less ¶ capability in combat as other countries develop better fighters of their own. ¶ Respondents also learned that the proposal “would save approximately $5 billion a year in 2013, and ¶ $382 billion over the remaining life of the program.”¶ A majority favored cancelling the program, 54 to 44%. A large majority of Democrats (59%) and a ¶ modest majority of independents (53%) took this position. Republicans were essentially divided, with ¶ 48% in favor of cancelling and 52% opposed.

# Cut Bombers Program Link

**Recent polls prove the public thinks eliminating the bomber programs is unpopular**

**Kull et al 12** - A Study by the Program for Public Consultation, in collaboration with the Stimson Center and the Center for Public Integrity (Steven – Director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), faculty member of the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Matthew Leatherman – Bacehlors degrees in Political Science and American history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel hill and a Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University, an analyst with the Stimson Center, R. Jeffrey Smith – reporter at the Washington Post and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting in 2006, Clay Ramsay – Program on International Policy Attitudes Research Director and Center for International And Security Studies at Maryland fellow, Evan Lewis – Research Associate at PIPA, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland, Abe Medoff – Research Assistant/Office Manager at PIPA. He holds an MA in Security Policy Studies and a BA in International Affairs from The George Washington University, Russell Rumbaugh – director of the Budgeting for Foreign Affairs and Defense program, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Chicago and a Masters of Science in Security Studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stephan Subias – CISSM, “Consulting the American People on National Defense Spending,” May 10, 2012, http://www.public-consultation.org/pdf/DefenseBudget\_May12\_rpt.pdf)//PC

Eliminating Bomber Leg of Nuclear Weapons Triad ¶ Respondents were introduced to this long-running debate with the information that “right now the US ¶ has three different ways to deliver nuclear weapons: land-based missiles, submarines, and bombers,” ¶ and that there is a proposal to eliminate bombers and keep the other two. The question then covered ¶ the following arguments: ¶ Some people say that, given how powerful nuclear weapons are and the low likelihood that ¶ they will be used, having just two systems for delivering them is enough and we should save ¶ the money. Others say that it is better to have three ways of delivering nuclear weapons than ¶ two, and that bombers have a unique value because they can be recalled at the last minute. ¶ Submarine-launched or ground-launched missiles cannot be recalled once they are fired. ¶ Respondents were told that eliminating the bomber leg of the triad would save about $4 billion a year. ¶ Three in five (60%) opposed eliminating bombers as a means of nuclear weapons delivery, while ¶ 38% favored the proposal to eliminate this. Majorities of Republicans (68%), Democrats (54%), and ¶ independents (58%) were all opposed.

# Gas Tax Link

**Gas tax unpopular with the public**

**RF 11** (The Reason Foundation, “77 Percent of Americans Oppose Raising the Gas Tax, Reason-Rupe Transportation Poll Finds,” December 20, 2011, Reason Foundation, http://reason.org/news/show/reason-rupe-transportation-infrastr)//PC

A majority of Americans believe new transportation projects should be paid for with user-fees instead of tax increases, according to a new national Reason-Rupe poll of 1,200 adults on cell phones and land lines.¶ The Reason-Rupe poll finds 77 percent of Americans oppose increasing the federal gas tax, while just 19 percent favor raising the tax, which is currently 18.4 cents a gallon. The public thinks the government wastes the gas tax money it already receives. Sixty-five percent say the government spends transportation funding ineffectively, and just 23 say the money is spent effectively.¶ The survey shows Americans believe new roads and highways should be paid for by the people driving on them: 58 percent of Americans say new roads and highways should be funded by tolls. Twenty-eight percent say new road capacity should be paid for by tax increases. ¶ The Reason-Rupe poll finds broad support for user-fees. If a toll road would save drivers a “significant” amount of time, 59 percent of Americans say they would pay to use it. And 57 percent favor converting carpool lanes, or high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, into high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes. Voters are much-less supportive of variably-priced toll lanes, however. Half of those surveyed oppose, and 39 percent favor, variably-priced tolls that rise and fall with traffic levels.¶ In terms of transportation spending priorities, 62 percent want to prioritize funding for road and highway projects, while 30 percent want to prioritize funding for mass transit projects.¶ As the debate over high-speed rail continues in California and elsewhere, a solid majority of Americans, 55 percent, say the private sector should build high-speed train systems where it thinks riders will pay to use rail. Just 35 percent of Americans believe federal and state governments should build high-speed rail systems where they think the trains are needed. ¶ As governments at all levels look for ways to pay for transportation projects, public officials should note that 55 percent of Americans support using public-private partnerships to build critical infrastructure projects. Just 35 percent oppose using public-private partnerships to fund highways, airports and other infrastructure. ¶ The National Transportation Safety Board has called for a ban on cell phones while driving and 69 percent of Americans tell Reason-Rupe that talking on a cell phone while driving should be illegal. Even more, 89 percent, say texting while driving should be illegal. The poll did not ask about using hands-free devices.

**Transportation infrastructure popular, but the gas tax specifically is unpopular**

**Weinberg 11** (Ali, Reporter for NBC, “Poll: Support for infrastructure spending, but not paying for it,” February 17, 2011, NBC, http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/\_news/2011/02/17/6075671-poll-support-for-infrastructure-spending-but-not-paying-for-it?lite)//PC

Democrats, Republicans, and independents would all support new government spending on U.S. transportation infrastructure, but are not interested in footing the bill themselves, according to a new poll.¶ The survey, conducted by Democratic polling firm Hart Research and Republican firm Public Opinion Strategies, was released days after President Obama submitted his 2012 budget request, which includes $53 billion over six years towards high-speed rail projects and $30 billion a year to fund a national infrastructure bank. ¶ The survey found wide bipartisan support for legislators to seek common ground on infrastructure improvements: 71% of all respondents -- including 74% of Democrats, 71% of Republicans and 69% of independents -- said they wanted elected officials to work together on the issue.¶ Support was also strong among respondents who identified themselves as part of the Tea Party, an affiliation that connotes a strong anti-government spending attitude, with 66% supporting infrastructure investment.¶ “The bipartisan, or even tripartisan, nature of the issue comes through loud and clear," said Jay Campbell of Hart Research, who, along with Public Opinion Strategies, conducted the poll for state-centric think tank the Rockefeller Institute.¶ This support also extended into specific policy proposals that would control how transportation dollars are spent. In the poll, 90% supported the idea of holding all levels of government accountable for making sure infrastructure projects stay on time and budget, as well as allowing local regions to have a greater say in how transportation funds are used in their area.¶ Even some spending increases, like more competitive grants for transportation projects and money for developing public transportation systems and bike paths, were met with high approval numbers.¶ “There is a tolerance for more spending in this area as long as there's a demonstration that it's going to be spent wisely,” said Republican pollster Bill McInturff of Public Opinion Strategies.¶ But support plummeted to 40% when respondents were asked if they would support replacing the per-gallon gasoline tax, which has stayed at the same level since 1993, with a fee based on the number of miles driven.¶ While a gas-tax hike would be a quick way to increase revenue, its unpopularity among voters means it’s unlikely to become a reality in Congress, Campbell said.¶ “This is really the rock and a hard place for lawmakers,” he said. “Voters say our infrastructure is lacking, they say it should be modernized, they say it should be improved, but they resist paying for it.”

# Bikes Link

**Critical Bikes is unpopular – it is the last priority for the public**

**Caruso 10** (Lisa, Reporter for Bloomberg News, “What Role For Polls In Policy Debates?,” April 4, 2010, National Journal, http://transportation.nationaljournal.com/2010/04/what-role-for-polls-in-funding.php)//PC

Two national polls on voters' attitudes toward transportation policy point to potential usefulness -- and constraints -- of using survey data to inform policy decisions.¶ The more recent poll was conducted by Transportation for America, a coalition of environmental, smart growth, alternative transportation and public health groups. It found that two-thirds of voters wanted more options besides driving and that 58 percent favor spending more on public transportation services. In fact, 51 percent were willing to have their taxes increased to improve mass transit. The telephone survey contacted 800 registered voters between Feb. 27 and March 2 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percent.¶ The other poll was released in April 2008 by the American Highway Users Alliance, which represents motorists, truckers and other groups whose business depends on highways. It found that 93 percent considered it important that their elected representatives support dedicating fuel taxes and other highway user fees solely to road and bridge improvements, and 57 percent supported some increase in fuel taxes to fund highway and bridge projects. That figure rose to 71 percent after respondents heard the economic and safety arguments for an increase. The online survey of 1,000 likely voters was conducted April 4-6, 2008, with an error margin of plus or minus 3.1 percent.¶ Yet respondents to the T4 America poll listed roads second to rail as being neglected in federal spending -- and they put sidewalks and bike paths last. Similarly, roughly 80 percent of respondents to the Highway Users' poll considered bike and pedestrian paths a local government responsibility and major highways and bridges a federal responsibility (although a majority said funding urban light rail and trolley transit is the states' job). And both polls clearly indicate that voters will pay more for a transportation system that better meets their needs.¶ While polls of voter attitudes like these can give lawmakers valuable information in writing the next surface transportation law, they can also present a confusing and even contradictory picture. What kinds of policy reforms might this polling data suggest be considered in the reauthorization debate? How helpful can polls be in the policy-making process, if they belong there at all? What other public opinion polls about transportation are out there that you think would add to the debate?

# Airports Link

**Airports are unpopular, new TSA measures incite backlash**

**Condon 10** (Stephanie, Political Report for CBS News“After a Week of Backlash, Is Public Opinion Turning Against the TSA Measures?,” November 23, 2010, CBS News, http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544\_162-20023682-503544.html)//PC

A new national survey suggests that public opinion is fairly quickly turning against the new airport security procedures the government is implementing, leading to increased pressure on the Transportation Security Administration to reverse course on the new, controversial measures.¶ The TSA has come under fire for its new full-body scanning machines, which have been put to use in 70 U.S. airports since last month, as well as the new "enhanced" pat-down searches TSA workers are conducting on travelers who refuse to go through the new machines. The TSA has so far asked for the public's cooperation as it implements the new procedures. The agency and the Obama administration have also pointed to last week's CBS News poll to suggest people aren't as outraged as media reports suggest. According to that poll, conducted Nov. 7-10 and released Nov. 15, 81 percent of Americans said they supported the use of the full-body scanners.¶ Now, however, a new Washington Post/ABC News poll, conducted Nov. 21, puts public support of the scanning machines 17 percentage points lower than the CBS News poll did. Sixty-four percent of respondents in that poll said they supported use of the machines, while 32 percent said they were opposed to the machines. Support drops to 58 percent among Americans who say they fly at least once a year.¶ Additionally, the poll found that half of Americans think the new, thorough pat downs go too far.¶ The marked shift in public opinion comes after a week of backlash led by offended travelers and civil libertarians and subsequently picked up by some lawmakers and heavily covered by the media.¶ The firestorm started after a video went viral featuring John Tyner, a man who recorded his enhanced pat-down on Nov. 13 and warned the TSA agent not to "touch his junk." In the days following, Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report" ran a lengthy segment ridiculing the TSA procedures, and the tech website Gizmodo published a slideshow of 100 images from full-body scanners that it obtained after filing a Freedom of Information Act request. Saturday Night Live mocked the pat-down procedures, and Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, known for successfully landing a plane in the Hudson River, spoke out against them.¶ The day before CBS News released its poll, protests against the new security measures, organized online, gained enough momentum to spur the TSA to call the New York Times.¶ The organizers of "Opt-Out Day" want travelers on Wednesday to "opt out" of going through the scanners, prompting physical inspections that will slow down air travel on one of the busiest travel day of the year. The goal is to cause enough disruption at airports to cause the TSA to reconsider their new procedures.¶ The New York Times' Nate Silver, known for his analysis of polling data, predicts the TSA will quickly respond to the backlash. He points out that the Washington Post/ABC poll shows that as many as 20 percent of respondents said they would be less likely to fly because of these new procedures, which could have economic or safety implications. He also points out that the TSA has modified a number of its past procedures; for instance, in 2007, the TSA reversed its policy prohibiting lighters on planes.¶ "It is perhaps foolish to predict how the T.S.A. will respond this time," Silver writes. "But caution aside, I would be surprised if the new procedures survived much past the New Year without significant modification."¶ The head of the Transportation Security Administration, John Pistole, told CBS News anchor Katie Couric that the agency is already looking into ways to effectively change its policies.¶ Pistole said, "What we have done is go back to those entities such as the GAO (Government Accountability Office) and the inspector general who have done covert testing to show that we are not being thorough enough in our screening because they're able to get through the screening, gone back to them and to say, OK, how can we be better informed if we modify our screening then what are the risks we deal with, so that's what we're dealing with."¶ Significant changes are not expected before the Thanksgiving weekend, however, and the TSA has said that while it is open to refining its techniques, it has no plans to abandon them.

# Transportation – Link Turn

A transportation bill would be bipartisan in the eyes of the public

Anderson 12 (Geoffery, Political Machine, February 22, “Geoffery Anderson: As the House Transportation Bill Languishes, There’s Still Time to ‘Fix it First’”, LexisNexis Academic)

Let's look on the bright side of life.

By all accounts, you would be hard-pressed today to find anyone who views congressional inaction positively. But with the House of Representatives' transportation package languishing amid opposition from both Democrats and Republicans, members of Congress at least have added time to address the bill's severe shortcomings.

Our country's roads and bridges are in desperate need of repair, so crafting economically beneficial legislation with bipartisan support should be lawmakers' top priority. Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica has already shown us what's possible when business development and other interests meet, including language in the House bill that would spur development around transit stations and jumpstart real estate investment. With that kind of cooperative leadership as a model, the House would be wise to make the following revisions, showing voters that it's the congressional branch with the capacity to get things done in an election year:

Restore guaranteed funding for public transportation. Let's talk economics, not politics; historically, investments in public transportation generate 31 percent more jobs per dollar than construction of roads and bridges. Moreover, millions of Americans rely on transit systems to get them to and from work, shops and schools every day. Retaining a dedicated source of funding for public transportation adds certainty that those economic connections remain in place. Ignoring 30 years of bipartisan policy, destabilizing business growth and stranding seniors and commuters without cars hardly seems like a way to win hearts and minds.

More emphasis on bridge and road repair. Our existing transportation infrastructure is falling apart: One in nine of the bridges and overpasses American drivers cross each day is rated in poor enough condition that they could become dangerous or be closed without near-term repair. The longer we wait to fund these maintenance projects, the more they'll cost; according to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, every dollar spent to keep a road in good condition avoids 6-14 needed later to rebuild the same road once it has deteriorated significantly.

Reinstate measures that provide funding to pedestrian and bicycling safety programs. The decades-long neglect of pedestrian safety in the design and use of American streets comes at heavy cost: From 2000 to 2009, 47,700 pedestrians were killed in the United States. Considering the unfathomable toll such deaths take on families and on economic development and medical costs, it simply doesn't make sense to cut safety funding when we really should be adding to it. With an increasing percentage of the American population wanting to live in walkable communities with housing options near jobs, shops and schools, the transportation bill needs to support programs in line with those market trends.

Transportation comes first. Partisan add-ons have marred Congress' recent debate over the transportation bills. While lawmakers certainly have the power to raise contentious issues in enacting new legislation, those are distractions that will keep the country from achieving its primary goals. Whatever you think of the specific proposals, everyone knows they amount to poison pills that will delay needed funding and reform until next year.

It goes without saying that Americans are ready for an economically sound, people-friendly, and bipartisan transportation bill. It's a good thing our elected officials have extra time to meet those expectations.

Transportation investment is a bipartisan issue for the public

Halsey 12 (Ashley Halsey III, The Washington Post, April 23, “Infrastructure projects need public support, transportation experts say”, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/experts-want-to-build-public-support-for-infrastructure-projects/2012/04/23/gIQAvmMXcT\_story.html)

“Recent public-opinion surveys have found overwhelming support for the idea of infrastructure investment,” the report said. “After the ‘bridge to nowhere’ controversies of recent years, the public has become sensitized to issues of pork-barrel spending and understandably demands to see a clear connection between federal expenditures, actual transportation needs, and economic benefits.”

Despite apprehension about wasteful spending, the report said, more than two-thirds of voters surveyed by the Rockefeller Foundation said infrastructure improvement was important and 80 percent said spending on it would create millions of jobs.

The transportation group, co-chaired by former transportation secretaries Norman Y. Mineta and Samuel K. Skinner, compiled a comprehensive study on infrastructure in 2010. That report estimated that an additional $134 billion to $262 billion must be spent per year through 2035 to rebuild and improve roads, rail systems and air transportation.

**Transportation infrastructure popular with the public – most recent polls prove, and assumes their funding links**

**TI 5/22** (Truckinginfo.com, “Survey: Americans Value Infrastructure in Upcoming Election,” May 22, 2012, http://truckinginfo.com/news/news-print.asp?news\_id=77009)//PC

Two-thirds of Americans who intend to vote during this year's presidential election feel that a candidate's standing on American transportation infrastructure will influence their decision, according to the America Thinks national highway survey from HNTB Corp., an infrastructure firm serving public and private owners and contractors. Additionally, more than one in five (22%) say this will be extremely influential on who they vote for.¶ "Our highways, bridges and other transportation infrastructure are essential assets that support growth and investment in the U.S. economy," says Pete Rahn, HNTB leader national transportation practice. "People expect them to be resilient, reliable and safe."¶ Nearly nine in ten (89%) Americans feel it's important for the federal government to fund the maintenance and improvements of interstate highways.¶ Congress recently approved the ninth extension of transportation legislation that originally expired in 2009. The Highway Trust Fund - due to inflation, rising construction costs and increasingly fuel efficient vehicles - no longer collects enough money to support the U.S. surface transportation systems.¶ More than half of Americans (57%) believe the nation's infrastructure is underfunded, according to the survey.¶ The uncertainty over a long-term highway bill also is a challenge for state departments of transportation, notes HNTB. State DOTs rely heavily on federal funding to support major highway and bridge programs, and creates ambiguity for planners and contractors who need the certainty of a long-term bill to commit to large, complex multiyear projects.¶ "The absence of a long-term bill is hurting our economic competitiveness," says Rahn. "Recent efforts by the House and Senate to move discussions into a conference committee and hammer out potential details of a bill are a step in the right direction, but what's really needed is a stable, long-term authorization that can adequately pay for our transportation system."¶ Overall, 80% of those surveyed would rather increase funding and improve roads and bridges than continue current funding levels and risk allowing our roads and bridges deteriorate.¶ The challenge is finding sustainable and sufficient revenue sources. More than three in five (61%) Americans would prefer to allocate funds for these projects through tolls.¶ Currently, there are few opportunities to toll the nation's interstates. There are two federally approved pilot programs. One would allow up to three existing interstate facilities to be tolled. Slots have been secured for Interstate 70 by Missouri and portions of Interstate 95 by North Carolina and Virginia. Another program would allow three new interstate highways to be tolled. One slot has been secured by South Carolina for what is slated to become Interstate 73. None of the states have finalized plans to move forward, and any additional opportunities would need to be legislated by Congress.¶ Rahn says the expansion of tolling makes sense for busy highways and interstates. "It's a proven source of funding that charges users on the road rather than at the pump. Plus, modern electronic tolling is quick and easy for motorists, allowing them to complete a transaction at highway speeds, no longer having to stop at toll booths."¶ HNTB's America Thinks national highway survey polled a random nationwide sample of 1,024 Americans April 2-10, 2012. It was conducted by Kelton Research, which used an e-mail invitation and online survey. Quotas were set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population ages 18 and over. The margin of error is +/- 3.1%.

# FAA - link turn

**FAA spending is uniquely popular**

**Kandorfer 11** (Pierre, Examiner.com, journalist who used to work as newspaper editor “Most people support funding for the FAA,” April 10, 2011, Examiner, http://www.examiner.com/article/most-people-support-funding-for-the-faa)//PC

Polls show that US taxpayers want to cut the funding for most government agencies. However, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is an exception.¶ New polls conducted on behalf of the Aerospace Industries Association shows considerable public support for fully funding the Federal Aviation Administration and the Next Generation Air Transportation System.¶ "It's critical that Congress fund the FAA by passing a fiscal year 2011 appropriations bill," said AIA President and CEO Marion C. Blakey. "More continuing resolutions will further erode FAA's ability to implement the much needed Next Generation Air Transportation System in a timely manner."¶ According to media reports, passing a full-year appropriations measure will allow FAA to enter into new contracts, move forward with new construction, hire more safety inspectors and certify new technology—activities prohibited under stop-gap continuing resolutions that only allow spending on previously authorized projects.¶ Reportedly, the public supports spending on aviation safety. A poll conducted in early March shows 68 percent of Americans support new technologies to improve air safety. Furthermore, 65 percent favor maintaining or increasing FAA funding levels. Only 19 percent polled favor cutting FAA's budget. Finally, a majority of Americans knowledgeable about FAA's satellite-based NextGen air traffic control system support its timely implementation.¶ "Americans support improving our aviation system," Blakey said. "Funding NextGen is important. It will make our safe skies safer, reduce congestion and delays and improve aviation's environmental stewardship."

# Special Ops - Link TURN

**Special Ops forces are popular, CP avoids the link to elections – specific to independents, they’re key to the election**

**Kull et al 12** - A Study by the Program for Public Consultation, in collaboration with the Stimson Center and the Center for Public Integrity (Steven – Director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), faculty member of the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Matthew Leatherman – Bacehlors degrees in Political Science and American history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel hill and a Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University, an analyst with the Stimson Center, R. Jeffrey Smith – reporter at the Washington Post and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting in 2006, Clay Ramsay – Program on International Policy Attitudes Research Director and Center for International And Security Studies at Maryland fellow, Evan Lewis – Research Associate at PIPA, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland, Abe Medoff – Research Assistant/Office Manager at PIPA. He holds an MA in Security Policy Studies and a BA in International Affairs from The George Washington University, Russell Rumbaugh – director of the Budgeting for Foreign Affairs and Defense program, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Chicago and a Masters of Science in Security Studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stephan Subias – CISSM, “Consulting the American People on National Defense Spending,” May 10, 2012, http://www.public-consultation.org/pdf/DefenseBudget\_May12\_rpt.pdf)//PC

4E. Special Operations Forces ¶ Six in ten reduced the budget for Special Operations Forces, but while three quarters of ¶ Democrats made cuts, only 42% of Republicans did so. On average, 10% was cut. ¶ Respondents were introduced to the military roles played by SOF today in the following language: ¶ Special operations forces are highly trained forces that include the Green Berets, Army ¶ Rangers, Delta Force, and Navy SEALs, as well as elite aviators and Marines. They ¶ undertake covert missions (such as against terrorist groups), fight adversaries’ elite or ¶ irregular forces, and frequently train and advise other countries’ militaries. ¶ They were shown the 2012 amount of SOF spending, $14 billion. They were then offered an ¶ argument for preserving the SOF budget as is: ¶ US Special Operations Forces provide a less expensive, rapid and more precise way than ¶ regular soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines to counter immediate threats from terrorists ¶ (such as the operation against bin Laden), pirates, paramilitary criminal groups, and nuclear ¶ proliferators. Using them to train partner states’ militaries may help head off the need for US ¶ military operations in the future. Reducing Special Operations Forces could affect the US’s ¶ ability to discreetly and precisely target adversaries’ leaders and military assets. ¶ This argument was found convincing by a large majority—79%--with 36% finding it very ¶ convincing. Almost all Republicans found it convincing (89%); 75% of Democrats and 72% of ¶ independents agreed with them. Only 19% found it unconvincing. ¶ The argument in favor of reducing spending focused on the issues of secrecy and accountability, and ¶ pointed out that recent expansions of SOF may have already made them unwieldy. ¶ US Special Operations Forces need to be used very selectively. They operate mostly out of ¶ the public eye and thus are less accountable. Some operations have been legally and morally ¶ questionable——such as assassinations and kidnappings——and have provoked hostility ¶ toward the US. Additionally, Special Operations Forces have recently been expanded to over ¶ 60,000 personnel, making it larger than the militaries of 100 countries. This is too big: it ¶ dilutes their quality and increases the likelihood that they will be overused. ¶ Though a majority found the argument convincing, it did not get nearly as good a reception as the ¶ argument for preserving spending. Fifty-nine percent found it convincing (very, only 15%). This ¶ included a little under half of Republicans (45%), a much larger 69% of Democrats, and 64% of ¶ independents. Thirty-nine percent found it unconvincing. ¶ Fifty-eight percent of respondents reduced the budget for Special Operations Forces at least some. ¶ Most Democrats (74%) and independents (54%) made cuts, while only 42% of Republicans did. ¶ In setting their own budget for this area, on average, the sample trimmed off a modest $1.4 billion (a ¶ 10% cut). This average cut was driven largely by Democrats, who reduced the area by $3.2 billion ¶ (23%). Republicans on average cut just $0.5 billion, or 4%. Interestingly, **among independents, SOF** ¶ **was an area where some made increases** that drove up independents’ average amount, raising it by ¶ $0.7 billion or 5%. ¶ When we view how majorities of respondents acted, however, the picture is somewhat different. A¶ majority cut by at least 14% ($2 billion). A majority of Republicans preserved the SOF budget at its ¶ 2012 level. A majority of Democrats cut it by 29% ($4 billion) or more. A majority of independents ¶ resembled the full sample, making a 14% cut or more.

# \*\*\*Internal Links\*\*\*

# A2 Transportation Key

**Transportation not key to the election – multiple other issues**

**Kuhnhenn 7/14** (Jim, reporter for the Huffington Post, Associated Press, “Economy Big In 2012 Election, But Other Issues May Play Role In Voters' Decisions,” Huffington Post, July 14, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/14/economy-2012-election\_n\_1673346.html)//PC

WASHINGTON — As the economy colors and polarizes voters' attitudes, the Election Day outcome for President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney may be decided on the margins by narrower issues that energize small but crucial slivers of the population.¶ For three months, the economy by most measures has faltered. Yet the White House contest has remained locked in place, with the incumbent holding on to a slight national lead or in a virtual tie with his rival. Analysts from both parties have no doubt that absent a defining, unpredictable moment, the race will remain neck and neck until November.¶ That, several strategists say, means secondary issues such as health care, immigration, education, even little mentioned social issues such as abortion, guns or gay rights could make a difference when targeted to the right audiences. Under those conditions, the advantage, these strategists say, rests with Obama.¶ "Part of the power of the presidency, part of the power of incumbency, is having the ability with an executive order to make rules, make effective law that is deeply satisfying to a large group of supporters," said Steve Schmidt, Republican John McCain's presidential campaign manager in 2008 and top aide in President George W. Bush's re-election operation. "Being able to deliver if you're an incumbent president for really important parts of the Democratic party coalition, that's an enormously important thing."¶ Obama already has moved to shore up his support with certain voting blocs, with directives on birth control and immigration. He's given his backing to gay marriage and brawled with congressional Republicans on behalf of lower student loan rates. Each issue won praise from disparate groups of voters, many of whom had voiced frustration with the president or whose enthusiasm for Obama had been waning.¶ "In every single state there will be micro-targeted advertisement, direct mail, or online campaign to get voters out there to kind of hit them on those personal issues that are important to them," said Rodell Mollineau, president of a pro-Obama political organization, American Bridge. "Whether you're pro-choice or anti-choice, pro-immigration or anti-immigration, you will be touched one way or the other."¶ The role of these secondary issues is similar to the part that gay marriage ballot initiatives played in the 2004 contest between President George W. Bush and Democratic nominee John Kerry. That election was dominated by the war in Iraq and national security issues. Though the extent to which 11 ballot issues, especially ones in Michigan and Ohio, helped turn out Bush voters eight years ago is a matter of debate, many analysts believe the initiatives at least primed the vote for the incumbent.

**Transportation Infrastructure not key to the election – comparative evidence**

**Freemark 12** (Yonah, The Transport Politic, independent researcher who writes about transportation and land use issues for The Transport Politic and The Infrastructurist, “On Infrastructure, Hopes for Progress This Year Look Glum,” January 25, 2012, The Transport Politic, http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2012/01/25/on-infrastructure-hopes-for-progress-this-year-look-glum/)//PC

The contributions of the Obama Administration to the investment in improved transportation alternatives have been significant, but it was clear from the President’s State of the Union address last night that 2012 will be a year of diminished expectations in the face of a general election and a tough Congressional opposition.¶ Mr. Obama’s address, whatever its merits from a populist perspective, nonetheless failed to propose dramatic reforms to encourage new spending on transportation projects, in contrast to previous years. While the Administration has in some ways radically reformed the way Washington goes about selecting capital improvements, bringing a new emphasis on livability and underdeveloped modes like high-speed rail, there was little indication in the speech of an effort to expand such policy choices. All that we heard was a rather meek suggestion to transform a part of the money made available from the pullout from the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts — a sort of war dividend whose size is undefined — to “do some nation-building right here at home.”¶ If these suggestions fell flat for the pro-investment audience, they were reflective of the reality of working in the context of a deeply divided political system in which such once-universally supported policies as increased roads funding have become practically impossible to pursue. Mr. Obama pushed hard, we shouldn’t forget, for a huge, transformational transportation bill in early 2011, only to be rebuffed by intransigence in the GOP-led House of Representatives and only wavering support in the Democratic Senate. For the first term at least, the Administration’s transportation initiatives appear to have been pushed aside.¶ Even so, it remains to be seen how the Administration will approach the development of a transportation reauthorization program. Such legislation remains on the Congressional agenda after three years of delays (the law expires on March 31st). There is so far no long-term solution to the continued inability of fuel tax revenues to cover the growing national need for upgraded or expanded mobility infrastructure. But if it were to pass, a new multi-year transportation bill would be the most significant single piece of legislation passed by the Congress in 2012.¶ The prospect of agreement between the two parties on this issue, however, seems far-fetched. That is, if we are to assume that the goal is to complete a new and improved spending bill, rather than simply further extensions of the existing legislation. The House could consider this month a bill that would fund new highways and transit for several more years by expanding domestic production of heavily carbon-emitting fossil fuels, a terrible plan that would produce few new revenues and encourage more ecological destruction. Members of the Senate, meanwhile, have for months been claiming they were “looking” for the missing $12 or 13 billion to complete its new transportation package but have so far come up with bupkis. The near-term thus likely consists of either continued extensions of the current law or a bipartisan bargain that fails to do much more than replicate the existing law, perhaps with a few bureaucratic reforms.¶ In the context of the presidential race, Mr. Obama’s decision not to continue his previously strong advocacy of more and more transportation funding suggests that the campaign sees the issue as politically irrelevant. If the Administration made an effort last year to convince Americans of the importance of improving infrastructure, there seems to have been fewer positive results in terms of popular perceptions than hoped for. Perhaps the rebuffs from Republican governors on high-speed rail took their toll; perhaps the few recovery projects that entered construction were not visible enough (or at least their federal funding was not obvious enough); perhaps the truth of the matter is that people truly care more about issues like unemployment and health care than they do for public transit and roads.¶ This does not mean an end to the beneficial shifts in national policy that have for the first time in decades really made transportation a tool for the improvement of conditions in cities large and small. This, ultimately, is the success of the Department of Transportation under Mr. Obama: Making livability and density primary goals of the mobility system. Even if little gets done in 2012, it is hard to see these ideas disappearing from the popular discourse.

**Fundraising Key**

**Fundraising matters – swings key votes**

**Madhani, 7/26/12** (Aamer, “Analysts question whether 2012 campaign cash edge matters,” USA Today, http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-07-25/campaign-fundraising-advantage-questioned/56490600/1)RK

Mark Mellman, a veteran Democratic strategist, is more circumspect. Mellman said that there's an adage among campaign strategists that 80% of advertising dollars are wasted. But strategists don't know which 80% that is until after they spend it, he said. "If we're sitting here like we were in 2000, and we find ourselves in a situation where we're saying, 'Geez, 500 votes made the difference in who is president and who is not.' … There's nobody who can say, 'I know for certain that a 1.5-to-1 or 2-to-1 differential in spending didn't matter' in that difference of 500 votes." Mellman adds that the advertising market is more fractured than ever, making it more complicated and expensive to reach voters. Long gone are the days where campaigns could make a huge ad buy during the three networks evening news and reach 60% of the electorate, he said. The Romney campaign believes the fundraising advantage — if it comes to fruition — could give them an important edge in the final days of an election that is expected to be close.

**A2 Fundraising Key**

**Fundraising doesn’t matter**

**Madhani, 7/26/12** (Aamer, “Analysts question whether 2012 campaign cash edge matters,” USA Today, http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-07-25/campaign-fundraising-advantage-questioned/56490600/1)RK

But in a campaign in which both sides could spend billions of dollars, some question whether a fundraising advantage is as meaningful as it once was. "If each side raises the table stakes of $500 million, which certainly appears will happen, after that it's just going to be **white noise** and a lot of wasted advertising," said Mark McKinnon, a top strategist in George W. Bush's presidential campaigns. And with the sheer amount of money that both campaigns have at their disposal, voters in battleground states — which are getting a bulk of the advertising attention — are going to become **anesthetized** to the advertising long before both sides empty their coffers, says Matt Bennett, who served as campaign communications director to Al Gore's 2000 campaign. The Obama campaign has predicted that Romney and GOP-leaning groups will spend $1.2 billion. The Obama campaign, which won't offer estimates of what it expects to raise in 2012, spent about $750 million in 2008. "The question is whether spending $1.2 billion is any different than spending $800 million," Bennett said. "The answer is no, because you reach a **saturation point** after a certain point."

**Even if Romney has more funding, only Obama can spend it in critical weeks ahead**

**Confessore and Willis 7/20** (\*Nicholas – political reporter at the New York Times, and \*\*Derek Willis – web developer at the New York Times,“Obama Spends the Most, but Romney Raises More,” July 20, 2012, New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/21/us/politics/obama-spends-the-most-in-june-but-romney-raises-more.html)//PC

President Obama outspent Mitt Romney 2 to 1 in June even as Mr. Romney far outraised him, according to campaign reports filed on Friday with the Federal Election Commission, leaving Mr. Obama and the Democratic Party with significantly less cash on hand than Mr. Romney and the Republicans as polls show a head-to-head race.¶ Mr. Obama and the Democratic National Committee spent $70.8 million in June, including about $38 million on television advertising, as the president’s campaign sought to batter Mr. Romney over his ties to Bain Capital, the private equity firm.¶ Mr. Romney and the Republican National Committee spent $38.8 million, including about $11 million on television advertising — more than double what Mr. Romney’s campaign spent in May but far less than Mr. Obama.¶ But because money raised for the election cannot be spent until after the two parties hold their nominating conventions at the end of the summer, Mr**. Obama appears to have far more money available to spend in the critical weeks ahead, when each candidate seeks to define the other.**¶ Mr. Obama had an estimated $72 million in primary cash available at the end of June, thanks to a vast army of small donors who can give again and again without hitting the $2,500 contribution limit for primary season. Half of Mr. Obama’s money in June came in checks of less than $200. Mr. Romney has an estimated $20 million in primary money. Many of his early donors gave the maximum contribution while he was still spending heavily to fend off his Republican rivals in the first half of the year.¶ But Mr. Romney sharply improved his take from small donors in June, with checks of under $200 accounting for about a third of his fund-raising, suggesting that Mr. Obama’s advantage might not persist.¶ The primary cash for the candidates does not include money not yet transferred to their campaigns from the fund-raising accounts each candidate shares with his party.¶ The deficit in available money leaves Mr. Romney dependent on the Republican-leaning outside groups that have spent heavily in recent months to keep Mr. Obama on the defensive. American Crossroads, the leading Republican “super PAC,” this week announced a new $9 million campaign against Mr. Obama that criticizes the president for what the group says are unfair attacks on Mr. Romney. Restore Our Future, a super PAC backing Mr. Romney, spent about $15 million between April and June, including $7.6 million in June, a month when it raised $20 million.¶ Donations to Restore Our Future included $10 million from the casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson and his wife, $1 million from the real estate developer Harlan Crow, and $2 million from the Texas homebuilder Bob Perry, according to commission reports.¶ Tax-exempt “issue groups” that do not report their donors have spent millions more against Mr. Obama.¶ Mr. Romney has used that breathing room to crisscross the country attending fund-raisers to fill his war chest, exploiting his joint committee with the R.N.C. to bring in checks far in excess of what he could accept for his campaign. The committee, Romney Victory, brought in $140 million in the three months through June.¶ With the primary behind him, Mr. Romney has also begun building out his campaign staff and infrastructure, investments Mr. Obama and the Democrats made months ago. The Romney campaign’s payroll more than doubled between April and June, while his spending on direct mail has more than tripled. He spent close to a half-million dollars on office equipment in May and June. Mr. Romney’s campaign also spent $559,689 in June on “campaign promotional items,” according to election commission reports.¶ Mr. Obama substantially increased his expenditures on polling, spending $2.6 million in June, a fivefold increase over May. He continued to spend heavily on online advertising, with bills of about $4.4 million in June, and data mining, continuing a yearlong effort by Mr. Obama’s campaign to refine its attack on Mr. Romney and reconstitute the vast army of grass-roots supporters that helped power his 2008 victory. Mr. Obama’s spending on events — including stages, sound and lighting — also jumped in June, as he began hitting the campaign trail more intensively.¶ Both candidates are relying heavily on “bundlers,” supporters who gather checks from friends and business associates and help host fund-raisers. A list of bundlers posted by Mr. Obama’s campaign on Friday named individuals and couples. The top rank of bundlers, who have raised at least $500,000 each, included roughly 200 individuals accounting for at least $100 million of Mr. Obama’s haul.¶ Such disclosures are not required, and Mr. Romney has refused to name his fund-raisers. An analysis published this month by USA Today found that Mr. Romney has close to 1,200 bundlers, hundreds of them executives in the financial industry.

**Funding not key – Romney can’t spend it before the nominating convention**

**Selyukh and Cohen 7/21** (\*Alina – covering campaign finance for Reuters, and Alexander – Reuters, “As election approaches, candidates beef up spending,” July 21, 2012, Reuters, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/21/us-usa-campaign-money-idUSBRE86B0ZV20120721)//PC

(Reuters) - Less than four months until the U.S. presidential election, Republican candidate Mitt Romney's campaign is beefing up on personnel and investing more cash internally as outside groups pour millions into television ads to help him counter Democratic President Barack Obama's messaging over the airwaves.¶ Obama's spending still dwarfs Romney's June outlays, with two-thirds of it going toward advertising, but federal disclosures filed on Friday show the Republican candidate investing more in his campaign's infrastructure, something Obama did months ago, as the race has been stuck in a dead heat.¶ Obama's campaign doled out $58.1 million in June, nearly twice as much as he raised, Friday's filings showed. Facing no competition within his own party, Obama got an early start on ad buys, framing his Republican challenger negatively.¶ Romney's campaign spent $27.5 million in June, nearly double the $15.6 million it spent in May and $12.6 million spent in April, when Romney first emerged as the presumed Republican presidential nominee.¶ Romney spent less than half of his June haul on advertising, Reuters analysis of filings showed.¶ The internal spending uptick was expected as campaigning heats up in earnest, but it raises concerns of burning through cash on expenses that are not direct outreach to likely or potential voters - something Republicans had repeatedly pointed out about Obama's spending trends earlier this year.¶ Now, the scale appears to be leveling as Romney added 125 new paid staff members in June for a total of 272 and spent $491,088 more on their salaries for a total of $1.3 million. He also spent nearly $440,000 on office supplies, furniture, equipment and other infrastructure buildup and equipment and $9.7 million on various consulting services.¶ Obama's campaign added 76 new paid staffers in June for a total of 779, paying them $2.8 million.¶ LAW'S LIMITATIONS¶ One hurdle for Romney is a provision of the U.S. campaign law that prohibits some funds from being spent until he is officially nominated at the Republican convention in late August.¶ Campaigns are allowed to accept up to $5,000 from one donor, but only half of that can be spent before the convention.¶ Romney's campaign has reported having about $850,000 walled off to be available only for use after the convention. He also has a joint fund with the Republican National Committee that presumably has millions set off for the general election but filings so far have not clarified how much exactly.¶ Romney's aides say the rule has put him at a disadvantage because Obama ran for re-election unopposed and Romney spent millions on a bitter fight against rival Republicans.¶ Obama has $7.8 million set aside for the general election.¶ "We ... spent most of our primary dollars on the primary," Romney told the Toledo Blade newspaper in an interview this week. "There are just many places we can't afford to be running ads. So we are massively outspent by a President that had no primary. And we are able to both shift into general election funds after our conventions, and we will be able to be more competitive, and you'll to see more of us as that occurs."¶ In June, Romney's campaign received $24 million in donations and had $22.5 million in cash on hand, while Obama's campaign received $28.1 million and had $97.5 million left in the bank.¶ Both campaigns also rely on separate multimillion-dollar war chests held by the national parties and funds shared with them. All told, Obama and his allies have far outraised Romney, but the Republican and his party have more in cash on hand.¶ 'SUPER PAC' HELP¶ Obama's TV advertising spending has been effectively balanced out by Republican Super PACs, predominantly American Crossroads and the pro-Romney Restore Our Future.¶ Obama and Priorities USA Action, the outside "super" political action committee helping the president, have spent the past several weeks pummeling Romney's past as a private equity executive and painting him as an out-of-touch rich man.¶ Priorities earlier this week bought $4 million worth of ad time in three swing states.¶ Restore Our Future spent $7.2 million on ads that will run in 11 states from the end of July through August 9, while American Crossroads is spending $9.3 million on ads in nine states, defending Romney from the Democrats' attacks on his business record.¶ The Obama campaign earlier this week started airing a new ad raising questions about why Romney, a millionaire, will not release more of his tax returns.¶ Republicans for months have been pointing to Obama's rate of spending - for two months in a row now he's spent more than he has raised - calling it unsustainable.¶ "I trust the Obama campaign, who ran a pretty good campaign four years ago, that they can do it this time around," said Barry Goodman, a Michigan fundraiser who together with his business partner has "bundled" more than $500,000 for the president's re-election campaign.¶ "They must feel comfortable that they can raise more."¶ In 2008, Obama set a fundraising record of $750 million hauled in, but this year his campaign has been sounding alarms that thanks to deep-pocketed Republican outside spending groups, Obama could be the first ever incumbent to be outspent.

# Economy Key

The economy is the leading issue in the 2012 election

CNN 12 (America’s Choice 2012 Election Center, CNN 12, “Top Campaign Issues”, http://www.cnn.com/election/2012/campaign-issues.html)

Economy

The economy, unemployment, taxes and how to manage the federal government's $14 trillion debt will be leading issues in the 2012 White House race. With the near-collapse of the U.S. banking and financial system hitting late in the 2008 race, President Obama's tenure in the Oval Office is being defined, in many ways, by economic and fiscal policy issues. And the tea party movement - the conservative wing of the Republican party -- has been hammering Obama's economic and fiscal policy since 2009, pushing GOP candidates to hold firm on pledges not to raise taxes and to cut spending.

**Economy is key to election – determines who controls spin**

**Swanson, 12** (Ian, “It's the economy, candidates,” The Hill, 4/26/12, Academic OneFile)RK

Mitt Romney is making the case that the 2012 election will be all about the economy, which right now is undoubtedly causing some sleepless nights for President Obama's campaign team. Obama wants the election to be about how Romney is too conservative--for women, for young people, for Hispanics, for the country. His argument is laid out in an interview released Wednesday by Rolling Stone. Romney "pre-butted" that argument Tuesday night after winning five GOP primary fights in convincing fashion. Pivoting to the battle with Obama, Romney said Obama wants to make the 2012 election "a campaign of diversions, distractions and distortions." "That kind of campaign may have worked at another place over in a different time. But not here and not now. It's still about the economy ... and we're not stupid." The economy gives Romney his best chance of defeating Obama, and three things will shape the economic context for the campaign--unemployment, housing and the European debt crisis. None of those is moving firmly in a positive direction for Obama right now, which gives Republicans hope that Romney, a decided underdog to the president, can close the gap in the next seven months. Let's look at unemployment first. The rate has dropped to 8.2 percent in March from 9 percent in September, a significant fall that put some wind behind Obama's sails and maybe even created a bit of overconfidence among some Democrats. The problem for Obama is that he is unlikely to see a similar drop from now until November. Economist Mark Zandi of Moody's Analytics expects the unemployment rate to be 8 percent on Election Day, just two-tenths of a point lower than where it stands now. "It will take a bit of luck for unemployment to be below 8 percent on Election Day," he wrote in an email. The economy looked strong in January and February as the nation averaged job gains of more than 200,000, but an unseasonably warm winter likely boosted those figures, and they are now being balanced out. Zandi expects the economy to gain 140,000 jobs in April when the Bureau of Labor Statistics releases its report for the month next week. Growth at that rate would do little to change the unemployment rate. Obama is getting some better news on housing, a key economic indicator that has been a huge problem throughout his presidency. Evidence is growing that the market is near to bottoming out. Housing market analysts at CoreLogic argue that "now is a good time to buy" because housing affordability is at its highest level ever. Another recent report from the group showed month-over-month prices increasing 0.7 percent in February from January, excluding distressed sales. While the same report said national home prices continued to decline on a year-to-year basis, the report offered more evidence that a long-awaited bottom to the housing crash might be found. "House prices, based on data through February, continue to decline, but at a decreasing rate," said Mark Fleming, chief economist for CoreLogic. "The deceleration in the pace of decline is a first step toward ultimately growing again." Housing will remain a localized issue in many ways, and Obama could be hurt in swing states such as Nevada where the crisis is expected to linger the longest. Still, rising home prices would greatly increase consumer confidence, which Obama needs if he is to win over voters on his handling of the economy. It could also provide a boost for hiring and the stock market, the third leg of the 2012 economy stool. A strong stock market helps incumbent presidents, and Obama was certainly boosted earlier this year after the Dow Jones average soared from 11,231 on Nov. 25 to 13,252 on March 15. The bullish market was sparked by the sense that Europe had rallied around a deal to control its debt crisis, but has since stalled amid talk of Spanish loan defaults and serious doubts that the crisis is over. The herky-jerky nature of the markets in the last month hasn't been enough to really injure Obama, but a significant drop in the summer could be devastating. Whether the world sees one is the great unknown for the two candidates and the Federal Reserve, which on Wednesday said: "Strains in global financial markets continue to pose significant downside risks to the economic outlook." Two reports earlier this year noted that incumbent presidents are likely to win if they've governed while stocks have risen. A critical period could be the three months before Election Day. InvestTech Research, an investment firm in Montana, found the incumbent party has won 15 of the 16 presidential elections in which the stock market climbed in the three months before Election Day. Falling unemployment, a rising stock market and the bottoming-out of the housing crisis won't guarantee Obama a second term. But they would make it easier for him to turn the election into a referendum on Romney, forcing the Republican to eat his words.

**Economy is the central focus of the election, assumes other factors** – healthcare ruling, running mate

**Rutenberg and Connelly 7/18** (Jim – Political correspondent for The New York Times, Marjorie – editor in News Surveys, the department that designs, conducts, and analyzes public opinion polls for The Times, “Economic Fears Hurting Obama, Poll Indicates,” July 18, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/19/us/politics/poll-shows-economic-fears-undercutting-obama-support.html?pagewanted=2&\_r=1)//PC

Declining confidence in the nation’s economic prospects appears to be the most powerful force influencing voters as the presidential election gears up, undercutting key areas of support for President Obama and helping give his Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, an advantage on the question of who would better handle the nation’s economic challenges, according to the latest New York Times/CBS News Poll. Despite months of negative advertising from Mr. Obama and his Democratic allies seeking to further define Mr. Romney as out of touch with the middle class and representative of wealthy interests, the poll shows little evidence of any substantial nationwide shift in attitudes about Mr. Romney. But with job growth tailing off since spring and the Federal Reserve chairman, Ben S. Bernanke, wondering aloud whether the labor market is “stuck in the mud,” the poll showed a significant shift in opinion about Mr. Obama’s handling of the economy, with 39 percent now saying they approved and 55 percent saying they disapproved. In the Times/CBS poll in April, when the economy seemed to have momentum, 44 percent approved and 48 percent disapproved. The new poll shows that the race remains essentially tied, notwithstanding all of the Washington chatter suggesting that Mr. Romney’s campaign has seemed off-kilter amid attacks on his tenure at Bain Capital and his unwillingness to release more of his tax returns. Forty-five percent say they would vote for Mr. Romney if the election were held now and 43 percent say they would vote for Mr. Obama. When undecided voters who lean toward a particular candidate are included, Mr. Romney has 47 percent to Mr. Obama’s 46 percent. Both results are within the poll’s margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points. But it is the first time Mr. Romney has shown a numeric edge in the Times/CBS poll since he emerged from the primaries as the presumptive nominee. Mr. Obama had a three-point advantage in March. The two were each favored by 46 percent in April. The poll, conducted between July 11 and 16 and including 982 registered voters, is reflective of the national mood, not the views of voters in the handful of swing states most likely to decide the outcome — and where most of the campaign advertising war is being waged. Some polls suggest that the attacks are affecting perceptions in some battleground states. For instance, surveys last month by Quinnipiac University in Ohio and Pennsylvania — where millions of dollars in TV advertising is being spent — showed Mr. Obama with leads over Mr. Romney in both states. But the Times/CBS poll nonetheless underscores a national trendline in which the economy remains the dominant force in the campaign, regardless of outside events like the Supreme Court ruling on Mr. Obama’s health care law or the daily sticks-and-stones of the trail. In a reversal from the Times/CBS Poll in April, more Americans say they disapprove of the way Mr. Obama is handling his job, 46 percent, than say they approve of it, 44 percent, although the difference is within the poll’s margin of sampling error. Yet there are some hopeful glimmers for Mr. Obama, who is viewed in this poll as the advocate for the middle class. For instance, just over half of the voters said that his policies were improving the economic picture now (17 percent) or would in the future (34 percent). And he maintains an advantage over Mr. Romney when it comes to the question of whether he cares a lot or some about the problems of everyday Americans — 63 percent said he did, compared with 55 percent who said the same of Mr. Romney. A plurality of Americans, 49 percent, agree with Mr. Obama’s assertion that the Bush-era tax cuts should continue on adjusted gross annual income of $250,000 and less. More than a quarter say the cuts should stay in place for all income groups; 17 percent say they should expire altogether. Mr. Romney has ample challenges, too, with the poll showing that he has yet to build up a positive image of his own as Mr. Obama seeks to build a negative one for him. While more than half of Mr. Obama’s voters said they strongly supported him, fewer than a third of Mr. Romney’s said the same about him. More than a third of his voters said they were voting for him because of their dislike for Mr. Obama, while fewer than 10 percent of Mr. Obama’s supporters said they would vote for him out of dislike for Mr. Romney. Mr. Romney continues to be dogged by the notion that he is disconnected from the middle class. More than half of the voters said his policies would favor the rich. Mr. Obama’s campaign and its allies at the “super PAC” Priorities USA Action have sought to stoke those views of Mr. Romney, through television advertisements criticizing his tenure at the investment firm Bain Capital. Six in 10 voters surveyed said Mr. Romney’s experience at Bain would not affect their vote, though other polls in swing states have indicated that the ads are influencing perceptions about his business experience. Republicans have met Mr. Obama’s attacks with countercharges portraying him as a typical politician who has abandoned his former mantra of “hope and change.” And 58 percent of those surveyed said that he had not delivered on his 2008 campaign pledge for change. “Obama promised a lot of promises, and he failed at every one of them without exception,” Jerry Taylor of Yerington, Nev., said in a follow-up interview to the poll. He voted for Mr. Obama four years ago but says he now plans to vote for Mr. Romney. “Words are cheap, but deeds are precious.” The poll includes a drop in Mr. Obama’s favorability ratings, with 36 percent saying they viewed him favorably and 48 percent saying they did not. In April, 42 percent expressed a favorable opinion of him and 45 percent an unfavorable one. But that change may have been affected by a reordering of this particular set of questions, which at this point in general election cycles are typically placed near the top of the survey. During the primary season, the questions about favorability were placed lower on the survey after queries about presidential job approval and other topics. As the focus of the campaign trail shifts to speculation over Mr. Romney’s choice of a running mate, only a quarter of voters say that choice matters a lot to their decision for November. Far more important, those surveyed said, are issues like the economy and jobs, health care, taxes, the deficit and national security — most of them areas in which Mr. Romney is roughly tied or has an advantage in the poll. Voters gave Mr. Obama an advantage when it came to foreign policy and social issues. Asked which candidate they believed would do a better job handling the economy and unemployment, 49 percent said Mr. Romney, 41 percent Mr. Obama. The drop in Mr. Obama’s economic approval ratings is consistent with a downturn in the percentage of Americans who believe the economy is getting better. While 33 percent said they saw improvement in April, 24 percent say they do now. Nearly half of voters say the current economic plight stems from the policies of Mr. Obama’s predecessor, George W. Bush, which most voters expect Mr. Romney would return to.

**Economics determine swing state votes – they’re key to the election**

**Cooper 5/5** (Michael, New York Times, “9 Swing States, Critical to Presidential Race, Are Mixed Lot,” May 5, 2012, The New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/us/politics/9-swing-states-key-to-election-are-mixed-lot.html?pagewanted=1)//PC

Since the housing bubble burst, Nevada has been plagued with record foreclosures, the nation’s steepest drop in home values and its highest unemployment rate.¶ ¶ Iowa, on the other hand, may have missed out on some of the boom but was spared the worst of the bust: its housing prices have stayed relatively stable, and it now has the fifth-lowest unemployment rate in the country.¶ Ohio suffered a steeper than average loss of jobs during the recession, but it has since seen its unemployment rate fall below the national average.¶ All three are among the handful of swing states likely to decide who wins the presidential election — states in different stages of a slow economic recovery.¶ With just over six months until Election Day, an analysis of the emerging electoral map by The New York Times found that the outcome would most likely be determined by how well President Obama and Mitt Romney perform in nine tossup states.¶ All nine voted for Mr. Obama in 2008, only to see Republicans make big gains since then.¶ Now, with many of those states transformed economically and politically by the recession, they are perhaps even less predictable than they were in past close elections. The disparity in their circumstances highlights the challenges that both the Obama and the Romney campaigns face in framing arguments that will resonate across the country.¶ The nine — Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin — offer both parties reasons for hope, and concern. It is no coincidence that Mr. Obama chose two of them, Ohio and Virginia, to hold his first official re-election rallies on Saturday.¶ “This is a make-or-break moment for the middle class,” Mr. Obama said at Ohio State University in Columbus.¶ While the performance of the national economy will help shape the mood of the country and set the tone of each campaign, the situation on the ground in each of the nine states could be pivotal as well.¶ It would be hard to argue that these states are better off now than they were four years ago, given that they have yet to recover the jobs they lost. Often, that makes a compelling argument for a challenger trying to unseat an incumbent.¶ But political scientists have found that past elections have been more influenced by the changes in the economy in the year or two before the election. And a range of economic data provided by Moody’s Analytics shows that all nine states are rebounding and that most now have unemployment rates below the national average. If voters in those states begin to feel the improvement by the fall and the economy does not take a turn for the worse, it could aid the president’s efforts to hold on to enough of them to win.¶ But the length and depth of the recession make it more difficult to model behavior, and the slow recovery could complicate things. Xu Cheng, a senior economist at Moody’s Analytics, which uses state economic and political data to predict election results, said his team had altered its model this year to account for “the grumpy voter effect.”¶ “The so-called grumpy voter effect is that despite economic improvement in a state, if the economic situation in a state is really too bad, the voters will discount the improvement,” Mr. Cheng said. The effect could help tilt foreclosure-racked Florida to the Republicans, he added.¶ As the general election begins in earnest, it is clear that the tossup states are a top priority of both campaigns and that 2012 will include plenty of stops for Philadelphia cheese steaks, Cincinnati chili and Cuban sandwiches in Florida. After Mr. Romney easily won five primaries on April 24, he gave his victory speech in New Hampshire, which held its primary months ago.¶ The political outlook in the tossup states is far from clear. While they all voted for Mr. Obama in 2008, seven have elected Republican governors since then and all have added significant numbers of Republicans to their legislatures or Congressional delegations. Two states, however, Ohio and Wisconsin, saw Democrats push back strongly after their newly elected Republican governors worked to curb the collective bargaining rights of public worker unions, which could have ramifications in November.

**A2 Economy Key**

**Their models are wrong – economy isn’t the key factor**

**Roth, 12** – Roy K., Brigham Young University (“Does the Economy Determine the President? A Regression Model For Predicting US Presidential Elections,” Undergraduate Economic Review, vol. 8, is. 1, http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1172&context=uer)RK

Many Americans believe that the economy determines who wins the presidency. There is a large body of work dedicated to the effects that the economy has on presidential elections in the United States. This paper takes a slightly different approach, and presents important insights. I find that while economic conditions are important, they are **usually overshadowed** in elections where an incumbent faces a challenger. The majority of work done in this area, including Fair (1972) and Kahane (2009), use the percentage of the popular vote as the dependent variable of their econometric models. In this paper I use two models that supplement the existing literature on this subject. The first estimates a vote-share equation with the percentage of the electoral vote, rather than the popular vote, as the dependent variable. The second estimates the probability that the Democratic candidate in any particular election will win. My approach has two clear benefits. First, **these methods give clear predictions of the winner.** Equations giving a prediction of the share of the popular vote sometimes fail in this area. The results of the 2000 election give an example of why this is desirable. Gore, the Democratic candidate received the majority of the popular vote, but received fewer electoral votes than Bush. Gore lost the election by a small margin. In that situation even a perfect prediction of the popular vote would be misleading. The second advantage regards significant third-party candidates. In 1992 and 1996 elections, Ross Perot played a major role as a third party candidate, receiving 18.9% and 8% of the popular vote, respectively. This could seriously affect vote-share models based on a two-party system. Electoral votes, however, are given (with a few exceptions) only when a candidate receives the largest share of the popular vote in a state, and are thus less sensitive to third-party candidates. Even Perot failed to receive a single electoral vote. In fact, during the elections covered in this paper, no third-party candidates received any electoral votes.

**The impact of the economy is overestimated**

**Roth, 12** – Roy K., Brigham Young University (“Does the Economy Determine the President? A Regression Model For Predicting US Presidential Elections,” Undergraduate Economic Review, vol. 8, is. 1, http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1172&context=uer)RK

The most significant contribution of this paper is that perhaps economic indicators are not as significant as they have been portrayed. They seem to have very significant effects on the share of the popular vote (see Fair 2009), however, this research indicates that their effects are less significant in actually determining the winner of an election. The advantage that an incumbent has over a challenger is usually large enough to overshadow economic conditions. As a result this research provides some justification of term-limits. Further research in this area should reinforce these findings.

**Jewish Vote Key**

**Jewish vote key to the election – specifically New Jersey, Florida, and Pennsylvania**

**Tobin, 12** (Jonathan S., “Jews, Money, and 2012,” Commentary, vol. 133, is. 3, ProQuest)RK

The Court's defense of political speech has made it possible for advocacy groups to spend money promoting their views in a more unfettered manner than was permitted under the unconstitutional restrictions contained in the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law. The liberal critique of the decision largely centered on the unsubstantiated fear that corporations would be able to exercise undue influence. Yet the more obvious result is that those who care about specific political issues will be able to use whatever financial clout they can amass to make their voices heard. That means it may turn out that those who care about Israel- and those politicians they seek to hold accountable- will be among the ones most affected by the ruling. For President Obama, whose record on Israel will be a matter of particular contention this year, the guaranteed right for individuals and organizations to spend dollars highlighting his efforts in the Middle East might greatly complicate his run for rélection. Adelson was only one of many supporters of Israel to choose a presidential candidate at least in part on the basis of U.S.-Israel relations. But the size of his contribution and the strategic role it played in keeping Gingrich in the race as the primary season was heating up cast a spotlight not only on the controversial donor himself, but also on support for Israel a^ an important issue in the 2012 campaign. Expressing affection for the Jewish state has become a staple of American political culture, but the wide spread perception of tension between the Obama administration and the government of Israel has raised the stakes for both political parties as they vie for Jewish votes, and for Jewish campaign contributions. That Jewish money would enter into the presidential election is a delicate subject for many Jews. They fear that discussing the impact of pro-Israel contributions on the race will give unjustified credence to traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes and bolster the myth that the U.S.-Israel relationship is solely the product of a Jewish cabal's manipulation of American foreign policy. Yet any objective analysis of the presidential contest must take into account that both parties are already actively competing for Jewish votes and money. As the campaign unfolded, all the Republican candidates, save libertarian outlier Ron Paul, sought to claim the mantle of Israel's defender against the threat of a second Obama administration. At the same time, Democrats tried furiously to counter the popular notion that Obama has a problem with Israel, arguing that he is, in fact, the most pro-Israel president in history. THAT EITHER Jewish money or votes would be much in play in 2012 seems to contradict some basic facts about American Jewry. Although the Obama administration has determined to distance itself from Jerusalem and has quarreled with Israel's government for three years, most American Jews remain devoted to the Democrats and are likely to reelect the most liberal president in more than a generation. They remain disproportionately liberal and are surpassed in their loyalty to the Democrats by only the African- American community. Even if liberal ardor win help Obama win the majority of Jewish votes, he might still face serious trouble. Polls indicate a decline in his Jewish backing, and events such as the special congressional election in September 2011, whereby a safe Democratic seat in a heavily Jewish district in New York fell to the Republicans, could mean that he is due for a precipitous drop from the estimated 78 percent of Jewish votes he received in 2008. A shift in the votes of a group that amounts to less than 2 percent of the population may not seem to be of much moment, but the attention that Obama and his team paid to the Jewish community in the latter half of 2011- including a determined effort to spin his record on Israel and the possibility of a shift in strategy on Iran- demonstrates they believe it is important. And even if the Republicans don't come near their modern record, when Ronald Reagan won 39 percent of the Jewish vote in 1980, or duplicate the 1988 tally in which George H. W. Bush won 35 percent, they still might receive enough votes to affect the outcome in the key swing states of **New Jersey, Florida, and Pennsylvania.** Equally important, though harder to measure, is the possibility that Obama's problems with Jewish voters will affect fundraising for other Democrats and lead to an increase in contributions to Republicans. Estimates of the amount of money Jews have donated to American politicians, parties, and causes are even less accurate than the loose estimates of Jewish votes, but there is little question that the figure is **staggering.** It is impossible to determine precisely the grand total contributed to only presidential candidates by individual Jewish donors, but it may well be as much or more than one third of all Democratic money and a lesser though still impressive percentage of the funds raised by Republicans. Anti-Semites and 'Israel Lobby" conspiracymongers believe money is the only reason American politicians care about Israel, but that is a misleading and potentially libelous explanation. If pro-Israel policies were not enormously popular with all Americans, as every survey of opinion on the issue has always shown, then no amount of Jewish money would be enough to secure the alliance. Affection for Israel is based on the common values of the two countries, and on the passionate support for Zionism that is part of the American political DNA and rooted in the religious and political beliefs of the overwhelming majority of Americans. The Adelson-Gingrich connection is an example of how the role of pro-Israel money is often misinterpreted. In the immediate aftermath of the Adelsons' $10 million donations, some on the political left asserted that the casino owner had, in effect, purchased Gingrich's position on the Middle East and was the reason that the former speaker had spoken of Palestinian nationalism as a late-20th century invention- a statement so provocative Gingrich was required to defend it during a nationally televised debate. Yet Gingrich's ardent backing of Israel and disdain for Palestinian efforts to destroy it long predated his relationship with Adelson, let alone his presidential run. He held those views throughout his tenure in Congress, even when, in the 1980s, it was perfectly respectable for conservative Republicans to view Israel with suspicion (as Jesse Helms did, for example, until he experienced a change of heart later in his career). Indeed, Gingrich's affection for Benjamin Netanyahu had been a maj or irritant to the Israeli politician's relationship with President Clinton in the 1990s. If Adelson sought to advance Gingrich's fortunes, it was because Gingrich has supported the Jewish state for decades without even the hint of a thought of recompense. Gingrich was rewarded for his record with the support of Adelson and others who liked his willingness to offend establishment sensibilities about the Middle East. His remark about the Palestinians being an "invented people" was a perfect illustration ofthat, even though he was quick to add that his beliefs about the origins of Palestinian nationalism did not mean he was inalterably opposed to a Palestinian state should it pledge to live in peace with Israel. Although some Jewish PACs actively support candidates friendly to Israel and oppose those who are not, there are few credible examples of "Jewish money" sinking anti-Israel politicians. Some dissenters from the pro-Israel consensus, such as the late Sen. Charles Percy of Illinois or former Rep. Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, were alleged to be crushed by Jewish donations that went instead to their opponents. Such accounts, however, tend to ignore that the candidates were already deeply unpopular and likely to lose, no matter their views on Israel. Like the myth of the Israel Lobby itself, the notion of the undue influence of pro-Israel donations is a convenient explanatory tool for those who cannot accept that most Americans back the alliance. What critics of the Jewish state usually misunderstand is that politicians who make a point of bashing Israel are, in most instances, contradicting the opinions of their constituents, not just a few big Jewish donors. In the 2012 Republican race, several candidates with strikingly similar positions on the Middle East have competed, with mixed success, for the affection of the Jewish community. If by the beginning of 2012 much ofthat support had coalesced behind Mitt Romney, it was not so much due to his positions on the Middle East. He was indistinguishable from Gingrich in his willingness to prioritize the alliance with Israel and to oppose threats to its existence. Romney enjoyed greater support because he was seen as the most viable candidate to run against Obama. Democrats have often argued successfully to keep the issue of Israel off the table in order to preserve a bipartisan consensus, but Obama's record has made that cynical ploy untenable. This leaves open the possibility that a Republican candidate **might win significant Jewish support.**

**Jews swing key states**

**Tobin, 12** (Jonathan S., “Jews, Money, and 2012,” Commentary, vol. 133, is. 3, ProQuest)RK

DIESPITE the president's seemingly unshakeable grip on the votes of most liberals, there is still a significant percentage of the Jewish vote up for grabs. Even if one assumes the ceiling for any Republican to be Ronald Reagan's 39 percent and that nothing could happen between Israel and the United States to cause Obama's share of the Jewish vote to drop below 50 percent, it still leaves anywhere from 10 to 25 percent of American Jews as **potential swing voters.** Some analysts dispute the notion that a slight percentage of a small minority group can have any impact on an election in which more than 130 million Americans are expected to participate. But given that it is still the Electoral College and not the popular vote that determines the outcome of the presidential election, **Jewish votes in a few large states will be crucial.** Some of the states with the largest Jewish populations-New York with 8.3 percent, Massachusetts with 4.3 percent, Maryland with 4.2 percent, and California with 3.3 percent- will not be in play in 2012. Obama will win them. But there are **at least three states with large concentrations of Jewish voters that could decide the election: New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida.** Obama won New Jersey in a landslide in 2008. But John Kerry carried it by less than a quarter of a million votes in 2004. If the 2012 race reverts to the models of 2000 and 2004, in which the outcome was narrowly decided, then any shift in the Jewish vote, which amounts to at least 6 percent of the total, could be **decisive.** This could also be true in Pennsylvania, where polls at the end of 2011 showed Obama to be in serious danger of losing a state he won easily in 2008. In 2004, Kerry carried the Keystone state by a slender margin of fewer than 150,000 votes. A repeat of the 2004 toss-up would mean that a shift of only 10 to 25 percent of the Jewish vote could make the **difference between victory and defeat** for Obama. Such a possibility may be even more likely in Florida, a state that has been closely contested by the parties and swung both ways in recent elections. It goes without saying that if the 2012 election is as close as the 2000 "hanging chad" election, any shift in the Jewish vote could be decisive. But even if it is no closer than the elections of 2004 or 2008 (when Bush and Obama won by narrow margins), it will be important. Like many non- Jewish moderates, Jews in these states are most concerned with the condition of the economy. But the number of those who will actually vote for the GOP standard-bearer may turn on whether the nominee is someone closely identified with the Christian right. Candidates such as Gingrich or Rick Santorum have little chance of equaling, much less beating John McCain's paltry 22 percent- even if Obama is perceived as unsatisfactory on Israel- because their image, at least as far as Jewish moderates are concerned, is defined more by their stands on social issues such as abortion and gay rights than by their positions on the Middle East. But a candidate who is not seen in this light, such as Mitt Romney, might be in position to garner Jewish swing votes.

**A2 Jewish Vote Key**

**Jews don’t vote republican – either way, one policy won’t swing them**

**Tobin, 12** (Jonathan S., “Jews, Money, and 2012,” Commentary, vol. 133, is. 3, ProQuest)RK

THE TRANSFORMATION of the Republicans from a party indifferent to the Jewish vote and lukewarm about Israel into a pro-Israel force is almost complete. All but one contender for the GOP presidential nomination has campaigned as a friend of Israel and a critic of the Obama administration's stance on the Middle East. But Republicans' efforts to capitalize on their party's strong record on Israel have earned them **little or zero electoral success.** Since Ronald Reagan earned a recoed 39 percent of the Jewish vote in 1980, no Republican has done as well. Indeed, Reagan received only 31 percent of Jewish votes in 1984 despite winning a 49-state landslide that year. After the elder George Bush garnered a respectable 35 percent in 1988, he dropped to 11 percent in 1992, and Robert Dole got 16 percent in 1996. George W. Bush did little better in 2000 with 19 percent, even though he climbed to 24 percent in 2004- still a disappointing showing for Jewish Republicans who believed Bush had established himself as the most pro-Israel president since the state's founding. In 2008, with John McCain, a moderate proIsrael Republican opposing Obama (a candidate with little record of support for the Jewish state and troubling associations with anti-Zionist radicals), the GOP was disappointed even more sorely. Obama secured 78 percent of the Jewish vote. That more than three-quarters of Jews were unmoved by the GOP's appeals asserting that left-wing Democrats had moved outside the bipartisan pro-Israel consensus left Republicans without much hope of making progress among Jewish voters. Contrary to the myth about the power of the pro-Israel Lobby, **Jews are not single-issue voters.** As many writers, including former COMMENTARY editor Norman Podhoretz, have explained at length, Jews are disproportionately liberal. Liberals see the Democrat "social justice" agenda not only as appropriate policy but also as, in part, a mandate from then· faith tradition. Just as important as the identification of many Jews with liberal policies is Jewish antipathy for a great constituency of the Republican Party: Christian conservatives. The divide between Jews and Christian conservatives runs deep and must now be acknowledged as being as much about culture and prejudice as it is about politics. Liberal Jews view the Christian right as a threat to their rights as a religious minority. If that means backing a half-hearted friend of the Jewish state instead of a GOP candidate who may be pro-Israel but is also a pro-life, anti-gay evangelical, then there is little question that is what most will do.

# Independents key

**Weaker base is irrelevant – the race is on between independents, they’re key to the election**

**Cillizza and Blake 7/18** (Chris – American political reporter for The Fix for the Washington Post, regular contributor to the Post on political issues, an MSNBC political analyst and Aaron – covers national politics at the Washington Post, where he writes regularly for the Fix, summa cum laude graduate of the University of Minnesota, “Some Republicans still not sold on Mitt Romney’s campaign,” July 18, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/some-republicans-still-not-sold-on-mitt-romneys-campaign/2012/07/17/gJQAiyCMsW\_blog.html?wprss=rss\_the-fix)//PC

Sixty-six percent of GOPers in the poll viewed the way Romney is running his campaign in a favorable light, while 24 percent viewed it unfavorably. Those numbers lagged behind how President Obama’s campaign is viewed among Democrats — 75 percent of whom regard his bid favorably. There’s also an enthusiasm gap for Romney in the data. While 51 percent of liberal Democrats feel strongly favorably toward Obama’s campaign, just 31 percent of conservative Republicans feel the same about Romney’s bid. The numbers come after several weeks of criticism of the Romney campaign that began with a tweet from News Corp. chairman Rupert Murdoch and has come to include lingering questions about the exact date of Romney’s departure from Bain Capital and his unwillingness to release more than two years of past tax returns. And they suggest that unrest about how Romney is running is not simply limited to a few bold-faced named like Murdoch and former General Electric CEO Jack Welch. To be clear, though, these numbers do not indicate that broad swaths of the Republican Party view the Romney campaign as having skidded off the tracks — or anything close to it. Rather, they point to the fact that, within a certain segment of the Republican Party, there is dissatisfaction about how the way Romney is campaigning. In Romney’s defense, there will always be a certain group of partisans for whom second-guessing its nominee is a favorite pastime. (Remember how many backseat campaign managers the presidential bids of John Kerry and Al Gore spawned among Democratic partisans?) And among independents, who almost certainly will decide the identity of the next president, there is little statistical difference between how the two campaigns are viewed. Forty-seven percent of independents regard Obama’s campaign favorably, while 46 percent view it unfavorably; for Romney it’s 41 percent favorable, 46 percent unfavorable. What the Post-ABC numbers will do, however, is fuel a narrative that Romney has lost control of his campaign over the last few weeks. (Columnists Charlie Cook and Byron York both put forward that idea in separate pieces Tuesday.) The Romney team has already taken steps to bolster its communications operation and insisted that any further changes will be by addition, not subtraction. The question now will be whether it can stick to that pledge amid the media maelstrom in which it currently finds itself.

# A2 Independents Key

**No link and independents not key – the election is highly polarized, not enough people are willing to switch votes**

**Blake 7/23** (Aaron, covers national politics at the Washington Post, where he writes regularly for the Fix, summa cum laude graduate of the University of Minnesota “The incredible shrinking — and increasingly valuable — undecided voter,” July 23, 2012, The Fix from the Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/the-incredible-shrinking--and-increasingly-valuable--undecided-voter/2012/07/23/gJQAcRMH4W\_blog.html?wprss=rss\_the-fix)//PC

President Obama, Mitt Romney and a slew of outside groups will spend hundreds of millions of dollars over the next three and a half months trying to convince 1/16th of the American electorate to vote their way.¶ A voter in Oklahoma City last month. ¶ New polling from The Washington Post and ABC News shows there are fewer genuinely undecided voters during the 2012 election campaign than there have been in any of the last three elections.¶ And less than one in five voters says there is any chance at all that he or she will change his or her mind.¶ Just 6 percent of Americans say there is a good chance they will change their mind about their pick in the 2012 presidential race — a reflection of the divided nature of American politics and the few voters who are actually persuadable.¶ Another 13 percent say that it’s possible but unlikely that they will change their minds.¶ That’s a more polarized electorate than we saw in either 2004 or 2008.¶ In 2004, polling in late June showed 12 percent said there was a good chance they would change their minds. That number dropped to 7 percent by mid-July.¶ In 2008, a mid-July poll showed 10 percent said they were genuinely undecided.¶ While, overall, 19 percent of people in the latest poll said there’s a chance they will change their minds — however small that chance may be — that number was higher in 2004 (21 percent) and 2008 (25 percent).¶ The numbers paint a picture of a sharply divided electorate — though not necessarily head-and-shoulders more so than in recent elections. The fact is that politics has been polarized for a while, whether it was because of the Iraq war in 2004 and 2008 or the economic situation in 2012.¶ But this election year does seem to be slightly more polarized. And that means that the universe of gettable voters is increasingly small. That puts a premium on figuring out who those voters are and how to target them. It also means more money will be spent on fewer such voters than ever before.¶ If $3 billion is spent on the election, as the latest projections suggest, and only 6 percent of the electorate is really willing to change its mind, that means roughly $400 will be spent trying to persuade each of those voters.¶ Rest assured, there are plenty of people in both the Romney and Obama campaigns working on a strategy to capture those voters as we speak.

# Ads Key

**Ads are uniquely key in swing states**

**Page 7/8** (Susan, Washington Bureau Chief for USA TODAY, a master's degree from Columbia University, joins the journalists' roundtable each week on CNN's Late Edition, national awards for her reporting including the Gerald R. Ford Prize for Distinguished Reporting on the Presidency, the Merriman Smith Award for Deadline Reporting on the Presidency, and the Sigma Delta Chi Award for Washington Correspondence (shared), Swing states poll: Amid barrage of ads, Obama has edge,” July 8, 2012, USA Today, http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-07-08/swing-states-poll/56097052/1)//PC

When it comes to campaign ads in the presidential race, there are two Americas.¶ In most of the country, just about the only time campaign ads for the presidential candidates are on TV is when there's a news story about the ads. In the handful of battleground states that are likely to decide the outcome of the election, though, viewers can't escape arguably the most intense early barrage of ads in American political history.¶ "In a swing state, you're part of the presidential campaign," says political scientist Darrell West, author of Air Wars. "Everywhere else, you're outside."¶ In a new USA TODAY/Gallup Poll of swing states, an overwhelming majority of voters remember seeing campaign ads over the past month; most voters in other states say they haven't. In the battlegrounds, one in 12 say the commercials have changed their minds about President Barack Obama or Republican Mitt Romney — a difference on the margins, but one that could prove crucial in a close race.¶ At this point, Obama is the clear winner in the ad wars. Among swing-state voters who say the ads have changed their minds about a candidate, rather than just confirmed what they already thought, 76% now support the president, vs. 16% favoring Romney.¶ "We gave them new information," says Obama campaign manager Jim Messina. "Romney had been out there claiming success as governor," but Democratic ads have prompted voters to "take a look at his record" on job creation and as head of the private-equity firm Bain Capital. Messina also credits a $25 million buy for a positive ad "about the challenges the president inherited and what we had to do to move this country forward."¶ To be sure, Obama's ads have done more to win back Democrats than to win over independents or Republicans: Thirteen percent of Democrats say their minds have been changed by ads, compared with 9% of independents and 3% of Republicans.¶ Romney pollster Neil Newhouse calls the findings unsurprising. "It is expected to find that more voters say their views have changed about Mitt Romney; they simply don't know him all that well," he says. "On the other hand, there are few voters who are going to say their views have changed about President Obama. They know him pretty damned well."¶ Obama and his allies have outspent Romney's side on ads so far by almost a third. Although the TV spots didn't start earlier than in recent elections, there have been more than ever before — including a negative flood from the new breed of super PACs — and they are continuing without the traditional summertime letup.¶ In the 12 battleground states, the race is all but tied. Obama leads Romney 47%-45% among 1,200 registered voters in the poll June 22-29 — a tick closer than Obama's 48%-44% lead among 2,404 voters in the rest of the USA over the same period.¶ The swing states survey focuses on a dozen states that aren't firmly aligned with either Democrats or Republicans. That puts them in a position to tip the outcome in the Electoral College. The states: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin.¶ The candidates expend enormous time and effort raising money in such cities as New York, Los Angeles and Houston so they can then spend most of that money on ads in such media markets as Colorado Springs, Orlando and Richmond, Va.¶ Their target: voters like Jessica Bruning, 28, of Holstein, Iowa.¶ "I don't get a chance to see the news a lot," Bruning, who was called in the USA TODAY Poll, said in a follow-up phone interview. "I have two kids and go to school and work. Seeing the ads every day helps me catch up. I see what they are going to do."¶ What has she learned? That Obama has been pushing to keep student loan rates low — she's attending community college to be certified as a welder, so that's an important issue for her — and that Romney "wants to cut taxes for the rich people and raise them for the poor."¶ "I don't think that's cool," she says. She plans to vote for Obama.

# A2 Ads Key

**Ads not key – Obama's recent ads prove**

**Trende 7/23** (Sean, the Senior Elections Analyst for RealClearPolitics, 99% accuracy rate in the last five elections, master’s degree in political science from Duke University and bachelor’s degree from Yale University, regular guest on Fox News, Fox News Radio, CNN Radio and NPR, “Obama Spending Blitz Brings Little Change in Race,” July 23, 2012, Real Clear Politics, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/07/23/obama\_spending\_push\_brings\_little\_change\_in\_race\_114872.html)//PC

A month ago, I suggested that the punditry's coverage of the presidential race might indicate a case of collective histrionic personality disorder. Its reaction to President Obama's June spending push hasn't improved the prognosis. In the course of a few weeks, the narrative has shifted from one where it was time for the Democrats to panic to one where Mitt Romney's "Death Star" had curiously disappeared to another where Romney is supposed to panic.¶ What do the facts actually show? We know that Obama heavily outspent Romney in June, in part because the Romney campaign can’t yet spend funds earmarked for the general election. We know that these ads have focused incessantly on the presumptive GOP nominee’s experience at Bain Capital, and that they are quite good. We know that the media has piled on, with questions about when Romney’s tenure at Bain ended and why he refuses to provide the traditional number of income tax returns. And we know that the president leads Romney in the RCP Averages, both nationally and in most of the swing states.¶ ¶ But where is the evidence that anything has changed, outside of the media narrative? PrioritiesUSA, the Obama campaign’s super PAC, suggests this as the key finding: “37% of voters say that Romney’s business experience at Bain Capital make them LESS likely to vote for him. Just 27% say it makes them MORE likely to vote for him.”¶ But another way of reporting this information would be to say that, after a seven- to eight-figure ad blitz aimed at convincing voters that Romney is a cross between the buffoonish Thurston Howell III and the rapacious Gordon Gekko, 63 percent of voters either find Romney’s business experience irrelevant or say it makes them more likely to vote for him. (Of course, it also matters how those 37 percent are distributed. If the bulk of those who find Romney’s business experience unpalatable are Democrats or Democratic-leaning independents, then this isn’t much of a problem for the Republican’s campaign.)¶ Regardless, with Romney trailing, this is merely more of the same. We haven’t really seen any movement in the RCP Average since the GOP primary race ended in early May: The president has held a steady lead of one to three points.¶ Let’s break this down a bit further. Below is a chart of all the polls in the various RCP Averages where the pollster published a sample taken in July and another in the same jurisdiction taken in either May or June. For Gallup’s tracking poll, I simply averaged the findings for June and for July (to date).¶ The results? On average, the polls have moved two-tenths of a point toward the president during this time period. That’s net movement, by the way, meaning that he’s moved up a tenth of a point and Romney has moved down a tenth of a point, on average. Looking at state polls only, we see marginal movement toward Romney. If we look at only the swingiest of swing states -- Colorado, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia -- we see about two-thirds of a point movement toward Obama. That’s not much bang for the buck.¶ In fact, there’s some evidence that the advertising barrage is actually hurting the president. Incumbent campaigns are usually loath to go negative because negative ads tend to drive down the incumbent as well as the challenger, and because they tend to increase the challenger’s name recognition (something that is not really an issue in a presidential race).¶ The following chart shows a rolling five-poll average of the president’s and Romney’s favorability ratings from January through July.¶ As you can see, the president’s favorability ratings begin to dip downward at the beginning of June, then collapse at the end of the month. This doesn’t seem to be a function of polls with pro-Republican “house effects” moving into the averages: three of the four surveys taken in July show the president with a worse favorability rating than that pollster’s previous iteration.¶ At the same time, it isn’t clear that he got anything in exchange. All four July polls show Romney with a better favorability rating than their previous iteration. This can be chalked up to the small number of polls in our July sample here, but I’ll admit I was a bit surprised that Romney didn’t show any decline in his favorables.¶ The superficial takeaway is that this is bad news for the president. He’s unleashed something of a “shock and awe” campaign and fired off what many think is one of his most damaging bullets against Romney, with little to show for it.¶ He’ll also be going into the fall campaign at financial parity -- at best -- with Romney. This is a position he’s never been in before. He buried Alan Keyes in the fall of 2004, was able to outspend Hillary Clinton down the stretch in the spring of 2008, and had a massive advantage in the fall of that year when John McCain opted to take federal matching funds. A page from past Obama playbooks has now been torn out.¶ But this is all speculative stuff -- Obama may have some devastating opposition research on Romney that we’re unaware of, and the fundraising parity with the Romney campaign may not matter outside of the margins. And we don’t know the counterfactual: Would his polling edge have continued to slide had he not taken to the airwaves?¶ I think the best we can say is that this remains a remarkably stable race, with the president barely ahead of his challenger with roughly 100 days to go. In other words, my basic assessment of the race has remained roughly unchanged from where it was a year ago: The president’s election chances are roughly 50-50.

# Enthusiasm Key

**Romney will win now – Enthusiasm is key to the election**

**Jones 7/25** (Jeffrey M., Gallup Polls, “Democratic Voting Enthusiasm Down Sharply From 2004, 2008,” July 25, 2012, Gallup, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/156194/Democratic-Voting-Enthusiasm-Down-Sharply-2004-2008.aspx>)//PC

PRINCETON, NJ -- Democrats are significantly less likely now (39%) than they were in the summers of 2004 and 2008 to say they are "more enthusiastic about voting than usual" in the coming presidential election. Republicans are more enthusiastic now than in 2008, and the same as in 2004.¶ Track the 2012 race and compare it to past elections > These results are based on a July 19-22 USA Today/Gallup poll. They suggest a shift in Republicans' and Democrats' orientation to voting in the coming presidential election compared with the last two, with Republicans expressing more voting enthusiasm. The current 51% to 39% Republican advantage in voter enthusiasm is slightly larger than the 53% to 45% GOP advantage Gallup measured in February of this year.¶ The voting enthusiasm measure gives a sense of Americans' motivation to turn out and vote but probably also their expectations of their preferred party's chances of winning. Thus, the Republican advantage may indicate a greater likelihood of voting among Republicans but also greater optimism about a Republican victory than was the case in 2008. In turn, Democrats are probably less optimistic about their chances of winning than they were in 2008.¶ Gallup has found a relationship between voting enthusiasm and the outcome of midterm congressional elections, with the party that has the advantage generally faring better in the elections. That pattern also held in the 2008 presidential election, with Democrats reporting greater enthusiasm throughout the year and Barack Obama winning the election. The 2004 data provided less guidance as to the eventual winner, as the Republicans (68%) and Democrats (67%) had similar scores at the time of the election, which George W. Bush won narrowly.¶ Voter Enthusiasm Down Among All Americans¶ Overall, Americans' voting enthusiasm this year has lagged behind what it was in 2004 and 2008. The current level of enthusiasm is down slightly from what it was in the summer of 2008, but that followed a significant drop after the 2008 primaries, from 62% to 48%. Voting enthusiasm began to pick up again in the fall of 2008, and by the time of the 2008 election it was similar to 2004 levels.¶ The decline in voter enthusiasm this year is consistent with Gallup's finding that self-reported likelihood to vote is lower compared with the fall of 2004 and 2008.¶ Implications¶ With voter enthusiasm down significantly from 2004 and 2008 levels, it is reasonable to expect that turnout will be lower this presidential election than in the last two elections, both of which had above-average turnout from a historical perspective.¶ Republicans' greater enthusiasm about voting is a troubling sign for the Obama campaign, especially given the fact that registered voters are essentially tied in their presidential voting preferences and that Republicans historically vote at higher rates than Democrats do.¶ However, Democrats' depressed enthusiasm may be influenced by the comparatively tough re-election battle the president is facing, likely due to the state of the economy and Americans' generally sour mood. So it may be that Democrats will still vote in large numbers but are just not as excited about doing so as they were in the last two elections.¶ Lower Democratic enthusiasm at this point could also indicate that Democrats have not fully tuned in to the campaign, which is possible, given the lack of a Democratic nomination contest this year as there was on the Republican side. If that indeed is a factor, Democrats' enthusiasm may pick up steam in the fall after the Democratic convention. But if Democrats do not close the enthusiasm gap between now and Election Day, it would put Obama's re-election chances in serious jeopardy.

# A2 Enthusiasm Key

**Enthusiasm not a clear predictor – fluctuations and unclear questions**

**Blake 7/26** (Aaron, covers national politics at the Washington Post, where he writes regularly for the Fix, summa cum laude graduate of the University of Minnesota, “Enthusiasm: The Holy Grail of the 2012 race,” July 26, 2012, The Fix, Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/enthusiasm-the-elusive-holy-grail-of-the-2012-race/2012/07/25/gJQAxMHCAX\_blog.html?wprss=rss\_the-fix)//PC

Republicans have a big advantage in enthusiasm heading into the final 100 days of the campaign. Or maybe they don’t.¶ Republican White House hopeful Mitt Romney(L) and President Barack Obama. (AFP PHOTO/Getty Images)¶ A new Gallup poll released Wednesday showed the GOP with a sizeable edge in enthusiasm, with 51 percent of their voters professing more enthusiasm than in other recent elections, as compared to just 39 percent of Democrats. That’s its biggest advantage this cycle.¶ But just three weeks ago, a CNN/Opinion Research poll showed it was Democrats who had an unprecedented edge in enthusiasm, with 59 percent of their voters saying they were “extremely” or “very” motivated to vote, compared to 51 percent of Republicans.¶ Either something big changed in the first half of July, or we’re getting mixed messages. We’ll go with the latter.¶ The fact is that the enthusiasm gap is a hugely important predictor of elections that, right now, is very hard to pin down — for a number of reasons.¶ First, it depends a lot on how you ask the question. The Gallup poll asked voters to compare their level of enthusiasm to past elections, while the CNN poll asked a more straight up, ‘Are you enthusiastic’ question. Different questions get different responses, and we can all argue about which question is better.¶ Just as importantly, though, are a pair of very conflicted party bases.¶ Republicans in particular don’t seem to know whether they are excited or not. They are very enthusiastic about beating President Obama, but not very enthusiastic about GOP nominee Mitt Romney.¶ Much of the anti-Obama sentiment that drove record GOP enthusiasm (and huge GOP gains) in 2010 remains, but Republicans have an imperfect and less-than-exciting captain manning the helm.¶ A recent Washington Post-ABC News poll showed that 48 percent of Obama supporters said they were “very enthusiastic” about voting for the president, while just 34 percent of Romney supporters said the same of their guy.¶ So when Republican voters are asked how enthusiastic they are, do they think about beating Obama or voting for Romney? Republican leaders better hope the former is enough to get them to the polls on Election Day.¶ On the other side, Democrats still like their candidate plenty — personally, at least — but they are not terribly enthusiastic about what they’ve seen from his administration or the state of the country.¶ The 39 percent of Democrats who told Gallup they were more enthusiastic than before other recent elections is the lowest that number has been measured in a presidential election cycle since March 2000. And the 59 percent who told CNN they were “extremely” or “very” enthusiastic is much higher than it has been in recent months — a suggestion that it might have been a momentary bump.¶ (The CNN poll may have been a reflection of Obama’s recent base-rallying announcements, including coming out in support of gay marriage, stopping the deportation of young illegal immigrants, and pushing for tax cuts for the wealthy to expire.)¶ Overall, both sides right now have something to be excited about and something to keep them from showing up to vote. That’s why enthusiasm overall is lower at this point than it was in either 2004 or 2008, and it’s also why we’ve seen some muddled polling on the enthusiasm gap.¶ The question is which big motivating factor — personal affinity for Obama for Democrats and anti-Obama sentiment for Republicans — is more motivational come Election Day.¶ Obama inches toward action on guns: Obama suggested late Wednesday that he would be open to additional measures to restrict the ownership of guns in response to the country’s second big gun-related tragedy in 18 months.¶ Obama has been slow to embrace legislative action on guns in the aftermath of the shootings at a movie theater in Aurora, Colo., but his remarks in New Orleans may give gun control advocates some hope.¶ “We should leave no stone unturned and recognize that we have no greater mission that keeping our young people safe,” Obama said, specifically mentioning more thorough background checks and keeping guns out of the hands of the mentally ill.¶ But even while taking a step toward action, Obama suggested guns are only part of the problem.¶ “We must also understand that when a child opens fire on other children, there’s a hole in his heart that no government can fill,” he said.¶ Also Wednesday, Romney suggested new gun laws weren’t the answer.¶ Hirono leads by 19 in Democratic poll: A new poll of the Hawaii Senate race conducted for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee shows Rep. Mazie Hirono (D) leading former governor Linda Lingle (R) by 19 points.¶ The DSCC poll, conducted by pollster Mark Mellman and shared with The Fix, shows Hirono at 52 percent and Lingle at 33 percent -- up from a 15-point lead last month. Hirono also has a higher favorable rating (55 percent) than Lingle (47 percent).¶ “Lingle’s weakness is a function of her relative unpopularity and the Democratic orientation of the state,” the memo concludes. “That combination puts huge obstacles in Lingle’s path, while the better-liked Hirono is further aided by the state’s partisan landscape.”¶ The poll is just the latest in a string of very disparate surveys of the race. While a Lingle poll released earlier this month showed her leading Hirono by five points, a Hirono poll released last month showed the Democrat up by 12 points.¶ This is really par-for-course for the 50th state, where it is very difficult to poll accurately.¶ Hirono still faces a primary with former congressman Ed Case — she announced the primary endorsement of GOP Rep. Don Young (Alaska) on Tuesday — but Hirono is expected to face Lingle in the general election. Hirono also released a new ad Wednesday.

# Florida key

**Florida key to the election**

**Thomas 7/18** (Ken, Associated Press, “Obama's aim in Florida? Keep pressure on Romney,” The Sacramento Bee, July 18, 2012, http://www.sacbee.com/2012/07/18/4639964/romney-pushes-attacks-against.html)//PC

WASHINGTON -- President Barack Obama is trying to keep the pressure on Republican rival Mitt Romney, opening two days of campaigning in Florida in search of military veterans, seniors and unaligned voters in the state's crucial midsection. Romney's wife said no more of her husband's tax information would be made public.¶ Obama was appearing Thursday in Jacksonville and West Palm Beach as his campaign urges Romney to release more years of his tax returns and keeps a sharp focus on the former Massachusetts governor's tenure as the head of a private equity firm.¶ "We've given all that people need to know and understand about our financial situation and about how we live our life," Ann Romney told ABC News in an interview broadcast Thursday.¶ Romney had planned a quiet day of private meetings Thursday at his campaign headquarters in Boston, but abruptly changed his plans and scheduled a campaign stop nearby to coincide with Obama's first event in Florida. After several days of aggressive anti-Obama rhetoric, the Republican's campaign was showing no signs of letting up.¶ Florida is the largest and most coveted of the nation's Election Day toss-up states, a place where Romney could severely damage Obama's chances of winning re-election. Republicans are holding their national convention in Tampa in August in hopes of giving themselves an edge in the state.¶ Yet, if Obama can lock down Florida's 29 electoral votes, it would be difficult for Romney to mount enough support elsewhere to capture the White House.¶ Polls have shown Obama and Romney in a dead heat in the state, which has struggled with an unemployment rate of 8.6 percent, above the national average, and a still-recovering housing market. Florida provided the deciding margin in George W. Bush's victory in 2000 and the state has been closely contested ever since. Obama carried it in 2008.¶ Obama aides noted that since 1992, Floridians have cast more than 32.5 million votes during the past five presidential elections and only 57,000 votes have separated the two parties in those campaigns. "Florida's always a close state and we don't expect that to change between now and November," said Obama campaign spokesman Ben LaBolt.¶ Both sides are jockeying for an advantage.

# Latinos Key

**Latino votes key to the election, not independents – immigration is the central issue**

**Ross 7/23** (Janell, business reporter at the Huffington Post, bachelor's degree from Vassar College and a master's degree from the Columbia University School of Journalism, “Number Of Unregistered Latino Voters Large Enough To Transform Red States Into Swing States,” July 23, 2012, Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/22/unregistered-latino-voters-swing-states\_n\_1691032.html)//PC

The day before a class action civil rights lawsuit accusing Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio and his office of wide-scale civil rights violations went to trial in Phoenix, a handful of people stood at the corner of North 27th Avenue and West Indian School Road just off the city’s Black Canyon Freeway.¶ Wearing “Adios Arpaio” T-shirts, the small group staged a protest at one of the busiest intersections in mostly Latino West Phoenix, aimed at what some consider two of Arizona’s biggest problems: Arpaio and apathy.¶ Some signs read, “Honk If You Don’t Like Arpaio.” Others bore the words, “Register to Vote Here.” After an hour, 11 people registered to vote.¶ “I know that sounds tiny,” said Daria Ovide, a coordinator for the Campaign for Arizona’s Future, a union-financed group working to register Latino voters in Arizona, a key battleground state. “But believe me, it matters.”¶ What happens at thousands of intersections, car shows and carnivals when eligible, but unregistered Latino voters, and avid canvassers like Ovide meet, may well determine the outcome of the next presidential election. Those meetings could so dramatically reshape the political landscape, activists and analysts agree that consistently red states could become swing states or turn blue.¶ Right now in 10 battleground states -- places where both the Obama and Romney campaigns say victory is feasible -- there are 12.1 million unregistered, but potentially eligible, Latino adults, according to new data released late Thursday by the Center for American Progress, a Washington, D.C., think tank. In uber-important Florida, the state's 1.4 million unregistered, potentially eligible Latino adults represent a group of voters five times larger than Obama’s margin of victory in 2008.¶ “If just a portion of these potential voters do come out and vote they could swing the election,” said Philip Wolgin, an immigration policy analyst at the center. “And while I don’t think that Texas is going to become a swing state tomorrow, I also don’t think that four years ago anyone thought that Arizona would be either. Look at it now.”¶ In Arizona, 405,300 Latino U.S. citizens do not have voting credentials. And another 575,300 Latino permanent legal residents could become naturalized citizens, register and vote.¶ In 2008, John McCain carried the state by 195,404 votes.¶ These potential voters, according to a series of recent polls, care deeply about immigration issues like racial profiling by law enforcement and the Supreme Court’s June decision on Arizona’s SB170, “show me your papers” laws, as well as jobs, education and health care, said Clarissa Martinez, the National Council of La Raza's director of civic engagement and immigration. The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is a Washington, D.C.-based civil rights organization.¶ Having more Hispanic voters in the political system, could force action on some of the nation’s more intractable political issues, she said.¶ For most Central and South American immigrants, the wait for a visa that allows for legal immigration to the United States can stretch for two decades or more. Once here, immigrants may apply for legal permanent residency. Most legal permanent residents must wait three to five years to apply for citizenship. Then, after passing English-language proficiency, U.S. civics and history exams and paying an $800 fee, legal permanent residents typically wait a minimum of four to six months to be summoned to a swearing in ceremony where they become U.S. citizens.¶ NCLR is working with local nonprofit agencies and canvassers in states like Florida, Nevada, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Texas, California, North Carolina, New York and Idaho to help those who are eligible to become naturalized citizens do so and those who can register to vote obtain credentials.¶ “When we talk about electoral expansion, you really are talking about sweeping changes to the nation’s political calculus, there’s no doubt,” said Martinez. “But part of the challenge is that the best resourced efforts are concentrated in election years and are associated with candidates or parties who are interested in the short-term. They want to win the next election.”¶ To win the next election, most campaigns focus their energy and money on reaching so-called habitual voters or reducing the number of people who turn out to vote for the opposition. Habitual voters are the share of already registered voters who vote in every election possible.¶ In some ways, the limited interest political parties and candidates have shown in helping people to become citizens is good, said Martinez.¶ Politicizing the citizenship process could become unseemly. On the other, investment in naturalization and voter registration work is desperately needed right now, she said.¶ In Phoenix, the "Adios Arpiao" crew gets the funding it needs from Unite Here, a hospitality workers union, and the AFL-CIO, said Ovide. The group aims to counterbalance Voter ID policies, the effects of shortened early voting periods and efforts to identify alleged non-citizens on voter rolls around the country. Opponents say these measures will make it more difficult for many older voters, minorities and low -income adults to participate. Proponents insist that the laws protect the integrity of the voting process and prevent alleged voter fraud.¶ The day that Arpaio’s trial began, canvasser’s wearing "Adios Arpaio" T-shirts fanned out to supermarkets, a gas station, a library and a restaurant in hopes of registering Latino voters.¶ That day, they registered 150, Ovide said.

# Early Votes key

**Early voting key to the election**

**Simendinger 7/27** (Alexis, White House Correspondent for RealClearPolitics, “Early Voting May Hold Key to 2012 Election,” July 27, 2012, Real Clear Politics, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/07/27/early\_voting\_may\_hold\_key\_to\_2012\_election\_114930-4.html)//PC

News flash: The country's next president may be elected in October, not November.¶ Confused?¶ ¶ Campaign strategists working for President Obama and Mitt Romney say they're organized for an October election. And both candidates believe early voting in key battleground states could conceivably forecast the next president days and perhaps weeks before most voters turn out on Nov. 6.¶ Early voting -- which has become a significant trend since 2004 -- helps explain why July’s campaign advertising for and against the presidential contenders has been so intense well before most of the country goes to the polls. It’s part of the reason why both candidates this summer have put a premium on mobilizing their respective bases, and wooing fence-sitters where they can.¶ The importance of early voting underscores why the Obama campaign told Floridians on July 12 how to request mail-in ballots, well in advance of an Oct. 31 deadline. And early voting proved enough of a missed opportunity for the GOP in 2008 that Republicans’ have revised their get-out-the-vote playbook. Romney’s team describes the importance of early voting and its strategies to lock up pre-Election Day ballots as “the chase.”¶ “It’s kind of changed the game,” Kirsten Kukowski, spokeswoman for the Republican National Committee, told RCP. “It’s changed the dynamics.”¶ And here’s why: The calendar for pre-Nov. 6 voting in certain swing states is just weeks away. In Iowa, for example, early voting starts Sept. 27. In Ohio, it begins Oct. 2. That’s one day before anyone in the Buckeye State will have heard a word of the first presidential debate, scheduled for Oct. 3 in Denver. In Colorado, early voting opens up hours before the final debate between Obama and Romney is to occur in Boca Raton, Fla., on Oct. 22. And in Florida -- where one-third of all votes were cast before Election Day in 2008 -- balloting this year will begin five days after that last debate. In North Carolina, where Obama’s margin over John McCain was a mere 14,177 votes in 2008, pre-Election Day voting begins Oct. 18. In Nevada, it starts Oct. 20.¶ About 30 percent of all votes in 2008, or nearly 40 million, were cast before Election Day. That proportion of early participation was unprecedented, and experts who study early voting expect the trend to continue in the low- to mid-30 percent range this year. Even if the total number of votes cast isn’t as high as the 131 million counted in 2008, the early-voting trend could steam ahead because both campaigns this year are evenly matched in terms of money and methods to turn out the vote. Plus, states have continued to adapt to the realities of convenience voting, while voters are getting more acclimated to the opportunities.¶ In 1972, early voting was a tiny asterisk -- about 4 percent of votes cast. Twenty years later, it was 7 percent. But by 2004, the trend had bloomed to 20 percent, according to federal census data. Early voting leapfrogged again in 2008, largely because Democrats worked intensively to take advantage of the rolling election calendar.¶ The early voting phenomenon has moved the goal posts for presidential candidates and the parties, reshaped the nature of voter mobilization, intensified the focus on battleground states and election laws, and created openings to gauge (and influence) who is winning -- and where. It’s also inspired data-driven debates about whether early voting is increasing or decreasing overall turnout.¶ “It’s a part of everything we do,” a spokesman for the Obama campaign, commenting on background, told RCP. “For example, you have to talk to persuadable voters earlier because they have the option to vote early, so it’s not just about the turnout game. And it’s why we hired all of our early-vote/GOTV directors already, and why our long-term organizing for the past five years will pay off,” he explained in an email. “We are ready earlier than ever.”¶ The current neck-and-neck status of the presidential race suggests that every ballot cast could make a difference in the Electoral College states that are expected to determine the victor. That includes ballots cast by active-duty military and even U.S. voters living overseas. It’s a point the Obama campaign relentlessly drives home to supporters, hoping to raise the stakes and gin up enthusiasm for the incumbent. “It takes one,” is Michelle Obama’s newest challenge to campaign volunteers.¶ Because the Obama and Romney teams can track, in real time, public information in many early-voting states about who casts their ballots early -- either in person or after individuals request absentee ballots -- political parties can gauge their progress and redeploy resources before Election Day.¶ ¶ It may not be commonly understood that tallies of early voting (individual’s names, addresses, party registration) are public and open to examination in many states leading up to Election Day. This information affirms for campaigns and the political parties which individuals cast ballots early, or are in the process of doing so. The campaigns are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on techniques and technologies to reach eligible voters. By registering them to participate, then encouraging them to act early, and then shepherding those supporters to the finish line where they can vote early, the campaigns build cushions under their candidates and gather up valuable data along the way.¶ Locking up votes early means campaign workers can shift to other targets for support, and deploy money, staff and volunteers more efficiently. The campaigns can encourage voters to avoid Election Day lines and inclement weather, and assist them with voter eligibility issues and ballot questions.¶ The candidates also hope that building a bank of early votes could offset the impact of any negative, late-breaking information that could flip supporters to their opponent, or make backers sit it out on Election Day. Indeed, the fact that so many Americans are voting earlier may discourage opponents from waiting until the eve of an election to unleash negative surprises, such as George W. Bush’s DUI troubles, or the inflammatory tape recordings of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, and to encourage candidates to come clean about their foibles earlier -- and on their own terms.¶ Romney’s voter identification experts say they are so prepped for each state’s early-voting rules that they “have it down to exactly how many days after the first ballot is available [that] we need to start calling to be sure that those people are returning their ballots,” Kukowski explained. “We know exactly when we need to get to people.”¶ The Obama campaign, which put early voting to good use in 2008 while McCain did not, boasts the effort is now “baked into our everyday organizing program,” as one source put it.¶ That organizing program spans “events with campaign principals and surrogates, to phone calls from volunteers to their neighbors in field offices across the country, to making sure voters know how they can make sure their vote is counted legally,” said campaign spokesman Adam Fetcher. In states where voters have weeks to vote rather than a day, the Obama campaign alerts potential supporters to the details of those options.¶ Blending early-voting trends since 2004 with the GOP’s ambitions to compete with some of the Obama team’s innovations, the coordinated RNC and Romney teams compiled a list of states and expectations for early voting (as percentages of all votes cast). The following are forecasts Republicans are using, alongside comparisons from 2008. The early voting calculations from the last election come from state-reported data, as well as published figures compiled by George Mason University's Michael McDonald, who is an authority on the subject:¶ Colorado, 85 percent (78.9); Nevada, 75 percent (66.9); New Mexico, 72 percent (62.3); North Carolina, 70 percent (60.6); Florida, 70 percent (51.8); Ohio, 45 percent (30); Iowa, 41 percent (36); Michigan, 30 percent (20.4); Wisconsin, 30 percent (21.2); Virginia, 20 percent (13.5); and New Hampshire, 11 percent (10).¶ “We could know before Election Day in some of these states who wins,” Kukowski said. “That kind of knowledge, when we’re in the middle of our get-out-the-vote efforts, is obviously a very important thing for us to know. It’s all about efficiency. If we feel pretty good about our data in a state where we already know where 70 percent of the voters stand, that just frees us up for some of the other states where [voting] is mostly on Election Day.”¶ Romney’s team believes that by October, the winner could be evident in at least four key states, which account for 59 of the 270 electoral votes needed to win.¶ ¶ “Florida, North Carolina, Nevada and Colorado -- those four states, people argue, are going to be very, very important in the last couple weeks of the campaign,” Kukowski continued. “The fact that over 70 percent of their electorates will have already voted by the time October ends is critical.”¶ Asked to size up the GOP projections for early voting, an Obama campaign source said the forecasts were high but “not out of the question.” A surge in early voting in Ohio to 45 percent this year appeared large, for example, “but it’s feasible,” he said.¶ Professor McDonald, who teaches at George Mason’s Department of Public and International Affairs and is the creator of the United States Elections Project website, also pegged the GOP projections as a bit on the high side.¶ “Maybe these are Romney targets based on expectations of their mobilization efforts,” he told RCP after examining the list. If they are right, early voting in 2012 might be “somewhere in the mid- to high 30 percent range,” he said. Looking at the GOP’s Ohio projection, for instance, he wondered if Romney’s team aimed to increase early voting in the state’s rural regions, to counter Democrats’ anticipated success in mobilizing Obama supporters in the state’s urban areas.¶ If the Romney campaign is ambitious to expand early voting to benefit the GOP nominee, one question is with which voters they’ll accomplish it.¶ College-age voters who are enrolled in classes away from home can vote early or by absentee ballot. But Romney’s play for those voters (in key battleground states) on issues they care about has been difficult to discern. Obama’s outreach, on the other hand, has been in plain view. He’s touting his fight in Congress for continued low-interest student loans, the Affordable Care Act’s requirement that young adults up to age 26 be covered on their parents’ insurance, and the president’s determination that eligible children of illegal immigrants be allowed to stay in the United States rather than face deportation.¶ The elderly -- who participate in large numbers in presidential elections -- appear to favor absentee and early in-person voting because inconveniencies are minimized. While Obama won in every age category in 2008 except among senior citizens, he may be faring better this year among the over-65 crowd. Romney, on the other hand, has gained on Obama among likely voters between ages 35 and 54. In swing states with large populations of senior citizens, the elderly could help select a winner by October.¶ African-Americans of all ages, who backed Obama in 2008, participated in Democrats’ “Souls to the Polls” programs that encouraged early voting on Sundays. Since then, legislative changes that eliminated Sunday voting in some states sparked Democratic Party accusations of GOP intentions to suppress the vote for the president.¶ The Obama campaign, joined by the Democratic National Committee, filed a federal lawsuit July 17 against Ohio’s top elections officer, arguing that election-law changes embraced by the state’s Republican-controlled legislature disenfranchised many voters by eliminating early, in-person voting on the final three days before Election Day. “The United States Supreme Court has stated clearly . . . that 'having once granted the right to vote on equal terms, the State may not, by arbitrary and disparate treatment, value one person’s vote over that of another,’” wrote campaign general counsel Robert Bauer in an opinion column published by the Cleveland Plain Dealer.¶ It is widely believed that the majority of early voters share a few key attributes: They are partisans. They are highly motivated to participate in elections. And they select their choice candidate without waiting around for every campaign ad or debate argument. “They could vote now and they’d be happy,” McDonald said.¶ In a close race like the one between Obama and Romney in which the electorate seems, at least according to months of polling, to be split along partisan lines, there is another important question about early voting: Does it increase overall voter participation?¶ ¶ The jury is still out. McDonald’s research suggests that public perception of close contests influences voter turnout. That helps explain why the Obama campaign is so eager to proclaim the president to be in a dog fight with Romney. McDonald also found that states new to the roster of battleground states in 2008 experienced the largest jumps in turnout compared with 2004. And some states that faded from the battleground picture experienced declines in turnout. He suggested voter mobilization is part of a “plausible” explanation for increased turnout during presidential elections since 2000, coupled with a strong motivation to vote.¶ The opposite argument -- that early voting often depresses turnout -- has been described by Kenneth Mayer, a political science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Research conducted by Mayer and his university colleagues found that early voting can diminish the inspiration and intensity of the final days of the race because campaigns scale back mobilization efforts, run fewer ads, close offices, and transition campaign workers to more competitive states when they believe votes are already in.¶ In 2008, Obama managed to expand the electorate and inspire turnout. This year, inspiring a robust turnout will test the president and his team. Republicans are eager to defeat Obama even if they’re not in a deep swoon for Romney. Conservatives believe they have the money, the muscle and the voter lists, thanks to the RNC and pro-Romney super PACs, to tip the scales in October.¶ “There are so many moving parts to this,” Mayer told RCP, “like how close a state is likely to be, and what you think the payoff will be for a particular mobilization effort among a constituency you think will be in your favor.”¶ The obvious payoff would be success mobilizing early voting in competitive states that offer handsome bonuses as measured in electoral votes.¶ In Ohio, with 18 such prizes, the impact of early voting “probably won’t make a difference if the statewide margin is 100,000,” Mayer observed, “but if it’s close enough so that you’re talking about a few tens of thousands of votes, then everything makes a difference.”

# Voter Turnout Key

**Voter turnout key to the election**

**Hayden 7/26** (Tom, The Nation Institute's Carey McWilliams Fellow, “A Romney Presidency Would Be a Threat to Peace We Cannot Allow,” July 26, 2012, The Nation, http://www.thenation.com/article/169117/romney-presidency-would-be-threat-peace-we-cannot-allow)//PC

There are no “fringes” in a 50-50 election. Consultants on both sides claim that the November result will depend on turnout. Again and again, 1 or 2 percent margins are the difference between winning and losing. Elections are settled by fringes, at least as often as the more-targeted undecided.¶ Democrats generally try to win elections, while the Republican Party, because it represents a fading demographic minority, is forced to steal them. The Republicans steal them primarily with money, but also with voter suppression and disenfranchisement laws that reduce turnout among the young, students and racial minorities. The Republicans are hoping to dampen or prevent turnout among anti-war voters just enough to squeeze themselves back into power.

# African-Americans Key

**African-American vote key to Obama's re-election**

**King 7/26** (John, CNN Chief National Correspondent, “The Battlegrounds: African-American turnout,” July 26, 2012, CNN, http://www.cnn.com/2012/07/26/politics/king-battleground-pennsylvania/index.html)//PC

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (CNN) -- Paulette Beale shakes her head at the suggestion, then flashes a contagious smile.¶ "It's still history," she says, to rebut the notion there could be less intensity for President Barack Obama in the African-American community the second time around.¶ "The first history was that he won. The second history's that he won twice. So, it's not just about history the first time, you have to be concerned about the history for the next four years also. You can make history more than one time, you know."¶ Her mother and father stand a few feet away, nodding approvingly.¶ Paul and Altermese Beale founded Paul Beale's Florist 41 years ago. Paulette takes the lead now, but her parents are on hand helping most days in a shop that is an institution in the Ogontz Avenue area of North Philadelphia.¶ "We love him," Altermese Beale says of Obama. "One of the proudest days of my life was the day he was elected."¶ The Beales are determined to see the president re-elected, and are part of an Obama campaign ground operation that is active early because of several obstacles to generating the big African-American turnout that was critical to then-Sen. Obama's 2008 victories in many of the major presidential battlegrounds, Pennsylvania among them.¶ Obama vs. low black voter turnout Fact-Checking campaign ads Biden critical of Romney campaign¶ Our visit this week was timed to coincide with the president's speech to the National Urban League.¶ At that meeting, in New Orleans, a major topic of discussion is a new Urban League study suggesting that **if African-American turnout in 2012 falls** back to 2004 levels, then **Obama is almost certain to lose** North Carolina and would find things much tougher in a handful of other battlegrounds, including Ohio, Virginia, Michigan, Florida and Pennsylvania.¶ In 2008, just shy of 65% of eligible African-Americans voted for president; in 2004 it was 60%. That prospect of lower turnout could change the math in some key battlegrounds even if the president runs roughly equal to his share of the African-American vote, an eye-popping 95% in 2008.¶ There are a number of reasons the Obama campaign worries that turnout among its most loyal voters could slip some -- and we got a taste of all of them during our visit to Philadelphia:¶ • Economy: African-American unemployment is well above the national average.¶ • History: The prospect of electing the country's first African-American president was unquestionably a factor in the 2008 turnout boost.¶ • Complacency: The president's win in Pennsylvania was by 9 points, and Republicans have not carried the state in a presidential race since 1988.¶ • New voter ID laws: Pennsylvania is among the states with a new requirement that voters show photo identification on Election Day.¶ Paul Beale scowls at the mention of the law.¶ "There are people who don't want him as president and they are trying to suppress the vote," he says.¶ Altermese Beale says some of her elderly friends don't have driver's licenses or other current photo identification.¶ "If they keep this law, we will be in bad shape," she says.¶ The Beales ask every customer if they are registered to vote, and have forms and literature on hand for those who need help. Across the street at the Obama campaign field office -- one of six in Philadelphia -- a table just inside the door is stacked with literature about the new law and its requirements.¶ The campaign's networking with local businesses is part of an unprecedented effort to register and then keep in contact with African-American voters.¶ Danny Wright is a natural fit. A 67-year-old with vivid memories of taking part in civil rights marches in his native Maryland and now the owner of Danny's Auto Tags, which contracts with the state to issue driver's licenses and also sells auto insurance.¶ "It's like a spark," Wright told us during our afternoon visit. "When you say, 'Obama,' everybody is very, very enthusiastic about him and you will see each person say to the other person, 'Have you registered to vote?' "¶ The new ID law is also a hot topic of conversation. Many fiercely oppose it. Wright is in that group, but says he has to assume it will stay on the books through November.¶ "You hear a lot of talk about suppression," he says. "Everyone is making sure they're having the proper ID and everything to go vote. So we reinforce this also."¶ Our walk through the neighborhood -- steamy temperature aside -- had more of an October feel than late July; campaign volunteers were everywhere, asking passersby if they are registered to vote and collaring most of those who answered no.¶ One of the local Obama turnout teams has met regularly since the 2008 campaign. Most of the others took shape beginning a year ago. One older volunteer says his only worry is that so many people tell him, "Don't worry, Pennsylvania is a can't-lose.' "¶ Bruce Burton has a quick answer when visitors to his Pretty Boyz barber shop sound complacent about the president's November odds.¶ "We have more at stake," Burton said. "We're either going back to the years of President Bush or we're going to keep moving forward. ... We have voter registration forms in the back. We are recruiting as many people as possible. We are not feeling that this is a sure bet. We feel we have to stand behind him 100%."¶ Black clergy is always critical to voter turnout in communities like this, and Dr. Kevin R. Johnson says Obama can count on his help despite a disagreement over the president's support for same-sex marriage.¶ "We understand that he is not the pastor of the United States of America -- he is the president of the United States," said Johnson, the senior pastor at Philadelphia's Bright Hope Baptist Church.¶ After services this past Sunday, Bright Hope congregants had a chance to get materials on the new voter ID law.¶ Johnson says that law could be one factor in driving African-American turnout down a bit from 2008. But if there is a significant drop, his bet is that the tough economy will be the driving force.¶ "The president could do more in that area," Johnson said. "When you look at the unemployment rate in the African-American community, there's more that can be done."¶ Still, Johnson says things are a bit improved in recent months, and as he tells congregants they must vote, he also says he is banking on a little help in this tougher election climate.¶ "The reason I know that everything is going to be all right in November is because I trust in the Lord," Johnson said. "I love the president. But I trust in the Lord."

**African-Americans key, specifically in swing states**

**Charles 7/17** (Deborah, General assignment reporter in Washington, DC for Reuters, “Black voter turnout could be the swing factor in November,” Reuters, July 17, 2012, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/17/us-usa-campaign-blacks-idUSBRE86G04C20120717)//PC

(Reuters) - High voter turnout among African Americans helped get President Barack Obama elected in 2008 but a black rights group fears even a small drop in turnout in the November election might cause him to lose or struggle in several key states.¶ Leaders of the National Urban League, a civil rights group, released a report on Tuesday that said although blacks voted overwhelmingly for the Democrat in 2008, if the number of African American voters drops even 5 percentage points this year it could tip the outcome in some vital states.¶ If that voter turnout rate returned to the 2004 election levels - 60 percent compared with nearly 65 percent in 2008 - the report estimated that Obama, the nation's first black president, would lose in North Carolina and would have a tough time in Ohio and Virginia.¶ "We wanted to point out that turnout makes a difference," said Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League. "And that African American turnout particularly, in a number of states, could make the ultimate difference."¶ Obama has a 6-point lead over his Republican rival Mitt Romney four months ahead of the November 6 election, a Reuters/Ipsos national poll showed last week.¶ A USA TODAY/Gallup poll of 12 swing states - including North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia - on July 8 showed the pair essentially tied as Obama had a narrow 2-point lead.¶ Chanelle Hardy, executive director of the National Urban League Policy Institute, said the analysis also showed that in 2008 more African Americans between 18 and 25 voted compared with whites of the same age group for the first time.¶ "That's just an amazing high water mark for democracy," she said. "Armed with that information we're in a strong position to tell each and every African American voter: 'Your vote does matter.'"¶ Morial said many political pundits often dismiss the importance of blacks because they voted overwhelmingly - about 95 percent - for Obama in 2008 over Republican John McCain.¶ "No one has really picked up on the idea that African American voters are part of the swing category," said Morial. "But it's not 'What percentage of African American voters will vote for the president?' - it's 'How many actually get to the polls and vote?'"¶ The group said it saw a connection between the unusually high black voter turnout in 2008 and tough new voter registration and vote identification requirements that have since been passed or proposed in dozens of U.S. states.¶ Conservative groups and Republican-led state legislatures that have proposed the new rules say they will help ensure fair voting and cut back on fraud.¶ Rights groups say the new rules would unfairly target groups like minorities and low-income voters. The Center for American Progress said in a report in April that as many as 25 percent of blacks do not possess a valid form of government-issued ID, compared with 11 percent on average for all races.

**Black voter turnout key to Obama victory in swing states**

**Demby 7/17** (Gene, the politics editor of Huffington Post BlackVoices, “Black Voter Turnout Could Make A Big Difference In Several Swing States, Report Finds,” July 17, 2012, Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/17/black-voter-turnout\_n\_1680177.html?utm\_hp\_ref=mostpopular)//PC

The number of black voters who turn out to vote in the upcoming elections could play a huge role in several swing states, according to a report released Tuesday by the National Urban League.¶ A swell of black voters was the difference in several states in 2008, according to the report, which focused on North Carolina, Virginia and Ohio in particular. "Essentially, African American voters in a number of key states hold the key to the outcome of the 2012 election," Marc Morial, the Urban League's president, said.¶ According to the report, the voter turnout rate among African Americans jumped 5 percentage points between 2004 and 2008, from 60 percent to 65 percent. The 2008 election also saw 2.4 million more black voters cast ballots than in 2004 -- more than double the pace at which the country's black population grew.¶ "If turnout goes back to what it was in 2004, it will have a huge impact in North Carolina," Madura Wijewardena, an analyst at the Urban League, said. If black voting reverts to its 2004 levels, it could mean President Barack Obama would lose North Carolina, and he would face uphill battles in Ohio and Virginia as well.¶ Obama and presumptive GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney stand in a virtual dead heat in North Carolina, according to Real Clear Politics. Obama boasts a narrow, albeit widening lead in Ohio and a small, shrinking lead in Virginia.¶ Winning North Carolina was seen as a major and symbolic victory for then-Sen. Obama, when he barely edged out Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) to capture the state's 15 electoral votes. North Carolina had been a reliably Republican state in presidential elections since 1964 -- it had only voted for a Democrat once in three decades until Obama's 2008 win. Virginia, which Obama also won in 2008, had not voted for a Democratic presidential candidate in the last 10 elections going back to 1972.¶ Ohio, the third state in the study and another won by Obama in 2008, is a famous bellwether of national elections. Ohio has voted for every presidential winner, except one, since 1944.¶ The study found that black turnout, by percentage of eligible voters, nearly reached parity with that of white voters in 2008. "In 2008, there was only a 1.8 percent difference in black and white turnout," said Chanelle Hardy, the Urban League's policy director. "That's just an amazingly high water mark for democracy. Armed with that information, we're in a strong position to tell each and every African American voter -- 'your vote does matter.'"¶ African-American voters are the most likely group to actually vote if they are registered, according to the study. About 93 percent of registered blacks vote in national elections, compared to 90 percent of whites and 84 percent of Hispanics.¶ But it was among younger voters that the surge of African Americans to the polls was most evident. Among voters between 18 and 44, blacks actually outpaced whites. For the first time in history, whites were not the biggest proportion of an age group, Wijewardena said.¶ Morial said that given these trends, it's not a coincidence that Republican-dominated legislatures have passed voter ID laws, which require voters to provide certain forms of official ID in order to vote. "We think it has a lot to do with the fact that you had extraordinary turnout in 2008," he said.¶ Proponents of the laws say they are designed to reduce voter fraud. But voting rights organizations, like the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University, point out that voter fraud is extremely rare, while others point out that the groups most likely to be affected because they do not have IDs are African Americans, Latinos, young people and the poor -- groups that tend to vote for Democrats.¶ Nate Silver, the statistician at The New York Times's FiveThirtyEight blog, wrote on Sunday that it's unclear just how much of an impact the new voter ID laws will have on turnout this fall.¶ "Nevertheless, it’s clear enough that stricter voter ID requirements are probably bad for Democrats, on balance," Silver wrote. "In almost every state where the ID laws have been at issue, Republican governors and legislatures have been on the side of passing stricter ones, while Democrats have sought to block them."¶ President Obama is scheduled to attend the Urban League's annual national convention next week in New Orleans.

**Virginia/Ohio Key**

**Romney has to win Ohio and Virginia**

**West, 12** (Paul, “Analysis: Three states stand out in 2012 presidential election,” Tribune News Service, 5/18/12, ProQuest)RK

WASHINGTON -- The presidential candidates have just placed their opening bets, and three states stand out as keys to the 2012 election: Ohio, Virginia and, perhaps surprisingly, Iowa. Romney's first TV ad of the general election campaign, which debuts Friday, will air in four states, including Ohio, Virginia and Iowa. (Notably, it repeats his pledge to "end Obamacare," the law based on his Massachusetts model). The Romney campaign wouldn't confirm the scope of the buy but didn't wave off an attempt to confirm James Hohmann's report in Politico, which listed that trio of states, plus North Carolina. President Barack Obama included Ohio, Virginia and Iowa in his most recent buy as well. **It is practically impossible for Romney to capture the presidency without carrying Ohio and Virginia.** Obama took both in 2008, and if he wins either again, he's almost surely going to being re-elected.

**Young Voters Key**

**Obama’s youth vote is vulnerable**

**Saulny, 7/1/12** (Susan, “Stung by Recession, Young Voters Shed Image as Obama Brigade,” New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/02/us/politics/economy-cuts-into-obamas-youth-support.html?_r=1>)RK

In the four years since President Obama swept into office in large part with the support of a vast army of young people, a new corps of men and women have come of voting age with views shaped largely by the recession. And unlike their counterparts in the millennial generation who showed high levels of enthusiasm for Mr. Obama at this point in 2008, the nation’s first-time voters are less enthusiastic about him, are significantly more likely to identify as conservative and cite a growing lack of faith in government in general, according to interviews, experts and recent polls. Polls show that Americans under 30 are still inclined to support Mr. Obama by a wide margin. But the president may face a particular challenge among voters ages 18 to 24. In that group, his lead over Mitt Romney — 12 points — is about half of what it is among 25- to 29-year-olds, according to an online survey this spring by the Harvard Institute of Politics. And among whites in the younger group, Mr. Obama’s lead vanishes altogether. Among all 18- to 29-year-olds, the poll found a high level of undecided voters; 30 percent indicated that they had not yet made up their mind. And turnout among this group is expected to be significantly lower than for older voters. “The concern for Obama, and the opportunity for Romney, is in the 18- to 24-year-olds who don’t have the historical or direct connection to the campaign or the movement of four years ago,” said John Della Volpe, director of polling at the Harvard Institute of Politics. “We’re also seeing that these younger members of this generation are beginning to show some more conservative traits. **It doesn’t mean they are Republican. It means Republicans have an opportunity.**” Experts say the impact of the recession and the slow recovery should not be underestimated. The newest potential voters — some 17 million people — have been shaped more by harsh economic times in their formative years than by anything else, and that force does not tend to be galvanizing in a positive way. For 18- and 19-year-olds, the unemployment rate as of May was 23.5 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For those ages 20 to 24, the rate falls to 12.9 percent, compared with the national unemployment rate of 8.2 percent for all ages. The impact of the recession on the young has created a disillusionment about politics in general, several experts suggested. “I think the lack of excitement right now is **palpable enough to be a challenge to the re-election campaign**” of Mr. Obama, said Peter Levine, director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University.

**Focus on Future Key**

**Obama has to make the race about next term**

**The Economist, 4/14/12** (“Game on; America's presidential election,” vol. 403, is. 8980, ProQuest)RK

This fight is going to be nastier than the one in 2008. By instinct Mr Romney is a moderate, but the primaries tugged him sharply right, forcing him to boast that he was "severely conservative" by embracing policies, including deep cuts in social spending, that even the famous flip-flopper will now find it difficult to drop. After the primaries, candidates pivot towards the centre. But Mr Romney knows that to turn out a conservative base that does not love him he must mobilise their hatred of Mr Obama. In the meantime Mr Obama appears to believe that he cannot afford to present himself once more as a healer who will soar above party divisions. He is running a more partisan campaign this time round. An already polarised America therefore faces a deeply polarising election. The second time, it's harder In 2008 Mr Obama promised audacity, hope and "change we can believe in". His appeal sprang from who he was: a fresh young senator offering a new direction after the clapped-out administration of George Bush and a safer pair of hands than the 72-year-old John McCain. But incumbents cannot run on promise alone. This time he will be judged less on who he is and more on what he has done. Considering the circumstances, he has not done badly. He can justly claim to have prevented a great recession from turning into a great depression. He rescued Detroit's carmakers and finished the job of stabilising the banks. Mr Romney says he made a bad situation worse, but if Mr Obama had not used billions of borrowed dollars to stimulate the sagging economy, even more Americans would be out of work today. By battering al-Qaeda and killing Osama bin Laden, he has disproved the notion that Democrats are soft on national security. Still, "it could have been worse" has never been an inspiring re-election slogan. The recovery is still so tepid that Mr Obama **cannot risk** running on his record alone. He has therefore to cast the election as **a** **choice, not a referendum** on his performance. **That requires him to make the choice as stark as possible.** For months he has portrayed the Republicans as ruthless asset-strippers who care nothing about the middle class so long as they can promote the interests of the super-rich. How lucky for Mr Obama that the super-rich Mr Romney made his fortune in the cut-throat business of private equity.

**Immigration Key**

**Hispanics key for Romney – he’s losing them now**

**Reyes, 12** (Raul, “Column: Romney foolish to ignore Latino vote,” USA Today, 3/8/12, http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/story/2012-03-08/romney-latino-immigration-obama-campaign/53421562/1)RK

Considering his family history, Mitt Romney might be expected to have moderate views on immigration. In 1885, Romney's great-grandfather fled Utah for Mexico because of U.S. laws against polygamy. The Romney clan lived in Mexico until the revolution forced family members to return to the U.S. in 1912. Unfortunately, the GOP presidential front-runner has shown little interest in Hispanics — a big mistake. On Super Tuesday, he barely eked out a win in Ohio, where Hispanics represent 3% of the population, by a margin of just 0.8 percentage points. He also lost in Georgia to Newt Gingrich, the only GOP candidate who supports limited amnesty for undocumented workers and where the Hispanic population has soared by more than 90% in the past decade. Romney opposes "amnesty" and says undocumented immigrants should "self-deport." Though it is normal for candidates to play to the base in primaries, and move to the center later, Romney is boxing himself in. His decision to be an immigration hard-liner ignores history, demographics and sound strategy. GOP adviser Mark McKinnon says a successful presidential candidate must win at least 40% of the Hispanic vote. George W. Bush, who supported immigration reform, reached this level in 2004 and won. Four years later, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who supported reform until he swung right, got 31% of the Latino vote and lost. Romney opposes the DREAM Act, which would allow undocumented youth to legalize their status provided they serve in the military or attend college. This puts him at odds with the 91% of Latinos who support the act, according to the Pew Research Center. Romney should remember Sharron Angle, Nevada's 2010 GOP Senate candidate, who ran TV ads denounced for their use of anti-Hispanic stereotypes. Her rhetoric mobilized Latinos, and she was defeated. It's puzzling that Romney seems to be conceding Hispanic votes because many Latinos are dissatisfied with President Obama. "Romney has now thrown Obama a lifesaver (on immigration)," GOP strategist Ana Navarro told Politico. I couldn't agree more. Romney has potential appeal to Latinos, but he is pursuing a shortsighted strategy by playing to the anti-immigrant crowd. In the long run, this will only alienate Hispanics — **and might even cost him the general election.**

**Bain Perception Key**

**Election comes down to the perception of Bain capital – only issue**

**Morris, 6/20/12** – Dick, political author and commentator, previously worked as a pollster, political campaign consultant, and general political consultant (“Obama's strategy emerges,” Jewish World Review, http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0612/morris062012.php3)RK

The battle of Barack Obama is ending in his defeat. A sagging economy, a likely setback on ObamaCare and sliding job approval are foreclosing the possibility that the president can be reelected on his record in office. So the battle of Mitt Romney is beginning. It is evident to Obama's people that only through a negative campaign can they hope to win the election. Their strategy in attacking Romney is becoming clear. It begins with an understanding of the fact that Romney's major attribute in the minds of the voters and his leading defect are two sides of the same coin. On one side, voters see him as a businessman with vast experience. In a war, they turn to a general. In a deep recession, they turn to a businessman with a record of job creation. But the other side of the coin is that voters feel that Romney is too rich to understand the problems of the average person. They worry that he lives on another planet and doesn't grasp what is going on in their lives. Whether or not he can overcome the negative is wrapped up in how people see his tenure at Bain Capital. Does it indicate that Romney is a job creator or a dealmaker? Is he a creature of Wall Street or Main Street? Are his skills at saving businesses, or just at making money from them? The perception of his Bain career is far more important to the Romney candidacy than his record as governor of Massachusetts or his various flip-flops on issues. Bain goes the core of his key credential, his business experience. Lose it and he loses everything. If Obama can win the battle of Bain, he can go from there to paint Republican budget-cutting plans as the product of a party whose nominee either doesn't know or doesn't care about the plight of the average person. He can depict GOP refusal to raise taxes on the rich as a pander to its backers. And then he can take the campaign to the safe haven of all Democrats: Medicare and Social Security. But if Obama loses the battle of Bain, his attacks on the Republican Party will miss the mark (or miss the Mitt). The House Republicans (as a unit, not as individuals) might be seen as heartless or rigid or dogmatic, but Romney doesn't sit in the House. Unlike Dole in 1996, he is not responsible for the positions his party takes in Congress. Nor has he ever embraced voucher alternatives to Medicare without also stressing the ongoing availability of the current system into the indefinite future. Even if Obama scores against the Republican Party as an institution, Romney himself will be seen as an expert who knows his stuff and quietly creates jobs while the politicians fight. If the Republican nominee's image is deeply rooted in his successes at Bain, he cannot be characterized as a rich guy making deals and raking in millions. Nor can he be vulnerable to Democratic charges of arrogance and ignorance of the problems of Main Street.

# \*\*\*Impacts\*\*\*

**Romney Good – Israel Relations**

**Romney boosts Israel relations**

**Weber, 7/25/12** (Joseph, “Romney overseas tour a chance to showcase Netanyahu friendship,” Fox News.com, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/07/25/romney-overseas-tour-chance-to-showcase-netanyahu-friendship/)RK

Mitt Romney set out Wednesday on an international journey that will allow the business-minded candidate to burnish his foreign policy creds and showcase something he has that President Obama doesn't -- a longstanding personal relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. While an incumbent president almost always has the advantage when it comes to foreign policy, the Republican challenger could use his six-day tour to highlight Obama's alleged trust deficit with Israel. And what better way for Romney to do that than by spending quality time with his former colleague, who also happens to lead Israel? The connection between Romney and Netanyahu goes back decades. It started in the mid-1970s when they were corporate consultants at the Boston Consulting Group and has lasted nearly 40 years -- with Netanyahu, the world-wise politician, occasionally offering advice to Romney, the successful financier turned politician. Yet the friendship until recently had gone largely unnoticed, or at least until Romney emerged as the likely 2012 GOP presidential nominee and during a primary debate brought attention to it. Responding to a controversial statement Newt Gingrich had made about Palestinians, Romney said: "Before I made a statement of that nature, I'd get on the phone to my friend Bibi Netanyahu" and ask for his advice. Though Republican and Democratic strategists differ over what impact Romney's trip will have on the November election, both sides agree Israel is an essential U.S. ally in the unstable Middle East and that Romney will surely make the most of his relationship with Netanyahu. "Israel is paramount to peace in the Middle East, more so than places like France, Great Britain and China," said Tyler Harber, a Republican strategist and partner in the Washington-area firm Harcom Strategies. He said Romney aides realize the strategic importance of the Israel stop -- between scheduled visits to England and Poland -- because they know American voters pay close attention to Israel and forging strong ties in that country could help Romney improve his stature among Jewish voters back home who typically vote Democrat. "They understand what's important is this environment," Harber said. "And the visuals of going to Israel are good." Romney's visit also highlights the trouble the Obama administration has had with Israel, and the fact that the president hasn't visited Israel since taking office -- though he did visit during the 2008 campaign. U.S. relations with Israel have always been complicated, but political analysts say Obama made the situation more difficult by attempting -- at least initially -- to build bridges with such bitter Israeli enemies as Iran.

**Romney Good – Heg**

**Obama kills US leadership**

**Hentosh, 11** (David J., “Obama Lost U.S. World Leadership Role,” Thomas Jefferson Club Blog, 3/19/11, https://thomasjeffersonclubblog.wordpress.com/2011/03/19/obama-lost-u-s-world-leadership-role/)RK

When Obama was elected, those enamored with his rhetoric convinced themselves that he was going to bring a new respect to America through his “wise” foreign policy, even though that policy was never delineated. The results, after just two years, are that the US has lost its world leadership role, insulted its allies, and has become a nation of inaction, indecision, and internal squabbling. Afghanistan, “Obama’s War”, is a result of an election campaign based on anything that was not Bush. There was no policy with “superior intelligence” involved in going into Afghanistan and, essentially, trying to use successful military tactics from the Iraq (Bush’s) War. It was a mere fulfillment of a campaign pledge, and an obviously distasteful one for Obama. Media silence on that war has been a deafening assurance that all is not going well with “Obama’s War”. US loss of leadership has been blatantly obvious in response, or lack of, to the current crisis in Libya. The Obama administration’s inability or unwillingness to act and to lead has been noticed around the world. In the UK, it is being expressed in the media that “…the only thing President Obama seems decisive about is his indecision”. That indecision was reaffirmed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, meeting with foreign ministers in Paris about Libya, when she repeated the administration’s position that all options are on the table without endorsing any particular step. When pressed by French President Sarkozy to come out more forcefully, Hillary repeatedly responded “there are difficulties” and offered little else. As a result, European countries baffled by the US position on Libya are looking towards the UN for leadership, a desperate act in the absence of US leadership. Obama’s inaction during Iran’s uprising was rationalized as a politically wise decision. It is true that, sometimes, doing nothing can actually be a productive strategy, but when it is the only strategy it becomes a very dangerous weakness. **The US is becoming weak in the eyes of the world and enemies** such as Ahmajinedad, Chavez, and Khadafi **are exploiting that weakness.** We need to reassert our leadership role now. A lot more damage can occur in the remaining two years.

# Romney Good - Economy

Romney’s election is key to the economy – comparative evidence

Klein 6/5 (Ezra, The Washington Post, 2012, “In 2012, the Keynesian choice is . . . Mitt Romney?”, ProQuest Newsstand)

Even if you disagree with every one of Mitt Romney's policies, there's a chance he'd still be the best presidential candidate to lift the economy in 2013.

That's not because he has business experience. For all his bluster about the lessons he learned in the private sector, his agenda is indistinguishable from that of career politician Paul Ryan. Nor is it because he has demonstrated some special knowledge of what it takes to create jobs. Job growth in Massachusetts was notably slow when he was governor. It's because if Romney is elected, Republicans won't choose to crash the economy in 2013.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that if Congress gridlocks this year - if it simply gets nothing done - the economy will take a $607 billion hit in 2013 as the George W. Bush tax cuts expire, the payroll tax cut expires and assorted spending cuts kick in. Falling off that "fiscal cliff," they predict, would throw the nation back into recession.

But it's even worse than that: House Speaker John A. Boehner has said he wants another debt-ceiling showdown. The country is not expected to hit the ceiling until February or March, so the only scenario in which that threshold matters is one in which Congress has already pushed the nation over a fiscal cliff. So as bad as the last debt-ceiling crisis was - and Gallup's polling showed it did more damage to consumer confidence than the fall of Lehman Brothers - this one would be worse.

Miles Nadal, chief executive of the communications firm MDC Partners, says that at a recent event with executives from more than 100 companies, the business leaders, panicked about this possibility, agreed on the best outcome for the economy: "A Republican landslide." Why? "Because anything that breaks the logjam is positive," he says. "The quality of the leader is less relevant than the ability to break gridlock."

There's no reason to believe that Romney could "break" gridlock. But there is reason to believe that he wouldn't face it in the first place. Republicans control the House. They're three seats away from controlling the Senate - and, because this Senate election follows 2006, which was a wave election for Democrats, Republicans are defending 10 seats while Democrats are defending 23. It's difficult to imagine a scenario in which Romney wins the White House and Republicans don't control the House and the Senate. On the other side, although it's not impossible to imagine President Obama winning a second term and Democrats taking back the House, it's unlikely.

Romney and the Republicans probably won't reach 60 seats in the Senate, but they won't need them. The major issues on the table are budget-related. That means they can be considered using the budget reconciliation process, which can't be filibustered. So if Republicans can maintain party unity - and they usually can - they'll be able to govern effectively. And there's no way that they'll permit the Bush tax cuts to expire or the debt ceiling to lapse. Investors, knowing that, probably would stop worrying about the debt ceiling the moment a Romney win became clear.

**Romney Good – AT: Arab Spring**

**Obama’s Arab Spring policy is ineffective**

**Boyer, 12** – Dave, White House correspondent for The Washington Times ( “Critics slam Obama’s handling of Arab Spring” The Washington Times, 2/8/12, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/feb/8/critics-slam-obama-handling-arab-spring/?page=all)RK

Growing instability from Syria to Egypt highlights the Obama administration’s failure to develop a consistent strategy for promoting democracy in the wake of popular uprisings in the region, analysts say. During the Arab Spring last year, President Obama pledged full U.S. support to those who risked their lives to reform dictatorial regimes across the Middle East. Now, the administration has closed the U.S. Embassy in Syria as government forces slaughter civilians and is grappling with the Egyptian military’s plan to hold trials for Americans accused of meddling in its internal affairs. “On multiple fronts, the administration is playing catch-up to these situations,” said Robert Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. “One lesson is the need for clarity. In Egypt, we were not clear enough with the military men early on. We have overplayed the principle that the new leaders were elected democratically and therefore we have to respect their wishes.” Egypt on Sunday referred 19 Americans, all employees of pro-democracy nonprofit groups, for criminal trial on charges that they fomented unrest. One of them is the son of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich compared the situation to the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis that helped make Jimmy Carter a one-term president. “You now have the Obama hostage crisis to resemble the Carter hostage crisis,” Mr. Gingrich said. The Americans are not being held in prison, but are not allowed to leave the country. Mr. LaHood said he speaks to his son every day. “The administration has no policy,” said Danielle Pletka, vice president for foreign and defense policy studies at the conservative American Enterprise Institute. “Hoping is not a foreign policy.” White House press secretary Jay Carney said the administration has expressed “grave concern about the crackdown” in Egypt. “We are discussing our concern with all levels of the Egyptian government,” Mr. Carney said. “We have made clear that the consequences of this action could potentially affect our relationship and could potentially affect the aid that we provide.” The U.S. each year gives $1.3 billion in military aid that stems from Egypt’s 1979 peace treaty with Israel, and American taxpayers provide about $250 million in annual economic aid. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Florida Republican and chairwoman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, demanded that Egypt return all assets seized in the raids of the nonprofit groups, stop the prosecutions and allow the organizations to reopen their offices. “It is unacceptable that U.S. taxpayer dollars, taxpayer-funded equipment, and, most importantly, U.S. citizens are the target of a politically motivated investigation,” she said. “The Egyptian government’s actions cannot be taken lightly and warrant punitive actions against certain Egyptian officials, and consideration of a cutoff of U.S. assistance to Egypt.” James Carafano, an analyst in national security at the conservative-leaning Heritage Foundation, said the situation in Egypt reflects a pattern in the Middle East that is worrisome for U.S. interests. “The most organized groups in Egypt are the Islamist groups, and they are antithetical to U.S. interests,” Mr. Carafano said. “It’s not surprising they’ve come to the fore. What we’ve seen across the Arab Spring is the likelihood of governments coming to power that are, at best, no better for U.S. interests.” Mr. Gingrich echoed those remarks. “The largest voting bloc in the new Egyptian government is the Muslim Brotherhood,” he said. “The second-largest group [the fundamentalist Salafi al-Nour Party] is more radical than the Muslim Brotherhood. So the Muslim Brotherhood are now the moderates. This is like the 1930s, and this is a mindless capitulation to forces that are contrary to our entire civilization.” On Syria, the Obama administration has repeatedly called on President Bashar Assad to step down and has imposed a series of financial and economic sanctions against its top leaders. Mr. Obama has rejected military intervention in the 11-month-old rebellion, in which the United Nations says more than 5,400 civilians have been killed. Russia and China last weekend blocked a U.N. Security Council effort to embrace an Arab League solution to the crisis in Syria. Mr. Carney said the actions by Russia and China gave “solace” to a regime that won’t last. “We are going to work with … international allies and partners, and with other friends of Syria — friends of the Syrian people — to continue to pressure the Assad regime so that it ceases this reprehensible behavior,” Mr. Carney said. Ms. Pletka said the administration is ineffectually following events in Syria rather than trying to manage them with a coherent policy. “They will not get involved with Syria,” she said, “because they are without principle, they are without policy.”

**Romney Good – AT: Turkey Relations**

**Romney understands Turkey’s importance**

**Aslan, 7/26/12** (Ali H., “Romney appreciates Turkey’s critical role in Middle East,” Today’s Zuman, http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\_getNewsById.action?newsId=287762)RK

Presumptive Republican candidate for US president Mitt Romney appreciates Turkey’s unique role in the region as well as in NATO, according to one of his senior advisors, as November’s presidential and congressional elections in the US approach. Speaking at a panel discussion at the Washington-based Brookings Institution on Wednesday, Rich Williamson, senior adviser for foreign and defense policy for Romney, said the Republican presumptive candidate was aware of Turkey’s unique role in the region as well as in NATO, adding that Romney was appreciative of the critical role that Turkey plays in the region. Williamson stated that during his discussions with Romney, Turkey had come on to the agenda in the context of the crisis in Syria. “And he [Romney] clearly has an appreciation of the pivotal, critical role that Turkey plays in Syria and in the region,” said Williamson, adding that the US needs to work closely with Ankara to support Turkey’s efforts to protect its borders. Stating that Turkey’s importance had increased in the region, Williamson said that Turkey had become more assertive in an attempt to become a major player in the Middle East. “Turkey is a country that the United States has a great interest in developing and strengthening a personal relationship with, even though we’ve seen some items we are not always going to be in agreement with,” said Williamson. “We know they [Turkey] have allowed some of the [Syrian] opposition to come into Turkey. They [Syrian opposition] have offices in Turkey,” said Williamson.

**Turkey relations are resilient – Romney won’t have an impact**

**Enginsoy, 6/14/12** (Umit, “Romney is coming (II)” Hurriyet Daily News, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/romney-is-coming-ii.aspx?pageID=449&nID=23111&NewsCatID=440)RK

Whatever the reasons, if Romney wins, it will have major repercussions on foreign policy, although we said the elections are mainly about the economy. First, Romney is more pro-Israeli than Obama. In January, he accused Obama of “having thrown Israel under the bus,” also pledging that he would correct the situation during his presidency. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a staunch supporter of Romney, is constantly looking at his watch as if to pass the time more quickly. As a result, Turkey would be compelled to have a better relationship with Israel. Second, Obama has worked in his first term to make Muslims happier in America, with better conditions than 9/11. Romney would be expected to assume a more hardline position on Muslims worldwide. And third, Obama and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have created a unique friendship. Obama, in an effort to erase President George W. Bush’s move to present an unprecedented gift to Iran’s Shiites, his archenemies, with a Shiite administration in Iraq by overthrowing Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship, has reversed this by mainly backing the Sunnis during the Arab Spring. This also is appreciated by Erdoğan. Under Romney, who will undo most of Obama’s deeds, this close relationship between Obama and Erdoğan would possibly be a problem. Also, Obama, until the elections, will be highly reluctant to do anything significant about Syria. However, the Turkish-U.S. relationship has evolved to surpass such obstacles, and no matter what Turkey does it can’t exceed a certain point and fall below another point in the quality of its relationship with America. Therefore, the worst for Erdoğan would be to restart from that low point with Romney, who anyway belongs to the rational wing of the Republicans.

**No risk to relations**

**Enginosy, 11** (Umit, “The Republicans are OK,” Hurriyet Daily News, 12/15/11, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-republicans-are-ok.aspx?pageID=449&nID=9197&NewsCatID=440)RK

But still, the remaining two-and-a-half Republican candidates for the nomination, who have a considerable chance of winning the presidency, are not bad for Turkey or the world. Let me start with the “half,” the Texas congressman Ron Paul, a libertarian and a non-interventionist, who tacitly agrees with the theory of an American decline in the 21st century (in line with my own understanding of world affairs). Accused by his rivals of being an isolationist, Paul supports a smaller role for the United States in world affairs. On matters related to Turkey, he backs an American non-role on the “Armenian genocide” matter – which got him an “F” grade from the Armenian National Committee of America, the largest and most influential Armenian-American group. But still, he remains largely “unelectable,” because he, 76, is old, not tall, not particularly good-looking, and he doesn’t have a presidential haircut. That brings me to probably the most electable Republican contender, Mitt Romney, the former governor of the northeastern state of Massachusetts, normally a Democratic stronghold. Romney, 64, is reasonably young, tall, good-looking and does have a presidential haircut. But he has a great sin: He is a Mormon. Protestant right-wingers and evangelists of any sort, which form the Republican grassroots, view the Mormons as a perverse sect. At the same time, Romney is very mainstream; he deplores the Occupy Wall Street movement and has called for mainstream solutions to international matters. He’s likeable. But he’s also boring and does not address the wills of the Tea Party, a radical right-wing Republican sect. And that brings us to Newt Gingrich, 68, a former speaker for the U.S. House of Representatives. A controversial politician, he is also reasonably young, tall, arguably good-looking and has a partially presidential haircut. The non-Romney Republican front, which is composed of all sorts of right-wingers, has long worked to find someone who can stand against Romney. Earlier such candidates included Michele Bachmann, a Minnesota congresswoman; Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who made Bush Jr., who held the same post as him, look like Einstein; and Herman Cain, a black businessman (I can never understand why a black person should or could seek a major Republican post). All these three people sought to present their ignorance on international matters as a virtue. Not prominently intelligent, they had to practically or effectively quit the competition. Anyway, back to Gingrich. He was in office when he spearheaded efforts to impeach Bill Clinton when he himself was also involved in an extra-marital affair. But he voiced his respect for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic, in 2006, winning the Atatürk award from the Atatürk Society of America the same year. Anyway, Obama is good for Turkey. But a potential victory in the presidential elections by a reasonable Republican candidate in November 2012 would not be really bad for Ankara. The Turkish-U.S. relationship is on the mend.

# Romney Good – AT: Rollback

No rollback – Romney recognizes the importance of transportation infrastructure

Everett and Snider 7/24 (Burgess and Adam, Politico, 2012, “Top T&Iers talk transpo with Romney - Huerta vote expected before August recess - Buses get big bucks from DOT - Pilot's bill of rights goes to Obama’s desk”, http://www.politico.com/morningtransportation/0712/morningtransportation190.html)

EXCLUSIVE — T&I Republicans talking to Romney: Top GOP members of the T&I committee have chatted with Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney about transportation policy, but only very generally, MT has learned. Chairman John Mica spoke with Romney about a month ago in Florida, Mica told us yesterday. “I did talk to him briefly, he was in Orlando, but nothing in depth,” Mica told MT. “There’s several of his folks that have been following it. If I can help, I will. I’ve been a little bit preoccupied.”

Railroads panel Chairman Bill Shuster has spoken with Romney more than once. “He understands, being a former governor, the importance. You want to be competitive in the world, you want an economy that’s growing and vibrant; you’ve got to be investing in your infrastructure. We didn’t really talk about details,” Shuster told MT. Shuster also took a subtle swipe at President Obama: “The president’s talking a little about it, but he needs something positive to talk about.” Shuster added that it’s not a plank of Romney’s stump speech because infrastructure is not currently a hot-button issue.

# Romney Bad – HSR Rollback

Romney would rollback High Speed Rail – only Obama can maintain it

Washington Times 12 (January 17, “Romney on the fast track: GOP front-runner wants to privatize Amtrak trains”, ProQuest Newsstand)

Amtrak left taxpayers stranded with a $1.4 billion bill last year, and it's going to cost even more to keep government-run rail alive this year. Instead of looking for ways to cut back to attain profitability or just improve the notoriously late, slow and underwhelming service, Amtrak's CEO proposed on Wednesday to buy a set of electric trains (not the toy kind) to make his request for another 130 mostly ordinary rail cars more politically correct.

Uncle Sam chips in about $55 each time someone buys an Amtrak ticket. Republican presidential front-runner Mitt Romney said if he's elected, he would end that practice by privatizing Amtrak. It's a move that should have left the station years ago.

The former Massachusetts governor wants to scale back federal government programs we can't afford, including the money-losing railroad. "There's a long list of programs many people like," Mr. Romney told the Des Moines Register editorial board earlier this month. "Some of those I like myself. But the test for me is, is this program so critical that it's worth borrowing money from China to pay for it?" He applied this philosophy to trains in a November speech, explaining, "I like Amtrak, but I'm not willing to borrow $1.6 billion a year from China to pay for it." Even though Amtrak is supposed to make a profit, 41 of its 44 routes lost money. It's time to derail this gravy train.

President Obama disagrees and wants to burn even more money on rail, but the Republican-led House of Representatives stopped him in his tracks. The White House budget last year demanded a whopping $6.6 billion increase for the Federal Railroad Administration as a key element of its anti-automobile agenda. In the final transportation bill for fiscal 2012, rail got an additional $326 million, but the loot came with some GOP policy baggage. Amtrak is barred from padding an employee's salary with overtime costs in excess of $35,000 (unless that poses a risk to the safety and operational efficiency). Also, federal funds may not be used on routes where Amtrak offers a discount of 50 percent or more off normal peak fares. The idea is to force private competition on the lines where Amtrak is already failing.

House conservatives didn't allow a penny to be wasted on high-speed rail, the conductor in chief's favorite high-priced ticket item. Last year, Mr. Obama announced he wanted $53 billion over six years to build a national high-speed rail system with the goal of ensuring 80 percent of Americans have access to a federal choo-choo. As our national debt worsens, Mr. Obama just keeps rolling along.

# Romney Bad – Iran Strikes

A Romney administration would return to Bush era military policies – including striking Iran

Hayden 7/26 (Tom, 2012, The Nation, “A Romney Presidency Would Be a Threat to Peace We Cannot Allow”, http://www.thenation.com/article/169117/romney-presidency-would-be-threat-peace-we-cannot-allow#)

Based on what little is known, a Romney presidency would return America to the Bush-era foreign and military policies. Romney’s key advisers include the neoconservatives who championed the Iraq War, resumed hostilities with Russia and at least rhetorical support for an Israeli strike against Iran. The hawks in the Republican wings include John Bolton, Randy Scheunemann and, in the background, the deep-pocketed Sheldon Adelson. Obama’s campaign team has tried for weeks to frame Romney as too willing to go to war, an argument, according to the *New York Times*, “that could be damaging if it manages to stick, since Americans have grown war-weary after a decade of combat.”

# Romney Bad - Mass Transit Rollback

**Romney winning the election would rollback mass transit – unpopular among republicans**

**Sledge 12** (Matt, reporter for the Huffington Post, and a graduate of Brown University, “GOP Candidates' Transportation Infrastructure Talk Praises Tolls But Ignores Jobs,” January 4, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/04/gop-candidates-transportation-infrastructure-jobs\_n\_1184314.html)//PC

President Barack Obama made improving transportation infrastructure a centerpiece of both his 2009 stimulus bill and 2011's American Jobs Act, which died in Congress late in the year. Upgrading the country's poorly maintained roads and bridges, the president argued, would have the dual benefit of improving business opportunities while putting people to work.¶ Speaking in front of the functionally obsolete Brent Spence Bridge in Cincinnati in September, the president said, "We used to have the best infrastructure in the world."¶ "How can we sit back and watch all these countries in Europe and Asia build newer airports and faster railroads and stronger bridges?" Obama asked in an address that sounded like a campaign speech to observers. "At a time when millions of unemployed construction workers could build them right here in America?"¶ Among the Republican candidates running for president, however, references to transportation infrastructure have been few and far between. Infrastructure's job-creating potential, so critical for Obama, seems not to register among the GOP candidates, who abhor deficit spending and argue they'll be able to grow the economy as a whole by cutting taxes.¶ "I listened to some of the debates, but I don't recall the word transportation at all," said Ken Orski, a transportation consultant and former Nixon administration official.¶ Obama "seems to view transportation as a social good and therefore to be supported irrespective of its economic basis, of its self-financing basis," Orski argued.¶ Republicans, by contrast, view transportation as either a local issue or "a sector that ought to stand on its own feet, in other words pay for itself, in other words through tolls or other fees," Orski said.¶ If there is one thing that GOP candidates Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich seem to agree on, it's those "user fees." If a road's worth building, the argument goes, people will be willing to pay for it themselves through tolls.¶ That argument mirrors one advanced by the Department of Transportation during the Bush administration, which, according to the Washington Post, operated under the guiding principle that "unleashing the private sector and introducing market forces could lead to innovation and more choices for the public." The result was "a legacy of new toll roads across the country."¶ In a 2008 speech outlining his infrastructure "principles," unearthed by Streetsblog, former House Speaker Gingrich (R-Ga.) said the country should "when possible shift to user fees rather than tax increases. The fact is all the polling indicates if you want to help with suburban congestion, suburbanites are very prepared to have a user fee to get them places faster, they understand the time value of money."¶ A President Romney, it seems, would also look at roads as a business proposition.¶ Speaking to a voter at a New Hampshire town hall, former Massachusetts Gov. Romney said that he would "prioritize those things which are most important to you and infrastructure and having good roads and bridges and rail lines and so forth and air traffic lines are essential for a strong economy," according to the blog Transportation Nation. "I'm willing to invest in those things and even borrow in circumstances where there’s going to be a revenue stream that pays it back."¶ Romney's admission that he would be willing to borrow for infrastructure was a rare one in the GOP field. But the "revenue stream" to pay back the cost of borrowing would come with a catch: "Here in New Hampshire you have tolls and I know that's not real popular -- but more popular than a sales tax, than an income tax, and so you have a dedicated stream of revenue, and so the state is able to build a highway or to repair bridges and the revenue stream you have pays it back."¶ Romney's plan sounds a lot like it could lead to using the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act to build more toll roads -- just as it was used under the Bush administration. Under President Obama, the Department of Transportation has continued to use TIFIA for toll roads while also expanding its use as a financing mechanism for mass transit.¶ The Romney-Obama split mirrors a deeper ideological divide between the two major political parties on transportation. Democrats and Republicans have wide differences of opinion about how to pay for transportation, according to the crosstabs of a Dec. 3-13 Reason-Rupe poll provided to HuffPost.¶ Members of both parties strongly oppose raising the gas tax, which is increasingly unable to fill the coffers of the National Highway Trust Fund as people drive fewer miles and cars become more efficient.¶ Far sharper is the partisan divide over public transportation. When forced to pick between increasing funding for public transportation or interstates, the Reason poll found, 40 percent of Democrats would go with the former. **Only 18 percent of GOP-backers favored public transportation over roads**.¶ On high-speed rail, which has become a favorite Republican example of a stimulus boondoggle, GOP voters are very much opposed to government support for the emerging transportation option. Only 21 percent of Republicans support government backing for bullet trains, as opposed to 47 percent of Democrats.¶ So Romney was probably on firm ground on Monday when he told a crowd in Iowa, according to Transportation Nation, that "Amtrak ought to stand on its own feet or its own wheels or whatever you'd say."¶ President Obama, by contrast, has proudly touted his support for Amtrak -- and high-speed rail.

# Romney Bad - HSR Rollback

**Romney would rollback HSR -**

**Sledge 12** (Matt, reporter for the Huffington Post, and a graduate of Brown University, “GOP Candidates' Transportation Infrastructure Talk Praises Tolls But Ignores Jobs,” January 4, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/04/gop-candidates-transportation-infrastructure-jobs\_n\_1184314.html)//PC

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Only 21 percent of Republicans support government backing for bullet trains, as opposed to 47 percent of Democrats.¶ So Romney was probably on firm ground on Monday when he told a crowd in Iowa, according to Transportation Nation, that **"Amtrak ought to stand on its own feet** or its own wheels or whatever you'd say."¶ President **Obama**, by contrast, **has proudly touted** his support for Amtrak -- and **high-speed rail**.

**Obama Good – Arab Spring**

**Obama key to effective leadership in the Arab Spring – Romney will only respond militarily**

**Ratner, 6/17/12** – Ari, former Obama Administration appointee at the State Department (“Mitt Romney Doesn't Understand the Arab Spring or Its Implications for America,” Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ari-ratner/mitt-romney-doesnt-unders\_b\_1604393.html)RK

Contrary to Romney's critique, considering the speed at which this tide emerged, and the extreme constraints on our response, the Obama Administration's policy towards the Arab Spring has been impressive on many levels. In its initial stages, the Administration pursued a relatively cautious policy, respectful of the fact that change was being driven from the region. But as the extent of the flood became clear, the Administration wisely took key steps to mark the terrain: We counseled Mubarak to abandon his sinking ship while pushing on his generals to throw him overboard at the moment of truth; We kept Gaddafi from poisoning the well of change coming up from the people of Libya; We encouraged key allies, like Jordan and Morocco, to build a raft of reform for themselves -- even as other allies, like Bahrain and Yemen, have failed to heed that advice; We articulated principles on democracy, human rights, and economic reform that all would be wise to follow; and utilized new tools, such as e-diplomacy and expanded public-private partnerships, to maximize our impact in a difficult budget environment. All the while, we have also made considerable progress on key security threats, such as Iran's nuclear program, for which the regime in Tehran is now paying a high price in international sanctions. President Obama also deserves credit not just for ordering the strike on Osama bin Laden but for prosecuting the War on Terror more vigorously and effectively than his predecessor. But despite these successes, Mitt Romney is not entirely wrong: Our policy on the Arab Spring has at times been needlessly ineffective, particularly when it comes to our economic response to the crisis. What Romney conveniently passes over, however, is that his party is in large part responsible for this fact. Our economic response to the Arab Spring has been highly constrained both by partisan opposition, and by a foreign policy apparatus that is not equipped for this type of challenge. **A Romney Administration would only make matters worst on both counts.** Indeed, the Republican foreign policy establishment -- increasingly dominated by its Janus-like neoconservative and isolationist faces -- has dumbed down our national conversation on the Middle East to be almost devoid of any nuance and overly focused on the military. They see the waters of change in the Middle East as if they were a mirage composed of only our best hopes -- a tide of liberals like us -- or our worst fears -- a swamp of Islamists out to get us. But these waters are murky. They have brought up many forces that we barely know, and that cannot be engaged with military means. Yet, as we seek to engage new actors across the region, we have been hindered by the fact that out traditional policy apparatus is not built to swim in this new tide. At a time when new forces in the region are fundamentally concerned with economic growth and dignity, our foreign policy apparatus is still built for a landscape made of desert sand. And our investments in this region are still overwhelmingly for desert warfare. In 2011, we allocated approximately $4.7 billion on foreign military financing in the Middle East. This figure does not include the trillions of dollars -- and incalculable cost in blood -- that we have spent for more than a decade in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our development and economic assistance to the region, in contrast, only totals approximately $1.5 billion. In Egypt, the figures are $1.3 billion for military aid, and $250 million for economic aid. Given the new landscape, these ratios ought to be reversed -- or at least more balanced. But in a Romney Administration they would only become more skewed as non-military foreign aid would be sacrificed on the false altar of debt reduction, even though it has almost no bearing at all on our national debt. Yet, this over-emphasis on military means is reflective of a deeper myopia towards the region's changing landscape.

**Aid key to Middle East economies and social stability**

**Reuters, 6/28/12** (“BLOCKED: Politics hinders aid to Arab Spring economies,” KippReport, http://www.kippreport.com/2012/06/politics-hinders-aid-to-arab-spring-economies/)RK

When Saudi Arabia withdrew its ambassador to Cairo in late April, yields on Egyptian Treasury bills rose and stock prices slipped as investors feared Egypt would be cut off from billions of dollars of Saudi financial aid. The diplomatic row, triggered by street protests in Cairo against Saudi Arabia’s arrest of an Egyptian lawyer, was quickly patched up. The ambassador returned to Cairo within a week and a few days later, Saudi Arabia placed a $1 billion, eight-year deposit in Egypt’s central bank. But more than a year after the start of the Arab Spring uprisings around the Middle East, the incident showed how **countries hit by the unrest face uncertain prospects for obtaining foreign aid, which is badly needed to rebuild their economies and ease social tensions.** The international community, including the biggest Western economies and wealthy Gulf Arab oil exporters, pledged tens of billions of dollars of assistance last year. But only a small fraction of that sum has actually been handed over; in some cases, aid flows appear to be blocked or slowed by politics, economic policy or tight state budgets.

**Increased economic and social instability in the Middle East collapses the economy**

**Schuman, 11** (Michael, “Does the turmoil in Egypt threaten the global recovery?” TIME, 2/2/11, http://business.time.com/2011/02/02/does-the-turmoil-in-egypt-threaten-the-global-recovery/#ixzz1TT6k4O6d)gw)RK

At first glance, the upheaval on the Nile might seem far removed from the world of Wall Street and Main Street. Egypt is not a major participant in global manufacturing networks, nor is Cairo a significant financial hub. But Egypt’s political crisis could have implications for the global economy nevertheless. That’s because the economic and political role Egypt plays in the Middle East gives it economic power beyond the easy-to-measure statistics. The turmoil in Egypt is putting a glaring spotlight on the fragility of political stability in the entire Arab world. That, in turn, is giving already-nervous investors yet another reason to worry about the questionable strength of the global recovery. Here’s how Mohamed A. El-Erian, chief executive officer of Pimco, explained it recently: How Egypt evolves in the next few days and weeks matters a great deal — and not just for Egyptians but also for the world economy. It matters in ways that are unusual and, for many, unfamiliar. Unlike China, Egypt is not a major source of global demand nor is it a major exporter. Unlike commodity-rich countries, Egypt does not directly influence world prices. But Egypt is a critical enabler and, as such, indirectly touches many other nations. With its control over the Suez Canal, Egypt is a major gatekeeper of global trade. Even more important, its role and standing in the Middle East makes it a critical participant in promoting geo-political stability in an area prone to volatility. Where the country goes from here will have an impact on the wellbeing of the global economy and stability of the world’s financial markets. Here’s why: The main way Egypt can impact the global economy is through oil. Though Egypt does produce oil, it is not a major exporter, and the country isn’t a member of OPEC. But the Suez Canal, which runs through Egypt, is a crucial waterway for transporting oil from the oil-rich Persian Gulf to Europe and elsewhere, and any disruption in the operation of the canal due to Egypt’s political crisis could quickly produce bottlenecks in oil markets that might cause prices to spike. And as the protests in Egypt spread to Jordan, Yemen and other parts of the Middle East, they raise the alarm that super oil exporters like Saudi Arabia could eventually find themselves facing similar unrest, which could have major implications for oil production and prices. Just those fears alone pushed oil prices upward as Egypt unraveled, with Brent even reaching $100 a barrel. Further increases in oil prices could become a serious problem for the global economy. Higher oil prices fuel inflationary pressures in emerging markets like China and India that are already fighting rapidly rising prices, forcing them to take measures to slow down their economies. They can also sap the spending power of consumers and companies in the developed world, just when such demand is badly needed to sustain the recovery from the Great Recession. Even before the Egypt crisis, the International Energy Agency warned that oil prices were reaching a “dangerous zone” for the global economy. Economist Nouriel “Dr. Doom” Roubini said in The Financial Times that the result of Egypt’s political crisis could end up being a double-dip recession for oil-importing countries in the developed world: The upheaval in Tunisia and now Egypt has important economic and financial implications. About two-thirds of the world’s proven oil reserves and almost half of its gas reserves are in the Middle East; geopolitical risk in the region is thus a source of spikes in oil prices that have global consequences. Three out of the past five global recessions have followed a Middle East geopolitical shock that led to a spike in oil prices…This rise – and the related increase in other commodity prices, especially food – pushes up inflation in already overheating emerging market economies where oil and food prices represent up to two-thirds of the consumption basket; it is also a negative terms of trade and disposable income shock for advanced economies that are barely out of the recent recession and experiencing an anemic recovery…If oil prices were to rise much further, these economies would slow down sharply and some might even experience a double-dip recession. The political upheaval in Egypt is also having an amplified impact on world economic sentiment simply because investors are already in a jittery mood. Sure, the global economy is in better shape than many had expected, with some strong data coming out of important economies like the U.S. and Germany. The International Monetary Fund upgraded its forecasts for global growth recently. But a long list of threats to the recovery remain, from the European debt crisis to the weak U.S. housing market to persistent unemployment. The last thing the world needs is a new, unforeseen shock from an unexpected source. Egypt could prove to be just such an unwelcome surprise.

**Specifically, GOP would arm Syrian rebels**

**Parnes and Her, 12** (Amie and Jeremy, “Obama will not arm Syrian rebels; Romney sees a 'lack of leadership'” The Hill, 5/29/12, http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/229951-president-will-not-arm-syrian-rebels-romney-says-he-should)RK

President Obama and Mitt Romney on Tuesday offered clashing views over whether to arm insurgents in Syria after a weekend massacre left more than 100 people dead and drew international condemnation. Romney called for the United States and partner nations to “arm the opposition so they can defend themselves” against the government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, but White House press secretary Jay Carney warned that would lead to more “chaos and carnage” and was “not the right course.” The deep divide highlighted the realpolitik approach in Syria favored by an Obama administration focused on convincing Syrian ally Russia to pressure Assad and concerned about where weapons intended for insurgents might end up. It also offered an opening of sorts for Romney — who clinched the Republican nomination on Tuesday night — to hammer Obama on foreign policy, which has been one of the president’s biggest strengths during his time in office. As violence in Syria has escalated, Romney has ramped up his attacks on Obama’s handling of the events. “President Obama’s lack of leadership has resulted in a policy of paralysis that has watched Assad slaughter 10,000 individuals,” Romney said in a statement Tuesday on Syria, his second in three days. Observers say the conflict in Syria provides “fertile ground” for Romney and other Republicans. “Those are the first couple of volleys, and I think that’s what will edge the Obama administration to do something about it,” said Andrew Tabler, a senior fellow at The Washington Institute who co-founded the first private English-language publication in Syria. “The Obama administration will respond to public pressure — it’s an election year.” But on Tuesday, the White House — seemingly aware of a war-weary American public — didn’t appear to want to engage militarily in the conflict. Instead, Carney said, the Obama administration would continue to give a peace plan by U.N.-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan support and “hope the pressure on Assad has an effect.” At the same time, Carney added, “We will continue to work with both the Security Council and the broader coalition of friends of Syria to place pressure on the Assad regime.” When it comes to arming the rebels, there are concerns in Congress in both parties about who the opposition is and whether al Qaeda is involved, although those concerns have dissipated somewhat as the violence has increased. “I didn’t hear an easy way forward,” said Sen. Mark Udall (D-Colo.), who spoke to reporters on a conference call Tuesday during a congressional trip to Egypt and Israel. “There’s concern still about arming the opposition, who nobody seems to know very well, even in the region.” The administration still has some diplomatic levers it can pull, including further sanctions against Syria to try to stanch its cash flow. On Tuesday, the United States expelled the top Syrian envoy to Washington as part of a coordinated effort by countries around the world. One of the biggest diplomatic obstacles that remains is Russia, which has backed the Assad regime but joined the U.N. Security Council in condemning Syria this weekend. Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that convincing Russia is key to finding an internationally backed solution. “Russia has its own set of interests to protect, and it’s worth talking to the Russians both about what they want in Syria and what they don’t want in Syria,” he said. On Tuesday, Carney reiterated that no options — including military action — are off the table. But, he added, “We believe very strongly that Assad has to go.” Carney’s comments come a day after Obama — who campaigned on the platform of ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — spoke about the “light of a new day on the horizon.” “As commander in chief, I can tell you that sending our troops into harm’s way is the most wrenching decision that I have to make,” he said during remarks on Memorial Day. “I can promise you I will never do so unless it is absolutely necessary and that when we do, we must give our troops a clear mission and the full support of a grateful nation.” Observers say Obama will keep up the diplomatic approach as long as he is able. The administration “hates to see what’s happening in Syria, but the idea of another engagement is something they don’t want to contemplate,” said Cal Jillson, a professor of political science at Southern Methodist University. In the middle of its election-year battle with Romney, Team Obama is conscious of an American public that would like to see the administration focus on domestic issues, including the down economy. “The American public is very much pro-freedom, but after 10 years of war, the desire to help other people gain their freedom is a long, hard road,” Jillson said. “The country is tired of war, they know our pocketbook is thin, and the Obama administration playing the diplomatic game in Syria is the right way to go electorally.” But critics of Obama’s policies in Syria say that the calls for Assad to leave power aren’t going to be effective unless they are backed up with action, something the administration thus far has yet to provide. “Rhetoric alone isn’t going to change the Syrian regime,” said Michael Rubin, an analyst at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute. “The Obama administration will keep bumping up against the same decision on the use of military action.” Romney’s call for arming the rebels is just one step that could be taken to try to put pressure on Assad, and other, more hawkish Republicans have called for more action.

**US intervention in Syria risks world war three**

**The American Dream, 11** (“Could We Actually See A War Between Syria And Turkey?” 6/28/11, http://endoftheamericandream.com/archives/could-we-actually-see-a-war-between-syria-and-turkey)RK

In recent days, there have been persistent rumors that we could potentially be on the verge of a military conflict between Syria and Turkey. As impossible as such a thing may have seemed just a few months ago, it is now a very real possibility. Over the past several months, we have seen the same kind of "pro-democracy" protests erupt in Syria that we have seen in many of the other countries in the Middle East. The Syrian government has no intention of being toppled by a bunch of protesters and has cracked down on these gatherings harshly. There are reports in the mainstream media that say that over 1,300 people have been killed and more than 10,000 people have been arrested since the protests began. Just like with Libya, the United States and the EU are strongly condemning the actions that the Syrian government has taken to break up these protests. The violence in Syria has been particularly heavy in the northern sections of the country, and thousands upon thousands of refugees have poured across the border into neighboring Turkey. Syria has sent large numbers of troops to the border area to keep more citizens from escaping. Turkey has responded by reinforcing its own troops along the border. Tension between Turkey and Syria is now at an all-time high. So could we actually see a war between Syria and Turkey? A few months ago anyone who would have suggested such a thing would have been considered crazy. But the world is changing and the Middle East is a powder keg that is just waiting to **explode.** Since the Syrian government began cracking down on the protests, approximately 12,000 Syrians have flooded into Turkey. The Turkish government is deeply concerned that Syria may try to strike these refugees while they are inside Turkish territory. Troop levels are increasing on both sides of the border and tension is rising. One wrong move could set off a firestorm. The government of Turkey is demanding that Syrian military forces retreat from the border area. The government of Syria says that Turkey is just being used to promote the goals of the U.S. and the EU. Syria also seems to be concerned that Turkey may attempt to take control of a bit of territory over the border in order to provide a "buffer zone" for refugees coming from Syria. What makes things even more controversial is that the area where many of the Syrian refugees are encamped actually used to belong to Syria. In fact, many of the maps currently in use inside Syria still show that the area belongs to Syria. War between Syria and Turkey has almost happened before. Back in the 1990s, the fact that the government of Syria was strongly supporting the Kurds pushed the two nations dangerously close to a military conflict. Today, the border between Syria and Turkey is approximately 850 kilometers long. The military forces of both nations are massing along that border. One wrong move could set off a war. Right now, it almost sounds as though the U.S. government is preparing for a war to erupt in the region. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently stated that the situation along the border with Turkey is "very worrisome" and that we could see "an escalation of conflict in the area". Not only that, but when you study what Clinton and Obama have been saying about Syria it sounds very, very similar to what they were saying about Libya before the airstrikes began. In a recent editorial entitled "There Is No Going Back in Syria", Clinton wrote the following.... Finally, the answer to the most important question of all -- what does this mean for Syria's future? -- is increasingly clear: There is no going back. Syrians have recognized the violence as a sign of weakness from a regime that rules by coercion, not consent. They have overcome their fears and have shaken the foundations of this authoritarian system. Syria is headed toward a new political order -- and the Syrian people should be the ones to shape it. They should insist on accountability, but resist any temptation to exact revenge or reprisals that might split the country, and instead join together to build a democratic, peaceful and tolerant Syria. Considering the answers to all these questions, the United States chooses to stand with the Syrian people and their universal rights. We condemn the Assad regime's disregard for the will of its citizens and Iran's insidious interference. "There is no going back"? "Syria is headed toward a new political order"? It almost sounds like they are already planning the transitional government. The EU has been using some tough language as well. A recent EU summit in Brussels issued a statement that declared that the EU "condemns in the strongest possible terms the ongoing repression and unacceptable and shocking violence the Syrian regime continues to apply against its own citizens. By choosing a path of repression instead of fulfilling its own promises on broad reforms, the regime is calling its legitimacy into question. Those responsible for crimes and violence against civilians shall be held accountable." If you take the word "Syrian" out of that statement and replace it with the word "Libyan" it would sound exactly like what they were saying about Gadhafi just a few months ago. The EU has hit Syria with new economic sanctions and it is also calling on the UN Security Council to pass a resolution condemning the crackdown by the Syrian government. It seems clear that the U.S. and the EU want to see "regime change" happen in Syria. The important thing to keep in mind in all of this is that Turkey is a member of NATO. If anyone attacks Turkey, NATO has a duty to protect them. If Syria attacked Turkey or if it was made to appear that Syria had attacked Turkey, then NATO would have the justification it needs to go to war with Syria. If NATO goes to war with Syria, it is very doubtful that Iran would just sit by and watch it happen. Syria is a very close ally to Iran and the Iranian government would likely consider an attack on their neighbor to be a fundamental threat to their nation. In fact, there are already reports in the international media that Iran has warned Turkey that they better not allow NATO to use their airbases to attack Syria. So if it was NATO taking on Syria and Iran, who else in the Middle East would jump in? Would Russia and China sit by and do nothing while all of this was going on? **Could a conflict in the Middle East be the thing that sets off World War III?** Let's certainly hope not. **More war in the Middle East would not be good for anyone.**

**Obama Good – Iran**

**Romney causes Iran strikes**

**Glaser, 6/21/12** (John, “Vying for War on Iran: Romney Floating Bolton for Sec. of State,” AntiWar.Blog, http://antiwar.com/blog/2012/06/21/vying-for-war-on-iran-romney-floating-bolton-for-sec-of-state/)RK

The Washington Times has picked up on some gossip on what a Romney presidential cabinet would look like. Guess who for secretary of state? John R. Bolton, the U.N. ambassador during the George W. Bush administration and specialist on arms control and security issues, is said to be a leading candidate for secretary of state. As if Mitt’s own musings about not needing the consent of Congress to go to war weren’t enough of a hint that a Romney presidency would mean bombing Iran, he floats John Bolton as secretary of state. This is the UN Ambassador under George W. Bush, noted for his bad temper and aggressively hawkish foreign policy views. Earlier this year, he said in an interview on Fox News that economic sanctions on Iran and assassinating Iranian nuclear scientists are “half-measures” and that bombing Iran is a better option. “Half-measures like assassinations or sanctions are only going to produce the crisis more quickly,” Bolton said. “The better way to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons is to attack its nuclear weapons program directly.” Of course, extrajudicial killings of civilian scientists, harsh economic warfare, threats to bomb, and actual bombing are all things that will encourage Iran to develop weapons (which, Bolton always forgets to mention, Iran is not currently doing). An aggressive war on Iran would be an order of magnitude worse than an Iranian nuclear weapon. A few months ago, an article in Foreign Policy revealed that Israel had recently supplied Azerbaijan with a $1.6 billion arms deal including “sophisticated drones and missile defense systems” and has also, US officials suspected, secured access to airfields which could be essential to Israeli fighter jets flying bombing missions over Iran. At the time, Bolton alleged that the Obama administration leaked that information to sabotage Israel’s plans to attack Iran, which signals how enthusiastic the green light for a preventive (i.e. unprovoked, discretionary) Israeli attack on Iran would be. “I think this leak today is part of the administration’s campaign against an Israeli attack,” Bolton claimed on Fox News. Astoundingly, he added, “I think the pressure that the administration has put on Israel has been just merciless, behind the scenes.” In reality, the charge is absurd. As Jacob Heilbrunn at the National Interest wrote, Obama’s staunch support of Israel is never enough for his ideological neoconservative detractors. Heilbrunn: ”He condemned the Palestinian drive for statehood at the United Nations. Not enough. He awarded Israel $3 billion in military assistance, an all-time high. Not enough. He repeatedly avowed his commitment to Israel’s security and well-being. Still not enough.” Romney, for his part, can at least be said to be playing politics and trying to sound tougher on foreign policy in order to attract Republican votes. But surrounding himself with people like Bolton, who sincerely harbor such dangerous and irrational foreign policy views without a political script, indicates a Romney presidency would be considerably more reckless and pro-war.

**Obama key to credible Iran strategy**

**Packer, 6/12/12** (George, “A FOREIGN-POLICY PRESIDENT,” The New Yorker, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/comment/2012/06/obama-foreign-policy-2012-election.html#ixzz21nJej1UF>)RK

The best example of Obama’s success in foreign policy is Iran. Here he was too cautious in June, 2009, when he initially failed to condemn state violence against the Green Movement. According to David Sanger’s new book, “Confront and Conceal,” at least one Administration official now admits that this failure was taken by Tehran as weakness, not as an overture to engagement. But since then, Obama has done a masterful job of putting the maximum pressure on Iran while holding back the dogs of war: Proving that engagement won’t work by trying it for a year, then isolating the regime, showing the world that Tehran, not Washington or Jerusalem, is the problem; winning international support for truly painful sanctions; waging a form of cyber warfare that hurts Iran’s nuclear program without getting America stuck in a quagmire; even **using Israeli war threats to force Iran to the table, while** (so far) **keeping Israel from giving in to its own irrational impulses.** Just imagine Mitt Romney pulling off anything like this. On foreign policy, Obama has talked softly and carried a big stick. The coolness and reasonableness that are sometimes weaknesses at home—and have been exploited as such by his opponents—have served him and the country extremely well abroad.

**Obama Good – Turkey Relations**

**Romney kills US-Turkish relations**

**Hurriyet Daily News, 12** – leading Turkish newspaper (“What if Obama loses the elections?,” 4/25/12, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/what-if-obama-loses-the-elections.aspx?pageID=238&nid=19173)RK

According to a senior Turkish official, the Turkish-American bilateral relationship is enjoying a “golden era.” “Despite some disagreements on certain issues, our cooperation with Washington is satisfactory; we understand each other’s differences and concentrate on how we can further help each other to contribute to the regional and global peace,” the official said. Roughly speaking, there were two separate developments that made Ankara and Washington come closer in such an unprecedented way. The first, Turkey’s acceptance of stationing NATO’s early warning radar system in its territories; the second, the stance it has taken regarding the Arab Spring, even from the very early days of this wave of reforms that has shaken the entire Arab World. Turkey’s joining of NATO’s military operation against Libya’s Muammar Gadhafi and leading the international community in both Egypt and Syria to topple their defiant tyrannical leaders were very positively received by the United States. Last but not least, a change in Turkey’s language vis a vis Iran’s nuclear program could also be added to this list. The two countries are also closely working in international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. Cementing economic and political ties with Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani in line with Washington’s decade-old advice should also not be underestimated when citing reasons why the U.S. favors Turkey as a credible, regional ally. Many recall how tense the dialogue was between Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and U.S. President Barrack Obama at their June 2010 meeting in Toronto. “That meeting was the turning point,” official remembered, “Obama was astonished to see an outspoken, self-confident leader who was very much capable of defending the causes he believed in, but apart from everything Erdoğan’s honesty amazed him.” No doubt there is a good sense of dialogue between Obama-Erdoğan and Clinton-Davutoğlu, the two countries’ foreign ministers. Every good thing has an end though: presidential elections are looming and there is no guarantee that Obama will stay in power for another four years. “Not only Turkey, but the entire world should work for Obama,” the official said on condition of anonymity. “This is very important for the world’s peace.” In the event of the election of a Republican candidate, probably Mitt Romney, a drastic change in Washington’s foreign policy is very likely, away from Obama’s non-interventionist multilateral understanding. For many, an Israeli attack against suspected Iranian nuclear sites would be much more likely in such an event, which would put Turkey into a very risky position as well. (It is also interesting to see the change: Traditional Turkish foreign policy always preferred a Republican president, an attitude which was challenged by George W. Bush.) However, under a Republican President, the real risk is on the bilateral scale. It is no secret that Republicans are very much annoyed with Ankara’s growing relations with the Hamas, its defending of Iran’s nuclear program and its isolating of Israel and Armenia in the region. That’s why these days Ankara is considering reaching out to some prominent and influential Republican groups to explain the government’s policies in an explicit way.

**Relations key to US Middle East policy, Caucasus stability, and Turkish democracy**

**Turgut, 09** (Pelin, “Turkey Sees a Greater Role in Obama's Foreign Policy,” 3/11/09, TIME, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1884042,00.html)

Ties between Washington and Ankara had become increasingly fraught under the Bush administration, never fully recovering from the Turkish parliament's refusal in 2003 to allow U.S. troops to use Turkey as a launching pad into neighboring Iraq. During the subsequent war, U.S. popularity fell to an all-time low in Turkey. But Obama appears to view Turkey — a predominantly Muslim but officially secular country straddling Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East — as having a key part to play in his effort to heal U.S. relations with the Islamic world. An increasingly assertive regional power, Turkey has significant influence in a number of **conflict zones critical to U.S. foreign policy** objectives, ranging from relations between Israel and its neighbors to the Caucasus, Iraq and Iran. "The new administration is aware of Turkey's importance," said Turkish foreign minister Ali Babacan after meeting Clinton. "Turkish-American relations have entered a new era." Since last May, Ankara has hosted several rounds of secret peace talks between Syria and Israel. It also played a role in helping secure the tenuous cease-fire that ended hostilities in Gaza earlier this year. Turkey has also been approached by Tehran to mediate in its standoff with Washington over Iran's nuclear program. A day after Secretary Clinton's Ankara visit, a high-profile Turkish delegation flew to Tehran, with whose regime Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's moderate Islamist-rooted government enjoys good relations. And while Turkey would not allow U.S. troops to transit its territory on the way in to Iraq, it has said it will allow them to pass through Turkey on their way out, in line with President Obama's withdrawal plans. Ankara may play an even larger role in Afghanistan, another key focus of the Obama Administration. Turkey already has about 800 troops on the ground as part of the NATO mission there, and could potentially provide more — the Obama Administration is currently struggling to convince other European NATO allies to send reinforcements. Washington could also seek Ankara's help in persuading some its neighbors to allow NATO to run supply lines for its Afghanistan mission through their territories. Turkey's rising star in Obama's Washington could also help keep the country's democratization process on track. Elected twice on a platform of change, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has been faltering on democratic reforms in recent months. Having been frustrated in its efforts to expedite its acceptance into the European Union, Turkey's government has instead put greater emphasis on looking east, burnishing its influence in the Islamic world. The Kurdish conflict in the southeast, which spills over into Iraq, remains unresolved and reforms have stalled, while a recent U.S. State Department human rights report cites police misconduct, allegations of torture and limits on freedom of expression as problems in Turkey. By dangling the prospect of a high-profile strategic role for Ankara, Obama can help ensure that Turkey gets back on track on issues that matter: E.U. membership, fully addressing the grievances of the country's large Kurdish minority and better democracy. And a more stable Turkey can only strengthen its position as a moderate role model for the countries to its east.

**Turkey relations key to US Middle East policy, Iran prolif, Israel-Palestine conflict, Caucus energy exports, and Turkish democrac**

**Boyer and Katulis, 08** – Spencer P., Director of International Law and Diplomacy in the National Security and International Policy Department at the Center for American Progress and Brian, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, his work focuses on U.S. national security policy with an emphasis on the Middle East, Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Pakistan (“The Neglected Alliance Restoring U.S.–Turkish Relations to Meet 21st Century Challenges,” Center for American Progress, December 2008, http://www.turkey-now.org/db/Docs/CAP\_turkey.pdf)RK

The strategic relationship between the United States and Turkey—a decades-long partnership that has advanced both countries’ common interests—remains a key pillar in overall **U.S. national security** policy. Yet this vital alliance has suffered through serious strains in recent years, mostly due to ill will generated by the 2003 Iraq War. Today, this neglected alliance is in critical need of repair. The incoming Obama administration has a unique opportunity to rebuild bilateral relations, but doing so will require significant steps by both Turkey and the United States. Repairing the relationship will necessitate closer coordination between the two governments on key policy questions directly related to Turkey’s geopolitical position astride Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Demonstrable U.S. actions are necessary to address the Turkish people’s deeply unfavorable views about the United States. According to recent public opinion polls, Turks today have a less favorable opinion of the United States than do Russians, Chinese, and Pakistanis. As Turkey becomes increasingly democratic, these views of the United States at the popular level will aff ectthe Turkish leadership’s strategic calculations. Indeed, any effort to strengthen U.S.-Turkish relations will come at a time when Turkey is undergoing significant domestic transformations and facing major foreign policy challenges. The lack of progress in Turkey’s eff orts to join the European Union has contributed to the country’s sense of alienation from the West, and made real the possibility of Turkey forging an independent path that is less aligned with Western interests. Turkey’s role in the Middle East and Central Asia has evolved substantially as the altered strategic landscape in those regions has changed. What’s more, Turkey is undergoing its own political evolution as it tries to reconcile its longtime secular traditions with the increasing influence of a new, conservative religious elite. Turkey also is experiencing the rise of a pro-capitalist, conservative business class that represents a new center of political power in Turkey. The incoming Obama administration has a unique opportunity to forge a new partnership with Turkey’s leaders, and should do so on three key fronts: the Middle East; the energy crossroads that Turkey occupies astride the Caucasus nations of Central Asia; and Europe. All three of these fronts present their own separate challenges for U.S.-Turkish relations, but also offer opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation and progress. In the Middle East, Turkey’s leadership role has evolved on multiple fronts—Iraq, Iran, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Key policy actions for the United States regarding Turkey’s leadership role in the Middle East include: Establishing a strategic bilateral dialogue to formulate and advance a common set of interests and objectives for the Middle East, including those involving Iraq, Iran, and the Arab-Israeli conflict • Continuing security cooperation with Turkey to address the threat posed by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, which both the United States and Turkey consider a terrorist group. This should be done while also encouraging Turkey, Iraq, and officials in the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq to develop strong security, economic, and political ties that reaffirm the territorial integrity of Iraq and Turkey, and advance regional security • Working more closely with Turkey in advancing multilateral and regional diplomatic and security initiatives aimed at stabilizing Iraq as the United States continues the redeployment of U.S. troops • Encouraging Turkey and Israel to maintain their strong economic and military ties and offering support for Turkish efforts to facilitate dialogue between Israel and Syria • Working closely with Turkey in an international effort to address Iran’s nuclear program and Iran’s evolving regional role, taking advantage of Turkey’s unique position as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its ties to both Israel and Iran • Supporting Turkey’s continued contributions to stabilization and peacekeeping efforts in countries such as Lebanon and Afghanistan As the United States works with Turkey in these key Middle Eastern arenas, the two countries also must keep a close eye on opportunities to advance bilateral cooperation in the energy crossroads of the Caucasus region. The war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 underscored this area’s strategic importance, and the incoming Obama administration should encourage Turkey to continue developing itself as an energy conduit. Turkey’s location makes it a prime candidate for moving energy from the Caucasus and Central Asia while bypassing both Iran and Russia, both of whom may manipulate their control of supply routes. As it builds stronger cooperation on these fronts, the new administration should: Monitor historic tensions between Turkey and Armenia, calibrating its actions to acknowledge that Turkish and Armenian leadership have recently made moves to reconcile their differences • Remain engaged with the oil- and natural gas-producing nations of Central Asia on the other side of the Caspian and Aral seas, which are seeking U.S. and Turkish help to export to Europe Turkey’s future role within Europe is also a critical issue that will affect U.S. security and economic interests. EU member states will ultimately decide whether Turkey becomes a member of the European Union, but the Obama administration should play an intermediary role and continue to push for Turkey’s accession as past administrations have done. Key policy actions for the United States regarding Turkey’s evolving position in Europe include: • Making Turkey one of the first stops on President Obama’s first European trip for face-to-face meetings with the Turkish prime minister and president. Our new president should make such a visit to Turkey within the context of a European as opposed to Middle Eastern trip to demonstrate that the United States considers Turkish membership in the EU and stronger ties to the West to be an important strategic objective • Using diplomacy to persuade our European allies such as France and Germany to keep Turkey’s EU accession process moving forward and to abandon rhetoric that gives the impression that Turkey is not a proper cultural or religious fit for the EU • Encouraging Turkey to drop its objections to the 2002 Berlin Plus Agreement, which authorizes the EU to use NATO assets and capabilities to support the creation of an EU rapid reaction force as part of a European Security and Defense Policy • Working with U.N., EU, and Turkish and Cypriot leaders to make sure that discussions to resolve the long-standing dispute over Cyprus stay on track • Encouraging Turkey to hasten its development of democratic institutions, freedoms, and reforms, which may help lessen the antagonism between the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP (its Turkish acronym), and its adversaries in parliament, the military, and the courts. Such democratic progress also may help prevent further legal action against the AKP, which could damage Turkey’s EU aspirations • Increasing U.S. bilateral investment, business, educational, and cultural ties to the country regardless of Turkey’s status in the EU accession process

**Turkey Relations Impacts**

**Turkey relations key to Middle East Stability**

**Boyer and Katulis, 08** – Spencer P., Director of International Law and Diplomacy in the National Security and International Policy Department at the Center for American Progress and Brian, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, his work focuses on U.S. national security policy with an emphasis on the Middle East, Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Pakistan (“The Neglected Alliance Restoring U.S.–Turkish Relations to Meet 21st Century Challenges,” Center for American Progress, December 2008, http://www.turkey-now.org/db/Docs/CAP\_turkey.pdf)RK

Today, that post-Ottoman political order is collapsing, with the balance of power in the Middle East reshaped by an increasingly assertive Iran, the fallout from the Iraq War, and continued instability on the Arab-Israeli front. As Turkey looks to advance its interests in this evolving new order, it must come to grips with lingering regional sensitivities over Turkey’s historical role in the Middle East. Already a vital partner with key countries in the Middle East for decades, Turkey stepped up its engagement in the region on several fronts over the past five years. Turkey’s main regional focus remains geared toward managing the Kurdish question, but the Turks are active in Arab-Israeli diplomacy, regional peacekeeping in Lebanon, and energy issues such as Iraq’s oil exports. In short, Turkey plays a pivotal role in the Middle East, and its engagement is bound to increase substantially over the next 10 years since it is one of the few countries in the world that has **strong relations with all of the key powers in the region**, including Egypt, Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. The United States needs to build its partnership with Turkey to better manage the changes sweeping across the Middle East. The United States must also work with Turkey to formulate and advance a common set of interests and objectives for the entire region. While security cooperation—the cornerstone of the U.S.-Turkey relationship—will remain important, the United States should look increasingly at political, diplomatic, and economic tools to alter the future of the Middle East to the benefit of the United States and the vast majority of the citizens of the region. Working to advance common interests in the Middle East and address common threats, the two countries can partner with others in the Middle East to advance **stability and prosperity**. Ankara has been at the forefront of establishing economic relations with a variety of players in the Middle East, from Israel to Iraq. Any reinvigoration of the U.S.-Turkey relationship will necessarily include a closer focus on economic development and cooperation between Turkey and the Middle East. Only with active U.S. diplomatic engagement and political support, however, can Turkey resolve its outstanding regional issues and become a more influential partner for the United States in the region. **A healthy U.S.-Turkey relationship can help calm the Middle East**, while continued drift and estrangement will leave the region and both Turkey and the United States worse off. The first priority, then, of the Obama administration should be to tackle the toughest problem in U.S.-Turkish relations—the Kurdish question. Only then can the two countries work more openly on the other important bilateral tasks before them.

**Turkey cooperation is key to US Middle East goals**

**Boyer and Katulis, 08** – Spencer P., Director of International Law and Diplomacy in the National Security and International Policy Department at the Center for American Progress and Brian, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, his work focuses on U.S. national security policy with an emphasis on the Middle East, Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Pakistan (“The Neglected Alliance Restoring U.S.–Turkish Relations to Meet 21st Century Challenges,” Center for American Progress, December 2008, http://www.turkey-now.org/db/Docs/CAP\_turkey.pdf)RK

The past seven years in the Middle East have been a period of historic and often traumatic transformations, with escalating conflict in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories. The United States should support Turkey’s efforts to play a larger diplomatic, economic, and peacekeeping role in the Middle East. With good relations with all major regional players, and a desire to maintain them, Turkey is in a unique diplomatic position and can be a key intermediary between antagonistic parties in the Middle East’s multiple conflicts. The United States should coordinate its regional diplomatic efforts with Turkey in order to ensure that both countries are working constructively and not echoing or **canceling each other out.**

**Relations solve Russia’s stranglehold on European oil supplies**

**Boyer and Katulis, 08** – Spencer P., Director of International Law and Diplomacy in the National Security and International Policy Department at the Center for American Progress and Brian, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, his work focuses on U.S. national security policy with an emphasis on the Middle East, Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Pakistan (“The Neglected Alliance Restoring U.S.–Turkish Relations to Meet 21st Century Challenges,” Center for American Progress, December 2008, <http://www.turkey-now.org/db/Docs/CAP_turkey.pdf)RK>

The recent war in Georgia also underscored the vulnerability of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Just prior to the war’s start, global energy company BP shut down the pipeline due to a PKK attack on it in Turkey.47 Then, during the Georgia conflict, the pipeline remained south of the conflict zone, but Georgian government officials accused Russia of targeting the pipeline for air strikes.48 Less than a week into the war, BP shut down its remaining two pipelines as a precautionary measure.49 Making matters worse, the war exposed Georgia as the weak link in U.S. and Turkish efforts to expand the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline west to Europe via the Nabucco pipeline and east to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. (The only other possible country the pipe line could pass through is Armenia, with which Turkey has poor relations.) With Russia reasserting its hegemony over the Caucasus, support for expanding the pipeline will likely be **limited without U.S. leadership.** Turkey’s long-term ambition to become the terminal for Caspian energy resources may now be far more difficult to realize. Ceyhan is also the endpoint of the Kirkuk-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline linking Turkey and Iraq to the south.50 As a result of supporting U.S. and U.N. sanctions and policies against Iraq, Ankara claims to have lost about $80 billion in oil revenues and increased energy costs between Desert Storm and the U.S. invasion in 2003.51 Since 2003, however, the Iraqi government has pre-approved more than three dozen companies, including Turkish oil company TPAO, to bid on oil and gas development deals. In the context of these regional energy dynamics, Turkey holds a negotiating chip that the others do not: Its 600-mile, 40-inch Kirkuk-Ceyhan export pipeline has a capacity to pump 1.6 million barrels per day (bpd), though the current output varies and fluctuates significantly because overall production in Iraq is vulnerable to repeated attacks that shut down the flow of oil through the pipeline. 52 Current output is only 600,000 bpd. 53 At the moment, Iraqi production stands at 2.5 million bpd, which makes Turkey a possible transit route for the majority of its exported oil.54 Iraq currently sends 250,000 to 300,000 bpd to Ceyhan, with a short-term goal of 500,000 bpd. This pipeline has been largely offline due to insurgent attacks and smuggling, but began to increase its output after a new security initiative began in late summer 2007.55 Likewise, a recent “strategic and economic integration agreement” between Turkey and Iraq will see an increase from 800,000 barrels of oil a day to 1 million barrels flowing through this oil pipeline.56 TPAO is calling for $87 billion in investments in the Turkish petroleum industry between 2007 and 2012,57 with the Black Sea seen as another potential route for Turkey in its quest for energy independence. Black Sea oil exploration has already begun and so far $500 million has been spent on drilling. Black Sea oil could account for an estimated 10 billion barrels, which would provide Turkey with half of its oil demand by 2015 and make it energy independent by 2023.58 TPAO currently only produces 90,000 bpd of oil; Turkey consumes 600,000 a day.59 Black Sea oil might mitigate this issue while freeing Turkey from its dependence on its neighbors in the future. Th e interim period, however, will likely see a continuation of the status quo, with Turkey looking to exploit gas relations with Iran while the exploration of joint oil and perhaps nuclear ventures with Syria become a distinct possibility. Syria and Turkey recently announced they were planning to create a joint oil company, with nuclear cooperation a potential outcome down the road.60 These developments are likely to exacerbate already strained relations between Turkey and the United States as Turkey looks to fuel its economic growth and concurrent energy needs while the United States seeks to stanch Iranian and Syrian infl uence in the region and limit the spread of nuclear technology to Syria. The Obama administration should assist Turkey in regaining its momentum as a crossroads of energy in a manner that furthers U.S. interests in the region. Turkey’s location makes it a prime candidate for moving energy from the Caucasus and Central Asia while bypassing Iran and Russia, both of whom may manipulate their control of supply routes. Since Turkey is much more reliable and friendly to both Europe and the United States, the United States should encourage Turkey to continue developing itself as an energy conduit.

**AT: Romney Good Scenarios**

**Even if Romney wins, no impact – McConnell will block major legeslation**

**Friedman, 7/19/12** (Dan, “Does Mitch McConnell Have What It Takes?,” National Journal, Academic OneFile)RK

It's a good bet that, as majority leader, he would counsel caution. A political history buff, he has said that lawmakers' biggest mistakes tend to follow successes. McConnell has faulted not only Democrats, in 2009 and 2010, but Republicans, in 1995, for overreaching in the mistaken belief that voters' decision to remove the other party from office represented a mandate. McConnell is "very careful, **extremely careful**," said William Hoagland, a former senior aide to Frist. McConnell would likely prove more cautious, deliberate, and prone to extensive consultation with his members than prior leaders, Hoagland said. In 1973, as a new 31-year-old chairman of the Jefferson County, Ky., Republican Party, McConnell told a reporter that "the best kind of change is gradual change. You have to deal with what's possible and discourage radical change." These days, McConnell says that Republicans should govern "with humility" if they regain power. He urges "modesty and restraint." That statement can be interpreted to mean **the GOP should temper legislative ambitions** with the realization that attempts to rely on Republican **votes to advance major legislation, especially entitlement reform, would either fail or risk quickly returning the party to the minority.** "You'd have to be careful what you did on entitlements, because it could affect other things you do," Lott said. While noting the need for immediate action on deficit reduction, Lott cited the danger of bringing up bills that cause "a big fight rather than things that have bipartisan support." More immediately, compromise is required because neither party has a near-term shot at a Senate supermajority that would allow them to ignore the minority, McConnell said. The office of majority leader, even more the House speaker's job, restricts its holder to moving someone else's legislation. Although McConnell has had limited personal contact with Mitt Romney, Senate GOP staffers claim close coordination with the presumptive GOP nominee's campaign. McConnell has said he expects Romney as the "leader of the Republican Party" to dictate GOP agenda, before and "hopefully" after the election. McConnell would work to enact that agenda, aides said. His private counsel, however, would likely reflect the **extreme pragmatism** and attention to electoral considerations that characterize McConnell's career. McConnell's 2006 maneuvering on the Iraq war is instructive. McConnell worked to defeat Democratic efforts to mandate troop withdrawals, and he went on to line up congressional support for President Bush's troop "surge." But, in his memoir, Bush maintained that McConnell, then majority whip, privately urged the withdrawal of troops from Iraq to help the GOP in pending congressional elections. McConnell aides have said he recalls suggesting to Bush that if he already planned to withdraw some troops, it would be useful for him to announce that decision before the election.

**AT: Iran Strikes Impact**

**Iran strike before the election**

**Johnson, 12** – Steve, author, economist, personal investor, antique store owner, and avid reader (“Will Israel attack Iran in September?” Tea Party Culture War Blog, 5/4/12, http://www.teapartyculturewar.com/\_blog/Tea\_Party\_Culture\_War\_Blog/post/Will\_Israel\_attack\_Iran\_in\_September/)RK

The Obama administration is increasingly convinced sanctions will not deter Tehran from pursuing its nuclear program. The White House wants to see sanctions work, and does not need another Middle East conflict. The problem is that Tehran is behaving like sanctions do not matter. President Obama has insisted any attack on Iran should be postponed until after the US presidential elections in November. Unconfirmed reports have stated Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to postpone an attack on Iran in exchange for a purchase agreement, with the US, of advanced refueling aircraft and GBU-28 bunker-piercing bombs. President Obama would prefer Israel postpone its attack until the spring of 2013. However, Israel is concerned Iran will drag out talks to buy time while its centrifuges keep spinning enriched uranium. Israel is asking for Iran to stop further uranium enrichment and the transfer of its stock pile of 20% enriched uranium to a third party. Iran only needs 3% enriched uranium for peaceful purposes. Few experts believe Iran will ever agree to these conditions. If recent reports of a Netanyahu promise to postpone an attack until the fall are true, a possible strike would correspond with the pivotal weeks just before the American presidential election. If Israel waits until after the US election it looses the leverage of Jewish voters making sure Obama supports Israel if they get into trouble or require additional military supplies. If Obama loses the election a new president would not be inaugurated until January, 2013. Iran could use the cover of winter and the transition of a new US president to enrich uranium to a 90% threshold required for a nuclear bomb. Since most military analysts believe Israel would prefer to carry out a long-range attack on Iran in a period when the skies above the target are cloudless, September or October, would offer the last window of opportunity before winter. Netanyahu has reportedly agreed to wait until fall, but has refused to commit Israel would not attack Iran before elections in November. If, by the end of summer, there is no significant change in Iran’s position, the clamor for military action will start over again. Israeli officials have already identified September as the best month to launch an air strike. If that happens, President Obama could find himself campaigning for re-election in the midst of the war he has sought desperately to avoid. A spike in oil prices would cause the slow economic recovery to decline into a recession, and hurt his chances of re-election

**AT: Tax Reform Scenarios**

**McConnell blocks tax reform**

**Friedman, 7/19/12** (Dan, “Does Mitch McConnell Have What It Takes?,” National Journal, Academic OneFile)RK

As majority leader, or even from the minority, McConnell would oppose any deficit-reduction plan that could be described as raising taxes, although he does not rule out the use of dynamic scoring that counts increases in revenue through assumed economic growth, aides said. McConnell has called for tackling tax reform separately from deficit reduction. That's different than the approach pushed by advocates of legislation based on the recommendations of Erskine Bowles and former Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., which include both tax and entitlement reforms. McConnell's tax views differ from those of GOP senators who have said they could accept a net tax increase resulting from the elimination of tax deductions and loopholes. His stance also rejects Democratic demands that Republicans accept more revenue. He would have **a difficult needle to thread.** On tax revenue in particular, McConnell's need to get reelected in 2014 may impose caution. "I think he would be very careful that he not get 'Lugared,' " Hoagland said, referring to the primary defeat this year of Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind. Likely tax- and entitlement- reform efforts will make 2013 "a real tough exercise" for Senate leaders, "especially if you're in cycle," Hoagland said. McConnell aides said the senator is already so opposed to tax hikes that his reelection will have no effect.

# Agenda Politics - Random

**Politics – Compartmentalization**

**PC is completely irrelevant – nothing passes**

**Packer, 6/12/12** (George, “A FOREIGN-POLICY PRESIDENT,” The New Yorker, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/comment/2012/06/obama-foreign-policy-2012-election.html#ixzz21nJej1UF>)RK

To a surprising extent, this is still the country that Obama inherited in 2009, the one that George W. Bush led for two terms, even the one that Bill Clinton presided over. Why didn’t Obama’s first term bring transformation that he promised? That will be one for the historians, but the lines of explanation are already clear: The recession was longer and worse than the Administration expected, and for many Americans it’s still going on; the Republicans decided from the start that they would lay all problems at Obama’s door and do as little as possible to help him solve them, a daring as well as immoral strategy that paid off handsomely; the White House seemed completely unprepared for this approach, letting the President’s opponents to define him by August of his first year; Congress, especially the Senate, has **sunk into a state of paralysis** in which the only thing that moves quickly is money. No single President, however gifted, **could bridge the political divide**, because it is real and deep and semi-permanent, and to believe otherwise was profoundly ahistorical.

# Obama Will Push the Plan

**Obama will push the plan – government infrastructure investment is part of his economic plan**

**Zakaria 7/18** (Fareed, Washington Post Opinion Writer, the host of CNN’s Fareed Zakaria GPS and editor at large of Time magazine. Before being named to his position at time in October 2010, Zakaria spent 10 years overseeing Newsweek’s editions abroad and eight years as the managing editor of Foreign Affairs, author of “The Post-American World” (2009) and “The Future of Freedom” (2007), B.A. from Yale College and a Ph.D. from Harvard University, “What voters are really choosing in November,” July 18, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/fareed-zakaria-romney-and-obamas-relevant-debate-over-americas-future/2012/07/18/gJQAjVhSuW\_story.html)//PC

The presidential campaign has gotten so heated over the attacks and counterattacks from the Obama and Romney campaigns that it’s easy to forget that larger issues are at stake in November. That’s unfortunate because, beneath the froth, there is an important ideological debate to be had about America’s future. The attacks are, I suppose, inevitable. But let’s be honest: They’re largely untrue or irrelevant. Whatever the paperwork shows, Mitt Romney was not running Bain Capital after February 1999. Even if he had been, outsourcing jobs to lower a company’s costs — and ensure its survival — is not sleazy; it’s how you run a business efficiently. (Is President Obama suggesting that we put up tariff barriers to prevent outsourcing in the future?) On the other side, Romney’s recent claim accusing the president of shoveling government grants to his political supporters was so twisted it earned the Fact Checker’s highest score for distortion — “Four Pinocchios.” Below all the mudslinging lies a real divide. Obama has been making the case that the U.S. economy needs investment — in infrastructure, education, training, basic sciences and technologies of the future. Those investments, in the president’s telling, have been the key drivers of American growth and have enabled people to build businesses, create jobs and invent the future. Romney argues that America needs tax and regulatory relief. The country is overburdened by government mandates, taxes and rules that make it difficult for businesses to function, grow and prosper, he says. He wants to cut taxes for all, reduce regulations and streamline government. All this, in his telling, will unleash America’s entrepreneurial energy. Both views have merit. It would make for a great campaign if our nation had a sustained discussion around these ideas. Then the election would produce a mandate to move in one of these directions. In both cases, the candidates would have to explain how they would square their ambitions with long-term deficit reduction. If Obama plans to invest government funds in infrastructure, or if Romney intends to cut taxes, each needs a serious strategy of fiscal reform. Obama has been more specific than Romney, but neither has been entirely honest about what the numbers show are necessary to get America’s fiscal house in order: cuts to entitlement programs and higher taxes (whether through higher rates or the elimination of deductions such as the one for mortgage interest). On the broader economic strategy, I think that Obama has the stronger case. We need a tax and regulatory structure that creates strong incentives for businesses to flourish. The thing is, we already have one. The World Economic Forum’s 2011-12 Global Competitiveness Report ranks the United States No. 5 — and first among large economies. There has been a little slippage in this ranking the past few years, but it is modest and can be rectified. Overall, however, whether compared with our own past — of, say, 30 years ago — or with other countries, the United States has become more business-friendly. That’s why, just last week, the Economist magazine predicted an American economic renaissance. America is worse off than it was 30 years ago — in infrastructure, education and research. The country spends much less on infrastructure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). By 2009, federal funding for research and development was half the share of GDP that it was in 1960. Even spending on education and training is lower as a percentage of the federal budget than it was during the 1980s. The result is that we’re falling behind fast. In 2001, the World Economic Forum ranked U.S. infrastructure second in the world. In its latest report we were 24th. The United States spends only 2.4 percent of GDP on infrastructure, the Congressional Budget Office noted in 2010. Europe spends 5 percent; China, 9 percent. In the 1970s, America led the world in the number of college graduates; as of 2009, we were 14th among the countries tracked by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Annual growth for research and development spending — private and public — was 5.8 percent between 1996 and 2007; in South Korea it was 9.6 percent; in Singapore, 14.5 percent; in China, 21.9 percent. In other words, the great shift in the U.S. economy over the past 30 years has not been an increase in taxes and regulations but, rather, a decline in investment in human and physical capital. President Obama has real facts and a strong case — which makes it all the more depressing that his campaign has focused on half-truths and weak arguments.