**Max Hantel | Jishnu Guha-Majumdar | Haley Tuchman**

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**Tommy “G-Unit” Chen | Moez “Fareed” Hayat | Elijah “Breakfast Burrito” Ash | Jon “Legally Blinde” Agosto | Zach “Dunkz” Ezer | Ian “The Political” Powers | Christian “Politrix” Vargas | Cameron “Camo” Wilson**

# 1NCs

## Obama Good

### 1NC

#### Obama winning the election now—economic data and preponderance of polls

Silver, 6/29 [Nate, 538 Blogs, American statistician, sabermetrician, psephologist, and writer, “July 29: Obama rises to 67.8 percent, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/29/june-29-obama-rises-to-67-8-percent/>]

President Obama, who got good news in Thursday’s health care ruling, received more overnight on Friday when European leaders agreed to terms on a bank bailout. That sent the S. & P. 500 up by 2.5 percent on the hopes that this will reduce some of the downside risk in the economy. Since the stock market is one of the economic variables the model considers, Mr. Obama’s probability of winning the Electoral College rose with the European news, to 67.8 percent, his highest figure since we began publishing the model this month. The government also released data on personal income on Friday, another economic indicator the model uses. It rose by 0.2 percent in May, somewhat stronger than in most previous months and slightly beating market expectations. Still, personal income growth has been extremely sluggish for most of Mr. Obama’s term and remains the most pessimistic of the economic indicators the model uses. The flow of polling has been comparatively strong for Mr. Obama of late, with leads in most battleground states in surveys published this week and national polls moving toward him, though some of this probably reflects statistical noise. It is much too soon to tell what, if any, direct effect the health care ruling will have on Mr. Obama’s polling numbers; the large majority of polls used by the model were conducted before it was announced.

#### Federal transportation investment is unpopular and can turn the election – empirically Obama gets blamed

USC News 4-17-12 [“Transit Policy Is Pivotal on Road to the White House”, <http://news.usc.edu/#!/article/33401/transit-policy-is-pivotal-on-road-to-the-white-house/>]

Following decades of bipartisan consensus, federal transit policy has turned into a hot-button issue in a presidential election for the first time. Lisa Schweitzer, associate professor at the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy, took a look at what the various proposals and candidate positions mean for the future of U.S. infrastructure during a discussion on March 21. Two USC Price students – Ph.D. candidate Mohja Rhoads and Master of Public Policy student Theodore Minch – joined Schweitzer in the discussion. The event was part of the “Road to the White House 2012: Politics, Media and Technology,” a weekly conversation series presented by USC Price’s Judith and John Bedrosian Center on Governance and the Public Enterprise, the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism’s Center on Communication Leadership & Policy, and the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences’ Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics. Schweitzer provided a brief history of how federal transit policy got to where it is today. The policy began in 1956 when the gas tax was created with the express purpose of going into a highway trust fund. For the next 30 years, the federal role in transportation was to build those highways. In 1987, with the initial highway system complete, public opinion broke into two factions. One believed the federal gas tax should end, and the states should control and maintain their links of the national highway system. The other thought this revenue was still needed for transit projects, maintaining roads and rebuilding bridges. The path for how this federal money would be handled in the post-interstate era was decided in 1992, when the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act set out that federal gas-tax revenue would be used to help cities build better transit systems. In 2009, the highway trust fund had a $9 billion deficit. The gas tax, which sits at 18.4 cents per gallon, hadn’t been raised since 1992. The recession hit, gas prices climbed and many people couldn’t afford to drive as much. Consequently, gas tax revenues took a nose dive. “The political firestorm became much hotter, and the partisanship that had been growing arguably since 1987 and really took off in 1992 just got splintered in a way we had never really experienced in transportation before,” Schweitzer said. Policymakers were left with three options – to raise the federal gas tax, reduce the federal role in transportation by authorizing fewer programs and projects or take money out of the general fund to make up the deficit. The latter option has been the temporary fix used thus far. Proposed legislation in each house is not expected to go anywhere this year. The Senate bill, introduced by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), would compromise on eliminating some earmarks and making some cuts while maintaining transit funding. It’s not a long-term solution but essentially another extension. The bill has passed through the Democrat-controlled Senate but isn’t expected to be considered by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, which has a bill that would eliminate earmarks, cut transit/bike funding from general-fund programs and reduce the federal role. It appears this year will see another basic extension of subsidizing the highway trust fund from the general fund, which is not sustainable. “The problem with that is that next year the highway trust fund is going to be officially bankrupt,” Schweitzer said. “We can’t keep passing these extensions.” More permanent solutions include raising the federal gas tax; focusing on user fees, fares, tolls and ticket sales rather than taxes; creating a national infrastructure bank that would leverage private investment to fund public-work endeavors; and reducing the federal transit role or eliminating it all together and make it a local issue. The first two options do not go over well with voters. “In my opinion, the conversation is much better now than it was a decade ago,” Rhoads said of spreading user fees. “It’s there but it’s just highly unpopular among voters, so there’s not many leaders [who will put it] on their agenda.” There are a lot of people, particularly the ones who live in rural areas, who don’t understand why they should be paying for rail in Dallas and would like to see the federal gas tax eliminated. As a donor state that contributes more gas tax to the feds than it gets back, California would be better off by turning that 18.4 cents per gallon into a state tax. However, there is a benefit to having a federal fund. “You have a centralized nexus of a lot of money,” Minch said. “It opens up doors in terms of financing and bond issues. With the federal government involved, you have the full faith and credit of the U.S. as a backstop to insure investment.” President Obama, who Schweitzer said places a lot of importance on transit policy, is a supporter of a national infrastructure bank. As an example of the partisan splintering on transit in recent years, Schweitzer cited how high-speed rail used to be a bipartisan issue until Obama made it a centerpiece of his agenda. Then conservatives treated high-speed rail as a symbol of how liberals don’t understand that you can’t keep spending with the country in financial trouble.

#### New policy changes can swing the election – neither candidate is doing anything drastic for fear of rocking the boat

Haberman 7/5/2012 (Maggie, Maggie Haberman is a Senior Political Writer for POLITICO. Prior to that, she worked at the New York Post, where she covered the 2008 presidential election, along with numerous state, city and congressional races. She also worked at the New York Daily News, Politico, <http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=5C8C5397-AD4C-43B0-9F71-CD10D4B74CE3>)

With the Supreme Court health care ruling out of the way, operatives on both sides now see just a handful of inflection points that could shape the arc of an increasingly calcified, close race between President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. In a campaign in which news cycles burn hot and fast — and then out — in a matter of hours, very little has happened to actually shake up the campaign since the primaries ended. In one national survey after another, the race is a 3-percentage-point affair in which Obama hovers just below the 50 percent mark, and Romney stays around 45 percent. “It didn’t take long for the race to get locked in. There’s no reason to think that it won’t stay locked in,” said Democratic strategist Steve Murphy. Neither candidate is predisposed to throw the long ball; both are running campaigns that lay out little by way of future vision — Obama has been nonspecific about a second term, and Romney has played keep away on some key policy planks — and neither has much incentive to change course. “In a race that’s as close as this one’s likely to be, both candidates are going to be ultra-cautious,” said Dan Schnur, head of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics at the University of Southern California. “It’s hard to see one of them taking the kind of risk that would be necessary to dramatically change the trajectory.”

### 1NC Trade War

#### Romney victory would guarantee trade war with China – it’s not just election posturing

Shobert 2-22 [Benjamin, Managing Director of Rubicon Strategy Group, a consulting firm specialized in strategy analysis for companies looking to enter emerging economies, “Romney lays ground for China trade war”, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China\_Business/NB22Cb01.html]

Part of what Romney wrote aligns with his early September 2011 economic plan, where he announced that his administration would formally label China a "currency manipulator". On this point, his Wall Street Journal op-ed doubled down; there, he wrote, " ... on day one of my presidency I will designate it a currency manipulator and take appropriate counteraction." As a head nod to the influential parts of the GOP who represent the interests of big-business, he subsequently added, "A trade war with China is the last thing I want, but I cannot tolerate our current trade surrender." For someone who claims not to want a trade war with China, Romney is making a pretty compelling case for how his administration would make one all but certain. It is a temptation to read Romney's op-ed as the sort of positioning during the primaries that Americans have come to expect during their elections. Even in the US-China policy-community, many draw comfort from past election cycles where blustery comments from potential presidential candidates were dramatically toned down - if they did not go away altogether - once their transition into elected office took place. The present administration went through a similar smoothing out of the rough edges about its stance towards China once it emerged victoriously from both the primary and the general election. Admittedly, this is the safest way to interpret Romney's most recent volley towards the Chinese: as the primary shifts back to his "home state", China presents an issue that certainly has bi-partisan traction in a manufacturing-sensitive midwestern economy like Michigan, where China's economy is perceived to have benefited at the expense of middle-class American blue-collar workers. It is a note the Romney campaign believes can be safely struck not only in the midst of a heated GOP primary, but in the general election as well. Tradition says nothing should be made of Romney's saber rattling towards China, but is tradition wrong? Choosing to interpret Romney's attitude towards China as something not to be alarmed about overlooks a major difference between past election cycles and today's: now the American psyche is deeply frustrated over the difficulties the country's economy must face. In the past, the relative confidence felt about America's economic future allowed many to overlook the potential threat China might present. Today, that confidence is gone. The average American worker remains traumatized and deeply insecure since the 2008 financial crisis. Many also feel brutalized over the ugly state of American politics, precisely when the latter should be shedding light on how best to deal with the former. An economic crisis has quickly devolved into a political one, leaving many in middle America eager for someone to blame. Tied to these economic insecurities are deep misgivings about America's place in the world, which go back to the US response to 9/11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Americans are torn between the GOP world view that argues for America to remain a hegemonic force for good around the world, versus a libertarian-progressive framework that believes that America can be powerful and influential, but must do so within a the realities of both a multi-polar world and the economic limitations imposed on Washington based on years of fiscal imprudence. When Romney disparagingly writes of President Barack Obama that he "came into office as a near supplicant to Beijing", he touches on this insecurity and appeals to the American desire to appear muscular and able to "go it alone" where others counsel caution and compromise. The popular temper American politicians tap into over China is not necessarily new, although a good argument could be made that negative portrayals of China during American elections has been growing more common in this, and recent election cycles. Conventional thinking has it that the real decision-makers about American policy towards China are those who never run for elected office, the safe wise men who, behind closed doors, know how to calm everyone down and focus on how best to maintain the status-quo. That is precisely why Romney's ongoing diatribe against China is so distressing: he is supposed to be one of those calm, level-headed people that could be trusted not to demagogue China in order to score cheap political points. For US-China policy-makers, Romney's elevation of China as an issue for the general election should not be overlooked, downplayed, or rationalized. To have the supposedly most business-savvy candidate for president the country has seen in years run within the most pro-business, historically free trade American political party with a major plank of his economic plan being to call out China as a currency manipulator is noteworthy.

#### Escalates to full-scale conflict

Landy ‘7 [Ben Landy, Director of Research and Strategy at the Atlantic Media Company, publisher of the Atlantic Monthly, National Journal, and Government Executive magazines. Landy served in various research and project management positions at the Brookings Institution and Center for Strategic and International Studies, two leading public policy think tanks in Washington, D.C. Ben holds a bachelor of arts degree from Yale University. April 3, 2007, <http://chinaredux.com/2007/04/03/protectionism-and-war/#comments>]

The greatest threat for the 21st century is that these economic flare-ups between the US and China will not be contained, but might spill over into the realm of military aggression between these two world powers. Economic conflict breeds military conflict. The stakes of trade override the ideological power of the Taiwan issue . China's ability to continue growing at a rapid rate takes precedence, since there can be no sovereignty for China without economic growth. The United States' role as the world's superpower is dependent on its ability to lead economically. As many of you will know from reading this blog, I do not believe that war between the US and China is imminent, or a foregone conclusion in the future. I certainly do not hope for war. But I have little doubt that protectionist policies on both sides greatly increase the likelihood of conflict far more than increases in military budgets and anti-satellite tests

#### Extinction

Tucker ‘5 [Nancy – Prof IR @ G’Town. Dangerous Strait: The US-Taiwan-China Crisis, 2005//]

At the beginning of this new century, nowhere is the danger for Americans as great as in the Taiwan Strait where the potential for a war with China, a nuclear armed great power, could erupt out of miscalculation, misunderstanding, or accident. Skeptics might argue that other threats are more volatile or more certain—conflict in the Middle East, terrorism at home and abroad, clashes with angry and chaotic rogue or failed states. But although the United States risks losing lives and repu- tation in these encounters none but a collision with China would be as massive and devastating. War with China over Taiwan may or may not be inevitable. The pros- pect, nevertheless, shapes the course of U.S.-Taiwan relations and signifi-cantly influences the texture of Taiwan's domestic affairs. Similarly, though the level of tension between Washington and Beijing fluctuates, depending on security, proliferation, trade, and human rights concerns, the dilemma of Taiwan's future remains a constant and can become incendiary with little warning. Optimists believe that, with time, ground for reconciliation be- tween China and Taiwan can be found and the two sides will be able to ar- rive at a mutually acceptable solution despite an impasse that has produced repeated military skirmishes and political upheaval for more than fifty years. Pessimists argue that the road to war has been laid, and nothing that anyone does, short of realizing the immediate unification demanded by Beijing, will deter combat. Indeed some feel that progress toward such a calamity has speeded up, making Washington's struggle to keep the rivals at peace, and the United States out of war, much more difficult. It is not surprising, therefore, that those who write on the interactions among the United States, Taiwan, and the PRC inevitably are drawn to, and quickly become preoccupied with, the situation in the Taiwan Strait. The tendency to focus on the clash of interests surrounding Taiwan's status and future follows naturally from the hazards inherent in the existing situation. For decades the contending parties have struggled toward largely incom- patible objectives. China insists upon recovery of the island of Taiwan which it asserts is a part of China's sovereign territory, severed from the mainland first by imperialists and then by the losing side in a civil war. Tai- wan's rulers initially believed as adamantly as those of the PRC in the uni- ty of China, but declared that Taipei not Beijing was the legitimate capital. More recently, Taiwan has sought increasing autonomy and international space despite Beijing's objections, with the majority of the population fa-voring a status quo that shuns both independence and Chinese control. For the United States also, the status quo is desirable since Washington has acknowledged, without accepting, the one-China principle asserted by Bei- jing. At the same time, the United States has legally obligated itself, in a way some sec as a contradiction, to help provide for Taiwan's defense and has asserted its preference for a solution to the problem that will meet with the assent of the people of Taiwan.

## Obama Bad

### 1NC

#### Romney win likely—polls, funds, and base energy

[POLITICO](http://www.politico.com/) 7/5/2012 (“GOP discovers that Mitt Romney could win”, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0512/76653.html>)

Top Republicans, long privately skeptical about their presidential prospects, are coming around to a surprising new view — that [Mitt Romney](http://www.politico.com/tag/mittromney) may well win the White House this November. Margin-of-error polling, fundraising parity last month, conservative consolidation around Romney and a still-sluggish economy has senior GOP officials increasingly bullish about a nominee many winced over during a difficult primary process. Gavin on Romney’s chances Interviews with about two dozen Republican elected officials, aides, strategists and lobbyists reveal a newfound optimism that with a competent, on-message campaign, Romney will be at least competitive with a weakened incumbent. That’s a dramatic shift from the fatalistic view many party stalwarts shared mere weeks ago. “Romney is a lot better off than I expected him to be this quickly,” said former Mississippi Gov. [**Haley Barbour**](http://www.politico.com/tag/HaleyBarbour), who cast a primary vote for Newt Gingrich. “A lot of people were concerned that Romney, with his being the least conservative of all the Republican candidates, was going to have to work hard to unite the party — that he would have a serious sales job on his hands. But President Obama has apparently taken care of that for him.” Barbour said that after a gaffe-filled primary, he expected a bruised Romney “to start down but hopefully not by double digits. “But that he’s this close has surprised and encouraged me — and I think it has encouraged Republicans around the country.” Sen. [**John Cornyn**](http://www.politico.com/tag/JohnCornyn) (R-Texas), chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, said: “I wouldn’t have thought it would be this close, basically a tie.” A slew of polls recently released by The New York Times/CBS, Washington Post/ABC, Wall Street Journal/NBC and Gallup show a tight race, with neither candidate up by more than 5 points. But what gives Republicans confidence is the continued concern expressed in the surveys about Obama’s stewardship of the economy and a sense that the country is headed in the wrong direction. And, as is inevitably the case, the polling has been chiefly responsible for reframing how Republicans view the race. “I think some of the recent polling gives a lot of confidence to the Republicans, yes,” said Senate Republican Whip [**Jon Kyl**](http://www.politico.com/tag/JonKyl) of Arizona. At a Senate Republican luncheon last week, three different senators brought up The New York Times poll showing Romney up before Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Romney’s congressional liaison, even got to his campaign briefing, according to a source present. GOP leaders are still somewhat daunted by Obama’s seeming advantage on the electoral map, recognizing that the president has, for now, an easier path to 270 electoral votes than Romney. And more than a few are still concerned about their candidate’s penchant for self-inflicted wounds, wondering only half in jest whether they’d be better off with Romney in a bunker for the duration of the campaign. But Republican hopes are rising also because their fears over Obama’s campaign are dissipating. This is partly because GOP officials, and even some Democrats, believe Chicago and the White House have not yet found a concise message against Romney — a view that was only bolstered by the Bain Capital/Cory Booker dustup of recent days.

#### Transportation Infrastructure is framed as jobs creation—key to Obama reelection

Cooper 1-25 [Donna, senior fellow at American progress “Will Congress Block Infrastructure Spending? President Obama’s Defeat Is More Important than Job Creation” http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/01/infrastructure\_sotu.html)

In spite of the compelling evidence that federal investments in infrastructure are an effective tool for creating jobs—the U.S. Department of Transportation 2007 estimates indicated that $1 billion in highway investments can create 27,800 jobs—this “jobs package” included the House-passed fiscal year 2012 budget bill that makes deep cuts in spending for highway and other surface transportation repairs. This package of bills willfully neglects the dire state of our aging infrastructure and the need to create more well-paying construction jobs. They haven’t stopped there. While ignoring the president’s very popular American Jobs Act, they’ve joined the all-out offensive campaign to push the environmentally dangerous Keystone pipeline project, claiming it as their solution to the jobs crisis. This project is more like a jobs pipedream. It’s already three years behind schedule and may never see the light of day due to broad-based U.S. opposition to building the pipeline, including from the Republican governor of Nebraska, who opposes the pipeline route through his state. None of this is news to the House Republicans. They are desperate to shift attention away from their failure to advance legislation to address our nation’s crumbling infrastructure because they are more concerned with blocking a jobs victory for President Obama that would help him win the 2012 presidential election. Emblematic of this strategy was the announcement in a November House leadership press conference where Speaker Boehner indicated that he intended to release a multiyear highway funding bill early in 2012 and fund it with revenues dependent on a massive expansion in oil-and-gas drilling offshore and on public lands, including in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. The only problem is that the House leadership knows that this drilling-dependent approach is likely to be dead on arrival in the Senate. Just this past May, 57 senators voted against a motion to proceed to consider the House bill to permit expanded offshore oil-and-gas drilling. If the House leadership were sincere about creating new construction jobs, then why not start by getting behind a bill that can pass both chambers so that private contractors can get to work repairing more of the 150,000 bridges that need it or the $52.3 billion in improvements needed at the nation’s airports? Instead we are now on the eighth temporary extension of a federal highway bill that expired in 2009 and now only runs through the end of March 2012. Then there’s the Federal Aviation Administration funding bill. Yesterday before the president’s State of the Union address, House Transportation Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL) held a vote for the 23rd temporary extension of the legislation that will provide funding for our airport safety and construction only through the end of February 2012. These extensions enable the status-quo level of inadequate funding for infrastructure to limp along while our national assets crumble. The House Republicans have blocked the passage of a long-term aviation funding bill for the past two years, demanding that arcane and unfair union election rules be included in the bill. As of today a compromise among all parties takes the union issue off the table. But there are many more details to work out, including the level of funding and what is funded. Given the Republican track record on passing the legislation that is needed to rebuild our infrastructure, it is premature to consider this aviation funding bill a done deal. The House is not the only problem. Sen. Reid late in 2011 put the president’s American Jobs Act, which included $60 billion to repair our schools and fund a National Infrastructure Bank, to a vote, but Senate filibuster rules that require 60 favorable votes to put a bill on the floor for consideration made moving this infrastructure funding bill impossible. After failing to reach that 60-vote threshold, Sen. Reid said, “Republicans think that if the economy improves, it might help President Obama. So they root for the economy to fail and oppose every effort to improve it.” Indeed, Sen. McConnell blocked passage of the Senate version of the Jobs Act while lambasting the president for pointing it out and blasting the Senate Democrats for not working with the House Republicans to reach a compromise. But that statement begs the question of why McConnell isn’t working with his own party’s leadership in the House to make sure the Senate receives a bill that has a chance of a positive vote. The answer is clear: The Republican leadership is very concerned that responding to the American popular call for infrastructure investment will benefit President Obama politically—never mind the pain suffered by the American people and our future economic competitiveness by their failure to act. The president should not be deterred, however, by the roadblocks he faces in Congress. In his speech in Kansas this past December, he summoned the nation to redouble its commitment to an economy that lifts all boats. Echoing President Theodore Roosevelt’s progressive sentiments, he said: We simply cannot return to this brand of "you're on your own" economics if we're serious about rebuilding the middle class in this country. We know that it doesn't result in a strong economy. It results in an economy that invests too little in its people and in its future. We know it doesn't result in a prosperity that trickles down. It results in a prosperity that's enjoyed by fewer and fewer of our citizens. Just as the creation of our middle class finds it roots, in part, in the building of our infrastructure, so too is the restoration of our infrastructure essential to the restoration of the breadth and vibrancy of America’s middle class.

#### New policy changes can swing the election – neither candidate is doing anything drastic for fear of rocking the boat

Haberman 7/5/2012 (Maggie, Maggie Haberman is a Senior Political Writer for POLITICO. Prior to that, she worked at the New York Post, where she covered the 2008 presidential election, along with numerous state, city and congressional races. She also worked at the New York Daily News, Politico, <http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=5C8C5397-AD4C-43B0-9F71-CD10D4B74CE3>)

With the Supreme Court health care ruling out of the way, operatives on both sides now see just a handful of inflection points that could shape the arc of an increasingly calcified, close race between President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. In a campaign in which news cycles burn hot and fast — and then out — in a matter of hours, very little has happened to actually shake up the campaign since the primaries ended. In one national survey after another, the race is a 3-percentage-point affair in which Obama hovers just below the 50 percent mark, and Romney stays around 45 percent. “It didn’t take long for the race to get locked in. There’s no reason to think that it won’t stay locked in,” said Democratic strategist Steve Murphy. Neither candidate is predisposed to throw the long ball; both are running campaigns that lay out little by way of future vision — Obama has been nonspecific about a second term, and Romney has played keep away on some key policy planks — and neither has much incentive to change course. “In a race that’s as close as this one’s likely to be, both candidates are going to be ultra-cautious,” said Dan Schnur, head of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics at the University of Southern California. “It’s hard to see one of them taking the kind of risk that would be necessary to dramatically change the trajectory.”

### 1NC Israel Relations

#### Romney is key to relations – Israelis don’t trust Obama

Weinberg 6-19 [David, director of public affairs at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, “Why Israelis remain leery of Obama”, The Times of Israel, <http://davidmweinberg.com/2012/06/19/why-israelis-remain-leery-of-obama/>]

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney told Evangelical Christians this past weekend that that he’ll do “the opposite” of what President Obama has done in dealing with Israel. Romney said that he would “not want to show a dime’s worth of distance between ourselves and our allies like Israel.” Romney also said that Obama “has almost sounded like he’s more frightened that Israel might take military action than he’s concerned that Iran might become nuclear.” It would seem that Israelis share Romney’s gut feelings. A poll published this weekend by the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (where I direct public affairs), along with the Bar-Ilan University Center for International Communication and the Anti-Defamation League, found that Israeli Jews are clearly critical of President Obama’s Middle East policies with regards to Israel-Palestinian affairs, the Arab uprisings, and Iran. Israelis overwhelmingly admire America and strongly believe that in an existential crisis America would stand by Israel. Fifty-one percent of poll respondents also believe Obama himself is “friendly” or “very friendly” toward Israel. Perhaps they mean this on a personal level. But 53 percent feel that US policy in response to the “Arab Spring” was not handled properly, and 38 percent feel that US policy in response to the “Arab Spring” has weakened the standing of the US in the Middle East. Forty-one percent of Israelis are dissatisfied with the Obama administration’s policies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (for good reasons that are not the focus of this column). Israelis admit that they don’t know Romney well, but 30 percent still intuitively feel that Romney would better promote Israel’s interests. Most significantly, Israelis don’t have too much confidence that Obama can be trusted to stop the Iranians from developing a nuclear bomb. Forty-five percent think he might act to prevent the Iranians from obtaining the bomb, but 42 percent do not believe he will do so. On such an existential issue, this is simply just not good enough. Notably, 71 percent would support an Israeli bombing of Iranian nuclear sites – even if the American government opposed an Israeli strike! This is not surprising. The talks that Obama is leading with the Iranians (along with the other P5+1 powers) seem likely to drag out for months into the fall, giving the Iranians time to surreptitiously enrich even more uranium and to continue their explosives testing work. Israelis suspect that Obama seeks to postpone any decisions about Iran until after the November elections, which from an Israeli point of view, may be too late. Furthermore, according to all reports, the West is offering Iran a deal that would leave all its nuclear development facilities intact, including the Fordow underground center, instead of dismantling them. This allows the Iranians to continue refining their nuclear skills. Even at low levels of enrichment this provides a framework with which Teheran can bypass Western restrictions and hoodwink Western inspectors. Every Israeli knows that Iran has clandestinely crossed every “red line” set by the West over the past 20 years – putting nuclear plants online, building heavy water facilities, refining uranium, working on explosive triggers and warheads, and generally breaching all its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty – and has gotten away with it. So any deal that scales back sanctions and allows Iran to keep operating its advanced nuclear development facilities, even at a low-level, is a fatal bargain. I would argue that Israelis also hold a nagging suspicion that Obama could cut a deal with the Iranians involving tacit recognition of their hegemony in the Gulf region – which is what Tehran is truly after. Could it be that Obama is prepared for a seismic shift in US alliances in the region, moving from partnership with the much-weakened princes of Saudi Arabia to a “grand civilizational bargain” with the ayatollahs of Iran? Are we wrong to fear that Obama might quietly acquiesce in an Iranian leap to nuclear status in exchange for understandings with Tehran on the division of power in the region? Something else nags at the edges of Israeli political consciousness, I think. All the adamant protestations of Obama administration support for Israel don’t weigh up against the damage that administration officials apparently have sought to inflict on Israel’s deterrent power and operational military capabilities – through purposeful leaks of information relating to Israel’s strike abilities against Iran. We suspect a deliberate American campaign to scuttle any planned Israeli hit on Iran. To this end, classified intelligence assessments and documents have leaked from Washington that rip deep into Israel’s most sensitive military zones. This includes State Department documents with details of Israel’s “secret staging grounds” (airbases) in Azerbaijan; Congressional Research Service studies that pan Israel’s ability to do much damage to Iran; and results of a classified Pentagon war game dubbed “Internal Look,” which forecast that an Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities would likely draw the United States into a wider regional war in which hundreds of American forces could be killed. This is to say: Don’t you dare act, Israel, or the Obama administration will blame you for causing American deaths. Obama boasts at length at every opportunity about upgrades in US-Israel intelligence sharing and weapons development that he has authorized. Aside from being a benefit to America well as Israel, these upgrades are, of course, primarily aimed at holding us back from attacking Iran. The enhanced security cooperation seems to be a bear-hug meant to handcuff Israel. The Presidential Medal of Freedom that Obama gave Shimon Peres last week is much of the same. Golden handcuffs. And all the while, the centrifuges continue to spin in Qom. It’s no wonder that many Israelis dream of an even closer relationship under a different president.

#### That means they’ll strike Iran

Goodman 2-13-12 [Alana, Assistant online editor for Commentary magazine and has written for the Weekly Standard, the Washington Examiner, and the Jewish Post, “What Obama’s Reelection Would Mean for Iran’s Nuclear Program”, <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2012/02/13/obama-reelection-iran-nuclear-program/>]

Newsweek has a must-read today on the cooperation between the U.S. and Israel on halting Iran’s nuclear program. The detail getting the most attention is the Obama administration’s decision to keep crucial intelligence from Israel regarding the locations of nuclear scientists. But the lack of intelligence-sharing goes both ways – Israel is also staying mum about when it will strike Iran, if it decides to take that course. The reason for the silence seems to be a breakdown of trust between the Israeli government and the Obama administration. While the U.S. has the capability to attack the program after it goes fully underground, Israel’s window of time for carrying out a successful attack is much shorter. And the Israelis have reason to doubt Obama would take military action if he wins reelection, Newsweek reports: One former Israeli official tells Newsweek he heard this explanation directly from Defense Minister Ehud Barak. “If Israel will miss its last opportunity [to attack], then we will have to lean only on the United States, and if the United States decides not to attack, then we will face an Iran with a bomb,” says the former Israeli official. This source says that Israel has asked Obama for assurances that if sanctions fail, he will use force against Iran. Obama’s refusal to provide that assurance has helped shape Israel’s posture: a refusal to promise restraint, or even to give the United States advance notice.

#### That draws in Russia

WSWS 4/28 (Clara Weiss, “Russia prepares for a US-Israeli military strike against Iran,” http://www.wsws.org/articles/2012/apr2012/russ-a28.shtml//HT)

Russia has undertaken intensive preparations during the past few months for a possible military strike by Israel and the United States on Iran. According to recent reports, the Russian General Staff expects a war against Iran this summer, with enormous repercussions for not only the Middle East but also the Caucasus. Russian troops in the Caucasus have been technically upgraded, and a missile division situated on the Caspian Sea has been placed in readiness. The missile cruisers of the Caspian flotilla are now anchored off the coast of Dagestan. The only Russian military base in the South Caucasus, located in Armenia, is also on alert for military intervention. Last autumn, Russia sent its aircraft carrier Kuznetsov to the Syrian port Tartous following the escalation of the conflict in Syria. Experts believe that Russia would support Tehran in the event of war, at least on a military-technical level. In a commentary in April, General Leonid Ivashov, president of the Academy of Geopolitical Science, wrote that “a war against Iran would be a war against Russia” and he called for a “political-diplomatic alliance” with China and India. Operations were being undertaken throughout the Middle East in order to destabilise the region and proceed against China, Russia and Europe. The war against Iran, Ivashov wrote, would “end up at our borders, destabilise the situation in the North Caucasus and weaken our position in the Caspian region.”

#### Extinction

Bostrom ‘2

[Nick, PhD Philosophy – Oxford U., Existential Risks, http://www.nickbostrom.com/existential/risks.html ]

A much greater existential risk emerged with the build-up of nuclear arsenals in the US and the USSR. An all-out nuclear war was a possibility with both a substantial probability and with consequences that *might* have been persistent enough to qualify as global and terminal. There was a real worry among those best acquainted with the information available at the time that a nuclear Armageddon would occur and that it might annihilate our species or permanently destroy human civilization.[4]  Russia and the US retain large nuclear arsenals that could be used in a future confrontation, either accidentally or deliberately. There is also a risk that other states may one day build up large nuclear arsenals. Note however that a smaller nuclear exchange, between India and Pakistan for instance, is not an existential risk, since it would not destroy or thwart humankind’s potential permanently. Such a war might however be a local terminal risk for the cities most likely to be targeted. Unfortunately, we shall see that nuclear Armageddon and comet or asteroid strikes are mere preludes to the existential risks that we will encounter in the 21st century.

# Obama Good

## Uniqueness

### Uniqueness – Obama – Polls

#### Obama Winning, Poll of polls Prove

Steinhauser and Wallace, 7/5 [Paul and Gregory, CNN Contributors, “Poll of Polls: Obama ahead of Romney, but Slightly” Web. <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2012/07/05/poll-of-polls-obama-ahead-of-romney-but-slightly/>]

President Barack Obama has a slight 3-point advantage over presumptive Republican nominee Mitt Romney in Thursday's CNN Poll of Polls, a sample of three recent national surveys of the presidential race. It shows Obama at 48% and Romney at 45%. The CNN Poll of Polls includes the most recent CNN/ORC International Poll, which was conducted between June 28 and July 1; the Gallup Daily Tracking Poll, conducted between June 27 and July 3; and the Newsweek/Daily Beast Poll, conducted on June 28. In the CNN/ORC International Poll, Obama is ahead of Romney, 49% to 46%. The Gallup poll includes results of the past seven days and has Obama over Romney, 48% to 44%, with a sampling error of plus or minus two percentage points. Obama has 47% and Romney 44% in the Newsweek/Daily Beast poll. While the CNN and Gallup polls include registered voters, the Newsweek survey includes only likely voters and has a sampling error of plus or minus four percentage points.

### Uniqueness – Obama – Swing States

#### Obama winning key swing states Ohio and Pennsylvania and has momentum—but he has to fight economic instability to hold on

Washington Post News Service 7/5/2012 (Reporting with Bloomberg News, http://www.oregonlive.com/newsflash/index.ssf/story/obamas-rust-belt-prospects-look-bright-as/eb1fc0c2a60d284b3bf99fb9ff0f6718)

The 2010 Republican electoral rout in the industrial Rust Belt was decisive and complete, with the GOP sweeping the gubernatorial and Senate races in the key presidential battleground states of Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan. In the aftermath, Democratic prospects for 2012, particularly President Barack Obama's, seemed bleak. But less than two years later, the dynamics have changed. Things are looking up for the president, and the best evidence may be three Senate Democrats who will head into the final sprint of this year's campaign as clear favorites, having weathered the worst of the tea party storm in the region. Their good standing and an improving economy in the area are encouraging for the president, who desperately needs to engage white working-class voters in these must-win states. Obama is helped by the better-than-average employment picture in Ohio and Pennsylvania, both of which recorded rates of 7.3 percent in May, while the national level remained at 8.2 percent. Michigan's unemployment rate in May was 8.5 percent. The economic instability that continues to threaten Obama's re-election hopes has not been a vulnerability for Democratic incumbents in these states. Approval ratings for Sens. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Robert Casey of Pennsylvania and Debbie Stabenow of Michigan have held steady despite continued unease among voters about the pace of the economic recovery and an overall disgust toward Congress, providing some optimism for how Obama can campaign in this critical part of the country. As he embarked Thursday on a two-day bus tour through Ohio and Pennsylvania, the president had Brown at his side. He will stump with Casey on Friday. The tour, which runs from Toledo to Pittsburgh, presents a stark contrast to the 2010 midterm-election campaigns, when virtually no endangered Democratic incumbent sought the spotlight with Obama. Some experts think that these Democrats might be able to help shore up the president's support among wavering party members and swing voters. This is particularly true of Casey, who endorsed Obama early in 2008. The senator has deep support in western, central and northeastern Pennsylvania, areas of uncertainty for the president that have created an opening for Republican challenger Mitt Romney and his party to contemplate an upset in the state. "Casey will be so far ahead that he can be a messenger to blue-collar voters," said former Pennsylvania Gov. Edward Rendell, D. On the bus tour his campaign is calling "Betting on America," Obama spent his first day emphasizing gains in manufacturing and his administration's bailout of the U.S. auto industry, hoping to appeal to voters in areas with many union workers. The title is an unsubtle jab at Romney, who has faced questions about offshore personal bank accounts and investments by Bain Capital, made during his time as head of the firm, in companies that eventually outsourced jobs abroad. "When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse . . . Governor Romney said we should just let Detroit go bankrupt," Obama told a crowd of 500 supporters in this manufacturing town just south of Toledo. "I refused to turn my back on communities like this one. . . . And three years later, the American auto industry is coming roaring back." The president is paying special attention to Ohio, where he began his 2012 campaign with a speech in Columbus in May and delivered a major address on the economy in Cleveland last month. The Buckeye State has voted for the winning candidate in 10 consecutive presidential elections and no Republican has ever won the presidency without capturing Ohio. Consequently, both campaigns are spending much time and advertising money in the state. A Quinnipiac poll released last week gave Obama an edge in Ohio (47 percent to 38 percent) and Pennsylvania (45 percent to 39 percent).

#### Obama winning Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania—controls key demographics and economics

San Francisco Chronicle 6/27 (“Obama Tops Romney in Poll of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida Voters,” Kristin Jensen, 2012 Bloomberg News Published 07:47 a.m., Wednesday, June 27, 2012, http://www.sfgate.com/business/bloomberg/article/Obama-Tops-Romney-in-Poll-of-Pennsylvania-Ohio-3666769.php)

June 27 (Bloomberg) -- President Barack Obama holds an edge over presumed Republican nominee Mitt Romney in the election battleground states of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Florida, a Quinnipiac University poll shows. Obama leads Romney by 9 percentage points in Ohio, 6 points in Pennsylvania and 4 points in Florida, according to the June 19-25 “swing-state” survey released today. Obama has gained ground in Ohio and Florida while his lead in Pennsylvania diminished slightly, compared with a comparable Quinnipiac poll released on May 3. A move by Obama to stop deportations of some illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children helped win over voters, said Peter Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute. The president holds almost a 2-1 lead among Hispanic voters in Florida, the poll found. “If he can keep those leads in all three of these key swing states through Election Day, he would be virtually assured of re-election,” Brown said in an e-mailed statement. No one has won the White House since 1960 without carrying at least two of the three states surveyed in this poll; Obama won all of them in 2008. The three states combined hold 67 of the 270 electoral votes needed to win the White House. Florida in Florida, Obama leads Romney 45 percent to 41 percent, the poll showed. In the swing-state poll released May 3, the president led by 1 point, meaning the race in the state was a virtual dead heat. The revised deportation policy Obama announced June 15 and his June 22 address to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials meeting in Lake Buena Vista, Florida -- following a Romney speech to the group by one day -- boosted the president’s standing with Hispanics in that state, according to Quinnipiac poll data. In a June 12-18 poll by Quinnipiac solely of Florida voters -- in which Obama also led overall by 4 percentage points -- the president had a 10-point edge over Romney among Hispanics surveyed, 49 percent to 39 percent. In the latest poll, Obama’s lead over Romney among this bloc has grown to 24 points, 56 percent to 32 percent. Immigration Initiative Among all Florida voters in the new survey, 58 percent said they supported Obama’s immigration initiative, while 33 percent opposed it. Voters in the other two states in the poll were also supportive, backing the policy 52 percent to 38 percent in Ohio and 51 percent to 41 percent in Pennsylvania. In Ohio overall, Obama leads Romney 47 percent to 38 percent, the poll showed. In the May 3 swing-state poll, Obama was up 44 percent to 42 percent. The president benefits from positive views about him among Ohio voters -- 50 percent rate him favorably, compared with 44 percent who have an unfavorable opinion of him. By comparison, 32 percent of Ohio voters say they view Romney favorably, while 46 percent don’t. While Democrats and Republicans in the state allied overwhelmingly with their party’s candidate, independent voters backed Obama 45 percent to 36 percent. “The president’s lead is largely due to his lead among independent voters, the group that usually decides Ohio elections,” Brown said. Pennsylvania in Pennsylvania, Obama leads 45 percent to 39 percent in the latest poll; in the survey released May 3 he was backed by 47 percent to Romney’s 39 percent. Obama has a 12-point edge with women voters in the state in the latest poll. Neither candidate enjoys positive favorability ratings in the state. Obama gets favorable marks from 45 percent, while 49 percent view him unfavorably. Romney is viewed favorably by 34 percent, unfavorably by 39 percent. “Pennsylvania voters have no great love for President Barack Obama, but at this point they like Governor Mitt Romney less,” said Tim Malloy, assistant director of the polling institute. In all three states, Obama is holding his own against Romney on the handling of the economy -- the central argument the Republican has made for replacing the president. In Ohio, voters back Obama 47 percent to 42 percent when asked whether he or Romney would do a better job on the economy. In Pennsylvania, voters tie on this question -- 44 percent for each -- while in Florida, Romney has a slight edge, 46 percent to 44 percent for Obama.

### Uniqueness – Obama – Electoral Count

#### Obama will win – Romney has to jump through too many electoral hoops

Schoen 5-8-12 [Doug, Political strategist, pollster, author & commentator, “The 2012 Election Is Obama's To Win -- Just Look At The RCP Electoral Map”, Forbes, http://www.forbes.com/sites/dougschoen/2012/05/08/the-2012-election-is-obamas-to-win-just-look-at-the-rcp-electoral-map/]

With President Obama now leading Mitt Romney 253-170 in the Real Clear Politics Electoral Map, it appears that the 2012 presidential race is Obama’s to win — notwithstanding the fact that two candidates are currently neck-and-neck among the electorate overall, and in key battleground swing states.To be sure, the latest swing state polling show President Obama virtually tied with Mitt Romney – who has significantly improved his standing among swing state voters since becoming the presumptive Republican nominee. On Monday, USA Today/Gallup released a poll of voters in 12 battleground states ( Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin) – the first USA Today/Gallup swing-state poll since the March survey which found [Obama leading by nine percentage points](http://www.gallup.com/poll/153668/Obama-Romney-Among-Registered-Voters-Nationwide.aspx) among swing-state voters.The latest USA Today/Gallup swing-state poll shows the President and Romney virtually tied (47%-45%) – with the President’s two point lead over Mr. Romney falling within the margin of error.Similarly, last week’s Quinnipiac University Swing State Poll found the two candidates in a statistical tie in key toss-up states Ohio and Florida — with Romney leading 44 percent to 43 percent in Florida and Obama leading 44 percent-42 percent in Ohio. But all one needs to do is look at the Electoral Map to see that the President is a mere 18 electoral votes shy of the 271 needed to win.Put simply, all President Obama needs to do is win either Ohio or a combination of two or more states including Virginia, New Hampshire, Iowa, Missouri, Colorado, North Carolina or Arizona. Bottom line: no matter how you do the math, President Obama’s path to electoral victory seems clear.

### Uniqueness – Obama – Romney Losing Base

#### Conservatives all turning on Romney—he can’t win without the base

Politico 7/5 (2012, “Conservative Griping about Mitt Romney Grows,” http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=D01E5DA2-B6BE-45C6-B2B1-7E00F696478D)

The Romney campaign is grappling with an unexpected swell of Republican complaints about the former Massachusetts governor’s political operation, at least temporarily disrupting the legendarily disciplined message of the presumptive GOP nominee. What began over the weekend with a few stray tweets from Fox News media baron Rupert Murdoch has grown into a larger chorus of criticism from the right over the deftness (or lack thereof) of Romney’s team. On Thursday, Romney’s team put out word of a massive $100 million fundraising haul — but its skill in attracting donors has done little to tamp down longstanding concerns within the GOP about the insularity and rigidness of the Romney camp. Those gripes are now being aired in public, as center-right staples from The Wall Street Journal editorial page to conservative radio host Laura Ingraham lament what they view as an uninspired, passive campaign. Romney’s general-election approach has resembled the strategy he used during the GOP primaries, a keep-your-head-down, minimalist effort aimed at keeping the focus on his opponent. That’s been a greater challenge for Romney as he faces President Barack Obama instead of Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum.

#### Obama Winning—electoral vote counts based on polls

Riley 6/29 [Charles. CNN Money Contributor. Web. “Obama Still on track For an Electoral Victory”<http://economy.money.cnn.com/2012/06/29/obama-still-on-track-for-electoral-victory/>]

But his advantage over Mitt Romney is narrowing. According to the model, which produces a state-by-state prediction based in part on the latest economic data, Obama is on track to capture 303 electoral votes. That's more than the 270 required for victory, but if economic growth slows further, the model could easily shift. According to the model, Obama is likely to hold onto the key battleground states of Virginia, Ohio, New Hampshire, Colorado, Nevada and Pennsylvania. According to Moody's, Obama's lead is narrowest in Virginia and Ohio, where he is projected to capture 51.6% and 51.9% of the vote. Should those two states flip, Obama's electoral vote count would be released to 272 -- in other words, an extremely narrow victory. Florida and North Carolina may very well decide who occupies the White House in 2013. According to the polls, Obama currently is ahead in Florida, but trailing by a large margin in North Carolina. The two polls both come from organizations known for a conservative slant, so overall the numbers are probably positive for the President. The first poll, , shows Obama ahead of Mitt Romney 46% to 45% in the state of Florida. The poll includes a sample of 1,127 “likely voters” and has a margin-of-error of plus-or-minus 2.9%. We Ask America has not done any earlier polls in Florida, so it is impossible to compare the results to anything in the past. Obama now leads in the Real Clear Politics average of six Florida polls taken over the last two months by a 46.7% to 45.0% margin. As seen in the map above (click to expand), President Obama could still easily get to 270 electoral votes without North Carolina. Quinnipiac released last week showed that Obama may be benefiting in Florida from his administration’s new immigration policy, which grants temporary immunity to many younger illegal immigrants. Since We Ask America generally slants Republican, the poll showing President Obama in the lead is certainly a positive sign for Democrats.

### Uniqueness – Obama – Klein Model

#### Klein model predicts Obama win based on economic models

Matthews 7-3-12 [Dylan, Researcher at the Washington Post, “How’s our model doing?”, WonkBlog, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/wp/2012/07/03/hows-our-model-doing/>]

A while back, Ezra — with the help of political scientists at Yale, UCLA, and George Washington University — developed Wonkblog’s very own presidential election model. It uses only three variables: economic growth during the first three quarters of the election year; the president’s average approval rating as measured by Gallup in June of the election year; and whether or not a candidate is a member of the incumbent party. Now that June is over, and the presidential approval data are in, the second of those variables is set for the 2012 election. I went through Gallup’s tracking polls and found that Obama had an average approval rating of 46.46, virtually indistinguishable from George W. Bush’s 46 percent June approval average in 2004. If second- and third-quarter economic growth stays at the first-quarter level of 1.9 percent, then the model predicts that Obama will win 82.5 percent of the time. Now, we won’t know the second-quarter GDP numbers until the end of this month (and the initial figures are often wrong and are revised later), and the third quarter hasn’t happened yet, so this could all change. But the president can find some comfort in the model now.

#### Klein model is most successful election forecasting tool

Klein 4-24-12 [Ezra, the editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg, “Predict the 2012 election with our interactive tool!”, Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/create-your-own-election/2012/04/24/gIQAuaOIeT_blog.html>]

Political scientists have long known that you can predict most of what will happen in a presidential election with just a few key pieces of information: how the economy does, for instance, and the incumbent’s approval ratings in the summer. If you have those two numbers — even before you know the opponent, the campaign strategies or the issues — you can usually call the winner. What these models suggest, in other words, is that the ephemera of elections aren’t that important. Not that this stuff doesn’t matter at all: Elections are often close, and a few percentage points can mean the difference between defeat and victory. But these micro-scandals mostly serve to distract us from the things that really do matter. And I don’t want to spend the next seven months distracted. So I asked three political scientists — Seth Hill of Yale, John Sides of George Washington University and Lynn Vavreck of UCLA — to help me create an election forecasting model. And when I say “help me,” I mean that they did all the work and then sat me down and explained, slowly and using small words, what they had done. The final model uses just three pieces of information that have been found to be particularly predictive: economic growth in the year of the election, as measured by the change in gross domestic product during the first three quarters; the president’s approval rating in June; and whether one of the candidates is the incumbent. That may seem a bit thin. But it calls 12 of the past 16 elections right. The average error in its prediction of the two-party vote share is less than three percentage points. Then I started playing with the model. And frankly, it just looked wrong. If GDP is flat — that is to say, if the economy doesn’t grow at all this year — and Obama’s approval rating is 45 percent, he wins 49 percent of the time. If you boost growth to a still-anemic 1.5 percentage points, he wins 74 percent of the time. That seems a little unlikely. That, the political scientists said, is the point of a model such as this one. “There’s this moment where you go, ‘Whoa, that’s a high number,’ ” Vavreck says. “ ‘Something must be wrong.’ But what it forces you to do is . . . to divorce yourself from contemporary context. You can’t go in thinking, ‘But, oh, this president is black,’ or ‘Gas prices are high,’ or ‘We just had the tea party.’ You have to strip all that away and say: ‘Incumbent parties, in growing economies, almost always win in contemporary American history.’ ” She’s right. Since 1948, only three incumbent presidents have lost reelection campaigns: Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush. Carter and Bush both ran in very bad economies. Ford was a bit of an odd case, as he took office after Richard Nixon resigned over Watergate, and even so, the election was extremely close. This is the way models discipline your thinking: They force you to see relationships and patterns that conflict with your intuition.

### Uniqueness – Obama – Latinos

#### Obama’s winning the Latino vote – key to swing states like Florida.

Politico 7-1 (Robin Bravender, 7/1/12, “Obama Spanish language ad blitz aims to wrap up Latino vote”, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0612/78036.html)

President Barack Obama wants to dominate the Latino vote, and his campaign has orchestrated a Spanish-language ad blitz to make it happen. Obama’s campaign has spent more than $2 million on Spanish-language television and radio ads since mid-April, according to several sources who track media buys. That’s on top of the $4 million the pro-Obama super PAC Priorities USA Action and the Service Employees International Union have committed to spending through the summer on Spanish TV and radio ads hitting Romney in Colorado, Nevada and Florida. In contrast, Mitt Romney has spent about $110,000 on Spanish-language ads during the general election, sources say. It’s not just about winning a minority group; it’s about a well-located minority group. With large populations in some of the biggest battlegrounds — Hispanics make up more than one-fifth of the population in Colorado, Florida and Nevada — Obama and his support believe the Latino vote can literally be the difference that delivers a second term for the president. “It’s a lot of votes,” Congressional Hispanic Caucus Chairman Charles Gonzalez (D-Texas) said of the Latino community. “And that may well determine who wins this election if it comes down to certain battleground states.” The advertising blitz comes alongside Obama’s move in June to halt the deportation of some young illegal immigrants. The policy won acclaim from Latino voters who have been disappointed by the lack of movement on comprehensive immigration reform and the stalled DREAM Act, which would create a path to citizenship for some young illegal immigrants. Obama and the Democratic National Committee poured $20 million into a joint Hispanic voter outreach effort in 2008, which paid off when Obama garnered 67 percent of the Hispanic vote, according to a Pew Hispanic Center analysis. An Obama campaign spokesperson wouldn’t say whether Democrats will top that spending this cycle, but their early spending is an indication that they could come close. The campaign is planning to keep running ads targeted to Latinos through Election Day. The early spending is key, Democrats say. “In the past, a number of political campaigns have made the mistake when targeting Hispanic and Latino voters of either starting communicating with them too late or spending too little,” said John Rowley, a Democratic media consultant. “I think that’s a mistake that the Obama team is trying to not make.” Obama already has a sizable advantage over Romney with Latino voters. A survey in five swing states released June 22 showed Obama leading Romney among Latino voters by 36 percentage points overall across Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Nevada and Virginia, with the biggest leads in Arizona, Colorado and Nevada.

#### Obama campaign ahead with Latinos—Spanish language ads and immigration plans

Politico 7-1 (Robin Bravender, 7/1/12, “Obama Spanish language ad blitz aims to wrap up Latino vote”, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0612/78036.html)

 Unions and the pro-Obama super PAC are reminding Latino voters of some of the comments Romney made during his primary bid, said Brandon Davis, the SEIU’s political director. The ads funded by Priorities USA and the SEIU feature Spanish translations of Romney gaffes “I’m also unemployed” and “I like being able to fire people.” “We’re not going to allow candidates to run from the positions that they’ve stated,” Davis said. “We are essentially informing voters about where he stands in his own words.” The Obama campaign’s ads have featured local organizers from cities including Tampa, Orlando and Denver touting Obama’s policies on health care, education and other issues. The campaign also released an ad featuring Cristina Saralegui, the Cuban-American talk show host and media celebrity, praising Obama’s health care law. Romney has been vague about his plans for immigration reform, saying that he wants a “long-term solution” to the immigration system but declining to say whether he would maintain Obama’s new policy that allows some young illegal immigrants to stay in the country.

Uniqueness

#### Romney behind on Latinos and they are key to the election—predictive evidence

LA Times 6-26 (“Swing-state Latinos could end Mitt Romney's White House dream”, http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/topoftheticket/la-na-tt-swing-state-latinos-20120626,0,7275509.story)

It is becoming increasingly difficult for Mitt Romney to climb out of the hole he has dug for himself with Latino voters, and, as a result, that hole could turn into a grave for his presidential campaign. Heading into the Republican primaries, Romney did not have a Latino problem. His public pronouncements on immigration issues were reminiscent of those of George W. Bush who, in his two presidential campaigns, won a significantly bigger share of Latino votes than past GOP candidates. The nearly 40% support Bush received in 2004 assured him victories in the crucial swing states of Florida, Virginia, Nevada, Colorado and New Mexico. Winning those states is just as crucial in 2012. But through the long months of the Republican primary contests, Romney went out of his way to take a hard line on illegal immigration. It may have seemed like a smart idea at the time. His party's hard-right base was suspicious of his moderate record as governor of Massachusetts and the ease with which he tacked with the wind on so many issues. Trashing the Dream Act and calling for illegal immigrants to "self-deport" allowed Romney to leap to the right of his more conservative rivals and, perhaps, helped him clinch the nomination. Now, of course, that tactic does not look quite so clever. At this juncture in the campaign, illegal immigration is a hot issue, thanks to President Obama and the U.S. Supreme Court. Two weeks ago, Obama made news and new friends among Latinos by declaring that young people brought into the country illegally by their parents will not be targeted for deportation as long as they are law-abiding and productive. And this week, the high court struck down all but one section of a controversial Arizona law that aimed to crack down hard on suspected illegal immigrants. In reaction to both these developments, Romney and his spokesmen have been vague and evasive. They have abandoned the tough rhetoric of the primaries and replaced it with bland generalities. Romney has refused to say if, as president, he would reverse Obama's non-enforcement policy. On the Arizona law that he once declared could be a model for the whole country, he now says only that the Supreme Court ruling is "unfortunate" and that, somehow, it is all Obama's fault. Romney seems almost to be edging toward another flip-flop, waffling over the very issue on which he was so rigid in the primary debates. This will give hyper-conservatives reason again to mistrust his ideological steadiness. Yet, if he and his campaign tacticians think his toned-down rhetoric will improve his standing with Latinos, they are almost certainly going to be disappointed. Romney's approval rating with Latinos, the fastest-growing block of the American electorate, is mired in the mid-20s, 40 points behind Obama, and there it is likely to stay. Illegal immigration will soon be overtaken by other issues, most likely healthcare, thanks to the upcoming Supreme Court ruling on "Obamacare." Ultimately, the focus will return to the economy. Romney stands on much more solid ground on both those issues. But though it may be a relief for him to see illegal immigration fade as a focus of campaign buzz, it will also mean that the image of Romney as muddled and untrustworthy on the issue will be locked in place. That will matter a great deal if the election turns out to be as close as it is expected to be. Just as a healthy slice of the Latino vote helped put Bush over the top in key swing states in 2004; a poor showing among Latino voters could mean those same states will be out of reach for Romney in 2012. And if they are out of reach, so is the White House.

## Links

### Link – Environment – Ohio

#### Ohio swing counties hate the environmental regulation aspects of plan

Kotkin 2012 (Joel, June, presidential fellow in urban futures at Chapman University and a contributing editor to the City Journal, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/06/25/despite-obama-s-policies-the-rust-belt-s-revival-could-save-his-campaign.html)

Those concerns are especially pronounced in traditional swing regions like the Utica Shale in the eastern part of Ohio and the coal-producing swaths of western Pennsylvania (nearly half of the businesses in the booming gas and oil extraction field are based in the industrial heartland) that have long been resentful of Washington regulators. Business owners are concerned—as are many of their employees—that a second Obama term could mean the EPA shutting down the nascent natural gas boom that’s begun to generate both energy and high-wage industrial jobs. Some businesses have postponed investment due to uncertainty about the election and the prospect of aggressive regulation. “There’s a lot of things in play,” says Platt, who has been active in Republican politics. Not surprisingly, he credits much of the region’s recovery to the economic policy of Republican governors like John Kasich in Ohio, Michigan’s Rick Snyder, and Wisconsin’s Scott Walker—all states he notes that are lapping Illinois. The Land of Lincoln, Obama’s Democrat-controlled home state, suffers the region’s highest unemployment rate and is competing with California for the nation’s worst credit rating. “It’s not clear right now which of the two narratives will win out.” The health of the manufacturing economy may prove even more important to the president’s reelection than the Dow Jones index. If industrial growth softens or goes into reverse—for instance, if Europe’s economic troubles cross the Atlantic—the Midwest will feel the effects first. And if the Rust Belt suffers, Obama’s path to a second term gets that much tougher.

#### Ohio is key to the election

Journal Gazette 6-15 [“Race in full swing in key swing state Ohio”, <http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20120615/NEWS03/306159951/1066/NEWS03>]

From opposite ends of Ohio, a state vital to both of their political futures, Romney and Obama dueled in economic speeches that set the tone for a fierce, final five months of debate. At the core, the pitches were the political foes’ familiar, fundamentally different takes on how get to an economically aching nation soaring again. “That’s really what this election is about,” Obama said. Romney went first from Cincinnati, a Republican stronghold, and he described Obama’s administration as the very “enemy” of people who create jobs. “Look what’s happened across this country,” Romney said. “If you think things are going swimmingly, if you think the president’s right when he said the private sector is doing fine, then he’s the guy to vote for.” But he questioned why anyone would do that, saying if the job isn’t getting done, pick “someone who can do a better job.” The backdrop was Ohio, seen by strategists as a state that could swing the election. It went to Obama last time and George W. Bush before that, and it remains crucial. No Republican has ever won the presidency without winning Ohio. Romney gave what amounted to his standard speech, albeit realigned as a prebuttal as Obama was pulling into his event site at the top of the state. Given the tight presidential race and the enormous interest in the economy, the two speeches offered anticipation of a big campaign moment, but the substance yielded little new. This was Obama in professor mode, filling his speech with budget numbers and history and talk of independent analysts. It was an economics case, yet hardly one of roaring rhetorical lift. The goal for Obama was not to uncork new proposals but to define a contrast. He is still pushing tax credits and other jobs ideas that have awaited action in Congress for months. On Thursday, he said the election is an opportunity for voters to step in and “break the stalemate.” In essence, Obama said Romney would gut government and cut taxes for the rich at the expense of everyone else. Romney said Obama is crushing the free market with regulation. Obama said, “If you believe this economy grows best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules, then I ask you to stand with me for a second term as president.” Despite what had seemed to be a speech showdown, the two events were not of the same scope. Obama spoke for more than 50 minutes, more than doubling Romney’s comments, in what his campaign called the first in a series of major economic speeches. Romney’s reference to Obama’s statement about the private sector “doing fine” recalled what was largely seen as a presidential gaffe last week. Even though Obama’s aides said he was taken out of context, Obama conceded his misstep Thursday, joking “It wasn’t the first time. It won’t be the last.” The president also appealed for more time to let his ideas work. Citing the monster American recession, he said most countries in the past have needed 10 years to recover.

### Link – High Speed Rail

#### Pushing HSR costs Obama the election—too many failures to change the narrative now

Fletcher 2012 (Michael, January, Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/plans-for-high-speed-rail-are-slowing-down/2012/01/13/gIQAngYc1P_print.html>)

Critics began panning the first leg of California’s futuristic high-speed rail network as a “train to nowhere” soon after officials decided to build it not in the major population centers of Los Angeles or San Francisco, but through the state’s Central Valley farming belt. Since then, things have only gotten worse. Spiraling cost estimates and eroding political and public support now threaten a project crucial to a 21st-century vision of train travel that President Obama promised would transform U.S. transportation much as interstate highways did more than a half-century ago. A national high-speed rail network would not only support tens of thousands of construction and manufacturing jobs, but it would get Americans out of their cars, revitalize struggling downtowns, and spare the environment millions of tons of carbon emissions and travelers untold hours wasted in traffic or in airport terminals waiting out delays. Obama set a goal of providing 80 percent of Americans access to high-speed rail within 25 years. But that lofty vision is yielding to the political gravity generated by high costs, determined opponents and a public that has grown dubious of government’s ability to do big things. Virtually none of the projects has gotten off the ground, and the one that has is in trouble. For Obama, the political stakes are high going into the 2012 election. Republican front-runner Mitt Romney has accused him of putting too much faith in government to build the economy. The president, Romney says to the delight of Republican partisans, “does not know” how business, or the economy, works. The plan that envisions bullet trains trains zipping between the nation’s major cities at speeds up to 220 miles per hour, was one of the few transformative projects included in the $797 billion stimulus program enacted early in Obama’s presidency. “Imagine whisking through towns at speeds over 100 miles an hour, walking only a few steps to public transportation, and ending up just blocks from your destination,” Obama said in announcing his vision for high-speed rail in April 2009. “Imagine what a great project that would be to rebuild America.” So far, Obama has wagered more than $10 billion in federal money on high-speed rail, only to see his plans diminished, one after another. Republican governors in Florida, Wisconsin and Ohio turned back billions of dollars in federal money for high-speed rail, denouncing the proposals as both the creation of Big Government and as economically unfeasible. The objections in those three states left money to be redirected to a host of projects that promise to relieve bottlenecks and speed up traditional rail service in many parts of the country. In one case, the 285-mile trip between Chicago and Detroit will be reduced 30 minutes from the current 51 / 2 hours. But those improvements fall short of the transformative promise of high-speed rail. House Republicans were also among those who dug in against Obama’s high-speed rail vision, saying that outside of select regions, it did not fit a sprawling, car-loving nation served by nearly 50,000 miles of interstate highways and an extensive air travel network. Now the nation’s only pending true high-speed rail project is facing a crisis moment in California, a Democratic stronghold known for its innovation.

#### High Speed Rail is unpopular – perceived as creating suburban sprawl

Hanscom 1/17 – (Greg, a senior editor at Grist, 7-1, “President Obama and the forgotten urban agenda”, <http://grist.org/cities/president-obama-and-the-forgotten-urban-agenda/>)

The transportation bill is a gargantuan piece of federal legislation that funds road, bridge, and rail projects nationwide — and has huge implications for the way cities and suburbs grow. Unable to agree on a new direction, Congress has punted on the issue for the past two years, passing resolutions that simply extend the old policy — a policy that encourages sprawling suburban growth. “That’s a lack of leadership coming out of White House,” Leinberger says. “President Obama spent too much political capital on high-speed rail instead of looking at light rail, street cars, and the entire range of transportation alternatives.” Leinberger and other smart growthers are putting their hopes for more dramatic reform in a second term for Obama. Some even imagine a day when HUD and DOT merge into a single agency. Perhaps then we could turn this SUV around, abandoning policies that prop up dead-end suburbs and turning back to the challenge of building strong, sustainable cities. Americans say, at least, that this is what they want.

#### Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida, and California oppose high-speed rail

PBS 10 (“Rail politics: The choices for voters — spend or save our way out of the recession,” By Tom McNamara, October 28, 2010, http://www.pbs.org/wnet/need-to-know/the-daily-need/rail-politics-the-choice-for-voters-spend-or-save-our-way-out-of-the-recession/4589/)

Apparently, it is getting easier to argue against the next chapter of American innovation, especially if it’s being proposed by the Obama administration. If elected, Republican gubernatorial candidates from Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida and California are promising to say “no” to federal dollars for high-speed rail. Being against massive government investment in high-speed rail isn’t hurting their chances either. The anti-rail candidates are in command in Wisconsin, Ohio, and Florida; and California is a tossup. And it’s no coincidence that Christie has campaigned in all of these states. High-speed rail is one of President Obama’s signature initiatives. In his State of the Union address this year, the president backed up his national rail vision by announcing that $8 billion in stimulus money would be distributed to various states, including Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida and California, to get the country’s next generation of transportation moving.

### Link – High Speed Rail – California

#### HSR is a disaster for Obama in California—even democrats turn on him

Cruickshank 2012 (Robert, Robert Cruickshank is a political strategist and historian living in Seattle, http://www.cahsrblog.com/2012/04/will-senate-democrats-do-mitt-romneys-work-for-him/)

As the presidential election cycle heats up, Republicans are looking for ways to undermine President Barack Obama. One of their tried and true tactics is to take high profile initiatives of the Obama Administration and poke holes in them, make them look like scandalous wasteful failures rather than bold, innovative, effective projects. Congressional Republicans already hate high speed rail, and Darrell Issa’s investigation into the California HSR project is clearly intended as a bash-the-president exercise. Given that, why on earth would State Senate Democrats be willing to undermine the HSR project and give Republicans – including Mitt Romney – another opportunity to attack the president? Unfortunately that seems to be exactly what some Senate Dems have in mind: Sen. Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto) has been arguing for weeks that it is impractical for the rail authority to think the Senate could hold hearings and approve the $68-billion rail system — the biggest infrastructure project in state history — in a couple of months. As a result, the Senate’s Democratic leadership is considering whether to delay including money for construction of an initial rail segment in the 2013-14 budget this spring, and instead push the decision into August before the Legislature recesses. The budget deadline is June 15, but appropriations can be made in separate legislation until Aug. 31. “The timing is still being discussed, but we should have a better idea in the coming days,” said a spokeswoman for Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg. “It is not uncommon to appropriate bond funds in a bill outside of the budget act.” There are two important things to consider here. First, a delay would be used by Republicans and Mitt Romney as a justification to argue that President Obama, by investing $3.5 billion in federal funds in the California HSR project, is wasting taxpayer dollars on a project that even some California Democrats don’t like. Already Senators like Joe Simitian and Alan Lowenthal – who wants to become a Congressional Democrat himself! – have provided crucial ammunition to Republicans like Darrell Issa by repeating claims about the project that are false and flawed, including about the ridership projections. Delaying the funding decision until the eve of the Republican convention strikes me as a very bad thing to do, playing right into their hands.

#### California could flip Republican, especially if Obama loses base support

Kinsey 2012 (Todd, Todd Kinsey is a political consultant and conservative commentator whose articles have appeared in many leading publications, both print and electronic. His work has been cited by prominent media outlets including the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Times and the Washington Post. Todd has also become a sought after political expert and campaign consultant. He has worked on campaigns ranging from city and state races as well as the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. In doing so, Todd has served in a variety of positions including: Campaign Manager, Media Director, Treasurer, Political Director, Policy Advisor and Social Media Director. March 4, http://toddkinsey.com/blog/2012/03/04/is-california-in-play-for-the-gop/)

For the first time since the days of Reagan the Republican Party has a real chance of winning a national election in California. You read that right, not only is Dianne Feinstein’s Senate seat in real jeopardy for the first time since she took office in 1992 but President Obama has his work cut out for him as well. Once thought untouchable, Sen. Feinstein’s poll numbers are at an all time low. According to a report by CBS Los Angeles, Feinstein’s approval rating has dropped to a dismal 41 percent. Furthermore, even amongst her Democrat base, Feinstein only receives a 60 percent approval rating. And like the rest of the country, only 9 percent of Californians approve of the job Congress is doing. In 2010, Senator Barbara Boxer had the fight of her life and narrowly defeated Republican upstart Carly Fiorina. The DNC had to pull out all the stops in defense of the longtime Democrat stronghold. For starters, Sen. Boxer had to spend a whopping $28 million which was nearly double what she had to spend in her previous election. Sensing potential defeat in California, which would have been an even bigger political slap in the face than Scott Brown winning in Massachusetts, President Obama had to make no less than three trips to California in a desperate attempt to save Boxer’s seat. But the president’s coattails are all but nonexistent in 2012 and he will be fighting to save his own political life this November. In evaluating election results from the last two presidential election cycles, California is not nearly as blue as the Democrats would lead you to believe. In 2008, the year of President Obama’s sweeping victory, he only won twenty-four counties in California compared to Sen. John McCain’s thirty-four. President Obama carried the urban counties and that was enough to ensure victory for him in California. In 2004, John Kerry only received 54 percent of the popular vote in California and won a paltry twenty-two counties compared to President Bush’s thirty-six counties. More importantly there were seven counties that were within 3 percent of going to Bush which would have easily carried him to victory had those counties gone the other way.

### Link – High Speed Rail – XT: California

#### High Speed Rail is unpopular in California

Huffington Post 6-3 [“California High Speed Rail Doesn't Have The Support Of Majority Of Californians: Poll”, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/04/california-high-speed-rail_n_1566807.html>]

LOS ANGELES -- A new poll finds California voters are experiencing buyers' remorse over a proposed $68 billion bullet train project, as the number of lawsuits against the rail system grows. Fifty-five percent of voters want to see the high-speed rail bond issue that was approved in 2008 back on the ballot, and 59 percent say they would now vote against it, according to the USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times survey (lat.ms/N9tTcm) published Saturday. Since the $9 billion borrowing plan was passed, the projected cost of the bullet train between Los Angeles and San Francisco has roughly doubled, and it will now share track with slower commuter and freight trains in some areas, the Times said. A majority of voters have turned against the ambitious undertaking just as Gov. Jerry Brown is pushing lawmakers to approve the start of construction in the Central Valley later this year. Powerful agriculture groups and freight railroads maintain that proposed routes would damage their interests and compromise safety. Schools, churches, businesses and homeowners are also opposed to the project. On Friday, Central Valley farm groups filed a major environmental lawsuit in Sacramento County Superior Court, asking for a preliminary injunction to block rail construction. Plaintiffs include the Madera and Merced county farm bureaus and Madera County. The suit is one of several already on the books, and still more agricultural interests in the Central Valley are threatening to sue. "We think a preliminary injunction against construction will occur because there were so many violations in the authority's environmental impact report," Anja Raudabaugh, executive director of the Madera County Farm Bureau, told the Times. The plaintiffs say the rail project would affect 1,500 acres of prime farm land and 150 agribusinesses in their region. The poll found that concerns about the project extend across regions, ethnic groups, income brackets and even political affiliations, according to the Times. Among Democrats, initially the strongest supporters of the plan, only 43 percent would support the bond in a new vote, while 47 percent would oppose it. Seventy-six percent of Republicans would vote against it. Voters have reconsidered their support for high-speed rail as lawmakers slash public programs to cope with a widening budget gap, said Dan Schnur, director of the poll and head of the Unruh Institute of Politics at USC. "The growing budget deficit is making Californians hesitant about spending so much money on a project like this one when they're seeing cuts to public education and law enforcement," Unruh said. "But they also seem to be wary as to whether state government can run a big speed rail system effectively." In Southern California, 67 percent of voters said they would reject issuing high-speed rail bonds if they could vote again. If the bullet train system is built, 69 percent said they would never or hardly ever ride it. No respondents – zero percent – said they would use it more than once a week. Just 33 percent of respondents said they would prefer a bullet train over an airplane or car on trips between LA and San Francisco The USC Dornsife/Times survey heard from 1,002 registered voters in mid-May. It was conducted by Democratic polling firm Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and Republican polling firm American Viewpoint. The sample has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

#### High Speed Rail is unpopular in Cali – cost and budget tradeoffs

Los Angeles Time 6-21 [“Pension reform is job No. 1; If legislators don't get moving on serious changes to benefits, they may doom an initiative to raise state taxes and avoid deep education cuts”, Lexis Nexis]

A foreclosure package is practically a wrap. High-speed rail has been a slow go. It no longer is popular with the public. Projected costs have doubled -- and bells and whistles have been removed -- since voters authorized building the Los Angeles-to-San Francisco line. It's still a mystery how all the $68 billion in construction costs will be raised. But Brown is insisting that the Legislature authorize an initial sell of $2.7 billion in state bonds -- at a borrowing cost of roughly $180 million annually for 30 years -- to trigger federal funding of $3.3 billion. That would build the initial stretch of track in the San Joaquin Valley. "I want to get high-speed rail done before the recess," Steinberg says. "Not that it's that popular." He and Brown are afraid that the feds will back out of the deal if the state doesn't soon begin putting up money. "The longer it goes on there's a risk," the Senate leader says. "There's a risk of us going ahead because we don't have guaranteed funding for the future. But there's a risk in not doing it. The state is hungry for forward thinking. For infrastructure, construction work. The risk of not doing it is greater than in doing it." That's all speculative. But the risk to the tax proposal and education funding of continued pension procrastination is unambiguous. Everyone knows the political problem with pension reform. "It's got labor out of our comfort zone," says Dave Low, executive director of the California School Employees Assn., who also heads a labor coalition fighting major pension rollbacks. Labor largely foots the bill for Democratic election campaigns. And Brown also is counting on donations from public employee unions for his tax campaign. So this is delicate. Brown has proposed a tougher overhaul than what Democrats have been willing to accept. A special two-house committee held several hearings on pensions and came up empty. "The whole hearing process was just a dog and pony show," contends a Republican member, Sen. Mimi Walters of Laguna Niguel. "We didn't have any meaningful discussion on pension reform." "If Democrats were smart," says Marcia Fritz, a leading pension-reform activist, "they would make it their issue and get in front of the parade." Yes, and they wouldn't recess for summer vacation until the job was done.

#### Forcing HSR onto California is political suicide for Obama—he shouldn’t hitch his wagon to Jerry Brown

The Herald Sun (NC) 2012 (February 18, Lexis)

Critics have called it the train to nowhere and a $98 billion boondoggle. As concerns mount over the practicality and affordability of California's plan to build a high-speed rail system, even many former supporters are beginning to sound skeptical. Not so Gov. Jerry Brown. He has emerged as the most vocal cheerleader of a project that is as risky as it is ambitious. Building a first-in-the-nation project would provide a lasting legacy for the 73-year-old Democratic governor as he moves into the twilight of a long political career. His father is revered for promoting the construction of California's comprehensive water system and expanding the state's higher education system into a national model. The stakes are high for Brown as he champions a massive public works project that other governors, notably in Florida and Ohio, have shunned. Many critics, even some fellow Democrats, worry that the rail line will never be self-sustainable and that the financially struggling state will be saddled with huge operational costs. Yet Brown has expressed little patience for those whose ambitions for the nation's most populous state are lower than his own, dismissing them as "declinists." He said a state with a population of nearly 38 million ? projected to be 49.2 million by 2030, three years before the first phase of the rail line would be finished ? already is stifled by traffic gridlock and air pollution. California, Brown says, can't afford to miss the chance to invest in high-speed rail, which he promotes as a clean-energy alternative for travel. "Spain can build it. China can build it. France can build it. Germany can build it. England can build it. Japan can build it. But oh, we can't build it," Brown said, mocking critics in a speech a week ago to the California Democratic Party convention. "No, we can build more airport runways, more freeways over the next 50 years. That's twice as expensive. So I'm not saying it's cheap; I'm just saying it's cheaper than the alternative, and it's a hell of a lot better." Brown was addressing the convention in San Diego, one of the major California cities left off the first phase of the high-speed rail line, which has led to local criticism. Sacramento, the state capital, also is left out. Despite the cost and imperfections of the current plan, Brown has support from President Barack Obama's administration, which included $35 billion for passenger rail over the next five years in its latest budget proposal. U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood visited California earlier this month to reaffirm the president's support. LaHood called it "good for the economy and the nation." The administration has promised $3.5 billion to California on the conditions that work begins this year and that the first section of track will go in the Central Valley, more sparsely populated than the state's coastal regions. California voters approved $9 billion in bonds to be used as seed money for high-speed rail in 2008. The network would link the San Francisco Bay area to Los Angeles and Orange County via the Central Valley, and would be completed by 2020 at a cost of $45 million. The ballot measure said trains would run at speeds of up to 220 mph in an 800-mile network connecting all the major population centers. Travel time between San Francisco and Los Angeles: 2 hours and 40 minutes. The plan has changed dramatically since voters approved it. In a draft business plan last fall, the California High-Speed Rail Authority said the projected cost had jumped to between $98 billion and $117 billion, while the completion date for the entire first section was pushed back 13 years. A subsequent report by the nonpartisan state auditor's office said there were no commitments in place to fund the project beyond the $9 billion authorized by voters and the $3.5 billion in federal money. The auditor's report called the program's financial situation "increasingly risky." The rail line's supporters, including unions advocating for construction jobs, say private operators could run the system without more taxpayer money. The auditor estimated operating costs from 2025 to 2060 could be nearly $97 billion, and said the plan doesn't include "any alternatives" if it fails to generate significant profits beginning in its first operational year. Questions also have been raised about the engineering, ridership projections and estimated fares that rail officials say would make the train competitive with airfare. The concerns have caused some previous supporters to waver. "I don't want the state of California chasing $3.5 billion in federal funds at a cost of $98.5 billion. That's not my idea of a bargain," said state Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, a one-time supporter. "If future funding is uncertain, then whatever we're going to build and pay for today has to have real value in and of itself." He calls himself a "supporter of high-speed rail done right," but said he'd yet to see such a project. Simitian questions whether the initial phase, a 130-mile section of track linking Fresno to Bakersfield, would have any value if the rest of the line is never built. Under the current plan, that track would be electrified to allow for higher speed travel, but it would not directly connect to other rapid rail lines. Some of the questions are likely to be addressed in a new version of the rail authority's business plan. Since the previous one was released, Brown has transformed the authority's board of directors and ordered it to devise a workable plan that is politically defensible. He has said he expects the plan eventually submitted to the state Legislature to carry a price tag well below $100 billion. Lawmakers must approve selling the voter-approved bonds sometime this year. The person charged with implementing Brown's mandate is Dan Richard, a Brown appointee who took over as chairman of the rail board. Years of engineering, environmental review and financial studies already have been completed and were subjected to public hearings, but the authority has just a few months to revise the plan to make it more palatable to lawmakers. Richard said he takes the concerns raised by the state auditor and others seriously. "I guess at this point, I have a one-line response: Change is coming to high-speed rail," he said. An updated final plan was due to the Legislature by Jan. 1, but that deadline has been pushed back several times. It is not expected before the end of March. Among the changes being considered are accelerating the 30-year construction timeline to reduce inflation costs, using more existing regular rail tracks in the Central Valley and other areas and re-routing part of the Central Valley line closer to existing freight and passenger rail lines. That could reduce rights of way costs. The rail authority also is considering spending about $1 billion to upgrade existing rail networks and electrify tracks at each end of the system, which would allow faster trains and could help garner political support. This approach has the backing of some local officials who are concerned about the expense and land needed to build separate dedicated lines, but using existing rail lines runs the risk of taking the "high-speed" out of high-speed rail. That underscores the stakes for Brown. He says California should be a pioneer in building a system he believes is necessary for the future, but the cost and construction hurdles are so high they could imperil the project's long-term viability. Critics already are trying to starve the project of public financing.

### Link – High Speed Rail – Ohio

#### The GOP took Ohio by campaigning against HSR—its unpopular enough to swing the state again

Spinelli 2012 (John Michael, The Examiner, Columbus Government Bureau, http://www.examiner.com/article/look-to-california-for-why-ohio-will-never-have-high-speed-rail”)

When John Kasich won the office of governor in 2010 by a scant two percentage points, he routinely mocked then Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland for a train plan the governor said would create thousands of jobs and that would leave Ohio an island in an otherwise larger rail-connected Midwest hub plan. Candidate Kasich took ever opportunity that year to debunk and derail the 3C passenger rail plan for its terribly slow speed and exorbitant costs, which relied primarily on big, on-going federal funding, with mysterious funding from Buckeye taxpayers to cover the approximately $17 million dollar gap between revenues and costs that stretched far into the future. Back in 2008, California voters said yes to a $9.95 billion bond package that would jump start a 220-mph train that one day would connect San Francisco with San Diego, with lots of stops in-between. Golden State backers started promoting plan costs about $35 billion as they foretold tales of millions of riders who would opt to ride the high-speed rails (HSR) instead of riding state highways. But over the years, cost creep pushed up project costs to nearly $100 billion for a plan whose first phase wouldn't be ready until 2017, the deadline for spending federal stimulus money. If everything went smooth, that date would certainly test the patience of even the most ardent HSR true believer. But the road to rail hasn't been smooth. Based on the impatience of legislators who wanted reliable figures and the zeal with which opponents, who sifted through one report after another to find the glaring flaws in ridership numbers, the standoff between trains afficionados and those who say its just too expensive to pursue in light of other critical demands promises to continue unabated. When combined with the dogged opposition by some communities along the route, California's HSR plan seems a long-shot at best and doomed at worst. As governor, John Kasich, a former nine-term Congressman turned investment banker for Lehman Brothers, told federal transportation director Ray LaHood in the fall of 2010 that he wanted to use the $400 million granted to Gov. Strickland, his rail czar Jolene Molitoris and the Ohio Rail Development Commission, the official cheerleader agency for Ohio for the 39-mph average speed 3C plan linking Cleveland to Cincinnati, with stops in Columbus, Dayton and lesser venues, for roads and bridges. When LaHood said no, Kasich had no other tricks to play, so the money flowed back to Washington, where other HSR beneficiary states, including California, lined up like hungry vultures waiting for their fair share of the kill. On Monday, California Gov. Jerry Brown, still an ardent advocate of the plan even though others in Sacramento have stepped off the train for previously mentioned reasons, announced that the new price tag for high-speed rail will be $68.4 billion. But like it was in Ohio, public opinion in California shows voters would vote differently today than they did nearly three years ago when the dreams of trains racing like wildfire as they do in Europe, Japan and China was too tantalizing to say no to. And now that Gov. Kasich and his transportation director Jerry Wray are telling dozens of project hopefuls that their projects will be shelved for years if not decades because funding from Ohio taxpayers, and money from once-reliable Washington, is pretty much gone with the wind for the foreseeable future as panic to do something to patch debts and reduce deficits relegates funding for HSR in Ohio and elsewhere to either the resurgence of earmarks, which rumors say could make a comeback, or to a date far into the future when the nation's coffers are once again full. Even though Gov. Kasich balanced the state budget, as every governor is required to do by law, by essentially putting counties, cities and school districts on state rations for the coming years, he can't do the same for infrastructure funding because it relies mostly on state and federal gas taxes, which are waning as drivers drive less but which should be raised, a move governors like Kasich, who signed a pledge to never raise taxes, won't ever do, even though more Republicans are calling this blind allegiance to Grover Norquist, the mastermind behind this tax pledge, counterproductive and unrealistic. So while California soldiers on with its exorbitant costs for its HSR plan, which even if it doesn't produce real jobs for real people with produce jobs for rail lobbyists and mostly foreign companies whose proprietary rail technologies will be used the most, Ohio is forced to retreat back to roads and bridges, the funding for which is scant, with the exception of selling or long-term leasing the Ohio Turnpike to investors who know the leverage they have for a state whose transportation system is absolutely key to its hopes for more jobs.

#### Ohio is key to the election

Journal Gazette 6-15 [“Race in full swing in key swing state Ohio”, <http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20120615/NEWS03/306159951/1066/NEWS03>]

From opposite ends of Ohio, a state vital to both of their political futures, Romney and Obama dueled in economic speeches that set the tone for a fierce, final five months of debate. At the core, the pitches were the political foes’ familiar, fundamentally different takes on how get to an economically aching nation soaring again. “That’s really what this election is about,” Obama said. Romney went first from Cincinnati, a Republican stronghold, and he described Obama’s administration as the very “enemy” of people who create jobs. “Look what’s happened across this country,” Romney said. “If you think things are going swimmingly, if you think the president’s right when he said the private sector is doing fine, then he’s the guy to vote for.” But he questioned why anyone would do that, saying if the job isn’t getting done, pick “someone who can do a better job.” The backdrop was Ohio, seen by strategists as a state that could swing the election. It went to Obama last time and George W. Bush before that, and it remains crucial. No Republican has ever won the presidency without winning Ohio. Romney gave what amounted to his standard speech, albeit realigned as a prebuttal as Obama was pulling into his event site at the top of the state. Given the tight presidential race and the enormous interest in the economy, the two speeches offered anticipation of a big campaign moment, but the substance yielded little new. This was Obama in professor mode, filling his speech with budget numbers and history and talk of independent analysts. It was an economics case, yet hardly one of roaring rhetorical lift. The goal for Obama was not to uncork new proposals but to define a contrast. He is still pushing tax credits and other jobs ideas that have awaited action in Congress for months. On Thursday, he said the election is an opportunity for voters to step in and “break the stalemate.” In essence, Obama said Romney would gut government and cut taxes for the rich at the expense of everyone else. Romney said Obama is crushing the free market with regulation. Obama said, “If you believe this economy grows best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules, then I ask you to stand with me for a second term as president.” Despite what had seemed to be a speech showdown, the two events were not of the same scope. Obama spoke for more than 50 minutes, more than doubling Romney’s comments, in what his campaign called the first in a series of major economic speeches. Romney’s reference to Obama’s statement about the private sector “doing fine” recalled what was largely seen as a presidential gaffe last week. Even though Obama’s aides said he was taken out of context, Obama conceded his misstep Thursday, joking “It wasn’t the first time. It won’t be the last.” The president also appealed for more time to let his ideas work. Citing the monster American recession, he said most countries in the past have needed 10 years to recover.

### Link – High Speed Rail – Ohio – XT: Unpopular

#### HSR gave the GOP Ohio

Spinelli 2011 (John Michael, New Mexico Rail Runner Express train recalls issues with Ohio's 3C train, <http://www.examiner.com/article/new-mexico-rail-runner-express-train-recalls-issues-with-ohio-s-3c-train>)

LIke Ohio's 3C passenger train, the Rail Runner, according to the SFR was sold as an "opportunity to make New Mexico competitive with other states." Peters reported that existing railroad - owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co. - lay between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. New Mexico agreed in 2005 to purchase 300 miles of BNSF Railway track stretching from Belen through Trinidad, Colo., for $76 million. The track beyond Santa Fe was meant to prepare for a potential route to Denver, Peters said. Candidate Kasich turned the 3C proposal into a battering ram against Strickland and Molitoris, whose answers to simple questions about who would ride it, what it would cost, and why the state should jump feet first into a project that even in the best circumstances would lose big money, were insufficient at best and disingenuous at worst. When Kasich became governor, he returned $400 million Ohio had been awarded in federal high-speed rail from the Obama Administration to promote fast trains across the nation.

### Link – High Speed Rail – Oil Lobby

#### Oil lobby opposes HSR

RePass 6-9-11 [James P. RePass, Principal Executive of the National Corridors Initiative, a bi-partisan business and environmental transportation advocacy group. Primarily engaged in operating the non-profit National Corridors Initiative since its founding in 1989, he has a private-sector background and broad private-sector experience. Providence Journal, “New England s been slow in fast-rail race”, Lexis Nexis]

Recently, word began to dribble out of the Midwest that a game-changing event regarding the future of America s high-speed-rail program might be afoot. Since the election of Barack Obama, pro-rail stories have made the national news more than at any time in decades; keeping his campaign promise, the new president committed $8 billion in stimulus funds in his April 2009 high-speed-rail plan, which identified 10 initial corridors ranging from 100 to 600 miles long. Another $5 billion in federal capital for new rail programs was also created that year. That $13 billion is kick-starting high-speed rail as the first Interstate Highway System construction programs did: States that organized and asked, got the money, and built their segments first. That s the technique President Eisenhower used, pitting one region against another in a competition to get superhighways built. There is, however, a big difference between rail now and highways then: Rail has a well-funded enemy, the oil lobby. It pays experts to issue reports that debunk rail, loudly and dishonestly. Still, America is going forward with high-speed rail, just as we did with the Interstate Highway System a half century ago, and the competition to be first is starting to get hot.

#### Oil lobby opposition shifts the election

The Guardian 1-12-2012 [Suzanne Goldenberg, “Oil Lobby Threatens Obama Over Keystone Pipeline: Here's Just How Much Financial Firepower the Industry Has in Washington”, <http://www.alternet.org/story/153759/oil_lobby_threatens_obama_over_keystone_pipeline%3A_here%27s_just_how_much_financial_firepower_the_industry_has_in_washington>]

New analysis of oil industry contributions to members of Congress has revealed the level of the oil lobby's financial firepower that Barack Obama can expect to face in the November elections if he refuses to approve the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. Obama has until 21 February to make a decision on whether to approve the pipeline, under a compromise tax measure approved late last year. America's top oil lobbyist warned last week that the president would face "huge political consequences" if he did not sign off on the project to pump tar sands crude across the American heartland to refineries on the Texas coast.

### Link – High Speed Rail – AT: Link Turn

#### Even if high speed rail is popular in some areas – that’s not true of a nation-wide project

Business Monitor International 2-9-11 [“New High Speed Funding Plans Likely To Get Short Shrift From Congress”, Lexis Nexis]

Building a high-speed rail network almost from scratch is astronomically expensive, especially in a country the size of the US. It is estimated that to build all ten corridors on the government's wish list, it would cost US$600bn. For this reason, focusing on a couple of high-demand and high-revenue generating lines is the most sensible route to progression. As has happened in Florida and California, the most advanced plans should be top of the list. If funding does get approved, BMI believes that supporting the most viable projects first would provide the best value for money for taxpayers, potentially encouraging more investment and garnering more support both political and popular, for high-speed rail - a mode of transport which remains relatively untested in the US.

### Link – HOV Lanes – Environmentalists Internal

#### High occupancy vehicle lanes are hugely unpopular with environmentalists

Poole and Orski 98 (Robert W. Poole Jr. is director of transportation studies at Reason Public Policy Institute, president of the Reason Foundation, and a long-time transportation policy researcher. A former aerospace engineer, he received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from MIT. C. Kenneth Orski is editor and publisher of Innovations Briefs, a newsletter reporting on new developments and policy issues in the field of transportation. He is the chair of the Institute of Transportation Engineers Task Force on HOT Lanes and is also president of the Urban Mobility Corporation, a Washington-based transportation-consulting firm, which he founded in 1981. In addition to his publishing and consulting activities, Mr. Orski directs MIT’s International Mobility Observatory. That project, which is sponsored by the international automobile industry through the World Economic Forum, documents and assesses global trends in transportation innovation. “HOT Lanes: A Better Way to Attack Urban Highway Congestion,” Regulation 15 Volume 23, No. 1, http://www.cato.org/pubs/regulation/regv23n1/poole.pdf)

Environmentalists Question Benefits HOV lanes also have come under attack from the environmental movement. Although environmentalists played a major role in the push for carpools and HOV lanes three decades ago, many environmentalists have come to view the building of HOV lanes as little more than an excuse for building more roads. Environmentalist critics of HOV lanes say that for every car diverted into a reserved lane another car fills the vacancy, causing more traffic rather than less, higher levels of air pollution, and greater suburban sprawl.

#### Environmentalists are key to Obama’s re-election

Georgia Political Review 2/15 [Alexander Sileo is a junior international affairs and psychology double major. He is a member of advocacy groups such as Amnesty International and Habitat for Humanity. He is also a member of the Roosevelt Institute where he is researching LGBT rights in the United States and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. “Will Key Groups Rally Behind Obama This Election?” February 15, 2012 4:43 pm, http://www.georgiapoliticalreview.com/will-key-groups-rally-behind-obama-this-election/]

In September of last year, Obama shocked environmentalist groups when he chose not to strengthen regulations on ozone standards to prevent air pollution. When announcing the decision, Obama stated that “I have continued to underscore the importance of reducing regulatory burdens and regulatory uncertainty, particularly as our economy continues to recover.” The move won him praise among many industry officials, but environmental groups and health advocates, a base of support for Democratic candidates, were outraged. Obama later handed the environmental lobby a bone with his temporary rejection of the Keystone XL oil pipeline that has fiercely divided business and environmental interests. Proponents argued that the pipeline would help create jobs in the country, but critics pointed to the dependency on dirty fuel sources that negatively affect the environment. In a statement from The White House, Obama announced, “As the State Department made clear last month, the rushed and arbitrary deadline insisted on by Congressional Republicans prevented a full assessment of the pipeline’s impact, especially the health and safety of the American people, as well as our environment.” Obama, however, in the same statement left room for the pipeline to be approved in the future should the State Department have a longer period of time to assess any potentially harmful environmental effects.

### Link – Inland Waterways – Spending

#### Inland waterway projects cost billions and massively misallocate funds

Nicollet Island Coalition ’10 [Group of conservation and environmental organizations formed in 1994 to address restoration issues on the Upper Mississippi River and provide coordinated advocacy work on Upper Mississippi River issues. Coalition partners include the Izaak Walton League of America, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, National Wildlife Federation, Prairie Rivers Network, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Sierra Club, and Taypayers for Common Sense, “Big Price-Little Benefit: Proposed Locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Are not economically Viable”, February 2010, http://www.iwla.org/index.php?ht=a/GetDocumentAction/i/2079]

Figure 8 was taken from a February 2009 Corps presentation to the Inland Waterways User Board on the status of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund. As of 2009, the IWTF had essentially no available surplus funds, and the Corps projects a fund balance near zero through 2013. The Corps-authorized project backlog for IWTF obligated projects is about $17 billion. 36 The proposed new navigation projects for NESP total $2.2 billion, all of which are subject to IWTF funding. Although IWTF is currently unable to make significant contributions to an efficient, long-term schedule for constructing inland waterways navigation projects, barge industry interests have proposed a reduction of their contribution to the IWTF-funded projects from 50 percent to 25 percent. 37 And in the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Congress completely eliminated the IWTF obligation on UMR rehabilitation projects at Lock and Dam 3 and Lock 27. If the industry obligation is reduced, taxpayers would have to fund all or nearly all navigation operations – including maintenance, construction, and rehabilitation – on the U.S. inland waterways system. 38 The first step in establishing an economically viable inland waterways system is for the barge industry to meet its existing requirement to fund at least 50 percent of the cost of infrastructure construction. Without increased funding, the backlog of legitimate IWTF projects cannot proceed in an economical manner. Any solution to this funding shortfall must be resolved in the best interests of the taxpayers. Next, Congress should increase required funding in the IWTF to also cover at least 50 percent of the operation and maintenance costs for the inland waterways navigation system currently shouldered entirely by taxpayers. corps cost estimations One major reason IWTF is depleted is cost overruns on several large lock and dam projects the Corps has been constructing on the Ohio River. 39 The cost estimates and annual escalation factors for the Ohio River projects, as indicated in Table 5, have fallen far short. Actual cost overruns range from 82 percent to more than 205 percent. Similar to the Ohio River projects, Table 6 shows a dramatic increase in estimated costs for the seven new UMR-IWW locks proposed in the Corps’ 2004 NESP Final Report. In just five years, estimates have increased from 34 to 57 percent, an overall average of more than 43 percent. On an annual basis, the average cost estimate increase has been 8.7 percent.

#### That’s unpopular and a key election issue

Huffington Post 7-1

[Ken,“Obama On the Defensive On Government Spending, Debt” Huffington Post http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/27/obama-government-spending-debt\_n\_1548844.html]

Government spending and debt are emerging as a campaign tug-of-war, with Mitt Romney blaming President Barack Obama for a "prairie fire of debt" and Obama calling the charge a "cowpie of distortion." House Speaker John Boehner is talking about a debt ceiling that is still more than eight months away. What gives? In a word, polling. The American public is growing increasingly distressed about government spending and high budgets. The issue now ranks as high on the worry scale as lack of jobs. And it worked well for Republicans in 2010, who galvanized voters with ads and flyers that drew attention to government red ink and took back control of the U.S. House after four years of Democratic rule. Republicans are looking for that magic again. Romney has maintained a drumbeat of criticism over Obama's handling of federal spending and the national debt in recent weeks, forcing the president on the defensive on an issue where public opinion is stacked against him. In Iowa earlier this month, Romney said a "prairie fire of debt" was sweeping across the nation, threatening the country's future. He accused Obama of inflating the debt that he had pledged to reduce and ballooning the federal budget deficit with the 2009 economic stimulus and 2010 health care bill after saying he would cut it sharply. Obama, in campaign events in Colorado, California and Iowa this week, argued that federal spending had slowed to rates not seen in decades after he inherited a $1 trillion large debt and later pushed for $2 trillion in spending cuts. The president pointed to Romney's tax proposal, saying it would give millionaires tax cuts at the expense of the debt. Obama called Romney's claims a "cowpie of distortion" and would saddle the debt with $5 trillion in new tax cuts, likening it to trying to put out "a prairie fire with some gasoline." "What happens is, the Republicans run up the tab, and then we're sitting there and they've left the restaurant," Obama said at a campaign event in Des Moines. "And then they point and (say), `Why did you order all those steaks and martinis?'" Obama's defensive crouch on debt and spending reflect a hard reality: Polls consistently show voters, including sought-after independents, placing more trust in Romney to handle the massive debt. The nation's economy remains a focal point for voters but many remain concerned that years of heavy federal spending on guns and butter could leave the U.S. in a similar position as Greece and other European nations grappling with massive debt. A Gallup/USA Today poll conducted May 10-13 found that overall, 82 percent of Americans called the "federal budget deficit and debt" extremely or very important, a level of interest comparable to unemployment.

### Link – Inland Waterways – Olmsted Module

#### Olmsted Link -

#### Normal means would include funding the Olmsted Lock in Ohio

Dateline Washington 4-26 [Alexander: Bill Will 'Free Up $72 Million for Funding Urgent Needs Such as Reconstruction of Chickamauga Lock' Lexis Nexis]

The office of Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., issued the following news release: U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) today praised the inclusion, in the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2013, of an alternate method of funding for the Olmsted Lock and Dam on the Ohio River, which will allow the Army Corps of Engineers to expand its work on other locks and dams, including Chickamauga Lock: "This bill will free up $72 million for funding urgent needs such as reconstruction of Chickamauga Lock. It was unacceptable to me that Chickamauga Lock could close because of the failure of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, and this is a good first step to better managing the fund." The new funds come as a result of Sen. Alexander's suggestion last month, at a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Energy and Water Subcommittee on the fiscal year 2013 Army Corps of Engineers budget, for a new funding method for the Olmsted Lock on the Ohio River, which has been absorbing the vast majority of the money in the Inland Waterways Trust Fund and limiting funding for maintenance, repair and new construction on the rest of the nation's locks and dams, including Chickamauga Lock. At that hearing, Alexander proposed changing Olmsted Lock's 50-50 cost-share arrangement between waterways users and the Treasury to "something such as 90 percent from the Treasury and 10 percent from the Inland Waterway Trust Fund, so that we could consider other priority projects." Jo-Ellen Darcy, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) replied that under current law the Army Corps is required to follow the 50-50 funding and to change that would require an act of Congress, to which Sen. Alexander noted: "We are in a position to do that." Today's bill will change Olmsted's cost share to 25 percent from the trust fund and 75 percent from the Treasury, freeing up $36 million in trust fund revenues, which, matched with money from the Treasury, will provide an additional $72 million for Inland Waterways projects in fiscal year 2013.

#### And it’s an unpopular boondoggle that gets blamed on the federal government

Buchsbaum 2-23

[Lee, Editor Coal Age.com “LOCKED Out: Aging Locks and Dams Jeopardize Inland Waterways” Coal Age.com http://www.coalage.com/index.php/features/1766-locked-out-aging-locks-and-dams-jeopardize-inland-waterways.html]

Endless foreign wars, endless Federal budget cuts and endless political debates are starting to take a collective toll on the health and viability of our nation’s crumbling infrastructure, once the envy of the world. While most taxpayers are familiar with the limitations of the nation’s highway system, far fewer understand the problems now commonplace along the U.S. inland waterways system. Traversed daily by thousands of barges and tows owned by dozens of operators, industry and government stakeholders are becoming increasingly frustrated as the locks and dams that comprise much of the waterways infrastructure continue to fail at accelerating rates. As funds dry up from the Federal level, it will be left to industry, labor and local governments to shore up the liquid arteries of commerce that bind this nation together. Unique among the network of rivers that make up the U.S. inland waterways, the Ohio River would be considered a major coal river. Hundreds of millions of tons of coal travel through the Ohio River’s many locks and dams annually going from mine to power plant, and increasingly from mine to export facility. As domestic utilities reduce the collective coal burn, now more than 10% of the combined steam and thermal coal produced in the U.S. is heading overseas. With coal traffic patterns changing as a result of this market shift, larger amounts of river-borne coal are seeking new outlets, especially as existing rail-served coal ports become clogged with other traffic. Complicating transit is the fact that many locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi and particularly the Ohio River are ancient, some over a century old, and quite a few are way past their design life. As each day passes, the threat of a significant or catastrophic lock or dam failure becomes more imminent. While America has so far dodged that bullet, the right bolt breaking lose at the wrong time in the wrong place could wreak havoc on coal markets. The Federal Government continues to invest funds in various river improvement projects. Tremendous amounts of money have been tied up for years in one of the biggest boondoggles in modern times: the Olmstead Lock and Dam on the lower Ohio. Initially budgeted at $775 million, projected costs have today climbed to more than $2.1 billion and there’s no end in sight. Moreover, according to the way in which money has been allocated and prioritized, under existing law, dozens of other projects are being held up while Olmstead is “finished.” Meanwhile, the inland waterways become more fragile.

### Link – Keystone Pipeline

#### Keystone is unpopular with environmentalists

PHYS 6-15 [“US begins review of new Keystone pipeline route”, <http://phys.org/news/2012-06-keystone-pipeline-route.html>]

President Barack Obama rejected the initial proposal for the $7 billion pipeline early this year, saying he could not vouch for its safety in time for a deadline despite intense election-year pressure. Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney lashed out at Obama's rejection, saying the incumbent fighting for a second term in November elections "demonstrates a lack of seriousness about bringing down unemployment, restoring economic growth and achieving energy independence." House Republicans also seized on the issue and passed legislation in April mandating construction of the pipeline. In February, TransCanada said it would go ahead with building part of the pipeline between Oklahoma and the Texas coast that does not require US presidential approval. It said work should begin this summer and take about a year. TransCanada then submitted a new permit application in May for the northern portion of the pipeline with a revised route that would avoid Nebraska's environmentally sensitive Sand Hills. The State Department issued a notice of intent Friday that it will prepare an environmental review of the new proposal which would extend from the border crossing at Phillips, Montana to Steele City, Nebraska. It will also review the proposal to determine whether the pipeline will have an impact of historic preservation sites and has invited Indian tribes and other interested parties to comment. Environmentalists fear an accident along the 1,700-mile (2,700-kilometer) pipeline would spell disaster for aquifers in central US Great Plains states. They also oppose the project because exploiting the oil sands requires energy that generate a large volume of greenhouse gases and say a change of the route will not lessen the pipeline's dangers. "Keystone XL is a commitment to dirty fuels and pollution for decades," said Joe Mendelson, director of climate and energy policy at the National Wildlife Federation.

#### Environmentalists are key to Obama’s re-election

Georgia Political Review 2/15 [Alexander Sileo is a junior international affairs and psychology double major. He is a member of advocacy groups such as Amnesty International and Habitat for Humanity. He is also a member of the Roosevelt Institute where he is researching LGBT rights in the United States and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. “Will Key Groups Rally Behind Obama This Election?” February 15, 2012 4:43 pm, http://www.georgiapoliticalreview.com/will-key-groups-rally-behind-obama-this-election/]

In September of last year, Obama shocked environmentalist groups when he chose not to strengthen regulations on ozone standards to prevent air pollution. When announcing the decision, Obama stated that “I have continued to underscore the importance of reducing regulatory burdens and regulatory uncertainty, particularly as our economy continues to recover.” The move won him praise among many industry officials, but environmental groups and health advocates, a base of support for Democratic candidates, were outraged. Obama later handed the environmental lobby a bone with his temporary rejection of the Keystone XL oil pipeline that has fiercely divided business and environmental interests. Proponents argued that the pipeline would help create jobs in the country, but critics pointed to the dependency on dirty fuel sources that negatively affect the environment. In a statement from The White House, Obama announced, “As the State Department made clear last month, the rushed and arbitrary deadline insisted on by Congressional Republicans prevented a full assessment of the pipeline’s impact, especially the health and safety of the American people, as well as our environment.” Obama, however, in the same statement left room for the pipeline to be approved in the future should the State Department have a longer period of time to assess any potentially harmful environmental effects.

### Link – Keystone Pipeline – XT: Environmentalists

#### Keystone Unpopular

New York Times 3-22 [“Keystone XL Pipeline”, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/k/keystone\_pipeline/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=Keystone%20XL%20pipeline&st=cse]

Keystone XL is a proposed $7 billion pipeline that would run nearly 2,000 miles to connect Canada’s oil sands to refineries around Houston and the Gulf of Mexico that are designed to handle the heavy crude that the sands produce. It would be the longest oil pipeline outside of Russia and China, and has become a potent symbol in a growing fight that pits energy security against environmental risk. It would be able to carry more than half a million barrels a day. The proposal requires President Obama’s approval because it crosses an international border. Opposition from environmentalists and officials along parts of the pipeline route, combined with a Republican measure forcing Mr. Obama to make a decision sooner than he wished, led to at least a temporary rejection of the project.

#### Keystone angers environmentalists and splits Obama’s base

New York Times 3-22 [“Keystone XL Pipeline”, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/k/keystone\_pipeline/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=Keystone%20XL%20pipeline&st=cse]

Keystone has been mired in politics for years, with opponents and supporters of the project each claiming to represent the people of Nebraska, which sits in the center of the proposed expansion. Supporters portray the state as universally in love with the project, while opponents say the state’s residents validate their own dislike of it. The truth is somewhere in between. TransCanada initially proposed a route that would cross the Sand Hills and Ogallala Aquifer. Many Nebraskans — including Gov. Dave Heineman, a Republican, and some members of the state’s Congressional delegation — resisted that plan even though the State Department, which has jurisdiction over the project, found it acceptable after extensive review. Late in 2011, Mr. Heineman called a special session of the Legislature that resulted in a law requiring the new Keystone XL route to be constructed away from the Sand Hills. TransCanada agreed, but the Obama administration, facing continued protests from environmental groups, said it would delay a decision on the new route until after the election. House Republicans pushed back, using an amendment to the payroll tax holiday extension bill in December 2011 to require that the administration make a faster decision while allowing the Nebraska reroute to proceed. Mr. Obama responded by rejecting the TransCanada application. For Republicans, the pipeline is a political trifecta. It unites most of their party and divides the Democrats. It is also fairly easy to explain to voters, and it hits on the key concerns of many Americans: jobs, energy independence and fear of economic competition with China, which Republicans have said will be the recipient of the Canadian oil without the Keystone plan.

### Link – License Tag Fees

#### Constituents will backlash over license tag fees – no political support

High Point Enterprise 11 (“SPEED BUMP: Fee controversy colors mass transit budget debate,” by Paul B. Johnson, 13 months ago, High Point Enterprise, http://www.hpe.com/view/full\_story/13230366/article-SPEED-BUMP--Fee-controversy-colors-mass-transit-budget-debate)

GREENSBORO – The board of trustees for the region’s mass transit agency is struggling to find a politically acceptable route to sustain funding in the wake of public blowback against a recent proposal to assess a $3 fee on vehicle license tag registrations in the Triad. The Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation faces a fiscal crossroads as the agency seeks sources of revenue to keep its black and red buses rolling across the Piedmont. At its meeting Wednesday, the PART board voted to cut and adjust routes in several counties, including Randolph and Davidson. The trustees also discussed the level of fare increases to institute and generate more revenue for PART. The board held a public hearing last month on a proposal to raise a full fare by 50 cents, but now will hold another public hearing June 8 on the possibility of raising fare rates higher. Some PART riders have indicated they would pay higher fares to sustain PART. The public hearing will be part of the PART meeting at 8:30 a.m. in the meeting room at 7800 Airport Center Drive in Greensboro. One proposal that hasn’t gotten traction – according to members of the PART board who are elected officials from the region – is the idea of assessing an extra $3 license tag fee on motorists in five Piedmont counties. The counties are Guilford, Davidson, Randolph, Surry and Forsyth. PART trustees were candid in saying the proposal has generated backlash from constituents opposed to paying extra for a license tag to secure a steady stream of funding for PART. High Point Mayor Becky Smothers, a PART trustee, said she doesn’t see political support for the fee.

### Link – Parking Taxes

#### Parking taxes are politically unpopular

CLF 10 (“BLUERIBBON SUMMIT ON FINANCING THE MBTA AND RTAS: OPTIONS PAPERS,” Northeastern University Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy and the Conservative Law Foundation, November 1, 2010, http://nuweb9.neu.edu/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/BlueRibbon\_Options.pdf)

Disadvantages of this Policy Option: • Legislation would be required to authorize local imposition of parking fees • Taxing parking may be politically unpopular at both the state and local level • Revenue potential cannot easily be calculated because the number of parking spaces is unknown • While one of the benefits of parking fees/taxes is the ability to tailor the charges to geography and the market, that fine grain approach requires very careful work at the local level and municipalities may not have the resources available to conduct such an analysis • Particularly if the tax is based on the parking spaces (rather than the price charged), a good inventory would be required in order to impose and later enforce parking taxes; such inventories do not commonly exist in Massachusetts • Even if cities and towns choose to tax parking, they may want to use the revenues for purposes other than support for transit.

#### Parking taxes are unpopular with the public – seen as government trying to drain people of more money

Chicago Tribune 8/17 (Jon Hilkevitch’s Getting Around, “Parking solutions don’t have to be taxing San Francisco’s ‘smart parking’ experiment could offer model for Chicago,” October 17, 2011, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-10-17/classified/ct-met-getting-around-1017-20111017\_1\_parking-solutions-parking-tax-spaces)

But Chicago’s parking tax, as structured, would likely prove unpopular with many drivers who will see it as a move by the city to extract more money from people coming downtown to work and for entertainment. The suspicion will be reinforced if the congestion tax on parkers fails to improve traffic, reduce double parking or cut down on drivers circling downtown blocks looking for on-street parking. A genuine congestion-pricing component in which fees can be increased and decreased based on the supply and demand of parking would produce better results, experts said. "I think it was a mistake for Chicago to privatize parking meters without including a flexible pricing goal in the contract," said Donald Shoup, an urban planning professor at UCLA and author of the book "The High Price of Free Parking," which argues that public parking is generally underpriced and detrimental to cities. "If the meter rate is too low, there are no empty spaces and people drive around creating an environmental mess," Shoup said. "Meter rates that are too high contribute to cities losing jobs and businesses losing customers." The goal is to achieve an 85 percent occupancy rate for parking on streets, in garages and in lots, Shoup said. It's the equivalent of about one vacant space on every block or on each section of a parking garage or parking lot, he said.

#### Parking taxes spark a backlash from the business sector – bad for economic development

Goldin 10 [Pete Goldin is PW’s Technology Editor, May 1, 2010, “Montreal Implements Controversial New Parking Tax,” Parking World, http://www.parkingworld.com/articledetails.php?id=80]

On February 4, the Coalition pour une véritable métropole, comprised of six associations with a stake in Montreal’s economic development, announced that they oppose the parking tax in favor of alternatives such as a gasoline tax. “We are concerned about the effect of the new tax imposed on downtown parking,” says Jean Laramée, Board chairman of the Institut de développement urbain du Québec (IDU). “By sharply increasing the tax burden of businesses and residents, this budget is hobbling a still fragile economy.” Opponents also say that the tax will discourage consumers and businesses from using commercial and cultural offerings in the downtown area. “The parking tax is totally going to kill downtown Montreal,” says Girard, “because there is competition in the suburbs which is very close to downtown – a brand new shopping mall that has all the stores you can find downtown, and the parking is free.” Girard says Montreal is already seeing a migration to the suburbs, stating that downtown parking occupancy is 25% less compared to a year ago. He contends that the increase in parking costs triggered by the tax will only make the situation worse. In addition, Girard asserts that the tax will increase monthly parking rates by $20 to $40 per month, and this could force small businesses to relocate to suburban office buildings where parking is free.

### Link – Port Security

#### Port security is politically unpopular

Haveman & Shatz 6. Jon D. Haveman, research fellow @ Public Policy Institute of California. Ph.D in Economics-University of Michigan. Howard J. Shatz, senior economist at RAND corporation. 2006 “Protecting the Nation’s Seaports: Balancing Security and Cost.”[http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/r\_606jhr.pdf]

The second constraint is related to the first: Political incentives to take action in port security are weak. From a politician’s point of view, port security emergency response planning is the worst of all worlds: It requires extremely high up-front costs for benefits that will be realized only in the future—most likely when the official is already out of office—or perhaps never. In addition, making homeland security policy requires making tough choices about where to dedicate limited resources. These are exactly the kinds of choices many politicians try to avoid. When such choices cannot be avoided, longer-term planning usually takes a back seat to shorter-term gains. Consider, for example, a mayor who must decide whether to dedicate additional police officers to lowering the crime rate or enhancing counterterrorism surveillance at the port. Any politician with a reasonably developed sense of selfpreservation focuses on crime and leaves port security for another day. Moreover, even within the area of homeland security, electoral incentives create sub-optimal policy outcomes. The natural impulse of any elected official is to focus on issues of greatest concern to constituents. This sounds good in theory. The problem is that it works poorly in practice. Most California citizens are concerned about terrorism, but few have visited the port complex or worry about its security, and fewer still pay close attention to the details of how elected officials handle the arcane details of CERT training or cross-agency coordination. Instead, since the September 11 attacks, the public and the press have focused their concern on higher-visibility targets such as LAX and the security of local drinking water supplies. The misplaced allocation of homeland security dollars can be seen at every level of government. In December 2004, former DHS Inspector General Clark Kent Ervin articulated this in a report titled “Major Management Challenges Facing the Department of Homeland Security.”

### Link – Public Transportation – Suburban Voters

#### Suburban voters hate public transport

Schneider 1992 (William, Political Journalist at the Atlantic, “The Suburban Century Begins,” <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/politics/ecbig/schnsub.htm>)

There is a reason why people want to be confined to their houses and their cars. They want a secure and controlled environment. Suburban commuters show a determined preference for private over public transportation. Automobiles may not be efficient, but they give people a sense of security and control. With a car you can go anywhere you want, anytime you want, in the comfort of your own private space.

### Link – Transportation

#### New transportation spending is unpopular – voters like fiscal conservatism

PBS 10 (“Rail politics: The choices for voters — spend or save our way out of the recession,” By Tom McNamara, October 28, 2010, http://www.pbs.org/wnet/need-to-know/the-daily-need/rail-politics-the-choice-for-voters-spend-or-save-our-way-out-of-the-recession/4589/)

After making headlines for weeks, yesterday New Jersey Governor Chris Christie made it official: He’s killing the commuter rail tunnel between Manhattan and New Jersey. The project is too expensive, he says, and his state doesn’t have the money to cover its share of the costs. The demise of the largest public works project in decades illustrates the stark political choice many voters will make next week: either spend our way out of the recession with big projects like high-speed trains and tunnels or save our way out with good old fashioned belt-tightening. Christie made his choice clear last week with a childhood story: “In our house, when I used to go to my mother and say, ‘I’d like something new, I’d like to buy something.’ My mother would look at me and say, ‘Well, of course, Christopher, you can have that, just go in the back yard and take the money off the money tree. You know where that is, right?’” The New Jersey governor is only in his first year of office and not up for reelection, yet he has been crisscrossing the country this election season endorsing Republican candidates and preaching his wildly popular brand of fiscal conservatism. In closing the story of Christopher and the money tree, he made a connection to the unchecked spending he sees today: “There is no money tree in Washington, D.C. … To me it is a moral imperative to say no to these things.” Does Chris Christie have his finger on the country’s pulse? Nearly two years after an economic stimulus steeped in infrastructure building promises and $787 billion in government spending, Americans by and large have had enough. In a September 2010 Rasmussen poll, 61 percent of U.S. voters said cutting government spending and deficits would do more to create jobs than President Obama’s call last month for $50 billion more in infrastructure spending, what’s being dubbed” stimulus part two.”

#### New transportation spending is unpopular – public concern over national debt

Freemark 11 (“Understanding the Republican Party’s Reluctance to Invest in Transit Infrastructure,” by Yonah Freemark, Journalist at The Atlantic Cities, Strategic Initiatives Fellow at MTA New York City, Transit Urban Fellow at The Next American City, Education @ Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Yale University, The Transport Politic, http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2011/01/25/understanding-the-republican-partys-reluctance-to-invest-in-transit-infrastructure/)

Late last week, a group of more than 165 of the most conservative members of the House of Representatives, the Republican Study Committee, released a report that detailed an agenda to reduce federal spending by $2.5 trillion over ten years. Spurred on by increasing public concern about the mounting national debt, the group argues that the only choice is to make huge, painful cuts in government programs. With the House now in the hands of the Republican Party, these suggestions are likely to be seriously considered. Transportation policy is prominent on the group’s list, no matter President Obama’s call for investments in the nation’s transportation infrastructure, expected to be put forward in tonight’s state of the union address. Not only would all funding for Amtrak be cut, representing about $1.5 billion a year, but the Obama Administration’s nascent high-speed rail program would be stopped in its tracks. A $150 million commitment to Washington’s Metro system would evaporate. Even more dramatically, the New Starts program, which funds new rail and bus capital projects at a cost of $2 billion a year, would simply disappear. In other words, the Republican group suggests that all national government aid for the construction of new rail or bus lines, intercity and intra-city, be eliminated.

#### Transportation projects push exurban and suburban voters towards the GOP

Freemark 11 (“Understanding the Republican Party’s Reluctance to Invest in Transit Infrastructure,” by Yonah Freemark, Journalist at The Atlantic Cities, Strategic Initiatives Fellow at MTA New York City, Transit Urban Fellow at The Next American City, Education @ Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Yale University, The Transport Politic, http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2011/01/25/understanding-the-republican-partys-reluctance-to-invest-in-transit-infrastructure/)

This pattern is not a coincidence. The Democratic Party holds most of its power in the nation’s cities, whereas the GOP retains greater strength in the exurbs and rural areas. The two parties generally fight it out over the suburbs. In essence, the base of the two parties is becoming increasingly split in spatial terms: The Democrats’ most vocal constituents live in cities, whereas the Republicans’ power brokers would never agree to what some frame as a nightmare of tenements and light rail. What does this mean? When there is a change in political power in Washington, the differences on transportation policy and other urban issues between the parties reveal themselves as very stark. Republicans in the House of Representatives know that very few of their constituents would benefit directly from increased spending on transit, for instance, so they propose gutting the nation’s commitment to new public transportation lines when they enter office. Starting two years ago, Democrats pushed the opposite agenda, devoting billions to urban-level projects that would have been impossible under the Bush Administration. Highway funding, on the other hand, has remained relatively stable throughout, and that’s no surprise, either: The middle 50% of congressional districts, representing about half of the American population, features populations that live in neighborhoods of low to moderate densities, fully reliant on cars to get around. It is only in the densest sections of the country that transit (or affordable housing, for instance) is even an issue — which is why it appears to be mostly of concern to the Democratic Party. Republicans in the House for the most part do not have to answer to voters who are interested in improved public transportation. This situation, of course, should be of significant concern to those who would advocate for better transit. To put matters simply, few House Republicans have any electoral reason to promote such projects, and thus, for the most part they don’t. But that produces a self-reinforcing loop; noting the lack of GOP support for urban needs, city voters push further towards the Democrats. And sensing that the Democratic Party is a collection of urbanites, those from elsewhere push away. It’s hard to know how to reverse this problem.

Transportation infrastructure gets linked to controversial environmental proposals—hurts Obama politically.

Cooper 1-25 [Donna, senior fellow at American progress “Will Congress Block Infrastructure Spending? President Obama’s Defeat Is More Important than Job Creation” http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/01/infrastructure\_sotu.html)

 But bipartisanship isn’t always what it seems, especially when it comes to infrastructure. In 2011 Republicans in the House and Senate unveiled a new strategy that linked new infrastructure investments with divisive environmental proposals. They know this linkage is unacceptable to the president, Senate Democrats, and most of the American public. Yet congressional Republicans are making this push so they can block movement to create jobs and rebuild our infrastructure while sounding like they are in favor of policies that do both. This is a serious claim, but the evidence is clear. In the past year, instead of rolling up their sleeves and drafting long-term highway and aviation spending bills, the House leadership cranked out a package of bills that include measures to weaken clean water and clean air protections and to restrict union organizing. They disingenuously called this a "jobs package."

#### Transportation infrastructure perceived as wasteful spending—most Americans don’t benefit

WSJ 4-15 (“Why Your Highway Has Potholes”, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303815404577333631864470566.html?mod=WSJ\_Opinion\_LEADTop)

Nothing shows off the worst of Congress like a highway bill. And this year's scramble for cash is worse than ever because the 18.4 cent a gallon gasoline tax will raise $70 billion less than the $263 billion Congress wants to spend over the next five years. Let the mayhem ensue. The Senate has passed a two-year $109 billion bill sponsored by Barbara Boxer of California that bails out the highway trust fund with general revenues, including some $12 billion for such nonessentials as the National Endowment for the Oceans and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The bill requires little or no reform. The prevailing Senate view is the more concrete that gets poured, the more jobs back home. So more "shovel-ready" nonstimulus. House Republicans oppose the Senate version amid a $1.3 trillion deficit and have their own bill to give states more flexibility—though still not enough—on how to spend transportation dollars. Congress had to pass a temporary 90-day extension of highway funding through June 30 because the two sides can't agree. What's missing is any new thinking. Clear evidence of inefficient transportation spending comes from a new Treasury study estimating that traffic gridlock costs motorists more than $100 billion a year in delays and wasted gas. In cities like Los Angeles, commuters waste the equivalent of two extra weeks every year in traffic jams. This congestion could be alleviated by building more highway lanes where they are most needed and using market-based pricing—such as tolls—for using roads during peak travel times. That makes too much sense for Washington. In a typical year only about 65 cents of every gas tax dollar is spent on roads and highways. The rest is intercepted by the public transit lobby and Congressional earmarkers. Then there are the union wages that pad the cost of all federal projects. The New York Times reported in 2010 that 8,074 Metropolitan Transportation Authority employees made $100,000 or more in 2009 even as the system loses money. Transit is the biggest drain. Only in New York, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. does public transit account for more than 5% of commuter trips. Even with a recent 2.3% gain in bus and rail use due to high gas prices, public transit still accounts for a mere 2% of all inner-city trips and closer to 1% outside of New York. Since 1982 government mass-transit subsidies have totaled $750 billion (in today's dollars), yet the share of travelers using transit has fallen by nearly one-third, according to Heritage Foundation transportation expert Wendell Cox. Federal data indicate that in 2010 in most major cities more people walked to work or telecommuted than used public transit. Brookings Institution economist Cliff Winston finds that "the cost of building rail systems is notorious for exceeding expectations, while ridership levels tend to be much lower than anticipated." He calculates that the only major U.S. rail system in which the benefits outweigh the government subsidies is San Francisco's BART, and no others are close to break-even. One reason roads are shortchanged is that liberals believe too many Americans drive cars. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has been pushing a strange "livability" agenda, which he defines as "being able to take your kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, drop by the grocery or post office, go out to dinner and a movie, and play with your kids in a park, all without having to get in your car." This is the mind of the central planner at work, imagining that Americans all want to live in his little utopia. The current scheme also creates giant inequities. Politically powerful cities get a big chunk of the money, while many Western and Southern states get less back than they pay in. But why should people in Akron, Ohio or Casper, Wyoming have to pay gas taxes to finance the New York subway or light rail in Denver? One reason there is so much overspending on inefficient urban transit is that federal matching dollars require residents in other states to foot up to half the bill. The best solution would be to return all the gas tax money to the states, roughly in proportion to the money each pays in. This would allow states and localities to determine which roads and transit projects they really need—and are willing to pay for. California could decide for itself if it wants more roads, whether it can afford high-speed rail, and whether it wants to use congestion-pricing on crowded roads. The House Transportation Committee has found that getting a permit for a new road costs twice as much, and takes three times as long, when federal money is included than when financed with private or local dollars. Less federal control would also allow states to lure billions of dollars of private financing for new roads, which experts like Mr. Winston believe is the next big thing in transportation financing but is now generally prohibited. One of the worst features of Ms. Boxer's Senate bill is that she would exacerbate the funding shortage by adding new penalties if states leverage private dollars to build new toll roads and bridges. The Senate's highway-fund bailout will only perpetuate the spending misallocation that has contributed to traffic nightmares. It will also run up the deficit. If Congress really wants to enhance the livability of cities and suburbs, it will pass a highway bill that builds more roads.

### Link – User Fees/Taxes

#### No public support for increased transportation user fees and taxes

Dill and Weinstein 07 (J. Dill, Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning, and A. Weinstein, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, San Jose State University, Transport Policy 14 (2007) 346–356, “How to pay for transportation? A survey of public preferences in California,”)

Another outcome of legislative reluctance to raise fees and taxes that generate transportation revenues has been that legislators have put any potential revenue measure before the voters, as a ballot proposition. Analysts, in response, must seek to recommend options that not only have strong public support, but also are desirable in terms of their equity, ability to generate stable revenue streams, and capacity to encourage environmentally responsible choices by the traveling public. Thus, the transportation profession needs to develop a better understanding of how the public perceives a wide range of different revenue options.

### Link – AT: Link Turn

#### Even if voters support transportation improvements, they don’t want to pay for it

Rockefeller foundation 5-22 (“The Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey: Findings from a national survey of registered voters, conducted byHart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies” Feb 14 2011 [http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/uploads/files/80e28432-0790-4d42-91ec-afb6d11febee.pdf accessed tm 5/22/12](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/uploads/files/80e28432-0790-4d42-91ec-afb6d11febee.pdf%20accessed%20tm%205/22/12))

Even with a highly polarized electorate that remains steadfast in its belief that things in the nation are off on the wrong track there is wide agreement—across the partisan spectrum—that leaders in Washington should be seeking common ground. Nowhere is this more true than legislation related to the country’s transportation infrastructure. Indeed, two in three voters say that making improvements in infrastructure is very important, and most voters say that in its current state the nation’s transportation system is barely adequate. Voters seek better and safer roads and more public transportation options, widely agreeing that the United States would benefit from an expanded and improved public transportation system. Moreover, few believe that current government spending in this area is efficient and wise, and voters welcome a range of reforms in how transportation projects are financed. At the same time, as is the case with many spending-related issues today, voters are unwilling to personally pay for additional funding of national transportation projects. While wide support exists for encouraging more private investment, imposing penalties on over-budget projects, and establishing a National Infrastructure Bank, there is very little support for increasing the federal gas tax or increasing tolls on interstate highways and bridges.

#### Even if the plan is popular, its inability to convince rural and suburban voters of its indirect benefits to them means they still lose their votes

Freemark 11 (“Time to Fight,” Yonah Freemark, Journalist at The Atlantic Cities, Strategic Initiatives Fellow at MTA New York City, Transit Urban Fellow at The Next American City, Education @ Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Yale University, The Transport Politic, http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2012/02/06/time-to-fight/)

Whatever the reason, in the long-term, it is hard to envision reversing the continued growth of the GOP’s strident opposition to sustainable transportation investments in the House. As I have documented, density of population correlates strongly and positively with the Democratic Party vote share in Congressional elections; the result has been that the House Republicans have few electoral reasons to articulate policies that benefit cities. Those who believe in the importance of a sane transportation policy need to make more of an effort to advance a sane transportation politics to residents of suburban and rural areas, who also benefit from efforts to improve environmental quality, mobility alternatives, and congestion relief, but perhaps are not yet convinced of that fact. Doing so would encourage politicians hoping for votes outside of the city core — Democratic or Republican — to promote alternatives to the all-highways meme that currently rules the GOP in the House. In the face of such actions, it becomes imperative in the short term not only to ramp up citizen opposition to the defunding of transit and associated programs, but also to full-throatily endorse those leaders who will stand up to fight. Not working for their election in the fall risks policies like those being advanced in the House being passed by an acquiescent Senate and signed by a future president. Such actions would put in question the potential improvement of existing programs and turn back on the policy strides that must be made to contest the vision some have of an all-automobile America.

### Link – AT: Transpo Bill Popular

#### The last transportation bill wasn’t popular – it was a desperation move

Everett and Snyder 6/29 [Burgess and Synder, Politico, “Transportation Bill Gets Congressional Approval” Web. <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0612/78032.html>]

The massive majorities by which the package passed — 373-52 in the House and 74-19 in the Senate – do not capture the weeks of wrangling ahead of the votes. The bill was in doubt until the last minute, with current transportation policy set to expire. The bill also capped federal student loan interest rates, which were expected to jump on Sunday. And it extended federal flood insurance programs. “Any of the amendments were to kill the bill. And I couldn’t let that happen,” Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) told POLITICO of overcoming objections from Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who wanted the upper chamber to have more time to read the bill. Lawmakers from both parties and chambers say the bill is imperfect, but most agree it represents an improvement over current policy. House Republicans dropped insistence on including the Keystone XL pipeline and other environmental provisions as the Senate Democrats moved toward the House position on environmental streamlining and dropped funds for conservation. “Nobody likes the bill. But we’ve got to have a bill,” one GOP lawmaker told POLITICO. And Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.), who along with other House Democratic negotiators withheld signatures on the conference report over complaints of being frozen out of the information pipeline, said he and others “reluctantly” voted for the bill.

#### The transportation bill is not a long-term solution – it just preserves the status quo

Freemark 11 (“Congress Passes Major Transportation Bill, Preserving the Status Quo,” Yonah Freemark, Journalist at The Atlantic Cities, Strategic Initiatives Fellow at MTA New York City, Transit Urban Fellow at The Next American City, Education @ Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Yale University, The Transport Politic, http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2012/07/01/congress-passes-major-transportation-bill-preserving-the-status-quo/)

MAP-21 replaces SAFETEA-LU, the last long-term federal transportation bill, which expired in 2009; in the meantime, we have seen extension after extension of that law and a seemingly never-ending set of grueling disagreements about the future of mobility policy in the U.S. that revealed stark partisan differences about the role of the federal government in directing the construction and maintenance of the nation’s road and transit systems. There have been points in this debate when the chances of a bill passing — any bill other than an extension — seemed close to nil. Democrats have demonstrated a sincere interest in expanding the amount spent on new transportation capital, especially in high-speed rail and transit, as illustrated by President Obama’s proposal in early 2011 for a $556 billion, six-year bill. Republicans, meanwhile, have argued for constraining the amount spent on highways to revenues collected from fuel taxes — and abandoning efforts to expand funding for sustainable mobility. But ultimately the two sides have similar goals: To maintain existing transportation funding without increasing taxes to pay for them; in other words, to preserve the status quo.

## Impacts

### Impact – Afghanistan

#### Romney would expand the war in Afghanistan indefinitely – causes overstretch and insecurity in Asia and Middle East

Stokes 2012 (Jacob, Policy Analyst at National Security Network, “Romney’s Afghanistan Plan Comes into Focus,” <http://www.democracyarsenal.org/2012/01/romneys-afghanistan-plan-comes-into-focus.html>)

It seems fair now to assume that Romney’s position on Afghanistan as explained lately and in his campaign documents and official foreign policy speeches represents his actual position, despite equivocations to the contrary. In those places, Romney has laid out several firm strategic principles. Let’s look at each of them and draw conclusions. After all, as Romney has said, “The commander in chief also has to be the educator in chief and has to communicate to the American people why he is making the decisions he’s making.” Principle 1: The Taliban—not just al Qaeda and international terrorism—must be completely crushed. Romney’s first strategic principle is that the mission in Afghanistan includes the total defeat of the Taliban, not just the end of international terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. In his Citadel speech, Romney asked, “In Afghanistan, after the United States and NATO have withdrawn all forces, will the Taliban find a path back to power? After over a decade of American sacrifice in treasure and blood, will the country sink back into the medieval terrors of fundamentalist rule and the mullahs again open a sanctuary for terrorists?” Romney explained that, “I will order a full review of our transition to the Afghan military to secure that nation’s sovereignty from the tyranny of the Taliban.” Romney’s foreign policy white paper also says the U.S. goal in Afghanistan is military defeat of the Taliban or at least an Afghan army that can hold them off. “He will order a full interagency assessment of our military and assistance presence in Afghanistan to determine the level required to secure our gains and to train Afghan forces to the point where they can protect the sovereignty of Afghanistan from the tyranny of the Taliban.” Principle 2: No talks with the Taliban until they stop fighting. The second strategic principle, articulated Monday night, is no talks with the Taliban. As Romney said then, “The right course for America is not to negotiate with the Taliban while the Taliban are killing our soldiers. The right course is to recognize they’re the enemy of the United States. It’s the vice president [Joe Biden] who said they’re not the enemy of the United States. The vice president’s wrong. They are the enemy. They’re killing American soldiers.” Principle 3: The Obama administration’s withdrawal policy is too fast. The third strategic principle is that the current plan for withdrawing ISAF forces is too fast. This is what Romney means when he says that he would listen to the “commanders on the ground” and slow the withdrawal going into 2014. (For an explanation of why this particular construct is misguided, see here and here.) Given these strategic principles, the promised review by a future President Romney would, almost by definition, require the U.S., to increase troop numbers in Afghanistan and to commit them to stay there indefinitely – call it a “Romney surge.” With no talks on the horizon and a U.S. commitment to their total defeat—combined with the safety of a haven in Pakistan—the Taliban would have strong incentive to keep fighting and no incentive to renounce al Qaeda and international terrorism. More broadly, increasing the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan would continue add stress to our defense budgets and require a larger force or lower troop numbers in Asia or the Middle East. The rebalancing of U.S. foreign policy would stop in its tracks. It’s time to recognize that, despite his equivocations, Mitt Romney has the outlines of an Afghanistan policy. The media and pundits should take the candidate as his word, follow the strategic outlines he’s established to their logical conclusions and hold the candidate accountable. Right now, those strategic principles augur a forever war in Afghanistan, one that differs from John McCain’s “100 years war” in Iraq only because Romney hasn’t put a figure on his. We know what Romney thinks. Now he needs to make the case for why that’s in the American national security interest.

#### Obliterates American primacy

Pyne, 9 - Vice Chair of the Utah State Legislative Compensation Commission and Vice President of the Association of the United States Army's Utah chapter and a Vice President of the Salt Lake Total Force Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (David, “Obama failing our troops in Afghanistan,” 11/7, http://westernfrontamerica.com/2009/11/07/obama-failing-troops-afghanistan/)

Since we invaded Iraq six and a half years ago and Afghanistan eight years ago, we have lost nearly 7,000 American soldiers and contractors killed in action with tens of thousands more severely wounded at the cost of a trillion dollars thus far. October has been the single deadliest month for US forces since the war began. It shouldn’t take a military strategist to realize that after fighting a war for over eight years without any real idea how to win, it might be time to consider a drastic change in strategy. This should include a sober assessment of the cost/benefit analysis of staying and fighting at a rising cost in American blood and treasure versus conserving our military strength and bringing our troops home to defend America from terrorist attack. The Soviets fought an eight year long war in Afghanistan before finally realizing that victory was not a possibility in a conflict which some say began a chain of events that resulted in the collapse of the Evil Empire thanks to Reagan’s support of proxy forces against the Soviet invaders. If the Soviet Union could not win after eight years of fighting in Afghanistan, what makes our leaders think that we can? The longer we keep large numbers of our troops fighting no-win counterinsurgency wars of attrition in Iraq and Afghanistan, the weaker and more vulnerable we will become to the point where eventually the American Empire, as some call it, may decline precipitously or perhaps even collapse altogether. Worse yet, America’s increasing military weakness highlighted further by Obama’s ongoing demolition of our nuclear deterrent might invite a catastrophic attack from our from our Sino-Russian alliance enemies. Already some of our retired generals have stated that they believe our Army and Marine Corps ground forces have been broken by their over-deployment in the desert sands of Iraq and Afghanistan. If the Soviet Union could not win after eight years of fighting in Afghanistan, what makes our leaders think that we can? The longer we keep large numbers of our troops bogged down fighting two no-win counterinsurgency wars of attrition in Iraq and Afghanistan, the weaker and more vulnerable we will become to the point where eventually the American Empire, as some call it, may decline precipitously or perhaps even collapse altogether. Worse yet, America’s increasing military weakness highlighted further by Obama’s ongoing demolition of our nuclear deterrent, might invite a catastrophic attack from our from our Sino-Russian alliance enemies. Already some of our retired generals have stated that they believe our Army and Marine Corps ground forces have been broken by their over-deployment in the desert sands of Iraq and Afghanistan. This high tempo of deployments has resulted in much of our military equipment to break down while procurement and readiness are at their lowest levels over the past quarter century. Our national security always suffers when we get bogged down in wars where our troops are asked to bleed and die, but are not permitted by our political leaders to win. Our brave soldiers should never be allowed to sacrifice in this way without the hope of victory! The best way to support our troops is to bring them home to their families and make a commitment that we will not let a week go by without thanking a soldier for their willingness to risk life and limb to defend us all. What is it going to take to get our political leaders to realize that the costs of staying and fighting the long war in Iraq and Afghanistan greatly outweigh the costs of redeploying out of theater? The same voices we hear calling for us to send another 40,000 to 100,000 troops to Afghanistan are the ones that would have called for us to keep surging and fighting in Vietnam in perpetuity at the cost of hundreds of thousands of our soldiers lives. It didn’t make sense to do that then and it doesn’t make sense to do so now. Ronald Reagan won the Cold War against the Evil Soviet Empire in part by employing proxies to fight and win our battles for us. We need to learn from Reagan and re-employ a strategy of arming and supporting proxies both states and insurgent movements to fight our wars so our troops don’t have to. America needs to conserve its military strength for a time when we they may be called upon to fight great power enemies, not waste it bogged down fighting Vietnams in the desert as we have been doing the past several years. Until we do, we will remain in a state of imperial overstretch and strategic paralysis with no reserve forces to fight new hypothetical wars of necessity and with a continuing window of vulnerability which our enemies will undoubtedly continue to exploit. North Korea has already been exploiting our window of vulnerability with their ongoing nuclear missile buildup as has the Islamic Republic of Iran is doing with its near imminent development of weaponized nukes. Even Russia has done so with their invasion of US-ally Georgia this past year.

#### Hegemony key to de-escalate conflict – collapse causes multiple hotspots to escalate – causes global nuclear war

Kagan 12 – Senior Fellow @ the Brookings Institution, Robert, The importance of U.S. military might shouldn’t be underestimated, Washington Post, 2-2, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-importance-of-us-military-might-shouldnt-be-underestimated/2012/02/02/gIQAX5pVlQ_story.html>

These are sensible arguments. Power takes many forms, and it’s smart to make use of all of them. But there is a danger in taking this wisdom too far and forgetting just how important U.S. military power has been in building and sustaining the present liberal international order. That order has rested significantly on the U.S. ability to provide security in parts of the world, such as Europe and Asia, that had known endless cycles of warfare before the arrival of the United States. The world’s free-trade, free-market economy has depended on America’s ability to keep trade routes open, even during times of conflict. And the remarkably wide spread of democracy around the world owes something to America’s ability to provide support to democratic forces under siege and to protect peoples from dictators such as Moammar Gaddafi and Slobodan Milosevic. Some find it absurd that the United States should have a larger military than the next 10 nations combined. But that gap in military power has probably been the greatest factor in upholding an international system that, in historical terms, is unique — and uniquely beneficial to Americans. Nor should we forget that this power is part of what makes America attractive to many other nations. The world has not always loved America. During the era of Vietnam and Watergate and the ugly last stand of segregationists, America was often hated. But nations that relied on the United States for security from threatening neighbors tended to overlook the country’s flaws. In the 1960s, millions of young Europeans took to the streets to protest American “imperialism,” while their governments worked to ensure that the alliance with the United States held firm. Soft power, meanwhile, has its limits. No U.S. president has enjoyed more international popularity than Woodrow Wilson did when he traveled to Paris to negotiate the treaty ending World War I. He was a hero to the world, but he found his ability to shape the peace, and to establish the new League of Nations, severely limited, in no small part by his countrymen’s refusal to commit U.S. military power to the defense of the peace. John F. Kennedy, another globally admired president, found his popularity of no use in his confrontations with Nikita Khrushchev, who, by Kennedy’s own admission, “beat the hell out of me” and who may have been convinced by his perception of Kennedy’s weakness that the United States would tolerate his placing Soviet missiles in Cuba. The international system is not static. It responds quickly to fluctuations in power. If the United States were to cut too deeply into its ability to project military power, other nations could be counted on to respond accordingly. Those nations whose power rises in relative terms would display expanding ambitions commensurate with their new clout in the international system. They would, as in the past, demand particular spheres of influence. Those whose power declined in relative terms, like the United States, would have little choice but to cede some influence in those areas. Thus China would lay claim to its sphere of influence in Asia, Russia in eastern Europe and the Caucasus. And, as in the past, these burgeoning great-power claims would overlap and conflict: India and China claim the same sphere in the Indian Ocean; Russia and Europe have overlapping spheres in the region between the Black Sea and the Baltic. Without the United States to suppress and contain these conflicting ambitions, there would have to be complex adjustments to establish a new balance. Some of these adjustments could be made through diplomacy, as they were sometimes in the past. Other adjustments might be made through war or the threat of war, as also happened in the past. The biggest illusion is to imagine that as American power declines, the world stays the same. What has been true since the time of Rome remains true today: There can be no world order without power to preserve it, to shape its norms, uphold its institutions, defend the sinews of its economic system and keep the peace. Military power can be abused, wielded unwisely and ineffectively. It can be deployed to answer problems that it cannot answer or that have no answer. But it is also essential. No nation or group of nations that renounced power could expect to maintain any kind of world order. If the United States begins to look like a less reliable defender of the present order, that order will begin to unravel. People might indeed find Americans very attractive in this weaker state, but if the United States cannot help them when and where they need help the most, they will make other arrangements.

### Impact – Afghanistan – XT: Overstretch

#### Keeping forces in Afghanistan causes hard power overstretch

Friedman 06-29-2010 [George - political scientist and CEO of Stratfor, “The 30 Year War in Afghanistan,” <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100628_30_year_war_afghanistan?utm_source=GWeekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=100629&utm_content=readmore&elq=dd566e239fb84ec49d4c7eb62073e933>]

From [the grand strategic point of view](http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/net_assessment_united_states?fn=5316610535), the United States needs to withdraw from Afghanistan, a landlocked country where U.S. forces are dependent on tortuous supply lines. Whatever[Afghanistan’s vast mineral riches](http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20100614_afghanistan_significance_mineral_wealth?fn=7216610552), mining them in the midst of war is not going to happen. More important, the United States is overcommitted in the region and lacks a strategic reserve of ground forces. Afghanistan ultimately is not strategically essential, and this is why the United States has not historically used its own forces there. Obama’s attempt to return to that track after first increasing U.S. forces to set the stage for the political settlement that will allow a U.S. withdrawal is hampered by the need to begin terminating the operation by 2011 (although there is no fixed termination date). It will be difficult to draw coalition partners into local structures when the foundation — U.S. protection — is withdrawing. Strengthening local forces by 2011 will be difficult. Moreover, [the Taliban’s motivation](http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20100223_afghanistan_campaign_part_2_taliban_strategy?fn=6316610519) to enter into talks is limited by the early withdrawal. At the same time, with no ground combat strategic reserve, the United States is vulnerable elsewhere in the world, and the longer the Afghan drawdown takes, the more vulnerable it becomes (hence the 2011 deadline in Obama’s war plan). In sum, this is the quandary inherent in the strategy: It is necessary to withdraw as early as possible, but early withdrawal undermines both coalition building and negotiations. The recruitment and use of indigenous Afghan forces must move extremely rapidly to hit the deadline (though officially on track quantitatively, there are serious questions about qualitative measures) — hence, the aggressive operations that have been mounted over recent months. But the correlation of forces is such that the United States probably will not be able to impose an acceptable political reality in the time frame available. Thus, Afghan President Hamid Karzai is said to be opening channels directly to the Taliban, while the Pakistanis are increasing their presence. Where a vacuum is created, regardless of how much activity there is, someone will fill it. Therefore, the problem is to define how important Afghanistan is to American global strategy, bearing in mind that the forces absorbed in Iraq and Afghanistan have left the United States vulnerable elsewhere in the world. The current strategy defines the Islamic world as the focus of all U.S. military attention. But the world has rarely been so considerate as to wait until the United States is finished with one war before starting another. Though unknowns remain unknowable, a principle of warfare is to never commit all of your reserves in a battle — one should always maintain a reserve for the unexpected. Strategically, it is imperative that the United States begin to free up forces and re-establish its ground reserves. Given the time frame the Obama administration’s grand strategy imposes, and given the capabilities of the Taliban, it is difficult to see how it will all work out. But the ultimate question is about the American obsession with Afghanistan. For 30 years, the United States has been involved in a country that is virtually inaccessible for the United States. Washington has allied itself with radical Islamists, fought against radical Islamists or tried to negotiate with radical Islamists. What the United States has never tried to do is impose a political solution through the direct application of American force. This is a new and radically different phase of America’s Afghan obsession. The questions are whether it will work and whether it is even worth it.

### Impact – China – Relations

#### China relations are on the upswing – Romney victory would crush them

Stokes 4-25 [Jacob, a policy analyst at the National Security Network and editor of the international affairs blog DemocracyArsenal.org, “The Presidential Election and US-China Relations”, http://chinausfocus.com/political-social-development/the-presidential-election-and-us-china-relations/]

Broadly, Romney views the Sino-American relationship as zero-sum and destined for strategic confrontation. Specifically, Romney promises that, if he’s elected, the 21st century will be an “American century,” not a “Chinese century.” He also promises to get tough on China on “day one” by labeling China out as a currency manipulator (although that promise goes against his earlier record on trade enforcement and the positions taken by his top trade policy advisor). Commentaries in the Chinese press have derided Romney’s positions on China. A piece in the People’s Daily Overseas Edition, the Chinese Communist Party organ, sniped that, “Even some of the US' allies regard these unscrupulous and irresponsible attacks on its imaginary enemies as nonsense.” As for Romney’s remarks on currency issues, a Foreign Ministry spokesman called Romney’s stance “irresponsible” and a Xinhua report characterized his stance as an “absurd” attempt to play on the fears of U.S. voters. While President Barack Obama has not shifted into official campaign mode yet, the White House has begun talking more frequently about its record of combating unfair Chinese trade practices. Two paragraphs of this year’s State of the Union Address were devoted to the topic, and the speech included the announcement of a new Trade Enforcement Unit designed to coordinate efforts across federal agencies. Although the administration chose to highlight those efforts, trade enforcement is hardly a new concern. As Bruce Stokes of the German Marshall Fund has found, the Obama administration has brought more major trade actions against China than any of its predecessors. Those efforts come on top last November’s whirlwind rollout of the Asia “pivot,” which featured a series of economic, diplomatic and strategic moves designed to signal that U.S. attention was “rebalancing” to the Asia-Pacific. Also worth noting in the campaign context was China’s decision to reengage in military-to-military talks—however reluctantly and unenthusiastically-- last December, and presumptive Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s visit to Washington in February. Xi’s visit was designed for the current and future leadership of the two nations to become familiar with one another and increase mutual understanding. Those events set the state on which the election-year discussion of China policy will occur. The last two months have been largely quiet when it comes to China rhetoric from the campaigns and the White House, as the primary campaign has rolled into its final stages, and Iran and Syria consumed the lion’s share of diplomatic and military attention abroad. Meanwhile, the politics of China’s leadership transition have blown wide open as the Bo Xilai scandal provides a window into corruption and challenges to the rule of law at some of the highest ranks of the Chinese Communist Party. Not since Tiananmen have the Party’s internal fissures been so publicly displayed. The Bo scandal, combined with continued tensions in the bilateral relationship, will create more pressure for the candidates to take a confrontational approach to China. It is easy to see how issues such as China’s continued support of the North Korea regime, ongoing disputes in the South China Sea and continued Chinese cyber misbehavior will exacerbate that trend. So where will the election-year discussion of China go from here? Expect to see more chest-thumping from Romney—he’s slated to give a major foreign policy speech in April or May—as he tries to chip away at Obama’s high poll numbers on national security. Romney will likely also argue that his trade policies would bring back jobs that have left U.S. shores. For his part, Obama can point to his strong record on China, one which combines a combination of engagement and enforcement aimed at getting China to “play by the rules” across the board – diplomatically, economically, militarily and on human rights issues. Expect Obama to explain how his Asia policy includes revamped relationships with allies in the region and concerted efforts to create stronger ties with countries like Vietnam. He’ll also point to expanding regional trade ties through the US-South Korea free trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and efforts to ensure market access in China. Ultimately, the 2012 U.S. presidential election will have a long-term effect on Sino-American relations to the degree that it increases or decreases strategic mistrust between the two countries. The Chinese leadership understands that the rough and tumble of U.S. politics is often more smoke than fire—that most heated rhetoric gets moderated when it runs up against the demands of real-world policy making. But a political discussion that frames the relationship between the two countries as an exclusively zero-sum competition, one that mirrors the ideological and strategic dimensions of the Cold War--instead of a process of managing differences and identifying common interests--risks creating an atmosphere of strategic distrust that will do long-lasting damage in relations with China. While it’s essential for the U.S. leaders to stand firmly in support of American interests and values, candidates should be wary of letting political point-scoring damage the world’s most important bilateral relationship.

#### US China cooperation is key to prevent inevitable Space wars and catastrophic accidents – these risk extinction

Huntley – US Naval Postgraduate Student – ’10 [Wade. With Joseph Brock of the Kroc Institute for Peace Studies and Miranda Weingartner of Weingartner Consulting. “Planning the Unplannable: Scenarios on the Future of Space” Space Policy, Vol 26 No 1, Winter 2010. Ebsco]

Back to the Future” describes a future characterized by a high degree of technological breakthrough wherein power is projected by rule of force. In 2009 global tensions create an atmosphere where nations increasingly test new defensive technology. In 2010 India explodes a satellite out of Low-Earth orbit (LEO) and the USA tests an orbital interceptor. Gazprom invests $1 billion in the development of a nanotechnology research lab. There is also a steady erosion of Outer Space Treaty norms and limits to protect commerce. By 2013 NATO is dissolved, seen as no longer relevant. The EU alliance shifts towards defending its borders. Human spaceflight continues, in an increasingly competitive atmosphere. The USA launches Aries I, with a crew. Generation Y seems more interested in environmental issues than space. By 2014 many nations begin deploying anti-satellite (ASAT) technology. In 2015 China, the USA, India and Russia field rival ASATs in orbit, as LEO orbits are at risk from debris. Commercial interests give up on LEO and eye the Moon, which fuels the race to establish a presence there. An increasingly protectionist USA leaves the World Trade Organization (WTO). In response, China recalls its debts from the USA. Meanwhile, European and Asian growth continues and, in 2018, a Chinese factory begins production of bulk carbon nanotubes. The USA and China race to produce the first space elevator. The civil lunar programs move forward. By 2020 a joint US–EU team land on and ‘reclaim’ the Moon. Lunar bases and the space elevator are established, as resources continue to dwindle on earth. Rival moon bases compete over mining rights and orbital lasers promote a defensive arms race in space. NATO is replaced by a new European Defence Organization (EDO). A coalition emerges, including the USA, the EU and India, in opposition to Russia and China. By 2025 African nations reject the influence of major powers and, thanks to the proliferation of technology, become space powers in their own right. In 2028 major powers withdraw from the Outer Space Treaty. Saudi oil fields are now officially empty, and the lunar colonies' major export is solar power. Military bases on the Moon defend against rival solar farms. A Russian–Chinese coalition attacks the space elevator, which essentially strands the US–EU lunar colonies and seriously impairs energy availability on Earth. The UN breaks down and is dismantled. Treaties are ignored and tensions increase. The earth is highly militarized, and conflict occurs both on earth and in space. The future is tense, dark and uncertain. By 2030 Californian scientists claim to have discovered an alleged artificial signal from outer space. The signal offers the possibility of a new reason for hope. 4.4. Group observations on Scenario A In this scenario technological breakthroughs add to the rule of force rather than providing a means for international cooperation. States come together and drift apart based on their perceived interests. The group acknowledged the importance of “giving teeth” to the Outer Space Treaty and other treaties in order to enhance means of overcoming conflict in the future. However, treaties do erode when states or blocs of states perceive these no longer to serve their interests. Further, norms of the Outer Space Treaty may be eroded through the commercialization of space, rather than by conflict and militarization. The group recognized that cooperation is possible on some, but not all, issues. Following the Chinese recent ASAT test there were efforts to clarify the situation for all parties concerned and prevent repeat occurrences. This suggests in part that the UN breaking down is not realistic, and that there might be greater political will to move in a collaborative direction than the scenario suggests. The competition for resources breaks down liberal order and traps states into a situation where the rule of force is perceived as the only option. In this scenario democracies are not less likely to militarize. Politicians bear the responsibility for the implications of their actions. NASA remains a remnant of the Cold War, while the EU space plan is geared towards a broader array of concerns. The voice of civil society is then squashed. (There is also an option of a scenario where, instead of the EU, China becomes a regional champion, bringing other regional leaders like Brazil under a new transparent framework.) The rule of force is also justified for the protection of investments. An entity such as the US-Soviet Standing Consultative Commission (SCC), which was convened when one side thought there had been a violation by the other, might be helpful. Driving factors come not necessarily from the bottom or the top, but rather from mid-level officials who can promote a discussion on the consequences of space weaponization. It is important to reach out to the non-space community, to help a wider constituency relate to the issues and take greater interest. Getting away from focusing on big, one-off, prestige programs is one way to elicit such an interest. Technological innovation, while important, does not necessarily lead to an advantage for the country of origin. Rapid dissemination of technologies among a certain community can affect the security of the countries of origin. For this reason, if weaponization of space is inevitable, countries should operate as much as possible in a collaborative, transparent fashion. This suggests the utility of a global regime controlling the technology. Cooperative leadership among youth could be developed to help ensure future cooperation. This group underlines the importance of reaching young people today in order to stimulate awareness in the next generation of leaders of the negative spirals that could develop. All parties must be made aware that it is in no one's interest to attack each other's satellites; both sides need the information and need freedom to access space. A non-interference pact could be developed, which might name the kinds of weapons not to be used.

### Impact – China – Trade War – XT: Yes Trade War

#### Romney will cause a trade war – populism and inflamed rhetoric

Pethokoukis 10-13-11 [James, Money & Politics columnist-blogger for the American Enterprise Institute, “Would Romney really start a trade war with China?”, <http://www.aei-ideas.org/2011/10/is-romney-going-to-start-a-trade-war-with-china/>]

But if Mitt Romney were president, it seems likely he would sign it. In his 59-point economic plan, Romney says he would sign an executive order on “day one” of his presidency sanctioning China for unfair trade practices. And he was in full trade-warrior mode at the GOP debate on Tuesday: “I will label China … a currency manipulator. And I will go after them for stealing our intellectual property. … I certainly don’t want a trade war with anybody … but we can’t have a trade surrender either.” Tough stuff. But is currency really the problem? Even as the yuan has risen—quite sharply in real terms—America’s trade deficit with China has widened. And as the FT notes today, even if Chinese exports became less competitive, Chinese jobs would move to low-wage economies such as Vietnam and Indonesia, not America. Romney has more of a case when he highlights China’s non-tariff barriers, of which there are many, including import quotas, local content rules, import licensing restrictions, and forced technology transfers. Indeed, in his book “Seeds of Destruction,” Romney economic adviser Glenn Hubbard and co-author Peter Navarro call China’s industrial policy strategy a “Great Wall of Protectionism” and recommend “appropriate defensive measures.” This leads me to believe that Romney is quite serious about taking on China if he’s elected president. Besides, the politics are tantalizing. By wide majorities, Americans view China as an economic threat and want Washington to pursue a tougher approach. And the issue gives the wealthy Romney a bit of a populist sheen. The key, though, is not to excuse America’s faltering competitiveness and just blame China for all our economies woes. But if Americans feel other nations, especially China, aren’t playing by the rules, these new trade deals may be the last for some time to come.

#### Romney will start a trade war with China

Drezner 2/16/2012 (Daniel, Professor of International Politics at Tufts, Foreign Policy, http://drezner.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/16/romney\_smash\_china)

Third, the primary message Obama has been sending to Xi has been saying that China "don't play by the rules." Which, coincidentally enough, is exactly the same thing Romney says in the op-ed. “In the economic arena, we must directly counter abusive Chinese practices in the areas of trade, intellectual property, and currency valuation. While I am prepared to work with Chinese leaders to ensure that our countries both benefit from trade, I will not continue an economic relationship that rewards China's cheating and penalizes American companies and workers. Unless China changes its ways, on day one of my presidency I will designate it a currency manipulator and take appropriate counteraction. A trade war with China is the last thing I want, but I cannot tolerate our current trade surrender. (emphasis added) The bolded section represents the only portion of the op-ed in which Romney even hints that he might cooperate with China. The rest of it is pretty silly. It's ludicrous for Romney to claim he doesn't want a trade war in the same breath that he promises "day one" action against China. No wonder conservatives are labeling Romney's China policy as "blaringly anti-trade." To be blunt, this China policy reads like it was composed by the Hulk. Maybe this will work in the GOP primary, but Romney and his China advisors should know better.

### Impact – China – Trade War – Warming Impact

#### Trade dispute with China prevents essential cooperation over warming prevention

Bodeen ’10 [Christopher, “US ambassador urges disputes with China be separated from cooperation on international issues,” <http://www.canadianbusiness.com/markets/market_news/article.jsp?content=D9EGTA2O0>]

Beijing needs to take seriously American concerns about the value of the Chinese currency, but bilateral disputes should not impede cooperation on global issues such as climate change and Iran's nuclear program, the U.S. ambassador to Beijing said Thursday. Washington and other trading partners are pressing China to ease currency controls that have kept its yuan steady against the dollar for 18 months to help their companies compete amid weak global demand. A group of American lawmakers wrote to President Barack Obama this week urging him to press Beijing to loosen controls. The U.S. Treasury has the option of declaring Beijing a currency manipulator in a report due out in April, which could set the stage for a complaint to the World Trade Organization and possible sanctions on Chinese goods. "This is a real concern for people in my country," Huntsman told students at Beijing's elite Tsinghua University, citing high U.S. unemployment that critics say is exacerbated by an undervalued yuan. "Many see the trading relationship with China as a little bit out of balance, partially because of the currency issue," he said. Huntsman said China would be wrong to view the currency issue as merely an American complaint, with the EU and other trading partners — and even the head of the International Monetary Fund — sharing such concerns. He indicated U.S. officials would press China hard on allowing the yuan to appreciate in upcoming trade talks, and hoped to see "more flexibility on the exchange rate." China denies that its currency is undervalued, although many analysts expect the government will gradually raise the yuan's value this year while maintaining exchange rate controls. The sharpening trade disputes come amid lingering Chinese anger over U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and a recent meeting between Obama and Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Hard-liners in the Chinese military have argued for punishing the U.S. by withholding cooperation on issues such as Iran and climate change. However, Huntsman said such differences "cannot, must not, prevent the two countries from working together to create jobs, address climate change, and prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability." "To put our relationship on a more stable and mature footing, we have to delink our differences on bilateral issues from our cooperation on global issues, including nonproliferation," he said.

#### Runaway warming causes extinction

Deibel 7 (Terry L. Professor of IR @ National War College, 2007. “Foreign Affairs Strategy: Logic for American Statecraft”, Conclusion: American Foreign Affairs Strategy Today)

Finally, there is one major existential threat to American security (as well as prosperity) of a nonviolent nature, which, though far in the future, demands urgent action. It is the threat of global warming to the stability of the climate upon which all earthly life depends. Scientists worldwide have been observing the gathering of this threat for three decades now, and what was once a mere possibility has passed through probability to near certainty. Indeed not one of more than 900 articles on climate change published in refereed scientific journals from 1993 to 2003 doubted that anthropogenic warming is occurring. “In legitimate scientific circles,” writes Elizabeth Kolbert, “it is virtually impossible to find evidence of disagreement over the fundamentals of global warming.” Evidence from a vast international scientific monitoring effort accumulates almost weekly, as this sample of newspaper reports shows: an international panel predicts “brutal droughts, floods and violent storms across the planet over the next century”; climate change could “literally alter ocean currents, wipe away huge portions of Alpine Snowcaps and aid the spread of cholera and malaria”; “glaciers in the Antarctic and in Greenland are melting much faster than expected, and…worldwide, plants are blooming several days earlier than a decade ago”; “rising sea temperatures have been accompanied by a significant global increase in the most destructive hurricanes”; “NASA scientists have concluded from direct temperature measurements that 2005 was the hottest year on record, with 1998 a close second”; “Earth’s warming climate is estimated to contribute to more than 150,000 deaths and 5 million illnesses each year” as disease spreads; “widespread bleaching from Texas to Trinidad…killed broad swaths of corals” due to a 2-degree rise in sea temperatures. “The world is slowly disintegrating,” concluded Inuit hunter Noah Metuq, who lives 30 miles from the Arctic Circle. “They call it climate change…but we just call it breaking up.” From the founding of the first cities some 6,000 years ago until the beginning of the industrial revolution, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere remained relatively constant at about 280 parts per million (ppm). At present they are accelerating toward 400 ppm, and by 2050 they will reach 500 ppm, about double pre-industrial levels. Unfortunately, atmospheric CO2 lasts about a century, so there is no way immediately to reduce levels, only to slow their increase, we are thus in for significant global warming; the only debate is how much and how serous the effects will be. As the newspaper stories quoted above show, we are already experiencing the effects of 1-2 degree warming in more violent storms, spread of disease, mass die offs of plants and animals, species extinction, and threatened inundation of low-lying countries like the Pacific nation of Kiribati and the Netherlands at a warming of 5 degrees or less the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets could disintegrate, leading to a sea level of rise of 20 feet that would cover North Carolina’s outer banks, swamp the southern third of Florida, and inundate Manhattan up to the middle of Greenwich Village. Another catastrophic effect would be the collapse of the Atlantic thermohaline circulation that keeps the winter weather in Europe far warmer than its latitude would otherwise allow. Economist William Cline once estimated the damage to the United States alone from moderate levels of warming at 1-6 percent of GDP annually; severe warming could cost 13-26 percent of GDP. But the most frightening scenario is runaway greenhouse warming, based on positive feedback from the buildup of water vapor in the atmosphere that is both caused by and causes hotter surface temperatures. Past ice age transitions, associated with only 5-10 degree changes in average global temperatures, took place in just decades, even though no one was then pouring ever-increasing amounts of carbon into the atmosphere. Faced with this specter, the best one can conclude is that “humankind’s continuing enhancement of the natural greenhouse effect is akin to playing Russian roulette with the earth’s climate and humanity’s life support system. At worst, says physics professor Marty Hoffert of New York University, “we’re just going to burn everything up; we’re going to heat the atmosphere to the temperature it was in the Cretaceous when there were crocodiles at the poles, and then everything will collapse.” During the Cold War, astronomer Carl Sagan popularized a theory of nuclear winter to describe how a thermonuclear war between the Untied States and the Soviet Union would not only destroy both countries but possibly end life on this planet. Global warming is the post-Cold War era’s equivalent of nuclear winter at least as serious and considerably better supported scientifically. Over the long run it puts dangers form terrorism and traditional military challenges to shame. It is a threat not only to the security and prosperity to the United States, but potentially to the continued existence of life on this planet.

### Impact – Courts

#### The election determines the orientation of the Courts – Obama victory key to protect disenfranchised populations

The Nation 4/11 (Ari Berman, contributing writer for The Nation magazine and an Investigative Journalism Fellow at The Nation Institute, “Why the Supreme Court Matters,” <http://www.thenation.com/article/167350/why-supreme-court-matters>)

Based on recent history, there’s a good chance the Court’s conservative majority will prevail in most of these cases. During the Roberts Court, conservatives have been in the majority in 71 percent of divided cases, the highest percentage since the beginning of the Warren Court in 1953, according to the Times. In the next year or two, the Court could undermine key rights for minorities, immigrants, women, the LGBT community, historically disenfranchised voters, detainees and human rights activists. These high stakes add significance to the 2012 election. Regardless of what happens with healthcare reform, the Court should be a major issue in November. A 6-3 conservative Court under a President Romney would be nothing like a 5-4 moderate-to-liberal Court under President Obama. “There’s no overlap between the people Obama would appoint to the Court and the people Romney would appoint,” says Pam Karlan, co-director of Stanford University’s Supreme Court Litigation Clinic. “There’s more than just daylight.” Four justices are now in their 70s: Ginsburg (79), Scalia (76), Kennedy (75) and Breyer (73). If Romney wins, he could shore up the right flank of the Court; if Obama wins, he could tip the balance of power back to the center. “Citizens United would have never been put into law and America would never have been sold to the highest bidder had Al Gore won in 2000,” says former DNC chair Howard Dean. “Obama, if he wins, is going to appoint maybe one or two more Supreme Court justices. That could make all the difference.” At the Conservative Political Action Committee convention in February, Wayne LaPierre, head of the NRA, warned conservatives about an Obama second term. “If Obama wins re-election, he will likely appoint one—and perhaps three—more Supreme Court justices,” LaPierre said. “It’ll be the end of our freedom forever.” Some of this rhetoric is election-year sloganeering designed to rile up the base. But not only would Obama and Romney make vastly different Court appointments; they would ask the Court to hear very different cases, and they would take radically different positions on the cases it does hear. And, of course, the legislation that will come before the Court partly depends on who wins in November. Conservatives have long focused on the Court, railing against “activist judges” since the days of Brown v. Board of Education. Progressives are only now fully comprehending the dangers of a judiciary dominated by conservatives, who have spent decades cultivating their strength through institutions like the Federalist Society. “The conservative base is much more energized and aggressive about the Court than the progressive base,” says Doug Kendall, president of the Constitutional Accountability Center, a center-left legal advocacy group. “Progressives are fighting against a thirty-to-forty-year mobilization effort against the Warren Court and Roe v. Wade.” The federal judiciary is as important as the Supreme Court— something the Bush administration understood in a way the Obama administration has not. By the time he left office, Bush had appointed a third of all serving federal judges, stacking the bench with “smart, young, aggressively conservative judges,” says Karlan. Aside from nominating Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan to the High Court, Obama has done little to remake the judiciary. Senate Republicans under Mitch McConnell have filibustered Obama’s nominees, with little pushback from the administration or Senate Democrats. “Rahm Emanuel kept telling people that the left doesn’t care about judges,” says Karlan, “and the base wouldn’t punish Obama for not filling judicial vacancies.” Consider these mind-boggling statistics: March 27 marked the thousandth day with a record-high eighty vacancies on the federal bench. Obama’s judicial nominees have waited, on average, five times as long as Bush’s to be confirmed by the Senate. Obama has appointed forty-five fewer justices than Bill Clinton and thirty-six fewer than Bush at similar junctures of their presidencies. Obama could leave office with more judicial vacancies than when he entered. The possibility that healthcare reform may be overturned has belatedly forced Obama to pay attention to the Supreme Court. “It’s nice that the president has finally recognized, after nearly four years in office, that the Court matters a lot,” says Karlan. “Up until now, the president has had this ‘minimalism’ position toward the courts. He’s put virtually no effort in building a lower court bench that has progressive and moderate values.” Obama’s recent statements about the Court should be part of a broader focus on the judiciary. If ever there was a time for the president to run against the Court, it is now. According to the latest Gallup polling, trust in the judiciary is the lowest it’s been since 1976. The Supreme Court’s approval ratings have dropped fifteen points in the past two years, largely because of the Citizens United decision, which more than 60 percent of Americans disapprove of. (By contrast, the 2000 Bush v. Gore decision mostly increased Republican support for the Court.) “Recent polling shows that more and more Americans are disenchanted with the Court and believe it is just like the other two partisan branches of government,” says Nan Aron, president of the Alliance for Justice, a consortium of progressive legal groups. Citizens United has crystallized everything that’s wrong with the Court today—and it could get a lot worse, given the crucial issues looming on its docket. If Obama wants to frame the election as a battle of the 99 percent versus the 1 percent, there’s no sidestepping the heightened importance of the Supreme Court. “To borrow from John Roberts’s metaphor,” says Karlan, “you can have all the players, but if the other side has all the umpires, you’re not going to win.”

### Impact – Courts – Turns Neolib

#### A conservative takeover of the court would rollback entitlements that the poor rely on

Huffington Post 4/17 (“What a Conservative Judicial Revolution Looks Like” <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/doug-kendall/what-a-conservative-judic_b_1432795.html?view=print&comm_ref=false>)

As the Supreme Court's conservative majority stands poised at the edge of a cliff -- debating whether or not to strike down the Affordable Care Act and pick a very large fight with Congress and a sitting President -- two conservative judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit sought to push them over the edge last week. Their opinion -- a startling call for the abandonment of eight decades of Supreme Court case law in economic cases and a return to the pre-New Deal "Lochner Era" -- is the clearest roadmap yet as to what a conservative judicial revolution looks like. If you listened carefully to oral argument in the Supreme Court health care case, as well as the commentary that surrounded the argument, you know that the "ghost of Lochner" was ubiquitous, scaring school children and anyone who cares about the reputation and future of the Supreme Court. The Era is named after its most notorious ruling, Lochner v. New York, a 1905 case in which the Supreme Court struck down a state statute that attempted to impose a maximum-hours limitation on bakers. The Court declared this state law was an unconstitutional infringement of the "economic liberties" it found protected by the 14th Amendment. During the Lochner Era, the Supreme Court invalidated scores of federal and state statutes designed to improve working conditions and jump-start the economy out of the Great Depression, inventing new constitutional rights and giving a cramped construction to Congress' express constitutional powers. The fear now is that a 5-4 ruling by the Court striking down all or part of the ACA will usher in a new wave of conservative judicial activism, pushing forward additional challenges to landmark federal statutes passed since the New Deal. If that is the fear among many, it is the heartfelt desire among some -- including some of the most prominent lower court judges placed on the federal bench by the last several Republican presidents. That was the message of a remarkable concurring opinion issued last Friday by D.C. Circuit Judge Janice Rogers Brown, an appointee of President George W. Bush, and Judge David Sentelle, a Reagan appointee. The opinion accuses the Supreme Court of "abdicat[ing] its constitutional responsibility to protect economic liberty completely" and suggests that economic liberties should be recognized as a fundamental constitutional right. It advocates that courts step in whenever they discover "the political temptation to exploit the public appetite for other people's money--either by buying consent with broad-based entitlements or selling subsidies, licensing restrictions, tariffs, or price fixing regimes to benefit narrow special interests." That sentence reads like gibberish, perhaps to disguise just how radical it is, but let me try to translate it into English. Federal programs such as Social Security and Medicare are classic examples of "broad-based entitlements." Much of the regulation by agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) are carried out through "licensing" requirements. Tariffs have been a part of trade regulation since the nation's Founding. And so on.

### Impact – Courts – XT: Obama Shift

#### Obama re-election means he would drastically shift the court Left

CNS News 12 (Mark Sherman, “Obama Re-Election Could Alter Stance of Federal Appeals Courts, Supreme Court,” 2/5/12, <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/obama-re-election-could-alter-stance-federal-appeals-courts-supreme-court/>)

WASHINGTON (AP) — A second term for President Barack Obama would allow him to expand his replacement of Republican-appointed majorities with Democratic ones on the nation's appeals courts, the final stop for almost all challenged federal court rulings. Despite his slow start in nominating judges and Republican delays in Senate confirmations, Obama has still managed to alter the balance of power on four of the nation's 13 circuit courts of appeals. Given a second term, Obama could have the chance to install Democratic majorities on several others. Fourteen of the 25 appeals court judges nominated by Obama replaced Republican appointees. The next president, whether it's Obama or a Republican, also has a reasonable shot at transforming the majority on the Supreme Court, because three justices representing the closely divided court's liberal and conservative wings, as well as its center, will turn 80 before the next presidential term ends. The three justices are Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the leader of the court's liberal wing, conservative Antonin Scalia, and Anthony Kennedy, who leans conservative but on some issues provides a decisive vote for the liberals. The next high court opening would cause a titanic confirmation fight if it would allow a Republican president to cement conservative control of the court by replacing Ginsburg or if Obama could give Democratic appointees a working majority for the first time in decades by replacing Scalia or Kennedy. The prospect of such dramatic change on the Supreme Court, along with the justices' strikingly high-profile election-year docket could heighten the judiciary's importance as an election issue, said Curt Levey, who heads the conservative Committee for Justice. The justices will hear arguments on Obama's health care overhaul in March and Arizona's immigration crackdown in April. The court also could soon decide whether to hear a Texas affirmative action case challenging the use of race as a factor in college admissions. Even one new justice can produce dramatic change. Justice Samuel Alito replaced the more moderate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and shifted the outcome in cases on abortion, campaign finance and other key issues, even though both were appointed by Republicans. Openings on the circuit courts of appeals get much less attention, but those courts have the last say in most legal disputes that are appealed in the federal system. Only about 80 cases make it to the Supreme Court every year. There are still more Republicans than Democrats on the circuit appeals courts and on the entire federal bench. But if Obama merely filled existing vacancies, Democratic appointees would be the majority on the influential court of appeals in Washington, where four current Supreme Court justices once served, and the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Republicans also maintain their edge on the 10th Circuit in Denver only because two judgeships are empty. Two other appeals courts on which Republicans have comfortable majorities could shift over the next four years. The Chicago-based 7th Circuit has four judges in their 70s who were chosen by Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. In the New Orleans-based 5th Circuit, Judge Emilio Garza, a Republican appointee, will take senior status in August, a move that will open a seat while Garza takes a smaller caseload. Two Reagan picks in their 70s remain on the court. Twelve Reagan appointees now in their 70s remain on circuit appeals courts or, in the case of Scalia and Kennedy, the Supreme Court. Republican presidents, in recent decades, have been more aggressive than Democrats in filling those seats with younger, more like-minded lawyers. Many nominees of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush were in their early 40s, some even in their 30s, and with reputations as bold conservatives. By contrast, Obama has frustrated some liberal interest groups mainly by favoring older nominees over younger ones who might be the Democratic equivalents of some of the Reagan and Bush picks. Obama's two youngest appeals court nominees, Goodwin Liu and Caitlin Halligan, were stymied by Republican filibusters in the Senate. The average age of Obama-nominated appeals court judges is more than 55 years old, higher than any president's going back to Jimmy Carter, according to the liberal interest group Alliance for Justice. The age of these judges matters in an era when presidents regularly look to the circuit appeals courts as the pool for Supreme Court candidates. Younger judges have a chance to develop a record that presidents can examine, yet still be young enough to be considered for the high court. Alito and Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Clarence Thomas all became appellate judges in their early 40s. Chief Justice John Roberts, a Republican appointee, and Justice Elena Kagan, a Democrat, would have been on the appeals court in Washington before their 40th birthdays had senators not blocked their confirmations. Roberts had to wait another decade before becoming an appeals court judge, while Kagan is the only justice who did not serve as an appellate judge. Obama's picks have yet to surprise anyone with their decisions, said Levey, head of the conservative interest group. "So Obama's liberal critics can rest assured that if he's re-elected, his transformation of the appeals courts will make a big difference in the law." Party labels do not always foretell a case's outcome. During recent challenges to the Obama administration's health care overhaul, Republican appeals court judges in Cincinnati and Washington cast deciding votes upholding the law, while a Democratic appointee in Atlanta voted to strike down the requirement that most people buy health insurance or pay a penalty. Still, there is wide agreement that Obama picks have sharply altered the Richmond-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which had been dominated by conservative, Republican appointees.

### Impact – Courts – XT: Social Justice Impact – Now Key

#### Courtpacking would decide many critical upcoming cases for minorities

The Nation 4/11 (Ari Berman, contributing writer for The Nation magazine and an Investigative Journalism Fellow at The Nation Institute, “Why the Supreme Court Matters,” <http://www.thenation.com/article/167350/why-supreme-court-matters>)

When President Gerald Ford nominated him in 1975, Justice John Paul Stevens occupied the ideological center of the Supreme Court. By the time he retired in 2010, he was the Court’s most liberal member. Over those thirty-five years, the Court changed far more than Stevens did. “What was once on the extreme right is now merely conservative,” wrote University of Chicago constitutional law professor Cass Sunstein. “What was once conservative is now centrist. What was centrist is now left wing. What was once on the left no longer exists.” According to a study using Martin-Quinn scores, “the current court is the most conservative since at least the 1930s,” wrote Nate Silver of the New York Times recently. Of the ten most conservative members of the Court from 1937 to 2006, five are serving today: Clarence Thomas (1), Antonin Scalia (3), John Roberts (4), Samuel Alito (5) and Anthony Kennedy (10). The fact that Kennedy is now regarded as a moderate swing vote underscores how far to the right the Court has moved. (Only Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg makes the most liberal list, at number 10.) That rightward shift of the Roberts Court is especially pronounced today, in the wake of the ghastly 2010 Citizens United decision and the prospect that the Court may invalidate the Obama administration’s healthcare law. These consequential decisions could be a frightening preview of things to come. In the next year or two, the Court will consider a number of blockbuster cases. In late April the justices will hear arguments on Arizona’s draconian “papers please” immigration law. The fall term, which begins in October, includes a challenge to affirmative action at the University of Texas. In the not-so-distant future the Court will likely decide the merits of: California’s Proposition 8, which banned gay marriage, and/or the Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibits states from enforcing gay marriage laws outside their borders and denies government benefits to gay couples; Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which forces states and localities covered by the act to pre-clear voting law changes with the federal government to make sure they do not discriminate against minority voters; Montana’s ban on corporate campaign contributions and its challenge to Citizens United; the indefinite detention of enemy combatants at prisons like Guantánamo; the ability of foreign nationals to sue corporations and their employees in the United States for human rights abuses abroad; and possibly even Roe v. Wade, given the slew of anti-abortion restrictions passed by Republicans since the 2010 elections. “It’s the most startlingly jampacked period in the past century,” says Tom Goldstein, a veteran Supreme Court litigator and publisher of SCOTUSblog. “It’s hard to imagine a more perfect storm of cases that will be granted or argued right before the presidential election that are so freighted with politics.”

### Impact – Climate

#### Obama will focus on climate change

The New Yorker 6/18 (Ryan Lyzza, “The Second Term,” http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa\_fact\_lizza?currentPage=1//HT)

“It seems to me that the President needs to decide what his legacy is going to be,” Korologos wrote on January 24, 1985, a few days after Reagan’s second inaugural. “What is he going to be the most proud of when he’s sitting at the ranch with Nancy four and five years after his Presidency? Is it going to be an arms control agreement? Is it going to be a balanced budget? Is it going to be world-wide economic recovery? Is it going to be a combination of all of this: peace and prosperity? . . . Every speech; every appearance; every foreign trip; every congressional phone call and every act involving the President should be made with the long-range goal in mind.” Every President running for reëlection begins to think about his second term well before victory is assured. In early 2009, Rahm Emanuel, Obama’s first chief of staff, told me that the White House was already contemplating the Presidency in terms of eight years. He said that it was folly to try to accomplish everything in the first term. “I don’t buy into everybody’s theory about the final years of a Presidency,” Emanuel said. “There’s an accepted wisdom that in the final years you’re kind of done. Ronald Reagan, in the final years, got arms control, immigration reform, and created a separate new department,” that of Veterans Affairs. from the issue cartoon bank e-mail this Obama’s campaign is well aware that he may end up like Jimmy Carter or George H. W. Bush, the two most recent one-term Presidents, who were both defeated despite some notable—even historic—accomplishments, including the Camp David Accords, under Carter, and the Gulf War, under Bush. The country remains closely divided, and the economy is teetering again. After several months of relatively positive news, the employment report released in June was gloomy. Barring a disastrous revelation or blunder, Mitt Romney will be a more formidable opponent than many assumed during his rightward lurch to secure the Republican nomination. Many White House officials were reluctant to discuss a second term; they are focussed more on the campaign than on what comes after. But the ostensible purpose of a political campaign is to articulate for the public what a candidate will do if he prevails. “It’s a tension,” David Axelrod, Obama’s longtime political adviser, said. “On the one hand, you don’t want to be presumptuous in assuming a second term. But campaigns are about the future, and there is an imperative to spell out where we’re going.” Obama has an ambitious second-term agenda, which, at least in broad ways, his campaign is beginning to highlight. The President has said that the most important policy he could address in his second term is climate change, one of the few issues that he thinks could fundamentally improve the world decades from now. He also is concerned with containing nuclear proliferation. In April, 2009, in one of the most notable speeches of his Presidency, he said, in Prague, “I state clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.” He conceded that the goal might not be achieved in his lifetime but promised to take “concrete steps,” including a new treaty with Russia to reduce nuclear weapons and ratification of the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. In 2010, Obama negotiated a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with the Russians and won its passage in the Senate. But, despite his promise to “immediately and aggressively” ratify the C.N.T.B.T., he never submitted it for ratification. As James Mann writes in “The Obamians,” his forthcoming book on Obama’s foreign policy, “The Obama administration crouched, unwilling to risk controversy and a Senate fight for a cause that the President, in his Prague speech, had endorsed and had promised to push quickly and vigorously.” As with climate change, Obama’s early rhetoric and idealism met the reality of Washington politics and his reluctance to confront Congress.

#### US action to reduce emissions spills over internationally

Roberts 5 [Paul Roberts, Harper’s Magazine, Finalist for the National Magazine Award, 2005, The End of Oil: A Perilous New World, p.14-5]

But by necessity, much of this book will focus on the United States. For all that the new energy economy is an international issue, no nation will play a greater role in the evolution of that economy than ours. **Americans are the most profligate users of energy in the history of the world**: a country with less than 5 percent of the world’s population burns through 25 percent of the world’s total energy. Some of this discrepancy is owing to the American economy, which is bigger than anyone else’s and therefore uses more energy. But it is also true that the American lifestyle is twice as energy-intensive as that in Europe and Japan, and about ten times the global average. **The** United States **is** thus **the most important of all energy players: its enormous demand makes it an essential customer for the big energy states like Saudi Arabia and Russia. Its large imports hold the global energy market in thrall**. (Indeed, the tiniest change in the U.S. energy economy – a colder winter, an increase in driving, a change in tax law – can send world markets into a tailspin. And because American power flows from its dominance over a global economy that in turn depends mainly on oil and other fossil fuels, **the** United States **sees itself as having no choice but to defend the global energy infrastructure from any threat and by nearly any means available** – economic, diplomatic, even military. **The result of this simultaneous might and dependency is that the** United States is, and **will be, the preeminent force in the shaping of the new energy economy. The** United States **is the only country with the** economic muscle**, the** technological expertise**, and the**

international standing truly to mold **the next energy system. If the U.S. government** and its citizens **decided to launch a new energy system and have it in place** within twenty years, **not only would the energy system be built, but** the rest of the world would be forced to follow along. **Instead, American policymakers are** too paralyzed to act**, terrified that to change U.S. energy pattersn would threaten the nation’s economy and geopolitical status** – not to mention outrage tens of millions of American voters. Where Europe has taken small but important steps toward regulating carbon dioxide (steps modeled, paradoxically, on an American pollution law), **the** United States **has made only theatrical gestures over alternative fuels, improved efficiency, or policies that would harness the markets to reduce carbon**. As a result, the energy superpower has not only surrendered its once-awesome edge in such energy technologies as solar and wind to competitors in Europe and Japan but made it less and less likely that an effective solution for climate change will be deployed in time to make a difference.

#### Runaway warming causes extinction

Deibel 7 (Terry L. Professor of IR @ National War College, 2007. “Foreign Affairs Strategy: Logic for American Statecraft”, Conclusion: American Foreign Affairs Strategy Today)

Finally, there is one major existential threat to American security (as well as prosperity) of a nonviolent nature, which, though far in the future, demands urgent action. It is the threat of global warming to the stability of the climate upon which all earthly life depends. Scientists worldwide have been observing the gathering of this threat for three decades now, and what was once a mere possibility has passed through probability to near certainty. Indeed not one of more than 900 articles on climate change published in refereed scientific journals from 1993 to 2003 doubted that anthropogenic warming is occurring. “In legitimate scientific circles,” writes Elizabeth Kolbert, “it is virtually impossible to find evidence of disagreement over the fundamentals of global warming.” Evidence from a vast international scientific monitoring effort accumulates almost weekly, as this sample of newspaper reports shows: an international panel predicts “brutal droughts, floods and violent storms across the planet over the next century”; climate change could “literally alter ocean currents, wipe away huge portions of Alpine Snowcaps and aid the spread of cholera and malaria”; “glaciers in the Antarctic and in Greenland are melting much faster than expected, and…worldwide, plants are blooming several days earlier than a decade ago”; “rising sea temperatures have been accompanied by a significant global increase in the most destructive hurricanes”; “NASA scientists have concluded from direct temperature measurements that 2005 was the hottest year on record, with 1998 a close second”; “Earth’s warming climate is estimated to contribute to more than 150,000 deaths and 5 million illnesses each year” as disease spreads; “widespread bleaching from Texas to Trinidad…killed broad swaths of corals” due to a 2-degree rise in sea temperatures. “The world is slowly disintegrating,” concluded Inuit hunter Noah Metuq, who lives 30 miles from the Arctic Circle. “They call it climate change…but we just call it breaking up.” From the founding of the first cities some 6,000 years ago until the beginning of the industrial revolution, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere remained relatively constant at about 280 parts per million (ppm). At present they are accelerating toward 400 ppm, and by 2050 they will reach 500 ppm, about double pre-industrial levels. Unfortunately, atmospheric CO2 lasts about a century, so there is no way immediately to reduce levels, only to slow their increase, we are thus in for significant global warming; the only debate is how much and how serous the effects will be. As the newspaper stories quoted above show, we are already experiencing the effects of 1-2 degree warming in more violent storms, spread of disease, mass die offs of plants and animals, species extinction, and threatened inundation of low-lying countries like the Pacific nation of Kiribati and the Netherlands at a warming of 5 degrees or less the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets could disintegrate, leading to a sea level of rise of 20 feet that would cover North Carolina’s outer banks, swamp the southern third of Florida, and inundate Manhattan up to the middle of Greenwich Village. Another catastrophic effect would be the collapse of the Atlantic thermohaline circulation that keeps the winter weather in Europe far warmer than its latitude would otherwise allow. Economist William Cline once estimated the damage to the United States alone from moderate levels of warming at 1-6 percent of GDP annually; severe warming could cost 13-26 percent of GDP. But the most frightening scenario is runaway greenhouse warming, based on positive feedback from the buildup of water vapor in the atmosphere that is both caused by and causes hotter surface temperatures. Past ice age transitions, associated with only 5-10 degree changes in average global temperatures, took place in just decades, even though no one was then pouring ever-increasing amounts of carbon into the atmosphere. Faced with this specter, the best one can conclude is that “humankind’s continuing enhancement of the natural greenhouse effect is akin to playing Russian roulette with the earth’s climate and humanity’s life support system. At worst, says physics professor Marty Hoffert of New York University, “we’re just going to burn everything up; we’re going to heat the atmosphere to the temperature it was in the Cretaceous when there were crocodiles at the poles, and then everything will collapse.” During the Cold War, astronomer Carl Sagan popularized a theory of nuclear winter to describe how a thermonuclear war between the Untied States and the Soviet Union would not only destroy both countries but possibly end life on this planet. Global warming is the post-Cold War era’s equivalent of nuclear winter at least as serious and considerably better supported scientifically. Over the long run it puts dangers form terrorism and traditional military challenges to shame. It is a threat not only to the security and prosperity to the United States, but potentially to the continued existence of life on this planet.

### Impact – Climate – XT: Obama Pushing

#### Although it’s divisive, Obama will push for climate change

The New Yorker 6/18 (Ryan Lyzza, “The Second Term,” http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa\_fact\_lizza?currentPage=1//HT)

Another major initiative under discussion is energy policy, but the politics of energy are almost as fraught as those of housing. As a candidate, Obama talked in stirring terms about the threat from global warming. In June, 2008, on the night he won the Democratic nomination, he declared that his victory marked “the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal.” But climate change will remain a divisive issue after the election. Among Obama’s conservative critics, his call to halt the rise of the oceans is a frequently mocked piece of oratory. And one of the biggest failures of his first term was the Administration’s inability to win a deal on cap and trade—originally a Republican idea. Obama talks about energy in most of his speeches, but, in contrast with 2009, when the centerpiece of his program was a cap-and-trade approach to reducing carbon emissions, his goal today is unclear. Early discussions on Capitol Hill suggest that, in a wide-ranging deal, a carbon tax might be part of a grand bargain to settle Taxmageddon. The proposition is not as absurd as it sounds. In 1997, the budget deal struck by Clinton and the Republicans was not so much a meeting in the middle as a swap of major priorities. “That was a deal of trades,” one former Clinton official said. Clinton won policies such as a new children’s-health program, a higher-education tax cut, and some progressive changes to the welfare bill that he signed into law in 1996. “We won those things and then we just gave the Republicans big Medicare savings, and we let them cut the capital-gains tax for rich people.”

### Impact – Economic Inequality/Turns K Aff

#### Romney will increase economic inequality and overlook the poor

Clawson 6/29 (Laura, “Opportunity in America means people 'get as much education as they can afford,” The Daily Kos)

At a campaign speech in Virginia on Wednesday, Mitt Romney took a 20-second break from attacking President Obama to lay out this stirring vision of opportunity in America: I want to make sure that we keep America a place of opportunity where everyone has a fair shot, they get as much education as they can afford and with their time they're able to get and if they have a willingness to work hard and the right values they ought to be able to provide for their family and have a shot at realizing their dreams. "As much education as they can afford." If you can't afford college tuition—something Romney himself made more difficult for many in Massachusetts during his time as the state's governor—that should, in Romney's view, define the opportunities available to you. That's a severely harsh vision in an economy in which high school graduates face high unemployment and low wages; in other words, in which a willingness to work hard and the right values (whatever those may be) are not enough to provide for your family and have a shot at realizing your dreams. Even when he's seeking to present America as a shining city upon a hill, Mitt Romney's vision is entirely bounded by wealth. Even when he dreams, he doesn't dream about opportunity for all, just for those who can afford to buy it.

### Impact – Economy

#### Romney win collapses the economy – tax breaks to the rich, cuts to education, infrastructure, research, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and more – consensus of qualified experts

Ayres & Boushey 7/2 (Sarah Ayres is a Research Associate in the Economic Policy Department at American Progress. Prior to joining the Center, Sarah handled economic and financial policy as legislative assistant to Congressman Rick Boucher (D-VA), a senior member of the Energy and Commerce Committee. She was also the field director for New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch's successful re-election campaign in 2008. Sarah has a B.A. in government and sociology from Dartmouth College. Heather Boushey is Senior Economist at American Progress. Her research has been published in academic journals and has been covered widely in the media, including regular appearances on the PBS Newshour and in The New York Times, where she was called one of the "most vibrant voices in the field." She also spearheaded a successful campaign to save the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation from devastating budget cuts. Boushey received her Ph.D. in economics from the New School for Social Research and her B.A. from Hampshire College. She has held an economist position with the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, the Center for Economic and Policy Research, and the Economic Policy Institute. “Economists Agree Romney’s Plan Would Spark a New Recession: Austerity and Tax Cuts for the Rich Would Cripple Economic Growth,” Center for American Policy, June 2, 2012, http://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/2012/07/romney\_economic\_plan.html)

The private sector of the U.S. economy has added jobs for the past 27 months in a row, corporate profits have hit an all-time high, and the U.S. auto industry is back, with manufacturers consistently adding jobs for the longest period since the mid-1990s. Still, as President Barack Obama has said, “we are still not creating (jobs) as fast as we want.” And the biggest hurdle to swifter job creation is the embrace of austerity by Republicans in Congress who refuse to implement measures that would boost employment—a position supported by their presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. This austerity has real—negative—economic consequences. Increasingly, economists are pointing to austerity as a key reason for too-slow job creation. Despite considerable warnings from economic experts that government spending is critical to creating jobs; conservative leaders in Congress are inflicting these austerity programs on us at the federal, state, and local level. According to Yale economists Ben Polak and Peter Schott: Without this hidden austerity program, the economy would look very different. If state and local governments had followed the pattern of the previous two recessions, they would have added 1.4 million to 1.9 million jobs and overall unemployment would be 7.0 to 7.3 percent instead of 8.2 percent. Even though austerity is not good for the U.S. economy, this is exactly the economic policy promoted by Romney. His ideologically driven agenda would continue the failed supply-side policies of President George W. Bush by giving even more tax breaks to the rich—a policy that has not generated strong and sustained economic growth—while slashing investments in our middle class and America’s future competitiveness, such as education, public safety, basic research and development, and infrastructure upgrades. Romney’s plan for spending cuts is deliberately vague, but it is clear that it will require drastic cuts to programs that support middle-class families and support economic growth in order to fund tax cuts for the rich. The House Republican budget developed by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) would fund $3 trillion in tax breaks for the rich by ending guaranteed Medicare coverage for our elderly and slashing middle-class investments in education, infrastructure, and research. This no-growth budget provides a starting point for Romney’s economic plan, which then goes further down the path of austerity and will enact substantially deeper spending cuts. Romney does not specify how he would cut federal spending but he has promised to cut taxes while also capping federal spending and balancing the budget. In order to meet these constraints, his plan would require extraordinary cuts to federal programs. The result would bring more austerity and less growth. According to an analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “by 2022, if the [federal] budget had to be balanced while taxes were cut,” which is Romney’s goal, “the proposals would require cutting entitlement and discretionary programs other than Social Security and core defense by more than half.” Specifically, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that Romney’s proposals would deplete Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program by $3.4 trillion over the next 10 years. In addition, the nonpartisan think tank says that, under Romney’s plan, compensation payments for disabled veterans would be cut by one-quarter, and 13 million people struggling to put food on the table for their families would be kicked off the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. None of this would create jobs—never mind Romney’s claims that austerity for almost all of us will lead the wealthy to invest more in job creation. In fact, what it would do is undermine middle-class economic security, which in turn would lead to less spending and more and more families struggling to make ends meet. These kinds of cuts will hurt our economic future because we won’t be making the kinds of investments—in education or infrastructure—that will drive future growth. We have already seen the effect austerity has on economic growth and it is not pretty. For the past two years, Republicans in Congress have inflicted an austerity regime that has held back job growth and slowed the economy. The Republican-led House of Representatives has repeatedly refused to consider measures like the American Jobs Act, which would spur growth and reduce unemployment by beefing up aggregate demand. By refusing to act, Congress has ensured that huge job losses in the public sector drag down overall employment levels. Given the mounting evidence that such mandated spending cuts are hindering economic growth, it is no surprise that many economists are critical of Romney’s dramatic spending cuts. Here’s what an array of economists are saying: Joel Prakken, chairman of economic forecasting firm Macroeconomic Advisers, asks the directly pertinent question: “Are all these things going to reduce the unemployment rate from eight to five in two years?” No, he says, because Gov. Romney’s ideas “would do little to stimulate aggregate demand in the short run. The reason that unemployment is as high as it is inadequate aggregate demand, not inadequate supply.” Mark Hopkins, senior adviser at Moody’s Analytics, states plainly that “on net, all of [Romney’s] policies would do more harm in the short term. If we implemented all of his policies, it would push us deeper into recession and make the recovery slower.” Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz is more blunt: “The Romney plan is going to slow down the economy, worsen the jobs deficit, and significantly increase the likelihood of a recession.” James Galbraith, business professor at the University of Texas at Austin, worries that “if applied, these fiscal measures would be utterly draconian. The attacks on Medicare and Social Security would throw large portions of the population into poverty.” At the heart of economists’ worries is that Romney’s economic plan fails to address the single-biggest drag on the U.S. economy—a continued lack of aggregate demand. Federal Reserve Board Chairman Ben Bernanke recently explained, “While both cyclical and structural forces have doubtless contributed to the increase in long-term unemployment, the continued weakness in aggregate demand is likely the predominant factor.” Most small-business owners agree: A Gallup survey of small businesses shows that 71 percent are not hiring because there isn’t enough demand to justify new hires. Big corporations are similarly reluctant to hire, instead choosing to sit on record levels of cash. As many experts realize, investments in infrastructure, education, and other services can go a long way to help correct the shortfall in aggregate demand and give our economy a much-needed boost to spur growth while laying the foundation for long-term economic growth. One needs look no further than the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. According to Congressional Budget Office Director Doug Elmendorf, the Recovery Act “created higher output and employment than would have occurred without it.” And four out of five economists surveyed by the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business agree that employment at the end of 2010 was higher than it would have been without the Recovery Act. The U.S. economy is not adding jobs quickly enough to bring back full employment anytime soon, and for that Americans can blame obstinate congressional Republicans intent on cutting spending instead of creating jobs. Now, despite clear evidence that their spending cuts are slowing economic growth, Mitt Romney has a plan that doubles down on austerity. What the U.S. economy needs now is the exact opposite. Investing in education, infrastructure, and research and development will boost the economy in the short term and set the United States on a path to long-term competitiveness. As Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman explains, “Now is not the time to be laying off school teachers. Now is the time to be doing public works, rehiring those school teachers, to get this economy moving again.” In other words, deficit reduction should wait until after we have given our economy the kick-start it needs today. Romney’s plan is the wrong prescription.

#### Economic decline ensures great power war-trade disruptions will cause diversionary conflicts that collapse interdependence.

Royal 10 – Jedediah, Director of Cooperative Threat Reduction at the U.S. Department of Defense, 2010, “Economic Integration, Economic Signaling and the Problem of Economic Crises,” in Economics of War and Peace: Economic, Legal and Political Perspectives, ed. Goldsmith and Brauer, p. 213-214

Less intuitive is how periods of economic decline may increase the likelihood of external conflict. Political science literature has contributed a moderate degree of attention to the impact of economic decline and the security and defence behaviour of interdependent states. Research in this vein has been considered at systemic, dyadic and national levels. Several notable contributions follow. First, on the systemic level, Pollins (2008) advances Modelski and Thompson's (1996) work on leadership cycle theory, finding that rhythms in the global economy are associated with the rise and fall of a pre-eminent power and the often bloody transition from one pre-eminent leader to the next. As such. exogenous shocks such as economic crises could usher in a redistribution of relative power (see also Gilpin. 1981) that leads to uncertainty about power balances, increasing the risk of miscalculation (Fearon. 1995). Alternatively, even a relatively certain redistribution of power could lead to a permissive environment for conflict as a rising power may seek to challenge a declining power (Werner, 1999). Separately, Pollins (1996) also shows that global economic cycles combined with parallel leadership cycles impact the likelihood of conflict among major, medium and small powers, although he suggests that the causes and connections between global economic conditions and security conditions remain unknown. Second. on a dyadic level, Copeland's (1996. 2000) theory of trade expectations suggests that 'future expectation of trade is a significant variable in understanding economic conditions and security behaviour of states. He argues that interdependent states are likely to gain pacific benefits from trade so long as they have an optimistic view of future trade relations. However, if the expectations of future trade decline. particularly for difficult to replace items such as energy resources, the likelihood for conflict increases, as states will be inclined to use force to gain access to those resources, Crises could potentially he the trigger for decreased trade expectations either on its own or because it triggers protectionist moves by interdependent states.' Third, others have considered the link between economic decline and external armed conflict at a national level. Blomberg and Hess (2002) find a strong correlation between internal conflict and external conflict, particularly during periods of economic downturn. They write, The linkages between internal and external conflict and prosperity are strong and mutually reinforcing. Economic conflict tends to spawn internal conflict, which in turn returns the favour. Moreover, the presence of a recession tends to amplify the extent to which international and external conflict self-reinforce each other. (Blomber & Hess,. 2002. p. 84) Economic decline has also been linked with an increase in the likelihood of terrorism (Blomberg. Hess. & Weerapana. 2004). which has the capacity to spill across borders and lead to external tensions. Furthermore, crises generally reduce the popularity of a sitting government. 'Diversionary theory' suggests that, when facing unpopularity arising from economic decline, sitting governments have increased incentives to fabricate external military conflicts to create a 'rally around the flag' effect. Wang (1996). DeRouen (1995), and Blomberg, Hess, and Thacker (2006) find supporting evidence showing that economic decline and use of force are at least indirectly correlated. Gelpi (1997), Miller (1999). and Kisangani and Pickering (2009) suggest that the tendency towards diversionary tactics are greater for democratic states than autocratic states, due to the fact that democratic leaders are generally more susceptible to being removed from office due to lack of domestic support. DeRouen (2000) has provided evidence showing that periods of weak economic performance in the United States, and thus weak Presidential popularity, are statistically linked to an increase in the use of force. In summary, recent economic scholarship positively correlates economic integration with an increase in the frequency of economic crises, whereas political science scholarship links economic decline with external conflict at systemic. dyadic and national level, This implied connection between integration. crises and armed conflict has not featured prominently in the economic-security debate and deserves more attention.

### Impact – Health Care

#### Romney will repeal health care

USA Today 6/28 (Jun 28, 2012, “Romney: Repeal health care law by voting out Obama,” by Catalina Camia, USA TODAY <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/onpolitics/post/2012/06/mitt-romney-health-care-supreme-court-decision-reaction/1>)

Mitt Romney said the Supreme Court’s health care ruling highlights why it’s important to defeat President Obama in November. “If we want to get rid of Obamacare, we’re going to have to replace President Obama,” Romney said, making a short statement before TV cameras. The court in a 5-4 ruling upheld the health care law, which Obama has said was inspired by one signed by Romney in Massachusetts while he was governor. The ruling upholds the law’s mandate that most Americans obtain insurance coverage. Romney argued that the Supreme Court did not “say that Obamacare is good law or that it's good policy.” The presumptive GOP nominee’s message echoes what Republicans have been saying ever since the high court upheld the individual mandate in the health care law: It’s up to voters now. Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus says the Supreme Court’s decision on health care “sets the stakes for the November election." "Just elect Romney. We need #FullRepeal," tweeted Priebus. He said in a statement: "Now, the only way to save the country from Obamacare’s budget-busting government takeover of health care is to elect a new president." The divided Congress has tried, but failed, to repeal the health care law. The GOP-led House has voted several times to do so, but the Democratic-led Senate has blocked those moves. Rep. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., who is running for Senate, said the GOP must focus on achieving majorities in the Senate and keeping it in the House for repeal efforts to succeed. "Support for Obamacare is a heavy anchor to drag through this election," he said. "I think it certainly moves back in to the political field and (Republicans) just need to push for full repeal in the Congress."

#### Solves bioterror

SKLAR 2002 (Holly, coauthor of "Raise the Floor: Wages and Policies That Work for All Of Us," “Rolling the Dice on Our Nation's Health,” December 19th, <http://www.commondreams.org/views02/1219-07.htm>)

Imagine if the first people infected in a smallpox attack had no health insurance and delayed seeking care for their flu-like symptoms. The odds are high. Pick a number from one to six. Would you bet your life on a roll of the dice? Would you play Russian Roulette with one bullet in a six-chamber gun? One in six Americans under age 65 has no health insurance. The uninsured are more likely to delay seeking medical care, go to work sick for fear of losing their jobs, seek care at overcrowded emergency rooms and clinics, and be poorly diagnosed and treated. The longer smallpox--or another contagious disease--goes undiagnosed, the more it will spread, with the insured and uninsured infecting each other. Healthcare is literally a matter of life and death. Yet, more than 41 million Americans have no health insurance of any kind, public or private. The uninsured rate was 14.6 percent in 2001--up 13 percent since 1987. The rate is on the rise with increased healthcare costs, unemployment and cutbacks in Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). One in four people with household incomes less than $25,000 is uninsured. One in six full-time workers is uninsured, including half the full-time workers with incomes below the official poverty line. The share of workers covered by employment health plans drops from 81 percent in the top fifth of wage earners to 68 percent in the middle fifth to 33 percent in the lowest fifth, according to the Economic Policy Institute. As reports by the American College of Physicians, Kaiser Family Foundation and many others have shown, lack of health insurance is associated with lack of preventive care and substandard treatment inside and outside the hospital. The uninsured are at much higher risk for chronic disease and disability, and have a 25 percent greater chance of dying (adjusting for physical, economic and behavioral factors). To make matters worse, a health crisis is often an economic crisis. "Medical bills are a factor in nearly half of all personal bankruptcy filings," reports the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine. The U.S. is No. 1 in healthcare spending per capita, but No. 34--tied with Malaysia--when it comes to child mortality rates under age five. The U.S. is No. 1 in healthcare spending, but the only major industrialized nation not to provide some form of universal coverage. We squander billions of dollars in the red tape of myriad healthcare eligibility regulations, forms and procedures, and second-guessing of doctors by insurance gatekeepers trained in cost cutting, not medicine. Americans go to Canada for cheaper prices on prescription drugs made by U.S. pharmaceutical companies with U.S. taxpayer subsidies. While millions go without healthcare, top health company executives rake in the dough. A report by Families USA found that the highest-paid health plan executives in ten companies received average compensation of $11.7 million in 2000, not counting unexercised stock options worth tens of millions more. The saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," couldn't be truer when it comes to healthcare. Yet, we provide universal coverage for seniors through Medicare, but not for children. We have economic disincentives for timely diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Universal healthcare is a humane and cost-effective solution to the growing healthcare crisis. Universal coverage won't come easy, but neither did Social Security or Medicare, which now serves one in seven Americans. Many proposals for universal healthcare build on the foundation of "Medicare for All," albeit an improved Medicare adequately serving seniors and younger people alike. Healthcare is as essential to equal opportunity as public education and as essential to public safety as police and fire protection. If your neighbor's house were burning, would you want 911 operators to ask for their fire insurance card number before sending--or not sending--fire trucks? Healthcare ranked second behind terrorism and national security as the most critical issue for the nation in the 2002 Health Confidence Survey released by the Employee Benefit Research Institute. The government thinks the smallpox threat is serious enough to start inoculating military and medical personnel with a highly risky vaccine. It's time to stop delaying universal healthcare, which will save lives everyday while boosting our readiness for any bioterror attack.

#### Extinction

Ochs, 2 (Richard; Naturalist – Grand Teton National Park with a Masters in Natural Resource Management from Rutgers, “Biological Weapons must be abolished immediately”, 6/9 www.freefromterror.net/other\_articles/abolish.html)

#### Of all the weapons of mass destruction, the genetically engineered biological weapons, many without a known cure or vaccine, are an extreme danger to the continued survival of life on earth. Any perceived military value or deterrence pales in comparison to the great risk these weapons pose just sitting in vials in laboratories. While a "nuclear winter," resulting from a massive exchange of nuclear weapons, could also kill off most of life on earth and severely compromise the health of future generations, they are easier to control. Biological weapons, on the other hand, can get out of control very easily, as the recent anthrax attacks has demonstrated. There is no way to guarantee the security of these doomsday weapons because very tiny amounts can be stolen or accidentally released and then grow or be grown to horrendous proportions. The Black Death of the Middle Ages would be small in comparison to the potential damage bioweapons could cause. Abolition of chemical weapons is less of a priority because, while they can also kill millions of people outright, their persistence in the environment would be less than nuclear or biological agents or more localized. Hence, chemical weapons would have a lesser effect on future generations of innocent people and the natural environment. Like the Holocaust, once a localized chemical extermination is over, it is over. With nuclear and biological weapons, the killing will probably never end. Radioactive elements last tens of thousands of years and will keep causing cancers virtually forever. Potentially worse than that, bio-engineered agents by the hundreds with no known cure could wreck even greater calamity on the human race than could persistent radiation. AIDS and ebola viruses are just a small example of recently emerging plagues with no known cure or vaccine. Can we imagine hundreds of such plagues?

### Impact – Health Care – XT: Repeal

#### Republicans will repeal healthcare

Seattle Post 7/1 (Anne Flathery, “GOP: Voters will have final say on health care law” Associated Press, <http://www.seattlepi.com/business/article/GOP-Voters-will-have-final-say-on-health-care-law-3677079.php//HT>)

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican congressional leaders said Sunday that voters — not the Supreme Court — will have the final word on President Barack Obama's health care law come November. And they are betting that the law's unpopularity will be enough to drive Democrats from power. The White House's response? Bring it on. "We've got one last chance here to beat Obamacare, and we can do that in the November election," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, calling the law the "single worst piece of legislation" passed in modern times. White House chief of staff Jack Lew countered that he believes most Americans want to put the health care debate to rest. "I actually think the American people want us to focus on the economy, on creating jobs and moving forward," said Lew. Republicans and Democrats have been wrangling for the upper hand in the health care debate since last week's Supreme Court ruling upholding the law's mandate that individuals buy health insurance or face a penalty. Chief Justice John Roberts, a conservative, provided the pivotal vote in that decision by ruling that the penalty was legal under the government's taxing authority. While technically handing a political victory to Obama, Roberts' ruling invigorated Republicans eager to cast the law as a new tax. "The American people do not want to go down this path," said House Majority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio. "They do not want the government telling them what kind of insurance policy they have to buy, and how much they have to pay for it, and if you don't like it we're going to tax you." Democrats refute the characterization of the law. Lew said the mandate would impact only 1 percent of Americans — those who can afford health insurance but refuse to buy it. "This is a penalty on free riders," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. Yet public opposition to the health care law remains high. Forty-seven percent of respondents in a recent Associated Press-GfK poll said they oppose the law while 33 percent said they support it. However, much of the polling does find strong support for individual elements, like allowing young adults to remain on their parents' plan to age 26. Some Democrats see that as an opening to reframe the debate. Republicans say they believe last week's ruling by the high court gives them fresh ammunition to attack Obama — and the Democrats who support him — in the upcoming election because of the health care bill's connection to jobs. The GOP says the law puts onerous mandates on industry that could stifle job creation. "I think it's intertwined with the economy, and I think it's an example where Washington doesn't get it," said Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., of the health care bill. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said Sunday that Republicans, including Mitt Romney, are "being the mouthpiece of the health care industry" and that the bill will actually improve the economy. "The costs were unsustainable," she said of the current health care system. "It's a competitiveness issue for business and for our economy. So we had to (come) to a place where we lowered costs to all concerned, and that we again take it down a path where we continue to lower costs." If given control of the Senate next year, McConnell said he would support using budget reconciliation rules to repeal the health care law. Doing so would prohibit Senate filibusters and require only 51 votes to succeed. In 2010, Republicans lambasted Democrats for relying on these rules to pass the health care bill, calling their tactics unusual and hyperpartisan. McConnell said he'll do whatever it takes to repeal the law. "I'm confident they're going to give us the votes to repeal it," he said of the American public. The House is scheduled to vote to overturn the law on July 9. The vote will largely be symbolic since the Democrats control the Senate. But it will put lawmakers on record for the upcoming political campaign. McConnell and Lew spoke on "Fox News Sunday." Boehner, Schumer and Coburn spoke on CBS' "Face the Nation." Pelosi spoke on NBC's "Meet the Press."

#### McConnell promised a republican victory would end Obamacare

Reuters 7/1 (Will Dunham, “Top Republicans press healthcare law repeal effort,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/01/us-usa-healthcare-idUSBRE8600E120120701//HT>)

(Reuters) - The two top Republicans in Congress vowed on Sunday to push ahead with efforts to repeal President Barack Obama's healthcare law despite the Supreme Court upholding it, but the White House said it is time to stop fighting and start implementing it. "This has to be ripped out by its roots," House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner, the top Republican in Congress, said of the 2010 law on the CBS program "Face the Nation." Boehner added: "We will not flinch from our resolve to make sure this law is repealed in its entirety." The House, controlled by Republicans, has scheduled a vote on July 11 to repeal the law. The Democratic-led Senate, as it has done in the past, is certain to block any repeal legislation. The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the law, Obama's signature domestic policy achievement and the most sweeping overhaul since the 1960s of the unwieldy U.S. healthcare system. The ruling was written by conservative Chief Justice John Roberts and joined by the court's four liberals. "I think the thing that the American people want is for the divisive debate on healthcare to stop," White House Chief of Staff Jack Lew said on "Fox News Sunday." "I think that what we need to do is get on with the implementation now, and that's what we intend to do," Lew added. The healthcare law battle promises to figure prominently in the November 6 election in which Obama is challenged by Republican Mitt Romney, who as Massachusetts governor pushed through a state healthcare overhaul with provisions similar to Obama's plan. A Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Sunday showed public support for the law rising to 48 percent after the ruling from 43 percent before the court's decision. The U.S. system, unlike other rich countries, is a patchwork of private insurance and restrictive government programs. The United States pays more for healthcare than any other country, but about 50 million of the roughly 310 million Americans still have no insurance. The law was meant to bring coverage to more than 30 million of the uninsured and slow soaring medical costs. Critics deride the law as "Obamacare" and say it meddles too much in the lives of individuals and the business of the states. 'SINGLE WORST PIECE OF LEGISLATION' Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said Republicans will insist that the Democrats who control the chamber hold a vote before the election on repealing the law. "If I'm the leader of the majority next year, I commit to the American people that the repeal of 'Obamacare' will be job one," he said on "Fox News Sunday." McConnell said he would use a process called "reconciliation" in the 100-member Senate to permit a simple majority to pass a repeal of the law rather than the customary 60 votes. McConnell had criticized Senate Democrats for using that same process in passing the bill in 2010. "Yes, that could be done with a simple 51 votes," he said. "This is the single worst piece of legislation that's been passed, certainly in modern times. And it will be an issue, a big issue, in the fall election," McConnell said. "We've got one last chance here to defeat Obamacare. We can do that in the November election," added McConnell. McConnell labeled the law's "individual mandate" provision - requiring most people to obtain health insurance by 2014 or pay a financial penalty - a middle-class tax increase. Asked whether a similar provision in Romney's healthcare law in Massachusetts was also a middle-class tax increase, McConnell said, "Well, I think Governor Romney ought to speak for himself about what was done in Massachusetts." The White House and fellow Democrats refuse to label as a tax the law's penalty on people who decline to obtain health insurance - even though the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the "individual mandate" only because it was permissible under the congressional power to levy taxes. "It's a penalty. It's something that only 1 percent of people - who can afford insurance and choose not to get - it will pay," Lew said on CNN's "State of the Union." Nancy Pelosi, the top House Democrat, added on NBC's "Meet the Press": "It is a penalty for free riders." Asked what Republicans would do - if they succeed in repealing Obama's law - to provide coverage to the tens of millions of Americans currently with no insurance, McConnell said: "That is not the issue. The question is how can you go step by step to improve the American healthcare system. It is already the finest healthcare system in the world." "We're not going to turn the American healthcare system into a western European system," he added, referring to government-run systems that provide near universal coverage.

### Impact – Infrastructure/Turns Case

#### Obama would dedicate his second term to infrastructure expansion—solves the aff

Schroth 6/27/2012 (Raymond, Writer for America Magazine: A National Catholic Weekly, “Readings: What if Obama wins?,” http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/blog.cfm?blog\_id=2&category\_id=167)

According to Lizza, Obama’s campaign is highlighting noble intentions like dealing with climate change and containing nuclear proliferation, but he fudged in 2010, reluctant to confront Congress, on these very issues. The old question will continue to loom of “who Obama really is:” “an aspiring compromiser, a lawyerly strategist, or a bold visionary willing to gamble to assure his legacy.” His best opportunity for a breakthrough on energy policy, immigration, or tax reform, Lizza says, would come in 2013. It is more likely that he will spend his last two years on foreign policy. If he wants to leave a mark, says Lizza, he’ll need two things: a sense of humility, and a revitalized faction of Republican lawmakers willing to make deals with the president. It seems implausible to suppose that Obama would turn radical in his second term. And if he wins in November it will be by smallest margin in history. So much for hoping for a “mandate.”

If he has time for just one big initiative, what should it be? Housing reform, energy policy, immigration, the infrastructure? Several staff members favor “a bold infrastructure package . . . what would create jobs, has a government reform component, and could establish a legacy in the form of an upgraded power grid or high-speed train, with which Obama might forever be associated.”

#### Obama second term would solve infrastructure investment

Rubinstein 2012 (Dana, March 27, reporter for Capital. She has written for Bloomberg Businessweek, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the New York Observer, and the Brooklyn Paper, http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/03/5524547/when-obama-going-have-his-eisenhower-moment)

"I think then he could really use the hammer of the bully pulpit of a sitting president who does’t have to run again," said Chris Ward, who served as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's executive director before moving to construction firm Dragados. "I think he’ll be a very different president once he gets reelected." “I’ll tell you this, if he wins a second term, he’s going to come into a second term with some domestic priorities,” said Schank. “Investing in transportation is not a bad way to invest his political capital.” In the transportation nerd’s fantasy scenario, one in which funding was bountiful and politicians were programmed to spend it judiciously, the president would direct federal government to do things like rebuild the nation’s highways, expand its rail and transit networks, and improve connections between the two. The country could subsidize freight rail, unclogging the highways. The government could fund passenger rail too, and do it where it’s needed, like, say, in the Northeast corridor. “The interconnection between highway and rail systems in many places could be done much better,” said Paul Yarossi, chairman of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association. “I think we could improve our ability to move product to and from docks and piers, how we integrate our rail and truck traffic together could be done better. It’s just a matter of taking a look at what our transportation system might look like 20 years from now and seeing if there’s a better way of making the different modes of transportation work together.” And maybe, in this scenario, the president would fight for new sources of revenue.

### Impact – AT: Weak Foreign Policy

#### Obama has asserted American primacy and Romney wouldn’t be meaningfully different from him

Singh ’12 [Robert, Professor of Politics at Birkbeck, University of London, “Welcome to the Post-American World: Barack Obama, US Foreign Policy and the 2012 Election”, http://www.worldfinancialreview.com/?p=1747]

Against all this, of course, one must set Obama’s likely opponent. Although not exactly edifying, the Republican Party campaign has seen – with the exception of neo-isola­tionist Ron Paul – a fairly predictable conservative critique of Obama’s foreign policies set out. Obama is portrayed as weak, naive and feckless with American power, “apologising” for America’s historic ills and errors, and failing to stand squarely with traditional allies such as the UK and Israel against long-standing foes such as Iran and Syria. Not supporting the Green Movement in Iran in 2009, and failing to articulate the forceful promotion of democratic values and human rights in Russia, China and elsewhere, Obama is condemned for what one of his White House officials infelicitously termed “lead­ing from behind.” How much purchase such criticisms have is questionable. Even if he was not vociferous in its celebration early on, as his presidency has progressed, Obama has come to embrace at least the rhetoric of American exceptionalism much more forcefully. Earlier this year – allegedly influenced by the re­cent publications of neo-conservative scholar, Robert Kagan – Obama even went so far as to expressly deny that America is in decline and to reassert the position of the US as the “indis­pensable nation” that Madeleine Albright had controversially declared back in 1998. Moreover, the conservative attack on Obama would per­haps have greater force were it not for two factors. First, any fair accounting of the Obama record must note the marked and, to many supporters and opponents alike, surprising con­tinuity of his administration with its ill-loved predecessor. While the administration rejected early on the language of a “war on terror”, its logic was preserved. In fact, one can make a case that the administration has been even more aggressive than that of George W. Bush in using drone strikes to carry out assassinations, infringing Pakistani (not to mention Yemeni and Somali) sovereignty, and in maintaining rendition, deten­tion, military commissions and the pursuit of “state secrets” doctrines. Obama may be uncomfortable with the mantle of a “war president”, but it is difficult credibly to label him as weak when it comes to his willingness to use military force. It is per­haps another irony of the administration that some of its more notable accomplishments have come from advancing the Bush agenda more effectively than did Bush, while some of its more problematic or stalled policies have been Obama innovations (such as the “soft security” agenda of energy independence and combating climate change, as well as the “global nuclear zero” non-proliferation agenda, which has ceased momentum and threatens to crater under the growing nuclear ambitions of Iran, North Korea and Pakistan). Second, once we get past the heated campaign rhetoric of an election year, would a Republican foreign policy look markedly different after January 2013 to the current Democratic one? Again, symbolism needs to be distinguished from substance here. Mitt Romney has certainly castigated Obama on international matters from China and trade to non-proliferation. The key areas where one might anticipate a difference, though, are probably Israel and Iran. On the former, a Romney White House would likely prove far more congenial to the Netanyahu administration, whose relations with Obama have been fraught and icy. On the latter, Romney would be more likely to countenance an Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, and possibly aid one with US forces, than the current incumbent. Beyond these important areas, though, it is difficult to see how a Romney administration – confronting the same budgetary constraints at home and similar geo-political challenges abroad – would make decisive departures in US foreign policy to contain China, weaken Russia, embolden the EU or pacify the Middle East.

### Impact – AT: Israel Strikes

#### Relations are already strained – Obama is irrelevant

The Washington Quarterly 12 (Don Waxman, “The Real Problem in U.S.—Israeli Relations,” Spring 12 <https://www.twq.com/files/publication/twq12springwaxman.pdf//HT>)

To many Israelis, and Israeli supporters in the United States, the reason for the tensions between the United States and Israel in recent years is simple: President Obama is not really pro-Israelor at least not in the way that right-wing, hawkish Israeli and American Jews, and most Republicans, understand the term. For them, being ‘‘pro-Israel’’ means providing uncritical support for Israeli governments. It certainly doesn’t mean lecturing Israel on what’s best for it, or applying any kind of pressure on itboth of which President Obama has done. By this narrow definition, Obama is certainly not ‘‘pro-Israel,’’ but then neither are many American Jews, nor even Israelis for that matter, who also don’t blindly support the Netanyahu government. But it is not only right-wing Israeli and American Jews who question Obama’s pro-Israel credentials. There is a widespread sentiment within Israel and the American Jewish community that President Obama is not emotionally or instinctively pro-Israel in the way that his recent predecessors have been (notably, presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton). While Obama is credited with helping Israel on occasion (at the United Nations for instance, 3 or when the Israeli embassy in Cairo was under siege), he is not regarded as a ‘‘true friend’’ of the country. However baseless this belief may be, it has endured despite the best efforts of President Obama and his supporters to dispel it. Indeed, within parts of the American Jewish community, it has become something of a cliche´ to say that Obama does not have a feeling in his ‘‘kishkes’’ (meaning ‘‘guts’’ in Yiddish) for Israel. 4 The persistence of the belief that Obama is not sincerely pro-Israel is also, it must be noted, a result of the constant efforts of Republicans to woo Jewish voters and donors. There is nothing new about this attempt by Republicans, but with Obama in office it has gained new momentum and hope. Republicans appear to be convinced that this time, unlike all previous instances when the great Jewish defection from the Democratic Party was supposed to occur, large numbers of Jewish voters will really abandon their traditional Democratic affiliation and vote for a Republican presidential candidate. Although this scenario remains highly unlikely (notwithstanding last year’s upset Republican win in New York’s heavily Jewish 9th congressional districtAnthony Weiner’s former seat), 5 it entices Republicans who hope to make Obama’s stance on Israel a partisan ‘‘wedge issue’’ in 2012. Thus, the incessant criticisms of Obama’s attitude toward Israel by Republican politicians and commentators should really be seen as electioneering, not objective analysis. Not only is much of the criticism of Obama’s approach to the U.S. relationship with Israel tendentious (and quite possible disingenuous), it is also highly selective. The assertion that Obama has ‘‘thrown Israel under the bus’’ (in Mitt Romney’s words) is belied by the fact that U.S.—Israeli defense ties have actually increased during the Obama administration. 6 This is not to say that Obama’s handling of relations with Israel has been flawless by any means. The president and others in his administration have undoubtedly made numerous tactical mistakes, some of which have been very costly. Most egregiously, Obama has not visited Israel or directly spoken to the Israeli public, although he has addressed the Muslim and Arab publics in Ankara in April 2009, Cairo in June 2009, and at the State Department in May 2010. But while the administration has been guilty of mishandling the relationship at times, it cannot fairly be accused of reducing U.S. support for Israel, as many of its critics charge. If President Obama, therefore, is not to blame for the recurrent U.S.—Israeli tensions that have arisen during his term, who or what is? Some analysts have suggested that the trouble lies in a clash between two very different leadersObama and Netanyahu. 7 Politically, they come from different campsObama is a liberal, Netanyahu a conservativeand personally they don’t seem to like or trust each other very much. 8 The lack of personal warmth between them has been on full display in their White House meetings, most notoriously in May 2011 when Netanyahu publicly lectured a stern-faced Obama in front of the press, after the president stated in a speech at the State Department the day before that the borders of a future Palestinian state should be based upon the 1967 ‘‘Green Line’’ with mutually agreed land swaps. Although the personal chemistry of leaders can certainly make a difference in interstate relationshipsthink of the close relationship between President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, for exampleit does not fully account for the tensions in U.S.—Israeli relations during the Obama administration. After all, these tensions are not just limited to Obama and Netanyahu. They are more widespread and deeply rooted. They stem from more than merely a personality clash between the two leaders. At the root of the tensions are differing strategic perspectives. Only by recognizing this can we really understand the problem in U.S.—Israeli relations today

#### Israeli strikes aren’t likely-they’re waiting for the U.S.

Tobin 12 (Jonathan, Jonathan S. Tobin is Senior Online Editor of Commentary magazine with responsibility for managing the editorial content of the website as well as serving as chief politics blogger. From January 2009 to April 2011, he was executive editor of the magazine, “Iran, Obama and Bibi’s October Surprise” Commentary, 5/6/12, <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2012/05/06/benefits-of-bibi-october-surprise-scenario-israel-elections-netanyahu-obama-iran-nuclear/>/HT)

But Netanyahu and Barak are also keenly aware of the danger of pushing too far. That’s why it is equally unimaginable they would order a strike on Iran while the West was actively conducting nuclear negotiations. Though no one should think they would not use force as a last resort, they have throughout this crisis made it clear they understood it is far better for the West — whose interests are involved in this matter as much as that of Israel — to deal with the Iranian nuclear threat. However, once the talks started last month, it seemed as if Israel had lost its leverage. The Iranians are past masters of playing diplomatic hide and seek with credulous Western negotiators. This round of talks started off no different than previous futile attempts to make the ayatollahs see reason. With European Union foreign policy chief Catherin Ashton in charge of the negotiations, there seemed little chance the West would push the Iranians hard. With both sides more intent on preventing an Israeli attack than on actually coming up with a deal that would shut down Iran’s nuclear program, it seemed likely that they would be dragged out until the end of the year when a re-elected President Obama might have the “flexibility” to take a less harsh view of the issue than when the votes of the pro-Israel community were up for grabs. But if Obama believes there is a window for an Israeli attack in the fall prior to November, that might scare him into forcing Ashton and the negotiators to get tough. Though there is no reason to believe any amount of Western pressure, sanctions or threats will persuade Iran to give up its ambition of a nuclear weapon, Netanyahu’s election schedule might be enough to get the West to follow through on its oil embargo and to refuse to allow the Islamist regime to play them for the suckers in the P5+1 talks. Rather than the September 4 election making a unilateral Israeli strike more likely, it just might be the thing that could stiffen the spines of Obama and his European partners during the next six months.

### Impact – AT: Tax Cuts

#### Expiration of tax cuts good-would drastically decrease the debt

Mataconis 5/18 (Doug, attorney in private practice in Northern Virginia and blogs regularly at Below The Beltway and The Liberty Papers. “What Happens If All The Bush Tax Cuts Expire?” http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/what-happens-if-all-the-bush-tax-cuts-expire//HT)

To put this in perspective, the Federal Reserve expects the economy to grow at a roughly 2.9 percent pace in 2013. If Congress does nothing at the end of this year, much of that growth could be wiped out, and there’s a strong possibility that the United States could lurch back into recession. (Granted, a lot could depend on how the Fed reacts in this situation.) On the flip side, as Ezra discussed in Thursday’s Wonkbook, letting all of the tax cuts expire and spending cuts kick in would also cut the U.S. deficit considerably: “Public debt falls from 75.8 percent in 2013 to 61.3 percent in 2022.” Given the fact that we’ve already seen evidence that the 2.5% growth forecast for this year may turn out to be overly optimistic, we probably put to much stock in the 2.9% forecast for 2013. If growth (not factoring in the impact of the changes coming on December 31) is less that 2.9%, then the impact of what Plumer calls “Taxmageddon” will be even worse.

#### Doesn’t matter who’s president-neither will let the tax cuts expire

Mataconis 5/18 (Doug, attorney in private practice in Northern Virginia and blogs regularly at Below The Beltway and The Liberty Papers. “What Happens If All The Bush Tax Cuts Expire?” http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/what-happens-if-all-the-bush-tax-cuts-expire//HT)

When November and December 2012 roll around, the President and Congress will be faced with the same dilemma. Quite honestly, I don’t believe that allowing the tax cuts to expire is going to be considered a serious position on either side of the aisle, not under current economic conditions. As was the case in 2010, the big point of contention will be what happens to the tax rates for those making more than roughly $200,000 per year. My guess is that what happens there will depend greatly on what happens in the November election but that if the GOP really wants to push the point they will be able to once again get the President to agree to a full extension rather than a limited one. In the end, it’s a game of chicken and when both sides already know that neither one wants to allow the tax cuts (or the payroll tax holiday) to expire because of the impact it would have on the economy, that gives the GOP a significant negotiating advantage. So, count on the Bush Tax Cuts staying around for at least another two years absent some kind of comprehensive tax reform in the first year in of office whoever happens to take the oath of office on January 20, 2013. At that point, shouldn’t we start calling them the Obama Tax Cuts, or maybe the Romney Tax Cuts?

# Obama Bad

## Uniqueness

### Uniqueness – Romney – General

#### Romney winning by a narrow margin – Obama’s health care unpopularity and job approval

Rasmussen 7/3 (Rasmussen Reports is a media company whose work is followed by millions on a wide variety of platforms. Our firm has been a pioneer in the use of automated telephone polling techniques. During Election 2008, Rasmussen Reports projected that Barack Obama would defeat John McCain by a 52% to 46% margin. Obama was 53% to 46%. In 2004, Rasmussen Reports was the only firm to project the vote totals for both candidates within half a percentage point. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 1,500 Likely Voters is +/- 3 percentage points with a 95% level of confidence. Tuesday, July 03, 2012, “Daily Presidential Tracking Poll,” http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\_content/politics/obama\_administration/daily\_presidential\_tracking\_poll)

The Rasmussen Reports daily Presidential Tracking Poll for Tuesday shows Mitt Romney attracting 47% of the vote, while President Obama earns 44%. Four percent (4%) prefer some other candidate, and five percent (5%) are undecided. Last week, the president received an immediate bounce following the Supreme Court ruling on his health care law. On the night of the ruling, the single night poll results were by far the best recorded for Obama in many months. Over the past few days, the numbers have returned to where they’ve been for most of the past month—Romney up slightly among likely voters in a very close race. See tracking history. On the Generic Congressional Ballot, Republicans now hold a narrow one-point advantage. Political conservatives are following the election more closely than moderates or liberals. Fifty-one percent (51%) of conservatives are following the race daily. Among moderates, 32% are that interested. Thirty-four percent (34%) of liberals are paying that much attention. Interest in a campaign is often a leading indicator of turnout. On the day before we celebrate the founding of our nation and the ratifying of the Declaration of Independence, Americans still believe in the founding ideals. Ninety-four percent (94%) believe “we are all endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Eighty-two percent (82%) believe “all men are created equal.” Seventy percent (70%) agree that “governments derive their only just powers from the consent of the governed.” However, just 22% believe that the federal government actually has the consent of the governed today. A president’s Job Approval rating is one of the best indicators for assessing his chances of reelection. Typically, the president’s Job Approval rating on Election Day will be close to the share of the vote he receives. Currently, 46% of voters say they at least somewhat approve of the president’s job performance. Fifty-three percent (53%) at least somewhat disapprove (see trends). When tracking President Obama’s job approval on a daily basis, people sometimes get so caught up in the day-to-day fluctuations that they miss the bigger picture. To look at the longer-term trends, Rasmussen Reports compiles the numbers on a full-month basis. For the full month of June, the president’s Job Approval rating was 47%. During all of 2012, those ratings have stayed in a narrow range between 47% and 49% on a full month basis. While the Supreme Court declared that the president’s health care law is constitutional, they were unable to make it popular. Fifty-two percent (52%) still favor repeal of the law. That’s little changed from a week ago and little changed since the law was passed more than two years ago. However, while most voters still hope for repeal, the belief that it will happen has fallen sharply. Just 39% now believe repeal is even somewhat likely, down from 61% last week. Ratings for the Supreme Court have slipped since the health care ruling. A week ago, 36% said the high court was doing a good or an excellent job. That’s down to 33% today. The big change is a rise in negative perceptions. Today, 28% say the court is doing a poor job. That’s up 11 points over the past week. A growing number (56%) now believe the justices pursue their own agendas rather than ruling on an impartial basis. Also, the numbers who see the high court as too liberal is up, while the numbers who see it as too conservative is down. Political analyst Michael Barone writes that even though the health care law survived, the political playing field has changed. “It’s not a winning issue for the incumbent,” he contends. After reviewing the data, Scott Rasmussen concludes that the Supreme Court did nothing more than keep the health care law on life support. “It’s important to remember that the law has already lost in the court of public opinion," he writes. "The Supreme Court ruling is a temporary reprieve more than anything else.” If you’d like Scott to speak to your organization, meeting, or conference, please contact Premiere Speakers. Looking to the Electoral College swing states, Obama leads in New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Michigan. Romney leads in North Carolina and Missouri. The race is a toss-up in Wisconsin, Iowa, Ohio, Virginia, Florida and Colorado.

#### Romney now winning—poll based on longer term trends and key demographics prove

Stirewalt 5/15/2012 (Chris, Chris Stirewalt is digital politics editor for Fox News, and his POWER PLAY column appears Monday-Friday on FoxNews.com, www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/05/15/alarm-grows-among-dems-about-obamas-chances/)

It has taken months of bad news, but Democrats increasingly believe that President Obama might just lose his re-election bid. The latest wake-up call comes in the form of a New York Times/CBS poll showing Republican Mitt Romney in the lead not just among registered voters overall, but with women and independents. The Times/CBS survey is unique in that the pollsters called back the same phone numbers they had a month before. In April, Obama and Romney were dead even. Now, Romney leads by 3 points overall. That’s still within the margin of error -- a statistical tie. But the shifts with women, moderates and independents are all statistically significant. Obama lost 5 points with each of those demographics.

### Uniqueness – Romney – Economy

#### Romney has momentum because of low jobs-approval for Obama. Only a high-profile move on jobs leadership can give Obama the race

Schoen 7/5/2012 (Douglas, political strategist, Fox News contributor, author of the new book, “Hopelessly Divided: The New Crisis in American Politics and What it Means for 2012 and Beyond,” http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/07/05/forget-health-care-it-still-about-jobs-jobs-jobs-for-obama-and-romney/)

Recent polling shows clearly and unambiguously that the former Massachusetts Governor remains within striking distance of the president – whose vulnerability in the polls became clearer and clearer over the course of the week. Here's why: President Obama’s job approval rating is well below the crucial fifty percent mark in the latest polling by Gallup(45%-47% disapproval), and Rasmussen (46%- 53% disapproval), and the latest Real Clear Politics average has the president with a net negative approval rating (47.6% - 48.3%). These findings are consistent with the results in a new Newsweek/Daily Beast poll, conducted by my polling firm, Douglas E. Schoen, LLC. immediately following the Supreme Court ruling – in which a solid majority (54%) of voters said they disapproved of President Obama’s overall job performance, a plurality of voters said it is time to replace him with someone else (48%), and only 42% said he has done his job well enough to deserve reelection. Moreover, voters told us that Governor Romney would do a better job on handling virtually every single domestic policy measure than President Obama – including the economy (52%-37%), illegal immigration (41%-38%), health care (48%-40%), balancing the budget (48%-44%), fighting crime (35%-33%), and holding the line on taxes (45%-42%). The fact that the president got no real bounce at all from the Supreme Court's ruling and saw no fundamental change in his approval ratings – even while a solid majority (58%) of voters see the Supreme Court decision as a major political win for Obama and while only 19% see it as a win for Romney, and 23% are unsure -- indicates the profound disquiet American voters feel with current economic circumstances. These findings underscore the real and fundamental political problem that President Obama and indeed both parties face -- the economy. Put simply, when voters head to the polls come November, their decision will hinge on jobs, housing and other economic indicators – not health care. Having suffered in the polls following the poor job figures for March, April, and May, the only way the president can turn these numbers around is to demonstrate real leadership on fiscal issues.

#### Obama will lose – the economy

Bommarito 7-4 [Sal, former investment banker and current political commentator, “10 Reasons Obama Will Lose in November”, http://www.policymic.com/articles/10704/10-reasons-obama-will-lose-in-november]

The writing is on the wall: *Barack* Obama is going to lose the presidential election *in November.* Mitt Romney’s efforts between now and then will have a relatively minor impact on the voters unless he makes a grave misstep. Here are the top ten issues that will cause voters to support the alternative candidate. Every issue presented herein is virtually out of the hands of the president and his supporters.  1) The economy. There is not an issue that is going well for Obama in this area. Unemployment will continue to be extremely high when it is announced on Friday. In addition to official unemployment numbers, the situation is exacerbated by a huge number of unemployed workers who have given up their efforts to find employment. 2) Europe. Absolutely nothing will be settled on the continent before our elections. The instability created by the on again, off again negotiations between Euro zone leaders is depressing America. Corporate executives are concerned, stock market investors are skittish and people around the world are wondering why the U.S. is playing no role in the important changes that are happening in Europe. This speaks to the irrelevance of Obama in the deliberations. 3) The stock markets. Middle class investors are still far off their highpoints of wealth accumulation prior to 2008 as exhibited by lower pension and housing valuations. The continued turmoil in the world will result in no meaningful upsurge in the markets before the elections.

#### Romney winning older suburban whites—Obama has to flip them to win with a new economic narrative

Globe and Mail 7/4/2012 (http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/us-election/white-middle-aged-voters-still-hold-the-power-in-us-election/article4388589/?cmpid=rss1)

Voter demographics will determine the political destinies of President Barack Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney. But while Hispanics are often identified as the key to victory in 2012, the real kingmakers are still middle-aged white suburban voters. And there, Mr. Obama has a problem. A new CNN/ORC poll shows Mr. Obama trailing Mr. Romney among white voters by 18 percentage points. The President’s support among the biggest block of the electorate stands at just 39 per cent. The survey included voters who “lean” toward one candidate or the other, not just those who have actually decided whom they will vote for. But the poll does underscore the ground Mr. Obama needs to make up among white voters in order to win in November. It also helps to explain why the Obama campaign has relentlessly hit at Mr. Romney’s record running the private equity firm Bain Capital more than a decade ago. The ads are directed mainly at working-class white voters, a critical chunk of the electorate that proved the least responsive to Mr. Obama’s charm in 2008 and which has only grown colder towards the President since. While top Democrats including former President Bill Clinton and Newark, N.J. mayor Cory Booker have publicly questioned the wisdom of attacking Mr. Romney’s business record, the Obama campaign and a Super PAC supporting the President have continued to hammer at the former Massachusetts governor’s “profits-before-people” philosophy. On Tuesday, the Obama campaign launched yet another negative television ad campaign using the Bain narrative. “Mitt Romney’s companies were pioneers in outsourcing U.S. jobs to low-wage countries,” according to the narrator of the ad, which is set to run in nine so-called “battleground states.” A single poll is not in itself a reliable gauge of public opinion. But the CNN survey is worth dwelling upon because of the detailed demographic breakdown of respondents it provides and its relatively low margins of error for each group of the electorate. For white voters, the margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. In 2008, John McCain won the white vote by 12 percentage points, besting Mr. Obama 55 per cent to 43 per cent, according to exit polls. Mr. Obama won overwhelmingly among blacks (95 per cent) and Hispanics (67 per cent). Turnout will be critical in determining the outcome in November. The proportion of eligible white voters has declined a tad from 74 per cent of the electorate in 2008, and the share of the Hispanic electorate risen to about 11 per cent. But that shift may not be reflected at the polls, as voter registration among Latinos this year trails 2008 levels. That could change with Mr. Obama’s efforts to mobilize Hispanics. His move to halt deportations of Latinos under 30 who were brought to the United States illegally as children is part of that effort. And a Supreme Court decision last week partially upholding Republican-led Arizona’s controversial crackdown on illegal immigrants could further help Mr. Obama get Hispanics to the polls. But without improving his standing among white voters, especially among the over-50 set that turns out in big numbers, Mr. Obama faces a much narrower path to victory than in 2008.

### Uniqueness – Romney – Health Care Backlash

#### Romney will win – health care

The Washington Times 6/29 [“Inside the Beltway”, 2012]

Republicans pre-loaded rebuttals to an Obamacare win in the Supreme Court, promising to "double down" on their efforts to repeal the health care law, and insisting the ruling would bolster Mitt Romney's campaign and appeal for him. They have a point. Pollsters consistently find that a majority of Americans either don't understand the law, or are wary of its big government implications and staggering costs. Doctors themselves appear dubious. A survey of 243 U.S. primary care physicians taken by the medical data company MDLinx after the decision found that 64 percent did not believe the law could achieve its objective of 100 percent health care coverage for Americans. "Conventional wisdom is that the decision upholding the Affordable Care Act is a win for the left. However, a majority of justices supported limiting the reach of the Commerce Clause to impose mandates, as well as restricting the federal government's ability to dictate Medicaid policy to the states. Furthermore, this decision sets up the 2012 election as another referendum on the act, something that did not work well for the Democrats in 2010," Tevi Troy told Inside the Beltway. He was deputy Health and Human Service director in the George W. Bush administration, and is now a health care policy adviser to the Romney campaign as well as a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. "Now is the time for Republicans to step up. Either repeal Obamacare, or the American people will repeal you," advised a vigorous Brent Bozell, founder of the Media Research Center and chairman of ForAmerica, a conservative non-profit advocacy group. AND THAT'S SHOW BIZ Dewey defeats Truman, again? The media hall of shame just got a few more entries. Caught up in the anxious snare of breaking news and journalistic hysteria, two news organizations and at least one public official got their stories wrong once the Supreme Court issued its ruling on Obamacare. Their blunders generated more than 18,000 gleeful press reports and mentions within hours. Alas, CNN and Fox News initially reported that President Obama's health care law had been ruled unconstitutional, even as other news outlets trumpeted the opposite. Critics pounced, and social media rattled with waggish comparisons to historic flubs - like the Chicago Tribune's erroneous "Dewey Defeats Truman" banner headline that has lived in infamy since 1948. Both networks corrected their errors, deftly blaming it all on the sluggish flow of facts, and misinterpretation. And like hundreds of other officials, Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott released his own statement following the Supreme Court ruling. Initially, Mr. Abbott earnestly proclaimed the decision a "historic victory for individual liberty, states' rights, and limited government." A Texas-sized "oops" moment, to be sure. And like the networks, Mr. Abbott squared his shoulders and tidied up his mess with a new quote an hour later, rehashing the correct facts and ultimately proclaiming, "It is time for Congress to step in and end the Obamacare nightmare." Does the world care? Oh yes. The network flubs alone drew national and international coverage and global tut-tuts from as far away Australia, India and Britain, according to a Goggle News count late Thursday. THE GRANDEST OLD PARTY The upcoming Republican National Convention will be a colossal, stupendous, behemoth? Yes, yes and yes, according to the official host committee in Tampa, Fla. Committee members plan to host "the largest welcome event" in the history of the convention itself. How large? More than 20,000 guests, including media and delegates, will be invited to the kick-off cocktail party and swanky soiree in Tampa - so large that it will be staged on Tropicana Field. The committee's president and CEO Ken Jones simply predicts "a monumental occasion, an incredible event." THE RAND BRAND The nation's capital is about to get shrugged: the Atlas Shrugged Society's "Atlas Summit" begins Friday to laud individualism, freedom, reason and respect for human achievement - all hallmarks of Ayn Rand's epic 1957 novel of the same name. The victory of Obamacare in the Supreme Court has added urgency to the three-day event; organizers are already citing the "chilling parallels" between the novel and the "current state of the world." The summit has drawn names of note. Among those in attendance: Rep. Allen B. West, Florida Republican; Fox Business News analyst John Stossel, Libertarian presidential hopeful Gary Johnson, Reason Foundation co-founder Robert Poole, and Americans for Tax Reform founder Grover Norquist. There's uncommon Hollywood afoot, too. Set to release "Atlas Shrugged, Part II" in October, film producers Harmon Kaslow and John Aglialoro will offer an update on their ambitious film project. See the big doings here: www.atlassociety.org. "Atlas should shrug now," advises Aaron Day, an entrepreneur who is also chief operating officer for the Washington-based Atlas Society. He plans to evaluate the Supreme Court health care ruling, and offer a "radical approach in response to this and other statist policies," he says. BUMPER PATROL "I visualized world peace. Now what?" Bumper sticker spotted in Joplin, Mo. POLL DU JOUR \* 89 percent of registered New Hampshire Republicans would vote for Mitt Romney if the presidential election were held today. \* 89 percent of registered New Hampshire Democrats would vote for President Obama. \* 83 percent of liberal New Hampshire voters would vote for Mr. Obama, 77 percent of conservative New Hampshire voters would pick Mr. Romney. \* 43 percent of registered New Hampshire voters overall would vote for Mr. Obama, 42 percent for Mr. Romney. \* 39 percent of independent New Hampshire voters would vote for Mr. Obama, 38 percent for Mr. Romney. \* 55 percent of Republican voters are "very enthusiastic" about the November election, 51 percent of Democrats feel the same way.

#### Obama will lose – health care and stimulus unpopularity

NY Times 7-1 (“The Price of Health Care”, Lexis Nexis)

For President Obama, the consequences of health care may still be fatal to his re-election hopes. The choice to go all-in on reform was the most important call of the Obama presidency, and from a purely political perspective it has proved the most disastrous one. Thursday's decision won't change this reality: Victory at the Supreme Court was obviously preferable to defeat, but the chief justice's grudging imprimatur is unlikely to make a deeply unpopular piece of legislation suddenly popular instead. Liberals have persuaded themselves that this unpopularity is largely the product of conservative misinformation and voter ignorance. But it's really a result of the gulf that opened in 2009 between the public's priorities and the president's agenda. By turning from economic crisis management to sweeping social legislation before the crisis had actually abated, Obama made himself look more ideological than practical and more liberal than pragmatic. By continuing to push for the largest possible bill even after the public backlash had elected a Republican senator in Massachusetts, he made himself look wildly out of touch as well. This was not a mistake the icons of the liberal past made. Franklin Delano Roosevelt spent two years defining himself as a Depression-fighter before he set out to establish Social Security; Lyndon Johnson pushed through the Great Society amid an economic boom. Had Obama followed Roosevelt's first-term example, the initial stimulus bill might have been broken up into smaller (and perhaps more popular) components, financial reform and perhaps tax reform would have preceded health care reform, and the kinds of jobs bills the White House demanded of a recalcitrant Republican Congress in 2011 might have been sought from a Democratic Congress in 2009 and 2010 instead. Even if this policy approach didn't dramatically accelerate the recovery, it would have given independent voters more confidence that the president had their economic interests rather than his history-making ambitions uppermost in mind. But the Obama White House was convinced that it could fight the recession and rewrite the social compact all at once. And when the administration's economic policies didn't deliver as promised, it was almost inevitable that the focus on health care would cost Obama approval ratings, cost his party House seats -- and perhaps help cost him a second term as well.

#### Healthcare decision unpopular

Bommarito 7-4 [Sal, a former business person and now spend most of my time writing novels and commenting on current affairs, “10 Reasons Obama Will Lose in November”, http://www.policymic.com/articles/10704/10-reasons-obama-will-lose-in-november]

8) Health care. The majority of Americans are not in favor of the current health care law. Now that Chief Justice Roberts has proclaimed it a new tax on Americans, Republicans will make hay on this issue in campaign advertisements.

### Uniqueness – Romney – Funding

#### Romney will win - Funding

NY Daily News 6-28 [“Obama campaign official: We could lose this election”, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/election-2012/obama-campaign-official-lose-election-article-1.1103852>]

President Barack Obama’s campaign is issuing a dramatic warning to its supporters: We could lose this election. “If we're drastically outspent in this election, there's a very good chance we will lose to Mitt Romney,” deputy campaign manager Julianna Smoot wrote in an email to supporters Wednesday night. “This is a distinct possibility. The financial landscape in this race has changed over the last few weeks.” ROMNEY RAISES MORE MONEY THAN OBAMA FOR FIRST TIME IN RACE FOR WHITE HOUSE Smoot then made a last-minute plea for supporters to give money to the Obama campaign before the next Federal Election Commission fundraising deadline on June 30. For added incentive, she said donors will be entered in a contest to win two seats beside Obama on his campaign bus next week. The desperate tone follows the surprise news earlier this month that Mitt Romney and the GOP raised more money in May than Obama and the Democratic Party. And Republicans have an additional fundraising weapon in their arsenal: the Republican super PAC, “Restore Our Future,” which has taken in multi-million dollar donations from billionaires like casino magnate Sheldon Adelson. A pro-Obama super PAC, “Priorities USA,” has been much less successful in attracting major donors. According to The Washington Post, the Republican Party is now looking to further increase its money-making edge by filing a lawsuit that challenges the government’s overall cap on individuals’ donations to political candidates and party committees. If the Republican National Committee’s lawsuit is successful, the Post said it would mean that one donor could give more than $2 million to candidates and parties as long as the funds are spread among House and Senate members and state organizations. Smoot’s email did not mention the RNC’s lawsuit, but said the presidential election should be decided by small donors, rather than millionaires and billionaires. She said that if the fundraising gap grows too wide, “Mitt Romney will win, and it will be because we couldn't keep up.” “We can't let that happen. I'm proud of how we're building this campaign, and I'm not about to let a handful of billionaires prove us wrong,” she added.

#### Romney’s outspending Obama – that’ll win him the election

Huffingtonpost 7-3 [“How Barack Obama May Lose the Presidency”, <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/marko-sijan/obama-romney_b_1645014.html>]

Fearing he'll be out-fundraised for the second month in a row by Republican nominee Mitt Romney, President Obama [reached out](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/06/30/exclusive-president-obama-asks-campaign-donors-to-send-him-more-money.html) to several donors of his 2008 election win in a conference call on Air Force One. He [warned](http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2012/07/obama-to-donors-i-really-need-you/1) that while his campaign has "a better grassroots operation ... and a better message," Romney has way more money and "the special interests that are financing Romney's campaign are just going to consolidate themselves. They're gonna run Congress and the White House." He laments that during his first presidential term his hair has turned gray because it's been so hard and slow making change, "especially when you've got an obstructionist Republican Congress," whose presidential nominee has billionaire backers like David and Charles Koch spending more alone on Romney than all of Obama's backers combined. However, the president does strike one positive note, seeing it as a "nice thing" that Americans "agree with our [Democrats'] message when they hear it ... A few billionaires can't drown out millions of voices." In my opinion, Obama's lying to himself and his donors, and knows full-well that a few billionairescan in fact determine an election. One way is through super-PAC ads. What's baffling is how cheap they look. One strains to believe they could sway even the most simple-minded voter. But apparently they can, provided Americans are relentlessly assaulted with them via television and the internet, bludgeoning their critical intelligence. Even more absurd is the [2010 U.S. Supreme Court decision](http://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/rpt/2010-R-0124.htm) in favour of Citizens United defining corporate donation as a form of human free speech, making it unconstitutional to limit the amount a corporation may contribute to a super-PAC. In his *Harper's* magazine essay, "It's a Rich Man's World: How billionaire backers pick America's candidates," Thomas Frank [argues](http://harpers.org/archive/2012/04/0083856) that super-PACs "have imported market logic directly into our politics," the U.S. becoming a country of, by and for the rich. Once Obama may have held social-justice ideals, such as the one that the poor, despite contributing little or nothing to the national economy, deserve handouts like hospital care financed by taxes on the rich and the working-class, medical attention being a privilege then not only for those who actually contribute something in return. However, by asking his donors to give him more money, he concedes that he can't beat corporate America, so instead he'll join them. In February his campaign manager Jim Messina [assured](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-02-13/obama-campaign-chief-messina-seeks-to-assure-wall-street-donors.html) potential contributors in New York's finance industry that Obama promises not to "demonize Wall Street as he stresses populist appeals in his re-election campaign." The president understands the clear and present danger that corporate money may fork over another Republican majority in Congress, and even worse, a Republican president. It's not that a majority of Americans aren't smart enough to know the bile spewed in super-PAC ads consists largely of lies; surely they suspect Romney could care less about them, and his presidency would hinge solely on placating the so-called "one-percenters" who really run America; it's just there's something omnipotent about the way unlimited amounts of money slowly, steadily steer our thoughts and desires. In [Romney's ads](http://www.youtube.com/user/rnc?v=rd0z-nKKoeI&feature=pyv), the viewer imagines Obama a foreign-born socialist; ominous sounds and images accompany bolded text read in voice-over by a man who intones with apocalyptic earnestness that the current president is responsible for unemployment rates hovering near 10 per cent in several states, hundreds of thousands of jobs lost, including those in the manufacturing and construction sectors, the heart of the American working-class. It also shows Obama's stimulus spending has gone haywire through radical tax hikes across all socio-economic levels. Through repeated exposure to such ads, voters grow cynical and info-glutted and may cease to care what's true and false. Obama's campaign will unleash its own torrent of anti-Romney vitriol and do so with increasing ferocity, spoiling whatever integrity and vision he may have held when first elected. Furthermore, I suspect the American people no longer trust their president and are seeking a reason, any reason, not to vote for him. No doubt Romney's campaign will save the biggest and most venomous onslaught of propaganda for the weeks and days before the vote, which, given our split-second media-blitzed attention spans, form the crucial moments that decide who wins an election. Democracy, *per se*, has yet to exist in reality, and while it has acquired a veneer of authenticity, now the thought of an American presidential election reflecting a "democratic process" seems absurd. Whoever wins will further entrench America's corporate elite as the true governors of the nation. After all, money may be our single greatest invention. According to [John Buchan](http://www.scribd.com/doc/24568370/Buchan-Frozen-Desire-1997-Synopsis), money is widely considered the only true measure of success and failure, of happiness and misery, and a language we can all speak and understand, even the poorest of the poor. No longer the means to convey our desires, but an end in itself, money, be it our own or someone else's, shepherds us in most of our decisions. As [Adam Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wealth_of_Nations) wrote in The Wealth of Nations, we hold from conception in the womb till death the belief that "[a]n augmentation of fortune is the means by which the greater part of men propose and wish to better their condition." Perhaps Romney's campaign will frame broadcast revenues for states it targets with ads as windfalls for their cash-strapped residents, especially those living in states that have suffered huge losses of jobs and industries. I fear the colossal and superior spending on ads by Romney's super-PAC will play a major role in securing his election victory. If it's bulldozed into the minds of enough Americans that higher ad revenues means Republicans are infusing more cash than Democrats into their state economies, voters may choose Romney as the one who can augment their fortune and better their condition.

### Uniqueness – Romney Base

#### Obama’s base is apathetic

Bommarito 7-4 [Sal, a former business person and now spend most of my time writing novels and commenting on current affairs, “10 Reasons Obama Will Lose in November”, http://www.policymic.com/articles/10704/10-reasons-obama-will-lose-in-november]

9) Young, minority and disenfranchised voter apathy. Obama energized all of these groups in 2008. The magic is gone, or should I say the myth of Obama has been debunked. Many voters feel a sense of helplessness and will not vote; the vast majority of these groups would likely support Obama if they did.

10 The conservatives and the Tea Party smell blood. These groups will be totally engaged in November, as they know that Obama is vulnerable. The power of the right was obvious during the Republican primaries. I predict that Tea Party activity in swing states will have a gigantic impact on the elections.

#### Romney can win—he has to energize the base and dominate the white vote

[Zogby](http://blogs.forbes.com/johnzogby/) 5/31/2012 (John, an American political pollster, founder of the "Zogby Poll" and the Zogby companies, is an internationally respected pollster, opinion leader and best-selling author. His polling is best known for both phone polling and interactive, Internet-based polling. Zogby is currently a Senior Analyst with JZ Analytics “What Romney Needs to Be Elected”, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/johnzogby/2012/05/31/what-romney-needs-to-be-elected/>)

Obama or Mitt Romney can lose more than a million votes with decreases of as little as one percent of the total turnout from a core constituency. So let’s look at Romney and the GOP base. These are not predictions, but instead are projections based on polling and possible turnout levels. While the groups I’ll look at are well defined, there is overlap between them. Finally, these are national vote projections, and not the state totals that will decide the election. An analysis of battleground polls will come later on. Right now, Romney and Obama are basically tied in the average of all polls. My [Washington](http://www.forbes.com/places/dc/washington/) Times/JZ Analytics poll has them within one percentage point. To win, Romney must maximize votes from whites and conservatives. In 2008, 133 million votes were cast. That is a reasonable projection for this election, and the basis for my analysis. Then, whites made up 76% of all voters, or 101 million. John McCain took 55% of whites, or 55.5 million votes. Since whites comprise a majority of voters, they are much more than a sub-group. But whites are nonetheless a core Republican constituency. A higher percentage of white voters equates to a greater number of votes for Romney. It could also mean fewer for Obama since a rise in the white share of all votes can also be caused by a decrease in non-white voters. Polling now has Romney getting about the same percentage of the white vote as McCain received. Should white turnout drop to 74%, Romney would lose as many as three million votes. If whites comprise more than 76% (as they did in 2010 when the GOP routed the Democrats), Romney will likely be elected. Conservatives are a more specific target group, and the one Romney desperately needs to maximize. Conservatives of all stripes made up 34% of voters in 2008. In 2008, McCain won among conservatives, 78%-20%, with 35 million votes. Now, conservatives favor Romney over Obama, 77%-10%, with 13% undecided. Obama is very unlikely to get more than a percent or two of those uncommitted conservatives, leaving room to grow for Romney. The GOP base is both Romney’s strength and potential weakness. Conservatives, who have always been reliable voters, are even more motivated at the prospect of defeating Obama. There are more conservatives than liberals, and they are usually more likely to vote than the young, Hispanic and African-American Democratic constituencies. To date, Romney has been all in with every facet of social and fiscal conservative beliefs. But that prevents him from effectively pitching moderate voters, who increasingly vote Democrat. Example: How do you win the votes of suburban women when they can’t be sure where you stand about contraception? This dynamic of needing to maximize party ideologue voters and winning a majority of the few truly undecided is the needle both campaigns need to thread. That makes both party conventions (which are held later than usual this year) especially important. Romney’s task is more difficult. He doesn’t have the same level of trust from his base as Obama does from his, so he must use the convention to solidify that trust. At the same time, Romney must also allay fears that he would take the nation farther to the right than undecided voters would want to see it go. If Romney can do both, he can become the next President.

### Uniqueness – Romney – Swing States

#### Romney leads in key swing states—more important than national polls

Newsmax 7/3/12 (Patrick Hobin, http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/obama-romney-national-poll/2012/07/03/id/444302)

President Barack Obama maintains a slight and statistically insignificant edge over Mitt Romney nationally, according to a new CNN/ORC International poll, but Romney leads Obama in critical battleground states. Obama leads Romney nationally by three percentage points, 49 to 46, with 4 percent of those saying they would vote for another candidate or neither candidate, which is inside the poll's margin of error. In the 15 states CNN calls battleground states — Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin — Romney leads Obama, 51 percent to 43 percent.

### Uniqueness – Romney – Latinos

#### Romney will win the Latino vote.

Politico 7-1 (Robin Bravender, 7/1/12, “Obama Spanish language ad blitz aims to wrap up Latino vote”, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0612/78036.html)

The huge gulf between campaigns on Spanish-language ad buys could narrow now that Romney is no longer in primary mode. Romney has already softened his tone on immigration since the GOP primary, when he drew fire for saying at a debate that he would encourage “self-deportation” of the estimated 11 million people living in the United States illegally. The Romney campaign has made it clear that it wants to put a dent in Obama’s lead among Latinos since it’s not likely to win the group outright. That could be particularly effective in a state like North Carolina, where Obama beat Sen. John McCain by about 14,000 votes in 2008 and where there are about 182,000 registered Latino voters. Some Republicans see the Democrats’ early spending as a sign that they’re worried about locking down the Latino vote. “It’s really interesting to see that President Obama has spent all this money already, and I think it’s because, frankly, he’s seen as kind of being a little bit out of touch with reality,” said Romney backer and Cuban-American Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.). “Remember when he said, ‘The economy is fine?’ Latinos are dealing with an 11 percent employment rate.”

#### Romney is expanding his campaign to win the Latino vote.

Politico 7-1 (Robin Bravender, 7/1/12, “Obama Spanish language ad blitz aims to wrap up Latino vote”, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0612/78036.html)

His campaign has tried to boost Romney’s appeal with Spanish-language ads, including one released earlier this month that assailed Obama’s recent comments that the private sector is “doing fine.” The ads replicate a similar ad launched earlier in English. On top of the roughly $110,000 the Romney campaign has spent so far during the general election for Spanish ads in Denver, Las Vegas, Cleveland and Raleigh, N.C., it spent another $120,000 during the primary to run Spanish ads, according to a media buyer. That included television ads in Florida that featured well-known Cuban-American lawmakers and one of Romney’s sons touting the candidate’s plans for jobs and national security. The campaign released another radio ad in Spanish ahead of the Puerto Rico primary. And the campaign says it’ll expand its Latino outreach. The campaign will launch “an unprecedented and aggressive outreach to Hispanic voters which will include unprecedented grass-roots and person-to-person contact as well an extensive paid media campaign in both English and Spanish,” according to a campaign aide. RNC spokeswoman Alexandra Franceschi added that the GOP’s fundraising arm is also planning to engage the Latino community through paid ads, earned media and outreach on the ground. The RNC has already dispatched state directors for Latino outreach in six battleground states: Florida, Virginia, North Carolina, Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado. Rafael Collazo, director of political campaigns for the National Council of La Raza, expects 2012 to mark a “historic” level of acknowledgement of Latino voters by both presidential campaigns. “We anticipate that Romney’s efforts will ramp up, particularly in some of the battleground states,” he said. “We by no means feel like Romney is going to give up on the Hispanic vote, but obviously Obama feels it’s a strength and is trying to maximize a potential voting bloc that he feels he has.”

### Uniqueness – AT: Pro-Obama Polls

#### Polls for Obama are distorted by race – the Bradley Effect

National Journal 6-12 [“Can Google Predict the Impact of Racism on a Presidential Election”, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/thenextamerica/politics/can-google-predict-the-impact-of-racism-on-a-presidential-election--20120612>]

Since 1982, political pollsters and Democrats have worried about the tendency of African American politicians to underperform on Election Day relative to their last known standing in non-partisan and credible polls. Dubbed the Bradley effect, after the Los Angeles mayor who lost his bid for the California governor's mansion despite being ahead in polls, or the Wilder effect, after the Virginia governor who narrowly became that state's first black executive after polls showed him with a sizable lead, the theory predicts that white voters' concern over appearing racist will cause them to overstate their willingness to vote for a black politician when queried by pollsters. In 2008, concern over the possibility of the effect contributed to Democratic pre-election anxiety (it's almost always Democrats who worry about it, since most African Americans who run in statewide general election contests are Democrats). "In recent days, nervous Obama supporters have traded worry about a survey -- widely disputed by pollsters yet voraciously consumed by the politically obsessed -- that concluded racial bias would cost Mr. Obama six percentage points in the final outcome," reported Kate Zernike in an October 2008 Week in Review piece in The New York Times. "He is, of course, about six points ahead in current polls.See? He's going to lose." "How much we are under-representing people who are intolerant and therefore unlikely to vote for Obama is an open question," Andrew Kohut, the president of Pew Research Center, told the paper. "I suspect not a great deal, but maybe some. And 'maybe some' could be crucial in a tight election." Obama, as we all know, went on to win, becoming the country's first black president and claiming victory with a margin of more than 7 percent over John McCain. Now the concern that Obama might lose because he's black is back, thanks to the provocative article "The Effects of Racial Animus on a Black Presidential Candidate: Using Google Search Data to Find What Surveys Miss" (PDF), by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, a doctoral candidate in economics at Harvard University. The New York Times' Sunday Review featured a fascinating infographic by Stephens-Davidowitz, and he unpacked his research in an accompanying blog post examining how he used Google searches done prior to the 2008 election to gauge racist sentiment in certain geographic areas and correlate that with Obama's eventual vote share.

## Links

### Link – Airports

#### Airports popular – perceived benefits to communities and to politicians [note: not good with States CP – fed key]

Bilotkach 10 (Assistant Professor of Economics @ University of California, October 2010, “Political Economy of Infrastructure Investment: Evidence from the Economic Stimulus Airport Grants,” http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~vbilotka/Draft\_September10.pdf)

The federal government plays a crucial role in the infrastructure investment in the United States, including allocation of funds to the airports. Given that airports are perceived to bring substantial benefits to the respective communities, federally funded airport infrastructure projects are both sought after, welcomed, and should be beneficial to the politicians capable of securing the funds. Complicated structure of the American political system creates possibilities for strong influence of political factors on the process of allocation of infrastructure investment funds. Understanding the role of politics in this area is of no trivial importance, as currently perception of the airports’ role is being revised. An increasing number of countries have started viewing airports as the firms rather than the infrastructure objects. Privatization and deregulation of the airports is also becoming more common. It is believed that involvement of the private sector will bring about efficiency gains, and that privately run airports may be more willing and able to contribute to solving the congestion problem.

#### Metropolitan airport improvement popularity spills over between Congressional districts

Bilotkach 10 (Assistant Professor of Economics @ University of California, October 2010, “Political Economy of Infrastructure Investment: Evidence from the Economic Stimulus Airport Grants,” http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~vbilotka/Draft\_September10.pdf)

District level results of the November 2008 US House of Representatives election have been obtained from the web-site of the House of Representatives. Based on the raw data furnished there; we have computed the percentages of votes cast for the Republican and Democratic parties’ candidates. The district-level data for the November 2008 presidential elections have been compiled by Swing State Project – an online publication devoted to political analysis (www.swingstateproject.com). The issues in using the raw district level data are as follows. First, density of the congressional districts is proportional to the population density. Second, large airports are usually located in the metropolitan areas with multiple districts. This means that investment into the metropolitan area airports may spill over beyond the congressional districts in which those airports are located; hence, if election results affect appropriations of the airport infrastructure grants, it may not be sufficient to look at the results for only the district in which the airport is located. We have therefore identified the congressional districts adjacent to every district in our dataset; and will in some specifications average the election results across the given and all the adjacent districts.

#### Amount of funds allocated to airports affect the Presidential election – studies prove

Bilotkach 10 (Assistant Professor of Economics @ University of California, October 2010, “Political Economy of Infrastructure Investment: Evidence from the Economic Stimulus Airport Grants,” http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~vbilotka/Draft\_September10.pdf)

Conclusion about impact of the White House on the grant allocation process stems primarily from the Tobit regression results. These show positive association between the district level Presidential election results and the amount of funds allocated to the airport. We have suggested that such association is consistent with rewarding districts for their contribution to the election outcome. Recall that elsewhere in the literature impact of the White House on allocation of federal funds has been detected by Garrett and Sobel (2003). Note we have checked for the existence of separate effects for the districts in which Obama won, or districts with small Obama-McCain vote differential, and did not find any. We of course need to note that the association between the airport infrastructure grants and the Presidential election results does break down once we factor in adjacent districts; however, such a result does not necessarily weaken our conclusion, it only shows rewards have been targeted to the specific districts.

#### Airports are publicly popular – the data is overwhelmingly on our side

Bilotkach 10 (Assistant Professor of Economics @ University of California, October 2010, “Political Economy of Infrastructure Investment: Evidence from the Economic Stimulus Airport Grants,” http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~vbilotka/Draft\_September10.pdf)

Moreover, study of aviation related infrastructure offers an attractive environment for examining the more general issue of political factors behind the allocation of federal funds. Airports and airfields are ubiquitous, unlike, for instance, tornadoes or corn fields. Also, airports are generally viewed favorably by the public, unlike some other kinds of federally provided infrastructure (e.g., prisons). For this study, we make use of information on the airport infrastructure grants, appropriated under the ARRA of 2009. We supplement this data with airport characteristics, simple demographic measures, congressional district level results of the November 2008 election (both Presidential and House), and Senate election results.

### Link – Bikes

#### Bicycle transportation is popular – seen as environmentally-friendly

Barry 11 – (Sean, political reporter for Transportation for America, 6-21, “Republicans and independents support public transit to alleviate climate change, survey finds”, <http://t4america.org/blog/2011/06/21/republicans-and-independents-support-public-transit-to-alleviate-climate-change-survey-finds/>)

A poll released last week shatters the conventional wisdom that Americans are divided about climate change and its potential cures. Contrary to an undeniable divide in elite political opinion, the survey from [Yale University’s Project on Climate Change Communication](http://environment.yale.edu/climate/publications/PolicySupportMay2011/?utm_source=Yale+Project+on+Climate+Change+Communication&utm_campaign=1532310204-June_2011_Six_Americas_survey_report_26_14_2011&utm_medium=email) found that 71 percent of Americans believe global warming should be a priority, with 13 identifying it as a “very high” priority, 27 percent “high” and 31 percent “medium.” Notably, this figure included 50 percent of Republican respondents, 66 percent of independents and 88 percent of Democrats. The survey also found broad consensus on how to tackle climate change, with transportation solutions among the answers with broadest support. Among all respondents, 80 favored more public transportation, 77 percent support installing bike lanes on city streets and 56 percent support reducing sprawl and targeting more development in city centers. Consistent with the findings of [Smart Growth America](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/2011/03/01/building-for-the-21st-century-american-support-for-sustainable-communities/), the [Rockefeller Foundation](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/press-releases/rockefeller-foundation-infrastructure) and others, many of these policies enjoyed support across party lines: Among Republicans, 74 percent support installing bike lanes, with 23 percent in strong support 80 percent of Republicans favor increasing the availability of public transportation, almost identical to the national average 79 percent of independents favored more public transportation, with 31 percent strongly in favor Republicans were about evenly split on supporting measures to reduce sprawl and target development in city and town centers, with 48 percent in favor and 52 percent opposed. Although raising the gasoline tax remains relatively unpopular among all voter groups, 66 percent of respondents supported requiring utility companies to produce at least 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources, even if it ended up costing households an extra $100 per year. A comparable percentage of Republicans, Democrats and independents agreed.

### Link – High Speed Rail

#### High-speed rail is popular – public lobbying and state interest

The Hill 10/22 (“Advocates for high-speed rail lobby for more after $8 billion in stimulus,” by Walter Alarkon - 10/22/09 06:00 AM ET, http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/64213-advocates-for-high-speed-rail-lobby-for-more-after-8-billion-in-stimulus)

Just months after winning $8 billion for high-speed rail projects in the stimulus, mass transportation advocates are pressing Senate appropriators for billions more in the 2010 Department of Transportation spending bill. Transit groups and urban Democrats want the Senate to accept the $4 billion for high-speed rail projects that the House included in its version of the spending bill for the departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development. Senate appropriators thus far have allocated just $1.2 billion for high-speed rail projects, choosing instead to spread more money to other types of transit programs. The Senate level is closer to the White House’s $1 billion request for high-speed rail. The spending bill has yet to go to conference committee. High-speed rail has already seen a significant boost in support over past years. High-speed rail projects received between $30 million and $50 million annually in spending bills but earlier this year received an $8 billion infusion in the economic stimulus package. The Obama administration, which had pushed lawmakers to fund high-speed rail projects in the stimulus, is now considering applications for the money from 24 states. California has asked for $4.7 billion for a high-speed link between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Florida has asked for $2.5 billion for a new line between Tampa and Orlando. The total cost of all the projects that have applied for funds is about $50 billion. Transportation advocates say the high number of applications is a sign of interest in high-speed rail and shows that more funding is needed to build a modern rail network. How much money Congress sets aside for high-speed rail projects for 2010 will tell the rest of the country how serious it is about high-speed rail, said John Krieger, transportation policy analyst for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG). “If they were to fund it in a big way, that will help keep the momentum going,” Krieger said. “If they were to do a much smaller allocation, there’s a chance this is a trend rather than the kind of legacy the Obama administration hopes it will be.” Krieger added it would take around $100 billion from the federal government to build a high-speed rail network. A coalition of rail proponents, including U.S. PIRG, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and Transportation for America, has been lobbying senators to support the higher funding level, arguing it will encourage more private-sector investment and create thousands of new jobs. “When the market opportunity is big, there will be a big reaction from the private sector,” said Arthur Guzzetti, vice president for policy at APTA. “If [the funding level is] a small incremental thing, you will get a commensurate response.” Top Senate appropriators have sought to spread money around to other transportation sectors. Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), the sponsor of the Senate’s Transportation appropriations bill, took a “balanced approach” to funding transit projects, providing more funding than the House for highways, railroad safety and multimodal grants, which can be applied to different types of transit projects, said Alex Glass, Murray’s spokesman. “We also need to improve the conditions of our roads and bridges, to invest in public transportation and to create an overall transportation network,” Glass said. Both Glass and an aide to Sen. Kit Bond (Mo.), the top Republican on the Senate Appropriations subcommittee for Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, noted that the Senate’s level of $1.2 billion for high-speed rail is still 20 percent higher than the president’s request. House members have shown bipartisan support for high-speed rail funding. In July, they defeated an amendment sponsored by Rep. Tom Latham (R-Iowa) to cut the funding for high-speed rail projects to $1 billion, the amount originally requested in President Barack Obama’s budget. The amendment lost, 284-136. In the upper chamber, Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) has called on Murray and Bond to meet the House funding level. Schumer and other Empire State lawmakers have championed a high-speed rail link in upstate New York. “Fully funding this program is critical to expanding public transportation infrastructure in the United States, which in turn helps the country to mitigate some of the environmental, energy and congestion issues that plague our roads and airspace,” Schumer wrote in a letter to Bond and Murray.

#### High Speed rail is popular – alleviates congestion

The Independent 09 [“Obama signals US rail revolution”, Lexis Nexis]

Impatience with road congestion and growing awareness of global warming means Mr Obama's vision of up to 10 regional high speed rail networks is likely to be politically popular. Encouraging him behind the scenes is Vice President Joe Biden, a self-confessed railway lover.

#### Moderate republicans like it

The New York Times 2-14-09 [“A Smaller, Faster Stimulus Plan, but Still With a Lot of Money”, Lexis Nexis]

While most spending was scaled back in the agreement, one area saw a huge increase: money for high-speed rail was quadrupled, to $8 billion. High-speed rail is popular with several moderate Republicans being courted to support the stimulus package.

### Link – High Speed Rail – I-4

#### High speed rail is extremely popular in the I-4 Corridor

Real Clear Politics 3-31-11 [“Foggy Thinking in the Sunshine State”, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/printpage/?url=http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2011/03/31/foggy\_thinking\_in\_the\_sunshine\_state\_109402.html]

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. -- You'd think that a state knocked cold by the real-estate meltdown would invest in a future not based on housing bubbles. And that if the feds dangled a bag of money to help it address a serious economic drag -- a gridlocked highway system that turns off tourists, retirees and business travelers -- you'd think the state would grab it. But this is Florida, where the recently elected Gov. Rick Scott has rejected $2.4 billion in federal money for a $2.7 billion high-speed train connecting Tampa and Orlando. Scott offers several reasons for this move, though not necessarily the real one. The Republican insists that Florida taxpayers would have to subsidize the line's operations, even though a state-sponsored study says otherwise. He notes that Tampa-Orlando is a relatively short 84-mile trip, and because the train would make stops, the trip would take almost as long as driving. This is true, assuming Interstate 4 isn't clogged with traffic, which it often is. (Orlando ranks seventh in the country for the worst traffic.) But the Tampa-Orlando run was to be just a first leg on a more ambitious bullet-train system. The bigger vision has trains turning right at Orlando and zooming down the crowded east coast to Miami. Tampa to Miami is 281 often tough road miles. This piecemeal thinking is indeed problematic, says Rush Loving, a railroad expert and author of "The Man Who Loved Trains." "The real market for the Tampa-Orlando run would have been from the airport to Disney World," he told me. That's not why you build bullet trains. "But there is a market from the Miami and Fort Lauderdale airports to Disney World." Consider my recent conversation with a helpful Thrifty car rental guy at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. Do you wish to buy a SunPass for the toll roads? he asked. No, I responded, I'll be driving on non-toll Interstate 95. Any other reason why I might need a SunPass? Well, he said, many drivers headed south to Miami on I-95 encounter such congestion that they switch to Florida's Turnpike, which is a toll road. Florida has been getting rid of humans who make change, so you need a SunPass at unmanned exits. OR you can go through the TOLL-BY-PLATE collection system, where a photo is taken of the license plate and a bill for that sum plus an administrative charge is sent to the rental company and added to your final tab. Suppose I were a jet-lagged tourist from Poland (or Portland). I'd think: What on earth is he talking about? I could visit the turnpike website and its "frequently asked questions," of which there are 26. One tells car renters who miss a toll, "Please contact the rental car company directly to report the missed toll and to learn their policy on toll violations." Is it now clear? OK, so why didn't Scott lunge for money that could have launched America's first bullet train and employed a bunch of jobless Floridians? Politics. Fast trains were to be President Obama's moon shot. Work on the Tampa-Orlando link was already so far along that it could have debuted in time for the 2012 election. The project is wildly popular in the independent-voter-rich I-4 corridor. Giving the people what they want might help Obama win Florida, so you can't do that.

#### I-4 is key to the election

Associated Press 6-3-12 [“In Florida fight, Obama and Romney scrap along I-4”, http://www.vcstar.com/news/2012/jul/03/in-florida-fight-obama-and-romney-scrap-along-i/]

ORLANDO, Fla. — ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) - In the presidential battleground with the biggest prize, Democrat Barack Obama is focused on ratcheting up voter turnout in Florida's university towns, its Hispanic enclaves around Orlando and its Jewish communities in the south. Republican challenger Mitt Romney is working to squeeze as many votes as possible out of north Florida's conservative military bastions, the senior-heavy Gulf Coast and Miami's Cuban community. But their strategies to energize core supporters overlap in the central Florida swing-voting region that's key to winning the state and its 29 electoral votes. Voters along Interstate 4, which stretches from Tampa Bay to Daytona Beach, will determine the outcome if the race remains close into the fall, as expected. About 45 percent of the state's voters live in that 17-county area. "Neither party has enough base alone, which is why those persuadable places, particularly along the I-4 corridor, are so important," said Steve Schale, a Democrat who ran Obama's Florida campaign four years ago.

### Link – High Speed Rail – XT: I-4

#### I-4 voters empirically love high speed rail

Tampa Bay Times 5-27-11 [“AGAIN, FLORIDA TO BE IN PLAY IN 2012”, Lexis Nexis]

By some estimates, the election of Rick Scott may prove to be the best thing to happen to Obama in Florida. "Gov. Scott's early performance is such that Florida's very much in play,'' said Florida Democratic chairman Rod Smith, arguing that Scott's rejection of high-speed rail antagonized voters in the crucial I-4 corridor and that the arch-conservative agenda under way in Tallahassee is antagonizing even many Republicans. "Most people in Florida are kind of down the middle and if you swing too far one way or another you pay a price for it,'' said Smith. "This tea party iteration of the Republican Party is not Florida and it's not going to be successful in the long run."

#### Florida Proves HSR is Popular

The New York Times 3-12-11 [“How Flaws Undid Obama's Hope For High-Speed Rail in Florida”, Lexis Nexis]

When the Obama administration chose Florida to get a large chunk of stimulus money to build the nation's first high-speed rail line, some Republicans in Washington worried privately that the project might prove too popular. It was, after all, a multibillion-dollar federal project being lavished on Florida, an important swing state that President Obama had won in the last election, with the money focused squarely on the Interstate 4 corridor between Tampa and Orlando, the home of one of the most crucial blocs of independent voters in the state.

### Link – High Speed Rail – Ohio

#### HSR popular in Ohio—funds private sector jobs and helps local economies

Somanader 2011 (Tanya, ThinkProgress, http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2011/01/03/137048/ohio-kasich-jobs/?mobile=nc)

Rather than acknowledge the number of jobs created or kept afloat by Democratic policies like the Recovery Act, Republicans insist that Democrats have done nothing to help create private-sector jobs. Future House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) has said, “Washington has kept the private sector in bust while manufacturing a boom for the public sector.” Boehner’s bosom-buddy Gov. John Kasich (R-OH) beat a similar drum on the campaign trail. Touting his plan to help the private-sector “quickly help create jobs,” Kasich insisted he would help “improve the atmosphere in our state for real business development” by meeting “the needs of businesses to overcome” governmental “snafus.” But Kasich undermined his rhetoric by killing Ohio’s high-speed rail project. In doing so, he derailed many businesses’ economic development plans and effectively killed the private-sector jobs he promised to create, leaving one businessman to call his decision “unbelievable,” “mind-boggling,” and “naive”: Locally, certain not to happen is construction of a $15 million facility planned for Columbus by US Railcar Co. The plant would have employed up to 200 when fully staffed, said Mike Pracht, president and chief executive officer of the Columbus-based railroad-car manufacturer. “It’s unbelievable these states would send back $400 million and $800 million in free money,” Pracht said. “It’s mind-boggling.” “The only thing I can compare it to is the interstate-highway program back in the ’60s. Where would Ohio be today if it opted out of the interstate highway system? To suggest passenger rail would be any different is naive.” Pracht said that in addition to the jobs his company would have added, abandoning the rail plan negates millions of dollars in potential development that would have clustered around each rail station along the 258-mile route. Pracht’s anger is legitimate. The Cleveland developer Forest City Enterprises was planning projects that would create $180 million of taxable property. Dayton, OH anticipated around $250 million worth of downtown development around the rail station and, in Columbus, OH, the rail line “was expected to spur business development” and “provide a link between Downtown and Port Columbus.” But, as Forest City’s spokesman put it, “Clearly, it won’t happen now. It’s a governmental decision.” A decision that has already cost Gov. Scott Walker (R-WI) private-sector jobs as well. But Kasich is “unrelenting” in his mission to overtly rebuke his campaign promises. While acknowledging that the train would create private-sector jobs, Kasich’s spokesman Rob Nichols scoffed Kasich wasn’t going to build a train that “will cost taxpayers.” A curious excuse given the fact that Kasich is perfectly willing to spend taxpayer money to “pay for security improvements” at his own private residence. Because Kasich is choosing to be “the first Ohio governor in a generation” to live in his private residence rather than in the already secured governor’s mansion, Ohioans will now pay for “around-the clock security at the Kasich home” as well as at the official residence. Decisions like these help to explain the seven point drop in his approval rating before he’s even taken office. But rather than rethink high-speed rail and his other poor economic policies, Kasich is committed to driving the state into further economic disaster. As Nichols said, “We had the debate. The train is dead. The matter is closed.”

#### Ohio key to election—the only issue that matters there is the unemployment rate

Suddes 4/21 (Thomas, Editorial Board member of the Plain Dealer, http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2012/04/ohios\_vote\_can\_hinge\_on\_unempl.html)

Still, it's a fact that no Republican has reached the White House without winning Ohio. And since before the Civil War, only three Democrats -- Grover Cleveland in 1884 and 1892, Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 and John Kennedy in 1960 -- have moved into or stayed in the White House without Ohio's backing. To be sure, it's unclear that an Ohio presidential election pivots on the state unemployment rate; from county to county, conditions vary. And unemployment rates are double-edged. In October 2010, just before Republican John Kasich unseated Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland, Ohio's unemployment rate was 9.6 percent. So -- should Ohioans thank Kasich, or Obama, because Ohio's March unemployment rate was 7.5 percent? In truth, politicians of both parties want to have it both ways. When times are good, pols applaud themselves; when times are hard, pols denounce the banks or the oil companies -- or the other party. In 1976, Democrat Jimmy Carter carried Ohio. He unseated Republican President Gerald Ford. Ohio's October 1976 unemployment rate was 7.5 percent. In October 1980, Ohio's unemployment rate was 9.5 percent. Sayonara, Jimmy Carter. In October 1984, unemployment in Ohio wasn't much better (9.1 percent), but it was better, and Ohioans helped re-elect Ronald Reagan. Ohioans gave the White House to Republican George H.W. Bush in 1988; the state's October 1988 unemployment rate was 5.8 percent. In October 1992, the Ohio unemployment rate was 7.3 percent, and voters retired Bush I by electing Democrat Bill Clinton. (And for all Bubba's defects, Ohio's unemployment rate was 4.9 percent just before his 1996 re-election and 3.9 percent -- a figure that today seems incredibly low -- as Clinton's presidency ended.) During the eight Octobers of Republican Dick Cheney's reign (doing business as "George W. Bush"), the peak October unemployment rate was 7.3 percent -- just before Barack Obama carried Ohio with 51.4 percent of its vote. (Neither Carter, in 1976, nor Harry Truman, in 1948, could garner 50 percent of Ohio's presidential vote; each drew about 49 percent of it.) Whatever Romney's virtues, the former Massachusetts governor has the charisma of a tree stump. And outer-suburban and rural Ohio Republicans preferred Rick Santorum in March's primary. But if Ohio's unemployment rate doesn't fall further -- and look as if it's staying down -- the 2012 World Series may be the last that Barack Obama will get to watch on a White House TV.

### Link – High Speed Rail – XT: Ohio

#### High-Speed Rail creates massive temporary job growth in Ohio

Walker 2012 (Founder of the Columbus Underground, and co-founder of Metropeneur, http://www.columbusunderground.com/report-high-speed-rail-will-boost-economy-in-ohio)

A new report called “Connecting the Midwest” was released by the Ohio Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) today and provides in-depth information on how high-speed passenger rail systems in the Midwest will create jobs, boost the economy, reduce highway congestion, and reduce fuel consumption. “As the saying goes, ‘you are either part of the problem, or part of the solution,” said Jeff Griffin, OhioPIRG Program Associate. “Rail is a part of the solution – boosting our economy and creating jobs, modernizing our transportation system and helping to solve our nation’s oil dependency. Rail gets us moving, in the right direction.” Some of the highlights from the report include: A completed Midwest high-speed rail network will support 15,200 temporary construction jobs over a 10 year period and create an additional 57,000 permanent jobs. Building high-speed rail from Cleveland to Cincinnati, Toronto, Detroit, Pittsburgh and Buffalo would boost the region’s economy by generating more than $3 billion of development near stations. The 3C stage of the rail network is projected to reduce car traffic on Ohio’s highways by nearly 320,000 vehicle miles per year, reducing congestion and pollution. The 3C line will save up to 15,000 gallons of fuel per day. 55% of Ohioans would live within 15 miles of a station, and 59% of the state’s workforce would have a station within 15 miles of their workplace. The system would prevent 188,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year by replacing less efficient car and plane travel. The amount is equal to the annual emissions of 34,000 cars. Andrew Snow of the Environmental Law and Policy Center in Columbus said, “The fact is, this is an economic development project with a number of benefits including the creation of lasting employment opportunities – not just for those working on the rail line itself and for the hundreds of rail supply manufacturers in the state but also for the next generation of Ohio’s engineers, tourism industry employees and small business entrepreneurs. It’s truly a win-win-win for everyone.”

### Link – Inland Waterways – Pennsylvania

#### Inland Waterway renovation reinvigorates local Pennsylvania economy

Toohey 1/8/2012 (Michael, President of Waterways Council Inc., “Pa. Waterways Infrastructure must become a priority,” PatriotNews, available at http://www.waterwayscouncil.org/Media%20Center.htm)

This is no more important than today in tough economic conditions. But these commodities and the shippers who grow and produce them are in danger of losing their competitive edge unless we give needed focus on and proper funding for the lock and dam infrastructure that allows their transport. In this country, with unemployment stubbornly holding steady at 9 percent and the number even higher in the construction industry, jobs are another commodity that we cannot afford not to invest in. Building locks and dams on the waterways system will create and sustain American, family-wage jobs in Pennsylvania. There is a road map for modernizing our lock and dam system, growing our exports, keeping the positive balance of trade in the agriculture industry and adding jobs to the U.S. economy known as the Inland Waterways Capital Development Plan or CDP.

#### Pennsylvania unemployment rate key to Obama re-election

Rohrer and Hanna 7/5/2012 (Sam Rohrer, president of the Pennsylvania Pastors' Network, is a former state representative and candidate for governor and U.S. senator (sam@papastors.net). Colin Hanna is president of Let Freedom Ring, a public policy nonprofit organization based in Pennsylvania (colin@lfrusa.com), http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/opinion/perspectives/pennsylvania-may-undo-obama-643314/)

The Obama-Biden campaign bus tour rolling through Pennsylvania this week, about four months before Election Day, illustrates that the road to re-election runs through the Keystone State. Many political analysts believe that President Barack Obama cannot win without Pennsylvania, so it would seem self-evident that the state should get considerable attention from both campaigns in the upcoming election. Instead, Pennsylvania has been downgraded by some pundits and may have been dropped from the list of top-priority swing states by the Romney campaign. We believe that's a mistake, and that Pennsylvania instead is poised to become the Ohio or Florida of 2012 -- the battlefield that decides the outcome of the presidential race. A recently released Quinni- piac poll found Mr. Obama leading by a comfortable 6 points in a head-to-head matchup in Pennsylvania, while also showing that he has only a 46 percent job-approval rating. That's in the danger zone for any president seeking re-election, and the fact that it's exactly the same number as his support base suggests that he may not have much upward room in which to move. Historically for presidents seeking a second term, the Gallup Presidential Approval Rating is more predictive than early head-to-head polling numbers, and not a single president has been reelected with an approval rating of less than 49 percent since Gallup began reporting that number in 1948 (Truman vs. Dewey). If that number gets any lower in Pennsylvania than its current 46 percent, Mr. Obama's vulnerability will be clearly documented, and Pennsylvania will fit any definition of a full-fledged swing state.

### Link – Keystone Pipeline

#### Keystone is popular and a key election issue – unions and the economy

EDI Weekly 1-5 [“US oil lobby declares Keystone XL key battle in presidential election”, http://ediweekly.com/features/2012/1/5/us-oil-lobby-declares-keystone-xl-key-battle-in-presidential.html]

The head of the most powerful oil and gas lobby in the United States, Jack Gerard, president and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute, wants energy to be front and centre in the upcoming presidential election battle. Unveiling a “Vote 4 Energy” campaign, Gerard said his group advocates energy independence for the United States and an end to the government regulations that make that goal unreachable. With a friendlier regulatory environment, America could be largely energy independent by 2026, Gerard maintains. Gerard also warned President Obama and his administration that failure to approve the Keystone XL pipeline will have “huge political consequences” in the coming election. Obama now has until February 21 to decide whether the pipeline, which will carry 700,000 barrels of crude oil a day from Alberta’s oil sands to refineries in Texas, is in the US national interest. Obama had tried to defer his decision until after the November, 2012 presidential election, but Congressional Republicans passed a measure in December requiring him to make his decision within 60 days. According to Gerard, Keystone is “clearly in the national interest,” and has been backed by the Teamsters Union and the AFL-CIO’s Building and Construction Trades Department. Obama risks losing the support of organized labour if he fails to approve the pipeline, but he will certainly alienate environmentalists if he approves it. TransCanada, the company that will build the pipeline, says Keystone XL could create as many as 20,000 jobs over two years. A State Department report last summer said the pipeline would create up to 6,000 jobs during construction. Others have said the 20,000 figure is vastly inflated.

#### Keystone’s popular – concerns about foreign oil dependence

Huffington Post 7-3 [“Keystone Pipeline XL Pipeline: How the Ogallala Aquifer Weighs into the Debate”, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/snagfilms/keystone-pipeline-xl-pipe_b_1644331.html>]

With the general election drawing closer, and the Obama-Romney debates only months away, it is only natural to predict what topics will make the candidates sweat on stage. A topic that tends to be routine in the general election is our dependence on foreign oil. Democrats often lean towards proposing alternative and clean energy solutions, while Republicans seem to focus on finding new fossil fuel sources domestically. Despite this apparent regularity, this election cycle has a concrete manifestation of the Democrat-Republican divide on energy independence. The Keystone XL pipeline represents the dichotomy between Republican and Democratic solutions to the problem of foreign oil dependency. The proposed pipeline would carry crude oil from Alberta, Canada through Illinois, Indiana, and ultimately the Gulf Coast. It could create thousands of jobs and provide a sizable domestic supply of crude oil. This, of course, does not come without an environmental price. The pipeline will not only reinforce our attachment to fossil fuels, but it will also cross the Ogallala Aquifer. The aquifer provides drinking water for nearly two million people and supports billions of dollars in agriculture. Needless to say a leak/attack could be devastating. Unsurprisingly, Governor Romney supports a permit to allow the pipeline, while President Obama opposes it. A Washington Post/ABC Poll suggests that the majority of registered voters side with Romney, as 62 percent are in favor of a permit. Over half of Democrats disapprove of the pipeline while just over 80 percent of Republicans support it. The Keystone pipeline is assuredly divisive, and its political implications are undoubtedly significant.

#### It has major public support

CNEWS 7-2 [“Americans favour Keystone XL pipeline: Poll”, <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Politics/2012/07/02/19942806.html>]

It seems the majority of Americans are in favour of building the proposed the Alberta-Texas Keystone XL pipeline. A recent poll published by the Washington Post newspaper indicates Americans are firmly behind energy infrastructure giant TransCanada's plan to ship 700,000 barrels a day of Alberta bitumen to Gulf Coast refineries. Just over 60% of registered voters polled said the government should approve the building of the pipeline. Along party lines, that broke down to 48% support among registered Democrats and 82% among Republican supporters. A full 82% of registered voters polled said they believed it would create jobs, while a minority ­ 34% - were concerned the project would harm the environment. In January, President Barack Obama punted a decision on the controversial pipeline until 2013 ­ after this year's presidential elections - sparking an immediate reaction from the federal Conservative government. Prime Minister Stephen Harper began pitching Alberta crude to energy-hungry Asian economies and his government launched a streamlined environmental review to help speed Canadian pipeline projects like Enbridge's Northern Gateway through the process. Last month, Obama also received a sound chiding by a Canadian and an American academic in the prominent Foreign Affairs magazine for nixing the Keystone XL decision. They pointed to Obama's refusal to green-light the project as a key event in what they view as an unravelling relationship between the two countries. "Obama's choice marked a triumph of campaign posturing over pragmatism and diplomacy, and it brought U.S.-Canadian relations to their lowest point in decades," they write. Critics don't want the pipeline built because they say oil from Alberta is dirty and worry a spill along way would wreak environmental havoc. The project has been in review for over three years. A random U.S. sample of 1,002 adults were surveyed between June 14 and June 17 for the telephone poll. Results have a 3.5 percentage point margin of error.

### Link – Public Transportation

#### Mass transit is popular – seen as environmentally-friendly

Barry 11 – (Sean, political reporter for Transportation for America, 6-21, “Republicans and independents support public transit to alleviate climate change, survey finds”, <http://t4america.org/blog/2011/06/21/republicans-and-independents-support-public-transit-to-alleviate-climate-change-survey-finds/>)

A poll released last week shatters the conventional wisdom that Americans are divided about climate change and its potential cures. Contrary to an undeniable divide in elite political opinion, the survey from [Yale University’s Project on Climate Change Communication](http://environment.yale.edu/climate/publications/PolicySupportMay2011/?utm_source=Yale+Project+on+Climate+Change+Communication&utm_campaign=1532310204-June_2011_Six_Americas_survey_report_26_14_2011&utm_medium=email) found that 71 percent of Americans believe global warming should be a priority, with 13 identifying it as a “very high” priority, 27 percent “high” and 31 percent “medium.” Notably, this figure included 50 percent of Republican respondents, 66 percent of independents and 88 percent of Democrats. The survey also found broad consensus on how to tackle climate change, with transportation solutions among the answers with broadest support. Among all respondents, 80 favored more public transportation, 77 percent support installing bike lanes on city streets and 56 percent support reducing sprawl and targeting more development in city centers. Consistent with the findings of [Smart Growth America](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/2011/03/01/building-for-the-21st-century-american-support-for-sustainable-communities/), the [Rockefeller Foundation](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/press-releases/rockefeller-foundation-infrastructure) and others, many of these policies enjoyed support across party lines: Among Republicans, 74 percent support installing bike lanes, with 23 percent in strong support 80 percent of Republicans favor increasing the availability of public transportation, almost identical to the national average 79 percent of independents favored more public transportation, with 31 percent strongly in favor Republicans were about evenly split on supporting measures to reduce sprawl and target development in city and town centers, with 48 percent in favor and 52 percent opposed. Although raising the gasoline tax remains relatively unpopular among all voter groups, 66 percent of respondents supported requiring utility companies to produce at least 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources, even if it ended up costing households an extra $100 per year. A comparable percentage of Republicans, Democrats and independents agreed.

#### Public transportation is popular among voters – prefer our evidence because it is politically objective

FM3-POS 1**0** (Democratic polling firm of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) and the Republican polling firm of Public Opinion Strategies (POS), Public Opinion Strategies, “Key Findings from a National Survey on Transportation Funding,” March 11, 2010, http://t4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/031110-Pollsters-Memo.pdf)

The Democratic polling firm of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) and the Republican polling firm of Public Opinion Strategies (POS) recently partnered to complete a national survey of registered voters to assess public attitudes toward transportation, and in particular funding of public transportation and walking and biking options. The survey results show that American voters overwhelmingly perceive a benefit from an expanded and improved public transportation system, would personally like more transportation options – including options for biking and walking -- and a solid majority says that more federal transportation dollars should go to public transportation as opposed to road building. In fact, when thinking about reducing traffic congestion, three-in-five voters choose improving public transportation and making it easier to walk and bike over building more roads and expanding existing roads (59% to 38%). Many voters are already utilizing alternatives to driving – or wish they could – and the chief reason American voters do not use public transportation more often is simply that it is not available or convenient for them.

#### All key voter subgroups support increased public transit

FM3-POS 10 (Democratic polling firm of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) and the Republican polling firm of Public Opinion Strategies (POS), Public Opinion Strategies, “Key Findings from a National Survey on Transportation Funding,” March 11, 2010, http://t4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/031110-Pollsters-Memo.pdf)

Specifically, the survey found the following: Voters express strong positive regard for public transportation and increasing transportation options in a number of different ways, from the global to the personal: More than four-in-five voters (82%) say that “the United States would benefit from an expanded and improved public transportation system, such as rail and buses.” A majority (56%) say they “strongly agree” with this sentiment. This is a widely held view, held by overwhelming majorities of voters in every region of the country and in every type of community. On a personal level, two-thirds (66%) say that they “would like more transportation options” so they have the freedom to choose how to get where they need to go. Along these same lines, 73% currently feel they “have no choice but to drive as much as” they do. One-in-five voters have used public transportation – either bus, rail or ferry – in the last month (19%) in order to go to school, work run errands or go shopping. In addition, 44% say they have walked and 13% say they have biked for those non-recreation purposes. Among the four-in-five voters (81%) who have not taken a bus, train or ferry in the last month for those purposes, the primary reason cited is that it is simply not available in their community (47%), while another 35% say it is not convenient to their work, home or school (35%). A solid majority view an expanded transportation network as the preferable step in facing our transportation future. When asked which of the following statements comes closer to their point of view, three-in-five voters point to improving public transportation and biking and walking options as the step we should take as one can see in Figure 1. This view is widely held, as majorities of virtually all key voter sub-groups side with improving public transportation and walking and biking options, including majorities in every region of the nation and in every type of community from urban to suburban to rural.

### Link – Public Transportation – Florida/Elderly Internal 1/2

#### Senior citizens love public transportation – mobility and independence

Harris Interactive Inc. 05 [Harris Interactive® conducted the telephone survey on behalf of the American Public Transportation Association between November 28 and 30, 2005 among 404 U.S. adults aged 65 and over. Figures for region, age and gender were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the actual population. Participants were selected and screened using targeted sampling techniques. The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 4.9% at a 95% confidence level. “Older American Attitudes toward Mobility and Transportation,” http://www.colorado.edu/RetiredFaculty/051206harris\_interactive.pdf]

Not surprisingly, mobility and independence are of high importance to senior citizens, particularly as they get older. Older Americans want to maintain their independence for as long as they can and worry that they will be stranded and unable to get around when they are no longer able to drive. Importantly, senior citizens recognize the role that public transportation plays in maintaining their quality of life. They believe that public transportation offers mobility and access to the things they need in everyday life, providing older Americans with the freedom they seek. This sentiment is even more pronounced when thinking about driving alone at night with the majority of senior citizens saying “… public transportation is a better alternative to driving alone, particularly at night.” While most older Americans do not currently use public transportation in their community, they report a much higher likelihood of using it if it were more readily available and/or addressed the needs of seniors. ATTITUDES TOWARD MOBILITY Older Americans place a high importance on their mobility and worry about being stranded when they are unable to drive (82% agree). There is nearly universal agreement (98%) among older Americans that maintaining a sense of independence and mobility is extremely important. Notably, seniors are very intense in their stance on this issue with fully 87 percent saying they strongly agree with the statement, “As I get older, maintaining my independence and ability to get around is extremely important.” Only one percent voice disagreement. While both men and women place a high importance on independence and mobility, women are more likely to strongly agree with the statement.

### Link – Public Transportation – Florida/Elderly Internal 2/2

#### Senior citizens are key to win Florida – a must-have state for re-election

Sun Sentinel 1/8 [“Florida’s seniors could sway results of 2012 elections,” January 8, 2012, by William E. Gibson, Washington Bureau]

WASHINGTON — A political courtship is about to unfold for the hearts, minds and votes of Florida’s senior citizens. Democrats as well as Republicans are targeting older voters in Florida and other key states this year, knowing they turn out in big numbers and could sway the presidential election as well as majority control of Congress. In the Republican presidential race, older voters are turning toward Mitt Romney, according to polls, political observers in Florida and the results of the Iowa caucuses last week. If the trend continues, the former Massachusetts governor will surpass former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other rivals to win Florida's winner-take-all Republican primary Jan. 31. While Republicans compete among themselves, President Barack Obama and fellow Democrats are reaching out to the elderly, mostly by attacking Republican proposals to transform Medicare and by touting new benefits under the health-care law passed in 2009 that’s taking effect in phases. The debate already has had an impact. "I'm not happy with the changes Obama didn't make — all the promises he made and didn't fulfill," said Joan Drucker, 71, a retired florist in Hallandale. "But he's for the middle class. He believes in Social Security and Medicare. I think he will keep those in place. The Republicans, I fear, will try to dismantle both programs and make them into something most senior citizens will not be happy about.” But many senior citizens are fearful of cutbacks to Medicare included in the new health-care law, disturbed by dwindling resources for Social Security and alarmed by the nation's rising debt, which topped $15trillion last year. "One thing that's despicable is the way Democrats are throwing the Social Security thing around," said Irving Rabiner, 68, a retired store clerk in Delray Beach who is backing Gingrich. “The Republicans do not want to do away with Social Security. They want to restructure it so it will be there for my children and your children and generations down the road.” The health-care and Social Security debate is especially important in Florida, home to 3.3 million senior citizens; as is the state's economic distress — marked by a 10 percent unemployment rate and widespread home foreclosures. These concerns have boosted Romney, a former business executive who claims he knows how to revive the economy. "He's a person who has the capability, if anyone does, to get us out of this mire of debt and malaise," said Fran Hancock of North Palm Beach, who is organizing volunteers for Romney. Polling early last month in Florida showed a dramatic rise for Gingrich, who excelled in some of the candidate debates that were widely watched by older Florida Republicans. But the Iowa results and more recent national polls indicate that Gingrich's support is fading while Romney's is rising, especially among seniors. Romney got a clear plurality — 33 percent — of Iowa caucus-goers 65 and older, according to an exit poll. Former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum, of Pennsylvania, got 20 percent, followed by Gingrich with 17 percent. "Looks like the older voters are leaning toward Romney," said Susan MacManus, a political scientist at the University of South Florida and author of "Targeting Senior Voters." "The concern about Gingrich is that he is not electable." She said some elderly Republicans are buzzing about Romney's TV ad claiming that he's "a man of steadiness and constancy." In the ad, which began running in Florida last week, Romney says: "I've been married to the same woman for 25 — excuse me; I'll get in trouble — for 42 years. I've been in the same church my entire life. I worked at one company, Bain, for 25 years." Many older voters can relate to that message, MacManus said, because they too remained loyal to the same company through their careers and tend to frown on those who jump from marriage to marriage. She said older Republicans, especially military veterans, also relate to Romney’s ad message that he “will never apologize for the United States of America.” While the Republican primary campaign heads toward Florida, Democrats are pouncing on what they say is GOP plans to slash Medicare while turning it into a voucher system and to convert Social Security at least partially into a stock-market investment scheme. Obama has stepped up his attacks and vowed to veto further cutbacks to Medicare unless they are coupled to a higher tax on the wealthy. Administration officials, meanwhile, make announcements nearly every week about the benefits of the health-care law, notably expanded prescription-drug coverage under Medicare. U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Weston, repeatedly accuses Republicans of trying to "end Medicare as we know it," a theme Democrats will sound throughout the year. "Mitt Romney as president would be a disaster for seniors and folks trying to make ends meet,” she asserts. Romney has fired back, noting that the new health-care law would cut $500 billion from Medicare over 10 years, mostly by reducing payments to providers. "Let's not forget, only one president has ever cut Medicare for seniors in this country, and it's Barack Obama," Romney said. "We're gonna remind him of that time and time again." A senior backlash to the health-care law helped Republicans win all six of the closely contested congressional races in Florida in 2010. A nationwide exit poll of voters that year found that 58 percent of those 65 and older wanted the law repealed. Some 59 percent of voters in that age group voted for Republicans for Congress. "There was a little anger-venting in that election," said John Dowless, a Republican campaign consultant in Orlando. "I don't detect a feeling quite as intense in 2012. I still believe Republicans are slightly more motivated than current Democrats to go out and vote."

### Link – Public Transportation – Youth

#### Young voters are anti-car and anti-suburb. Public transit is uniquely important to them.

AP 6/28/12 (http://www.wric.com/story/18900182/big-us-cities-boom-as-young-adults-shun-suburbs?clienttype=printable)

For the first time in a century, most of America's largest cities are growing at a faster rate than their surrounding suburbs as young adults seeking a foothold in the weak job market shun home-buying and stay put in bustling urban centers. New 2011 census estimates released Thursday highlight the dramatic switch. Driving the resurgence are young adults, who are delaying careers, marriage and having children amid persistently high unemployment. Burdened with college debt or toiling in temporary, lower-wage positions, they are spurning homeownership in the suburbs for shorter-term, no-strings-attached apartment living, public transit and proximity to potential jobs in larger cities. While economists tend to believe the city boom is temporary, that is not stopping many city planning agencies and apartment developers from seeking to boost their appeal to the sizable demographic of 18-to-29-year olds. They make up roughly 1 in 6 Americans, and some sociologists are calling them "generation rent." The planners and developers are betting on young Americans' continued interest in urban living, sensing that some longer-term changes such as decreased reliance on cars may be afoot. The last time growth in big cities surpassed that in outlying areas occurred prior to 1920, before the rise of mass-produced automobiles spurred expansion beyond city cores. New Orleans, which saw its population shrivel in the mid-2000s due to Hurricane Katrina, saw the biggest rebound in city growth relative to suburbs in the last year, 3.7 percent vs. 0.6 percent. Atlanta, Denver, Washington, D.C., and Charlotte, N.C., also showed wide disparities in city growth compared to suburbs. Other big cities showing faster growth compared to the previous decade include Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Seattle. "I will never live in the suburbs," said Jaclyn King, 28, a project director at a Denver hospital. King, who grew up in the Denver suburb of Littleton and attended Columbine High School, still remembers her parents' 45-minute train commute to the city each day for work. She now rents a Denver house with her fiancée. "I just like being connected to everything down here - concerts, work, restaurants, all of it. This is where everything's at," said King, who biked 6 miles to her job on a recent morning. Businesses are taking notice. "Companies are really seeking to meet the need of younger people who are choosing to live in cities," said Royal Shepard, an analyst with S&P Capital IQ in New York, who tracks the residential and commercial real estate market. The ratings agency has a "positive fundamental outlook" on residential real estate investment trusts, particularly those with holdings in multifamily apartment buildings, citing in part a demographic shift. "The recession hit suburban markets hard. What we're seeing now is young adults moving out from their parents' homes and starting to find jobs," Shepard said. "There's a bigger focus on building residences near transportation hubs, such as a train or subway station, because fewer people want to travel by car for an hour and a half for work anymore.

#### Young Voters key but Obama has to find a way to energize them and transcend partisan deadlock

Killian 2/2/12 (Linda, a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, is the author of "The Swing Vote: The Untapped Power of Independents," in the Atlantic, http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/02/4-types-of-independent-voters-who-could-swing-the-2012-elections/252363/)

These voters under 35-years-old are not joiners and are mistrustful of groups except for those organized online. They are often more comfortable communicating via a computer screen than face-to-face and are used to having hundreds of choices when it comes to entertainment and most other aspects of their life, so they don't understand why they should be forced to choose between just two political parties. They see themselves as unique and special and don't think they can be pigeonholed in just one political party. They were captivated by the transformational nature of Barack Obama's 2008 candidacy and voted for him in large numbers, but they are disenchanted with the partisan gridlock in Washington and Obama's inability to bring about the fundamental changes to the political system that he promised in the campaign. Motivating the Facebook Generation voters again this time around will be critically important to Obama's re-election.

### Link – Public Transportation – AT: Unpopular

#### Familiarity with public transportation increases popularity – even if its unpopular now plan reverses that perception

TCRP 2000 [Transit Cooperative Research Program, A research program supported by the federal transit administration, “Enhancing the Visibility and Image of Transit in the United States and Canada”, TCRP report 63]

The current image and position of public transportation is weak. Public concern for public transportation pales in comparison to other key public issues like education, crime, and air and water pollution. In addition, in terms of favorability, public transportation falls in the lowermiddle tier of industries. Public transportation suffers from the low levels of concern people have for transportation issues— people support those things they perceive provide solutions to their greatest problems. In addition, although two thirds of the public has used public transportation at least once1, only half (55%) claim familiarity with it. Evidence clearly suggests that increased awareness and familiarity with public transportation increases support. Increased familiarity with the dominant message orientation tied directly to personal values offers the greatest promise. The *Community Benefit Built on Personal Opportunity* orientation has strong appeal across all regions, types of systems, and demographic subgroups. Swing supporters (those who are neither supporters or non-supporters) are the primary audience targets. In addition, Influentials (the one-fifth of the population most actively involved in a community) comprise an additional important target audience.

### Link – Spending

#### Obama gets credit and popular support for federal spending

Kriner and Reeves, 7-28 [Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves are Assistant Professors at the Department of Political Science, Boston University, “Voters bypass their own representatives and reward Presidents for federal spending, new research shows”. Web. http://phys.org/news/2012-06-voters-bypass-reward-federal.html]

Voters of all political stripes tend to reward Presidents for federal spending in their areas, new research shows. Contrary to the perception that voters will give credit to their [members of congress](http://phys.org/tags/members%2Bof%2Bcongress/) and senators for any federal largesse that comes the way of their county, research by two Assistant Professors from Boston University reveals that it is the incumbent President (or the party nominee who is running for office) who gets the thanks - and the votes at election time. Writing in the [American Political Science Review](http://phys.org/tags/american%2Bpolitical%2Bscience%2Breview/), Douglas L Kriner and Andrew Reeves draw on comprehensive election and federal spending data at the county level for all presidential contests from 1988 to 2008 to examine the electoral consequences of federal spending. Their resulting paper, 'The Influence of Federal Spending on Presidential Elections' reaches the conclusion that voters bypass their own representatives and hand the credit to the President. Kriner and Reeves research shows that in 2008, voters of all partisan stripes rewarded the Republican candidate in districts where federal spending had increased under the Republican administration of George W Bush. The evidence from Gallup polling data revealed that increased federal spending in a voter's district during the final year of the Bush administration significantly raised the likelihood of that voter opting to support [John McCain](http://phys.org/tags/john%2Bmccain/). The only role played by the member of congress or senator appears to be in boosting the President even more in the eyes of voters if he happens to be of the same political persuasion as their local representatives. Hence, a Republican President receives even more electoral rewards from federal spending decisions in a county if the local member(s) of Congress and both senators are also Republican. Kriner and Reeves also found that voters from liberal and moderate counties are more likely to reward presidents for federal cash spent in their area than [voters](http://phys.org/tags/voters/) from conservative counties. Kriner says the research presents a hitherto unsuspected aspect of electoral behavior and that previous research has looked for links between federal spending and voter action in the wrong place: "Virtually every academic inquiry into the electoral consequences of [federal spending](http://phys.org/tags/federal%2Bspending/) has focused on Congress. The image of pork-barreling legislators jockeying to channel federal dollars to their districts to secure re-election is firmly entrenched in the popular consciousness. Our study shows, for the first time, that it is actually Presidents who are reaping the rewards." Reeves adds that, as they found the effect was 'particularly dramatic' in battleground states, it is one to which future Presidential campaigns would do well to pay close attention: "Given that relatively small vote margins in battleground states determined the [presidential elections](http://phys.org/tags/presidential%2Belections/) of 2000 and 2004, deciding where to spend federal funds may be pivotal in determining who wins the White House."

### Link – Transportation

#### Transportation is popular, even in an election year

Governing FedWatch 11-17-11 [“Voters Nationwide Choose to Pay More for Transit”, http://www.governing.com/blogs/fedwatch/In-Elections-Voters-Show-Theyll-Pay-for-Transportation.html]

As federal lawmakers debate the future of highway and transit funding, they’ve found themselves in a peculiar position. The gas tax won’t generate enough money to maintain funding for those programs. Yet both parties in Congress, as well as the Obama administration, are opposed to raising gas taxes. Their rationale is that such a move would be wildly unpopular among voters, who are still feeling the effects of the recession. But it appears they may be underestimating their constituents. In local elections this year, voters have supported efforts that would increase their own costs and increase their governments' investments in transit projects about 79 percent of the time, according to the [Center for Transportation Excellence](http://www.cfte.org/success/2011BallotMeasures.asp), which advocates for transit and tracks ballot initiatives on that subject. Since 2000, the success rate has been 70 percent, meaning that of those votes resulted in increases or renewals of sales and property taxes for transit projects like bus service and light rail. “We’re not talking about a fluke election,” says Art Guzzetti, vice president for policy at the American Public Transportation Association. “It’s a sustained trend. When you present [voters] a good option to deal with their problems, they will say yes.” To be fair, there's a big distinction between the federal gas tax and local taxes for transit. At the local level, voters know at election time exactly what they're getting for their money, and they can decide whether the investment is worth it. At the federal level, voters pay a gas tax at the point of purchase -- which many people aren't aware of in the first place --  and that that money is distributed to a myriad of programs and projects. Essentially, federal leaders have a tougher case to make, since they can't attach a specific project to the tax. But CTE's research does suggest that voters have a willingness to pay for transportation programs they think are worthy. Last week, Durham County, N.C. residents approved a new half-cent sales tax expected to generate $18.3 million annually to improve bus service and bring commuter and light rail to the area. Cincinnati voters rejected a proposal to prohibit the city from spending money on a streetcar project. And voters in Washington state defeated a plan that would allow the state legislature -- instead of a separate commission -- to set tolls. Lawmakers likely would have reduced those tolls. “Voters do like transportation. They like transit. And they didn’t like an initiative to derail the plan that we had in place,” says Dan Kully, a political consultant that worked to defeat the initiative in Washington, during a presentation this week.

#### Infrastructure is a key campaign issue—framed as jobs

Johnson 2-17 [Fawn, Correspondent, National Journal “Infrastructure Becomes Campaign Fodder” http://transportation.nationaljournal.com/2012/02/infrastructure-becomes-campaig.php]

If you want proof that President Obama is distancing himself as far from Congress as he can, look no further than his proposed infrastructure budget. The White House proposed $476 billion over six years for surface transportation in the fiscal 2013 budget, which is at least $200 billion more than House Republicans are proposing. It's also at least $150 billion more than current infrastructure spending levels. Obama is aiming high, even though he knows he'll probably get much less. Infrastructure means jobs, and "jobs" are the name of the game for his reelection. It's an added bonus that infrastructure has been in the news, which gives politicians of all stripes the opportunity to exploit it for reelection purposes. Both the House and the Senate are attempting (and so far not succeeding) to pass surface transportation bills. Obama ideally wants to increase federal infrastructure investment, but he has also praised the Senate for its more modest bill that simply maintains the current spending levels over two years. Leaders say it could take a few weeks to get that measure completed.

#### Infrastructure investment is popular with the public

Teixeira 2/22 (Ruy Teixeira is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress and The Century Foundation. He is also a guest scholar at the Brookings Institute, Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Public Opinion Snapshot: Public Backs Infrastructure Investment,” February 22, 2011, Center for American Progress, http://www.americanprogress.org//issues/2011/02/snapshot022211.html)

It’s no secret that our country’s infrastructure is in urgent need of repair and serious modernization. Conservatives, in their mania for cutting government spending, have lost whatever little interest they once had in addressing this problem. But the public hasn’t. Eighty percent declared themselves in agreement with President Barack Obama’s State of the Union call for a major effort to rebuild and modernize America’s infrastructure in a new Hart Research/Public Opinion Strategies survey for the Rockefeller Foundation. What’s more, the public backs a number of government actions to provide additional funding for infrastructure projects. These include a National Infrastructure Bank (60 percent support), issuing national transportation bonds (59 percent), and eliminating oil company subsidies (58 percent). No doubt conservatives are too busy running around with their budget axes to pay much attention to findings like these. But serious policymakers should. Infrastructure investment is important—and the public’s got your back.

#### Transportation infrastructure is a key deciding factor for voters

HNTB 5/18 (“Americans value highways and bridges as a national treasure New America,” THINKS survey from HNTB Corporation highlights public concerns for U.S. transportation infrastructure; 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 percent. HNTB Corporation is an employee-owned infrastructure firm serving public and private owners and contractors. With nearly a century of service, HNTB understands the life cycle of infrastructure and solves clients’ most complex technical, financial and operational challenges. Professionals nationwide deliver a full range of infrastructure-related services, including award-winning planning, design, and program delivery and construction management. http://www.hntb.com/news-room/news-release/americans-value-highways-and-bridges-as-a-national-treasure)

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (May 18, 2012) – A new survey from HNTB Corporation finds two-thirds (66 percent) 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; more than one in five (22 percent) 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," said Pete Rahn, HNTB leader national transportation practice. "People expect them to be resilient, reliable and safe." Clearly, Americans hold the nation's infrastructure in high regard. Nearly nine in ten (89 percent) Americans feel it’s important for the federal government to fund the maintenance and improvements of interstate highways. Yet, this infrastructure isn’t receiving the fiscal attention it deserves. 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 system, remaining solvent only through a series of infusions from federal general revenue funds. More than half of Americans (57 percent) believe the nation’s infrastructure is underfunded. The uncertainty over a long-term bill also is a challenge for state departments of transportation, which 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," said 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, 4 in 5 (80 percent) Americans 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 3 in 5 (61 percent) Americans would prefer to allocate funds for these projects through tolls. Currently, there are a 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, individually, portions of Interstate 95 by both 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 said 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."

#### Transportation Infrastructure Key Voting Issue

ADS Logistics 5-29 [Transportation Infrastructure Weighs Heavy on the Minds of Voters http://www.adslogistics.com/blog/bid/78595/Transportation-Infrastructure-Weighs-Heavy-on-the-Minds-of-Voters]

With all the political issues you will be hearing about as the election nears, one important topic that will be on many Americans’ minds may surprise you. The transportation infrastructure concerns many in this country, and it will be heavily considered before voters decide who they want for the next president. In fact, according to Truckinginfo, about two thirds of American voters claim that each candidate’s stance on transportation infrastructure will help them vote. This is not exactly a hot button issue that you may see discussed on the news frequently, but it is clearly important to the average voter. The survey, which was conducted by HNTB Corp., also discovered the following results: 89% of citizens surveyed feel that federal funding is crucial to improve interstate highways. More than 80% wish to increase current funding for highways. 57% claimed that this country’s infrastructure is underfunded. Why Do Voters Care? Though people may not discuss this issue as much as they talk about hot topics, it is easy to see why it is important to most. When highways and bridges are left to deteriorate, they become unsafe for travel. In addition, when new roads and bridges are not being built as the population grows, travel becomes more difficult. A crumbling infrastructure is not just unsafe, it is also unappealing, as some older roads and bridges have simply become eyesores that passers-by and local residents alike do not want to look at. Putting additional money into improving the infrastructure, therefore, can increase safety, travel, and appeal. So it should be obvious now why so many voters will consider this issue when voting in the upcoming election.

#### Overwhelming statistical support for transportation infrastructure among voters—seen as economic benefit, proper government role, and personally beneficial

Rockefeller Foundation 2012 (The Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey

Findings from a national survey of registered voters, conducted by Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies; Survey Methodology: From January 29 to February 6, 2011, Hart Research (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) conducted a national survey of voters on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation. The firms interviewed 1,001 registered voters, including 200 voters who have only a cell phone. The data’s margin of error is ±3.1 percentage points for the full sample, and is higher for subgroups of the sample.)

􏰀 Voters want common ground on transportation legislation more than on any other issue. Americans want leaders to seek common ground across a host of issues, but they want it on transportation legislation more than any other area. 􏰁 71% of voters say there should be common ground on this issue—higher than other major issues—while 19% say leaders should hold fast to their positions, which is lower than other major issues. 􏰁 By comparison, the next-highest issue is legislation dealing with the budget deficit, where 69% would like to see common ground and 25% want to see leaders holding fast to their positions. 􏰁 This pattern holds across other issues as well, from energy development to health care reform to tax cuts to Social Security. 􏰀 Two in three voters say that improving the nation’s infrastructure is highly important, and many say our current infrastructure system is inadequate. 􏰁 66% of voters say that improving the country’s transportation infrastructure is extremely (27%) or very (39%) important. Another 27% say it is somewhat important. Just 6% say it is not important. 􏰁 Again, majorities of Democrats (74%), independents (62%), and Republicans (56%) say this is very or extremely important, as do 59% of Tea Party supporters. 􏰁 The importance of improving infrastructure also is consistent regardless of the length of a voter’s commute—whether their commute is less than 15 minutes (60% important), between 15 and 44 minutes (69%), or 45 minutes or longer (63%). 􏰁 Indeed, 44% say that roads are often or totally inadequate and that only some public transportation options exist for those who want them. Only 4% of voters say that roads are totally adequate with lots of public transportation options, while 50% say roads are mostly adequate and there are just enough public transportation options. 􏰀 The public understands the economic benefits of infrastructure improvement. 􏰁 Four in five (80%) voters agree that federal funding to improve and modernize transportation “will boost local economies and create millions of jobs from construction to manufacturing to engineering.” Just 19% disagree with this. 􏰁 And 79% agree that “in order for the United States to remain the world’s top economic superpower we need to modernize our transportation infrastructure and keep it up to date.” Again, 19% disagree. In fact, voters are in strong agreement with President Obama’s ideas on investment in transportation. Survey respondents were read excerpts from the president’s State of the Union address related to transportation and asked their reaction. “The American Dream has required each generation to sacrifice and meet the demands of a new age. We know what it takes to compete for the jobs and industries of our time. We need the fastest, most reliable ways to move people, goods, and information—from high-speed rail to high-speed Internet. So over the last two years, we've begun rebuilding for the 21st century, a project that has meant thousands of good jobs for the hard-hit construction industry. We should redouble those efforts. We'll put more Americans to work repairing crumbling roads and bridges. We'll make sure this is fully paid for, attract private investment, and pick projects based on what's best for the economy, not what's best for politicians.” 􏰁 Fully 80% of voters agree with this statement, including 46% who strongly agree, while 19% say they disagree. 􏰁 Agreement is nearly unanimous among Democrats (95%) and is exceptionally high among independents (75%) and Republicans (66%). 􏰁 Indeed, 91% agree with the specific idea that “our generation has a responsibility to the future to invest in America's infrastructure--just as our parents and grandparents did”; only 8% disagree with this. 􏰀 Voters’ top priorities for additional infrastructure investments are safer streets and having more transportation options. 􏰁 Voters’ top goal by far is “safer streets for our communities and children”—57% say this should be one of the top-two priorities if more money is invested in infrastructure. This is the top choice for most major subgroups of the electorate. 􏰁 The second-highest priority for voters overall at 32% is “more transportation options.” But there is a socioeconomic difference here—for voters in lower- income households the second-highest priority (at 37%) is “less money spent out-of-pocket on transportation.” 􏰁 In addition, 85% agree that “spending less time in traffic would improve quality of life, make communities safer, and reduce stress in people’s daily lives.” 􏰁 Moreover, the vast majority also believe the country (80%) and their own community (66%) would benefit from an expanded and improved public transportation system.

### Link – Transportation – Virginia

#### Virginians Hate USFG Transport Funding Cuts

Inside Nova 2-16

[Lawmakers urge governor to speak out on transportation funds <http://www2.insidenova.com/news/2012/feb/16/3/lawmakers-urge-governor-speak-out-road-funds-ar-1692603/>]

Legislation pending before the U.S. House of Representatives would cut $361 million in existing transportation money coming to Virginia from the federal government. In a letter sent to the governor Wednesday, the representatives asked McDonnell "to weigh in with your Republican colleagues in the House of Representatives and urge them to reconsider this ill-advised approach to funding the critical transportation needs of the commonwealth." The transportation bill, which includes House Resolution 3408, H.R. 3813 and H.R. 7, is scheduled to come before the House of Representatives this week. The Virginia Railway Express, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, Metro and other transit operations across the state would see cuts because of provisions in the resolutions, according to a news release from Connolly’s office. Virginia stands to get $5.3 billion over the next five years if transportation funding bills are not changed, but under the current proposals, the state would get only $4.9 billion. "This legislation would cut 7 percent of all federal transportation money coming to Virginia over the next 5 years," Connolly said in the release. "Frankly, given the General Assembly’s unwillingness to fund any kind of serious transportation proposal, these cuts would be absolutely devastating and would threaten our continued economic competitiveness."

### Link – Transportation – Suburbs

#### Transportation spending is popular with suburban voters - Obama gets credit

McGirr 4/19 [Lisa, professor of history at Harvard and the author of “Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right. Web. <http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/19/the-new-suburban-poverty/> ]

The Brookings Institution [reported two years ago](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/0120_poverty_kneebone.aspx) that “by 2008 suburbs were home to the largest and fastest growing poor population in the country.” In the previous eight years, major metropolitan suburbs had seen poverty rates climb by 25 percent, almost five times faster than cities. Nationwide, 55 percent of the poor living in the nation’s metropolitan regions lived in suburbs. To add insult to injury, [a new measure to calculate poverty](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/19/us/census-measures-those-not-quite-in-poverty-but-struggling.html?pagewanted=all) — introduced by the Census Bureau just last year — darkens an already bleak picture: nationally, 51 million households had incomes less than 50 percent above the official poverty line, and nearly half of these households were in suburbs. Why is poverty [soaring in the suburbs](http://moneyland.time.com/2011/09/26/suburban-ghetto-poverty-rates-soar-in-suburbia/)? Part of the answer, according to the Brookings Institution, is simple demographics: More Americans live in the suburbs, so there are more poor people there, too. But the recent downturn has also had an outsize impact on suburbs, with the decline in certain categories of jobs and an end to the housing boom that drew many urbanites and immigrants to the suburbs in the first place. As these residents increasingly turn for help to packed local food pantries and crowded county welfare offices, their sense of their own identity and that of the suburbs where they live is itself being transformed. It won’t be long before the politics of suburban living change too. The climbing rates of suburban poverty mark a definitive end to the Fordist model of mass production and consumption, and its most internationally recognized poster child: homogeneous middle class families cradled safely in ever expanding suburban developments. To be sure, this now quintessential form of American living — tract subdivisions distant from work, shopping and urban amenities — was itself once an American novelty. The public infrastructure built during the New Deal, World War II and the cold war transformed the nation’s built environment. That part of the story is familiar. Government highway programs significantly shortened travel times from surrounding urban centers. Developers leveraged cheap mass-building techniques, G.I. loans to returning veterans, and Federal Housing Authority programs to conjure subdivisions in farm fields from Levittown, N.Y. to Anaheim, Calif. Working-class men and women could purchase homes with government-backed low-interest mortgages; loans to veterans required no down payments. These subsidized opportunities increased the number of American homeowners from 40 percent in 1940 to 62 percent in 1960. The suburban share of the nation’s population grew from a mere 7 percent in 1910 to 32 percent by 1960. By 1970, the Census Bureau declared that the United States had “become a nation of suburbs.” By then, suburbs in metropolitan areas surpassed central cities and non-metro areas in population. The rapid growth, particularly coupled with the population shift to the Sun Belt in the last third of the 20th century, had weighty political implications. It incubated a distinctive variant of conservative politics and built a class of middle-income voters that has tended to favor the Republican Party. Suburban inhabitants conveniently forgot that their cherished neighborhoods were in fact dependent on the programs of the New Deal state. Indeed, in 1962 Michael Harrington argued in “The Other America” that poverty survived amid broad prosperity precisely because it was invisible to most Americans. “Living out in the suburbs,” Harrington declared, in what now seems like quaint nostalgia, “it is easy to assume that ours is, indeed, an affluent society.” Americans, he suggested, no longer saw poverty just “on the other side of the tracks” in their towns and small cities, but as a distant problem of the inner city, glimpsed only fleetingly from commuter trains or highway traffic. Could the rising tide of suburban poverty threaten the core assumptions of suburban life? Many suburbanites will no longer be able to insulate themselves from problems they used to associate with the inner city: poverty, social disorder, drugs and violence. What will this mean for the new suburban poor, for suburban municipalities and for the United States? At the most basic level, poor people living in suburbs face challenges gaining access to services they need, because the municipalities they live in are unaccustomed or even hostile to providing them, or are simply unable to do so. Suburbs, with their thin safety nets, are not well equipped to handle the rising demands for help. Local food pantries in suburbs across the nation are stretched beyond capacity to meet the needs of the new poor. The Parma Heights Food Pantry in Ohio served thirty-six families in 2007 and [now must meet the needs of 260 families](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/25/us/suburban-poverty-surge-challenges-communities.html). In El Paso, Colo., county workers have taken to working nights and Saturdays to meet exploding demands for aid. The suburban poor also face the geographic challenges of decentralized living. Car ownership is a costly, brittle lifeline in suburbs with weak public transport networks. Budget cuts often target public transportation first, hindering access to jobs, as well as services. Suburban poverty also throws into bold relief the environmental burden of the suburbs; poor people are faced with the challenge of heating and lighting spacious but energy-inefficient single-family homes. Chances are, however, that suburbs facing the highest burdens of the new poverty will be least able to meet them because of the economic recession and the spatial retreat of the better off. Just as many white Americans fled the cities for the suburbs in the 1960s, leaving the cities behind with declining tax revenues and fewer job opportunities, there is new cycle of exodus of the well-to-do from inner-ring metropolitan suburbs. As the better-off retreat, the provision of amenities and essentials from parks to schools to garbage pickup, heavily funded by property taxes, are bound to flounder for those left-behind. The new poverty may well loosen the suburbs’ historic ties to the Republican Party with its emphasis on individualist solutions. The replacement of America’s middle-class suburbs, however flawed, by wealthier exurbs and secondhand suburban remnants is a leading symptom of America’s 21st-century reinvention as a society of stark class divisions, spatial segregation and inherited social status. It will take bold politics to reverse trends like these, including higher taxes on the national, state and local levels to meet the needs of the poor spread out in these fractured, isolated communities. It is not likely that the 2012 election will be the terrain of the bold, although President Obama’s proposal for tax increases on the wealthy is a step in the right direction. At this point, the festering pain in suburbia may not translate into suburban support for increased public revenues and spending. But as suburbs redefine themselves to grapple with the reality of poverty in their midst, public solutions will likely find growing appeal in places whose voters have historically favored fiscal conservatism. Generally speaking, the suburban voter of the past has tended to vote Republican in national elections. The new suburban poverty may well remake those politics. A [recent survey](http://www.hofstra.edu/Home/News/PressReleases/113011_SuburbanPoll.html) by the National Center for Suburban Studies found that 59 percent of suburbanites, while skeptical of Obama’s performance and deeply dissatisfied with their personal economic circumstances, favored raising taxes on the wealthy. Obama’s recent pledges to build a “fairer” nation and to level the playing field in favor of poor and middling Americans may resonate with struggling suburban residents. The new poverty may well loosen the suburbs’ historic ties to the Republican Party with its emphasis on individualist solutions. Looking toward the future, the new suburban poverty should sound an alarm bell that the suburban “way of life” itself may be better suited to an era now past. It suggests that we should rethink public policies that have long favored homeowners and decentralized living. Though politically difficult, in the long term public policy should seek to reshape the national landscape to prioritize denser forms of living. Many metropolitan centers, from New York to Atlanta to San Francisco, have fared better in this downturn. This may hold the key to future economic growth. We should take the opportunity afforded by our new consciousness of suburban poverty and push policy makers to encourage the efficient use of sustainable energy, better integration of public and private transportation, and to offer alternatives to home ownership as the signal achievement of the American way of life by taking the dramatic and long overdue step of abolishing the federal mortgage interest deduction. The American dream of suburban domestic bliss has been fostered by sixty years of public policy; a new American dream of sustainable community and solidarity in urban life is also within reach, if public policy once again lends a hand.

## Impacts

### Impact – Israel Relations – XT: Romney Key

#### Israel will bomb Iran if Obama is elected – seen as too appeasing

Babbin 5-21 [Jed, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense under George H.W. Bush, “Losing the World to Win Reelection”, The American Spectator, <http://spectator.org/archives/2012/05/21/losing-the-world-to-win-reelec>]

Israel -- and the threat it faces from Iran -- is Obama's greatest failure. Obama has been in office for nearly four years, but he has yet to visit Israel. His enmity toward Prime Minister Netanyahu has led to Israel's isolation. The gap between the two men means that when Israel decides to take military action against Iran, as it must, we will probably not know anything about it until the operation is underway. The distrust between the two leaders is that great. England, whose Prime Minister reportedly was tucked in bed on Air Force One by Obama on the return flight from an NCAA basketball game, may have thought that the "special relationship" forged by FDR and Churchill was still alive. That thought evaporated after Obama's declaration that America was neutral in the face of Argentina's revival of the Falkland Islands dispute over which it began a war with the UK thirty years ago. Poland, which was promised a ground-based missile defense system by President Bush, was stunned by Obama's sudden reversal. He promised, instead, a sea-based system that our Navy lacks the numbers of ships to provide, and which has no plan or budget to build them. As badly as our allies have been treated, Obama has embraced our enemies as much or more. Iran, Syria, North Korea, and Pakistan openly support Islamist terrorism around the globe. Saudi Arabia, hiding under cover of secretive Islamic banking transactions, is still funding terrorist groups. Russian opposition to missile defenses for Europe is likely the principal subject of Obama's sotto voce message for Putin that he'll have "more flexibility" once he's re-elected. Obama's appeasement of Iran is manifest. Congress passed increased sanctions against Iran last year. In March, Obama exempted Japan and ten European nations from compliance with those sanctions. Iran's nuclear program continues without any effective American action against it.

Netanyahu definitively prefers Romney to Obama

The Globe and Mail 4-20-12 [PATRICK MARTIN, “Israeli PM criticizes Obama for diplomacy with Iran”, Lexis Nexis]

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched an unexpected attack this week on the world's six major powers led by President Barack Obama over how they were conducting nuclear talks with Iran. The attack underscored the fact that relations between the Israeli and U.S. leaders are as bad as they ever were, just as the presidential election in the United States gets into full swing. Indeed, indications are that not only is Mr. Netanyahu more comfortable with the views on Iran held by Mitt Romney, the leading Republican candidate who is sure to be Mr. Obama's opponent in this year's election, but also with Mr. Romney as a person. Mr. Netanyahu accuses the world powers of stringing out their talks with Iran over its nuclear program. His criticism came one day after the first meeting between Iran and representatives from the so-called five-plus-one countries: the five members of the United Nations Security Council - Russia, China, France, Great Britain and the United States - plus Germany. "My initial impression is that Iran has been given a 'freebie,'" Mr. Netanyahu said, referring to the five-week hiatus before the second round of the talks and complained that the gap will allow Iran "to continue enrichment [of uranium] without any limitation, any inhibition." Mr. Netanyahu is among Iran's harshest critics, arguing unceasingly that the Islamic Republic not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons, and threatening that if the international community did not prevent this from happening, Israel would. There is no doubt that, when it comes to the all important issue of Iran, the Israeli leader prefers the position held by Mr. Romney. Indeed, it was the former Massachusetts governor who last year uttered the line that in his Mideast policies, Mr. Obama had "thrown Israel under the bus." The two conservative politicians first got to know each other more than 35 years ago when their early careers overlapped at the Boston Consulting Group. Mr. Netanyahu, then 26, had been at MIT studying management; Mr. Romney, then 29, had just graduated from Harvard. Both had elected to accept offers from the up-and-coming BCG.

#### Romney key to Israel relations—ties to Netanyahu

AP 7/2/2012 (“Romney Planning to Visit Israel over Summer,” <http://www.bradenton.com/2012/07/02/4100806/romney-planning-to-visit-israel.html>)

Obama has yet to travel to Israel as president, but did visit in 2008 during his first presidential campaign. Romney has made the trip on multiple occasions - most recently in January 2011, when he met with Netanyahu as part of a Mideast swing that also brought him to Afghanistan and Jordan. He also spoke in 2007 at a prominent security conference in the Israeli coastal city of Herzliya. Romney's relationship with the U.S.-educated Netanyahu dates back decades. Romney and the Israeli leader have a longstanding friendship stemming from their brief overlap in the 1970s at Boston Consulting Group. Both men worked as advisers for the firm early in their careers, before Romney co-founded his own private-equity firm. Although Netanyahu has carefully avoided taking sides in the U.S. election, he has had a frosty relationship with Obama. Netanyahu has been jokingly referred to in the Israeli media as "the Republican senator from Israel," and is considered to be much closer ideologically to Republicans than Democrats on economic and foreign policy issues.

### Impact – Israel Relations – Middle East War Impact

#### Stable US-Israel relations key to Middle East stability.

Kramer ‘6

(Dr. Martin, fellow at The Washington Institute and senior fellow at the Olin Institute @ Harvard, “The American Interest,” Fall 2006, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC06.php?CID=980>)

My answer, to anticipate my conclusion, is this: United States support for Israel is not primarily the result of Holocaust guilt or shared democratic values; nor is it produced by the machinations of the “Israel Lobby.” American support for Israel -- indeed, the illusion of its unconditionality – underpins the pax Americana in the eastern Mediterranean. It has compelled Israel’s key Arab neighbors to reach peace with Israel and to enter the American orbit. The fact that there has not been a general Arab-Israeli war since 1973 is proof that this pax Americana, based on the United States-Israel alliance, has been a success. From a realist point of view, supporting Israel has been a low-cost way of keeping order in part of the Middle East, managed by the United States from offshore and without the commitment of any force. It is, simply, the ideal realist alliance. In contrast, the problems the United States faces in the Persian Gulf stem from the fact that it does not have an Israel equivalent there, and so it must massively deploy its own force at tremendous cost. Since no one in the Gulf is sure that the United States has the staying power to maintain such a presence over time, the Gulf keeps producing defiers of America, from Khomeini to Saddam to Bin Laden to Ahmadinejad. The United States has to counter them, not in the interests of Israel, but to keep the world’s great reserves of oil out of the grip of the West’s sworn enemies.

#### These wars escalate globally – culminate in extinction.

Moore ‘9

(Carol, BA in Polisci @ Wane State, “Six Escalation Scenarios to Nuclear World War III, 16 February,http://pakalert.wordpress.com/2009/02/16/six-escalation-scenarios-to-nuclear-world-war-iii/)

Israel is especially dangerous because its leaders and supporters have made clear for years that if Israel was every devastated by any kind of war or attack it would retaliate in indiscriminate “Samson Option” attacks against not just on Muslim cities, but against European and even Russian targets. (See “Israeli Nuclear Threats and Blackmail ” .) Russia, of course, would retaliate with thousands of nuclear bombs against the United States. Given suspected U.S. nuclear primacy plans, Russia could feel compelled to attack the United States for acts like a U.S. nuclear attack on Iran, which is just a few hundred miles from its border. On January 25, 1995 Boris Yeltsin, then President of Russia, came within three minutes of initiating a full nuclear strike on the United States because of one Norwegian scientific rocket Russians could not identify. (Details ) And U.S. leaders also could be spooked by a nuclear incident, as the 2002 movie “Sum of All Fears” illustrates. Once there is any use of nuclear weapons, it will be like giving permission for anyone to use them. Compare it to a room full of people embarrassed to cough, but once one does, everyone else feels free to do so. Any use of nuclear weapons probably will lead to a rapid escalation, “out of control spiral,” to nuclear war among most or all nuclear nations–”world nuclear war.” The U.N. cannot stop it.  U.S. imperialism and pre-emptive strikes cannot stop it.  Only a worldwide disarmament movement can stop it.

### Impact – Israel Strikes – XT: Yes Strikes

#### Netanyahu wants to strike

Haaretz 12 (Aluf Benn, “Netanyahu is preparing Israeli public opinion for a war on Iran,” 3/15/2012,

http://www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/netanyahu-is-preparing-israeli-public-opinion-for-a-war-on-iran-1.418869?trailingPath=2.169%2C2.216%2C2.217%2C//HT)

Since his return from Washington, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has mainly been preoccupied with one thing: Preparing public opinion for war against Iran. Netanyahu is attempting to convince the Israeli public that the Iranian threat is a tangible and existential one, and that there is only one effective way to stop it and prevent a "second Holocaust": An Israeli military attack on Iran's nuclear infrastructure, which is buried deep underground. In his speech before the Knesset on Wednesday, Netanyahu urged his colleagues to reject claims that Israel is too weak to go it alone in a war against a regional power such as Iran and therefore needs to rely on the United States, which has much greater military capabilities, to do the job and remove the threat. According to polls published last week, this is the position of most of the Israeli public, which supports a U.S. strike on Iran, but is wary of sending the IDF to the task without the backing of the friendly superpower.

#### Israeli psychology guarantees they’d attack Iran

Pfeffer ’10 (Ashnel. Staffer for the Assc Press in Israel. “Israel has Know-How to Hit Iran” The Assc Press 5/11/10, lexis)

In a rare public reference to a sensitive subject, a member of the inner cabinet said yesterday that Israel is already essentially in confrontation with Iran and possesses the necessary capabilities to attack the Islamic Republic. Vice Prime Minister and Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon, a former chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces, made the remarks at a conference on Israel's air power at the Fisher Institute for Air and Space Strategic Studies in Herzliya. The institute was established by the Israel Air Force Association "There is no doubt, looking at the overall situation, that we are already in a military confrontation with Iran," he said. "Iran is the main motivator of those attacking us, with its funding and training of Hezbollah," Ya'alon said. "There is no doubt that [Israel's] technological capabilities, which improved in recent years, have improved range and aerial refueling capabilities, and have brought about a massive improvement in the accuracy of ordnance and intelligence," he said. "This capability can be used for a war on terror in Gaza, for a war in the face of rockets from Lebanon, for war on the conventional Syrian army, and also for war on a peripheral state like Iran." Israel has rarely used the term "war" in official statements on how to deal with Iran's nuclear program. "As far as I'm concerned, offense remains the best form of defense," Ya'alon said, adding that the anti-missile system being developed by the defense establishment "can make things easier for the public, but won't keep Israelis out of shelters in their hour of need.

### Impact – Fiscal Discipline

#### An Obama second term would crush fiscal discipline and maintain deficits

Radosh 5-12-12 **[**Ronald, Adjunct Senior Fellow at The Hudson Institute, and a Prof. Emeritus of History at the City University of New York, “The New Yorker’s Liberal Illusions about Barack Obama”, <http://pjmedia.com/ronradosh/2012/06/12/the-new-yorkers-liberal-illusions-about-barack-obama/?singlepage=true>]

What Lizza leaves out of his account is Obama’s record: his fiscal irresponsibility, his decision to ignore the Bowles-Simpson Commission’s recommendations, his decision to move first for radical health care instead of a jobs program. Lizza is right when he says that “at some point this year the debate will focus on the looming fiscal crash.” What he does not show is that Obama has never done anything of a serious nature to even acknowledge the problem, nevermind offer new bold measures to address it. Instead, Lizza compares Obama to Bill Clinton, who in his second term abandoned bold domestic programs and replaced them with a noticeable shift to the center. With Republican support (and some Democratic opposition) he passed NAFTA and introduced serious welfare reform, a conservative idea introduced first by Republicans. Dick Morris, then his advisor, called it “triangulation.” It worked, and in moving in this direction Clinton had the support of moderate Democrats in the then-important Democratic Leadership Council, of which Clinton himself had earlier been a leading member. Barack Obama is not Bill Clinton. While Clinton was a DLC Democrat, Obama came into office with a background as an anti-business community organizer, a supporter of radical black nationalists in his Chicago ward, and an associate of radicals, socialists, and Communists who all worked together for his election. That is the significance of Stanley Kurtz’s recent revelation that Obama had been a member of the social-democratic New Party in Chicago in 1996. As Kurtz writes: Obama’s joining this leftist party was no reluctant concession to a marginal group just to secure elective office. Obama had been working with the New Party’s leaders for years, and their larger strategic vision was a prime example of what drew him into politics in the first place. The New Party issue is no fluke. On the contrary, it’s a reflection of Obama’s consistent and continuous life plan. To assume that Barack Obama will move in the direction Lizza says he will is to believe that all of the signals about his belief system do not count, and that he is capable of pulling a Clinton in a second term. Clinton, to put it bluntly, was a real pragmatist and a master politician, and never was a man of the ideological left wing. As someone might say in a debate with Obama: “I know Bill Clinton, and you’re no Bill Clinton.” Lizza’s hope that a second Obama term would begin “with major deficit reduction and serious reform of taxes and entitlements” is nothing but a pipe dream, meant to assure those drifting away from the Obama camp that the president is really a sensible moderate just waiting for the chance to screw his base. Or, you can take the word of Obama advisor David Plouffe, who assures Lizza that Democrats would of course accept entitlement reform because in a divided Congress they would have to. There is more chance that a deal could be made if Mitt Romney wins, which is something that Lizza never addresses. He only sees movement if Obama wins and convinces Republicans — who of course he holds responsible for all failures — that they must give up “obstructionism.” Instead, Lizza serves up a new term in which, for the first time, bipartisan legislation will take place, and Republicans and Democrats together will agree on “immigration, climate change, and campaign finance.”

#### Continued deficit spending and lack of confidence will collapse dollar hegemony─

Caploe 8 [David, The Straits Times, “It's the fiscal deficit, stupid,” Sept 2 Lexis]

The result of dollar hegemony has been a 'win-win' situation for both the US and the rest of the world: The US can import goods and services far beyond its immediate ability to pay, and the rest of the world has been willing to take dollars, which they can use themselves. In this way, America serves as not just the global consumer of last resort - the place where countries know they are usually able to off-load their inventories - but also the global financier of last resort. That is, the supply of dollars moving around the world has, for the last half century, helped maintain the flow of not just trade, but international investment as well. Now, the key pre-condition for the successful operation of this system is the health of the US domestic economy. This is why the massive fiscal deficits are so worrisome - especially when combined with the indulgence and encouragement of all the high-tech financial manipulation and chicanery the inventive genius of Wall Street has devised over the past several years. The symbol of this, of course, is the collapse of the entire - not just 'sub-prime' - housing market in the US. These problems are compounded by the conventional response of private banks to a situation where a growing percentage of their loans are not being re-paid - tightening credit requirements and increasing interest rates. So no matter how much the Federal Reserve may cut interest rates at the top, interest rates for consumers on the ground are likely to continue to rise - which, in turn, will further slow an already weakened economy.

#### Dollar hegemony is key to primacy and power projection

Kirshner 8 [Jonathan Kirshner, Department of Government @ Cornell University, “Review of International Political Economy,” august 1, eview of International Political Economy,15:3,418 — 438 Informaworld]

Setting aside these red herrings, **the US would**, nevertheless, **face real consequences from the contraction of the international role of the dollar**. **They are reduced international political inﬂuence, the loss of the beneﬁts it has become accustomed to enjoying** (in particular, the ease with which it is able to ﬁnance its deﬁcits), **and the risk of reduced macroeconomic policy autonomy during international political crises**. These latter two **effects**, which **would directly affect US power**, would be more acute and salient if the change in the dollar ’s role comes about suddenly in the wake of an international ﬁnancial crisis, and less dramatic, though still signiﬁcant, if the dollar ’s relative primacy were to erode gradually. Either of these changes would take place in a domestic (American) political context that would likely magnify the extent to which dollar diminution contracts US power. It is hard to quantify the reduction of political inﬂuence that would result from diminished global use of the greenback, but that does not make it any less real. **The loss of dollar primacy**, even to a (most likely) ‘ﬁrst among equals’ status, **would erode the Hischmanesque beneﬁts that the US garners as a result of the dollar ’s global rol**e. In a world where fewer hold dollars, **fewer would also have a stake on the dollar, and** subtly, **they would have less of a stake in the US economy and US policy preferences more generally**. At the same time, the issuers of currencies that ﬁll in the gaps where the dollar once reigned would see their own inﬂuence enhanced, as holders of, say, euros, see their interests more enmeshed in the interests of the European Union. **As the dollar is used less in some parts of the world** (including most likely Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa and the Middle East), **the US would lose twice, ﬁrst, from the reduction in its own inﬂuence, and second, from the enhanced political inﬂuence of other powers.** More concretely, with the reduction in the dollar ’s prestige and thus its credibility, **the US would lose some of the privileges of primacy** that it takes for granted and routinely, if implicitly, invokes. Here the shift in status from ‘top’ to ‘negotiated’ currency is paramount.36 In a scenario where the dollar ’s role receded, and especially as complicated by an increasingly visible overhang problem (as more actors get out of dollars), American policies would no longer be given the beneﬁt of the doubt. Its macroeconomic management would be subject to intense scrutiny in international ﬁnancial markets and its deviations from ﬁnancial rectitude would start to come at a price. This would affect the US ability to borrow and to spend. Federal government spending would take place under the watchful eye of international bankers and investors, whose preferences will always be for cuts. Borrowing from abroad would also come at a higher price. In the past, periods of notable dollar weakness led to US borrowing via mechanisms that involved foreign currency payments and which were designed to insure creditors against the possibility of a decline in the value of the dollar. Each of these experimental mechanisms, the Roosa Bonds of the 1960s and the Carter Bonds of the 1970s, were only used on a modest scale; but they suggest the antecedents for future demands by creditors that would limit the ability of the US to borrow in dollars.37 **It would also become more difﬁcult to reduce the value of US debts via devaluation and inﬂation, devices which have served the US well in the past, but which in the future would both work less well and further undermine the dollar ’s credibility.** Increased (and more skeptical) market **scrutiny of American macroeconomic policy choices would also affect the US during moments of international crisis, and during periods of wartime**. Markets tend to react negatively to the prospects for a country’s currency as it enters crisis and war, anticipating increased prospects for government spending, borrowing, inﬂation, and hedging against general uncertainty.38 Under dollar hegemony, the US tended to beneﬁt from the ‘ﬂight to quality’ during moments of international distress; but in the context of dollar diminution, with markets much more nervous about the dollar, the US would ﬁnd itself uncharacteristically under ﬁnancial stress during crucial moments of international political confrontation. Here some analogy to Britain is illustrative – during World War II the international role of the pound was an important source of support; but after the war, with sterling in decline, the vulnerability of the pound left Britain exposed and forced it to abandon its military adventure over Suez in 1956.39 These new pressures on the dollar would take place in a distinct domestic political context. How would the US political system react to life under the watchful and newly jaundiced eye of international ﬁnancial markets, with reduced macroeconomic policy autonomy, greater demands that its economic choices meet the ‘approval’ of international ﬁnanciers and investors, and forced to ﬁnance its military adventures not by borrowing more dollars, but with hard cash on the barrelhead? **There is good reason to suspect that in response, the US will scale back its international power projection, to an even greater extent than necessarily implied by its underlying economic power**. For the US seems to be at the political limits of its ﬁscal will, consistent with theories that anticipate great powers will become addled by consumerism and the corroding consequences of afﬂuence.40 **This is particularly notable with regard to America’s recent wars. The 9/11 attacks revealed a real threat to the nation’s security, yet the subsequent war in Afghanistan has been undertaken with caution regarding risks taken and resources (both military and economic) expended; investments in homeland security have been relatively modest given the needs at hand, and appropriations for securing ‘loose nukes’ have been inadequate.**41 The yawning divergence between the government’s rhetoric associated with the stakes of the Iraq war and the unwillingness of the administration to call for any national sacriﬁces on its behalf strongly suggest that America’s leaders are deeply skeptical of the nation’s ability to mobilize its vast wealth in support of foreign policy abroad. Indeed the Iraq war is the only large war in US history that has been accompanied by tax cuts. Major tax increases were associated with the War of 1812, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and even, if with great reluctance on the part of President Johnson, the Vietnam War.42 From one perspective, military spending in the US is not at historically high levels. As a percentage of gross domestic product, US defense spending (3.9% in 2004, 4.0% in 2005) is in fact near post-World War II lows, and well below the levels associated with other wartime periods (13% in 1953, 9.5% in 1968). However, that amount of spending is nevertheless extremely high in when considered in absolute dollars ($454.1 billion in 2004; 493.6 billion in 2005), and given that at these levels, the US comes close to spending as much on defense as the rest of the countries of the world combined.43 It is these ﬁgures that are more likely to be decisive in the future when the US is under pressure to make real choices about taxes and spending in the future. When borrowing becomes more difﬁcult, and adjustment more difﬁcult to postpone, choices will have to be made between raising taxes, cutting non-defense spending, and cutting defense spending. In sum, **while dollar doomsayers have cried wolf repeatedly in the past, the currents of massive US debt, its unprecedented current account imbalances, the emergence of the euro, and, most important of all, a distinct geopolitical setting, have caused the dollar to drift towards uncharted waters**. As a result, a reduced international role for the dollar plausible and perhaps even likely, and it would have signiﬁcant political consequences. A general downward recasting of US political inﬂuence would be accompanied by much more novel and acute inhibitors on the willingness and ability of the US to use force abroad – macroeconomic distress during international crises, and consistent pressure on federal budgets. The reduction in US power and inﬂuence would be less salient if dollar diminution occurs gradually rather than suddenly, and if the American public suddenly becomes willing to tolerate tax increases and cuts to other government spending. But even these circumstances would mitigate, not eliminate, the consequences of the erosion of dollar primacy for the US.

#### Hegemony key to de-escalate conflict – collapse causes multiple hotspots to escalate – causes global nuclear war

Kagan 12 – Senior Fellow @ the Brookings Institution, Robert, The importance of U.S. military might shouldn’t be underestimated, Washington Post, 2-2, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-importance-of-us-military-might-shouldnt-be-underestimated/2012/02/02/gIQAX5pVlQ_story.html>

These are sensible arguments. Power takes many forms, and it’s smart to make use of all of them. But there is a danger in taking this wisdom too far and forgetting just how important U.S. military power has been in building and sustaining the present liberal international order. That order has rested significantly on the U.S. ability to provide security in parts of the world, such as Europe and Asia, that had known endless cycles of warfare before the arrival of the United States. The world’s free-trade, free-market economy has depended on America’s ability to keep trade routes open, even during times of conflict. And the remarkably wide spread of democracy around the world owes something to America’s ability to provide support to democratic forces under siege and to protect peoples from dictators such as Moammar Gaddafi and Slobodan Milosevic. Some find it absurd that the United States should have a larger military than the next 10 nations combined. But that gap in military power has probably been the greatest factor in upholding an international system that, in historical terms, is unique — and uniquely beneficial to Americans. Nor should we forget that this power is part of what makes America attractive to many other nations. The world has not always loved America. During the era of Vietnam and Watergate and the ugly last stand of segregationists, America was often hated. But nations that relied on the United States for security from threatening neighbors tended to overlook the country’s flaws. In the 1960s, millions of young Europeans took to the streets to protest American “imperialism,” while their governments worked to ensure that the alliance with the United States held firm. Soft power, meanwhile, has its limits. No U.S. president has enjoyed more international popularity than Woodrow Wilson did when he traveled to Paris to negotiate the treaty ending World War I. He was a hero to the world, but he found his ability to shape the peace, and to establish the new League of Nations, severely limited, in no small part by his countrymen’s refusal to commit U.S. military power to the defense of the peace. John F. Kennedy, another globally admired president, found his popularity of no use in his confrontations with Nikita Khrushchev, who, by Kennedy’s own admission, “beat the hell out of me” and who may have been convinced by his perception of Kennedy’s weakness that the United States would tolerate his placing Soviet missiles in Cuba. The international system is not static. It responds quickly to fluctuations in power. If the United States were to cut too deeply into its ability to project military power, other nations could be counted on to respond accordingly. Those nations whose power rises in relative terms would display expanding ambitions commensurate with their new clout in the international system. They would, as in the past, demand particular spheres of influence. Those whose power declined in relative terms, like the United States, would have little choice but to cede some influence in those areas. Thus China would lay claim to its sphere of influence in Asia, Russia in eastern Europe and the Caucasus. And, as in the past, these burgeoning great-power claims would overlap and conflict: India and China claim the same sphere in the Indian Ocean; Russia and Europe have overlapping spheres in the region between the Black Sea and the Baltic. Without the United States to suppress and contain these conflicting ambitions, there would have to be complex adjustments to establish a new balance. Some of these adjustments could be made through diplomacy, as they were sometimes in the past. Other adjustments might be made through war or the threat of war, as also happened in the past. The biggest illusion is to imagine that as American power declines, the world stays the same. What has been true since the time of Rome remains true today: There can be no world order without power to preserve it, to shape its norms, uphold its institutions, defend the sinews of its economic system and keep the peace. Military power can be abused, wielded unwisely and ineffectively. It can be deployed to answer problems that it cannot answer or that have no answer. But it is also essential. No nation or group of nations that renounced power could expect to maintain any kind of world order. If the United States begins to look like a less reliable defender of the present order, that order will begin to unravel. People might indeed find Americans very attractive in this weaker state, but if the United States cannot help them when and where they need help the most, they will make other arrangements.

### Impact – Iran Proliferation

#### Obama win causes Iranian Prolif – he isn’t hard-line enough

Jerusalem Post 5-3-12 ['Iran will become nuclear if Obama wins election', http://www.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=260480]

Iran will obtain nuclear weapons if US President Barack Obama is re-elected for a second term, Republican candidate Mitt Romney said Sunday, AFP reported. "It's pretty straightforward in my view. If Barack Obama is re-elected, Iran will have a nuclear weapon and the world will change if that's the case," Romney said during a campaign stop in Snellville, Georgia according to the report. His comments came hours after Obama addressed the AIPAC conference, where he stressed that he opposed containment on Iran and could use military force if necessary to stop it from acquiring nuclear weapons, but said there was still time for diplomacy to work. One day before he hosts Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office, Obama hit on many Iran policy points Israel is looking for from the United States. But his words to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference also underscored the differences in the country’s perspectives, including on the prospects for diplomacy, as he warned against voices who are talking up the threat of war. Obama also strongly defended his record on Israel and sought to stave off Republican attacks during the presidential campaign. Romney and fellow Republican candidates Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich will be addressing the AIPAC Policy Conference on Tuesday. In apparent reference to the US president's speech, AFP quoted Romney as saying to some 2,000 supporters, that Obama had failed to communicate that military options were on the table. The presidential hopeful also reportedly asserted, that if he becomes president, he "will have those military options...will take those crippling sanctions and put them in place."

#### That escalates to global war and extinction.

Beres and Ben ‘7 (Louis Rene [Professor of political science at Purdue University], Isaac [major general with the Israeli military, professor of security studies at Tel Aviv University and Chairman of the Israel Space Agency], The Washington Times, June 11, "Deterring Iran; Israel seeks to head off nuclear strike", Lexis)

The "doomsday clock" continues its advance to "midnight." Existential atomic danger is most immediate to Israel. Iran poses the greatest problem. Israel knows that the Iranian president's exterminatory threat is real. In law, this threat signifies the intent to commit genocide. Israel also recognizes that the pre-emptive destruction of Iran's growing nuclear infrastructures would involve serious operational and international difficulties. For interception, Israel has deployed elements of the tested Arrow system of ballistic missile defense, but even the Arrow would have "leakage." A single incoming nuclear missile that manages to penetrate Arrow could promptly kill 25,000-50,000 civilians, and even more if we include long-term fatalities. Iran could also share its nuclear assets with terror groups that would use cars and ships rather than missiles as delivery vehicles. These enemies might seek nuclear targets in New York or Chicago as well as Israel. Iran now augments its declared intent with a corresponding capacity. Left to violate binding treaty rules with impunity, Tehran might be undeterred by threats of Israeli and/or American retaliation. Such a failure of nuclear deterrence could be the result of a presumed lack of threat credibility or even of willful Iranian indifference. Iran could even become the suicide bomber in macrocosm, a nuclear-armed state willing to "die" as a "martyr." Iran's illegal nuclearization has already started a perilous domino effect in the region. Both Saudi Arabia and Egypt have announced possible plans to develop nuclear capability "for peaceful purposes." Strategic stability in a proliferating Middle East could never resemble earlier U.S.-Soviet deterrence dynamics. Even the key assumption of rationality might be unwarranted. A nuclear Iran could therefore lead to a nuclear war in the Middle East. Israel will need to choose wisely between "assured destruction" and "nuclear war-fighting." These are alternative strategies in which one side primarily targets its strategic weapons on the other side's populations and infrastructures or on that enemy state's weapons systems and supporting military assets. Israel could also opt for a "mixed" strategy, but any targeting policy that might encourage nuclear war- fighting would be more costly than gainful. Israel should opt for nuclear deterrence based upon assured destruction. A counterforce targeting doctrine would be less persuasive as a nuclear deterrent, especially to leaders who might sacrifice their armies as "martyrs." And if Israel were to opt for nuclear deterrence based upon counterforce capabilities, its pertinent enemies could feel especially threatened. This could heighten the prospect of nuclear aggression against Israel and of subsequent nuclear war. Israel's decisions on strategic targeting will depend, in part, on: (1) enemy inclinations to strike first; and (2) enemy inclinations to strike all at once. Should Israel assume that an enemy state in the process of "going nuclear" is apt to strike first and to strike with all of its nuclear weapons right away, Israeli counterforce-targeted warheads - used in retaliation - would hit only empty launchers. In such circumstances, Israel's only application of counterforce doctrine would be to strike first itself - an option that Israel clearly and completely rejects. For intrawar deterrence, a counter-value strategy would prove more appropriate to prompt war termination.

### Impact – NATO

#### Obama win would destroy NATO

USA Today 5-20-12 [Aamer Madhani, “Romney: Obama is undermining NATO”, <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2012/05/romney-obama-is-undermining-nato/1>]

Both Democratic and Republican administrations have long been concerned that NATO could be heading toward military irrelevance as only three of the members meeting their pledge spend a minimum of 2% of gross domestic product on defense. But Romney argued in an op-ed in the Chicago Tribune that Obama deserves particular blame. "While military underinvestment is an old problem for NATO, a lack of American leadership on the issue is an alarming new development," Romney wrote. "Instead of working to strengthen NATO, the Obama administration has taken actions that will only undermine the alliance." While much of the next two days of talks will center on winding down the war in Afghanistan, there' s growing concern on both sides of the Atlantic about the future of the alliance, noted Stephen Flanagan, a national security analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. Flanagan said to expect Obama to reaffirm — as he has in his past travels to Europe and during visits to Washington by leaders such as Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron — that Europe remains profoundly important to the United States. "I think that he will sound, and others in the administration will sound, that Europe still remains Washington's reliable partner of choice in dealing with international security problems," Flanagan said. But Romney argues that Obama's rhetoric isn't backed up by his actions. In particular, Romney pointed to Obama's signing a budget agreement last year that calls for a $1 trillion in cuts to the defense budget over the next decade and raised concern about the Air Force and Navy's shrinking fleet. He also said that Obama treated two NATO allies — Poland and Czech Republic — "shabbily" with his decision to withdraw from a George W. Bush-era agreement to station missile defense sites in both of those countries. "With the United States on a path to a hollow military, we are hardly in a position to exercise leadership in persuading our allies to spend more on security," Romney wrote. "And in fact the Obama administration has failed to exercise such leadership. Quite the contrary; a multiplier effect has set in: The administration's irresponsible defense cuts are clearing the way for our partners to do even less."

#### NATO key to prevent great power war

Roberts 8, (Guy B, Dec. 8 Deputy Assistant Secretary General for WMD Policy at NATO, Comité de Surveillance OTAN http://www.csotan.org/textes/doc.php?type=documents&art\_id=441 accessed 7/9)

This leads to the question of why nuclear deterrence and more importantly, why nuclear deterrence for NATO? Nuclear weapons provide something that conventional forces cannot: incalculable risks. It is, of course, exceedingly difficult to prove a negative. So let me right up front make a statement of belief: «nuclear deterrence has prevented a catastrophic war for over 50 years and it will continue to be an effective insurance policy for the unstable and unpredictable world we live in.» Given that much of the worst violence in human history has occurred because of great power wars, we should not dispense with the very weaponry that has rendered such devastating conflicts almost obsolete. When a potential aggressor thinks about the nuclear capability of NATO and chooses against an attack, nuclear weapons work. They thus serve as a political and psychological tool capable of maintaining the security of the allies. They are the only current weapon capable of destroying an entire society, raising the cost of aggression to an unacceptably high level. Such is not the case with conventional forces. While you may be outmatched conventionally, the risk of complete annihilation is very low. History is replete with cases of calculated aggression against larger, stronger conventionally armed adversaries, for example the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour. Many statesmen have decried the grim character of deterrence. Deterrence arises from a logical and a moral necessity – as Kenneth Walz pointed out in his 1954 classic, “Man, the State, and War.” Because men are not angels, because states can be malevolent, and because the international system of states is itself a jungle, without an all-powerful world government to enforce order, something like deterrence is required. Deterrence can be thought of as reason’s attempt to check the perpetual temptation of evil. As Edmund Burke warned: “There is no safety for honest men but by believing all possible evil of evil men.” This includes assuming they will lie, cheat and betray. The search for perfect security is a fool’s errand in a world inherently beset by conflict. Deterrence thus seeks to build security on the firmer foothold of a realistic view of human nature. This is one that sees that the most reliable human motive is the preservation of things one holds most dear – particularly one’s own life. Our deterrence posture is such that we believe no regime, no matter how aggressive and risk-inclined, would be so foolish as to attack the Alliance, a move that would yield little advantage, and thereby incur an attack’s clear consequence – utter destruction. Now, it is important to note that deterrence is fundamentally defensive and to be distinguished from its more brazen cousin, coercion, which is the use of threats of violence to accomplish positive ends. Through the threat of overwhelming force it enforces peace, founding it on the firmer ground of respect and fear rather than the shiftier ground of ideology or aspiration. So if President Bush’s effort to diminish international conflict by improving the character of states, by making them democracies, does not work out, deterrence will still be available. Deterrence offers an insurance guarantee against the possible failure of idealists to reduce the likelihood of war by other means.

### Impact – NATO – Russia Impact

#### U.S. commitment to NATO is necessary to deter Russian aggression and Central European conflict

Ball, British International Studies Association, 1998 (Christopher L., “Nattering NATO negativism? Reasons why expansion may be a good thing,” *Review of International Studies,* <http://journals.cambridge.org/article_S0260210598000436>*)*

If Russia is potentially hostile, other scholars call for expansion only if Russia actually behaves aggressively. In essence, they call for a tit-for-tat strategy of cooperating by not expanding NATO now, but expanding it later if Russia proves aggressive.18 The trouble with this strategy is that the barnyard door is closed after the horses have left. Once Russia has became clearly aggressive, it may be too late to deter it. First, Russia might already have formed a paper-tiger image of the West, and not believe that any new commitments are credible.19 Second, psychological theories provide some evidence that earlier deterrent commitments are more likely to be heeded than threats made after a challenger is committed to use force.20 After leaders decide to challenge, they may have a motivated error to discount the credibility of deterrent threats. A NATO commitment might fail if Russia were already committed to advance. Third, trying to develop an effective defence plan to deter Russia might prove difficult over a short period. The necessary weapons interoperability, doctrines, and training might be so disparate that fast and effective cooperation would be impossible. While the Partnership for Peace programme would help alleviate this problem, it is not a substitute for the coordination that would occur under NATO. The West might be forced to rapidly deploy large units in Central Europe during a crisis. But placing large NATO forces in these countries during a crisis might trigger a war, not deter one. Of course, expansion opponents could point out that deterrence may be dangerous where domestic political instability or strategic vulnerability lead to motivated and cognitive distortions.21 Instead of dissuading a potential challenger, they may magnify the incentives to challenge. In this case, the expansion of NATO will prompt Russian challenges. But it is unlikely that deterrence attempts *after* the challenge would be any more effective. Expanding NATO later would only exacerbate any crisis. To argue that NATO can expand later is only compelling as a political cover for abandoning Central Europe if Russia becomes aggressively revisionist.

####  Extinction

 Bostrom**,** Prof Oxford**,** 2002**(**Nick, March, 2002 [www.transhumanist.com/volume9/risks.html](http://www.transhumanist.com/volume9/risks.html))

A much greater existential risk emerged with the build-up of nuclear arsenals in the US and the USSR. An all-out nuclear war was a possibility with both a substantial probability and with consequences that might have been persistent enough to qualify as global and terminal. There was a real worry among those best acquainted with the information available at the time that a nuclear Armageddon would occur and that it might annihilate our species or permanently destroy human civilization. Russia and the US retain large nuclear arsenals that could be used in a future confrontation, either accidentally or deliberately. There is also a risk that other states may one day build up large nuclear arsenals. Note however that a smaller nuclear exchange, between India and Pakistan for instance, is not an existential risk, since it would not destroy or thwart humankind’s potential permanently.

### Impact – Tax Cuts

#### Romney would extend Bush Tax Cuts

Sullivan 4-30 [Martin, economist and contributing editor for Tax Analysts, “Sullivan: If Romney Wins . . .”, 2012, http://taxprof.typepad.com/taxprof\_blog/2012/04/sullivan-if.html]

Romney's tax agenda is ambitious. According to his campaign documents, he would extend the Bush tax cuts across the board (if they aren't already extended for him in the lame-duck session). Then he would add tax cuts that include a 20% cut in all individual income tax rates; elimination of all tax on interest, dividends, and capital gains for households with incomes below $200,000; elimination of the estate tax; repeal of the alternative minimum tax; and a reduction of the corporate rate to 25%. Because he would also repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Romney would eliminate that act's 3.8% tax on investment income of high-income individual taxpayers and the 0.9% tax on wages that is scheduled to take effect in 2013. The Romney campaign says eliminating tax benefits will offset the cost of these tax cuts, but it has not specified what tax benefits it intends to cut. The price tag for the tax cuts is staggering. According to the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, assuming the extension of the Bush tax cuts is already included in the baseline, the reduction in revenue would be $480 billion for 2015. That's about 3% of GDP.

#### Tax cuts extension prevents a recession that spills over globally

Washington Post 7/3 (“IMF warns: ‘Fiscal cliff’ of tax hikes, spending cuts puts U.S. economy at risk,” http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/us-economy-at-risk-imf-report-warns/2012/07/03/gJQAuundKW\_story.html//HT)

The United States could be pushed back into recession if automatic tax hikes and spending cuts take effect next year as scheduled, a potentially devastating blow to the world economy, the International Monetary Fund warned on Tuesday. In its annual review of the U.S. economy, the fund added its weight to the growing chorus of analysts and others worried that political deadlock might lead the nation into an economic disaster. Unless Congress and the Obama administration agree on alternatives, a set of tax cuts, most of them dating to the George W. Bush administration, will expire next year. A series of automatic budget cuts would also take effect under a separate law. The combined drag would equal about 4 percent of the nation’s annual economic output, leaving the economy stuck in neutral and perhaps even contracting. “Failure to reach an agreement on near-term tax and spending policies would trigger a severe fiscal tightening . . . with negative growth early next year and significant negative repercussions on an already fragile world economy,” the fund reported. After months in which the IMF has cited Europe’s problems as a chief global risk, Tuesday’s report focused on the quandary facing the world’s largest economy: how to curb a massive run-up in debt without stifling economic growth that the fund already considers “tepid.” The fund on Tuesday lowered its estimate of U.S. growth for this year and next, forecasting the economy to expand by 2 percent this year compared with the 2.1 percent growth rate it projected in April. That adds to concerns about the slowing global economy, with several euro-zone countries mired in recession and emerging giants such as China and India cooling from the high rates of growth that had helped buoy the world’s outlook. In a news conference Tuesday, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde said that despite high levels of debt, U.S. policymakers still have room to spend more on infrastructure, worker training programs and other efforts to keep short-term growth on track. The fund consults with national leaders in preparing its annual reviews, and the recommendations offered by the IMF jibe closely with those made by the Obama administration. Specifically, the fund recommended that the United States slow its budget-cutting in the short run, allowing slightly larger government deficits in order to spend an additional $100 billion or more on a variety of programs. “U.S. authorities do not have a lot of space available, but they should use it to support the recovery in the near term,” Lagarde said. Efforts to trim the federal deficit have “to be sensible and certainly not excessive.” U.S. officials had no comment on the IMF report. Europe continues to pose risks to the U.S. financial situation, the IMF said. If the euro zone’s financial crisis intensifies, it could threaten to cramp U.S. exports and trigger broader problems. But with the United States approaching what has been deemed a “fiscal cliff,” the fund urged U.S. officials to “decisively tackle” the country’s problems. Along with agreement over extending the tax cuts and slowing any spending reductions, the IMF said, the country needs to raise the debt ceiling “promptly” and secure the Social Security system by increasing taxes over time and raising the retirement age. Social Security and spending on other entitlement programs is a longer-term issue, but the fund said the upcoming debate over the debt ceiling — likely to occur after the election — could upend markets. “The threat — only the threat of delay — in raising the debt ceiling could weaken growth already,” Lagarde said, if world debt markets become concerned about the ability of the United States to sustain its rising debt levels.

#### Economic decline ensures great power war-trade disruptions will cause diversionary conflicts that collapse interdependence.

Royal 10 – Jedediah, Director of Cooperative Threat Reduction at the U.S. Department of Defense, 2010, “Economic Integration, Economic Signaling and the Problem of Economic Crises,” in Economics of War and Peace: Economic, Legal and Political Perspectives, ed. Goldsmith and Brauer, p. 213-214

Less intuitive is how periods of economic decline may increase the likelihood of external conflict. Political science literature has contributed a moderate degree of attention to the impact of economic decline and the security and defence behaviour of interdependent states. Research in this vein has been considered at systemic, dyadic and national levels. Several notable contributions follow. First, on the systemic level, Pollins (2008) advances Modelski and Thompson's (1996) work on leadership cycle theory, finding that rhythms in the global economy are associated with the rise and fall of a pre-eminent power and the often bloody transition from one pre-eminent leader to the next. As such. exogenous shocks such as economic crises could usher in a redistribution of relative power (see also Gilpin. 1981) that leads to uncertainty about power balances, increasing the risk of miscalculation (Fearon. 1995). Alternatively, even a relatively certain redistribution of power could lead to a permissive environment for conflict as a rising power may seek to challenge a declining power (Werner, 1999). Separately, Pollins (1996) also shows that global economic cycles combined with parallel leadership cycles impact the likelihood of conflict among major, medium and small powers, although he suggests that the causes and connections between global economic conditions and security conditions remain unknown. Second. on a dyadic level, Copeland's (1996. 2000) theory of trade expectations suggests that 'future expectation of trade is a significant variable in understanding economic conditions and security behaviour of states. He argues that interdependent states are likely to gain pacific benefits from trade so long as they have an optimistic view of future trade relations. However, if the expectations of future trade decline. particularly for difficult to replace items such as energy resources, the likelihood for conflict increases, as states will be inclined to use force to gain access to those resources, Crises could potentially he the trigger for decreased trade expectations either on its own or because it triggers protectionist moves by interdependent states.' Third, others have considered the link between economic decline and external armed conflict at a national level. Blomberg and Hess (2002) find a strong correlation between internal conflict and external conflict, particularly during periods of economic downturn. They write, The linkages between internal and external conflict and prosperity are strong and mutually reinforcing. Economic conflict tends to spawn internal conflict, which in turn returns the favour. Moreover, the presence of a recession tends to amplify the extent to which international and external conflict self-reinforce each other. (Blomber & Hess,. 2002. p. 84) Economic decline has also been linked with an increase in the likelihood of terrorism (Blomberg. Hess. & Weerapana. 2004). which has the capacity to spill across borders and lead to external tensions. Furthermore, crises generally reduce the popularity of a sitting government. 'Diversionary theory' suggests that, when facing unpopularity arising from economic decline, sitting governments have increased incentives to fabricate external military conflicts to create a 'rally around the flag' effect. Wang (1996). DeRouen (1995), and Blomberg, Hess, and Thacker (2006) find supporting evidence showing that economic decline and use of force are at least indirectly correlated. Gelpi (1997), Miller (1999). and Kisangani and Pickering (2009) suggest that the tendency towards diversionary tactics are greater for democratic states than autocratic states, due to the fact that democratic leaders are generally more susceptible to being removed from office due to lack of domestic support. DeRouen (2000) has provided evidence showing that periods of weak economic performance in the United States, and thus weak Presidential popularity, are statistically linked to an increase in the use of force. In summary, recent economic scholarship positively correlates economic integration with an increase in the frequency of economic crises, whereas political science scholarship links economic decline with external conflict at systemic. dyadic and national level, This implied connection between integration. crises and armed conflict has not featured prominently in the economic-security debate and deserves more attention.

### Impact – Tax Cuts – Obama Won’t Extend

#### Obama won’t extend the tax cuts

Huffington Post 6/6 (Obama: Bush Tax Cuts For Wealthy Will Not Be Extended, Period, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/06/obama-bush-tax-cuts-will-\_n\_1574165.html)

The White House is insisting President Barack Obama will not extend the Bush-era tax cuts for wealthier Americans – even temporarily. Obama spokesman Jay Carney said the president has been clear in his opposition to extending tax cuts for households with annual incomes above $250,000. Tax cuts for people of all incomes are due to expire at year's end. Carney's stand came after former President Bill Clinton caused a political headache for the White House by suggesting in an interview that tax cuts for people of all incomes – including the rich – should be extended into 2013 to avoid economic harm and allow time for a broader fiscal deal. Pressed directly on whether Obama would support a temporary extension, Carney said: "He will not. Could I be more clear?

### Impact – Tax Cuts – Econ Internal

#### Tax cuts expiration would devastate the economy

CBN News 5/23 (“Expiring Tax Cuts, Spending Cuts Could Mean Recession,” http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/finance/2012/May/Expiring-Tax-Cuts-Spending-Cuts-Could-Mean-Recession//HT)

The U.S. economy could be thrown into another recession if the Bush**-**era tax cuts expire or if a series of automatic spending cuts take place, according to a new government study. The Congressional Budget Office report revealed that the economy would shrink by 1.3 percent in the first half of next year if the government lets a series of Bush-era tax cuts expire and automatic budget cuts kick in. "Under current law, increases in taxes and, to a lesser extent, reductions in spending will reduce the federal budget deficit dramatically between 2012 and 2013 -- a development that some observers have referred to as a "fiscal cliff" -- and will dampen economic growth in the short term," said the report. The CBO said the threat of recession comes in if tax bills go up quickly for all Americans. President Obama wants to eliminate the Bush-era tax cuts for individuals who make more than $200,000 a year. Republicans want to make all the tax cuts permanent.

#### Tax cuts are key to sustain economic progress

NRO News 5/17 (Larry Kudlow, “Extend the Bush Tax Cuts Now,” http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/300306/extend-bush-tax-cuts-now-larry-kudlow)

Tax-cut certainty is so vital right now because the anemic economic recovery may be movin towards deflation. That’s the message of a gold price that has collapsed by near 20 percent, falling from around $1,900 an ounce to the mid-$1,500s. With a risk-averse economy at home, and with the Greek and European financial crises abroad, the demand for dollars seems to exceed the dollar supply printed by the Fed. This could be solved by more quantitative easing. But a better approach for a system already oversupplied with unused liquidity would be the extension of tax-rate growth incentives, not more monetary pump-priming. The uncertainty over the Bush tax cuts already has caused a number of business leaders to threaten a hiring freeze and a dampening of investment until they can figure out the after-tax cost of capital and rate of return on investment. Hiring has slowed noticeably in recent months. And a number of Wall Street economists are marking down the anemic recovery even more, suggesting that the 3 percent growth at the end of last year, which faltered to 2 percent growth in the first quarter, could be even less in the period ahead. A bunch of CEOs have even formed their own march on Washington. Eighteen of them just wrote to Treasury man Timothy Geithner, begging him to oppose tax-rate hikes on dividends (from 15 to 45 percent) and capital gains (from 15 to near 30 percent, taking the “Buffett Rule” into account). “Equity capital is the life blood of investment and job creation for U.S. companies,” they wrote. And they argued that the administration’s tax-hike plans would do great harm to American competitiveness and capital formation. According to accounting firm Ernst & Young, the top U.S. integrated tax rate on corporate profits and dividends is on course to hit 68.6 percent, significantly higher than all other OECD countries, as well as Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Capital gains would rise to 56.7 percent. And Speaker Boehner knows this. So he’s begun a valiant fight to get supply-side tax reform at the top of the congressional agenda well before the election. Similarly, House budget chairman Paul Ryan is suggesting at least a six-month extension of the Bush tax cuts, so as not to disrupt business. (By the way, the Ryan tax-and-spending-reform budget got 41 votes in the Senate, while Obama’s budget got none.) In a recent interview, former top Obama economic adviser Larry Summers told me the U.S. recovery is going “ahead of schedule.” Really? But former Obama economist Austan Goolsbee gives a more realistic assessment by referring to a subpar 2 percent forecast that is way too slow to spark faster job creation. Bizarrely, some 25 million people have vanished from the labor force — from unemployment, underemployment, or simply dropping out all together. And half of U.S. households are now on some form of federal-transfer-payment assistance. So as we pay so many people not to work, we’re sapping the vitality of the economy. Mitt Romney recently gave a fine speech, blasting Obama’s profligate spend-and-borrow policies. He described “a prairie fire of debt sweeping across Iowa and the nation,” and he tied our newfound debt to the “tepid recovery.” But lower spending alone, while important, is not going to solve the economic-growth problem. Yes, moving spending to 20 percent of GDP from 24 percent will free up private resources. But lower tax-rate incentives on the extra dollar earned and invested is a more powerful economic-growth tool. Romney should push his 20 percent tax-rate-reduction plan. That would add liquidity to fight deflation, and would provide new economic-growth incentives.

### **Impact** **– AT: China Trade War**

#### Romney’s china-bashing is just election rhetoric

NYT 3-22 [JOHN HARWOOD, “The Electoral Math of Romney’s Stance on Trade With China”, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/23/us/politics/mitt-romneys-stance-on-china-trade.html?pagewanted=all]

One Romney adviser, Vin Weber, initially wondered whether the position reflected political calculation. When he joined internal discussions about Mr. Romney’s forthcoming economic plan last year, Mr. Weber said he sought to persuade other economic advisers to abandon the promised currency crackdown, which he still considers a policy mistake. Soon Mr. Weber was making that case directly to the candidate — who rejected the appeal and insisted his policy is the right one. “This is directly from him,” said Mr. Weber, a Washington lobbyist and former Republican congressman from Minnesota. “He believes it will strengthen his hand substantially. Mitt Romney is a person who sees himself as a successful negotiator.” Underpinning Mr. Romney’s argument is his assertion that recent presidents of both parties have been “played like a fiddle” by Chinese leaders. By keeping the yuan’s value lower against the dollar than market forces would dictate, Beijing makes exports to the United States cheaper and imports from the United States more expensive. In a Republican debate last year, Mr. Romney said China’s interest in smooth relations with a mammoth customer like the United States would preclude his actions from backfiring. “You think they want to have a trade war?” Mr. Romney said. “If you are not willing to stand up to China, you will get run over by China, and that’s what’s happened for 20 years.” That assertion grates on veterans of the Bush administration, which in 2006 began a “strategic economic dialogue” with China led by Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr., a former chairman of Goldman Sachs. The Obama administration has extended that dialogue, pressing Beijing to raise the value of the yuan while stopping short of declaring China a currency manipulator. “Both the Bush and Obama administrations have been as aggressive as possible while protecting the American people,” said Neel T. Kashkari, a Bush administration Treasury official now at Pimco, the giant bond-trading firm. “Launching a trade war with China would hurt us as much as it would hurt them.” Mr. Romney’s economic plan makes it sounds as if he is willing to take that risk. It lists the currency crackdown among five executive orders he pledges to issue on “Day 1” of his presidency. But a close reading of the language suggests he has left himself an out. It pledges to label China a currency manipulator “if China does not quickly move to float its currency.” China has already been raising the value of its currency against the dollar somewhat in recent years, including by 4.7 percent in 2011. Some experts on China policy predict a President Romney would find a way to sidestep his pledge once electioneering gave way to governance. “It is a campaign, after all,” said Nicholas R. Lardy, a fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. “My forecast is that if Romney becomes president there will be little or no change in our China policy.”

### **Impact** **– AT: China Relations**

#### US China relations are resilient – election posturing won’t affect them

Ding 3-24 [Sheng, Associate Professor of Political Science at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, “Don’t Worry About the China Bashing”, The Diplomat, <http://thediplomat.com/2012/03/24/don%E2%80%99t-worry-about-the-china-bashing/?all=true>]

Still, safe though the attacks on China might feel, they are also unlikely to have much impact on American voters. American voters as a whole are generally seen as having little interest in foreign policy issues, whether because of a lack of knowledge on foreign policy issues or a feeling that foreign policy has no particular relevance to their lives. Most American voters focus on domestic issues – jobs, taxes and gas prices, as well as social issues like gun violence, gay marriage and abortion. The fact is that although China is the United States’ most important bilateral relationship, American voters won’t be casting their votes on the basis of a candidate’s China policies. And anyway, the U.S. and Chinese economies are so integrated that U.S. policymakers can’t simply cut their constituencies off from China. So, does all this China bashing really matter – and does it risk inflaming already tense ties? There’s a long tradition, especially since the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet foe, of American presidential candidates attacking China. Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama all attacked their predecessor’s China policies. Some went further than rhetoric, taking key policy decisions to underscore their “toughness.” For example, in September 1992, President George H.W. Bush approved the sale of 150 F-16 jet fighters to Taiwan, a move viewed by the Chinese government as “the most hideous U.S. arms sale to Taiwan since 1979.” In March 1996, President Bill Clinton ordered two U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait in response to China’s provocative military exercises in the lead-up to Taiwan’s first democratic election. The move helped underscore Clinton’s readiness to stand up to China in support of a fledgling democracy. But election year posturing – and the ups and downs of U.S.-China relations more generally – shouldn’t overshadow the fact that successive U.S. and Chinese governments have made ongoing efforts to institutionalize bilateral relations. Yes, the two nations have different political and economic systems, and their peoples sometimes have very different world views. And these differences can lead to prejudice. But the communications revolution of the past two decades also means that there are constantly expanding opportunities for Americans and Chinese to interact on many different levels, which should eventually encourage greater understanding. The reality is that much of the heated political rhetoric over China will die down once the presidential election is over. Despite the claims by some candidates to the contrary, we can safely assume that come January, whoever comes out on top in November will deal with China in a pragmatic and constructive manner.

### Impact – AT: Court-Packing

#### Their scenario is too simple – There is no concrete “liberal” or “conservative” justice anymore

Washington Post 6-30 (Robert Barnes, “After Supreme Court term, line between ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ is blurrier,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/after-supreme-court-term-line-between-liberal-and-conservative-is-blurrier/2012/06/30/gJQAbumcEW_story_1.html//HT>)

When Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. joined with the court’s liberal justices to uphold President Obama’s health-care law, it was historic in more ways than one: It was only the second time in his seven years on the court that he provided the winning vote for the left to prevail over the conservative justices. That statistic alone should be enough to cool hopeful chatter from some liberal political commentators that perhaps Roberts is showing signs of becoming the next David H. Souter. Souter, nominated to the court in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush, eventually became a fairly reliable liberal vote. But it does point to another fact about the Supreme Court term that ended last week: In cases that divided the court into its usual ideological camps, liberals were in the majority as often as conservatives. Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, who normally provides the decisive vote when liberals and conservatives disagree, sides about two-thirds of the time with conservatives. This term, according to statistics at SCOTUSblog, he split the difference evenly. And on the two issues most likely to define the court’s term — health care and Arizona’s get-tough law on illegal immigration — liberal justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan were in the majority. The limit of federal power was the overarching theme of the court’s deliberations this term, and it delivered a mixed verdict. Kennedy and Roberts parted ways with conservatives Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel A. Alito Jr. in the Arizona case. Kennedy’s majority opinion was a solid affirmation that the federal government must play the preeminent role in immigration policy and that states must be careful in trying to supplement it. “Arizona may have under­standable frustrations with the problems caused by illegal immigration,” Kennedy wrote. “But the state may not pursue policies that undermine federal law.” The health-care ruling, like the immigration decision, was an important political win for the Obama administration. But it came with new restrictions on federal authority. Roberts and Kennedy joined the other conservatives in saying the requirement that almost all Americans must buy health insurance was not constitutional under Congress’s authority to regulate interstate commerce. “The Commerce Clause is not a general license to regulate an individual from cradle to grave,” Roberts wrote, although he found the individual mandate constitutional under Congress’s taxing authority. Ginsburg said the Commerce Clause finding was disturbing. “Since 1937, the court has deferred, as it should, to Congress’ policymaking in the economic and social realm,” she said in a dissent read from the bench. And seven members of the court, all but Ginsburg and Sotomayor, said there are limits to how coercive Congress may be when conditioning federal payments to the states on requirements the states must perform. Stanford University law professor Pamela Karlan said Roberts’s health-care compromise was “certainly designed to make the court look less political. But in fact it is setting the seeds for the future.” Another case, testing the Federal Communications Commission’s continued authority to police the broadcast airwaves, ended in something of a fizzle. Despite extensive briefing on the subject, the justices passed on deciding whether the commission’s regulations violated the First Amendment, essentially giving the agency a chance to come up with new and clearer regulations. Liberals were on the prevailing side in several key criminal justice cases. The court extended its line of cases requiring courts to treat juvenile offenders different from adults by banning mandatory life sentences even if the conviction is for murder. By a separate 5 to 4 vote, it extended the right to effective counsel to plea offers, recognizing that only a small percentage of criminal cases go to trial. And Kennedy joined the liberals to rule that Congress intended more lenient sentences it created for crack-cocaine offenders to apply even for some of those who committed their crimes before the law was signed. Those victories hardly make a trend. According to the SCOTUSblog numbers, Kennedy and Roberts were most likely to be in the majority, while Ginsburg and Breyer were the least likely. In some controversial cases, the court was united. It decided unanimously that religious organizations have broad freedom to choose those who carry out their faith missions and that federal discrimination laws do not apply when the organizations fire some employees. All nine voted that those accused of violating some Environmental Protection Agency standards have an immediate right to challenge the findings in court. And all agreed government prosecutors needed a valid warrant to use a Global Positioning System device on a suspected drug dealer’s vehicle to track his whereabouts for a month. It was the first of what will probably be more decisions on how modern technology coexists with privacy rights. The lineups suggest that the court “is more dynamic and complex” than many believe when consigning the justices to “liberal and conservative molds,” said Gregory G. Garre, solicitor general under President George W. Bush. Such roles will be questioned again next term, as the court is expected to consider a host of politically divisive issues, such as affirmative action in college admissions and challenges to voting laws and the Voting Rights Act. Just as justices were finishing their work Friday, they received a petition asking them to review lower court decisions that declared the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional. It denies federal recognition of same-sex marriages performed in those states where it is legal. “Controversy has a way of finding the court,” said Steven R. Shapiro, national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union. “And next term is shaping up to be another blockbuster year.”

### Impact – AT: Economic Inequality

#### Politics aside-Romney would back a more liberal economic agenda

Krugman 12 (Paul, American economist, Professor of Economics and International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, Centenary Professor at the London School of Economics, and an op-ed columnist for The New York Times, “Romney’s Economic Closet,” NYT, 2/23/12, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/24/opinion/krugman-romneys-economic-closet.html>)

According to Michael Kinsley, a gaffe is when a politician accidentally tells the truth. That’s certainly what happened to Mitt Romney on Tuesday, when in a rare moment of candor — and, in his case, such moments are really, really rare — he gave away the game. Speaking in Michigan, Mr. Romney was asked about deficit reduction, and he absent-mindedly said something completely reasonable: “If you just cut, if all you’re thinking about doing is cutting spending, as you cut spending you’ll slow down the economy.” A-ha. So he believes that cutting government spending hurts growth, other things equal. The right’s ideology police were, predictably, aghast; the Club for Growth quickly denounced the statement as showing that Mr. Romney is “not a limited-government conservative.” On the contrary, insisted the club, “If we balanced the budget tomorrow on spending cuts alone, it would be fantastic for the economy.” And a Romney spokesman tried to walk back the remark, claiming, “The governor’s point was that simply slashing the budget, with no affirmative pro-growth policies, is insufficient to get the economy turned around.” But that’s not what the candidate said, and it’s very unlikely that it’s what he meant. Almost surely, he is, in fact, a closet Keynesian. How do we know this? Well, for one thing, Mr. Romney is not a stupid man. And while his grasp of world affairs does sometimes seem shaky, he has to be aware of the havoc austerity policies are wreaking in Greece, Ireland and elsewhere. Beyond that, we know who he turns to for economic advice; heading the list are Glenn Hubbard of Columbia University and N. Gregory Mankiw of Harvard. While both men are loyal Republican spear-carriers — each served for a time as chairman of George W. Bush’s Council of Economic Advisers — both also have long track records as professional economists. And what these track records suggest is that neither of them believes any of the propositions that have become litmus tests for would-be G.O.P. presidential candidates. Consider Mr. Mankiw, in particular. Modern Republicans detest Keynes; Mr. Mankiw is the editor of a collection of papers titled “New Keynesian Economics.” In an early edition of his best-selling textbook, he dismissed supply-side economics — the doctrine embraced by the sainted Ronald Reagan — as the creation of “charlatans and cranks.” And, in 2009, he called for higher inflation as a solution to the economic crisis, a position anathema to Republicans like Representative Paul Ryan, the chairman of the House Budget Committee, who warn ominously about the evil of “debasing” our currency. Given his advisers, then, it seems safe to assume that what Mr. Romney blurted out Tuesday reflected his real economic beliefs — as opposed to the nonsense he pretends to believe, because it’s what the Republican base wants to hear.

### Impact – AT: Infrastructure/Turns Case

#### Obama would still be beholden to a GOP congress that is anti-infrastructure

Rubinstein 2012 (Dana, March 27, reporter for Capital. She has written for Bloomberg Businessweek, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the New York Observer, and the Brooklyn Paper, <http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/03/5524547/when-obama-going-have-his-eisenhower-moment>)

In this year’s State of the Union, the president made a strong argument for infrastructure spending. “During the Great Depression, America built the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge,” he said. “After World War II, we connected our States with a system of highways. Democratic and Republican administrations invested in great projects that benefited everybody, from the workers who built them to the businesses that still use them today.” “In the next few weeks, I will sign an executive order clearing away the red tape that slows down too many construction projects. "But you need to fund these projects. Take the money we're no longer spending at war, use half of it to pay down our debt, and use the rest to do some nation-building right here at home.” The “you” in that sentence was Congress. But the Republican-controlled House is looking to cut transportation spending, not increase it. It will be all the president can do to get them to agree to pass the Senate's version of this year's transportation-spending bill, which more or less extends the status quo. “The White House hasn’t recommended funding sources, and the Congress has been reluctant to propose new revenues,” says Yaro, of the Regional Plan Association. House Republicans in particular have staked out a radical position on infrastructure funding, going so far as to propose eliminating mass-transit financing entirely from the gas tax. In fact, even if Obama wins a second term, his ability to do anything much more than hold the line on current spending levels would probably be contingent on his party winning both houses of Congress.

### Impact – AT: Iran Strikes

#### Obama would too

The Atlantic 6/25 (Dominic Tierney, professor of political science at Swarthmore, Wag the Dog? Odds of War With Iran Now at 36% <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/06/wag-the-dog-odds-of-war-with-iran-now-at-36/258922//HT>)

So how much does the American president matter? Not as much as you might think. The panelists estimated that if Obama wins reelection in November, the odds of war drop only slightly from 36 percent to 34 percent, and if Romney won, the odds tick upward only marginally to 37 percent. Whoever is in charge, it seems, political tails can wag strategic dogs.

#### Obama is more likely to authorize Iran strikes- AIPAC, donors, and advisors

Rosenberg 5/29 (M.J. Rosenberg served as a Senior Foreign Policy Fellow with Media Matters Action Network, and prior to that worked on Capitol Hill for various Democratic members of the House and Senate for 15 years. He was also a Clinton political appointee at USAID. In the early 1980s, he was editor of AIPACs weekly newsletter Near East Report. From 1998-2009, he was director of policy at Israel Policy Forum, “OBAMA IS MORE LIKELY TO APPROVE BOMBING IRAN THAN ROMNEY” <http://mjayrosenberg.com/2012/05/29/is-obama-more-likely-to-approve-bombing-iran-than-romney//HT>)

At the rate we are going, the pro-Iran war lobby could get the war it wants in the next few months, right during the U.S. election campaign. AIPAC and its leadership cadre in Congress (led by Rep. Howard Berman) are now insisting the United States permit ZERO enrichment by Iran, i.e, denying it its rights under the NPT. Berman is a Democrat, speaking for Democrats, and his defection to the full Netanyahu approach makes it likely Obama will fold and give up on negotiations. Given that no Iranian government would ever accept such terms, a war is much more likely. Many consider that impossible. After all, if President George W. Bush flat-out refused to give Israel permission to attack Iran , why would President Obama say “yes.” The big difference is politics. When the Israelis (via their neocon proxies Vice President Cheney, Elliot Abrams, and others) demanded that Israel be allowed to attack before the ostensibly dovish Obama became president, the hawks had no cards to play. Bush was leaving office and had no need to please the war crowd. Besides he knew that they had destroyed his presidency by duping him into invading Iraq. Why would he give them Iran when, as he told them, no one could predict the implications of attacking. In short, he responded to the idea of war in Iran as he should have reacted to the idea of invading Iraq: with skepticism. His “no” ended the discussion, leaving the war crowd despondent, believing that that their chances of success with Obama were nil. Bush would have been unlikely to agree (following the Iraq failure) even if he had political considerations to worry about. Bush did not rely on AIPAC oriented donors to bankroll his campaigns. Republican presidential candidates (and that includes the likely 2012 nominee, Mitt Romney) are almost entirely funded by business interests. Name a special interest (the old fashioned kind that donates to campaigns to ultimately put money in their own pockets like the Chamber of Commerce or Koch Brothers) and you will find it well-represented among GOP donors. But not the Israel lobby crowd which, no matter what you may think about it, is not about personal greed. Check out the list of Romney’s top donors. These are not people who care about the West Bank, Iran nuclear enrichment or foreign policy issues in general. Their special interest is themselves. This is not the case with Democratic donors. With corporate money flowing so heavily to the Republicans, Democrats need other sources. One of the Democrats’ largest sources of funding comes from the “pro-Israel” crowd which, like Hollywood executives, have stuck with Democrats through thick and thin. Although the single-issue Israel types, would like to see Jews move toward the Republicans, they don’t. To their credit, even Jewish multi-millionaire business people tend to be liberals who reject the Republican party as being alien and, to be frank, hostile to all minorities – including Jews. Most of these wealthy Jewish donors do not give to Democrats out of hawkishness on Israel although AIPAC and other “pro-Israel” organizations have successfully conveyed the falsehood that they do. In fact, as the polls demonstrate, Jews support Democrats because of their preference for a liberal, tolerant, economically just America not as a form of insurance that the U.S. will not push Israel toward peace. Nonetheless, the lobby has been very successful in conveying that if a donor’s name is Goldberg, the money is about Israel, and now Iran, even though it’s more likely to be about opposing racism or environmental destruction. That is why Obama treads so lightly on all issues that touch the Middle East. His aides tell him that even the slightest deviation from the Netanyahu line will cause “pro-Israel” money to start flowing to the Republicans. That is also why Vice President Biden met with pro-Israel groups right before the just-concluded Iran negotiations to assure them that the United States will not deviate an inch from Netanyahu’s. That commitment produced our refusal to even discuss the easing of sanctions in exchange for Iranian commitments to limit nuclear enrichment. And it was that refusal (and particularly the refusal to defer new onerous sanctions) that killed this round of negotiations and maybe negotiations altogether. After all, why would Iran give up anything unless we are prepared to lift sanctions? What country gives up anything in exchange for nothing or, at best, very little? All this leads me to conclude that Netanyahu may decide to attack during the Obama presidency rather than wait for Romney. One, Romney is unlikely to win. And, two, if he does win, why would he be more willing to approve an attack than George Bush was? Sure, his campaign rhetoric is stridently hawkish and he has indicated that neocons will dominate his foreign policy team. But that could be just campaign talk, just another Romney attempt to look crazy right to solidify support among the crazy right. As president, however, he is likely to understand, as Bush did, that, as a Republican, he is free to do what he wants to do on the Middle East including refusing to authorize an Israeli attack. After all, unlike Obama, AIPAC-connected donors will not have played a significant role in his election and are unlikely to support him for re-election. Besides, pure business types like Romney (and his supporters) can be surprisingly dovish when it comes to disrupting the world economy not to mention their beloved oil market. These calculations are all obvious enough that one can assume they have occurred to Netanyahu and his lobby too. Romney, for all his tough talk, is both a question mark and fairly immune to the intimidation of U.S. policymakers that is Netanyahu and his lobby’s stock-in-trade. Obama, on the other hand, has been led to believe he is utterly vulnerable to the lobby and its donors – which is why he has proven to be such a pushover for Netanyahu over the past three years. In short, unless somehow there is a breakthrough in the next round of Iran negotiations (June 18 in Moscow), a breakthrough Netanyahu and his lobbyare working hard to prevent, war could be looming. And not under President Romney. Under President Obama. Yes, that could, in the end, cost him the election, but that is not what he is likely to hear from his top advisers these days: the people who raise the money. As always, they will tell Obama that he has no choice but to give Netanyahu what he wants. If past is prologue, he will.

### Impact – AT: Obama Agenda

#### Obama won’t get anything done second term

#### A – Not enough Time

The New Yorker 6/18 (Ryan Lyzza, “The Second Term,” http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa\_fact\_lizza?currentPage=1//HT)**)**

Whatever goal Obama decides on, his opportunities for effecting change are slight. Term limits are cruel to Presidents. If he wins, Obama will have less than eighteen months to pass a second wave of his domestic agenda, which has been stalled since late 2010 and has no chance of moving this year. His best opportunity for a breakthrough on energy policy, immigration, or tax reform would come in 2013. By the middle of 2014, congressional elections will force another hiatus in Washington policymaking. Since Franklin Roosevelt, Presidents have lost an average of thirty House seats and seven Senate seats in their second midterm election. By early 2015, the press will begin to focus on the next Presidential campaign, which will eclipse a great deal of coverage of the White House. The last two years of Obama’s Presidency will likely be spent attending more assiduously to foreign policy and shoring up the major reforms of his early years, such as health care and financial regulation. As William Daley, who served for a year as Obama’s chief of staff, put it, “After 2014, nobody cares what he does.”

#### B – No Mandate

The New Yorker 6/18 (Ryan Lyzza, “The Second Term,” <http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=1//HT>)

One thing is nearly certain: if Obama wins in November, his margin of victory will be among the narrowest in history. Since 1916, seven Presidents have won a second term, and all of them exceeded the percentage of the popular vote that they received in their first election. With each reëlection since Nixon’s, the President’s margin of victory over his opponent has steadily declined. In 1972, Nixon won another term by a popular-vote margin of twenty-three points. In 1984, Reagan won his reëlection by eighteen points. In 1996, Clinton won his by nine points.\* In 2004, Bush beat John Kerry by just 2.5 points, the smallest margin of victory for the reëlection of a President since the nineteenth century. Obama won in 2008 by seven points. If he manages to win this year, it is likely to be by less than that, which would make him the first President in a hundred and twenty-four years to win a second term by a smaller margin than in his initial election. Whatever a mandate is, Obama won’t have one.

#### C – Economy comes first

The New Yorker 6/18 (Ryan Lyzza, “The Second Term,” http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa\_fact\_lizza?currentPage=1//HT)

If Obama wins, his immediate task will be to settle more than a decade’s worth of deferred arguments about how big the government should be and who should pay for it. By this spring, the gamesmanship had begun. “It’s a discouraging day to talk to me,” a top White House official fumed. That afternoon, May 15th, Boehner had delivered a speech in which he insisted that Republicans would not raise the debt ceiling next year unless a dollar in government spending was cut for every dollar of new borrowing. “I just can’t believe somebody, even him, would say something that irresponsible again,” the official said. Notwithstanding Boehner’s antics, there is a possibility that a second Obama term could begin with major deficit reduction and serious reform of taxes and entitlements. A similar opportunity arose in the second terms of Reagan (who in 1986 signed into law a historic tax-reform bill) and Clinton (who in 1997 reached a significant budget deal with Republicans). Although both victories occurred when the two parties were less polarized, many White House officials regard the successes as encouraging precedents. Several senior Clinton officials involved in the 1997 deal now work for Obama, including Jacob Lew, Obama’s chief of staff, and Gene Sperling, the head of the National Economic Council.

# All-Purpose

## Internals – State Specific

### California Key

#### Obama is winning California but it could still flip

Kinsey 2012 (Todd, Todd Kinsey is a political consultant and conservative commentator whose articles have appeared in many leading publications, both print and electronic. His work has been cited by prominent media outlets including the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Times and the Washington Post. Todd has also become a sought after political expert and campaign consultant. He has worked on campaigns ranging from city and state races as well as the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. In doing so, Todd has served in a variety of positions including: Campaign Manager, Media Director, Treasurer, Political Director, Policy Advisor and Social Media Director. March 4, <http://toddkinsey.com/blog/2012/03/04/is-california-in-play-for-the-gop/>)

For the first time since the days of Reagan the Republican Party has a real chance of winning a national election in California. You read that right, not only is Dianne Feinstein’s Senate seat in real jeopardy for the first time since she took office in 1992 but President Obama has his work cut out for him as well. Once thought untouchable, Sen. Feinstein’s poll numbers are at an all time low. According to a report by CBS Los Angeles, Feinstein’s approval rating has dropped to a dismal 41 percent. Furthermore, even amongst her Democrat base, Feinstein only receives a 60 percent approval rating. And like the rest of the country, only 9 percent of Californians approve of the job Congress is doing. In 2010, Senator Barbara Boxer had the fight of her life and narrowly defeated Republican upstart Carly Fiorina. The DNC had to pull out all the stops in defense of the longtime Democrat stronghold. For starters, Sen. Boxer had to spend a whopping $28 million which was nearly double what she had to spend in her previous election. Sensing potential defeat in California, which would have been an even bigger political slap in the face than Scott Brown winning in Massachusetts, President Obama had to make no less than three trips to California in a desperate attempt to save Boxer’s seat. But the president’s coattails are all but nonexistent in 2012 and he will be fighting to save his own political life this November. In evaluating election results from the last two presidential election cycles, California is not nearly as blue as the Democrats would lead you to believe. In 2008, the year of President Obama’s sweeping victory, he only won twenty-four counties in California compared to Sen. John McCain’s thirty-four. President Obama carried the urban counties and that was enough to ensure victory for him in California. In 2004, John Kerry only received 54 percent of the popular vote in California and won a paltry twenty-two counties compared to President Bush’s thirty-six counties. More importantly there were seven counties that were within 3 percent of going to Bush which would have easily carried him to victory had those counties gone the other way.

### California Not Key

#### No risk of California going Republican

Hutchinson 2012 (Earl Ofari, Political analyst and author, “Could Obama lose California in 2012?,” http://www.lamag.com/columns/citythink/story.aspx?ID=1567664)

The short answer to "Can Obama lose California?" is no. It's a lockdown Democratic state. Now here’s the longer answer as to why the question is even posed: It’s true that the Democrats have a crushing numerical advantage over the GOP in terms of vote numbers and percentages here. The state's two major cities, Los Angeles and San Francisco, are rock solid Democratic, labor, environmental, and minority voter friendly. San Diego, another major city, is increasingly environmental and multi-ethnic friendly. No GOP presidential candidate has won California since George H.W. Bush did in 1988.

#### California is too multicultural for Romney to have a chance

Sragow 2012 (Darry, Partner, SNR Denton and former chief campaign strategist for the Democrats in the California State Assembly, “Could Obama lose California in 2012?,” http://www.lamag.com/columns/citythink/story.aspx?ID=1567664)

In a traditional two-way race between a Democrat and a Republican it is virtually impossible for the president to lose California. He is still more popular here than he is in many other places. He certainly has a reservoir of personal goodwill to draw on and is facing a Republican Party that is an endangered species in California. Republicans continue to constitute a smaller and smaller part of the California electorate. Their registration is down to about 31 percent, and the Republican Party in California is viewed pretty widely as hostile to people of color—Latinos and every Asian American group but one, Vietnamese Americans, who tend to be conservative. Obviously this is now a minority white state, so the trend is inevitable.

### Ohio – Key

#### Ohio is key to the election

Journal Gazette 6-15 [“Race in full swing in key swing state Ohio”, <http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20120615/NEWS03/306159951/1066/NEWS03>]

From opposite ends of Ohio, a state vital to both of their political futures, Romney and Obama dueled in economic speeches that set the tone for a fierce, final five months of debate. At the core, the pitches were the political foes’ familiar, fundamentally different takes on how get to an economically aching nation soaring again. “That’s really what this election is about,” Obama said. Romney went first from Cincinnati, a Republican stronghold, and he described Obama’s administration as the very “enemy” of people who create jobs. “Look what’s happened across this country,” Romney said. “If you think things are going swimmingly, if you think the president’s right when he said the private sector is doing fine, then he’s the guy to vote for.” But he questioned why anyone would do that, saying if the job isn’t getting done, pick “someone who can do a better job.” The backdrop was Ohio, seen by strategists as a state that could swing the election. It went to Obama last time and George W. Bush before that, and it remains crucial. No Republican has ever won the presidency without winning Ohio. Romney gave what amounted to his standard speech, albeit realigned as a prebuttal as Obama was pulling into his event site at the top of the state. Given the tight presidential race and the enormous interest in the economy, the two speeches offered anticipation of a big campaign moment, but the substance yielded little new. This was Obama in professor mode, filling his speech with budget numbers and history and talk of independent analysts. It was an economics case, yet hardly one of roaring rhetorical lift. The goal for Obama was not to uncork new proposals but to define a contrast. He is still pushing tax credits and other jobs ideas that have awaited action in Congress for months. On Thursday, he said the election is an opportunity for voters to step in and “break the stalemate.” In essence, Obama said Romney would gut government and cut taxes for the rich at the expense of everyone else. Romney said Obama is crushing the free market with regulation. Obama said, “If you believe this economy grows best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules, then I ask you to stand with me for a second term as president.” Despite what had seemed to be a speech showdown, the two events were not of the same scope. Obama spoke for more than 50 minutes, more than doubling Romney’s comments, in what his campaign called the first in a series of major economic speeches. Romney’s reference to Obama’s statement about the private sector “doing fine” recalled what was largely seen as a presidential gaffe last week. Even though Obama’s aides said he was taken out of context, Obama conceded his misstep Thursday, joking “It wasn’t the first time. It won’t be the last.” The president also appealed for more time to let his ideas work. Citing the monster American recession, he said most countries in the past have needed 10 years to recover.

#### Ohio is the key battleground

The Columbus Dispatch 6-1 [“Campaign battleground barrage is only going to get worse”, <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/editorials/2012/07/01/campaign-battleground-barrage-is-only-going-to-get-worse.html>]

More than anywhere in Ohio, and perhaps as much as anywhere in the nation, “There are more people up for grabs in central Ohio, and if they’re up for grabs, the candidates will be here competing for them,” said Herb Asher, an Ohio State University political scientist. “It really does look like central Ohio will be the battleground,” he said. Scott Jennings, Romney’s Ohio campaign manager, called central Ohio a “target of opportunity,” adding, “It is absolutely a swing area and key battleground.” Here is why the campaigns will focus so heavily on the 20-county Columbus media market, barraging us with direct mail, TV ads and candidate visits: Obama’s performance four years ago signaled that formerly strong Republican allegiances had turned mushy. Democratic presidential candidates almost always lose in the Columbus media market — usually by hefty margins. In the last six presidential elections in Ohio, Republicans won three and Democrats three. But in the five elections before 2008, Republican presidential candidates carried central Ohio every time, winning by an average of 83,767 votes, or 10 percentage points. In 2008, Obama won the region by 30,552 votes or 2.8 percentage points. He became the first Democrat since the Lyndon B. Johnson landslide in 1964 to win central Ohio, outperforming the collective average vote-take of the previous five Democratic nominees by nearly 13 percentage points. If Obama can duplicate his 2008 performance in central Ohio, he likely will carry the state and potentially seal his re-election. If Romney can return the region to its traditional GOP orientation, he likely will carry the state and potentially win the presidency.

### Ohio – Key – Unemployment

#### Ohio key to election—the only issue that matters is unemployment

Suddes 4/21 (Thomas, Editorial Board member of the Plain Dealer, http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2012/04/ohios\_vote\_can\_hinge\_on\_unempl.html)

Still, it's a fact that no Republican has reached the White House without winning Ohio. And since before the Civil War, only three Democrats -- Grover Cleveland in 1884 and 1892, Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 and John Kennedy in 1960 -- have moved into or stayed in the White House without Ohio's backing. To be sure, it's unclear that an Ohio presidential election pivots on the state unemployment rate; from county to county, conditions vary. And unemployment rates are double-edged. In October 2010, just before Republican John Kasich unseated Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland, Ohio's unemployment rate was 9.6 percent. So -- should Ohioans thank Kasich, or Obama, because Ohio's March unemployment rate was 7.5 percent? In truth, politicians of both parties want to have it both ways. When times are good, pols applaud themselves; when times are hard, pols denounce the banks or the oil companies -- or the other party. In 1976, Democrat Jimmy Carter carried Ohio. He unseated Republican President Gerald Ford. Ohio's October 1976 unemployment rate was 7.5 percent. In October 1980, Ohio's unemployment rate was 9.5 percent. Sayonara, Jimmy Carter. In October 1984, unemployment in Ohio wasn't much better (9.1 percent), but it was better, and Ohioans helped re-elect Ronald Reagan. Ohioans gave the White House to Republican George H.W. Bush in 1988; the state's October 1988 unemployment rate was 5.8 percent. In October 1992, the Ohio unemployment rate was 7.3 percent, and voters retired Bush I by electing Democrat Bill Clinton. (And for all Bubba's defects, Ohio's unemployment rate was 4.9 percent just before his 1996 re-election and 3.9 percent -- a figure that today seems incredibly low -- as Clinton's presidency ended.) During the eight Octobers of Republican Dick Cheney's reign (doing business as "George W. Bush"), the peak October unemployment rate was 7.3 percent -- just before Barack Obama carried Ohio with 51.4 percent of its vote. (Neither Carter, in 1976, nor Harry Truman, in 1948, could garner 50 percent of Ohio's presidential vote; each drew about 49 percent of it.) Whatever Romney's virtues, the former Massachusetts governor has the charisma of a tree stump. And outer-suburban and rural Ohio Republicans preferred Rick Santorum in March's primary. But if Ohio's unemployment rate doesn't fall further -- and look as if it's staying down -- the 2012 World Series may be the last that Barack Obama will get to watch on a White House TV.

### Ohio – Obama Winning

#### Obama’s winning Ohio – key to reelection

Dickerson 5-2 [John, Slate's chief political correspondent, “The Most Important Voters of 2012”, http://www.slate.com/articles/news\_and\_politics/politics/2012/05/white\_working\_class\_ohio\_voters\_romney\_needs\_to\_win\_them\_over\_.single.html]

They’re white, they’re working-class, and they live in Ohio. And Romney has to win them over.

Ohio Republican Senate candidate Josh Mandel is 34, but he looks 19. He's not clean-cut—he's freshly shorn. So when the young State Treasurer explains that he's going to beat incumbent Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown by winning over working-class voters who spend their day with equipment that is hot, heavy, and dirty, it seems like a long shot. But Mandel has possible inroads with these voters: He served two tours in the Marines in Iraq. His grandfather was a laborer at a brass factory and his mother was also a union worker—the kind of voters he's trying to court. In one of his ads he highlights his military experience. (A snapshot from Anbar Province puts grit on a man.) In another he highlights his working-class heritage. Mandel’s strategy may not work, but at least he can start the conversation with white, working-class voters, a critical voting bloc. The question after two days of reporting in Ohio is what Mitt Romney can do to appeal to these same voters? Is he going to visit the shift-change at the Lordstown GM plant and let them take his measure, or is he just going to hope that history and a bad economy will bring them out to vote against President Barack Obama? Ohio is competing with Florida for the title of most important state in this election. According to almost every serious analysis, it is a must-win for Mitt Romney. (Pause to cite the election-year adage: No Republican has won the presidency without winning Ohio.) Fifty-four percent of the electorate is made up of white, working-class voters, according to the Brookings Institution. Romney has a hard time with them. In the Ohio primary, according to exit polls, he lost those making $50,000-$100,000 by 11 points to Rick Santorum, and lost those without a college degree, too. The good news is that Obama has also had trouble with these voters. He lost them in the 2008 primary to Hillary Clinton and he lost working-class white voters to John McCain by 18 points. Romney will probably win these voters in Ohio but his challenge is to win them by a big enough margin to overcome Obama's strengths with young voters, minorities, and college graduates. How should Romney make his case to working-class voters? How can he show that he understands them? We know what Romney's father George Romney would do. In 1968 when he was running for president, George Romney took a 17-city tour of the "ghettos." On this tour, the candidate interacted in unscripted moments with actual people. Unplanned events took place. He argued with those who opposed him. He suggested that he was interested in the lives of people who were not likely to be in his voting coalition. This kind of sustained engagement with serendipity would seem as foreign to the Mitt Romney campaign as campaigning in the nude. When Charlie Rose asked Romney this week on CBS This Morning whether he might replicate even a sliver of his father’s outreach, the governor said he has held regular meetings with voters away from the cameras. This was politically and logistically confusing. Those who have covered Romney by the minute were surprised to learn about these events. Also: Why, if you're having trouble connecting with middle class voters—as the polls regularly show he does—would you hide these regular engagements with them? I asked the campaign for a few details and about why these meetings were secret and was told there would be no more information on this topic.  Romney starts with an empathy deficit and continues to dig his hole deeper. At a recent speech at Ohio’s Otterbein University, Romney suggested to the students that one of several paths to success was that they could borrow money from their parents to start a business. (Mitt Romney has helped his son through a family trust.) With nearly 70 percent of college students on some kind of financial aid, it's safe to assume that parents who can't pay for school also don't have ready cash to fund the first venture. Democrats added the parental-loan remark to the string of Romneyi$ms that highlight his wealth and his distance from the daily struggles of most Americans. The Obama campaign went on offense this week with a blunderbuss ad called “Swiss Bank Account,” that ends with the line: “It’s just what you’d expect from a guy who had a Swiss bank account.” Subtle! Obama hopes to make Romney’s financial background as exotic to these voters as Obama’s upbringing in Indonesia. Josh Mandel thinks that Romney should show up at a plant or coal mine or find some other way to connect with these voters, or else risk losing them. And Romney clearly knows he must find some way to show that he understands what people face in economically uncertain times. A considerable danger to Romney would be that a factory tour would look like he was pandering. A hard-hat moment would look as inauthentic as John Kerry's afternoon of hunting or Michael Dukakis' ride in the tank. Despite Romney's deficit with white, working-class voters and his self-inflicted wounds, he does have two big advantages: history and the economy. A majority of blue-collar voters haven't voted for a Democrat since Lyndon Johnson. These folks have been the hardest hit by the economic downturn. Romney just needs voters to blame the president for the bad economy, which they seem ready to do. In a recent Quinnipiac poll, Romney tops Obama on all questions related to the economy and jobs. "The Romney campaign message is pretty simple," said one veteran GOP strategist, summing up the Ohio strategy, "Under Obama, your life sucks. "President Obama has a direct rebuttal that he’ll be making in his first official campaign event, which is scheduled for Saturday at Ohio State University. Obama will tout the 2009 bailout of Chrysler and General Motors which he says not only saved jobs at car manufacturing plants but also in those industries that service the car industry. Last week the Obama campaign launched a “made in Ohio” tour in which former Gov.  Ted Strickland toured the state reminding voters about the rescue and about Mitt Romney’s  2008 Op-Ed that theNew York Times editors gave the headline, “Let Detroit Go Bankrupt.” Ohio Democrats may also have a tactical advantage that will help the president overcome the usual Democratic disadvantage with blue-collar voters. Last year, Gov. John Kasich and Republican leaders tried to limit public-sector union bargaining rights for roughly 400,000 state and local workers, including police, firefighters, and teachers. In November, voters overturned the law (Senate Bill 5, which Romney supported) 62 percent to 38 percent. Republicans admit this damaged the party’s reputation with firefighter and police unions that had typically been sympathetic to the GOP. Democrats say the door-knocking and voter-outreach effort that led to that victory started a conversation with angry blue-collar voters that will make them receptive to Obama’s re-election campaign. Republicans say any conversation with voters that starts with the auto bailout will lead to a larger conversation about the economy, enabling Romney to argue that his 25 years in business gives him special insight. But even there the issue is getting murky. During Romney’s recent visit to Ohio, he joined Gov. John Kasich who touted the thousands of jobs now available in the state. The Ohio unemployment rate was 9 percent last year and is now 7.5 percent, just below the national average. Republicans argue Kasich should get the credit and not the president. To make that case, Mitt Romney will first have to find a way to talk to those working-class voters.

#### Obama’s winning Ohio but its close

Politico 6/26 [“Poll: Obama slips in Ohio”, <http://www.politico.com/politico44/2012/06/poll-obama-slips-in-ohio-127304.html>]

[President Obama](http://www.politico.com/p/pages/barack-obama)'s lead in [Ohio](http://politico.com/tag/ohio) has narrowed, according to a new survey. Obama leads [Mitt Romney](http://www.politico.com/p/pages/mitt-romney) 47 percent to 44 percent in the Buckeye State, according to the latest poll by the Democratic-leaning firm PPP. But that's down from a seven point lead that he maintained in the last two PPP surveys of the state. Obama is clinging to his lead based on his strength with three demographic groups: black voters, young voters and women. Obama leads among African-Americans 93 percent to 6 percent, and he beats Romney among young voters 54 percent to 36 percent. Women support Obama over Romney 52 percent to 41 percent. Obama has built his reelection campaign around themes aimed at wooing working class whites in states like Ohio and Pennsylvania — focusing on the successful auto rescue, Romney's offshoring record and vocational training and education. But those voters are showing signs of moving towards Romney. The sharpest decline in Obama's support has come among white voters. He and Romney split the white vote essentially evenly in PPP's previous polls. But their latest numbers shows Romney leading 49 percent to 44 percent among whites. And among white Democrats, Obama has lost support as well. In May he lead 89 percent to 6 percent, but that has dropped to 78 percent to 16 percent. PPP surveyed 673 Ohio voters, giving the poll a margin of error of plus or minus 3.8 percent.

#### Obama’s winning Ohio – Polls

Koff 3-28-12 [Stephen, Washington bureau chief of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, “President Obama would win Ohio if election were today, poll says”, http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2012/03/president\_obama\_would\_win\_ohio.html]

[President Barack Obama](http://topics.cleveland.com/tag/barack%20obama/index.html) would win Ohio, and therefore probably the nation, if the 2012 election were held today, according to a new poll released this morning by Quinnipiac University.Obama, a Democrat, would beat former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, a Republican, 47 percent to 41 percent.If former Pennsylvania U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum were the Republican nominee, Obama would win 47 percent to 40 percent.A similar trend holds in two other key swing states, Florida and Pennsylvania, according to the [Quinnipiac University Swing State Poll](http://www.quinnipiac.edu/institutes-and-centers/polling-institute/presidential-swing-states-%28fl-oh-and-pa%29/release-detail?ReleaseID=1727), although the race would be closer in Pennsylvania. No one has won the White House since. if the election were held today, Obama would be re-elected, based on this poll. But Peter A. Brown, Quinnipiac's assistant polling director, cautioned in a statement accompanying the poll's release that the election "is not today. It is seven months away. Two months ago, President Obama and Governor Romney were in a statistical tie in Ohio and Florida."Obama has pulled ahead because of prospects for the economic recovery, Brown says. Six in 10 voters in the three states think the economy is recovering. "So there's a little more economic optimism," Brown said at a morning news conference in Washington. "It's not gigantic, but it's made a differene."

### Florida Key

#### Florida’s key to the election

CNN 6-29 (Adam Levy and Kevin Bohn, 6/29/12, “Game on in Florida: Romney's first general election ads go up”, http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2012/06/29/game-on-in-florida-romneys-first-general-election-ads-go-up/)

Mitt Romney's campaign bought its first ad spots in Florida since he became the presumptive Republican nominee for president, according to a GOP ad buying source. The campaign is spending $631,685 on ads that began airing Friday in four of the ten Florida media markets – Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, and Ft. Myers. They represent essential battleground territories as Romney will need to win Florida's 29 electoral votes this November. Featured in the spot that airs until July 3rd is the president's former opponent – Hillary Clinton. Using footage from a 2008 press conference, the Romney campaign accuses the president's team this year of dishonest tactics a charge similar to one from Clinton four years ago. The "Hillary ad" will face steep competition on Florida air waves. The Obama campaign is spending $1,347,066 from June 21st – July 2nd in the same media markets as the Romney ad, as well as in Miami, West Palm Beach, and Gainesville, according to the GOP ad buying source. This brings the president's reelection ad buys in Florida to $12,208,554 since April. Until now, the Romney campaign had only bought ads in Colorado, Iowa, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Nevada, Ohio, and Virginia since Rick Santorum suspended his campaign for president in April. The expansion into Florida comes after the campaign raised over $4.6 million dollars since Thursday's Supreme Court decision upholding the majority of the president's health care law. Both Obama and Romney have won Florida during their campaigns for president. In the 2008 general election, the president beat Senator John McCain in the sunshine state, winning 51% of the vote. Romney picked up essential momentum this year in January, earning 46% of the GOP Florida vote after Newt Gingrich won the South Carolina primary.

### Florida Key – I-4 Corridor

#### I-4 Corridor voters are key to winning Florida which is key to Obama’s re-election

Tampa Bay Times 6/30 (“Puerto Ricans in Osceola Crucial to White House Race,” By Adam C. Smith, Tampa Bay Times Published: Saturday, June 30, 2012 at 11:53 p.m. <http://www.theledger.com/article/20120630/NEWS/120639948/1410?p=1&tc=pg>)

KISSIMMEE To understand how a once-rural county best known for cattle ranches has emerged as one of the nation's most critical presidential campaign battlegrounds, go back more than three decades to a shrewd marketing decision by a Miami developer. That's when Landstar Homes decided to aggressively market a development in rural Osceola County to Puerto Ricans both on the island and in the New York City area. The appeal of the low-crime, low-cost suburbs near Walt Disney World quickly caught on. Soon brothers, sisters, mothers and cousins of the early ­Puerto Rican residents flocked to Buenaventura Lakes and new developments sprouted to meet their demand. Today, 46 percent of Osceola’s roughly 300,000 residents are Hispanic, overwhelmingly Puerto Rican, and by 2020 nearly 200,000 Osceola residents will be Hispanic, according to census projections. This is ground zero for the changing demographics in America and a big reason why the long-celebrated swing voter battleground swath of Florida known as the Interstate 4 Corridor is starting to turn into a Democratic stronghold. Florida is America's biggest battleground state, a state that Republicans must win to have any shot at winning the White House. How Osceola votes in November won't necessarily decide whether Mitt Romney or Barack Obama wins Florida's 29 electoral votes. Given the demographic shifts, few political observers view this as Romney country. Campaigns ultimately come down to simple addition, however, and Osceola is on the leading edge of the population changes in the Orlando metro area, which is on the way to becoming the dominant population center of the state. “This used to be an old cow town, but it's completely changed today,” said house painter J.R. Hatchett, a third-generation Osceola County resident and one of the few non-Hispanics living in and around the Buenaventura Lakes area sometimes dubbed Little Puerto Rico. "There are almost no good ol' boys left around here. Back in 1984, my high school had maybe 20 Spanish kids out of at least 1,500. Today the school has almost no white students." A STARK TREND Osceola County, just south of Orange County and its Orlando hub, features some of the best and worst of old and new Florida: vast tracts of grassland and swamp, garish strips of retailers hawking T-shirts and cheap buffets, and tons of tourists. It takes some effort to find the host of serene lakes still brimming with lunker bass and historic, old downtowns shaded by massive oaks draped with Spanish moss. But it's hard to avoid the suburban sprawl and clogged roads typical of an area unprepared for the exploding growth that started in the 1980s. Osceola residents include upscale suburbanites relishing Disney's hyper-planned Celebration community, recent transplants from Puerto Rico, Nicaragua and Colombia, and old Florida cowboys who still cherish Osceola's rodeo tradition. In 2004, George W. Bush won Osceola County by fewer than 5,000 votes when 63 percent of voters turned out. Four years later, Obama won it by 20,000 — almost 10 percent of his 263,450-vote margin in Florida — when turnout reached 73 percent. The trend becomes starker when you factor in nearby Orange and Seminole counties, part of the Orlando metropolitan region also seeing soaring growth of Hispanic residents. In 1996, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties made up about 7.4 percent of the statewide vote, and Bill Clinton lost those three counties to Bob Dole by 12,000 votes. In 2008, those counties made up about 9.2 percent of the statewide vote and gave Obama a 100,000-plus-vote margin of victory. “If current population growth trends continue, the Orlando media market could overtake both Miami and Tampa in the next 20 years; and if the core of that market, metro-Orlando, continues to take a big turn toward the Democrats, the statewide and even national political implications are stunning,” Steve Schale, who directed the 2008 Obama campaign in Florida, recently noted on his blog. The Florida political map for decades has been simple: Democrats win southeast Florida handily, Republicans dominate North Florida and the battleground that decides statewide elections is along the I-4 Corridor — the Tampa Bay and Orlando area media markets. "If the three counties around Orlando continue to trend in the coming decade and beyond like they have in recent years, the fundamental balance of the I-4 will shift," Schale said, noting the growing Puerto Rican and African-American populations there. Osceola County is an ominous harbinger for Florida’s dominant Republican Party, but the fastest-growing part of its electorate still remains an unpredictable enigma to political strategists and academics alike. Why? Because something is fundamentally different between Election Day in Little Puerto Rico near Disney and Election Day in Puerto Rico, nearly 1,200 miles away.

#### I-4 is key to the election

Associated Press 6-3-12 [“In Florida fight, Obama and Romney scrap along I-4”, http://www.vcstar.com/news/2012/jul/03/in-florida-fight-obama-and-romney-scrap-along-i/]

ORLANDO, Fla. — ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) - In the presidential battleground with the biggest prize, Democrat Barack Obama is focused on ratcheting up voter turnout in Florida's university towns, its Hispanic enclaves around Orlando and its Jewish communities in the south. Republican challenger Mitt Romney is working to squeeze as many votes as possible out of north Florida's conservative military bastions, the senior-heavy Gulf Coast and Miami's Cuban community. But their strategies to energize core supporters overlap in the central Florida swing-voting region that's key to winning the state and its 29 electoral votes. Voters along Interstate 4, which stretches from Tampa Bay to Daytona Beach, will determine the outcome if the race remains close into the fall, as expected. About 45 percent of the state's voters live in that 17-county area. "Neither party has enough base alone, which is why those persuadable places, particularly along the I-4 corridor, are so important," said Steve Schale, a Democrat who ran Obama's Florida campaign four years ago.

### Florida Not Key

#### Florida doesn’t matter – swing voter theory is a myth

Krishnaiyer 5-4 (Kartik, Krishnaiyer worked in Government and Public Relations for a decade, “The Florida ‘Swing’ Voter Myth”, The Political Hurricane, http://thepoliticalhurricane.com/2012/05/04/the-florida-swing-voter-myth/

Two new polls were released this week which showed Mitt Romney creeping ever so slightly ahead of President Obama in the state of Florida. Much of the analysis of this Romney “surge” has focused around swing voters, a myth invented by pollsters in the 1980s, further promoted in the 1990s, and one which should have been firmly repudiated by the 2004 and 2008 election results. The reality is that Florida does not have that many “swing” voters (mind you there are a few but not many) but elections in the state are turnout wars: a battle between the two parties to turn out their base. I-4 corridor counties in particular are vulnerable to turnout spikes based on each party’s level of excitement or enthusiasm in the area. On election day 2004, speculation nationally was that John Kerry would win Florida. But when the first precincts from Pinellas and Pasco Counties came in that night, I knew the election was over. The GOP had wisely run a conservative campaign that elites may have claimed polarized the electorate, but it appealed to their base and turned them out. The so-called “swing” voters rejected Bush, yet he still won Florida by a relatively healthy margin. In 2008 we saw very much the same thing happen but it was the Democrats who fired up their base and turned out voters that had been absent in 2004. In 3 of the last 4 midterm elections Florida has produced big Republican gains but much of that had to do with declining Democratic turnout and activism rather than the defection of “swing” voters. For example, in 2002 I would strongly suggest Democrats who were dissatisfied with the nomination of the moderate Bill McBride stayed home and gave the GOP their largest post-Reconstruction Governor’s race victory margin. In 2002 traditionally liberal southeast Floridians either stayed home or did not work as enthusiastically to turn out the vote as they did in 2000, 2006 and 2008, which were good Democratic years in the state. The Republican success of 2002, 2004 and 2010 was largely due to a spike in turnout and reconnection with the party’s base voters. In the I-4 corridor, the Democratic party infrastructure is so poor or fragmented in some places that in bad years the turnout suffers beyond recognition. To the extent that swing voters exist in Florida, they vote largely based on personality and other non-issue related reasons. Democrats who continue to advocate a more moderate approach to issues do not understand Florida’s electorate. While moderation may work in suburbs of large Northern and Midwestern cities, or in states where the electorate is overwhelmingly conservative, Florida’s potential Democratic electorate is often concerned about issues such as environmental protection, gun control, and other social issues. The days when Florida voters were obsessed with crime and taxes are long gone, but some Democrats seem to believe the way back to a majority status in the state is to embrace yesterday’s issues. Florida’s Democrats could advocate a certain brand of economic populism that would appeal to the base of the party while encouraging other Democratically-inclined voters to turn out. But what we have witnessed instead is a party that has promoted candidates tied to the insurance industry, banking sector, and those who oppose strong environmental regulations. Bill Clinton won Florida in 1996 by running aggressively on gun control and environmental protection. Al Gore’s popular economic message resonated with Florida voters in 2000, and Barack Obama, perceived (wrongly perhaps) to be a liberal, carried the state in 2008. Florida’s Democrats have been wrong so many times about “swing” voters. We were told in 1998 to nominate Rick Dantzler because Buddy MacKay was too liberal. In 2002, we were told that Buddy MacKay’s liberalism gave us Jeb Bush and we needed to nominate a moderate. Janet Reno, who generated enthusiasm among the most activists was rejected for the traditional institutional Democrat, Bill McBride. What ensued was a Republican landslide. In 2004 Betty Castor occupied the middle ground against Mel Martinez who, despite a moderate record as Orange County Chairman (County Mayor), decided to run to the hard right. Castor lost. In 2010 moderate Alex Sink, the wife of McBride, questioned President Obama’s Health Care plan, positioned herself to the right of Governor Charlie Crist on insurance and banking and tried to appeal to “swing voters” against a pathetically weak GOP nominee. Sink, like McBride and Castor, was defeated. The Democrats need to learn the realities of the Florida electorate. Moderate/swing voters are minimal in numbers and efforts to appeal to them are offset by losing potential voters or workers on the left. The Democrats have botched up repeatedly over the past decade. As the field for 2014 statewide elections begins to form, let us hope Florida’s Democrats remember the lessons of recent history.

### Pennsylvania Key – Unemployment

#### Pennsylvania unemployment rate key to Obama re-election

Rohrer and Hanna 7/5/2012 (Sam Rohrer, president of the Pennsylvania Pastors' Network, is a former state representative and candidate for governor and U.S. senator (sam@papastors.net). Colin Hanna is president of Let Freedom Ring, a public policy nonprofit organization based in Pennsylvania (colin@lfrusa.com), http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/opinion/perspectives/pennsylvania-may-undo-obama-643314/)

The Obama-Biden campaign bus tour rolling through Pennsylvania this week, about four months before Election Day, illustrates that the road to re-election runs through the Keystone State. Many political analysts believe that President Barack Obama cannot win without Pennsylvania, so it would seem self-evident that the state should get considerable attention from both campaigns in the upcoming election. Instead, Pennsylvania has been downgraded by some pundits and may have been dropped from the list of top-priority swing states by the Romney campaign. We believe that's a mistake, and that Pennsylvania instead is poised to become the Ohio or Florida of 2012 -- the battlefield that decides the outcome of the presidential race. A recently released Quinni- piac poll found Mr. Obama leading by a comfortable 6 points in a head-to-head matchup in Pennsylvania, while also showing that he has only a 46 percent job-approval rating. That's in the danger zone for any president seeking re-election, and the fact that it's exactly the same number as his support base suggests that he may not have much upward room in which to move. Historically for presidents seeking a second term, the Gallup Presidential Approval Rating is more predictive than early head-to-head polling numbers, and not a single president has been reelected with an approval rating of less than 49 percent since Gallup began reporting that number in 1948 (Truman vs. Dewey). If that number gets any lower in Pennsylvania than its current 46 percent, Mr. Obama's vulnerability will be clearly documented, and Pennsylvania will fit any definition of a full-fledged swing state.

### Wisconsin – Key

#### Wisconsin is a key swing state

HTR News 6-20 (6-20th of 2012, The Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter is one of 10 daily newspapers within Gannett Wisconsin Media that provides readers with news, information and local advertising offers when and how they want it “Other views: Wisconsin shaping up as key state in election”,http://www.htrnews.com/article/20120621/MAN0601/306210058/Other-views-Wisconsin-shaping-up-key-state-election)

Mitt Romney’s Monday visit to Janesville is the first one by a presidential candidate since the June 5 recall election. Be assured it won’t be the last. Now that the recall elections have been settled, Wisconsinites barely have time to take a breath before the campaign for president starts to heat up. And you can be assured they’ll be accompanied by commercials and robocalls. The former are [easy](http://www.htrnews.com/article/20120621/MAN0601/306210058/Other-views-Wisconsin-shaping-up-key-state-election) enough to mute, if you choose to; the latter are more irritating no matter which side is making them. At least if there were a live, human voice at the other end, you could vent your frustration, as well as your support or opposition. Wisconsin will be targeted because it’s expected to be a swing state in the fall election between President Barack Obama and Romney, the presumptive Republican nominee and former Massachusetts governor. Obama captured the state in the 2008 election, but the Democrats have given up some ground since then, losing a U.S. Senate seat, as Ron Johnson of Oshkosh defeated incumbent Russ Feingold in 2008 as well as two House seats, as Republican Reid Ribble ousted incumbent Democrat Steve Kagen and Republican Sean Duffy won the seat held by Dave Obey, who had represented the Wausau-area district since 1969. Wisconsin is a battleground, especially in light of the recall elections and recent elections. Unless you’re a political junkie (in which case you’re in heaven), it’s easy to grow tired of the election cycle that has been ongoing since last summer. But there are some major elections coming up this fall. We’ll elect a president and vice president, a U.S. senator, House representatives for all eight districts, state senators in even-numbered districts, all the members of the Assembly, and district attorneys for all the counties in the state. Now is the time to take part in the democratic process by [learning](http://www.htrnews.com/article/20120621/MAN0601/306210058/Other-views-Wisconsin-shaping-up-key-state-election)about the candidates, in spite of an understandable impulse to turn off politics. Elections matter, therefore, your vote matters. Take the time and get informed.

### Wisconsin – Obama Winning

#### Wisconsin is leaning Obama but its competitive – key to a Romney victory

McCormick 6-6 – political scientist (John, 6/6th of 2012, “Obama Election Map Shaken After Walker’s Win”, http://www.businessweek.com/printer/articles/93602?type=bloomberg)

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker said today his victory in yesterday’s recall election sets the stage for Mitt Romney to be competitive in his state in November’s election, while the presumptive Republican presidential nominee saw broader national implications to the result. “I think he’d acknowledge he’s an underdog, particularly here in Wisconsin,” Walker said of Romney on MSNBC. “But I think anyone looking at the results last night would also acknowledge that it’s now competitive in Wisconsin.” Romney, speaking at a fundraiser today in San Antonio, Texas, said the Wisconsin vote will “echo” throughout U.S. “Yesterday was won by the people of Wisconsin doing the right thing and voting for conservative principles,” he said. “I think people recognize we just can’t keep going down the same path that we’re on. It ends up in calamity.” Walker’s win prompted Democratic and Republican strategists to reassess Wisconsin’s political landscape and the role the state will play in the presidential race. Until earlier this week, target states listed by President Barack Obama’s campaign didn’t include the state, which has voted Democratic in the past six presidential elections, albeit narrowly at times. In a campaign video released June 4 -- the day before the recall -- Obama campaign manager Jim Messina listed Wisconsin as “undecided,” along with Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Ohio, North Carolina, New Hampshire and Virginia. Downplaying Results White House press secretary Jay Carney told reporters aboard Air Force One today that he hadn’t yet spoken extensively with Obama about the Wisconsin outcome. “I certainly wouldn’t read much into yesterday’s results,” he said, adding that Obama’s message about growing the economy and jobs “will resonate in Wisconsin.” It remains an open question whether Romney can capitalize on Walker’s momentum. So far, his campaign has yet to announce any travel plans to Wisconsin. “It tends to be a blue state in presidential elections, we don’t win a lot in Wisconsin,” Romney said today. “The key for Governor Romney to be competitive enough to win is I think he’s got to lay out a clear platform -- something similar to what our friend Paul Ryan has done,” Walker said, pointing to the U.S. House Budget Committee chairman whose proposed overhaul of Medicaid and Medicare and suggested government spending cuts is being used by Democrats to rally support. Make Compelling Case Walker said that if Romney “makes a compelling case to the people of Wisconsin that he’s willing to take those kinds of risks to get America back on track for our kids and our grandkids’ kids, he can win.” Romney said today the Wisconsin results show voters support leaders who seek to curb the government’s size and challenge organized labor, and that those attitudes would surface in November’s vote. Voters in Wisconsin “said we’ve seen a conservative governor; he cut back on the scale of government and has held down taxes and stood up to the public sector unions and we want more of that, not less of it,” Romney said during a telephone town hall meeting with members of the National Federation of Independent Business. “And I think you’re going to find that in the decisions being made in November.” Big Names Three of the biggest names in Republican politics today call Wisconsin home: Walker, Ryan and Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus. Even before the recall results were in, Democrats and Republicans were working to spin the significance of the outcome for the matchup between Obama and Romney, a former Massachusetts governor. The organization and mobilization of Wisconsin Republicans to protect Walker could provide Romney a boost, should he decide to compete aggressively in the state. If Romney were able to make Wisconsin a competitive state, it could make a major difference in this year’s campaign. Winning a Midwest industrial state such as Wisconsin or Michigan, which both backed Obama in 2008, would provide him an easier path to the 270 electoral votes needed to win the White House. Wisconsin’s History A victory wouldn’t be an easy task for Romney, 65. The state, which has 10 electoral votes, hasn’t voted for a Republican presidential candidate since President Ronald Reagan carried it in his 1984 re-election against Democrat Walter Mondale, who won just one state, his native Minnesota. Obama, 50, in the 2008 election beat Republican John McCain in Wisconsin, 56 percent to 42 percent. An exit poll of recall election voters conducted yesterday showed Obama beating Romney, 51 percent to 44 percent. Still, if this presidential election plays out similar to those held in 2000 and 2004, Romney could have a fighting chance. Former President George W. Bush came within several thousand votes of winning the state in both of those election cycles.

### Wisconsin – Either Way

#### Wisconsin could swing either way

Silver ’11 [Nate, American statistician, sabermetirician, psephologist, writer, and correctly predicted the winner of the 49 of the 50 states, “Wisconsin is a swing state in more ways than one”, March , 7th, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/07/wisconsin-is-a-swing-state-in-more-ways-than-one/]

One thing to keep in mind as you read about the continuing dispute in Wisconsin: The state is not just a swing state relative to the rest of the country, it’s also a swing state internally.Here are two maps, prepared by the New York Times’s team of graphic journalists, which compare how Barack Obama fared in the state in 2008 to how Governor Scott Walker performed there last year: Wisconsin is not one of those states — like Pennsylvania or Missouri — where the Democrats rack up huge margins in the cities and the Republicans dominate everywhere else. Yes, Democrats do very well in Madison and Milwaukee. But those cities are not all that large — collectively, Milwaukee County and Dane County, which includes Madison, account for only about one-quarter of the state’s voters — and most of the outlying areas are competitive.Barack Obama beat John McCain outside of Dane and Milwaukee counties in 2008, and overall, he won 59 of the state’s 72 counties. In the governor’s race in 2010, Mr. Walker won the same number of counties. Other than Milwaukee and Madison for the Democrats and the suburbs of Milwaukee, which very Republican-leaning, most parts of the state are fully prepared to vote for candidates from either party.This is why the electoral pressure is liable to be fairly acute on members of the state senate and state assembly: there are not many intrinsically safe seats. The median tenure for a state senator in Wisconsin is just eight years — two terms.According to an [analysis](http://www.swingstateproject.com/diary/8405/wisconsin-presidential-results-by-state-senate-district) by the group Swing State Project, Mr. Obama received between 48 and 58 percent of the vote — within 5 percentage points of 53 percent he received nationwide — in 17 of Wisconsin’s 33 state senate districts, a majority. By contrast, this was true of only about 1 in 4 United States congressional districts and of 18 of the 50 states.Republicans now occupy most of these swing districts. In fact, Mr. Obama carried 14 of the 19 state senate districts that they now hold.Ordinarily, some of the Republicans in the Wisconsin Senate would have some insulation from the elevated passions of the moment, because state senate terms are staggered, and the Republicans elected in the G.O.P. wave of 2010 would not have to run again until 2014. But there is movement toward recall elections, which could [force the issue](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/06/us/06wisconsin.html) before the voters as soon as late this year.Nor are the Democrats in the state senate immune. I’ve been reluctant to do a deep-dive into the polling in the state, because essentially all of the state-level polling is partisan to one degree or another. But while the polls [broadly agree](http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/117472988.html) that Governor Walker has become rather unpopular and that voters are skeptical of his proposal to limit the scope of collective bargaining for public-sector unions, the polls also suggest that Wisconsinites are not thrilled with the senate Democrats’ tactic of leaving the state to deny Republicans a quorum. And Republicans are [organizing recall efforts](http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/116853618.html) against Democratic senators just as Democrats are going after Republicans, and 8 of the 14 Democrats have terms ending in 2012, meaning their strength of their support among voters was not tested in the Republican-leaning environment of last year.Further increasing the risks to members of both parties is that the map of the state’s senate and assembly districts will soon be re-drawn to reflect the 2010 census, which could diminish the incumbency advantage in the elections of 2012 and 2014.It is very difficult to predict how the standoff will be resolved. But there are powerful incentives for both Democrats and Republicans in the Wisconsin Senate to reach a compromise of some kind, one that would almost certainly involve cutting benefits and pay for state employees but not significantly altering the scope of collective bargaining.Mr. Walker has so far resisted any suggestion of a compromise. But he may find himself the odd man out.

## Internals – Other

### Small Changes Matter

#### Low link threshold—each campaign is being cautious. Plan can only hurt Obama in a tight race

Haberman 7/5/2012 (Maggie, Maggie Haberman is a Senior Political Writer for POLITICO. Prior to that, she worked at the New York Post, where she covered the 2008 presidential election, along with numerous state, city and congressional races. She also worked at the New York Daily News, Politico, <http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=5C8C5397-AD4C-43B0-9F71-CD10D4B74CE3>)

With the Supreme Court health care ruling out of the way, operatives on both sides now see just a handful of inflection points that could shape the arc of an increasingly calcified, close race between President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. In a campaign in which news cycles burn hot and fast — and then out — in a matter of hours, very little has happened to actually shake up the campaign since the primaries ended. In one national survey after another, the race is a 3-percentage-point affair in which Obama hovers just below the 50 percent mark, and Romney stays around 45 percent. “It didn’t take long for the race to get locked in. There’s no reason to think that it won’t stay locked in,” said Democratic strategist Steve Murphy. Neither candidate is predisposed to throw the long ball; both are running campaigns that lay out little by way of future vision — Obama has been nonspecific about a second term, and Romney has played keep away on some key policy planks — and neither has much incentive to change course. “In a race that’s as close as this one’s likely to be, both candidates are going to be ultra-cautious,” said Dan Schnur, head of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics at the University of Southern California. “It’s hard to see one of them taking the kind of risk that would be necessary to dramatically change the trajectory.”

### Environmentalists Key

#### Environmentalist shift would swing the election – Romney can still get them

Lehrer 5-11 [Eli, President of R Street, a free-market think tank, “Eli Lehrer: How Mitt Romney Can Win the Environmental Vote”, Political Machine, Lexis]

Mitt Romney just had an awesome week but, unless he and attracts new groups to the Republican coalition, it still seems he won't win the November election. If he wants to win, he'll need to broaden his base. One reasonably easy way he can do that is by attracting gay and lesbian voters and the other is by attracting environmentalists. Since it seems hugely unlikely he'd make the policy flip-flop he'll need to get the gay vote, environmentalists may be his best bet for broadening the base without sacrificing a single stated principles. A bit on Romney's great week first and why it probably won't deliver the election. Wisconsin governor Scott Walker just survived a recall attempt, President Obama claimed (bizarrely) that "the private sector is doing fine," after bad job numbers raised questions about his stewardship of the economy, and Ron Paul's son, Rand, even endorsed him. In fact, it's difficult to think of a better turn of events for Romney's campaign. That said, barring a full-scale recession between now and the election, I'd still put money on Obama to win: Romney hasn't led in the polls since last September. Quite simply,Obama will likely be able to make up for a decidedly lackluster domestic economic record by relying on a few genuine foreign policy successes, the power of the incumbency, and a mobilized base. Since the (few) positives in Obama's record and the incumbency are unalterable, the Romney camp can only win by shaving parts of Obama's base. And environmentalists are one place big place where it could work. Stanford University researchers have found that about 38 million Americans care a lot about the environment and might vote on it. Assuming that environmental voters turn out at roughly the same rate as other citizens who can vote, this means that somewhere between 15 and 19 percent of the electorate will vote partly on environmental issues. Although there's no current, detailed polling, it's likely that Obama currently stands to get around 75 percent of this group -- taking 50 percent of it would probably be enough to put Romney over the top. So how can he do it? First, Romney should commit to a comprehensive program to reduce the damage that the government does to the environment. This is conservative bread and butter and, luckily, there's a pre-written agenda (okay, I'm one of the authors) -- Green Scissors -- on how to do it. In addition, Romney should work to expand conservation by expanding the principles of the successful, money saving Coastal Barrier Resources Act. The act, signed by Ronald Reagan, forbids the functioning of many federal programs on barrier islands and along barrier beaches and, in so doing, has created an area of protected land larger than all but one National Park in the lower 48 states. Second, Romney should continue his attacks on Obama's bureaucratic command-and-control environmental policies -- blocking the Keystone XL Pipeline, placing all sorts of new EPA mandates on industry -- with simpler, equally pro-environment policies. In particular, Romney should commit his environmental protection agency to trying to price externalities resulting from pollution. This wouldn't be the (fairly) derided and unworkable "cap and trade" schemes but, rather, a way of replacing bureaucratic mechanisms with market ones. Since pollution of all kinds is what Ronald Reagan called a "destructive trespass," it's perfectly consistent with conservative principle to impose fees on those who emit pollution. This type of system will do far more to clean up the environment than heavy-handed, economy-harming direct regulation and, if all the fees were rebated to consumers or used to cut other taxes, wouldn't necessarily increase the size and scope of government. It's a winner and has, particularly in elite circles, already attracted attention from environmentalists. The bottom line: environmentalists, unlike other core democratic groups -- government workers and welfare recipients among them -- aren't necessarily clients of the state and don't intrinsically benefit from bigger government or the continuation of given programs. Likewise, there's no necessary link between the environment and much of the Democratic Party's agenda that promotes abortion and disdains traditional faith. In fact, there are plenty of places that bigger government actually harms the environment. Romney can get environmentalists to vote for him without sacrificing conservative principles. He should do it.

#### They’re disaffected by Obama and ripe to be picked off by Romney

Blue Virginia 4-24 [“Obama Campaign Has No Idea How to Inspire Environmentalists”, Lexis Nexis]

The Obama campaign released this video in conjunction with Earth Day, but as ClimateProgress' Joe Romm points out, it makes no mention of global warming, the biggest threat to Earth's life and ecosystems. That's why I say the Obama campaign is running to the right of America - poll after poll shows a majority of Americans understand the threat posed by climate change, but the Obama campaign has apparently chosen to ignore the majority's concerns and instead woo the skeptical minority. Best of luck with that. Also noticeably absent from President Obama's Earth Day outreach to environmentalists - wildlife. The video shows beautiful landscapes and depicts them as great habitats for mountain bikers and little else. Really? Not even a quick shot of a bald eagle, that great Endangered Species Act success story? I was most confused and frankly insulted by the Obama campaign having their man go on and on about "energy independence." This is supposed to be the environmentalist pitch and you're talking to me not about less drilling and fewer oil spills, but about national security? Environmentalists are ready to be fired up to re-elect President Obama. But if his campaign doesn't know how to drop the cold-blooded calculated messaging for even two minutes to inspire their base, a key opportunity could be lost.

#### Environmentalists are key to Obama’s base

Georgia Political Review 2/15 [Alexander Sileo is a junior international affairs and psychology double major. He is a member of advocacy groups such as Amnesty International and Habitat for Humanity. He is also a member of the Roosevelt Institute where he is researching LGBT rights in the United States and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. “Will Key Groups Rally Behind Obama This Election?” February 15, 2012 4:43 pm, http://www.georgiapoliticalreview.com/will-key-groups-rally-behind-obama-this-election/]

In September of last year, Obama shocked environmentalist groups when he chose not to strengthen regulations on ozone standards to prevent air pollution. When announcing the decision, Obama stated that “I have continued to underscore the importance of reducing regulatory burdens and regulatory uncertainty, particularly as our economy continues to recover.” The move won him praise among many industry officials, but environmental groups and health advocates, a base of support for Democratic candidates, were outraged. Obama later handed the environmental lobby a bone with his temporary rejection of the Keystone XL oil pipeline that has fiercely divided business and environmental interests. Proponents argued that the pipeline would help create jobs in the country, but critics pointed to the dependency on dirty fuel sources that negatively affect the environment. In a statement from The White House, Obama announced, “As the State Department made clear last month, the rushed and arbitrary deadline insisted on by Congressional Republicans prevented a full assessment of the pipeline’s impact, especially the health and safety of the American people, as well as our environment.” Obama, however, in the same statement left room for the pipeline to be approved in the future should the State Department have a longer period of time to assess any potentially harmful environmental effects.

### Environmentalists Not Key

#### Americans don’t care about the environment – they just want their cars.

Transportation Research Board 2k (“Enhancing the Visibility and Image of Transit in the United States and Canada”, Transit Cooperative Research Program, pg. 29)

There are many, both inside the public transportation industry and outside, who believe that the positive impact of public transportation on the environment is a significant benefit. However, in order to successfully make this connection in the minds of the American public, one must also understand the extent to which the environment itself is viewed as an important issue. Public opinion data indicates that environmental protection is simply not a salient top-of-mind issue among most of the American public. When asked to articulate what they believe is the most important problem for the government to address in the coming year, the environment does not make the list of the top twelve concerns. A recent CBS News Poll shows social security, budget deficit/national debt, taxes, and healthcare as topping the list. (To interpret these findings, it is helpful to understand some background about how Americans perceive primary problems the nation faces. The research team’s 25 years of extensive experience in tracking these issues indicates that if there is a foreign policy crisis or threat, the public’s primary concerns focus on that crisis. Without such a crisis, concerns shift to the welfare of the economy. In the absence of economic troubles, people’s primary concerns shift toward social issues. Even within the realm of social concerns, there are often more pressing issues such as education.)

### Latinos – Key

#### Hispanics are key to swing states

The Hill 6-22 [“Hispanic population soars in presidential swing states”, <http://thehill.com/homenews/news/234231-hispanic-population-soars-in-presidential-swing-states>]

Hispanic populations are soaring in toss-up states that will decide the presidential election. Shifting demographics in states not usually associated with Hispanic voters have changed the traditional political calculus heading into Election Day. President Obama and Mitt Romney, the presumed GOP nominee, are aware of the burgeoning Hispanic numbers and have ramped up their outreach in recent days. Immigration, an emotionally charged issue for many Hispanics, is likely to stay on the front burner in the weeks ahead as the Supreme Court is expected to rule soon on the controversial Arizona law requiring law enforcement officers to check the immigration status of people they stop. Hispanic populations have grown by an average of 77 percent in nine presidential battlegrounds since 2000, according to census data. States traditionally seen as dominated by white working-class voters have seen Hispanic populations explode in recent years. Pennsylvania’s Hispanic population grew 83 percent between 2000 and 2010; Iowa’s increased by 83.7 percent; Virginia’s increased 92 percent; North Carolina’s increased by 111 percent; Ohio’s increased by 63 percent; New Hampshire’s increased by 79 percent; and Iowa’s grew by 84 percent, according to U.S. Census data. As a percentage of the total population, these Hispanic voting blocs are not proportionally equal to Nevada or Florida, but they are fast becoming more significant. Clarissa Martinez-De-Castro, director of civic engagement and immigration at the National Council of La Raza, noted that Hispanic voter participation exceeded the margin of Obama’s victory in Indiana and North Carolina, two traditional Republican strongholds, in 2008. In Pennsylvania, Hispanics make up nearly 6 percent of the total population, while in Virginia they account for nearly 8 percent; in North Carolina it’s 8.4 percent; in Iowa, 5 percent; in Ohio, 3.1 percent; and in New Hampshire, nearly 3 percent. “It will have a significant impact in a very close election,” said Manuel Pastor, professor of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. Sen. Marco Rubio (Fla.), the Senate Republican’s leading liaison to the Hispanic community, told reporters Thursday that Hispanics in these states would be crucial to Republicans’ fortunes. “What I think we should focus on is the growing number of Hispanic voters in key states like Florida, Virginia, Iowa, North Carolina and others that are much more open-minded, that do not have a longstanding — via geographic — allegiance to one political party or ideology,” he said at a breakfast sponsored by The Christian Science Monitor. Some analysts think Rubio is a strong contender to become Romney’s running mate because he could attract Hispanic voters, though experts on Hispanic political activity are skeptical. They say many Hispanic voters have been turned off by the harsh anti-immigration rhetoric of the Republican Party and note that Hispanic candidates in Nevada and New Mexico failed to win a majority of Latino voters in 2010. “Nothing is a slam-dunk,” Martinez-De-Castro said of Rubio’s ability to move Hispanic voters if he appears on the GOP ticket. Rubio acknowledged on Thursday that Democrats would win a significant majority of Hispanic voters this fall, regardless of new immigration proposals pushed by Romney or himself. “There is a historical reality that Democrats are in the short term going to do much better among Hispanics,” he said. A June Latino Decisions/Univision poll gave Obama a 43-point lead over Romney among Hispanic voters. Other polls have shown similarly wide margins. Swing states with large Hispanic populations have also seen swift growth between 2000 and 2010, according to the U.S. Census. Nevada’s Hispanic community grew 82 percent, to 26 percent of the state’s population. Its support was a big factor in Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid’s (D-Nev.) gritty 2010 reelection. In Colorado, the Hispanic population grew by 41.2 percent to make up 20.7 percent of the total population. Florida’s expanded by 57.4 percent to make up 22.5 percent of the entire state. A survey of U.S. Census data by National Council of La Raza found that the number of registered Hispanic voters in swing states skyrocketed as well. The number of registered Hispanic voters in Pennsylvania swelled from 95,000 in 2004 to 189,000 in 2008. In North Carolina, it rose from 44,000 in 2004 to 83,000 in 2008. In Florida, it grew from 924,000 in 2004 to 1.38 million in 2008. The larger Hispanic populations in Florida, Colorado, Nevada and even Virginia could factor in Romney’s decision to focus on Midwestern states such Ohio, Wisconsin and Michigan, which have proportionally smaller Hispanic blocs. Pastor said increases in Hispanic populations do not always correlate with a proportional rise in the number of registered voters. Population increases include illegal immigrants, who are not allowed to vote, and younger people, who have less consistent voting records. The changing demographics could influence control of the Senate in 2013. Four of the presidential swing states — Nevada, Ohio, Virginia and Florida — are Senate battlegrounds. Romney made a pitch to Hispanic voters Thursday with an address to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials. Romney told the audience that Obama has been taking their support for granted. He softened his stance on immigration by pledging to give green cards to immigrants who earn advanced degrees at U.S. universities and a path to legal status for those who serve in the military.

#### Latinos are the critical demographic in swing states

Politico 6/17 (“Mitt Romney dodges immigration questions, calls W.H. move 'political'”

http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0612/77498.html#ixzz1zQFaKJY8//HT)

Mitt Romney criticized how President Barack Obama changed immigration policy — but not the policy itself — in a rare non-Fox News national

TV interview broadcast Sunday. Speaking to Bob Schieffer on CBS’s “Face the Nation,” the presumptive Republican presidential nominee refused to say whether he, as president, would revoke the Obama administration’s decision to stop deporting certain undocumented immigrants. Continue Reading Romney declined five times to tell Schieffer whether he would conduct the same policy Obama announced Friday that the Department of Homeland Security will pursue. Romney instead called for a permanent solution. The interview was recorded Saturday. After Schieffer asked directly four additional times whether Romney would undo the policy without receiving an answer, Romney called the move political. “I think the timing is pretty clear. If he really wanted to make a solution that dealt with these kids or with illegal immigration in America, then this is something he would have taken up in his first three and a half years, not in his last few months,” he said. Romney has yet to offer an opinion on the merits of Obama’s immigration policy change. On Friday, he told reporters in New Hampshire that he supports Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio’s proposal, which has yet to be introduced in the Senate. “With regards to these kids who were brought in by their parents through no fault of their own, there needs to be a long-term solution so they know what their status is,” the former Massachusetts governor said during his five-day swing state bus tour. “This is something Congress has been working on, and I thought we were about to see some proposals brought forward by Sen. Marco Rubio and by Democrat senators, but the president jumped in and said, ‘I’m going to take this action;’ he called it a stop-gap measure. I don’t know why he feels stop-gap measures are the right way to go.” White House senior adviser David Plouffe, who made appearances on the four other national Sunday morning shows, suggested that he is unaware of how the politics of the immigration announcement will play. Several states key to the president’s reelection effort — Colorado, Nevada, North Carolina, Virginia and Iowa — have large and growing Hispanic populations. And that’s not even counting Florida. “Who knows how the politics will turn out,” Plouffe said CNN’s “State of the Union.” “But this decision was the right decision. Well, we’ll see. I’ve ceased making predictions on things because we’ll see how they turn out.” On ABC’s “This Week” Plouffe made clear the Obama campaign would have to “fight for every vote” this fall. “This is going to be an exceedingly close election,” he said. “But there’s no doubt that our strength with Latino voters can help in states like Nevada, Colorado, Florida.” Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said during an interview on NBC’s “Meet the Press” that the president’s announcement was a “way to divert attention” from the tough political sledding he’s had in June. “I think this is obviously a way to divert attention from very bad news the president has had for three or four weeks,” McCain said. “That’s very clear.” But Romney’s nonresponse, as well as the careful manner in which other senior Republicans have reacted since Friday, shows that the issue is a very tricky one politically for a party that has a nativist element in its base. Former GOP presidential rival Rick Santorum, speaking on CNN, said Romney’s careful response on the issue — embracing Rubio’s plan while largely avoiding comment on Obama’s — shows he’s “trying to walk a line as not to sound like he’s hostile to Latinos.” Romney has to take into account “very important states” with his own immigration policies, Santorum noted.

#### Latinos are key to Obama reelection-Republicans are on the offensive

The New Yorker 6/18 (Ryan Lyzza, “The Second Term,” <http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=1//HT>)

 After a party loses, it goes through a period of self-examination. If, despite the lacklustre economy and a general dissatisfaction with the direction of the country, Obama manages to defeat Mitt Romney, the explanation may be a simple matter of demographics: the Republican Party can no longer win the Presidency without increased support from nonwhite voters. “If we win, Latino voters will play a big role in that,” David Plouffe said. “The Republican Party is going to have to make a decision. I don’t think it’s much of a decision, actually. They’re going to have to moderate.” The White House is so convinced of the centrality of Hispanics to the current election and its aftermath that Plouffe told me he has been preparing for months for an onslaught of advertisements from a pro-Romney group attacking Obama from the left on immigration, arguing that Obama’s deportation and border-security policies have been too Draconian.

### Latinos – Not Key

#### Hispanics are underrepresented in swing states

Silver 6-19 [Nate, American statistician, sabermetirician, psephologist, writer, and correctly predicted the winner of the 49 of the 50 states, “Hispanic Voters Less Plentiful in Swing States”, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/19/hispanic-voters-less-plentiful-in-swing-states/?pagewanted=print>]

As I wrote on Tuesday morning, President Obama's decision to suspend deportations of some young illegal immigrants should entail mostly upside for him from a political standpoint. Based on polls about his decision and the way that Republicans are reacting to it, the evidence that public opinion is on Mr. Obama's side is reasonably clear. So I don't agree with other analysts who have termed the decision risky or puzzling. Mr. Obama has learned this year that being the incumbent at a time when most voters think the country is on the wrong track is not necessarily an advantageous position. But an incumbent president can still help himself at the margin with his policy and agenda-setting powers. I do agree with Sean Trende of Real Clear Politics about one key point, however. It is one reason why the caveat "at the margin" very much applies to Mr. Obama's decision, and may somewhat diminish its electoral importance. As Mr. Trende writes, "Latinos are underrepresented in swing states". Below is a table showing an estimate of Hispanic turnout in 2008. These figures were determined by multiplying a state's overall turnout by the share of voters who described themselves as Hispanic or Latino in exit polls. In total, about 11 million Hispanics turned out to vote in 2008, according to these estimates. However, almost 40 percent of the Hispanic vote was in one of just two states - California and Texas - that don't look to be at all competitive this year. The fact that Democrats are winning clear majorities among Hispanics is one reason that California is no longer competitive, of course. And perhaps Texas will become more competitive in another 8 or 12 or 16 years. (Although note that many Hispanics in Texas have been there for generations and might not be thought of as immigrant communities.) But voters in these states just aren't likely to sway the Electoral College outcome in 2012. New York and Illinois, which also aren't at all competitive, and New Jersey, which is only very marginally so, also have a decent number of Hispanic voters. You do see Florida up near the top of the list, however, and Arizona and Colorado not far down, so I will need to be a bit more precise about my analysis to defend my claim. The way that the FiveThirtyEight presidential forecasting model measures the competitiveness of a state is through what it calls the tipping point index. This is a measure of the likelihood that a state will make the marginal difference in the election, giving a candidate the decisive 270th electoral vote. The list of tipping point states is narrower than you might expect. The relative order of the states just doesn't change very much from election to election, especially when an incumbent is running again and we know what voters thought about him four years earlier. Many states might be competitive, meaning that they might plausibly be won by either candidate, but most of their electoral votes would be superfluous in an election that truly came down to the last vote. The tipping point index accounts both for how close a state is relative to the national trend, and how many electoral votes it has. Right now, the model thinks that the odds are about 50/50 that one of just two states, Virginia and Ohio, will play the tipping point role. Each of these has a below-average number of Hispanic voters. Colorado is third on the tipping point list, and it has an above-average number of Hispanic voters. But Pennsylvania is fourth, and it has a below-average number again. Nevada, with an above-average number of Hispanics, is fifth on the list, but it is followed by three very white-dominated states (Iowa, New Hampshire and Wisconsin). Then comes Florida, which is lower on the list than you might expect, especially since it has 29 electoral votes. The model "thinks" about the different electoral combinations very carefully when it runs its simulations, and considers how the states might move in relationship to one another based on their demographics, as well as in comparison to the national trend. Mr. Obama could certainly win Florida - we give him about a 35 percent chance of doing so -- but these simulations find that he usually has easier paths to the victorious 270 electoral votes. The president's polling and the "fundamentals" factors that the model considers are more favorable to Mr. Obama's in each of the eight states that appear above Florida on the tipping point list. Most of the time that he wins states like Virginia, Ohio and Colorado, for instance, Mr. Obama will already have a winning map unless he takes some unexpected losses elsewhere. Moreover, many of the Hispanics in Florida are Cuban-Americans, and they do not always behave like the predominantly Mexican-American population of the Southwest, or the Hispanic populations of the Northeast, which include many Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. The model also doesn't think much of New Mexico as a tipping point state. It really wasn't close at all in 2008, and polls there have shown Mr. Obama with a double-digit lead at a time when he is barely ahead of Mitt Romney nationally. Mr. Obama could lose New Mexico in a landslide, but it just doesn't meet the definition of a tipping point state. Even the broader term "swing state" probably mischaracterizes it somewhat. Nor does the model think that Arizona is a tipping point state. If has a fairly large Hispanic population, but the white population there is old and quite conservative. Arizona is something of the opposite of New Mexico - a state Mr. Obama could win this year, but probably only in a landslide where it does not provide the decisive electoral votes. On the whole, if you take a weighted average of the Hispanic turnout in each state based on its tipping point index, it comes out to about 6 percent, less than the 9 percent Hispanic turnout throughout the country as a whole. That means a Hispanic voter is somewhat less likely to swing the Electoral College outcome than if they were evenly distributed (as a share of the population) throughout all 50 states.

### Oil Lobby Key

#### Oil lobby opposition shifts the election

The Guardian 1-12-2012 [Suzanne Goldenberg, “Oil Lobby Threatens Obama Over Keystone Pipeline: Here's Just How Much Financial Firepower the Industry Has in Washington”, <http://www.alternet.org/story/153759/oil_lobby_threatens_obama_over_keystone_pipeline%3A_here%27s_just_how_much_financial_firepower_the_industry_has_in_washington>]

New analysis of oil industry contributions to members of Congress has revealed the level of the oil lobby's financial firepower that Barack Obama can expect to face in the November elections if he refuses to approve the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. Obama has until 21 February to make a decision on whether to approve the pipeline, under a compromise tax measure approved late last year. America's top oil lobbyist warned last week that the president would face "huge political consequences" if he did not sign off on the project to pump tar sands crude across the American heartland to refineries on the Texas coast.

#### Oil Industry supports candidates that favor them – key to the election in 15 states, including battleground states

FT 6/5 (Financial Times, US Politics & Policy, June 5, 2012 8:10 pm, “US energy lobby hits campaign trail,” by Ed Crooks and Richard McGregor, http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/876e2614-af29-11e1-a8a7-00144feabdc0.html)

The US oil industry is mounting its biggest-ever campaign to influence the November presidential election, as it seeks to capitalize on the transformation of America’s energy landscape by shale gas and oil. The American Petroleum Institute’s “Vote 4 Energy” campaign is designed to win support for candidates who back its agenda of increased access and limited regulation for oil and gas companies. Jack Gerard, president of the Washington-based industry group, said the shale gas and oil revolution was creating a “game-changing opportunity to reshape the energy landscape” that required specific policy decisions. With jobs growth weak, the oil and gas industry is one of the US economy’s few bright spots and the API believes it can use the sector’s strength to make energy policy a central election issue. Mr. Gerard said that with increased production, renewable energy and help from Canadian oil supplies, “the US can become energy independent in 12 years”. The API has announced rallies in 15 states, most of them important battlegrounds for the presidential election, and has been advertising on television, radio, posters and print. Events will be held this week in Missouri and Colorado. The campaign describes itself as non-partisan, arguing that it does not back individual candidates and enjoys support from some Democratic governors and labour unions. But the central focus of the API’s agenda for expedited oil and gas development – including immediate approval of the Keystone XL pipeline and a stay on new taxes and regulation – is squarely opposed by US President Barack Obama.

### Rural Key

#### Rural voters will swing the election

Connell 6-15 - Republican strategist, conservative activist, and political analyst (Ford, 6-15 of 2012, “Why Mitt Romney and Barack Obama Are Battling for the Rural Vote”, <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/ford-oconnell/2012/06/15/key-to-presidential-election-lies-in-rural-america>)

Former Gov. Mitt Romney has spent almost his entire life in big cities. But if he is to win the election for president this November, he will have to learn to connect with voters from the farms and small towns of America. In a year when popular and Electoral College votes both figure to be close, momentum in rural areas could spell the difference in a variety of states. This is not lost on either campaign. It's why Romney will embark today on his "[Every Town Counts](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/election-2012/post/mitt-romney-plans-six-state-five-day-bus-tour/2012/06/11/gJQAQDpnUV_blog.html)" bus tour—a five-day, six-state journey that will take him to rural localities in the battleground states of New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Michigan. [[See a collection of political cartoons on Mitt Romney](http://www.usnews.com/cartoons/mitt-romney-cartoons).] Every little bit of face time with rural voters should help the former Massachusetts governor. [President Barack Obama performed unusually well](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1108/15297.html) in rural areas in 2008. He lost to Republican Sen. John McCain by 8 percentage points—a huge step up after Sen. John Kerry lost to President George W. Bush by 19 points in 2004. President Obama's ability to carry key rural counties in Iowa, Colorado, and North Carolina helped lift him to victory. Moreover, the president enjoyed uncommon success among white men—a key constituency in rural areas. He split the vote among white independents and claimed 43 percent of the total among white voters—levels of achievement not seen by Democrats since Jimmy Carter's election in 1976. But things no longer look so bright for the president. Rural Americans, like their urban and suburban counterparts, said they voted based on the economy in 2008, and his policies have not helped them. Unemployment is at least a [half-point higher in rural areas than urban areas](http://nbcpolitics.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/05/02/11505207-obamas-2008-rural-appeal-will-be-put-to-the-test-in-november?lite). And, of the nation's more than 3,000 counties, about 30 percent now endure unemployment rates of 10 percent or higher and a good many of those are rural counties in 2012 battleground states such as North Carolina, Wisconsin, Michigan, Colorado, and Ohio. [[See a collection of political cartoons on the 2012 campaign.](http://www.usnews.com/cartoons/campaign-2012-cartoons)] Worse, President Obama carried the Tar Heel State by 14,000 votes in 2008—his smallest margin of victory in any state. But 50 of the counties with the worst unemployment rates in the nation are in rural North Carolina, and 15 of those counties went for President Obama in 2008. [Obama's disapproval ratings exceed](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/elections/election_2012/election_2012_presidential_election/iowa/election_2012_iowa_president)his approval ratings in [Iowa and North Carolina](http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/2011/PPP_Release_POTUS_NC_061212.pdf), and polling shows races tightening considerably in other rural battleground states, such as[Michigan](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/mi/michigan_romney_vs_obama-1811.html) and [Wisconsin](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/wi/wisconsin_romney_vs_obama-1871.html). Thus, [Democrats have begun to worry](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-campaigns-erratic-behavior-concerns-some-democrats/2012/06/12/gJQAedXZYV_story.html)that if he can't alter his economic message and change his campaign strategy, he could find himself in real trouble come November. Yet, Governor Romney also has some work to do among rural voters before he can start to measure the White House drapes. Former Sen. [Rick Santorum defeated him](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/for-romney-a-widening-gap-between-urban-and-rural-support/) soundly in nearly every contest that involved large rural populations. Romney was 11 points better in metro areas than nonmetro areas. The United States Department of Agriculture divides America into nine classifications—from most urban to most rural. In 2008, Romney captured the two most urban classifications against John McCain. McCain carried the other seven. [[Check out our editorial cartoons on President Obama](http://www.usnews.com/cartoons/barack-obama-cartoons).] McCain lost in 2008 in large part not because rural areas went for Obama but because an unenthusiastic rural electorate stayed home. Romney's bus tour and subsequent appeals are designed to assure those voters turn out in 2012. To do this, he must keep it simple. He must outline a cogent, understandable economic plan that rewards private initiative and limits government regulation. He must promise to nurture the [domestic energy production boom—](http://www.forbes.com/sites/joelkotkin/2012/03/14/the-gops-fatal-attraction-to-rural-america/2/)oil, coal, and natural gas—that has brought new wealth to North Dakota, north Louisiana, and elsewhere. He must connect to patriotism and the military—a significant number of rural families have members who serve or have served. And he must demonstrate his commitment will extend beyond Election Day and through all four years of his term. If he can do these things, if he can connect with rural Americans, if he can run up the kind of margins George W. Bush did in 2004 and perhaps flip states such as Michigan, rural America could be a real "Electoral College game changer" [says Mark Halperin](http://thepage.time.com/2012/06/11/the-romney-bus-trip/) of Time magazine.If Romney succeeds, it could well be rural America that pushes him over the top and into the White House.

### Unions Key

#### Obama needs unions to win

Crabtree 4-30 [Susan, writer for The Washington Times, Washington Times “Obama woos Unions for Election Drive” ]

Striking a conciliatory election-year tone, President Obama told an audience of labor union officials that he hasn't been "a perfect president" but had always stayed true to his pledge to work on their behalf. "When I was running for this office, I told people, I'm not a perfect man — Michelle can tell you that," he said Monday, veering from prepared remarks at the the AFL-CIO's Building and Construction Trades Department Legislative Conference and reiterating a few moments later that he's "not a perfect president." During his 2008 campaign for president, Mr. Obama relied heavily on unions for millions of dollars of support, as well as labor's national get-out-the-vote grassroots network. Mr. Obama has sometimes been at odds with labor during his three years in office but will need all the support he can get from unions ahead of the November election. In recent weeks and months, Mr. Obama's been working to mend fences. In February, Mr. Obama delivered a blistering attack on Mitt Romney when he spoke before United Auto Workers, highlighting his GOP rival's opposition to the auto industry bailout. In Monday's speech, Mr. Obama was clearly trying to rebuild his union ties. "I made a promise I'd always tell you where I stood, I'd always tell you what I thought, what I believed in, and most importantly, I'd wake up every single day working as hard as I know how — to make your lives a little better," he said. "And for all that we've gone through over the last three-and-a-half, four years, I have kept that promise," he continued. "And I'm still thinking about you, and I still believe in you. And if you join me, we'll remind the world why it is that America is the greatest nation on Earth." Even before the president delivered the remarks, Mr. Romney's campaign issued a release slamming Mr. Obama for pandering to the labor unions. "Nearly 23 million Americans are struggling for work in the Obama economy, but the president has repeatedly sided with his well-funded allies in big labor over American workers," said Romney campaign spokeswoman Andrea Saul. Mr. Obama's campaign supported legislation that would make it easier for workers to form unions and stacked the National Labor Relations Board with union sympathizers, the Romney campaign argued. It also gave union leaders unfettered access to the White House. The AFL-CIO's Richard Trumka has visited the Obama White House at least 71 times, the campaign said, citing press reports. During Monday's remarks, Mr. Obama quickly pivoted from his self-deprecation to an attack on Republicans for obstructing his agenda. "Republicans in Congress would rather put fewer of you to work rebuilding America than ask millionaires and billionaires to live without massive new tax cuts," he said. Republicans, he argued, aren't willing to shift their priorities from protecting the wealthy from more tax hikes to making investments that will benefit average working Americans. Republicans in Congress have blocked several Democratic attempts to increase infrastructure and transportation spending, Mr. Obama said. "If we're smart about it, we can also afford to make the investments that will help our country and the American people in the short-term," he said. "I think that's a no-brainer. But apparently, Republicans disagree."

### Unemployment Key

#### Unemployment rate is key to election

Haberman 7/5/2012 (Maggie, Maggie Haberman is a Senior Political Writer for POLITICO. Prior to that, she worked at the New York Post, where she covered the 2008 presidential election, along with numerous state, city and congressional races. She also worked at the New York Daily News, Politico, http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=5C8C5397-AD4C-43B0-9F71-CD10D4B74CE3)

If the unemployment rate shoots up in a dramatic way, it probably won’t matter what Obama says — Romney will be the likely beneficiary. Romneyland also sees a net benefit in a flat-lined jobs situation because it will contribute to a mood of national anxiety that, they believe, will make Obama unelectable. The headlines will be negative for Obama surrounding the unemployment rate, if it stays the same or worsens, as they did last month, and many think it will compound the desire for a change among a sour electorate. To Schnur’s mind, the jobs reports — and the situation in Europe — are among the most important indicators, and the rest of the coverage is “noise.”

### Youth Key

#### Youth vote is key to Obama’s re-election

Dunford 5/25 (Kara Dunford is currently a student at The George Washington University pursuing a degree in political communication, “The Youth Vote in 2012: Top Ten New Stats,” NextGen Journal - Voices of the Next Generation - Our Generation, http://nextgenjournal.com/2012/04/the-youth-vote-in-2012-top-ten-new-stats/)

Credit for President Barack Obama’s electoral victory in 2008 is often given partly to the 18-29 year old demographic, which provided then-Senator Obama with 66% support. As focus turns to the 2012 general election battle between Obama and his presumed Republican challenger, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, the question becomes whether the president will still be able to captivate America’s youth- and persuade them to vote as in 2008. In recent days, a number of new general election polls have been released, bringing youth voters back into the spotlight. With a perhaps overwhelming amount of new statistics to consider, here are ten of the most critical data points: Barack Obama’s lead over Mitt Romney has grown by six points since late November: Contrary to popular belief, Obama’s 2008 campaign did not spark an extraordinary increase in turnout among 18-29 year-olds. As The Washington Post pointed out earlier this week, 18 percent of the electorate was between 18 and 29 years old in 2008. That is only a one-point increase from the 2004, 2000, and 1996 elections. The youth vote mattered for Obama because of the wide margin between ballots cast for him and ballots cast for Republican nominee John McCain. Obama captured roughly two-thirds of this voting bloc, creating a 34-point margin between himself and McCain, the largest margin of any Democratic presidential nominee in recent history. A new national poll released by Harvard University’s Institute of Politics (IOP) shows Obama with a 17-point advantage over Romney, an increase of six percentage points from late November polling. Because a key to Obama’s success in 2012 will be maintaining his margin among young voters, the increasing advantage gives his campaign a positive outlook. Obama’s overall job approval rating has improved among Millennials: Obama suffered job approval ratings at an all-time low in November polling from the IOP, with only 46 percent of 18-29 year-olds approving of the president’s performance. This number has risen in the past four months, however, with 52 percent of 18-29 year-olds now favoring Obama’s performance. If this number continues to grow, it will give Obama a leg-up in the fall campaign. Obama continues to struggle with white Millennials: Despite improving overall job approval ratings, approval for Obama has not increased among white 18-29 year-olds. Only 41 percent of this demographic approve of the President’s job performance, a number that has remained unchanged since the fall. 2008 exit polls show that white Millennials were the largest group of 18-29 year-olds to cast a ballot. Without the support of this demographic, Obama may not be able to maintain his large margin among young voters, a critical component of potential reelection victory. Obama receives increased support from Hispanic Millennials: 66 percent of Hispanic voters ages 18-29 approve of Obama’s job performance, a number that has increased 14 percentage points since the fall. Obama has overwhelming support from Hispanics in a potential general election match-up, leading Romney 50 percent to 12 percent, a 38-point margin. These numbers are certainly positive for the president, but he will need the support of white Millennials in addition to Hispanic Millennials in order to preserve his margin among young voters. Young voters cite the economy as a primary concern: In the IOP poll, 58 percent of young voters cited “jobs and the economy” as the national issue that concerns them the most. In issue match-ups, “creating jobs and lowering the unemployment rate” was chosen as the more important issue 77 percent of the time, beating out issues such as “ensuring affordable access to healthcare;” “preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons;” and “reducing the federal deficit.” Among undecided voters, creating jobs was chosen as the number-one priority 75 percent of the time. Polling from The Public Religion Research Institute and Georgetown University’s Berkley Center (PRRI) also found jobs and unemployment to be a critical issue for young voters. 76 percent of voters ages 18-24 responded that jobs and unemployment represent a critical issue for the country. As unemployment numbers have remained relatively steady over the past few months, hovering just over 8 percent, Obama has some ground to make up to ensure that his job approval rating continues to grow among young voters. Millennial voters give Romney a low favorability rating: 32 percent of voters ages 18-24 have a favorable view of Mitt Romney, according to the PRRI polling. In addition, only 54 percent of Romney supporters report that they would be excited to cast their ballot for him. These numbers are alarming for the presumptive Republican nominee if he wants to chip away at Obama’s 2008 advantage among the youth. However, Romney may have an opportunity to improve his standing if the jobs market remains stagnant. According to an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll released last week, 40 percent of voters believe Romney is the candidate with better ideas to improve the economy, compared with just 34 percent who favor Obama. Two-thirds of Independents are undecided: Both Obama and Romney received substantial support from their respective parties in the IOP poll. Obama won among Democrats 75 percent to 6 percent, while Romney was favored among Republicans 69 percent to 11 percent. While base support will be important in the fall campaign, 66 percent of self-described Independents are undecided, giving both candidates the opportunity to increase their support among youth voters. Both Obama and Romney have increased focus on student loan rates in a bid to win their support. Among decided Independents, 22 percent favor Obama, while 12 percent support Romney.

### Youth Key

#### Young Voters key but Obama has to find a way to energize them and transcend partisan deadlock

Killian 2/2/12 (Linda, a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, is the author of "The Swing Vote: The Untapped Power of Independents," in the Atlantic, http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/02/4-types-of-independent-voters-who-could-swing-the-2012-elections/252363/)

These voters under 35-years-old are not joiners and are mistrustful of groups except for those organized online. They are often more comfortable communicating via a computer screen than face-to-face and are used to having hundreds of choices when it comes to entertainment and most other aspects of their life, so they don't understand why they should be forced to choose between just two political parties. They see themselves as unique and special and don't think they can be pigeonholed in just one political party. They were captivated by the transformational nature of Barack Obama's 2008 candidacy and voted for him in large numbers, but they are disenchanted with the partisan gridlock in Washington and Obama's inability to bring about the fundamental changes to the political system that he promised in the campaign. Motivating the Facebook Generation voters again this time around will be critically important to Obama's re-election.

#### Young vote key—Obama has to offer up radically new and transformative policies on the economy and jobs to energize them

Jackson 7/3/2012 (Jesse, Reverend and famed Civil Rights leader, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-jesse-jackson/young-america-is-key-to-2\_b\_1646096.html)

When young Americans come alive, they transform the possible. We saw that in 2008 when young Americans -- the millennial generation of 18- to 29-year-olds -- voted in large numbers (larger than the aging baby boomers), and overwhelmingly for Barack Obama. They cast almost one out of every six votes in that election and voted for Obama by a 2-to-1 ratio. We saw what happens when they are discouraged in 2010, when young voter turnout fell a staggering 60 percent, and a Tea Party Congress was elected. What will young voters do in 2012? The president showed his concern by kicking off his campaign with speeches on two college campuses. The New York Times reports young people are more discouraged and disaffected than ever. The youngest voters particularly -- the 18- to 24-year-olds -- are struggling in the worst economy since the Great Depression. Obama still leads Romney by 13 points in early polls, but that is half his lead among 25- to 29-year-olds. Many are undecided and many turned off and tuned out. Young voters are still largely Obama territory. Today's aging, white, Southern-dominated Republican Party has little appeal. Millennials are the most diverse generation in our history. They are the most accepting of equal rights for all -- minorities, gays and women. Most can't even imagine that we're arguing about birth control in the 21st century. The president reflects their values far more than his opponent. Obama fought to free student loans from the private banks, to extend Pell grants and defend lower student loan rates. He is bringing young men and women home from Iraq and Afghanistan, while Romney calls for more war. His Justice Department is defending the right to vote against efforts by Republicans in various states to erect obstacles against the young. He defended Planned Parenthood when the Republican Congress targeted it. He's pushed for renewable energy and common sense on catastrophic climate change, against the "Drill, baby, drill" Republicans. It's no wonder current polls show Romney winning only 29 percent of the millennial vote, less than John McCain garnered in spring polls four years ago. But while Obama will win the most young votes, the question is how many will vote? The overwhelming issue for young people is jobs, and the jobs picture is lousy. Nearly one in four 18- or 19-year-olds was unemployed in May, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For 20- to 24-year-olds, the rate is 12.9 percent. Discouragement, despair and cynicism are the natural result. The campaigns are gearing up their Twitter, text, video, Facebook and other communication capacities. They plan dorm-to-dorm volunteer campaigns. But cool campaign technologies won't answer the concerns of the young. Young people are looking for a plan to put people to work. Romney's trickle-down ideas have little appeal -- particularly since they entail tax cuts for the already wealthy and deep cuts in education, college support and public services that appeal to the young. To get young voters excited, Obama will have to offer more than his record. He'll need to fight for jobs that will give the young a future. When cynicism or dismay wins out and the young withdraw, unintended consequences result. We saw that in 1968 when Nixon beat Humphrey by the margin of our despair. We saw it in 2010 when only 20.9 percent of young people bothered to vote, and the Tea Party-dominated Republicans took the Congress, leading to two years of partisan obstruction.

## Meta-Level

### Political Predictions Fail

#### Political predictions fail – like monkeys throwing darts

Stevens 6-23 (Jacqueline, Stevens is a professor of political science at Northwestern University, “Political Scientists Are Lousy Forecasters”, The New York Times – Opinions Pages, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/24/opinion/sunday/political-scientists-are-lousy-forecasters.html?pagewanted=all>)

Political scientists are defensive these days because in May the House passed an amendment to a bill eliminating National Science Foundation grants for political scientists. Soon the Senate may vote on similar legislation. Colleagues, especially those who have received N.S.F. grants, will loathe me for saying this, but just this once I’m sympathetic with the anti-intellectual Republicans behind this amendment. Why? The bill incited a national conversation about a subject that has troubled me for decades: the government — disproportionately — supports research that is amenable to statistical analyses and models even though everyone knows the clean equations mask messy realities that contrived data sets and assumptions don’t, and can’t, capture. It’s an open secret in my discipline: in terms of accurate political predictions (the field’s benchmark for what counts as science), my colleagues have failed spectacularly and wasted colossal amounts of time and money. The most obvious example may be political scientists’ insistence, during the cold war, that the Soviet Union would persist as a nuclear threat to the United States. In 1993, in the journal International Security, for example, the cold war historian John Lewis Gaddis wrote that the demise of the Soviet Union was “of such importance that no approach to the study of international relations claiming both foresight and competence should have failed to see it coming.” And yet, he noted, “None actually did so.” Careers were made, prizes awarded and millions of research dollars distributed to international relations experts, even though Nancy Reagan’s astrologer may have had superior forecasting skills. Political prognosticators fare just as poorly on domestic politics. In a peer-reviewed journal, the political scientist Morris P. Fiorina wrote that “we seem to have settled into a persistent pattern of divided government” — of Republican presidents and Democratic Congresses. Professor Fiorina’s ideas, which synced nicely with the conventional wisdom at the time, appeared in an article in 1992 — just before the Democrat Bill Clinton’s presidential victory and the Republican 1994 takeover of the House. Alas, little has changed. Did any prominent N.S.F.-financed researchers predict that an organization like Al Qaeda would change global and domestic politics for at least a generation? Nope. Or that the Arab Spring would overthrow leaders in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia? No, again. What about proposals for research into questions that might favor Democratic politics and that political scientists seeking N.S.F. financing do not ask — perhaps, one colleague suggests, because N.S.F. program officers discourage them? Why are my colleagues kowtowing to Congress for research money that comes with ideological strings attached? The political scientist Ted Hopf wrote in a 1993 article that experts failed to anticipate the Soviet Union’s collapse largely because the military establishment played such a big role in setting the government’s financing priorities. “Directed by this logic of the cold war, research dollars flowed from private foundations, government agencies and military individual bureaucracies.” Now, nearly 20 years later, the A.P.S.A. Web site trumpets my colleagues’ collaboration with the government, “most notably in the area of defense,” as a reason to retain political science N.S.F. financing. Many of today’s peer-reviewed studies offer trivial confirmations of the obvious and policy documents filled with egregious, dangerous errors. My colleagues now point to research by the political scientists and N.S.F. grant recipients James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin that claims that civil wars result from weak states, and are not caused by ethnic grievances. Numerous scholars have, however, convincingly criticized Professors Fearon and Laitin’s work. In 2011 Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils B. Weidmann and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch wrote in the American Political Science Review that “rejecting ‘messy’ factors, like grievances and inequalities,” which are hard to quantify, “may lead to more elegant models that can be more easily tested, but the fact remains that some of the most intractable and damaging conflict processes in the contemporary world, including Sudan and the former Yugoslavia, are largely about political and economic injustice,” an observation that policy makers could glean from a subscription to this newspaper and that nonetheless is more astute than the insights offered by Professors Fearon and Laitin. How do we know that these examples aren’t atypical cherries picked by a political theorist munching sour grapes? Because in the 1980s, the political psychologist Philip E. Tetlock began systematically quizzing 284 political experts — most of whom were political science Ph.D.’s — on dozens of basic questions, like whether a country would go to war, leave NATO or change its boundaries or a political leader would remain in office. His book “Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?” won the A.P.S.A.’s prize for the best book published on government, politics or international affairs. Professor Tetlock’s main finding? Chimps randomly throwing darts at the possible outcomes would have done almost as well as the experts. These results wouldn’t surprise the guru of the scientific method, Karl Popper, whose 1934 book “The Logic of Scientific Discovery” remains the cornerstone of the scientific method. Yet Mr. Popper himself scoffed at the pretensions of the social sciences: “Long-term prophecies can be derived from scientific conditional predictions only if they apply to systems which can be described as well-isolated, stationary, and recurrent. These systems are very rare in nature; and modern society is not one of them.” Government can — and should — assist political scientists, especially those who use history and theory to explain shifting political contexts, challenge our intuitions and help us see beyond daily newspaper headlines. Research aimed at political prediction is doomed to fail. At least if the idea is to predict more accurately than a dart-throwing chimp.

#### Political science fails at predicting elections

Lawler 6-25 (Peter, Lawler is a Professor of Government at Berry College, “Political ‘Science’ and Its Forecasting Failures”, Big Think, <http://bigthink.com/rightly-understood/political-science-and-its-forecasting-failures>)

Here’s a distinguished political scientist—Jacqueline Stevens—who agrees with me that the NSF ought to cut the funding for political science. The Republicans in Congress think that these “scientists” are covertly pushing an ideological agenda that lurks behind all their jargon and “methods.” That’s somewhat true. When applied to the lives of human beings, everyone knows that the experts who begin their claims for authority with “studies show” are always less objective than they say they are. I actually think that allegation applies less to political science than the other disciplines of social science. If you want to see ideological uniformity, go to a sociology conference (I have a couple of times). Go to the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association and you’re charmed by the sometimes bizarre bazaar of diversity. The gay and lesbian activists are meeting right next to the monarchists and traditionalist Catholics, and I, for one, am happy to see them all. Most mainstream political scientists, admittedly, are kind of boring, but there’s something about the “political” and residually philosophical dimensions of the discipline that produces a genuinely inclusive and welcoming environment. My objection to NSF funding is simply that political science has failed, as our author says, in its effort to produce the kind of scientific discoveries the NSF is looking for. The NSF, at the end of the day, has a predominately technological understanding of science. The goal is to produce useful knowledge that will improve the health and other dimensions of physical well-being of Americans (that, of course, includes military power). The original scientific pretension of political science (see the work of the genuine genius Harold Lasswell) was all about prediction and control. If, through science, we have some firm and quantifiable idea of what causes political change, we will be able to predict what happens. Armed with that knowledge, we will be able to exercise beneficent control over the future. We can develop a political technology. But it turns out political scientists have a terrible record of prediction—worse by far than that of savvy politicians: It’s an open secret in my discipline: in terms of accurate political predictions (the field’s benchmark for what counts as science), my colleagues have failed spectacularly and wasted colossal amounts of time and money. The most obvious example may be political scientists’ insistence, during the cold war, that the Soviet Union would persist as a nuclear threat to the United States. In 1993, in the journal International Security, for example, the cold war historian John Lewis Gaddis wrote that the demise of the Soviet Union was “of such importance that no approach to the study of international relations claiming both foresight and competence should have failed to see it coming.” And yet, he noted, “None actually did so.” Careers were made, prizes awarded and millions of research dollars distributed to international relations experts, even though Nancy Reagan’s astrologer may have had superior forecasting skills. Political prognosticators fare just as poorly on domestic politics. In a peer-reviewed journal, the political scientist Morris P. Fiorina wrote that “we seem to have settled into a persistent pattern of divided government” — of Republican presidents and Democratic Congresses. Professor Fiorina’s ideas, which synced nicely with the conventional wisdom at the time, appeared in an article in 1992 — just before the Democrat Bill Clinton’s presidential victory and the Republican 1994 takeover of the House. Alas, little has changed. Did any prominent N.S.F.-financed researchers predict that an organization like Al Qaeda would change global and domestic politics for at least a generation? Nope. Or that the Arab Spring would overthrow leaders in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia? No, again. What about proposals for research into questions that might favor Democratic politics and that political scientists seeking N.S.F. financing do not ask — perhaps, one colleague suggests, because N.S.F. program officers discourage them? Why are my colleagues kowtowing to Congress for research money that comes with ideological strings attached? One reason among many for these failures to forecast change is the tendency of political scientists to think in terms of categories borrowed from "real" science—such as systems and stability. So they slight the behavior of great political actors as a fundamentally unpredictable cause. They also slight the "variable" of the actual truth or falsity of political opinion. So it's worth noting that the ideologically confident Reagan predicted that the Soviet Union couldn't last much longer, because the regime was based on an increasingly self-evident lie. That's why he (prudently) engaged in ideological war against evil on behalf of the truth about who we are. When Reagan turned out to be right and virtually every political scientist wrong, the political scientists were quick to dismiss the possibility that Reagan might have a significant cause of the unpredicted big change. I remember being in at a meeting of the Southern Political Science Association just before the election of 1994. An expert panel of political scientists with an array of cool models was unanimous in predicting that the Republicans couldn't pick up more than 30 seats in Congress. The subtext? The Democrats had controlled Congress for such a long time that there must be some enduring, "subpolitical" systematic cause for that stability. It couldn't be that the election could be determined by the Republicans' confident mobilization of opinion. It is really and truly true that the cabdriver who took me over to the conference site gave me a political lecture that included a correct prediction—based on the greatness of Newt Gingrich—of Republican takeover. As for 1992, how could any political scientist have predicted Ross Perot? Generally, political science does its best work when it begins with the perspectives of the statesman (or political leader) and the citizen and then goes on to refine and enlarge what's seen about political life by those who are actually engaged in it. The attempt to impose a scientific perspective alien to the phenomena almost always leads us to see a lot less than is really there.

#### It’s impossible to forecast elections – reality doesn’t conform to political variables

Silver 6-25 (Nate Silver, 6/25/12, “The Problems With Forecasting and How to Get Better at It”,

http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/the-problems-with-forecasting-and-how-to-improve/)

Some of these experts claimed that they could predict elections to an extremely high degree of accuracy without ever looking at a poll, instead relying on various combinations of economic and other variables. In fact, these efforts have gone badly. Models based on these “fundamentals” alone have missed election results by an average of eight points since they began to be published widely in 1992. (Those models that combined economic and polling data have had considerably better results.) This is worse than you would do just by glancing at the Gallup poll, or even by just guessing that the outcome of the election would be split 50-50. It was also much worse than what the models advertised. Most of them claimed to have pinpoint accuracy, and would have given odds anywhere from hundreds-to-one to billions-to-one against some of the outcomes that actually occurred, like the virtual tie between George W. Bush and Al Gore in 2000. (Many of the models had envisaged a Gore landslide instead.) I’ve gotten various reactions since I’ve published these results, but some have verged on utter denial. Some political scientists have obfuscated the problem (intentionally or not) by treating the data the models used to fit their equations as tantamount to actual predictions – in essence, claiming credit for “predicting” the past. (Here’s a tip: I have a model that says you should bet a lot on George Mason to make the Final Four in 2006. You’ll make a fortune. Now you’ll just have to get your hands on a time machine.) The political scientists have also noted that some of the forecast models have done better than others. To be clear, I do think that some of them are more soundly constructed. But so far, the results of the “fundamentals” models when tested on real data have been consistent with a hypothesis of no forecasting skill but instead some random variance centered around a poorly performing mean. Cherry-picking the most successful models may be the equivalent of attributing genius to the octopus that predicted the World Cup. But there is also another, more sophisticated defense of the failures of prediction. “Prediction is simply not what we do,” writes Seth Masket, an extremely talented political scientist from the University of Denver. Instead, Mr. Masket and others say, the goal of political science is to explain the world rather than to predict it. There is an interesting discussion of this theme in the comments section of the political scientist Matthew Dickinson’s blog. As I wrote over there, “I find the whole distinction between theory/explanation and forecasting/prediction to be extremely problematic.” One can take an extreme position, as Ms. Stevens does, that accurate political predictions are “the field’s benchmark for what counts as science.” One can also claim, as Mr. Dickinson does, that predictions are not highly scientific unless they are rooted in clearly articulated theory. Some of these distinctions, I think, are semantic rather than substantive. Where I was able to reach some agreement with Mr. Dickinson is in the notion that predictions in political science are usually more a means than an end. Although there is much riding on the outcome of the presidential election, the success or failure of a political scientist’s prediction about it – or my prediction of it, of course – isn’t going to contribute much one way or the other to human welfare. This might be contrasted with, say, a weather forecast, or an economic forecast, which will have a more direct impact on life and policy decisions. In political science, much research does not lend itself to testable predictions. Theories about political institutions, for instance, might take decades to verify – if they can be verified at all. But herein lies the problem. Theories and statistical models are different types of approximations about the real world. Without testing them by means of prediction, how do we know they are true and objective approximations? If some models and theories lend themselves more readily to prediction, largely the same techniques are applied to formulate the testable and untestable ones alike. It is extremely easy to mistake the random noise in data for a signal, or to mistake correlation for causation. And one may become enamored of the model or the theory, which will usually be neater and more seductive than the reality.

### Political Predictions Good

#### Political scientists make accurate predictions – their criticisms are wrong

Nyhan ’11 (Brendan, 11-16, Nyhan has a PhD in political science and an assistant professor in the Department of Government at Dartmouth College, “The attack on election forecasting straw men”, http://www.brendan-nyhan.com/blog/2011/11/the-election-forecasting-straw-man.html)

In recent days, journalists, bloggers, and commentators have reared up to bash a fictitious conventional wisdom about election forecasting. The premise for many of these statements is that political scientists believe that campaigns and other non-economic factors don't matter in presidential elections. For instance, The Daily Beast's Michael Tomasky describes "the political-science theory of presidential elections and economic determinism" as "pretty much strictly a function of economic conditions." At Real Clear Politics, Sean Trende states that Emory's Alan Abramowitz thinks "presidential elections can be reduced to a simple equation." And in a Bloomberg View column, Ronald Klain, the former chief of staff for Al Gore and Joe Biden, writes that "a group of political scientists, mathematicians and scholars have argued that a handful of factors determine of presidential elections, irrespective of the campaigns." But as the political scientists John Sides and Seth Masket have already pointed out, these are straw men. Very few political scientists think campaigns don't matter or that elections can be perfectly forecast in advance. In an earlier post, Sides expressed this point well: “Because people continually overestimate the effect of campaigns, this blog holds up the other end of the dialectic by emphasizing the economy and defending those who do. But plenty of research has identified the effects of campaigns too... it's time to abandon this whole it's-either-the-economy-or-the-campaign dichotomy...” Even New York Times blogger Nate Silver, who has become something of a professional critic of political scientists, concedes the point in a post today, writing that the view Klain ascribes to forecasters "is certainly not the majority opinion within the discipline." What's bizarre about this flurry of articles is that election forecasting is such an obscure topic in the political press. The conventional wisdom that presidential election outcomes are largely unpredictable in advance and that the outcomes we observe are primarily the result of campaign strategy is vastly more prominent. So why is everyone so worried about forecasting models? A related straw man is the idea that political scientists think their models make perfectly precise predictions. Here, for instance, is what Silver wrote: “[P]olitical scientists as a group badly overestimate how accurately they can forecast elections from economic variables alone. I have written up lengthy critiques of several of these models in the past...” The three posts that Silver links to critique a historian's non-quantitative model which few political scientists would endorse, Ray Fair's forecasting model, and the "Bread and Peace" model of Douglas Hibbs. Only the last two are representative of the field, and political scientists have criticized Fair's model at length in the past (PDFs). More generally, as Jacob Montgomery and I wrote last week, there is certainly reason to be concerned that these models are too confident about their predictions, but most sophisticated quantitative researchers in political science are aware of these concerns and do not interpret the forecasts so literally. Moreover, we can evaluate which models perform well in making forecasts beyond the data used in estimation and combine their predictions to create more accurate forecasts with appropriate estimates of uncertainty, as Montgomery and his co-authors do in their article (PDF). Silver dismisses this exercise as a "game show" and disparages any attempt to evaluate the models by their future performance -- "most of how they perform over the next few elections will be determined by luck" -- but we can and should aspire to better.

### Political Predictions Good – AT: Tetlock/Menand

#### Tetlock is wrong – Quantitative predictions work

Voeten 6-24 (Erik, Voeten is the Peter F. Krogh assistant professor of geopolitics and global justice at the School of Foreign Service and the department of Government at Georgetown University, “Dart-Throwing Chimps and Op-Eds”, The Monkey Cage, <http://themonkeycage.org/blog/2012/06/24/dart-throwing-chimps-and-op-eds/>)

When the House passed the Flake amendment to cut NSF funding for political science The New York Times (and most other newspapers) did not find the event sufficiently interesting to be worthy of valuable newspaper space. So why then does the editorial page seem so eager to debunk political science as a “science?” We as political scientists have barely recovered from the alleged inferiority complexes we suffer as part of our apparent inability to overcome “physics envy” and now we hear that “political scientists are not real scientists because they can’t predict the future.” One would almost be tempted to think that the message conveyed in these pieces suits the editorial page editors just fine. Indeed, Stevens explicitly writes that policy makers could get more astute insights from reading the New York Times than from reading academic journals. If this was the purpose of placing the op-ed, then the editorial board has been fooled by what can charitably be described as Stevens’ selective reading of the prediction literature; especially Tetlock’s book. Here is how Stevens summarizes this research: “Research aimed at political prediction is doomed to fail. At least if the idea is to predict more accurately than a dart-throwing chimp.” But Tetlock did not evaluate the predictive ability of political science research but of “experts” who he “exhorted [..] to inchoate private hunches into precise public predictions” (p.216). As Henry points out, some of these experts have political science PhDs but they are mostly not political science academics. Moreover, Tetlock’s purpose was not to evaluate the quality of research but the quality of expert opinion that guides public debate and government advice. Two points are worth emphasizing. The first is that the media, and especially editorial page editors, make matters worse by ignoring the track record of pundits and indeed rewarding the pundits with personal qualities that make them the least likely to be successful at prediction. Here is how Tetlock summarizes the implications of his research for the media: “The sanguine view is that as long as those selling expertise compete vigorously for the attention of discriminating buyers (the mass media), market mechanisms will assure quality control. Pundits who make it into newspaper opinion pages or onto television and radio must have good track records; otherwise, they would have been weeded out. Skeptics, however, warn that the mass media dictate the voices we hear and are less interested in reasoned debate than in catering to popular prejudices. As a result, fame could be negatively, not positively, correlated with long-run accuracy. Until recently, no one knew who is right, because no one was keeping score. But the results of a 20-year research project now suggest that the skeptics are closer to the truth. I describe the project in detail in my book Expert Political Judgment: How good is it? How can we know? The basic idea was to solicit thousands of predictions from hundreds of experts about the fates of dozens of countries, and then score the predictions for accuracy. We find that the media not only fail to weed out bad ideas, but that they often favor bad ideas, especially when the truth is too messy to be packaged neatly.” The second point is that simple quantitative models generally do better at prediction than do experts, regardless of their education. This is not because these models are that accurate or because experts don’t know anything but because people are terrible at translating their knowledge into probabilistic assessments of what will happen. This is why a simple model predicts 75% of the outcome of Supreme Court cases correctly whereas constitutional law experts (professors) get only 59% right. Since predictive success is not the gold standard for social science, as Stevens would have it, this has not yet led to a call to do away with constitutional law experts or randomly allocate them research funds.

### Yes Swing Voters

#### Swing voter theory is true.

Galston 3-10 (William, Galston is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, “Ignore Swing Voters at Your Peril!”, The New Republic, <http://www.tnr.com/article/the-vital-center/101506/swing-voters-independents-ruy-teixeira>)

In the modest guise of a book review, Ruy Teixeira has reopened an important issue in American politics: Who are the swing voters, and how important are they in these hyperpolarized times? The answer matters a lot, both for campaign strategy and for the conduct of elected officials. If swing voters are insignificant, then campaigns and incumbents can focus on mobilization—that is, on whipping up the fervor of those who already support them. If swing voters make a difference, then the challenge is to balance mobilization and persuasion—doing enough to keep your supporters happy while giving persuadable voters good reasons to prefer you to the alternatives. If there aren’t many swing voters, which is what Teixeira suggests, the question of their significance is answered by default—with the upshot that the only types of elections the American people deserve are hyperpolarized ones. Fortunately, there’s good reason to believe otherwise. Teixeira’s argument rests on the contention that independents are too often mistaken for swing voters. Citing a stack of solid political science studies, he pours cold water on the popular thesis that independents are a horde of untethered voters ripe for mobilization by the clarion call of moderation and compromise. Most independents “lean” toward one party or the other, and the leaners behave much like the partisans of the party toward which they incline. True (non-leaning) independents constitute only one-fifth of total independents, and less than one-tenth of the electorate. (In a close election, of course, even a relatively small group can be decisive if its members give a super-majority to one party.) Still, there are some aspects of independents’ decision-making and weight that these aggregate statistics don’t quite capture. Consider the stark difference between two recent off-year elections—2006 and 2010. In 2006, 93 percent of Democrats voted for Democratic candidates, and 91 percent of Republicans for Republicans, while independents favored Democratic candidates 57 to 39. In 2010, as in 2006, overwhelming majorities of partisans went with their partisanship—91 percent for Democrats, 94 percent for Republicans. But this time, 56 percent of independents voted for Republican candidates (up 17 points from 2006) while only 37 percent favored Democrats (down 20 points). To be sure, independents’ share of the electorate rose from 26 percent in 2006 to 29 percent in 2010. But even if every additional independent voter had gone Republican, that wouldn’t be nearly enough to explain the dramatic shift. At least when it came to these congressional races, independents were a lot swingier. In addition, Teixeira doesn’t explore in any detail those swing voters who don’t consider themselves independents at all. The Swing Voter in American Politics, the anthology of essays to which Teixeira refers in passing, suggests that there are quite a few. One political scientist—William Mayer—finds that swing voters averaged 23 percent of the electorate between 1972 and 2004, with considerable variation from year to year. Using a somewhat different methodology and metric, another political scientist—James Campbell—found about 17 percent. Because pure (swing) independents are only about 7 percent of the electorate, these results suggest that more swing voters are partisans than independents. (All other things being equal, however, independents are more likely than partisans to be swing voters.) On their face, these findings also suggest that national campaigns can rarely afford to ignore swing voters. While there are some years (2004, for example) when they are less numerous, not speaking directly to a group that averages one-fifth of the electorate is hardly a formula for optimal results. It turns out that the attitudes of swing voters are more distinctive than their demographics. Compared to non-swing voters, swing voters report being more moderate and less politically engaged. And they tend to be in the middle range on information—better informed than non-voters, less informed than voters who have made up their minds. But—and this is crucial—they have a solid enough base of information to understand, and be influenced by, additional information they receive during campaigns. And they are much easier to reach than non-voters. The bottom line: While Teixeira rightly debunks the myth of free-range independents, it would be wrong to conclude that the politics of mobilizing core supporters is all that matters. Even in these hyperpolarized times, there are lots of voters who remain open to a politics of persuasion—more than enough to determine the outcome—and campaigns ignore them at their peril.

#### Independents exist and are swing voters

Killian 5-27 (Linda, a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, is the author of "The Swing Vote: The Untapped Power of Independents." “5 myths about independents”, http://www.usatoday.com/USCP/PNI/Editorial/2012-05-27-PNI0527vip-killianPNIBrd\_ST\_U.htm)

Perhaps the biggest myth about independents is that they are closet partisans or "leaners" who are independent in name only but regularly vote with one party. True, about half of independents do fit into this category, but the rest are truly independent; their allegiance swings from election to election. They are persuadable, not polarized partisans. A recent Pew Research Center poll puts the number of swing voters this year at 23 percent -- almost a quarter of the electorate. In 2006, independents chose Democratic House candidates over Republicans, 57 to 39 percent. But, in 2008, Democrats won independent voters by only 8 points and lost them by 19 points in 2010. With that kind of track record, it is impossible to say that independent voters are reliably partisan. Independent voters are less engaged. In hundreds of interviews with independent voters, I found that they tend to be well-informed and care about the political process -- even though the two parties have done their best to alienate them through attacks, gridlock and dysfunction. About two-thirds of them say they are independent because "both parties care more about special interests than about average Americans," according to a Pew survey. Independent turnout is typically lower than it is among partisan voters. But in more than half of the country, independents are not permitted to vote in primaries, so they have no say in the candidates selected in the general election. (Independent voters can vote in non-presidential Arizona primaries.) It's no surprise then that they are usually less satisfied with their candidate choices than partisan voters are. Independents are more turned off than partisan voters by negative campaign ads and are more likely to say they want more substantive discussions from the candidates and the media. Independents take voting seriously but are less moved by partisan appeals. They care more about the deficit than Democratic voters do, more about the environment than Republicans do, and less about social issues, such as same-sex marriage and abortion, than do voters from either party. Independent voters want a third party. I found no unanimity: Some of them think we do need a third- or multiparty system and consistently vote for outsider and third-party candidates, while others accept that this is a two-party nation. The most successful third-party presidential candidacy in the past 100 years was when Teddy Roosevelt ran for a third term as a candidate with the Bull Moose Party in 1912 and won 27 percent of the vote. Roosevelt came in second to Woodrow Wilson and carried half a dozen states, including California, Michigan and Pennsylvania. Ross Perot, running as a Reform Party candidate in 1992, won 19 percent of the vote. The third-party organization Americans Elect gathered enough signatures to qualify for the ballot in more than half of the states but did not attract a candidate who could generate much interest and officially suspended its effort May 17. Many independent voters think it is more realistic to push for open primaries and campaign finance and congressional redistricting reform that would open up the process to all voters and candidates than it would be to try to create a competitive third party. Independents are centrists. Independent voters are more diverse in age, race, gender and income than their Republican and Democratic counterparts. Most independents are socially liberal, fiscally responsible centrists, but some libertarians and far-left progressives also call themselves independents. Sixty percent of independents say they are not aligned with a party because they agree with the Republicans on some things, such as the economy and national security, and with the Democrats on social issues. I think of independent voters as falling into four key constituencies: NPR Republicans who are socially moderate and fiscally conservative; America First Democrats, who tend to be male and more socially conservative (formerly known as Reagan Democrats); the Facebook generation of voters younger than 35 who lean libertarian on social and economic issues; and Starbucks Moms and Dads, suburban voters who make up a huge chunk of the electorate and are reliably unpredictable. Washington and the nation at large may seem polarized, but a majority of voters consider themselves somewhere in between the two parties. These are not just independents but centrists and moderates who still may be registered with one party but at times vote for the other. Independents and their views are diverse -- they don't fit into either political party or neatly in the center. Independent voters are disillusioned with President Barack Obama. In 2008, Barack Obama won 52 percent of independent voters to John McCain's 44 percent, the largest margin a Democratic presidential candidate has received from independents since 1996. Almost half of the independents who voted for Obama in 2008 did not vote Democratic in 2004; and independents made up 23 percent of Obama voters, according to a study by Third Way, a centrist think tank. Because their numbers are growing and the Democratic and Republican parties are shrinking, independent voters, especially those in swing states, hold the key to the 2012 election. Gallup polling has shown Obama and presumptive GOP nominee Mitt Romney in a virtual tie among independent voters. The most recent poll had Obama up 2 points with this group nationwide but also revealed that he has a 9-point lead among independents in 12 battleground states. According to a recent Washington Post poll, independents favor Obama's support for same-sex marriage 49 to 43percent, but independents still think the economy is the most important issue and will probably make their decision based on how it is doing in the fall. Ninety percent of Democrats and Republicans say they plan to vote for their party's candidate, while a third of independent voters say they are not sure how they will vote. That means you will see a lot more visits by Obama and Romney to battleground states, trying to capture independent swing voters.

### No Swing Voters

#### No swing voters – even if more people are registering independent.

Chicago Tribune ’11 (12-28, “'Swing' voters are still partisan”, <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-12-28/news/ct-oped-1228-page-20111228_1_independents-swing-voters-alan-i-abramowitz>)

Voters are a tough bunch to satisfy these days. The number of people who are registered to vote as Democrat or Republican has plunged by 2.5 million since 2008, according to a new tally. Independent ranks have grown. Still, studies show, most independents still vote overwhelmingly for one party or the other, even if they don't want to admit that in public. Both parties have been losing members to the independent column since at least the 1960s. Among other reasons, television and suburbanization increasingly have liberated voters from reliance on precinct captains and other party favors. Americans increasingly like to believe that we vote for the individual or for ideas, not the party. Considering the various scoundrels who give both parties a bad name from time to time, I understand. That would help explain the 2.5 million defections uncovered in a USA Today analysis. Registered Democrats still outnumber other categories, with more than 42 million people, compared with 30 million Republicans and 24 million independents. But the Dems also have lost the most — 1.7 million since 2008. And in the eight swing states that register voters by party — Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina and Pennsylvania — Democrats' registration is down by 800,000 and Republicans' by 350,000. Independents have gained 325,000. Obama won all of those eight states in his 2008 landslide, but polls and party insiders say they're mostly up for grabs in 2012. As North Carolina elections director Gary Bartlett told USA Today, the 2012 winner will be "whoever is attractive to the unaffiliated voter." Or, at least, so goes the conventional wisdom. But, maybe not. Most self-declared independents I know also make it pretty clear which side of the left-right divide they're on. That observation is backed up by election scholars. Increasingly, the academics are challenging not only the independence of independent swing voters, but even the cherished notion that independents determine election outcomes. In a groundbreaking 1992 book, "The Myth of the Independent Voter," authors Bruce E. Keith, David B. Magleby, Candice J. Nelson and Elizabeth Orr found that most self-identified independents were "closet partisans." They tend to think like and vote mostly for one of the two major parties. Over time, only about 10 percent strayed across party lines enough to be called truly "independent" of either major party. And in a further blow to independent pride, the authors found, those who actually vote the most independently also tend to be the least informed about what and whom they are voting for. (Cheer up, my fellow self-declared independent voters. The very fact that you are reading this column indicates that you probably are not part of that sadly underinformed crowd.) More recent data from the American National Election Study analyzed by political science professor Alan I. Abramowitz of Emory University show that in 2008, independents made up 40 percent of eligible voters, but only 33 percent of those who actually voted. Only 7 percent of the total voted as true independents with no party preference. The other indies were clearly "leaners" for one party or the other. Nor do independents necessarily determine the outcomes of presidential elections, especially when the final count is close, Abramowitz writes in the Crystal Ball blog of political science professor Larry Sabato at the University of Virginia's website. In fact, he argues, in all three of the presidential elections since 1972 that were decided by a margin of less than five points, the candidate chosen by the most independent voters lost the popular vote. His examples: When Jimmy Carter won the overall popular vote in 1976, most independents voted for Gerald Ford. In 2000, most independents voted for George W. Bush, but Al Gore won the overall popular vote, despite losing the Electoral College. And in 2004 most independents voted for John Kerry, but George W. Bush won the overall popular vote. Yet, I suspect that there's another reason that more people are calling themselves independents these days. They're hoping that someday if there are enough independents, they might create a third party. Maybe. But considering the wide diversity of views held by independents now, their wishes won't be easy for a third party to satisfy either.

### AT: Only the Economy Matters

#### The economy isn’t the only thing that matters – campaigns, candidates, and ideology matter

Silver ’11 (Nate, 11-16, Silver has a degree in economics from the University of Chicago; he makes political predictions, and he correctly predicted the winner of 49 of the 50 states in 2008, “A ‘Radical Centrist’ View on Election Forecasting”, NY Times – FiveThirtyEight Blog, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/16/a-radical-centrist-view-on-election-forecasting/>)

This is obviously something of a false juxtaposition. It is extremely unlikely that campaigns don’t matter at all. Now and then, you’ll see a political scientist come fairly close to expressing this viewpoint, but that is certainly not the majority opinion within the discipline. The question, instead, is how much campaigns matter, and that is a difficult question to answer. I strongly agree with Mr. Klain that political scientists as a group badly overestimate how accurately they can forecast elections from economic variables alone. I have written up lengthy critiques of several of these models in the past, which suffer from fundamental problems regardless of which variables they choose. One of the things it took me a long time to learn about forecasting is that there’s a difference between fitting data to past results and actually making a prediction. A regression model built from historical data is really just a description of statistical relationships that existed in the past. The forecaster hopes or assumes that the relationships will also apply in the future, but there is often a significant deterioration in performance. I’m not just talking about obvious examples of spurious correlation like that the winner of the Super Bowl was once a highly “statistically significant” predictor of the direction of the stock market. (In recent years, this indicator has performed badly.) The problems run a lot deeper than that, affecting many or perhaps even most of the statistical relationships documented in the peer-reviewed literature in some fields. John P.A. Ioannidis, for instance, has described how most published research findings in medical journals cannot be replicated independently. Scott Armstrong of the Wharton Business School, who has devoted most of his life to studying prediction, has found analagous problems in the social sciences. My research into the Survey of Professional Forecasts suggests that actual economic data falls outside the 90 percent confidence intervals as claimed by economists somewhere between one-third or one-half of the time, meaning that they are extremely overconfident about the reliability of their forecasts. Presidential forecasting models that rely on economic data are likely to be especially susceptible to these problems. Most of them are fit to data from a small sample of 10 to 20 past elections but have a choice of literally hundreds of defensible economic or political variables to sort through. Forecasters who are not conscientious about their methodology will wind up with models that make overconfident forecasts and that impute meaning to statistical noise. I would not paint all the forecasters with the same brush. Two political scientists who I know have a very sophisticated understanding of these problems are Larry Bartels at Princeton and Robert Erikson at Columbia. Others, like Hans Noel, will publish models, but provide very explicit disclaimers about their limitations. But there others who tweak as many knobs as they can, and there are bloggers and reporters who take all of the results at face value and don’t distinguish the responsible forecasts from the junk science. The problem is made worse when a game show is made out of forecasting and everyone competes to see who can get the most overfit model published in a peer-reviewed journal. A more tangible question is how well economic statistics alone can really predict elections. I have written previously that a good assumption is that they can explain perhaps 50 percent of the results. But based on some further research that I will soon publish, I suspect that estimate was too high, and that the answer is more like 30 or 40 percent when the models are applied to make real, out-of-sample forecasts. Economic variables that perform better than that over a small subset of elections tend to revert to the mean or even perform quite poorly over larger samples. So say that 60 percent of elections cannot be explained by economic variables. Should all of the remaining credit go to campaigns? No, of course not. First, the fact that widely available published economic statistics cannot explain more than about 40 percent of election results does not mean that the actual living and breathing economy cannot. The American economy is a very hard thing to measure. Gross domestic product was originally estimated to have declined at a rate of about 3.5 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008; revised data puts the decline at almost 9 percent instead. The government first reported that the economy had grown by 4.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 1977, but that figure was later revised to negative 0.1 percent. Using revised data can reduce the error to some extent, but there is quite a lot of intrinsic uncertainty of measurement. Some of the debates about why variable X is superior to variables P, D and Q are no more productive than debating the number of angels that can dance on a pinhead; the measurement error swamps any marginal gain that might be made from the choice of one reasonable variable over another. Moreover, there are differences between what the statistics say about the economy and how Americans actually experience it. Some of these differences can be exploited by campaigns, but others fall into the category of being “unknown knowns”: things that are manifestly important but that we don’t have a good way to measure. Beyond the economy, likewise, there are other sorts of factors that campaigns may have little control over. Wars. Terrorist attacks. Earthquakes. Hurricanes. Sex scandals. Most of the attempts to translate these events into statistical variables have been quite silly. But that doesn’t mean the uncertainty they introduce into forecasting should be mistaken for the skill of a campaign. It’s not to Michael Dukakis’s credit that Gary Hart was dumb enough to get caught on a yacht with a swimsuit model. Next, we have to make a distinction between candidates and campaigns. Sometimes a very appealing candidate runs a terrible campaign — Hillary Rodham Clinton comes to mind — or vice versa. Variables related to the candidates themselves are potentially easier to quantify than those related to campaign strategy. One of those variables is the left-right ideology of the candidate, which I do include in my model and which political scientists have sometimes included in the past. Measuring ideology is not easy — although in practice it is probably no harder than accurately measuring the economy — but there are a few well-regarded methods for doing so. I have evaluated a couple, and they perform quite well according to statistical tests, even when taken in conjunction with factors like the president’s approval rating on Election Day or robust measures of economic performance. To be sure, statistical tests may miscalibrate the impact of ideology just as they exaggerate the impact of particular economic variables. But there are strong theoretical reasons to believe that ideology matters, and there is moderately strong evidence from other contexts, like Congressional elections and elections in parliamentary systems, that it does. It does not seem plausible, meanwhile, as some political scientists’ models imply, that the difference between Representative Michele Bachmann or Mitt Romney would amount to only 1 or 2 points at the polls. Another difficulty is that candidate ideology is correlated with other variables, like the length of the time that a party has been out of office, and those variables in turn have been correlated with election results. My view is that there are strong reasons to believe that ideology is in fact the causal factor — models that make the opposite assumption come up with some highly implausible results — but it is hard to know for sure when you’re dealing with highly correlated variables over small samples. We will be publishing more about this topic in the coming weeks. Nevertheless, Michele Bachmann’s campaign would have to work with Mrs. Bachmann, while Mitt Romney’s would have to work with him; how much difference can their strategies make at the margin? One of the more tangible examples of campaign strategy mattering was in 2008, where by a variety of measures Mr. Obama’s campaign (which Mr. Klain was a part of) overperformed by a net of about 3 or 4 points in swing states. In this case, Mr. Obama’s sound strategy was superfluous since he was likely to have won the campaign either way, but had the election been closer, it may have made a difference. Our models in 2008 generally found that Mr. Obama was about 5 percent more likely to win the Electoral College but lose the popular vote rather than the other way around. My guess — and it’s just a guess — is that this may be as good an estimate as any at the effects that a well-run campaign might have. Perhaps a very well run campaign can improve a president’s chances of winning re-election by 5 or 10 percent. But who knows. We have already had an extremely wide array of outcomes in the various special and interim elections that have taken place around the country so far this year, and we’ve had a very wild Republican primary, suggesting that voter preferences may be more malleable than normal.

### Telephone Surveys Indict

#### Unweighted samples of telephone surveys skew results because of under-represented races

Huffington Post 6/17 (“Race Matters: Why Gallup Poll Finds Less Support for President Obama,” 06/17/2012, by Mark Blumenthal, senior polling editor of the Huffington Post and the founding editor of Pollster.com, named of the best 50 websites of 2009, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/17/gallup-poll-race-barack-obama\_n\_1589937.html?utm\_hp\_ref=@pollster)

The Huffington Post has conducted an independent analysis that confirms the phenomenon and points to a likely explanation. The problem lies in the way that Gallup handles the racial composition of its samples, and the findings highlight significant issues with how polls are developed and conducted today. The dirty little secret of telephone surveys now conducted by most media outlets is that their unweighted samples alone cannot provide reliable estimates of population demographics like race and Hispanic ancestry. A dramatic fall in response rates has led to what pollsters call "non-response bias" in their raw data. Partly because survey response rates are typically lowest in urban areas, unweighted samples routinely under-represent black and Hispanic Americans. As a Pew Research Center study recently demonstrated, random-sample surveys continue to provide accurate data on most measures -- but only when their samples of telephone numbers include both landline and mobile phones, and only when the completed interviews are weighted to match the demographic composition of the population. That means the weighting procedures that pollsters use are critical to producing accurate results. The need to weight accurately by race and ancestry is particularly significant when it comes to evaluating the contest between Obama and Romney. As Gallup itself reported in early May, Romney led Obama among non-Hispanic white voters by 54 to 37 percent, while the president had the support of more than three-quarters of non-white registered voters (77 percent). Obama’s support among African Americans on Gallup's tracking poll stood at 90 percent. That gap makes the way pollsters account for race hugely important. When pollsters weight their samples to match population demographics, every percentage point increase in black representation translates into a nearly one-point improvement in Obama’s margin against Romney. The difference of just a few percentage points in the non-white composition of a poll can produce a significant skew in its horse race results.

### Polls Prodict

#### Polls predict best

Silver ’11 (Nate, 11-16, Silver has a degree in economics from the University of Chicago; he makes political predictions, and he correctly predicted the winner of 49 of the 50 states in 2008, “A ‘Radical Centrist’ View on Election Forecasting”, NY Times – FiveThirtyEight Blog, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/16/a-radical-centrist-view-on-election-forecasting/>)

These models are not that good, so my view is that if you’re going to build one, it ought to have a nice wide confidence interval that is designed to apply in the real world and not just in the software package. I also hold the view that one should switch to polling-based metrics sooner rather than later. These models are easier to calibrate, are less prone to overfitting (they have essentially just one variable: the polling average) and are far less presumptuous about why the electorate votes the way it does. They make the very reasonable assumption that voters will do a better job of explaining why they vote the way they do than can be inferred from a series of quasi-random economic inputs. If polling-based models do a much better job of prediction, they sacrifice something in explaining elections, leaving some of Mr. Klain’s questions unresolved. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the elections in which no campaign would have changed the result. One of these is an example that Mr. Klain cites: 1984. But, to use just one example, if cold, hard economic data were decisive in elections, then President Ronald Reagan, seeking re-election in 1984 when the economy was beset by a 7.5 percent unemployment rate, wouldn’t have won 49 states. After all, his successor, President George H.W. Bush lost by more than 200 electoral votes when he ran for re-election in 1992, with the jobless rate at 7.4 percent. The unemployment rate may have been 7.5 percent when voters went to the polls to pick between Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale. But it had declined from as high as 10.8 percent earlier in Mr. Reagan’s term. Moreover, economic growth was exceptional in both 1983 and 1984, with G.D.P. advancing at almost 6 percent in the election year. One thing the statistical evidence is quite clear upon is that voters are reasonably forward-looking and weigh the rate of change much more heavily than how the economy is performing in an absolute sense. (Historically, the raw unemployment rate has been among the very worst predictors of election outcomes, while the change in job growth during the election year has been among the very best.) Mr. Reagan’s morning in America campaign seemed brilliant when the unemployment rate had fallen to 7 percent from 11 percent. The same message would have been ridiculous had the unemployment rate risen to 7 percent from 3 percent instead.