# Elections Updates

## Uniqueness

### Obama win

#### There’s hope for Obama- middle class support and economic optimism

Rutenberg and Connelly. 07/18 (Jim Rutenberg and Marjorie Connelly, New York Times' Elections Policy Analysts, "Economic Fears Hurting Obama, Poll Indicates" on July 17, 12 from www.nytimes.com/2012/07/19/us/politics/poll-shows-economic-fears-undercutting-obama-support.html?pagewanted=all/ak)

In a reversal from the Times/CBS Poll in April, more Americans say they disapprove of the way Mr. Obama is handling his job, 46 percent, than say they approve of it, 44 percent, although the difference is within the poll’s margin of sampling error.¶ Yet there are some hopeful glimmers for Mr. Obama, who is viewed in this poll as the advocate for the middle class. For instance, just over half of the voters said that his policies were improving the economic picture now (17 percent) or would in the future (34 percent).¶ And he maintains an advantage over Mr. Romney when it comes to the question of whether he cares a lot or some about the problems of everyday Americans — 63 percent said he did, compared with 55 percent who said the same of Mr. Romney.¶ A plurality of Americans, 49 percent, agree with Mr. Obama’s assertion that the [Bush-era tax cuts](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/t/taxation/bush_tax_cuts/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier) should continue on adjusted gross annual income of $250,000 and less. More than a quarter say the cuts should stay in place for all income groups; 17 percent say they should expire altogether.¶ Mr. Romney has ample challenges, too, with the poll showing that he has yet to build up a positive image of his own as Mr. Obama seeks to build a negative one for him.¶ While more than half of Mr. Obama’s voters said they strongly supported him, fewer than a third of Mr. Romney’s said the same about him. More than a third of his voters said they were voting for him because of their dislike for Mr. Obama, while fewer than 10 percent of Mr. Obama’s supporters said they would vote for him out of dislike for Mr. Romney.¶ Mr. Romney continues to be dogged by the notion that he is disconnected from the middle class. More than half of the voters said his policies would favor the rich.¶ Mr. Obama’s campaign and its allies at the “[super PAC](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/c/campaign_finance/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier)” Priorities USA Action have sought to stoke those views of Mr. Romney, through television advertisements criticizing his tenure at the investment firm Bain Capital.¶ Six in 10 voters surveyed said Mr. Romney’s experience at Bain would not affect their vote, though other polls in swing states have indicated that the ads are influencing perceptions about his business experience.

#### **Their evidence isn’t in the context of swing states- Obama is winning in those**

Rutenberg and Connelly. 07/18 (Jim Rutenberg and Marjorie Connelly, New York Times' Elections Policy Analysts, "Economic Fears Hurting Obama, Poll Indicates" on July 17, 12 from www.nytimes.com/2012/07/19/us/politics/poll-shows-economic-fears-undercutting-obama-support.html?pagewanted=all/ak)

The poll, conducted between July 11 and 16 and including 982 registered voters, is reflective of the national mood, not the views of voters in the handful of swing states most likely to decide the outcome — and where most of the campaign advertising war is being waged.¶ Some polls suggest that the attacks are affecting perceptions in some battleground states. For instance, surveys last month by Quinnipiac University in Ohio and Pennsylvania — where millions of dollars in TV advertising is being spent — showed Mr. Obama with leads over Mr. Romney in both states.

#### Romney wont win- Latinos, women and independents- they’re kt the election

Cardona, 07/20 (Maria Cardona is a Democratic strategist, a principal at the Dewey Square Group, a former senior adviser to Hillary Clinton and former communications director for the Democratic National Committee, as well as a policy analyst for CNN; "GOP's Obama obsession will lose it the election" on July 20, 2012 from www.cnn.com/2012/07/20/opinion/cardona-romney-latino/index.html/ak)

**(CNN)** -- A month ago, when Mitt Romney addressed the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials during its annual conference in Orlando, Florida, many thought he was on a path to adopting a more nuanced tone on immigration and coming up with an aggressive strategy to woo Latino voters to his side.¶ Instead, he lately seems to have adopted U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann's messaging strategy, using a version of the Minnesotan's line from the 2008 campaign when she [went on a rant](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/10/17/gop-rep-channels-mccarthy_n_135735.html) about the views of then-Sen. Barack Obama and his wife being "very anti-American."¶ Romney is not making it easier for Latinos to support him. In fact, the strategy will continue alienating this critical demographic group, along with independents and women.¶ We heard former New Hampshire Gov. John Sununu, one of Romney's top surrogates, use similar language on Tuesday.¶ "I wish this president would learn how to be an American," he said.¶ Granted, he apologized for it later that day, but the subtext is still there. Romney himself is using a version of the line when he says that Obama's way of doing things seems["foreign."](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-romney-campaign-20120718,0,7508037.story) To many voters, that is code for "un-American."

#### Obama will win- Latinos advantage

Cardona, 07/20 (Maria Cardona is a Democratic strategist, a principal at the Dewey Square Group, a former senior adviser to Hillary Clinton and former communications director for the Democratic National Committee, as well as a policy analyst for CNN; "GOP's Obama obsession will lose it the election" on July 20, 2012 from www.cnn.com/2012/07/20/opinion/cardona-romney-latino/index.html/ak)

Repeat offender Rush Limbaugh has also been making headlines.¶ On Monday [he declared](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0712/78553.html), "I think it can now be said without equivocation" that Obama "hates this country." And Republicans don't seem to be in a hurry to admonish him or distance themselves from those statements. Romney has not responded.¶ To be clear, as a Democrat, I am not surprised or complaining that the GOP is resorting to such low levels. As for House Speaker Tip O'Neill was fond of saying, "Politics ain't beanbag."¶ As a political strategist, however, I find this new tactic reckless and dangerous for a political party that needs to broaden its base of support to win -- among independents, women and especially Latinos. This kind of language will do the opposite.¶ As an American Latina born in Colombia, I recoiled at this language, the same way I did in 2008 when Bachmann used it. It reminds me -- and I suspect it reminds many other Latinos in this country -- of the lengths to which many in this Republican Party have gone to marginalize those who represent the new and changing demographics in the United States.¶ Given that experts say Romney needs at least 40% of the Latino vote to win, this is an odd strategy for someone who enjoys Latino support in the low 20s. Contrast that to the effort going on in the Obama campaign to continue speaking to Latinos about the issues they care most about.¶ For example, I recently moderated a chat between first lady Michelle Obama and Latina moms from Mamiverse.com, a website for bilingual/English-dominant Latina moms.¶ It was a masterful political stroke by the Obama campaign. In half an hour, through [this historic live chat](http://www.mamiverse.com/michelle-obama-15141/), they demonstrated they understood just how important the [voices of Latina mothers](http://www.mamiverse.com/online-latina-moms-study-tech-savvy-culturally-focused-and-the-new-swing-vote-4034/) were going to be this election cycle and how critical that would be to Obama's re-election in this very tight race.¶ Obama won [67% of the Latino vote](http://www.cnn.com/2012/07/20/opinion/cardona-romney-latino/index.html) in 2008. A few months ago, I would have said it would be a big challenge for him to repeat those numbers, especially given some disappointment among Latinos about the president's not being able to deliver on immigration reform, as well as his record on deportations. But he is now on track to gain the same amount, if not more, of the Latino vote.¶ This week, Latino Decisions [released a poll](http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2012/07/18/after-sb1070-decision-obama-widens-lead-over-romney/) that gives Obama 70% of the Latino vote to Romney's 22%, the highest support the president has enjoyed from the Latino community to date. If those numbers hold, it will be very hard for Romney to win the election.¶ This jump in support is a clear sign that the Obama campaign is doing a much more aggressive job of reminding Latino voters what this president has done to help Latino children and families get ahead:¶ -- Health care reform gives [9 million Latinos](http://blog.aarp.org/2012/07/11/healthcare-reform-upheld-what-it-means-latinos/) and millions of Hispanic children with pre-existing conditions life-saving coverage.¶ -- The Recovery Act has [kept 1.9 million Latinos out of poverty](http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=2910), and the president's actions to create 4.5 million jobs include millions of new jobs for Latinos.¶ -- Obama has passed [18 tax cuts for small businesses](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/07/11/obama-administration-takes-immediate-actions-help-small-businesses) that benefit hundreds of thousands Latino entrepreneurs.¶ -- Obama's support for Pell Grants [gives 150,000 additional Hispanic students](http://www.georgelopez.com/george-lopez-helps-launch-latinos-for-obama-site/) the chance to go to college.¶ -- A [$5 billion investment in the Head Start program](http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education) benefits hundreds of thousands of Latino children who are more than one-third of Head Start participants.¶ -- [Extensions of the Earned Income Tax Credit](http://www.blackradionetwork.com/la_raza_endorses_new_tax_package), the Child Tax Credit and unemployment benefits help 5.4 million Latino families, including 11.3 million Latino children and nearly 1 million Hispanics who didn't lose their unemployment benefits.¶ -- And facing the "party of 'no'" on immigration, Obama has given temporary relief to almost [1 million "dreamers"](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/06/15/obama-gets-smart-on-immigration-with-new-policy-for-dreamers.html) -- undocumented kids who came here through no fault of their own and know no other country to call their own. They will be able to study or join the military without the threat of deportation.¶ But Obama is getting some help from the GOP as well.¶ The Romney campaign's attacks on Obama as being less than all-American and "foreign" will bring to mind everything the GOP has said and done in the past to make Latinos feel unwelcome in their own country.¶ For example, it will bring vivid memories of Kris Kobach, architect of the harsh [Arizona SB1070 law](http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2012/06/24/supreme-court-decision-on-sb1070-could-alienate-latino-voters/), Romney's own ["self-deportation" comments](http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-01-24/news/30657385_1_mitt-romney-illegal-immigrants-deportation) that won him the not-so-honorary title of being the most right-wing GOP presidential candidate [on immigration](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/11/la-mayor-antonio-villarai-slams-mitt-romney_n_1417392.html), U.S. Rep. Steve King's remarks [comparing immigrants to dogs](http://www.salon.com/2012/05/22/rep_steve_king_immigrants_like_dogs/) and GOP Kansas State Rep. Virgil Peck's comments on fixing immigration by[shooting immigrants from helicopters](http://articles.nydailynews.com/2011-03-15/news/29149175_1_illegal-immigrants-feral-hogs) like feral pigs.¶ What's worse for the GOP is that not one national GOP leader has strongly condemned such voices. Some Republicans now, including former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida,[warn their own party members](http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/jeb-bush-marco-rubio-warn-republicans-on-losing-hispanic-voters/" \t "_blank) they must change their tune.

### Romney win

#### Romney will win now- Obama’s handling of the economy is terrible

Rutenberg and Connelly. 07/18 (Jim Rutenberg and Marjorie Connelly, New York Times' Elections Policy Analysts, "Economic Fears Hurting Obama, Poll Indicates" on July 17, 12 from www.nytimes.com/2012/07/19/us/politics/poll-shows-economic-fears-undercutting-obama-support.html?pagewanted=all/ak)

Declining confidence in the nation’s economic prospects appears to be the most powerful force influencing voters as the presidential election gears up, undercutting key areas of support for [President Obama](http://elections.nytimes.com/2012/candidates/barack-obama?inline=nyt-per) and helping give his Republican challenger, [Mitt Romney](http://elections.nytimes.com/2012/primaries/candidates/mitt-romney?inline=nyt-per), an advantage on the question of who would better handle the nation’s economic challenges, according to the latest New York Times/CBS News Poll. Despite months of negative advertising from Mr. Obama and his Democratic allies seeking to further define Mr. Romney as out of touch with the middle class and representative of wealthy interests, the poll shows little evidence of any substantial nationwide shift in attitudes about Mr. Romney.¶ But with job growth tailing off since spring and the Federal Reserve chairman, Ben S. Bernanke, wondering aloud whether the labor market is “stuck in the mud,” the poll showed a significant shift in opinion about Mr. Obama’s handling of the economy, with 39 percent now saying they approved and 55 percent saying they disapproved.¶ In the Times/CBS poll in April, when the economy seemed to have momentum, 44 percent approved and 48 percent disapproved.¶ The new poll shows that the race remains essentially tied, notwithstanding all of the Washington chatter suggesting that Mr. Romney’s campaign has seemed off-kilter amid attacks on his tenure at Bain Capital and his unwillingness to release more of his tax returns. Forty-five percent say they would vote for Mr. Romney if the election were held now and 43 percent say they would vote for Mr. Obama.¶ When undecided voters who lean toward a particular candidate are included, Mr. Romney has 47 percent to Mr. Obama’s 46 percent. Both results are within the poll’s margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points. But it is the first time Mr. Romney has shown a numeric edge in the Times/CBS poll since he emerged from the primaries as the presumptive nominee. Mr. Obama had a three-point advantage in March. The two were each favored by 46 percent in April.

#### Obama’s lead decreasing- economy

**Silver, 07/17** (Nate Silver, chief pollster for New York Times’ 538 election polling center who is regarded as the top-level pollster based on distinct mathematical models, FivethirtyEight: Nate Silver's Political Calculus, "July 17: Obama's Re-electio Chances Fall on Gloomy G.D.P. Forecast" on July 17, 2012 from fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/17/july-17-obama-odds-fall-on-gloomy-g-d-p-forecast/ak)

Tuesday was a bit of an eclectic day for economic and polling news, but there was one data point that had the largest influence on our presidential forecast. That was the latest edition of The Wall Street Journal’s [economic forecasting survey](http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-flash08.html?project=EFORECAST07), which showed more bearish projections for gross domestic product and other economic indicators. Economists now expect the below-average growth that the economy has been experiencing to continue for quite a while, with G.D.P. growing at a rate of about 2 percent into early 2013. The panel’s previous projections had not been especially bullish, but had been closer to 2.5 percent.¶ The G.D.P. projections are one of seven economic variables that [our model uses in its forecast](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/05/measuring-the-effect-of-the-economy-on-elections/); a couple of the others were also updated on Tuesday.¶ [Inflation remains low](http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/17/usa-economy-idINL2E8IH1LA20120717): in fact, there was no inflation at all in June, as the decline in gas prices offset a modest increase in other goods. This is welcome news for consumers, but it did not immediately help Mr. Obama in our forecast because the model was already giving him the maximum amount of credit for the low inflation rate. (The model does not give “extra” credit to the incumbent candidate when the inflation rate is below 2 percent, since a 2 percent inflation rate is considered optimal by economists.)¶ There was also data out on [industrial production](http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/g17/current/) on Tuesday, which showed a rebound in June after a decline in May. Industrial production has generally been fairly robust over the past year, and is one of the more emphatic signs that our economy — however tepid the recovery might be — is at least not in recession right now. However, since the trend in the industrial production numbers had already been favorable (excluding the poor May data point), the new numbers did not shift our model’s economic index much.¶ On the polling front, there were new polls out in Iowa and New Hampshire that look superficially good for Mr. Obama — he held leads of five points and four points in those surveys. But in both cases, the pollster had shown a larger lead for Mr. Obama before. To some extent, this probably reflects reversion to the mean, especially in the case of the Iowa poll, in which Public Policy Polling had previously given Mr. Obama [an implausible 10-point lead](http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/main/2012/05/obama-leads-romney-by-10-in-iowa.html).¶ Overall, Mr. Obama’s chances of winning the Electoral College declined to 66.8 percent in the forecast model, from 68.7 percent on Monday.

#### Romney will win- economy, unemployment, deficit and security

**Rutenberg and Connelly. 07/18** (Jim Rutenberg and Marjorie Connelly, New York Times' Elections Policy Analysts, "Economic Fears Hurting Obama, Poll Indicates" on July 17, 12 from www.nytimes.com/2012/07/19/us/politics/poll-shows-economic-fears-undercutting-obama-support.html?pagewanted=all/ak)

Republicans have met Mr. Obama’s attacks with countercharges portraying him as a typical politician who has abandoned his former mantra of “hope and change.” And 58 percent of those surveyed said that he had not delivered on his 2008 campaign pledge for change.¶ “Obama promised a lot of promises, and he failed at every one of them without exception,” Jerry Taylor of Yerington, Nev., said in a follow-up interview to the poll. He voted for Mr. Obama four years ago but says he now plans to vote for Mr. Romney. “Words are cheap, but deeds are precious.”¶ The poll includes a drop in Mr. Obama’s favorability ratings, with 36 percent saying they viewed him favorably and 48 percent saying they did not. In April, 42 percent expressed a favorable opinion of him and 45 percent an unfavorable one.¶ But that change may have been affected by a reordering of this particular set of questions, which at this point in general election cycles are typically placed near the top of the survey. During the primary season, the questions about favorability were placed lower on the survey after queries about presidential job approval and other topics.¶ As the focus of the campaign trail shifts to speculation over Mr. Romney’s choice of a running mate, only a quarter of voters say that choice matters a lot to their decision for November. Far more important, those surveyed said, are issues like the economy and jobs, health care, taxes, the deficit and national security — most of them areas in which Mr. Romney is roughly tied or has an advantage in the poll.¶ Voters gave Mr. Obama an advantage when it came to foreign policy and social issues.¶ Asked which candidate they believed would do a better job handling the economy and unemployment, 49 percent said Mr. Romney, 41 percent Mr. Obama.¶ The drop in Mr. Obama’s economic approval ratings is consistent with a downturn in the percentage of Americans who believe the economy is getting better. While 33 percent said they saw improvement in April, 24 percent say they do now.¶ Nearly half of voters say the current economic plight stems from the policies of Mr. Obama’s predecessor, George W. Bush, which most voters expect Mr. Romney would return to.¶

#### Romney will win- the economy and advantage in Virginia

**Reuters, 07/19** (Laura MacInnis and Sam Youngman for Reuterus, "Obama seeks gains in Florida as voter angst on economy rises" on July 19, 2012 from www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/19/us-usa-campaign-idUSBRE86G10D20120719/ak)

(Reuters) - President Barack Obama sought a boost for his campaign in the crucial state of Florida on Thursday, amid new signs that voters are increasingly dissatisfied with his handling of the U.S. economy and questions about whether his attacks on Republican Mitt Romney are resonating.¶ Kicking off a two-day swing through this politically divided state, Obama tried to shore up his support with senior citizens and continued to cast Romney as a defender of the rich at the expense of the middle class.¶ His trip came a few hours after two new polls suggested that even after several weeks in which his campaign has controlled the narrative of the presidential race, voters' concerns about the economy are dragging down Obama's support for the November 6 election.¶ A CBS News/New York Times poll showed Romney with a slight edge nationwide, raising questions about how much voters are paying attention to Obama's efforts to define Romney as an out-of-touch, wealthy elitist who refuses to release much information about his income and taxes.¶ In another sign that Romney could be picking up steam, a Quinnipiac University poll showed Romney has closed a gap with Obama in Virginia, another battleground state. The race there is now tied at 44 percent apiece, the poll said.¶ During his remarks in Jacksonville, Obama noted that he might be outspent by the Republicans in a campaign that will cost both sides hundreds of millions of dollars.¶ "Florida, I've been outspent before, and I've been counted out before, but through every campaign, what has always given me hope is the American people. You have the ability to cut through all that nonsense," he said.¶ Romney, meanwhile, showed on Thursday that he had taken to heart other Republicans' calls for him to be more aggressive in attacking Obama.¶

#### Obama will face tough times- young voters disapprove

**Kraushaar, 07/19** (Josh Kraushaar is executive editor of National Journal Hotline and pens the weekly “Against the Grain” column. He also contributes to 2012 Decoded. Kraushaar previously reported for Politico, where he broke political news and covered and analyzed campaigns. Prior to joining Politico, Kraushaar was the editor of House Race Hotline where he covered the historic 2006 Congressional elections. Kraushaar has appeared as a political analyst on television and radio, including FOX News, MSNBC, CNN, National Public Radio and C-SPAN. He co-hosted a weekly radio show on XM Radio during the 2008 presidential election titled “Politics Nation” along with Hotline Editor-in-Chief Reid Wilson, "Bad Economy Taking Its Toll on Obama" on July 19, 2012 from decoded.nationaljournal.com/2012/07/bad-economy-taking-its-toll-on.php/ak)

The first round of polls is out after President Obama's Bain attacks against Mitt Romney and the results aren't good news for the White House. By themselves, the national toplines are discouraging enough - Romney holds a (statistically-insignificant) 47 to 46 percent lead in the [new CBS/NYT poll](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/07/19/us/nytcbspoll-results.html?ref=politics), and the president is stuck at 47 percent in the just-released Fox News and [NPR poll](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=156987168&live=1) in 12 battleground states. ¶ But beneath the head-to-head numbers, the results foreshadow some tough times ahead for Obama. Voters appear to be processing the worsening economic news belatedly, and their pessimism shows in spades. In the CBS/NYT poll, Obama's job approval dropped to 44 percent, with only 39 percent approving of his economic performance - down five points from April. For the first time since January, more voters now think the economy is getting worse. Nearly two-thirds of voters now place some blame on the president for the weak economic conditions, with 34 percent giving him "significant" responsibility. An outright 52 percent majority of independents believe Obama will "never improve" the economy. These aren't numbers that victories are made of.¶ And in a sign that the newfound negative tone of the campaign may be backfiring, the poll showed Obama's favorability ratings - always his strong suit - at an all-time low as president. Only 36 percent in the NYT/CBS poll view him favorably, a six-point drop over the last three months, with 48 percent viewing him unfavorably. Romney's favorables aren't good, either - 32/36 fav/unfav - but mutually assured destruction isn't going to win the election for the president.¶ The state-by-state numbers aren't any more encouraging. Quinnipiac's [just-released poll of Virginia voters](http://www.quinnipiac.edu/institutes-and-centers/polling-institute/virginia/release-detail?ReleaseID=1778) shows Obama and Romney tied, with Obama only polling at 44 percent. Among non-college educated whites, Obama's job approval dropped even further, down to 29 percent, with only 40 percent of college-educated whites approving of his job performance. To compensate in the Old Dominion, Obama would need overwhelming support from minorities and turnout comparable to their 2008 levels.¶ All told, the numbers paint a picture of voters growing increasingly disillusioned with the president. By going hard negative against Romney, the president is landing some solid blows. But without much of a positive governing agenda to campaign on, it doesn't look like that will be enough by itself.

#### Romney will win- Obama’s campaign will punch itself out

**Tracinski, 07/19** (Robert Tracinski writes daily commentary at TIADaily.com. He is the editor of The Intellectual Activist and a contributor to RealClearMarkets and is also an elections analyst for RealClearPolitics, "How the Election Will Play Out (and why Romney will win)" on July 19, 2012 from www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/07/19/how\_the\_election\_will\_play\_out\_and\_why\_romney\_will\_win\_114848.html/ak)

When it comes to his record and his biography, I suspect that Mitt Romney has not yet begun to fight, and that is the other big development I'm predicting for the final months of the general election.¶ I have been speculating for some time—and others have begun to say the same thing—that Romney's election strategy can be described as "rope-a-dope." This was a sports reporter's coinage for Muhammad Ali's strategy in the famous 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" against George Foreman. Foreman was a large man known as a hard hitter, so Ali's strategy was to goad Foreman into throwing a frenzy of punches while Ali adopted a protective position and leaned against the ropes so they would help absorb the energy of the blows. Foreman fell for it and punched away in a fury, tiring himself out in the early rounds only to find himself fatigued while Ali was still fresh. Ali dominated the later rounds and knocked Foreman down long enough for the referee to call him out.¶ The analogy here is that Romney is letting the Obama campaign punch itself out, spending like crazy on a blitz of negative advertising early on, before swing voters have made up their minds or even paid much attention to the race. Meanwhile, Romney has been holding his fire and money, saving it for when it will really count.¶ Why is the Obama campaign falling for this? Because they have no other option. Here we have to refer back to the established rules of the horse-race analysis. When a president is running for re-election, it is inherently a referendum on the incumbent, so if his approval ratings are below 50%, he's in trouble. If a majority disapproves of his performance, that means they are going to be likely to cast their votes for the challenger. Obama is below 50% now. He's been around 47% in the RealClearPolitics average for a long time now, and since some of the polls tend to overestimate support for Democrats, the real number is probably a few points lower.

## Florida

### Obama win

#### Obama is winning Florida by one percentage point- that’s subject to change and Florida is key to election

**Silver, 07/14** (Nate Silver, chief pollster for New York Times’ 538 election polling center who is regarded as the top-level pollster based on distinct mathematical models, FivethirtyEight: Nate Silver's Political Calculus, "July 14: Another Recount in Florida?" on July 14, 2012 from fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/14/july-14-another-recount-in-florida/ak)

We haven’t usually been running forecast updates on the weekend, but a Florida poll will always get our attention. In this case, it’s a [new poll](http://www.cfnews13.com/content/news/cfnews13/news/article.html/content/news/articles/cfn/2012/7/13/florida_decides_poll_0.html) from Mason-Dixon, released on Saturday, that shows President Obama with a nominal 1-percentage-point lead there over Mitt Romney.¶ Our model shows Florida as close as can be. It projects the Nov. 6 result as Mr. Obama 49.5 percent, Mr. Romney 49.4 percent — an outcome that would be close enough to trigger another recount.¶ Mr. Obama has led in the majority of Florida polls recently — five of seven since June 1. The model hedges against these polls a bit because Florida is normally a bit Republican-leaning and its economy is doing quite poorly. That’s how it gets a tie there.¶ Still, Mr. Obama’s polling in Florida seems to have improved by a percentage point or so since a couple of months ago, at a time when [national polls](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/11/july-11-has-anything-changed-in-the-presidential-race/) have generally been quite steady. That has brought it a bit closer to the national average and increased its ranking on our list of [tipping point states](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/27/arizona-is-probably-not-a-swing-state/) that are most likely to decide the election.

#### Obama beating Romney in Florida, which is key to the election

**Miami Herald, 07/19** (The Miami Herald, "President Barack Obama visits Florida to tour his plans for 'middle class' tax cut, debt reduction" on July 19, 2012 from [www.miamiherald.com/2012/07/19/2902170/president-barack-obama-visits.html/](http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/07/19/2902170/president-barack-obama-visits.html/a)ak)

With Florida up for grabs in November, Obama and Romney are spending millions of dollars in television ads and making frequent campaign stops around the state.¶ The latest Herald/Tampa Bay Times/Bay News 9 poll, released last weekend, showed 46 percent of likely Florida voters backing Obama, 45 percent supporting Romney and 2 percent were behind Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson. Only 7 percent are undecided.¶ In a conference call with reporters Wednesday, Democratic National Committee chair and Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, and Ben LaBolt, Obama campaign spokesman, dismissed recent polls, including the Herald/Times/Bay News 9 poll.¶ They expect the race in the nation's biggest battleground state to go down to the wire, as it has in every presidential contest in the past two decades.¶ "We have no expectation that either candidate will get to the point of 10 points up or down,'' he said. "We think this will be close and competitive right up until the election and that's why we're building the largest grass roots campaign in history," said Wasserman Schultz.¶ That may explain why Obama's campaign trip to Florida will include Jacksonville, where he lost narrowly in 2008, and to Lee and Collier counties, where he lost badly before winning the state with a 2.5 percentage point margin.

### Romney win

#### Romney will win despite outsourcing allegations- Florida

**Reuters, 07/19** (Laura MacInnis and Sam Youngman for Reuterus, "Obama seeks gains in Florida as voter angst on economy rises" on July 19, 2012 from www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/19/us-usa-campaign-idUSBRE86G10D20120719/ak)

The CBS News/New York Times poll published on Thursday showed Romney's key argument -- that the president had failed in his stewardship of the economy -- seemed to be resonating more with voters than the Obama team's focus on Romney's past.¶ The poll showed 39 percent of respondents saying they approved of Obama's economic leadership while 55 percent disapproved. That represented a worsening from April, when 44 percent approved of the president's economic stewardship while 48 percent disapproved.¶ The Obama campaign played down the significance of the findings and pointed to another element in the poll: that Americans believed Obama cared more about the middle class than Romney did.¶ "We've always known this election would be close," said Obama campaign spokeswoman Jen Psaki.¶ It could be especially close in Florida, a state Obama won in 2008 but that traditionally swings its support between Democratic and Republican presidential candidates.¶ Recent polls have shown Obama and Romney neck-and-neck in the state, which accounts for 29 electoral votes in the presidential election. A presidential candidate needs 270 state electoral votes to win.¶ Obama retains strong support from Hispanic voters in Florida, but weakness in the housing market and concerns about the overall U.S. economy have clouded his broader prospects, while a large number of conservative-leaning retirees there have helped bolster Romney's chances.

## Ohio

### Obama win

#### Obama’s forecasted to win Ohio

**Silver, 07/16** (Nate Silver, chief pollster for New York Times’ 538 election polling center who is regarded as the top-level pollster based on distinct mathematical models, FivethirtyEight: Nate Silver's Political Calculus, "July 16: Obama Gains Ground From Ohio Poll" on July 16, 2012 from fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/16/july-16-obama-gains-ground-from-ohio-poll/ ak)

A series of surveys in swing states from the firm Purple Strategies shows relatively little change in the race since its last set of polls five weeks ago. But there is an exception in Ohio, where the poll now shows President Obama ahead of Mitt Romney by three points — rather than behind by three, as he was in the firm’s survey last month.¶ No one poll should be overinterpreted, but Purple Strategies had been one of the few firms to show Mr. Romney with a lead in Ohio, making this bad news for him. Mr. Obama’s chances of winning the Electoral College are now listed at 68.7 percent by the forecast model, up from 67.0 percent on Saturday.

## Virginia

#### It’s up for grabs- no one is winning

**Kraushaar, 07/19** (Josh Kraushaar is executive editor of National Journal Hotline and pens the weekly “Against the Grain” column. He also contributes to 2012 Decoded. Kraushaar previously reported for Politico, where he broke political news and covered and analyzed campaigns. Prior to joining Politico, Kraushaar was the editor of House Race Hotline where he covered the historic 2006 Congressional elections. Kraushaar has appeared as a political analyst on television and radio, including FOX News, MSNBC, CNN, National Public Radio and C-SPAN. He co-hosted a weekly radio show on XM Radio during the 2008 presidential election titled “Politics Nation” along with Hotline Editor-in-Chief Reid Wilson, "Bad Economy Taking Its Toll on Obama" on July 19, 2012 from decoded.nationaljournal.com/2012/07/bad-economy-taking-its-toll-on.php/ak)

The state-by-state numbers aren't any more encouraging. Quinnipiac's [just-released poll of Virginia voters](http://www.quinnipiac.edu/institutes-and-centers/polling-institute/virginia/release-detail?ReleaseID=1778) shows Obama and Romney tied, with Obama only polling at 44 percent. Among non-college educated whites, Obama's job approval dropped even further, down to 29 percent, with only 40 percent of college-educated whites approving of his job performance. To compensate in the Old Dominion, Obama would need overwhelming support from minorities and turnout comparable to their 2008 levels. All told, the numbers paint a picture of voters growing increasingly disillusioned with the president. By going hard negative against Romney, the president is landing some solid blows. But without much of a positive governing agenda to campaign on, it doesn't look like that will be enough by itself.

#### There is a standstill in Virginia- voters are torn

**Weisman, 07/19** (Jonathan Wiseman is a policy and elections analyst for the New York Times, "A Hunt for Split- Ticket Voter in a Tight Virginia Senate Race" on July 19, 2012 fromwww.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/us/politics/in-tight-virginia-senate-race-seeking-every-edge.html?\_r=1&pagewanted=all/ak)

Of more than a dozen competitive Senate races this year, none appear as close as the contest in Virginia. For both Mr. Kaine and Mr. Allen, the search for people like Ms. Trent who say their vote for senator is not tied to their vote for president has become imperative.¶ The state appears deadlocked between Mr. Obama and Mr. Romney. A Quinnipiac University poll released on Thursday had the presidential candidates even at 44 percent support in the state, a situation consistent with recent national polls. (The poll also showed the Senate race tied.) And neither Senate candidate wants his fate dependent on his party’s presidential standard-bearer.

## Impacts

### Israel Strike

**Israel will strike Iran before the election**

**Nimmo** 6 – 25 – **12** (Kurt, reporter for Prison planet news, “October Surprise: Will Israel Attack Iran Before the Election?”, <http://www.prisonplanet.com/october-surprise-will-israel-attack-iran-before-the-election.html> ck)

On Saturday, the Israeli newspaper Haartez reported a senior Israeli official as saying Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has decided to attack Iran prior to the elections in the U.S. “U.S. defense contracts, an Iranian F-16 acquisition, and Israel’s new military preparations suggest that all sides are getting ready for whatever may come,” Haaretz wrote, citing a report posted by Business Insider. Business Insider and Haaretz did not venture to speculate when Israel would launch an attack. On Sunday, Michael Carmichael suggested the attack would occur during the Democrat national convention. “Military experts have long agreed that the ‘sweet spot’ for an Israeli attack on Iran will be this coming September or October precisely because of the timing of the US presidential election cycle,” Carmichael explains. “For maximum political impact and minimal diplomatic responsiveness, the time of the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, NC – September 3-6 comes within this window of opportunity as well as the days immediately prior to the US election – say from Halloween till the 6th of November.” Carmichael notes that elections have played an instrumental role in military activities. He mentions Israel’s Operation Cast Lead and argues it was timed to coincide with the transition between Obama and Bush and ended abruptly immediately before the Inauguration in January 2009. He also mentions the Tet Offensive in early 1968 that removed LBJ from the race for the White House. In May, Jeffrey Goldberg wrote that Netanyahu has settled political differences within his ruling coalition and this makes an attack more likely. On Thursday, Israel said a military strike is more likely now that talks between Iran and the West on Iran’s nuclear program have failed. “I don’t want to pretend to set timelines for the world,” said Defense Minister Ehud Barak about a new round of sanctions imposed on Iran, “but we have said loud and clear that it cannot be a matter of weeks but it (also) cannot be a matter of years.” Russian president Vladimir Putin’s visit to Israel today underscores the seriousness of the situation. Putin is to meet with Netanyahu and other Israeli officials to talk about Iran and Syria. Russia opposes any military response to Iran’s nuclear program. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said last week on Russian television that in order to settle the Iranian issue, “it’s necessary to refrain from constant threats of using force, abandon scenarios aimed against Iran and stop dismissing the talks as failure.”

**Israel will strike if Obama is winning**

**Poor** 7 – 8 -**12** (Jeff, reporter for the Daily Caller, Krauthammer: Israelis will attack Iran if they think Obama will win re-election, dailycaller.com/2012/07/08/krauthammer-israelis-will-attack-iran-if-they-think-obama-will-win-re-election/ ck)

On Friday’s “Special Report,” Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer warned that Americans should **expect Israel to attack Iran if** President Barack **Obama’s re-election appears likely**. Krauthammer explained that there could be a punitive response from the Obama administration, which would be less likely before he is re-elected. **“If they think Obama will win reelection** I think **it’s likely they will attack before**, because afterwards there is no way to tell how Obama would punish Israel and they would be vulnerable to sanctions and other measure of the United States,” he said. Krauthammer reminded viewers of the time frame advanced by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta earlier this year, and explained how that is a sign that “the clock is running.” “The window is between now — remember, the Secretary of Defense said earlier in year that Israel would have attacked by now, attack in April, May, June,” he continued. “The clock is running. They are simply waiting to make sure that the sham negotiations are declared over, rather than put on life support — to say all options have been tried and now we have to defend ourselves

### No Israel Strike

**Israel won’t strike Iran – threat of strike is to spur tougher international stance**

**Tobin** 5 – 6 – **12** (Jonathan, senior editor of Commentary magazine, columnist for the JointMedia News Service (JNS) and his writing has appeared in the New York Post, the Jerusalem Post, the Weekly Standard, the New York Times and many other publications. Over the course of his career, he has won more than 50 journalism awards for commentary, editorial writing, and arts criticism, “Iran, Obama and Bibi’s October Surprise”, <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2012/05/06/benefits-of-bibi-october-surprise-scenario-israel-elections-netanyahu-obama-iran-nuclear/> ck)

On Friday, a commentator on Israel’s Channel 2 said aloud what others had been whispering in recent days. The Times of Israel reports that commentator Amnon Abramovich claimed today’s announcement that new Israeli elections will be scheduled for September 4 may set in motion a chain of events that could lead to an Israeli attack on Iran sometime between that date and the U.S. presidential election in November. The scenario makes sense on the surface in that if, as expected, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu wins an easy victory in September, he theoretically would have two months to strike Iran while President Obama was campaigning for re-election and therefore unlikely to condemn or punish Israel for ignoring his wishes about the use of force to fend off Tehran’s nuclear threat. **That isn’t likely to happen for a number of reasons**, but the mere fact that it might is a positive development. As much as there is good reason to doubt that even under such seemingly favorable circumstances Israel would attack Iran on its own, the election announcement will have the salubrious effect of concentrating the minds of President Obama and his shaky allies in the P5+1 nuclear talks with Iran. The only reason the West has stepped up its previously weak sanctions on Iran that led to the current lackluster negotiations is that they believed Israel would act unless they started behaving as if they cared about the problem. As most informed observers have noted, the chances of the talks achieving anything that would actually lessen the danger are slim. But if the Iranians as well as Obama and his partners think Israel will strike in the fall that could put tremendous pressure on both sides to do more than diplomatic game playing. For all of the hysterical criticism being aimed at Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak for their supposed messianism about dealing with Iran, they have actually gone about their business on this issue in a rational manner. By making it clear to the world that Israel would not allow the Islamist regime to pose an existential threat to its existence, they have forced Obama to ratchet up his own rhetoric and to foreswear any policy of “containing” a nuclear Iran. They have also managed to pressure the European Union to threaten an oil embargo of Iran that would have been unimaginable without their fear that an Israeli attack would overturn the entire Middle East chessboard. 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.

### Israel Strike = Obama Lose

**Obama will prevent strike - fears political consequences – it’d make him lose**

**Herz** 4 – 2 – **12** (Douglas, reporter for American Thinker, internet publication specializing in national security,“If Israel Attacks Iran, Obama Loses Presidency”, <http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2012/04/if_israel_attacks_iran_obama_loses_presidency.html> ck)

If Israel were to attack Iran to destroy its nuclear weapons capability, Iran would retaliate by attempting to close the Strait of Hormuz as it has often threatened. The U.S. Fifth Fleet patrolling the area would likely be called upon to keep the Strait open, and expanded American military involvement in the region could not be ruled out. World oil and financial markets would be roiled. Israel would be hit with a barrage of rockets and international condemnations. And relations with strategic competitors such as China and Russia would hit the deep freeze. President Obama would have many 3AM telephone calls to deal with. But the real pain for Obama would come from the political price he would pay as Americans saw gasoline prices skyrocket (again), dead and wounded U.S. soldiers and sailors coming home from the Middle East (again), plummeting financial markets (again), possible terror attacks on U.S. soil (again), and internet disruptions from Iranian cyberwar. **No president could survive politically from such a series of calamities**. Thus president **Obama is desperate to delay any Israeli attack on Iran** until after the November elections, even to the extent of foiling Israel's near-term military plans.

## AT: Ad attacks

#### They’re not working

So far, the polls show that the negative ads haven't broken Romney's campaign. But there is a deeper ideological reason why this campaign is not likely to succeed. Remember that this is not just a negative campaign against Romney. It is a negative campaign against capitalism and against success. And it's not just that the Obama campaign overreaching with their negative attacks on Romney. They are also overreaching with their negative attacks on success.

## **AT: Independents key**

#### Independents not key to the election- Obama can lose the majority of them and still win

**Cohn, 07/18** (Nate Cohn is a staff writer for The New Republic who is considered to be one of the most credible sources for predicting the elections, "How Obama's Weakness With Independents Could Change the Electoral Map" on July 18, 2012 from www.tnr.com/blog/electionate/105096/the-consequences-obamas-weakness-independents-the-electoral-map/ak)

With Obama [struggling among independent voters](http://www.tnr.com/blog/electionate/105091/does-obama-have-problem-independent-voters) and Democrats likely to constitute a slightly larger share of the electorate than Republicans, Romney will probably carry independents in a close national election. That doesn't mean the effects will be the same across the electoral map, though: Since independents aren't distributed evenly across the country, Obama's dependence on independent voters varies considerably by state. ¶ Regardless of whether we consider all independent voters or just white independent voters, self-identified independents constituted a far greater share of Obama's coalition in the North and Midwest than in the South and Mid-Atlantic. In states like New Hampshire, independents constituted an unusually large share of the electorate; not only that, but Obama carried a clear majority of them. Partisanship increases along with African Americans and white evangelicals as one heads further south, where both candidate's chances dependent more on turnout than the disposition of a marginal number of swing voters.¶ Even though Obama seems to have lost considerable support among white independents, there is not a convincing relationship between Obama's losses since 2008 and his previous dependence on independent voters. For example, Obama hasn't suffered undo losses in New Hampshire, despite being the state where he was most dependent on independent voters.¶ Although a few outlying states prevent a remotely compelling correlation between Obama’s losses since 2008 and his dependence on independents, there is still a rough pattern: Obama was more dependent on white independents in states where he relied on the support of white working class voters. ¶ If you compare Obama’s dependence on white working class voters and independents, Colorado stands out as the only state where he was particularly reliant on white independents, but not white working class voters. That might help explain why Obama has lost more ground in Colorado than his relatively low dependence on white working class voters might suggest. ¶ At the same time, the Mid-Atlantic stands out—again!—as the region where Obama would be most likely to hold his gains from 2008. To illustrate just how resilient Obama might be, consider this: If Obama lost a staggering 20 percent of support among white independents, it would reduce his share of the popular vote by just one percentage point in North Carolina.¶ Independents and white Independents are broad categories that obscure considerable underlying diversity. But to the extent that independents might be expected to behave similarly across the country, weakness among independents—and particularly white independents—could subtly alter the electoral map. In states like New Hampshire and Colorado, losses among white independents would have big consequences, even while Obama's coalition holds in North Carolina.

## AT: Thumpers

### AT: Tax Returns thumper

#### Returns don’t matter- race is still tight

Grier 7/19 (Peter, staff writer at the Christian Science Monitor, Why won't Mitt Romney release more tax returns?, <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/DC-Decoder/Decoder-Wire/2012/0719/Why-won-t-Mitt-Romney-release-more-tax-returns>)

He seems to be treating the tax return question in the same way. In his view, it’s probable that producing more tax documents would only lengthen the pain, since the papers would produce lots of stuff for Obama researchers to investigate. And at this point, he can’t give in, or at least can’t give in quickly. It would look as if his response was being driven by pressure from the media and the Obama campaign. So he’s trying to ride out the Twitter storm, as he has done so far with Trump. As it has from the beginning of the general election campaign, the Romney team is doggedly framing the election as a referendum on Obama and the economy. The challenger may not enter into it, in this view. A new CBS poll therefore must hearten Romney operatives – it shows the former Massachusetts governor ahead by 47 to 46 percent, though that slim lead is within the survey’s margin of error.

#### Doesn’t change the election

Bolton 7/17 (Alexander, reporter at the Hill, GOP prods Romney on tax returns, <http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/238561-gop-prods-romney-on-tax-returns>)

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) noted he released only two years of tax returns during the 2008 campaign, adding that, in 2004, Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) revealed little tax information for his wife, Teresa Heinz, a multimillionaire. McCain also firmly rejected speculation that he might have passed over Romney for his running mate four years ago because of the tax issue. “It just shows the really gutter campaign the Obama campaign is running,” he said. “They have become a disgraceful campaign; they should be ashamed of themselves.” Other Republicans joined him in rallying to Romney’s defense. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) said former President Ronald Reagan released only one year of tax returns in 1980 and warned that Democrats would find another issue to distract voters from the sluggish economy if Romney shared his records. “It’s not required,” he said. “Democrats are trying to use it to distract Romney from his message, but it will pass. The election will come down to who can lead the country in the future. As soon as this [controversy] is over, they’ll have another one.”

### AT: Healthcare Thumper

#### Health care doesn’t thump- it’s unpopular

Flaherty 7/2 (Anne, writer for the AP, GOP bets health-care law will affect fall election, <http://www.tennessean.com/viewart/20120702/NEWS02/307020025/GOP-bets-health-care-law-will-affect-fall-election>)

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 affect 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. 47% opposes 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.

#### At worst there’s no net impact- divisions

Lightman 7/12 (David, reporter for McClatchy Newspapers, New poll finds mixed messages from public on health care, <http://www.sacbee.com/2012/07/12/4626437/new-poll-finds-mixed-messages.html#storylink=cpy>)

The public is sending mixed messages about its views of the 2010 federal health care law, making the potential impact on the November election hard to judge. By a 55-36 percent margin, people think the law has a tax increase, according to a new Quinnipiac University poll released Thursday. Most people have to obtain coverage by 2014 or face a penalty — or a tax, depending on one's point of view. At the same time, voters said, by a 48-45 percent margin, they agreed with the June 28 Supreme Court ruling upholding the law. Yet by 49-43 percent, they want it repealed. The House of Representatives Wednesday voted for repeal on a largely party line vote. The Democratic-run Senate is not expected to go along. 55 percent said a presidential candidate's views on health care matter. 59 percent said the court's decision will not affect their vote. But 27 percent said it would make them less likely to vote for President Barack Obama, while 12 percent said an Obama vote was more likely.

### AT: VP thumper

#### No game changer VP

Miami Herald 7/19 (Will Romney roll dice on VP pick, or play it safe?, <http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/07/19/2903433/will-romney-roll-dice-on-vp-pick.html#storylink=cpy>)

In a signal he’s getting close, he’s put a staff in place this week to help the new candidate. Randy Bumps, former political director for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, will be the vice presidential candidate’s operations director, and former party spokesman Kevin Sheridan will be his communications director. Romney, aides say, knows well the first maxim of picking a running mate: Do no harm. "If there is a game changer, it would be rather remarkable," said Andrew Kohut, president of the Pew Research Center.

# Aff Updates

## Thumpers

### Tax Returns

#### Tax returns thump independents

Geiger 7/19 (Kim, reporter at the LA Times, Poll: Most Americans think Romney should release more tax returns, http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-pn-poll-most-americans-think-romney-should-release-more-tax-returns-20120719,0,7055712.story)

As pressure builds for Mitt Romney to release additional tax returns, a new poll suggests a majority of Americans agree that the Republican presidential candidate should disclose more about his financial history. A USA Today/Gallup poll conducted Wednesday night found that 54% of adults thought Romney should release more than the two years of returns he had already agreed to make public. Still, 42% of those surveyed said they did not expect the tax forms to reveal information that could damage Romney’s campaign. And 47% said they thought the information contained in the returns was “largely irrelevant to voters.” The results of the poll were predictably split along party lines, with Republicans less interested in seeing the returns and Democrats more likely to think the information would hurt Romney’s image. But 45% of independents said they thought the tax forms could show either that Romney was unfit to be president (9%) or reveal information harmful to the campaign (36%). Independents were also more likely than Republicans, but less likely than Democrats, to think the returns would provide legitimate information to voters.

#### Returns ensure Romney loss

Green 7/17 (Joshua, reporter at Bloomberg BusinessWeek, What's Romney Hiding in His Tax Returns?, http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-07-17/whats-romney-hiding-in-his-tax-returns)

Last night I had dinner with some (non-Bain) private equity executives, and I took the opportunity to quiz them on the topic and test my own theories about Romney’s tax returns. Let me emphasize that I have no idea what is in those returns, and neither did anyone I spoke with. What follows is unfounded, though not implausible, speculation. The most intriguing scenario that emerged about what could be lurking in those returns is as follows: When the stock market collapsed in 2008, the wealthiest investors fared worse than everyone else. (See, for instance, this Merrill Lynch study.) The “ultra-rich”—those with fortunes of more than $30 million—fared worst of all, losing on average about 25 percent of their net worth. “There was really nowhere to hide as an investor in 2008,” Merrill Lynch’s president of global wealth management pointed out in 2009. “No region ended the year unscathed.” As a member of the ultra-rich, Romney probably wasn’t spared major losses. And it’s possible he suffered a large enough capital loss that, carried forward and coupled with his various offshore tax havens, he wound up paying no U.S. federal taxes at all in 2009. If true, this would be politically deadly for him. Even assuming that his return was thoroughly clean and legal—a safe assumption, it seems to me—the fallout would dwarf the controversy that attended the news that Romney had paid a tax rate of just 14 percent in 2010 and that estimated he’d pay a similar rate in 2011.

#### Returns are a lose-lose

USA Today 7/18 (Editorial: Romney tax returns a must-see if he wants to win, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/story/2012-07-18/Romney-tax-returns-presidency/56323054/1>)

How much he puts out is his prerogative. There's no law saying he has to release more than two years. In fact, there's no law saying he has to release any returns. But he should, and probably must, if he plans on winning the presidency. When you run for the highest office in the land, voters have every reason to understand your finances, and not just for the curiosity value. Romney's returns are the definitive source for answering a number of significant questions: •How much of his wealth came from astute business decision-making and how much from tax avoidance and financial engineering? •What was the purpose of his offshore accounts in the Cayman Islands and Switzerland? •How did he end up with $21 million to $102 million in an Individual Retirement Account despite strict annual contribution limits? •Did he skirt taxes in ways not available to most voters? Particularly, how much of his wealth came from a loophole that allows hedge fund and private equity managers with incomes that can exceed $1 billion a year to pay a tax rate of just 15%, less than half the normal top rate? All these questions bear on the kind of president he would be, particularly at a time when the public is suspicious of Washington's insider games, often played using the tax code. In political terms, the controversy over the returns puts Romney in a tough spot. If he releases more, the Obama campaign will undoubtedly use them to push its theme that he's out of touch with the middle class. But if he withholds them, he sends an unmistakable signal that he has something to hide.

## **Too Early**

#### Ads don’t matter yet- no one is going to pay attention until October

**Tracinski, 07/19** (Robert Tracinski writes daily commentary at TIADaily.com. He is the editor of The Intellectual Activist and a contributor to RealClearMarkets and is also an elections analyst for RealClearPolitics, "How the Election Will Play Out (and why Romney will win)" on July 19, 2012 from www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/07/19/how\_the\_election\_will\_play\_out\_and\_why\_romney\_will\_win\_114848.html/ak)

But there is a big problem with dumping all these negative ads so early. If you bring up a charge in May or June, the Romney campaign and dozens of commentators and bloggers will have time to refute the attacks, or at least come up with convincing attempts to explain them away. You also run the risk of over-reaching—as in the Romney felony charge—and creating a story, not about Romney's wrongdoing, but about your campaign's unfair attacks. But most of all, these charges become "old news," so when the Obama campaign tries to bring them up again in October, once everyone is finally paying attention, the charges lose their impact because the press and the pundits have already heard it before. This business is called "news" for a reason, because it moves forward on things that are new.

#### No one is paying attention yet- the Olympics are starting

**Tracinski, 07/19** (Robert Tracinski writes daily commentary at TIADaily.com. He is the editor of The Intellectual Activist and a contributor to RealClearMarkets and is also an elections analyst for RealClearPolitics, "How the Election Will Play Out (and why Romney will win)" on July 19, 2012 from www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/07/19/how\_the\_election\_will\_play\_out\_and\_why\_romney\_will\_win\_114848.html/ak)

Then there is the calendar. Outside of Washington and the media, most voters are not paying much attention to the race yet. And in exactly eight days, the Olympics begin.¶ The Olympics are the crucial dividing point, because they will dominate the airwaves and the news, sucking away whatever attention anyone is now paying to the election. So Obama's negative campaign blitz has to have whatever effect it's going to have in those eight days. But what happens when the Olympics start? To begin with, the Olympics provide an opportunity for Mitt Romney to highlight the best part of his record, his successful turnaround of the 2002 Winter Olympics. And he can do so without having to do very much or spend much money. It will be natural, after all, for the sports reporters covering the Olympics to mention Romney's history with the movement.