



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

# **Nationwide Voter Survey:**

## **President Obama's Current Political Standing and Republican Candidate Prospects for 2012**

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## Survey Overview

- President Obama's sliding job rating is real and not just a temporary blip. His numbers have gradually eroded since May. In this survey, he's dipped slightly below 50% on overall approval and slightly below 40% on handling health care, which is dragging him down.
- The electorate is increasingly divided on Obama, with significant partisan polarization.
- Troubling for Obama is his standing among independents. His overall approval number among this critical swing constituency is 43%. In 2008, he beat John McCain among independents 52-44%. Independents think Obama is intelligent, honest and truthful, and many still see him as a strong leader, but large majorities think he's trying to do too much too fast, spending too much, growing government too much, and likely to raise taxes.
- Obama continues to do well among his base constituencies: African Americans, voters under 30 and Democrats. Three-in-10 Democrats say Obama has exceeded their expectations plus 56% think he's doing as expected. Eleven percent say he's doing worse.
- Despite Obama's diminished popularity, he leads the major Republican presidential possibilities by wide nine to 19-point margins. Romney is currently the strongest potential challenger; Huckabee is a close second. Palin is weakest; Gingrich does slightly better.
- Among Republicans, Romney leads the GOP field for the 2012 nomination. He also leads among independents who lean Republican.
- **BOTTOM LINE:** Obama has time to get things back together and overcome this slump, especially if there is visibly sustained improvement in the economy. But for now, he's in a vulnerable position on big issues (the economy, health care) that people care about. Swing voters, who played a decisive role in his election, are increasingly worried where he's taking the country. He needs to quickly reassure them. Even as Obama's opposition energizes and GOP constituencies gain new confidence, the President remains lucky that the Republicans have yet to rebuild their own nationwide credibility. The next 90 days are crucial for him.

## Methodology

**Clarus Research Group** is a full-service, nonpartisan, survey research firm based in Washington, D.C. that provides market insights and practical analysis for corporate, association, nonprofit, political and advocacy clients. More information on Clarus clients and service offerings may be found on the Web at [www.ClarusRG.com](http://www.ClarusRG.com).

Clarus conducted this nationwide survey among 1,003 U.S. voters, based on a representative sample. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent.

Interviews were conducted via telephone by live interviewers August 14-18, 2009.

*Dr. Ronald A. Faucheux, President, Clarus Research Group*  
*Brynna McCosker, Director of Operations, Clarus Research Group*

## Key Findings

- *Obama's job approval has fallen slightly below 50%. His strongest voter groups are those under 30 years old (67%), African Americans (83%), Democrats (84%) and the northeast (59%).*
- *Among independent voters, the key swing group in elections, Obama's positive rating is now 43%.*



In general, do you approve or disapprove of the job President Barack Obama is doing?

	All	M	F	Whites	Minorities	<45	>45
<i>Approve</i>	49%	42%	56%	44%	65%	53%	46%
<i>Disapprove</i>	39	45	35	46	19	34	44
<i>NO/NS/NA*</i>	11	14	10	10	17	13	10

*\* No opinion, not sure, no answer*

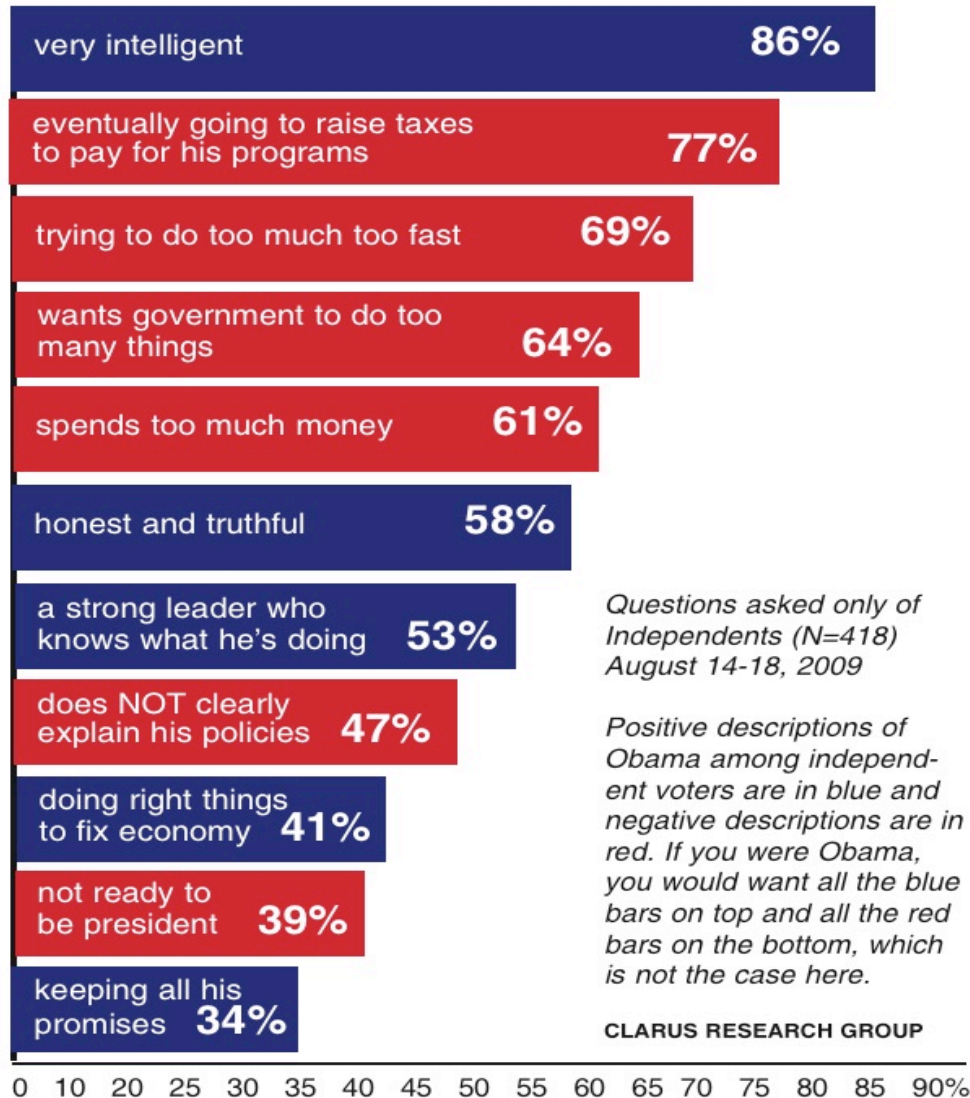
*NOTE: M = males, F = females; Minorities include African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans and others; age is under 45 years old and over 45 years old*

## Key Findings

- In 2008, 52% of independents voted for Obama. His current job approval is 43% among independents.
- Although most independents believe Obama is intelligent, honest and truthful, a majority believe he wants government to do too many things, spends too much money, will raise taxes, and is trying to do too much too fast.
- 41% of independents think he's doing the right things to fix the economy, 45% don't.



## How independents describe Obama....



## Key Findings

- Among Democrats, 30% say Obama is doing better than expected and 11% say worse.
- Among independents, 13% say better than expected and 24% worse.
- Among blacks, 37% say better than expected and 6% say worse.
- Among voters under 30, 15% say better and 14% say worse.



Comparing what you thought of Barack Obama when he was running for President to what you think now, would you say he's doing a better job than you expected, a worse job than you expected or is he doing the same as you expected?

**Asked only of Democrats and Independents (N=595)**

	All	M	F	Whites	Minorities	< 45	> 45
<b>Better</b>	22%	15%	27%	16%	34%	14%	27%
<b>Worse</b>	17	21	14	19	14	17	17
<b>Same</b>	56	58	54	63	43	63	52
<b>NO/NS/NA</b>	5	5	4	2	9	5	4

## Key Findings

- Clearly, health care is dragging Obama down. Approval of his handling of the issue is 10 points lower than his overall job rating.
- The only groups giving Obama strong approval ratings on health care are Democrats, 71%, and blacks, 66%.
- Interestingly, only 52% of voters who do NOT have medical insurance approve of Obama on the health care issue.



Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Obama is doing handling the health care issue?

	All	M	F	Whites	Minorities	<45	>45
<i>Approve</i>	39%	35%	42%	34%	53%	40%	38%
<i>Disapprove</i>	48	53	44	54	32	48	49
<i>NO/NS/NA</i>	13	11	14	12	16	11	14

## Key Findings

- *Obama leads Romney by 9 points, but falls below the 50% mark by 3 points.*
- *Obama polls 93% of blacks and 87% of Democrats.*
- *Romney wins independents 42% to 40% and carries Republicans 74% to 11%.*



If the next presidential election were held today, and the two candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney, for whom would you vote?

	All	M	F	Whites	Minorities	<45	>45
<i>Obama</i>	47%	42%	52%	39%	73%	51%	45%
<i>Romney</i>	38	41	35	46	13	35	41
<i>NO/NS/NA</i>	15	17	13	15	14	14	15



## Key Findings

- *Obama leads Palin by 19 points.*
- *Obama polls 93% of blacks and 88% of Democrats.*
- *Obama wins independents 49% to 34%. Palin wins Republicans 71% to 17%.*
- *Palin does best in the South (42%) and worst in the Northeast (21%).*

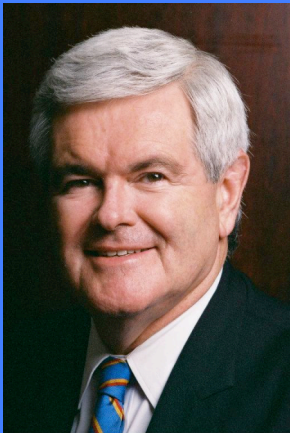


If the next presidential election were held today, and the two candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Sarah Palin, for whom would you vote?

	All	M	F	Whites	Minorities	<45	> 45
<b>Obama</b>	53%	47%	58%	46%	75%	59%	49%
<b>Palin</b>	34	37	31	40	14	31	37
<b>NO/NS/NA</b>	13	16	11	14	11	11	14

## Key Findings

- *Obama leads Gingrich by 18 points.*
- *Obama polls 92% of blacks and 88% of Democrats.*
- *Obama wins independents 46% to 38%. Gingrich wins Republicans 66% to 18%.*
- *Gingrich does best in the South (38%) and worst in the Northeast (25%).*

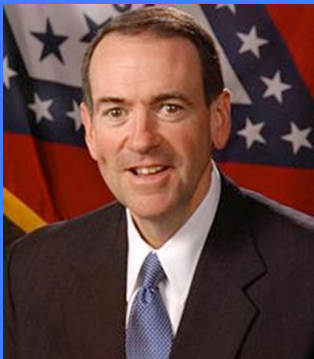


If the next presidential election were held today, and the two candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Newt Gingrich, for whom would you vote?

	All	M	F	Whites	Minorities	<45	>45
<b>Obama</b>	52%	46%	57%	45%	72%	57%	48%
<b>Gingrich</b>	34	39	30	41	13	30	38
<b>NO/NS/NA</b>	15	15	14	14	15	13	15

## Key Findings

- *Obama leads Huckabee by 10 points, but falls below the 50% mark by 2 points.*
- *Obama polls 88% of blacks and 88% of Democrats.*
- *Huckabee wins independents 41% to 40% and Republicans 73% to 12%.*
- *Huckabee's best region is the South (43%) and worst is the Northeast (31%).*



If the next presidential election were held today, and the two candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mike Huckabee, for whom would you vote?

	All	M	F	Whites	Minorities	<45	> 45
<b>Obama</b>	48%	43%	52%	41%	68%	50%	46%
<b>Huckabee</b>	38	38	37	45	15	33	41
<b>NO/NS/NA</b>	15	19	11	14	16	17	13

## Key Findings

- *Obama polls below 50% against both Romney and Huckabee and above 50% against Palin and Gingrich.*
- *At this point, Palin appears to be the weakest GOP opponent for Obama. Her performance among independent voters is much weaker than the other three Republican possibilities tested.*



## Presidential Trial Heat Summary

	<i>All</i>	<i>Obama lead</i>	<i>Among Independents</i>
Obama	47	+9 points	Romney +2 points
Romney	38		
Obama	48	+10 points	Huckabee +1 point
Huckabee	38		
Obama	52	+18 points	Obama +8 points
Gingrich	34		
Obama	53	+19 points	Obama +15 points
Palin	34		

## Key Findings

- Among Republicans, Romney leads with 28%, then Huckabee 22%, Palin 20%, Gingrich 15%, and Jindal 3%.
- Among independents who lean Republican, Romney leads with 35%, then Huckabee 19%, Palin 17%, Gingrich 15%, and Jindal 5%.
- Romney does best in the Midwest (36%) and Northeast (35%); Huckabee does best in the West (28%) and Midwest (25%); Palin does best in the South and Northeast (22%), and Gingrich does best in the South (19%).



Of the following possible candidates for the next Republican Presidential nomination, which one would you now most likely favor?

*Asked only of Republicans (and independents who lean Republican) N=353*

	All	M	F	Whites	Minorities	< 45	> 45
<i>Romney</i>	30%	34%	27%	30%	38%	34%	28%
<i>Palin</i>	18	20	17	18	22	17	20
<i>Huckabee</i>	22	16	27	23	11	21	22
<i>Gingrich</i>	15	16	13	14	17	14	15
<i>Jindal</i>	4	5	2	4	1	4	3
<i>Someone else (volunteered)</i>	2	2	2	2	--	3	1
<i>NO/NS/NA</i>	10	8	12	10	11	6	12