

2012 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Santorum Gains Six Points in U.S. But Obama Still Leads Republicans

Mitt Romney drops in contest against incumbent president, who keeps double-digit leads over Ron Paul and Newt Gingrich.

[NEW YORK – Feb. 20, 2012] - Republican Rick Santorum has made significant gains in a head-to-head presidential contest against Barack Obama in the United States, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,016 American adults, 49 per cent of decided voters would support Obama in the 2012 election, while 46 per cent would cast a ballot for Santorum. Since the previous survey [conducted in January](#), Santorum has gained five points, while Obama has dropped two.

Obama holds a five-point advantage in a contest against Mitt Romney (49% to 44%). Since last month, the incumbent president has gained two points in this scenario, while the Republican contender has lost five points.

President Obama's numbers are stable in an election facing Ron Paul (50% to 39%). Against Newt Gingrich, the Democratic incumbent's lead is now 17 points (54% to 37%).

Analysis

This month, Rick Santorum has supplanted Mitt Romney as the Republican candidate who fares best against Barack Obama. Male voters are tied when assessing these two rivals, and the former

KEY FINDINGS

- **Rick Santorum (46%, +6) closer to Barack Obama (49%, -2) in head-to-head match-up**
- **Mitt Romney (44%, -5) now five points behind the President (49%, +2)**
- **Obama keeps double-digit leads over Ron Paul (50% to 39%) and Newt Gingrich (54% to 37%)**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From February 15 to February 17, 2012, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,016 randomly selected American adults who are Springboard America panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of the United States. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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Pennsylvania Senator has a sizeable lead among respondents over the age of 55 (58% to 39%). Also, half of Independents are saying they would vote for Santorum in this match-up.

Romney has lost his edge over Obama, and while still keeping the upper hand in the oldest demographic, he is clearly not connecting as well as he did in the first month of the year. Independents are now more likely to support the Republicans in a contest against Obama if Santorum becomes the nominee.

Independents are evenly split in an election pitting Obama versus Ron Paul, but the Texas Congressman has the worst retention rate of all four GOP candidates, holding on to 70 per cent of Republicans (compared to at least 80% for Romney and Santorum). Gingrich was unable to gain points this month, and is only popular among voters over the age of 55.

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About Angus Reid Public Opinion

[Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) is a public affairs practice headed by Dr. Angus Reid: an industry visionary who has spent more than four decades asking questions to figure out what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. A team of talented and experienced practitioners with a unique and profound understanding of global issues conduct high quality research throughout the world on a daily basis for corporations, governments, academic researchers, and non-profit organizations.

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- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
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2012 U.S. Presidential Election

Suppose that **Rick Santorum** was already the Republican Party's party nominee in 2012. Who would you vote for in the presidential election?

– Based on 652 respondents who expressed a preference in this scenario .

	Gender			Age			Party ID		
	All	Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Barack Obama	49%	48%	50%	63%	50%	39%	86%	11%	42%
Rick Santorum	46%	48%	44%	31%	44%	58%	8%	83%	51%
A third party candidate	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	5%	8%

2012 U.S. Presidential Election

Suppose that **Rick Santorum** was already the Republican Party's party nominee in 2012. Who would you vote for in the presidential election?

	Feb. 2012	Jan. 2012
Barack Obama	49%	51%
Rick Santorum	46%	40%
A third party candidate	5%	9%

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2012 U.S. Presidential Election

Suppose that **Mitt Romney** was already the Republican Party's party nominee in 2012. Who would you vote for in the presidential election?
– Based on 665 respondents who expressed a preference in this scenario.

	Gender			Age			Party ID		
	All	Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Barack Obama	49%	47%	52%	52%	51%	45%	88%	10%	42%
Mitt Romney	44%	46%	42%	37%	44%	51%	10%	80%	45%
A third party candidate	6%	7%	5%	10%	5%	4%	3%	10%	13%

2012 U.S. Presidential Election

Suppose that **Mitt Romney** was already the Republican Party's party nominee in 2012. Who would you vote for in the presidential election?

	Feb. 2012	Jan. 2012
Barack Obama	49%	47%
Mitt Romney	44%	49%
A third party candidate	6%	4%

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2012 U.S. Presidential Election

Suppose that **Ron Paul** was already the Republican Party's party nominee in 2012. Who would you vote for in the presidential election?

– Based on 608 registered voters who expressed a preference in this scenario.

	Gender			Age			Party ID		
	All	Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Barack Obama	50%	47%	52%	51%	49%	48%	83%	10%	42%
Ron Paul	39%	41%	37%	42%	38%	39%	9%	70%	41%
A third party candidate	11%	12%	11%	7%	13%	13%	8%	20%	17%

2012 U.S. Presidential Election

Suppose that **Ron Paul** was already the Republican Party's party nominee in 2012. Who would you vote for in the presidential election?

	Feb. 2012	Jan. 2012
Barack Obama	50%	50%
Ron Paul	39%	40%
A third party candidate	11%	10%

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2012 U.S. Presidential Election

Suppose that **Newt Gingrich** was already the Republican Party's party nominee in 2012. Who would you vote for in the presidential election?

– Based on 630 registered voters who expressed a preference in this scenario .

	Gender			Age			Party ID		
	All	Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Barack Obama	54%	51%	57%	55%	59%	48%	87%	13%	48%
Newt Gingrich	37%	40%	32%	28%	32%	47%	6%	77%	31%
A third party candidate	9%	9%	11%	16%	9%	5%	7%	10%	21%

2012 U.S. Presidential Election

Suppose that **Newt Gingrich** was already the Republican Party's party nominee in 2012. Who would you vote for in the presidential election?

	Feb. 2012	Jan. 2012
Barack Obama	54%	55%
Newt Gingrich	37%	38%
A third party candidate	9%	7%

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