



**NBC News/Marist Poll:
Obama and Romney Tied in Iowa**

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

In Iowa, President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney are in a dead heat. Among registered voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, Obama receives 44% while Romney garners the same proportion -- 44%. Two percent support another candidate, and 10% are undecided.

"Both Obama and Romney are far from fifty percent in Iowa and have a lot of ground to cover," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "But, Obama's supporters are less enthusiastic and less interested than Romney's, and this poses a special problem for the incumbent president."

Key points:

- By **party**, 82% of Democrats are behind Obama while 83% of Republicans back Romney.
- Among independent voters, Obama -- 42% -- and Romney -- 38% -- are locked in a tight contest.
- Voters who have an **excellent or good chance of voting** in November divide. 46% are for Romney while 45% are for the president.
- Among those who express a high **level of enthusiasm** about the presidential election, a majority of voters -- 51% -- are behind Romney while Obama receives 43%. However, Obama receives majority support -- 53% -- among those who are moderately enthusiastic. Among these voters, Romney garners 40%. Voters with a low degree of enthusiasm divide. 38% back Mr. Romney compared with 35% for Mr. Obama.
- Nearly half of those with a high level of **interest** in the presidential contest -- 48% -- are for Romney compared with 42% for the president. Among those who express a moderate degree of interest, the president -- 50% -- leads Romney -- 37%. 45% of

Iowa voters who have low interest in the election are for Obama while 40% are for Romney.

- A majority of voters who **strongly support** their choice of candidate -- 54% -- are for Obama compared with 46% for Romney.
- There is a **gender gap**. 49% of men throw their support behind Romney while 40% are for Obama. Among women, Obama has 48% to 39% for Romney.
- President Obama carries Iowa voters under the **age** of 30. Here, he receives 50% to 40% for Romney. The candidates are neck and neck among older voters. Voters between 30 and 44 back Romney 44% to 42% for Obama. Among those 45 to 59, 45% support Romney while 44% are for Obama. Looking at those 60 and older, 44% rally for Obama while the same proportion -- 44% -- backs Obama.

About Two-Thirds Strongly Committed to Candidate

67% of registered voters report they strongly support their choice of candidate while 25% are somewhat committed to their choice. Seven percent might cast their ballot differently come November, and 2% are unsure.

Key points:

- More than seven in ten Obama supporters -- 71% -- are firmly in the president's camp while 62% of those behind Romney say they will not waver in their commitment to him.

About Four in Ten Very Enthusiastic About Voting in November

Only 38% of registered voters in Iowa are very enthusiastic about voting in November. 37% are somewhat enthusiastic while 17% are not too enthusiastic. Eight percent are not enthusiastic at all.

Key points:

- 46% of Romney's supporters are very enthusiastic about going to the polls in November. This compares with 38% of Obama's backers who have a similar degree of enthusiasm.

Iowa Voters Divide About Obama's Job Performance

Looking at the president's job rating among Iowa voters, 46% approve of how Obama is doing in office while 45% disapprove. 10% are unsure.

When NBC News/Marist last reported this question in December, 45% of voters in the state gave the president good marks while 43% thought his performance fell short. 12%, at that time, were unsure.

Voters Divide Over Candidates' Favorability

Nearly half of Iowa's registered voters -- 48% -- have a favorable view of the president while 45% have an unfavorable view of him. Seven percent are unsure.

Voters also divide about what they think about Romney. 43% perceive him positively while 43% have a lesser impression of Romney. 15% are unsure.

Plurality Says Candidate's Stance on Same-Sex Marriage Has Little Impact on Vote

34% of Iowa's electorate report they are more likely to vote for Romney because he opposes same-sex marriage while 22% say they are more likely to cast their ballot for Obama because he supports same-sex marriage. However, 42% state a candidate's position on same-sex marriage does not make much difference to their vote. Three percent are undecided.

Economy Tops Social Issues on Many Voters' Priority List

When it comes to deciding their vote, 71% of voters in Iowa say the economy carries more weight than social issues. This compares with 22% who report social issues trump the economy. Seven percent are unsure.

When it comes to the candidate who will do a better job handling the economy, 46% think Romney is the candidate who is better skilled to do so while 41% believe Obama is. 13% are unsure.

Looking at the candidate who comes closer to voters' views on social issues, there is a divide. 45% say Obama better reflects their position while 43% report Romney shares their stance. 12% are unsure.

On other issues:

- 50% of Iowa voters think Obama will do a better job **handling foreign policy**. This compares with 36% who have this opinion of Romney. 14% are unsure.
- Half of voters -- 50% -- believe Obama is the candidate who best **understands voters' problems**. This compares with 38% for Romney. 13% are unsure.
- A majority of the electorate -- 52% -- reports Romney will do a better job **reducing the national debt** while 34% think Obama is better equipped to do so. 14% are unsure.

Economy Inherited, Says Nearly Six in Ten

57% of registered voters in Iowa think President Obama mostly inherited the nation's current economic conditions. 34%, though, report the state of the economy is mostly a result of the president's own policies. Nine percent are unsure.

What does the future hold for the U.S. economy? A majority of voters are optimistic. 55% believe the worst is over while 36% think there is more bad news ahead. Nine percent are unsure.

In the next year, nearly half of voters -- 49% -- say the economy will be about the same as it is now. This compares with 31% who think the economy will get better and 16% who believe it will get worse. Four percent are unsure.

When it comes to the personal finances of Iowa voters, more than six in ten -- 61% -- say they will be status quo in the coming year. 27% state their family's money matters will improve while 12% think they will get worse.

Gotta' Get Back on Track, Says Majority

54% of Iowa voters believe things in the nation are off on the wrong track. 39% disagree and say they are headed in the right direction. Six percent are unsure.