



NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll: Obama and Romney Neck and Neck in North Carolina

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This NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll Reports:

President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden -- 48% -- are in a close contest with Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan -- 46% -- among likely voters in North Carolina, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or voted absentee. Only one percent backs another candidate, and 5% are undecided.

“This was the closest of the battleground states four years ago, and it is close again this time,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Obama and Romney are fighting to a draw over who is better able to handle the economy. The competitive presidential contest is not, however, spilling over to the race for governor.”

Key points:

- **Party ID.** There is a wide partisan divide. President Obama receives the support of 91% of Democrats likely to vote while Romney garners the backing of 95% of Republicans who are likely to cast a ballot. Among independent likely voters, Romney -- 49% -- has the lead over Obama -- 40%.
- **Enthusiasm.** 61% of likely voters in North Carolina are very enthusiastic about voting in November. Among likely voters who support Obama, 66% express a high level of enthusiasm compared with a similar 63% of those who back Romney.
- **Intensity of support.** 87% of likely voters in North Carolina report they strongly support their choice of candidate while 11% are somewhat behind their pick. One percent of likely voters might cast their ballot differently, and just 1% is unsure. Among Obama’s supporters who are likely to vote, nine in ten -- 90% -- say they are firmly committed to their candidate while 84% of Romney’s supporters who are likely to go to the polls say the same.
- **Gender.** A gender gap exists. Obama -- 53% -- leads Romney -- 42% -- among women who are likely to vote. Romney -- 51% -- has the advantage over Obama -- 44% -- among men.

- **Age.** More than seven in ten likely voters in North Carolina under the age of 30 -- 72% -- are behind the president while 20% back Romney. Among those aged 30 to 44, Obama receives the support of 50% of these likely voters compared with 46% for Romney. Looking at those 45 to 59, there is a divide. Obama garners the support of 48% while Romney has the backing of 47%. Looking at those 60 and older, Romney -- 54% -- is ahead of Obama -- 41%.

Among registered voters in North Carolina including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or voted absentee, Obama has 49% to 45% for Romney. Just 1% of registered voters plans to support another candidate, and 6% are undecided.

When NBC News/Marist last reported this question in June, registered voters, including those who were undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, divided. 46% supported the president. 44% were behind Romney, and only 1% backed another candidate. Nine percent were undecided.

Half Perceive Obama Favorably...Divide about Romney

President Obama is viewed favorably by 50% of likely voters in North Carolina. 46%, however, have an unfavorable view, and 4% are unsure.

Likely voters divide over Romney. 46% think well of Romney while 45% do not. Nine percent are unsure.

Split Decision on Biden...Plurality Views Ryan Favorably, but Nearly One in Five Unsure

45% of likely voters in North Carolina have a favorable impression of Vice President Joe Biden while 46% have an unfavorable view of him. Nine percent are unsure.

Looking at Paul Ryan, 45% of likely voters in the state perceive him well compared with 38% who do not. A notable 17% have either never heard of him or are unsure how to rate him.

Obama and Romney Battle on Economy...Obama with Advantage on Foreign Policy

Which candidate will better handle the nation's economy? 45% of registered voters believe Obama will while the same proportion -- 45% -- thinks Romney is the better candidate for the job. Nine percent are unsure. It's a similar story among likely voters, 47% perceive Romney as more capable on this issue while 46% say Obama is better suited for the task. Eight percent are unsure.

In NBC News/Marist's June survey, voters also divided. 43% of registered voters thought Obama would do a better job dealing with the nation's economy while 43% believed Romney would. 14% were unsure.

It's a different story when it comes to foreign policy. Here, nearly half of registered voters statewide -- 49% -- say Obama is better prepared to tackle foreign policy compared with 41% who have this opinion of Romney. 10% are unsure. Likely voters agree. 49% say Obama is the candidate who will better handle foreign affairs. However, 42% report Romney is the stronger candidate. Eight percent are unsure.

When NBC News/Marist reported this question in June, Obama -- 48% -- outpaced Romney -- 37% -- on the issue of foreign policy among registered voters. 15%, at that time, were undecided.

Mixed Reviews of President Obama's Job Performance

47% of registered voters in North Carolina approve of the job President Obama is doing in office while the same proportion -- 47% -- disapproves. Six percent are unsure.

There has been no change on this question in North Carolina. When NBC News/Marist last reported it in June, 47% gave the president a thumbs-up while 47% said he fell short. Six percent, at that time, were unsure.

Majority Thinks Nation Has Fallen Off Track

A majority of registered voters in North Carolina -- 55% -- say the country is moving in the wrong direction while 40% believe it is moving along the right one. Six percent are unsure.

In June, similar proportions held these views. 56% of registered voters thought the country took a wrong turn while 36% reported it was on the right track. Eight percent were unsure.

McCrory Leads Dalton in NC Governor's Race

Republican Pat McCrory -- 52% -- outpaces Democrat Walter Dalton -- 39% -- among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or voted absentee in the race for governor in North Carolina. Less than 1% backs someone else, and 8% are undecided.

Among registered voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or voted absentee, 51% back McCrory while 38% are for Dalton. Less than 1% supports another candidate, and 11% are undecided.

In June, registered voters, including those who were undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, divided. 43% supported McCrory compared with 41% for Dalton. 17% were undecided.