NBC News/Marist Poll:
Obama Leads Romney by Six Percentage Points in Ohio
*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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Contact: Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Azzoli
Marist College
845.575.5050

This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

As the presidential contest now stands in the battleground state of Ohio, President Barack Obama leads Republican Mitt Romney, 48% to 42%, among registered voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Two percent support another candidate, and 8% are undecided.

“Romney needs to break through someplace in the Midwest,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Although Obama carried the Buckeye State by five percentage points last time and leads by comparable numbers now, Romney’s hoping to repeat the GOP’s fortunes from 2004.”

Key points:

- Looking at party, 88% of Democrats support the president while 87% of Republicans back Romney.
- Romney -- 47% -- leads Obama -- 38% -- among independent voters in the state.
- The race is competitive among voters with an excellent or good chance of voting in November’s election. 48% of these voters are for Obama while 44% are for Romney.
- When it comes to enthusiasm, a majority of those with a high level of enthusiasm about the presidential election -- 52% -- are behind the president while 44% back Romney. Obama -- 48% -- is also ahead of Romney -- 41% -- among those who say they are moderately enthusiastic. Romney -- 40% -- and Obama -- 37% -- are neck and neck among those who have a low degree of enthusiasm about November’s contest.
- 50% of those who have a high level of interest in the presidential election support Obama while 42% are for Romney. Romney -- 49% -- leads Obama -- 39% --
among those who have a moderate degree of interest. Among those who have little interest, Obama -- 47% -- has the advantage over Romney -- 37%.

- Nearly six in ten registered voters in Ohio who strongly support their choice of candidate -- 58% -- back Obama while 42% rally for Romney.
- There is a gender gap. Men divide. 47% are for Romney while 45% are behind Obama. Obama -- 50% -- leads Romney -- 38% -- among women.
- Obama -- 50% -- has the advantage over Romney -- 40% -- among those who are younger than 30. Obama -- 52% -- also bests Romney -- 36% -- among those who are 30 to 44 years of age. Looking at older Americans, the contest becomes more competitive. 47% of those 45 to 59 support Obama while 46% back Romney. Among those 60 and older, 46% are for Obama while 45% are for Romney.

Seven in Ten Firmly Committed to Candidate

70% of registered voters in Ohio say they strongly support their choice of candidate. 23% are somewhat behind their pick while 5% might vote differently. One percent is unsure.

Key points:

- More than three in four registered voters in Ohio who support Obama -- 78% -- are firmly in the president’s camp. 62% of Romney’s backers have a similar level of support for their candidate.

The Enthusiasm Factor: 43% Very Enthusiastic about November’s Presidential Election

More than four in ten registered voters in Ohio -- 43% -- say they are very enthusiastic about this fall’s presidential election. 36% are somewhat enthusiastic while 15% are not too enthusiastic. Six percent are not enthusiastic at all.

Key points:

- Nearly half of registered voters in Ohio who support Obama -- 47% -- have a high level of enthusiasm about November’s election. 45% of Romney’s backers share this degree of enthusiasm.

Portman as V.P. Pick? Not So Fast

How would Ohio Senator Rob Portman impact the GOP ticket if Romney selected him as his running mate? There’s no benefit for Romney. 47% of registered voters say they would cast their ballot for President Obama and Vice President Biden while 42% report they would vote for Romney and Portman. Two percent say they would vote for someone else, and 9% are undecided.
Among the Ohio electorate not including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, Obama leads Romney, 45% to 40%. One percent supports another candidate, and 14% are undecided.

**Nearly Half Approve of Obama’s Job Performance**

49% of Ohio registered voters approve of the job President Obama is doing in office. 45% disapprove, and 6% are unsure.

When NBC News/Marist last reported this question in March, Ohio voters divided. 45% gave the president high marks while 45% thought Mr. Obama’s performance was subpar. Nine percent, at the time, were unsure.

**Obama Viewed Favorably by Half, Romney’s Image in Need of Makeover**

50% of registered voters in Ohio have a favorable impression of President Obama while 44% have an unfavorable one. Six percent are unsure.

However, it’s a different story for Romney. 47% have an unfavorable impression of him while 39% have a favorable one. 14% are unsure.

**45% Say Stance on Same-Sex Marriage Has Little Influence on Vote**

While 31% of registered voters in Ohio report they are more likely to vote for Romney because he opposes same-sex marriage and 21% say they are more likely to support Obama because he supports same-sex marriage, a plurality -- 45% -- states it does not make much difference in to their vote. Two percent are undecided.

**It’s the Economy, Say More than Three in Four Ohio Voters**

76% of registered voters in Ohio say the economy is more important than social issues when deciding their vote for president. 18%, however, say the opposite is their priority. Six percent are unsure.

Which candidate will do a better job at handling the economy? Ohio voters divide. 45% select Obama while 42% choose Romney. 12% are unsure.

There is also a schism when it comes to social issues. 45% of registered voters believe the president comes closer to their views on issues such as abortion, contraception, and same-sex marriage. However, 43% think Romney is the candidate who better reflects their views. 12% are unsure.
On other issues:

- When it comes to handling foreign policy, 50% of registered voters in Ohio say Obama will do a better job while 37% report Romney will. 13% are unsure.
- Obama is also perceived by 50% of voters as the candidate who best understands voters’ problems. 37% have this impression of Romney, and 13% are unsure.
- Nearly half of registered voters in Ohio -- 48% -- think Romney is the candidate who will do a better job reducing the national debt while 38% believe Obama is better skilled to handle this task. 14% are unsure.

Economic Conditions Mostly Inherited, Say 57%...Brighter Economic Days Ahead, Says Majority

Nearly six in ten Ohio registered voters -- 57% -- believe President Obama inherited the nation’s current economic conditions. 35% disagree and say the nation’s tumultuous economy occurred as a result of the president’s own policies. Eight percent are unsure.

When thinking about the U.S. economy, a majority of voters are optimistic. 55% believe the worst of the country’s economic times are over. This compares with 37% who say the worst is still ahead. Eight percent are unsure.

When NBC News/Marist last reported this question in March, half of the state’s electorate -- 50% -- thought the worst was over. 42% reported the worst was yet to come, and 8% were unsure.

What will the nation’s economy look like in the next 12 months? 36% of registered voters believe it will get better while 15% say it will get worse. A plurality -- 45% -- reports it will stay about the same. Five percent are unsure.

There has been little change on this question since March. At that time, 35% believed the economy would improve, 20% said it would worsen, and 42% thought it would be about the same. Three percent were unsure.

On the economic home front, 26% of registered voters think their personal finances will get better in the coming year. 11%, however, say they will get worse while almost two-thirds -- 64% -- report they will stay about the same.

A Nation Off Course?

A majority of voters -- 55% -- think things in the nation are off on the wrong track. 41%, though, say they are headed in the right direction. Four percent are unsure.
In a similar NBC News/Marist Poll conducted last March, similar proportions of voters in the state held these views. 55% thought the nation needed its course corrected, 40% said it was headed in the right direction, and 5% were unsure.

**Brown Leads Mandel for U.S. Senate in Ohio**

In the race for U.S. Senate in Ohio, a majority of registered voters -- 51% -- support Democratic incumbent Sherrod Brown while 37% back Republican Josh Mandel. 12% are undecided.

When NBC News/Marist reported this question in March, 47% were behind Brown while 37% backed Mandel. 16% were undecided.

**Key points:**

- By **party**, 89% of Democrats are for Brown while 80% of Republicans support Mandel. Among independents, Brown -- 46% -- leads Mandel -- 39% -- by 7 percentage points.