



NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll: Obama and Romney in Virtual Dead Heat in Florida

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This NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll Reports:

Leading into the first presidential debate, President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden -- 47% -- are neck and neck with Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan -- 46% -- among likely voters in Florida, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. One percent backs another candidate, and 6% are undecided.

“The race for Florida’s 29 electoral votes is now very close,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Since our poll last month, independent voters have flipped from supporting Obama to now favoring Romney.”

When NBC News/WSJ/Marist last asked this question in September, Obama and Biden had the support of 49% of likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate compared with 44% for Romney and Ryan. At that time, only 1% backed another candidate, and 5% were undecided.

Key points:

- **Party ID.** A wide partisan divide exists. 90% of Democrats who are likely to vote support Obama while 90% of Republican likely voters back Romney. Among independent voters who are likely to cast a ballot, 47% are for Romney while 41% favor Obama. In September, 48% of independent likely voters supported *Obama* compared with 41% for *Romney*.
- **Enthusiasm.** 66% of likely voters are very enthusiastic to go to the polls in November. 70% of those who are behind Romney are very enthusiastic about voting next month. This compares with 68% of Obama’s backers who say the same. More Obama voters are enthusiastic to vote now compared with last month when 59% reported a high degree of enthusiasm.
- **Intensity of support.** 88% of likely voters strongly support their choice of candidate. 10% are somewhat committed to their pick while 2% might cast their ballot

differently. One percent is unsure. 91% of President Obama's supporters are firmly in his camp while 86% of Romney's backers are intensely committed to him.

- **Gender.** Among women who are likely to vote, Obama -- 48% -- edges Romney -- 45%. The president has lost support among women. Last month, Obama -- 53% -- led Romney -- 41% -- among this group. Romney -- 47% -- is virtually tied with Obama -- 46% -- among men who are likely to cast a ballot. Last month, Romney edged Obama by four points among men.
- **Age.** Younger voters favor the president. 69% of likely voters under 30 support Obama while 23% are for Romney. Among those 30 to 44, Obama -- 53% -- also leads Romney -- 39%. The gap closes among likely voters between the ages of 45 and 59. Here, Romney receives 49% to 46% for Obama. Romney -- 53% -- is ahead of Obama -- 41% -- among likely voters 60 and older.

Among registered voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, 48% favor Obama while 43% are for Romney. Two percent are behind another candidate, and 8% are undecided.

Half View Obama Favorably...Voters Still Divide About Romney

Among likely voters in Florida, 50% have a favorable opinion of President Obama. 45% have an unfavorable one, and 5% are unsure.

Similar proportions of likely voters had these opinions in NBC News/WSJ/Marist's previous survey. At that time, 51% thought well of the president while 46% did not. Only 3% were unsure.

46% of Florida likely voters have a positive impression of Romney compared with 43% who do not. 10% are unsure.

Here, too, there has been little change since last month when 47% had a favorable view of Romney, and 45% had an unfavorable opinion. Eight percent, then, were unsure.

Impressions of the Veeps

45% of likely voters have a favorable view of Vice President Joe Biden. 45%, however, have an unfavorable impression of him, and 11% are undecided.

Last month, 46% of likely voters thought well of Biden while 45% had a less than stellar view of him. Nine percent were unsure.

When it comes to likely voters' impressions of Paul Ryan, 43% now have a positive opinion of Ryan while 39% have an unfavorable one. 17% are unsure.

In September, 43% thought well of the candidate while 41% had an unfavorable perception of him. 16% had either never heard of Ryan or were unsure how to rate him.

Voters Still Divide about Economy...Obama Bests Romney on Foreign Policy and Medicare

45% of registered voters in Florida believe Romney will do a better job handling the economy. However, 45% also think Obama will. 10% are unsure. Among likely voters, 47% see Romney as better able to handle the country's economic woes compared with 45% who report Obama is more capable to turn around the economy. Eight percent are unsure.

In NBC News/WSJ/Marist's September survey, 47% of registered voters said Obama was the better candidate for the job while 44% reported Romney was better suited to deal with the economy. Nine percent were unsure.

When it comes to foreign policy, Obama -- 50% -- has the advantage over Romney -- 41% -- among registered voters statewide. Nine percent are unsure. Among likely voters, 49% have more confidence in Obama's ability to handle these issues compared with 44% who think Romney is more capable. Seven percent are unsure.

Last month, 53% of registered voters in the state said Obama would do a better job handling foreign policy while 38% thought Romney would. Nine percent, at that time, were unsure.

On the issue of Medicare, 49% of Florida registered voters report they have more trust in the president to tackle the issue. 40%, however, say Romney is the better candidate for the job. 11% are unsure. Likely voters maintain similar views. 48% say Obama is better prepared to deal with Medicare. 43% report Romney will do a better job. Nine percent are unsure. Romney -- 47% -- edges Obama -- 43% -- on this issue among Florida likely voters who are sixty years of age or older.

Split Decision on Obama's Job Performance

48% of registered voters in Florida approve of the job the president is doing in office. 45% disapprove, and 7% are unsure.

In September, 50% gave Obama's performance a thumbs-up while 44% thought he fell short. Seven percent were unsure.

Course Correction for the Country?

52% of registered voters in Florida say the country is on the wrong track. However, 41% believe the nation is moving in the right direction. Seven percent are unsure.

Little has changed on this question. In NBC News/WSJ/Marist's September survey, 52% of registered voters perceived the nation to be off track while 42% disagreed and reported it was on course. Six percent were unsure.

Nelson Maintains Lead in U.S. Senate Race

Democrat Bill Nelson -- 52% -- has an 11 percentage point lead over Republican Connie Mack -- 41% -- among likely voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Seven percent are undecided.

In September, 51% of likely voters supported Nelson compared with 37% for Mack. 12% were undecided.

Among registered voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, 52% are behind Nelson while 38% are for Mack. 10% are undecided.