



NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll: Obama and Romney Still Competitive in Florida

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This NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll Reports:

Has there been a post-debate bump in Florida? Among likely voters in Florida, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or voted by absentee, President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden have the support of 48% to 47% for Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. One percent is behind another candidate, and 4% are undecided.

“Most Florida voters were locked into their choice prior to the debate, and only 6% of likely voters made up their mind post-debate,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Overall, Romney’s supporters are slightly more enthusiastic about their candidate than are Obama’s backers.”

In the NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll released last week, just before the first presidential debate, Obama and Biden -- 47% -- were also locked in a close contest with Romney and Ryan -- 46% -- among likely voters in Florida, including those who were undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. One percent backed another candidate, and 6%, at that time, were undecided.

Key points:

- **Party ID.** 93% of Democrats who are likely to vote support the president. This compares with 90% of Republicans likely to go to the polls who are behind Romney. Among independent likely voters in Florida, Romney has the support of 48% compared with 43% for Obama.
- **Enthusiasm.** 66% of Florida likely voters are very enthusiastic to go to the polls on Election Day, unchanged from before the debate. Looking at the candidates’ supporters, 71% of Romney’s backers are very enthusiastic compared with 66% of those who rally for Obama.
- **Intensity of support.** 88% of likely voters in the state are firmly committed to their choice of candidate. Nine percent somewhat support their pick while 2% might

change their minds. One percent is unsure. 87% of Romney's backers are strongly committed to him. This compares with 86% of Obama's supporters who say the same. A slight dip has occurred among Obama supporters who are firmly committed to him. Last week, 91% of his backers said they would not waver in their support. There has been little change among Romney's supporters. In NBC News/WSJ/Marist's previous survey, 86% reported a strong level of commitment.

- **Gender.** Among women who are likely to vote, Obama garners 54% compared with 41% for Romney. Obama has gained support among women. In last week's poll, Obama -- 48% -- edged Romney -- 45%. Romney -- 54% -- leads Obama -- 41% -- among men who are likely to vote. Romney has gained ground among men. Last week, Romney -- 47% -- and Obama -- 46% -- were virtually tied among this group.
- **Age.** Looking at voters younger than 30, 70% support the president compared with 27% who back Romney. Obama -- 49% -- edges Romney -- 44% -- among those 30 to 44. Likely voters 45 to 59 tip toward Romney -- 48% -- over Obama -- 45%. Among likely voters 60 and older, Romney -- 53% -- leads Obama -- 44%.

Among registered voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee, Obama -- 49% -- has a four percentage point advantage over Romney -- 45%. One percent supports another candidate, and 5% are undecided.

Did the Debate Matter?

92% of Florida likely voters say they decided on their candidate before the debate. Six percent made their selection after last Wednesday's encounter, and 2% are unsure.

94% of likely voters who support Obama made their selection before the debate compared with 4% who made up their minds afterward. Among Romney's supporters, 91% chose him pre-debate. This compares with 7% who made their selection following the matchup.

How did registered voters find out about what happened during the debate? 65% mostly watched the debate. 20%, however, mostly watched news coverage of the event while 15% of registered voters in Florida neither watched the debate nor followed its news coverage.

Registered Republicans in Florida -- 74% -- were more likely to watch the debate than Democrats -- 68% -- or independent voters -- 53%.

Florida's young voters were less likely to tune into the debate than their older counterparts. While 61% of registered voters 30 to 44, 65% of those 45 to 59, and 71% of registered voters 60 and older watched the debate, just 49% of those under 30 did the same. 23% of young voters caught the news coverage while 29% neither watched the debate nor saw the news about it.

52% View Obama Favorably...More Perceive Romney in Positive Light

When it comes to President Obama's image, 52% of Florida likely voters have a favorable impression of him. 43% do not, and 5% are unsure.

In last week's NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll, 50% thought well of the president while 45% had an unfavorable impression of him. Five percent, at the time, were unsure.

Looking at Romney, 49% of Florida likely voters have a positive opinion of him while 44% do not. Seven percent are unsure.

When NBC News/WSJ/Marist last reported this question a week ago, 46% had a favorable opinion of the candidate while 43% had an unfavorable one. 10%, at that time, were unsure.

Vice Presidential Candidates About to Square Off

What pre-debate impressions do Florida likely voters have of the vice presidential candidates? Likely voters in Florida divide about Vice President Joe Biden. 45% perceive him positively while 44% do not. 11% are unsure.

In last week's survey, 45% of likely voters had a favorable impression of Biden while 45% had an unfavorable one. 11%, then, were unsure.

When it comes to Paul Ryan, 43% of likely voters think well of him while 40% have an unfavorable opinion of him. 17% are unsure.

In NBC News/WSJ/Marist's early October survey, 43% had a positive impression of Ryan while 39% had an unfavorable one. 17% were unsure.

Romney and President Close on Economy...Obama Viewed Stronger on Foreign Policy and Medicare

47% of Florida registered voters perceive Romney as the better candidate to handle the nation's economy while -- 45% -- view Obama in this way. Eight percent are unsure. Likely voters agree. 48% think Romney is better suited to turn around the U.S. economy while 45% have this opinion of Obama. Seven percent are unsure.

In last week's NBC News/WSJ/Marist survey, 45% of registered voters statewide said Romney would do a better job handling the economy. This compares with 45% who believed Obama was the stronger candidate on this issue. 10% were unsure.

In the foreign policy realm, Obama -- 52% -- bests Romney -- 40% -- among registered voters in Florida. Eight percent are unsure. Among Florida likely voters, 51% think Obama

is better prepared to deal with these issues while 42% say Romney is. Seven percent are unsure.

Earlier this month, Obama -- 50% -- was ahead of Romney -- 41% -- on this question among registered voters statewide. Nine percent, at that time, were unsure.

Looking at Medicare, 51% of registered voters have more confidence in Obama to tackle this issue. This compares with 39% who have more trust in Romney to do so. Nine percent are unsure. Among likely voters, 50% say Obama is better suited to deal with Medicare compared with 42% who say the same about Romney. Eight percent are unsure. Likely voters who are 60 or older give Romney the edge on the issue. 49% believe Romney will better handle Medicare and 44% think Obama will.

When NBC News/WSJ/Marist previously reported this question last week, nearly half of registered voters in Florida -- 49% -- reported Obama was the candidate who was more capable to handle Medicare while 40% said Romney was the man for the job. 11%, then, were unsure.

Obama Approval Rating at 48% in Florida

48% of registered voters in Florida approve of the job President Obama is doing in office. 43% disapprove, and 8% are unsure.

This is unchanged from last week's survey when the same proportion of registered voters -- 48% -- gave the president a positive rating. 45%, at that time, thought he fell short, and 7% were unsure.

Half Believe Nation Needs a New Compass

50% of registered voters in Florida believe the country is moving in the wrong direction. 44%, however, say it is on the right road. Six percent are unsure.

Last week, 52% thought the nation was off course. 41% believed it was on track, and 7% were unsure.

Nelson Up by 13 Percentage Points in U.S. Senate Race

In the race for U.S. Senate in Florida, Democrat Bill Nelson leads Republican Connie Mack, 52% to 39%, among likely voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted by absentee ballot. Nine percent are undecided.

In last week's NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll, Nelson -- 52% -- also outdistanced Mack -- 41% - - among these voters. Seven percent, then, were undecided.

Among registered voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate and those who voted absentee, 53% support Nelson compared with 36% who are for Mack. 11% are undecided.