



NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll: Obama Leads Romney in Iowa

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This NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll Reports:

President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden receive the support of 50% of likely voters in Iowa including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Republicans Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan garner the support of 42% of these voters. Only 1% is behind another candidate, and 7% are undecided.

“The gap between Iowa voters who think things are headed in the right direction as opposed to those who say it’s moving in the wrong direction has narrowed by more than half,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “This change is giving President Obama a boost in the state.”

Key points:

- **Party ID.** Most Democrats who are likely to vote -- 92% -- are for the president while most Republican likely voters -- 89% -- are for Romney. Among independent voters, 49% are behind Obama compared with 39% for Romney.
- **Enthusiasm.** A majority -- 51% -- of likely voters are very enthusiastic about casting their ballot in November. Looking at each candidate’s supporters, 55% of Obama’s backers who are likely to vote are very enthusiastic about casting a ballot while the same proportion of likely voters who favor Romney -- 55% -- express a similar degree of enthusiasm.
- **Intensity of support.** More than eight in ten likely voters -- 81% -- strongly support their choice of candidate while 16% are somewhat committed to their selection. Only 2% might vote differently, and 1% is unsure. Among President Obama’s backers who expect to vote, 82% are firmly committed to him. This compares with 80% of Romney’s supporters who are likely to cast a ballot.
- **Gender.** Obama -- 55% -- leads Romney -- 37% -- among women who are likely to vote. Men who are likely to vote divide. 47% are for Romney while 45% are behind the president.

- **Age.** Obama -- 50% -- is ahead of Romney -- 44% -- among likely voters under the age of 30. Looking at likely voters between 30 and 44, 58% are for the president compared with 32% for Romney. Among voters aged 45 to 59, 49% are for Obama while 45% are for Romney. Obama receives the support of 48% of likely voters 60 and older compared with 44% for Romney.

Looking at registered voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, 51% are for Obama while 40% support Romney. One percent is behind another candidate, and 8% are undecided.

When NBC News/Marist last reported this question in May, registered voters divided. 44% of registered voters in Iowa supported Obama while 44% backed Romney. Two percent supported another candidate, and 10% were undecided.

Majority with Favorable View for Obama, Romney Falls Short

53% of Iowa likely voters have a favorable view of the president while 42% have an unfavorable one. Five percent are unsure.

When it comes to Romney, 50% have an *unfavorable* impression of the candidate while 42% have a favorable one. Eight percent are unsure.

The Great Divide...Perceptions of the Vice Presidential Candidates

While 44% of likely voters in Iowa have a favorable view of Vice President Joe Biden, 43% have an unfavorable one. 13% are unsure.

When it comes to Paul Ryan, voters also divide. 40% have a positive view of the candidate while 43% have an unfavorable one. A notable 17% are either unsure or have never heard of him.

Obama Edges Romney on Economy...Prez Viewed Stronger on Foreign Policy

On the issues, Romney is no longer viewed as the "economy" candidate in Iowa. 46% of registered voters in Iowa say Obama will better handle the nation's economy while 42% believe Romney will do the better job. 11% are unsure. Likely voters agree. 47% of likely voters see Obama as better able to improve the economy compared with 43% who view Romney in this light. 10% are unsure.

When NBC News/Marist last reported this question in May, Romney -- 46% -- edged Obama -- 41% -- among registered voters on the issue of the economy. 13%, at that time, were unsure.

When registered voters weigh in on the issue of foreign policy, Obama -- 53% -- trumps Romney -- 35%. 12% are unsure. Likely voters have similar opinions. 52% think the president is better prepared to deal with foreign policy concerns compared with 38% who believe Romney is. 10% are unsure.

In May, half of registered voters -- 50% -- said Obama was the stronger candidate on foreign policy compared with 36% who had this view of Romney. 14%, then, were unsure.

Nearly Half Approve of Obama's Job Performance

49% of Iowa registered voters approve of the job President Obama is doing in office while 43% disapprove. Eight percent are unsure.

The president's job approval rating has inched up in Iowa. In NBC News/Marist's May survey, voters divided. 46% gave the president a thumbs-up while 45% thought he fell short. 10% were unsure.

Nation Needs a New Compass?

49% of registered voters in Iowa believe the country is moving in the wrong direction. 43%, however, think the nation is on track, a margin of six points. Eight percent are unsure.

By contrast, in an NBC News/Marist survey four months ago, a majority of registered voters -- 54% -- said the country was moving in the wrong direction while 39% reported it was moving in the right one. Six percent, at the time, were unsure.