



**NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll:
Obama Up Five Points Over Romney in Virginia**

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This NBC News/WSJ/Marist Poll Reports:

Among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate in Virginia, President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden receive the support of 49% of voters compared with 44% for Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. Two percent support another candidate, and 5% are undecided.

“Obama carried Virginia in 2008 breaking the streak of ten consecutive presidential wins for the GOP,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “No wonder both campaigns are battling in Virginia this time.”

Key points:

- **Party ID.** 96% of Democrats likely to vote are behind the president while 94% of Republicans back Romney. Among those all-important independent voters, there is a divide. 45% rally for Romney while 43% throw their support behind Obama.
- **Enthusiasm.** 60% of likely voters in Virginia are very enthusiastic about voting. Supporters for both candidates express similar degrees of enthusiasm. 64% of Mitt Romney’s backers and 63% of likely voters who are behind President Obama are very enthusiastic about November’s election.
- **Intensity of support.** When it comes to the intensity of support likely voters have for the candidate of their choice, 84% report they stand strongly behind their presidential pick. 13% say they are somewhat committed to their selection, and only 2% believe they might cast their ballot differently. One percent is unsure. Among Obama’s supporters likely to cast a ballot, 87% think they will not waver. This compares with 80% of Romney’s backers who say they strongly support Romney.
- **Gender.** Obama -- 54% -- outpaces Romney -- 40% -- among women likely to vote. However, among men who are likely to cast a ballot, Romney -- 49% -- has the advantage over Obama -- 44%.

- **Age.** Obama -- 57% -- has the backing of likely voters under the age of 30. Among those 30 to 44, Obama -- 52% -- also leads Romney -- 40%. The race divides among those over 45. Voters between 45 and 59 split, 47% for Obama and 47% for Romney. 48% of voters 60 and older support Romney compared with 46% who back Obama.

How do Obama and Romney fare among registered voters in Virginia including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate? 49% support the president compared with 42% who back Romney. Two percent favor another candidate, and 6% are undecided.

When NBC News/Marist last reported this question in May, 48% of registered voters including those leaning toward a candidate were for the president. 44% were behind Romney. Only 1% said they supported someone else. Seven percent were undecided.

Majority Views Obama Favorably...Divide Over Romney

Looking at the candidates' favorability ratings, 53% of likely voters have a positive impression of the president. 43% have an unfavorable one, and 4% are unsure.

Regarding Romney, 46% of likely voters perceive him favorably while 45% do not. Nine percent are unsure.

What about the Veeps?

47% of likely voters have a favorable view of Vice President Joe Biden. 43% have an unfavorable impression of him, and 10% are unsure.

How does Paul Ryan fare? 44% of voters think well of him while 39% have a less favorable opinion of him. Nearly one in five likely voters -- 18% -- have either never heard of him or are unsure how to rate him.

Voters Divide Over Stronger Candidate on Economy...Obama Bests Romney on Foreign Policy

Which candidate do registered voters in Virginia see as the one who will better handle the economy? 45% believe Obama will better handle the issue while 44% say Romney will. 11% are unsure. Likely voters have a similar perception. 45% see Obama as the candidate who can better turn the economy around while the same proportion -- 45% -- views Romney in this light. 10% are unsure.

In an NBC News/Marist Poll four months ago, 46% of registered voters believed the president was better equipped to handle the economy while 45% reported Romney was the better candidate for the job. Nine percent, then, were unsure.

When it comes to foreign policy, Obama -- 51% -- outshines Romney -- 38%. 11% are unsure. Again, likely voters share this view. 50% believe Obama is better suited to direct foreign policy while 39% have this view of Romney. 10% are unsure.

In May, 52% of voters said Obama was the candidate who would better handle foreign policy compared with 37% who said the same about Romney. 10% were unsure.

Nearly Half in Virginia Approve of President's Job Performance

49% of registered voters in Virginia approve of how the president is doing his job. 44%, however, think his performance is subpar. Six percent are unsure.

Little has changed since NBC News/Marist's May survey. At that time, 49% of voters thought highly of the president's job performance. This compares with 45% who thought he fell short. Six percent were unsure.

Nation Needs a New Path, Says 52%

A majority of registered voters in Virginia -- 52% -- think the country is moving in the wrong direction. 42%, however, believe it is traveling in the right one. Six percent are unsure.

In NBC News/Marist's previous survey, nearly six in ten registered voters in Virginia -- 58% - - said the nation was off track. 38% believed it was on course, and 4% were unsure.

Kaine and Allen Tied in Race for U.S. Senate in Virginia

Democrat Tim Kaine -- 46% -- and Republican George Allen -- 46% -- are locked in a close contest among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate in the race for U.S. Senate in Virginia. Eight percent are undecided.

Among registered voters, Kaine receives 46% to 45% for Allen. Nine percent are undecided. In May, Kaine was ahead of Republican George Allen, 49% to 43%, among registered voters statewide. Nine percent, then, were undecided.