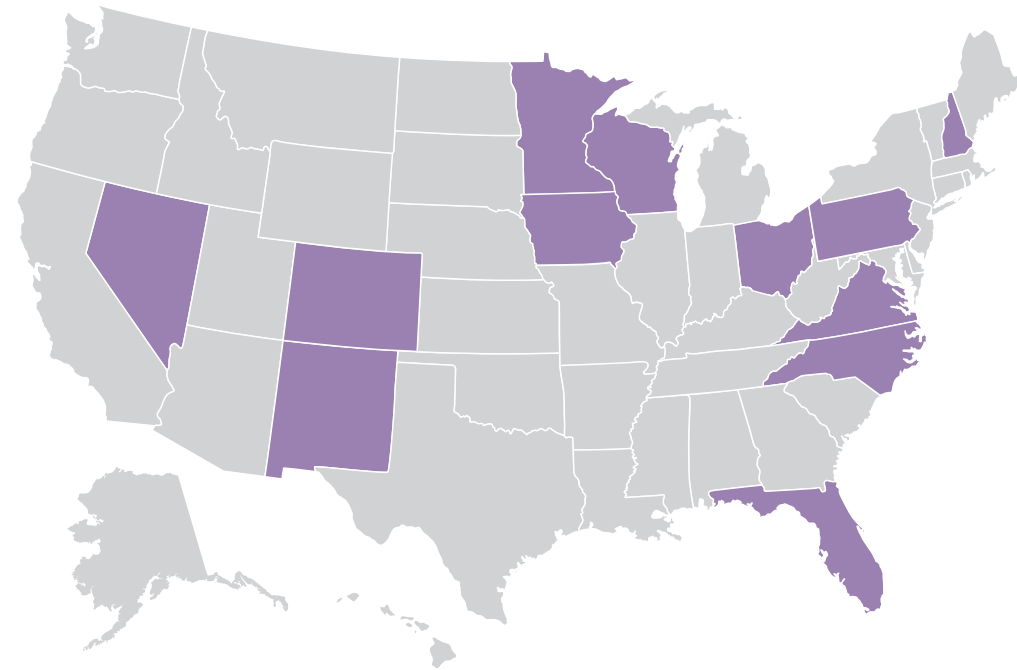


September 2011 Edition

# PURPLEPOLL



## WHY THE PURPLEPOLL?

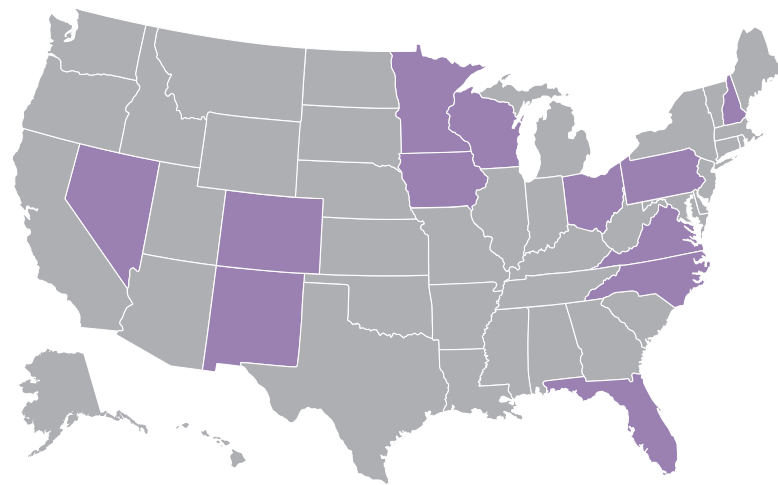
In 2012, a dozen states will decide whether President Obama is elected to a second term. The PurplePoll focuses exclusively on the Purple Electorate - likely voters only in these swing states. Updated regularly throughout the 2012 election cycle, the PurplePoll will follow leading political indicators and track new issues as they emerge.

It will offer a unique lens through which you can gather original insight into this critical election. Produced by Purple Strategies, the PurplePoll will offer balanced analysis from our bipartisan team.

For more information, contact Bruce Haynes [[bruce.haynes@purplestrategies.com](mailto:bruce.haynes@purplestrategies.com)] or Doug Usher, Ph.D. [[doug.usher@purplestrategies.com](mailto:doug.usher@purplestrategies.com)], at 703-548-7877.

# PURPLEPOLL

September 2011



These results set a benchmark for a challenging re-election campaign for President Obama. Across various metrics in the Purple Electorate, President Obama is at levels below that of recent successful presidential incumbents.

At the same time, there are danger signs for the top two Republican candidates, Mitt Romney and Rick Perry. Neither is currently well liked among Purple State voters, and the Obama campaign has yet to launch its expected onslaught of advertising.

It is too early to make confident predictions about the election. At this early stage, Obama's numbers are problematic, but there is much time for change over the months to come. The PurplePoll will be monitoring these trends regularly.

## Rating The Candidates:

### President Obama Is Currently Net Negative, And Perry Is Weak Out Of The Gates

Across the Purple Electorate, the President's job ratings are net negative, with 41% offering positive ratings and a majority (53%) offering negative evaluations. Of particular importance is his rating among independents, which is slightly lower than the overall purple states average. President Obama also faces a restive base – 22% of which disapproves of his performance (71% approve).

On the other side of the campaign, neither of the two leading GOP challengers has come out of the gate with particular appeal to the Purple Electorate. Thirty-two percent (32%) have a favorable view of Mitt Romney, with more (39%) having an unfavorable view.

Purple state voters have an even worse view of Texas Governor Rick Perry. Just 24% have a favorable view, while 44% hold an unfavorable view. Perry is less well liked among independents, with just 19% holding a favorable view and just short of a majority (49%) having an unfavorable view. Importantly, there is no Purple region that has a more favorable than unfavorable view of either GOP candidate.

As the Republican nomination process takes a turn for the negative and candidates begin to increase their attacks on each other, these candidates' appeal to Purple Electorate voters may continue to deteriorate. Monitoring all of these (and potential) candidates' positions among independent voters will be of particular importance.

## Purple America's Priorities:

### Jobs, Followed By Government Spending And Taxes

Asked to choose from five different issues, a near majority (49%) across Purple States prioritize "Jobs and economic growth," saying that it is the highest priority. The same is true in every region, with the issue reaching its maximum in the "Southern Swing" (FL, NC, VA) where a 54% majority cite that as their largest priority.

"Government spending and taxes" is the second largest priority (23%). Concern about spending is highest with Republicans in the Purple Electorate, with less concern among independents and Democrats.

Health care is the only other national priority that achieves double digits (10%) in our test of important issues, followed by illegal immigration (6%) and Terrorism and the Iraq/Afghan Wars (5%).

Voters are split on whether President Obama or "Republicans in Congress" have better ideas for the future of the economy (43% choose Republicans in Congress; 44% choose Obama). However, when couched as President Obama's ideas against "Republican candidates for president," 45% pick the GOP candidates, compared to 42% for President Obama. This difference is small but may signal a future advantage for the eventual Republican nominee as the debate shifts away from the Congress and to the campaign.

## Obama Trails Romney And Leads Perry – But Context Is Key

Our head-to-head presidential trial heats are indicative of the current depth of President Obama's difficulties. He trails Mitt Romney by 3 points (46% to 43%), and that lead extends across three of the four Purple regions (Obama leads only in the Heartland region, by 4 points). Romney's lead expands to nine points among independents (48% to 39%).

Rick Perry is bested by President Obama in a head-to-head, 44% behind the President at 46%. However, unlike Romney, Perry performs worse among independents in the Purple electorate, trailing 41% to 46%. Perry trails behind Obama in all regions with the exception of the "Southern Swing" where voters are evenly split at 46%.

Taken in historic context, these findings don't project final results – other Presidential incumbents have trailed in early trial heats and won.

However, taken together, this first Purple Poll reveals that the key 2012 election terrain is challenging for President Obama at this early stage. Yet American political terrain can change dramatically in a short period of time, and the PurplePoll will keep a close watch.

## WHAT IS THE PURPLEPOLL?

Unlike other polls, the PurplePoll focuses exclusively on the 12 states that are most likely to determine whether President Obama will win re-election: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

These states were won by President Obama en route to his 365 electoral votes. Since 1996, eight of these states swung between the Republican and Democratic candidates. The four others (NH, MN, PA, and WI) have been decided by 3 points or less at least once since 2000. The voters in these states have held the presidential election balance for the past dozen years, and will continue to do so in 2012.

Updated regularly throughout the 2012 election cycle, the PurplePoll will follow leading political indicators and track new issues as they emerge. It will offer a unique lens to gather original insight into this critical election.

In addition to data from the overall Purple electorate, we divide the data in regional state clusters: "The Wild West" (CO, NV, NM), "The Heartland" (IA, MN, WI), "The Rust Belt" (NH, OH, PA) and "The Southern Swing" (NC, VA, FL). These groupings help provide more texture to our results.

The PurplePoll is fielded and analyzed by Purple Insights, the research division of Purple Strategies, the bipartisan public affairs firm.

The poll was fielded 9/17-9/26, using automated telephone interviews and RDD sample. Total weighted N size=1360, margin of error +/-2.7. With regional oversamples, the margin of error for each regional state cluster is +/-4.2.

## ABOUT PURPLE STRATEGIES

Purple is a fully integrated, bipartisan team that excels at merging red and blue perspectives to find effective strategic solutions. We look to build a consensus that will support a public affairs initiative, influence a debate or stimulate change. Our team includes experts in opinion research, strategic communications, grassroots, government affairs, digital communications and creative.

Recognizing the need for a balanced, bipartisan approach to corporate communications and issue advocacy, Alex Castellanos and Steve McMahon merged two well-established Republican and Democratic firms – National Media and Issue & Image – to create Purple Strategies. By joining forces, Purple brings together strategists and communication specialists from across the political spectrum, including veteran political strategists Bruce Haynes, Mark Squier, Rob Collins and Jim Jordan.

For more: [www.purplestrategies.com](http://www.purplestrategies.com)



## The Wild West

### Most Important Issue

Jobs/Economy: **37%**    Immigration: **7%**  
Spending/Taxes: **24%**    Terrorism/Wars: **4%**  
Health Care: **18%**    Other/Not sure: **10%**

### Obama Approval

Approve: **40%**  
Disapprove: **53%**  
Not sure: **7%**

### Romney Favorability

Favorable: **29%**  
Unfavorable: **43%**  
Not sure: **29%**

### Perry Favorability

Favorable: **25%**  
Unfavorable: **45%**  
Not sure: **30%**

### 2012: Obama vs. Romney

Obama: **42%**  
Romney: **45%**  
Not sure: **13%**

### 2012: Obama vs. Perry

Obama: **45%**  
Perry: **43%**  
Not sure: **12%**

### Better Ideas on the Economy: GOP Candidates vs. Obama

GOP Candidates: **45%**  
Obama: **41%**  
Not sure: **14%**

### Better Ideas on the Economy: GOP Congress vs. Obama

GOP Congress: **45%**  
Obama: **40%**  
Not sure: **15%**

## The Heartland

### Most Important Issue

Jobs/Economy: **47%**    Immigration: **4%**  
Spending/Taxes: **28%**    Terrorism/Wars: **2%**  
Health Care: **12%**    Other/Not sure: **6%**

### Obama Approval

Approve: **46%**  
Disapprove: **47%**  
Not sure: **6%**

### Romney Favorability

Favorable: **30%**  
Unfavorable: **45%**  
Not sure: **25%**

### Perry Favorability

Favorable: **22%**  
Unfavorable: **49%**  
Not sure: **29%**

### 2012: Obama vs. Romney

Obama: **48%**  
Romney: **44%**  
Not sure: **8%**

### 2012: Obama vs. Perry

Obama: **49%**  
Perry: **40%**  
Not sure: **10%**

### Better Ideas on the Economy: GOP Candidates vs. Obama

GOP Candidates: **44%**  
Obama: **46%**  
Not sure: **10%**

### Better Ideas on the Economy: GOP Congress vs. Obama

GOP Congress: **43%**  
Obama: **46%**  
Not sure: **11%**

## The Rust Belt

### Most Important Issue

Jobs/Economy: **45%**    Immigration: **5%**  
Spending/Taxes: **23%**    Terrorism/Wars: **5%**  
Health Care: **12%**    Other/Not sure: **9%**

### Obama Approval

Approve: **41%**  
Disapprove: **52%**  
Not sure: **6%**

### Romney Favorability

Favorable: **30%**  
Unfavorable: **41%**  
Not sure: **29%**

### Perry Favorability

Favorable: **21%**  
Unfavorable: **43%**  
Not sure: **36%**

### 2012: Obama vs. Romney

Obama: **42%**  
Romney: **46%**  
Not sure: **11%**

### 2012: Obama vs. Perry

Obama: **46%**  
Perry: **44%**  
Not sure: **9%**

### Better Ideas on the Economy: GOP Candidates vs. Obama

GOP Candidates: **44%**  
Obama: **43%**  
Not sure: **13%**

### Better Ideas on the Economy: GOP Congress vs. Obama

GOP Congress: **41%**  
Obama: **46%**  
Not sure: **13%**

## The Southern Swing

### Most Important Issue

Jobs/Economy: **54%**    Immigration: **5%**  
Spending/Taxes: **21%**    Terrorism/Wars: **5%**  
Health Care: **7%**    Other/Not sure: **8%**

### Obama Approval

Approve: **39%**  
Disapprove: **54%**  
Not sure: **7%**

### Romney Favorability

Favorable: **33%**  
Unfavorable: **36%**  
Not sure: **31%**

### Perry Favorability

Favorable: **28%**  
Unfavorable: **43%**  
Not sure: **29%**

### 2012: Obama vs. Romney

Obama: **43%**  
Romney: **48%**  
Not sure: **9%**

### 2012: Obama vs. Perry





Obama: **46%**  
Perry: **46%**  
Not sure: **8%**

### Better Ideas on the Economy: GOP Candidates vs. Obama

GOP Candidates: **48%**  
Obama: **41%**  
Not sure: **11%**

### Better Ideas on the Economy: GOP Congress vs. Obama

GOP Congress: **45%**  
Obama: **44%**  
Not sure: **11%**

Complete Questionnaire		%	Region				Gender		Party			Education	
		Total					Male	Female	GOP	Ind	Dem	Non-Coll	Coll+
Which of the following issues do you think is the most important facing the country today?	Jobs and economic growth	49	37	47	45	54	47	52	40	47	60	45	55
	Government spending and taxes	23	24	28	23	21	27	19	36	25	9	21	25
	Health care	10	18	12	12	7	8	12	7	10	13	12	7
	Illegal immigration	6	7	4	5	5	8	4	5	5	7	5	6
	Terrorism and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan	5	4	2	5	5	4	5	3	4	5	6	3
	Other	3	6	2	4	3	4	2	4	5	2	3	4
	Not sure	5	4	4	5	5	3	6	5	4	4	7	1
Do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president?	Approve	41	40	46	41	39	37	44	11	36	71	40	41
	Disapprove	53	53	47	52	54	58	48	86	54	22	52	53
	Not sure	7	7	6	6	7	5	8	3	11	7	8	6
Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of Mitt Romney?	Favorable	32	29	30	30	33	37	28	47	31	20	28	38
	Unfavorable	39	43	45	41	36	40	37	25	38	52	38	40
	Not sure	29	29	25	29	31	22	35	28	31	28	34	22
Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of Rick Perry?	Favorable	24	25	22	21	28	29	19	41	19	11	21	27
	Unfavorable	44	45	49	43	43	46	42	25	49	59	39	50
	Not sure	32	30	29	36	29	25	39	34	32	30	40	23
If the 2012 election for president were held today and the candidates were: [ROTATE] Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney, for whom would you vote?	Obama	43	42	48	42	43	41	45	8	39	78	42	44
	Romney	46	45	44	46	48	50	42	83	48	11	45	47
	Not sure	11	13	8	11	9	9	13	9	13	10	13	9
If the 2012 election for president were held today and the candidates were: [ROTATE] Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Rick Perry, for whom would you vote?	Obama	46	45	49	46	46	44	48	11	46	79	44	48
	Perry	44	43	40	44	46	47	40	79	41	12	42	45
	Not sure	10	12	10	9	8	9	12	10	13	8	13	7
Who do you think has better ideas for improving the American economy: the Republican candidates for president or Barack Obama?	GOP candidates for president	45	45	44	44	48	50	42	82	46	12	45	46
	Obama	42	41	46	43	41	40	44	8	39	76	42	42
	Not sure	12	14	10	13	11	11	14	10	15	12	13	12
Who do you think has better ideas for improving the American economy: Republicans in Congress or Barack Obama?	GOP in Congress	43	45	43	41	45	47	40	79	42	12	44	43
	Obama	44	40	46	46	44	42	45	10	42	76	42	45
	Not sure	13	15	11	13	11	11	15	11	15	12	14	12

Fielded 9/17-9/26, using automated telephone interviews and RDD sample. Total N size=1360, margin of error +/-2.7. Regional margins of errors (with oversamples) are +/-4.2.