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NATIONAL: ROMNEY LEADS IN MONMOUTH POLL

Republican holds momentum after second debate

The latest *Monmouth University Poll* of voters nationwide shows Mitt Romney holding on to a three point lead over Barack Obama in next month's presidential race. The GOP challenger continued to make gains in every issue area after the second debate.

Currently, Gov. Romney leads the incumbent by 48% to 45% among likely American voters. Following the first debate earlier this month, Romney held a one point lead. The current results mark a reversal from Monmouth's mid-September poll when Pres. Obama held a 48% to 45% advantage in vote intention. Currently, 3% of likely voters say they will vote for another candidate and 5% are still undecided about their choice – results which have held steady since June.

About 12% of the poll's likely voter sample reports they have already cast their presidential ballot in early voting. Among this group, Romney got 44% of the vote to 41% for Obama – an edge which is within the margin of error for this sub-group.

“The debates changed the dynamic of this race. While many observers feel the president won the second meeting, it did not erase the damage incurred by the first one. And it's not clear whether tonight's final debate on foreign policy can alter that,” said Patrick Murray, director of the New Jersey-based Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The election remains particularly tight among female voters, with Obama earning 49% of this group's vote to 45% for Romney. This is similar to the Monmouth University Poll's split among women voters earlier this month. Prior to the first debate, though, the Democratic incumbent enjoyed a double digit lead among women. Gov. Romney holds a sizable 51% to 40% lead among male voters right now.

The Republican nominee is trusted more to handle a range of issues. His biggest advantage is on the federal budget and national debt. More than half (51%) of likely voters trust Romney on this issue

compared to 42% who prefer Obama. This marks a gain from the 48% to 44% edge Romney had earlier this month. Prior to that, voters were split on which candidate would better handle the deficit and debt.

Romney's advantage on jobs and the economy has also grown since the second debate. He has an edge over Obama on this issue – 50% trust the challenger to do a better job and 44% prefer the incumbent. This is up from his narrower 49% to 45% lead after the first debate. Romney has also pulled ahead on Social Security and Medicare, claiming a narrow 48% to 45% edge on this issue. After the first debate, likely voters were split – 46% trusted Obama more to 45% who preferred Romney – but earlier in the fall, Obama had a distinct advantage on this issue.

Romney also draws even with Obama on foreign policy – 46% of likely voters trust the Republican more on this issue compared to 47% who favor the Democrat. This is similar to the 45% Romney to 47% Obama split recorded after the first debate and an improvement for Romney since mid-September.

More than half of likely voters (56%) report watching the entire second debate and another 24% watched part of it, which is slightly less than the number of likely voters who reported watching the first debate. Seven percent of likely voters report that the debate caused them to have a change of heart about which candidate they would support – compared to 9% after the first debate. Among this group, 57% now declare themselves for Romney to 32% for Obama. After the first debate, those who changed their mind went for Romney by a larger 73% to 18% margin.

Mitt Romney's personal ratings also continue to improve, standing at 49% favorable to 39% unfavorable among likely voters. This builds on the 46% positive to 39% negative ratings he received after the first debate. Prior to that event, voters were almost evenly divided on their ratings of the GOP nominee.

Voter opinion of Barack Obama has been almost evenly divided throughout the entire campaign. The current results show little change. The Democratic incumbent holds a 45% favorable to 45% unfavorable rating.

Voters shifted their opinion about the two running mates since the vice presidential candidates debated on October 11. Republican Paul Ryan now earns a 45% favorable to 34% unfavorable rating, up from 38% positive to 33% negative in September. Democrat Joe Biden's rating is upside down at 37% favorable to 46% unfavorable, a larger net negative gap than the 34% favorable to 39% unfavorable rating he held last month.

The latest *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 1,402 likely voters in the United States from October 18 to 21, 2012. This sample has a margin of error of ± 2.6 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. If the election for President were today, would you vote for Mitt Romney the Republican, or Barack Obama the Democrat, or some other candidate? [IF UNDECIDED: At this moment, do you lean towards Mitt Romney or do you lean towards Barack Obama?] [NAMES WERE ROTATED] [Includes early voters who have already cast their ballots]

(with leaners)	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Romney	48%	90%	52%	6%	51%	45%	34%	50%	53%	57%	6%	42%
Obama	45%	6%	33%	91%	40%	49%	57%	40%	43%	38%	82%	48%
Other candidate	3%	1%	7%	0%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%
(VOL) Undecided	5%	2%	8%	2%	5%	4%	6%	6%	2%	4%	9%	5%

TREND: Likely Voters	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012	September 2012	August 2012	June 2012
Romney	48%	47%	45%	45%	46%
Obama	45%	46%	48%	46%	47%
Other candidate	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%
(VOL) Undecided	5%	5%	4%	6%	4%
Unwtd N	1402	1360	1344	1149	1152

[QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 WERE ROTATED]

2. Is your general opinion of Mitt Romney favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Favorable	49%	90%	53%	9%	52%	47%	33%	53%	54%	56%	12%	47%
Unfavorable	39%	6%	31%	75%	37%	41%	48%	37%	35%	35%	62%	40%
No opinion	12%	4%	15%	16%	12%	13%	19%	10%	11%	10%	26%	13%

TREND: Likely Voters	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012	September 2012	August 2012	June 2012
Favorable	49%	46%	41%	40%	38%
Unfavorable	39%	39%	40%	39%	37%
No opinion	12%	15%	19%	21%	25%
Unwtd N	1402	1360	1344	1149	1152

3. Is your general opinion of Barack Obama favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Favorable	45%	7%	35%	88%	40%	49%	56%	42%	42%	38%	77%	49%
Unfavorable	45%	86%	50%	4%	48%	43%	30%	47%	52%	54%	8%	39%
No opinion	10%	7%	15%	7%	11%	8%	14%	11%	6%	8%	15%	12%

TREND: Likely Voters	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012	September 2012	August 2012	June 2012
Favorable	45%	46%	46%	45%	45%
Unfavorable	45%	45%	43%	43%	43%
No opinion	10%	8%	11%	12%	11%
Unwtd N	1402	1360	1344	1149	1152

[QUESTIONS 4 AND 5 WERE ROTATED]

4. Is your general opinion of Paul Ryan favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Favorable	45%	82%	49%	9%	49%	42%	29%	49%	51%	51%	10%	46%
Unfavorable	34%	4%	27%	66%	31%	36%	38%	32%	33%	30%	53%	35%
No opinion	21%	14%	23%	25%	20%	23%	33%	19%	16%	19%	37%	19%

TREND: Likely Voters	Mid Oct 2012	September 2012	August 2012
Favorable	45%	38%	35%
Unfavorable	34%	33%	30%
No opinion	21%	29%	34%
Unwtd N	1402	1344	1149

5. Is your general opinion of Joe Biden favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Favorable	37%	7%	27%	74%	34%	39%	42%	32%	39%	33%	62%	39%
Unfavorable	46%	81%	52%	9%	50%	42%	31%	50%	49%	52%	15%	45%
No opinion	18%	12%	22%	17%	16%	18%	28%	18%	11%	15%	24%	16%

TREND: Likely Voters	Mid Oct 2012	September 2012	August 2012
Favorable	37%	34%	32%
Unfavorable	46%	39%	39%
No opinion	18%	27%	28%
Unwtd N	1402	1344	1149

[QUESTIONS 6 TO 9 WERE ROTATED]

6. Who do you trust more to handle the economy and jobs – Mitt Romney or Barack Obama?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Romney	50%	93%	57%	6%	54%	47%	35%	53%	56%	59%	9%	44%
Obama	44%	5%	34%	90%	40%	48%	58%	41%	40%	36%	83%	52%
Not sure/Don't know	5%	2%	9%	4%	6%	5%	8%	5%	4%	5%	8%	4%

TREND: Likely Voters	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012	September 2012	August 2012
Romney	50%	49%	45%	45%
Obama	44%	45%	48%	45%
Not sure/Don't know	5%	6%	6%	10%
Unwtd N	1402	1360	1344	1149

7. Who do you trust more to handle Social Security and Medicare – Mitt Romney or Barack Obama?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Romney	48%	90%	52%	7%	50%	46%	32%	51%	53%	56%	11%	43%
Obama	45%	7%	33%	89%	41%	48%	56%	40%	42%	37%	82%	46%
Not sure/Don't know	8%	3%	14%	5%	9%	7%	11%	9%	5%	7%	8%	11%

TREND: Likely Voters	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012	September 2012	August 2012
Romney	48%	45%	42%	43%
Obama	45%	46%	50%	46%
Not sure/Don't know	8%	8%	8%	11%
Unwtd N	1402	1360	1344	1149

8. Who do you trust more to handle the federal budget and national debt – Mitt Romney or Barack Obama?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Romney	51%	92%	57%	8%	55%	48%	36%	55%	55%	59%	14%	46%
Obama	42%	5%	29%	87%	38%	46%	54%	37%	40%	35%	76%	47%
Not sure/Don't know	7%	3%	14%	4%	7%	7%	10%	8%	5%	6%	10%	8%

TREND: Likely Voters	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012	September 2012	August 2012
Romney	51%	48%	47%	46%
Obama	42%	44%	47%	44%
Not sure/Don't know	7%	8%	7%	10%
Unwtd N	1402	1360	1344	1149

9. Who do you trust more to handle foreign policy – Mitt Romney or Barack Obama?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Romney	46%	89%	49%	6%	49%	44%	31%	49%	52%	54%	10%	42%
Obama	47%	7%	39%	91%	44%	50%	60%	45%	42%	41%	80%	52%
Not sure/Don't know	6%	3%	12%	3%	7%	6%	9%	6%	6%	5%	10%	7%

TREND: <i>Likely Voters</i>	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012	September 2012
Romney	46%	45%	42%
Obama	47%	47%	51%
Not sure/Don't know	6%	8%	7%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	1402	1360	1149

10. Did you read or hear anything about Tuesday's presidential debate, or not? Were you able to watch the full 90 minute debate, did you see clips or part of the debate on TV or the internet, or did you only read or hear about the debate?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Watched full debate	56%	58%	53%	57%	58%	55%	47%	54%	64%	58%	56%	53%
Saw clips or part	24%	23%	24%	24%	22%	26%	29%	23%	22%	24%	28%	21%
Only read/heard about	9%	9%	11%	9%	10%	9%	8%	11%	8%	10%	5%	11%
Did not follow debate	10%	10%	12%	9%	10%	10%	15%	12%	5%	8%	9%	16%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%

TREND: <i>Likely Voters</i>	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012*
Watched full debate	56%	58%
Saw clips or part	24%	25%
Only read/heard about	9%	10%
Did not follow debate	10%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	1402	1360

* Note: Asked about the Oct. 3 debate.

11. Did the debate change your opinion about who you would vote for, or not?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Yes	7%	7%	9%	5%	7%	7%	9%	5%	8%	5%	7%	14%
No	81%	83%	75%	84%	81%	80%	72%	81%	85%	85%	81%	66%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%	4%
<i>Did not follow debate</i>	11%	10%	12%	9%	10%	11%	16%	13%	5%	9%	11%	16%

TREND: <i>Likely Voters</i>	Mid Oct 2012	Early Oct 2012*
Yes	7%	9%
No	81%	82%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%
<i>Did not follow debate</i>	11%	7%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	1402	1360

* Note: Asked about the Oct. 3 debate.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from October 18 to 21, 2012 with a national random sample of 1,402 likely voters, including 531 via live interview on a landline telephone, 562 via interactive voice response (IVR) on a landline telephone, and 309 via live interview on a cell phone. Interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. (live landline and cell) and Survey USA (IVR and live cell) and the telephone sample was obtained from Survey Sampling International. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 2.6 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
<i>LIKELY VOTERS</i>			
<i>31% Rep</i>	<i>47% Male</i>	<i>21% 18-34</i>	<i>72% White</i>
<i>34% Ind</i>	<i>53% Female</i>	<i>39% 35-54</i>	<i>11% Black</i>
<i>35% Dem</i>		<i>40% 55+</i>	<i>12% Hispanic</i>
			<i>5% Asian/Other</i>

	<i>Likely Voters</i>	<i>PARTY ID</i>			<i>GENDER</i>		<i>AGE</i>			<i>RACE</i>		
		<i>Rep</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Dem</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>18-34</i>	<i>35-54</i>	<i>55+</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>
<i>Unweighted N</i>	1402	443	485	465	663	739	209	477	706	1122	123	84
<i>moe</i>	2.6%	4.7%	4.5%	4.6%	3.8%	3.6%	6.8%	4.5%	3.7%	2.9%	8.8%	10.7%

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