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NATIONAL: ROMNEY EDGES OBAMA IN MONMOUTH POLL

Post-debate: more voters like Romney, give him edge on key issues

The latest *Monmouth University Poll* of likely voters in this year's national presidential race shows Mitt Romney with a nominal, but statistically insignificant, one point lead over Barack Obama. As a result of the first presidential debate, more U.S. voters feel they now have a better sense of the GOP challenger's plans for the country and give him the edge on key issues.

Currently, Gov. Romney leads the incumbent by 47% to 46% among likely American voters. This marks a reversal of the 3-point edge Pres. Obama held in the Monmouth University Poll one month ago. If all registered voters cast ballots, Pres. Obama would cling to a tenuous lead of 46% to 43%. The poll found older voters to be a key demographic that has shifted toward the Republican nominee. Romney now claims a 52% to 44% advantage among likely voters age 55 and older. In September, this group was split at 49% for Obama and 47% for Romney.

"There is no question that the electorate is extremely volatile. Many of the polling shifts we see now are within the margin of error and reflect just how close this race is," said Patrick Murray, director of the New Jersey-based Monmouth University Polling Institute, adding, "There is no doubt that the candidates' performances in the first debate changed the underlying dynamic of this race, benefitting Mitt Romney across the board."

Nearly 6-in-10 likely voters (58%) report watching the entire first debate and another 25% watched clips or parts of it. Only 7% of likely voters say they heard nothing at all about the debate. Just 9% of likely voters report that the debate caused them to have a change of heart about which candidate they would support. Among this group, 73% now declare themselves for Romney to just 18% for Obama. Although this group is small, this shift could represent a net 4 to 5 point swing toward the GOP nominee in the voter preference margin.

Importantly, nearly 6 in-10 voters feel they now know more about Mitt Romney's plans for the country as a result of the debate, including 27% who know a lot more and 30% a little more. By comparison, less than 4-in-10 say the same about Barack Obama's plans – 17% feel they know a lot more and 21% know a little more.

Mitt Romney now bests Barack Obama on some key issue areas. The GOP nominee is now more trusted to handle the economy and jobs by a 49% to 45% margin. One month ago, Obama had a 48% to 45% edge on this issue. Romney also has the edge over Obama on the federal budget and national debt by 48% to 44% compared to an evenly divided voter opinion of 47% to 47% in September.

The challenger has also erased the incumbent's earlier advantage on entitlements and foreign policy. Regarding Social Security and Medicare, 46% of likely voters trust Obama more to a similar 45% for Romney. In September, Obama claimed a clear 50% to 42% advantage on this issue area. When it comes to foreign policy, 47% choose Obama to 45% for Romney, which is a marked change from Obama's 51% to 42% edge just one month ago.

It appears that the gain in issue advantage also translates to improved personal ratings for Gov. Romney. Just under half (46%) of likely voters now have a favorable opinion of the Republican standard-bearer compared to 39% who have an unfavorable view. One month ago, Romney's rating was split at just 41% positive to 40% negative. Pres. Obama's rating, by comparison, is little changed from a month ago. He now gets a 46% favorable to 45% unfavorable split decision. In September, this stood at 46% positive to 43% negative.

"This election is far from over, but it's hard to deny that Mitt Romney has made gains in practically every area. This is likely to heighten voter interest in the upcoming debates, starting with tonight's vice presidential face-off," said Murray.

Fully 6-in-10 voters (60%) say they are very likely to tune in to tonight's debate between the two parties' vice presidential nominees. Another 21% are somewhat likely. Perhaps as a sign of reinvigorated enthusiasm, more Republicans (69%) than Democrats (59%) and independents (55%) say they are very likely to watch tonight's debate. A plurality of likely voters expects that Republican Paul Ryan (40%) will outperform Democrat Joe Biden (31%) in that match-up.

The latest *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 1,360 likely voters in the United States from October 8 to 10, 2012. This sample has a margin of error of ± 2.7 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	47%	93%	44%	8%	49%	46%	37%	49%	52%	58%	4%	31%
Obama	46%	5%	41%	89%	44%	48%	54%	44%	44%	36%	89%	60%
Other candidate	2%	0%	6%	0%	3%	1%	4%	1%	2%	2%	0%	3%
(VOL) Undecided	5%	2%	9%	2%	5%	5%	5%	6%	3%	4%	7%	7%

TREND: Likely Voters	October 2012	September 2012	August 2012	June 2012
Romney	47%	45%	45%	46%
Obama	46%	48%	46%	47%
Other candidate	2%	3%	4%	3%
(VOL) Undecided	5%	4%	6%	4%
Unwtd N	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	46%	89%	42%	10%	46%	45%	36%	46%	51%	56%	5%	29%
Unfavorable	39%	5%	39%	71%	38%	40%	44%	38%	38%	34%	66%	47%
No opinion	15%	6%	19%	19%	15%	15%	20%	17%	11%	10%	30%	24%

TREND: Likely Voters	October 2012	September 2012	August 2012	June 2012
Favorable	46%	41%	40%	38%
Unfavorable	39%	40%	39%	37%
No opinion	15%	19%	21%	25%
Unwtd N	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	46%	8%	43%	86%	45%	48%	51%	46%	44%	37%	91%	55%
Unfavorable	45%	86%	45%	9%	47%	43%	35%	46%	50%	55%	2%	30%
No opinion	8%	6%	12%	6%	8%	9%	13%	8%	6%	8%	7%	15%

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

[QUESTIONS 4 TO 7 WERE ROTATED]

4. 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	49%	93%	47%	9%	51%	47%	38%	50%	53%	59%	3%	37%
Obama	45%	5%	39%	87%	43%	46%	53%	44%	41%	34%	92%	59%
Not sure/Don't know	6%	2%	13%	4%	6%	7%	9%	6%	6%	7%	5%	4%

TREND: Likely Voters	October 2012	September 2012	August 2012
Romney	49%	45%	45%
Obama	45%	48%	45%
Not sure/Don't know	6%	6%	10%
Unwtd N	1360	1344	1149

5. 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	45%	90%	43%	8%	47%	44%	37%	47%	49%	55%	2%	34%
Obama	46%	6%	41%	90%	45%	48%	50%	46%	45%	37%	92%	55%
Not sure/Don't know	8%	4%	16%	3%	8%	8%	12%	7%	7%	8%	6%	10%

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

6. 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	48%	91%	47%	10%	50%	46%	37%	50%	52%	59%	3%	29%
Obama	44%	5%	38%	87%	42%	47%	53%	43%	41%	34%	91%	58%
Not sure/Don't know	8%	4%	15%	3%	8%	8%	10%	7%	7%	7%	5%	13%

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

7. 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	45%	87%	45%	8%	47%	43%	35%	47%	49%	54%	2%	36%
Obama	47%	7%	42%	89%	45%	49%	54%	46%	44%	37%	93%	58%
Not sure/Don't know	8%	6%	13%	3%	8%	8%	11%	7%	7%	9%	5%	6%

TREND: Likely Voters	October 2012	September 2012
Romney	45%	42%
Obama	47%	51%
Not sure/Don't know	8%	7%
Unwtd N	1360	1149

8. Did you read or hear anything about last week'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	58%	60%	58%	58%	62%	55%	47%	57%	67%	62%	50%	48%
Saw clips or part	25%	28%	22%	24%	21%	29%	26%	28%	20%	24%	27%	23%
Only read/heard about	10%	7%	12%	9%	11%	9%	12%	10%	8%	9%	11%	11%
Did not follow debate	7%	5%	7%	10%	7%	7%	14%	5%	5%	5%	12%	16%
(VOL) Don't know	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%

9. 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	9%	11%	12%	5%	10%	9%	9%	9%	10%	2%	17%	
No	82%	83%	78%	84%	82%	82%	73%	84%	84%	84%	85%	63%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Did not follow debate	7%	5%	7%	10%	7%	7%	15%	5%	5%	5%	12%	18%

[QUESTIONS 10 AND 11 WERE ROTATED]

10. As a result of the debate, how much more do you feel you know about Mitt Romney's plans for the country – a lot more, a little more, or no more than before?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Lot more	27%	46%	23%	12%	24%	29%	19%	26%	31%	30%	13%	25%
Little more	30%	35%	33%	21%	32%	27%	30%	31%	28%	32%	16%	27%
No more than before	34%	12%	35%	54%	34%	34%	33%	35%	33%	31%	56%	27%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Did not follow debate	7%	5%	7%	10%	7%	7%	15%	5%	5%	5%	12%	18%

11. As a result of the debate, how much more do you feel you know about Barack Obama's plans for the country – a lot more, a little more, or no more than before?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Lot more	17%	11%	13%	26%	14%	19%	12%	18%	18%	13%	41%	19%
Little more	21%	14%	19%	31%	18%	24%	24%	22%	20%	22%	24%	17%
No more than before	52%	67%	60%	33%	58%	47%	46%	53%	56%	59%	22%	43%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Did not follow debate	7%	5%	7%	10%	7%	7%	15%	5%	5%	5%	12%	18%

12. How likely are you to watch this week's vice presidential debate between Paul Ryan and Joe Biden – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all likely?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Very likely	60%	69%	55%	59%	61%	60%	44%	60%	69%	63%	57%	45%
Somewhat likely	21%	19%	22%	22%	19%	23%	31%	21%	15%	19%	24%	30%
Not too likely	9%	8%	9%	9%	9%	9%	14%	8%	7%	9%	7%	11%
Not at all likely	8%	4%	13%	7%	8%	8%	10%	9%	6%	8%	8%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	4%	4%

13. Do you think Paul Ryan or Joe Biden will win that debate?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Paul Ryan	40%	76%	37%	11%	42%	38%	33%	39%	44%	49%	5%	23%
Joe Biden	31%	6%	22%	62%	28%	33%	33%	29%	31%	24%	68%	37%
(VOL) Will be a tie	3%	1%	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	26%	17%	36%	25%	26%	26%	32%	28%	22%	24%	24%	38%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from October 8 to 10, 2012 with a national random sample of 1,360 likely voters, including 503 via live interview on a landline telephone, 560 via interactive voice response (IVR) on a landline telephone, and 297 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 2.7 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.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted) LIKELY VOTERS			
32% Rep	49% Male	22% 18-34	72% White
35% Dem	51% Female	39% 35-54	11% Black
33% Ind		39% 55+	12% Hispanic
			5% Asian/Other

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Unweighted N	1360	418	458	471	656	704	210	441	698	1063	152	70
moe	2.7%	4.8%	4.6%	4.5%	3.8%	3.7%	6.8%	4.7%	3.7%	3.0%	8.0%	11.7%

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