



**CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL**  
 For release: Wednesday, April 18, 2012  
 7:00 am EDT

**Obama vs. Romney: It's Tied!**  
**April 13-17, 2012**

With less than seven months to go before the presidential election, the race is dead even between Barack Obama and his presumptive Republican rival Mitt Romney. 46% of registered voters nationwide would support the President if the election were held today, while the same number (46%) say they would vote for Romney.

The race was also close a month ago, when President Obama led Romney by just three points.

**Who Would You Vote For if the Candidates Were...?**

(Among registered voters)

	Now	3/2012	2/2012	1/2012
Barack Obama	46%	47%	48%	45%
Mitt Romney	46	44	42	45

Now that Rick Santorum has suspended his bid for the Presidency, most Republican primary voters – whether they voted in the primaries already or not – have rallied behind Republican frontrunner Mitt Romney. 54% of Republican primary voters now say they want to see Mitt Romney become the Republican nominee, far ahead of Newt Gingrich (20%) or Ron Paul (12%). Just 30% backed Romney in March, when Santorum was still in the race.

**Republican Nomination Preference**

(Among Republican Primary Voters)

Mitt Romney	54%
Newt Gingrich	20
Ron Paul	12
Someone else (vol.)	9

These Republican voters have become a bit more enthusiastic about Romney's candidacy, but many remain lukewarm. 33% say they will enthusiastically support Romney if he is the nominee, compared to 28% in January and 18% last October. Still, more have reservations about him (40%) than enthusiastically back him.

**Support for Mitt Romney as Republican Nominee**

(Among Republican Primary Voters)

	Now	1/2012	10/2011
Enthusiastically support	33%	28%	18%
Support with reservations	40	38	42
Support only because the nominee	18	21	19
Not support	8	10	14

But white evangelicals, a group Romney has had trouble winning in the primaries, aren't especially enthusiastic about him as the potential Republican nominee. 27% say they will enthusiastically support him in November, but more (50%) still have reservations about him.

About a third of self-identified conservatives and Tea Party supporters who are Republican primary voters now enthusiastically support Romney.

<b>Support for Mitt Romney as Republican Nominee</b>			
(Among Republican Primary Voters)			
	Conservatives	W. Evangelicals	Tea Party
Enthusiastically support	33%	27%	36%
Support with reservations	37	50	41
Support only because the nominee	21	18	20
Not support	7	2	3

63% of Republican primary voters think Rick Santorum did the right thing in dropping out of the race. Even a majority of primary voters who would like to see someone other than Mitt Romney win the nomination think Santorum did the right thing when he suspended his campaign.

Evangelicals were some of Santorum's strongest supporters during his run for president, but more than half of them (52%) think he did the right thing in leaving the race.

<b>Should Santorum Have Suspended His Campaign?</b>			
(Among Republican Primary Voters)			
	Total	Romney Supporters	Support other candidate
Yes	63%	72%	53%
No	30	24	35

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This poll was conducted by telephone from April 13-17, 2012 among 957 adults nationwide. 852 interviews were conducted with registered voters, including 268 with voters who said they plan to vote or already have voted in a Republican primary. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The margin of error for the sample of registered voters could be plus or minus three points and six points for the sample of Republican primary voters. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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q16 Who would you like to see the Republican party nominate as its presidential candidate in 2012 -- Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, or Mitt Romney?

REPUBLICAN PRIMARY VOTERS	
	%
Newt Gingrich	20
Ron Paul	12
Mitt Romney	54
Someone Else (vol.)	9
Undecided (Vol.)	4
DK/NA	1

q17 If Mitt Romney became the Republican nominee for President, would you enthusiastically support him, support him but with reservations, support him only because he is the Republican Party nominee, or not support him?

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Enthusiastically support	33	28
Support with reservations	40	38
Support only because nominee	18	21
Not support	8	10
Don't know/No answer	1	3

q18 As you may now, Rick Santorum suspended his presidential campaign this week. Do you think Rick Santorum did the right thing in leaving the presidential race or do you think he should have remained in the race?

Right to leave race	63
Should have stayed in	30
DK/NA	7

q19 If the 2012 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and Mitt Romney, the Republican, would you vote for Barack Obama or Mitt Romney?

TOTAL REGISTERED VOTERS		Mar12a
	%	%
Obama	46	47
Romney	46	44
Other (Vol.)	2	1
Won't vote (Vol.)	3	2
Depends (Vol.)	1	1
Don't know/No answer	2	5

Sample sizes:	
Republican primary voters:	268
Total registered voters	852