



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
For The People & The Press

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So-So Grades for Obama's Campaign, Worse Grades for Romney's

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## Romney's '47%' Comments Criticized, But Many Also Say Overcovered

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## So-So Grades for Obama's Campaign, Worse Grades for Romney's Romney's '47%' Comments Criticized, But Many Also Say Overcovered

Mitt Romney's statement that 47% of the public is dependent on government has registered strongly with voters. Fully two-thirds of voters (67%) correctly identify Romney as the candidate who made the comments. Among those aware that Romney made comments about the "47%", more than half (55%) have a negative reaction while just 23% react positively.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Sept. 27-30 among 1,005 adults, including 828 registered voters, finds that large percentages of Republican (65%), Democratic (65%) and independent voters (72%) know that Romney described nearly half of the population as dependent on government and paying no income taxes.

The reaction among those aware that Romney made the comments is clearly negative. Yet they also think that news organizations are giving too much coverage to Romney's "47%" statement. Nearly half of voters (49%) who know that Romney made those remarks say news organizations are giving the story too much coverage, while just 13% say they are giving it too little coverage; 28% say the amount of coverage has been appropriate.

The survey also finds that, more generally, voters are not too impressed with the jobs both candidates have done in attempting to win them over. Only about half of voters give Barack Obama grades of A or B in convincing them to vote for him. Even fewer voters give Romney grades of A or B for persuasiveness.

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### Romney and the "47%"

	Sept 2012
<i>Know which candidate made 47% comments* ...</i>	%
Yes, Mitt Romney	67
Yes, other name	4
Don't know	<u>29</u>
	100
<i>Among those who name Romney, reaction was...</i>	
Positive	23
Negative	55
Neutral/None (VOL.)	19
Don't know	<u>3</u>
	100
<i>Among those who name Romney, amount of news coverage to comments</i>	
Too much	49
Too little	13
Right amount	28
Don't know	<u>10</u>
	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 27-30, 2012. Based on registered voters.

\* Open-ended question. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## GOP Voters' Mixed Views of Romney Comments

Overall, 55% of registered voters who identify Romney as the candidate who made the “47%” comments have a negative reaction to them, while fewer than half as many (23%) have a positive reaction. Nearly one-in-five (22%) react neutrally (19%) or have no opinion (3%).

Democrats overwhelmingly react negatively to Romney’s comments (88%). And 55% of independents who are aware of Romney’s comments say they have a negative reaction; just 18% view his comments positively.

GOP voters aware of Romney’s statement have mixed opinions: 54% react positively, while 29% have a neutral reaction or don’t know, and 17% react negatively.

Voters with lower family incomes who are aware of Romney’s statement have a highly negative reaction to them: 69% of those with family incomes below \$30,000 express negative views of Romney’s 47% comments, compared with about half of those in higher income categories.

In terms of how the press has covered Romney’s comments, a sizable majority of Republican voters (74%) say the press has them given too much coverage. Nearly half of independent voters (48%) also say Romney’s remarks have gotten too much coverage, while just 29% of Democrats agree.

### Reactions to Romney’s Comments

<i>Among voters who know Romney made “47%” comments, reaction is ...</i>	<b>Positive</b> %	<b>Negative</b> %	<b>Neutral/ DK</b> %
	23	55	22=100
Republican	54	17	29=100
Democrat	5	88	7=100
Independent	18	55	27=100
<i>Family income</i>			
\$75,000 or more	24	52	23=100
\$30,000-\$74,999	23	54	22=100
Less than \$30,000	12	69	19=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 27-30, 2012.  
Based on registered voters who name Romney as candidate who made “47%” comments (N=611). Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## Grading the Campaigns

Voters grade the Obama's efforts at winning them over far less positively than they did four years ago. In October 2008, 65% of voters graded Obama at A or B for convincing them to vote for him, while 32% graded him at C, D or F. Today, just 46% of voters grade Obama at A or B, while about as many (50%) give him a grade of C or lower.

Obama's grades today are about the same as John Kerry's (46% A or B) and George W. Bush's (42%) in October 2004. Obama also gets about the same grades as did Bill Clinton in 1996, during his reelection campaign.

In September 1996, 50% rated Clinton's efforts to persuade voters at A or B, while 47% graded them at C or lower.

Romney's current grades are in line with John McCain's marks in 2008 and Bob Dole's in 1996. Currently, 31% of voters give Romney's campaign a grade of A or B. In October 2008, 34% gave McCain's campaign a grade of A or B, while 29% gave Dole's efforts positive grades in September 1996.

### Obama's Grades Far Lower than in 2008

<i>Based on registered voters</i>	<b>Sept 1992</b>	<b>Sept 1996</b>	<b>June 2000</b>	<b>Oct 2004</b>	<b>Oct 2008</b>	<b>Sept 2012</b>
<b>Democratic campaign</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%
A or B grade	58	50	35	46	65	46
C, D or F grade	38	47	60	51	32	50
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 27-30, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

### Romney's Grades Similar to McCain's and Dole's

<i>Based on registered voters</i>	<b>Sept 1992</b>	<b>Sept 1996</b>	<b>June 2000</b>	<b>Oct 2004</b>	<b>Oct 2008</b>	<b>Sept 2012</b>
<b>Republican campaign</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%
A or B grade	38	29	40	42	34	31
C, D or F grade	58	67	55	54	64	64
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 27-30, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Currently, Democrats' grades for the Obama campaign are more positive than GOP voters' grades for the Romney's. Nearly eight-in-ten Democratic voters (78%) give Obama a grade of A or B for convincing them to vote for him; 62% of Republican voters give Romney equivalent grades. Independent voters also give the Obama campaign higher marks (42% A or B) than the Romney campaign (26% A or B).

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### Rating the Campaigns

<i>Based on registered voters</i>	<b>A or B grade</b>	<b>C, D or F grade</b>	<b>DK</b>
<b>Obama campaign</b>	%	%	%
All voters	46	50	3=100
Republican	14	83	4=100
Democrat	78	19	2=100
Independent	42	53	4=100
<b>Romney campaign</b>			
All voters	31	64	5=100
Republican	62	33	5=100
Democrat	11	85	3=100
Independent	26	68	6=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 27-30, 2012.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted September 27-30, 2012 among a national sample of 1,005 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (603 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 402 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 184 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,005	3.7 percentage points
Registered voters	828	4.1 percentage points
Republican voters	256	7.3 percentage points
Democratic voters	286	6.9 percentage points
Independent voters	252	7.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**September 27-30, 2012 OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,005**

**PEW.1-PEW.3 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

**RANDOMIZE PEW.4 AND PEW.5**

PEW.4 What grade would you give Barack Obama as to how good a job he is doing in convincing you to vote for him? Would you grade his election campaign: A, B, C, D, or F?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=828]:**

Sep 27-30 2012		--- <i>Obama</i> ---		--- <i>Kerry</i> ---		<i>Gore</i>	----- <i>Clinton</i> -----		
		Mid-Oct 2008	June 2008	Mid-Oct 2004	June 2004	June 2000	Sept 1996	July 1996	Sept 1992
18	A	32	23	15	6	9	18	9	21
29	B	33	33	31	25	26	32	28	37
17	C	14	18	21	30	31	23	30	24
9	D	7	11	12	16	13	8	12	7
24	F	11	12	18	18	16	16	18	7
3	DK/Ref (VOL.)	3	3	3	5	5	3	3	4

**ASK ALL:**

**RANDOMIZE PEW.4 AND PEW.5**

PEW.5 What grade would you give Mitt Romney as to how good a job he is doing in convincing you to vote for him? Would you grade his election campaign: A, B, C, D, or F?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=828]:**

Sep 27-30 2012		-- <i>McCain</i> --		--- <i>Bush</i> ---		<i>Bush</i>	-- <i>Dole</i> --		<i>Bush, Sr.</i>
		Mid-Oct 2008	June 2008	Mid-Oct 2004	June 2004	June 2000	Sept 1996	July 1996	Sept 1992
10	A	10	5	16	13	10	8	3	14
21	B	24	27	26	26	30	21	19	24
22	C	27	35	22	23	29	30	36	27
18	D	18	16	12	12	13	18	19	15
24	F	19	14	20	23	13	19	20	16
5	DK/Ref (VOL.)	2	3	2	3	5	4	3	4

**PEW.6 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**NO QUESTION PEW.7**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.8 Do you happen to know which candidate made comments describing 47% of the population as dependent on government and paying no taxes? **[DO NOT READ RESPONSE OPTIONS; IF RESPONDENT SAYS "YES" BUT DOES NOT PROVIDE A NAME, PROBE: "which candidate?"]**

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=828]:**

Sep 27-30

2012

67	Yes, Mitt Romney (VOL.)
4	Yes, Barack Obama (VOL.)
*	Yes, other (VOL.)
27	No, don't know (VOL.)
2	Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF NAMED MITT ROMNEY [PEW.8=1]:**

PEW.9 Did you have a **[RANDOMIZE: Positive OR Negative]** reaction to Romney's 47% comments?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO NAMED ROMNEY IN PEW.8 [N=611]:**

Sep 27-30

2012

23	Positive
55	Negative
19	Neutral/No reaction (VOL.)
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF NAMED MITT ROMNEY [PEW.8=1]:**

PEW.10 Do you think news organizations are giving too much, too little, or the right amount of coverage to Romney's 47% comments?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO NAMED ROMNEY IN PEW.8 [N=611]:**

Sep 27-30

2012

49	Too much
13	Too little
28	Right amount
10	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)