Ipsos Poll conducted for Reuters, July 2012
Issue Tracking Poll
NOTE: all results shown are percentages unless otherwise labeled.

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted for Thomson Reuters from July 19-23, 2012. For the survey, a sample of 1,195 Americans was interviewed online. The precision of the Reuters/Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.3 percentage points. For more information about credibility intervals, please see the appendix.

The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, education, ethnicity and a political values scale. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Figures marked by an asterisk (*) indicate a percentage value of greater than zero but less than one half of a per cent. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.

CANDIDATE STRENGTH POLL

Q1. In your opinion, which candidate for President has a better plan, policy or approach to each of the following?

a.   Healthcare

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	37%	71%	9%	27%	38%
Mitt Romney, Republican	31%	8%	66%	15%	34%
None	16%	10%	12%	33%	15%
Don't know	17%	10%	13%	24%	13%

b.   The war on terror

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	35%	65%	12%	24%	37%
Mitt Romney, Republican	24%	6%	52%	16%	26%
None	18%	14%	14%	36%	16%
Don't know	23%	15%	22%	24%	20%

c.   The US Economy

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	30%	58%	6%	22%	31%
Mitt Romney, Republican	32%	8%	71%	19%	36%
None	18%	18%	11%	33%	16%
Don't know	20%	16%	12%	26%	16%

d.   Immigration

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	31%	57%	7%	23%	32%
Mitt Romney, Republican	28%	9%	57%	15%	30%
None	20%	15%	17%	37%	20%
Don't know	22%	19%	18%	25%	18%

e.   Social Security

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	31%	63%	6%	21%	34%
Mitt Romney, Republican	25%	5%	55%	12%	27%
None	21%	14%	19%	39%	19%
Don't know	23%	18%	19%	28%	20%

f.   Medicare

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	34%	65%	8%	26%	35%
Mitt Romney, Republican	25%	7%	54%	15%	27%
None	18%	12%	17%	34%	18%
Don't know	23%	16%	21%	26%	20%

g.   Taxes

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	32%	65%	6%	23%	35%
Mitt Romney, Republican	30%	7%	65%	19%	33%
None	18%	14%	17%	30%	16%
Don't know	19%	14%	12%	27%	15%

h.   Gay marriage

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	37%	62%	15%	29%	37%
Mitt Romney, Republican	23%	9%	49%	11%	26%
None	19%	14%	17%	34%	18%
Don't know	21%	15%	19%	26%	18%

i.   Jobs and employment

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	32%	62%	8%	23%	34%
Mitt Romney, Republican	33%	7%	72%	23%	37%
None	16%	16%	9%	32%	15%
Don't know	18%	15%	11%	21%	14%

j.   The federal government deficit

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Barack Obama, Democrat	28%	57%	5%	18%	29%
Mitt Romney, Republican	32%	9%	68%	20%	35%
None	20%	19%	12%	37%	19%
Don't know	20%	15%	15%	25%	17%

ISSUE TRACKING POLL

Q2. In the last seven days, how much, if anything, have you heard about:

a. Mitt Romney's tax returns

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Heard a great deal	25%	28%	31%	15%	28%
Heard a fair amount	20%	21%	23%	18%	22%
Heard a little bit	26%	24%	27%	32%	26%
Not heard anything at all	21%	21%	15%	25%	18%
Unsure	8%	6%	4%	11%	5%
Total aware	**71%**	**73%**	**81%**	**64%**	**76%**

b. Mitt Romney's former company Bain Capitol

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Heard a great deal	23%	26%	29%	14%	27%
Heard a fair amount	18%	19%	24%	14%	20%
Heard a little bit	26%	23%	28%	30%	26%
Not heard anything at all	24%	25%	15%	30%	21%
Unsure	9%	7%	5%	12%	6%
Total aware	**67%**	**68%**	**80%**	**58%**	**73%**

[FOR EACH ITEM IN Q2 Aware of]
Q3. Has what you have heard about (INSERT ITEM) made you more or less favorable towards

a. Mitt Romney's tax returns
 1. Barack Obama

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Much more favorable	20%	41%	4%	8%	20%
Somewhat more favorable	12%	18%	5%	11%	10%
No change	48%	36%	52%	65%	47%
Somewhat less favorable	7%	2%	11%	10%	8%
Much less favorable	14%	2%	29%	7%	15%
Total more favorable	**31%**	**59%**	**9%**	**19%**	**30%**
Total less favorable	**21%**	**5%**	**40%**	**17%**	**23%**

 2. Mitt Romney

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Much more favorable	9%	4%	14%	7%	9%
Somewhat more favorable	7%	7%	9%	5%	8%
No change	47%	23%	66%	58%	46%
Somewhat less favorable	14%	23%	6%	17%	14%
Much less favorable	23%	44%	6%	13%	23%
Total more favorable	**16%**	**11%**	**22%**	**12%**	**17%**
Total less favorable	**37%**	**66%**	**12%**	**30%**	**37%**

b. Mitt Romney's former company Bain Capitol

1. Barack Obama

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Much more favorable	18%	38%	4%	7%	18%
Somewhat more favorable	13%	23%	3%	22%	12%
No change	46%	31%	51%	60%	45%
Somewhat less favorable	7%	5%	11%	1%	8%
Much less favorable	17%	4%	31%	11%	18%
Total more favorable	**31%**	**61%**	**7%**	**28%**	**30%**
Total less favorable	**24%**	**9%**	**42%**	**12%**	**26%**

2. Mitt Romney

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Much more favorable	8%	2%	12%	10%	8%
Somewhat more favorable	9%	9%	12%	3%	9%
No change	48%	24%	65%	61%	46%
Somewhat less favorable	13%	19%	8%	10%	13%
Much less favorable	22%	46%	4%	16%	24%
Total more favorable	**17%**	**11%**	**24%**	**13%**	**18%**
Total less favorable	**35%**	**65%**	**12%**	**26%**	**36%**

PUBLIC OFFICIAL DISCLOSURE POLL

Q4. Do you believe that candidates for political office should be required to disclose their (multiple response)

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Tax returns	67%	78%	61%	61%	70%
Income and investments	64%	76%	56%	60%	67%
Past drug use	50%	47%	53%	47%	50%
Health and medical reports	45%	47%	46%	44%	47%
None [EXCLUSIVE]	17%	10%	19%	21%	14%

Q5. As you may know, some people believe that presidential candidate Mitt Romney should release more information about his older tax returns. How much, if anything, have you heard about this issue?

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Heard a great deal	22%	26%	24%	17%	25%
Heard a fair amount	22%	23%	27%	16%	24%
Heard a little bit	33%	36%	31%	37%	34%
Not heard anything at all	16%	12%	13%	21%	12%
Unsure	6%	3%	5%	9%	5%
Total aware	**77%**	**85%**	**82%**	**70%**	**83%**

Q6. Which of the following is closest to your opinion:

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
Mitt Romney has released the tax returns he needs to and any further requests are an unnecessary invasion of his privacy	32%	12%	62%	20%	35%
Americans have a right to know a presidential candidate's total financial history, even if it goes back many years	46%	69%	19%	57%	46%
Unsure	22%	19%	18%	23%	19%

Q7. And do you believe that the debate about Mitt Romney's tax returns is...

	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Registered voters
A waste of time	53%	29%	84%	46%	55%
An important part of the campaign	47%	71%	16%	54%	45%

How to Calculate Bayesian Credibility Intervals

The calculation of credibility

natural estimate of the true population proportion θ. This model is often called the likelihood function, and it is a standard concept in both the Bayesian and the Classical framework. The Bayesian[1] statistics combines both the prior distribution and the likelihood function to create a posterior distribution. The posterior distribution represents our opinion about which are the plausible values for θ adjusted after observing the sample data. In reality, the posterior distribution is one's knowledge base updated using the latest survey information. For the prior and likelihood functions specified here, the posterior distribution is also a beta distribution ($\pi(\theta/y)\sim\beta(y+a,n-y+b)$), but with updated hyper-parameters.

Our credibility interval for ϑ is based on this posterior distribution. As mentioned above, these intervals represent our belief about which are the most plausible values for ϑ given our updated knowledge base. There are different ways to calculate these intervals based on   . Since we want only one measure of precision for all variables in the survey, analogous to what is done within the Classical framework, we will compute the largest possible credibility interval for any observed sample. The worst case occurs when we assume that a=1 and b=1 and   . Using a simple approximation of the posterior by the normal distribution, the 95% credibility interval is given by, approximately:

$$\bar{y} \mp \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}..$$

For this poll, the Bayesian Credibility Interval was adjusted using standard weighting design effect 1+L=1.3 to account for complex weighting[2]

Analysis Domain	Sample size	Credibility intervals
All Americans	1195	3.3
Democrats	473	5.2
Republicans	425	5.5
Independents	172	8.7
Registered voters	962	3.7

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[1] *Bayesian Data Analysis, Second Edition, Andrew Gelman, John B. Carlin, Hal S. Stern, Donald B. Rubin, Chapman & Hall/CRC | ISBN: 158488388X | 2003*

[2] *Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for unequal Pi . Journal of Official, Statistics, 8, 2, 183200.*