



INSTITUTE OF
PUBLIC OPINION

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

The Morning Call /

Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion

Pennsylvania 2012: An Election Preview



**Key Findings Report
December 9, 2011**

KEY FINDINGS:

1. While nearly half of Pennsylvanians currently disapprove of President Obama's handling of his job, his overall standing in the state has improved since August when his numbers reached the lowest point during his tenure in office.
2. Pennsylvania voters are very split on whether President Obama deserves reelection, with a slight plurality preferring Obama over an unnamed Republican candidate in a head-to-head matchup.
3. President Obama edges former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney by 4 points, Texas Governor Rick Perry by 18 points, and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich by 17 points in hypothetical match-ups for the 2012 election.
4. After a notable decline in public standing in August, Senator Robert Casey Jr. now receives approval of over half of Pennsylvanians for his job performance in the United States Senate.
5. By a 2 to 1 margin Pennsylvania voters believe that Senator Casey deserves to be reelected, and he holds a 22 point lead over an unnamed Republican in a hypothetical election.
6. Pennsylvanians are fairly evenly split in terms of which party's candidates they prefer in terms of the 2012 congressional elections.

METHODOLOGY: The following key findings report summarizes data collected in a telephone survey of registered voters of the state of Pennsylvania between November 28 and December 7, 2011. Individual households and cell phones throughout Pennsylvania were selected randomly for inclusion in the study. The sample of phone numbers used in the survey was generated by Genesys Sampling Systems of Ft. Washington, PA. Interviewing was conducted by the staff of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, with 447 surveys completed, of which 422 were registered voters. Of the 447 surveys 317 were completed on land lines and 130 were completed on cell phones. The total number of completions results in a margin of error of +/- 5% at the 95% confidence interval. However the margin of errors for sub groups (i.e. women, income groups, age categories) is larger due to smaller sample size. Percentages throughout the survey have been rounded upward at the .5 mark, thus many totals in the results will not equal 100%. The data has been weighted by the following categories: age, gender, educational attainment, race and region. The instrument was designed by Christopher Borick, PhD in consultation with staff members of the *Morning Call*. The analysis was written Dr. Borick.

OVERVIEW: With the 2012 elections under 11 months away voters in the key swing state of Pennsylvania remain divided on President Obama's performance in office, but give him a slight advantage over an unnamed Republican candidate and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. The 44th President has more substantial leads over other prominent GOP prospects such as former Speaker of the House Next Gingrich and Texas Governor Rick Perry. Meanwhile, United States Senator Robert Casey Jr. has improved his standing among Commonwealth voters since the summer, with a majority of the electorate in the Keystone State now maintaining the

view that he deserves reelection next year. These are among the findings in the most recent Morning Call/ Muhlenberg College survey of voters in Pennsylvania.

THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE

After experiencing the lowest ratings of his presidency during the August debt-ceiling debates President Obama’s job approval numbers have moderately rebounded in the Commonwealth, buoying his chances of winning the 20 crucial electoral votes that Pennsylvanian’s will chose next November. Yet even with this rebound more voters in the Keystone State disapprove of Obama’s performance in the White House than approve of his work as president. As can be seen in Table One, the first term president’s approval ratings climbed by 10 points between August and September, with 45% of Pennsylvanians approving of the way he s handling his job. These stronger approval numbers correspond with a notable 8 point drop in Obama’s disapproval marks.

**TABLE ONE
APPROVAL RATINGS FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA
AMONG PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS**

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| April 2009 | 61% | 24% | 15% |
| April 2010 | 45% | 46% | 9% |
| September 2010 | 40% | 56% | 4% |
| March 2011 | 48% | 44% | 9% |
| August 2011 | 35% | 58% | 7% |
| December 2011 | 45% | 50% | 5% |

Despite an improving standing among Pennsylvanians, a slim majority of voters in the Commonwealth do not believe that President Obama deserves reelection at this time. With 51% of Pennsylvanians maintaining a view that Obama has not earned a second term in office and only 41% holding the view that the president deserves reelection, it appears that it will be a challenging environment for the President to once again carry the state that he won by over 600,000 votes in 2008.

**TABLE TWO
DOES BARACK OBAMA DESERVE REELECTION?
(REGISTERED VOTERS IN PENNSYLVANIA)**

| | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| March 2011 | 40% | 45% | 14% |
| August 2011 | 36% | 55% | 9% |
| December 2011 | 41% | 51% | 9% |

With the Pennsylvania electorate divided on President Obama’s job performance it is not surprising that he finds himself in a fairly tight race with a generic Republican presidential candidate. The survey results indicate that Obama holds an 8 point lead over an unnamed GOP

challenger, with 44% supporting the president and 37% favoring the Republican candidate. This lead for Obama is near the 5% lead he held in August and 4% lead he maintained last March.

**TABLE THREE
OBAMA vs. GENERIC REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE
(REGISTERED VOTERS IN PENNSYLVANIA)**

| | Obama | Republican | Depends on Candidate (vol) | Not Sure/Refused |
|----------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| March 2011 | 37% | 33% | 22% | 8% |
| August 2011 | 36% | 31% | 31% | 3% |
| December 2011 | 45% | 37% | 14% | 5% |

Of course with the GOP primaries and caucuses beginning in January the generic Republican candidate will be replaced by a real-life nominee. Thus the survey included a battery of questions matching President Obama with a number of leading Republican contenders. In particular, the survey matched Obama against; former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney; Former Speaker of the House Next Gingrich; Texas Governor Rick Perry; and businessman Herman Cain. These candidates have regularly performed among the best in polling of GOP primary candidates this fall and thus were included in this survey of Pennsylvania voters. It is important to note that Herman Cain suspended his campaign during the fielding of this survey.

The survey results presented in Table Four indicate that President Obama and Mitt Romney are in a statistical dead heat in Pennsylvania, while Obama maintains sizeable leads over Perry, Gingrich and Cain. Governor Romney actually outperforms a generic Republican candidate in a match-up with Obama, with Romney trailing the president by 4 points and the generic GOP challenger trailing the president by 8 points. Speaker Gingrich trails the president by 17 points and Perry trailed Obama by 18 points.

**TABLE FOUR
OBAMA vs. REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES
(REGISTERED VOTERS IN PENNSYLVANIA)**

| | Republican | Obama | Not Sure/Other |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Romney | 41% | 45% | 6% |
| Gingrich | 35% | 52% | 12% |
| Perry | 30% | 48% | 21% |
| Cain | 28% | 55% | 18% |
| Generic Republican | 37% | 45% | 19% |

THE UNITED STATES SENATE RACE IN PENNSYLVANIA

As the presidential election draws nearer so does a major U.S. Senate race in the Commonwealth. Incumbent Senator Robert P. Casey Jr. will make his first attempt at reelection next November

against a Republican challenger from a large field of announced candidates. The results of the survey provide evidence that Casey is in a generally solid position among the Pennsylvania electorate in terms of both job approval and head-to-head matchups with an unnamed Republican candidate.

As with President Obama, Senator Casey has experienced a rebound in public support since the August debt-ceiling debates. A majority (54%) of Pennsylvanians now approve of the job that Casey is doing in Washington, compared to only 40% who approved in late summer. Casey's disapproval numbers dropped from 35% to 24% over the same time frame, thus solidifying his standing as the election year nears.

**TABLE FIVE
APPROVAL RATINGS FOR SENATOR CASEY
AMONG PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS**

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| March 2011 | 48% | 22% | 30% |
| August 2011 | 40% | 35% | 26% |
| December 2011 | 54% | 24% | 22% |

By a 2 to 1 margin Pennsylvania voters indicated that Senator Casey deserves reelection, with significant growth in the number of voters than maintain this position since our survey last August. Notably, there was only a modest decline in the number of Keystone State voters who stated that Casey does not deserve reelection, with 27% holding this view today compared with 30% last summer. Casey's improved standing on this measure appears to be buoyed by a shift from voters unsure about Casey's merit for reelection, with only 19% unsure on this matter in December compared to 30% last summer.

**TABLE SIX
DOES BOB CASEY JR. DESERVE REELECTION?
(REGISTERED VOTERS IN PENNSYLVANIA)**

| | Yes | No | Not Sure/Refused |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| March 2011 | 48% | 24% | 28% |
| August 2011 | 41% | 30% | 30% |
| December 2011 | 54% | 27% | 19% |

Casey has also been able to increase his advantage over a generic Republican candidate from an 8 point lead in August to a 23 point lead in the December canvass of Commonwealth voters. In a match-up with an unnamed GOP candidate Casey leads by a margin of 49% to 27%. As can be seen in Table Seven the growth in support for Casey appears related to the decline in undecided voters, with only half as many voters unsure about their position on this race in December (8%) as there were in August (18%).

**TABLE SEVEN
CASEY vs. GENERIC REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE
(REGISTERED VOTERS IN PENNSYLVANIA)**

| | Casey | Republican | Depends on Candidate (vol) | Not Sure/Refused |
|----------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| March 2011 | 41% | 27% | 18% | 24% |
| August 2011 | 33% | 25% | 25% | 18% |
| December 2011 | 49% | 27% | 15% | 8% |

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE RACES IN PENNSYLVANIA

With the 2010 Census results dictating the loss of one of Pennsylvania’s 19 congressional seats, and the Pennsylvania General Assembly soon to release its map of the state’s 18 congressional districts, this survey examined the preferences of Commonwealth voters in terms of their preferences regarding elections in their own district. The survey findings indicate voters in the state are fairly divided on which party’s candidates they prefer if the congressional elections were held today, with 40% supporting a Democratic candidate and 35% favoring a Republican candidate.

**TABLE EIGHT
PARTY PREFERENCE IN CONGRESSIONAL RACES
(REGISTERED VOTERS IN PA)**

| | Percent Responding |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Democratic Candidate | 40% |
| Republican Candidate | 35% |
| Depends on Candidate | 19% |
| Not Sure/Refused | 6% |

CONCLUSION

With the 2012 elections under a year away Pennsylvania voters demonstrate mixed views on the work of President Obama and are largely divided in terms of support for his reelection bid. Despite fairly high levels of job approval the President remains the choice of a plurality of registered voters in match-ups with both a generic Republican candidate and a variety of leading Republican challengers. Of the Republican field former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney is most competitive with Obama, trailing the incumbent President by only a few percentage points. Meanwhile, Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey Jr. remains in a strong position to win reelection next November as he possesses strong approval ratings and performs well in hypothetical contests with a Republican challenger

Muhlenberg College/Morning Call
December 2011 Pennsylvania State Survey
Frequency and Cross tabulation Report

Sample - 447 Adult Pennsylvanians

422 Registered Voters

Land Line Interviews = 317: Cell Phone Interviews = 130

Fielding Dates: November 28 – December 7, 2011

Margin of Error = +/- 5% at 95% Level of Confidence

AAPOR RR1 – Response Rate = 20%

5 Callback Attempts

Data Weighted by Age, Race, Educational Attainment, Gender and Region

Q1: Thank you. In which of the following categories does your current age fall? (READ LIST)

- 1. 18-34.....20%
- 2. 35-49.....26%
- 3. 50-64.....34%
- 4. Or over 65.....21%

Q2:

Next, I would like for you to rate the performance of a few political officials. For each name that I read, please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the way he is doing his job.

First, President Barack Obama

- 1. Approve.....45%
- 2. Disapprove.....50%
- 3. Not Sure.....5%

TREND

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| April 2009 | 61% | 24% | 15% |
| April 2010 | 45% | 46% | 9% |
| September 2010 | 40% | 56% | 4% |
| March 2011 | 48% | 44% | 9% |
| August 2011 | 35% | 58% | 7% |
| December 2011 | 45% | 50% | 5% |

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|-----------------|---------|------------|----------|
| Democrat | 72% | 24% | 5% |
| Republican | 19% | 75% | 5% |
| Independent | 35% | 63% | 2% |
| Southeast PA | 59% | 33% | 8% |
| Southwest PA | 53% | 43% | 3% |
| Remaining Areas | 35% | 62% | 8% |

Q3:

Governor Tom Corbett?

1. Approve.....51%
2. Disapprove..... 30%
3. Not Sure.....19%

TREND

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| March 2011 | 36% | 15% | 49% |
| August 2011 | 35% | 33% | 32% |
| December 2011 | 51% | 30% | 19% |

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|-----------------|---------|------------|----------|
| Democrat | 38% | 45% | 15% |
| Republican | 58% | 16% | 26% |
| Independent | 54% | 30% | 15% |
| Southeast PA | 52% | 27% | 20% |
| Southwest PA | 45% | 49% | 6% |
| Remaining Areas | 50% | 30% | 20% |

Q4:

Senator Pat Toomey?

1. Approve.....44%
2. Disapprove.....28%
3. Not Sure.....28%

TREND

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| March 2011 | 39% | 19% | 42% |
| August 2011 | 40% | 30% | 31% |
| December 2011 | 44% | 28% | 28% |

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|-----------------|---------|------------|----------|
| Democrat | 33% | 38% | 27% |
| Republican | 57% | 16% | 27% |
| Independent | 39% | 33% | 28% |
| Southeast PA | 39% | 28% | 31% |
| Southwest PA | 29% | 44% | 27% |
| Remaining Areas | 50% | 23% | 26% |

Q5:

And Senator Bob Casey, Jr.?

1. Approve.....54%
2. Disapprove.....24%
3. Not Sure.....22%

TREND

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| March 2011 | 48% | 22% | 30% |
| August 2011 | 40% | 35% | 26% |
| December 2011 | 54% | 24% | 22% |

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Approve | Disapprove | Not Sure |
|-----------------|---------|------------|----------|
| Democrat | 63% | 20% | 17% |
| Republican | 41% | 29% | 30% |
| Independent | 48% | 27% | 25% |
| Southeast PA | 53% | 19% | 28% |
| Southwest PA | 55% | 34% | 11% |
| Remaining Areas | 49% | 28% | 23% |

Q6:

Which of the following categories best describes your current voting status? Are you registered as a (READ LIST)?

1. Democrat.....45%.
2. Republican..... 40%
3. Independent.....11%
4. Other Party.....1%
5. Not registered to Vote in Pa.....3%
6. Not Sure.....1%

Q7:

Do you feel that Barack Obama deserves to be reelected, or do you feel that he does not deserve to be reelected?

- 1. Reelected.....41%
- 2. Not reelected.....51%
- 3. Not Sure.....8%

TREND

| | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| March 2011 | 40% | 45% | 14% |
| August 2011 | 36% | 55% | 9% |
| December 2011 | 41% | 51% | 8% |

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----------|
| Democrat | 71% | 23% | 6% |
| Republican | 15% | 79% | 6% |
| Independent | 20% | 67% | 13% |
| Southeast PA | 55% | 32% | 13% |
| Southwest PA | 47% | 40% | 12% |
| Remaining Areas | 31% | 64% | 6% |

Q8: Now, if the 2012 presidential election was being held today

Do you think you would vote for Barack Obama, the Democratic candidate, or the Republican Candidate?

- 1. Barack Obama.....45%
- 2. Republican Candidate.....37%
- 3. Depends on the Candidate.....14%
- 4. Not sure.....5%

TREND

| | Obama | Republican | Depends on Candidate (vol) | Not Sure |
|----------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| March 2011 | 37% | 33% | 22% | 8% |
| August 2011 | 36% | 31% | 31% | 3% |
| December 2011 | 45% | 37% | 14% | 5% |

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Obama | Republican | Depends on Candidate (vol) | Not Sure |
|-----------------|-------|------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Democrat | 73% | 10% | 11% | 5% |
| Republican | 17% | 68% | 15% | <1% |
| Independent | 37% | 35% | 13% | 15% |
| Southeast PA | 57% | 26% | 12% | 5% |
| Southwest PA | 55% | 30% | 11% | 1% |
| Remaining Areas | 33% | 48% | 16% | 4% |

Q9:

Now, if the 2012 presidential election was being held today and the race was between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, who would you vote for?

- 1. Barack Obama.....45%
- 2. Mitt Romney.....41%
- 3. Some other Candidate.....8%
- 4. Not sure.....6%

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Obama | Romney | Some Other Candidate (vol) | Not Sure |
|-----------------|-------|--------|----------------------------|----------|
| Democrat | 76% | 17% | 2% | 5% |
| Republican | 12% | 68% | 14% | 6% |
| Independent | 30% | 39% | 13% | 17% |
| Southeast PA | 55% | 30% | 4% | 10% |
| Southwest PA | 54% | 29% | 6% | 9% |
| Remaining Areas | 37% | 50% | 11% | 3% |

Q10:

If the 2012 presidential election was being held today and the race was between Barack Obama and Rick Perry, who would you vote for?

- 1. Barack Obama.....48%
- 2. Rick Perry.....30%
- 3. Some other Candidate.....11%
- 4. Not sure.....10%

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Obama | Perry | Some Other Candidate (vol) | Not Sure |
|-----------------|-------|-------|----------------------------|----------|
| Democrat | 77% | 13% | 2% | 8% |
| Republican | 19% | 48% | 22% | 11% |
| Independent | 37% | 37% | 11% | 15% |
| Southeast PA | 61% | 19% | 3% | 18% |
| Southwest PA | 62% | 31% | 4% | 2% |
| Remaining Areas | 35% | 40% | 18% | 7% |

Q11:

Now, if the 2012 presidential election was being held today and the race was between Barack Obama and Herman Cain, who would you vote for?

- 1. Barack Obama.....55%
- 2. Herman Cain28%
- 3. Some other Candidate.....10%
- 4. Not sure.....8%

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Obama | Cain | Some Other Candidate (vol) | Not Sure |
|-----------------|-------|------|----------------------------|----------|
| Democrat | 83% | 10% | 2% | 5% |
| Republican | 24% | 50% | 16% | 10% |
| Independent | 49% | 18% | 27% | 7% |
| Southeast PA | 69% | 16% | 6% | 10% |
| Southwest PA | 70% | 27% | 2% | 1% |
| Remaining Areas | 43% | 37% | 14% | 7% |

Q12:

Now, if the 2012 presidential election was being held today and the race was between Barack Obama and Newt Gingrich, who would you vote for?

- 1. Barack Obama.....52%
- 2. Newt Gingrich35%
- 3. Some other Candidate.....6%
- 4. Not sure.....6%

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Obama | Gingrich | Some Other Candidate (vol) | Not Sure |
|-----------------|-------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| Democrat | 80% | 16% | 1% | 4% |
| Republican | 22% | 51% | 12% | 16% |
| Independent | 53% | 26% | 20% | 1% |
| Southeast PA | 67% | 18% | 4% | 12% |
| Southwest PA | 61% | 30% | 6% | 3% |
| Remaining Areas | 41% | 47% | 8% | 5% |

Q13:

Do you feel that Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey, Jr. deserves to be reelected, or do you feel that he does not deserve to be reelected?

1. Reelected54%
2. Not Reelected27%
3. Not Sure.....19%

TREND

| | Yes | No | Not Sure/Refused |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| March 2011 | 48% | 24% | 28% |
| August 2011 | 41% | 30% | 30% |
| December 2011 | 54% | 27% | 19% |

CROSSTABULATIONS

| | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----------|
| Democrat | 61% | 19% | 19% |
| Republican | 44% | 41% | 15% |
| Independent | 45% | 34% | 21% |
| Southeast PA | 57% | 22% | 21% |
| Southwest PA | 67% | 28% | 5% |
| Remaining Areas | 45% | 32% | 23% |

Q14:

If the 2012 election for United States Senator were being held today, do you think you would vote for Bob Casey Jr. the Democratic candidate, or the Republican candidate?

1. Bob Casey Jr.49%
2. Republican Candidate.....27%
3. Depends on Candidate.....15%
4. Not Sure..... 8%

TREND

| | Casey | Republican | Depends on Candidate (vol) | Not Sure/Refused |
|----------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| March 2011 | 41% | 27% | 18% | 24% |
| August 2011 | 33% | 25% | 25% | 18% |
| December 2011 | 49% | 27% | 15% | 8% |

CROSSTABLATIONS

| | Casey | Republican | Depends on Candidate (vol) | Not Sure |
|-----------------|-------|------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Democrat | 75% | 8% | 11% | 5% |
| Republican | 26% | 49% | 19% | 6% |
| Independent | 22% | 27% | 35% | 15% |
| Southeast PA | 58% | 19% | 16% | 7% |
| Southwest PA | 61% | 17% | 13% | 11% |
| Remaining Areas | 37% | 41% | 14% | 8% |

Q15:

If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your congressional district? The Democratic Party's candidate, or the Republican Party's candidate?

1. Democratic Candidate..... 40%
2. Republican Candidate..... 35%
3. Depends on Candidate.....19%
4. Not Sure..... 6%

| | Democrat | Republican | Depends on Candidate (vol) | Not Sure |
|-----------------|----------|------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Democrat | 72% | 5% | 13% | 10% |
| Republican | 12% | 72% | 14% | 2% |
| Independent | 26% | 32% | 39% | 2% |
| Southeast PA | 50% | 22% | 25% | 4% |
| Southwest PA | 49% | 25% | 21% | 4% |
| Remaining Areas | 30% | 47% | 16% | 7% |

QUESTIONS 15 to 37 WILL BE RELEASED IN A LATER REPORT

Finally, I have a few questions about yourself.

Q38: What county do you reside in?

(CODED INTO REGIONS)

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Southeast..... | 34% |
| Southwest..... | 19% |
| Remainder of State..... | 48% |

Q: 39:

What is your current marital status? (READ LIST)

1. Single21%
2. Married.....54%
3. Separated.....3%
4. Divorced.....7%
5. Widowed.....14%
6. Partnered.....1%

Q: 40:

What is your highest level of education? (READ LIST)

1. Less than HS..... 7%
2. Hs grad.....34%
3. Some college..... 29%
4. College graduate.....19%
5. Graduate or professional degree.....11%
6. Not sure.....1%

Q41:

Which of the following categories best describes your racial identity? Are you (READ LIST)?

1. White/Caucasian.....78%
2. African-American..... 10%
3. Hispanic.....5%
4. Asian American.....2%
5. Native-American.....1%
6. Mixed Race..... 4%
7. Other.....1%

Q 42:

Which of the following categories best describes your family income? Is it?

1. Under \$20,000.....13%
2. \$20-40,000.....25%
3. \$40-60,000.....21%
4. \$60-80,000.....15%
5. \$80-100,000.....12%
6. Over \$100,000.....12%
7. Not sure.....2%

Q43:

Thank you for your help with the survey. We appreciate your time.

1. Male.....48%
2. Female..... 52%