

Romney gaining on Obama, poll shows
Reuters
April 17 , 2012

WASHINGTON, April 17 — US President Barack Obama's lead over Mitt Romney has narrowed to four percentage points from 11 points a month ago, now that Romney has established himself as the probable Republican presidential nominee, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released yesterday.

Obama was backed by 47 per cent of registered voters in the telephone poll conducted from April 12-15 compared with 43 per cent who supported Romney. In the same poll conducted between March 8-11, Obama led Romney by 52 per cent to 41 per cent.

Romney (left) and Obama are said to be in a statistical deadheat. — Reuters pic
In what could be a problem for Obama in the November 6 election, 53 per cent of registered voters said jobs and the economy were the most important issue in the presidential election campaign, and slightly more — 45 per cent — rated Romney higher in that area than the 43 per cent who favoured Obama.

"Obama has had to preside over a really tough economy," said Chris Jackson, research director at Ipsos public affairs. "People are sort of dinging him for it and that's really what's going to make this a competitive race."

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama led his Republican rival John McCain by a much larger margin — 52 per cent to 40 per cent — on jobs and the economy, as the Democrat won the election.

The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll result is a statistical deadheat; the two-point gap on the issue is within the margin of error.

Romney's last major rival for the Republican nomination to oppose Obama's re-election left the race before the poll was conducted.

Rick Santorum, a former Pennsylvania senator best known for strongly conservative views on social issues that pushed the Republican campaign to the right, ended his run for the White House on April 10.

Romney gained on Obama as he solidified his position as the likely nominee, Jackson said.

"Last month, when it looked like Santorum might have a chance to upstage Romney, Romney was down," Jackson said. "Just by winning the Republican primary, he has managed to close the gap" with Obama.

Romney's campaign was also heartened last week when a Democratic cable television commentator made remarks that seemed to criticise his wife, Ann, for staying home and raising their five sons rather than holding a job outside the home.

The comment escalated into a fracas over the role of women in society and gave Romney, who is struggling to improve his ratings among women voters, a chance to reach them

through Ann Romney.

Yesterday's poll showed the closest margin between Romney and Obama since a survey conducted from October 31 to November 3, 2011, when Romney had a one-point lead over Obama, 44 per cent to 43 per cent. That was Romney's only lead since the Reuters/Ipsos head-to-head polling began in May 2011.

In most of the nationwide surveys, Obama has enjoyed a lead of six per cent or more among registered voters.

Obama's approval rating remains steady, the poll found, with the same percentage of voters — 49 — approving and disapproving of his performance as president. His approval rating last month was 50 per cent, versus a 48 per cent disapproval rating, and Jackson said Ipsos' models showed it was unlikely to change before Election Day on November 6.

Incumbents generally were considered to have a solid chance of re-election if their approval ratings were about 45 per cent or higher before voters headed to the polls, Jackson said.

Nationwide polls about the presidential election released yesterday varied widely. Gallup's daily tracking poll had Romney leading Obama by 47 per cent to 45 per cent. A CNN poll had Obama leading Romney by 52 per cent to 43 per cent.

With the election expected to be close, it is likely to come down to the result in a few "swing states", not strongly allied with either party, on November 6.

"All that matters is electoral math," said Republican strategist Ford O'Connell. "The key question: can Romney win Florida, Ohio, Virginia and North Carolina? If so, then Obama will be unseated. If Obama wins any one of the four — essentially, game over for the GOP."

Reuters/Ipsos' telephone poll of 1,044 adults included 891 registered voters, of whom 304 were Democrats, 235 were Republicans and 302 were independents. The margin of error was plus or minus 3.1 percentage points for all respondents, 3.3 for registered voters, 4.2 for Democrats, 4.9 for Republicans and 9.8 for independents. — Reuters

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/world/article/romney-gaining-on-obama-poll-shows/>