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October 17, 2012

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OBAMA MORE TRUSTED, YOUNG ADULTS MAKING THE CASE FOR A SECOND TERM HARVARD POLL FINDS

Youth turnout likely to decline, but 18- to 29- year old Romney supporters more likely than Obama supporters to say they will “definitely” vote in November

Cambridge, MA – A new national poll of America’s 18- to 29- year olds by Harvard’s Institute of Politics (IOP), located at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, finds President Barack Obama continuing to widen the gap between himself and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney leading by a nineteen-percentage point margin (55%-36%) among young adult “likely” voters. Just weeks before the presidential election, the poll also shows voting enthusiasm slipping as only forty-eight percent (48%) of America’s young adults say they will “definitely” vote this fall.

In addition, the IOP’s newest survey results – its 22nd major release since 2000 – show a solid majority of 18- to 29- year olds (62%) more comfortable with the view that President Obama inherited problems unable to be fixed in one presidential term rather than the viewpoint that he has failed (33%) – see below for more information. A detailed report on the poll’s findings is available on the Institute’s homepage at www.iop.harvard.edu.

“As enthusiasm for voting continues to slip among America’s 18- to 29- year olds, the IOP’s latest poll shows a clear sentiment by young adults that Washington is broken,” said Harvard Institute of Politics Director Trey Grayson. “We must work together to re-engage youth in the political process – a goal critical to the health and future of our democracy.”

"Despite telling us that they are far less likely to vote this year, Millennials still yearn to make this country great – and it is our hope that as we approach Election Day both presidential campaigns work to connect with young adults in more meaningful ways and better engage on the issues that will shape their future and ours," said Harvard Institute of Politics Polling Director John Della Volpe. "It's not only good politics - it's good for the country."

The KnowledgePanel® survey of 2,123 18- to 29- year old U.S. citizens with a margin of error of +/- 2.1 percentage points (95% confidence level) conducted with the Government and Academic Research team of GfK for the IOP between September 19 and October 3, 2012 finds –

- ***President Obama more trusted than Gov. Romney to handle major issues; majority believe problems President inherited are complex and require more time to solve.*** When America’s 18- to 29- year olds were asked which presidential candidate they trust more to handle a number of top issues, late-September IOP polling shows President Obama favored over Governor Romney on health care (+23 percentage points), foreign policy (+23), to be the Commander-in-Chief of the military (+22), immigration reform (+20) – and the economy (+19). Obama was also trusted more to handle “issues of

concern to someone your age” (+31) and “issues of concern to women” (+33).

In addition, six-in-ten Millennials (62%) said the statement: “the problems that President Obama inherited are so complex it takes more than four years to do the job” came closer to their own view, while only a third (33%) said the same about the statement: “despite his best efforts, President Obama has failed.”

- ***Romney voters more likely to turnout than Obama voters; less than half of America’s young adults expected to “definitely vote” in November.*** 18- to 29- year olds favoring Governor Romney are more likely (65%) than those favoring President Obama (55%) to say they will “definitely” vote this fall. Overall, forty-eight percent (48%) say that they will “definitely” vote in the November elections, with another ten percent (10%) saying “probably” and sixteen percent (16%) saying “50-50.” African Americans (59%) and Whites (54%) are both significantly more likely to say they will vote this fall than Hispanics (31%), as are college students (55%).
- ***Obama leads Romney by nineteen points with young adult “likely” voters, continues to be preferred candidate among 18- to 29- year olds generally and is ahead on college campuses.*** At the time the IOP’s new fall poll was conducted, 18- to 29- year old “likely” voters gave President Obama a nineteen-percentage point (19%) lead over Governor Romney (55%: Obama; 36%: Romney), a slight improvement from March IOP polling (51%: Obama; 34%: Romney). Among young adults enrolled in a four-year college “likely” to vote, Obama leads 48%-38% with fourteen percent (14%) undecided. The IOP’s latest poll also shows Obama has continued to grow his lead among young adults generally to twenty-two points (48%: Obama; 26%: Romney; don’t know: 22%), five percentage points greater than seen in March IOP polling (43%-26%) and eleven points greater than December IOP polling (37%-26%). Obama leads Romney among 18- to 24- year olds by twelve points (41%-29%) and 25- to 29- year olds by 23 points (46%-23%).
- ***President Obama enjoys strong leads in “Blue” and “Swing” states – and also ahead in “Red” states.*** President Obama is favored over Governor Romney among likely 18- to 29- year old voters in Swing states by 16 percentage points (54%-38%) and in Blue states by 34 points (61%-27%) – he leads by 6 points in Red states (49%-43%).
- ***Governor Romney’s VP pick unhelpful.*** When young adults were asked how Governor Romney’s selection of Congressman Paul Ryan as his running mate affected their likelihood to vote for him, by more than a 4:1 margin more respondents say the Ryan pick made them “much less likely” to support Mitt Romney (40%: much less likely; 9%: much more likely). Among likely Republican voters, thirty-four percent (34%) say that the Ryan pick makes them “much more likely” to vote for Romney, with six percent (6%) saying “much less likely;” among likely Independent voters, nine percent (9%) said the Ryan pick makes them “much more likely” to support Mitt Romney, with thirty-seven percent (37%) saying that it makes them “much less likely;” and among likely voters who are Democrats, three percent (3%) report that the pick made them “much more likely” to vote for Romney, with 65 percent saying “much less likely.”

- ***Four-in-ten young adults prefer a Democrat-controlled Congress.*** A plurality (40%) of America's 18- to 29- year olds prefer that Democrats control Congress after the November elections, with one-quarter (25%) saying they support a Republican-controlled Congress and 30% saying Congress should be split.

GfK conducted a study of young adults on political issues on behalf of Harvard University's Institute of Politics. Complete results, are available – along with past surveys – online at www.iop.harvard.edu.

Methodology

The goal of the project was to collect 2,000 completed interviews with young Americans between 18 and 29 years old. The main sample data collection took place from September 19 through October 3. A small pretest was conducted prior to the main survey to examine the accuracy of the data and the length of the interview.

Four thousand, nine hundred and twenty-seven (4,927) KnowledgePanel members were assigned to the study. The cooperation rate was 43.1 percent resulting in 2,123 completed interviews. One hundred and six (106) interviews were conducted in Spanish with the remainder done in English. The web-enabled KnowledgePanel® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, GfK provides a laptop and ISP connection at no cost. People who already have computers and Internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and are sent e-mails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research. More technical information is available at <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp/reviewer-info.html> and by request to the IOP.

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