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Obama romping in Rhode Island

Raleigh, N.C. – In PPP’s first look at next year’s presidential contest in Rhode Island, Mike Huckabee and neighboring Massachusetts’ Mitt Romney come closer than John McCain did to defeating Barack Obama. But “closer” is a relative term. McCain lost by 28 points, so that still puts the eternally blue state unsurprisingly far out of reach.

At 53-39, Rhode Island gives the president his fifth highest approval rating of the 43 states in which PPP has measured him in the last 13 months. But though they are the strongest of the four against the president in every state, Romney and Huckabee are still weak enough candidates that a sizeable chunk of those who disapprove of Obama’s job performance still plan to vote for him. As in most states, all of the candidates are personally disliked, and lag by more than Obama’s approval-disapproval margin.

Romney almost halves McCain’s deficit, lagging 54-37. He is the only of the four Republicans tested to come close to breaking even on the favorability front in Rhode Island. 41% see him favorably and 42% unfavorably. That compares to Huckabee’s 32-44, Newt Gingrich’s 20-59, and Sarah Palin’s 24-69. Romney is the best liked across the board—the only one about whom the plurality independents have positive feelings, and the only one better liked in his own party than disliked by Democrats.

Doing just slightly better than McCain, Huckabee is behind, 56-31. But, as usual, Gingrich and Palin both do worse than the 2008 nominee, with the former at a 60-27 deficit, and the latter at 65-24. Despite only a 48-43 approval margin with independents, Obama wins their support in every matchup, by one point over Romney, 12 over Huckabee, 25 over Gingrich, and 32 over Palin. And despite more Democrats disapproving of his job performance than Republicans approving, the president attracts more GOP support than all the Republicans but Romney and Huckabee do from the Democratic base. Palin also drives Democrats toward the president in droves—only 3% are undecided when he is matched against her, versus 8-10% against the others. She also has an inordinate 28% of the GOP on the fence, versus 8-13% in the other horseraces.

“Even though a Mitt Romney nomination might cut into the Democrats’ usual lofty leads in Northeastern states, he’d have to hope for some sort of cosmic shift in public sentiment in order to win Rhode Island,” said Dean Debnam, President of Public Policy Polling. “The last two times it went red were in the Nixon 1972 and Reagan 1984 landslides, when the Democratic candidates each carried one state and the District of Columbia.”

PPP surveyed 544 Rhode Island voters from February 16th to 22nd. The survey’s margin of error is +/-4.2%. Other factors, such as refusal to be interviewed and weighting, may introduce additional error that is more difficult to quantify.



Rhode Island Survey Results

Q1 Do you approve or disapprove of President Barack Obama's job performance?

Approve 53%
Disapprove..... 39%
Not sure 8%

Q2 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Newt Gingrich?

Favorable..... 20%
Unfavorable 59%
Not sure 20%

Q3 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Mike Huckabee?

Favorable..... 32%
Unfavorable 44%
Not sure 24%

Q4 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Sarah Palin?

Favorable..... 24%
Unfavorable 69%
Not sure 7%

Q5 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Mitt Romney?

Favorable..... 41%
Unfavorable 42%
Not sure 17%

Q6 If the candidates for President next year were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Newt Gingrich, who would you vote for?

Barack Obama..... 60%
Newt Gingrich..... 27%
Undecided..... 13%

Q7 If the candidates for President next year were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mike Huckabee, who would you vote for?

Barack Obama..... 56%
Mike Huckabee..... 31%
Undecided..... 13%

Q8 If the candidates for President next year were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Sarah Palin, who would you vote for?

Barack Obama..... 65%
Sarah Palin..... 24%
Undecided..... 11%

Q9 If the candidates for President next year were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney, who would you vote for?

Barack Obama..... 54%
Mitt Romney..... 37%
Undecided..... 10%

Q10 Who did you vote for President in 2008?

John McCain..... 31%
Barack Obama..... 58%
Someone else/Don't remember 12%

Q11 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 55%
Man..... 45%

Q12 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

Democrat..... 41%
Republican..... 14%
Independent/Other..... 45%



Q13 If you are white, press 1. If other, press 2.

White 86%
Other..... 14%

Q14 If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

18 to 29..... 12%
30 to 45..... 30%
46 to 65..... 40%
Older than 65..... 18%



Crosstabs

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Obama Approval				
Approve	53%	14%	80%	18%
Disapprove	39%	82%	11%	64%
Not sure	8%	3%	9%	18%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Gingrich Favorability				
Favorable	20%	47%	7%	13%
Unfavorable	59%	32%	74%	60%
Not sure	20%	22%	19%	26%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Huckabee Favorability				
Favorable	32%	60%	19%	27%
Unfavorable	44%	20%	58%	39%
Not sure	24%	20%	23%	34%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Palin Favorability				
Favorable	24%	57%	6%	27%
Unfavorable	69%	38%	89%	55%
Not sure	7%	5%	6%	17%





Crosstabs

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Romney Favorability				
Favorable	41%	71%	25%	39%
Unfavorable	42%	20%	56%	30%
Not sure	17%	9%	18%	31%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Obama/Gingrich				
Barack Obama	60%	16%	90%	32%
Newt Gingrich	27%	68%	4%	31%
Undecided	13%	16%	6%	37%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Obama/Huckabee				
Barack Obama	56%	13%	86%	19%
Mike Huckabee	31%	72%	7%	42%
Undecided	13%	15%	7%	39%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Obama/Palin				
Barack Obama	65%	23%	92%	38%
Sarah Palin	24%	58%	4%	33%
Undecided	11%	18%	4%	29%





Crosstabs

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
Obama/Romney				
Barack Obama	54%	9%	83%	27%
Mitt Romney	37%	82%	11%	45%
Undecided	10%	9%	6%	28%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Obama Approval			
Approve	53%	58%	47%
Disapprove	39%	32%	47%
Not sure	8%	10%	6%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Gingrich Favorability			
Favorable	20%	16%	25%
Unfavorable	59%	59%	60%
Not sure	20%	25%	15%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Huckabee Favorability			
Favorable	32%	27%	39%
Unfavorable	44%	45%	43%
Not sure	24%	28%	18%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Palin Favorability			
Favorable	24%	19%	30%
Unfavorable	69%	75%	63%
Not sure	7%	7%	7%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Romney Favorability			
Favorable	41%	39%	43%
Unfavorable	42%	41%	43%
Not sure	17%	19%	14%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Obama/Gingrich			
Barack Obama	60%	66%	54%
Newt Gingrich	27%	21%	34%
Undecided	13%	13%	13%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Obama/Huckabee			
Barack Obama	56%	61%	49%
Mike Huckabee	31%	23%	40%
Undecided	13%	16%	10%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Obama/Palin			
Barack Obama	65%	72%	56%
Sarah Palin	24%	17%	32%
Undecided	11%	11%	12%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Obama/Romney			
Barack Obama	54%	60%	46%
Mitt Romney	37%	29%	45%
Undecided	10%	10%	9%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Obama Approval				
Approve	53%	73%	10%	48%
Disapprove	39%	18%	87%	43%
Not sure	8%	9%	3%	9%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Gingrich Favorability				
Favorable	20%	8%	54%	21%
Unfavorable	59%	72%	22%	59%
Not sure	20%	19%	24%	20%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Huckabee Favorability				
Favorable	32%	19%	56%	37%
Unfavorable	44%	53%	23%	42%
Not sure	24%	28%	20%	21%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Palin Favorability				
Favorable	24%	11%	55%	26%
Unfavorable	69%	83%	35%	67%
Not sure	7%	6%	9%	7%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Romney Favorability				
Favorable	41%	23%	65%	49%
Unfavorable	42%	54%	20%	38%
Not sure	17%	23%	16%	12%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Obama/Gingrich				
Barack Obama	60%	84%	9%	54%
Newt Gingrich	27%	7%	79%	29%
Undecided	13%	8%	12%	17%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Obama/Huckabee				
Barack Obama	56%	80%	9%	48%
Mike Huckabee	31%	10%	78%	36%
Undecided	13%	10%	13%	16%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Obama/Palin				
Barack Obama	65%	88%	12%	59%
Sarah Palin	24%	9%	60%	27%
Undecided	11%	3%	28%	14%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Obama/Romney				
Barack Obama	54%	78%	7%	45%
Mitt Romney	37%	13%	85%	44%
Undecided	10%	9%	8%	11%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Obama Approval			
Approve	53%	52%	61%
Disapprove	39%	42%	20%
Not sure	8%	6%	19%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Gingrich Favorability			
Favorable	20%	21%	12%
Unfavorable	59%	59%	61%
Not sure	20%	19%	28%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Huckabee Favorability			
Favorable	32%	33%	25%
Unfavorable	44%	44%	46%
Not sure	24%	23%	29%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Palin Favorability			
Favorable	24%	24%	20%
Unfavorable	69%	68%	78%
Not sure	7%	8%	2%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Romney Favorability			
Favorable	41%	42%	36%
Unfavorable	42%	42%	42%
Not sure	17%	16%	22%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Obama/Gingrich			
Barack Obama	60%	59%	68%
Newt Gingrich	27%	28%	19%
Undecided	13%	13%	13%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Obama/Huckabee			
Barack Obama	56%	54%	66%
Mike Huckabee	31%	32%	24%
Undecided	13%	14%	10%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Obama/Palin			
Barack Obama	65%	63%	74%
Sarah Palin	24%	25%	19%
Undecided	11%	12%	7%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Obama/Romney			
Barack Obama	54%	52%	66%
Mitt Romney	37%	39%	23%
Undecided	10%	9%	10%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Obama Approval					
Approve	53%	53%	53%	54%	50%
Disapprove	39%	33%	41%	38%	40%
Not sure	8%	13%	5%	8%	10%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Gingrich Favorability					
Favorable	20%	17%	18%	20%	26%
Unfavorable	59%	53%	59%	65%	52%
Not sure	20%	30%	23%	15%	21%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Huckabee Favorability					
Favorable	32%	28%	39%	28%	34%
Unfavorable	44%	52%	39%	49%	39%
Not sure	24%	21%	22%	24%	27%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Palin Favorability					
Favorable	24%	13%	27%	23%	26%
Unfavorable	69%	80%	67%	68%	68%
Not sure	7%	7%	5%	8%	6%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Romney Favorability					
Favorable	41%	23%	49%	38%	45%
Unfavorable	42%	50%	36%	46%	38%
Not sure	17%	27%	15%	16%	17%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Obama/Gingrich					
Barack Obama	60%	70%	60%	60%	55%
New t Gingrich	27%	23%	27%	26%	29%
Undecided	13%	7%	13%	14%	16%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Obama/Huckabee					
Barack Obama	56%	67%	53%	57%	51%
Mike Huckabee	31%	23%	36%	28%	34%
Undecided	13%	10%	12%	14%	15%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Obama/Palin					
Barack Obama	65%	77%	63%	63%	62%
Sarah Palin	24%	13%	26%	24%	26%
Undecided	11%	10%	11%	12%	12%



Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Obama/Romney					
Barack Obama	54%	67%	49%	57%	45%
Mitt Romney	37%	27%	42%	35%	39%
Undecided	10%	7%	8%	8%	16%