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## **MORE MILLENNIALS PREDICT OBAMA WILL LOSE BID FOR RE-ELECTION THAN WIN, HARVARD POLL FINDS**

*Mitt Romney strongest Republican challenger to President Obama;  
less than one-in-four Millennials support the "Occupy" movement*

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 more Millennials predict President Barack Obama will lose his bid for re-election (36%) than win (30%). The new survey also shows former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney fairing best among potential Republican challengers in a general election match-up against President Obama, trailing the President by eleven percentage points (Obama: 37%, Romney: 26%).

Thirty-two percent of Millennials say they are following the "Occupy Wall Street" demonstrations either very (6%) or somewhat closely (26%), with 66% not following the demonstrations closely. Only twenty-one percent (21%) said they supported the movement. A detailed report on the poll’s findings is available on the Institute’s homepage at [www.iop.harvard.edu](http://www.iop.harvard.edu).

“Our new polling data clearly shows Millennials are growing more concerned over the direction of the country and effectiveness of Washington, D.C. to solve problems,” said Trey Grayson, Director of Harvard’s Institute of Politics. “The opportunity exists for all political parties and campaigns to re-engage this generation – those who do can maximize results in 2012.”

“While we are more than a year away – it’s important to note that with enthusiasm about politics and Washington down, nearly three-quarters of Millennials seriously concerned about jobs and the economy – and more believing that the President that they helped elect will lose, rather than win re-election – this survey may well serve as an ominous sign for Barack Obama’s 2012 chances and the political engagement of America’s largest generation,” said John Della Volpe, Polling Director at Harvard’s Institute of Politics.

The web-enabled survey of 2,028 18-29 year-old U.S. citizens with a margin of error of +/- 2.2 percentage points (95% confidence level) conducted with research partner Knowledge Networks for the IOP between Nov. 23 and Dec. 3, 2011 finds –

- ***Plurality of Millennials predict Obama will lose bid for re-election.*** Among all 18-29 year-olds, more believe that Barack Obama will lose re-election (36%) than win (30%), with almost a third (32%) not sure – the margin is nearly identical among students enrolled in four-year colleges (37%: lose, 31%: win, 31%: not sure). Among survey respondents who voted for Barack Obama in 2008, less than half (48%) believe he will win re-election at this time (19% say Obama will lose, with 33% undecided).

- Mitt Romney leads among young Republican primary and caucus goers.*** Among young Republican and Independents indicating they are at least somewhat likely (definitely, probably or 50-50) to vote in their state's primary or caucus (n=637), Mitt Romney leads the field with 23 percent, followed by Ron Paul (16%), Herman Cain (15%) and Newt Gingrich (13%). Examination and allocation of Cain supporters' second-choice selections for President shows Romney would continue to lead (25%) among Millennials with Cain out of the race, with Ron Paul (18%) and Newt Gingrich (17%) in a statistical tie for second place (Herman Cain suspended his campaign on Dec. 3, the final day of the interviewing period for the IOP's fall poll).
- Approximately one-third of younger voters following "Occupy" movement; less than one-in-four supportive.*** Thirty-two percent of 18-29 year-olds say they followed the "Occupy Wall Street" demonstrations either very (6%) or somewhat closely (26%), with 66% saying they were not following the demonstrations closely. Twenty-one percent (21%) of Millennials say they supported the "Occupy" movement with one-third (33%) not supportive and 46% either unsure or refused to answer.
- Job approval ratings continue to slide for President Obama as well as Democrats and Republicans in Congress.*** President Obama's job performance rating among America's 18-29 year-olds is currently at the lowest point since IOP polling of the Obama administration began in the fall of 2009. Forty-six percent (46%) of Millennials approve of the job Obama is doing as president – a decrease of nine percentage points from Feb. 2011 IOP polling (55%) – with 51% saying they disapprove. Obama's job approval has also fallen among college students from 60% in February to 48% today. Views toward Democrats (33% approval; down from 45% in February) and Republicans in Congress (24% approval; down from 30% in February) have also slipped significantly over the same period.
- In 2012 preview, Barack Obama holds moderate lead over "generic" Republican, but ahead of potential Republican challengers by double digits.*** With the general election under one year away, Barack Obama leads a proposed match-up against "the Republican Party's candidate for President" by six percentage points (35%-29%), a smaller margin than found in February IOP polling (twelve percentage points; Obama: 38%-Republican: 26%). On college campuses, the match-up is a statistical dead-heat (Obama: 37%-Republican: 34%). When Obama is matched against specific candidates, he leads Mitt Romney by eleven percentage points (37%-26%) and Newt Gingrich and Rick Perry (39%-23%) by sixteen percentage points.
- By a margin of more than 4-1, Millennials believe U.S. is headed in wrong direction.*** Only twelve percent (12%) of young Americans believe things are "headed in the right direction" with fifty-two percent (52%) saying things are "off on the wrong track," a more pessimistic view than identified in February 2011 IOP polling (20 percent: "right direction," 39 percent: "wrong track"). Importantly, less than one-third (32%) of 18-29 year-olds approve of the way that President Obama is handling the economy, a ten percentage point drop since February IOP polling (42%).

Harvard students designed the poll in consultation with IOP Polling Director John Della Volpe, whose firm *SocialSphere, Inc.* commissioned Knowledge Networks to conduct the survey. Complete results, are available – along with past surveys – online at [www.iop.harvard.edu](http://www.iop.harvard.edu).

## **Methodology**

Knowledge Networks conducted a study of young adults on political issues on behalf of Harvard University's Institute of Politics. 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 November 23 to December 3, 2011. 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, eight hundred and five (4,805) KnowledgePanel® members were assigned to the study. The cooperation rate was 42 percent resulting in 2,028 completed interviews. Ninety-one (91) 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, Knowledge Networks 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/reviewerinfo.html> and by request to the IOP.

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*Harvard University's Institute of Politics (IOP), located at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, was established in 1966 as a memorial to President Kennedy. The IOP's mission is to unite and engage students, particularly undergraduates, with academics, politicians, activists, and policymakers on a non-partisan basis to inspire them to consider careers in politics and public service. The Institute strives to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the academic world and the world of politics and public affairs. More information is available online at [www.iop.harvard.edu/](http://www.iop.harvard.edu/).*

*Knowledge Networks delivers quality and service to guide leaders in business, government, and academia – uniquely bringing scientifically valid research to the online space through its probability-based, online KnowledgePanel®. The company delivers unique study design, science, analysis, and panel maintenance, along with a commitment to close collaboration at every stage of the research process. Knowledge Networks leverages its expertise in brands, media, advertising, and public policy issues to provide insights that speak directly to clients' most important concerns. For more information about Knowledge Networks, visit [www.knowledgenetworks.com](http://www.knowledgenetworks.com).*