

## Obama leads in Michigan; many voters undecided, survey says

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President Barack Obama holds a substantial lead in Michigan over Republican challenger Mitt Romney, although many of the state's voters remain undecided, according to Michigan State University's latest State of the State Survey.

In the quarterly survey, completed in August, the Democratic incumbent leads Romney 39 percent to 30 percent among likely voters, for a margin of 9 percentage points. The results come on the heels of an EPIC-MRA poll for the Detroit Free Press and a Detroit News/WDIV Local 4 survey that both show Obama with a commanding lead.

The MSU survey – the largest of the three – was taken before the national party conventions, at a time when 30 percent of those questioned were undecided. Republicans were more likely than Democrats to still be making up their minds, said Charles Ballard, survey director and professor of economics.

If the [undecided voters](#) follow party lines, Ballard said, Obama's lead would be 49 percent to 43 percent. "These results indicate that Gov. Romney faces an uphill battle in capturing the state of his birth," said Ballard. "Michigan has not voted for a Republican presidential candidate since 1988 and the auto-industry rebound appears to favor President Obama. But the election is more than six weeks away, so there is still time for Romney to gain ground."

Among white voters, Obama and Romney are in a statistical dead heat,

although Obama holds a commanding lead among black and Hispanic [voters](#), Ballard said. Obama has a significant lead among both men and women. Obama leads by double digits in southeast Michigan, while Romney has a narrow lead in west Michigan.

The survey also measures approval ratings for the president and governor. In the latest survey, 41 percent give Obama a rating of "excellent" or "good." That is statistically unchanged from the previous survey.

"When [Barack Obama](#) first took office in 2009, Michigan residents gave him very high marks, with 71 percent saying he was doing an 'excellent' or 'good' job," Ballard said. "The president's ratings fell over the next year, however, and since early 2011 his positives have been between 40 percent and 45 percent."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder's approval ratings increased but still remained lower than the president's. "The governor's ratings went from 33 percent positive in the spring to 36.8 percent in the current survey," Ballard said.

When it came to how Michiganders feel about their financial situation, about 54 percent call it "excellent" or "good," Ballard said. That's the highest reading since 2005, but still below the levels recorded in the late 1990s.

About 34 percent of residents said they are better off than they were a year ago. That's down slightly from 37 percent in the previous survey, but still higher than in any other survey since 2005. Some 47 percent of survey respondents expect to be better off a year from now.

The phone survey was conducted from June 12 to Aug. 13. A total of 1,015 Michigan adults were questioned in the survey, which has a

margin of error of plus or minus 3.08 percent.

MSU's State of the State [Survey](#) has been conducted by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research since 1994. IPPSR is a unit of MSU's College of Social Science.

Provided by Michigan State University

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