

PEOPLE'S WORLD

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September 29, 2012

Why Romney's slipping in polls

By Sam Webb

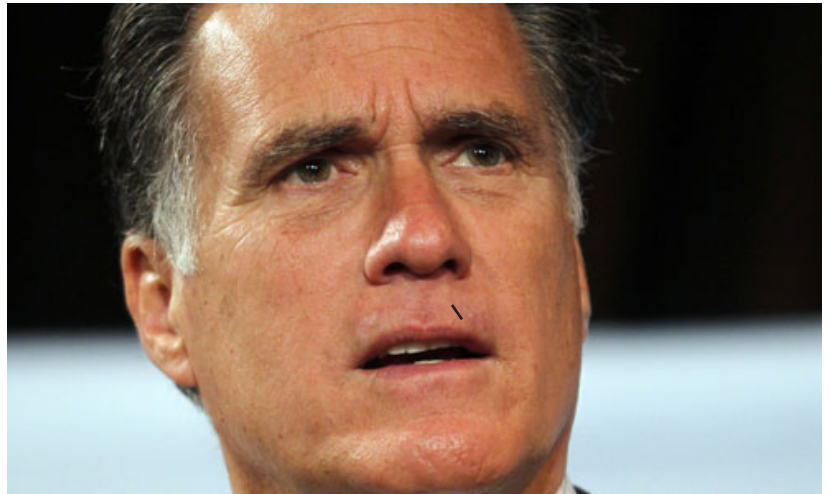
With less than seven weeks to Election Day, the American people are turning their attention to the presidential race. Polls say President Barack Obama has an advantage - in fact, some separation - over GOP nominee Mitt Romney nationally and in some critical battleground states - notably Florida, Virginia and Ohio.

How do we account for this? First is the contrast in the two parties' conventions. According to many nonpartisan pundits, the Republican convention was a "flop," whereas the Democratic Party convention succeeded in energizing its base and appealing to undecided voters.

Then there is the contrast in campaigns. Even Republican strategists are shaking their heads at the reoccurring missteps of the Romney campaign. Meanwhile the Obama team seems to be making all the right moves, beginning with their success in defining Romney over the summer and then at the convention as being out of touch with the "middle class."

Moreover, one can only think that this image will only grow with the surfacing this week of the Mother Jones video that has Romney (ala Russ Limbaugh) telling a group of wealthy Republicans that 47 percent of the people are on some form of government dole, pay no taxes and take no responsibility for their lives.

Another factor in Romney's growing unpopularity is that he is tacking in an extremist direction. The conventional wisdom was that upon securing the nomination he would move to the center, but



there are few signs of that so far. In not doing so, his campaign is alienating broad constituencies - union members, people of color, women, youth, seniors, gays, disabled, veterans, etc.

Romney's lack of a persuasive economic recovery plan also has hurt him in the polls. The expectation was that he would unveil a recovery plan in his acceptance speech at the Republican Party convention. What better place! But he came up empty, except for a few right-wing bromides like cutting taxes on businesses and the 1 percent.

As a result, Romney's advantage in public

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opinion polls over Obama over the handling of the economy has virtually disappeared. This is a major shift in popular thinking.

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Still another factor that accounts for Romney's slippage is that he hasn't given people the sense that he is a steady leader in difficult times. Nowhere was this more evident than last week when the U.S. consulate in Libya was attacked and four Americans were killed. Before the dust had settled and the facts were in, he chided the president for his handling of this heinous attack. His rhetorical, and groundless, shot from the hip at the president surprised nearly all, but his most zealous supporters and the Fox News team.

Indeed, people and pundits felt that his criticism was very unpresidential and amateurish.

Despite this criticism, Romney along with the right-wing media doubled down on their tirade against the president. Not only did the president supposedly botch the response to the attack on the consulate, they said, but the protests in the Muslim countries reveal that the president in foreign policy matters "leads from behind," that he unnecessarily apologizes for the U.S. role in world affairs, that he throws reliable allies like Israel under the bus and that he makes good speeches, but practices bad policy.

And joining Romney and gang (perhaps with a little more subtlety, but every bit as irresponsible and adventurist) was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who is itching to go to war with Iran. (Perhaps to boost his sagging poll numbers in Israel.)

None of this bodes well for Romney and the Republicans. Their path to victory in November is more difficult now. For Obama and his supporters, on the other hand, the recent turn in public opinion is cause for cautious optimism, although no one will express that in words, probably for good reason.

For they realize that much can happen over the next seven weeks that could have an impact on the outcome of the race - nothing more so than the systematic attempt by the Republican Party and its supporters to suppress the vote.

It is this palpable reality that is driving the supporters of the president to turn out record numbers and guarantee every vote is counted on Election Day.



Sam Webb is chair of the Communist Party USA.

Mitt, you take personal responsibility!

PW Editorial Board

Just in case a reader did miss Mitt Romney's secretly recorded comments at a Boca Raton, Fla., fundraiser, here they are:

"There are the 47 percent who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government ... These are people who pay no income tax. My job is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives."

One has to ask just who Mitt Romney was referring to as people who don't "take personal responsibility and care for themselves?"

It must be people like him - and their sibling corporations - because they spend millions to find ways to not pay taxes!

Set aside, for a moment, the fact that the overwhelming majority of the 47 percent who he says are hopelessly in the Obama camp, actually pay plenty of income and other taxes.

Even if we look only at the minority who don't pay federal income taxes, we find 61 percent of that group are workers currently employed but earning dismally low wages, particularly in the non-union states championed by Romney.

Students, military families, people with disabilities and the unemployed, taken together, ac-

count for 17 percent of those who don't pay federal income taxes.

Students, of course, will pay huge amounts of taxes when they get out of school and military families paid taxes before they joined up and will pay again after their enlistments. The unemployed lost their jobs and were it not for the outsourcing promoted by Romney many would still have their jobs and be able to pay federal income taxes.

As for the disabled: Does Romney dare tell the thousands suffering from black lung and other diseases acquired on the job, those born with disabilities or came by them through war or other life's trials, that they don't have the right to food or a roof over their heads?

The remaining 22% of those who don't pay federal income taxes are seniors, most of whom worked and paid taxes all their lives. Taking away the safety net would not only result in countless early deaths but would quickly plunge their families into abject poverty too.

The poorest one fifth of American households actually pay out a crushing 16 percent of their meager incomes in various federal, state and local taxes while many of the super-rich, Romney among them, devise ever more creative ways of avoiding taxes entirely.

Mitt, you're wrong!

It must be people like him because they spend millions to find ways to not pay taxes!

An election for the many or the few?

By Joelle Fishman

As anger grows against Mitt Romney's arrogance and disdain for the "47%" of working class Americans he considers freeloaders, the importance of this election is hammered home. Will the choice be in favor of the interests of the 1% at the peril of everyone else? Or will our country come together and represent the needs of the majority?

This election is not just about who wins. It is about building a strong, multi-racial labor and people's movement in our country that continues on after election day so that inequalities can be more fully addressed.

The contrast between the Republican and Democratic conventions made the choice abundantly clear.

The Republican convention was a highly militaristic, union bashing, racist and bigoted affair. Mitt Romney even declared that President Obama lacks the one qualification for president - running a large corporation.

In contrast, the Democratic convention served as the venue for a coming together of the broad all-people's front to defeat the right wing. The movement is at a higher level than in 2008. In Charlotte we witnessed a deeper understanding of the right wing corporate danger, and a growing realization that the system is structured in favor of the 1%.

The delegates told their stories of how their lives were improved by the Lily Ledbetter Act for pay equity, the restoration of 4.3 million jobs including in the auto industry and through the stimulus bill for public works, the Affordable Care Act, the new G.I. Bill, the ending of Don't Ask Don't Tell, the endorsement of marriage equality, and an executive order deferring deportation of immigrant students. Also, the appointment of two women, including the first Latina, to the US Supreme Court and Hilda Solis as Secretary of Labor.

While the economic crisis is not resolved, it is significant that a Gallup poll released after the convention showed that 48 percent of people believe their standard of living is getting better, compared to 35 percent when Obama took office.

Delegates who are union members distributed



fliers in support of the right to organize. As Richard Trumka said, North Carolina, with a union density of only 3%, was the perfect place to raise up the power of unions to achieve decent wages and benefits and a strong economy.

The contrast and extremism have caused some on the political left who were sitting it out to rethink. In a letter to peace activists, Tom Hayden challenged white liberal-left voters who only criticize Obama to reconsider their position and the breach it creates from the near unanimous support the President enjoys in the African American community.

Voter turnout is what will determine the outcome. The close polls for president and U. S. House and Senate races across the country show that this election is far from over.

In the next few weeks there is something that everyone can do to reach out to family, friends, co-workers and neighbors, join in with labor walks and phone banks and spread the word about what is at stake for the 99%.

This gigantic battle is about our lives, our stories. It is about building the all peoples front standing up against the ruthless greed, racism, hate and environmental degradation of corporate America. The conditions are not present in this election to win a people before profits agenda. But the results of this election will determine the conditions under which working people can organize and rise up to challenge corporate greed and expand equality and democratic rights.

The Republican convention was a highly militaristic, union bashing, racist and bigoted affair.

Va. Dems inch forward, still close

By Emile Schepers

Virginia, with its 8 million inhabitants, is seen as a key swing state for the elections. Recent polls show Obama and the Democrats advancing, but nobody is counting on this. The state is crucial both for its 13 electoral votes and because the outcome of the Senate race could determine whether the Democrats retain control of the Senate or lose it.

Virginia went for Obama in 2008, the first time a Democratic presidential candidate won the state since 1964. This year, Democratic Senator Jim Webb has decided not to run for re-election. His seat is being contested for the Democrats by Tim Kaine, who was mayor of the capitol, Richmond, from 1998 to 2001, governor of Virginia from 2006 to 2010 and Chairman of the DNC from 2009 to 2011. He is considered a moderate to liberal Democrat.

The Republican candidate is George Allen, who was governor from 1994 to 1998 and Senator from 2001 to 2007. He is considered to be a hard line right winger, known for abolishing parole in the Virginia criminal justice system, defending the use of the Confederate flag and opposing the Martin Luther King holiday. He lost to Webb in 2006 partly because he was caught out making a racist comment to a Democratic activist of South Asian origin. Once the interest of the press was captured by that incident, other incidents in Allen's past came to the surface that suggested a history of racism.

But polls show Kaine pulling ahead of Allen, by 8 and 7 percentage points respectively. Obama is leading Mitt Romney in the polls by approximately the same margins.

Nobody in the Obama-Kaine camp is taking victory for granted. Virginia has some restrictive measures that may be used to tamp down the vote in the Democratic Party's strongholds of African-American, Latino, youth and other sectors of the electorate.

Presidente Obama mantiene ligera ventaja sobre Romney en Florida

By Prensa Latina

Los encuestados por separado muestran una ligera ventaja del presidente Barack Obama sobre su rival republicano Mitt Romney en el estado de Florida, territorio crucial para las elecciones de noviembre, informó hoy el diario The Hill.

Una pesquisa de la firma Public Policy Polling (PPP) señala que el mandatario supera a Romney por cuatro puntos (50-46), su mayor repunte desde junio.

El 50 por ciento de los consultados por PPP consideraron inapropiadas las declaraciones del candidato republicano reveladas recientemente en un vídeo, en las que dijo que el 47 por ciento de los electores apoya a Obama porque dependen del gobierno para subsistir.

Por otra parte, una pesquisa conjunta de los diarios Miami Herald y Tampa Bay Times señala que Obama supera al exgobernador de Massachusetts por un punto porcentual (48-47), añade el rotativo.

Ambas indagaciones revelan una ventaja de 11 puntos para Obama entre los votantes independientes, seis más que los resultados de una consulta similar realizada en julio pasado.

Debido a la situación actual de ambos candidatos, Florida es más importante para Romney que para Obama, porque el mandatario puede obtener el mínimo necesario de 270 votos electorales sin ganar los 29 del sureño estado, pero es muy difícil que Romney triunfe sin ganar Florida, asegura The Hill.

Según las encuestas más recientes, Obama supera a Romney por tres puntos porcentuales a nivel nacional (48-45).

En las elecciones de 2008, Obama triunfó sobre McCain en Florida por

tres puntos. En 2004, el Presidente George W. Bush ganó allí con un cinco por ciento por encima del demócrata John Kerry.

En 2000, en una polémica decisión judicial, Bush fue declarado vencedor sobre el demócrata Albert Gore en ese territorio por una diferencia de varios centenares de votos, en medio de denuncias de fraude electoral que dilataron el anuncio oficial del resultado de los comicios.

En otras noticias, el presidente Barack Obama, criticó al Congreso de la Unión por salir de receso sin aprobar legislaciones como las que buscan estimular el crecimiento económico, reducir el desempleo y otorgar mayor ayuda a agroproductores afectados por fenómenos naturales.

"Estas ideas han estado dando vueltas durante meses (...). Pero aparentemente, algunos miembros del Congreso están más preocupados por sus empleos y sus salarios en esta época de campaña que por los intereses de los ciudadanos", dijo en su habitual alocución sabatina de radio e Internet.

Obama llamó a los ciudadanos a contactar con sus representantes en el órgano legislativo y a exigirles actuar.

"Ellos deberían hacer lo correcto por los veteranos y granjeros, por los propietarios responsables y por los pequeños comerciantes, por todos los estadounidenses de cualquier parte que están intentando salir adelante", dijo.

Los parlamentarios cerraron la víspera sus sesiones y salieron a sus respectivos distritos para comenzar las campañas con vista a conservar sus escaños en las elecciones del 6 de noviembre.