



2012 Presidential Election Voter Guide: Candidate Issue Positions



Budget, Spending and Taxes:

- Is balancing the budget an administrative priority?
Obama: Yes, but not a high priority.
Romney: Yes, a very high priority.
- In order to balance the budget, do you support reducing defense spending?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.
- In order to balance the budget, do you support an income tax increase on any tax bracket?
Obama: Yes—raise taxes on income above \$250,000 by allowing Bush tax cuts on that bracket to expire.
Romney: No—keep all Bush-era tax cuts.
- In order to balance the budget, do you support reducing Medicaid spending?
Obama: No.
Romney: Yes.
- In order to balance the budget, do you support reducing Medicare spending?
Obama: No.
Romney: Yes.



Campaign Finance:

- Do you support the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision, which prohibited the government from restricting independent political expenditures by corporations and unions?
Obama: No.
Romney: Yes.
- Do you support the DISCLOSE Act, which would require key funders of political ads to put their names on those ads?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No clear position, but most fellow Republicans oppose the bill.

Economy:

- Do you support federal spending as a means of promoting economic growth?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.
- Do you support providing tax incentives to businesses for the purpose of job creation?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: Yes.
- Do you support spending on infrastructure projects for the purposes of job creation?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: Yes, but less so than the President.
- Do you support the Dodd-Frank financial regulation act, which established the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.

Education:

- Do you support increased federal aid to college students to help with the cost of their education?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.
- Do you support requiring states to implement education reforms in order to be eligible for competitive federal grants?
Obama: Yes—states need firm standards.
Romney: No—cut back federal involvement in education.



Environment and Energy:

- Do you believe human activity is a major driving force in climate change?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: Position unclear—but the consensus in his party says no.
- Do you support the federal regulation of greenhouse gas emissions?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.
- Do you favor government support for alternative energy?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.
- Do you generally support reducing restrictions on offshore energy production?
Obama: No.
Romney: Yes.

Foreign Policy:

- Do you support the United States' combat operations in Afghanistan?
Obama: Yes, with a timetable to withdraw combat troops by the end of 2014.
Romney: Yes, aiming to withdraw by the end of 2014 but with no deadline.
- Do you support targeting suspected terrorists outside of official theaters of conflict?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: Yes.

Guns:

- Do you generally support restrictions on the sale and possession of guns?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.

Health Care:

- Do you support the 2010 Affordable Care Act?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.



- Should individuals be required to purchase health insurance, with assistance from government subsidies for small businesses and low-income individuals, as mandated in the 2010 Affordable Care Act?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.
- Should insurance companies be required to cover patients with pre-existing conditions, as mandated in the 2010 Affordable Care Act?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.

Immigration:

- Do you support requiring illegal immigrants to return to their country of origin before they are eligible for citizenship?
Obama: No.
Romney: Yes.
- Do you support the DREAM Act, which would allow children of illegal immigrants to stay in this country temporarily if they've graduated high school and have a clean legal record, and permanently if they attend college or serve in the military?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No.

Social Issues:

- Do you generally support pro-choice or pro-life legislation?
Obama: Pro-choice.
Romney: Pro-life.
- Do you support same-sex marriage?
Obama: Yes.
Romney: No—also no to civil unions.

Social Security:

- Do you support allowing individuals to divert a portion of their Social Security taxes into personal retirement accounts?
Obama: No—this option seems too vulnerable to market volatility.
Romney: Yes—this would let retirees benefit more from strong markets.



These candidate positions are drawn primarily from the [website](#) of Project Vote Smart, a non-partisan, nonprofit organization providing factual, unbiased information on candidates, officials, issues, and legislation, with stands inferred from public statements and more detailed information available on the Issue Position pages of the respective candidates. See also the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School's www.factcheck.org, which lets you search the truth of candidate stands.

For a comprehensive guide to all races including state initiatives and local Congressional and legislative races, see www.vote411.org, created by the League of Women Voters. You enter your address, or the address of your school, and click "Get Personalized Information on Candidates and Issues," and it will give you information provided by the respective campaigns on their stands, taking you first through national races, then statewide races, then local ones. You do have to scroll down to the bottom where it offers a comparison, because checking the box by a candidate won't automatically bring up their stands.

