

The 2012 Presidential Election

Written by *The Political Zoo* Editorial Staff

The 2012 Presidential election was a rough entry into the world of American politics for the uninitiated. It was rough even for the old veterans in the field of American politics. This article will examine the main issues of the election and try to simplify them.

For the sake of brevity, in this article we'll concentrate on the two big faces of the election. These were Governor Mitt Romney and the President for the four years preceding the election, Barack Obama.

Romney was the face of the Republican Party in the election, and Obama represented the Democratic Party.

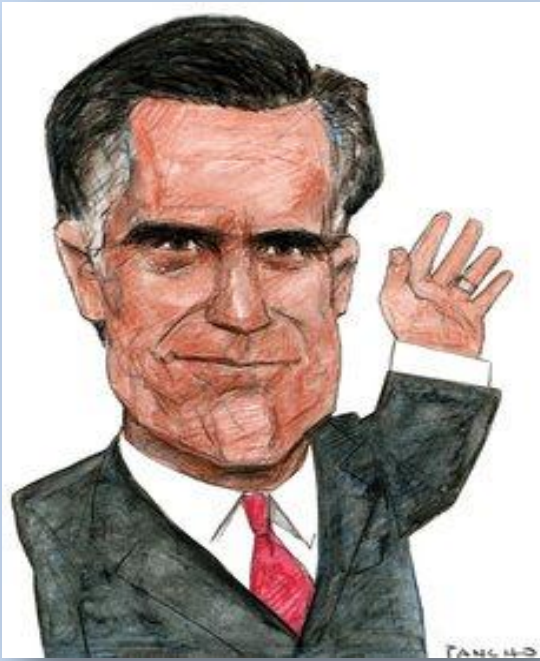
First, we will explain where both candidates were coming from, a bit of their background, and how they got to where they were as representatives of political ideals. Then, we'll move on to examine a few issues that were the key determiners in the election.

Barack Hussein Obama II was born in 1961 in Hawaii to Ann Dunham and Barack I. He and his wife

Michelle have two daughters. He attended public Islamic and private Christian schools in Indonesia and private school in Hawaii. He received a bachelor's of political science from Columbia University and a law degree from Harvard. Obama has been a writer, community organizer, lawyer, and law professor. He's also been a senator for both Illinois and the United States.

Obama ran for president against John McCain in 2008 and against Romney in 2012. As president, Obama has increased government spending and economic regulation, expanded educational grants, and approved an operation that





defeated Osama Bin Laden. Obama has also focused on helping Iraq create a democracy and withdrawing American troops. Obama's health care reform involves government regulation. To create jobs, Obama wants to expand the auto industry, whereas Romney wanted to focus on small businesses.

Willard Mitt Romney was born in 1947 in Michigan to George and Lenore Romney. Mitt Romney received a Bachelor's Degree in English from Brigham Young University in 1971 and a Master's Degrees in Business and Law from Harvard in 1975. His political career began in 1994 when he ran for the Massachusetts state senate, and continued in 2003 when he ran and won the election for Massachusetts governor. In 2008 Romney ran for the republican nomination for president, he lost, but came back to win the nomination in 2011.

Mitt Romney's major platform was to create jobs with what he called his "five point plan." Two of those points

(energy and education) are directly in line with general republican values, first, the Republican Party believes in energy independence, and second, that "[maintaining] a world-class system of primary and secondary education ... is critical to America's future" (Republican National Committee).

In the heated 2012 presidential race, one of the contended issues was that of health care reform.

Both plans required insurance from employers for employees, with failure to do so resulting in a penalty of \$750 per employee in Obama's act and \$295 in Romney's. The also required that all citizens required insurance, with failure to do so resulting in a penalty (\$695 per year in Obama's plan and \$1200 in Romney's). Both plans maintained that children

Both Romney and Obama's Health Care Plans Included:

- *Required insurance from employers for employees—Failure to do so results in a penalty of 750 dollars per employee in Obama's act and 295 in Romney's.*
- *All citizen's required insurance—Failure also results in a penalty (695 dollars per year, Obama's plan and 1200 dollars-Romney's).*
- *Children allowed to stay on their parents plan until age 26.*
- *All pre-existing conditions must be covered (However, in Romney's plan, coverage for certain specified conditions is only required for six months).*

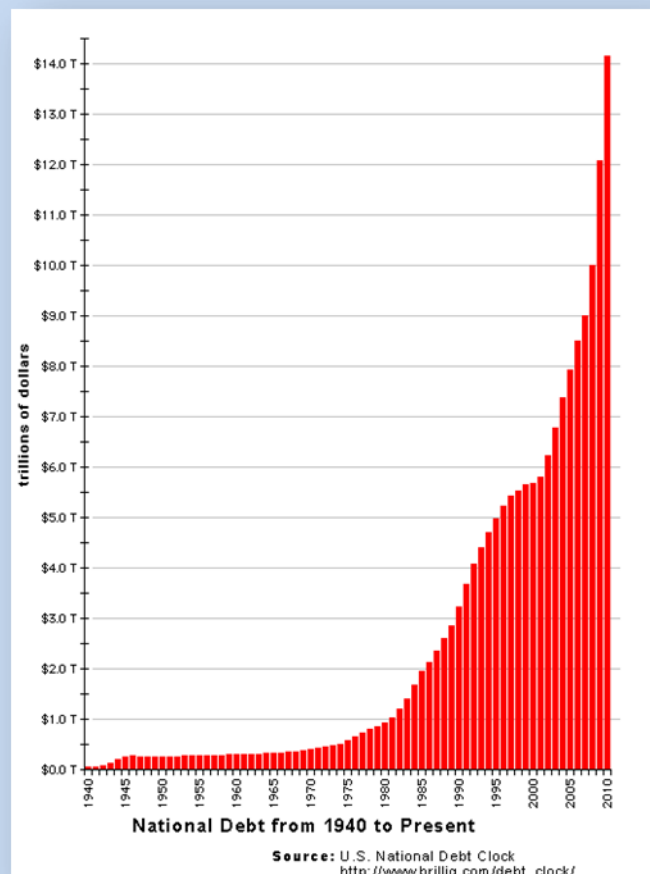
should be allowed to stay on their parents plan until age 26. The also insisted that all pre-existing conditions must be covered, however, in Romney's plan, coverage for certain specified conditions is only required for six months.

The major difference in the two plans was that Obama believed the federal government should mandate the insurance whereas, Romney believed the states should regulate their own.

Another issue that was commonly debated in the 2012 election was America's immigration policy. Romney's solution to the issue of illegal immigration was "self-deportation": implementing employment regulations and promoting legal immigration with policies like giving green cards to international students graduating from US colleges. President Obama's policy stated that any immigrants who were brought to the United States as children under the age of 16, have finished high school, and have no criminal record should be given a two year work visa.

One more major issue that was repeatedly brought up for examination in the 2012 presidential election was the rapidly rising national debt. The national debt increased by one half during the first term of Obama's presidency, rising from \$10.626 trillion at his inauguration to the debt at the time of the election and close of his first term, totaling \$15.566 trillion (Knoller, 1). The debate in the election was largely focused on determining who was responsible for that increase in debt, whether that party should be allowed to have a candidate in presidency, and how the debt should be

eliminated or reduced. The final issue debated constantly in the 2012 election was the U.S. foreign policy: how the U.S. engages other countries and how America's goals are accomplished (Dictionary.com). Its objective is to protect the nation, promote the country's interests, and increase America's presence internationally ("Why Foreign Policy Is Important"). The candidates share similar views on three different aspects of foreign policy, but some are significantly different. In regards to national defense, Romney promised to reverse Obama's defense cuts (refunding missile defense, upgrading military equipment) ("National Defense") and Obama's wanted to strengthen existing alliances around the world ("National Security"). As for the war in Afghanistan, both wanted to pull American troops out and bring them back



home by 2014 (Romney, first would consult with a US military commander) (“National Security”; “Afghanistan”). Both wanted to secure and halt creation of nuclear weapons in other countries: Romney’s focus was on Iran; Obama’s was on the world beginning with the U.S. and Russia (“Foreign Policy”; “Iran”).

Both parties agreed that while America is a great nation, changes should occur to improve the job market. However, beliefs on how to change are based on party values and differ greatly.

“Republicans believe individuals, not government, can make the best decisions” (GOP.com). They claim the solution is in the stimulation of the economy. Thus, they promote practices to enhance the position and growth

opportunity of small businesses and large American corporations and control constricting government regulations.

Conversely, the Democratic Party believes that “we’re greater together... this country succeeds when everyone ...plays by the same rules” (democrats.org). They propose that the best way to create jobs is through government regulations and programs.

We hope this summary of the 2012 election has helped to clarify a few of the issues that were debated. We also hope that it has demonstrated to readers the roles that the Democratic and Republican Parties play and how they operate as a balance to each other in offering different and sometimes opposite solutions to the nation’s problems.

