



## **U.S. POLITICAL & SOCIAL ISSUES**

**November 2011**

### **CONGRESS**

#### **CAMPAIGN GUIDE FOR CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES AND COMMITTEES**

Federal Elections Commission, August 2011

<http://www.fec.gov/pdf/candgui.pdf>

This Guide was written to help U.S. House and Senate Candidates comply with the Federal Election Campaign Act and FEC regulations. It may be used by committees supporting Presidential candidates who are not seeking public funding. However, special reporting rules apply to Presidential candidates, as explained in footnotes to the reporting chapters.

#### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE 112TH CONGRESS: A PROFILE**

Congressional Research Center, September 22, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/174246.pdf>

This report presents a profile of the membership of the 112th Congress (2011-2012). Statistical information is included on selected characteristics of Members, including data on party affiliation, average age, occupation, education, length of congressional service, religious affiliation, gender, ethnicity, foreign births, and military service.

### **ELECTIONS**

#### **OVERVIEW: VOTING LAW CHANGES IN 2012**

Brennan Center for Justice, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

[http://brennan.3cdn.net/908643d0ff303bdf08\\_j0m6bplun.pdf](http://brennan.3cdn.net/908643d0ff303bdf08_j0m6bplun.pdf)

In the first three quarters of 2011, state governments across the country have suddenly enacted an array of new laws and policies making it harder to vote. Some states require voters to show government-issued photo identification, often of a type that as many as one in ten voters do not have. Other states have cut back on early voting, a hugely popular innovation used by millions of Americans. Two states reversed earlier reforms and once again disenfranchised millions who have past criminal convictions but who are now taxpaying members of the community. Still others made it much more difficult for citizens to register to vote, a prerequisite for voting.

These new restrictions fall most heavily on young, minority, and low-income voters, as well as on voters with disabilities.

## **PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING PROCESS: CURRENT ISSUES**

Congressional Research Service, October 13, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/176016.pdf>

Despite long-standing complaints, the existing primary system routinely accomplishes its fundamental task—the selection of general election candidates according to the voting results in the states and territories or insular areas. The system is indirect, relying on elected delegates rather than the popular vote to determine the nominees. However, it differs markedly from the system of years past, when party leaders dominated the process. Because a majority of delegates is required for nomination, rank-and-file voters are usually willing to rally around the candidate chosen at the convention, even in years marked by internal party division. Finally, since the reforms of the 1970s, presidential elections have been marked by strong two-party competition for the presidency—Republican nominees have won six general elections and the Democrats have won four in generally close elections.

## **THE STATE OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE POLICY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ISSUES FOR CONGRESS**

Congressional Research Service, July 18, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/169367.pdf>

Despite recent changes, some aspects of campaign finance policy remain unchanged. Presidential public financing and the FEC may require congressional attention regardless of more recent developments. As Congress decides whether to revisit law surrounding political campaigns, it may be appropriate to take stock of the current landscape and to examine what has changed, what has not, and what policy options might be relevant. This report provides a starting point for doing so. It also provides comments on how those events might affect future policy considerations.

## **2012 PRIMARY SCHEDULE**

2012 Election Central (News, videos, debates and polls)

<http://www.2012presidentialelectionnews.com/2012-republican-primary-schedule/>

The 2012 GOP primary/caucus schedule is nearly set in stone. The calendar dates below are believed to be accurate unless last minute changes occur to the schedule. Note that "Super Tuesday" in 2012 falls on March 6th, however, it is a little less "super" than it has been in years past.

## **HOW NEWS MEDIA AND BLOGS HAVE EYED THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDERS DURING THE FIRST PHASE OF THE 2012 RACE**

Pew Research Center

Project for Excellence in Journalism, October 17, 2012

<http://www.journalism.org/sites/journalism.org/files/CANDIDATESSUTDYFINAL.pdf>

One man running for president has suffered the most unrelentingly negative treatment of all, the study found: Barack Obama. Though covered largely as president rather than a candidate, negative assessments of Obama have outweighed positive by a ratio of almost 4-1. Those assessments of the president have also been substantially more negative than positive every one of the 23 weeks studied. And in no week during these five months was more than 10% of the coverage about the president positive in tone.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS VERSUS ECONOMICS IN THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

Center for American Progress, November 22, 2011

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/11/path\\_to\\_270.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/11/path_to_270.html)

With a little under one year to go before the 2012 presidential election, next year's battle looks increasingly competitive, with ongoing economic distress and a highly energized Republican base potentially neutralizing the incumbency advantage that President Barack Obama would traditionally hold.

## **THE GENERATION GAP AND THE 2012 ELECTION**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, November 3, 2011

<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/11-3-11%20Generations%20Release.pdf>

In the last four national elections, generation has mattered more in American elections than it has in decades. This continues to be true as voters look ahead toward the 2012 general election. In a contest between President Obama and Mitt Romney, there is a 20-point gap in support for Obama between Millennials and the over-65 silent generation.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA OPEN NEW CHAPTER IN 2012 CAMPAIGN**

Pew Internet and American Life Project, November 4, 2011

<http://pewinternet.org/Media-Mentions/2011/Social-media-open-new-chapter-in-2012-campaign.aspx>

While mostly younger voters rely on social media for information, it's no longer exclusively their domain. The fastest-growing demographic group using social networking sites is those over 50, according to a Pew Research Center study from 2010.

## **ONE YEAR TO GO: PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S UPHILL BATTLE FOR REELECTION IN 2012**

The Brookings Institution, November 7, 2011

[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2011/1107\\_obama\\_galston/1107\\_obama\\_galston.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2011/1107_obama_galston/1107_obama_galston.pdf)

Despite recent signs of a modest upturn in President Barack Obama's political fortunes, the 2012 election is likely to be close and hard-fought. More than in any contest since 1992, the economy will be the overwhelming focus. But fundamental clashes about the role of government will also be in play against a backdrop of record low public confidence in governing institutions. And contests involving incumbents tend to be referenda on their records more than choices between candidates. If the election pitting Obama against the strongest potential Republican nominee, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, were held tomorrow, the president would probably lose.

## **ROMNEY'S MORMON FAITH LIKELY A FACTOR IN PRIMARIES, NOT IN A GENERAL ELECTION**

Pew Research Center, November 23, 2011

[http://pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Issues/Politics\\_and\\_Elections/Religion%20Report%20FINAL.pdf](http://pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Issues/Politics_and_Elections/Religion%20Report%20FINAL.pdf)

About half of all voters, and 60% of evangelical Republicans, know that Mitt Romney is a Mormon. The former Massachusetts governor's religion has implications for his nomination run, but not for the general election should he be nominated as his party's standard bearer.

## **IMMIGRATION**

### **CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS: THE CHANGING FACE OF METROPOLITAN AMERICA**

Urban Institute, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412435-children-of-immigrants-brief6-changing-face-metropolitan-america.pdf>

The majority (84 percent) of the 17 million children of immigrants in the United States live in the 100 largest metropolitan areas. Children of immigrants drove the growth in the child population under age 18 nationally and in the largest metros: if it was not for them, the child population in the top 100 metros overall and in many metros would have declined in the last decade. Driven by immigration and population momentum, the child minority share across the top 100 metros reached 51 percent in 2009 and many of the largest metros became "majority minority" metros.

### **IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES**

Migration Policy Institute, October 2011

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=858>

Immigration enforcement functions have traditionally been the responsibility of federal immigration authorities. In recent years, however, the enforcement landscape has broadened — not without controversy — to include state and local actors in the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

### **IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION AND ISSUES IN THE 112TH CONGRESS**

Congressional Research Service, September 30, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/175894.pdf>

Despite President Obama's calls for a national conversation on immigration reform, immigration has not been a front-burner issue for the 112th Congress. The 112th Congress, however, has taken legislative action on some measures containing provisions on a range of immigration-related topics. The Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10) includes a provision terminating a special refugee provision known as the Lautenberg amendment. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act, 2012 (H.R.2017), as passed by the House and reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee, contains border security-related provisions on staffing at ports of entry and enforcement activities between ports of entry. The House has passed legislation to reauthorize the H-1C temporary worker category for nurses coming to work in medically underserved areas in the United States (H.R.1933). It also has passed legislation concerning military service-based immigration benefits (H.R. 398).

## **UNAUTHORIZED ALIENS RESIDING IN THE UNITED STATES: ESTIMATES SINCE 1986**

Congressional Research Service, September 22, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/174245.pdf>

Estimates derived from the March Supplement of the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) indicate that the unauthorized resident alien population (commonly referred to as illegal aliens) rose from 3.2 million in 1986 to 11.2 million in 2010. Jeffrey Passel, a demographer with the Pew Hispanic Research Center, has been involved in making these estimations since he worked at the U.S. Bureau of the Census in the 1980s. The estimated number of unauthorized aliens had dropped to 1.9 million in 1988 following passage of a 1986 law that legalized several million unauthorized aliens. The estimates of unauthorized aliens peaked at an estimated 12.4 million in 2007. About 39% of unauthorized alien residents in 2010 were estimated to have entered the United States in 2000 or later.

## **UP FOR GRABS: THE GAINS AND PROSPECTS OF FIRST- AND SECOND-GENERATION YOUNG ADULTS**

Migration Policy Institute, November 2011

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/youngadults-upforgrabs.pdf>

Youth and young adults from immigrant families represent one in four people in the United States between the ages of 16-26 and account for half of the growth of the young adult population between 1995 and 2010. This report profiles the nation's 11.3 million first- and second-generation young adults, finding substantial generational progress in terms of high school graduation, college enrollment, and ability to earn family-sustaining wages. Second-generation Hispanic women are faring particularly well, with college enrollment rates equal to those of third-generation non-Hispanic white women.

## **JUSTICE**

### **HATE CRIME STATISTICS 2010**

Federal Bureau of Investigation, November 14, 2011

<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/hate-crime/2010/summary>

The Federal Bureau of Investigation released Hate Crime Statistics, 2010, based on information submitted by law enforcement agencies throughout the Nation. These data indicate that 6,628 criminal incidents involving 7,699 offenses were reported in 2010 as a result of bias toward a particular race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity/national origin, or physical or mental disability.

## **LABOR**

### **UNEMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS LOSSES: A LOOK AT LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF THE GREAT RECESSION ON AMERICAN WORKERS**

Brookings Institution, November 4, 2011

[http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/1104\\_jobs\\_greenstone\\_looney.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/1104_jobs_greenstone_looney.aspx)

Between October of 2008 and April of 2009, an average of 700,000 American workers lost their jobs each month—contributing to the worst sustained decline in employment

since the Great Depression. Research suggests that many of these workers—particularly those who held long-term jobs—will experience hardship that extends beyond the time they are unemployed. Once they are reemployed, they often earn significantly less, impacting the quality of life for them and their families.

## **MEDIA**

### **TEENS, KINDNESS AND CRUELTY ON SOCIAL NETWORK SITES**

Pew Internet & American Life Project, November 9, 2011

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2128/social-media-teens-bullying-internet->

As social media use has become pervasive in the lives of American teens, a new study finds that 69% of the teenagers who use social networking sites say their peers are mostly kind to one another on such sites. Still, 88% of these teens say they have witnessed people being mean and cruel to another person on the sites, and 15% report that they have been the target of mean or cruel behavior on social network sites.

## **PHILANTHROPY**

### **THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN BRIEF: PUBLIC CHARITIES, GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING, 2011**

Urban Institute, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412434-NonprofitAlmanacBrief2011.pdf>

The Internal Revenue Code defines more than 30 different categories of tax-exempt organizations. The largest group is 501(c)(3) public charities, such as arts, education, health care, human services, and other organizations to which donors can make tax deductible donations. The tax-exempt sector also includes a variety of other groups, such as advocacy organizations, labor unions, business and professional associations, fraternal societies, cemetery companies, state-chartered credit unions, and many more.

### **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING TO CHARITABLE GIVING RECENTLY? A LOOK AT THE DATA**

Urban Institute, October 24, 2011

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412432-charitable-giving-brief.pdf>

This brief attempts to assess the trends in charitable giving and how the current economic turmoil has affected the nonprofit sector - the main topic of an August 2011 roundtable hosted by the Tax Policy and Charities project at the Urban Institute. Twenty-five experts on tax policy and the nonprofit sector convened to discuss past trends in giving, the charitable sector's current situation, and the possible effects of proposals to modify the charitable deduction.

## **POVERTY**

### **HISPANIC POVERTY RATE HIGHEST IN NEW SUPPLEMENTAL CENSUS MEASURE**

Pew Hispanic Center, November 8, 2011

<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/148.pdf>

The Census bureau has just released results for 2010 from the alternative metric—called the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)—that uses a wider range of factors than the official federal measure to determine poverty status.

When the alternative measure is used, a greater share of Hispanics in 2010 lived in poverty than any other group. By contrast, when using the official poverty rate, a greater share of blacks in 2010 lived in poverty than Hispanics or any other group. Even so, no matter which measure is used, Hispanics make up nearly three-in-ten of the nation's poor—28.6% under the official poverty measure and 28.7% under the SPM.

### **THE RE-EMERGENCE OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY: METROPOLITAN TRENDS IN THE 2000S**

Brookings Institution, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2011/1103\\_poverty\\_kneebone\\_nadeau\\_berube/1103\\_poverty\\_kneebone\\_nadeau\\_berube.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2011/1103_poverty_kneebone_nadeau_berube/1103_poverty_kneebone_nadeau_berube.pdf)

Over a ten-year span, the country saw the poor population grow by 12.3 million, driving the total number of Americans in poverty to a historic high of 46.2 million. By the end of the decade, over 15 percent of the nation's population lived below the federal poverty line—\$22,314 for a family of four in 2010—though these increases did not occur evenly throughout the country.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **WHAT DIRECTIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH UNDER THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT?**

Urban Institute, November 8, 2011

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412441-Directions-for-Public-Health-Under-the-Affordable-Care-Act.pdf>

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) presents opportunities to support what has often been called the “new public health.” This analysis of the ACA provisions suggests five interrelated issues of importance for the future of public health—defining a new paradigm, identifying reliable funding streams, developing the evidence base, establishing effective relationships with other actors, and communicating the value proposition of public health. The brief concludes by noting that much work must still be done to assure that the ACA becomes a wellspring of appreciation for public health's value, rather than the high water mark for public health advocacy.

## **WOMEN**

### **WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS: 1917-2011**

Congressional Research Service, September 27, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/175864.pdf>

Ninety-three women currently serve in the 112th Congress: 76 in the House (52 Democrats and 24 Republicans) and 17 in the Senate (12 Democrats and 5 Republicans). Ninety-two women were initially sworn in to the 112th Congress, but one Democratic House Member has since resigned, and two others have been elected. This number (92) is lower than the record number of 95 women who were initially elected to the 111th Congress.

*Previous issues can be found at:*

<http://france.usembassy.gov/web-alert.html>