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U.S. Elections

1. Contemporary Developments in Presidential Elections

Kevin J. Coleman, R. Sam Garrett, Thomas H. Neale
CRS Report for Congress

January 9, 2012
54 p.

Full text: <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/180682.pdf>

This report considers contemporary developments in presidential elections. It emphasizes three topics chosen for their recurring importance and notable recent developments: (1) nominating procedures; (2) campaign finance; and (3) the electoral college. The report highlights significant developments in these areas, particularly for the 2008 and 2012 elections. It also provides background information about the presidential election process in general. Other CRS products cited throughout this report provide additional information about the topics introduced here. As the report notes, 2012 is expected to be a noteworthy election cycle for several reasons. Some are extensions of developments that started in 2008 or before, while others are more recent.

2. The Presidential Nominating Process and the National Party Conventions, 2012: Frequently Asked Questions

Kevin J. Coleman
Congressional Research Service

May 14, 2012
26 p.

Full text: <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/190154.pdf>

This report provides answers to frequently asked questions about the presidential nominating process, including how the delegates to the national conventions are chosen, the differences between a caucus and a primary, national party rules changes for 2012, and the national conventions themselves. It is not a comprehensive report on all aspects of the presidential nominating process.

3. **America's Path: Grand Strategy for the Next Administration**

Center for a New American Security

May 31, 2012

76 p.

Full Text: http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_AmericasPath_FontaineLord_0.pdf

America confronts a world in transition. Whatever the outcome of the November 2012 presidential election, America's next president will face many challenges. According to the authors, to lead America wisely, the president and his administration must answer several questions: What kind of world does America face and how is the strategic landscape evolving? What are America's core national interests? How should America pursue its interests and what threatens them? What opportunities exist and how can America seize them? How should America convey its purpose, both at home and globally?

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

4. **World Expectations Lowered**

Bruce Stokes

YaleGlobal

June 14, 2012

Full Text: <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/world-expectations-lowered>

U.S. presidential campaigns often tangle over which candidate is best capable of boosting the country's reputation abroad and providing leadership in global affairs. Polls in 2008 and 2009 showed satisfaction and great expectations in Europe, Mexico, Japan and elsewhere with Barack Obama's election in 2008, while citizens in six Muslim nations expressed doubts about U.S. policy changes, regardless of who's in charge.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

5. **Obama Holds Lead; Romney Trails on Most Issues**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

July 12, 2012

22 p.

Full Text: <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/7-12-12%20Political%20Release.pdf>

Despite the stagnant economy and broad dissatisfaction with national conditions, Barack Obama holds a significant lead over Mitt Romney. Obama is favored by a 50% to 43% margin among registered voters. Romney loses ground on the issue of which candidate can best improve the economy.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

6. **GOP Holds Early Turnout Edge, But Little Enthusiasm for Romney**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

June 21, 2012

72 p.

Full Text: <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/06-21-12%20Voter%20Attitudes.pdf>

Less than five months before Election Day, voters are not as engaged with the presidential campaign as they were at this point four years ago, when interest in the campaign reached record levels. But voter engagement today generally equals or surpasses levels from the four campaigns prior to 2008, indicating that 2012 could be another relatively high turnout election. Republicans hold the edge on several turnout measures, in contrast to 2008 when Democrats had leads, some quite substantial, on nearly every indicator. Yet Democrats are more enthusiastic about their candidate. Most Obama backers support him strongly, while most Romney voters support him only moderately.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

7. Partisan Polarization Surges in Bush, Obama Years: Trends in American Values: 1987-2012

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press June 4, 2012 168 p.

Full Text: <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/06-04-12%20Values%20Release.pdf>

As Americans head to the polls this November, their values and basic beliefs are more polarized along partisan lines than at any point in the past 25 years. Unlike in 1987, when this series of surveys began, the values gap between Republicans and Democrats is now greater than gender, age, race or class divides. Overall, there has been much more stability than change across the 48 political values measures that the Pew Research Center has tracked since 1987. But the average partisan gap has nearly doubled over this 25-year period -- from 10% in 1987 to 18% in the new study.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

8. Half Say View of Obama Not Affected by Gay Marriage Decision

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press May 14, 2012 4 p.

Full Text: <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/05-14-2012%20gay%20marriage-obama%20final.pdf>

Roughly half of Americans (52%) say Barack Obama's expression of support for gay marriage did not affect their opinion of the president. A quarter (25%) say they feel less favorably toward Obama because of this while 19% feel more favorably.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

9. Mr. Precedent

Stephanie Mencimer

Mother Jones

May/June 2011

p. 54-66

Currently available under a different title online at <http://motherjones.com/politics/2011/03/james-bopp-citizens-united>

Liberal reporter Stephanie Mencimer profiles conservative Indiana attorney James Bopp's efforts to change campaign finance laws. Bopp has been successful in his claims that campaign contributions are a form of free speech protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution. The Supreme Court extended the same free speech protections to corporations in the Citizens United v. FEC ruling. Bopp has many cases in the lower courts challenging money limits to campaign contributions. His law firm also has cases in 16 states challenging financial disclosure laws for campaign contributors.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

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