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## **Obama's Lead Among Younger Millennials Widens to 16 Points**

*New Millennials survey finds deep divisions on race, religion,  
and views of government*

**WASHINGTON** — Young voters' support for President Barack Obama has increased significantly since March, a new survey finds, widening to a 16-point advantage among younger Millennials (age 18-25) over Republican challenger Mitt Romney (55 percent vs. 39 percent).

The Millennial Values and Voter Engagement survey is the second installment of a two-wave study conducted this year by **Public Religion Research Institute** and **Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs**.

The new survey also finds that nearly two-thirds (66 percent) of younger Millennials say they are currently registered to vote, with half (50 percent) saying they are absolutely certain they will vote in the 2012 election.

“One of the most striking findings of the survey is the impact of parental example on younger Millennial voter engagement and voting preferences,” said **Robert P. Jones, CEO of Public Religion Research Institute**. “Younger Millennials whose parents brought them to the voting booth as children are significantly more likely to be registered to vote, and younger Millennials who have two parents supporting the same presidential candidate are closely following the vote choices of their parents.”

Despite being a highly diverse generation known for its acceptance of difference, the PRRI/Berkley Center survey finds surprisingly persistent racial divides among younger Millennials. Obama commands an overwhelming lead among black (97 percent) and Hispanic (69 percent) younger Millennial voters, while Romney has an 11-point advantage over Obama among white younger Millennial voters (52 percent vs. 41 percent).

These racial divides also hold true among religious voters. Eight-in-ten (80 percent) white evangelical Protestant younger Millennial voters and a slim majority of white mainline Protestant younger Millennial voters (51 percent) favor Romney. Obama, however, maintains an advantage among Catholic younger Millennial voters overall (55

percent vs. 38 percent) religiously unaffiliated younger Millennial voters (68 percent vs. 23 percent), and minority Protestant younger Millennial voters (70 percent vs. 26 percent).

“There are striking differences along racial lines about the role of faith in the lives of presidential candidates,” said Dr. Thomas Banchoff, director of Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. “Strong majorities of black and Hispanic younger Millennials say it is important for presidential candidates to have strong religious beliefs, while a majority of white younger Millennials disagree.”

Nearly half (49 percent) of younger Millennials say it is somewhat or very important for a candidate to have strong religious beliefs, while 48 percent say it is not too important or not at all important for a presidential candidate to have strong religious beliefs. Here, too, younger Millennials are divided by race. A majority of black (68%) and Hispanic (57%) Millennials agree that it is important for a presidential candidate to have strong religious beliefs, compared to only 44% of white Millennials. A majority (53%) of white Millennials believe that it is *not* important for a presidential candidate to have strong religious beliefs.

“Millennials have a reputation for being the ‘wired’ generation, but when it comes to government, they’re unplugged,” said Daniel Cox, PRRI Research Director. “Across a range of measures, younger Millennials indicate that they are disillusioned with the government’s ability to respond to their needs.”

Overall, younger Millennials exhibit a high degree of pessimism about the democratic process and government. More than 6-in-10 (63 percent) younger Millennials agree that “people like me don’t have any say about what the government does,” while more than 8-in-10 (82 percent) believe that business corporations have too much influence on the political process.

### ***Among the findings:***

- Nearly half (47 percent) of younger Millennials oppose programs that make special efforts to help blacks and other minorities to get ahead because of past discrimination, while around 4-in-10 (38 percent) favor these programs.
- Support for affirmative action programs diminishes considerably when younger Millennials are asked specifically about affirmative action for college admission.
- Relatively few (15 percent) younger Millennials report that they were hurt in the college admissions process because of affirmative action policies, while about 1-in-10 (8 percent) say they were helped by these policies.
- Most younger Millennials do not believe their race or gender will have an effect on their future career prospects.

### ***Methodology***

The 2012 Millennial Values Election Survey was conducted jointly by Public Religion Research Institute and Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and

World Affairs. Results from the Millennial Values Election Survey were based on interviews with 1,214 adults age 18 to 25 who were re-contacted from the original Millennial Values Survey. The original Millennial Values Survey were based on interviews of 2,013 adults age 18 to 24 who are part of the Knowledge Networks' KnowledgePanel. Interviews for the Millennial Values Election Survey were conducted online in both English and Spanish between August 28 and September 10, 2012. The margin of sampling error for the entire sample is +/- 4.3 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The survey was funded by a generous grant from the Ford Foundation.

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