



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 11, 2011

Barna Survey: Americans Think Obama Most Honest, Intelligent Candidate

Somewhat surprisingly, Obama scored higher than both Romney and Perry on all factors except leadership, with Romney besting the President on perceived leadership ability and Perry tying Obama in that category. Additionally, while the margins were small, Romney outscored Perry in all categories.



Overall, Obama received the highest score for perceived honesty, with 24 percent of respondents rating him “excellent” in this category and another 24 percent calling him “good.” By comparison, only nine percent of respondents gave Romney an “excellent” on honesty, with another 27 percent saying he was “good.” Bringing up the rear was Perry, with only six percent giving him an “excellent” and 25 percent a “good.”

Concerning perceived intelligence, the President outscored both other candidates, with 39 percent of respondents giving him an “excellent” and 29 percent a “good.” As for the Republican candidates, Romney was rated “excellent” by 17 percent and “good” by another 40 percent, with Perry receiving only 14 percent on “excellent” and 28 percent on “good.”

On perceived philosophy of government, Obama and Romney were much closer, with the President scoring 19 percent on “excellent” and 26 percent on “good,” followed closely by Romney with nine percent “excellent” and 30 percent “good.” Again Perry lagged with seven percent “excellent” and 25 percent “good.” The Barna researchers noted that Obama and Romney “had essentially identical mean scores due to the larger proportion of people who rated Mr. Obama’s philosophy of government as ‘not too good’ or ‘poor.’”

With regard to the crucial issue of leadership, Obama did have the highest “excellent” score at 17 percent, along with 25 percent of respondents giving him a “good” — for an overall “above average” score of 42 percent. But while only 10 percent of respondents rated Romney’s leadership abilities as “excellent,” 36 percent said they were “good,” giving the former Massachusetts Governor a superior 46 percent “above average” rating. As for Perry, 12 percent rated him “excellent” and 29 percent “good,” for an overall “above average” score that the researchers called “statistically even” with Obama’s leadership rating.

Predictably, among evangelicals, a group that has been heavily courted by Perry, the Texas Governor garnered “excellent” scores that far outshone the other two candidates in all categories: 30 percent on leadership (compared to nine percent for the other two); 26 percent on honesty (compared to 18 percent for Obama and nine percent for Romney); 42 percent for intelligence (versus 26 percent for



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Obama and 20 percent for Romney); 25 percent on philosophy of government (versus 15 percent Obama and six percent for Romney).

Also not surprisingly, noted the researchers, “among skeptics [i.e., atheists and agnostics] Mr. Obama was the top-rated individual on all four attributes — and, in three cases, by some of the widest margins awarded by any religious segment.” The only factor for which skeptics gave the President relatively low scores (competitive with Romney and Perry) was on his leadership abilities.

Barna found a particularly significant response to the query of whether, based “only on his performance” over his first term, Obama “does or does not deserve to be re-elected as president.” The researchers found that only “one-third of adults said he does deserve re-election, while four out of 10 said he does not.” Among evangelicals, seven out of 10 said the President does not deserve to be re-elected. Added the researchers of the overall findings: “The key to the ultimate election outcome, though, is the one-fourth who said they had not made up their mind yet.”

In related news, a survey released October 4 by [Rasmussen Reports](#) found that, based on present numbers, a “generic Republican” would hold “a six-point advantage over President Obama in a hypothetical 2012 match-up.” The poll found such a GOP candidate earning 47-percent support, compared to 41 percent for Obama. Another four percent opted for another candidate, with eight percent remaining undecided.

The poll revealed differences based on gender and age, with men preferring the “generic Republican” by 13 percent, and an even split among women between Obama and the unnamed Republican. Americans under 30 leaned toward Obama, while independent voters favored the “generic Republican.”



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