



**THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
For The People & The Press

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
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## 'Bain Capital' Story Seen as Important Campaign 2012: Too Negative, Too Long, Dull

As the Republican candidates battle for the chance to challenge Barack Obama in November, many Americans are highly critical of the presidential campaign.

Half (50%) say the campaign has been too negative. By comparison, four years ago, amidst primary fights in *both* parties, just 28% said the campaign at that point was too negative. Current ratings are more comparable to impressions of the 2004 Democratic primary campaign.

Most Americans (55%) describe the 2012 campaign so far as dull, with just 36% saying they find it interesting. This, too, is a reversal from four years ago, when seven-in-ten rated the campaign as interesting and just a quarter said it was dull. The share rating the 2012 campaign as either informative or important is also significantly lower than at a comparable point in 2008.

### Evaluating the Campaign

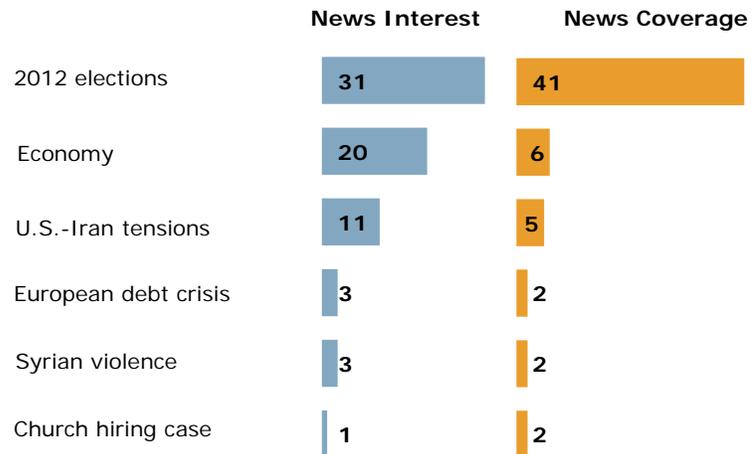
	Mar 2004	Feb 2008	Jan 2012
<i>Presidential campaign is...</i>	%	%	%
Interesting	33*	70	36
Dull	57	25	55
Neither/DK	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100
Too negative	47	28	50
Not too negative	47	66	41
Neither/DK	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100
Informative	53	65	48
Not informative	42	31	45
Neither/DK	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100
Important	81	90	74
Not important	17	10	23
Neither/DK	<u>2</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100
Too long	52	57	57
Not too long	44	40	35
Neither/DK	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 12-15, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.  
\*Results from June, 2004.

One constant is the impression that the campaign is too long. According to the latest weekly News Interest Index survey, conducted Jan. 12-15 among 1,008 adults by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 57% say the campaign has been too long, while 35% say it has not been too long. This is virtually identical to public evaluations of previous presidential campaigns.

With the New Hampshire primary on Jan. 10, the presidential campaign was the public's and the media's top story last week. Three-in-ten (31%) say this was the news they followed most closely; 20% say their top story was the economy. Campaign news dominated coverage, accounting for 41% of the newshole, according to a separate analysis by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ).

### News Interest Vs. News Coverage



News interest shows the percentage of people who say they followed this story most closely, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Jan. 12-15, 2012. News coverage shows the percentage of news coverage devoted to each story, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, Jan. 9-15, 2012.

About half of the public (51%) says Mitt Romney is the candidate they have the most about in the news recently, far more than any other Republican candidate. Romney also was by far the most heard about candidate one week earlier, following his narrow win over Rick Santorum in the Iowa caucuses. These public impressions are consistent with the amount of news coverage devoted to each candidate. According to PEJ, Romney was a significant player in 69% of election stories analyzed last week. No one else comes close. Romney also has been receiving more negative attention than earlier in the campaign. (See: [The Bain Story Hurts Romney and His Critics.](#))

About six-in-ten (61%) say they have heard at least a little about Romney's tenure as head of Bain Capital, a private equity

### Romney Getting Most Attention

Candidate in the news	Heard most about %	Actual Coverage*
Mitt Romney	51	69
Newt Gingrich	6	25
Ron Paul	4	14
Jon Huntsman	*	13
Rick Santorum	1	8
Rick Perry	2	6

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 12-15, 2012. \*Coverage based on the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index for the week of Jan. 9-15. Percentages show the number of campaign stories in which a candidate had a significant presence (at least 25%).

firm that critics say killed jobs when restructuring troubled companies. Among those who heard at least a little about Romney's record at Bain, most (70%) say they think this is an important issue for people to know about.

### Too Much Campaign Coverage?

Currently, the public is divided over whether the campaign is receiving too much coverage or the right amount; 36% say too much and 36% say the right amount. Just 16% say news organizations are giving the campaign too little coverage. Democrats are somewhat more likely than Republicans to say that there has been too much coverage (41% vs. 32%).

The current numbers are not much different from January 2008, also shortly after the New Hampshire primaries. At that time, 40% said news organizations were giving the campaign too much coverage, 44% said they were giving it the right amount and 11% said too little.

The share of people who feel the early campaigns are overcovered has been significantly higher in 2008 and 2012 than in previous primary elections. At comparable points in previous campaigns going back to 1992, majorities said news organizations were giving the campaigns the right amount of coverage.

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### Amount of Campaign Coverage

<i>Amount of campaign coverage ...</i>	<b>Feb 92</b>	<b>Mar 96</b>	<b>Feb 00</b>	<b>Feb 04</b>	<b>Jan 08</b>	<b>Jan 12</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too much	19	29	22	28	40	36
Too little	15	10	10	8	11	16
Right amount	62	58	63	61	44	36
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100

% of coverage given to the campaign	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	49	41
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PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 12-15, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. News coverage figures from the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism.

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## Most Aware of Bain Capital Controversy

About six-in-ten Americans have heard at least a little about Romney's record as head of Bain Capital, a major topic of debate among the GOP candidates in recent weeks; 21% say they heard a lot about this, while 40% heard a little. Another 38% say they heard nothing at all. Partisans are about equally likely to have heard about this: 66% of Republicans, 65% of Democrats and 61% of independents say they have heard at least a little about this.

Among those who say they heard at least a little, most (70%) say Romney's record at Bain Capital is an important issue for people to know about. Just 25% say it is not an important issue. Democrats (80%) are more likely to say this is an important issue than Republicans (60%), although majorities in both parties agree this is an important issue. Among independents who have heard at least a little, 72% say this issue is important.

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### Bain Capital Story Seen as Important

<i>Mitt Romney's record running Bain Capital</i>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>%</b>
Heard about	61
A lot	21
A little	40
Nothing at all	38
Don't Know	<u>1</u>
	100

<i>Is this issue important for people to know about?</i>	<b>All who heard about</b>
	<b>%</b>
Important	70
Not important	25
Don't know	<u>5</u>
	100
N	677

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 12-15, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## GOP More Likely to See Campaign as Interesting, Informative

With just the GOP engaged in a primary fight in 2012, Republicans are somewhat more positive about the campaign so far than Democrats or independents.

Nearly half of Republicans (48%) say the campaign is interesting, compared with 35% of Democrats and 34% of independents. Four years ago, the percentage finding the campaign interesting was higher across the board: 80% of Democrats, 68% of Republicans and 64% of independents.

Today, Republicans (49%) also are less likely than Democrats (60%) or independents (59%) to say the campaign is too long. Four years ago, Democrats were least likely to see the campaign as too long; 49% said this, compared with 63% of Republicans and 60% of independents.

Republicans are almost evenly divided on whether the campaign is too negative or not (48% vs. 46%). Among Democrats, the balance tilts toward too negative (53% vs. 40%). Independent views on this are little different from Republicans.

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### Partisan Differences

<i>Presidential campaign is...</i>	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Interesting	36	48	35	34
Dull	55	42	59	60
Neither/Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	100	100	100
Too negative	50	48	53	48
Not too negative	41	46	40	44
Neither/Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100
Informative	48	59	46	48
Not informative	45	36	49	44
Neither/Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100	100
Important	74	83	71	77
Not important	23	17	26	22
Neither/Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100
Too long	57	49	60	59
Not too long	35	45	34	32
Neither/Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 12-15, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## The Week's News

Following Romney's win in New Hampshire, news about the presidential election topped both the public's news interest and media coverage.

About three-in-ten (31%) say they followed election news most closely. Looking at a separate measure, 29% say they followed news about the candidates very closely, matching the number that said this one week earlier. More than a third of Republicans (36%) say they followed election news very closely, about the same as the 31% of Democrats who say this, and slightly more than independents (26%). News about the 2012 elections made up 41% of coverage.

Two-in-ten (20%) say they followed news about the economy most closely. A third say they followed reports about the condition of the U.S. economy very closely, down slightly from 39% one week earlier. News about the economy accounted for 6% of coverage.

About one-in-ten (11%) say their top story was the mounting tensions between the U.S. and Iran; 24% say they followed this news very closely. News about Iran made up 5% of the newshole.

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## News Interest

*% following each story very closely*

*Which one story did you follow most closely?*



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 12-15, 2012.

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The European debt crisis attracted little attention or coverage last week; 3% say this was their top story, while 12% say they followed this news very closely. The ongoing crisis accounted for 2% of coverage.

The situation in Syria attracted similarly low interest; 3% say this was the news they followed most closely, while 12% say they followed this news very closely. News about political violence in Syria made up 2% of coverage.

Few closely followed news about a Supreme Court ruling that allowed greater leeway for churches and other religious groups in hiring. Just 1% say this was the story they followed most closely; 8% say they followed this news very closely. News about the Supreme Court accounted for 2% of coverage.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly News Interest Index, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media's coverage. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected Jan. 9-15, and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected Jan.12-15 from a nationally representative sample of 1,008 adults.

## About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events. This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Monday through Sunday) PEJ compiles this data to identify the top stories for the week. (For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to [www.journalism.org](http://www.journalism.org).) The News Interest Index survey collects data from Thursday through Sunday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted January 12-15, 2012 among a national sample of 1,008 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (604 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 404 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 194 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,008	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	297	7.0 percentage points
Democrats	285	7.0 percentage points
Independents	330	6.5 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX**  
**JANUARY 12-15, 2012**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,008**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE;] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
January 12-15, 2012	33	32	14	20	1
January 5-8, 2012	39	31	15	15	*
December 15-18, 2011	36	32	14	16	1
December 8-11, 2011	41	29	13	16	1
December 1-4, 2011	40	33	13	13	1
November 17-20, 2011	35	33	16	15	1
November 10-13, 2011	39	31	15	14	*
November 3-6, 2011	37	31	15	17	1
October 27-30, 2011	38	33	14	15	1
October 20-23, 2011	38	32	14	16	1
October 13-16, 2011	39	32	14	14	*
October 6-9, 2011	43	28	14	14	1
September 29-October 2, 2011	46	26	14	14	*
September 22-25, 2011	44	33	11	11	*
September 8-11, 2011	40	30	15	14	1
September 1-4, 2011	44	30	11	15	*
August 25-28, 2011	44	28	14	13	1
August 18-21, 2011	44	29	12	14	1
August 4-7, 2011	46	30	11	13	1
July 28-31, 2011	43	30	13	13	*
July 21-24, 2011	41	32	13	13	1
July 14-17, 2011	41	30	14	14	1
July 7-10, 2011	36	30	15	18	1
June 30-July 3, 2011	38	32	13	16	1
June 23-26, 2011	37	29	15	19	*
June 16-19, 2011	39	33	14	13	*
June 9-12, 2011	39	30	15	16	1
June 2-5, 2011	35	34	17	14	*
May 19-22, 2011	33	34	17	16	*
May 12-15, 2011	32	32	17	18	2
May 5-8, 2011	40	35	15	9	1
April 21-25, 2011	41	33	12	14	*
April 14-17, 2011	44	30	14	12	1
April 7-10, 2011	46	30	14	10	*
March 31-April 3, 2011	42	31	16	11	0
March 24-27, 2011	36	32	17	15	*
March 17-20, 2011	38	32	17	13	*
March 10-13, 2011	40	30	16	13	*
March 3-6, 2011	37	31	17	13	1
February 24-27, 2011	49	29	11	10	*
February 17-20, 2011	35	33	14	17	*
February 10-13, 2011	36	34	13	16	*
February 3-6, 2011	35	37	14	14	*
January 20-23, 2011	37	33	14	15	1
January 13-16, 2011	37	29	15	18	1
January 6-9, 2011	39	37	11	12	1

[SEE TRENDS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS](#)

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
b. Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Europe					
January 12-15, 2012	12	23	23	42	1
December 8-11, 2011	14	22	27	37	1
December 1-4, 2011	14	24	25	36	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
November 10-13, 2011: <i>Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Greece and Italy</i>	15	23	23	38	1
November 3-6, 2011: <i>Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Greece and other European countries</i>	18	26	21	34	1
October 27-30, 2011	12	27	24	36	*
September 29-October 2, 2011: <i>The debt crisis in Greece and other European countries</i>	15	21	24	39	1
September 15-18, 2011	16	23	24	37	1
August 18-21, 2011: <i>The debate among European leaders on how to address the region's debt crisis</i>	12	21	22	44	1
August 11-14, 2011: <i>Riots in London and other parts of Britain</i>	17	28	21	32	1
June 30-July 3, 2011: <i>The financial crisis and violent protests in Greece</i>	14	22	23	39	1
June 16-19, 2011	10	20	25	45	1
May 13-16, 2010: <i>A trillion-dollar bailout package for European governments facing debt problems</i>	21	26	24	28	2
May 7-10, 2010: <i>The financial crisis in Greece and violent protests there</i>	19	23	26	31	*
April 30-May 3, 2010: <i>The financial crisis in Greece</i>	6	15	28	51	1
October, 1998: <i>Financial instability around the world</i>	32	40	19	9	*
September, 1998: <i>Economic and political instability in Russia</i>	18	30	28	24	*
Late August, 1998: <i>Economic problems in Russia</i>	8	22	29	41	*
January, 1998: <i>The deepening financial crisis in many Asian countries</i>	15	25	27	33	*
March, 1995: <i>The financial and political instability in Mexico</i>	12	28	30	29	1
c. Mounting tensions between the U.S. and Iran					
January 12-15, 2012	24	30	18	27	*
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
January 5-8, 2012: <i>Tensions between the U.S. and Iran over shipping in the Persian gulf</i>	23	26	19	32	*
June 10-13, 2010: <i>New U.N. sanctions against Iran because of its nuclear program</i>	19	28	25	27	1
October 2-5, 2009: <i>Talks between the United States and Iran over Iran's nuclear program</i>	30	32	18	20	*
May 21-24, 2009: <i>Iran testing a missile hat could reach Israel</i>	20	29	25	26	*
July 11-14, 2008: <i>The Iranian government firing test missiles capable of striking Israel</i>	25	29	22	23	1
January 11-14, 2008: <i>Encounter between U.S. and Iranian ships</i>	25	26	21	27	1

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
December 7-10, 2007: <i>Intelligence report on Iran's nuclear weapons program</i>	25	31	20	23	1
October 26-29, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran</i>	26	34	21	18	1
September 28 – October 1, 2007: <i>Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent tip to New York City where he spoke at Columbia University and the United Nations</i>	23	31	20	25	1
June 1-4, 2007: <i>Recent talks between the United States and Iran</i>	19	27	27	26	1
February 23-26, 2007: <i>Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran</i>	29	37	18	15	1
February 16-19, 2007: <i>Iran supplying weapons to insurgents in Iraq</i>	28	32	20	19	1
February 2-5, 2007	33	38	18	10	1
September, 2006: <i>Iran's nuclear research program</i>	23	34	19	23	1
August, 2006: <i>Iran's nuclear research program</i>	24	34	20	20	3
June, 2006: <i>Iran's nuclear research program</i>	21	32	22	22	3
April, 2006: <i>Iran's nuclear research program</i>	26	30	23	20	1
March, 2006: <i>Iran's nuclear research program</i>	24	31	22	22	1
d. Political violence in Syria					
January 12-15, 2012	12	17	26	45	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
August 4-7, 2011: <i>Political violence following uprisings in Syria</i>	10	19	26	44	1
May 5-8, 2011	14	27	30	28	1
June 2-5, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests and violence in some Middle Eastern countries</i>	18	25	25	32	*
April 28-May 1, 2011	18	29	25	27	1
February 3-6, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries</i>	32	35	16	18	*
January 27-30, 2011	17	26	21	35	*
e. The U.S. Supreme Court decision on hiring practices for churches and other religious groups					
January 12-15, 2012	8	12	21	58	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
June 23-26, 2011: <i>The Supreme Court dismissing a sex discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart</i>	24	22	17	36	1
March 3-6, 2011: <i>A Supreme Court ruling protecting free speech rights of protestors at military funerals</i>	24	22	17	36	1
October 7-10, 2010: <i>A case before the Supreme Court involving a fundamentalist pastor's anti-gay protests at military funerals</i>	18	22	22	37	1

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
January 22-25, 2010: <i>The Supreme Court overturning campaign finance limits on corporations and unions paying for ads about political candidates</i>	18	21	25	34	1
December, 2003: <i>The Supreme Court decision upholding campaign finance reform legislation</i>	8	17	28	45	2
September, 2003: <i>The removal of a monument of the Ten Commandments from an Alabama courthouse</i>	32	29	19	19	1
July, 2002: <i>The federal court ruling that the words "One nation, under God" cannot appear in the Pledge of Allegiance</i>	52	27	10	10	1
July, 2002: <i>The Supreme Court ruling allowing vouchers to be used at private and religious schools</i>	19	24	22	33	2
July, 2002: <i>The Supreme Court ruling that bans the death penalty for the mentally retarded</i>	16	23	25	34	2
May, 1992: <i>The Supreme Court's deliberations about the legality of restrictions on abortion in Pennsylvania</i>	28	34	24	13	1
July, 1990: <i>The Supreme Court decision that found laws against flag burning unconstitutional and the attempt in Congress to amend the Constitution</i>	24	39	25	11	1
July, 1989: <i>The Supreme Court decision on the burning of the U.S. flag</i>	51	32	12	4	1
May, 1989: <i>The Supreme Court's hearing of arguments in a Missouri abortion case</i>	25	29	21	24	1
f. News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections					
January 12-15, 2012	29	29	18	23	1
January 5-8, 2012	29	30	16	25	*
December 15-18, 2011	26	24	20	29	1
December 8-11, 2011	27	27	18	28	*
December 1-4, 2011	25	28	20	26	1
November 17-20, 2011	24	31	21	23	1
November 3-6, 2011	22	31	20	26	1
October 27-30, 2011	21	26	21	30	1
October 20-23, 2011	21	28	22	28	1
October 13-16, 2011	26	29	22	23	1
October 6-9, 2011	25	25	23	27	1
September 29-October 2, 2011	27	26	21	25	*
September 22-25, 2011	25	26	23	25	1
September 15-18, 2011	24	28	21	27	1
September 8-11, 2011	22	26	21	31	*
September 1-4, 2011	22	23	22	32	1
August 25-28, 2011	22	22	22	33	1
August 18-21, 2011	27	26	19	28	1
August 11-14, 2011	19	24	20	36	1
August 4-7, 2011	18	21	22	37	1
July 28-31, 2011	17	27	21	35	1
July 21-24, 2011	17	22	28	32	*
July 14-17, 2011	18	26	27	28	1
July 7-10, 2011	16	23	27	33	1
June 30-July 3, 2011	21	28	24	25	2
June 23-26, 2011	19	26	24	31	*

**PEW.1 CONTINUED...**

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
June 16-19, 2011	23	29	23	25	*
June 9-12, 2011	18	30	22	30	1
June 2-5, 2011	21	31	22	26	*
May 26-29, 2011	20	27	24	28	*
May 19-22, 2011	15	27	24	32	1
May 12-15, 2011	15	22	26	35	1
May 5-8, 2011	16	24	27	32	1
April 21-25, 2011	18	26	23	32	1
April 14-17, 2011	20	23	29	27	1
March 24-27, 2011	13	19	26	41	1
March 10-13, 2011	15	21	26	38	0
February 10-13, 2011	16	19	24	40	*
February 3-6, 2011	15	20	23	42	*

[SEE TRENDS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS](#)

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.2 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]**

Jan 12-15

2012

31	News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections
20	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
11	Mounting tensions between the U.S. and Iran
3	Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Europe
3	Political violence in Syria
1	The U.S. Supreme Court decision on hiring practices for churches and other religious groups
9	Some other story (VOL.)
21	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.3 Thinking about Republican candidates for president in 2012... Regardless of whom you might prefer, which Republican candidate have you heard the most about in the news recently? **[OPEN END. RECORD FIRST MENTION ONLY.] [PLEASE BE CERTAIN TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "JOHN MCCAIN" AND "HERMAN CAIN".]**

Jan 12-15

2012

	Jan 5-8 <u>2012</u>	Dec 1-4 <u>2011</u>	Oct 13-16 <u>2011</u>	Sep 8-11 <u>2011</u>	Aug 18-21 <u>2011</u>	Jul 21-24 <u>2011</u>	Jun 16-19 <u>2011</u>	Jun 2-5 <u>2011</u>	May 12-15 <u>2011</u>	Apr 14-17 <u>2011</u>	
51	Mitt Romney	39	5	18	12	7	13	27	22	7	9
6	Newt Gingrich	11	13	*	1	1	1	5	2	12	1
4	Ron Paul	6	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	2	*
2	Rick Perry	3	3	12	31	22	3	*	*	*	*
1	Rick Santorum	9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1	Herman Cain	*	43	23	*	1	*	*	*	*	*
*	Michele Bachmann	3	*	1	7	23	23	5	1	1	*
*	Jon Huntsman	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	Gary Johnson	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2	Other										
32	None/DK/Ref.	26	32	39	37	35	44	45	41	50	53

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.4 Do you think news organizations are giving too much coverage, too little coverage or the right amount of coverage to news about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections?

	<u>Too much coverage</u>	<u>Too little coverage</u>	<u>Right amount of coverage</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
January 12-15, 2012	36	16	36	11
January 5-8, 2012	37	16	39	8
September 8-11, 2011: <i>Possible candidates for the 2012 presidential elections</i>	25	20	44	12
June 30-July 3, 2011	29	16	41	14
April 21-25, 2011	22	31	39	8
February 10-13, 2011	20	29	40	12
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
<b>2008 Election</b>				
June 20-23, 2008: <i>News about Candidates for the 2008 presidential election</i>	44	10	44	2
April 25-28, 2008	51	7	38	4
January 25-28, 2008	36	9	52	3
January 18-21, 2008	33	11	51	5
January 11-14, 2008: <i>The campaign</i>	40	11	44	5
January 4-7, 2008	40	11	43	6
December 14-17, 2007: <i>News about Candidates for the 2008 presidential election</i>	32	16	48	4
November 16-19, 2007	32	13	51	4
July 20-23, 2007	32	18	43	7
June 1-4, 2007	33	12	47	8
<b>2004 Election</b>				
February, 2004: <i>The 2004 presidential campaign</i>	28	8	61	3
October, 2003	23	17	51	9
April, 2003: <i>The race for the Democratic presidential nomination</i>	15	38	38	9
<b>2000 Election</b>				
June, 2000: <i>The 2000 presidential campaign</i>	19	16	60	5
March, 2000	25	10	61	4
February, 2000	22	10	63	5
September, 1999	28	14	49	9
July, 1999	18	13	59	10
<b>1996 Election</b>				
March, 1996: <i>The 1996 presidential campaign</i>	29	10	58	3
October, 1995	18	18	60	4
<b>1992 Election</b>				
September, 1992: <i>The 1992 presidential campaign</i>	22	11	62	5
February, 1992	19	15	62	4
October, 1991	12	22	58	8
<b>1988 Election</b>				
May, 1988: <i>The 1988 presidential campaign</i>	24	7	62	7
November, 1987	21	16	58	5

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.5 How would you describe the presidential election campaign so far – is it **[READ ITEM a. FIRST, THEN RANDOMIZE ITEMS b. THRU e.]**

a.	<u>Interesting</u>	<u>Dull</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
January 12-15, 2012	36	55	3	5
October 20-23, 2011	35	51	4	10
October 10-13, 2008	71	25	3	1
September 12-15, 2008	68	26	5	1
April 18-21, 2008	59	35	5	1
February 15-18, 2008	70	25	4	1
October 12-15, 2007	37	55	5	3
April, 2007	34	52	6	8
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	66	28	5	1
Early September, 2004 (RV)	50	42	6	2
June, 2004	33	57	4	6
June, 2000	28	65	4	3
July, 1996	21	73	3	3

b.	<u>Too negative</u>	<u>Not too negative</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
January 12-15, 2012	50	41	1	7
October 20-23, 2011	44	41	4	11
October 10-13, 2008	55	41	3	1
September 12-15, 2008	43	51	4	2
April 18-21, 2008	50	44	4	2
February 15-18, 2008	28	66	3	3
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	57	38	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	62	32	1	5
June, 2004	45	46	2	7
Mid-March, 2004	47	47	2	4

c.	<u>Informative</u>	<u>Not informative</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
January 12-15, 2012	48	45	2	6
October 20-23, 2011	40	49	2	9
October 10-13, 2008	63	34	2	1
September 12-15, 2008	54	41	3	2
February 15-18, 2008	65	31	2	2
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	73	22	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	63	33	1	3
June, 2004	48	46	2	4
Mid-March, 2004	53	42	2	3

d.	<u>Too long</u>	<u>Not too long</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
January 12-15, 2012	57	35	2	6
October 20-23, 2011	50	39	2	9
October 10-13, 2008	57	39	3	1
April 18-21, 2008	65	29	5	1
February 15-18, 2008	57	40	*	3
October 12-15, 2007	66	28	3	3
April, 2007	59	32	3	6
Mid-October, 2004 (RV)	51	43	3	2
Early September, 2004 (RV)	53	42	2	3
June, 2004	52	42	2	4
Mid-March, 2004	52	44	1	3

**PEW.5 CONTINUED...**

e.	<u>Important</u>	<u>Unimportant</u>	<u>(VOL.) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
January 12-15, 2012	74	23	1	2
February 15-18, 2008	90	10	*	*
Mid-October, 2008 (RV)	96	3	1	*
Early September, 2004 (RV)	90	9	*	1
June, 2004	79	18	1	2
Mid-March, 2004	81	17	1	1

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.6 How much, if anything, have you heard about Mitt Romney's record as head of the private equity firm Bain Capital? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all?

Jan 12-15

2012

21	A lot
40	A little
38	Nothing at all
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK IF HEARD A LOT OR A LITTLE (PEW.6=1,2):**

PEW.7 Do you think this is an important issue for people to know about, or not?

<b>BASED ON TOTAL:</b>	<b>BASED ON HEARD A LOT/LITTLE:</b>		
Jan 12-15	Jan 12-15		
<u>2012</u>	<u>2012</u>		
43	70		Important
16	25		Not important
3	5		Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
39	--		Heard nothing/DK/Ref
<b>N 1,008</b>	<b>677</b>		