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NEWS RELEASE [RMP 2012-II-01]

Contact: Jim Haynes
President/CEO
Earl de Berge
Research Director
602-258-4554

OBAMA AND ROMNEY NECK AND NECK IN ARIZONA INDEPENDENTS, HISPANICS AND MODERATES SWING TOWARD OBAMA

Phoenix, Arizona, April 25, 2012. In January, President Barack Obama trailed Mitt Romney by six points (43% to 37%) in test elections here in Arizona but now Romney trails Obama by two points (40% to 42%). The gap between them is within the margin of error of the survey and so for all intents and purposes, the numbers mean they are currently in a dead heat. Nonetheless, the eight point swing since January is significant.

Without question, Arizona is a battle ground in which both political parties will doubtless see good reasons for ramping up strong campaigns. Democrats may foresee more than their usual glimmer of hope that Obama's competitiveness here means that with hard work they could carry the state and with it, some additional congressional or state legislative seats. Both the state legislature which is controlled by Republicans, and the U.S. Congress, are held in low regard by voters here. More specifically, barely eleven percent of Arizonans rate the performance of the U.S. Congress favorably and for the state legislature, the positive scores are only 20 percent, while 40 percent flatly rate their performance as "Poor".

Additionally, with the retirement of Senator Jon Kyl, Democrats have a crack at an open U.S. Senate seat at a time when both of the incumbent GOP senators are being given marks for their performance in Washington which can only be called lackluster.

President Obama's increased competitiveness traces principally to swelling support for him among political moderates, Independents and ethnic minorities, particularly among Hispanics who currently favor Obama by an impressive 64 to 25 percent. The much talked about lead Obama is opening with women does not appear to be so strong in Arizona even though he does have a lead. Thus, among women, Obama leads Romney by only 44 to 38 percent. Among Independents Obama leads by 43 to 27 percent and in Pima County, his lead is 50 percent to 38 percent.

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One of the more telling shifts in voter sentiment toward the presidential candidates is found within the ranks of political moderates who in January were somewhat cool toward Mr. Obama, but who today are leaning toward voting for Obama over Romney by 48 to 31 percent an impressive 17 point gap. No doubt the GOP primary may have caused many moderates to wonder whether the GOP was being pulled so far to the right that the views of moderates are basically being ignored. A major challenge to Romney will be to re-cast himself in a fashion that appeals to moderates but does not drive the more conservative voters away.

Given the current closeness of the race it is also useful to explore where Mitt Romney enjoys superior strength. Basically, he leads Obama among Caucasian voters (45% to 38%) and political conservatives (60% to 27%). But within most other constituency sub groups, the vote division is very close. For example, among men it is Obama at 39 percent to Romney at 43 percent. Voters under 55 split 44 percent for Obama to 37 percent for Romney while in rural Arizona the vote is 40 percent for Obama and 42 percent for Romney. And in the all-important population center of Maricopa County, the split is literally dead even – 41 percent for Obama and 40 percent for Romney.

As might be expected, 66 percent of liberals favor Obama while 60 percent of conservatives favor Romney. At the same time however, a fifth of liberals (18%) lean toward Romney and 27 percent of conservatives say they plan to support Obama. And with moderates splitting 48 percent for President Obama and 31 percent for Romney, this election year could be a dilly. Right now, the odds are that Obama's name on the ballot will not hurt the Democrats, particularly if they turn out their rank and file members, younger voters, Hispanics and Independents.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2012-II-01), is based on 511 interviews with registered voters statewide, conducted between April 9 and 17, 2012. Interviewing was conducted in both English or Spanish by professional interviewers of the Behavior Research Center on both landlines and cell phones. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, race and political party were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one can say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.4 percent of what they would have been had the entire voter population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ENCLOSED: Statistical tables.

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona
RMP (2012-II-01)

For this and other polls, see www.brcpolls.com/results.

“If the election for President of the United States were being held today, who would you vote for if the candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney?” (ROTATE)

	Obama	Romney	Not Sure
April 2012	42%	40%	18%
January 2012	37	43	20

APRIL 2012 DETAIL

Maricopa	41	40	19
Pima	50	38	12
Rural	40	42	18
Men	39	43	18
Women	44	38	18

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**STATISTICAL DATA**

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|                             | Obama     | Romney    | Not Sure  | Net to Obama |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| <b>Statewide</b>            | <b>42</b> | <b>40</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>2</b>     |
| Democrats                   | 74        | 12        | 14        | 62           |
| Liberals                    | 66        | 18        | 16        | 48           |
| Hispanics                   | 64        | 25        | 11        | 39           |
| Non-Hispanic minorities     | 48        | 26        | 26        | 22           |
| Moderates                   | 48        | 31        | 21        | 17           |
| Independents                | 43        | 27        | 30        | 16           |
| Pima County                 | 50        | 38        | 12        | 12           |
| Income under \$45,000       | 47        | 36        | 17        | 11           |
| Age under 35 years          | 42        | 33        | 25        | 9            |
| Income over \$85,000        | 48        | 42        | 10        | 6            |
| Women                       | 44        | 38        | 18        | 6            |
| Age 35 to 54 years          | 46        | 41        | 13        | 5            |
| Maricopa                    | 41        | 40        | 19        | 1            |
| Rural                       | 40        | 42        | 18        | -2           |
| Men                         | 39        | 43        | 18        | -4           |
| Age over 55 years           | 39        | 45        | 16        | -6           |
| Caucasian                   | 38        | 45        | 17        | -7           |
| Income \$45,000 to \$84,000 | 39        | 48        | 13        | -9           |
| Conservatives               | 27        | 60        | 13        | -33          |
| Republicans                 | 13        | 77        | 10        | -64          |

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