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# U.S. ELECTIONS 2012

## Sistem Pemilu di Amerika Serikat

Pemilu yang bebas dan jujur adalah landasan utama setiap Negara demokrasi. Pemilihan penting bagi proses peralihan kekuasaan secara damai.

Amerika Serikat adalah Negara demokrasi yang representatif sejak pengesahan Konstitusi Amerika pada 1787— walaupun tradisi pemilihan sudah ada selama era Kolonial dan punya akar dalam sejarah Inggris. Proses pemilihan di masa Amerika modern berlangsung di tingkat federal, negara bagian, dan lokal dan pemerintah menjamin hak pilih bagi semua warga Negara Amerika yang berusia 18 tahun ke atas.

### Pemilihan di Amerika Serikat

Pemilihan digelar pada setiap tahun genap di wilayah federal dan sebagian besar negara bagian serta lokal untuk berbagai jabatan pemerintahan di AS. Beberapa negara bagian dan wilayah lokal mengadakan pemilihan setiap tahun ganjil. Setiap empat tahun, warga Amerika memilih seorang presiden dan wakilnya. Setiap dua tahun, warga Amerika memilih ke 435 anggota DPR AS dan kira-kira sepertiga dari 100 anggota Senat AS. Masa bakti setiap senator enam tahun.

Ada dua ragam dasar pemilu AS: pemilihan pendahuluan dan pemilihan umum. Pemilihan pendahuluan dilakukan sebelum pemilihan umum untuk menentukan calon-calon dari partai yang akan maju untuk pemilihan umum. Para calon yang menang dalam pemilihan pendahuluan selanjutnya mewakili partainya dalam pemilu.

### Syarat-syarat Calon

Berdasarkan konstitusi

Amerika Serikat, syarat calon presiden adalah:

- Usia 35 tahun atau lebih.
- Seorang warga negara yang lahir di Amerika Serikat.
- Tinggal di Amerika Serikat setidaknya selama 14 tahun. Untuk wakil presiden ditambahkan dengan:
- Tidak boleh berasal dari negara bagian yang sama dengan presiden.

Syarat calon anggota Kongres-Dewan Perwakilan:

- Setidaknya berumur 25 tahun.
- Tinggal di Amerika Serikat selama 7 tahun.
- Menjadi warga yang sah dari negara bagian yang mereka wakili di Kongres.

Syarat calon anggota Senat:

- Setidaknya berumur 30 tahun.
- Tinggal di Amerika Serikat selama 9 tahun.
- Menjadi warga yang sah dari negara bagian yang mereka wakilnya.

### Pemilihan Presiden

Setiap empat tahun, pemilu untuk presiden AS digelar pada Selasa pertama setelah Senin pertama bulan November. Berikut adalah tahapan pemilu presiden Amerika Serikat:

1. Negara-negara bagian melakukan pemilihan pendahuluan atau kaukus untuk menentukan calon-calon dari partai yang akan mengikuti konvensi nasional.
2. Konvensi nasional, suatu ajang dimana calon-calon partai hasil kaukus akan diseleksi dan salah satunya kemudian ditetapkan sebagai kandidat presiden.

3. Kampanye dan pemilu.

Calon dari setiap partai akan berkampanye ke seluruh negara bagian untuk memenangkan suara pemilih dalam pemilu bulan November.

4. *Electoral college*. Kandidat presiden yang mendapat *popular vote* pada pemilu bulan November tidak otomatis memenangkan pemilu. Konstitusi AS mensyaratkan dilakukannya proses *Electoral college*, suatu sistem dimana setiap negara bagian menentukan *elector* (sekelompok orang yang terpilih) untuk memilih presiden dan wakilnya, setelah pemilihan *popular vote* dilakukan. *Electoral college* dilakukan pada bulan Desember di hari Senin pertama setelah hari Rabu minggu kedua.

### Pemilihan Kongres

Bagi rakyat AS, pemilihan anggota Kongres sama penting dan kompetitifnya seperti pemilihan presiden. Ini karena peranan penting yang Kongres mainkan dalam membuat undang-undang. Kongres secara hukum dan politik bersifat independen dari keinginan presiden.

Pada masa lalu, pemilihan Kongres cenderung menjadi "terpusat ke partai" dimana banyak pemilih yang loyal kepada satu partai politik cenderung memilih anggota Kongres dari partai yang bersangkutan. Namun sejak 1960-an, pemilihan anggota Kongres semakin berpusat kepada si calon. Pertumbuhan media dan internet, pentingnya penggalangan dana kampanye yang agresif, jajak pendapat yang konstan dan aspek-aspek kampanye

*Bersambung ke hal. 4*

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## The 2012 Presidential Election: Economy or Personality?



By Andre Kohut  
President  
of Pew  
Research

Center. April 16, 2012

With the focus now fully on the campaign between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, commentary about the issues, the voting blocs and the strategies of the two campaigns dominates political discourse. But having polled on the last 10 presidential elections, I'm struck by a meta-question about each candidate's viability that may trump all else. Obama and Romney both carry so much political baggage that one or the other will have to defy modern political history to win in November.

For Mitt Romney, the history buster would be that no candidate in the modern polling era with personal favorability ratings as low as his has ever won the presidency. With a 29 percent rating, he is far and away the least personally popular presidential candidate since pollsters have been regularly checking favorability ratings.

Barack Obama is much more personally popular than Romney, but his problem is that no incumbent president has ever won re-election with unemployment rates as high as they are likely to be in November. The modest decline in the unemployment rate in the Labor Department's March report – to 8.2 percent — adds to the challenge he faces. In recent times, only Ronald Reagan struggled with a comparably high unemployment rate (8 percent) at the start of his re-election year. However, it declined steadily over the course of 1984 and it stood at 7.2 percent by Election Day.

Even if Obama succeeds in making further progress on unemployment, he is not likely

to mirror Reagan's experience. He will remain vulnerable on the economy more generally.

While Obama's overall job rating inched up in recent months as the public heard somewhat better reports about the condition of the economy, at Pew our March survey continued to find a 53 percent majority disapproving of Obama's handling of the economy.

And so it has been over the course of Obama's presidency. On average, only 10 percent of Americans have rated the national economy as excellent or good. For President George W. Bush, about 30 percent rated the national economy positively in his first term. In President Clinton's first term, an average of about 20 percent rated the economy excellent or good, but the numbers were markedly higher in late 1995 as his re-election approached (30 percent).

Perhaps tellingly, the public's rating of the economy in the Obama years comes closest to its assessment of life under the first President Bush; in 1992 only about 10 percent held a positive opinion of the national economy in the final year of George Bush's one term in office.

Mitt Romney's personal unpopularity may well be as intractable for him as public opinion about the economy is for Obama. There is no indication in the polling that presidential candidates transform their personal images over the course of a general election campaign.

As Election Day approaches, favorable ratings for past candidates have typically remained about where they were early in the campaign – or have declined. The losing candidates Michael Dukakis, Bob Dole and Bush saw their personal popularity slip at the end of the cam-

paign. But even at their low points, they were all much more personally popular than Romney is today.

Romney may have somewhat more potential to improve public regard for him than past candidates, however, because his image took such a hit during the nomination race. More Americans had a favorable rating of the former Massachusetts governor late last year when the public first began paying attention. His favorable rating was 36 percent in November 2011, compared with 29 percent now. And his unfavorable rating has jumped from 42 percent to 51 percent.

Obviously, this is the consequence of a very negative primary campaign struggle. Romney's personal image even soured among Republicans, who came to see him as less in tune with the needs of people like themselves. His elitist image led him to under-perform among working class voters in almost every primary. Growing numbers of Republican voters also came to see Romney as inconsistent on the issues. He ran poorly among voters who told exit pollsters that voting for the "true conservative" was what mattered most to them.

But both candidates struggle with huge handicaps. One of the oldest axioms about presidential elections is that they are referendums on the times. And for the 69 percent of the public who continue to say they are dissatisfied with national conditions, these are bad times. That is very bad news for Obama. However, Americans don't back candidates they don't like or trust. This is Romney's challenge.

There is no track record on how voters will resolve such conflicting pressures. Core Republicans and Democrats are certainly likely to rally to their party's standard bearer, but where the swing voters are headed in

November is very unclear given the political burdens both candidates carry.

The variability in the polls these days may well be an indication of how difficult it will be for many voters to choose between a president they believe has underperformed and a challenger they are uncomfortable with personally. But whatever they do will defy modern political history.

Source:

New York Times online, accessed on 10/01/2012 at <http://goo.gl/TNE5z>

Related links:

*With Voters Focused on Economy, Obama Lead Narrows/* Pew Research Center for the People and Press, 2012.

Read more:

<http://goo.gl/YDJdq>

*Job Reports Crucial to Presidential Election Outcome/* Paul Steinhauer, CNN, 2012


Read more

<http://goo.gl/o0Fg1>

*Obama-Romney Race Competitive in 12 Swing States/* Lydia Saad, Gallup, 2012

Read more:

<http://goo.gl/GbEmF>

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## Web-Based Resources on U.S. Elections

### U.S. ELECTIONS PROCESS

*How to Become President of the United States/Kids.gov, 2012*

A poster outlines the process of the U.S. presidential election. Accessible at: <http://goo.gl/Xjr65>

*Electoral College in the U.S. Elections/IIP Digital, 2012*

Americans elect their president using a representative system called Electoral College. Watch the video outlines the system at: <http://goo.gl/x8TZC>

### FINANCING CAMPAIGN

*2012 Elections: The First Influenced by "Super PACs"/ Stephen Kaufman, IIP Digital, 2012*

New regulation on financing campaign in U.S elections have opened new avenues for political spending by corporations, unions and non-profit organizations. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/mbWvP>

*Federal Election Commission (FEC) Regulates Presidential Campaign/Stuart Gorin, IIP Digital, 2012.*  
FEC regulates that in 2012 elections, individual contribu-

tions to a presidential candidate are limited to \$5,000 during the election cycle. Additionally, the campaigns are required to identify anyone who contributes more than \$200. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/Smvvt>

### U.S. ELECTIONS & NEWS MEDIA

*Surviving "News Media" A Good Test for Candidates./ By Stephen Kaufman, IIP Digital, 2012*

Politicians must ask themselves how they face the news media and the challenge of steering clear of controversies while simultaneously delivering their messages so that they will be broadcast accurately to potential voters. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/kq0vb>

### POLING ROLES IN THE U.S. ELECTIONS

*Political Pools: Why We Just Can't Live Without Them/John Zogby, 2008*

Polling expert John Zogby discusses the importance of polls, not only in gauging people's attitudes toward candidates running for office but also in revealing voters' values and their feelings about current issues.

Read more at: <http://goo.gl/J7Bjl>

### U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

*When Will Social Media Elect a President?/Andy Kessler, WSJ, 2012*

Twitter and Facebook will change U.S. politics, as new technology always has. Think Nixon or 'Obama Girl.' Read more at: <http://goo.gl/O3Rka>

*Will the U.S. Election Be Won on Facebook?/Haydn Shaughnessy, Forbes, 2012*

Facebook is altering the way politicians communicate with an electorate. So will this be the Facebook election?. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/dW5Qe>

### ISSUES CONCERNED VOTERS

*2012 Hot Issues: From Federal Spending to Energy/Fox News, 2012*

Explore some hot issues for Americans related to the elections 2012. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/VKDkK>

*More Supports for Gun Rights, Gay Marriage than in 2008 or 2004/Pew Research Center, 2012*

Recent Pew Research survey

finds that on gun control, Americans have become more conservative and on gay marriage, they have become more liberal. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/2icZn>

*U.S. Presidential Election 2012: Pros and Cons of Controversial Issues/ ProCon Org, 2012*  
Read more at: <http://www.procon.org/>

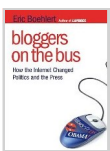
### U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, RELIGIOUS & RACE

*More See "Too Much" Religious Talk by Politicians/Pew Research Center, 2012*

A new survey finds signs of public uneasiness with the mixing of religion and politics. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/600b0>

*Race and Religion in the U.S. Presidential Election/ Jesse Washington and Rachel Zoll, Fox News Latino, 2012*  
Barack Obama versus Mitt Romney, an African-American and a white Mormon, representatives of two groups and that have endured oppression to carve out a place in the United States. How much progress has America made against bigotry?. Read more: <http://goo.gl/lxnh1>

## IRC Resources on U.S. Elections



**Bloggers on the Bus:** /Erich Boehlert. Free Press, 2009  
The book describes the changes made by Internet in politics and press areas.

**Complete Book of U.S. Presidents, The/William A. DeGregorio. & Sandra Lee Stuart. Barricade Books, 2009.**  
The book chronicles the U.S Presidents' lives, loves, friends, administrations, foes, successes, and failures.

**Dynamics of America Political Parties/Mark D. Brewer & Jeffrey M. Stoncash. Cambridge University Press, 2009**  
Authors examine the process of gradual change that inexorably shapes and reshapes American politics.

**How Congress Gets Elected/ Rhodes Cook. CQ Press .he**  
author outlines a solid introduction to how American voters elect their representatives and how the process has changed throughout American's history.

**Guide to U.S. Election/CQ Press. Washington D.C: CQ Press, 2009.**

The set presents an informative and balanced overview of the all aspects of the electoral process in America.



**Mass Media and American Politics/Doris A. Graber. CQ Press, 2010.**

In this book, author focuses on 3 focal points: the media role in both the public and private sectors; its impact on the attitudes of ordinary

Americans and political elites; and the ways in which the news media cover government and politics.

**Youth to Power/Michael Connelly. Ig Publishing, 2008.**  
The book examines how today's young people are combining technology with a vigorous social spirit to revive progressive politics.

Check more of IRC books collection at: <http://goo.gl/Bwpc8>

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The IRC collection includes a collection of reference titles, a periodicals section, and access to extensive online commercial-databases. For details on reference and periodical collections, please check our online catalog at <http://69.63.217.22/U10086Staff/OPAC/index.asp>.

For all IRC information products, including this info package are available online at: <http://jakarta.usembassy.gov/infoproduct.html>

Information queries may be submitted to us by phone, fax, mail, and e-mail. You are also welcome to visit us by appointment for personal research assistance.

## Sistem Pemilu di Amerika Serikat

*Sambungan dari hal. 1*

modern lainnya telah membuat pemilih lebih cenderung memberi bobot kepada kekuatan dan kelemahan calon sebagai individu, bukan sebagai anggota partai tertentu.

Kongres terdiri atas dua badan: Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR) dan Senat. Anggota dari masing-masing badan dipilih dengan cara berbeda.

DPR dimaksudkan untuk menjadi badan yang paling dekat dengan rakyat, dipilih dari distrik yang relatif kecil dengan pemilihan yang lebih sering (dua tahun sekali). Setiap negara bagian dijamin akan mendapat satu kursi di DPR. Negara bagian yang jumlah penduduknya besar, akan memperoleh lebih banyak kursi di DPR. Senat dibentuk untuk mencerminkan kepentingan negara bagian. Tiap negara bagian, tanpa mengindahkan jumlah penduduknya, akan diwakili oleh 2 senator. Dengan demikian negara-negara bagian kecil mempunyai pengaruh yang sama besarnya di Senat seperti halnya negara-negara bagian besar.

### Prosedur-prosedur Pemilihan

Di Amerika Serikat, tidak ada daftar pemilih nasional sehingga seorang warga negara yang memenuhi syarat memilih harus mendaftarkan diri untuk memilih di wilayah tempat tinggal mereka. Jika mereka pindah tempat, mereka harus mendaftar lagi di alamat yang baru. Sistem pendaftaran dirancang untuk menghapus kecurangan, dan prosedur bervariasi di tiap negara bagian.

Salah satu tugas terpenting pejabat pemilihan adalah memastikan setiap orang yang memenuhi syarat ada di daftar, sementara orang yang tidak memenuhi syarat tidak tercantum. Pemilih yang tidak menemukan namanya di tempat pemungutan suara, akan mendapatkan kartu suara sementara, dan kelayakan orang tersebut akan diperiksa ulang sebelum suara-suara mereka dihitung.

Disarikan dari:  
U.S. Elections in Brief  
<http://goo.gl/ZoZJ9>

Related links:  
Ben's Guide to U.S. Government  
<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/>

eJournal: A Long Campaign  
<http://goo.gl/J7Bjl>

## U.S. Elections 2012 Trivia

Submit your answers to the IRC (either by email or mail), with details of your address and phone number, by end of October at the latest. Five lucky person who answered the trivia correctly will get a souvenir from the IRC

1. What are the current major political parties in the U.S?  
A. Democratic and Republican  
B. Liberal and Conservative  
C. Tea Party and Democratic
2. U.S. Presidential Elections are held once every.....years.  
A. Two                                      B. Four                                      C. Five
3. What is the maximum number of terms a U.S. President can serve?  
A. One                                      B. Two                                      C. Three
4. Members of the House of Representatives are elected every.....years.  
A. Two                                      B. Four                                      C. Six
5. When did women gain the right to vote throughout the U.S?  
A. 1848                                      B. 1920                                      C. 1933
6. General elections in the U.S. are usually held in which month?  
A. January  
B. July  
C. November
7. What is the minimum voting age in the U.S. Elections?  
A. 18                                      B. 25                                      C. 30
8. Who was the youngest elected U.S. President?  
A. Barack Obama  
B. John F. Kennedy  
C. Theodore Roosevelt

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