



# PURPLE PERSPECTIVE JULY 2012

The Purple Perspective is our periodic look at the key structural and opinion measures that determine the political environment for the upcoming presidential election. In this report, we offer a single, unbiased source for current and historical data on these factors. Please contact Doug Usher at [doug.usher@purplestrategies.com](mailto:doug.usher@purplestrategies.com) or 703-548-7877 with any comments or questions.

There have been five incumbents who have faced re-election since 1980: Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush. Barack Obama is the sixth.

Our direct polling data on the current campaign points to a very competitive race, with a slight advantage for Obama.

However, as the campaign moves toward the end of the summer, the Obama team faces a stark reality: compared to previous incumbents, the structural and opinion environment that Obama faces is perilous. Across 7 of 8 measures we track here, the current measure for President Obama ranks below the three successful incumbents. In some cases, he ranks dead last.

The economic structural factors are the clearest drag on his re-election. Out of six incumbents, he ranks:

- 5th on GDP growth
- 6th on growth in personal disposable income
- 6th on unemployment
- 4th on monthly job creation.





The data are only slightly better on the opinion metrics, with Obama performing at or near the same levels as past successful incumbents on job approval and prospective evaluations of the economy. But on other key opinion measures, he trails.





Of course, these measures cannot alone predict the outcome, and recent polling indicates a tight race. This can be attributed to two factors:

- 1) Voters do not fully blame Obama for the current economic conditions
- 2) Voters are not sold on Romney as a viable alternative

Moving forward, the imperative for the Romney campaign is to make this election a referendum on the economy, recognizing that the structural factors should be enough to carry the day. By contrast, the Obama campaign's best approach in this environment is to make Romney unpalatable to swing voters. Recent ads on Bain capital and offshoring are their latest efforts to do so.

Given the data here, at this point President Obama faces the more difficult task.

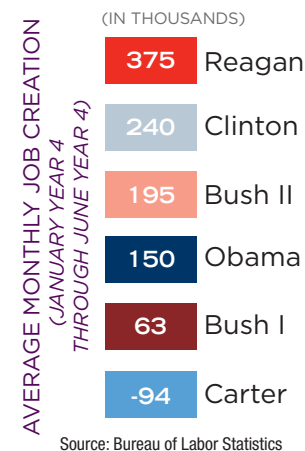
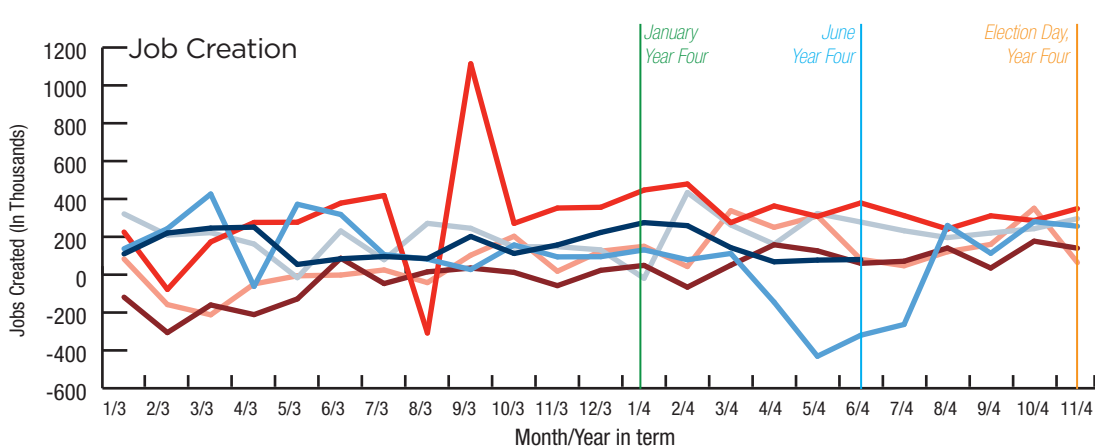
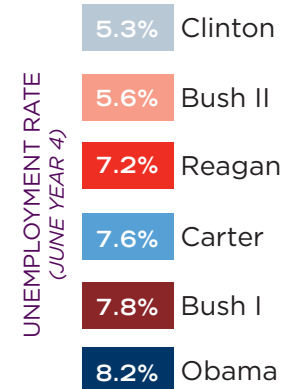
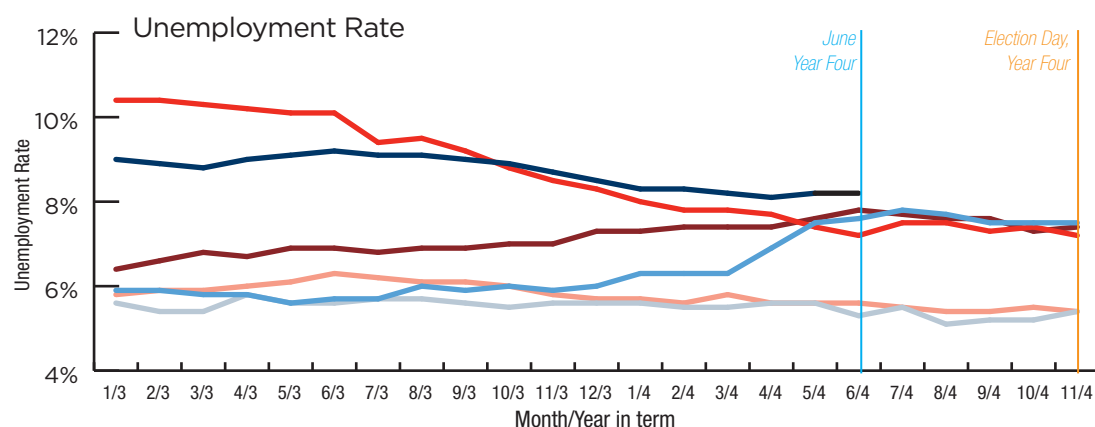
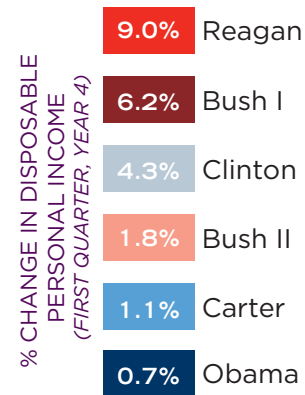
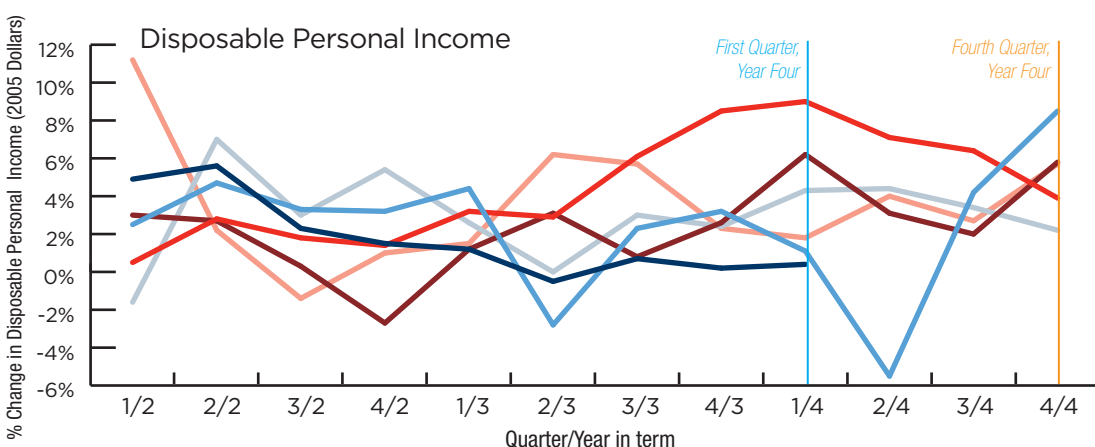
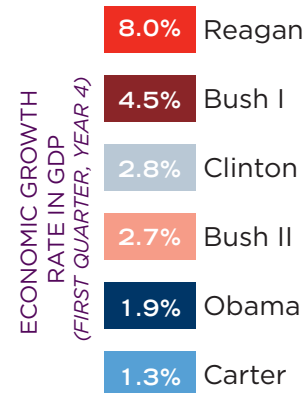
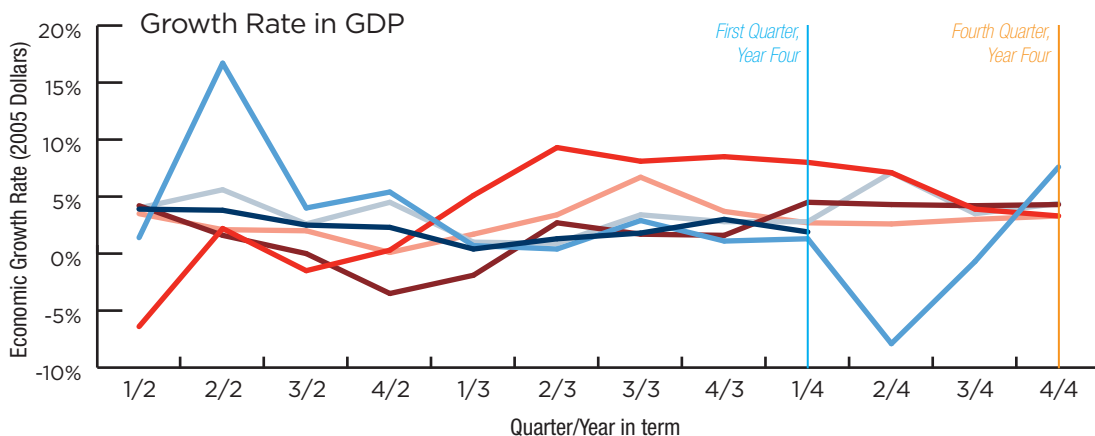
STRUCTURAL	Latest Number	Obama's Rank	Top Incumbent	Trend	Purple Interpretation
Growth Rate in GDP	1.9%	5/6		↔	●
Growth Rate in Disposable Personal Income	0.7%	6/6		↔	●
Unemployment Rate	8.2%	6/6		↔	●
Job Creation	150	4/6		↔	●

OPINION	Latest Number	Obama's Rank	Top Incumbent	Trend	Purple Interpretation
Presidential Job Approval	45%	4/6		↔	●
Prospective Evaluation of the Economy	25%	3/5		↓	●
Expected Financial Situation Next Year	25%	5/5		↓	●
Consumer Sentiment	73.2	5/5		↓	●

● = more favorable for Obama    ● = even    ● = more favorable for Romney

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# PURPLE PERSPECTIVE JULY 2012: STRUCTURAL DATA



# PURPLE PERSPECTIVE JULY 2012: PUBLIC OPINION DATA

