



## The Reluctant Warrior

President Obama is reclaiming the center in the foreign policy debate. He's doing it by defining himself as a reluctant warrior. Which is exactly where most Americans are. And where the leading Republican candidates are not.

Americans value both peace and strength in foreign affairs. Over the years, the Democratic Party has acquired the image of the peace party, while the Republican image is one of strength. Those are still the prevailing party images according to the latest Third Way National Security Focus Group Report, a study of swing voters done in collaboration with Greenberg Quinlan Rosner. But those images may be starting to shift.

The Third Way study finds a gap between President Obama and the Democratic Party, with Obama seen as tougher and more forceful than his party. It also finds a gap between the Republican Party's image on national security and that of President George W. Bush. Whereas Bush was seen as tough and strong after the 9/11 attacks, he came across as rash and aggressive in Iraq.

There is a fine line between resolute and reckless. Bush crossed that line in Iraq,

and the leading Republican candidates for President are pulling their party even further in that direction. President Reagan was certainly tough, but he was never reckless. President Bush, on the other hand, came across as more of an eager warrior than a reluctant warrior. As the focus group report

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finds, "The performance of both Presidents [Bush and Obama] may be helping to make the scales on these issues more balanced."

Since 9/11, Americans have had two alarming experiences in world affairs. One was the Bush Administration's failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

As a result, Americans will demand pretty strong evidence that Iran is developing a nuclear-weapons capability before they support military action.

This year, Americans have experienced a sequence of shocking events in Afghanistan: the inadvertent burning of Muslim holy books, the killing of American officials working in an Afghan government office, and the horrifying murder of 16 Afghan civilians, allegedly by a rogue American sergeant. As a result, Americans are more eager than ever to end the country's Afghan involvement.

In the Pew poll, 57% of the public say the U.S. should remove troops from Afghanistan “as soon as possible” rather than keep them there until the situation has stabilized. Meanwhile, Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum have criticized President Obama for pledging to withdraw U.S. troops by the end of 2014.

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At the same time, Obama warned in his March 4 speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) that “too much loose talk of war” has benefited the Iranian government and hurt the American people by driving up the price of oil. “Now is not the time for bluster,” the President said. “Now is the time to let our increased pressure sink in and to sustain the broad international coalition that we have built.”

At his news conference a few days later, Obama defended his caution in calling for military action. “When I see the casualness with which some of these folks talk about war, I’m reminded of the costs involved in war,” he said. “I’m reminded [of] the decision that I have to make in terms of sending our young men and women into battle, and the impact that has on their lives.”

A reluctant warrior indeed.

Republican candidates, not so reluctant. “If we re-elect Barack Obama, Iran will have a nuclear weapon. And if you elect Mitt Romney, Iran will not have a nuclear weapon,” Mitt Romney said in a debate last November. Newt Gingrich agreed: “You have to take whatever steps are necessary to break its capacity to have a nuclear weapon.” Only Ron Paul demurred: “I’m afraid what’s going on right now is similar to the

war propaganda that went on against Iraq.”

Polling by Reuters, Pew and CNN indicates that a majority of Americans is willing to take military action if there is evidence that Iran is building nuclear weapons. The Washington Post-ABC News poll offered a choice: wait and see if sanctions against Iran work, “even if that allows more time for [Iran’s] nuclear program to progress,” or attack Iran “before its nuclear program progresses any further, even if that means not waiting to see if economic sanctions work.” The public prefers to wait and see whether sanctions work, by 64% to 26%.

Like the public, President Obama is willing to draw a line. “I do not have a policy of containment,” he told AIPAC, “I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.” Obama cannot accept containment because that would encourage Iran to proceed with a nuclear weapons program. A reluctant warrior is still a warrior, if need be. ■



## Republican Class Warfare

You know how Republicans accuse Democrats of running a class warfare campaign? Well, guess what? Republicans have their very own class war going on. Inside the party.

A striking income pattern has emerged. Look at the exit poll from the Illinois primary.

Mitt Romney's support went up sharply with income. He's the candidate of the rich. Santorum led in the low-income categories but dropped way behind Romney among upper-income voters. It's a class split. Romney gets "country-club conservatives." Santorum gets self-described "values voters" who are moved more by social issues like abortion and contraception.

The class division in the GOP mirrors the class split among Democrats in 2008, when Hillary Clinton carried white and Latino working class voters and Barack Obama carried educated upper middle-class liberals (plus African-Americans).

Among Democrats, the voting issues are reversed. White working-class Democrats are economic populists. The educated elite—"NPR liberals"—respond more to social issues and disdain those who "cling to guns and religion." That's why Romney calls President Obama a "law professor" and Santorum calls him a "snob" who wants everyone to go to college.

It's a contest between two elitists—the country club conservative versus the liberal college professor. Take your pick.

### Voter Preferences in the IL GOP Primary

	Mitt Romney	Rick Santorum
Under \$30,000	37%	45%
\$30-\$50,000	43%	37%
\$50-\$100,000	43%	38%
\$100-\$200,000	55%	30%
\$200,000 or more	57%	27%

Source: 2012 CNN Exit Poll

## Etch Two Sketches: Romney 2008 and 2012

Mitt Romney 2012 is not the same candidate as Mitt Romney 2008. How do we know? Because Romney 2012 is not getting the Romney 2008 vote.

In 2008, Romney captured the staunchly conservative vote against John McCain. This year, Romney is losing the staunchly conservative vote to Rick Santorum.

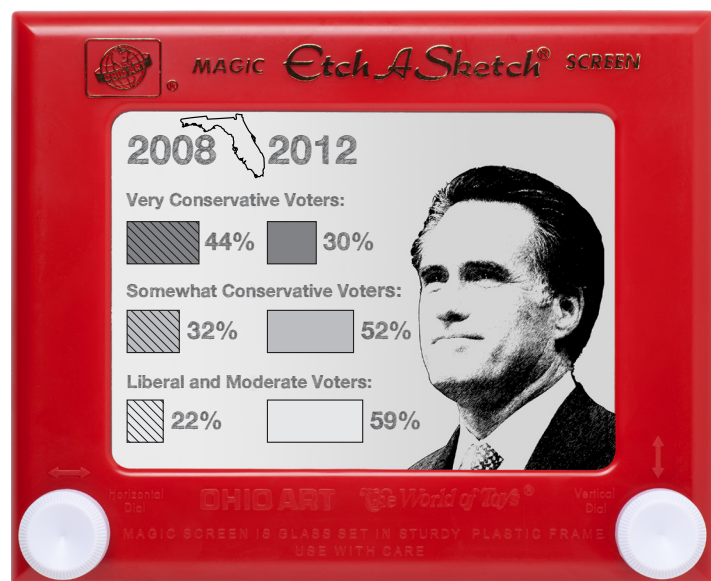
Which means that Romney is defined more by who he's running against than by who he is.

Look at Romney's vote in the 2008 and 2012 Florida Republican primaries:

In 2008, the more conservative you were, the more you voted for Romney. In 2012, the more conservative you were, the less you voted for Romney.

In 2008, Romney got the conservatives who didn't trust McCain. In 2012, Santorum is getting the conservatives who don't trust Romney. That suggests the Republican electorate has moved even farther to the right.

But keep this in mind: In 2008, Republicans nominated McCain over objections from staunch conservatives. In 2012, Republicans are likely to nominate Romney over objections from staunch conservatives. The more moderate candidate still wins.



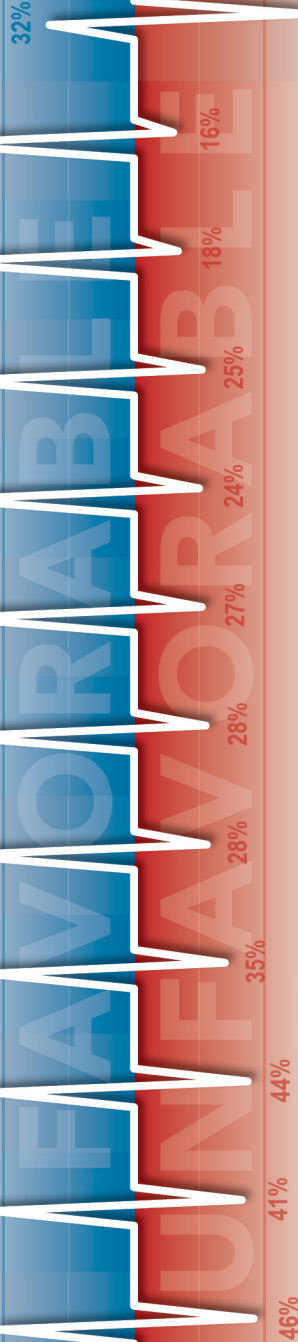


# THE ANATOMY OF OBAMACARE (WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?)

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (aka "Obamacare" or ACA) has been widely discussed and debated, but remains widely misunderstood.

A March 2012 Kaiser Health Tracking poll shows that many core provisions of the law are viewed favorably by the public, except the individual mandate — a vital organ without which the plan cannot survive.

1	Basic benefits package defined by government	51%	thumbs up
2	Increased Medicare payroll tax on upper income	53%	thumbs up
3	Employer mandate/penalty for large employers	54%	thumbs up
4	Health-services-to-admin/profit ratio enforcement	57%	thumbs up
5	No out-of-pocket for many preventive services	69%	thumbs up
6	No denial of coverage due to pre-existing condition	69%	thumbs up
7	Medicaid expansion	70%	thumbs up
8	Health plan decision appeals	71%	thumbs up
9	Financial help for middle-low income uninsured	71%	thumbs up
10	Easy-to-understand plan summaries	79%	thumbs up
11	Tax credits to small business	80%	thumbs up



OBAMACARE X-RAY IMAGE #032312

6 of 10 surveyed said they did not have enough information about the health care law to understand how it would impact them personally.

66% of respondents have an unfavorable view of the individual mandate, but under ACA, only about 6% of the total population will be required to newly purchase coverage or face a penalty.

About 2/3 of that 6% will be eligible to receive subsidies toward private insurance premiums, **which leaves just 2%**

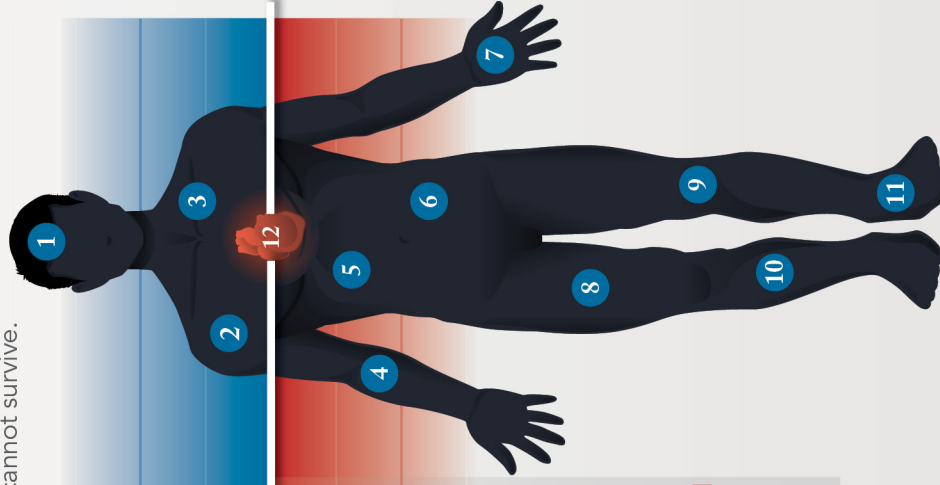
**who must comply with the individual responsibility requirement** without any financial help.



66% thumbs down

The Individual Mandate

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Affordable Care Act favorability and awareness data from Kaiser Health Tracking Poll, March 2012. Available at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8285.cfm>. Individual mandate data from The Urban Institute, "The Individual Mandate in Perspective" by Linda J. Blumberg, Matthew Buettgens, Judy Feder; March 2012. Available at <http://www.urban.org/publications/412533.html>.

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