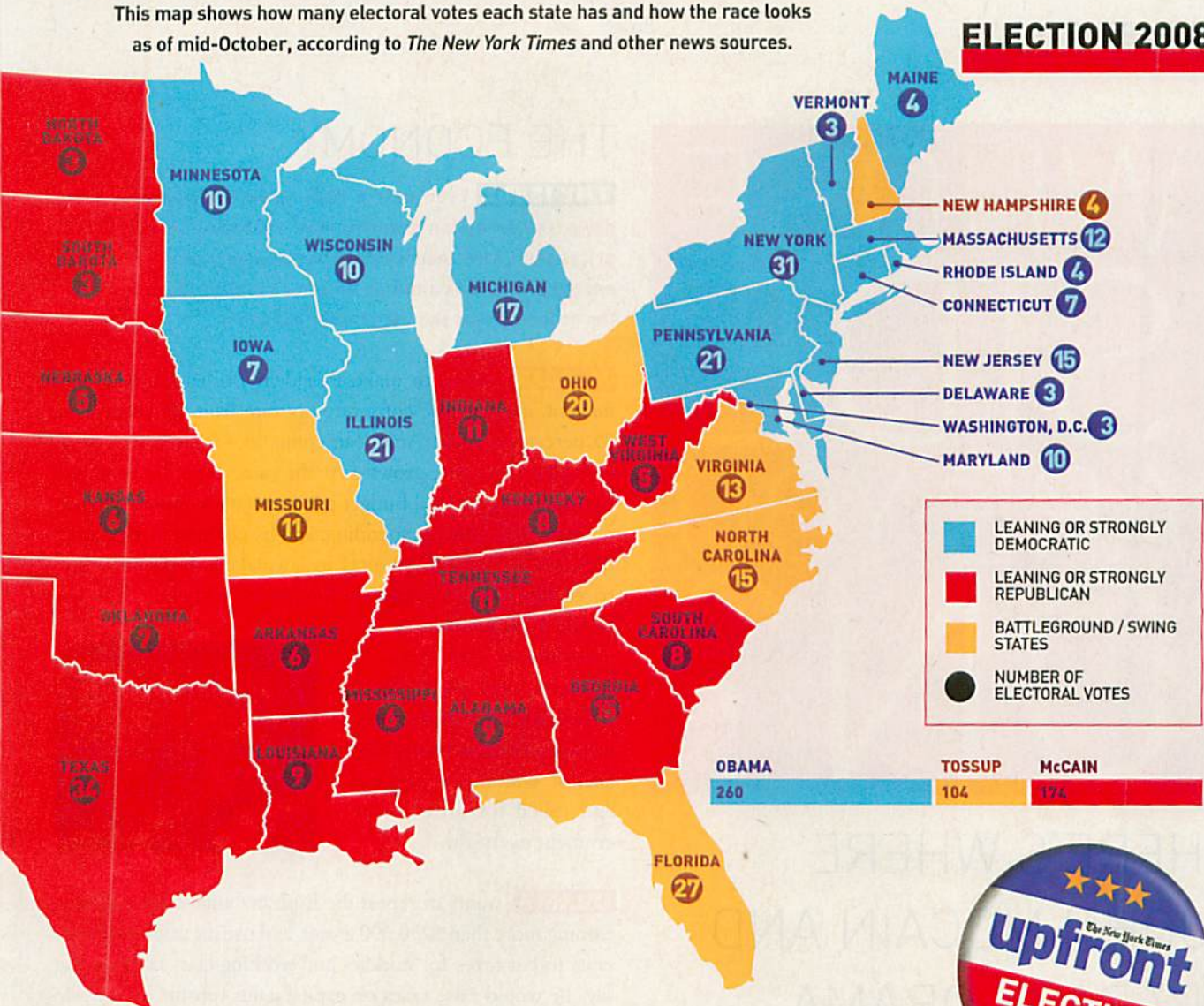


With 538 electoral votes at stake on November 4, Senators John McCain and Barack Obama will both be trying to reach the magic number of 270 to win the presidency. This map shows how many electoral votes each state has and how the race looks as of mid-October, according to *The New York Times* and other news sources.

## ELECTION 2008



state capital and cast their votes. The results of the national election become official when the states' electoral ballots are counted before a joint session of Congress on January 6. The winners are sworn in on Inauguration Day, which is always January 20.

**What if no candidate gets a 270-vote majority?** The House elects the President (each state gets one vote), and the Senate elects the Vice President, with each Senator getting one vote.\*

**Can one candidate win the popular vote and another win the electoral vote?** Yes, and the electoral vote determines who will be President. It happened most recently in 2000, when Al Gore won the popular vote but George W. Bush won the electoral vote and the White House. It's happened only three other times: in 1824, 1876, and 1888.

**It sounds like a complicated system.** The trick is to think about the election the way the candidates do: not as a single contest, but as 51 separate elections. They have to figure

out how to win enough of those 51 contests to rack up 270 electoral votes.

**How is this playing out in 2008?** Obama and McCain aren't spending much time, or TV ad dollars, in states where they're way behind or way ahead. Instead, they're targeting "battleground" or "swing" states that look close. According to analyses by *The New York Times* and other news organizations, eight states (shown in yellow above) were still up for grabs in mid-October. (For a current version of the *Times* map, go to the 2008 Campaign section of [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com).)

So if you live in California or Texas, you're probably not seeing as many campaign ads on TV as people in Florida or Ohio. In those and other battleground states it may seem as though McCain and Obama have taken over your TV set. ●

\* The Senate has exercised this power only once. In 1837, Martin Van Buren was elected President, but Richard M. Johnson fell one electoral vote short of a majority among four vice presidential candidates. The Senate elected Johnson Vice President by a vote of 33 to 16.



# WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

HERE'S WHERE  
JOHN MCCAIN AND  
BARACK OBAMA  
STAND ON 10 KEY  
ISSUES. WHO WOULD  
YOU\* VOTE FOR?

BY PATRICIA SMITH

## THE ECONOMY

**THE ISSUE** Even before Wall Street's September meltdown, the American economy was weakening as real estate prices sank, foreclosures and unemployment rose, and higher energy prices took a toll on America's wallets. It's no wonder the economy tops the list of voter concerns.

**MCCAIN** wants to make President Bush's tax cuts permanent, and cut the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 25 percent to make American companies more competitive and spur economic growth. At the same time, he promises to balance the federal budget by 2013 with a one-year freeze on most discretionary spending, and by eliminating earmarks (funding for special projects in lawmakers' states and districts, like Alaska's infamous "bridge to nowhere"). Though he has long pushed for less government regulation of business, since the financial meltdown he and running-mate Sarah Palin have railed against Wall Street excesses and called for greater government oversight.



**OBAMA** wants to repeal the Bush tax cuts for households earning more than \$250,000 a year, and use the additional revenue to cut taxes for middle- and working-class families. He says he would raise taxes on capital gains (profits on the sale of a house or stock, for example), enact a "windfall profits" tax on oil companies, and end tax breaks for companies that move jobs overseas. In response to the current financial crisis, Obama has called for more government regulation of investment banks, mortgage brokers, and hedge funds, whose risky practices all contributed to the problem.

## IRAQ

**THE ISSUE** After more than five years of war and more than 4,100 American combat deaths, there are about 155,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. When and how should U.S. troops leave?

**OBAMA** says he would remove all combat brigades from Iraq within 16 months of taking office, with a much smaller force remaining for counter-terrorism missions and to protect U.S. diplomatic and civilian personnel. He says that a timetable for withdrawal will force the Iraqi government to get its act together and govern more effectively.

\*When the winner runs for re-election in 2012, most of you reading this will be able to vote.





**McCain** opposes any timetable for withdrawing U.S. troops and says we must stay the course until Al Qaeda in Iraq is defeated and Iraqi forces are able to take over. A leading advocate of President Bush's troop surge, McCain believes that the best way to secure long-term peace in the region is to establish a stable and prosperous democracy in Iraq.

## ENVIRONMENT

**THE ISSUE** Both Obama and McCain believe that greenhouse

gases are causing global climate change, are concerned about its long-term effects, and support a controversial cap-and-trade program to reduce carbon emissions from industry. (A cap-and-trade system means factories and other pollution sources get a pollution "allowance." Those using less than their allotment can sell the remainder to other pollution sources that are using more.)

**McCain** favors giving away pollution allowances initially, and then letting companies buy and sell them. His goal is to reduce emissions to 60 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. McCain says he would consider joining an international treaty to reduce emissions if China and India participate. He cites President Teddy Roosevelt, who created our national parks system, as his model on environmental policy, and supports more money for national parks and protecting open space.

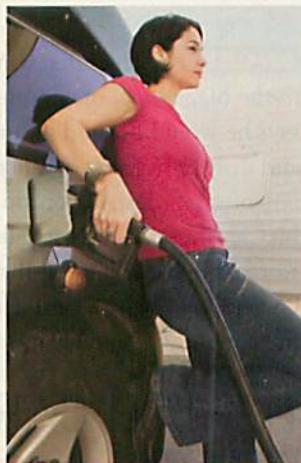
**Obama** would auction off the cap-and-trade pollution credits, with some of the revenue used for the development of clean-energy technology (see *Energy*). Obama's plan aims to reduce carbon emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. He also promises to beef up federal clean-air and clean-water standards.



## ENERGY

**THE ISSUE** High oil and gas prices are a huge burden on the economy, and America's dependence on unstable and unfriendly sources of foreign oil is a threat to national security.

**Obama** wants to invest \$150 billion over 10 years on the development of clean alternative energy sources. He has called for a windfall profits tax on oil companies to fund a \$1,000 tax rebate to help families with higher energy costs. He would mandate higher mileage standards and by 2015 wants one million plug-in hybrid cars that get up to 150 miles per gallon on the road. He supports investment in low-emissions coal plants and the construction of the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline, but opposes drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Obama recently changed his position on offshore drilling, saying he'd consider a limited increase.



**McCain** calls his energy plan an "all of the above" approach, meaning he wants to take a variety of steps to attack the problem. He favors increased oil production in the United States, including drilling off-shore, but not in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He wants to build 45 new nuclear power plants (which are emissions-free) by 2030, and to develop technology that allows coal (which fuels many U.S. power plants) to burn more cleanly. He supports the development of "flex fuel" cars and alcohol-based fuels like ethanol. McCain opposes a windfall profits tax on oil companies, which he says would discourage investment in new oil exploration.

## TERRORISM

**THE ISSUE** Seven years after 9/11, Osama bin Laden remains at large and Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups continue to threaten the U.S. and our allies around the world.

**Obama** says the Bush administration's approach to fighting terrorism has made Americans less safe. He believes the war in Iraq has been a distraction from the front line in





the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Obama says he would condition U.S. aid to Pakistan on whether it makes progress toward shutting down terrorist training camps. He has indicated he would authorize military actions in Pakistan—even without its approval—if

necessary. Obama favors increasing foreign aid to prevent conflict-ridden nations from becoming terrorism incubators. He also favors a greater emphasis on diplomacy, including direct talks with Iran, North Korea, and Syria.

**McCain** believes that winning the war in Iraq is essential to the bigger goal of winning the war against terrorism. He says he would depend on international cooperation to find and disrupt terrorist organizations and to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not fall into terrorists' hands. McCain opposes direct talks with Syria, Iran, and North Korea. He has indicated that Pakistan's cooperation would be necessary before he'd consider sending U.S. troops into the country on counter-terrorism missions.

## HEALTH CARE

**THE ISSUE** There are 45 million Americans without health insurance, and the cost of health care continues to rise.

**McCain** emphasizes cutting costs and increasing competition among insurance providers. He would tax employer-provided health benefits, and give families a \$5,000 federal tax credit so they could buy insurance on their own, and let them buy it from any state in the country. (It's now illegal to buy health insurance outside your own state.) The idea is to create more competition and discourage consumers from buying more coverage than they need, in order to hold down premiums and health-care costs.



**OBAMA** would offer subsidies for low-income people to buy insurance and require larger employers to provide insurance. He would expand Medicaid and existing programs so that all children would have health insurance. Obama's plan would also prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage to people with pre-existing conditions or charging them higher rates.

## AFGHANISTAN

**THE ISSUE** Since shortly after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, U.S. troops have been fighting the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, suffering more than 540 combat deaths. After several years of progress, the situation has deteriorated in the last year for Afghanistan and the 33,000 American troops deployed there.

**McCain** has called for an Iraq-style "surge" of additional troops to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan. The key to success there, he says, is providing security for the Afghan people. He would appoint a dedicated Afghanistan "war czar" to coordinate all aspects of the mission. McCain says he'd put increased pressure on neighboring Pakistan to cooperate with the U.S. and crack down on Taliban and Al Qaeda forces who take refuge across the border.

**OBAMA** would redeploy at least 7,000 U.S. troops from Iraq to Afghanistan, which he sees as the front line in the war against terrorism. He would also increase non-military aid by \$1 billion for reconstruction projects to improve the lives of Afghans and prevent the country from sliding back into the chaos that allowed the Taliban to come to power and Al Qaeda to take refuge there.





# ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

**THE ISSUE** There are 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States, and the debate continues about the costs and benefits of their presence here.



**OBAMA** wants to provide a path to citizenship that includes learning English and paying fines for entering the country illegally. He supports driver's licenses for illegal immigrants and a

guest-worker program similar to those the U.S. has had in the past. At the same time, he wants to increase penalties for employers who hire illegal immigrants, and he voted for the fence that is being built along the Mexican border.

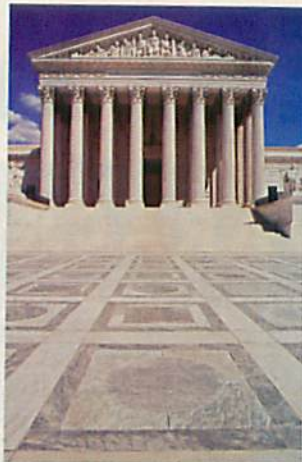
**McCAIN** helped write the failed bipartisan immigration reform bill of 2007. But he says he would no longer vote for that legislation, which would have created a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants who paid fines and learned English. He says his top priority now is securing the border with Mexico. He also voted for the border fence and supports increased funding for the border patrol.

## SUPREME COURT

**THE ISSUE** With five of the nine Justices in their 70s or older, the next President could end up appointing several new Justices (with confirmation by the Senate), potentially reshaping the Court—and the law—for decades.

**OBAMA** says he would nominate Justices with a progressive view of the Constitution. He supports *Roe v. Wade*, the controversial 1973 ruling that established a woman's right to an abortion, and has indicated he would appoint Justices who would uphold it. He voted against the confirmation of President Bush's appointments of Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., both of whom have generally voted with the Court's more conservative members.

**McCAIN** says he would nominate reliably conservative Justices, and that *Roe v. Wade* should be overturned. He supported the Roberts and Alito nominations, and has spoken out



against "judicial activism"—what some see as judges exceeding their authority by making law through their rulings. Since Congress is responsible for writing laws, McCain believes court rulings that effectively change the law violate the Founding Fathers' intent.

## GLOBALIZATION

**THE ISSUE** In an increasingly interconnected world, America's economic health is bound up with that of other nations. While the candidates have different attitudes toward free trade, both agree that it has many benefits and that globalization cannot be reversed.

**McCAIN** has long been a staunch advocate of free trade. He sees globalization as an opportunity for American workers, not a threat. He's a strong supporter of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and recently voted for a similar trade agreement that would increase U.S. trade with Central American countries. Noting that 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States, McCain says that free access to world markets is key for the future health of the American economy and job growth. For that reason, he opposes tariffs on Chinese goods.

**OBAMA** has talked about renegotiating NAFTA to provide more protection for the environment and for American workers who worry about their jobs being outsourced or moved overseas. He also wants China to revalue its currency. (That would raise the price of Chinese goods in the U.S. and allow American goods to better compete with them.) If China doesn't comply, Obama says he would impose tariffs on Chinese imports. ●





# VOICES: WHY I'M VO

## BARACK OBAMA

There's nothing more motivating than discovering that your passion is shared by others.

BY JULIA CELESTE OF SHAKER HEIGHTS, OHIO



The idea of the country being unified, sharing a single purpose, and fighting

for the common goal of a stronger, more stable America is what motivated me to volunteer for Barack Obama's campaign.

The first time I was inspired by Senator Obama was during his keynote speech at the Democratic Convention four years ago. "We are not a red America, we are not a blue America," he said. "We are the United States of America." And after seeing Obama in person at a primary debate in Ohio last March, I was impressed by his ideas, his authenticity, and his promise to represent all of America.

Even though I've just turned 15, this isn't the first presidential campaign I've been involved in. In 2000, when Vice President Al Gore was running for President, I canvassed door to door with my father in our neighborhood in Shaker Heights, a suburb of Cleveland. Four years later, during John Kerry's campaign, I sat between my two older siblings making calls to ensure that every voter who needed a ride to the polls had one.

But in this election, the tables have turned: It's my parents who are walking next to me, and I'm the one recruiting my siblings and friends to volunteer for Obama.

I can't vote because I'm not 18, and I can't contribute my own



money because I'm not yet 16—but there's no age restriction on volunteering. That's why, despite a busy school schedule and varsity fall sports, I go once or twice a week for about three hours to canvass, staff phone banks, or help out at events.

Canvassing is my favorite activity. Having someone you've never met before invite you in to sit down and take a rest simply because they know your heart is in the right place is encouraging.

But there's nothing more motivating than discovering that your passion is shared by others who are so different from you. I even draw strength from a door slamming in my face, following the question "How old are you anyway?"

When we take the initiative to get involved, when we decide that we are going to lend our voice to the

collective whole, then suddenly the election becomes about much more than just the candidates—it becomes about us. The election becomes about my education, your sister's husband in Iraq, someone's uncle on Wall Street, or the environment. It becomes bigger than each of us alone.

When the history books are written, I'm looking forward to being able to tell my kids that, yes, I volunteered for Barack Obama. By doing so, I also volunteered for myself, for the country, and for our future. ●

*Julia Celeste, 15, is a sophomore at Shaker Heights High School.*



# LUNTEERING FOR ...

## JOHN McCAIN

■ I realized that I could make a difference in the future of our country. ■

BY BRADLEY LOCKHART OF SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

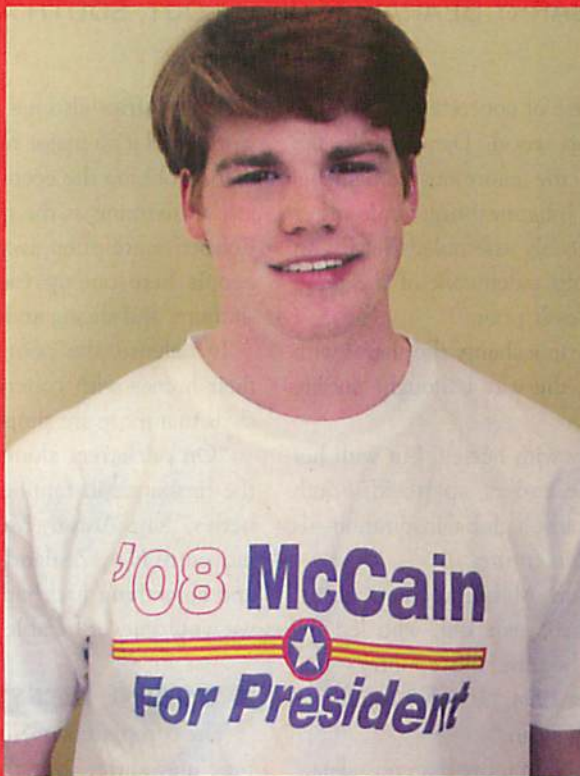


In 1954, John McCain graduated from Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia—the same school where I'm now a senior. When Senator McCain addressed our student body last April, I was inspired to volunteer for his campaign. He spoke of integrity, honor, and being part of something greater than yourself—and I took his comments to heart.

After his speech, my friends and I agreed that McCain's strongest attribute is his character. He does more than merely talk about his leadership abilities: McCain has spent his entire adult life honorably serving our country as a Navy officer or in the House or Senate representing Arizona.

Although I've considered myself a Republican since middle school and belong to the Young Republicans Club, I hadn't thought much about volunteering for the McCain campaign. But seeing and hearing him in person made the whole process seem more personal. I realized that I could make a difference in the future of our country.

When school broke for the summer, I called campaign headquarters and asked what I could do to help. Over the summer, the emphasis was on collecting donations and making sure the voters got to know the candidate. The campaign ads you see on TV help us get the word out about McCain's values and his qualifi-



cations to be President. But those ads also cost money—including a good chunk of the donations we helped collect.

My appeals for donations were mostly to family members. It was particularly gratifying when people who had never given to a political campaign before gave to the McCain campaign based on my personal appeal.

Local ordinances generally restrict placing campaign signs in public spaces until just before the election. But I signed up enough friends and family to make sure that our neighbors in Silver Spring, Maryland, will know that even in this very blue state, McCain has plenty of support.

In past elections, the political process has been unappealing to many students. But some political

experts say this is "the year of the youth vote."

I'm proud to know that I've participated in a process that will determine who will lead our country for the next four years. Politics is a way of life for some of our neighbors here in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. I hope that I stay involved in politics in some capacity for the rest of my life.

We all have the choice of sitting on the sidelines or getting into the game. You can make our team if you make the effort to try—and we expect to win. ●

*Bradley Lockhart, 18, is a senior at Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Va.*

## **BEYOND APARTHEID:**

# South Africa's Long Journey

It's still a bright spot on a troubled continent. But South Africa is facing tough realities 14 years after the start of majority rule.

BY BARRY BEARAK IN DIEPSLOOT, SOUTH AFRICA

**A** dusty maze of concrete, sheet metal, and scrap wood, Diepsloot is like many of the enormous settlements around Johannesburg: mile after mile of feebly assembled shacks, an impromptu patchwork of the poor, the extremely poor, and the hopelessly poor.

Monica Xangathi, 40, lives here in a shanty she shares with her brother's family. "This is not the way I thought my life would turn out," she says.

Her disappointment is not only with herself, but with her country. Fourteen years after the end of apartheid, South Africa—the global pariah that became a global inspiration—is feeling gloomy and anxious about its future.

"If only I could make Nelson Mandela come back," Xangathi says of the man, now 90 years old, who led the struggle against apartheid and became the country's first democratically elected President in 1994. "If only I could feed him a potion and make him young again."

This longing for the past is rooted in more than nostalgia.

The past year has been especially unnerving for South Africans, with one bleak event after another in a country long considered an example of progress. Economic growth has slowed; prices have shot up. Riots have broken out in several cities, with mobs killing dozens of impoverished foreigners, many from neighboring Zimbabwe (*see p. 17*), and chasing thousands more from their meager homes. A vicious power struggle recently ousted the President and has added political turmoil to the mix.

And longtime problems continue to pose enormous challenges, starting with AIDS: About 20 percent of adults, almost 6 million people, have HIV/AIDS, which accounts for half the country's deaths.

South Africa also has one of the highest crime rates in the world, and it's a major reason for the increasing "white flight" that is robbing the economy of many of its professionals. But just as alarming as the quantity of lawbreaking is the cruelty. Robberies are often accompanied by appalling violence, and people here one-up each other with tales of scalding and shooting and slicing and garroting.

In defense, the poor apply padlocks. The rich surround their homes with concrete and barbed wire—and there are signs that more are simply fleeing the country.

"On our street alone, just that one small street, three of the husbands in families were killed in carjackings or robberies," says Antony McKechnie, an electrical engineer who moved to New Zealand over the summer. "If we had stayed and something had happened to any of our three children, we would never be able to forgive ourselves."

### **A 'YOUNG, MESSY' DEMOCRACY**

The complaints of rich and poor, black, white, and mixed race may differ, but the discontent is shared. Polls show a pervasive distrust of government, political parties, and the police.

For much of the 20th century, a white minority ruled South Africa under apartheid, a government-run system that segregated blacks from whites and denied blacks basic rights. Apartheid essentially treated nonwhites as aliens in their own land.

But by the late 1980s, the South African government came under increasing pressure to dismantle apartheid. Many countries, including the United States, imposed economic sanctions on South Africa to pressure it to change. In 1990, the government legalized black political groups like the African National Congress; freed Mandela, its leader, after 27 years in prison; and began negotiations toward majority rule.



## NUMBERS IN THE NEWS

# 51%

**PERCENTAGE** of Americans who think Facebook is a passing fad (see p. 22).

SOURCE: AP-CNBC POLL

# \$20

**FINE** for violating a new law against swearing in public in Middleborough, Mass.

SOURCE: THE TELEGRAPH (UK)

# 50.4%

**PERCENTAGE** of U.S. births from July 2010 to July 2011 that were of minorities. It's the first time that total minority births outpaced those of whites in the U.S.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

# 222

**NUMBER** of bottles of water consumed per person in the U.S. in 2011, a record high.

SOURCE: TIME MAGAZINE

# 44%

**PERCENTAGE** of Americans who approve of the job the Supreme Court is doing, down from a high of 66 percent in the late 1980s.

SOURCE: THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Prehistoric World

# Defrosting the Ice Man's DNA

**S**cientists have long considered heart disease a modern problem. But "Ötzi," the mummified man discovered in 1991 by two Germans hiking through the Italian Alps, may turn that theory on its head. Ötzi was well-preserved in ice and snow for 5,300 years, so scientists have been able to learn a lot about him, including his age (46) and how he died (shot by an arrow). Now, after mapping out Ötzi's DNA, they know even more: Not only did he have brown hair, brown eyes, and type O blood, but he also suffered from lactose intolerance—the inability to digest dairy—and heart disease. The dairy allergy makes sense since there were no domesticated animals in early times, so early humans didn't need to digest animal milk. The heart disease was surprising. "Obviously, this disease was present already 5,000 years ago," says one researcher. "So now we can get a better understanding why such diseases develop." •



Out on the town:  
An artist's life-size  
rendition of how  
Ötzi looked.

## Biology

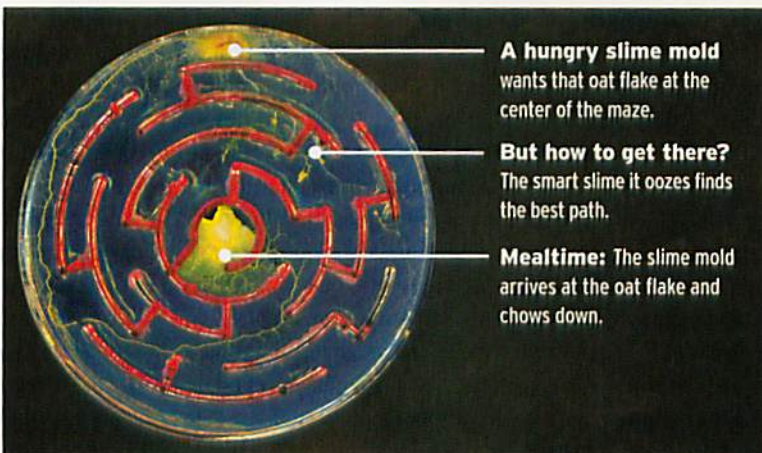
# Really Smart Slime

Slime gets a bad rap. It may conjure up images of Nickelodeon's celebrity slimings or the news last spring that some school lunch meats were filled

with a type of "pink slime." But *Physarum polycephalum*—a slime mold that lives in forests around the world—is actually pretty smart. When

the mold looks for food, it emits slime that, remarkably, creates the most efficient path to that food. That got researchers

wondering, just how smart is this slime? As smart as, say, the engineers who designed the U.S. Interstate Highway System in the 1950s? To find out, they used a dish shaped like the U.S. and placed pieces of rolled oats on 20 cities and a piece of mold on New York. The result: The network the mold created to connect the cities with its slime was very similar to the real interstate system. The highway systems of Britain, Mexico, and Brazil also passed the slime test. No word on whether smart slime has any insight on tackling global warming or the national debt. •



**A hungry slime mold** wants that oat flake at the center of the maze.

**But how to get there?** The smart slime it oozes finds the best path.

**Mealtime:** The slime mold arrives at the oat flake and chows down.



## ELECTION 2012

## WHAT'S AT STAKE

Whoever wins the presidency in November will face enormous challenges at home and abroad

BY PATRICIA SMITH

**W**hen President Obama was elected in 2008, expectations were incredibly high.

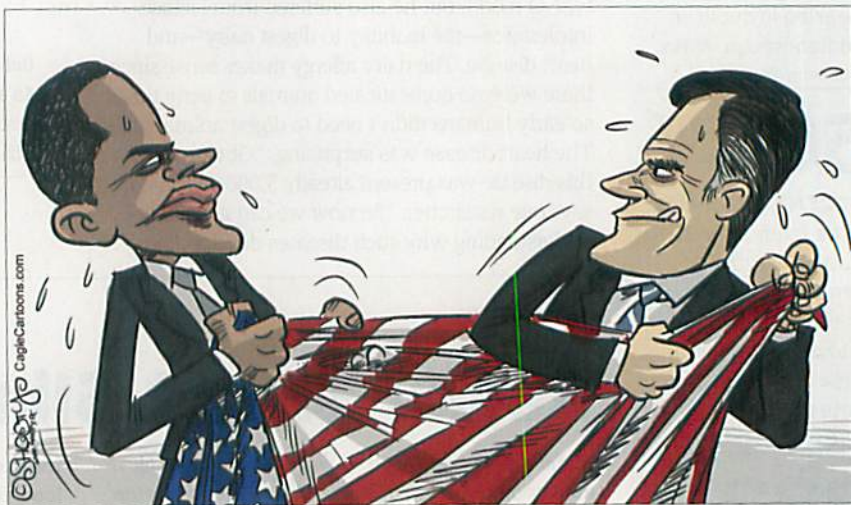
It was a moment of national crisis—the country was suffering through the worst financial meltdown since the Great Depression and fighting two wars. Obama looked to many like a potential savior. As the first African-American to win the presidency, he seemed to represent a changing of the guard. And his message of “hope and change” resonated with many Americans.

Now President Obama is running for re-election, but he's no longer an upstart promising to shake things up. The economy, while no longer on the brink of disaster, is still on the mend.

In November, Americans will decide whether Obama is the best person to lead the country for the next four years, or whether his Republican challenger, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, would do a better job.

With almost 13 million people still unemployed, the sluggish economy is the No. 1 issue for most voters. How Americans feel about the economy—whether it shows real signs of improvement or still looks fragile—may be the deciding factor in the election.

Underlying that issue, and many others, is a key difference between Democrats and Republicans in how



they view the role of government.

“Much of this election boils down to one question: Do you believe that government should have a bigger or smaller role in the life you live on a daily basis?” says Bill Rosenberg, a political science professor at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

#### Stark Differences

The two candidates have starkly different views on this question. President Obama sees government having a key role in stimulating economic growth and as the average American's protector. Romney, on the other hand, views government as a nuisance: Its excessive regulations endanger individual opportunity and the free market, he says. This philosophical divide

affects where the candidates stand on many issues (*see facing page*).

Many Americans are frustrated with everyone in Washington, including the president. For most of the last year, Obama's approval rating has been stuck below 50 percent—dangerous territory for a president seeking re-election.

“You can only run as a national savior once,” says E.J. Dionne, a columnist for *The Washington Post*. “One of the challenges for Obama is trying to re-motivate voters, particularly younger voters, who played such a key role in his election.”

In 2008, young voters were crucial to Obama's victory. A recent Wall Street Journal/NBC poll found that just 45 percent of 18- to 34-year-old voters





## BARACK OBAMA

Party: Democrat

Age: 51

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Birthplace: Honolulu, Hawaii

## ON THE ISSUES

Here's where Barack Obama and Mitt Romney stand on some key issues. Which candidate shares your views?

## MITT ROMNEY

Party: Republican

Age: 65

Hometown: Belmont, Massachusetts

Birthplace: Detroit, Michigan

### ECONOMY

Obama says his economic stimulus and the rescue of Wall Street and the auto companies kept the U.S. from falling into a depression after the financial collapse of 2008.

Romney says the high unemployment rate is proof that the president has failed to get the economy growing again. He says he'll reduce government spending and regulations.

### TAXES

Obama favors raising taxes on the wealthy as part of a deal to tackle the federal debt.

Romney favors lower taxes for both individuals and businesses to spur economic growth.

### AFGHANISTAN

Obama promises to start bringing home U.S. troops this year and to have all troops out of Afghanistan in 2014.

Romney says any withdrawal of U.S. troops should depend on the conditions on the ground and the military's advice.

### HEALTH CARE

Obama says his 2010 health-care reforms give many more people access to affordable health care.

Romney says he would repeal "Obamacare" and take a completely different approach.

### ENERGY

Obama favors investments in renewable energy and increasing U.S. oil and gas production.

Romney says he'll streamline regulations to make it easier to increase domestic oil and gas production.

### IMMIGRATION

Obama stopped deportations of illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as kids and will let them get temporary work permits.

Romney wants to crack down on illegal immigrants and reform the legal immigration system.

### SOCIAL ISSUES

Obama supports the legalization of gay marriage.

Romney believes marriage should be only between a man and a woman.





**Abroad:** There are about 90,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. How quickly they come home will be up to the next president.



**At Home:** With the unemployment rate above 8 percent, the sluggish economy is the No. 1 issue for most Americans.

express "high interest" in this year's election. That's down 17 points from four years ago. If less enthusiasm translates to lower turnout among young people, it could have an impact in several swing states (*see map, facing page*).

The Obama campaign seems to recognize this: It kicked off the president's re-election campaign in the spring with a tour of college campuses and an appearance on *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*.

### Conservative Base

Romney has an enthusiasm problem of his own. Many social conservatives and Tea Party members opposed Romney in the Republican primaries. Some Evangelical Christians were uncomfortable with the fact that he's a Mormon. Now he'll have to energize that conservative base without alienating independents, whose votes he'll need to win in November.

"It's no secret that the Tea Party's first choice wasn't Mitt Romney," says Brendan Steinhauser of FreedomWorks, a conservative group. "But the one thing that unifies the Tea Party is that we want to replace Barack Obama."

Most Americans already have a pretty good idea who Obama is. He's the child of a white woman from Kansas and a black man from Kenya who left the family when Obama was very young. He spent much of his childhood with his maternal grandparents in Hawaii, where he was born. After graduating from Columbia University and Harvard Law School, Obama became a community organizer in Chicago. He was elected to

the Illinois State Senate in 1996 and to the U.S. Senate in 2004.

Romney grew up in Michigan, where his father was governor. After graduating from Brigham Young University in Utah, he earned degrees from Harvard Law and Harvard Business schools.

Aside from his four years as the governor of Massachusetts, Romney has spent most of his career in business. As the co-founder and onetime C.E.O. of Bain Capital, a Boston-based financial firm, Romney became a wealthy man. In 2002, Romney was credited with saving the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City from financial disaster.

But Romney has a history of changing his political opinions, opening him to the charge that he's a flip-flopper who adjusts his positions to suit the political circumstances. For example, when he was

governor of Massachusetts, he supported health-care reform that requires everyone to buy insurance. Now, he rails against "Obamacare," President Obama's health-care-reform law, which was modeled after the Massachusetts law.

### 'It's the Economy, Stupid!'

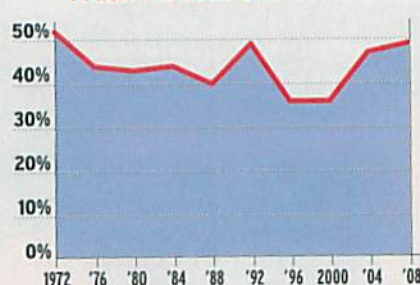
Romney's campaign will try to make the election about one issue: the economy. As a sign in Bill Clinton's campaign headquarters reminded staffers in 1992, "It's the economy, stupid!" That's been the case in presidential contests since then, and certainly seems to be in 2012.

"President Obama's policies have slowed the recovery and created misery for 24 million Americans who are unemployed or stuck in part-time jobs when what they really want is full-time work," Romney said during the primaries.

## Will Young Voters Show Up?

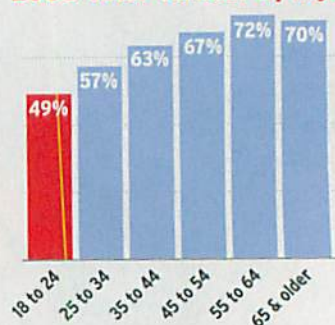
In 2008, young people had their highest voter turnout since 1972 (*left*), a year after the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18. But turnout of 18- to 24-year-olds was still much lower than that of older Americans (*right*).

Youth Turnout Since 1972



SOURCE: CIRCLE'S ANALYSIS OF CENSUS DATA ON 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS, 1972-2008

2008 Voter Turnout By Age

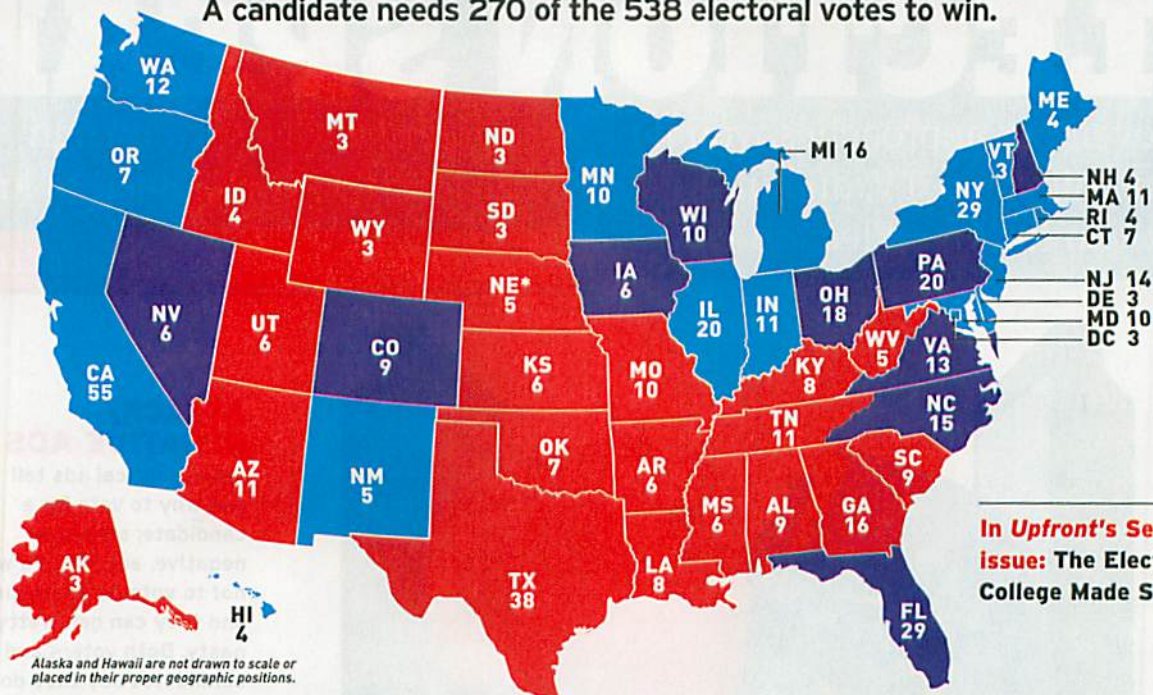


SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



# THE ELECTORAL MAP

The 50 states and their votes in the Electoral College.  
A candidate needs 270 of the 538 electoral votes to win.



**In Upfront's Sept. 17 issue: The Electoral College Made Simple.**

States won by Barack Obama in 2008

States won by John McCain in 2008

2012 swing states (also won by Barack Obama in 2008)

\*Nebraska is one of two states that divides its electoral votes. McCain won four and Obama one.

SOURCE: THE NEW YORK TIMES, THE WASHINGTON POST. STATE ELECTORAL VOTES ARE FOR THE 2012 ELECTION.

The Romney campaign has also been critical of Obama's record on a variety of national security issues, including blocking Iran's nuclear ambitions and dealing with China.

Obama has fulfilled his 2008 campaign promise to end the U.S. role in the war in Iraq. After almost 4,500 U.S. deaths, the last American troops left the country in 2011. He ordered the May 2011 raid that resulted in the death of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden. Now, after increasing the number of troops in Afghanistan, Obama is trying to wind down the U.S. role in that war as well.

## Most Expensive Election Ever

In a recent speech, Obama said his foreign policy is based on the belief that "there's no contradiction between being tough and strong and protecting the American people, but also abiding by those values that make America great."

On the home front, the economy isn't the only issue on voters' minds. There are

four Supreme Court Justices older than 70, so it seems likely the next president will have a chance to fill one or more vacancies. Any changes in the Court's makeup could influence the lives of Americans for decades to come.

The 2012 election is expected to be the most expensive ever, costing \$11 billion, according to Federal Election Commission estimates. A good chunk of that will come from outside groups known as super PACs (see "Election Speak," p. 10), which can accept unlimited individual, corporate or union donations. Most of that super PAC money will go to attack ads.

Much of the ad blitz will focus on 10 swing states: Ohio, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, Colorado, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Obama won them all in 2008, but this year they seem to be up for grabs.

**The next president will likely have a chance to appoint at least one Supreme Court Justice.**

The proportion of Hispanic voters is growing in these swing states, so both candidates will be vying for their support. In June, Obama issued an executive order halting the deportation of illegal immigrants brought here as children and allowing them to have temporary work permits. Romney has not said whether he would reverse the measure.

With the nation so polarized, voters seem to have a clear choice in November.

Dionne, the *Washington Post* columnist, says the difference between the two parties is so stark today that it feels like the nation is at a tipping point in terms of what direction it heads in.

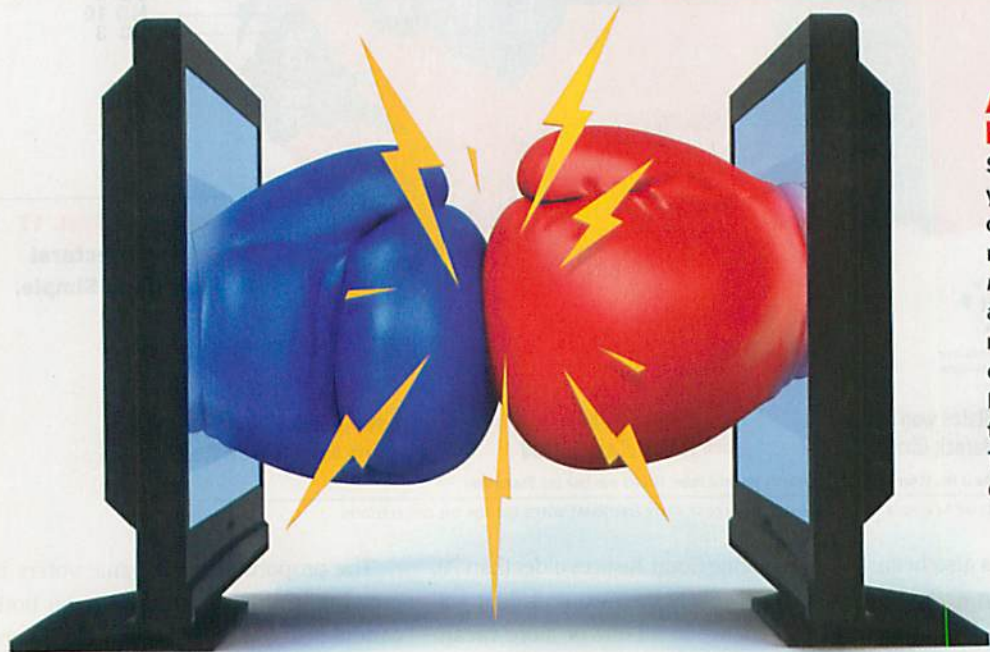
"In every election, there's this habit of commentators saying this is the most important election ever," he says, "but this is one case where I actually think it's not hype." •



# ELECTION SPEAK

As November approaches, you'll be encountering lots of campaign jargon online, on TV, and in print. Here are the terms you need to know to get you through Election Day.

► For more election lingo, go to [WWW.UPFRONTMAGAZINE.COM](http://WWW.UPFRONTMAGAZINE.COM)



## ATTACK/ NEGATIVE ADS

Some political ads tell you why to vote for a candidate; attack, or negative, ads tell you why *not* to vote for someone—and they can get pretty nasty. Both voters and candidates say they don't like negative ads, but will they go away? Not likely: The reality is, negative ads often work.

## AIR WAR

The battle between candidates to get as much advertising on TV, radio, and the Internet as possible. The competition to get the Obama and Romney messages out is what's driving the fierce "money race"—another term you should know. This election will likely be the most expensive ever, with a total of about \$11 billion in spending by the two campaigns combined, according to the Federal Election Commission.

## LAME DUCK

An elected official who sees his or her power wane after being defeated for re-election, deciding not to run again, or because term limits prevent the official from running again. Why a lame duck? Because it's weak and can't keep up with the rest of the flock.



## LOBBYISTS

Paid "influencers" who try to convince legislators and government officials to support their agendas. Lobbyists for, say, colleges, might try to convince Congress to give more money to, you guessed it, colleges. Corporations and unions, liberal and conservative groups, each of the 50 states, and foreign countries—all have lobbyists advancing their interests in Washington and state capitals. The term originated in London in the 1800s, when people would corner members of Parliament in the lobby of the House of Commons.

## MUDSLINGING

Particularly negative—and often nasty and very personal—campaigning. But watch out for candidates who accuse their opponents of mudslinging, when in reality they just don't like what's been said about them and hope to minimize its impact.

## 99 (AND 1) PERCENT

These terms sprouted from the Occupy Wall Street protests that began in New York last fall: The "1 percent" has become shorthand for the wealthy and powerful, especially Wall Street bankers. The "99 percent" is supposed to be everyone else.





## SUPER PACs

Political action committees (PACs) are private groups that are allowed to donate up to \$5,000 to support a political candidate. But a super PAC can pool unlimited donations from individuals, unions, and corporations to advocate for a candidate as long as it doesn't coordinate with the candidate's campaign staff. Super PACs grew out of the Supreme Court's 2010 ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. It said that under the First Amendment, corporations and unions have the same free speech rights as individuals, and so the government can't restrict the money they spend to support political candidates. Critics say super PACs give wealthy groups and donors too much influence.

## OBAMACARE

The nickname for President Obama's signature piece of domestic legislation, the Affordable Care Act. It was approved by Congress in 2010 without a single Republican voting for it. Obamacare started as a negative term to convey how big an impact the president's plan would have on America's health-care system and the economy. But it's now widely used, even by the Obama campaign. The most controversial part of the law is the "individual mandate," which requires all Americans to have health insurance or pay a penalty. Twenty-six states challenged the law, but in June, the Supreme Court upheld its key provisions, including the insurance requirement.

## RED & BLUE STATES

Election maps on TV were often color-coded to show how the two parties were doing: Red became standard for states voting Republican, blue for those voting Democratic. In recent years, most states have voted pretty consistently for one party or the other, and they started becoming known as red or blue states.

## SPIN

Sometimes candidates say things they regret, or things happen that make them look bad. That's where spin comes in: Campaign aides and supporters seek out reporters to interpret, or "spin," the event in question in as positive a light as possible. The real pros are known as spin doctors.

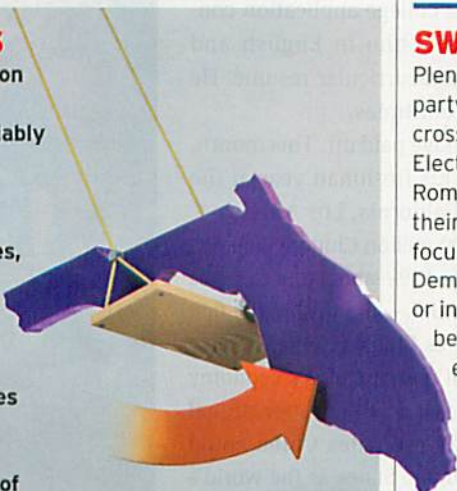


## YOUTH VOTE

The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18 in 1971, but 18- to 24-year-olds have a spotty voting record. The 2008 presidential election was better than usual: Forty-nine percent of young voters turned out to vote. Will they return to the polls this November? Stay tuned.

## SWING STATES

It's pretty clear, based on recent history, how 40 or so reliably red or reliably blue states will vote in November. That leaves 10 or so swing states (aka battleground states, or purple states, because they're neither red nor blue), which could go either way. And those 10 states are likely to decide the election. Swing states can expect to see a lot of Obama and Romney this fall, in the flesh or on TV.



## SWING VOTERS

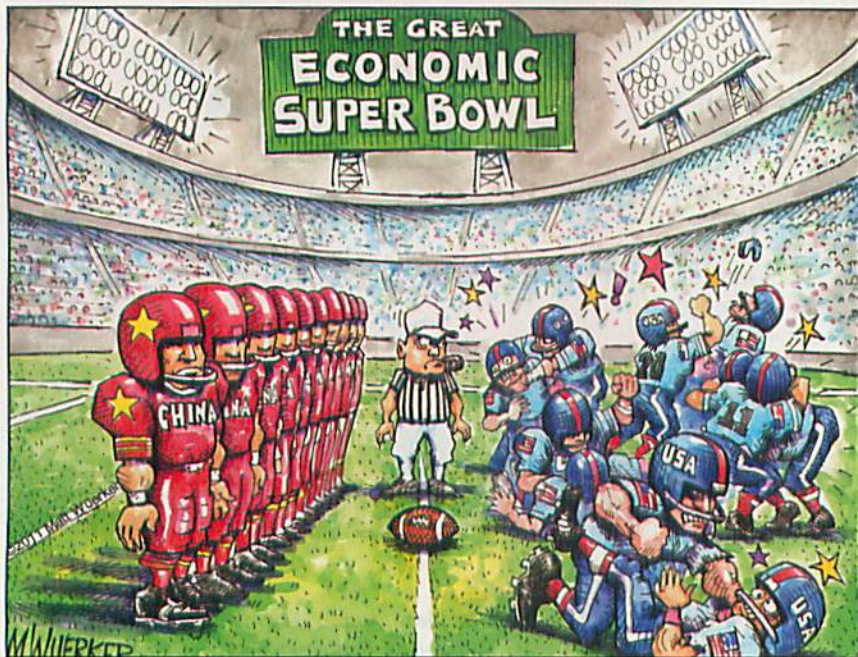
Plenty of voters brag about party loyalty and never crossing party lines on Election Day. Obama and Romney aren't wasting their time on them. They're focusing on swing voters—Democrats, Republicans, or independents who can be persuaded to vote for either party depending on the candidates and issues involved.

## TEA PARTY

A grassroots political movement that formed in 2009 and favors small government. They've exerted a lot of influence on the Republican Party, pressuring candidates and Republicans in Congress not to compromise with President Obama and the Democrats on spending and tax issues. Tea Partiers are unlikely to vote for Obama. Romney's challenge is to convince them that he's conservative enough—without alienating the more-moderate swing voters he needs to win the White House. ●



# THE CHINA CHALLENGE



By the time today's freshmen graduate from high school, China may have overtaken the U.S. as the world's largest economy. What does that mean for you and your future?

BY DAN LEVIN IN BEIJING

**W**hen Su Huairou was 12, he decided that he wanted to go to college in the United States. The Chinese teenager has spent the last six years making that dream a reality.

Su left home in Guiyang, a small city in southern China, to attend a special boarding school in booming Guangdong Province. Classes began before 8 a.m., and he did homework until lights-out at 11 p.m.

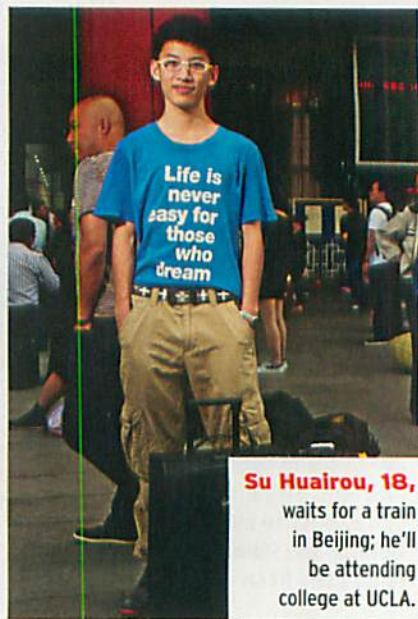
"I studied all the time, because my English had to be better than my classmates'," says Su, who is now 18 and

just graduated from high school. Su's parents hired a college application consultant to coach him in English and improve his extracurricular résumé. He took the SAT four times.

It seems to have paid off. This month, Su will begin his freshman year at the University of California, Los Angeles.

There are 100 million Chinese between the ages of 15 and 19—about four times as many as in the U.S.—and they're the first to come of age as China assumes its new role as a global power. China's economy is growing so fast that the International Monetary Fund estimates China could overtake the United States as the world's No. 1 economy as soon as 2016.

Su and his generation symbolize the challenges that China presents to the



**Su Huairou, 18,** waits for a train in Beijing; he'll be attending college at UCLA.

**▶ WATCH THE VIDEO**  
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