

2012 Presidential Election: The Only 10 States that Matter

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The chart below credits Obama with 217 safe electoral votes. These are safe: count on them. I also would put PA in this category based on all available data, but excluded it only because Romney has made a last minute push there. I have pre-filled in states where Obama has a very high likelihood of winning (cross these out if he loses or if they are not called immediately when the polls close). If these projections are correct, it brings Obama’s real base to 259: he needs only 11 more electoral votes to win.

Early Obama Knockout? To make it really simple: should Obama carry any of the first four states on the list (VA, NC, OH or FL), he is a near-certainty to be re-elected—and we will know early. (He would then need only hold the prefill states below and he is a heavy favorite in each). **Very short version: Ohio, Ohio, Ohio! (the least likely of the “likely Obama” states).**

If Romney were to win VA, NC, OH, and FL, Obama would still have a path to victory, but only by winning all of the remaining six states (my prefills plus NH and CO). He is heavily favored in the 4 prefills and ahead slightly in NH. If these hold, the entire election will turn on **Colorado**. And it could be a late night.

Lots of options for an early Obama knockout. Romney would need the first five states (or PA plus 4 of 5) unless you buy Karl Rove that MI or MN is in play (which I don’t).

Need 270 to Win

Polls Close (EST)	State	Prognosis	EV	OBAMA BASE 217*
7:00	Virginia	Tossup-Obama	13	
7:30	North Carolina	Tossup-Romney	15	
	Ohio (most likely tipping state)	Likely Obama	18	
8:00	Florida	Tossup-Romney	29	
	New Hampshire	Tossup-Obama	4	
	Pennsylvania	O-(Romney Fantasy)	20	20
9:00**	Colorado	Tossup-Obama	9	
	Wisconsin	Likely Obama	10	10
10:00	Iowa	Likely Obama	6	6
	Nevada	Likely Obama	6	6

*Real base is more like 259 (see prefills above)

TOTAL = 259 plus fill-ins

**Michigan (16) and Minnesota (10) are Romney fantasy states whose polls close at 9pm as is Oregon (7) which closes at 11pm. If either is in doubt, subtract these numbers from the Obama base (but don’t count on this happening). OR (11pm) is his only other long shot chance, but don’t hold your breath on that one.