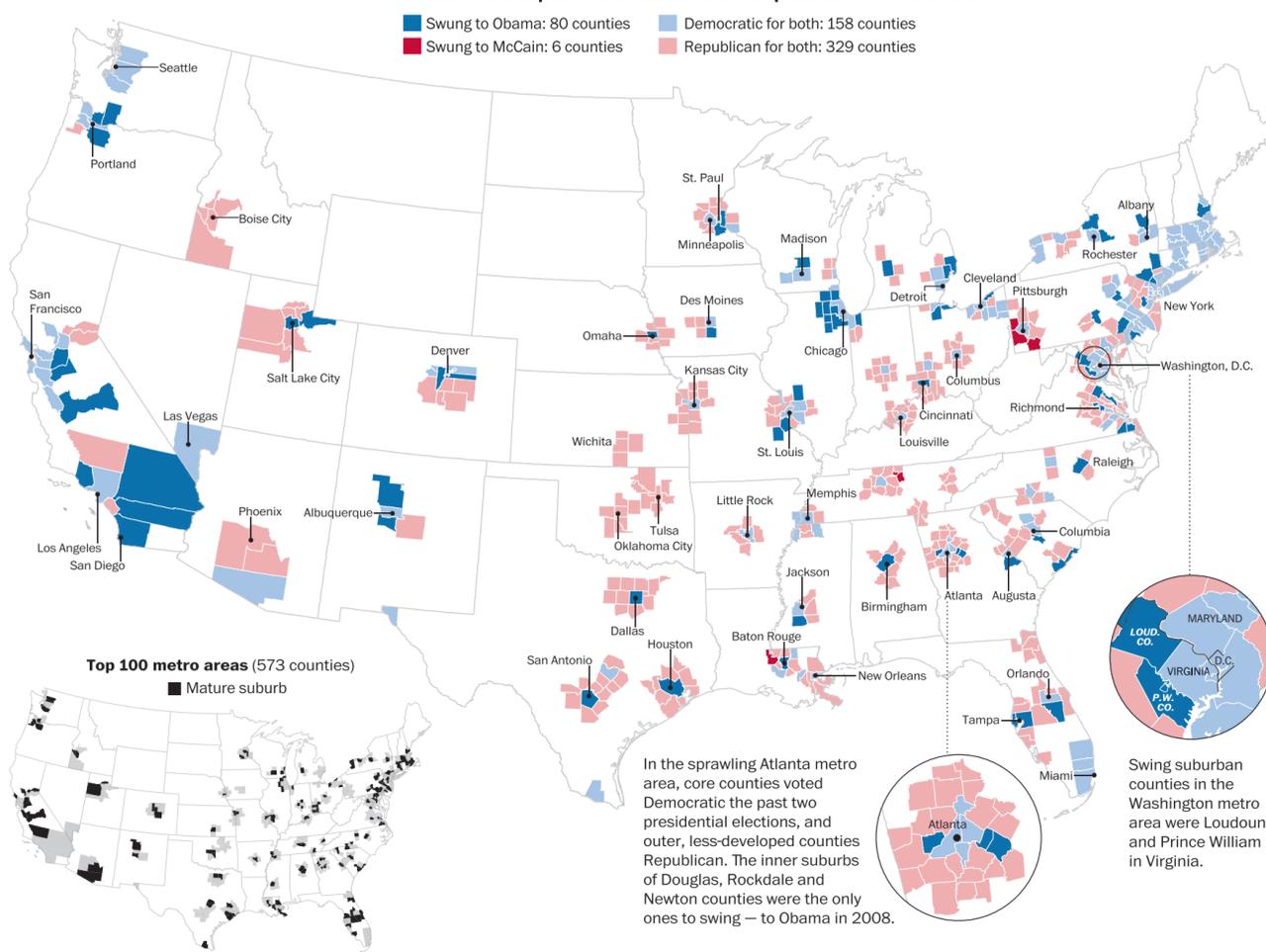


# CAMPAIGN 2012

## The 2012 battle for the 'burbs

In the past two presidential elections, almost two-thirds of the popular vote came from nation's 100 biggest metro areas. Each of these county clusters begins with a large urban core and extends across suburban counties with strong economic ties. In 2004 and 2008, Republicans won the least-settled suburban counties, while Democrats took the most urban ones. In between, the mature suburbs were a shifting battleground. They went for George W. Bush in 2004, but Barack Obama in 2008. The mature suburbs alone may not decide the 2012 presidential race, but they offer a geographic window on the swing voters who will. Will they stick with Obama? Or shift to presumed Republican nominee Mitt Romney? **By Ted Mellnik, Karen Yourish and Laura Stanton**

How 573 counties in the top 100 metro areas voted for president in '04 and '08:



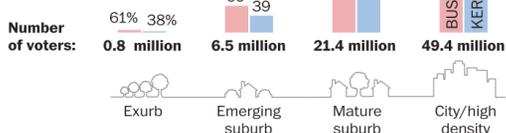
In the sprawling Atlanta metro area, core counties voted Democratic the past two presidential elections, and outer, less-developed counties Republican. The inner suburbs of Douglas, Rockdale and Newton counties were the only ones to swing — to Obama in 2008.

Swing suburban counties in the Washington metro area were Loudoun and Prince William in Virginia.

Breakdown by cities and suburbs

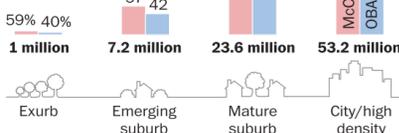
**2004**

John Kerry prevailed in urban areas, but George W. Bush's decisive support across the suburbs helped propel him to a second term.



**2008**

Obama extended the Democrats' dominance in urban cores and won in the mature suburbs.



In the mature suburbs, Obama got 2 million more votes than Kerry.

County groups are based on census data released in March on people living in densely developed urban areas. **City/high density:** 132 counties — at least 95 percent of population in urban areas. **Mature suburbs:** 164 counties — 75 to 95 percent urban. **Emerging suburbs:** 186 counties — 25 to 75 percent urban. **Exurbs:** 91 counties — less than 25 percent urban.

## Romney says he, not Obama, offers nation a path forward

GOP candidate asserts that president's policies are 'of the past'

BY PHILIP RUCKER

LANSING, MICH. — In his first stump speech since becoming the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, Mitt Romney accused President Obama of recycling tired policies of "old-school liberals" and asserted that it is he, not Obama, who offers the nation a path forward.

Obama formally began his reelection campaign last weekend by saying that he would lead the country forward and that Romney would take it backward. But Romney sought to turn that argument on its head in his speech here Tuesday. He said that Obama has abandoned the reforms that President Bill Clinton and the "New Democrats" introduced in the 1990s and instead has resurrected the "era of big government . . . with a vengeance."

"Looking backward won't solve the problems of today, nor will it take advantage of the opportunities of tomorrow," Romney said. "His are the policies of the past. The challenges of the present and the promise of tomorrow must be met by a new and bold vision for the future, and I will bring it."

Obama has asked voters to consider where he would take the country in his second term, and Romney said, "In our hearts, we know."

He added: "As much as we'd like to believe him, we know that America is going in the wrong direction — not forward, but sideways, or worse. We know that the mounting debt is a problem, not a blessing. We know that failing schools



MARK BUGNASKI/KALAMAZOO GAZETTE VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kate and Aaron Whitsett, with daughter Eliza, 2, vote in Kalamazoo, Mich., in special elections on the day Mitt Romney spoke in the state.**

**Pick Romney's running mate**

With Mitt Romney now the presumptive GOP presidential nominee, Washington's most famous political parlor game — speculating about a vice-presidential pick — can get underway in earnest. Click through our interactive graphic to see his possible choices at [postpolitics.com](http://postpolitics.com).

mean failing futures. We know that if more and more good jobs leave America, there won't be enough good jobs in America to succeed in this great country."

Obama's campaign responded by accusing Romney of reverting to the same economic policies of the George W. Bush administration: tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and lax regulation of Wall Street. "The American people won't be fooled — they know that this is the same economic scheme that crashed our economy and punished the middle class in the first place," Obama campaign spokeswoman Lis Smith said in a statement.

Romney delivered a formal speech to about 400 supporters at Lansing Community College. The only mention the former Massachusetts governor made of the auto industry, an important issue for voters in

Michigan, was a line at the beginning of his speech lamenting the demise of Oldsmobile.

Romney attacked Obama for a recent campaign invention that shows how a composite character, Julia, would benefit from Obama administration policies as she ages.

"Julia progresses from cradle to grave, showing how government makes every good thing in her life possible," Romney said. "The weak economy, high unemployment, falling wages, rising gas prices, the national debt, the insolvency of entitlements — all these are fictionally assumed away in a cartoon produced by a president who wants us to forget about them. By the way, what does it say about a president's policies when he has to use a cartoon character rather than real people to justify his record?"

Romney also sought to cast his business career — first as a management consultant and later as founder and chief executive of Bain Capital, a corporate buyout and venture capital firm — as entrepreneurial.

"I spent my business career at the leading edge of change and dynamism," Romney said. He said he helped companies adapt to changing marketplaces before their competitors, a skill set he argued would help him in the presidency.

And Romney made a pitch to the nation's young innovators.

"We work on iPads, we take pictures with cellphones, we sell on virtual marketplaces, we have best friends on Facebook we have never met — all of these things were invented in America," he said. "And somewhere at a coffee shop, perhaps here in Lansing, a student is probably sketching out an idea, right now, that will change our lives in ways we can't even imagine. I want that person to succeed beyond their wildest dreams."

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### 2Chambers

Excerpted from [washingtonpost.com/2chambers](http://washingtonpost.com/2chambers)

#### Notification 'gaps' on Colombia

Pentagon investigators have identified "significant gaps" in notification of the military chain of command in the hours after military personnel and U.S. Secret Service employees came into contact with prostitutes in Colombia, a senior lawmaker said Tuesday.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.) said that military personnel assigned to President Obama's trip to Colombia failed to promptly notify the chain of command of the events that unfolded and did not consult Gen. Douglas M. Fraser, commander of U.S. Southern Command, on the decision to permit the 12 members of the military to stay in Colombia as Obama's trip began and military officials launched an investigation. Military officials also failed to notify the chain of command of the assignment of some personnel to the Colombia trip, Levin said.

Levin said he was especially concerned that Fraser wasn't consulted on the decision to allow the 12 to stay, saying he should have been permitted to weigh in on the decision.

"Whether that was a correct or incorrect decision will be the subject perhaps of discussion," Levin said, adding that military officials had assured him the situation would be properly addressed.

The military's decision to allow the 12 to stay in Colombia contrasts with the action taken by the U.S. Secret Service, which moved immediately to send home 11 employees initially implicated in the scandal.

Levin and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) were briefed by military officials Tuesday. The meeting was "a dramatic improvement," McCain said, over a previous briefing on the scandal that he had criticized as incomplete and poorly prepared.

Levin said after the briefing that military investigators have found there was no security risk to Obama because the military personnel did not have copies of his travel schedule.

The U.S. Southern Command, which oversees military operations in Latin America, said Tuesday that it has completed its probe and that officials are working to determine proper disciplinary action for the 12 military people involved. In a statement, the Southern Command said it plans to brief all civilian and military Defense Department personnel deploying to missions across Latin America "on acceptable and unacceptable practices and the important role they play as representatives of the U.S. government and American people."

— Ed O'Keefe

### Election 2012

Excerpted from [washingtonpost.com/election2012](http://washingtonpost.com/election2012)

#### A GOP stumble on immigration

A Republican National Committee roundtable Tuesday, aimed at highlighting the GOP's Hispanic get-out-the-vote effort, ended up backfiring as the RNC's director of Hispanic outreach struggled to explain to reporters the Republicans' message to Hispanics when it comes to immigration.

Pressed by a reporter about what she would say to an undecided Hispanic voter who concluded after watching the GOP debates that former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney's proposals on immigration are too strict and are "out-of-line with what Hispanics want," the RNC's Bettina Inclin stumbled.

"I think as a candidate, to my understanding, that he's still deciding what his position on immigration is," she said. "So I can't talk about what his proposal's going to be, because I don't know what Romney exactly — he's talked about different issues. And what we saw in the Republican primary is that there's a very diverse opinion on how to deal with immigration."

Immediately, a reporter tweeted out Inclin's statement that Romney is "still deciding what his position on immigration is," and Democrats pounced.

The Obama campaign's director of Hispanic press, Gabriela Domenzain, said in a statement that Romney "has proven time and time again that he is the most extreme presidential candidate in modern history on immigration."

— Felicia Sonmez

#### Stops on the campaign trail

The stops each GOP presidential candidate made, from April 30 through Monday.



For more, go to: [wapo.st/campaigntrail](http://wapo.st/campaigntrail).

Source: PBS "NewsHour" THE WASHINGTON POST