

KIMBERLEY STRASSEL:: ‘I’m Calling It for Mitt’ – WSJ

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By KIMBERLEY STRASSEL

Predicting an election is risky business, but political journalists ought to be expected to take some risks. So I’m calling it for Mitt Romney. This isn’t blind enthusiasm talking; I’ve spent much of this election cycle assuming Mr. Romney would lose. He ground out an uninspiring victory in the primaries. He ran an equally timid general-election campaign, right through to his pick of Paul Ryan as a running mate. The Republican then risked all the benefit he’d earned from that bold move by staging a lackluster GOP convention.

But the Romney that has emerged since the first Denver debate is the sort of leader that voters have been hoping for at a time of economic uncertainty. As a result, Republican voters have gone from wanting to simply get rid of Barack Obama to wanting to vote to elect Mitt Romney as president. That wave of enthusiasm on the ground has infected independents as well and is the key to a Romney victory.

Many of the battleground polls assume the electorate will look somewhat like 2008, when Democrats had a seven-point partisan voting advantage over Republicans. This is inconceivable. The Obama turnout machine will be good, and probably bring out Democrats at about the party’s historic average; they will make up 37% to 38% of the electorate. The difference is that the GOP turnout machine, fueled by voter intensity, will likely equal (as it did in 2004) or even exceed that Democratic turnout. If that is the case, this election turns on independent voters, who are now behind Mr. Romney by a comfortable margin.

My final prediction is that at a minimum, Mr. Romney wins 289 electoral votes, a tally that includes Florida, Virginia, Ohio, Colorado, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Wisconsin. If it is a big night, he also picks up Pennsylvania and maybe Minnesota.

via [Political Diary: ‘I’m Calling It for Mitt’ – WSJ.com](#).

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