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By **LUCY MADISON** / **CBS NEWS** / *September 25, 2012, 10:57 AM*

Fact-checking Romney's "47 percent" comment

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Updated: 4:00 p.m. ET

(CBS News) In a video unearthed yesterday by Mother Jones, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney was captured making some inflammatory comments about people who don't pay income tax in America - the people he says will vote for President Obama "no matter what." Below, CBSNews.com looks into the validity of his controversial statement.

The Quote "There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it -- that that's an entitlement. And the government should give it to them. And they will vote for this president no matter what. ... These are people who pay no income tax. ... [M]y job is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives."

True or false? Much of Romney's statement relies on assumptions about one demographic: The 47 percent of Americans who he says "pay no income tax." So is it true that 47 percent of Americans don't pay income tax? Essentially, yes, according to the the Tax Policy Center, which provides data showing that in 2011, 46.4 percent of American households paid no federal income tax. The same data shows, however, that nearly two-thirds of households that paid no income tax did pay payroll taxes. And most people also pay some combination of state, local, sales, gas and property taxes.

In order to assess whether or not, as Romney claims, these non-income tax payers "will vote for the president no matter what," it's helpful to look at a breakdown of

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who they are. According to 2011 data from the Tax Policy Center, more than half of the filing units not paying income taxes are those with incomes less than $16,812 per year. Nearly a third - 29.2 percent - of those paying no income taxes are tax filers earning between $16,812 and $33,542, and 12.8 percent are those with incomes between $33,542 and $59,486. In other words, the poor are least likely to pay federal income taxes, but many middle-class families are also exempt. Smaller but significant numbers of the higher-income earners are also exempt: The same data shows that in 2011, 78,000 tax filers with incomes between $211,000 and $533,000 paid no income taxes; 24,000 households with incomes of $533,000 to $2.2 million paid no income taxes, and 3,000 tax filers with incomes above $2.2 million paid no income taxes.

Overall, according to the Tax Policy Center, "of the 38 million tax units made nontaxable by the addition of tax expenditures, 44 percent are moved off the tax rolls by elderly tax benefits and another 30 percent by credits for children and the working poor."

Moreover, only 18.1 percent of American households paid neither federal income taxes nor payroll taxes in 2011, says the Tax Policy Center. Of that 18.1 percent, 10.3 percent were elderly and 6.9 percent were non-elderly households earning less than $20,000 year, which include low-income families and students. About one in 20 is non-elderly with income over $20,000.

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Voters in households with household incomes of less than $30,000 a year tend to favor Mr. Obama, according to the latest CBS News/New York Times poll, with 61 percent supporting the president and 32 percent supporting Romney. The president's margin narrows significantly when only white voters in this income group are sampled: Among white voters earning less than $30,000, 52 percent supported Mr. Obama and 40 percent supported Romney. The race is even tighter when you look at white voters with household incomes under $50,000. Forty-six percent of those voters say they support Mr. Obama, and 47 percent support Romney, according to the latest CBS News/New York Times poll.

Additionally, according to 2008 data from the nonpartisan Tax Foundation, eight of the top 10 states with the lowest income tax liability are Republican-leaning states. The other two are Florida, a battleground state, and New Mexico, which CBS News ratesas likely Obama territory.

Jennifer DePinto contributed to this report.

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Lucy Madison is a political reporter for CBSNews.com.

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