

Romney: Obama Won With 'Gifts' to Certain Voters

Republican presidential nominee **Mitt Romney** is telling top donors that President **Barack Obama** won re-election because of the "gifts" he had already provided to blacks, Hispanics and young voters and because of the president's effort to paint Romney as anti-immigrant.

"The president's campaign, if you will, focused on giving targeted groups a big gift," Romney said in a call to donors on Wednesday. "He made a big effort on small things."

Romney said his campaign, in contrast, had been about "big issues for the whole country." He said he faced problems as a candidate because he was "getting beat up" by the **Obama campaign** and that the debates allowed him to come back.

In the call, Romney didn't acknowledge any major missteps, such as his "47 percent" remarks widely viewed as denigrating nearly half of Americans, his lack of support for the auto bailout, his call for illegal immigrants to "self-deport," or his change in position on abortion, gun control and other issues. He also didn't address the success or failure of the campaign's strategy of focusing on the economy in the face of some improvement in employment and economic growth during the months leading up to Election Day.

Obama won the popular vote by about 3.5 million votes, or 3 percent, and won the Electoral College by a wide margin, 332-206 electoral votes. Exit polls conducted for The Associated Press and television networks showed that Obama led Romney by 11 percentage points among women and won better than 7 of 10 Hispanic voters and more than 9 of 10 black voters.

Romney called his loss to Obama a disappointing result that he and his team had not expected, but he said he believed his

team had run a superb campaign. He said he was trying to turn his thoughts to the future, “but, frankly, we’re still so troubled by the past, it’s hard to put together our plans for the future.”

Romney’s finance team organized the call to donors. A person who listened to Romney’s call provided details about it to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the call was private. The Los Angeles Times first reported Romney’s remarks.

Among the “gifts” Romney cited were free health care “in perpetuity,” which he said was highly motivational to black and Hispanic voters as well as for voters making \$25,000 to \$35,000 a year.

Romney also said the administration’s promise to offer what he called “amnesty” to the children of illegal immigrants—what he termed “the so-called DREAM Act kids”—helped send **Hispanics** to the polls for Obama.

Young voters, Romney said, were motivated by the administration’s plan for partial forgiveness of college loan interest and being able to remain on their parents’ health insurance plans. Young women had an additional incentive to vote for Obama because of free contraception coverage under the president’s health care plan, he said.

“I’m very sorry that we didn’t win,” he told donors. “I know that you expected to win. We expected to win. We were disappointed; we hadn’t anticipated it.”

Romney said he and his team were discussing how his donor group could remain connected and have an influence on the direction of the **Republican Party** and even the selection of a future nominee—“which, by the way, will not be me.”

Asked about Romney’s remarks, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, a potential contender for the GOP nomination in 2016, strongly

condemned those in the GOP who classify voters based on income, race or age and said the party cannot concede wide swaths of voters and expect to win elections.

“We have got to stop dividing the American voters,” Jindal told reporters in Las Vegas, where the Republican Governors Association was meeting. “We need to go after 100 percent of the vote, not 53 percent. We need to go after every single vote.”

Associated Press writer Philip Elliott in Las Vegas contributed to this report.

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