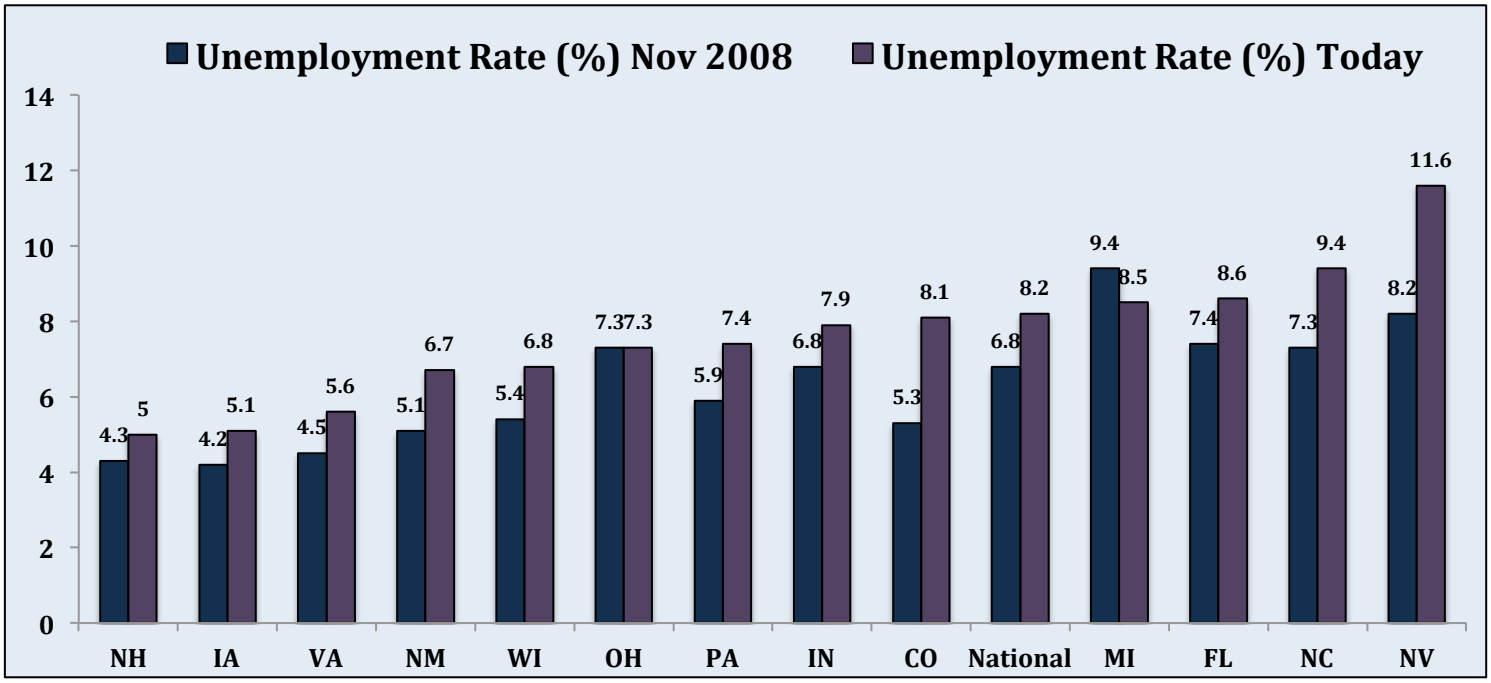
Swing States Have Higher Unemployment Rate Than in 2008: Some commentators have focused recently on the unemployment rates in battleground states, suggesting the key is whether a state's unemployment rate is lower than the national average. While that is a comforting thought to the Obama high command in Chicago, the more important relationship may be between where unemployment is today and where it was in November 2008. The Bureau of Labor Statistics released May unemployment rates for individual states last week, and according to this report, all but two battleground states have unemployment rates higher than they were on Election Day, November 4, 2008.

Michigan is the only state with a lower unemployment rate today (8.5%) than on Election Day 2008 (9.4%). Ohio's unemployment rate is the same as 2008, 7.3%. In every other battleground state, unemployment rates are higher today than when voters went to the polls in 2008. Nevada saw the largest increase, with a 3.4-point jump from 8.2% to 11.6%. The rates in Colorado and North Carolina both increased by more than two points, to 8.1% and 9.4%, respectively, and rates in Florida (8.6%), Indiana (7.9%), Pennsylvania (7.4%), New Mexico (6.7%), Wisconsin (6.8%) and Virginia (5.6%) are higher by more than one point.

President Barack Obama won some of these states by slim margin in 2008, but these higher unemployment numbers today could tip these states against him this time. Regardless on how their state compares to the national average, these voters feel the pain of their friends, families, and neighbors who are not better off than they were four years ago.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Accessed June 20, 2012

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