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## Has Obama lost the coal states? The Courts v. The Industry (</full-blog/2012/08/has-obama-lost-coal-states-courts-v.html>)

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By: Jessica Durden, Staff Member

The embattled coal states, already stressed by the rise of the natural gas industry, were dealt another blow when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit upheld an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandate to fiercely limit greenhouse-gas emissions.[1] The Court fully supported the EPA in its finding that rising carbon dioxide emissions from the coal industry and other utility providers have “likely been responsible for global warming over the past half century.”[2] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftn2](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn2)) The ruling piggybacked on a 2007 Supreme Court ruling that the EPA had power under the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse-gas emissions.[3]

In a heated election year, such a dramatic ruling could hurt the incumbent President Obama in his election efforts. Obama lost Kentucky and West Virginia, two major mining states, in 2008.[4] Peppered along the highways in West Virginia are billboards declaring that the coal corridor is Obama’s “No Job Zone,” and West Virginia democrats have withheld support for the President because of his support for the EPA’s strict regulations.[5] The 2012 polls in mining states were not in Mr. Obama’s favor prior to this ruling, either. In the Kentucky Democratic primary, 42 percent of registered and voting Kentucky Democrats voted for “uncommitted,” and in West Virginia a shocking 41 percent of state Democrats marked down a convicted felon’s name over Mr. Obama’s.[6] Kentucky’s primary vote result particularly shocked industry experts because there was not even another option on the ballot.[7]

These results are not entirely shocking, since Obama did not take these states in 2008 and was not projected to this year, but for a swing state like Ohio, this ruling could have major implications. Presumed Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney has already jumped on the opportunity to gain favor in coal-dependent Ohio by launching an energy-focused campaign in the state.[8] In an incredible streak, Ohio has picked the winner of the presidential election every year since 1964, and recent polls still put Mr. Obama ahead of Mr. Romney.[9] But this recent ruling gives Mr. Romney a strategic opening to appeal to the many industrial workers in Ohio struggling to get on board with the demands of the EPA. If the Romney camp convinces Ohio, it is possible to win the state—and therefore win the nation in November.

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[1] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) BRETT KENDALL, *Court Backs EPA on Warming*, WALL ST. J., June 26, 2012, at A1.

[2] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) *Id.*

[3] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) *Id.*

[4] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) *Election Results 2008*, NY TIMES, (Dec. 9, 2008), <http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/map.html>.

[5] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) MARK CASERTA, *Will W. Va. become an Obama “no-job” zone?*, HUNTINGTON HERALD-DISPATCH, (June 21, 2012), <http://www.herald-dispatch.com/opinions/x1805694144/Will-W-Va-become-an-Obama-no-job-zone>.

[6] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) AARON BLAKE, *Obama loses 40 percent of the primary vote in Arkansas, Kentucky*, (WASH. POST, May 22, 2012), [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/obama-loses-more-than-40-percent-of-kentucky-primary-voters-to-uncommitted-option/2012/05/22/gIQAIVHEjU\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/obama-loses-more-than-40-percent-of-kentucky-primary-voters-to-uncommitted-option/2012/05/22/gIQAIVHEjU_blog.html).

[7] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) *Id.*

[8] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) See KENDALL at A1.

[9] ([http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#\\_ftnref](http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnref)) TOM TROY, *Obama, Romney camps pull out all stops in Ohio*, TOLEDO BLADE (July 1, 2012), <http://www.toledoblade.com/Politics/2012/07/01/Obama-Romney-camps-pull-out-all-stops-in-Ohio.html>.

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