Swing states such as Ohio will figure prominently in the upcoming November election.

Now that former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has all but sewn up the Republican nomination to take on President Barack Obama, look for the fireworks to get started.

At stake will be Obama’s presidency and legacy.

We’re talking HUGE stakes.

It’s a foregone conclusion that the vast majority of African-American voters will cast their ballots for Mr. Obama. Whether they’ll vote out of racial solidarity and loyalty or because they honestly believe he’s doing a good job is irrelevant.

What is relevant is that this is a voting bloc that will have substantial input in the General Election in November.

Not so certain, however, are independent voters who overwhelmingly supported Obama in 2008.

That same group, polls are now showing, aren’t as ardent about the president as they were four years ago.

For starters, Obama’s message of “hope and change” resonated with enough Americans to land

him in the Oval Office.

Nearly four years later, however, many believe that Obama has fallen short of the mark to improve the lives of average Americans.

Couple that with rising gas prices and a still high unemployment rates, and there is a prescription for disaster.

It’s no secret that the Republicans will do all in their power to unseat Obama.

After all, politics is a “blood sport.”

To be sure Obama opponents and Romney supporters will pull out all the stops and wage what portends to be one of the nastiest presidential races in modern times.

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It’s one reason that Obama has visited our state so many times since taking office and will continue to do so right down to the wire.

There’s too much at stake, like we said.