



CBS NEWS POLL

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THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE AND THE DEBATES

October 3-5, 2008

The race for president has returned to about where it was before the first presidential debate, with Barack Obama and Joe Biden holding a small lead over Republicans John McCain and Sarah Palin. Opinions of both Palin and Biden improved after last Thursday's vice presidential debate, though Palin still trails when it comes to the perception she is up to the job.

Voters are now looking forward to Tuesday's presidential debate, and still have concerns about each candidate's ability to manage the troubled economy.

Obama and Biden hold a four point lead over John McCain and Sarah Palin. 47% of voters support Obama/Biden while 43% support McCain/Palin - similar to the margin before the first presidential debate, but a smaller lead than a week ago.

CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT

(Among registered voters)

	Now	10/1	9/25/08	9/10/08
Obama-Biden	47%	49%	47%	44%
McCain-Palin	43	40	42	46
Undecided	7	7	8	9

The race is almost identical among likely voters - Obama has a three point lead among this group.

CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT

	Likely voters	Registered voters
Obama-Biden	48%	47%
McCain-Palin	45	43
Undecided	5	7

Obama holds a 20 point lead in terms of enthusiasm - 58% of Obama voters say they are very enthusiastic about Obama while only 38% of McCain voters say the same about McCain. This is about same enthusiasm gap as last week.

DESCRIBE YOUR SUPPORT

(Among registered voters)

	Obama Voters		McCain Voters	
	Now	10/1	Now	10/1
Enthusiastic	58%	61%	38%	36%
With reservations	31	29	44	47
Party nominee	8	5	9	6
Dislike other candidate	2	4	7	10

Four out of five of each candidate's supporters now say their minds are made up and won't change before the election. Last week McCain voters were slightly more likely than Obama voters to say they could change their minds.

IS YOUR MIND MADE UP?

(Among registered voters)

	Obama voters		McCain voters	
	Now	10/1	Now	10/1
Yes	82%	86%	81%	78%
No, too soon	18	14	19	21

Although six in 10 voters are paying a lot of attention to the campaign, about one in five voters remain uncommitted - they either say they could still change their minds about their candidate, or are undecided entirely. The number of uncommitted voters is down from last week.

THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Once again interest in an upcoming debate is running high. 66% of registered voters say they are very likely to watch Tuesday night's second presidential debate. That's about the same percentage of voters who said they were very likely to watch the first presidential debate and the vice presidential debate.

More Democrats than Republicans say they are very likely to tune in. And even among those voters who are uncommitted (they have yet to choose a candidate or say they could change their minds), interest is also high -- 59% say they are very likely to watch.

WILL YOU WATCH THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE?

(Among registered voters)

	All	Uncommitted
Very likely	66%	59%
Somewhat likely	22	25
Not likely	10	14

A CBS News poll conducted last week showed that voters thought Barack Obama won the first debate, and nearly half of all voters expect he will win this debate too. McCain's voters have less confidence in their candidate than Obama's supporters do; 81% of Obama voters think their candidate will win, while only 53% of McCain supporters think McCain will.

WHO WILL WIN DEBATE?

(Among registered voters)

	All	Obama Voters	McCain Voters
Obama	48%	81%	14%
McCain	25	1	53
Tie (vol.)	2	2	3
Don't know	25	16	30

THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

After a few days to let the impact of Thursday's vice presidential debate sink in, voters have come away feeling more positively about both Joe Biden and Sarah Palin. But on the key questions of whether each candidate is ready to be vice president - or to be president if necessary - majorities see only Joe Biden as passing the test.

Despite being widely watched, the debate probably didn't reshape the presidential race - voters are no more likely now than before the debate to say the vice presidential candidates will influence their choice for President.

READINESS TO SERVE - AS VICE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT

Coming out of the debate, Joe Biden is seen as able to be an effective president, if that were necessary. Palin is not.

- Two-thirds say Biden could step in and be president.
 - Even Republicans are more likely than not to concede Biden could be an effective president.
- Only 37% of voters say Palin could be.
 - Republicans are the only partisan group that thinks she can be effective in the job.

COULD BE AN EFFECTIVE PRESIDENT, IF NECESSARY?

(Among registered voters)

		<u>Biden</u>			<u>Palin</u>			
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind	All	Dem	Rep	Ind
Yes	65%	83%	48%	60%	37%	13%	71%	34%
No	21	9	34	24	53	81	13	54

- There is no gender difference on this:
 - Both women and men think Palin would not be able to be an effective president.
 - Women are more skeptical than men; however, that may be because more women are Democrats.
 - Both women and men believe Biden could be effective.

COULD BE AN EFFECTIVE PRESIDENT, IF NECESSARY?

(Among registered voters)

		<u>Biden</u>			<u>Palin</u>	
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
Yes	65%	69%	62%	37%	41%	33%
No	21	18	24	53	51	54

- Only Biden is seen as being ready for the job that he and Palin are seeking, the vice presidency.
 - 75% call Biden ready; fewer than half, 42%, say Palin is.
 - The debate did not change these ratings dramatically. However, both Biden and Palin rose slightly.

PREPARED TO BE VICE-PRESIDENT

(Among registered voters)

	<u>Biden</u>		<u>Palin</u>	
	Now	Pre-debate	Now	Pre-debate
Yes	75%	70%	42%	38%
No	14	15	50	52

- Both Palin and Biden do well when it comes to connecting with voters on values - six in ten voters say each shares their values.

DOES...SHARE YOUR VALUES?

(Among registered voters)

	<u>Biden</u>	<u>Palin</u>
Yes	60%	59%
No	20	30
Not sure	20	11

As uncommitted voters did in a CBS News/Knowledge Networks poll conducted immediately after the debate, registered voters who watched the debate give the "win" to Biden.

WHO WON THE VP DEBATE?

(Among registered voters)

	All	Watchers
Biden	41%	50%
Palin	28	31
Tie (vol.)	14	17
Didn't watch (vol.)	15	-

Nearly eight in ten voters say they watched. But to measure the general impact of post-debate talk and highlight clips, all voters (including non-watchers) were asked who won. They also had the sense that Biden did.

NET IMPACT: OVERALL VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATES

- Both candidates improved their overall images somewhat in the debate.
 - o For those who said they changed their views, most reported feeling increasingly positive than negative.
 - o Biden's impact was more positive than negative by about 5 to 1.
 - o Palin improved, too. Among those whose views changed, more than twice as many became more positive than became more negative.

DID THE VP DEBATE CHANGE YOUR OPINION OF...

(Among registered voters)

		<u>Biden</u>		<u>Palin</u>
	All	Watchers	All	Watchers
Made it better	28%	33%	29%	35%
Made worse	5	6	11	13
No change	62	60	55	52

Partisanship plays a role in this, however:

- Republicans were much more likely than Democrats or independents to say their views of Palin improved; Democrats were the most likely to say their views of Biden went up and their views of Palin declined.

Overall views of the candidates have gone up from their pre-debate levels.

- Palin's favorable marks have returned to about the same range as when she was initially introduced to the public in September.
- Biden's favorable marks are as high as Palin's, but fewer have an opinion on him.

OPINIONS OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

(Among registered voters)

		<u>Biden</u>		<u>Palin</u>	
	Now	Pre-debate	Now	Pre-debate	
Favorable	40%	34%	40%	32%	
Unfavorable	19	19	32	33	
Undecided/Don't know	40	46	27	36	

- The debates did not make voters any more likely to say the vice presidential candidates matter in their vote. As before, about one in three say they will have a lot of influence.

HOW MUCH WILL VP'S SHAPE YOUR PRESIDENTIAL VOTE?

(Among registered voters)

	Now	Pre-debate	8/08
A lot of influence	32%	32%	28%
Voting on other factors	65	65	68

- Republican women are the most likely group to say vice presidential candidate matter, four in ten of them do.
 - o Republican men overwhelmingly say they do not matter.
 - o Democratic and independent women also say they don't.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE QUALITIES

Majorities - 62% each -- see both candidates as having the ability to be an effective president.

WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE PRESIDENT

(Among registered voters)

	Obama	McCain
Yes	62%	62%
No	31	31

Just over six in 10 voters think Barack Obama, his running mate Joe Biden, and John McCain have the ability to be effective in the role of president. In contrast, just 37% say the same about Sarah Palin in that role.

WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE PRESIDENT

(Among registered voters)

	Obama	Biden	McCain	Palin
Yes	62%	65%	62%	37%
No	31	21	31	53

There has been one positive change for John McCain since the first debate: he has succeeded somewhat in dissociating himself from an unpopular Republican President. President Bush currently has had among the lowest approval ratings of any modern president.

38% in this poll think that if elected president McCain would generally continue President Bush's policies, down from 46% last month, before the first presidential debate. This is the lowest percentage to link McCain to the President's policies since last the question was first asked last May.

IF ELECTED, MCCAIN WOULD...

(Among registered voters)

	Now	9/17	5/2008
Continue Bush policies	38%	46%	43%
Change to more conservative policies	26	22	21
Change to less conservative policies	27	26	28

However, the first debate appears to have changed few voters' minds on how each candidate would address the most pressing national issue - the economy - or change minds about their possible management of the war in Iraq.

Slightly fewer voters see Obama as prepared to handle the economy than did in a CBS News/New York Times poll conducted just before the first debate, but even fewer express confidence in John McCain's ability to do so. McCain continues to lead Obama on voters' confidence in handling the war in Iraq.

CONFIDENT...WOULD MAKE RIGHT DECISIONS ON..

(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	Pre-Pres. Debate	Now	Pre-Pres. Debate
The Economy				
Very confident	24%	29%	15%	17%
Somewhat confident	34	35	38	38
Not confident	41	34	44	45
Iraq				
Very confident	25%	26%	34%	30%
Somewhat confident	27	30	24	28
Not confident	45	42	39	41

OVERALL VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATES

Overall views of the two candidates have not changed as a result of the debate. Barack Obama continues to receive net positive evaluations from voters - and more have an opinion about him. In this poll, 46% have a favorable opinion of him, and 34% are unfavorable. More voters have opinions about McCain, too, but views of him are more closely divided, as they were before the debate.

OPINION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	Pre-Pres. Debate	Now	Pre-Pres. Debate
Favorable	46%	43%	40%	38%
Unfavorable	34	30	38	35
No opinion/Don't know	19	26	21	27

DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

The race continues to be close among independents. In this poll McCain has a small, statistically not significant edge. At the end of last week it was Obama with a small lead. Independents have swung back and forth between the two candidates for the last few weeks.

CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT AMONG INDEPENDENTS

(Among registered voters who are independents)

	Now	10/1	9/25	9/17	9/8	9/1
Obama	39%	43%	39%	46%	29%	43%
McCain	44	38	43	41	55	37
Undecided	9	13	12	10	14	15

Obama is leading among Democrats, liberals, moderates, and voters who supported Hillary Clinton in the primaries (though he has not improved his support among the latter group in recent weeks).

McCain is leading among Republicans, Independents, and conservatives. He is also leading among whites, including both white Catholics and

white evangelicals, as well as whites making less than \$50,000 a year without a college degree.

VOTE FOR PRESIDENT: DEMOGRAPHICS

(Among registered voters)

	-- Now --		-- 10/1 --	
	Obama	McCain	Obama	McCain
All	47%	43	49%	40
Republicans	7%	86	12%	82
Democrats	85%	10	85%	8
Independents	39%	44	43%	38
Liberal	82%	10	76%	14
Moderate	53%	37	55%	32
Conservative	20%	69	22%	69
Clinton supporters	66%	26	64%	21
Total Whites	38%	52	40%	48
White Catholics	41%	50	40%	49
White Evangelicals	18%	73	19%	69
Working class whites (income <\$50K + No college degree)	39%	43	33%	49
Whites w/o a coll. degree	37%	52	37%	50
Whites w/ income < \$50K	39%	45	37%	47

 This poll was conducted among a random sample of 957 adults nationwide, including 875 registered voters, interviewed by telephone October 3-5, 2008. Phone numbers were dialed from RDD samples of both standard land-lines and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample and the sample of registered voters could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

CBS NEWS POLL
The Presidential Race and the Debates
October 3-5, 2008

q1 How much attention have you been able to pay to the 2008 presidential campaign -- a lot, some, not much, or no attention so far?

	** REGISTERED VOTERS **				Sep08d
	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
A lot	60	64	59	56	59
Some	33	31	33	36	35
Not much	5	4	6	6	4
No attention so far	1	0	1	2	2
DK/NA	1	1	1	0	0

q2 Is your opinion of Barack Obama favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Barack Obama yet to have an opinion?

Favorable	46	12	81	35	48
Not favorable	34	74	6	33	32
Undecided	16	12	9	26	17
Haven't heard enough	3	2	4	4	3
Refused	1	0	0	2	0

q3 Is your opinion of John McCain favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about John McCain yet to have an opinion?

Favorable	40	80	8	42	39
Not favorable	38	6	70	29	42
Undecided	17	11	17	22	15
Haven't heard enough	4	3	5	5	4
Refused	1	0	0	2	0

q4 How likely is it that you will vote in the 2008 election for President this November - would you say you will definitely vote, probably vote, probably not vote, or definitely not vote in the election for President?

Definitely vote	91	93	94	84
Probably vote	8	7	4	14
Probably not vote	1	0	1	2
Definitely not vote	0	0	0	1
DK/NA	0	0	1	0

q5 If the 2008 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama for President and Joe Biden for Vice President, the Democrats, and John McCain for President and Sarah Palin for Vice President, the Republicans, would you vote for Barack Obama and Joe Biden or John McCain and Sarah Palin?

					Likely Voters	
					%	
Obama/Biden	47	7	85	39	48	49
McCain/Palin	43	86	10	44	45	40
Other (Vol.)	0	0	0	1	0	1
Won't vote (Vol.)	1	0	0	1	0	0
Depends (Vol.)/Undecided	7	6	5	9	5	7
Refused	2	1	0	6	2	3

q7 Is your mind made up or is it still too early to say for sure?

***** DECIDED VOTERS *****

	Total	Obama	McCain	Sep08d
	%	Voters	Voters	%
		%	%	
Mind made up	81	82	81	82
Too early to say for sure	19	18	19	18
DK/NA	0	0	0	0

q8 How would you describe your feelings about [fill can1] as the [fill part] nominee -- would you say you enthusiastically support him; support him but have reservations about him; support him only because he is the party nominee; or support him because you dislike [fill can2]?

Enthusiastic	49	58	38	50
With reservations	37	31	44	37
Party nominee	8	8	9	5
Dislike other candidate	5	2	7	6
DK/NA	1	1	2	2

q9-16 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q17 Is your opinion of Joe Biden favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Joe Biden yet to have an opinion?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep08d
Favorable	40	16	62	35	34
Not favorable	19	41	2	19	19
Undecided	18	20	16	20	14
Haven't heard enough	22	22	20	25	32
Refused	1	1	0	1	1

q18 Is your opinion of Sarah Palin favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Sarah Palin yet to have an opinion?

Favorable	40	77	13	39	32
Not favorable	32	4	58	26	33
Undecided	12	9	14	14	15
Haven't heard enough	15	10	15	20	21
Refused	1	0	0	1	0

q19 How confident are you in Barack Obama's ability to make the right decisions about the economy -- are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident	24	7	47	12	26
Somewhat confident	34	19	43	36	35
Not too confident	21	33	5	28	24
Not at all confident	20	39	4	21	15
DK/NA	1	2	1	3	0

q20 How confident are you in Barack Obama's ability to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq -- are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep08d
	%	%	%	%	%
Very confident	25	3	48	19	25
Somewhat confident	27	11	41	24	28
Not too confident	18	31	5	23	20
Not at all confident	27	53	5	31	26
DK/NA	3	2	1	3	1

q21 Regardless of how you intend to vote, do you think Barack Obama has the ability to be an effective President?

Yes	62	31	91	55
No	31	58	5	36
DK/NA	7	11	4	9

q22 BLANK

q23 How confident are you in John McCain's ability to make the right decisions about the economy -- are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident	15	37	2	11	15
Somewhat confident	38	50	23	44	34
Not too confident	22	9	29	25	26
Not at all confident	22	2	43	17	24
DK/NA	3	2	3	3	1

q24 How confident are you in John McCain's ability to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq -- are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident	34	71	9	31	31
Somewhat confident	24	21	22	30	23
Not too confident	16	3	22	19	19
Not at all confident	23	4	44	17	26
DK/NA	3	1	3	3	1

q25 Regardless of how you intend to vote, do you think John McCain has the ability to be an effective President?

Yes	62	91	36	67
No	31	4	56	25
DK/NA	7	5	8	8

q26 BLANK

q27 Which of these statements comes closer to your opinion? 1. The Presidential candidates' choices for Vice President will have a great deal of influence on my vote. OR 2. I will vote based mostly on the presidential candidates, not on who they chose for Vice President.

** REGISTERED VOTERS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep08d
	%	%	%	%	%
VP choices have influence	32	29	31	34	32
Vote on pres. Cands.	65	69	66	60	65
Don't know/No answer	3	2	3	6	3

q28 Do you think Joe Biden shares the values most Americans try to live by, or doesn't he?

Yes	60	36	83	55
No	20	41	6	19
DK/NA	20	23	11	26

q29 Do you think Joe Biden is prepared for the job of Vice President, or isn't he?

Is prepared	75	68	87	68	70
Is not prepared	14	23	4	16	15
DK/NA	11	9	9	16	15

q30 Do you think Joe Biden has the ability to be an effective President, if necessary?

Yes	65	48	83	60
No	21	34	9	24
DK/NA	14	18	8	16

q31 Do you think Sarah Palin shares the values most Americans try to live by, or doesn't she?

Yes	59	90	35	58
No	30	4	49	29
DK/NA	11	6	16	13

q32 Do you think Sarah Palin is prepared for the job of Vice President, or isn't she?

Is prepared	42	77	17	41	38
Is not prepared	50	12	78	49	52
DK/NA	8	11	5	10	10

q33 Do you think Sarah Palin has the ability to be an effective President, if necessary?

Yes	37	71	13	34
No	53	13	81	54
DK/NA	10	16	6	12

q34 What do you think John McCain will do if he is elected president: do you think he will generally continue George W. Bush's policies, change to more conservative policies, or change to less conservative policies?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **
 *** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep08d
	%	%	%	%	%
Continue Bush policies	38	12	67	28	46
Change to more conservative	26	33	17	31	22
Change to less conservative	27	45	11	31	26
DK/NA	9	10	5	10	6

q35 BLANK

q36-37 FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q38-53 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q54 Which candidate do you think did the best job, or won, Thursday night's vice presidential debate -- Joe Biden or Sarah Palin?

Biden	41	14	62	41
Palin	28	57	6	28
Tie/Both Equal (vol)	14	14	13	14
Didn't watch (Vol.)	15	14	17	13
DK/NA	2	1	2	4

q55 Since Thursday's debate, has your opinion of Sarah Palin changed for the better, changed for the worse, or not changed?

Changed for the better	29	50	14	28
Changed for the worse	11	3	19	9
Not changed	55	43	62	58
DK/NA	5	4	5	5

q56 Since Thursday's debate, has your opinion of Joe Biden changed for the better, changed for the worse, or not changed?

Changed for the better	28	17	38	25
Changed for the worse	5	8	1	7
Not changed	62	68	56	62
DK/NA	5	7	5	6

q57 How likely is it that you will watch the presidential debate on television on Tuesday October 7th -- very likely, somewhat likely, or not very likely?

					Uncommitted
					%
Very likely	66	59	73	65	59
Somewhat likely	22	27	19	22	25
Not very likely	10	13	7	10	14
Won't watch debates (Vol.)	2	2	1	2	1
DK/NA	0	0	0	1	1

q58 Who do you think will win the next presidential debate -- Barack Obama or John McCain?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Barack Obama	48	15	74	46
John McCain	25	54	5	22
Tie (vol.)	2	3	1	3
DK/NA	25	28	20	29

q59 FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q60 Did you watch or listen to the VICE-presidential debate between Joe Biden and Sarah Palin on Thursday, October 2nd?

Yes	77	80	75	77
No	23	20	25	23

	UNWEIGHTED	WEIGHTED
Total Respondents	957	
Registered Voters	875	821
Republicans - Reg. Voters	248	233
Democrats - Reg. Voters	320	311
Independents - Reg. Voters	307	277

Effective Likely Voters 616

*Every registered voter is included in the likely voter model, and is assigned a probability of voting, which is used to calculate the likely voter results. The sum of these probabilities is the effective number of likely voters.