

**THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE**  
 September 12 - 16, 2008

An overwhelming 78% of Americans say the economy is in bad shape and six in ten think things are getting worse - conditions that may favor Democrat Barack Obama. The convention "bounce" for Republican John McCain has dissipated and Obama has re-taken a national lead.

<b>VOTE FOR PRESIDENT</b>				
(Among registered voters)				
	Now	Post-Rep Convention 9/8/08	Post-Dem Convention 9/1/08	Pre- Conventions 8/20/08
Obama	48%	44%	48%	45%
McCain	43	46	40	42
Undecided	7	9	9	10

However this race remains up for grabs, with another potential game-changer - the first debate - just over a week away. One-fourth of the electorate remains uncommitted, saying they could still change their minds about their candidate, or remain undecided entirely.

Among likely voters, the gap is just about the same.

<b>VOTE FOR PRESIDENT</b>		
	Registered voters	Likely voters
Obama	48%	49%
McCain	43	44
Undecided	7	6

(The CBS News/New York Times horserace results for "likely" voters take into account voters' reported likelihood of voting and their voting and registration history -- characteristics which historically affect individuals' decision to vote.)

Views on the economy are closely related to vote. 61% of voters say the economy is now getting worse - and they are heavily for Obama. 32% say things are stable (even if not good) - and they're for McCain. The few who think things are improving are also backing McCain.

<b>THINK U.S. ECONOMY IS NOW...</b>		
(Among registered voters)		
	Getting worse	Staying same
Obama	62%	29%
McCain	29	63
Undecided	8	6

Since the conventions, neither candidate has increased the number of firm supporters. Eight in ten of Obama and McCain's backers have made up their minds - the rest say they could change.

**IS YOUR MIND MADE UP?**

(Among registered voters)

	Obama voters		McCain voters	
	Now	9/8	Now	9/8
Yes	79%	79%	81%	82%
No, too soon	18	21	19	18

Obama's supporters have become more enthusiastic - now six in ten are. A smaller number of his supporters now have reservations about him - 23% do, down from 35% immediately after both conventions.

Obama continues to hold an enthusiasm gap over McCain, even as McCain's backers have also become more enthusiastic (47% today, up from 42%) and many have put aside their reservations as well.

**DESCRIBE YOUR SUPPORT**

(Among registered voters)

	Obama Voters		McCain Voters	
	Now	9/8	Now	9/8
Enthusiastic	61%	53%	47%	42%
With reservations	23	35	37	47
Party nominee	8	8	6	2
Dislike other candidate	5	3	10	8

Obama's edge is also due in part to winning independents, a key swing group with whom he holds a 5-point lead. Independents continue to be more likely than partisans to say their minds could still change. They favored Obama in late August, McCain just after the Republican convention, and have returned to Obama.

Obama has made gains with women, and white women in particular. He now leads among women and runs even with McCain among white women. McCain led among white women after the Republican convention.

Obama is a little weaker in his own party (getting 83% of Democrats) than McCain is among Republicans (86%).

**VOTE FOR PRESIDENT: DEMOGRAPHICS**

(Among registered voters)

	Now		9/8/08	
	Obama	McCain	Obama	McCain
All	48%	43	44%	46
Republicans	6%	86	7%	88
Democrats	83%	10	88%	6
Independents	46%	41	29%	55
Men	42%	48	46%	46
Women	54%	38	42%	47
Whites	42%	50	37%	52
White men	36%	54	40%	52
White women	47%	45	34%	53

Prior to the political conventions both candidates were competitive among white women, and neither held a statistically significant lead. Only in the instance after the Republican convention did McCain open up a lead among white women.

**CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT**

(Among White Women Voters)

	Now	9/8/08	9/1/08	8/20/08	8/6/08
		Post-Rep Convention	Post-Dem* Convention	Pre- Conventions	Early August
Obama	47%	34%	43%	38%	38%
McCain	45	53	43	43	42
Undecided	7	12	10	15	17

\*This poll was conducted after the selection of Sarah Palin as John McCain's running mate.

McCain has closed the expectations gap a little. 45% of voters think Obama will eventually win the Presidency, and 38% believe McCain will. In August 48% thought Obama would win and 34% thought McCain would. Democrats remain optimistic about Obama, and Republicans about McCain.

The Obama campaign has tried to link John McCain to George W. Bush - and the President's disapproval rating is now at 68%, the highest of his administration.

46% believe McCain's policies would generally continue in the same direction as George W. Bush's. This perception has gone up a bit lately to where it was before the conventions.

**WOULD JOHN MCCAIN..**

(Among registered voters)

	Now	9/8/08	8/08
Continue Bush's policies	46%	42%	47%
Switch to more conservative policies	22	30	20
Switch to less conservative policies	26	20	24

**CANDIDATE QUALITIES**

Both Obama and McCain are now vying for the mantle of "change agent," but currently Barack Obama clearly wins that title. By over two to one, voters think Obama would bring real change to Washington in the way things are done. McCain, with his many years in Congress, is not seen as bringing change; a majority of voters think he would not do so, while just 37% think he would.

**WOULD HE BRING ABOUT REAL CHANGE IN WASHINGTON?**

(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	7/15/08	Now	7/15/08
Yes	65%	58%	37%	28%
No	29	35	59	65

The differing views of the two candidates are driven largely by the differing views held by independent voters. More than eight in 10 Democrats think Obama would bring real change to Washington, and 71% of Republicans say the same for John McCain. But among independents, 61% think Obama would bring change, while about the same percentage thinks McCain would not.

**WOULD HE BRING ABOUT REAL CHANGE IN WASHINGTON?**

(Among independent voters)

	Obama	McCain
Yes	61%	35%
No	31	58

This data underscores the importance voters are placing on change in this election, driven by low presidential approval ratings and economic worries. By a large margin, voters who view each candidate as bringing about change say they support that candidate for president. 84% of voters who think McCain would bring change to Washington will vote for him in November, and 68% of voters who think Obama will do so support him.

Immediately after the Republican convention, and with Sarah Palin's name included in the question, more voters felt that the Republican ticket would bring about change.

Neither candidate is viewed by most voters as outside the mainstream for their party. Voters are divided as to whether Obama is a different kind of Democrat or a typical one -- about the same way they viewed Bill Clinton in 1994 (who was president at the time this question was asked). John Kerry was much more likely to be seen as a typical Democrat when he ran for president in 2004.

**IS BARACK OBAMA A DIFFERENT KIND OF DEMOCRAT?**

(Among registered voters)

	Obama	Kerry	Clinton
	Now	7/2004	10/1994
Different	47%	30%	47%
Typical	48	55	44

Despite going against his party's position in the past on issues such as immigration reform, a majority of voters see McCain as a typical Republican -- just 40% think he is a different kind of Republican. That's not too much different than the way voters saw George W. Bush in 2000.

**IS JOHN MCCAIN A DIFFERENT KIND OF REPUBLICAN?**

(Among registered voters)

	McCain	Bush
	Now	8/2000
Different	40%	35%
Typical	57	52

Views of the two candidates on this measure are highly partisan. But independents are divided on both candidates, with about half saying each is a different kind of Democrat or Republican.

The two candidates retain the strengths and weaknesses each has held for some time: McCain is viewed as better prepared and a more effective commander-in-chief, while more voters relate to Obama and feel he understands them. Obama has a very small edge on sharing voters' values, and similar percentages think each candidate has explained what he would do as president and that each says what he believes rather than what people want to hear. Obama has risen on a few measures (says what he believes, has made it clear what he would do, and is prepared for the presidency), while McCain has not.

**CANDIDATE QUALITIES**  
(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	9/8/08	Now	9/8/08
<b>OBAMA STRENGTHS:</b>				
Can you relate to him?				
Yes	57%	57%	47%	45%
No	40	40	51	52
Does he understand your needs and problems?				
Yes	60%	61%	48%	51%
No	33	33	47	43
Would make U.S. image in world:				
Better	55%	52%*	26%	24%*
Worse	15	17	25	22
No effect	26	25	46	47
<b>MCCAIN STRENGTHS:</b>				
Is he prepared to be president?				
Yes	48%	42%	71%	76%
No	46	52	24	19
Effective Commander-in-chief?				
Very likely	26%	25%	52%	55%
Somewhat likely	35	34	27	27
Not likely	37	40	20	17
<b>CANDIDATES ARE SIMILAR ON:</b>				
Does he share Americans' values?				
Yes	66%	63%*	61%	63%*
No	27	31	33	30
Does he say what he believes?				
Yes	51%	46%*	52%	51%*
No	46	51	45	45
Has he made it clear what he would do?				
Yes	52%	45%	52%	50%
No	44	52	42	44

\* 8/20/2008

Views of independents are similar. Majorities think Obama understands them, and 53% can relate to Obama. More think McCain is prepared for the presidency than think Obama is. About half thinks neither has clearly explained what he would do as president.

Overall opinions of the two candidates have not changed much since earlier this month, and are remarkably similar. Just under half have a favorable opinion of each candidate, and slightly fewer are unfavorable. Now, about one in 5 has not formed an opinion of each.

**OPINION OF THE CANDIDATES**

(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	9/8/08	Now	9/8/08
Favorable	45%	44%	44%	46%
Unfavorable	35	37	37	37
No opinion/Don't know	19	19	19	17

Independent voters' views of each candidate are more positive than negative. 41% have a favorable impression of Obama (with 31% unfavorable), while 43% are favorable about McCain (and 27% are unfavorable).

**THE AGE ISSUE**

Each candidate's age seems to work for him rather than against him. More than half the voters see Obama's youth as an asset that would help him have fresh new ideas, while just a quarter think his relative youth makes him too inexperienced.

**DOES OBAMA'S AGE ...**

(Among registered voters)

	Now	07/2008
Help him have fresh ideas	58%	53%
Make him too inexperienced	24	26

Similarly, more than half of voters - 54% -- see McCain's age as an asset, up from the 45% who thought so in July. A third think his age would make it too difficult for him to do the work the presidency requires, a slightly larger number than view Obama's age as a negative.

**DOES MCCAIN'S AGE ...**

(Among registered voters)

	Now	07/2008
Make him experienced	54%	45%
Make the job too difficult	31	37

Views of independent voters are about the same as those of voters overall.

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1133 adults nationwide, including 1004 registered voters, interviewed by telephone September 12-16, 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 registered voters could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL  
 The Presidential Race  
 September 12-16, 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 ****				Sep08a
	Total	**** Party ID ****			
	%	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	%
A lot	63	64	65	57	44
Some	30	26	30	37	48
Not much	6	9	5	6	7
No attention so far	1	1	0	0	1

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	45	11	75	41	44
Not favorable	35	71	10	31	37
Undecided	16	15	11	22	17
Haven't heard enough	3	2	3	4	2
Refused	1	1	1	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	44	84	12	43	46
Not favorable	37	5	69	27	37
Undecided	16	7	17	24	16
Haven't heard enough	3	3	1	4	1
Refused	0	1	1	2	0

q4 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

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	48	6	83	46	49	44
McCain/Palin	43	86	10	41	44	46
Other (Vol.)	1	0	1	2	1	1
Won't vote (Vol.)	1	0	1	1	0	0
Depends (Vol.)/Undecided	7	6	6	9	6	9
Refused	0	2	0	1	0	0

q6 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

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

\*\*\*\*\* DECIDED VOTERS \*\*\*\*\*

	Total	Obama	McCain	Sep08a
	%	Voters	Voters	%
	%	%	%	%
Mind made up	80	79	81	78
Too early to say for sure	19	18	19	22
DK/NA	1	3	0	0

q8 How would you describe your feelings about Obama/McCain as the Democratic/Republican 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 McCain/Obama?

Enthusiastic	54	61	47	48
With reservations	30	23	37	41
Party nominee	7	8	6	5
Dislike other candidate	7	5	10	6
DK/NA	2	3	0	0

q9 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, John McCain for President and Sarah Palin for Vice-President, the Republicans, Bob Barr for President and Wayne Allyn Root for Vice-President, the Libertarians, and Ralph Nader for President and Matt Gonzalez for Vice President, would you vote for Barack Obama and Joe Biden, John McCain and Sarah Palin, Bob Barr and Wayne Allyn Root, or Ralph Nader and Matt Gonzalez?

\*\*\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*\*\*

	Total	*** Party ID ***			Likely
		Rep	Dem	Ind	Voters
	%	%	%	%	%
Obama/Biden	48	8	82	45	49
McCain/Palin	42	86	11	37	43
Barr/Root	1	0	0	4	1
Nader/Gonzalez	2	1	2	4	2
Other (Vol.)	0	1	0	0	0
Won't vote (vol.)	0	0	1	1	0
Depends (vol)/Undecided	5	3	4	7	4
Refused	2	1	0	2	1

q10 Regardless of how you intend to vote for President in 2008, who do you expect to finally win the 2008 presidential election -- John McCain or Barack Obama?

					Aug08a
John McCain	38	68	17	34	34
Barack Obama	45	18	65	47	48
Depends (vol.)	3	2	3	4	2
DK/NA	14	12	15	15	16

q11 If the 2008 election for U.S. House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate in your district?

\*\*\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*\*\*

	*** Party ID ***				Apr08b
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Republican	31	78	2	20	32
Democratic	51	7	92	41	50
Other (Vol.)	0	1	0	1	0
Won't vote (Vol.)	0	0	0	1	0
Depends (Vol.)	10	8	3	23	7
DK/NA	8	6	3	14	11

q12 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q13 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?

	*** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ***				Sep08a
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
Approve	27	62	6	20	29
Disapprove	68	30	92	73	64
DK/NA	5	8	2	7	7

q14-q20 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q21 How important is it that a President be someone you can relate to -- is it very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

	*** REGISTERED VOTERS ***			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
Very important	44	39	51	40
Somewhat important	38	43	31	41
Not very important	12	13	11	11
Not at all important	6	5	6	7
DK/NA	0	0	1	1

q22-q23 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q24 Do you think Barack Obama understands the needs and problems of people like yourself?

Yes	60	30	87	57	61
No	33	61	10	35	33
DK/NA	7	9	3	8	6

q25-q26 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q27 Do you think Barack Obama has made it clear what he would do as President, or hasn't he done that yet?

Has	52	29	75	46	45
Has not	44	66	22	51	52
DK/NA	4	5	3	3	3

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

\*\*\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*\*\*

	Total	*** Party ID ***			Aug08a
		Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	66	39	86	68	63
No	27	52	9	24	31
DK/NA	7	9	5	8	6

q29 Do you think Barack Obama has prepared himself well enough for the job of President, or hasn't he?

					Sep08a
Has prepared	48	15	74	46	42
Has not prepared	46	82	19	46	52
DK/NA	6	3	7	8	6

q30 Do you think Barack Obama says what he believes most of the time, or does he say what he thinks people want to hear?

					Aug08a
Yes, says what he believes	51	23	75	47	46
No, says what people want	46	74	22	49	51
DK/NA	3	3	3	4	3

q31 Do you think John McCain understands the needs and problems of people like yourself?

					Sep08a
Yes	48	84	19	48	51
No	47	13	75	45	43
DK/NA	5	3	6	7	6

q32-q33 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q34 Do you think John McCain has made it clear what he would do as President, or hasn't he done that yet?

Has	52	72	40	47	50
Has not	42	23	52	50	44
DK/NA	6	5	8	3	6

q35 Do you think John McCain shares the values most Americans try to live by, or doesn't he?

					Aug08a
Yes	61	89	36	64	63
No	33	7	56	27	30
DK/NA	6	4	8	9	7

q36 Do you think John McCain has prepared himself well enough for the job of President, or hasn't he?

\*\*\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*\*\*

	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep08a
	%	%	%	%	%
Has prepared	71	91	51	76	76
Has not prepared	24	8	40	19	19
DK/NA	5	1	9	5	5

q37 Do you think John McCain says what he believes most of the time, or does he say what he thinks people want to hear?

					Aug08a
Yes, says what he believes	52	81	25	58	51
No, says what people want	45	17	71	38	45
DK/NA	3	2	4	4	4

q38 Regardless of how you intend to vote, how likely do you think it is that Barack Obama would be an effective commander-in-chief of the nation's military -- would you say it is very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

					Sep08a
Very likely	26	4	45	23	25
Somewhat likely	35	22	43	38	34
Not too likely	20	36	7	23	24
Not at all likely	17	37	4	15	16
DK/NA	2	1	1	1	1

q39 Do you think Barack Obama is someone you can relate to, or not?

Yes	57	26	83	53	57
No	40	71	15	42	40
Don't know/No answer	3	3	2	5	3

q40 If he were elected President, do you think Barack Obama would bring about real change in the way things are done in Washington, or wouldn't he do that?

					Jul08a
Would	65	43	86	61	58
Would not	29	51	10	31	35
DK/NA	6	6	4	8	7

q41 If Barack Obama is elected president, do you think that will make the United States' image in the world better, make it worse, or will it have no effect on the United States' image in the world?

					Aug08a
Better	55	25	79	52	52
Worse	15	30	3	13	17
No effect	26	39	15	27	25
DK/NA	4	6	3	8	6

q42 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q43 Do you think Barack Obama is a different kind of Democrat, or do you think he is a typical Democrat?

\*\*\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*\*\*

	Total	*** Party ID ***		
		Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Different	47	33	59	46
Typical	48	62	37	48
DK/NA	5	5	4	6

q44 Regardless of how you intend to vote, how likely do you think it is that John McCain would be an effective commander-in-chief of the nation's military -- would you say it is very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep08a
					%
Very likely	52	83	24	57	55
Somewhat likely	27	13	35	32	27
Not too likely	10	3	21	4	12
Not at all likely	10	1	18	7	5
DK/NA	1	0	2	0	1

q45 Do you think John McCain is someone you can relate to, or not?

Yes	47	80	20	47	45
No	51	18	77	49	52
Don't know/No answer	2	2	3	4	3

q46 If he were elected President, do you think John McCain would bring about real change in the way things are done in Washington, or wouldn't he do that?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jul08a
					%
Would	37	71	11	35	28
Would not	59	24	86	58	65
DK/NA	4	5	3	7	7

q47 If John McCain is elected president, do you think that will make the United States' image in the world better, make it worse, or will it have no effect on the United States' image in the world?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Aug08a
					%
Better	26	46	9	28	24
Worse	25	4	46	18	22
No effect	46	46	42	50	47
DK/NA	3	4	3	4	7

q48 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q49 Do you think John McCain is a different kind of Republican, or do you think he is a typical Republican?

Different	40	63	15	48
Typical	57	34	81	48
DK/NA	3	3	4	4

q50-q61 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q62 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 \*\*\*\*

	Total %	*** Party ID ***			Sep08a %
		Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	
Continue Bush policies	46	18	72	38	42
Change to more conservative	22	39	11	20	30
Change to less conservative	26	37	12	33	20
Don't know/No answer	6	6	5	9	8

q63 If elected, Barack Obama would be 47 years old when he assumes office. Do you think his being 47 years old might make him too inexperienced to do the work the presidency requires, or do you think his age helps him have the fresh new ideas to do a good job as president?

	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	Jul08b
					%
Age hurts	24	44	9	21	26
Age helps	58	29	86	51	53
Wouldn't matter (Vol.)	14	19	4	23	16
Don't know/No answer	4	8	1	5	5

q64 If elected, John McCain would be 72 years old when he assumes office. Do you think his being 72 years old might make it too difficult for him to do the work the presidency requires, or do you think his age helps him have the experience and wisdom to do a good job as president?

Age makes job too difficult	31	11	49	29	37
Age means experience	54	77	35	55	45
Wouldn't matter (Vol.)	11	10	11	12	14
Don't know/No answer	4	2	5	4	4

UNWEIGHTED

WEIGHTED

Total Respondents	1133	
Republicans - Total	326	322
Democrats - Total	437	437
Independents - Total	370	374
Registered Voters	1004	
Republicans - Reg. Voters	305	298
Democrats - Reg. Voters	402	382
Independents - Reg. Voters	297	262