



CBS NEWS POLL
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WHERE THE RACE STANDS AFTER THE FIRST DEBATE
September 27-30, 2008

The Democratic ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden leads Republicans John McCain and Sarah Palin by nine percentage points among registered voters -- higher than Obama's lead last week, before Friday's first presidential debate. Obama's increased lead may be due to several factors: Republican President George W. Bush's very low approval rating (22% in this poll, the lowest of his presidency), concerns about the financial crisis facing the country, and perceptions that Obama would better manage the economy than John McCain.

CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT

(Among registered voters)

	Now	9/25/08	9/17/08
Obama	49%	47%	48%
McCain	40	42	43
Undecided	7	8	7

Far more voters think Obama won the first presidential debate than say McCain did, and enthusiasm among Obama's supporters has risen.

The race is similar among likely voters; Obama has a nine-point lead among that group.

CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT

Likely voters Registered voters

Obama	50%	49%
McCain	41	40
Undecided	6	7

About one in four voters remains uncommitted - they either say they could still change their minds about their candidate, or are undecided entirely. That percentage has not changed much in the past few weeks.

Obama's voters continue to be more enthusiastic than McCain's voters about their candidate. And their enthusiasm has increased in the last week, perhaps in part because of the debate.

DESCRIBE YOUR SUPPORT

(Among registered voters)

	Obama Voters		McCain Voters	
	Now	9/25	Now	9/25
Enthusiastic	61%	53%	36%	36%
With reservations	29	33	47	49
Party nominee	5	8	6	6
Dislike other candidate	4	4	10	7

Majorities of voters for each candidate say they have made up their minds about who to vote for, but McCain's support in this poll appears softer than Obama's. 21% of McCain's voters say it is too soon to say for sure who they will vote for, compared to 14% of Obama's voters.

IS YOUR MIND MADE UP?

(Among registered voters)

	Obama voters		McCain voters	
	Now	9/25	Now	9/25
Yes	86%	77%	78%	74%
No, too soon	14	23	21	26

THE ECONOMY AND THE RACE

The economic events of the past week, along with rising concerns about the economy among voters, may have contributed to Obama's current lead in this poll. Nearly nine in 10 voters rate the economy negatively now, including half who say it is very bad, and three quarters say it is getting worse. By a large margin, Obama wins the votes of those who say the economy is now very bad.

Obama has a clear edge over McCain on managing the economy - although relatively few voters say they are very confident in either candidate.

CONFIDENCE IN HANDLING THE ECONOMY

(Among registered voters)

	Obama	McCain
Very confident	26%	15%
Somewhat confident	35	34
Not too/at all confident	39	50

Obama gets higher marks than McCain for his handling of the financial crisis (though neither gets majority approval). Most voters think McCain's attempts last week to affect the Congressional negotiations made no impact on them.

APPROVE OF HANDLING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

(Among registered voters)

	Obama	McCain
Approve	44%	35%
Disapprove	32	46

ASSESSING THE FIRST DEBATE

According to all registered voters, Barack Obama won last Friday's presidential debate, the first in a series of three. Even more debate watchers, 51%, said the Democratic candidate did the better job.

WHO WON THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE?

(Among registered voters)

	All	Watchers
Obama	41%	51%
McCain	21	26
Tie (vol.)	14	19

While most voters said the debate did not affect their opinions of either candidate, more than twice as many said that the debate improved their opinion of Obama as said it improved their opinion of McCain. Many of those who say the debate improved their image of a candidate are supporting that candidate, although it is not clear whether the debate moved them.

DID DEBATE CHANGE YOUR OPINION OF THE CANDIDATE?

(Among registered voters who watched debate)

	Obama	McCain
Better	28%	13%
Worse	6	17
No change	66	69

OBAMA VS. MCCAIN ON QUALITIES: LITTLE CHANGE SINCE THE DEBATE

The debate has done little to change voters' perceptions of Obama and McCain on many candidate characteristics.

- Obama continues to have an advantage on handling the economy, but a number of voters are not confident in either candidate's ability to take on the country's top issue.
- McCain has an edge on Iraq; more are very confident that he would make the right decisions on that issue.

CONFIDENT...WOULD MAKE RIGHT DECISIONS ON..

(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	9/25	Now	9/25
The Economy				
Very confident	26%	29%	15%	17%
Somewhat confident	35	35	34	38
Not confident	39	34	50	45
Iraq				
Very confident	25%	26%	31%	30%
Somewhat confident	28	30	23	28
Not confident	46	42	45	41

- McCain continues to be seen as the candidate more likely to be an effective commander-in-chief, but 31% now say Obama is "very likely" to be an effective commander-in-chief -- the highest number he has seen in CBS News Polls.

EFFECTIVE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	9/25	Now	9/25
Very likely	31%	27%	42%	48%
Somewhat likely	30	35	31	29
Not likely	37	36	25	19

Each candidate has the same weaknesses he did before last week's debate.

- Obama has a clear advantage on empathy: 67% say Obama understands their needs and problems; fewer - 46% - think McCain does.
- More still see McCain as being prepared to be President: six in 10 think he is prepared for the job. But 52% now say Obama is prepared, up six points from before the debate.

OBAMA AND MCCAIN QUALITIES

(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	9/25	Now	9/25
Is he prepared to be president?				
Yes	52%	46%	60%	62%
No	43	45	34	30
Does he understand your needs and problems?				
Yes	67%	66%	46%	49%
No	28	27	49	45

- Voters continue to think McCain cares more about large corporations than ordinary people, while they think Obama would favor people over corporations.

CARES MORE ABOUT PROTECTING...

(Among registered voters)

	Obama		McCain	
	Now	9/25	Now	9/25
Ordinary people	73%	70%	31%	32%
Large corporations	13	16	57	52

- Each candidate is perceived as having a different approach to decision-making. Voters see Obama as more likely to not act quickly enough, while McCain is perceived as more likely to act too quickly.

WHEN THE CANDIDATES MAKE DECISIONS, DO THEY ...?

(Among registered voters)

	Obama	McCain
Act too quickly	23%	45%
Not quickly enough	41	29
Right speed (vol.)	13	7
Don't know	23	19

OVERALL VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATES

Overall opinions of Obama are a bit more positive than they were last week, while views of McCain have become more negative. 48% of voters now have a favorable opinion of Obama - his highest to date. As for McCain, more voters (42%) now have an unfavorable opinion of the Republican nominee than a favorable one (39%). The last time this occurred was in July.

OPINION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

(Among registered voters)

	Obama			McCain		
	Now	9/25	9/17/08	Now	9/25	9/17/08
Favorable	48%	43%	45%	39%	38%	44%
Unfavorable	32	30	35	42	35	37
No opinion/Don't know	20	26	19	19	27	19

OBAMA VS. MCCAIN: DEMOGRAPHICS

Obama is leading among women and moderates. He now has the support of about two in three voters who supported Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination.

McCain is leading among white voters (as he has been), including white men. White Catholics and white evangelicals also support McCain, as do conservatives.

Obama has a small lead among independents in this poll. Last week, this group narrowly backed McCain.

The race is close among men (McCain had a 5-point lead among them last week) and among white women.

VOTE FOR PRESIDENT: DEMOGRAPHICS

(Among registered voters)

	-- NOW --		-- 9/25 --	
	Obama	McCain	Obama	McCain
All	49%	40	47%	42
Men	47%	43	45%	49
Women	51%	37	49%	36
Republicans	12%	82	9%	82
Democrats	85%	8	83%	9
Independents	43%	38	39%	43
Liberal	76%	14	74%	19
Moderate	55%	32	56%	32
Conservative	22%	69	20%	69
Clinton supporters	64%	21	61%	24
Whites	40%	48	41%	49
White men	37%	53	38%	55
White women	43%	44	43%	43
White Catholics	40%	49	41%	48
Working class whites (income <\$50K + No college degree)	33%	49	37%	46
Whites w/o a coll. degree	37%	50	37%	51
Whites w/ income < \$50K	37%	47	40%	43
White Evangelicals	19%	69	20%	69

Support for each candidate among their party's base groups (liberals and Democrats for Obama, conservatives, evangelicals and Republicans for McCain) has remained consistent. Independent voters have divided almost evenly between the two candidates since the conventions - except for a brief time immediately following the Republican Convention when McCain led among independents by nearly two to one.

CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT

(Among registered voters who are independents)

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

VIEWS OF THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Opinions of Palin are divided now: 32% view her favorably, but 33% view her unfavorably. The vice presidential nominee enjoyed an eight point net positive rating last week. Biden's ratings have not changed much in the last week, and are generally positive.

OPINIONS OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

(Among registered voters)

	Now	Biden		Palin		
		9/25	9/17	Now	9/25	9/17
Favorable	34%	33%	38%	32%	37%	40%
Unfavorable	19	17	17	33	29	30
Undecided/Don't know	46	50	45	36	32	30

Women's views of Palin have changed since the Republican convention. More women now view the Republican vice presidential nominee unfavorably than favorably.

WOMEN'S VIEWS OF SARAH PALIN

(Among registered voters)

	Now	9/25	9/17	9/8
Favorable	30%	34%	36%	47%
Unfavorable	34	33	32	19
Undecided/Don't know	36	32	32	33

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,257 adults nationwide, including 1,113 registered voters, interviewed by telephone September 27-30, 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 could be plus or minus three percentage points, and plus or minus three points for the sample of registered voters. The error for subgroups is higher.

CBS News Poll

WHERE THE RACE STANDS: AFTER THE FIRST DEBATE

September 27-30, 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 **

	Total %	*** Party ID ***			Sep08c %
		Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	
A lot	59	59	61	56	63
Some	35	37	31	38	28
Not much	4	2	5	4	7
No attention so far	2	2	2	1	2
DK/NA	0	0	1	1	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	48	15	79	42	43
Not favorable	32	65	6	29	30
Undecided	17	19	13	21	22
Haven't heard enough	3	1	1	6	4
Refused	0	0	1	2	1

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	39	75	10	37	38
Not favorable	42	11	75	33	35
Undecided	15	12	11	22	23
Haven't heard enough	4	1	3	6	4
Refused	0	1	1	2	1

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	49	12	85	43	50	47
McCain/Palin	40	82	8	38	41	42
Other (Vol.)	1	0	0	2	1	1
Won't vote (Vol.)	0	0	0	1	0	1
Depends (Vol.)/Undecided	7	4	5	13	6	8
Refused	3	2	2	3	2	1

q6 FOR FUTURE RELEASE

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

	***** DECIDED VOTERS *****			
	Total	Obama	McCain	Sep08c
	%	%	%	%
Mind made up	82	86	78	75
Too early to say for sure	18	14	21	25
DK/NA	0	0	1	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	50	61	36	45
With reservations	37	29	47	41
Party nominee	5	5	6	7
Dislike other candidate	6	4	10	6
DK/NA	2	1	1	1

q9-18 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q19 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 **				Sep08c
	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	%
	%	%	%	%	%
Favorable	34	14	59	24	33
Not favorable	19	37	5	19	17
Undecided	14	15	12	16	18
Haven't heard enough	32	33	24	41	32
Refused	1	1	0	0	0

q20 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	32	66	8	26	37
Not favorable	33	5	59	29	29
Undecided	15	14	12	18	14
Haven't heard enough	21	14	21	27	18
Refused	0	1	0	0	2

q21 Do you think Barack Obama does or does not understand the needs and problems of people like yourself?

Yes, does	67	46	88	64	66
No, does not	28	48	9	32	27
DK/NA	5	6	3	4	7

q22 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?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **

	*** Party ID ***				Sep08c
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Very confident	26	7	49	17	29
Somewhat confident	35	20	40	43	35
Not too confident	24	41	7	26	20
Not at all confident	15	30	3	13	14
DK/NA	0	2	1	1	2

q23 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?

Very confident	25	5	47	19	26
Somewhat confident	28	13	35	33	30
Not too confident	20	26	11	23	24
Not at all confident	26	54	5	24	18
DK/NA	1	2	2	1	2

q24 Do you think Barack Obama has prepared himself well enough for the job of President, or hasn't he?

Has prepared	52	20	81	48	46
Has not prepared	43	76	14	45	45
DK/NA	5	4	5	7	9

q25 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?

Very likely	31	8	54	26	27
Somewhat likely	30	22	34	34	35
Not very likely	21	38	7	21	20
Not at all likely	16	31	3	16	16
DK/NA	2	1	2	3	2

q26 Do you think Barack Obama cares more about protecting the interests of ordinary working people or cares more about protecting the interests of large corporations?

Ordinary people	73	50	92	72	70
Large corporations	13	23	4	16	16
Both (vol.)	2	4	1	1	3
Neither (vol.)	3	6	0	3	3
DK/NA	9	17	3	8	8

q27 From what you know, when Barack Obama makes decisions, do you think he is more likely to act too quickly or is he more likely not to act quickly enough?

Acts too quickly	23	27	21	23
Not quickly enough	41	47	30	47
Right speed (VOL)	13	6	22	9
DK/NA	23	20	27	21

q28-29 BLANK

q30 Do you think John McCain does or does not understand the needs and problems of people like yourself?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep08c
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, does	46	77	20	48	49
No, does not	49	19	76	47	45
DK/NA	5	4	4	5	6

q31 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	31	3	14	17
Somewhat confident	34	53	13	39	38
Not too confident	26	11	40	24	25
Not at all confident	24	5	43	22	20
DK/NA	1	0	1	1	0

q32 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	31	63	7	29	30
Somewhat confident	23	27	16	27	28
Not too confident	19	4	29	21	20
Not at all confident	26	5	47	21	21
DK/NA	1	1	1	2	1

q33 Do you think John McCain has prepared himself well enough for the job of President, or hasn't he?

Has prepared	60	82	36	67	62
Has not prepared	34	12	57	27	30
DK/NA	6	6	7	6	8

q34 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?

Very likely	42	72	16	44	48
Somewhat likely	31	20	39	33	29
Not very likely	13	2	22	14	11
Not at all likely	12	5	21	8	8
DK/NA	2	1	2	1	4

q35 Do you think John McCain cares more about protecting the interests of ordinary working people or cares more about protecting the interests of large corporations?

Ordinary people	31	58	8	34	32
Large corporations	57	26	84	54	52
Both (vol.)	3	4	1	4	5
Neither (vol.)	1	1	0	1	1
DK	8	11	7	7	10

q36 From what you know, when John McCain makes decisions, do you think he is more likely to act too quickly or is he more likely not to act quickly enough?

** REGISTERED VOTERS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Acts too quickly	45	37	49	50
Not quickly enough	29	22	35	28
Right speed (VOL.)	7	18	2	4
DK/NA	19	23	14	18

q37-38 BLANK

q39-41 FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q42-65 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q52 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the current economic crisis?

Approve	44	23	66	37
Disapprove	32	51	12	37
DK/NA	24	26	22	26

q53 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q54 Do you approve or disapprove of the way John McCain is handling the current economic crisis?

Approve	35	55	15	38
Disapprove	46	26	67	42
DK/NA	19	19	18	20

q55-q65 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q66 Which candidate do you think did the best job, or won, Friday night's presidential debate?

Obama	41	16	64	38
McCain	21	40	6	20
Tie/Both Equal (vol.)	14	17	10	17
Didn't watch (Vol.)	19	23	15	20
DK/NA	5	4	5	5

q67 Since Friday's debate, has your opinion of John McCain changed for the better, changed for the worse, or not changed?

**** DEBATE WATCHERS ****

Changed for the better	13	20	6	15
Changed for the worse	17	6	26	17
Not changed	69	73	67	68
DK/NA	1	1	0	0

q68 Since Friday's debate, has your opinion of Barack Obama changed for the better, changed for the worse, or not changed?

**** DEBATE WATCHERS ****

	*** Party ID ***			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Changed for the better	28	12	44	22
Changed for the worse	6	11	2	7
Not changed	66	77	54	70
DK/NA	0	0	0	1

q73 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q74 Did you watch or listen to the presidential debate between Barack Obama and John McCain on Friday, September 26th?

Watched	66	68	68	63
Did not watch	34	32	32	37

	UNWEIGHTED	WEIGHTED
Total Respondents	1257	
Registered Voters	1113	
Republicans - Reg. Voters	362	312
Democrats - Reg. Voters	396	380
Independents - Reg. Voters	355	328
Effective Likely Voters		769

*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.