



REACTIONS TO SEN. OBAMA'S SPEECH AND THE REV. WRIGHT CONTROVERSY
March 20, 2008

Most voters following the events regarding Senator Barack Obama and Rev. Jeremiah Wright think Obama's speech was a success. Most agree with his thoughts on race, and think he did a good job explaining his relationship with Rev. Wright. However, the percentage who thinks he would unite the country has dropped since late February.

For this poll, CBS News re-interviewed voters who were first surveyed between March 15th and 18th, 2008, in the midst of the Wright controversy and mostly before Obama's speech on race, to gauge their reactions to Tuesday's speech and the continuing controversy over Wright's comments.

69% of voters who have heard or read about Obama's speech think he did a good job addressing the issue of race relations.

OBAMA'S SPEECH: GOOD OR POOR JOB ADDRESSING RACE RELATIONS?

(Among voters following the events)

Table with 2 columns: Response, Percentage. Rows: Good job (69%), Poor job (20)

Moreover, most voters following the speech agree with the ideas on race that Obama expressed in his speech. Three in four Democrats agree with Obama's sentiments on race, though fewer Republicans do.

AGREE WITH OBAMA'S VIEWS ON RACE RELATIONS IN U.S.?

(Among voters following the events)

Table with 5 columns: Response, All, Dems, Reps, Inds. Rows: Agree (63%, 73%, 43%, 65%), Disagree (25%, 16%, 39%, 25%)

71% of voters following the speech think Obama did a good job explaining his relationship with Rev. Wright.

OBAMA'S SPEECH: GOOD OR POOR JOB EXPLAINING WRIGHT?

(Among voters following the events)

Table with 2 columns: Response, Percentage. Rows: Good job (71%), Poor job (24)

The earlier CBS News Poll, conducted while the controversy about Rev. Wright was occurring, found an increase in Obama's unfavorable ratings between February and March. Today's poll shows that voters' opinions of Obama have not changed since then. Among the same group of voters interviewed before and after the speech, Obama's favorable ratings continue to outweigh his unfavorable ratings.

OPINIONS OF OBAMA

(Among registered voters)

	Now	3/15-18/08
Favorable	43%	44%
Unfavorable	30	28
Undecided/ Haven't heard	26	28

Despite the positive marks Obama receives for his speech, views of his ability to unite the country have declined compared to a CBS News/New York Times Poll conducted in February. Now, 52% of voters say he would unite the country if he becomes president; in February, before the March 4th primaries, 67% thought he would do that.

WOULD BARACK OBAMA UNITE THE COUNTRY?

(Among registered voters)

	Now	2/2008
Yes	52%	67%
No	35	25

As for the impact on Obama's electoral fortunes, most voters say these recent events will make no difference in their vote. Among those who say it will matter, just as many say they are less likely to vote for Obama as say they are more likely to. Nearly a quarter of Democrats say the speech has made them more likely to back Obama, while a similar number of Republicans say they are less likely to.

HAVE THESE EVENTS MADE YOU MORE OR LESS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR OBAMA?

(Among voters following the events)

	All	Dems	Reps	Inds
More likely	14%	22%	5%	11%
Less likely	14	8	25	13
No difference	70	68	69	75

Earlier this week, the CBS News Poll asked voters whom they would support in a general election match-up between Obama and Senator John McCain. When these voters were re-interviewed last night, seven in 10 Obama supporters said the speech and week's events had not made a difference in whether they were likely to vote for Obama. And a quarter said they were more likely to back him.

EVENTS MADE YOU MORE OR LESS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR OBAMA?

(Among voters who supported Obama over McCain before speech)

More likely to vote for Obama now	23%
Less likely	6
No difference	69

Overall, the speech and events surrounding the matter have found a wide audience: most voters say they have heard or read some about these events, including 42% who have heard a lot about it.

HEARD ABOUT CONTROVERSY AND SPEECH?

(Among registered voters)

A lot	42%
Some	30
Not much	24
None	4

Interviews were conducted among 542 registered voters by telephone on March 20, 2008. These respondents were originally interviewed in a CBS News Poll conducted March 15 - 18, 2008. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus four percentage points.

CBS NEWS POLL
Reactions to Senator Obama's Speech
March 20, 2008

q1 How much have you heard or read about Barack Obama's relationship with Reverend Jeremiah Wright, who has been his minister, and Obama's speech on race relations this week -- a lot, some, or have you not heard much about it yet?

*** REGISTERED VOTERS ***

	%
A lot	42
Some	30
Not much	24
None (Vol.)	4

q2 Barack Obama gave a speech on Tuesday about his relationship with Reverend Jeremiah Wright and race relations in the U.S. In his speech, do you think Barack Obama did a good job or a poor job explaining his relationship with Reverend Jeremiah Wright?

REGISTERED VOTERS WHO HEARD ABOUT
REV. WRIGHT AND OBAMA'S SPEECH

Good job	71
Poor job	24
DK/NA	5

q3 In his speech, do you think Barack Obama did a good job or a poor job talking about race relations in the U.S.?

Good job	69
Poor job	20
DK/NA	11

q4 Do you mostly agree or mostly disagree with what Barack Obama said about race relations in his speech?

Agree	63
Disagree	25
DK/NA	12

q5 Have these events made you more likely to vote for Obama, less likely, or made no difference in whether or not you would vote for Obama?

More likely	14
Less likely	14
No difference	70
DK/NA	2

q6 Is your opinion of Barack Obama favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Barack Obama yet to have an opinion?

	*** REGISTERED VOTERS ****	March 15-18
	%	%
Favorable	43	44
Not favorable	30	28
Undecided	22	20
Haven't heard enough	4	8
Refused	1	0

q7 Regardless of how you intend to vote, do you think Barack Obama would be the kind of president who would be able to unite the country or wouldn't he be that kind of president?

		Feb. 20-24
Would unite country	52	67
Not that kind of president	35	25
DK/NA	13	8

	<u>Unweighted</u>	<u>Weighted</u>
Total Respondents (Registered Voters)	542	
Voters following speech and events	405	396