



**CBS NEWS POLL**  
**For Release: Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008**  
**3:00 PM (EST)**

**THE 2008 ELECTION: 1 DAY TO GO**

October 31 - November 2, 2008

On the eve of the 2008 presidential election, the CBS News Poll finds the Democratic ticket, Barack Obama and Joe Biden, still with a comfortable lead over the Republicans, John McCain and Sarah Palin. The Democrats hold a nine point advantage among likely voters, including those who lean toward a candidate. Only 5% remain undecided. Obama-Biden led McCain-Palin by 13 points in yesterday's poll.

**CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT**

(Among likely voters including leaners)

|              | Now | 11/2 | 11/1 | 10/30 |
|--------------|-----|------|------|-------|
| Obama-Biden  | 51% | 54%  | 54%  | 52%   |
| McCain-Palin | 42  | 41   | 41   | 41    |
| Undecided    | 5   | 4    | 4    | 6     |

There is evidence that Sarah Palin's presence on the Republican ticket has hurt McCain with some voters; she is the top reason voters give for having switched their support from McCain to Obama. But McCain also suffers from ties to his party and to an extremely unpopular Republican President: George W. Bush's 20% approval rating is the lowest recorded for any President, and a majority of voters think McCain would continue the current Administration's policies.

More than nine in 10 of each candidate's voters now say they have made up their minds about who to vote for and are not likely to change.

**IS YOUR MIND MADE UP?**

(Among likely voters with a candidate choice)

|              | Obama voters | McCain voters |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Yes          | 92%          | 94%           |
| No, too soon | 8            | 6             |

With one day to go, only 9% of likely voters are uncommitted - either they have not yet chosen a candidate, or their minds could still change. Nearly all of these uncommitted voters say they plan to vote. Only a few - about 4% of them - say they will probably not.

In the CBS News/New York Times Poll conducted in the final days before the 2004 election, about 10% of voters said they were uncommitted. At the same time in 2000, more -- 16% -- were uncommitted.

Today's uncommitted voters are mostly white, and more than half are age 45 or older. Just over half are men, and more live in the South

than in other regions. Nearly half describe themselves as moderate, and many are not partisan - four in 10 are independents. About one in five of them did not vote for President four years ago.

**PROFILE OF UNCOMMITTED VOTERS**

(Among likely uncommitted voters)

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Republican   | 20% |
| Democrat     | 30  |
| Independent  | 43  |
| Liberal      | 23% |
| Moderate     | 47  |
| Conservative | 27  |
| Age < 45     | 44% |
| Age 45+      | 57  |
| Northeast    | 26% |
| Midwest      | 28  |
| South        | 39  |
| West         | 7   |
| 2004 Vote    |     |
| Kerry        | 30% |
| Bush         | 35  |

One reason many people won't change their minds is that many of them have already cast their vote: 24% of all registered voters say they have voted absentee or at an early voting location.

The choice of Sarah Palin may have decreased voter support for John McCain. While more than four in five of each candidate's voters say they have not changed their mind in recent weeks about which candidate to support, 14% of Obama's voters say they used to support McCain at some point during the past few months.

The top reason given by those who switched from McCain to Obama: McCain's choice of Sarah Palin as his running mate (4%). 10% of McCain's voters say they once supported Obama; 2% say they switched from Obama because they don't trust him or because of his past associations.

**EVER SUPPORTED THE OTHER CANDIDATE?**

(Among likely voters)

|     | Obama<br>Voters | McCain<br>Voters |
|-----|-----------------|------------------|
| Yes | 14%             | 10%              |
| No  | 84              | 88               |

## JOHN McCAIN AND PRESIDENT BUSH

Voters think John McCain would continue the policies of George W. Bush -- and this is not a positive association in the minds of most Americans. In fact, voters are associating McCain's policies with the most unpopular president in polling history. Now only 20% approve of the job he is doing as president, the lowest of his presidency - while his disapproval rating of 72% matches his all-time high first reached last month.

|            |     | <b>BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL</b> |          |         |         |
|------------|-----|----------------------------|----------|---------|---------|
|            | Now | 10/30/08                   | 10/23/08 | 11/2004 | 10/2001 |
| Approve    | 20% | 22%                        | 22%      | 51%     | 90%     |
| Disapprove | 72  | 70                         | 72       | 44      | 5       |

More than half - 54% - of all voters think McCain, if elected, would continue Bush's policies. That rises to two in three voters among those who disapprove of the job the president is doing.

### WOULD McCAIN GENERALLY CONTINUE BUSH'S POLICIES AS PRESIDENT?

(Among registered voters)

|     | Now | 10/30 |
|-----|-----|-------|
| Yes | 54% | 53%   |
| No  | 35  | 41    |

After the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in 2001 President Bush enjoyed a record high approval rating of 90%, 70 points above the dismal rating he holds today. The last time a majority of Americans approved of the job he was doing was in November 2004, right after his reelection for a second term.

That 90% job approval in 2001 was the highest ever recorded for any sitting president, and his current rating is the lowest since Gallup began asking about presidential approval in 1938.

### LOWEST RATINGS OF PAST PRESIDENTS

|                                 | Approve    | Disapprove  |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>George W. Bush (11/2008)</b> | <b>20%</b> | <b>72</b>   |
| Harry Truman (2/1952)           | 22%        | 65 (Gallup) |
| Richard Nixon (8/1974)          | 24%        | 66 (Gallup) |
| Jimmy Carter (7/1979)           | 26%        | 56          |
| George H. Bush (7/1992)         | 31%        | 59          |
| Lyndon Johnson (8/1968)         | 35%        | 52 (Gallup) |
| Bill Clinton (9/1994)           | 36%        | 51          |
| Gerald Ford (1/1975)            | 37%        | 39 (Gallup) |
| Ronald Reagan (1/1983)          | 41%        | 47          |
| Dwight Eisenhower (3/1958)      | 48%        | 36 (Gallup) |
| Franklin Roosevelt (8/1938)     | 50%        | 44 (Gallup) |
| John F. Kennedy (11/1963)       | 58%        | 30 (Gallup) |

## STRENGTH OF SUPPORT

Obama's voters are more supportive of their candidate on all measures than McCain's voters are about him. More are enthusiastic, they like him more, and they are more excited about his candidacy.

69% of Obama's voters say they like him a great deal better than McCain. Fewer of McCain's voters (61%) like him a great deal better than Obama.

### COMPARED TO OPPONENT, LIKE CANDIDATE... (Among likely voters including leaners)

|                      | Obama<br>Voters | McCain<br>Voters |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| A great deal better  | 69%             | 61%              |
| Somewhat better      | 20              | 27               |
| Only a little better | 10              | 11               |

Obama's voters continue to be much more enthusiastic about their candidate than McCain's voters are about him. Four in ten McCain voters have reservations about him.

### ENTHUSIASM FOR CANDIDATE (Among likely voters including leaners)

|                           | Obama<br>Voters | McCain<br>Voters |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Enthusiastic              | 69%             | 44%              |
| Support with reservations | 23              | 40               |
| Party nominee             | 2               | 4                |
| Dislike other candidate   | 4               | 12               |

Obama's supporters would also be much more excited about an Obama presidency than McCain's voters would be about a McCain presidency.

Reflecting some polarization within the electorate, many of each candidate's supporters would be scared if the other candidate wins, including 56% of McCain's supporters if Obama wins.

### FEELINGS ABOUT ELECTION OF OBAMA (Among likely Voters)

|                        | Obama<br>Voters | McCain<br>Voters |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Excited                | 46%             | 0%               |
| Optimistic/not excited | 43              | 10               |
| Concerned/not excited  | 9               | 33               |
| Scared                 | 0               | 56               |

**FEELINGS ABOUT ELECTION OF McCain**  
(Among likely Voters)

|                        | Obama<br>Voters | McCain<br>Voters |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Excited                | 0%              | 24%              |
| Optimistic/not excited | 5               | 58               |
| Concerned/not excited  | 48              | 16               |
| Scared                 | 45              | 1                |

**VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATES**

Not only do voters like Barack Obama, but they think he understands them. More than six in 10 voters think Obama understands their needs and problems - he leads McCain on this measure by 16 percentage points. In contrast, nearly as many voters think John McCain does not understand their needs and problems as those who do.

Most voters think both candidates are prepared to be president, though McCain does better on this measure than Obama.

**PERSONAL QUALITIES AND THE CANDIDATES**

(Among registered voters)

|                                     | Barack Obama |    | John McCain |    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----|-------------|----|
|                                     | Yes          | No | Yes         | No |
| Understands your needs and problems | 64%          | 29 | 48%         | 45 |
| Prepared to be president            | 53%          | 40 | 65%         | 29 |

One in two Americans has a favorable opinion of Barack Obama, more than the 43% who have a favorable opinion of John McCain. And nearly as many voters view John McCain unfavorably as view him favorably.

**VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATES**

(Among registered voters)

|                       | Obama | McCain |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|
| Favorable             | 50%   | 43%    |
| Not favorable         | 35    | 42     |
| No opinion/don't know | 13    | 14     |

Views of the vice presidential candidates remain a net asset for the Democrats. Opinions of Biden remain highly favorable, with a 2 to 1 ratio of positive feelings.

**VIEWS OF JOE BIDEN**

(Among registered voters)

|                      | Now | 10/30/08 | Two weeks ago |
|----------------------|-----|----------|---------------|
| Favorable            | 43% | 43%      | 43%           |
| Not favorable        | 21  | 25       | 20            |
| Undecided            | 15  | 13       | 18            |
| Haven't heard enough | 21  | 18       | 19            |

Views of Sarah Palin are split. They're somewhat less negative than last week.

**VIEWS OF SARAH PALIN**

(Among registered voters)

|                      | Now | 10/30/08 | Two weeks ago |
|----------------------|-----|----------|---------------|
| Favorable            | 37% | 36%      | 31%           |
| Not favorable        | 37  | 41       | 40            |
| Undecided            | 16  | 14       | 17            |
| Haven't heard enough | 9   | 10       | 12            |

**THE CANDIDATES AND THE ECONOMY**

The number of voters who think the policies of Barack Obama will help the economy is down since Saturday, but he is still the clear winner on this issue when compared to John McCain. 45% of voters think his policies will make the economy better, compared to only 30% who think the policies of John McCain will help.

And while the McCain campaign has focused on taxes in the final weeks of the campaign, slightly more voters now think McCain would increase their taxes than say that about Barack Obama.

**IF HE WERE ELECTED PRESIDENT, WILL OBAMA/McCAIN...?**

(Among registered voters)

|                          | Barack Obama |      | John McCain |      |
|--------------------------|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                          | Now          | 11/1 | Now         | 11/1 |
| Make the economy better? | 45%          | 51%  | 30%         | 29%  |
| Raise your taxes?        | 46%          | 47%  | 48%         | 48%  |

**THE HORSE RACE: DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS**

Obama holds a large lead among women, Democrats, liberals and moderates. He has a slight lead among independents, and the race is close among men. McCain holds a small lead among whites overall and among white men. The race is about even among white women.

**VOTE FOR PRESIDENT: DEMOGRAPHICS**

(Among likely voters including leaners)

|              | Obama | McCain |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| All          | 51%   | 42     |
| Men          | 47%   | 45     |
| Women        | 55%   | 41     |
| Republicans  | 12%   | 85     |
| Democrats    | 88%   | 9      |
| Independents | 46%   | 43     |
| Liberal      | 81%   | 16     |
| Moderate     | 60%   | 33     |
| Conservative | 24%   | 70     |

|              |     |    |
|--------------|-----|----|
| Total Whites | 46% | 49 |
| White men    | 44% | 49 |
| White women  | 48% | 49 |
| 2004 Vote    |     |    |
| Kerry        | 87% | 9  |
| Bush         | 17% | 78 |

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1051 adults nationwide, including 952 registered voters, interviewed by telephone October 31-November 2, 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.

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>reg< Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you registered to vote in the precinct or election district where you now live, or aren't you?

- <1> Yes
- <2> No
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>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?

- <1> Favorable
- <2> Not favorable
- <3> Undecided
- <4> Haven't heard enough
- <5> Refused

====>

>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?

- <1> Favorable
- <2> Not favorable
- <3> Undecided
- <4> Haven't heard enough
- <5> Refused

====>

>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?

- <1> Definitely vote
- <2> Probably vote
- <3> Probably not vote
- <4> Definitely not vote
- <5> Already voted (Vol.)[goto q8]
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>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 (PAY-lin) for Vice President, the Republicans, would you vote for Barack Obama and Joe Biden or John McCain and Sarah Palin?

- <1> Obama/Biden
- <2> McCain/Palin
- <3> Other (Vol.)
- <4> Won't vote (Vol.)
- <5> Depends (Vol.)/Undecided
- <6> Refused

====>

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>q6< Well as of today, do you lean more toward Barack Obama and Joe Biden or more toward John McCain and Sarah Palin?

- <1> Obama
- <2> McCain
- <3> Won't vote (Vol.)
- <9> DK/NA

====>

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

- <1> Mind made up
- <2> Too early to say for sure
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>q8< In the 2008 Presidential election, did you vote for Barack Obama for President and Joe Biden for Vice President, the Democrats, or John McCain for President and Sarah Palin (PAY-lin) for Vice President, the Republicans?

- <1> Obama/Biden
- <2> McCain/Palin
- <3> Other (Vol.)
- <9> Don't know/No answer

====>

ASK **ONLY** IF SELECTED CANDIDATE IN q5 OR q8

>q9< 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)?

- <1> Enthusiastic
- <2> With reservations
- <3> Party nominee
- <4> Dislike other candidate
- <9> DK/NA

====>

ROTATE BETWEEN q12 AND q13

>q12< If Barack Obama is elected as President, what best describes your feelings about what he will do in office 1. excited, 2. optimistic, but not excited, 3. concerned, but not scared, or 4. scared?

- <1> Excited
- <2> Optimistic, not excited
- <3> Concerned, not scared
- <4> Scared
- <9> Don't know/No answer

====>

>q13< If John McCain is elected as President, what best describes your feelings about what he will do in office 1. excited, 2. optimistic, but not excited, 3. concerned, but not scared, or 4. scared?

- <1> Excited
- <2> Optimistic, not excited
- <3> Concerned, not scared
- <4> Scared
- <9> Don't know/No answer

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>q16< Would you say you like (Barack Obama/John McCain) a great deal better than (Barack Obama/John McCain), somewhat better than (Barack Obama/John McCain/Other), or only a little better than (Barack Obama/John McCain)?

<1> A great deal

<2> Somewhat

<3> Only a little

<9> DK/NA

====>

>q17< Thinking back over the past few months, was there ever a time when you supported (Barack Obama/John McCain) for President?  
IF YES: What made you change your mind?

<0> Specific Answer

<97> No

<99> DK/NA

====>

>q18< Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?

<1> Approve

<2> Disapprove

<9> DK/NA

====>

>q24< Is your opinion of Joe Biden favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Joe Biden yet to have an opinion?

<1> Favorable

<2> Not favorable

<3> Undecided

<4> Haven't heard enough

<5> Refused

====>

>q25< Is your opinion of Sarah Palin favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Sarah Palin yet to have an opinion?

<1> Favorable

<2> Not favorable

<3> Undecided

<4> Haven't heard enough

<5> Refused

====>

>q30< Do you think Barack Obama does or does not understand the needs and problems of people like yourself?

<1> Yes

<2> No

<9> DK/NA

====>

>q32< Do you think Barack Obama has prepared himself well enough for the job of President, or hasn't he?

<1> Has prepared

<2> Has not prepared

<9> DK/NA

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====>

>q38< Do you think John McCain does or does not understand the needs and problems of people like yourself?

- <1> Yes
- <2> No
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>q40< Do you think John McCain has prepared himself well enough for the job of President, or hasn't he?

- <1> Has prepared
- <2> Has not prepared
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>q52< If Barack Obama is elected president do you think his policies would make the economy better, make the economy worse or wouldn't his policies have any effect on the economy?

- <1> Better
- <2> Worse
- <3> No effect
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>q57< If he were elected President, do you think Barack Obama would raise taxes on people like yourself, or wouldn't he do that?

- <1> Would
- <2> Would not
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>q61< If John McCain is elected president do you think his policies would make the economy better, make the economy worse or wouldn't his policies have any effect on the economy?

- <1> Better
- <2> Worse
- <3> No effect
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>q66< If he were elected President, do you think John McCain would raise taxes on people like yourself, or wouldn't he do that?

- <1> Would
- <2> Would not
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>q70< If John McCain were elected president, do you think he would generally continue George W. Bush's policies, or not?

- <1> Continue Bush policies
- <2> Not continue Bush policies
- <3> Some/not others (vol)
- <9> Don't know/No answer

CBS NEWS POLL 10/31-11/2

>q96< If you do vote in the November 4th election, will you vote by mail or by turning in an absentee ballot, OR will you vote at your precinct polling place ON Election Day. OR will you vote at an early voting location BEFORE Election Day?

IF ABSENTEE, ASK: As of today, have you already returned your absentee ballot or are you still planning to vote absentee?

IF EARLY VOTER, ASK: As of today, have you already cast a ballot at an early voting location or are you still planning to vote early?

- <1> Mail/absentee ballot - already returned
- <2> Mail/absentee - planning to vote
- <3> Precinct voter
- <4> Early voter - already voted (vol.)
- <5> Early voter - planning to vote (vol.)
- <9> DK/NA

====>

>q97< When you voted, did you vote by mail or by turning in an absentee ballot, OR did you vote at an early voting location?

- <1> Mail/absentee ballot - already returned

- <4> Early voter -- already voted
- <9> DK/NA

====>

|                         | UNWEIGHTED | WEIGHTED |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|
| Total Respondents       | 1051       |          |
| Total Registered Voters | 952        |          |
| Effective Likely Voters |            | 714      |