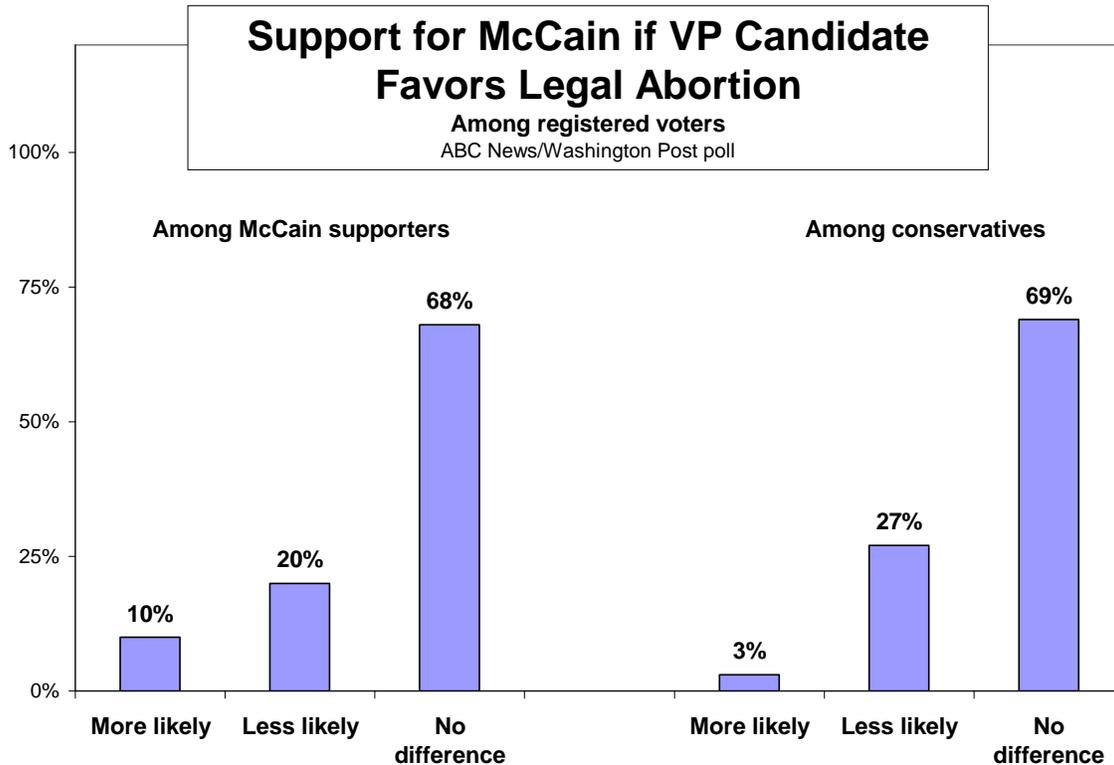


## Potential Risk to McCain in VP's view on Abortion

Vice-presidential candidates customarily do not drive vote choices, but there may be an exception: If John McCain were to pick a running mate who favors legal abortion, it could cost him votes, particularly in some core Republican groups.

Among current McCain supporters, 20 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll say they'd be less likely to vote for him if he picked a candidate for vice president who favors legal abortion, vs. 10 percent more likely – a 10-point net negative, and one he does not make up among Barack Obama's supporters.



The potential damage is sharper in some groups. Twenty-seven percent of conservatives say they'd be less likely to support McCain if he picked a vice president who favors legal abortion, vs. just 3 percent more likely – a net 24-point negative in this heavily Republican group. It's similar among evangelical white Protestants; 29 percent say such a pick would make them less likely to vote for McCain, vs. 6 percent more likely, a 23-point net negative.

The effect is biggest, naturally, among the 41 percent of registered voters who oppose legal abortion in all or most cases. A 32-point net in this group say a running mate who supports legal abortion would make them less likely to vote for McCain. And it would be a 42-point net negative to the most strongly anti-abortion voters, those who say it should be illegal in all cases. Anti-abortion voters, like evangelicals and conservatives, are among McCain's strongest support groups.

It's not only in the base that McCain could be hurt by a running mate who favors legal abortion. While there's no apparent effect among all movable voters (those who say they might change their minds or have no preference), among independents who are movable the proposition gets a 16-point net negative response.

While he could lose votes in these groups, moreover, McCain looks less likely to gain much support among their opposites. It would be just a 6-point net positive for him among all voters who support legal abortion, rising to 18 points among those who support it most broadly (in all cases). It looks apt to help him even less among liberals, moderates and non-evangelicals.

The net among all registered voters is that 9 percent say they'd be more apt to support McCain with a running mate who favors legal abortion, but 19 percent said it would make them less likely to vote for the Republican ticket.

	Support for McCain w/ v.p. who favors legal abortion			More-less NET
	More likely	Less likely	No difference	
Reg. voters	9%	19	72	-10
Conservatives	3	27	69	-24
Evangelical white Protestants	6	29	64	-23
Movable independents	15	31	54	-16
Abortion: illegal in all cases	5	47	46	-42
Abortion: illegal in all/most cases	4	36	57	-32
Abortion: legal in all/most cases	12	6	82	+6
Abortion: legal in all cases	23	5	72	+18

These compare to the anticipated impact of Joe Biden on the Democratic ticket. In interviews before that pick was announced, 13 percent said it would make them more likely to support Barack Obama, 10 percent less likely – essentially no effect, given polling tolerances. Seventy-five percent said it would make no difference.

McCain floated the possibility of a running mate who supports legal abortion two weeks ago, saying that this would not necessarily rule out Tom Ridge, the former Pennsylvania

governor. Said McCain: "I think it's a fundamental tenet of our party to be pro-life but that does not mean we exclude people from our party that are pro-choice."

This poll also tested the positive or negative effect of various possible vice presidential candidates. Only in the case of Mitt Romney did more people say the choice would make them more likely rather than less likely to support McCain, and that was within sampling error – 20 percent more, 16 percent less. Ridge showed a net negative impact of 6 points, Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman of -7, but the overall impact of all was small – given current knowledge of their positions on the hot-button issue of abortion.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Aug. 19-22, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,108 adults, including an oversample of African Americans (weighted to their correct share of the national population), for a total of 201 black respondents. Results among registered voters have a 3-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

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Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-22 previously released.

23. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) If McCain chooses [NAME] as his vice presidential running mate, would that make you more likely to vote for McCain, less likely, or wouldn't it make any difference in your vote?

8/22/08 - Summary Table\*

	More likely	Less likely	No difference	No opinion
a. Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney	20	16	63	1
b. Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman	12	19	68	1
c. South Dakota Senator John Thune	4	11	81	5
d. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty	4	6	86	5
e. Former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge	5	11	80	4
f. Florida Governor Charlie Crist	4	8	83	5

\*Half sample asked items a-c; other half sample asked items d-f.

24-32 previously released.

33. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) If McCain picked a vice-presidential candidate who supports legal abortion, would that make you more likely to vote for McCain, less likely, or wouldn't it make any difference in your vote?

	More likely	Less likely	No difference	No opinion
8/22/08 RV	9	19	72	1

Compare to:

Say Bush chooses a vice presidential running mate who supports legal abortion. Would that make you more likely or less likely to support Bush for president, or wouldn't it make much difference in your vote?

	More likely	Less likely	No difference	No opinion
7/23/00	12	20	66	1

\*\*\*END\*\*\*