

ABC NEWS POLL: THE PALIN PICK

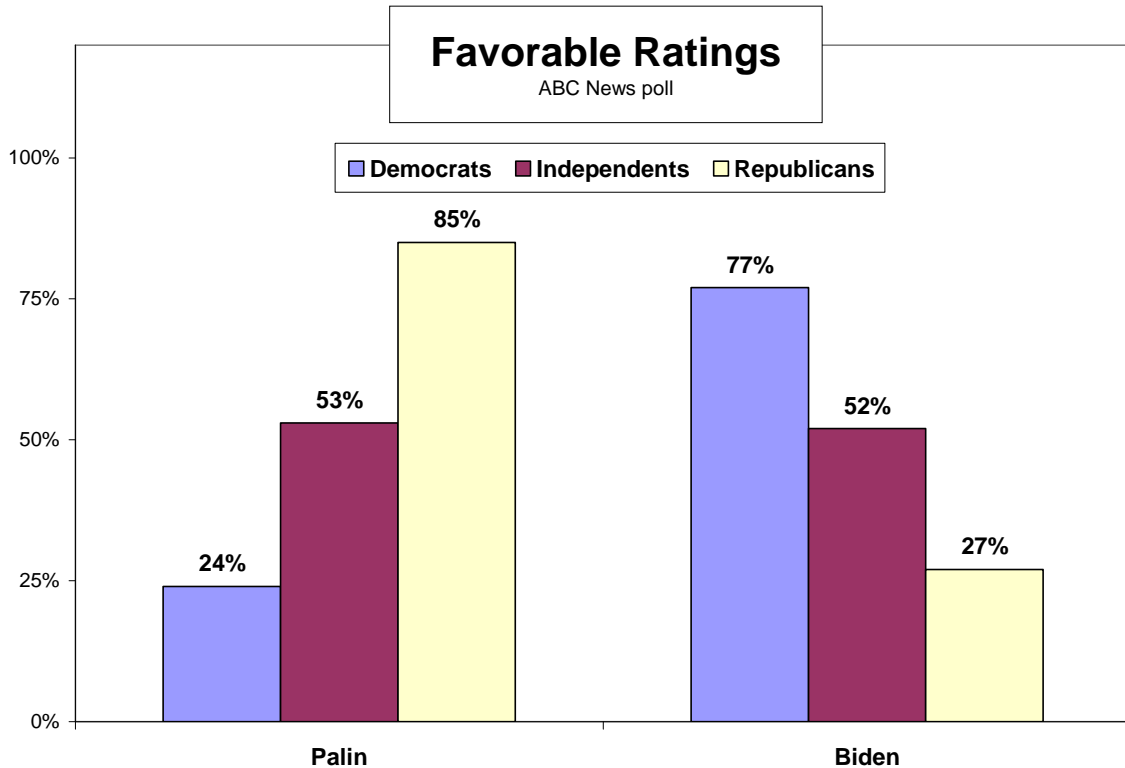
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Highly Partisan Reception Greets Palin as V.P. Pick

Sarah Palin is receiving a highly partisan reception on the national political stage, with significant public doubts about her readiness to serve as president, yet majority approval of both her selection by John McCain and her willingness to join the Republican ticket.

Given the sharp political divisions she inspires, Palin's initial impact on vote preferences and on views of McCain looks like a wash, and, contrary to some prognostication, she does not draw disproportionate support from women. But she could potentially assist McCain by energizing the GOP base, in which her reviews are overwhelmingly positive.

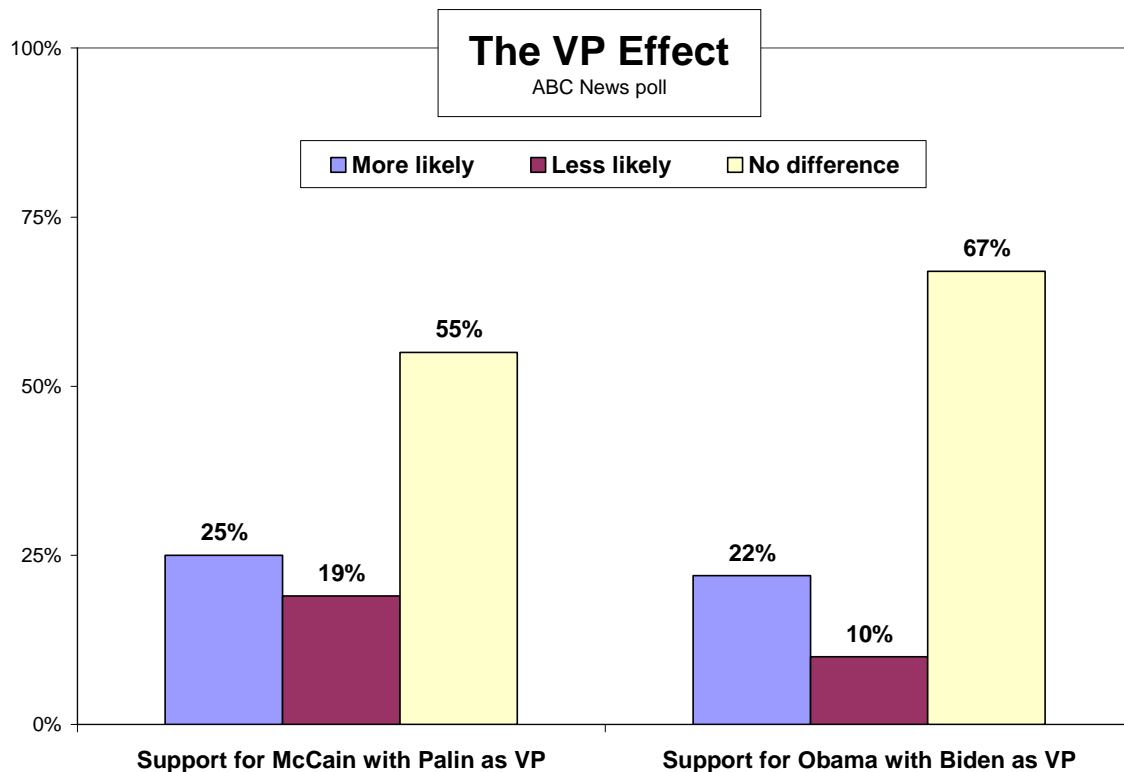
Half of Americans have a favorable first impression of Palin, 37 percent unfavorable, with the rest undecided. Her positive ratings soar to 85 percent among Republicans, 81 percent among her fellow evangelical white Protestants and 74 percent of conservatives. Just a quarter of Democrats agree, with independents in the middle.



Joe Biden, the Democratic vice presidential nominee, is similarly rated, with slightly fewer unfavorable views and partisanship running in the opposite direction.

	Palin:		Biden:	
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Favorable	Unfavorable
All	50%	37	54%	30
Democrats	24	63	77	9
Independents	53	34	52	31
Republicans	85	7	27	60
Men	54	37	55	35
Women	47	36	54	27

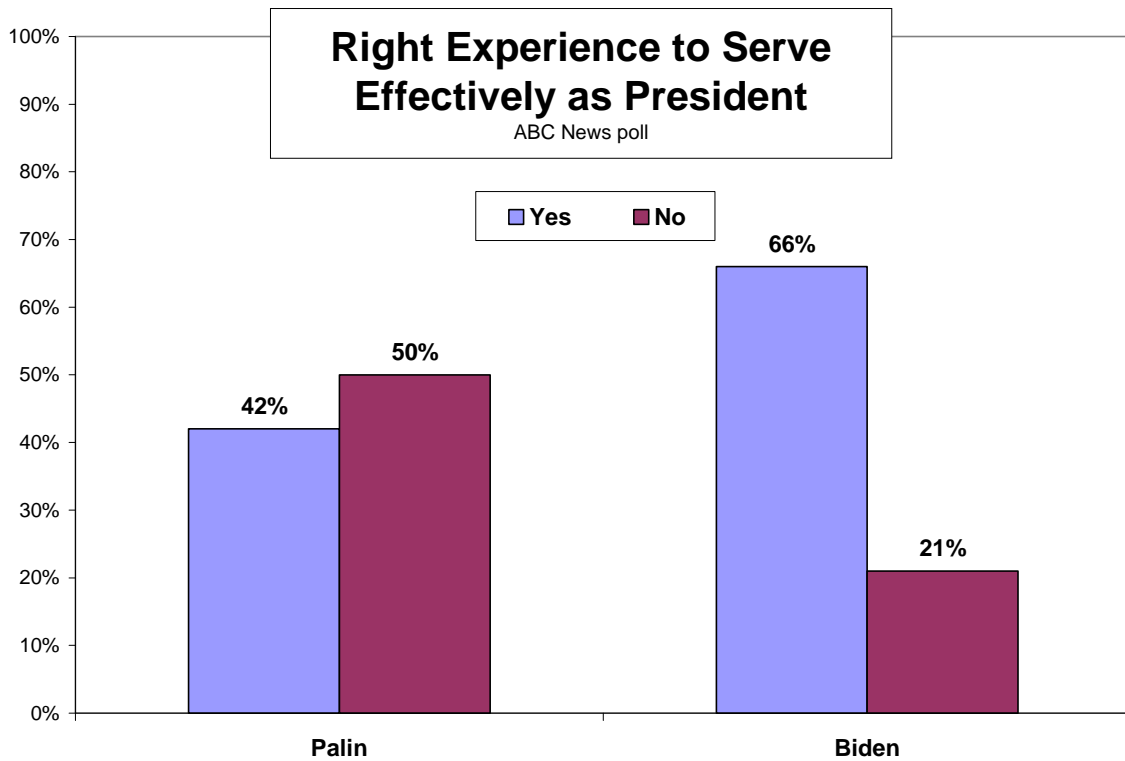
IMPACT – The public by a narrow 6-point margin, 25 percent to 19 percent, says Palin’s selection makes them more likely to support McCain, less than the 12-point positive impact of Biden on the Democratic ticket (22 percent more likely to support Barack Obama, 10 percent less so). But majorities in both cases say the vice presidential picks won’t matter in their vote, and those who do report an impact chiefly are reflecting their existing partisan predispositions.



Similarly, the public divides by a close 43-38 percent on whether the choice of Palin makes them more confident or less confident in the kind of decisions McCain would make as president – again along sharply partisan lines. Eighty percent of Republicans say it makes them more confident in McCain; that declines to 44 percent of independents, and 59 percent of Democrats instead say it makes them less confident in him. There’s no difference between the sexes.

Effect of Palin selection		
	More confident in McCain	Less confident
All	43%	38
Democrats	20	59
Independents	44	37
Republicans	80	9

Six in 10, nonetheless, approve of McCain’s selection of Palin, about the customary approval level for past vice presidential picks. That’s despite the fact that fewer than half, 42 percent, think Palin has the kind of experience it takes to serve effectively as president if that became necessary. Far more say Biden passes the experience bar, 66 percent.



Men are slightly more apt than women to say Palin’s experienced enough for the presidency, 46 percent to 39 percent, with more women unsure about it. Seventy-four percent of Republicans say she’s sufficiently experienced; 44 percent of independents and 21 percent of Democrats agree.

Experience, of course, has been a challenge to Obama. In a pre-convention ABC News/Washington Post poll, registered voters divided, 50-47 percent, on whether he does or doesn’t have the experience it takes to serve effectively as president.

MORE PALIN – Among other matters that have swirled around Palin’s selection, Americans by 2-1, 60 percent to 30 percent, say that given what they’ve heard about her family situation she made the right choice in agreeing to run for vice president. Roughly equal numbers of men and women say so; instead the divisions again are partisan, with 86 percent of Republicans but just 36 percent of Democrats sharing that view. Independents side more with Republicans on this question, with 66 percent saying she made the right choice.

The public divides on whether the news media have treated Palin fairly – half say yes, four in 10 no – and among those who do fault the coverage many more blame political bias than sexism. In this there is a difference between the sexes, with men (55 percent) more apt than women (46 percent) to say she’s been fairly treated. But more women are undecided, rather than saying the media have been unfair, and the far sharper divisions are partisan again. Fifty-seven percent of Republicans see the coverage as unfair; that declines to 27 percent among Democrats.

Among those who see unfairness in the news coverage, 39 percent mainly blame partisan bias, 15 percent sexism and 10 percent both equally. The rest, 34 percent, cite some other cause. Women who fault the media are slightly more apt than men who do so chiefly to blame sexism, 18 percent to 10 percent, but substantially more women and men alike mainly perceive political bias.

TOUCHSTONES – Among personal and policy matters tested in this poll, the most positive response is to Palin’s decision to have her fifth baby earlier this year after a diagnosis of Down syndrome; 41 percent say this makes them see her more favorably.

On the policy level, in a small victory for earmarks, Americans by 32-19 percent say they’re more apt to think better rather than worse of her for obtaining \$27 million in federal funding for local projects as mayor of Wasilla, Alaska.

Positive vs. negative impacts are closer in views, on a personal level, of her daughter’s pregnancy; and on policy matters, her views on abortion and gun control. Partisanship is strongest on her opposition to legal abortion; 57 percent of Republicans say these views make them see her more favorably, while just 29 percent of independents and 19 percent of Democrats agree. Positive responses to her position on abortion peak, at 66 percent, among evangelical white Protestants.

VOTE IMPACT – As noted, predisposed partisans on each side are more apt to react favorably to Palin and Biden. On Palin, conservatives by a 34-point margin say her addition to the ticket makes them more likely rather than less likely to support McCain; among Republicans it’s a 37-point positive margin, and among white evangelicals, 32 points. These are all heavily pro-McCain groups in the first place, but these numbers may reflect an enthusiasm – somewhat lacking in his campaign – that could impact their turnout.

At the same time, the story in the ideological center is different: Among moderates, Biden registers as a net 15-point positive for Obama. In the same group, Palin shows no effect on support for McCain.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Sept. 4, 2008, among a random national sample of 505 adults. The results from the full survey have a 4.5-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. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

a. Joe Biden, the Democratic nominee for vice president

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/4/08	54	30	25	30	14	16	16

b. Sarah Palin, the Republican nominee for vice president

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/4/08	50	33	17	37	14	23	13

2. Do you approve or disapprove of John McCain's choice of Palin as his vice presidential running mate? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/4/08	60	37	23	34	9	25	6

Compare to:

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
Lieberman 8/7/00	60	19	21
Cheney 7/29/00	61	15	24
Kemp 8/15/96*	67	14	19
Choate 9/10/96*	31	19	49

*RVs. For Kemp see also 1996 daily tracking

3. Does McCain's choice of Palin for vice president make you more likely to vote for McCain, less likely, or won't it make any difference in your vote?

	More likely	Less likely	No difference	No opinion
9/4/08	25	19	55	1

4. Does Barack Obama's choice of Biden for vice president make you more likely to vote for Obama, less likely, or won't it make any difference in your vote?

	More likely	Less likely	No difference	No opinion
9/4/08	22	10	67	1

5. Regardless of your vote preference, does McCain's choice of Palin as his running mate make you more confident or less confident in the kind of decisions McCain would make as president?

	More confident	Less confident	No effect (vol.)	No opinion
9/4/08	43	38	14	6

6. Do you think [NAME] does or does not have the kind of experience it takes to serve effectively as president, if that became necessary?

9/4/08 - Summary Table

	Does	Does not	No opinion
a. Biden	66	21	13
b. Palin	42	50	7

7. For each item I name, please tell me if it makes you think more favorably toward Palin, less favorably, or if it doesn't change your opinion of her one way or another.

9/4/08 - Summary Table

	More	Less	No change	No opinion
a. She decided to have her fifth baby earlier this year after it was diagnosed with Down Syndrome	41	6	52	1
b. Her 17-year-old daughter is pregnant, keeping the baby and marrying the father	17	12	70	1
c. As mayor she obtained 27 million dollars in federal funding for projects in her town of about 7,000 people	32	19	48	1
d. She opposes legal abortion unless the mother's life is in direct danger	33	36	31	1
e. She opposes stricter controls on handgun ownership	37	29	33	1

8. Given what you've heard about her family situation, do you personally think Palin made the right choice or the wrong choice in agreeing to run for vice president?

	Right	Wrong	No opinion
9/4/08	60	30	10

9. Overall, do you think the news coverage of Palin has been fair or unfair?

	Fair	Unfair	No opinion
9/4/08	50	41	9

9a. (IF UNFAIR, Q9) Do you think that is because of (sexism), (political bias), or some other reason?

	Sexism	Political bias	Some other reason	Both equally (vol.)	No opinion
9/4/08	15	39	34	10	3

9/9a NET

	Fair	NET	Sexism	Pol. bias	Other reason	Both (vol.)	No op.	No opinion
9/4/08	50	41	6	16	14	4	1	9

END