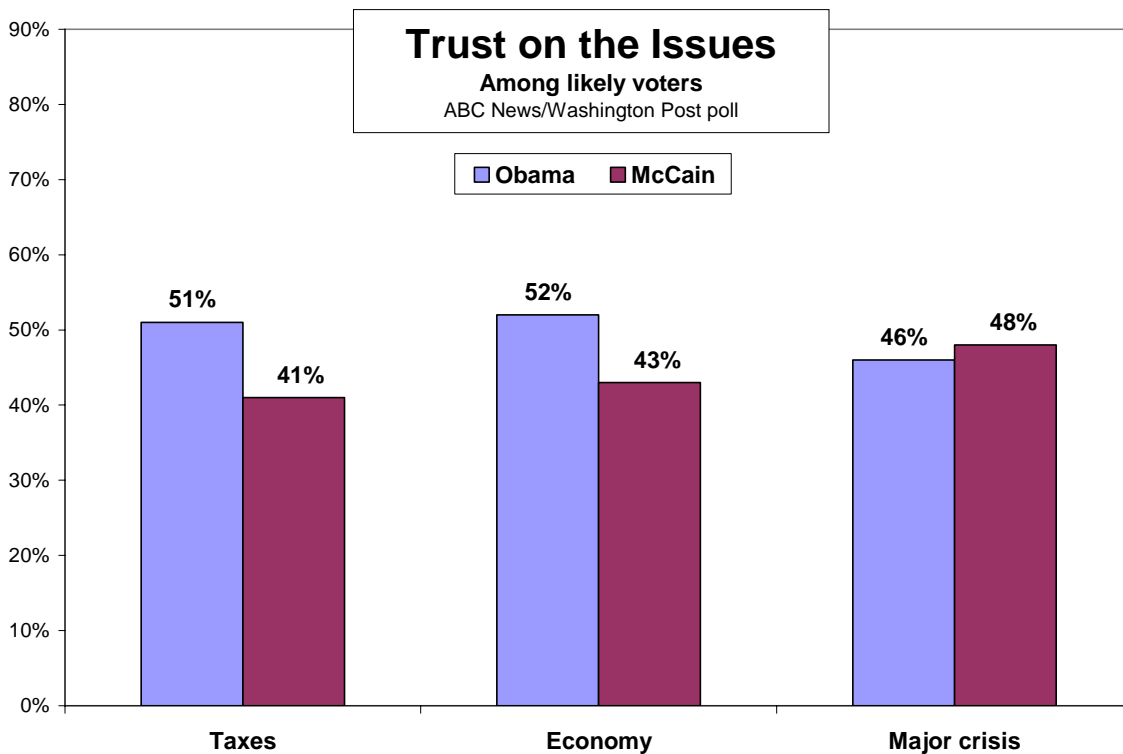


Obama Holds the Line on Taxes; McCain Better in Base, Not Center

A week from Election Day, John McCain has consolidated in his base but slipped in the center, Barack Obama is holding the line on taxes while advancing among middle class voters – and just a little weariness is slipping into assessments of the candidates.

McCain's had some gains in his pushback on economy and trust to handle a crisis. But he shows no progress on a third line of attack, taxes, and he's losing usually swing-voting independents by an 11-point margin and middle-income likely voters by 12 points.

For the first time since late September McCain has cracked Obama's double-digit margin in trust to handle the economy, now a 9-point Obama lead in this ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll, down from 18 points last week. And McCain's pulled about even in trust to handle an unexpected crisis, after trailing Obama by 9 points on this attribute Oct. 11. But it's still far from McCain's best on crisis management, a 17-point lead Sept. 7.

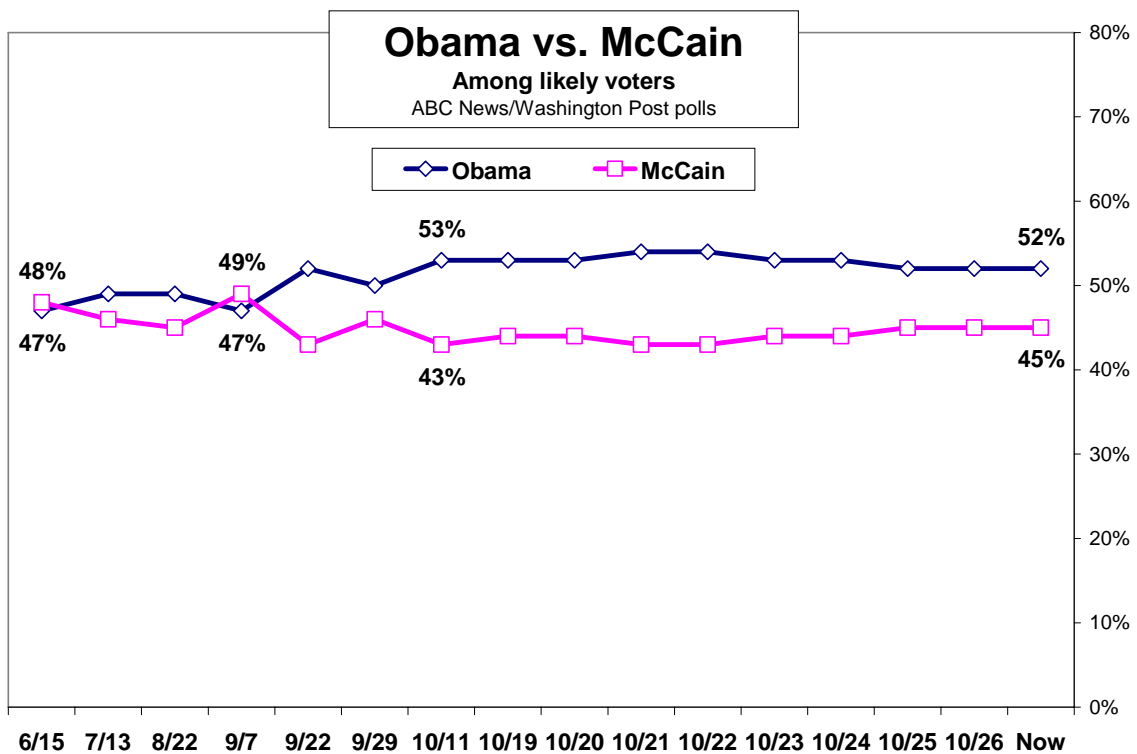


McCain, meanwhile, shows no progress on taxes, despite a steady push; Obama retains a 10-point lead in trust to handle them, including an improved 17-point margin in the much

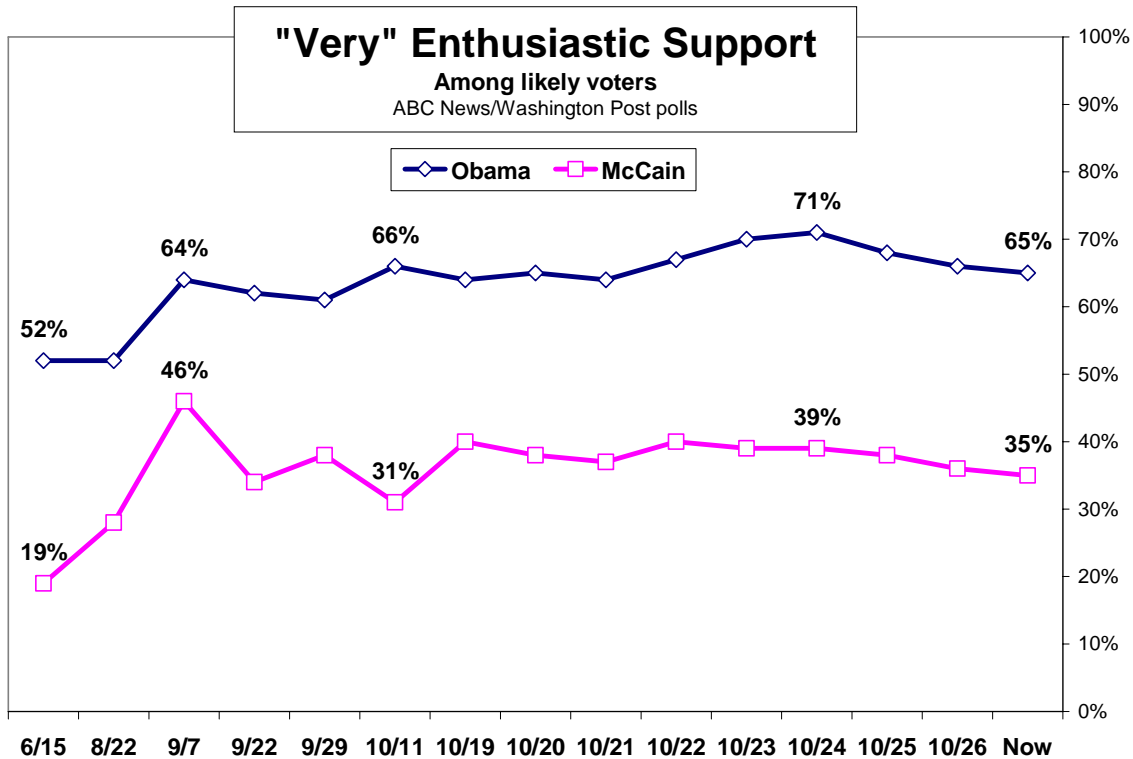
sought-after middle class. This traditionally is a Republican issue; the last Democrat to lead on taxes going into Election Day was Bill Clinton in 1992.

	Trust more to handle taxes		
	Dem. candidate	Rep. candidate	
2008	51%	41	Dem +10
2004	42	50	Rep +8
2000	37	50	Rep +13
1996	35	48	Rep +13
1992	41	30	Dem +11
1988	30	57	Rep +27

Head-to-head in vote preference it remains a 52-45 percent Obama-McCain contest among likely voters in this ABC/Post poll. McCain's at or near his best support to date among conservatives and evangelical white Protestants, core Republican groups. But the 52-41 percent division among independents is Obama's best since Sept. 22, and his lead among middle-class voters is his best to date.



WEARY? – Enthusiasm for both candidates has flagged a bit. Last week a high of 71 percent of Obama's supporters were "very enthusiastic" about his campaign; it's 65 percent now. And high-level enthusiasm among McCain's supporters has slipped about as much, from a high of 40 percent last week to 35 percent now.



Even with the edge off, Obama's enthusiasm continues to far outstrip McCain's. Obama's enthusiasm moreover, is higher – and McCain's lower – than in the 2004 presidential election.

	% of supporters "very" enthusiastic
Obama	65%
McCain	35
Bush '04	55
Kerry	46

Notably, among McCain's core groups, just 39 percent of evangelical white Protestants, 38 percent of conservatives and 36 percent of all Republicans who support him are very enthusiastic about it. By contrast, among Democrats who support Obama 72 percent are very enthusiastic; liberals 71 percent; and blacks, 86 percent.

In the center, moreover, among independents who favor McCain, 33 percent do so very enthusiastically; among independents who support Obama, it's 52 percent.

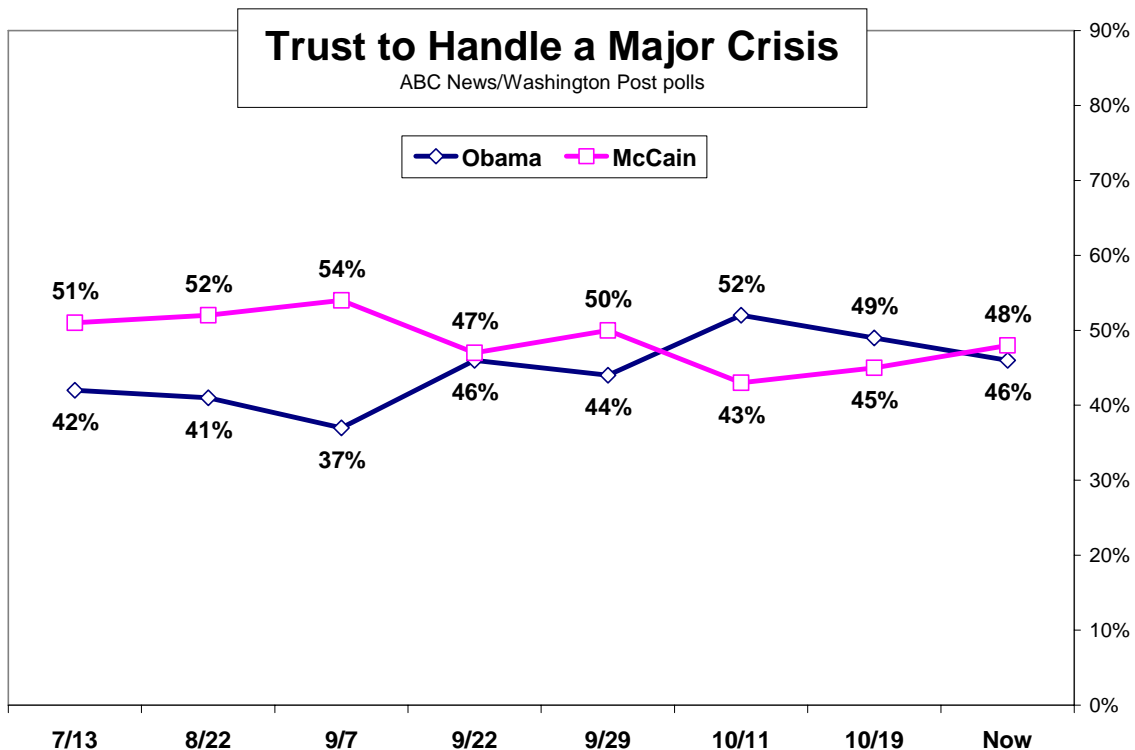
THE ISSUE – On issues, the economy still dominates. An overwhelming 54 percent call it the single most important issue in their vote, inching to a new high in ABC/Post tracking since Oct. 19. Obama leads McCain among economy voters by 58-39 percent, a big lead albeit Obama's smallest margin in this group in the past month.

Separately, consumer confidence, as measured in the ongoing ABC News Consumer Comfort Index, is 2 points from its record low in 22 years of weekly polling – precisely where it was immediately preceding the economy-driven 1992 election.

CHANGES – The single biggest change in trust to handle the economy, as noted in yesterday’s tracking report, is among movable voters, the 11 percent who haven’t definitely made up their minds – from a 29-point advantage on the economy for Obama last week to a 7-point McCain edge this week. Nonetheless movables split, 37-34 percent McCain-Obama, with the rest undecided.

Changes in trust on the economy also have occurred disproportionately in some of McCain’s core support groups, reflecting a return to the fold. Last week conservatives preferred McCain on the economy by a 40-point margin; now it’s 61 points; evangelical white Protestants preferred him on the economy by 46 points, compared with 65 points now.

On trust to handle a crisis, the sharpest changes since the Republican convention – toward McCain, then away, then back – have been among women, especially white women and married women, two potential swing voter groups.



GROUPS – In vote preference, McCain’s inched above 50 percent among suburban likely voters, but slipped to a dead heat in rural areas – while still losing urbanites to

Obama by nearly 2-1. McCain leads by 8 points among whites, a bit below the average 13-point advantage for Republican presidential candidates in exit polls since 1976. Obama makes it up among nonwhites, including more than 90 percent support from blacks and 68 percent among Hispanics.

Obama's overall lead continues to rely on his support among young voters – a nearly 2-1 advantage over McCain, 63-33 percent, among those under 30. Sliced more finely, that peaks at 70-28 percent among 18- to 24-year-olds, and 60-37 percent among 25- to 29-year-olds. Turnout among young voters always carries some uncertainty; in this poll they account for 16 percent of likely voters, about the same as their share of the electorate in 2004.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT – As reported separately (and updated here with Monday night interviews), for one in 10 likely voters 2008 is a done deal: Ten percent report that they've already voted. Assuming turnout between 130 and 140 million voters, that matches closely with tallies indicating that 12.6 million votes already have been cast early or by absentee ballot

Updating with Monday night interviews, early voters favor Obama over McCain, by 60-40 percent. Early voting to date peaks among senior citizens – 18 percent say they've voted – and Westerners, 16 percent.

Many more are coming: All told 35 percent of likely voters now say they plan to vote early or absentee in the week ahead, soaring to 57 percent in the West and 42 percent in the South. That slips to 25 percent in the Midwest, and in the Northeast, just 8 percent.

METHODOLOGY – Interviews for this ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll were conducted by telephone Oct. 24-27, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,301 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a 2.5-point error margin for the full sample. Questions 6b and 6c were asked Oct. 26-27 among 654 likely voters; that result has a 4-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

For details on ABC News polls including full questionnaires, methodology and sampling error information, see <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

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

1. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) How closely are you following the presidential race: very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not closely at all?

	---- Closely ----			---- Not closely ----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
10/27/08 RV	91	60	31	9	5	4	*

Call for full trend.

2. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) I'd like you to rate the chances that you will vote in the presidential election in November: Are you absolutely certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or less than that?

	Certain to vote	Probably vote	Chances 50/50	Less than that	Don't think will vote (vol.)	Already voted (vol.)	No op.
10/27/08 RV	76	6	4	1	1	11	1

Call for full trend.

2a. (ASKED IF CERTAIN IN Q2) Do you think you'll (vote in person at your polling place on Election Day), or (vote before Election Day by early voting or mail-in ballot)?

	Vote in person	Early voting/ mail-in ballot	Already voted (vol.)	No opinion
10/27/08 RV	76	20	3	1

Call for full trend.

3. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) If the 2008 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were (Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats) and (John McCain and Sarah Palin, the Republicans), for whom would you vote? (ASKED IF ALREADY VOTED) Confidentially and for statistical purposes only, did you vote for (Barack Obama and Joe Biden) or for (John McCain and Sarah Palin)?

NET LEANED VOTE - LIKELY VOTERS

	Obama	McCain	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/27/08	52	45	1	1	2
10/26/08	52	45	*	1	2
10/25/08	52	45	*	1	2
10/24/08	53	44	1	1	2
10/23/08	53	44	*	1	2
10/22/08	54	43	1	1	2
10/21/08	54	43	1	1	1
10/20/08	53	44	1	1	1
10/19/08	53	44	1	1	2
10/11/08	53	43	1	1	2
9/29/08	50	46	*	2	2
9/22/08	52	43	*	1	3
9/7/08	47	49	1	1	3
8/22/08	49	45	*	2	4
7/13/08	49	46	1	2	2
6/15/08	47	48	1	2	2

NET LEANED VOTE - REGISTERED VOTERS

	Obama	McCain	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
10/27/08	51	42	1	2	1	3
10/26/08	51	43	1	1	1	3
10/25/08	51	44	*	1	*	3
10/24/08	52	42	1	2	*	3
10/23/08	52	42	1	1	1	3

10/22/08	54	41	1	2	1	3
10/21/08	53	41	1	1	1	3
10/20/08	52	42	1	1	1	3
10/19/08	52	42	1	1	1	3
10/11/08	54	41	1	2	*	2
9/29/08	49	45	1	2	*	3
9/22/08	52	42	1	1	*	4
9/7/08	47	46	1	1	1	4
8/22/08	49	43	*	3	2	3
7/13/08	50	42	1	3	1	2
6/15/08	49	45	1	3	1	3
5/11/08	51	44	*	2	1	1
4/13/08	49	44	*	3	3	2
3/2/08	53	40	*	2	1	3
2/1/08	47	48	1	1	1	2
1/19/07	47	45	*	3	1	4

3b. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS IF NAMED CANDIDATE) Would you definitely vote for (CANDIDATE), or is there a chance you could change your mind and vote for someone else? (IF CHANCE CHANGE MIND) Is there a GOOD CHANCE you'll change your mind, or would you say it's PRETTY UNLIKELY?

	Definitely vote for	-Chance change mind - NET	Good	Unlikely	No opinion
10/27/08 LV	91	9	3	5	*
10/26/08 LV	91	9	3	6	*
10/25/08 LV	91	9	3	6	*
10/24/08 LV	91	9	4	5	1
10/23/08 LV	91	9	4	5	1
10/22/08 LV	90	9	4	5	1
10/21/08 LV	89	10	5	5	1
10/20/08 LV	89	10	4	6	1
10/19/08 LV	88	10	5	6	1
10/11/08 LV	88	11	4	7	1
9/29/08 RV	82	17	8	9	1
9/22/08 RV	83	16	8	8	1
9/7/08 RV	79	20	8	12	1
8/22/08 RV	73	24	11	13	3
7/13/08 RV	72	25	10	15	3
6/15/08 RV	72	26	11	16	2
5/11/08 RV	69	28	15	14	3
9/26/04 RV	82	16	4	12	2
9/8/04 RV	84	14	6	8	2
8/29/04 RV	81	18	7	11	1
8/1/04 RV	80	19	7	12	1
7/25/04 RV	78	20	7	13	2
7/11/04 RV	79	21	7	13	1
6/20/04 RV	73	26	12	14	*

Barack Obama:

	Definitely vote for	-Chance change mind - NET	Good	Unlikely	No opinion
10/27/08 LV	92	7	2	5	*
10/26/08 LV	92	8	3	5	*
10/25/08 LV	93	7	3	4	*
10/24/08 LV	92	7	3	4	*
10/23/08 LV	91	8	4	4	1
10/22/08 LV	90	8	3	5	1
10/21/08 LV	89	9	4	6	1
10/20/08 LV	90	9	3	6	1
10/19/08 LV	91	9	3	5	1

10/11/08	LV	90	9	3	6	1
9/29/08	RV	83	16	7	9	1
9/22/08	RV	85	14	8	7	1
9/7/08	RV	78	21	9	12	1
8/22/08	RV	74	23	7	15	4
7/13/08	RV	72	23	9	14	5
6/15/08	RV	71	26	7	19	3
5/11/08	RV	71	25	13	13	4

John McCain:

		Definitely vote for	-Chance change mind - NET	Good	Unlikely	No opinion
10/27/08	LV	90	10	4	6	*
10/26/08	LV	89	11	4	7	*
10/25/08	LV	88	11	3	8	1
10/24/08	LV	89	10	4	6	1
10/23/08	LV	90	10	4	5	1
10/22/08	LV	90	9	4	5	1
10/21/08	LV	89	11	5	5	1
10/20/08	LV	89	11	5	5	1
10/19/08	LV	86	12	6	6	1
10/11/08	LV	86	14	4	9	*
9/29/08	RV	81	18	9	9	1
9/22/08	RV	81	18	9	9	2
9/7/08	RV	80	19	8	11	2
8/22/08	RV	72	25	14	11	2
7/13/08	RV	71	28	12	17	1
6/15/08	RV	72	27	14	12	1
5/11/08	RV	66	32	17	15	2

4. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Have you voted for president in any year before this 2008 election, or is this the first year you'll be voting for president?

		Voted before	First time	No opinion
10/27/08	LV	89	11	0
10/26/08	LV	88	12	0
10/25/08	LV	88	12	0
10/24/08	LV	88	12	0
10/23/08	LV	87	13	*
10/22/08	LV	87	13	*
10/21/08	LV	87	12	*
10/20/08	LV	88	11	*
10/19/08	LV	89	11	*
10/11/08	LV	90	10	0
9/29/08*	RV	92	8	*
9/22/08	RV	92	8	0

10/31/04 RV 90 10 *

*9/29/08 and previous: "(Was this/will this be) the first time you've voted in a presidential election, or have you voted in previous presidential elections?"

5. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) What [was/is] the SINGLE most important issue in your choice for president: (The economy), (the war in Iraq), (terrorism), (energy policy), (health care), or something else?

		Economy	Iraq	Terrorism	Energy policy	Health care	Something else	No op.
10/27/08	LV	54	8	4	4	10	19	1
10/26/08	LV	53	8	5	4	10	19	1
10/25/08	LV	52	8	6	5	11	18	1

10/24/08 LV	51	8	5	4	11	19	1
10/23/08 LV	51	8	5	4	10	21	1
10/22/08 LV	51	8	5	4	10	20	1
10/21/08 LV	51	9	5	4	10	20	1
10/20/08 LV	52	8	6	5	9	19	1
10/19/08 LV	53	7	6	4	9	19	2

6. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Regardless of who you may support, who do you trust more to handle [ITEM] - (Obama) or (McCain)?

10/27/08 - Summary Table

	Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. The economy	52	43	1	3	2
b. An unexpected major crisis	46	48	2	2	3
c. Taxes	51	41	1	4	3

Trend:

a. The economy

	Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/27/08 LV	52	43	1	3	2
10/26/08 LV	52	42	1	3	3
10/25/08 LV	53	42	*	3	2
10/24/08 LV	55	40	1	2	2
10/23/08 LV	56	39	1	2	2
10/22/08 LV	56	38	1	3	2
10/21/08 LV	55	38	1	4	2
10/20/08 LV	55	38	1	4	2
10/19/08 LV	55	39	1	4	1
10/11/08 LV	54	37	1	6	2
9/29/08 RV	50	43	1	3	2
9/22/08 RV	53	39	1	4	3
9/7/08 RV	47	42	1	4	6
8/22/08 RV	50	39	2	5	4
7/13/08 RV	54	37	2	6	3
6/15/08 RV	52	37	2	5	4
5/11/08 RV	48	38	2	8	4
3/2/08 RV	50	37	2	6	5

Compare to:

	Kerry	Bush	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/30/04 LV	48	45	1	3	3

	Gore	Bush	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/25/00 LV	48	45	2	3	3

	Clinton	Dole	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/4/96 RV	48	42	2	6	3

	Clinton	Bush	Perot	All (vol.)	None (vol.)	No opinion
10/4/92 LV	43	26	20	1	5	5

Both Neither No

		Dukakis	Bush	(vol.)	(vol.)	opinion
11/1/88	LV	40	51	NA	NA	9

b. An unexpected major crisis

10/27/08	LV	46	48	2	2	3
10/19/08	LV	49	45	1	2	2
10/11/08	LV	52	43	1	3	1
9/29/08	RV	44	50	1	2	3
9/22/08	RV	46	47	2	2	3
9/7/08	RV	37	54	2	3	3
8/22/08	RV	41	52	2	2	3
7/13/08	RV	42	51	3	2	3

Compare to:

		Kerry	Bush	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
6/20/04		41	53	1	2	2

*"Please tell me whether the following statement applies more to (Bush) or more to (Kerry): He can be trusted in a crisis."

c. Taxes

10/27/08	LV	51	41	1	4	3
10/21/08	LV	51	43	1	3	2
10/20/08	LV	50	43	1	4	2
10/19/08	LV	52	42	1	4	2
10/11/08	LV	52	42	1	5	1
9/29/08	RV	48	46	*	3	3
9/7/08	RV	45	44	*	4	7
8/22/08	RV	44	45	1	5	5
6/15/08	RV	47	42	1	6	5

Compare to:

		Kerry	Bush	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/17/04	LV	42	50	1	4	4

		Gore	Bush	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/26/00	LV	37	50	2	9	4

		Clinton	Dole	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/4/96	RV	35	48	3	10	4

		Clinton	Bush	Perot	All (vol.)	None (vol.)	No opinion
10/4/92	LV	41	30	15	1	6	7

		Dukakis	Bush	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/19/88	LV	30	57	2	5	7

8. (ASKED OF LIKELY LEANED OBAMA/MCCAIN SUPPORTERS) Thinking about his candidacy for president so far, how enthusiastic are you about [NAME] - very enthusiastic, fairly enthusiastic, not too enthusiastic, or not enthusiastic at all?

10/27/08 - Summary Table - Among Likely Leaned Obama/McCain Supporters

	--- Enthusiastic --			---- Not enthusiastic ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	
a. Obama	96	65	31	3	3	1	1
b. McCain	83	35	49	16	13	3	*

Trend:

a. Obama

		--- Enthusiastic --			---- Not enthusiastic ----			No opinion
		NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	
10/27/08	LV	96	65	31	3	3	1	1
10/26/08	LV	96	66	30	3	2	1	1
10/25/08	LV	97	68	29	3	3	1	*
10/24/08	LV	97	71	26	3	3	1	0
10/23/08	LV	95	70	25	5	4	1	0
10/22/08	LV	94	67	28	5	5	1	*
10/21/08	LV	95	64	31	5	4	1	*
10/20/08	LV	95	65	31	5	4	1	*
10/19/08	LV	96	64	32	4	3	1	*
10/11/08	LV	96	66	30	4	3	1	*
9/29/08	RV	95	61	34	4	4	*	1
9/22/08	RV	94	62	32	6	4	1	*
9/7/08	RV	96	64	32	4	3	1	0
8/22/08	RV	95	52	43	5	2	3	*
6/15/08	RV	91	52	39	9	7	2	*

b. McCain

10/27/08	LV	83	35	49	16	13	3	*
10/26/08	LV	87	36	51	13	11	2	*
10/25/08	LV	86	38	48	14	11	3	*
10/24/08	LV	88	39	49	11	9	2	1
10/23/08	LV	89	39	50	10	8	2	1
10/22/08	LV	88	40	48	12	10	2	1
10/21/08	LV	88	37	51	11	10	1	*
10/20/08	LV	88	38	50	12	11	2	*
10/19/08	LV	87	40	47	13	11	2	*
10/11/08	LV	87	31	57	13	10	2	0
9/29/08	RV	90	38	52	10	7	2	*
9/22/08	RV	89	34	55	10	8	2	1
9/7/08	RV	92	46	46	8	6	2	0
8/22/08	RV	86	28	58	13	11	2	1
6/15/08	RV	74	19	55	25	19	6	1

Compare to:

10/26/04 - Summary Table - Among Likely Voters, Leaned Bush/Kerry Supporters

	--- Enthusiastic --			---- Not Enthusiastic ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	
a. Bush	91	55	36	9	8	1	*
b. Kerry	92	46	47	7	6	1	1

END