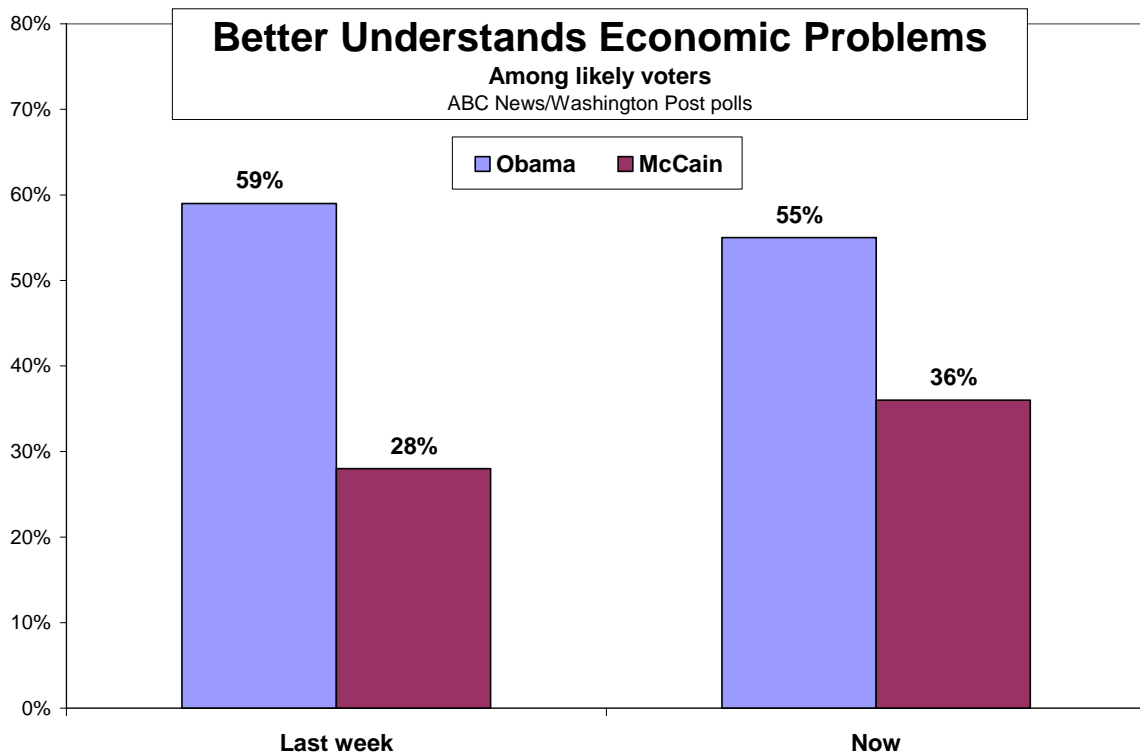


McCain Pushes Back on Attributes But the Dynamic Holds for Obama

John McCain has climbed back from his record shortfalls on economic empathy and “change” since the final presidential debate last week – but not enough to alter the basic dynamic of his contest with Barack Obama.

Focusing on economic concerns at the debate and since, McCain has trimmed Obama’s lead in better understanding Americans’ economic problems from 31 points last week to 19 points now; on bringing “needed change” to Washington, from 34 points to 21; and as the “stronger leader,” from 17 points to 8.



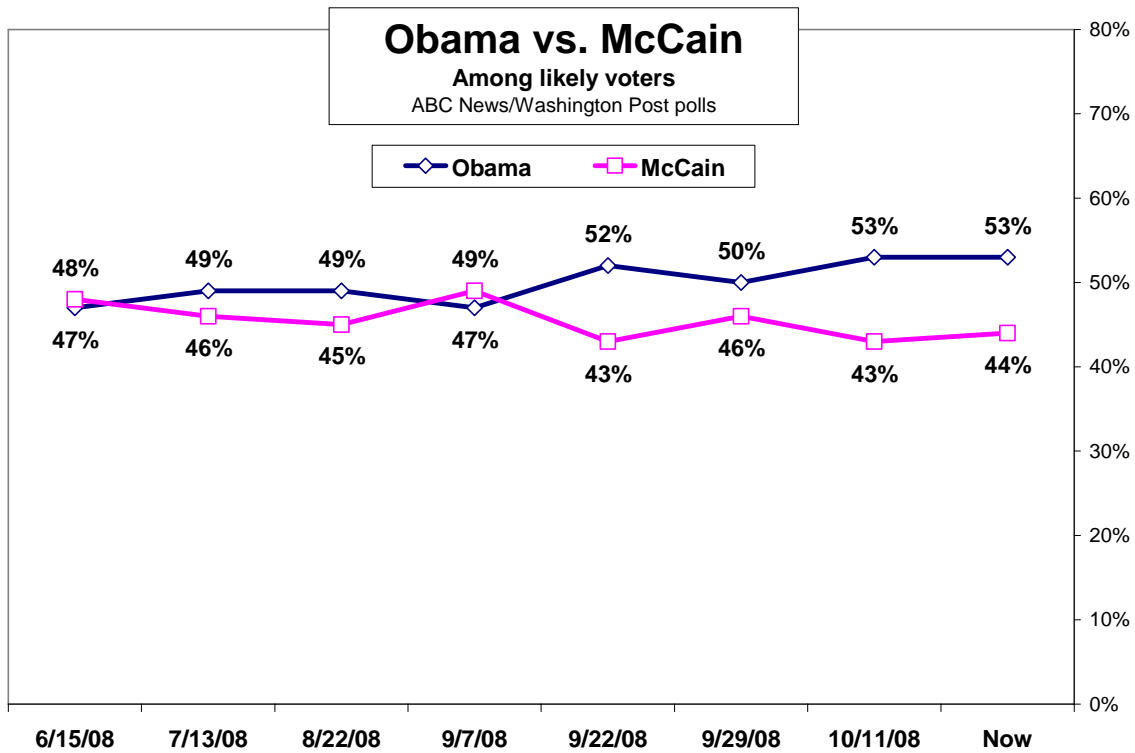
Moreover, since his debate declaration, “I am not President Bush,” the number of likely voters who think McCain would continue in Bush’s direction has inched (barely) under half for the first time in ABC News/Washington Post polls. And McCain has made back some of his enthusiasm deficit.

Yet Obama’s advantages remain. The Colin Powell endorsement lends him pushback. And most fundamentally he still leads in trust to handle the economy overall, voters’

overwhelming issue, by 16 points, 55-39 percent, essentially the same as pre-debate. (It's an 18-point Obama lead, 50-32 percent, on having presented the clearer economic plan.)

Obama also continues to lead McCain by 10 points in trust to deal with taxes, with no change since McCain's invocation of Joe the Plumber. Obama leads by 10 points on better representing "your personal values" and 8 points on honesty and trustworthiness. And while 40 percent of McCain's backers are "very" enthusiastic (up 9 points), that soars to 64 percent of Obama's.

The result: a continued advantage for Obama in overall vote preferences, 53-44 percent vs. McCain among likely voters, essentially unchanged from last week.

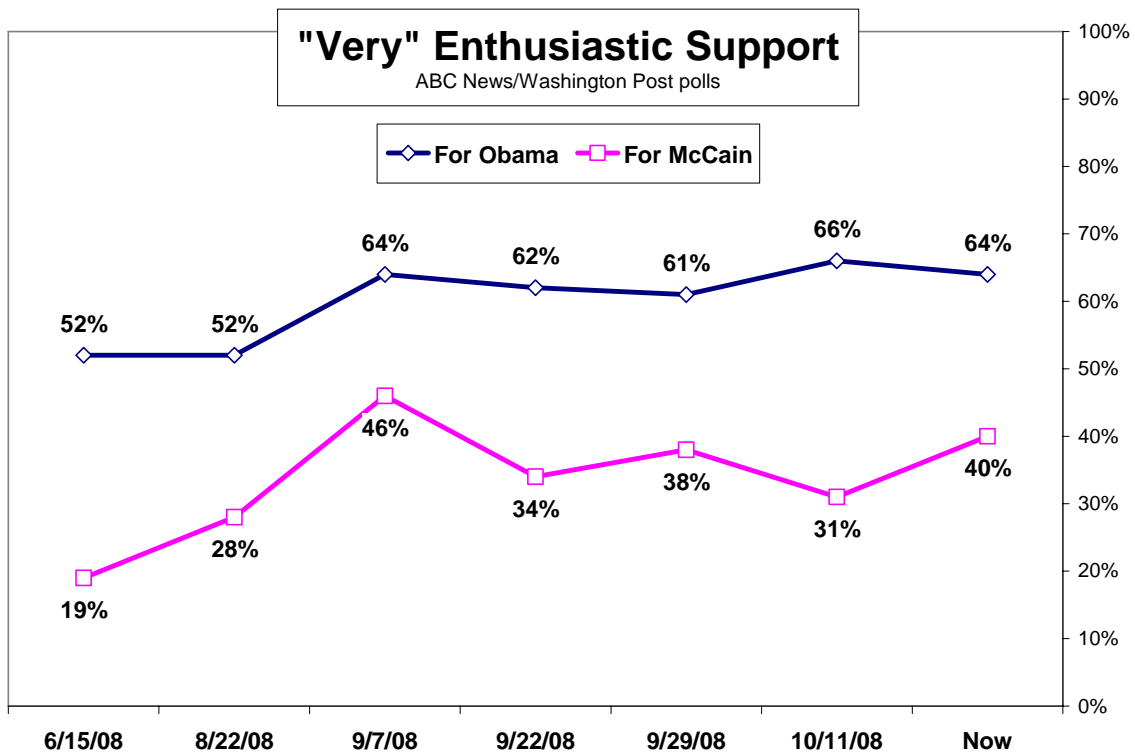


BUSH vs. EXPERIENCE – Association with George W. Bush remains a key problem for McCain; likely voters now divide, 49-48 percent, on whether he would lead the country in the same direction as Bush or strike out in a new one. That's not a significant change from last week's 52-45 percent, but it does inch McCain under 50 percent as a Bush 2.0.

Obama, meanwhile, does slightly better than McCain on his own main challenge, experience; likely voters by 54-44 percent say he has the experience it takes to serve effectively as president. And while likely voters divide closely on whom they trust more to handle an unexpected crisis, 49-45 percent Obama-McCain, that's turned from a 17-point McCain advantage at his high point after his convention.

There are other elements at play. As per ABC News poll reports Sunday and Monday, likely voters overwhelmingly reject Obama's association with 1960s radical William Ayers as a legitimate issue; 52 percent now say McCain's selection of Sarah Palin makes them less confident in his judgment; Obama leads by 2-1 as the more optimistic candidate; and Obama's ratings for his performance across the three debates are substantially better than McCain's, although the final debate did pull up McCain's score.

Then there's the enthusiasm gap, which is far larger than usual. At the end of the 2004 campaign, Bush's likely voters were more enthusiastic than Kerry's by 9 points, 55 percent vs. 46 percent. In 2000, 44 percent of Bush's supporters were very enthusiastic, 41 percent of Gore's. Enthusiasm for Obama is sharply higher this year.



PARTY TIME – Much of Obama's advantage lies in greater-than-usual participation by Democrats; they outnumber Republicans by 7 percentage points among likely voters in this poll, as they have consistently this season. In 2004, by contrast, Democrats and Republicans turned out in equal numbers. Obama's lead depends in large part on a larger-than-usual differential between Democrats and Republicans.

Not only are there more Democrats, Obama's doing a bit better in his own party; 91 percent of Democrats support him, compared with McCain's support among Republicans, 84 percent. Republicans are more often reliable party voters, but 12 percent of them now favor Obama, better than John Kerry or Al Gore's share of Republicans (6 and 8 percent, respectively), and about matching Bill Clinton's in 1996 (13 percent).

Swing-voting independents, meanwhile, divide very closely, 48-47 percent, as do married women, another potential swing group.

MORE GROUPS – Among other groups, McCain leads Obama by 6 points among whites, 51-45 percent; Republicans have won whites by a wider margin, averaging 13 points, in the last eight presidential elections. Obama’s support from blacks is nearly unanimous, and he holds a substantial advantage among Hispanic voters as well.

Young voters remain Obama’s best group, with a 2-1 advantage among those under 30; a question as ever with this group is the extent to which they turn out. Still, among likely voters 30 and over Obama retains an edge, albeit a much smaller one, 51-45 percent.

Among religious groups, evangelical white Protestants remain one of McCain’s best constituencies, with a 72-23 percent lead over Obama. White Catholics, customarily a swing group, continue to favor McCain, now by 55-42 percent – a surprise given Obama’s lead overall. Part of the reason is non-evangelical white Protestants; in the past a more pro-Republican group, they now divide closely, 50-46 percent, Obama-McCain.

METHODOLOGY – This is the first in a series of ABC News/Washington Post tracking polls that will continue daily until Election Day. Interviews were conducted by telephone Oct. 16-19, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,336 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a 2.5-point error margin for the full sample. 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
10/19/08	RV	90	57	33	10	6	3	*
10/11/08	RV	92	59	33	8	4	4	*
9/29/08	RV	89	58	31	11	7	5	*
9/22/08	RV	91	55	36	9	5	4	0
9/7/08	RV	89	51	38	10	6	5	*
8/22/08	RV	84	42	42	16	11	5	*
7/13/08	RV	79	36	42	21	12	9	1
6/15/08		75	34	41	25	12	13	*
5/11/08		83	39	44	17	13	5	0
4/13/08		84	37	47	16	11	5	*
3/2/08		84	42	42	15	11	4	*
2/1/08		81	35	46	19	12	7	*

1/12/08	79	32	47	21	15	6	*
12/9/07	72	21	51	28	19	8	*
11/1/07	67	21	46	33	22	12	0
9/30/07	69	21	48	30	21	10	*
7/21/07	70	22	48	30	20	10	*
6/1/07	66	18	48	34	22	13	*
4/15/07	66	20	45	34	20	14	*
2/25/07	65	20	44	35	25	10	*
10/19/04 RV	87	54	33	12	8	4	1
10/15/00 RV	77	33	44	23	15	8	*

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.
10/19/08 RV	83	6	5	3	1	4	*
10/11/08 RV	87	5	4	1	*	2	0
9/29/08 RV	87	6	5	1	1		*
9/22/08 RV	89	6	4	1	*		*
9/7/08 RV	85	7	5	1	1		*
8/22/08 RV	84	10	4	2	*		*
7/13/08 RV	79	10	7	3	2		0
6/15/08	71	9	8	7	4		*
3/2/08	78	9	7	4	2		*

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) For whom did you vote?

NET LEANED VOTE - LIKELY VOTERS

	Obama	McCain	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
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
10/19/08	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
10/19/08 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
10/19/08 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
10/19/08 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
10/19/08 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.
10/19/08 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)?

10/19/08 - Summary Table*

	Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. The economy	55	39	1	4	1
b. An unexpected major crisis	49	45	1	2	2
c. Taxes	52	42	1	4	2

*Full sample asked item a, half sample asked item b, other half sample asked item c.

Trend:

a. The economy

	Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
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

b. An unexpected major crisis

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

c. Taxes

10/19/08 LV	52	42	1	4	2
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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

7. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Regardless of who you may support, who do you think [ITEM] - (Obama) or (McCain)?

10/19/08 - Summary Table*

	Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. better understands the economic problems people in this country are having	55	36	2	6	2
b. would do more to bring needed change to Washington	56	35	1	4	2
c. is the stronger leader	51	43	2	2	2
d. previously released.					
e. has presented a clearer plan for dealing with the economic situation	50	32	2	13	3
f. better represents your own personal values	53	43	1	2	1
g. is more honest and trustworthy	48	40	5	5	2
h. previously released.					

*Half sample asked items a-d, other half sample asked items e-h.

Trend:

a. better understands the economic problems people in this country are having

	Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/19/08 LV	55	36	2	6	2
10/11/08 LV	59	28	3	9	1
9/29/08 RV	55	36	3	5	1
9/22/08 RV	57	33	2	7	2

b. would do more to bring needed change to Washington

10/19/08 LV	56	35	1	4	2
10/11/08 LV	62	28	2	6	2
9/29/08 RV	61	33	1	3	2
9/22/08 RV	58	33	1	5	3
9/7/08 RV	51	39	*	5	5
6/15/08 RV	59	27	2	8	4
5/11/08 RV	60	28	3	6	4
3/2/08 RV	58	31	2	6	5

c. is the stronger leader

10/19/08 LV	51	43	2	2	2
10/11/08 LV	56	39	1	2	2
9/29/08 RV	49	45	1	2	2
9/22/08 RV	47	46	2	1	4
9/7/08 RV	44	48	2	1	5
8/22/08 RV	49	44	3	2	2
6/15/08 RV	44	47	3	1	4
5/11/08 RV	42	47	3	2	5

3/2/08 RV 40 53 1 1 5

d. is more optimistic

10/19/08 LV 62 30 4 2 2
 8/22/08 LV 65 27 4 1 2

e. No trend.

f. better represents your own personal values

10/19/08 LV 53 43 1 2 1
 9/7/08 LV 51 43 2 3 1
 8/22/08 RV 50 43 2 3 2
 6/15/08 RV 49 41 1 6 2

g. is more honest and trustworthy

10/19/08 LV 48 40 5 5 2
 10/11/08 LV 45 41 5 7 2
 9/22/08 RV 47 36 7 7 3
 9/7/08 RV 38 44 5 7 6
 8/22/08 RV 39 38 10 9 4
 7/13/08 RV 43 40 7 6 4

h. has a better personality and temperament to be president

10/19/08 LV 54 37 6 2 1
 9/29/08 LV 57 37 2 2 1
 9/7/08 RV 57 35 3 2 3
 5/11/08 RV 55 34 4 3 4
 3/2/08 RV 59 29 2 4 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?

10/19/08 - 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	64	32	4	3	1	*
b. McCain	87	40	47	13	11	2	*

Trend:

a. Obama

	--- Enthusiastic ---			---- Not enthusiastic ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	
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

10/19/08 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
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	opinion
a. Bush	91	55	36	9	8	1	*
b. Kerry	92	46	47	7	6	1	1

4/2/00 - Summary Table - Among Likely Voters, Leaned Bush/Gore Supporters

	--- Enthusiastic ---			---- Not Enthusiastic ----			No
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	opinion
a. Gore	84	41	43	17	12	5	0
b. Bush	87	44	43	14	12	2	0

9. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) If McCain were elected president, do you think he'd (mainly lead the country in a new direction), or (mainly continue in George W. Bush's direction)?

	New	Same	No	
	direction	direction	opinion	
10/19/08	LV	48	49	4
10/11/08	LV	45	52	3
9/29/08	RV	46	53	2
9/7/08	RV	46	50	4
8/22/08	RV	40	57	4
6/15/08	RV	41	55	5

10. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Regardless of who you may support, do you think Obama does or does not have the kind of experience it takes to serve effectively as president?

	Does	Does not	No opinion	
10/19/08	LV	54	44	2
10/11/08	LV	56	42	2
9/29/08	RV	52	45	2
9/7/08	RV	48	48	4
8/22/08	RV	50	47	3
6/15/08	RV	48	48	4
3/2/08	RV	49	46	5

11-14 previously released.

15 held for release.

END