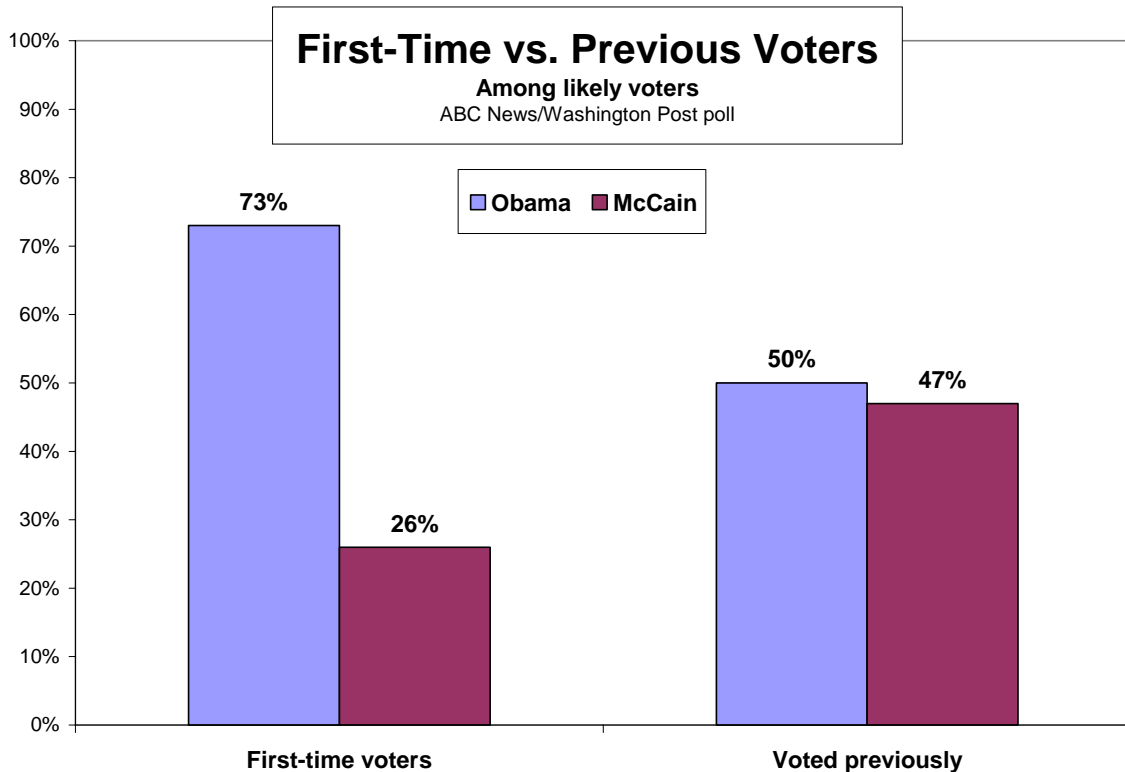


First-Time Voters Go Big for Obama

First-time voters underscore Barack Obama's organizational advantage in the presidential election: Four years ago first-timers backed Democratic nominee John Kerry by 7 points. Today they favor Obama over John McCain – by 47.

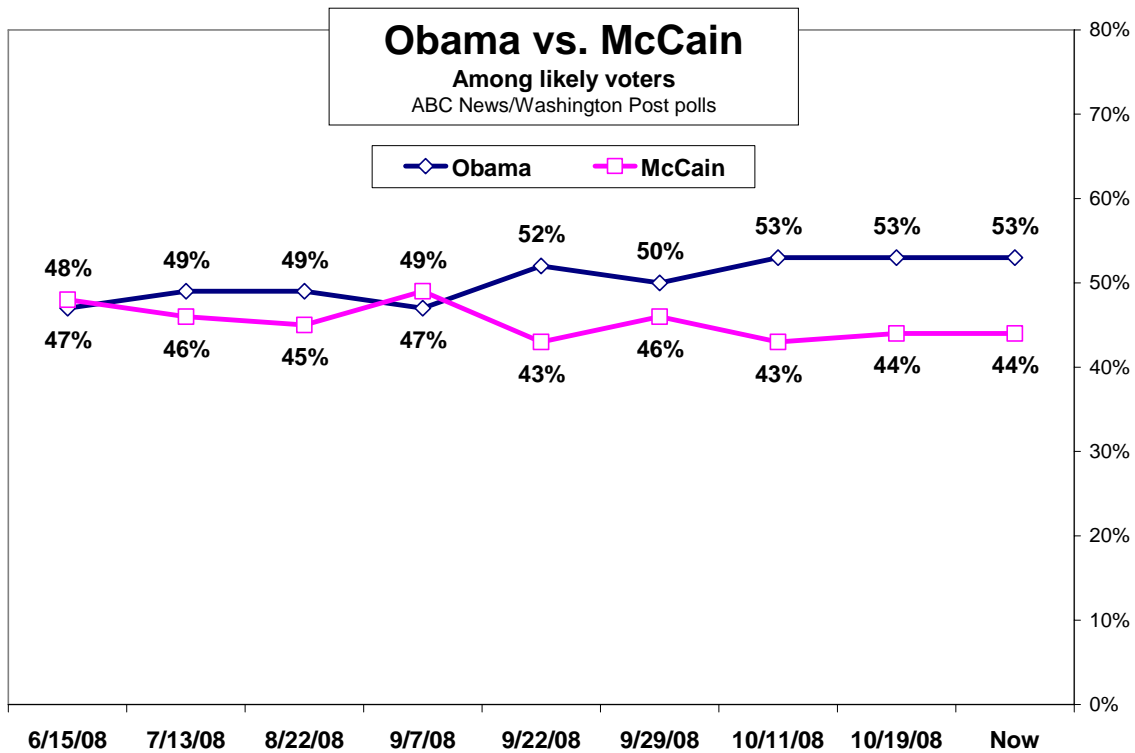
Indeed it's first-timers who give Obama his clear advantage in presidential preference. Among people who've voted previously, Obama and McCain are at 50-47 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll, not a statistically significant gap. But first-time voters favor Obama by a lopsided 73-26 percent, lifting him to an overall advantage.

There are striking vote-preference differences among other groups, many well-examined in the contest so far – young voters vs. their elders, whites and blacks, “economy” voters vs. those more focused on other issues – and others less so. First-time voters are among the telling ones; they attest both to the Obama campaign's efforts to sign up new voters, and to the extraordinary level of enthusiasm among his supporters this year.



But there's a cautionary note for the Obama campaign: Turnout among first-time voters is challenging to predict, since they're clearly not in the habit. That means targeted get-out-the-vote efforts can matter particularly with this group – not just in how many vote, but in how those who do vote divide between the candidates.

Overall, two weeks before Election Day, Obama leads McCain by 53-44 percent among likely voters, unchanged from yesterday's tracking results. Obama's held the advantage since taking a clear lead on the strength of economic discontent in an ABC/Post poll on Sept. 22.

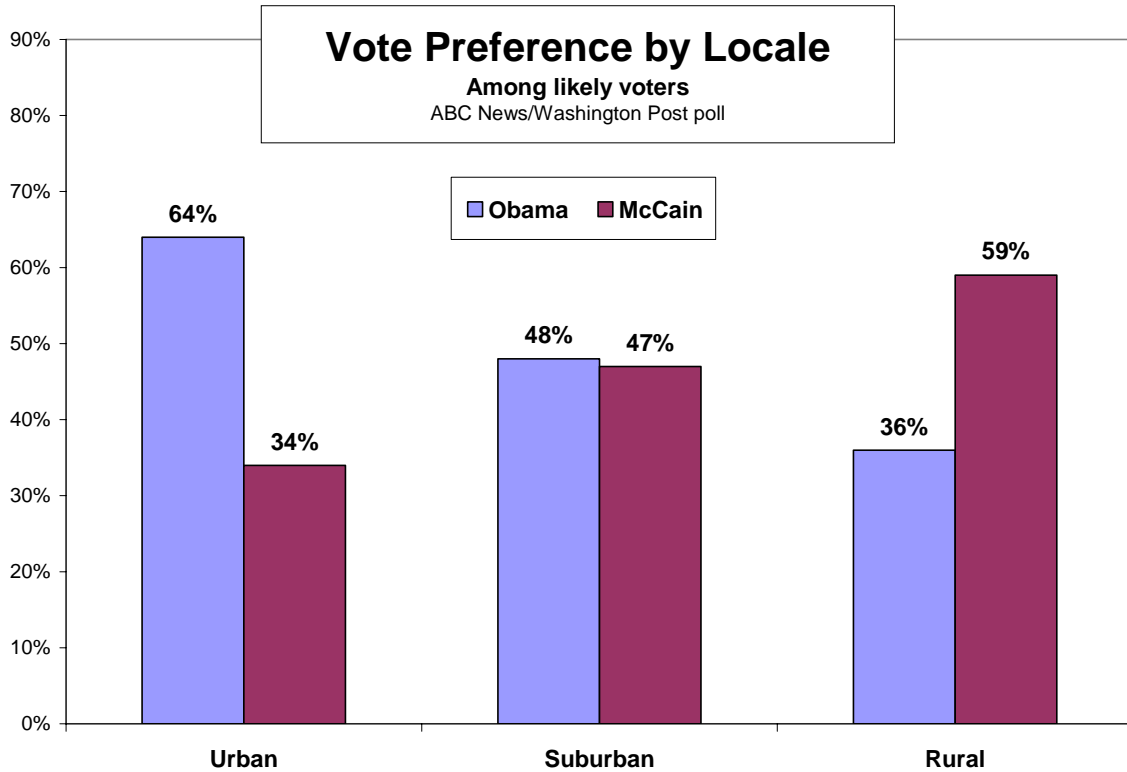


First-time voters account for 11 percent of all likely voters in this poll, matching their turnout in the 2004 presidential election. According to the national exit poll that year, they voted 53-46 percent for Kerry vs. George W. Bush, a far narrower division than their vote preference today. (Bush won previous voters by 51-48 percent.)

WHO? – Naturally, first-time likely voters are predominantly young, long Obama's best support group; 69 percent of them are under age 30. But young voters, in particular, can be skittish in terms of turnout.

First-time likely voters this year include three times as many Democrats as Republicans, a sharp shift from 2004, when partisanship was about even among first-timers. Given their youth, a third of likely first-time voters are liberals, vs. a quarter in 2004 (and more than among repeat voters this year, 20 percent).

URBAN vs. RURAL – Another difference among groups is based on where likely voters live: Obama leads by 30 points among city dwellers, but it's McCain by 23 points among rural Americans. Suburbanites divide almost exactly evenly.



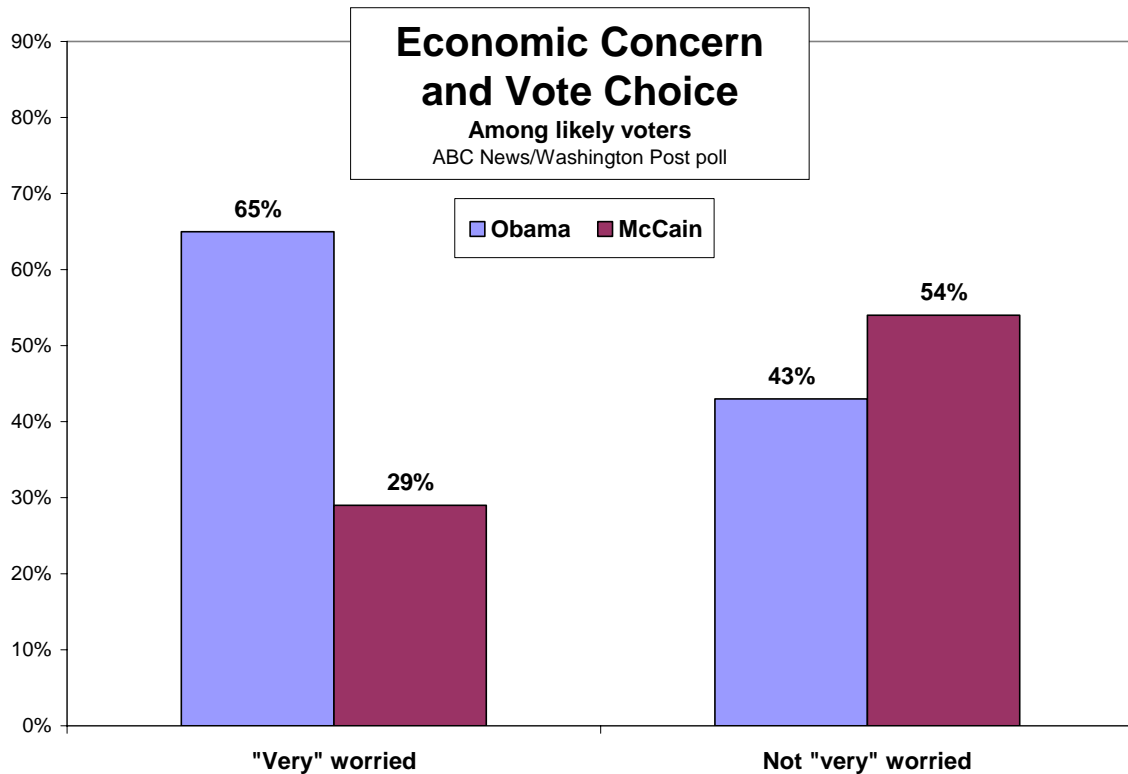
Obama leads overall partly because of his slightly larger advantage among urban voters (64-34 percent, compared with McCain's 59-36 percent among rural voters), but also because there simply are more of them: Twenty-five percent of voters are urban, vs. 16 percent rural. Divided suburbanites constitute the plurality, 46 percent of voters, splitting 48-47 percent between Obama and McCain.

ISSUES/ECONOMY – Urban residents, as it happens, also are the most focused on the economy; 58 percent call it the single most important issue in their vote, compared with 46 percent of rural likely voters (suburban residents fall between the two). Partisanship fuels some of this; Democrats also are more focused on the economy, and they're more numerous in urban areas, Republicans in rural ones.

The economy overall continues to dominate; it's far and away the No. 1 issue to voters overall, cited by 52 percent. And as reported separately Tuesday, ABC/Post data show continued high levels of economic unease – with a dramatic effect on vote preferences.

Eighty-five percent of likely voters are worried about the economy's direction the next few years, 44 percent "very" worried; two-thirds are worried about their own family's

finances, one in four very much so. It matters: Among people who are “very” worried about the economy, Obama leads by 65-29 percent. Among everyone else – somewhat worried, or not too worried or not worried at all – McCain leads, 54-43 percent. With no high-level economic worry, in theory, there’d be no Obama lead.



The differences aren't quite so stark on personal finances; here Obama leads by a wide margin among the very worried (by 66-27 percent) and by 10 points among somewhat worried. Those who aren't so worried split evenly; McCain leads only among those who aren't worried about their family finances at all. His problem is that they account for just 12 percent of likely voters.

Likely voters trust Obama over McCain to handle the economy, by 55-38 percent in the latest results. Obama also retains a narrower advantage on taxes, 50-43 percent, in four days of interviews completed Monday night – an issue the two have contested especially sharply since Joe the Plumber entered the stage.

Obama's 17-point lead in trust to handle the economy is the largest for any candidate since Bill Clinton's in 1992 – the last time economic discontent approached its levels today. On taxes, similarly, Obama's advantage this cycle is the first for a Democrat in ABC/Post pre-election polls since Clinton's in '92.

And as it happens, the weekly ABC News Consumer Comfort Index on Tuesday dropped to within a point of its record low in 22 years of weekly polls.

METHODOLOGY – Interviews for this ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll were conducted by telephone Oct. 17-20, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,324 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results on economic worry were conducted Oct. 16-19 among 1,336 likely voters. 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
10/20/08	RV	90	57	34	10	6	4	*
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	*
10/20/04	RV	89	55	34	10	7	3	*
10/20/00	LV	86	46	40	15	11	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	Probably	Chances	Less than	Don't think	Already	No
				will vote	voted	

		to vote	vote	50/50	that	(vol.)	(vol.)	op.
10/20/08	RV	81	6	5	3	1	4	*
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
10/20/08	53	44	1	1	2
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
10/20/08	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	
10/20/08	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
10/20/08	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
10/20/08	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
10/20/08	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.
10/20/08 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)?

10/20/08 - Summary Table*

	Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. The economy	55	38	1	4	2
c. Taxes	50	43	1	4	2

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

Trend:

a. The economy

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

c. Taxes

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

7 previously released.

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?

10/20/08 - Summary Table - Among Likely Leaned Obama/McCain Supporters

	--- Enthusiastic ---			---- Not enthusiastic ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	
a. Obama	95	65	31	5	4	1	*
b. McCain	88	38	50	12	11	2	*

Trend:

a. Obama

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

10/20/08	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
		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
10/20/08	LV	47	50	3
10/19/08	LV	48	49	4
10/11/08	LV	45	52	3
10/11/08	RV	46	51	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

10/20/08	LV	54	43	2
10/19/08	LV	54	44	2
10/11/08	LV	56	42	2
10/11/08	RV	54	45	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. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) How do you feel about [ITEM] - very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried or not worried at all?

10/19/08 - Summary Table

		----- Worried -----			----- Not worried -----			No
		NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not too	At all	opin.
a.	The direction of the nation's economy over the next few years	85	44	42	14	9	5	1
b.	Your own family's financial situation	66	24	43	33	21	12	*

Trend:

a. The direction of the nation's economy over the next few years

		----- Worried -----			----- Not worried -----			No
		NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
10/19/08	LV	85	44	42	14	9	5	1
10/11/08	LV	89	48	41	10	7	3	1
10/11/08		88	48	40	11	8	3	1
9/22/08		79	40	39	17	13	5	3
1/5/03		67	27	40	31	22	10	1
11/4/02	LV	76	34	42	23	17	6	1
11/3/02	LV	75	33	42	24	17	7	1
11/2/02	LV	73	32	41	26	19	8	1
10/27/02		75	27	48	23	16	7	2
10/27/02	LV	76	32	45	23	16	7	1

b. Your own family's financial situation

10/19/08	LV	66	24	43	33	21	12	*
10/11/08	LV	64	21	43	36	25	11	*
10/11/08		67	23	43	33	22	11	1
9/22/08		60	22	38	40	26	14	*

16-17 previously released.

END