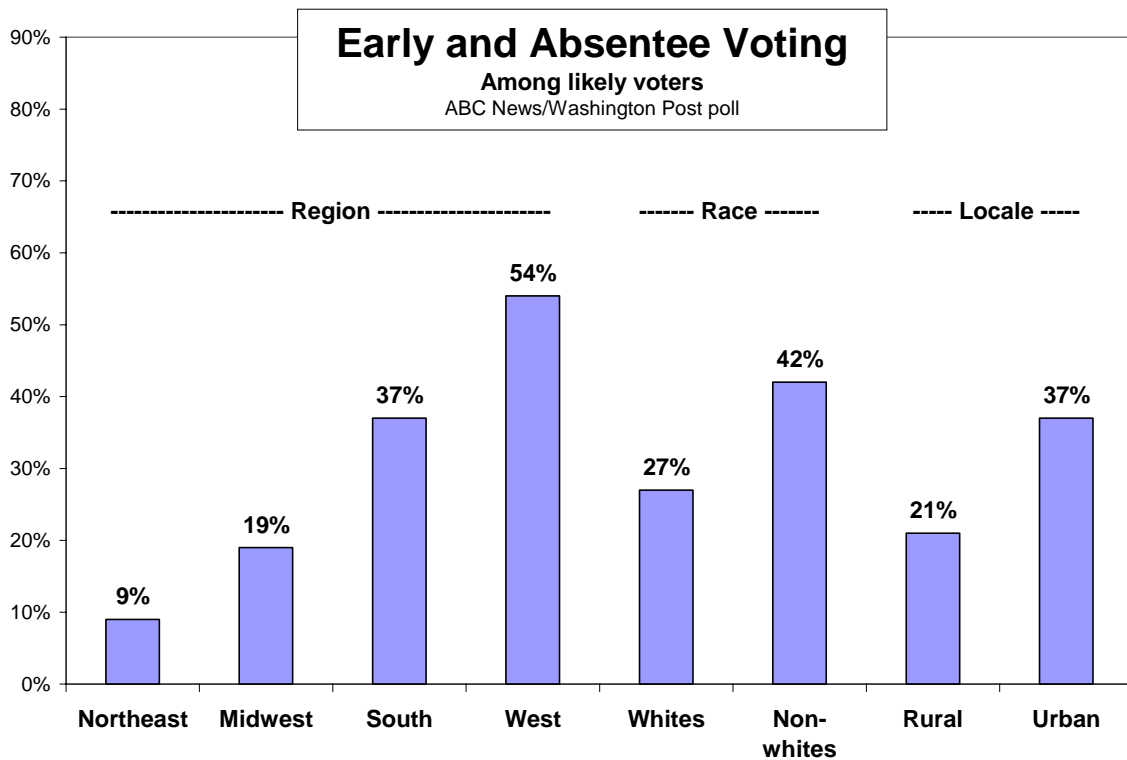


Three in 10 Plan on Voting Early, With a Heavy Preference for Obama

Absentee and early voting are changing the face of voting in America: Three in 10 likely voters in the latest ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll say they'll vote early, nearly double what it was eight years ago.

The trend, which may impact campaign strategies in terms of closing arguments and get-out-the-vote efforts, could assist Barack Obama: He leads John McCain by 26 points among likely voters who say they'll get it done early, vs. a closer 7-point margin among those who plan to hold off until Election Day.

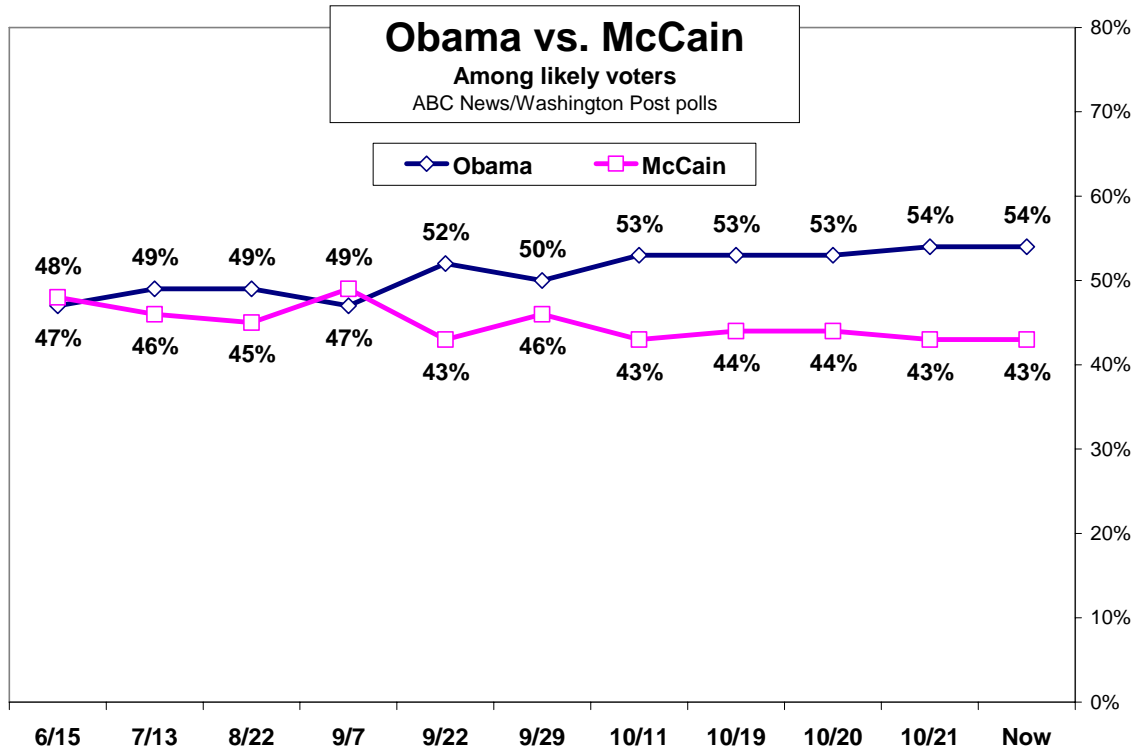
Other dynamics are at play. This poll also finds much broader comfort with Obama's race than with McCain's age. High-level enthusiasm among Obama's supporters exceeds two-thirds for the first time, an unusual level. And most critically, Obama leads by 18 points in trust to handle the economy, the central issue in the contest.



Fifty-one percent of likely voters call the economy the single most important issue in their vote, far above any others (next are health care, 10 percent, and the Iraq war, 8

percent). And economy voters favor Obama by 63-34 percent, continuing an advantage he's held since summer but expanded as the global economic crisis loomed, then struck.

The contest overall stands at 54-43 percent between Obama and McCain among likely voters, essentially stable since a Sept. 22 ABC/Post poll, with the exception of a slightly narrower result Sept. 29.



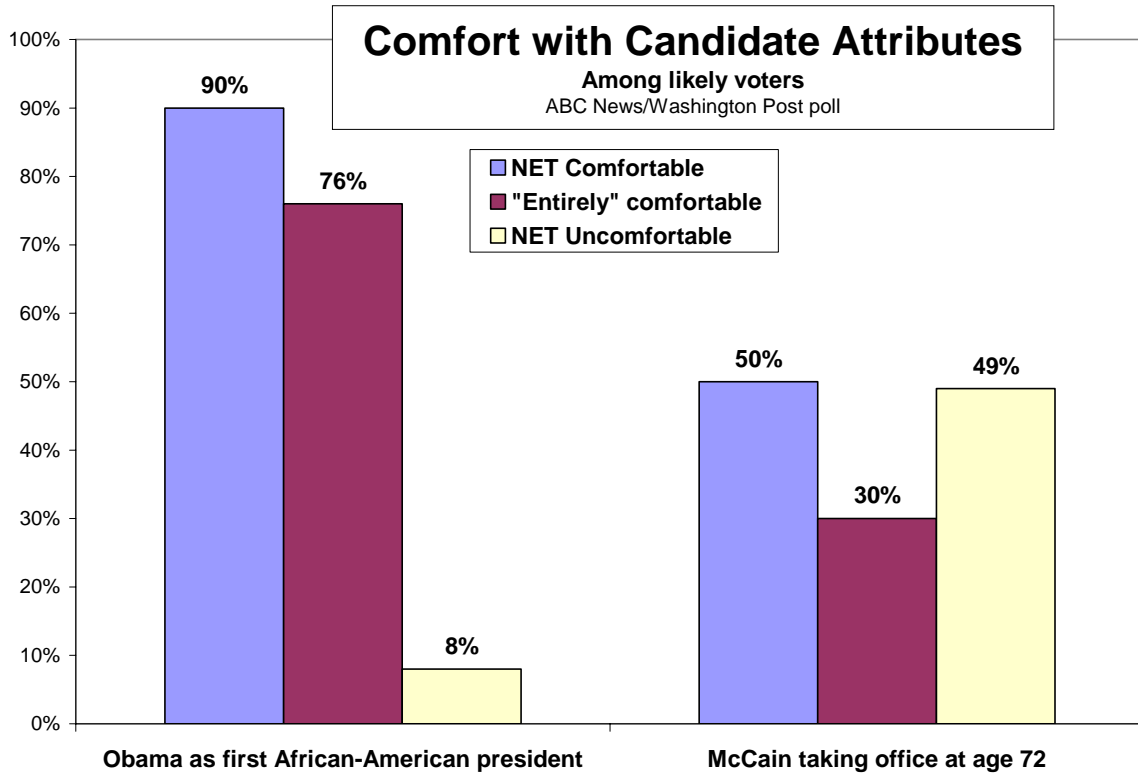
EARLY BIRDS – As noted, there's a much broader 61-35 percent Obama lead among those who intend to vote early, vs. 51-44 percent among traditional Election-Day voters. One reason is that early voting is most popular by far in the West, where a majority of voters, 54 percent, say they'll vote early or absentee. Obama's lead among all likely voters in the West, 61-35 percent, is his largest in ABC/Post polls to date.

Absentee and early voting decline from there – a still-high 37 percent in the South, but 19 percent in the Midwest and just 9 percent in the Northeast.

Early voting is higher among non-whites than whites (42 vs. 27 percent), among city dwellers than in rural areas (37 vs. 21 percent) and rises to 48 percent of the most highly educated adults, those with post-graduate degrees – again all strong Obama groups. McCain's more competitive in one other early-voting group, seniors, among whom 37 percent say they'll vote early or absentee, compared with 29 percent of younger adults.

The overall number of likely voters who plan to vote absentee or early, 31 percent, compares to an early/absentee vote of about 22 percent in 2004 and a bit fewer than 16 percent in 2000.

AGE and RACE – The dynamics of age and race are a continuing undercurrent in the election, and one in which Obama continues to fare better. Ninety percent of likely voters say they’re comfortable with his being the first African-American president, 76 percent “entirely” comfortable. But they divide 50-49 percent on comfort with McCain taking office at age 72 – and on that just 30 percent are entirely comfortable.



On the flip side, while 5 percent are entirely uncomfortable with Obama as the first black president, more, 26 percent, are entirely uncomfortable with McCain’s age – about what it’s been recently, but up from 19 percent just after the Republican convention.

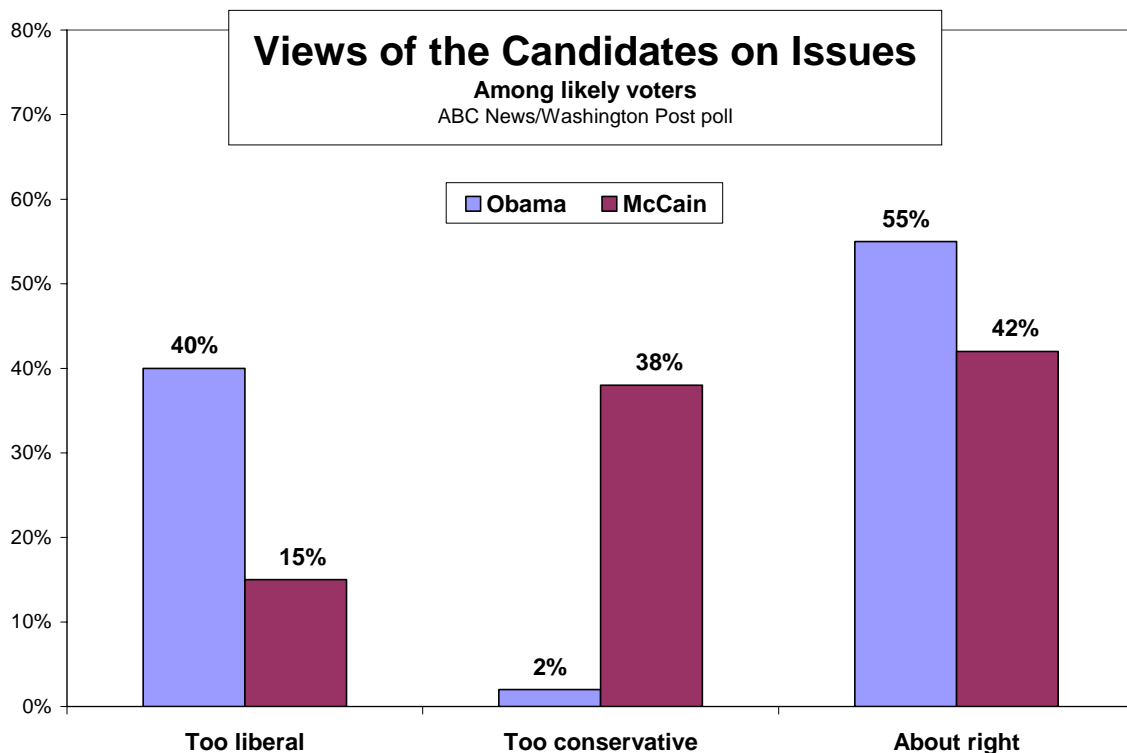
These views are highly partisan. But independents divide 50-50 in their comfort with McCain’s age, vs. 88-9 percent in their comfort with Obama’s race.

McCain continues to be challenged, as well, by the shadow of George W. Bush: After dipping under 50 percent for the first time earlier this week, the number of likely voters who think McCain would lead the country in the same direction as Bush is back to 52 percent.

Better for McCain is his support in one particular affinity group, military veterans; he leads among them by 54-43 percent. Veterans, however, account for just 12 percent of likely voters.

ROCKS/ROAD – As reported separately Thursday morning, McCain’s criticisms of Obama in terms of ideology aren’t showing progress, and on ethics Obama’s actually improved.

Likely voters by 49-39 percent pick Obama over McCain as having “higher personal and ethical standards”; that’s moved from an even split in an ABC/Post poll at the start of their race last May. Forty percent call Obama too liberal, but that’s essentially unchanged since summer, and a majority, 55 percent, instead says he’s “about right” ideologically. Fewer, meantime, say McCain’s where they’d like him to be ideologically – 42 percent.



Part of McCain’s challenge is that he comes in for some criticism on both sides of the ideological spectrum. Thirty-eight percent of likely voters see him as too conservative, much like the 40 percent who call Obama too liberal. But an additional 15 percent see McCain as too liberal, while just 2 percent call Obama too conservative.

In a can’t-buy-a-break result, 19 percent of conservatives call McCain too liberal, and an additional 11 percent of conservatives say he’s too conservative; that leaves 65 percent who say he’s about right. By contrast, 90 percent of liberals say Obama’s about right ideologically, as do 64 percent of moderates. Just 37 percent of moderates say McCain’s in the right place ideologically.

METHODOLOGY – Interviews for this ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll were conducted by telephone Oct. 19-22, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,335 likely voters, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a 2.5-point error margin for the full sample. Results on questions 2a and 20 were conducted Oct. 21-22 among 667 likely voters; those results have 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	
10/22/08 RV	89	57	32	11	6	5	*	

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.
10/22/08 RV	81	5	5	2	1	5	*
10/21/08 RV	82	6	5	2	1	4	*
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		*

2a. (ASKED IF CERTAIN TO VOTE) 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
10/22/08 RV	74	23	2	1

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
10/22/08	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
10/22/08	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	NET	-Chance change mind - Good	Unlikely	No opinion
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 NET	change Good	mind - Unlikely	No opinion
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 NET	change Good	mind - Unlikely	No opinion
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
10/22/08	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.
10/22/08 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

24 held for release.

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

Trend:

a. The economy

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

g and h held for release.

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

i. has higher personal and ethical standards

	Obama	McCain	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
10/21/08 LV	49	39	8	2	2
10/20/08 LV	49	43	5	2	2
5/11/08 RV	41	41	11	3	5
3/2/08 RV	44	31	10	4	11

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?

10/22/08 - Summary Table - Among Likely Leaned Obama/McCain Supporters

	--- Enthusiastic --			---- Not enthusiastic ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	
a. Obama	94	67	28	5	5	1	*
b. McCain	88	40	48	12	10	2	1

Trend:

a. Obama

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

10/22/08	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
		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
10/22/08	LV	45	52	3
10/21/08	LV	46	51	3
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
10/22/08 LV	56	42	2
10/21/08 LV	56	42	2
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

18. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) Do you think [NAME]'s views on most issues are too (liberal) for you, too (conservative) for you, or just about right?

a. Obama

	Too liberal	Too conservative	About right	No opinion
10/21/08 LV	40	2	55	4
10/20/08 LV	39	2	55	4
10/11/08 LV	38	3	57	2
6/15/08 RV	39	5	50	6
3/2/08 RV	33	5	55	7

b. McCain

10/21/08 LV	15	38	42	5
10/20/08 LV	12	40	42	6
10/11/08 LV	15	43	38	3
6/15/08 RV	18	35	41	6
3/2/08 RV	17	34	40	8
2/27/00	16	19	55	11
2/24/00	20	16	49	15
2/6/00	15	22	46	16

20. (ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS) If elected, [ITEM]. If you honestly assessed yourself, is that something with which you're entirely comfortable, somewhat comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable or entirely uncomfortable?

Trend:

a. McCain would take office at age 72

	NET	Entirely Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	NET	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Entirely Uncomfortable	No op.
10/22/08 LV	50	30	20	49	23	26	1
10/11/08 RV	50	27	23	50	24	25	*
9/29/08 RV	52	31	20	48	25	23	1
9/7/08 RV	56	32	24	42	23	19	3
8/22/08 RV	55	30	25	45	24	20	1

b. Obama would be the first African-American president

10/22/08	LV	90	76	14	8	3	5	2
10/11/08	RV	91	74	16	9	5	4	1
8/22/08	RV	87	70	17	11	6	6	2

21-26 held for release.

END