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The Battleground: The Presidential Race in New Hampshire

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This Marist Poll reports:

Presidential Race in New Hampshire:

- **Candidates Locked in Tight Race...Obama Edges McCain Among Likely Voters:**

With just eight days until Election Day, Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain are in a close contest for New Hampshire's four electoral votes. Among registered voters in New Hampshire, Obama has 47% to 43% for McCain. Neither candidate has made significant inroads in the Granite State in the past month. In a Marist Poll conducted in September, Obama had 48% among registered voters to McCain's 45%. Currently, Senator Barack Obama has a narrow lead over McCain among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Obama receives 50% to McCain's 45% among these voters. Once again, however, neither candidate has statistically gained nor lost ground in the state. In last month's Marist Poll, the results were similar. 51% of likely voters said they supported Obama while McCain had the backing of 45%. Looking at party support, each candidate's base remains solid. 93% of Democrats are behind Obama while 90% of Republicans are backing John McCain. Among Independent likely voters, 51% support Barack Obama compared with 39% for McCain. Last month, 54% of Independents likely to vote on Election Day supported Obama and 38% backed McCain.

Question Wording: If November’s presidential election were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:

	John McCain/ Sarah Palin the Republicans	Barack Obama/ Joe Biden the Democrats	Other	Undecided
Registered Voters				
October 2008	43%	47%	3%	7%
September 2008	45%	48%	1%	6%
Likely voters w/ leaners				
October 2008	45%	50%	2%	3%
Democrats	4%	93%	3%	<1%
Republicans	90%	9%	1%	<1%
Independents	39%	51%	4%	6%
September 2008	45%	51%	1%	3%
Democrats	2%	96%	1%	1%
Republicans	87%	11%	1%	1%
Independents	38%	54%	2%	6%

- **High Level of Commitment in New Hampshire:** More than eight in ten registered voters in New Hampshire -- 81% -- say their commitment is unshakeable when it comes to their pick for president. That’s regardless of whom they are planning to support. 80% of John McCain’s backers report they are strongly committed to the GOP candidate while 81% of Barack Obama’s supporters are firmly committed to him.

Question Wording: Would you say that you strongly support [ticket], somewhat support them, or do you think you might vote differently on Election Day?

Registered voters	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Might Vote Differently	Unsure
October 2008	81%	15%	4%	<1%
McCain/Palin supporters	80%	17%	3%	<1%
Obama/Biden supporters	81%	14%	4%	1%
September 2008	79%	17%	4%	<1%

- **It’s About the Issues:** A plurality of New Hampshire voters -- 48% -- say, if they had to choose, they prefer a candidate who shares their positions on the issues compared with 41% who would like a president with similar values. A majority of Barack Obama’s supporters -- 58% -- say issues are their priority. Nearly half of McCain’s backers feel a candidate’s values matter more.

Question Wording: If you had to choose, would you prefer a candidate who shares your positions on the issues but does not share your values, or a candidate who shares your values but not your positions on the issues?

Registered voters	Shared Issues	Shared Values	Unsure
October 2008	48%	41%	11%
McCain/Palin supporters	40%	49%	11%
Obama/Biden supporters	58%	32%	10%

- When It Comes to Favorability, It's a Draw...Both Candidates' Unfavorable Ratings Rise:** While a majority of New Hampshire voters say they have a positive impression of John McCain and Barack Obama, the unfavorable ratings of both presidential candidates have gone up. 56% of the electorate thinks well of McCain, and a similar proportion -- 57% -- has the same feeling about Barack Obama. On the other hand, 40% of the electorate has an unfavorable impression of McCain while 38% has a similar opinion of Obama. When compared with the proportion of voters who felt this way last month -- 34% for McCain and 31% for Obama -- it's clear the candidates have turned off some voters.

Question Wording: Overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of:

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
October 2008			
John McCain	56%	40%	4%
Barack Obama	57%	38%	5%
September 2008			
John McCain	61%	34%	5%
Barack Obama	63%	31%	6%

- Not So Positive for Palin...Majority Still Boasts About Biden:** When it comes to voters' views of the vice presidential candidates, registered New Hampshire voters divide over Sarah Palin. 48% have a positive perception of the GOP candidate while 46% view her unfavorably. Palin's image has lost some of its luster among Independent voters in New Hampshire. 52% of Independents currently have a negative impression of the Republican compared with 40% who felt that way last month. Her Democratic

counterpart, Joe Biden, has maintained a favorable rating with a majority of New Hampshire's electorate. 52% view him positively. More Independent voters, however, see Biden unfavorably. Last month, 28% of these voters had a negative view of Biden compared with 36% today.

Question Wording: Overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of:

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
Registered voters			
Sarah Palin			
October 2008	48%	46%	6%
Democrats	17%	77%	6%
Republicans	84%	11%	5%
Independents	40%	52%	8%
September 2008	52%	38%	10%
Democrats	12%	82%	6%
Republicans	85%	8%	7%
Independents	48%	40%	12%
Joe Biden			
October 2008	52%	38%	10%
Democrats	87%	8%	5%
Republicans	20%	69%	11%
Independents	53%	36%	11%
September 2008	51%	33%	16%
Democrats	84%	6%	10%
Republicans	23%	60%	17%
Independents	57%	28%	15%

Nature of the Sample: 757 New Hampshire Registered Voters

This survey of registered voters in New Hampshire was conducted on October 22nd and October 23rd, 2008. Registered voters were interviewed by telephone in proportion to the voter registration in each county in New Hampshire and adjusted for turnout in statewide elections. Results are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. There are 655 likely voters. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at $\pm 4\%$. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.