

The Temple Poll

Obama Leads in Pennsylvania

Will Enthusiasm Balance Experience Among Voters On Election Day?

Senator Barack Obama now leads Senator John McCain by 50 percent to 41 percent among Pennsylvanians likely to vote in the November 4 presidential election. Just 8 percent remain undecided, and half of that group prefers one candidate or the other. Adding in the undecided voters who lean to a candidate puts Obama's lead at 52 percent to 43 percent.

Presidential vote	Percent of likely voters	Including preferences of undecided
Obama	50	52
McCain	41	43
Don't know/not sure	8	4

These figures come from the most recent Temple Poll, for which interviews were conducted between October 20 and 26 with 1,001 Pennsylvanians registered to vote, 761 of them likely voters.

The Poll reveals the state of the contest among key demographic groups of likely Pennsylvania voters.

- Obama leads among moderates (62 percent to 34 percent), women (56/37), Catholics (53/41), those in middle-income families (55/42), and residents of the Southeast outside of Philadelphia (59/39).
- McCain leads among men (51/47), Protestants (52/44), and residents of the central portion of the state (57/34).
- The contest is effectively tied among Independents, voters in families with incomes of \$75,000 or more, and residents of the Southwest and the Northeast.

As the race reaches the home stretch, the campaigns allocate more of their resources to making sure their supporters reach the polls on Election Day. The McCain campaign enjoys a distinct advantage with regard to turnout: McCain's supporters have had more electoral experience than Obama's. By 65 percent to 51 percent, for example, McCain voters are more likely than Obama voters to say they follow government and public affairs "most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not." McCain voters are also more likely to say they always or nearly always vote and they have voted in a presidential or congressional election before. In part, these differences reflect the fact that McCain voters are older and wealthier, on average, than Obama supporters. The differences are important because engagement with politics and experience with elections facilitate voting.

"One of the questions that remains about this presidential election is whether Senator Obama's supporters will turn out on Election Day in the numbers necessary for Obama to win," said Michael Hagen, associate professor of political science and director of the Temple Poll.

Political engagement (<i>percent of registered voters</i>)	McCain voters	Obama voters
Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all? (<i>percent "most of the time"</i>)	65	51
Have you ever voted in an election for President or Congress before? (<i>percent "yes"</i>)	96	87
How often would you say you vote—always, nearly always, part of the time, or seldom? (<i>percent "always" or "nearly always"</i>)	89	84
Would you say you have been very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in the political campaigns so far this year? (<i>percent "very much interested"</i>)	73	67
How much thought have you given to next month's election for president—a great deal, a moderate amount, not much, or none at all? (<i>percent "a great deal"</i>)	73	70
How likely are you to vote in the election on November 4th? On a scale where 10 means you definitely will vote and 0 means you definitely will not vote in the election, where would you place yourself? (<i>percent "10"</i>)	87	88

Despite their inexperience, Obama voters are as likely as McCain voters to say they definitely will vote. If they do vote in equal numbers, one reason will be the level of enthusiasm among Obama voters about their candidate. Asked to express an opinion about the candidates on a scale from 0 to 10, 45 percent of Obama voters rate their candidate a 10; just 29 percent of McCain voters rate their candidate as high. The relative coolness of McCain voters to their candidate is not counterbalanced by hostility to their opponent; McCain voters and Obama voters feel about equally negative, on average, toward the opposing candidate.

“In terms of the motivations of individual voters,” Hagen said, “the Obama campaign has to hope that their candidate’s personal appeal will be as effective in getting voters to the polls as the habits and experience of McCain voters will be. Of course, both organizations have committed resources of their own to getting out the vote, and the Democrats will benefit from having more to spend on GOTV than the Republicans.”

Evaluations of candidates (<i>percent of registered voters</i>)	Obama voters	McCain voters
<u>Own candidate</u>		
10	45	29
9	15	14
8	19	21
7	9	19
6	3	7
5 or less	9	10
<u>Opposing candidate</u>		
0	35	37
1 or 2	15	15
3 or 4	18	18
5	16	13
6	7	9
7 or more	7	9

The Temple Poll is sponsored by Temple University's Institute for Public Affairs. For this Poll, a randomly selected sample of 1,001 Pennsylvanians registered to vote were interviewed by telephone between October 20 and 26, 2008. Once the interviewing was complete, the data were weighted to correct for unequal probabilities of selection and response, and to ensure that the demographic characteristics of the sample match the population of registered voters in Pennsylvania. The sample included 761 likely voters, identified on the basis of their voting history and engagement with the campaign. With samples of these sizes, the overall margin of error attributable to sampling is 3.1 percentage points for the sample of registered voters, 3.6 percentage points for the sample of likely voters. The sampling error for subgroups is larger.

For more information about the Poll, contact Dr. Michael G. Hagen, associate professor of political science and director of the Temple Poll (michael.hagen@temple.edu, 215 204 7798, or 610 662 7910) or Dr. Joseph P. McLaughlin, director of the Institute for Public Affairs and assistant dean for external affairs for the College of Liberal Arts (jmclau@temple.edu, 215 204 5059, or 215 510 3289).

Additional results from the Poll will be released over the next several days.

The Temple Poll

October 2008

The Presidential Contest in Pennsylvania

If the 2008 election for president was being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and John McCain, the Republican, who you would vote for?

<i>Percent of likely voters</i>		Barack Obama	John McCain	Not sure/ Don't know	Percent of sample
Total		50	41	8	99
Including preferences of undecided		52	43	4	99
Party identification	Democrat	90	7	3	40
	Independent	46	46	7	26
	Republican	13	84	3	34
Ideology	Conservative	20	75	4	34
	Liberal	90	5	5	16
	Moderate	62	34	3	48
Gender	Male	47	51	2	47
	Female	56	37	6	53
Race	White	49	46	4	92
	Black	100	0	0	4
Education	High school or less	54	42	4	41
	Some college	51	44	4	25
	College graduate	50	45	4	35
Age	18-29	71	26	3	13
	30-44	47	49	4	25
	45-64	51	45	2	39
	65+	50	44	6	21
Family income	Under \$30,000	60	35	3	15
	\$30,000-\$74,999	55	42	3	40
	\$75,000 and over	50	46	3	32
Religion	Protestant	44	52	3	42
	Roman Catholic	53	41	6	35
Church attendance	More than once a week	27	69	3	9
	Once a week	38	56	4	37
	Once or twice a month	57	38	5	16
	A few times a year	67	28	4	26
	Never	71	26	1	12
Region	Allegheny County	49	47	4	11
	Central	34	57	8	14
	Northeast	48	47	4	11
	Northwest	55	41	4	12
	Philadelphia	86	12	2	8
	South Central	50	47	2	15
	Southeast	59	39	3	18
	Southwest	47	44	7	9