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The Battleground: The Presidential Race in Iowa

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This Marist Poll reports:

Presidential Race in Iowa:

• **Obama Maintains Double-Digit Lead Among Likely Voters in the Hawkeye State:**

Senator Barack Obama is ahead of Senator John McCain by 8 percentage points among Iowa's registered voters and has a 10 percentage point margin among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. With about one week to go until Election Day, 48% of registered voters in Iowa support Obama compared with 40% for McCain. Among likely voters, Obama receives 52% to McCain's 42%. In a Marist Poll conducted last month, 51% of likely voters supported Barack Obama compared with 41% for McCain. Support currently divides along party lines. While Independents were evenly split last month, Obama surges ahead among this group with 63% of their vote. John McCain has the support of just 25% of Independents likely to vote on Election Day.

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	40%	48%	1%	11%
September 2008	41%	46%	2%	11%
Likely voters w/ leaners				
October 2008	42%	52%	1%	5%
Democrats	5%	91%	1%	3%
Republicans	91%	7%	<1%	2%
Independents	25%	63%	2%	10%

	John McCain/ Sarah Palin the Republicans	Barack Obama/ Joe Biden the Democrats	Other	Undecided
Likely voters w/ leaners				
September 2008	41%	51%	2%	6%
Democrats	6%	92%	<1%	2%
Republicans	85%	9%	1%	5%
Independents	42%	44%	3%	11%

- More Than Three-Quarters of Iowa Voters Strongly Support Their Choice of Candidate:** 78% of registered voters in Iowa say they won't change their minds by Election Day. That's regardless of which candidate they are planning to support. John McCain and Barack Obama both enjoy the strong backing of voters in their camps. Eight in ten of McCain's supporters say they are firmly committed to the GOP candidate while 76% of Obama's backers say they will not falter in their commitment to the Illinois senator. Just 4% in McCain's camp and 6% of Obama's supporters report they might change their mind on Election Day.

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

	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Might Vote Differently	Unsure
Registered Voters				
October 2008	78%	17%	5%	<1%
McCain/Palin supporters	80%	16%	4%	<1%
Obama/Biden supporters	76%	18%	6%	<1%
September 2008	69%	20%	9%	2%
McCain/Palin supporters	62%	22%	14%	2%
Obama/Biden supporters	76%	18%	5%	1%

- Voters Prefer Shared Values:** More voters in the state -- 47% -- would prefer a candidate who shares their values rather than one with whom they see eye-to-eye on the issues. Supporters of John McCain and backers of Barack Obama differ on this question. A majority of McCain's backers -- 58% -- share the view of the overall electorate in Iowa, saying values matter more. However, a majority of Obama's supporters -- 53% -- want a president who has a similar stance on the issues.

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	40%	47%	13%
McCain/Palin supporters	30%	58%	12%
Obama/Biden supporters	53%	37%	10%
September 2008	42%	49%	9%
McCain/Palin supporters	35%	55%	10%
Obama/Biden supporters	50%	46%	4%

- Voters Lukewarm on McCain...Majority View Obama Favorably:** While half of Iowa’s registered voters have a positive opinion of John McCain, a majority of the Iowa electorate - - 57% -- has a favorable impression of Barack Obama. McCain’s favorability rating has dipped over the past month. In September, 54% of voters thought well of McCain and 40% rated him unfavorably. Now, there is an 8 percentage point margin between his positive and negative scores. On the other hand, voters’ impressions of Obama have remained relatively unchanged. 58% of voters viewed him positively last month.

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

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
October 2008			
John McCain	50%	42%	8%
Barack Obama	57%	37%	6%
September 2008			
John McCain	54%	40%	6%
Barack Obama	58%	36%	6%

- Negative Feelings About Palin On the Rise...Biden Still Seen Favorably:** When it comes to Governor Sarah Palin, Iowa’s registered voters divide. 45% have a positive view of the vice presidential candidate compared with 47% who have an unfavorable impression of her. Palin’s image has dropped since last month. In the Marist Poll’s September survey, just 35% had a negative impression of the Republican. Independent voters have played a part in the shift. Last month, 30% of Independents viewed Palin negatively compared with 52% now. In contrast, Iowa voters have stayed steady in their perception of Senator Joe Biden.

49% have a positive impression of Biden compared with 33% who do not think well of him. That's comparable to last month when 50% of Iowa's electorate said he made a good impression on them. Biden's image has gotten a slight bump among Independent voters. A majority of this group -- 51% -- now think well of Biden while 46% viewed him that way in September.

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

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
Sarah Palin			
October 2008	45%	47%	8%
Democrats	13%	80%	7%
Republicans	85%	8%	7%
Independents	37%	52%	11%
September 2008	49%	35%	16%
Democrats	20%	61%	19%
Republicans	83%	8%	9%
Independents	51%	30%	19%
Joe Biden			
October 2008	49%	33%	18%
Democrats	78%	10%	12%
Republicans	20%	61%	19%
Independents	51%	27%	22%
September 2008	50%	30%	20%
Democrats	76%	11%	13%
Republicans	23%	52%	25%
Independents	46%	32%	22%

Nature of the Sample: 759 Iowa Registered Voters

This survey of registered voters in Iowa was conducted on October 23rd and October 24th, 2008. Registered voters were interviewed by telephone in proportion to the voter registration in each county in Iowa and adjusted for turnout in statewide elections. Results are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. There are 645 likely voters. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at $\pm 4\%$. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.