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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 with Edge Among Likely Voters:** With New Hampshire's 4 electoral votes on the line, Senator Barack Obama has the support of 48% to 45% for Senator John McCain among New Hampshire's registered voters. However, factor in New Hampshire's likely voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, and Barack Obama has a 6 percentage point edge over John McCain. Obama leads McCain 51% to 45%. There is a wide partisan divide among New Hampshire's likely voters. 96% of the state's likely Democratic voters say they support Obama while 87% of the state's likely Republican voters say they back McCain. A majority of New Hampshire's Independent voters -- 54% -- report they are behind Barack Obama.

**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	45%	48%	1%	6%

	John McCain/ Sarah Palin the Republicans	Barack Obama/ Joe Biden the Democrats	Other	Undecided
Likely voters w/ leaners	45%	51%	1%	3%
Democrats	2%	96%	1%	1%
Republicans	87%	11%	1%	1%
Independents	38%	54%	2%	6%

- Most Voters Strongly Support Their Candidate:** Overall, 79% of New Hampshire's registered voters say they strongly support their choice of candidate. When it comes to the level of commitment in each candidate's camp, 77% of John McCain's supporters say they are firmly behind him while Barack Obama enjoys the strong backing of 81% of his supporters. McCain and Obama are on equal footing when it comes to their supporters who might switch their vote at the polls. Just 4% of both McCain's and Obama's backers say they might change their minds.

**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
September 2008	79%	17%	4%	<1%
McCain/Palin supporters	77%	19%	4%	<1%
Obama/Biden supporters	81%	15%	4%	<1%

- Obama Bumps Up Level of Excitement:** Barack Obama's supporters are much more energized about their choice of candidates this election year than are John McCain's backers. Overall, 56% of registered voters in New Hampshire say they are excited about the choice they have for president. However, Barack Obama is igniting his supporters more than John McCain is sparking his. 70% of Obama's backers are excited about the candidates running for president while 49% of McCain's report they are enthused.

**Question Wording:** Are you excited or not excited about the choices you have for president?

<b>Registered voters</b>	Excited	Not Excited	Unsure
September 2008	56%	42%	2%
McCain/Palin supporters	49%	50%	1%
Obama/Biden supporters	70%	29%	1%

- Economic Crisis Plays Pivotal Role in Defining Campaign’s Focus:** From Wall Street to Main Street, the economy is, once again, dominating the headlines. For New Hampshire’s registered voters, the economy is the key issue in this campaign. 46% say the economy is their top priority when choosing a candidate. The war in Iraq and security against terrorism also rank highly in the minds of New Hampshire’s registered voters. Each receives 10%. More of Obama’s backers, however, are concerned about the economy than are McCain’s supporters. 52% of voters aligned with Obama say it’s their main focus compared with 39% of voters standing with McCain. Security against terrorism is a hot button issue for 19% of McCain’s supporters while just 1% of voters for Obama view it as their top priority. For 16% of voters in the Obama camp, the war in Iraq is a major concern. 5% of McCain’s allies see it as the deciding issue in this election.

**Question Wording:** When deciding your vote for president, which one of the following *issues* is most important to you:

<b>Registered voters</b>	<b>Sept. 2008</b>	McCain/ Palin Supporters	Obama/ Biden Supporters
Economy	<b>46%</b>	39%	52%
War in Iraq	<b>10%</b>	5%	16%
Security against terrorism	<b>10%</b>	19%	1%
Taxes	<b>7%</b>	13%	2%
Health care	<b>7%</b>	4%	8%
Education	<b>6%</b>	4%	8%
Social issues like abortion or same sex marriage	<b>5%</b>	7%	3%
Environment	<b>3%</b>	1%	5%
Illegal immigration	<b>2%</b>	4%	1%
Unsure	<b>4%</b>	4%	4%

- Voters Favor Obama’s Economic Plan...Some Question Strength of Record:** 49% of New Hampshire’s registered voters think Barack Obama has a better economic plan to handle the economy. That’s compared with 41% who say John McCain’s economic vision is stronger. New Hampshire voters do follow party lines on this issue. 91% of Democrats favor Barack Obama’s plan. 81% of Republicans think John McCain is on the right course. Among Independents, Obama has the clear advantage over McCain by 54% to 30%. However, when it comes to the candidates’ records on the economy, 48% of registered voters say McCain’s economic record is stronger while 35% think Obama’s is.

**Question Wording:** Which presidential candidate do you think has a better *plan/record* for handling the economy?

Registered voters	McCain	Obama	Unsure
<b>Better plan</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Democrats	4%	91%	5%
Republicans	81%	13%	6%
Independents	30%	54%	16%
<b>Better record</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Democrats	11%	69%	20%
Republicans	86%	6%	8%
Independents	41%	38%	21%

- It’s About the Issues, Say New Hampshire Voters:** 22% of voters in the Granite State want a president who is closest to them on the issues. Honesty and trustworthiness is the characteristic most important to 21% of New Hampshire’s registered voters while 18% want a candidate who shares their values. And, what about the much-talked about, “change?” The ability to shift the direction of the country is the most important factor to more of Barack Obama’s supporters than to John McCain’s. 23% of voters backing Obama value this quality the most compared with just 5% of voters rallying behind McCain. However, change is not the top quality in either candidate’s camp. For 28% of Barack Obama’s supporters, it’s most important that a candidate be close to them on the issues. A president who is honest and trustworthy tops the list for McCain’s backers with 24% of his voters having this view.

**Question Wording:** When deciding your vote for president, which one of the following qualities is most important to you? A presidential candidate who:

	<b>Sept. 2008</b>	McCain/ Palin Supporters	Obama/ Biden Supporters
<b>Registered voters</b>			
Is closer to you on the issues	<b>22%</b>	18%	28%
Is honest and trustworthy	<b>21%</b>	24%	19%
Shares your values	<b>18%</b>	23%	14%
Will bring about change	<b>15%</b>	5%	23%
Is a strong leader	<b>15%</b>	16%	13%
Has experience	<b>8%</b>	13%	2%
Unsure	<b>1%</b>	1%	1%

- **Majority Rules...Obama Has Better Vision for Change; McCain Has the Record:**

A majority -- 54% -- of New Hampshire voters believe Obama has the better *plan* to bring about change while 38% think McCain is the better candidate to take the nation in a different direction. Along party lines, 94% of registered Democrats think Obama is the better architect while 78% of Republicans think McCain has a better vision.

Independents favor Obama's plan by 62% to 27% for McCain's. However, when asked which candidate has the better *record* on bringing about change, here McCain has the majority. 51% of registered voters think his record of change outpaces Obama's. 37% say Obama's record is stronger.

**Question Wording:** Which presidential candidate do you think has a better *plan/record* to bring about change for the country?

<b>Registered voters</b>	McCain	Obama	Unsure
<b>Better plan</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>8%</b>
Democrats	5%	94%	1%
Republicans	78%	16%	6%
Independents	27%	62%	11%
<b>Better record</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Democrats	14%	74%	12%
Republicans	89%	7%	4%
Independents	44%	42%	14%

- **McCain and Obama Share Similar Favorability:** John McCain and Barack Obama are viewed well by many of New Hampshire’s registered voters. 61% have a positive impression of John McCain, and 63% view Barack Obama favorably.

**Question Wording:** Overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of [candidate]?

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
<b>Registered voters</b>			
John McCain	61%	34%	5%
Barack Obama	63%	31%	6%

- **Majority of New Hampshire Voters View Palin and Biden Positively:** Vice presidential candidates Governor Sarah Palin and Senator Joe Biden are both seen favorably by a majority of New Hampshire’s registered voters. 52% have a positive impression of Palin; 51% give Biden a similar favorability rating.

**Question Wording:** Overall, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of [candidate]?

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
<b>Registered voters</b>			
<b>Sarah Palin</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Democrats	12%	82%	6%
Republicans	85%	8%	7%
Independents	48%	40%	12%
Men	48%	41%	11%
Women	56%	35%	9%
<b>Joe Biden</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Democrats	84%	6%	10%
Republicans	23%	60%	17%
Independents	57%	28%	15%
Men	54%	32%	14%
Women	49%	35%	16%

**Nature of the Sample: 763 New Hampshire Registered Voters**

This survey of registered voters in New Hampshire was conducted from September 17<sup>th</sup> through September 21<sup>st</sup>, 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 604 likely voters. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at  $\pm 4\%$ . The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.