



The Battleground: The Presidential Race in Ohio

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This Marist Poll reports:

Presidential Race in Ohio:

- **Obama Has a Narrow Lead Over McCain in the Buckeye State:** The presidential race in Ohio is no longer a statistical dead heat. Among registered voters, Senator Barack Obama now outpaces Senator John McCain 48% to 40%. A Marist Poll conducted just last month had McCain and Obama each with the support of 44% of registered voters. Among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, Obama has 49% compared with 45% for McCain. Support for the candidates split along party lines. 85% of likely Republican voters report they back John McCain. A similar proportion of likely Democrats -- 89% -- are behind their party's candidate. Independent voters are divided. 44% say they back Obama while 47% report being for McCain. 6% of these key voters have not made up their minds.

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 | 44% | 44% | 2% | 10% |
| Likely Voters w/ Leaners | | | | |
| October 2008 | 45% | 49% | 1% | 5% |
| Democrats | 7% | 89% | 1% | 3% |
| Republicans | 85% | 8% | <1% | 7% |
| Independents | 47% | 44% | 3% | 6% |

| | John McCain/ Sarah Palin the Republicans | Barack Obama/ Joe Biden the Democrats | Other | Undecided |
|----------------|--|---|-------|-----------|
| September 2008 | 45% | 47% | 1% | 7% |
| Democrats | 7% | 90% | <1% | 3% |
| Republicans | 89% | 7% | <1% | 4% |
| Independents | 42% | 42% | 2% | 14% |

- Across the Board...Voters Strongly Committed to Choice of Candidate:** Regardless of whom they support, most registered voters in Ohio say they strongly back their pick for president. 78% are firmly committed to their candidate while just 4% report they might have a change of heart by Election Day. The same proportion of John McCain's and Barack Obama's backers has this level of commitment.

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% | 4% | 1% |
| McCain/Palin supporters | 78% | 17% | 4% | 1% |
| Obama/Biden supporters | 78% | 17% | 4% | 1% |
| September 2008 | 81% | 14% | 4% | 1% |

- Majority of Voters Have Favorable Images of both Barack Obama and John McCain...Obama Viewed Positively by More:** A majority of voters in Ohio hold positive perceptions of Barack Obama and John McCain. Six in ten registered voters think well of Obama while 54% view McCain favorably. In a similar Marist Poll conducted in September, Obama received a positive score of 54% from the Ohio electorate -- 6 percentage points fewer than he currently garners. McCain's favorable image among Ohio's voters remains relatively unchanged since last month when 56% of the electorate gave him a favorable rating. However, 44% of voters see him unfavorably now compared with 38% who held this view in September.

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

| Registered voters | Favorable | Unfavorable | Unsure |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| John McCain | | | |
| October 2008 | 54% | 44% | 2% |
| September 2008 | 56% | 38% | 6% |
| Barack Obama | | | |
| October 2008 | 60% | 37% | 3% |
| September 2008 | 54% | 38% | 8% |

- Biden’s Favorability Climbs...Perceptions of Palin Dip:** A majority of Ohio voters view both vice presidential candidates positively. However, Biden’s image has improved. Last month, just 45% of registered voters in Ohio said they think well of the candidate. That’s compared with 58% who report having a positive image of him today. Republican Sarah Palin barely holds onto a majority of voters who view her favorably. In that same September survey, 54% of the Ohio electorate gave Palin a “thumbs up” while 51% do so today. However, her negative rating has increased from 32% in the previous poll to 42% currently.

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

| Registered voters | Favorable | Unfavorable | Unsure |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Sarah Palin | | | |
| October 2008 | 51% | 42% | 7% |
| September 2008 | 54% | 32% | 14% |
| Joe Biden | | | |
| October 2008 | 58% | 34% | 8% |
| September 2008 | 45% | 33% | 22% |

Nature of the Sample: 961 Ohio Registered Voters

This survey of 961 registered voters in Ohio was conducted from October 5th through October 8th, 2008. Registered voters were interviewed by telephone in proportion to the voter registration in each county in Ohio and adjusted for turnout in statewide elections. Results are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. There are 771 likely voters. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.