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The Battleground: The Presidential Race in Pennsylvania

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This Marist Poll reports:

Presidential Race in Pennsylvania

- **Race Opens Up in Pennsylvania...Obama Pulls Ahead by 9 Percentage Points**

Among Registered Voters...Has Double-Digit Lead Among Likely Voters: The once tight presidential race in Pennsylvania is now tipping in Senator Barack Obama's favor. He leads Senator John McCain among the state's registered voters 49% to 40%. Among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate, Obama is in front of McCain by 12 percentage points -- 53% to 41%. In a Marist Poll released less than one month ago, Obama had the support of 45% of Pennsylvania's registered voters compared with 42% for McCain. Among the state's likely voters, Obama had 49% to 44% for McCain in the previous poll. Pennsylvania's likely voters currently divide along party lines. 88% of Democrats and 83% of Republicans likely to vote on Election Day now support their party's candidate. A majority of Independents -- 53% -- favor Obama compared with 34% for McCain. 12% of these voters are still undecided.

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%	49%	1%	10%
September 2008	42%	45%	2%	11%
Likely Voters w/ leaners				
October 2008	41%	53%	<1%	6%
Democrats	8%	88%	<1%	4%
Republicans	83%	12%	1%	4%
Independents	34%	53%	1%	12%
September 2008	44%	49%	<1%	7%
Democrats	6%	87%	<1%	7%
Republicans	92%	5%	<1%	3%
Independents	40%	49%	<1%	11%

- **More Than Three-Quarters of Voters Stand Firm Behind Candidate of Choice:**

76% of Pennsylvania’s registered voters, regardless of whom they are planning to support, say they will not alter their choice for president between now and Election Day. In fact, just 6% say they might change their minds. More of Barack Obama’s supporters, however, report they will not waver in their level of commitment compared with those favoring McCain. 81% of Obama’s backers say they are firmly behind the Illinois senator while 70% of McCain’s supporters report they’ll stick with the senator from Arizona.

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	76%	17%	6%	1%
McCain/Palin supporters	70%	24%	5%	1%
Obama/Biden supporters	81%	12%	6%	1%
September 2008	81%	14%	5%	<1%

- **Obama Receives Higher Marks When It Comes to Favorability:** Although both presidential candidates are viewed positively by a majority of the Pennsylvania

electorate, more registered voters in the state have a favorable impression of Barack Obama than John McCain. 65% think well of Obama; 55% view McCain positively. However, McCain’s negative rating has increased from 37% to 43% during the past 3 weeks. Obama’s positive rating, on the other hand, has increased 5 percentage points during that same time period.

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

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
John McCain			
October 2008	55%	43%	2%
September 2008	53%	37%	10%
Barack Obama			
October 2008	65%	34%	1%
September 2008	60%	32%	8%

- Big Bump in Biden’s Favorability...Palin’s Unfavorable Rating Climbs:** 63% of Pennsylvania’s voters say, “Way to go, Joe!” Compared with a Marist Poll conducted in September, Biden’s favorability rating got a boost. 52% of voters last month reported they viewed Biden positively. Pennsylvania voters, however, are lukewarm on Sarah Palin. Today, 50% of the electorate say they think well of Palin. However, 45% have an unfavorable impression of her compared with 34% during last month’s poll.

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

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
Sarah Palin			
October 2008	50%	45%	5%
September 2008	49%	34%	17%
Joe Biden			
October 2008	63%	28%	9%
September 2008	52%	29%	19%

Nature of the Sample: 943 Pennsylvania Registered Voters

This survey of 943 registered voters in Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvania and adjusted for turnout in statewide elections.

Results are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. There are 757 likely voters. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.