



# WNBC/Marist Poll

Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 ♦ Phone 845.575.5050 ♦ Fax 845.575.5111 [www.maristpoll.marist.edu](http://www.maristpoll.marist.edu)

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**All references must be sourced WNBC/Marist Poll**

Contact: Dr. Lee M. Miringoff  
Dr. Barbara L. Carvalho  
Marist College  
845.575.5050

## **National Poll: Personally Presidential**

This WNBC/Marist Poll reports:

- **Although many registered voters say too much attention is placed on the private lives of the presidential candidates and their families, that’s exactly what voters want to know:** 59% of voters nationwide believe too much attention is placed on the personal lives of the candidates running for president. However, when asked whether or not it’s important to know about a number of things that would ordinarily be considered personal, most voters think it’s important or, at least, interesting for this information to be public knowledge. Not surprisingly, 90% of voters think it’s important in deciding their vote to have information about the mental health of a candidate. 73% of voters also think the candidate’s physical health is important to know about, and 72% think a candidate’s prior drug use should be public knowledge. And, that’s not all. 41% want to know if a presidential candidate has had an affair, and another 27% say they would find information about a candidate’s infidelity interesting. 33% think it’s important for a candidate’s finances to be part of the public discussion, and another 31% find that information interesting to know about.

**Question Wording:** Do you think the attention given to the personal lives of candidates running for president is too much, too little, or about the right amount?

<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>Too Much</b>	<b>Too Little</b>	<b>About the Right Amount</b>
May 2007	59%	5%	36%
Democrats	58%	6%	36%
Republicans	60%	6%	34%
Independents	59%	4%	37%

**Question Wording:** In deciding your vote, do you think it is important to know each of the following, interesting but not important, or neither important nor interesting:

<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>Important to Know</b>	<b>Interesting But Not Important</b>	<b>Neither Important Nor Interesting</b>
<b>About the candidate...</b>			
Mental health	90%	7%	3%
Health	73%	15%	12%
Drug use	72%	16%	12%
Affairs outside of their marriage	41%	27%	32%
Personal finances	33%	31%	36%

- Most voters think there's a great deal of pressure on a presidential candidate's spouse, and it's not just the candidate who is under scrutiny:** 62% of voters think there is a great deal of pressure on the spouse of a presidential candidate. When asked what is important to know about a presidential candidate's spouse in deciding their vote for the candidate, 52% say the mental health of a candidate's spouse. Another 26% think that information would be interesting to know although not important to their decision to vote for or against the candidate. 52% also think it's important to know about the past drug use of a candidate's spouse, and 24% would find that to be interesting information. 31% think any extramarital affairs by the spouse should be public knowledge, and 30% think that information would be interesting to know about. 26% want information about the spouse's health, and 42% think there should be public discussion about the health of a candidate's spouse. Only 20% think the personal finances of a candidate's spouse are important to know about although another 31% would find that interesting.

**Question Wording:** When running for public office, do you think there is a great deal of pressure on the candidate's spouse, a moderate amount, not very much, or no pressure at all on the candidate's spouse?

<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>A Great Deal</b>	<b>A Moderate Amount</b>	<b>Not Very Much</b>	<b>No Pressure at All</b>
May 2007	62%	29%	5%	4%
Democrats	60%	27%	7%	6%
Republicans	69%	26%	3%	2%
Independents	63%	31%	4%	2%

**Question Wording:** In deciding your vote, do you think it is important to know each of the following, interesting but not important, or neither important nor interesting:

Registered Voters	Important to Know	Interesting But Not Important	Neither Important Nor Interesting
<b>About the candidate's spouse...</b>			
Mental health	52%	26%	22%
Drug use	52%	24%	24%
Affairs outside of their marriage	31%	30%	39%
Health	26%	42%	32%
Personal finances	20%	31%	49%

- Voters still see a traditional role for the president's spouse:** 87% of registered voters nationwide think it's appropriate for the president's spouse to focus attention on a humanitarian issue or charitable cause. Most voters are also comfortable with the First Lady or First Gentleman traveling as a White House representative to other countries to attend ceremonial functions. But, when it comes to acting as a policy advisor, many voters draw the line. Voters divide over whether a presidential spouse should serve as an unofficial policy advisor to the president. 61% of Democrats think that's okay. 61% of Republicans and 52% of independent voters disagree. When it comes to serving in an official policy role, most voters, regardless of political party, do not think that is something the president's spouse should do.

**Question Wording:** Most of the presidential candidates' spouses are active in the campaigns, when elected do you think a president's spouse should or should not do each of the following:

	Should	Should Not	Unsure
<b>Focus attention on a humanitarian issue or charitable cause</b>			
Registered voters	87%	8%	5%
Democrats	87%	7%	6%
Republicans	89%	10%	1%
Independents	86%	7%	7%
<b>Travel to other countries to attend ceremonies as an official representative of the White House</b>			
Registered voters	70%	26%	4%
Democrats	76%	22%	2%
Republicans	73%	24%	3%
Independents	62%	31%	7%

	Should	Should Not	Unsure
<b>Serve as an unofficial policy adviser</b>			
Registered voters	46%	47%	7%
Democrats	61%	33%	6%
Republicans	35%	61%	4%
Independents	38%	52%	10%
<b>Serve in an official government position as a policy adviser</b>			
Registered voters	23%	69%	8%
Democrats	34%	59%	7%
Republicans	15%	78%	7%
Independents	17%	74%	9%

### **Nature of the Sample: 1,003 Americans**

This survey was conducted April 26<sup>th</sup> through May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. 1,003 adults 18 years of age or older within the continental United States were interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. The results of the entire survey are statistically significant at  $\pm 3\%$ . There are 823 registered voters including 279 Democrats, 227 Republicans, and 299 independent voters. The results for registered voters are statistically significant at  $\pm 3.5\%$ . The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations.