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**Battle for the White House:
Obama Maintains Slight Edge Over McCain**

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This Marist Poll reports:

- **Campaign '08 Not Always About Change... Obama Still Holds Narrow Lead Nationally... Edges McCain by 4 Percentage Points Among Registered Voters... 5 Percentage Points Among Likely Voters:** Senator Barack Obama leads Senator John McCain 47% to 43% among registered voters nationwide. Obama enjoys a similar lead among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Here, he edges McCain 49% to 44%. In a similar survey released by Marist College last week, registered voters nationally reported they prefer Obama to McCain by the same proportion – 47% to 43%. Despite last Friday's presidential debate and the nation's economic crisis, likely voters, including those leaning toward a candidate, also have not swayed. In last week's survey, 49% said they supported Obama and 44% backed McCain. That's the same proportion of voters who are behind each candidate today. Support splits along party lines. 88% of Democrats and 89% of Republicans say they back their party's nominee. As for likely Independent voters, a majority prefer Barack Obama. He leads McCain among this important group by 51% to 40%.

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 2, 2008	43%	47%	1%	9%
September 25, 2008	43%	47%	2%	8%
Likely Voters w/ Leaners				
October 2, 2008	44%	49%	1%	6%
Democrats	9%	88%	1%	2%
Republicans	89%	5%	<1%	6%
Independents	40%	51%	1%	8%
September 25, 2008	44%	49%	<1%	7%

- Having Doubts? Intensity of Support Dips for Both Candidates:** Regardless of whom they support, 74% of registered voters nationwide say they strongly support their pick for president while just 7% of voters might change their minds by Election Day. While most voters report they firmly back one of the candidates, the intensity of support among some voters has dwindled. In a similar poll conducted last week, 81% of registered voters said they stood strong behind one of the candidates. Looking at each candidate’s camp, both Obama and McCain have seen a softening of support. 76% of Barack Obama’s backers report today they firmly support the Democrat compared with 83% last week. McCain experienced a 9 percentage point drop in the intensity of his backers from 79% to 70%.

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 2, 2008	74%	18%	7%	1%
September 25, 2008	81%	13%	6%	<1%
McCain/Palin supporters				
October 2, 2008	70%	21%	8%	1%
September 25, 2008	79%	14%	7%	<1%
Obama/Biden supporters				
October 2, 2008	76%	16%	7%	1%
September 25, 2008	83%	12%	4%	1%

- **A Tale of Two Candidates... Obama and McCain Share Similar Favorability**

Rating: A majority of registered voters nationally say they view both Barack Obama and John McCain favorably. 61% have a positive perception of Obama while 60% have a similar view of McCain.

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

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
John McCain	60%	37%	3%
Barack Obama	61%	36%	3%

- **Biden and Palin Both Viewed Positively Heading Into Vice Presidential Debate:**

When it comes to favorability, both Joe Biden and Sarah Palin receive a “thumbs up” from at least half of the national electorate. Not surprisingly both candidates get high marks from members of their own party. 87% of Republicans think well of Sarah Palin while 78% of Democrats have a positive perception of Joe Biden. More Independents, however, have a better impression of Biden compared with Palin. 54% of Independents think well of Biden; 45% see Palin favorably.

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

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
Sarah Palin	50%	40%	10%
Democrats	21%	67%	12%
Republicans	87%	8%	5%
Independents	45%	44%	11%
Men	55%	35%	10%
Women	44%	45%	11%
Joe Biden	53%	34%	13%
Democrats	78%	13%	9%
Republicans	27%	60%	13%
Independents	54%	30%	16%
Men	50%	39%	11%
Women	57%	29%	14%

Nature of the Sample: 1,274 Americans

This survey was conducted from September 28th through 30th, 2008. 1,274 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 1,134 registered voters and 943 likely voters. The results for these sub-samples are statistically significant at $\pm 3\%$ and $\pm 3.5\%$, respectively. The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations.