



**Battle for the White House:
Obama with 9 Percentage Point Lead Nationally**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, November 3, 2008

Contact: Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Azzoli
Marist College, 845.575.5050

This Marist Poll reports:

- **Down to the Wire...Obama Leads McCain by 9 Percentage Points Nationally:** After months of campaigning, the presidential contest comes down to mere hours. Heading into Election Day, Senator Barack Obama is ahead of his Republican rival, Senator John McCain, by 9 percentage points nationally -- 53% to 44% -- among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. In a Marist Poll conducted just last week, Obama held a 7 percentage point lead. Among registered voters nationwide, Obama is currently ahead of McCain, 51% to 42%, respectively.

Question Wording: If Tuesday'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
Likely voters w/ leaners				
November 3, 2008	44%	53%	1%	2%
October 31, 2008	43%	50%	3%	4%
October 2, 2008	44%	49%	1%	6%
September 25, 2008	44%	49%	<1%	7%
Registered voters				
November 3, 2008	42%	51%	1%	6%
October 31, 2008	39%	48%	2%	11%
October 2, 2008	43%	47%	1%	9%
September 25, 2008	43%	47%	2%	8%

- Concrete Commitment Among Most Voters:** Most voters nationally report a high level of commitment to their choice of candidate regardless for whom they are planning to support. 84% say they are not going to sway in their support while just 3% report they are still on the fence. That's comparable to the 87% of the national electorate who said they firmly supported a candidate in Marist's last poll. Since that survey, John McCain maintains the same level of strong support -- 86% -- among his backers. 83% say they firmly back Obama compared with 89% in a Marist Poll last week.

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
November 3, 2008	84%	13%	3%	<1%
October 31, 2008	87%	8%	4%	1%
October 2, 2008	74%	18%	7%	1%
September 25, 2008	81%	13%	6%	<1%
McCain/Palin supporters				
November 3, 2008	86%	11%	3%	<1%
October 31, 2008	86%	8%	6%	<1%
October 2, 2008	70%	21%	8%	1%
September 25, 2008	79%	14%	7%	<1%
Obama/Biden supporters				
November 3, 2008	83%	15%	2%	<1%
October 31, 2008	89%	9%	1%	1%
October 2, 2008	76%	16%	7%	1%
September 25, 2008	83%	12%	4%	1%

- Point of No Return...Nearly Half Chose Candidate Before Conventions...One-Fourth of Independents Say Debates Sealed the Deal:** 47% of registered voters nationally say they knew for whom they were going to vote even before the parties' conventions ever took place. This includes 59% of McCain's backers. McCain wrapped up his nomination fight much earlier than the Democrats. Only 43% of Obama's supporters say they were convinced to vote for him before the parties' conventions. 18% of the national electorate report the debates were the deal maker for them. This includes 22% of Obama's supporters but only 13% of voters behind McCain. 10% say the country's economic crash contributed the most to their decision. 11% of Obama's backers saw this as a turning point compared with just 5% of McCain's supporters. Another 10% of registered voters nationwide report

the vice presidential selections had the most impact on them. Looking along party lines, although the majority of Republicans -- 56% -- had their minds made up before the conventions, the next largest proportion -- 15% -- say the vice presidential selections had the most bearing on their decision. For Democrats, 48% report making up their minds before the conventions, but 17% point to the presidential debates as the deciding factor. Only 38% of Independents had picked a candidate early. For one-quarter of these all-important voters, the debates were defining moments. Another 13% of Independents mention the economic crisis as their decision point.

Question Wording: Which one of the following defining moments in the presidential campaign most helped you decide your vote?

	The Economic Crash	The Debates	The Vice Presidential Selections	The Party Conventions	Decided Before Party Conventions	Unsure
Registered voters	10%	18%	10%	8%	47%	7%
Candidate support						
McCain/Palin supporters	5%	13%	13%	6%	59%	4%
Obama/Biden supporters	11%	22%	10%	9%	43%	5%
Party						
Democrats	10%	17%	8%	8%	48%	9%
Republicans	6%	12%	15%	7%	56%	4%
Independents	13%	25%	8%	10%	38%	6%

- Favorable Finale for Both Candidates:** Going into tomorrow's election, both candidates are viewed favorably by a majority of the national electorate. John McCain and Barack Obama share similar favorability ratings. 57% think well of McCain while 56% view Obama positively. Their favorability ratings have declined slightly since a Marist Poll conducted in early October.

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

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
John McCain			
November 3, 2008	57%	38%	5%
October 2, 2008	60%	37%	3%
Barack Obama			
November 3, 2008	56%	37%	7%
October 2, 2008	61%	36%	3%

- **Majority View Biden Positively...Perceptions of Palin Dip:** A majority of registered voters nationally -- 53% -- view Senator Joe Biden favorably. However, voters divide over Governor Sarah Palin. 46% have a positive perception of Palin, and 46% view her negatively.

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

Registered voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
Sarah Palin			
November 3, 2008	46%	46%	8%
October 2, 2008	50%	40%	10%
Joe Biden			
November 3, 2008	53%	35%	12%
October 2, 2008	53%	34%	13%

Nature of the Sample: 830 Americans

This survey was conducted on November 2, 2008. 830 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 $\pm 3.5\%$. There are 747 registered voters and 635 likely voters. The results for these sub-samples are each statistically significant at $\pm 4\%$. The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations.