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The American Electorate: Great Expectations?

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This Marist Poll reports:

Majority of Voters Excited About the Candidates...Obama Supporters Lead the Charge:

- 53% of registered voters nationwide say they are enthusiastic about the choices they have for president while 44% aren't as energized.
- But, there's more to the story. The proportion of Barack Obama's supporters who report being excited about their choice of candidates is more than double that of John McCain's. 81% of voters behind Obama are enthused compared with 37% of John McCain's backers.
- Both camps, however, believe there is a lot at stake. Most voters -- 80% -- think after all the votes are counted, it will *really* matter which candidate calls 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue "home." This includes 87% of Obama's supporters and 83% of voters for McCain.

Confidence in Voting Process Grows...But, Voters Expect Long Lines:

- Since the 2004 presidential election, there's been a 15 percentage point drop in the proportion of the electorate who think that not all votes will be counted. At that time, 51% of voters were concerned, but today, just 36% say there's a likelihood that many votes will be excluded from the final tally. 43% of Barack Obama's supporters question whether all ballots will be included in the vote totals while 26% of McCain's backers doubt the system.

- 72% of registered voters nationwide expect there to be long lines at their voting place. But, 41% of voters say they will wait as long as it takes to cast their ballot. This includes 48% of Obama’s supporters and 39% of McCain’s backers who will stick it out.
- A notable proportion of voters expect confusion at the polls. 44% say many people will be confused about *how* to cast their ballot. That’s a slight dip from four years ago when nearly half -- 49% -- of the electorate thought there would be uncertainty on Election Day. Today, more supporters of Barack Obama -- 52% -- believe it’s very likely or likely that some people will be confused by the process compared with 34% of John McCain’s backers.
- Will some voters be turned away at the polls? 38% of registered voters think there’s a good chance many will be told they are ineligible to vote. 48% of Obama’s backers feel this way compared with 26% of McCain’s.

Nature of the Sample: 716 Americans

This survey was conducted on October 29th, 2008. 716 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 $\pm 4\%$. There are 636 registered voters. The results for this sub-sample is statistically significant at $\pm 4\%$. The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations.

Tables for *The American Electorate*

Question Wording: Are you excited or not excited about the choices you have for president?

Registered voters	Excited	Not excited	Unsure
November 3, 2008	53%	44%	3%
McCain/Palin supporters	37%	58%	5%
Obama/Biden supporters	81%	17%	2%
Democrats	76%	23%	1%
Republicans	37%	55%	8%
Independents	42%	56%	2%

Question Wording: Do you think it matters a great deal, somewhat, not too much, or not at all whether John McCain or Barack Obama wins the presidential election this year?

Registered voters	A Great Deal	Somewhat	Not Too Much	Not at all
November 3, 2008	80%	11%	4%	5%
McCain/Palin supporters	83%	11%	4%	2%
Obama/Biden supporters	87%	8%	4%	1%
October 26, 2004	77%	14%	6%	3%

Question Wording: Do you think it is very likely, likely, not very likely, or not likely at all that many votes will not actually be counted on Election Day:

Registered voters	Very Likely or Likely	Very Likely	Likely	Not Very Likely	Not Likely at All	Unsure
November 3, 2008	36%	14%	22%	37%	22%	5%
McCain/Palin supporters	26%	13%	13%	39%	30%	5%
Obama/Biden supporters	43%	13%	30%	38%	16%	3%
Democrats	39%	15%	24%	40%	17%	4%
Republicans	25%	12%	13%	39%	32%	4%
Independents	43%	17%	26%	32%	17%	8%
November 1, 2004	51%	20%	31%	28%	18%	3%

Question Wording: Do you think it is very likely, likely, not very likely, or not likely at all that there will be long lines at your polling place on Election Day?

Registered voters	Very Likely or Likely	Very Likely	Likely	Not Very Likely	Not Likely at All	Unsure
November 3, 2008	72%	35%	37%	15%	7%	6%
McCain/Palin supporters	67%	34%	33%	18%	10%	5%
Obama/Biden supporters	79%	37%	42%	12%	5%	4%
Democrats	76%	39%	37%	12%	7%	5%
Republicans	64%	30%	34%	20%	9%	7%
Independents	76%	35%	41%	13%	5%	6%
November 2, 2004	68%	28%	40%	20%	7%	5%

Question Wording: What is the longest amount of time, in minutes that you would wait on line to vote?

Registered voters	30 Minutes or Less	31 to 60 Minutes	More than an Hour	As Long As It Takes
November 3, 2008	27%	17%	15%	41%
McCain/Palin supporters	25%	18%	18%	39%
Obama/Biden supporters	19%	16%	17%	48%

Question Wording: Do you think it is very likely, likely, not very likely, or not likely at all that each of the following will happen on Election Day: That many people will be confused about how to cast their ballots?

Registered voters	Very Likely or Likely	Very Likely	Likely	Not Very Likely	Not Likely at All	Unsure
November 3, 2008	44%	10%	34%	37%	17%	2%
McCain/Palin supporters	34%	9%	25%	40%	24%	2%
Obama/Biden supporters	52%	10%	42%	36%	10%	2%
Democrats	49%	10%	39%	35%	15%	1%
Republicans	37%	7%	30%	38%	22%	3%
Independents	47%	14%	33%	37%	14%	2%
October 26, 2004	49%	23%	26%	33%	16%	2%

Question Wording: Do you think it is very likely, likely, not very likely, or not likely at all that each of the following will happen on Election Day: That many people will show up to vote and be told they are not eligible?

Registered voters	Very Likely or Likely	Very Likely	Likely	Not Very Likely	Not Likely at All	Unsure
November 3, 2008	38%	10%	28%	42%	15%	5%
McCain/Palin supporters	26%	9%	17%	47%	20%	7%
Obama/Biden supporters	48%	12%	36%	40%	10%	2%
Democrats	43%	13%	30%	43%	13%	1%
Republicans	28%	6%	22%	44%	21%	7%
Independents	42%	11%	31%	38%	12%	8%
October 26, 2004	37%	15%	22%	40%	20%	3%