



UW Badger Poll™ #27, Release #1  
University of Wisconsin Survey Center  
University of Wisconsin Madison  
FOR RELEASE ON OCTOBER 31, 2008

NOTE: When using material from this release please cite the UW Badger Poll™ conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center. Poll results compiled by Chad J. Kniss, Project Director, UW Survey Center. [ckniss@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:ckniss@ssc.wisc.edu) (office phone: 608.262.4157)

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## WISCONSIN'S VIEWS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

As Election 2008 entered the final two weeks, the recent Badger Poll asked Wisconsin Residents about their views on the presidential election.

- Among all adult residents of Wisconsin, Barack Obama leads John McCain 54% to 38%.
- Among likely voters (N=359) in this survey 52% favor Barack Obama, while 42% favor John McCain.
- Overall, 63% of Wisconsinites have a favorable impression of Senator Obama, while 39% have a favorable impression of Senator McCain.
- When it comes to impressions of the Vice-Presidential candidates, 45% have a favorable impression of Senator Joe Biden and 32% have a favor impression of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin.

The recent Badger Poll also asked which presidential candidate Wisconsinites thought was better able to handle eight issues. More respondents favored Barack Obama on all eight of the issues.

- Better at understanding the problems of ordinary people: 64% Obama 22% McCain
- Better at handling the economy: 57% Obama 28% McCain
- Better at providing leadership to the U.S.: 57% Obama 29% McCain
- Better at dealing with corruption in D.C.: 53% Obama 28% McCain
- Better at handling foreign relations: 52% Obama 39% McCain
- Better at handling the situation in Iraq: 52% Obama 37% McCain
- Better at handling Afghanistan: 51% Obama 36% McCain
- Better at handling terrorism: 49% Obama 38% McCain

- The largest issue that Badger State residents thought was ***the most important*** in their vote for president was the economy at 39%, with 48% of Obama supporters saying the economy is the most important issue and 29% of McCain supporters saying the economy is the most important issue.
- Only **14%** of Wisconsinites are satisfied with the way things are going in the U.S. today, down from 23% in April of 2008. 81% said they are dissatisfied.
- **75%** of Wisconsinites disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as President, while only 20% approve – down from 29% in April 2008.
- **74%** disapprove of the way that the U.S. Congress is handling its' job, while only 21% approve – down from 33% in April 2008.

## Choice for President of the United States

<b>October 21-28, 2008</b>			
	All Residents	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Barack Obama (D)	54%	52%	52%
John McCain (R)	38%	40%	42%
Another Candidate	3%	3%	2%
Undecided	4%	4%	3%
Refused	1%	1%	1%
(N)	(N=538)	(N=483)	(N=359)
Margin of Error	+/- 4.2%	+/- 4.5%	+/- 5.2%

<b>Intensity of Presidential Vote</b>				
	All	Likely Voters	Obama Supporters	McCain Supporters
Strongly for Obama	48%	47%	88%	--
Not so strongly for Obama	5%	4%	10%	--
Leaning toward Obama	1%	1%	2%	--
Undecided	4%	3%	--	--
Leaning toward McCain	11%	9%	--	28%
Not so strongly for McCain	7%	8%	--	18%
Strongly for McCain	20%	25%	--	54%
	(N = 538)	(N = 359)	(N = 279)	(N = 211)

## Impressions of the Candidates

### Impression of John McCain

	October 2008	April 2008	December 2007
Favorable	39%	47%	45%
Unfavorable	47%	27%	29%
Don't know	13%	25%	26%
Refused	1%	1%	<1%
	(N = 538)	(N = 521)	(N = 507)

### Impression of Barack Obama

	October 2008	April 2008	December 2007
Favorable	63%	45%	45%
Unfavorable	23%	35%	29%
Don't know	13%	20%	26%
Refused	1%	<1%	--
	(N = 538)	(N = 521)	(N = 507)

### Vice Presidential Candidates

	Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin	Senator Joe Biden
Favorable	32%	45%
Unfavorable	42%	22%
Don't know	26%	32%
Refused	<1%	1%
	(N = 538)	(N = 538)

## The Candidates and the Issues

Which candidate do you trust to...							
	Barack Obama	John McCain	Both (vol.)	Other (Vol.)	Neither (Vol.)	Don't Know	Refused
...do a better job handling the economy	57%	28%	<1%	3%	4%	5%	3%
...do a better job handling corruption in Washington D.C.	53%	28%	1%	5%	6%	4%	3%
...do a better job handling relations with foreign countries	52%	39%	<1%	3%	1%	3%	2%
...do a better job handling the situation in Iraq	52%	37%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%
...do a better job handling the situation in Afghanistan	51%	36%	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%
...do a better job providing leadership to the United States	57%	29%	2%	3%	2%	5%	2%
...do a better job handling the U.S. campaign against terrorism	49%	38%	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%
...do a better job understanding the problems ordinary people face	64%	22%	2%	3%	3%	4%	2%

(N = 538)

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**Most Important Issue When it Comes to Voting for President**

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*Issue Areas (as coded from open-end question)*

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The economy and jobs	39%
Health Care	10%
Personal Character, Honesty, Trustworthy	7%
Iraq / The War	4%
Taxes	4%
Pro-life / Abortion	4%
Change in direction for the country	4%
National Security	3%
Experience / Candidate's record	3%
Works to help the common people	2%
Environmental Issues	2%
Provides Leadership	2%
Foreign Policy	2%
Other (less than 2%)	10%
Too many to name just one	1%
Don't Know/Not Sure	2%
Refused	1%

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(N = 538)

## National Satisfaction and Approval of the President and the U.S. Congress

### Trend in Satisfaction with the Way Things are Going in the U.S. Today

	Satisfied	Mixed (vol.)	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Refused	(N)
Oct. '08	14%	5%	81%	<1%	<1%	(538)
April '08	23%	9%	67%	<1%	<1%	(521)
Dec. '07	29%	6%	65%	<1%	<1%	(507)
June '07	33%	4%	63%	<1%	--	(502)
Oct. '06	32%	5%	61%	2%	--	(508)

### Trend in the Approval Rating for President George W. Bush

	Approve	Neither (vol.)	Disapprove	Don't Know	Refused	(N)
Oct. '08	20%	2%	75%	1%	2%	(538)
April '08	29%	2%	68%	1%	<1%	(521)
Dec. '07	23%	3%	73%	1%	<1%	(507)
June '07	30%	1%	69%	<1%	--	(502)
Oct. '06	36%	2%	61%	<1%	1%	(508)

### Trend Approval Rating for the U.S. Congress

	Approve	Neither (vol.)	Disapprove	Don't Know	Refused	(N)
Oct. '08	21%	2%	74%	1%	1%	(538)
April '08	33%	<1%	62%	4%	1%	(521)
Dec. '07	33%	2%	61%	4%	<1%	(507)
June '07	41%	3%	54%	2%	--	(502)

**APPENDIX:**

**Vote Choice for President of the United States (includes leaners)**

		Barack Obama	John McCain	Other Candidates	Undecided	Refused	(N)
<b>Overall</b>		<b>54%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>(538)</b>
Voters	Registered voters	52%	40%	3%	4%	1%	(483)
	Likely voters	52%	42%	2%	3%	1%	(359)
Gender	Men	48%	44%	4%	3%	1%	(246)
	Women	59%	32%	3%	4%	2%	(292)
Party ID	Democrats	92%	<1%	2%	5%	1%	(185)
	Independents & Others	45%	44%	6%	4%	1%	(210)
	Republicans	8%	92%	--	--	--	(133)
Age	18-29*	60%	29%	--	11%	--	(27)
	30-44	59%	36%	4%	<1%	<1%	(110)
	45-59	49%	45%	2%	3%	1%	(198)
	60 plus	49%	40%	6%	1%	3%	(203)
Education	Never attended college	54%	35%	4%	6%	1%	(206)
	Some college	54%	36%	4%	5%	1%	(153)
	College graduate	54%	42%	2%	<1%	1%	(177)

(\*Caution should be taken when interpreting the findings of subgroups with smaller numbers of respondents due to the potential for larger variation.)



## SURVEY QUESTION WORDING

- GNS01A In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States today?
- GNS01B [#NOTE: only asked if 'GNS01A' is satisfied or dissatisfied] Would you say you are very [satisfied/dissatisfied] or are you only somewhat [satisfied/dissatisfied]?
- [Questions FAVR01 through FAVR12 were asked in random order]
- FAVR01 [For each of the following people, please tell me if you have a favorable impression of them, an unfavorable impression, or don't know enough to make up your mind.] **Senator Barack Obama**
- FAVR04 [For each of the following people, please tell me if you have a favorable impression of them, an unfavorable impression, or don't know enough to make up your mind.] **Senator John McCain**
- FAVR13 [For each of the following people, please tell me if you have a favorable impression of them, an unfavorable impression, or don't know enough to make up your mind.] **Senator Joe Biden**
- FAVR14 [For each of the following people, please tell me if you have a favorable impression of them, an unfavorable impression, or don't know enough to make up your mind.] **Alaska Governor Sarah Palin**
- APP\_01 Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?
- APP\_01A [#NOTE: only asked if 'APP\_01' is satisfied or dissatisfied] Would you say you strongly [approve/disapprove] or do you only somewhat [approve/disapprove] of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?
- APP\_03 Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job -- that is the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate?
- APP\_03A [#NOTE: only asked if 'APP\_03' is satisfied or dissatisfied] Would you say you strongly [approve/disapprove] or do you only somewhat [approve/disapprove] of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job?
- QD03 Are you currently registered to vote in Wisconsin?
- VOTE29 Which of the following best describes your voting habits? You don't usually vote; you tend to vote more in major races, such as for president or Congress; you try to vote in every election, but don't always find the time; or you vote in every election - referenda, primaries, and general elections?
- Q2008LV How likely is it that you will vote in the general election on November 4, 2008? Would you say it is not at all likely, only a little likely, somewhat likely, quite likely, or extremely likely?
- VOTE24\_08 [NOTE: major party candidates names randomly rotated][Barack Obama is the Democratic candidate for President and John McCain is the Republican candidate for President. [else]John McCain is the Republican candidate for President and Barack Obama is the Democratic candidate for President.] There are also seven other candidates for President on the Wisconsin ballot, including Libertarian Bob Barr, the Green Party's Cynthia McKinney and Independent Ralph Nader.
- As of now, do you prefer [Barack Obama, John McCain, [else]John McCain, Barack Obama,]or someone else for President of the United States?
- VOTE24\_08A Would you say you are strongly for [if vote24\_08 eq <1>]Barack Obama[if vote24\_08 eq <2>]John McCain] or not so strongly for him?

VOTE24\_08B [NOTE: Only asked if the vote24\_08 was undecided or refused to answer] Do you lean more toward [Barack Obama, John McCain[else]John McCain, Barack Obama] or someone else?

MIPEI What, if anything, do you consider to be the **most** important issue to you when it comes to voting for the President of United States?

(INT: RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM, AFTER TYPING RESPONSE VERBATIM, READ BACK TO R AND VERIFY, CORRECT IF NECESSARY)

PRES08\_A [NOTE: Major party candidates names randomly rotated in PRES08\_A through PRES08\_H] Which candidate; [John McCain, Barack Obama [else]Barack Obama, John McCain] or some other candidate, do you trust to do a better job handling...the economy?

PRES08\_B Which candidate; [John McCain, Barack Obama [else]Barack Obama, John McCain] or some other candidate, do you trust to do a better job handling...corruption in Washington D.C.?

PRES08\_C (Which candidate; [John McCain, Barack Obama [else]Barack Obama, John McCain] or some other candidate, do you trust to do a better job...) ...handling relations with foreign countries?

PRES08\_D (Which candidate; [John McCain, Barack Obama [else]Barack Obama, John McCain] or some other candidate, do you trust to do a better job...) ...handling the situation in Iraq?

PRES08\_E (Which candidate; [John McCain, Barack Obama [else]Barack Obama, John McCain] or some other candidate, do you trust to do a better job...) ...handling the situation in Afghanistan?

PRES08\_F (Which candidate; [John McCain, Barack Obama [else]Barack Obama, John McCain] or some other candidate, do you trust to do a better job...) ...providing leadership to the United States?

PRES08\_G (Which candidate; [John McCain, Barack Obama [else]Barack Obama, John McCain] or some other candidate, do you trust to do a better job...) ...handling the U.S. campaign against terrorism?

PRES08\_H (Which candidate; [John McCain, Barack Obama [else]Barack Obama, John McCain] or some other candidate, do you trust to do a better job...) ...understanding the problems ordinary people face?

## HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

This BADGER POLL™ was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center as part of its ongoing program of research designed to benefit the research community and the people of Wisconsin. The Director of the poll operations is Chad J. Kniss, UW Survey Center. The Faculty Director of the Poll content is Professor Katherine Cramer Walsh, Department of Political Science, UW-Madison. The BADGER POLL™ is intended to be a "poll of record" for the state, investigating matters of concern to Wisconsinites including politics, culture, and their daily lives, adhering to the highest standards of polling methodology and rigorous independence.

Results shown here are based on 538 persons who were randomly chosen within households with working landline telephone numbers and interviewed between October 21 and October 28, 2008, inclusive. During this time period, the UWSC made 10,688 phone calls to 2,002 telephone numbers. Additionally, advance letters describing the survey and its procedures was sent to 887 households whose randomly chosen telephone numbers were matched to a known listed address. The response rate for this survey was 38.1%, as defined by the American Association of Public Opinion Research Response Rate 3. Calls were made between 9AM and 9PM Monday through Friday and between 10AM and 5PM on Saturday and from 12 noon to 9PM on Sunday. All telephone numbers were randomly generated by computer. The UWSC made up to 10 attempts on each number in order to confirm if it was a residential number, select an eligible respondent and/or to convert first time refusals. Approximately 57.6% of the 538 interviews were completed in the first three days of calling.

Theoretically, results from this survey have a "margin of error" of a little over +/- 4%. This means that, had we asked every resident in Wisconsin, exactly these questions at the time the survey was conducted, there is only a one in twenty chance that the answers would differ by more than that in either direction from what we report here. There could be differences because of changes in question wording, events occurring in the meantime, or any of the practical difficulties involved in taking a scientific survey. Results based on subgroups are subject to a larger "margin of error". Results reported here are based on weighted data (weighted to reflect statewide gender and age groups).