



INSTITUTE OF  
PUBLIC OPINION  
MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

## MUHLENBERG COLLEGE /MORNING CALL

### 2008 Presidential Tracking Poll

RELEASE #5 – September 30, 2008

FIELDING PERIOD – September 25-29, 2008

SAMPLE – 601 Likely Voters in Pennsylvania

MARGIN OF ERROR - +/- 4.0% at 95% Level of Confidence

TOTALS MAY NOT EQUAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING

#### TRACKING TREND

	9/26	9/27	9/28	9/29	9/30
Obama	47%	47%	48%	49%	49%
McCain	43%	42%	42%	42%	41%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Not Sure	8%	9%	8%	7%	7%

Q1. Which political party are you currently registered with?

DEMOCRAT.....51%  
REPUBLICAN..... 38%  
INDEPENDENT..... 9%  
OTHER PARTY.....2%

Q2. Now, I would like to ask your overall impression of a few political figures. For each name I read please tell me if your impression of him is favorable or unfavorable. First, Barack Obama

FAVORABLE.....53%  
UNFAVORABLE.....36%  
NEUTRAL/NOT SURE.....11%  
HAVEN'T HEARD OF HIM...1%

Q3. Next, John McCain

FAVORABLE.....45%  
UNFAVORABLE.....37%  
NEUTRAL/NOT SURE.....16%  
HAVEN'T HEARD OF HIM...1%

Q4.. Sarah Palin

FAVORABLE.....41%  
UNFAVORABLE.....39%  
NEUTRAL/NOT SURE..... 16%  
HAVEN'T HEARD OF HER.....2%

Q5. and Joe Biden

FAVORABLE.....50%  
UNFAVORABLE.....31%  
NEUTRAL/NOT SURE.....16%  
HAVEN'T HEARD OF HIM...3%

Q6. Now, if the 2008 presidential election was being held today and the race was between Barack Obama and John McCain, who would you vote for? ( **INCLUDING LEANERS**)

OBAMA.....49%  
MCCAIN.....41%  
NEITHER/OTHER.....3%  
NOT SURE.....7%

Q7. Which of the following best describes the certainty of your vote for Barack Obama. Would you say you are definitely voting for Obama, very likely to vote for Obama or just leaning towards Obama?

DEFINETLY VOTING FOR.....80%  
VERY LIKELY TO VOTE FOR.....11%  
JUST LEANING TOWARDS..... 9%

Q8. Which of the following best describes the certainty of your vote for John McCain. Would you say you are definitely voting for McCain, very likely to vote for McCain or just leaning towards McCain?

DEFINETLY VOTING FOR.....81%  
VERY LIKELY TO VOTE FOR.....13%  
JUST LEANING TOWARDS..... 6 %

Q9. What issue do you consider to be the most important issue in deciding your vote for President of the United States?

THE ECONOMY/JOBS.....52 %  
GAS PRICES..... 2%  
REFORMING/CHANGING GOVERNMENT ... 6%  
THE WAR IN IRAQ..... 9%  
IMMIGRATION..... <1%  
TAXES ..... 3%  
TERRORISM..... 3%  
HEALTH CARE..... 4%  
ABORTION..... 3%  
ENERGY..... 1%  
OTHER..... 12%  
NOT SURE..... 4%

Q10. If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your Congressional district: the Democratic Party's candidate or the Republican Party's candidate?

DEMOCRAT.....46%  
REPUBLICAN.....35%  
NEITHER/OTHER.....2%  
NOT SURE.....17%

**METHODOLOGY:** Beginning on September 26, 2008 and ending on November 2, 2008, The Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion and the *Morning Call* will be releasing daily results from their statewide presidential election tracking poll. The results are drawn from telephone surveys of likely voters in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Each day's release will be based on the results of interviews conducted during the previous five days. For example, the initial release on Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup> was produced from interviews conducted between September 21st and 25th. While the total sample size will alternate from day to day because of varying completion rates, the average sample sizes will be between 500 and 600 likely voters. Precise margins of error will be identified with each release and average around +/-4.5% at a 95% level of confidence.

All interviews will be conducted by individuals who have been trained in standard interviewing procedures. The sampling frame for this research is a list of registered voters from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Each registered voter in the state has an equal chance of being selected for inclusion in the poll. Voters are chosen at random through a computerized selection process. The registration file will be updated until election day in order to include new registrants in the sampling frame.

To determine if an individual is a likely voter the Muhlenberg College/*Morning Call* uses a three step process. First, the individual must be registered to vote in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This is validated through the use of registered voting records. Second, the individual must identify their likelihood of voting in the November, 2009 election as either "definite" or "very likely." Finally, the individual must report that they are paying "extremely close" or "very close" attention to the campaign to be included in the sample. If an individual meets these three requirements they are identified as a likely voter. If they do not meet all three of the requirements they are excluded from participation.

The data gathered through our interviewing process is statistically weighted to insure that the sample reflects the overall population of voters in terms of age, race, gender and region of the state. The weighting process is required because different segments of the population respond to interview requests in different ways. For example, women answer the phone more than men and older individuals are more likely to be reached than their younger counterparts. The Muhlenberg College/*Morning Call* poll does not weight by party affiliation. In addition the poll does not include cell phones in its sampling frame.