

THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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**OBAMA LEADING MCCAIN BY 24 POINTS
IN CALIFORNIA. HIS BACKERS ARE
MUCH MORE ENTHUSIASTIC THAN
MCCAIN'S. CLINTON'S PRESENCE OR
ABSENCE FROM DEMOCRATIC TICKET
NOT A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Highlights of the latest *Field Poll* of Californians likely to vote in the upcoming November presidential election reveal the following:

- Democrat Barack Obama now leads Republican John McCain by twenty-four points (54% to 30%) in California.
- More Democratic Primary voters think Obama should not select Hillary Clinton as his vice-presidential running mate (48%) as feel he should (40%). Yet, the decision of whether Obama does or doesn't choose Clinton would have little effect on how these voters would vote in the fall.
- Obama has consolidated the support of California Democrats and non-partisans who voted for Clinton in California's February 5th primary election. The poll shows Obama preferred over McCain by 80% to 8% among these voters.
- Three times as many Obama voters (51%) as McCain voters (17%) say they are "very enthusiastic" about supporting their candidate for president in November.
- Obama's image rating among the overall California electorate (63% favorable vs. 26% unfavorable) is more positive than McCain's (48% to 38%).

These are the main findings from the survey conducted July 8 – 14 in English and Spanish among a random sample of 672 likely voters statewide.

Trend of presidential preference in California

In March 2007, when *The Field Poll* first began pairing Obama against McCain in presidential trial heats, the Illinois Senator was preferred over McCain by twelve percentage points. Now sixteen months later, after competitive primary election contests that saw each candidate become their respective party's nominees, Obama has opened up a bigger lead. The current poll finds Obama leading McCain in California's general election by twenty-four percentage points (54% to 30%) among this state's likely voters.

Table 1
Trend of California voter preferences between Barack Obama
and John McCain for President
(among likely voters in the November election)

	Obama	McCain	Other	No opinion
July 2008	54%	30	4	12
May 2008	52%	35	5	8
January 2008	47%	40	--	13
December 2007	50%	36	--	14
October 2007	50%	33	--	17
August 2007	49%	36	--	15
March 2007	51%	39	--	10

Big sub-group differences in voting preferences

There are wide differences in voting dispositions between partisans. Democrats prefer Obama 78% to 9%, while Republicans support McCain 65% to 16%. However, Obama has a greater than three to one edge among this state's non-partisan voters (64% to 18%). Obama has also consolidated the support of Democrats and non-partisans who voted for Hillary Clinton in the February 5th California primary. Currently Obama is preferred by a 80% to 8% margin among these voters.

There are also big differences in voting preference by political ideology. Strong conservatives are supporting McCain 74% to 8%, while those identifying themselves as moderately conservative back McCain 55% to 27%. However, both strong and moderate liberals are almost universally behind Obama. Obama also leads by greater than a two to one margin (59% to 23%) among middle-of-the-road voters.

Obama holds very large leads among voters in the state's two largest population centers, Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area, which collectively comprise a little less than half (44%) of all likely voters statewide. In the Bay Area in particular, Obama leads McCain six to one (73% to 12%). McCain is competitive with Obama only in the Central Valley and in Southern California outside of Los Angeles.

There are big differences between the preferences of voters living in the state's coastal counties, who represent 69% of likely voters, and those living in inland counties, which account for the remaining 31%. On the coast, Obama is preferred by a greater than two to one margin, 62% to 24%. By contrast, voters in inland counties prefer McCain 44% to 35%.

Women favor Obama by greater than two to one (56% to 27%), but men are also supporting him 51% to 35%.

Younger voters under age 40 favor Obama over McCain by a two and one-half to one margin (60% to 24%). Obama also leads McCain among voters in other age categories but by somewhat smaller margins.

Obama holds a relatively small lead over McCain – 47% to 37% - among white non-Hispanic voters. However, Obama enjoys a large preference advantage over McCain among Latinos (64% to 21%) and among Asians (59% to 23%). Obama is the overwhelming choice of African-Americans (89% to 5%).

There are differences in preferences by religion. Protestants prefer McCain 43% to 38%. However, Catholics are backing Obama 59% to 30%, while voters affiliated with other religions favor him three to one (62% to 20%). Voters with no religious preference prefer Obama overwhelmingly (72% to 15%).

Evangelical Christians, who comprise about a quarter of the electorate, favor McCain 48% to 35%. Among voters who are not evangelicals, Obama has a greater than two to one lead, 59% to 26%.

Table 2
Vote preferences for President across subgroups
of the California voting population
(among likely voters in the November election)

	Obama	McCain	Other/ No opinion
Total statewide	54%	30	16
<u>Party</u>			
(.43) Democrats	78%	9	13
(.19) Clinton voter in primary	80%	8	12
(.35) Republicans	16%	65	19
(.23) Non-partisans/others	64%	18	18
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.19) Strongly conservative	8%	74	18
(.10) Moderately conservative*	27%	55	18
(.45) Middle-of-the-road	59%	22	19
(.12) Moderately liberal*	87%	3	10
(.14) Strongly liberal	88%	4	8
<u>Region</u>			
(.69) Coastal counties	62%	24	14
(.31) Inland counties	35%	44	21
<u>Area</u>			
(.24) Los Angeles County	61%	27	12
(.33) Other Southern California	45%	40	15
(.18) Central Valley	39%	40	21
(.20) San Francisco Bay Area	73%	12	15
(.05) Other Northern California*	51%	25	14
<u>Gender</u>			
(.47) Male	51%	35	14
(.53) Female	56%	27	17
<u>Age</u>			
(.32) 18 – 39	60%	24	16
(.20) 40 – 49	47%	34	19
(.29) 50 – 64	55%	32	13
(.19) 65 or older	47%	34	19
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.63) White non-Hispanic	47%	37	16
(.17) Latino	64%	21	15
(.06) African-American*	89%	5	6
(.14) Asian/other*	59%	23	18
<u>Religion</u>			
(.39) Protestant	38%	43	19
(.21) Catholic	59%	30	11
(.21) Other	62%	20	18
(.19) No preference	72%	15	13
<u>Evangelical Christian</u>			
(.24) Yes	35%	48	17
(.76) No	59%	26	15

* Small sample base

Voter enthusiasm for Obama much greater than for McCain

Supporters of Obama are much more enthusiastic in their backing of his candidacy than are McCain voters. Half (51%) of those favoring Obama say they are very enthusiastic in their support, compared to just 17% of McCain voters who say this. Greater than one in four McCain voters (27%) are not enthusiastic about their support for the Arizona Senator, while just 5% of Obama voters say this.

Table 3
Enthusiasm of support among Californians
likely to vote for each candidate

	Obama supporters	McCain supporters
Very enthusiastic	51%	17%
Somewhat enthusiastic	44	56
Not enthusiastic	5	27

Image appraisals of the candidates and their wives

The current survey finds that about six in ten likely voters (63%) have a favorable image of Obama, while about five in ten voters (48%) see McCain in a positive light.

In the current survey, a cross-section of likely voters were also asked for their appraisals of the wives of the two major party candidates.

Half of voters (49%) have a favorable view of Michelle Obama, while 24% hold a negative impression. About one in four (27%) have no opinion.

A somewhat smaller proportion of voters (35%) has a positive view of Cindy McCain, but her negatives are also lower (18%). Nearly half of California voters (47%) has no opinion of her.

Table 4
California voter impressions of the candidates and their wives
(among likely voters in the November general election)

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<u>Barack Obama</u>			
July 2008	63%	26	11
May 2008	62%	29	9
January 2008	59%	23	15
<u>John McCain</u>			
July 2008	48%	38	14
May 2008	46%	45	9
January 2008	50%	28	22
Michelle Obama – July 2008	49%	24	27
Cindy McCain – July 2008	35%	18	47

Hillary Clinton as Obama's vice presidential running mate

One of the much discussed issues throughout the long and hard fought Democratic primary campaign was whether the two candidates would both end up on the ticket as their party's presidential and vice-presidential nominees.

After Obama became the presumptive nominee in June, the focus within political circles, as well as among many voters, has been whether Obama would select Clinton as his running mate, and what the effects of such a decision would be on his November general election chances.

When Democratic Party and non-partisans are asked their opinions about this, 48% think Obama should not choose Clinton as his running mate, while 40% think he should.

Yet, the decision of whether Obama does or doesn't choose Clinton would have little effect on how most Democrats and non-partisans would vote in the fall. Among those who favor Clinton being on the ticket, only about one in ten say if Obama did not choose her, this would make them less inclined to vote Democratic in November. Similarly, only about one in ten of voters who oppose Obama selecting Clinton as his running mate say that if he did choose Clinton, this would make them less likely to vote Democratic in the fall. In both cases most voters maintain that, whether Obama chooses Clinton or not, this would have no effect on their general election voting preferences.

Table 5
Should Obama select Hillary Clinton as his Vice Presidential nominee
and its potential effect on voter support of Obama for President
(among Democrats and non-partisans likely
to vote in the November election)

	Total	California vote in primary	
		Clinton voter	Obama voter
No , should <u>not</u> select Clinton	<u>48%</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>66%</u>
<u>Selecting Clinton makes these voters...</u>			
Less inclined to support Obama	11	4	15
Has no effect on vote	37	28	51
Yes, should select Clinton	<u>40</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Not selecting Clinton makes these voters...</u>			
Less inclined to support Obama	9	19	2
Has no effect on vote	31	39	20
No opinion	12	10	12

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 672 California voters considered likely to vote in the November general election. The weighted sample bases by party include 288 Democrats, 233 Republicans or 154 non-partisans/others. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish July 8-14, 2008. Up to six attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews were conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, the results were weighted slightly to re-align the overall sample to characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depends on the sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of 672 likely voters is +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The maximum sampling error for results based on the 376 Democratic and non-partisan voters asked whether Obama should select Hillary Clinton as his vice presidential running mate is +/- 5.1 percentage points.

The maximum sampling error is based on percentages in the middle of the sampling distribution (percentages around 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (percentages around 10% or around 90%) have a smaller margin of error. The maximum sampling error will be larger for analyses based on subgroups of the overall sample. While there are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error, the overall design and execution of the survey minimized the potential for these other sources of error.

Questions Asked

If the presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Barack Obama, Democrat and John McCain, Republican, for whom would you vote?

(IF OBAMA) Would you describe yourself as very enthusiastic, somewhat enthusiastic or not enthusiastic about the candidacy of Barack Obama?

(IF MCCAIN) Would you describe yourself as very enthusiastic, somewhat enthusiastic or not enthusiastic about the candidacy of John McCain?

Generally speaking, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of (John McCain) (Barack Obama) (Cindy McCain, wife of John McCain) (Michelle Obama, wife of Barack Obama)? (NAMES READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

(ASKED OF DEMOCRATS AND NON-PARTISANS)

Do you think Barack Obama should choose Hillary Clinton as his vice presidential nominee or not?

(IF YES) If Barack Obama does not choose Hillary Clinton as his vice presidential nominee, would this make you much less inclined to vote for the Democratic ticket in November, somewhat less inclined or would it have no effect on your voting decision?

(if no) If Barack Obama does select Hillary Clinton as his vice presidential nominee, would this make you much less inclined to vote for the Democratic ticket in November, somewhat less inclined or would it have no effect on your voting decision?