

THE FIELD POLL

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OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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**OBAMA-BIDEN LEADS McCAIN-
PALIN 52% TO 36% IN CALIFORNIA.
PALIN REINFORCES McCAIN'S BASE.
BIG COASTAL-INLAND DIVIDE IN
PREFERENCES.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

The Democratic ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden leads the Republican ticket of John McCain and Sarah Palin by a 52% to 36% margin in a statewide *Field Poll* conducted after the two major party conventions.

The sixteen-point lead for Obama-Biden is down from the 24-point margin in July before the two parties had held their conventions and selected their vice-presidential candidates.

An aggregate 3% of voters prefer other candidates, while 9% are undecided.

Table 1
**Trend of voter preferences pairing Obama-Biden
against McCain-Palin for President
(among likely voters in California)**

	Obama – Biden	McCain - Palin	Other	No opinion
September 2008	52%	36	3*	9
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

Note: Measures prior to September 2008 posed only the names of the presidential candidates

* Preferences for other candidates in September 2008 include: Barr 1%, Nader 1% and 1% unspecified others.

Sub-group differences

Voters residing in California's coastal counties, who represent 70% of the state's likely electorate, prefer Obama-Biden over McCain-Palin overwhelmingly, 57% to 32%. On the other hand, inland county voters favor the GOP ticket 46% to 38%.

Support for the Democratic ticket is strongest in Los Angeles County and the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, where Obama-Biden are supported by 60% and 69%, respectively. Voters in Southern California outside of Los Angeles, those in the Central Valley and voters in other parts of Northern California are about evenly divided in their preferences.

Voters are divided sharply by partisanship. About four out of five Democrats (81%) are voting for Obama-Biden, while about the same proportion of Republicans (76%) favors McCain-Palin.

Among all women voters in this state, 54% are supporting Obama-Biden and 33% prefer McCain-Palin. Women who are registered as Democrats split 83% to 9% in favor of the Democratic ticket. Republican women divide 74% to 12% for the GOP candidates.

Overall, men support Obama-Biden by ten points (49% to 39%). Democratic men divide 79% for Obama-Biden and 13% for McCain-Palin. Republican men prefer McCain-Palin 78% to 14%.

All age groups from 18 through 64 prefer Obama-Biden by substantial margins, with the youngest group of voters favoring the Democratic ticket most heavily. Voters age 65 and over are a little more divided, supporting Obama-Biden by five points.

White non-Hispanics favor Obama-Biden by just four points (46% to 42%). Latinos divide 66% to 21% on the side of the Democrats. Blacks favor Obama-Biden overwhelmingly (84% to 5%), while Asians/others support the Democratic ticket 45% to 35%. White non-Hispanic women favor Obama-Biden by nine percentage points (49% to 40%), while women of color favor the Democratic ticket greater than four to one (67% to 16%). White non-Hispanic men are evenly divided (44% for McCain and 44% for Obama), while men of color support the Democratic ticket 62% to 26%.

The McCain-Palin ticket is strongly favored 55% to 36% by Protestants. Catholics and other religious groups, and especially those who have no religious preference, provide big margins of support for Obama-Biden.

The 21% of the California electorate who identify themselves as evangelical Christians divide two to one (59% to 30%) in favor of the McCain-Palin ticket. By contrast, those who are not evangelicals line up on the side of Obama-Biden by a nearly opposite 58% to 29% margin.

Table 2				
Voter preferences for President across subgroups of the CA likely electorate (among likely voters in California)				
	Obama - Biden	McCain - Palin	Other	Undecided
Total statewide	52%	36	3	9
<u>Area</u>				
(.70) Coastal counties	57%	32	3	8
(.30) Inland counties	38%	46	4	12
<u>Region</u>				
(.24) Los Angeles County	60%	26	5	10
(.33) Other Southern California	42%	43	4	11
(.17) Central Valley	40%	45	4	11
(.21) San Francisco Bay Area	69%	27	1	3
(.05) Other Northern California*	48%	45	4	3
<u>Party registration</u>				
(.44) Democrats	81%	10	1	8
(.19) Democratic men	79%	13	1	7
(.25) Democratic women	83%	9	1	7
(.36) Republicans	13%	76	3	8
(.18) Republican men	14%	78	2	6
(.18) Republican women	12%	74	3	11
(.20) Non-partisans/others	58%	19	11	12
<u>Gender</u>				
(.47) Men	49%	39	3	9
(.34) White non-Hispanic men	44%	44	3	9
(.13) Other men	62%	26	3	9
(.53) Women	54%	33	4	9
(.37) White non-Hispanic women	49%	40	4	7
(.16) Other women	67%	16	4	13
<u>Age</u>				
(.15) 18 – 29	61%	22	8	10
(.15) 30 – 39	49%	39	**	12
(.20) 40 – 49	51%	40	4	5
(.31) 50 – 64	54%	36	3	7
(.19) 65 or older	45%	40	2	13
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
(.71) White non-Hispanic	46%	42	3	9
(.17) Latino	66%	21	3	10
(.06) Black/African-American*	84%	5	6	5
(.06) Asian/other	45%	35	3	17
<u>Religion</u>				
(.39) Protestant	36%	55	2	7
(.25) Catholic	54%	31	1	14
(.19) Other	61%	22	7	10
(.17) No preference	75%	16	6	3
<u>Evangelical Christian</u>				
(.21) Yes	30%	59	1	10
(.79) No	58%	29	4	9
<u>Political ideology</u>				
(.31) Conservative	13%	80	**	7
(.40) Middle-of-the-road	54%	25	5	16
(.29) Liberal	90%	2	4	4

* Small sample size

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Preferences tied to whether voters see personal qualities or positions on the issues as more important

By a two to one margin (55% to 28%) California voters say a presidential candidate's position on specific issues is more important to them than a candidate's personal qualities, like experience and leadership, when deciding whom to support.

The primacy of issues over personality to California voters is one of the main factors responsible for Obama's big lead here. Voters who consider a candidate's position on specific issues to be more important than his or her personal qualities favor Obama-Biden by a wide margin (60% to 29%). On the other hand, voters who consider personal qualities like experience and leadership to be more important than a candidate's stance on the issues are supporting McCain-Palin 55% to 35%.

The same pattern exists nationwide, although among U.S. voters a smaller proportion attaches greater importance to a candidate's positions on specific issues. In a post-convention *ABC News/Washington Post* poll, 48% of voters nationwide stated that a candidate's position on specific issues was more important while 37% said a candidate's personal qualities was of greater importance. Like Californians, voters nationwide who say a candidate's position on the issues was more important prefer Obama by a big margin (56% to 37%). On the other hand, among those saying a candidate's personal qualities was more important, McCain holds a big lead (56% to 39%).

Table 3
When choosing a President, do voters attach greater importance to personal qualities or positions on the issues and how this relates to 2008 presidential preferences (among likely voters in California)

	Position on the issues	Personal qualities	Both/not sure (volunteered)*
Statewide	55%	28%	17%
<u>Presidential preferences</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Obama	60%	35%	54%
McCain	29	55	36
Other/undecided	11	10	10

* Small sample base

Impact of Palin's selection as the GOP vice president mixed and highly partisan

When California voters are asked about the impact of McCain's selection of Palin as his vice-presidential running mate, about as many say this makes them more inclined to vote for McCain (28%) as say it makes them less inclined to do so (30%). Another 40% maintain that Palin's presence on the ticket has no effect on their presidential vote choice and 2% have no opinion.

McCain's selection of Palin has a very negative impact on Obama voters in this state, with only 3% saying it makes them more inclined to support McCain and 51% less inclined. However, her selection strengthens McCain's position within his support base. Two in three McCain backers (67%) say Palin makes them more inclined, while just 4% are less inclined. Among non-partisans 21% are more inclined and 19% less inclined to support McCain because of Palin.

By a greater than four to one margin (42% to 9%) Democratic voters say they are less rather than more inclined to vote for the Republican ticket with Palin as its V.P. candidate. Conversely, by a similar four to one margin (56% to 14%) Republicans in this state say that having Palin on the ticket makes them more inclined to support McCain.

There are also big differences in voter impressions of Palin between coastal and inland voters. Among coastal voters more say that McCain's selection of Palin makes them less inclined (34%) than more inclined (24%) to back the GOP ticket. Among voters living in inland counties, the selection of Palin was very well received, with 39% saying it makes them more likely to vote for McCain while just 22% say they are now less inclined.

McCain's selection of Palin as his V.P. makes non-partisan voters less (35%) rather than more (19%) inclined to vote Republican.

The selection of Palin is neither a plus nor a minus to men and women voters in California, although a slightly larger proportion of white non-Hispanic women say Palin's selection makes them more inclined (34%) than less inclined (29%) to support McCain.

Table 4
Impact that McCain's choice of Sarah Palin as his
vice presidential running mate has on voters
(among likely voters in California)

	<u>Vote for McCain...</u>			
	<u>More inclined</u>	<u>No effect</u>	<u>Less inclined</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Total	28%	40	30	2
<u>Presidential preference</u>				
Obama	3%	45	51	1
McCain	67%	28	4	1
Other/undecided	21%	52	19	8
<u>Party</u>				
Democrat	9%	47	42	2
Republican	56%	28	14	2
Non-partisan/other	19%	44	35	2
<u>Area</u>				
Coastal counties	24%	40	34	2
Inland counties	39%	38	22	1
<u>Gender</u>				
Men (total)	<u>32%</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>1</u>
White non-Hispanic men	34%	32	33	1
Other men	16%	36	44	4
Women (total)	<u>26%</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>2</u>
White non-Hispanic women	34%	37	29	*
Other women	13%	59	22	6

* Small sample size.

Impact of Biden's selection somewhat more positive than negative

Most California voters (60%) feel that Obama's selection of Joe Biden as his vice-presidential running mate has no effect on their presidential vote. Among those voters who say Biden's selection has an effect, 24% say it makes them more inclined and 14% less inclined to vote for the Democrats.

Among voters who are disposed to vote for Obama, 41% say that Biden strengthens their resolve to vote Democratic, while just 3% say it makes them less inclined to support Obama.

Two in three Republicans (66%) say the choice of Biden as the Democratic V.P. nominee has no effect on their disposition to vote for Obama. Among Republicans who are influenced, 30% say Obama's choice of Biden makes them less inclined to vote Democratic, while just 3% say it makes them more supportive.

Biden appears to give Obama a slight Democratic boost among non-partisans, with 18% saying his selection makes them more inclined and 12% less inclined to support Obama.

Although the differences are not large, a larger proportion of voters in the state's coastal counties (28%) say Biden's selection makes them more inclined to back Obama than say this among inland county voters (17%)

Table 5				
Impact that Obama's choice of Joe Biden as his vice presidential running mate has on voters (among likely voters in California)				
	Vote for Obama...			
	More inclined	No effect	Less inclined	No opinion
Total	24%	60	14	2
<u>Presidential preference</u>				
Obama	41%	55	3	1
McCain	3%	66	30	1
Other/undecided	18%	65	12	5
<u>Party</u>				
Democrat	36%	54	8	2
Republican	10%	65	24	1
Non-partisan/other	25%	65	8	2
<u>Area</u>				
Coastal counties	28%	58	13	1
Inland counties	17%	66	16	1

Enthusiasm for candidates increases following the conventions

Supporters of each party's nominees are much more enthusiastic about their choice now than they were before the nominating conventions.

In July, 51% of Obama voters in this state said they were very enthusiastic about supporting him as the Democratic standard-bearer. Now, after the convention, 67% say this, an increase of sixteen percentage points.

The change is even more dramatic on the GOP side. Two months ago just 17% of McCain's supporters classified themselves as being very enthused about backing him. Now, after the convention, 47% of his supporters say this, a thirty-point increase.

Table 6
Enthusiasm of support for each candidate
(among likely voters in California)

	Very enthusiastic	Somewhat enthusiastic	Not enthusiastic
<u>Obama-Biden supporters</u>			
September 2008	67%	27	6
July 2008	51%	44	5
<u>McCain-Palin supporters</u>			
September 2008	47%	44	9
July 2008	17%	56	27

Note: The September measure included presidential preferences after reading both the President and Vice President candidate. Earlier measures listed only the presidential candidate.

Differences between 100% and the sum of each candidate's supporters equal proportion with no opinion.

Would Biden or Palin make a better president?

By a nearly two to one margin (56% to 30%) California voters believe that Biden rather than Palin would make a better President if either one was called upon to become the nation's chief executive.

Obama supporters are nearly unanimous in their view that Biden would make a better President than Palin. A large plurality of non-partisans also takes this view (42% to 16%). McCain supporters, on the other hand, see Palin as the better President 75% to 11%.

There are wide partisan differences on this question. Among Democrats 81% think Biden would make a better President. By contrast, Republicans take an opposite view and feel that Palin would make a better President. Non-partisans overwhelmingly see Biden as the better potential President than Palin (64% to 14%).

Men and women voters hold generally similar views, with Biden seen as the better President by large margins.

Table 7
Which Vice Presidential candidate – Biden or Palin –
would make a better President
(among likely voters in California)

	Biden	Palin	No opinion
Total	56%	30	14
<u>Presidential preference</u>			
Obama	90%	3	7
McCain	11%	75	14
Other/undecided	42%	16	42
<u>Party</u>			
Democrat	81%	10	9
Republican	21%	65	14
Non-partisan/other	64%	14	22
<u>Gender</u>			
Men	55%	32	13
Women	56%	28	16

Images of the candidates and their wives

The image that California voters have of Obama is much more favorable (62%) than unfavorable (32%). However this assessment is down slightly from what was found in July when 63% had a positive view and 26% a negative view.

Californians have a more positive than negative view of McCain (50% to 42%). This rating is similar to a 48% to 38% positive rating in July.

Californians also have a more favorable (50%) than unfavorable opinion of Biden (29%). By contrast, California voter impressions are a decidedly mixed and very partisan view of Palin, with 43% viewing her favorably and 43% holding an unfavorable view.

Voter impressions of Michelle Obama, the wife of the Democratic presidential nominee, are about five to two positive (54% vs. 22%). John McCain's wife, Cindy, also receives a more favorable than unfavorable assessment from Californians (40% to 23%).

Table 8
Voter impressions of the Presidential candidates,
their wives and the Vice Presidential candidates
(among likely voters in California)

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<u>Barack Obama</u>			
September 2008	<u>62%</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>6</u>
Democrats	83%	10	7
Republicans	32%	64	4
Non-partisans/others*	73%	16	11
July 2008	63%	26	11
May 2008	62%	29	9
January 2008	59%	23	15
<u>John McCain</u>			
September 2008	<u>50%</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>8</u>
Democrats	30%	60	10
Republicans	80%	17	3
Non-partisans/others*	37%	52	11
July 2008	48%	38	14
May 2008	46%	45	9
January 2008	50%	28	22
<u>Joe Biden</u>			
September 2008	<u>50%</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>21</u>
Democrats	75%	11	14
Republicans	25%	56	19
Non-partisans/others*	40%	22	38
<u>Sarah Palin</u>			
September 2008	<u>43%</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>14</u>
Democrats	17%	66	17
Republicans	81%	12	7
Non-partisans/others*	36%	45	19
<u>Michelle Obama</u>			
September 2008	<u>54%</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>24</u>
July 2008	49%	24	27
<u>Cindy McCain</u>			
September 2008	<u>40%</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>37</u>
July 2008	35%	18	47

* Small sample base.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 830 likely voters in California. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period September 5-14, 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. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, the overall voter sample was divided into two random subsamples on some of the questions.

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 can be 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 are weighted slightly to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic and regional 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 830 likely voters is +/- 3.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings from the random subsamples have a maximum sampling error of +/- 5.0 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. 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. The maximum sampling error will be larger for analyses based on subgroups of the overall sample.

Questions Asked

If the presidential election were being held today, for whom would you vote -- the Republican Party ticket of John McCain and Sarah Palin, the Democratic Party ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden, or a candidate from another party? Would you describe yourself as very enthusiastic, somewhat enthusiastic or not enthusiastic about the candidacy of (Barack Obama) (John McCain)?

IF OTHER CANDIDATE: Which of four other presidential candidates on the California ballot would you vote for -- Bob Barr, Libertarian party; Ralph Nader, Peace and Freedom Party; Alan Keyes, American Independent Party; or Cynthia McKinney, Green Party?

Generally speaking, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of... (SEE RELEASE FOR PERSONS READ)? (NAMES READ IN RANDOM ORDER) (ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF VOTERS)

Which is more important to you in choosing a candidate for president -- their personal qualities such as experience and leadership ability, or the positions they take on specific issues? (ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF VOTERS)

How do you feel about Barack Obama choosing Joe Biden as his vice presidential running mate. Does Obama's choice of Biden make you more inclined or less inclined to vote for the Democratic Party ticket, or does it have no effect on how you will vote?

How do you feel about John McCain choosing Sarah Palin as his vice presidential running mate. Does McCain's choice of Palin make you more inclined or less inclined to vote for the Republican Party ticket, or does it have no effect on how you will vote?

Which Vice Presidential candidate, Joe Biden or Sarah Palin, do you think would make a better President?