

2008 Illinois General Election Poll

This Chicago Tribune Poll is based on interviews with 500 confirmed registered voters in Illinois likely to vote in the November 4 general election. Interviewing began the day after the final presidential debate, Thursday evening October 16, and ended on Saturday, October 18. The potential margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 4.4% at the 95% level of confidence.

Likely voting was based on certainty of voting in the upcoming election. The sample included 6% who voted absentee or participated in Illinois' early voting program that started October 13.

Barack Obama lives up to his favorite son standing in Illinois. Some 62% hold a favorable opinion of him versus 26% unfavorable. Over half of Collar County and Downstate voters have a favorable opinion of him as do Independents.

	Obama Opinion; Oct. 16-18, 2008							Party ID		
	Cook	Collar	Down	Obama	McCain	Unde-	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	
	State	County	Counties	state	Voters	Voters	cided	Dem.	Ind.	GOP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Favorable	62	78	53	52	97	13	34	89	59	21
Unfavorable	26	13	33	34	1	74	9	5	23	67
No opinion	12	8	14	14	1	12	58	6	18	12
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

6. "Here are names of people who may or may not be known in your area. For each, tell me your opinion of the person." (Shuffle order.) 7a. "Barack Obama, is your opinion of him...favorable, unfavorable, do you have no opinion, or have you never heard of him?"

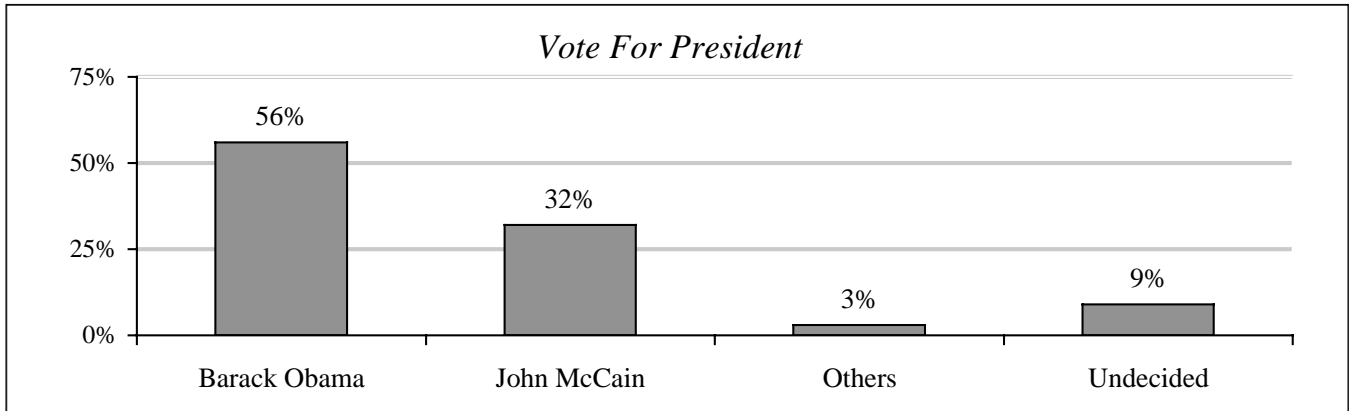
Opinion of John McCain is divided. About half of Collar County, Downstate, and Independents are favorable.

	McCain Opinion; Oct. 16-18, 2008							Party ID		
	Cook	Collar	Down	Obama	McCain	Unde-	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	
	State	County	Counties	state	Voters	Voters	cided	Dem.	Ind.	GOP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Favorable	42	31	49	49	14	93	36	16	48	84
Unfavorable	42	54	35	35	72	1	14	71	30	7
No opinion	15	14	15	15	12	6	50	12	21	9
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

7b. "John McCain, is your opinion of him...favorable, unfavorable, do you have no opinion, or have you never heard of him?"

VOTE FOR PRESIDENT

Barack Obama leads John McCain by 24 points, 56% to 32%. In 2004, John Kerry won Illinois by 10 points - 55% to 45%. Four years earlier, Al Gore won the state 55% to 43% - a margin of 12 points. (See final section of this report.)



8a-b “On November 4th, candidates for President include Democrat Barack Obama, Republican John McCain, Independent Ralph Nader, and Libertarian Bob Barr. If that election were held today, for whom would you vote...?” (Shuffle Names) If undecided: “If you were voting today and had to decide right now, would you vote for...?” (Shuffle Names) (If already voted In Q 5, ask: “For whom did you vote?”)

Obama has a strong lead in the 6-county Chicago area which accounts for over 60% of the state vote. The race is closer Downstate, 45% to 41%.

We typically see a gender gap favoring Democratic candidates among women. Below, the gap has diminished. In Table 9, Obama leads 56% to 33% among white suburban women. In the same table, the race is 50% to 40% for McCain among fairly conservative voters and 59% to 29% among very conservative voters.

	Voter Preference; Oct. 16-18, 2008										
	Cook County				Collar	Down	Party ID				
	State	Total	Chicago	Subs	Counties	state	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	Men	Women
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Obama	56	72	83	61	47	45	90	45	13	55	58
McCain	32	19	10	28	39	41	4	34	81	34	30
<u>Others (Net)</u>	3	2	1	4	2	3	2	5	1	4	2
Nader	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	4	1	3	1
Barr	*	1	-	1	-	*	-	1	-	*	*
Other candidate	*	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	*	-
Undecided	9	7	6	8	12	10	5	15	6	8	11
Base:	(500)	(196)	(100)	(96)	(114)	(190)	(213)	(136)	(120)	(238)	(262)

[Note. * less than 1 percent.]

Also in Table 9, among 59 African-Americans or 12% of the total sample, 93% are voting for Obama versus 2% for McCain.

Here is how the Kerry-Bush race looked four years ago at the same point in time.

Voter Preference, Kerry Vs. Bush; Oct. 16-19, 2004											
	Cook County			Collar Counties	Down-State	Party ID			Men	Women	
	State	Total	Chicago			Subs.	Dem	Ind.			GOP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Vote Kerry	50	67	82	52	40	39	90	52	4	49	51
Vote Bush	42	24	11	37	51	54	4	35	91	44	39
Vote Badnarik	*	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	*
Vote Other	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	2	-	1	1
Undecided	7	7	5	9	9	6	6	10	5	5	8
Base:	(700)	(273)	(139)	(134)	(152)	(275)	(253)	(181)	(228)	(326)	(374)

CANDIDATE ISSUES

John McCain tried to campaign on the promise of change and tried to distance himself from George Bush. But he is losing the “change” battle in Illinois.

Would Bring More Of The Changes Needed In Washington; Oct. 16-18, 2008											
	Cook	Collar	Down	Obama	McCain	Unde-	Party ID				
	State	County	Counties	state	Voters	Voters	cided	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Obama	61	74	51	54	98	11	36	91	54	23	
McCain	23	14	31	27	-	69	9	3	24	59	
Both (Vol.)	1	-	2	3	*	3	4	-	3	2	
Neither (Vol.)	7	6	8	6	1	9	25	4	10	6	
No changes needed (Vol.)	*	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	
Don't know	7	5	8	9	1	7	26	3	9	9	
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)	

12. “Regardless of how you will vote for president, both claim their campaigns are about change. Which one do you think will bring more of the changes needed in Washington...(Shuffle names)?”

A majority says Obama would be best on economic matters – 54% to 28% - pluralities say so among key groups.

Who Would Be Best At Restoring The Economy & Jobs Situation; Oct. 16-18, 2008											
	Cook	Collar	Down	Obama	McCain	Unde-	Party ID				
	State	County	Counties	state	Voters	Voters	cided	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Obama	54	68	47	44	91	4	27	87	45	12	
McCain	28	16	35	35	1	81	11	3	28	72	
Both (Vol.)	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	-	4	1	
Neither (Vol.)	7	6	7	7	4	8	19	4	8	9	
Don't know	10	8	10	12	4	6	41	5	15	7	
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)	

13. “Regardless of how you will vote, which candidate would be best at restoring the economy and jobs situation...(Shuffle names)?”

Nearly half of Illinois voters have at least some concern about the extent of Obama’s public office experience, more than half outside Cook County and among independent and undecided voters.

Concern About Obama’s Experience; Oct. 16-18, 2008										
	Cook	Collar	Down	Obama	McCain	Unde-	Party ID			
	State	County	Counties	state	Voters	Voters	cided	Dem.	Ind.	GOP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Lot/some (Net)</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>76</u>
A lot	24	19	26	28	5	58	20	7	25	54
Some	23	17	29	25	20	22	38	20	28	22
<u>Little/not at all (Net)</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>24</u>
Very little	22	27	18	21	31	10	17	32	22	9
Not at all	29	36	26	24	42	10	18	41	23	14
Don’t know	2	1	2	2	1	*	6	1	2	1
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

[Rotate order of 14a-4b.] 14a. “Barack Obama’s experience is an issue for some voters. How concerned - if at all - are you about the extent of Barack Obama’s public office experience...?”

Some voters have concerns over McCain’s age, primarily Cook County voters. Majorities in the balance of the state as well as undecided and independent voters have little or no concern.

Concern About McCain’s Age; Oct. 16-18, 2008										
	Cook	Collar	Down	Obama	McCain	Unde-	Party ID			
	State	County	Counties	state	Voters	Voters	cided	Dem.	Ind.	GOP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Lot/some (Net)</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>21</u>
A lot	26	35	20	20	41	2	17	42	19	7
Some	19	20	19	20	25	12	16	22	22	14
<u>Little/not at all (Net)</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>78</u>
Very little	19	17	21	20	17	21	26	20	16	20
Not at all	35	27	41	39	16	64	38	15	43	58
Don’t know	1	2	-	1	1	*	3	1	-	1
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

14b. “John McCain’s age is an issue for some voters. How concerned - if at all - are you about John McCain’s age...?”

BIDEN & PALIN

Opinion of Joe Biden is positive - 54%/23% - generally positive except for Republicans and McCain voters.

	Biden Opinion; Oct. 16-18, 2008									
	Cook	Collar	Down	Obama	McCain	Unde-	Party ID			
	State	County	Counties	state	Voters	Voters	cided	Dem.	Ind.	GOP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Heard Of</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>100</u>
Favorable	54	66	45	45	85	10	27	82	47	18
Unfavorable	23	16	29	28	2	62	20	2	24	62
No opinion	20	14	25	24	9	27	51	13	28	20
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

7c. "Joe Biden, is your opinion of him...favorable, unfavorable, do you have no opinion, or have you never heard of him?"

Opinion of Sarah Palin is more negative than positive, and more divided in key groups of Collar County voters and downstate.

	Palin Opinion; Oct. 16-18, 2008									
	Cook	Collar	Down	Obama	McCain	Unde-	Party ID			
	State	County	Counties	state	Voters	Voters	cided	Dem.	Ind.	GOP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Heard Of</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>100</u>
Favorable	33	23	42	38	7	81	22	11	36	72
Unfavorable	45	53	40	38	75	2	17	67	41	14
No opinion	19	18	16	23	14	16	60	18	21	14
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

7d. "Sarah Palin (PAY-lin), is your opinion of her...favorable, unfavorable, do you have no opinion, or have you never heard of her?"

Equivalent percentages of both McCain and Obama voters say their choice for president was influenced by their running-mates. Percentages are nearly equal.

	How Much Did Their VP Choice Influence Your Vote For McCain/Obama	
	Voting For McCain	Voting For Obama
	%	%
<u>Lot/some (Net)</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>60</u>
A lot	25	25
Some	35	34
<u>Little/none (Net)</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>39</u>
Very little	20	22
Not at all	19	17
Don't know	2	1
Base:	(156)	(269)

8c. (McCain Voters.) "How much does the selection of Sarah Palin (PAY-lin) for Vice President influence you to vote for John McCain....a lot, some, very little or not at all?" 8d. (Obama Voters.) "How much does the selection of Joe Biden for Vice President influence you to vote for Barack Obama....a lot, some, very little or not at all?"

Most voters think prior experience is very or at least somewhat important to handle the job of Vice President.

However, there were differences between Obama and Democratic voters versus McCain and Republican voters.

Some 71% of Obama voters and Democrats said experience was very important for that position. Only 32% of McCain voters and 35% of Republican rated experience as very important.

Importance Of Prior Experience To Handle Job Of VP; Oct. 16-18, 2008

	<u>State</u>							<u>Party ID</u>		
	<u>State</u> %	<u>Cook County</u> %	<u>Collar Counties</u> %	<u>Downstate</u> %	<u>Obama Voters</u> %	<u>McCain Voters</u> %	<u>Unclassified</u> %	<u>Dem.</u> %	<u>Ind.</u> %	<u>GOP</u> %
<u>Very/Somewhat (Net)</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>75</u>
Very important	55	64	52	47	71	32	39	71	51	35
Somewhat important	29	21	31	37	20	44	38	22	29	39
<u>Not too/Not at all (Net)</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>23</u>
Not too important	10	10	11	10	6	15	14	5	12	14
Not at all important	4	4	5	5	1	8	7	1	6	8
Don't know	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	3
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

11a. "Thinking again about Palin (PAY-lin) and Biden, how important to you is the extent of a candidate's prior experience to handle the job of vice president...?"

A question comparing the running-mates yielded a strong win for Biden as more qualified to take over the duties of president if it became necessary, 68% to 19%. Biden won much higher numbers from Obama voters than Palin did among McCain voters. Biden won by more than 2:1 in Collar Counties, Downstate, and among independent voters.

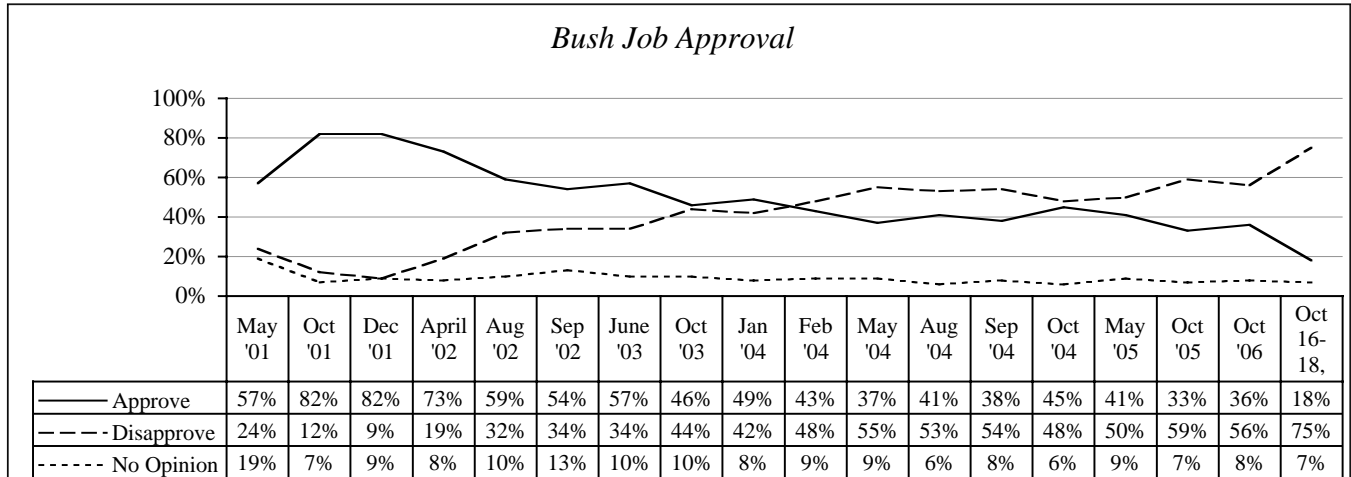
Candidate More Qualified Assume Duties Of President If Necessary; Oct. 16-18, 2008

	<u>State</u>							<u>Party ID</u>		
	<u>State</u> %	<u>Cook County</u> %	<u>Collar Counties</u> %	<u>Downstate</u> %	<u>Obama Voters</u> %	<u>McCain Voters</u> %	<u>Unclassified</u> %	<u>Dem.</u> %	<u>Ind.</u> %	<u>GOP</u> %
Biden	68	76	62	62	94	27	61	93	60	38
Palin	19	13	22	25	2	53	11	3	21	46
Both (Vol.)	1	2	-	2	*	3	-	2	1	2
Neither (Vol.)	3	3	7	2	1	7	-	-	6	6
Don't know	8	7	9	10	3	9	28	3	13	8
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

11b. "Regardless of how you will vote, which candidate for Vice President is more qualified to take over the duties of president should it become necessary to do so.....?" (SHUFFLE NAMES)

GEORGE W. BUSH

The Tribune Poll has now obtained eighteen Bush job approval scores since May, 2001. The last before now was October 2006 showing 36% approval/56% disapproval.



15. "Do you approve or disapprove of the job George Bush is doing as President?"

George Bush job approval in Illinois is now down to 18%. Disapproval is strongest among Democrats, voters for Obama, and in the more Democratic county in the state.

An important finding is that in Illinois, McCain voters and Republican voters are *divided* on Bush's performance in office, some measure of dissatisfaction with the incumbent administration the McCain campaign has tried to overcome.

George Bush Job Approval; Oct. 16-18, 2008

								<u>Party ID</u>		
	<u>State</u>	<u>Cook County</u>	<u>Collar Counties</u>	<u>Down state</u>	<u>Obama Voters</u>	<u>McCain Voters</u>	<u>Unde-cided</u>	<u>Dem.</u>	<u>Ind.</u>	<u>GOP</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	18	11	24	22	5	43	9	5	12	49
Disapprove	75	83	66	70	93	44	68	92	78	43
No opinion	7	6	10	7	1	1	23	3	10	8
Base:	(500)	(196)	(114)	(190)	(269)	(156)	(45)	(213)	(136)	(120)

Illinois Bush job approval is now half of what it was at the time of the 2006 Congressional election.

Bush Job Approval; Oct. 8-11, 2006

							<u>Party ID</u>		
	<u>State</u>	<u>Cook County</u>		<u>Collar Counties</u>	<u>Down state</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind.</u>	<u>GOP</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Approve	36	22	12	32	49	43	11	36	79
Disapprove	56	71	83	58	43	50	83	55	16
No opinion	8	8	6	10	8	7	5	9	5
Base:	(600)	(236)	(121)	(115)	(136)	(228)	(227)	(214)	(140)

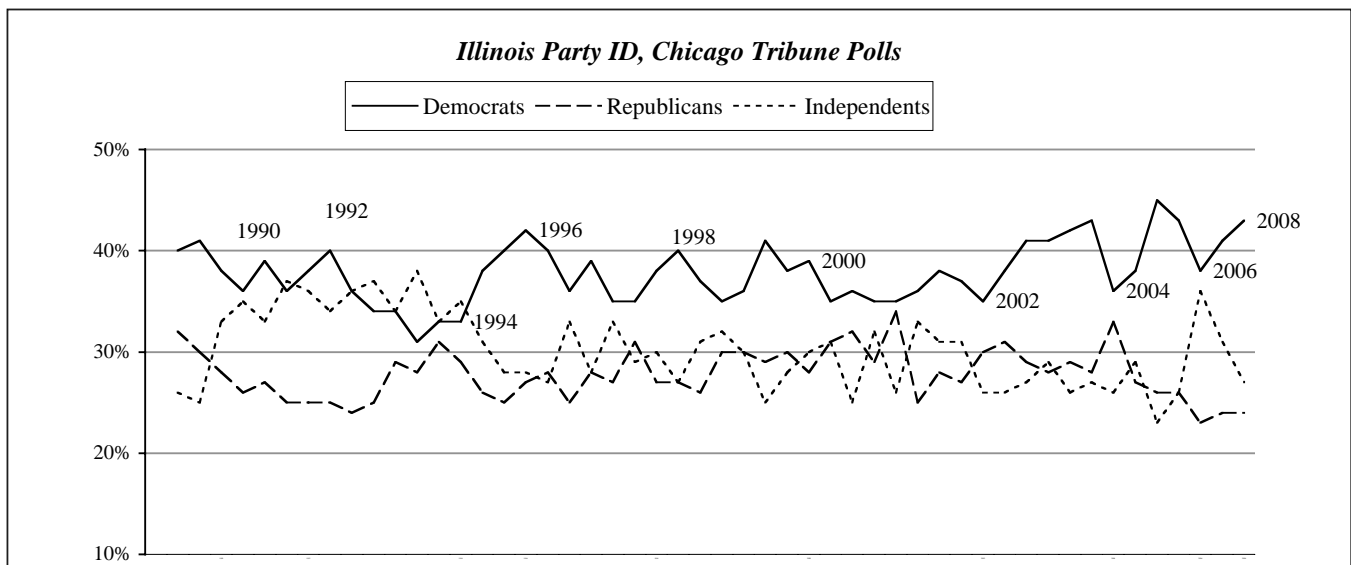
PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Illinois is not a party registration state so voters are not officially aligned with either party. Self-descriptions of party allegiance are fluid. Response is attitudinal.

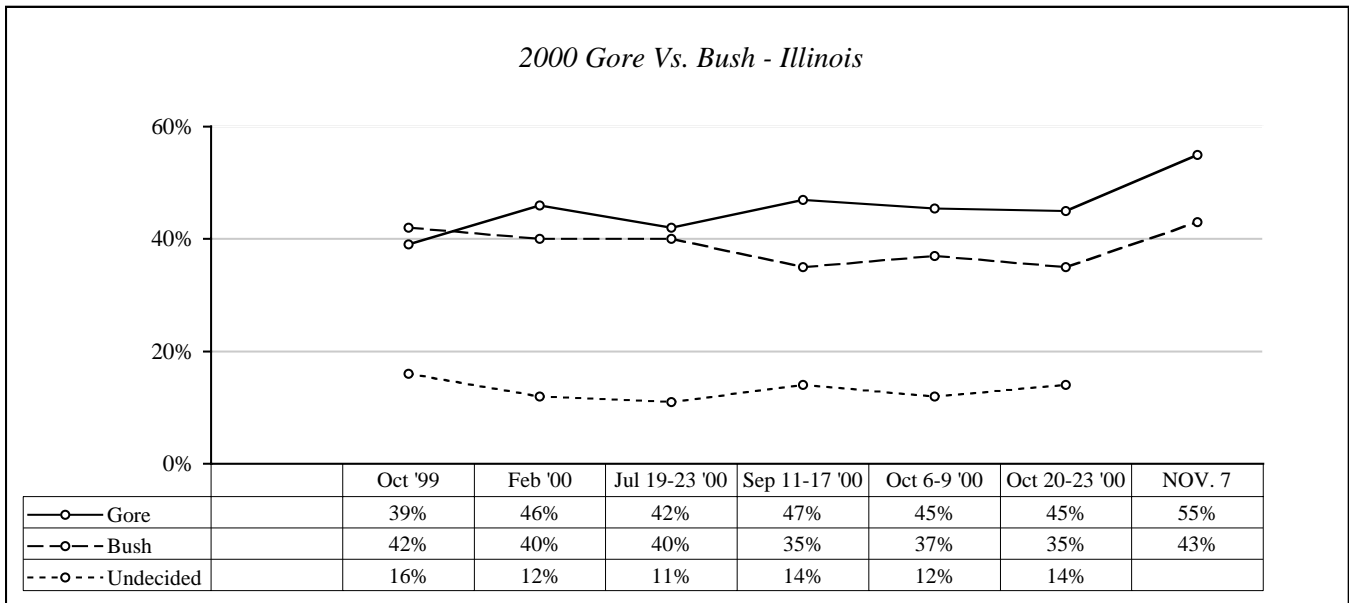
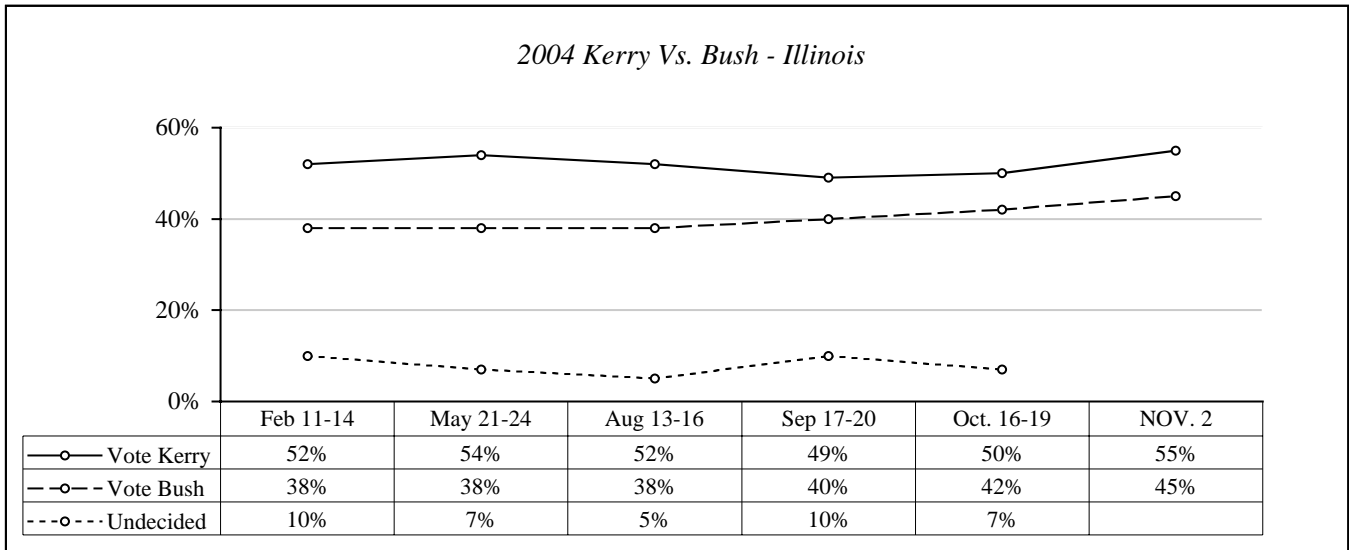
Likely voter party preference changes from year to year as well as from poll to poll. Differences shown in the table below reflect changes in likely voter sample composition. There is also movement within the general voter population, likely from major party allegiance to independent or unaligned status.

Democrats regularly outnumber Republicans in Illinois. The state's large contingent of independent voters makes the difference in election outcomes. In this poll, 43% of likely voters identified themselves as Democrats, 24% as Republicans, and Independents as 31%. This 19-point Democrat vs. Republican advantage is the highest we have seen.

Voter Party Identification: Illinois Final Polls						
	Oct '98	Oct '00	Oct '02	Oct '04	Oct '06	Oct '08
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Democrats	40	39	38	36	41	43
Republicans	27	28	28	33	24	24
<i>Dem. advantage</i>	<i>+13</i>	<i>+11</i>	<i>+10</i>	<i>+3</i>	<i>+17</i>	<i>+19</i>
Independents	27	30	31	26	31	27



2000 & 2004 CHICAGO TRIBUNE POLL RESULTS



HOW THE POLL WAS CONDUCTED

About the Tribune Poll

The findings of this Chicago Tribune Poll are based on telephone interviews with a sample of 500 Illinois voters likely to vote in the November 4th general election. For samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that results will differ by no more than plus or minus 4.4 percentage points from results obtained if all Illinois voters likely to vote were questioned. The potential margin of error for subgroups within the total sample is greater.

Market Shares Corp. of Arlington Heights conducted the poll October 16-18, 2008.