

FRANKLIN & MARSHALL

**June 2008**

**Franklin & Marshall  
College Poll**

**NATIONAL SURVEY  
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**Prepared By:  
Center for Opinion Research  
Center for Politics & Public Affairs  
Floyd Institute for Public Policy  
Franklin & Marshall College**

**In Partnership With:  
Hearst-Argyle**

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## Prepared By:

BERWOOD A. YOST  
DIRECTOR, FLOYD INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY  
DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR OPINION RESEARCH  
HEAD METHODOLOGIST, FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE POLL

G. TERRY MADONNA  
DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR POLITICS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
DIRECTOR, FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE POLL

JENNIFER L. HARDING  
PROJECT MANAGER, CENTER FOR OPINION RESEARCH  
PROJECT MANAGER, FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE POLL

ANGELA N. KNITTLE  
PROJECT MANAGER, CENTER FOR OPINION RESEARCH

KIRK MILLER  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, CENTER FOR OPINION RESEARCH

KAY K. HUEBNER  
PROGRAMMER, CENTER FOR OPINION RESEARCH

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## Methodology

The survey findings presented in this release are based on the results of interviews conducted June 16-22, 2008. The interviews were conducted at the Center for Opinion Research at Franklin & Marshall College under the direction of the poll's Director, Dr. G. Terry Madonna, Head Methodologist, Berwood Yost, and Project Manager, Jennifer Harding. The data included in this release represent the responses of 1,501 adult residents of the United States who are currently registered to vote. Telephone numbers for the survey were generated using random digit dialing, and respondents were randomly selected from within each household. Survey results were weighted using an iterative weighting algorithm.

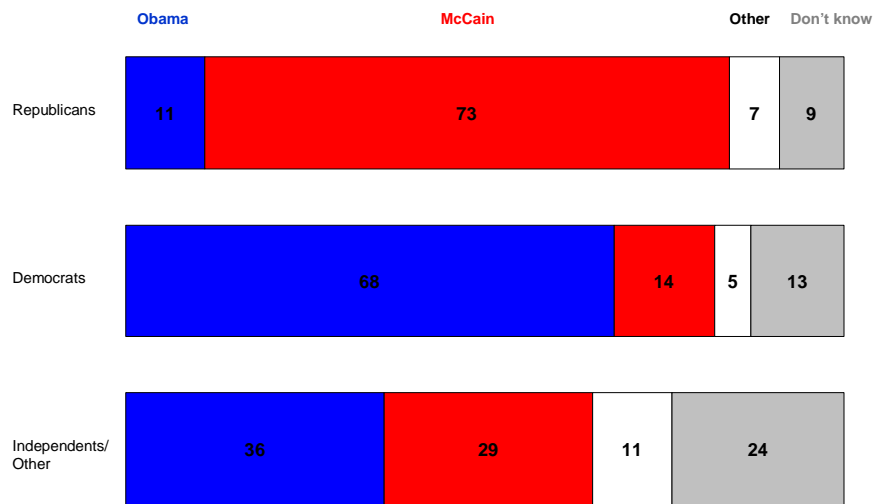
The sample error for registered adults is +/- 2.5 percent. In addition to sampling error, this poll is also subject to other sources of non-sampling error. Generally speaking, two sources of error concern researchers most. Non-response bias is created when selected participants either choose not to participate in the survey or are unavailable for interviewing. Response errors are the product of the question and answer process. Surveys that rely on self-reported behaviors and attitudes are susceptible to biases related to the way respondents process and respond to survey questions.

## Key Findings

### *The Presidential Election*

The June 2008 Franklin and Marshall College Poll of registered adults finds Democrat Barack Obama leading Republican John McCain by six points, 42% to 36%. Obama leads among those under 55 years of age, blacks, Hispanics, and those living in the Northeast and Midwest (see Table A-1). McCain has an advantage among those over 55, non-Hispanic whites, fundamentalist Christians, and military veterans. Both candidates fare well among their party faithful, and Obama has an advantage among independents (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Presidential Preference by Party Registration**



Attitudinal variables are also associated with vote choice. Three in four (78%) registered adults believe the country is “off on the wrong track,” and nearly half (42%) say they are worse off financially this year than last. Obama is currently leading among both of these groups (see Table 1). The economy (38%) and the Iraq War (18%) are most often mentioned as the issues that will influence

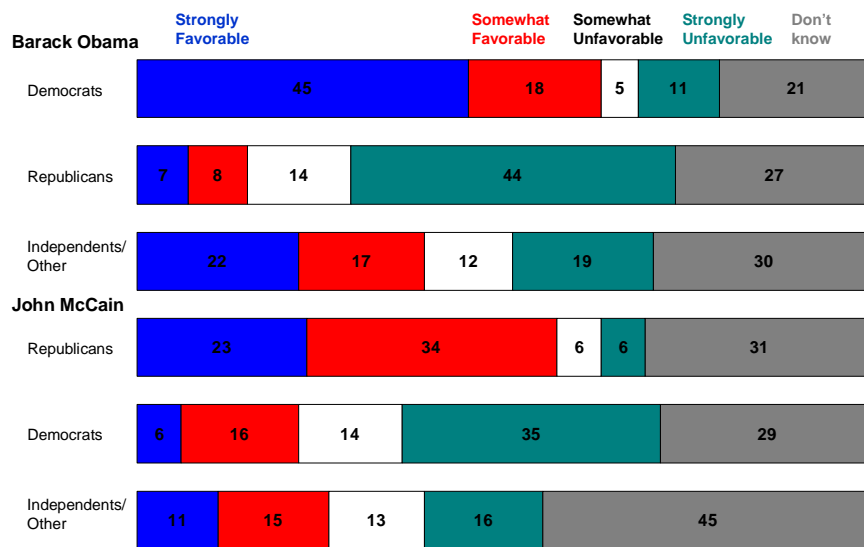
presidential vote choices in the fall, and Obama leads McCain among registered adults who are primarily concerned with these two issues.

**Table 1. Presidential Preference by Selected Attitudinal Items**

	McCain	Obama	Other	DK
<b>Direction of Country</b>				
Right direction	64%	18%	3%	15%
Wrong track	29%	49%	9%	13%
<b>Personal Finances Compared to Last Year</b>				
Better off	51%	30%	6%	13%
About the same	36%	42%	7%	16%
Worse off	30%	48%	8%	14%
<b>Most Important Issue in Presidential Vote Choice</b>				
Moral and family values	70%	17%	3%	9%
Foreign policy	54%	30%	4%	12%
Illegal immigration	54%	10%	18%	18%
Taxes	49%	26%	10%	15%
Energy policy	41%	34%	8%	17%
Something else	37%	32%	15%	17%
Iraq War	30%	54%	4%	12%
Economy	27%	48%	7%	18%
Healthcare	21%	67%	6%	6%

More registered Americans rate the candidates favorably than unfavorably. Partisan favorability scores show that John McCain is not as positively viewed among Republicans as is Barack Obama among Democrats (see Figure 2). Fewer Republicans have a strongly favorable opinion of John McCain (23%) than Democrats who have a strongly favorable opinion of Barack Obama (45%).

**Figure 2. Candidate Favorability Ratings by Party**



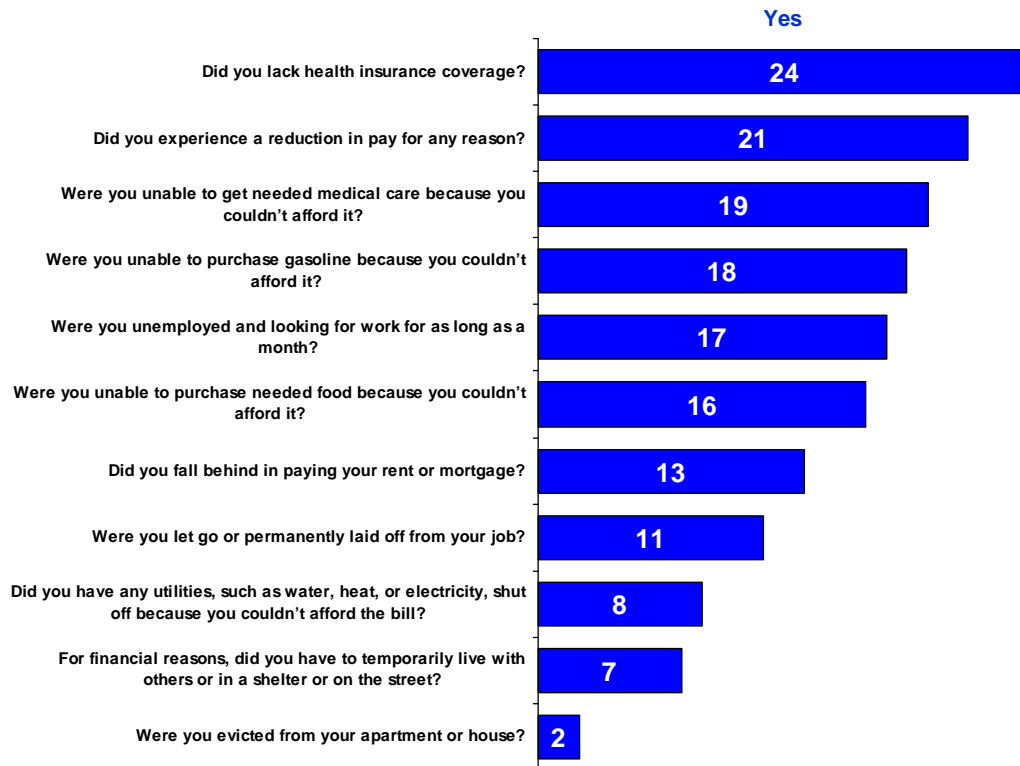
### ***Economic Concern and Hardship***

The race for the president is taking place at a time when Americans are focused intently on the economy. In addition to the results noted earlier about the direction of the country and respondents' financial standing, many Americans mention that economic issues are the greatest problems facing their families. Two-thirds of respondents name an economic issue (the economy in general-24%, gasoline and energy prices-22%, and personal finances-21%) as the biggest

problem facing their families. About seven in ten (66%) registered adults believe that the problems they are facing can be solved with the help of government.

Many registered Americans have suffered some economic hardships during the previous 12 months. About one in four (24%) says they have been without health insurance coverage at some point during the past year, and one in five (21%) has experienced a reduction in pay (see Figure 3). Overall, half (52%) of registered adults have experienced at least one of the 11 listed financial hardships at some point during the past year, and these respondents are much more likely to vote for Obama (50%) than McCain (27%) in November.

**Figure 3. Economic Hardships during Previous 12 Months**



**Table A-1. Presidential Vote Choice by Selected Demographics**

	McCain	Obama	Other	DK
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	38%	40%	9%	13%
Female	34%	44%	6%	16%
<b>Age*</b>				
18-34	28%	55%	6%	11%
35-54	35%	41%	8%	16%
55 and over	43%	34%	7%	16%
<b>Education</b>				
High School or Less	36%	41%	8%	15%
Some College	36%	41%	8%	15%
College Degree	35%	48%	4%	13%
<b>Household Income</b>				
Less than \$25,000	30%	49%	9%	13%
\$25-35,000	29%	46%	10%	15%
\$35-50,000	38%	39%	7%	16%
\$50-75,000	37%	41%	6%	15%
\$75-100,000	33%	46%	8%	14%
Over \$100,000	43%	38%	4%	15%
<b>Race*</b>				
White, non-Hispanic	42%	35%	8%	15%
Black, non-Hispanic	3%	91%	0%	7%
Other, non-Hispanic	30%	33%	11%	25%
Hispanic	34%	42%	8%	16%
<b>Marital Status*</b>				
Married	42%	35%	6%	17%
Not currently married	36%	41%	8%	15%
Single, never married	21%	62%	8%	9%
<b>Religious Affiliation*</b>				
Catholic	42%	36%	5%	17%
Protestant	41%	36%	8%	15%
Other	35%	44%	9%	13%
Unaffiliated	20%	60%	7%	13%
<b>Born Again Christian or Fundamentalist*</b>				
Yes	41%	33%	8%	18%
No	33%	47%	6%	14%
<b>Household Union Member</b>				
Yes	32%	44%	6%	19%
No	36%	42%	8%	14%
<b>Military Veteran*</b>				
Yes	46%	28%	8%	17%
No	34%	45%	7%	14%
<b>Region*</b>				
South	40%	37%	8%	15%
West	38%	41%	7%	14%
Midwest	32%	45%	8%	15%
Northeast	29%	50%	5%	15%
<b>Party Registration*</b>				
Republican	73%	11%	7%	9%
Democrat	14%	68%	5%	13%
Independent/Other	29%	36%	11%	24%

\* Significant differences ( $p < .05$ )



## Marginal Frequency Report

*[Reg, Reg\_Pln, AND RegParty were not asked of North Dakota residents.]*

Reg. Some people are registered to vote, and many others are not. Are you CURRENTLY REGISTERED to vote at your present address?

84%	Yes
15%	No
1%	Don't know

Reg\_Pln. Are you planning to register to vote prior to the presidential election in November or not?

n = 288

48%	Yes
45%	No
7%	Don't know

RegParty. [Do you plan to register / Are you currently registered] as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or as something else?

n = 1636

30%	Republican
44%	Democrat
22%	Independent/Other
4%	Don't know

Vote\_Nov. Many people will vote in the election for president in November; however, many other people will not. What would you say are the chances you will vote in the November presidential election? Are you certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances fifty-fifty you will vote, or don't you think that you will vote in the November election for president?

71%	Certain to vote
11%	Will probably vote
8%	Chances 50-50
9%	Don't think will vote
1%	Don't know

PoL\_Int. Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you are...in the 2008 presidential campaign?

57%	Very much interested
34%	Somewhat interested
9%	Not very interested

Gen. When it comes to presidential elections, do you always vote, do you usually vote, do you only sometimes vote, or do you rarely vote?

64% Always  
 14% Usually  
 8% Only sometimes  
 13% Rarely  
 1% Don't know

Vot04. Did you vote in the last presidential election in 2004 or not?

76% Yes  
 23% No  
 1% Don't know

VotPrim. Did you vote in a presidential primary or participate in a caucus this year or not?

46% Yes  
 53% No  
 1% Don't know

PrimPar. Did you participate as a Republican, Democrat, or something else?

n = 830

30% Republican  
 63% Democrat  
 6% Something else  
 1% Don't know

Satis. How satisfied were you with the choice of [fill Republicans/Democrats] running for the presidential nomination this year?

Republicans	Democrats	n
244	517	
19%	53%	Very satisfied
50%	31%	Somewhat satisfied
22%	8%	Not too satisfied
9%	8%	Not at all satisfied

*[The remaining questions were asked of registered adults and North Dakota residents only, n = 1501.]*

FavOb and FavMc. Is your opinion of [fill and rotate] [Barack Obama/John McCain] favorable, unfavorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about [Barack Obama/John McCain] to have an opinion?

Barack Obama	John McCain	
27%	13%	Strongly favorable
15%	21%	Somewhat favorable
9%	11%	Somewhat unfavorable
24%	22%	Strongly unfavorable
20%	24%	Undecided
5%	9%	Don't know

Pres08. If the November general election for president was being held today and the candidates were [rotate] John McCain the Republican and Barack Obama the Democrat, would you vote for John McCain, Barack Obama, some other candidate, OR aren't you sure how you would vote?

42%	Obama
36%	McCain
7%	Other
15%	Don't know

IssPrim. What will be the single most important issue in your vote for president this year? [rotate]

38%	The economy
18%	The Iraq War
9%	Healthcare
8%	Moral and family values
5%	Foreign policy
5%	Illegal immigration
5%	Energy policy
3%	Taxes
6%	Something else
3%	Don't know

UStrk. All in all, do you think things in the United States are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?

17%	Right direction
78%	Wrong track
5%	Don't know

MIP. What do you think is the MOST important problem facing YOU and YOUR FAMILY TODAY?

24%	Economy, in general
22%	Gasoline/oil prices, energy
21%	Personal finances, cost of living, unemployment
8%	Healthcare, insurance
3%	Government, politicians
3%	Iraq War
3%	Taxes
3%	Values, morality, religion
2%	Immigration, illegal immigrants
7%	Other
4%	Don't know

Gov. Do you think that the problems facing you and your family can be solved with the help of the government, or are these problems beyond what you think the government can do?

66%	With help of government
27%	Beyond what government can do
7%	Don't know

FinToday. We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family are better off, worse off, or about the same financially as you were A YEAR AGO?

15% Better off  
 42% Worse off  
 43% About the same

FinFut. Now looking ahead, do you think that A YEAR FROM NOW, you and your family will be better off financially than you are now, worse off, or about the same as you are now?

26% Better off  
 20% Worse off  
 45% About the same  
 9% Don't know

IntHard. Now I'm going to ask you about various events that happen to people. I'm interested in those that happened to you at any point during the last 12 months, that is since [fill one year ago's date]. Did any of the following hardships happen to you in the last 12 months?

Yes	No	Don't know	
24%	76%	0%	Did you lack health insurance coverage?
21%	79%	0%	Did you experience a reduction in pay for any reason?
19%	81%	0%	Were you unable to get needed medical care because you couldn't afford it?
18%	81%	1%	Were you unable to purchase gasoline because you couldn't afford it?
17%	83%	0%	Were you unemployed and looking for work for as long as a month?
16%	84%	0%	Were you unable to purchase needed food because you couldn't afford it?
13%	87%	0%	Did you fall behind in paying your rent or mortgage?
11%	89%	1%	Were you let go or permanently laid off from your job?
8%	92%	0%	Did you have any utilities, such as water, heat, or electricity, shut off because you couldn't afford the bill?
7%	93%	0%	For financial reasons, did you have to temporarily live with others or in a shelter or on the street?
2%	98%	0%	Were you evicted from your apartment or house?

I now have a final few questions for statistical purposes only.

Resd. How many years have you lived at your current address?

12.5 Mean

Age. What was your age on your last birthday?

9% 18-24  
 18% 25-34  
 17% 35-44  
 24% 45-54  
 12% 55-64  
 20% 65 and older

Educ. What was the last grade level of schooling you have completed?

7% Non high school graduate  
37% High school graduate or GED  
19% Some college  
11% Two-year or tech degree  
15% Four year college degree  
11% Post graduate degree

Mar. What is your CURRENT marital status, are you married, separated, divorced, or a widower?

24% Single, never married  
54% Married  
22% Separated/divorced/widower

Labr. Are you or is any member of your household a member of a LABOR UNION?

16% Yes  
84% No

Vet. Are you a military veteran?

15% Yes  
85% No

Hisp. Are you Hispanic or Latino or not?

12% Yes  
88% No

Race. Which of the following categories best describes your racial background?

78% White  
12% Black or African American  
1% Asian  
1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander  
3% American Indian, Alaska Native  
5% Other

Rel. Do you consider yourself to be Protestant, Catholic, some other religion, or not affiliated with any religion?

34% Protestant  
25% Catholic  
21% Some other religion  
20% Not affiliated with any religion

Bac. Do you consider yourself to be a born-again Christian or fundamentalist or not?

37% Yes  
60% No  
3% Don't know

NumA. Including yourself, how many adults 18 years of age or OLDER CURRENTLY live in this household?

29%	One
51%	Two
14%	Three
6%	Four or more

Work. Are you currently working FULL-time, PART-time, going to school, keeping house or something else?

48%	Full-time
12%	Part-time
4%	Going to school
7%	Keeping house
4%	Unemployed
5%	Disabled
19%	Retired
1%	Don't know

Inc. And just for statistical purposes, we need to know if your total family income is above or below \$50,000 per year.

18%	Under \$25,000
15%	\$25-\$35,000
15%	\$35-50,000
20%	\$50-75,000
12%	\$75-100,000
16%	Over \$100,000
4%	Don't know

Done. Sex of respondent

52%	Female
48%	Male

Region. Region of the country

36%	South
23%	West
22%	Midwest
19%	Northeast