

## HOW THE POLL WAS CONDUCTED

The Mason-Dixon Virginia Poll was conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington, D.C. from October 20 through October 21, 2008. A total of 625 registered voters were interviewed statewide by telephone. All indicated that they were likely to vote in the November general election.

Those interviewed were selected by the random variation of the last four digits of telephone numbers. A cross-section of exchanges was utilized in order to ensure an accurate reflection of the state. Quotas were assigned to reflect voter turn-out by county.

The margin for error, according to standards customarily used by statisticians, is no more than plus or minus 4 percentage points. This means that there is a 95 percent probability that the "true" figure would fall within that range if the entire population were sampled. The margin for error is higher for any subgroup, such as a regional or racial grouping.

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### **SAMPLE FIGURES:**

Men 310 (50%)

Women 315 (50%)

Whites 488 (78%)

Blacks 113 (18%)

Other 24 (4%)

### REGION

Northern Virginia	170 interviews
Shenandoah/Piedmont	95 interviews
Richmond Metro	80 interviews
Hampton Roads	140 interviews
Lynchburg/Southside	70 interviews
Roanoke/Southwestern Virginia	70 interviews

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## ANALYSIS

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### **OBAMA HAS NARROW LEAD IN VIRGINIA**

Democrat Barack Obama has taken a very narrow lead over Republican John McCain in Virginia. Statewide, 47% of likely voters currently support Obama, while 45% back McCain and 8% remain undecided. McCain held a 48%-45% advantage two weeks ago.

<u>PRESIDENTIAL VOTE</u>	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
<b>September 2008</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Early October 2008</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Mid October 2008</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8%</b>

Obama has widened his lead in Northern Virginia (61%-31%), but McCain maintains his margins in Virginia's rural regions and the Richmond Metro area. The race still looks like it will come down to the Hampton Roads/Tidewater region, where Obama is now slightly ahead (48%-43%).

Obama leads with blacks, voters under 50, women those who identify as Democrats, and is now ahead among those who identify themselves as independents (49%-38%). McCain leads among men, voters over the age of 50, whites, those who identify as Republicans and those who have served in the military

McCain has a slightly higher favorable rating than Obama (48%-46%) and Obama has slightly higher negatives (39%-35%).

<u>OBAMA NAME REC</u>	<u>FAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>NEUT</u>	<u>DR</u>
September 2008	45%	34%	20%	1%
Early October 2008	44%	33%	23%	-
Mid October 2008	46%	39%	15%	-

<u>MCCAIN NAME REC</u>	<u>FAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>NEUT</u>	<u>DR</u>
September 2008	48%	22%	29%	1%
Early October 2008	47%	27%	26%	-
Mid October 2008	48%	35%	17%	-

Joe Biden and Sarah Palin have the same favorable rating (44%), but Palin has higher negatives (39%-32%).

<u>BIDEN NAME REC</u>	<u>FAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>NEUT</u>	<u>DR</u>
September 2008	39%	26%	31%	4%
Early October 2008	39%	31%	29%	1%
Mid October 2008	44%	32%	23%	1%

<u>PALIN NAME REC</u>	<u>FAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>NEUT</u>	<u>DR</u>
September 2008	46%	23%	29%	2%
Early October 2008	42%	29%	28%	1%
Mid October 2008	44%	39%	16%	1%

State voters give Obama the edge on the issue of handling the economy (48%-41%), as well as on managing health care (53%-35%) and energy policy (44%-43%), while McCain gets stronger marks for national security (55%-39%), managing government spending & taxes (49%-42%) and handling the Iraq War (52%-51%).

The economy remains the top issue, but there has been some drop off (from 69% to 57%), with the shift primarily coming from voters expressing increased concern about taxes and government spending.

**STATEWIDE NAME RECOGNITION**

Do you recognize the name \_\_\_\_\_?  
(IF YES) Do you have a favorable, unfavorable or neutral opinion  
of \_\_\_\_\_?

	<b><u>RECOGNIZE FAVORABLE</u></b>	<b><u>RECOGNIZE UNFAVORABLE</u></b>	<b><u>RECOGNIZE NEUTRAL</u></b>	<b><u>DON'T RECOGNIZE</u></b>
John McCain	48%	35%	17%	-
Barack Obama	46%	39%	15%	-
Joe Biden	44%	32%	23%	1%
Sarah Palin	44%	39%	16%	1%

**QUESTION: If the 2008 presidential election were held today, would you vote for the Democratic ticket of Barack Obama & Joe Biden, the Republican ticket of John McCain & Sarah Palin, or one of the other party tickets?**

	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
<b>STATE</b>	47%	45%	-	8%

<u>REGION</u>	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Northern Virginia	61%	31%	-	8%
Shenandoah/Piedmont	34%	57%	-	9%
Richmond Metro	41%	52%	-	7%
Hampton Roads	48%	43%	-	9%
Lynchburg/Southside	44%	49%	-	7%
Roanoke/Southwest	39%	54%	-	7%

<u>SEX</u>	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Men	43%	48%	-	9%
Women	51%	42%	-	7%

<u>AGE</u>	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
18-34	55%	37%	-	8%
35-49	49%	42%	-	9%
50-64	45%	47%	-	8%
65+	39%	54%	-	7%

<u>RACE</u>	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Whites	36%	55%	-	9%
Blacks	92%	3%	-	5%

<u>PARTY ID</u>	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Democrats	82%	12%	-	6%
Republicans	11%	83%	-	6%
Independents	49%	38%	-	13%

<u>SERVED IN MILITARY?</u>	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Yes	34%	61%	-	5%
No	53%	38%	-	9%

**QUESTION: What do you feel is the single most important national issue facing the country today?**

Economy/Jobs	57%
Terrorism/War on Terror/National Security	11%
Taxes/Government Spending	8%
War in Iraq	5%
Health Care Issues/Cost of Health Care	5%
Social Issues/Moral Issues/Family Values	4%
Gas prices/Energy Issues	3%
Education	2%
Protecting Environment	1%
Social Security	-
Immigration	-
Other	1%
Not Sure	3%

**QUESTION: Which of the two major presidential candidates - Democrat Barack Obama or Republican John McCain -- do you trust more to handle the following issues?**

	<u>OBAMA</u>	<u>MCCAIN</u>	<u>DK/NO DIFF</u>
- The economy	48%	41%	11%
- National security	39%	55%	6%
- Improving health care	53%	35%	12%
- Managing government spending & cutting taxes	42%	49%	9%
- Developing energy resources and reducing dependence on foreign sources	44%	43%	13%
- Managing the Iraq War	41%	52%	7%

**QUESTION: What do you feel is more responsible for the current economic situation: (ORDER ROTATED)**

- The lending practices at government-backed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which encouraged giving home mortgages to less qualified applicants.
- The business practices of banks and brokerages on Wall Street who made and marketed risky investments.

	<u>STATE</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>DEMS</u>	<u>REPS</u>	<u>INDS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>
FANNIE MAE	41%	44%	38%	30%	54%	37%	37%
WALL STREET	23%	20%	26%	28%	17%	24%	27%
BOTH (NOT READ)	28%	29%	27%	34%	23%	28%	20%
NOT SURE	8%	7%	9%	8%	6%	11%	16%

**QUESTION: Who do you blame more for allowing the current economic situation to develop: (ORDER ROTATED)**

- The Bush Administration and Republicans who supported deregulation in the banking and financial industries.
- The Democrats in Congress who opposed increased regulation of lending practices at government-backed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

	<u>STATE</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>DEMS</u>	<u>REPS</u>	<u>INDS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>
BUSH/GOP	43%	42%	44%	78%	9%	43%	41%
CONGRESS/DEMS	34%	36%	32%	5%	67%	27%	28%
BOTH (NOT READ)	17%	18%	16%	14%	19%	19%	18%
NOT SURE	6%	4%	8%	3%	6%	11%	13%