

AS DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION KICKS OFF, DEMOCRATIC VOTERS SATISFIED WITH OBAMA'S PICK OF BIDEN AS RUNNING MATE, THINK IT WILL HELP OBAMA'S CHANCES OF WINNING

OBAMA DOING A BETTER JOB APPEARING PRESIDENTIAL, BUT MORE VOTERS THINK MCCAIN IS MORE PREPARED TO LEAD

Before V.P. Announcement, Democratic Voters Say Biden is Who They Would "Most Like To See" as Obama's Running Mate but in Head-to-Head Race, Biden Pick Has Had No Immediate Impact – Obama Still Slightly Edges Out McCain

As the Campaigns End the Summer Trying to Define Themselves and One Another, More Voters See Obama as "In Touch" with the Average American

New York, August 26, 2008 – In a poll fielded immediately prior to the Democratic National Convention, Barack Obama's pick of Joe Biden as his running mate is being met with approval by voters, particularly with Democratic voters.

After Saturday's announcement, 55% of Democratic voters said they were satisfied with Obama's selection of Joe Biden, while 28% of Democrats said they would have preferred someone else. Among all voters, 40% said they were satisfied, while 24% said they would have preferred someone else.

By a margin of more than 3:1, Democratic voters believe the Biden pick will help Obama's chances of winning (47%), while 15% think it will hurt his chances, and 32% think it will not make much of a difference either way.

The Diageo/ Hotline Poll of 1,022 voters was conducted by FD from August 18 – 24, with 615 interviews completed August 18-20 before Obama's announcement of Joe Biden as his running mate and 403 interviews completed August 24-25 after the announcement.

In the days leading up to Obama's announcement of Joe Biden as his running mate, The Diageo/ Hotline Poll asked voters to identify who, among the four most-mentioned V.P. contenders, they would "most like to see as the Democratic Vice Presidential candidate."

Biden was the top choice of 26% of all voters, leading Indiana Senator Evan Bayh (7%), Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius (5%), and Virginia Governor Tim Kaine (4%). Among Democratic voters, Biden was the top choice by an even wider margin, with 32% of Democrats indicating he was their top choice, again leading Bayh (6%), Kaine (4%), and Sebelius (3%).

Prior to the announcement, less than half of voters (47%) were familiar with Joe Biden, with 28% holding a favorable impression, 19% holding an unfavorable impression and 47% unable to rate him. After the announcement, 59% of voters were familiar with him, with 38% holding a favorable impression, 21% holding an unfavorable impression and 41% unable to rate him.

Obama More “In Touch” & Presenting a Presidential Image

Overall, voters appear to have taken in stride talk about McCain’s multiple homes and charges of Obama as being an “elitist.” Both candidates are largely seen as “in touch” with the “average American.”

However, Obama is seen as more “in touch” than McCain is. Specifically, 70% of voters say Obama is a “great deal” or “somewhat” in touch with the “average American”, while 61% of voters say McCain is a “great deal” or “somewhat” in touch with the “average American.”

This summer, much has been made by both campaigns and by the media about whether voters see Barack Obama as “Presidential” and about his preparedness to serve as President. To that end, voters believe Obama is doing a better job than McCain of “presenting himself as a potential president of the United States.”

Two-thirds (66%) of voters believe Barack Obama is doing an “excellent” or a “good” job of presenting himself as a potential president. In contrast, voters are less enchanted with John McCain’s efforts, with only 50% of voters saying he is doing an excellent/good job of presenting himself as a potential president.

However, these high ratings for Obama are not easily translating into positive perceptions of his being able to lead the country – voters still believe McCain is more prepared to lead.

Specifically, 58% of voters say Obama is prepared to lead the country, with 39% saying he is unprepared. Meanwhile, 74% of voters say McCain is prepared to lead the country as president.

“Even as voters think that Barack Obama has presented himself well as a potential president, they are still not convinced he is prepared to be president,” commented Amy Walter, Editor-in-Chief of *National Journal’s Hotline*. “The challenge for Obama, then, is to use these next months to specifically address these concerns.”

Obama Holds a Slight Edge in a Head-to-Head Match-up; But Voters See a Democratic Win as More Likely

The Diageo/ *Hotline* Poll finds that Barack Obama holds a slight edge over John McCain, 44%-40%, with 12% undecided. So far, the addition of Biden to the ticket has had no overall impact on the head-to-head matchup, with Obama edging McCain by a similar margin both before (Obama 45%-McCain 41%) and after (Obama 46%-McCain 41%) the Biden announcement. And, heading into the fall, the race in the all-important Swing States appears very close, with McCain barely edging out Obama 43%-41%, with 11% undecided.¹

Regardless of the closeness of the race, voters predict a Democratic victory in the fall. Specifically, 52% of voters say the Democratic has a better chance of winning and 32% say the Republican candidate has a better chance. This elevated optimism in a Democratic victory is likely driven by a “confidence gap” – Democratic voters have much more confidence their candidate will win than Republicans have in their own candidate.

¹ Includes: Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Virginia.

Among self-identified Republicans, only 59% think the Republican has a better chance, while 78% of self-identified Democrats think the Democrat has a better chance. Among Independents, 47% think the Democrat has better chance of winning and 31% think the Republican has a better chance.

The Issues

Economic issues remain paramount, with 50% of voters citing “the economy” as the most important issue when deciding who to vote for.

Moreover, when asked who would do a better job handling issues such as the economy, healthcare and energy policies (a major focus of both candidates this summer), voters think Obama would do a better job. In contrast, voters think McCain would do a better job managing the War in Iraq.

Table 1: Most Important Issue Impacting Vote & Candidate Performance

n=1,022	The Economy		War in Iraq		Energy Policies		Healthcare	
Most Important Issue to How You Will Vote	50%		18%		14%		12%	
 								
n=504	The Economy		War in Iraq		Energy Policies		Healthcare	
Who Would Do A Better Job?	August-08	Obama Net	August-08	McCain Net	August-08	Obama Net	August-08	Obama Net
Barack Obama	48%	+8%	40%	+9%	49%	+12%	47%	+11%
John McCain	40%		49%		37%		36%	

To obtain complete poll result, please see www.diageohotlinepoll.com

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Methodology: The Diageo/Hotline Poll was conducted by telephone from August 18 to August 24, 2008, among a random, representative sample of 1,022 registered voters, age 18 and older (margin of error +/- 3.0%), with 615 interviews completed August 18-20 before Obama’s announcement of Joe Biden as his running mate (margin of error +/- 3.9%) and 403 interviews completed August 24-25 after the announcement (margin of error +/- 4.9%).

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