

Election 2008: Arkansas Presidential Election

Arkansas: McCain Up by Ten
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The Presidential race in Arkansas has remained relatively steady over the past month. The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey in the Natural State finds John McCain leading Barack Obama 47% to 37%. When “leaners” are included, the GOP is ahead 52% to 39%.

Last month, McCain had a nine-point lead. That number was an astonishing change from May, Prior to Hillary Clinton’s exit from the race, McCain led Obama by twenty-four points. The Clinton impact was bigger in Arkansas than anywhere else due to her lengthy tenure as the state’s First Lady.

Arkansas has cast its six Electoral College votes for Republican candidates in five out of the last seven Presidential elections. In 2004, George W. Bush won the state by a 54% to 45% margin. Nationally, Obama holds a modest edge over McCain in the Rasmussen Reports daily Presidential Tracking Poll. *Please sign up for the Rasmussen Reports daily e-mail update (it’s free)... let us keep you up to date with the latest public opinion news.*

McCain is backed by 91% of Republicans in Arkansas Obama earns support from 67% of Democrats. Among unaffiliated voters, McCain leads 67% to 16%.

There is a huge racial divide as well. McCain leads 55% to 27% among white voters in Arkansas, while Obama leads 93% to 2% among black voters. The Republican has a 52% to 33% advantage among men, but the two candidates are essentially even among women.

The Republican’s favorability ratings have improved somewhat over the past month. He is now viewed favorably by 59%, up from 57% last month. Thirty-nine percent (39%) have an unfavorable view of McCain, down from 40% last month. Obama’s numbers have essentially stayed the same. The Democrat is viewed favorably by 45% and unfavorably by 53%

Not surprisingly, the plurality (45%) of Arkansas voters names the economy as the most important issue of Election 2008. National security is a distant second, with 25% of voters who think it is the most important issue.

High gas and oil prices are considered by voters to be one of the biggest short term threats to the economy. Two-thirds of Arkansas voters (65%) favor drilling in offshore oil wells, while 59% say it is likely gas prices would decrease if this practice were implemented. Over half (56%) of Arkansas voters favor drilling in the Alaskan Wildlife Refuge, while 32% disagree.

While voters in Arkansas are in favor of domestic oil drilling, they are not so supportive when it

comes to conservation. Two-thirds (64%) oppose a proposal to lower the national speed limit to 55 mph, while 25% agree with the idea. Nearly half of voters in Arkansas (48%) say reducing the price of oil and gas is more important than protecting the environment, while 36% think the latter is more important.

President George W. Bush earns good or excellent ratings from 34% of voters in Arkansas, while 53% think he is doing a poor job.