

Election 2008: Iowa Presidential Election

Race tightens in Iowa, but Obama Still Ahead 46% to 41%
Monday, August 11, 2008

John McCain has cut Barack Obama's lead in Iowa in half over the past month but still trails the Democrat 46% to 41%, according to the latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey of voters in the state.

When “leaners” are factored in, Obama leads his Republican opponent 49% to 44%.

Last month Obama had a double-digit lead on McCain, 51% to 41%. In June, after Hillary Clinton dropped out of the Democratic presidential race, he led McCain by seven points.

McCain had held steady at 38% for two months running, so the three-point uptick in the new survey is good news for his campaign.

Obama has the support of 79% of the state's Democrats, while 84% of GOP voters back McCain. Among unaffiliated voters, the Democrat has a sizable lead, 46% to 30%, roughly the same as in July.

Iowa is viewed as a swing state, although the 2004 election was the first time in 20 years that the state had gone for the Republican presidential candidate. President Bush carried the state by less than 10,000 votes that year.

Both candidates have seen a slight shift in their favorability ratings. Obama is now viewed favorably by 54% of Iowa voters and unfavorably by 43%, a shift of five percentage points from the favorable to the unfavorable column in the past month. McCain is regarded favorably by 53%, down 3% since mid-July, and unfavorably by 44%, up from 40% a month ago.

Obama continues to lead McCain among women voters 49% to 37%, although this is six points narrower than in July. For the second month in a row, the two are virtually tied among male voters, with 44% for McCain and 43% for Obama.

Economic issues are the most important concern this campaign season for 43% of Iowa voters, while less than half that number (21%) rate national security as the priority.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) say finding new sources of energy is more important than reducing the amount of energy Americans now consume, but 34% think the latter should come first.

Only 38% of Iowa voters think the United States has the best economy in the world, but 44% also think the media makes the economy seem worse than it really is.

Like a growing number of Americans nationwide, 57% of voters in Iowa say the United States

and its allies are winning the war on terror, while just 18% believe the terrorists are winning. Only 24% believe Iraq is the central front in the war on terror, but Iowa voters are more divided over whether Afghanistan is that front, as Obama has said. Forty-three percent (43%) see Afghanistan that way, but 32% do not.

While 45% say Afghanistan is a greater threat to U.S. national security than Iraq, 29% see Iraq as the bigger danger.

Sixty-five percent (65%) believe that most reporters try to help the candidate they want to win, and this election cycle 46% say most reporters are trying to help Obama. Just 11% think they are trying to help McCain, and 29% feel that most reporters try to offer unbiased coverage.

President Bush's job performance ratings remain virtually unchanged from last month, with 30% of Iowa voters saying he is doing a good or excellent job and 53% describing his performance as poor.