

# Election 2008: California Presidential Election

California: Obama Leads by Twelve  
Saturday, July 26, 2008

Barack Obama is leading John McCain 50% to 38% in California according to the latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey in the state. When “leaners” are included, Obama leads 52% to 42% in the Golden State.

The current results are closer than the twenty-eight point gap in June, but similar to the fourteen point lead Obama enjoyed in May.

The June poll was conducted just as McCain announced his proposal to drill in offshore oil wells, a plan that is popular nationwide but not on the West Coast. It seemed to unify McCain’s opposition in California.

In California, as in many typically blue states, Obama had a big bounce after he clinched the Democratic Presidential nomination. Recent polls in New Hampshire and other states show closer races this month than just after the primaries. In California, the two candidates are now tied at 39% among unaffiliated voters. Last month, Obama had a big 55% to 32% lead among unaffiliateds.

McCain is viewed favorably by 54% of voters in California, up from 43% last month. Forty-two percent (42%) of California voters have an unfavorable view of the Republican. Obama’s numbers are 60% favorable, down just three points from a month ago.

Nationally, the race between McCain and Obama remains competitive in the Rasmussen Reports daily Presidential Tracking Poll.

As in all states, the plurality of voters in California (40%) name economic issues as the most important in the upcoming election. Of those voters, Obama has a 76% to 17% advantage. National security issues are the most important for 22% of voters, and McCain has a 58% to 33% edge among those voters.

The majority of Californians (52%) say protecting the environment is more important than reducing gas and oil prices. Forty-two percent (42%) say the opposite.

Over half of voters in California (51%) say the U.S. and its allies are winning the War on Terror. That surge of optimism echoes voter sentiments nationwide. Most voters (56%) agree with Obama that Iraq is not the “central front” of the war, while 43% of voters give that title to Afghanistan. The plurality (46%) also believes that Afghanistan is a bigger threat to the U.S. than Iraq.

Nationally, 49% of voters believe the media is trying to help Obama win. In California, 50% of voters agree. Sixty-nine percent (69%) think that reporters covering campaigns try to help the candidate they want to win. On the economy, 40% think journalists present the current situation as worse than it really is. However, 43% think that despite current problems, the U.S. still has one of the best economies in the world.

Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger earns good or excellent ratings from just 35% of voters, up from 33% last month. A third of voters (33%) say the governor is doing a poor job.

President Bush earns good or excellent ratings from 30% of California voters, while 57% say he is doing a poor job. Nationally, the president's approval ratings continue to hover around record lows.