

Election 2008: Massachusetts Presidential Election

Massachusetts: Obama leads McCain 51% to 36%
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Just as the presidential race nationally has tightened up, Barack Obama's lead over John McCain in Massachusetts has narrowed since last month, but he still sits comfortably out front 51% to 36%.

Last month Obama led McCain by 20 percentage points 53% to 33%, but the latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey of Bay State voters shows the gap is down to 15. In June, the Democrat led his Republican rival 51% to 38%.

When “leaners” are factored in, Obama is ahead 54% to 38%.

Obama has the support of 78% of the state's Democrats, and McCain has the backing of a similar number of Republicans (79%). Unaffiliated voters favor McCain over Obama 45% to 36%.

Traditionally one of the bluest of blue states, Massachusetts has gone for only one Republican presidential candidate -- Ronald Reagan in 1984 -- in over 50 years. In 1972, it was the only state to cast its electoral votes for Democrat George McGovern.

Incumbent Senator John Kerry, the Democratic presidential nominee in 2004, remains far ahead of his Republican challenger Jeff Beatty 56% to 29%.

Obama is still viewed favorably by most Massachusetts voters – 62% this month compared to 67% a month ago. He is regarded unfavorably by 36%, up from 31%.

McCain's numbers remain largely uncharged, with 57% saying they have a favorable opinion of him versus 39% who view him unfavorably.

For 43% of Massachusetts voters, economic issues are their number one concern this election cycle, with 24% listing national security as their top concern. This parallels findings nationwide. In 2004, national security was the number one voter issue.

Unlike voters in most other states, a plurality (48%) say protecting the environment is more important than reducing the price of gas and oil, although nearly as many (41%) see it the other way around. Only 38% believe the United States has the best economy in the world.

Forty-four percent (44%) believe the United States and its allies are winning the war on terror, while 24% think the terrorists are winning. Forty-two percent (42%) agree with Obama that Afghanistan is the central front in the war on terror. Fifty-four percent (54%) also say Afghanistan

is a greater threat to the United States than Iraq, although 21% rank Iraq as the greater threat.

For the second month in a row, just 21% of Massachusetts voters think President Bush is doing a good or excellent job, while 59% rate his performance as poor, down from 64% a month ago. An equal number (59%) say Bush will be regarded as one of America's worst presidents, but 30% say history will view his performance as average and 7% say he will be seen as one of the best U.S. chief executives.