

Election 2008: Montana Presidential Election

McCain Pulls Even in Montana
Thursday, July 31, 2008

The good news for John McCain in Montana is that he's gained six points on Barack Obama over the past month. The bad news is that the race is essentially even in a state that George W. Bush won by 20-percentage points in 2004 and by 24 points four years earlier. Even Bob Dole managed to win Montana's three Electoral College votes, albeit by a narrow 44% to 41% margin, with Ross Perot picking up 14%.

The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey in the state shows McCain attracting 45% of the vote in Montana while Obama earns 44%. When “leaners” are included, it's all tied up at 47%.

A month ago, Obama had a five-point advantage in Montana. In April, the numbers were reversed and it was McCain by five.

McCain is viewed favorably by 59% of Montana voters, up a point over the past month. For Obama, 53% now have a favorable view, down four points.

Those figures include 26% with a Very Favorable opinion of McCain and 31% who think that highly of Obama. At the other end of the spectrum, just 16% have a Very Unfavorable opinion of McCain but 29% hold such a view of Obama.

The last Democrat to win Montana was Bill Clinton in 1992. He did so with 38% of the vote. The first President Bush got 35% of the Montana vote while Ross Perot picked up 26%.

Obama is preferred by 86% of Democrats and McCain by 80% of Republicans. The two men are essentially even among unaffiliated voters. One interesting note in the data is that five percent of Republicans say they'd prefer some other candidate while only one percent of Democrats feel that way. Among unaffiliated voters, five percent prefer a third option over either McCain or Obama.

Adding to McCain's challenge in this historically red state is the fact that Montana's very popular Democratic Governor is cruising to victory in his re-election bid.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of Montana voters say that most reporters are trying to help Obama win in November. Just nine percent think they're trying to help McCain. These perceptions are shared by voters throughout the nation.

Fifty-four percent (54%) of Montana voters say the U.S. and its allies are winning the War on Terror, a figure that is similar to the national average. Like voters throughout the country, Montana voters tend to see Afghanistan as a bigger threat going forward than Iraq.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) say that reducing the price of gas and oil is more important than

protecting the environment. Just 34% hold the opposite view.

Forty-four percent (44%) believe that the United States still has the best economy in the world, while 42% disagree.

Despite winning 59% of the vote in Montana less than four years ago, George W. Bush now earns good or excellent ratings from only 38% of the state's voters. Forty-eight percent (48%) say he is doing a poor job. Those figures have changed little over the past month.