

Election 2008: Pennsylvania Presidential Election

Pennsylvania: Obama Inches Further Ahead
Thursday, July 24, 2008

Barack Obama's lead over John McCain has now stretched to five percentage points in Pennsylvania. In April, McCain had a statistically insignificant lead, but the Democratic candidate has been slowly moving ahead since then.

The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey in the state finds Obama out front 47% to 42%. When “leaners” are included, Obama leads 51% to 45%. Last month, Obama led 46% to 42% after holding just a two-point lead the month before.

McCain holds a 40% to 38% edge among unaffiliated voters in the state his month. Obama leads 45% to 41% among men and 50% to 43% among women.

Obama is viewed favorably by 58% of voters in Pennsylvania, which has not changed since last month. McCain is viewed favorably by 61%, up from 57% last month.

John Kerry won the state for the Democrats in 2004 by a 51% to 48% margin over President Bush. Four years earlier, Al Gore carried the state by four percentage points. Immediately prior to release of this poll, Pennsylvania was rated as “Leans Democrat” in the Rasmussen Reports Balance of Power Calculator.

Like every other state, the plurality of voters in Pennsylvania (46%) say economic issues are the most important in the upcoming election. Among those voters, Obama leads 60% to 29%. National security issues are top priority for 25% of voters, among which McCain has a 58% to 33% lead.

Nationally, voters trust Obama more than McCain on most issues, including the economy, but the Republican candidate has a solid lead among voters on national security issues.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of voters in Pennsylvania say the United States and its allies are winning the War on Terror. That is slightly more optimistic to the national average. The majority (58%) agree with Obama that Iraq is not the “central front” of the War, while 43% believe that focus should be on Afghanistan. Fifty-percent of voters (50%) think Afghanistan is a bigger threat to the nation than Iraq.

Most voters in Pennsylvania (68%) say news reporters often try to help the candidate they want to win when covering political campaigns. Nearly half (48%) say the media tries to help Obama the most. Those are similar sentiments to those found on the national level.

Despite the ailing economy, 38% of voters still believe the U.S. has one of the best economies in the world, while 50% disagree. However, 48% of voters think the media portrays the current economic situation as worse than it really is.

Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell earns good or excellent ratings from 41% of voters, while 24% say he is doing a poor job. His approval ratings fell slightly from last month, when 44% said the governor was doing a good or excellent job.

President George W. Bush earns good or excellent ratings from just 31%, compared to 30% last month, of voters in Pennsylvania, while 53% say he is doing a poor job, compared to 54% last month.

The survey was conducted in partnership with Fox Television Stations, Inc.