

Poll finds few state voters for Obama

by: RANDY KREHBIEL World Staff Writer
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Oklahomans may not be excited about this year's presidential campaign, but most of them know who they're going to vote for.

And it's not Barack Obama.

The latest Oklahoma Poll, a statewide survey of 750 likely voters conducted July 19-23, found little support — and some outright hostility — for the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee.

Republican John McCain, meanwhile, attracted broad, if sometimes tepid, support to lead Obama by 32 percentage points, 56 percent to 24 percent.

Seventy-one percent said they are firm in their decisions.

"Oklahomans have their minds made up and they aren't going to change come hell or high water, no matter what," said poll consultant Al Soltow, vice president for research at the University of Tulsa.

A trend, noted in national polls, of a substantial core of dedicated supporters for Obama is not evident in the Oklahoma Poll.

"The enthusiasm that Obama has generated in other parts of the country is certainly not evident here," Soltow said.

In fact, enthusiasm for the campaign in general seems to be quite low.

Overall, 38 percent of those surveyed said they were more enthusiastic than usual about this year's elections. About 32 percent said this year's elections will make an important difference in the lives of themselves and their families.

Only those describing themselves as liberals indicated much excitement about this year's elections.

"That goes a long way to explaining the low turnout in the primary," Soltow said, referring to elections last week in which fewer than 20 percent of Oklahoma's registered voters participated.

"I would rather have had somebody different than John McCain on the Republican side, but I can't even believe who the Democrats picked," said poll respondent Billy Garrison, a registered Democrat who often votes Republican.

"I know our country will be in bad shape if Barack Obama is elected president," said Garrison of Tulsa.

Another erstwhile Democrat, Charles Ogdon of Muldrow, said he believes Obama will be the next president, in part because Ogdon believes an Obama presidency would fit biblical prophecies concerning Armageddon and the Second Coming.

But Ogdon isn't happy about it.

"I know the news media give John McCain fits and are for Barack Obama, but tell me, what has Barack Obama done?" he said.

More than a quarter of those surveyed said they found nothing to like about Obama, compared with 14 percent who said the same thing about McCain. More than half the Democrats had a favorable opinion of McCain, compared with just one in five Republicans who said the same about Obama.

When asked what they most disliked about McCain, the No. 1 answer (at 20 percent) was "nothing."

Lack of experience was the most frequently listed shortcoming for Obama.

McCain's greatest liability, in fact, may be President Bush. Many of those supporting Obama said they were ready for a change of direction.

"Honestly, it amazed me when the Republicans began talking about putting George Bush on the ticket back in 1999," said Fred Weinecke, a former Republican who recently changed his registration to Democrat. "Most likely he's done more damage to the Republican Party than anybody ever. He's probably going to be the one who elects Barack Obama."

Harry Jackson said the 71-year-old McCain's age has "caught up with him."

"I think we need a younger man with some ideas to change things up a little," he said.

"I have confidence in (Obama's) judgment, in his ability to make good decisions," said Jackie Pizarro of Tulsa. "We've needed that for a long time."

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Associate Images:



Obama

McCain

Who would you vote for?

Sen. John McCain	56%
Sen. Barack Obama	24%
Don't Know/Refused	20%

Numbers have been rounded.
Margin of error is plus or minus 3.66 percentage points.

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McCain versus Obama



What is the single most important personal quality to you in your choice for president?

Honesty/integrity	64%
Experience	15%
Fresh ideas	9%
Religious views	6%
Other	2%
Don't know/Refused	4%

What is the single most important issue to you in your choice for president?

Economy	39%
National security	18%
Energy/gasoline prices	17%
War in Iraq	15%
Other	3%
Don't know/Refused	8%

About the Oklahoma Poll

Soonerpoll.com conducted the scientific telephone survey July 19-23 of 750 likely voters registered in Oklahoma.

The respondents consisted of 315 Republicans, 400 Democrats, 34 independents and one Libertarian selected randomly from voters who have established a frequent voting pattern. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.58 percentage points, except where otherwise noted.

The Oklahoma Poll is sponsored by the Tulsa World and KOTV, channel 6.



Obama

Would you say you have a favorable or unfavorable view of Barack Obama?

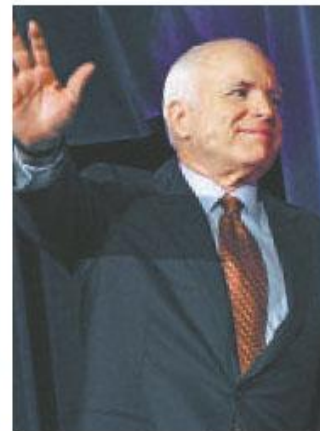
Favorable	37%
Unfavorable	51%
Don't know/Refused	12%

What is it about Barack Obama that you like?

Nothing	26%
Change/new ideas	12%
Personality/energy/physical appearance	11%
Communications skills	10%
Character/beliefs	8%
Age	5%
Education/intelligence	5%
Other	9%
Don't know	14%

What is it about Barack Obama that you don't like?

Lack of experience	23%
Nothing	13%
Character/beliefs	12%
Disagree with issues	6%
Religion	6%
Political ideology	4%
Other	22%
Don't know	14%



McCain

Would you say you have a favorable or unfavorable view of John McCain?

Favorable	65%
Unfavorable	25%
Don't know/Refused	10%

What is it about John McCain that you like?

Experience	22%
Character/beliefs	19%
Nothing	14%
Military experience	10%
Personality/energy/physical appearance	4%
Political ideology	4%
Agree with issues	4%
Other	15%
Don't know	8%

What is it about John McCain that you don't like?

Nothing	20%
Age	16%
Political ideology	11%
Disagree with issues	8%
Too much like Bush	7%
Personality/energy/physical appearance	6%
War views	5%
Other	16%
Don't know	11%

Taxes, health care and the war in Iraq

The alternative positions in the following three questions were drawn from policy statements by the two presidential candidates. In each question, the first alternative is Barack Obama's position and the second is John McCain's position.

The presidential candidates have different positions on taxes. Which position is closest to your own?

Repeal Bush tax cuts for households earning more than \$250,000	31%
Make Bush tax cuts permanent and eliminate alternative minimum tax	45%
Don't know/Refused	24%

The candidates would also handle health care differently. Which position is closest to your own?

Provide health insurance for all children and move toward universal health care	40%
Free-market, consumer-based health system with no requirement that everyone obtain health insurance	48%
Don't know/Refused	12%

The candidates also differ on how long U.S. military forces should remain in Iraq. Which position is closest to your own?

Withdraw one or two brigades a month to finish within 16 months, while leaving limited forces to combat terrorism	40%
No timetable for withdrawal, but have most American forces home by 2013	50%
Don't know/Refused	10%

Numbers have been rounded. Margin of error is plus or minus 3.58 percentage points.

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