

U.S. Presidential Election: **2008 Electoral Vote Analysis – Post-Convention Assessment**

Going into the post-convention, pre-debate phase of the 2008 U.S. Presidential election, the following represents an assessment on a state-by-state basis of the winner and the corresponding share of the electoral vote, if the election were held now.

Based on this assessment, the Republican Presidential ticket of Senator John McCain of Arizona and Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska would win 29 states with 282 electoral votes if the election were held now. The Democratic ticket of Senator Barack Obama of Illinois and Senator Joe Biden of Delaware would win 22 states (including the District of Columbia) with 256 electoral votes. The number of electoral votes needed to win is 270.

This updated assessment represents a shift of one state (Colorado) and 9 electoral votes from the Republican ticket to the Democratic ticket since the August assessment. A detailed analysis of the shift in Colorado is provided below.

The methodology used gives significant weight to recent trends in state polls. The data bases used incorporate state polls conducted by many organizations. Some of the polling organizations focus only on some states. Others poll in many states. Polling results are sometimes modified to reflect other factors.

Polling results are also supplemented by reports from state-based Democratic political activists who have agreed to provide their own assessment of the results if the election were held now.

Two caveats about this methodology. First, since this methodology relies heavily on state polls, which in turn typically only poll registered voters, it does not take into account the potential impact that newly registered voters will have. Second, since polling organizations typically call residential phone numbers, their results do not reflect potential voters (particularly young voters) whose primary telephones are cellular.

The methodology used also gives weight to: each state's historical voting patterns in Presidential and other state-wide elections; key demographic groups (age, ethnicity, religion); 2008 primary/caucus results; and other current political

developments (e.g., other statewide races for Senator and Governor, voter registration and party identification trends).

States in **Red** are assessed to be solidly for the Republican ticket. There are 20 such states with a total of 163 electoral votes.

States in **Blue** are assessed to be solidly for the Democratic ticket. There are 15 such states (including the District of Columbia) with a total of 190 electoral votes.

States in *Italics* are the remaining “battleground states.” Of the 16 “battleground states” with 185 electoral votes, following the table below are an analysis and rationale for each state’s assessment. *In italics are factors that may still change the current result.*

The last column on the right is an estimate of the possibility of the result changing between now and November.

An asterisk (*) indicates a change from the initial assessment in August.

In addition to Colorado shifting from McCain-Palin to Obama-Biden, eight states have shifted in the possibility of the result changing between now and November. Of these states, five (Alaska, Georgia, Montana, North Carolina, South Carolina) have shifted in the possibility of changing from McCain-Palin to Obama-Biden from “Moderate” to “Low.” One state (Minnesota) has shifted in the possibility of changing from Obama-Biden to McCain-Palin from “Moderate” to “High.” One state (Washington) has shifted in the possibility of changing from Obama-Biden to McCain-Palin from “Low” to “Moderate.” One state (Florida) has shifted in the possibility of changing from McCain-Palin to Obama-Biden from “Moderate” to “High.”

Of the total of nine states whose assessments have shifted since August, seven (Alaska, Georgia, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Washington) have shifted in the direction of the Republican ticket, while two (Colorado, Florida) have shifted in the direction of the Democratic ticket.

Of those states with “High” possibilities of changing between now and November, three (Colorado, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania with a total of 40 electoral votes) might move to McCain-Palin, while four (Florida, Michigan, Nevada, and Ohio with a total of 69 electoral votes) might move to Obama-

Biden. If all of these states do shift, then the result would be 285 electoral votes for Obama-Biden and 253 electoral votes for McCain-Palin.

The final section is an updated analysis of three key swing groups – Catholics, Hispanics-Latinos, and older voters (particularly women) -- who are critical to the chances of the Democratic Presidential ticket winning in November.

State	Obama- Biden	McCain- Palin	Possibility Of Shifting
Alabama (AL)			9 Low
Alaska (AK)			3 *Low
Arizona (AZ)			10 Low
<i>Arkansas (AR)</i>			6 Low
California (CA)	55		Low
<i>Colorado (CO)</i>	*9	0	High
Connecticut (CT)	7		Moderate
Delaware (DE)	3		Low
District of Columbia (DC)	3		Low
<i>Florida (FL)</i>		27	*High
Georgia (GA)		15	*Low
Hawaii (HI)	4		Low
Idaho (ID)		4	Low
Illinois (IL)	21		Low
Indiana (IN)		11	Moderate
<i>Iowa (IA)</i>	7		Moderate
Kansas (KS)		6	Low
Kentucky (KY)		8	Low
Louisiana (LA)		9	Low
Maine (ME)	4		Low
Maryland (MD)	10		Low
Massachusetts (MA)	12		Low
<i>Michigan (MI)</i>		17	High
<i>Minnesota (MN)</i>	10		*High
Mississippi (MS)		6	Low
<i>Missouri (MO)</i>		11	Moderate
Montana (MT)		3	*Low
Nebraska (NE)		5	Low
<i>Nevada (NV)</i>		5	High
<i>New Hampshire (NH)</i>	4		Moderate
New Jersey (NJ)	15		Moderate
<i>New Mexico (NM)</i>	5		Moderate
New York (NY)	31		Low
<i>North Carolina (NC)</i>		15	*Low
North Dakota (ND)		3	Low
<i>Ohio (OH)</i>		20	High

Oklahoma (OK)		7	Low
Oregon (OR)	7		Low
<i>Pennsylvania (PA)</i>	21		High
Rhode Island (RI)	4		Low
South Carolina (SC)		8	*Low
South Dakota (SD)		3	Low
Tennessee (TN)		11	Low
Texas (TX)		34	Low
Utah (UT)		5	Low
Vermont (VT)	3		Low
<i>Virginia (VA)</i>		13	Moderate
Washington (WA)	11		*Moderate
<i>West Virginia (WV)</i>		5	Low
<i>Wisconsin (WI)</i>	10		Moderate
Wyoming (WY)		3	Low
TOTALS	256	282	

BATTLEGROUND STATES ANALYSIS

Arkansas (6 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Bush won this state by 9% in 2004, a 4-point increase over his 5% margin in 2000. Arkansas has voted for the winners of the last nine Presidential elections. This state typically votes Republican in Presidential elections, unless the Democrats nominate a Southerner (e.g., Clinton in '96 and '92, Carter in '76). Arkansas does not have party registration. According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have an 11-point advantage in Arkansas. In 2006, Democrat Mike Beebe won with 55% of the vote for Governor. This represented a shift to the Democratic Party of 8 percentage points. Senator Hillary Clinton won the Arkansas Democratic primary by a margin of almost 40 percentage points. Senator McCain lost the Arkansas Republican primary.

*If the Obama-Biden ticket (a) wins over more older voters, who comprise 33% of registered voters (Kerry-Edwards won older voters in Arkansas in 2004 by a margin of 4%), and (b) mobilizes the turnout of young and African-American voters, who comprise almost 16% of the population, then the projected result may change. **Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: LOW.** (No change since August assessment.)*

Colorado (9 electoral votes): Obama-Biden. Bush won this state by 5% in 2004, a 3-point decrease from his 8% margin in 2000. This state has voted Democratic in Presidential elections only three times since Franklin Roosevelt's candidacies: Clinton in '92; Johnson in '64; Truman in '48. It has voted Republican for President in nine of the last ten presidential elections. Colorado is one of the fastest-growing states in the nation. Registration increased by 10% in 2004. Of Colorado's registered voters, almost 36% are Republican, 30% are Democratic, and 34% are "Other." According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have a 3-point advantage in Colorado, but Democratic voter registration has reportedly increased significantly in 2008. In 2006, Democrat Bill Ritter was elected Governor with 56% of the vote. This represented a shift to the Democratic Party of 20 percentage points. In 2008, Republican Senator Wayne Allard, who was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1996 with 51% of the vote, is not running for re-election, as he has retired. In 2002, Allard was re-elected with 51% of the vote. Recent polls show Democratic Rep. Mark Udall in a dead heat in his race against former Republican Rep. Bob Schaffer to succeed Senator Allard. Senator Obama won the Colorado Democratic caucuses by a margin of just over 34%. Senator McCain lost the Colorado Republican caucuses.

If the Obama-Biden ticket (a) fails to win over enough older voters, who comprise 21% of the population, (b) fails to win over and mobilize enough Hispanic-Latino voters, who comprise 17% of the population (Kerry-Edwards won Hispanic-Latino voters in Colorado in 2004 by a margin of 40%), and (c) fails to mobilize younger voters, then the projected result may change. Possibility of shifting to Senator McCain in November: HIGH. (Change from McCain-Palin since August assessment.)

Reasons for the change in assessment:

- *Most recent polls show the Obama-Biden ticket winning Hispanic-Latino voters by 30 percentage points. While this is still under the margin of previous Democratic candidates, it is significant if the turnout of Hispanic-Latino voters (especially in San Luis Valley) is higher than in 2004, when they represented only 8% of the Colorado vote.*
- *The substantial increase in Democratic voter registration is also a significant factor in the change of assessment.*
- *Independent voters, who are growing in numbers and have surpassed Republicans as the highest number of registered voters in Colorado, also appear to be moving to the Obama-Biden ticket.*
- *Although Colorado is one of the most urbanized states in the country (e.g., 80% of Coloradans live in the Front Range along Interstate 25), its suburbs are*

experiencing major growth. Democrats are making gains in suburban areas (e.g., Jefferson and Arapahoe counties near Denver, the “boomburbs” of Westminster and Lakewood), despite the appeal of Gov. Palin to many culturally conservative suburban voters.

- *College locations like Boulder also have significant potential for Democrats this year.*
- *A strong Democratic Senate campaign may provide an uplift to the Democratic Presidential ticket.*
- *Having the Democratic convention in Denver also has helped a bit.*
- *Finally, the Colorado Republican Party seems to be in disarray, which is likely to hurt the McCain-Palin ticket.*

One perspective on Colorado’s voting population was recently provided by Governor Bill Ritter to Ryan Lizza of The New Yorker. According to Gov. Ritter’s analysis, Colorado consists of the following voting segments:

- *Very liberal Democratic base: 20% - Obama-Biden*
- *Fox News conservatives: 16% - McCain-Palin*
- *Moral conservatives: 13% - McCain-Palin*
- *Government pragmatists: 37% - Swing voters*
- *Moral pragmatists: 14% - Swing voters*

Based on this analysis, the Obama-Biden ticket needs to add most of the “moral pragmatists” and some of the “government pragmatists” to its “very liberal base” in order to carry Colorado in November. This was the key to Gov. Ritter’s win in 2006 and the Obama-Biden campaign appears to be following this model.

Florida (27 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Bush won this state by 5% in 2004, a 5-point increase from his margin of less than 1% in 2000. This state has voted Democratic in Presidential elections only three times since 1968 and each time the Democratic candidate received barely 50% of the state’s votes: Clinton in ’96; Carter in ’76; and Johnson in ’64. Of Florida’s registered voters, just over 40% are Democratic, almost 38% are Republican, and almost 22% are “Other.” According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have a 1-point advantage in Florida. In the first six months of 2008, however, Democrats reportedly registered almost 107,000 new voters versus fewer than 17,000 new Republicans, extending the Democratic voter registration advantage in the state to 42%-37%. In the 2006 U.S. Senate race, Democratic incumbent Bill Nelson defeated Republican Katherine Harris by a margin of 22%. This was an increase

of 23 percentage points from his margin in 2000. Florida has no state-wide races in 2008. Senator Clinton won the non-binding Florida Democratic primary by a margin of almost 17%. Senator McCain won the Republican Florida primary.

If the Obama-Biden ticket (a) wins over more older voters, who comprise almost 44% of registered voters (Senator Nelson won older voters in Florida in 2006 by a margin of 21%), (b) increases its support among Hispanic-Latino voters, who comprise almost 17% of the population (Kerry lost Hispanic-Latino voters in Florida in 2004 by a margin of 12%), and (c) mobilizes the turnout of young and African-American voters, who comprise almost 14% of the population, then the projected result may change.

Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: HIGH. (Change from MODERATE possibility in August assessment.)

Iowa (7 electoral votes): Obama-Biden. Bush won this state by less than 1% in 2004 and Gore won it by less than 1% in 2000. This was the first time the Republican Presidential ticket carried the state since 1984. Iowa is generally close in recent Presidential elections, with only Democratic Presidential candidate Michael Dukakis winning by a substantial margin (10%) in 1988, which represented the largest Democratic margin since 1964, when the Johnson-Humphrey ticket carried Iowa with by a margin of 24%. Of Iowa's registered voters, just over 31% are Democratic, 30% are Republican, and almost 39% "Other." According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have a 6-point advantage in Iowa. Democrat Chet Culver was elected Governor in 2006 with 54% of the vote. He succeeded former Democratic Governor, Tom Vilsack, who was elected in 1998 with 52% of the vote and re-elected in 2002 with 53% of the vote. In 2008, Democratic Senator Tom Harkin, who was first elected to the Senate in 1984, is up for re-election. In 2002, Senator Harkin won re-election with 54% of the vote. He leads Republican businessman Christopher Reed by double-digit margins in recent polls. Senator Obama won the Iowa Democratic caucuses by a margin of just over 8%. Senator McCain lost the Iowa Republican caucuses.

*If the Obama-Biden ticket fails to win over enough older voters, who comprise almost 29% of registered voters, then the projected result may change. **Possibility of shifting to McCain-Palin in November: MODERATE.** (No change since August assessment.)*

Michigan (17 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Kerry won this state by 3% in 2004, a 2-point decrease from Gore's margin of by 5% in 2000. Michigan does not have party registration. Democrat Jennifer Granholm was re-elected Governor in 2006 with just over 56% of the vote. This represented a shift to the Democratic Party of 5 percentage points. In 2008, Democratic Senator Carl Levin, who was first elected to the Senate in 1978, is up for re-election. In 2002, Senator Levin won re-election with 61% of the vote. He leads Republican state representative Jack Hoogendyk by double-digit margins in recent polls. Senator Clinton won the non-binding Michigan Democratic primary by a margin of almost 11%. Senator McCain lost the Michigan Republican primary.

*If the Obama-Biden ticket: (a) wins over more older voters, who comprise almost 26% of registered voters, and (b) mobilizes the turnout of young and African-American voters, who comprise 14% of the population, then the projected result may change. **Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: HIGH.** (No change since August assessment.)*

Minnesota (10 electoral votes): Obama-Biden. Kerry won this state by 3% in 2004, a 1-point increase over Gore's margin of 2% in 2000. Minnesota has voted for the Democratic presidential candidates in the last eight elections. The only Republican Presidential candidates to carry this state in the past fifty years were Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 and Richard Nixon in 1972. Minnesota does not have party registration. Republican incumbent Norm Coleman and Democratic challenger Al Franken are in a close race for Senator. Senator Obama won the Minnesota Democratic caucuses by a margin of almost 35%. Senator McCain lost the Michigan Republican caucuses.

*If the Obama-Biden ticket (a) fails to win over enough older voters, who comprise almost 24% of registered voters, and (b) fails to win over enough Catholic voters, who comprise almost 22% of the population, then the projected result may change. **Possibility of shifting to McCain-Palin in November: HIGH.** (Change from MODERATE possibility in August assessment.)*

Missouri (11 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Bush won this state by 7% in 2004, a 4-point increase over his margin of 3% in 2000. With one exception (1952), Missouri has voted with the winner of every Presidential election since 1900. No

other state has that record of accuracy. The only Democratic Presidential candidates to carry this state since 1964 were Clinton in '92 and '96, and Carter in '76. Missouri does not have party registration. According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have an 8-point advantage in Missouri. In the 2004 race for Governor, Republican Secretary of State Matt Blunt defeated Democratic State Auditor Claire McCaskill with 51% of the vote. He succeeded Democratic Governor Bob Holden, who won in 1998 with 49% of the vote. This represented a shift to the Republican Party of 2 percentage points. Governor Blunt is not running for re-election in 2008. Representative Kenny Hulsof is the Republican candidate against Democratic attorney general Jay Nixon. In 2006, Claire McCaskill defeated the Republican incumbent U.S. Senator, Jim Talent, by a margin of 3%. Talent had been elected in 2002 with 50% of the vote against Democrat Jean Carnahan. This represented a shift to the Democratic Party of 3 percentage points. Senator Obama won the Missouri Democratic primary by a margin of just over 1%. Senator McCain won the Missouri Republican primary.

If the Obama-Biden ticket: (a) wins over more older voters, who comprise just over 26% of registered voters, and (b) mobilizes the turnout of young and African-American voters, who comprise just over 11% of the population, then the projected result may change.

Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: MODERATE. (No change since August assessment.)

Nevada (5 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Bush won this state by 3% in 2004, a 1-point decrease from his margin of 4% in 2000. Since 1964, Nevada has voted Democratic in Presidential elections only twice: Clinton in '92 and '96. Of Nevada's registered voters, just over 40% are Democratic, just over 39% are Republican, and just over 20% are "Other." According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have a 12-point advantage in Nevada. Republican Jim Gibbons was elected Governor in 2006 with 48% of the vote. He succeeded Republican Kenny Gunn, who had first been elected Governor in 1998 with 52% of the vote and re-elected in 2002 with 68% of the vote. In the 2006 election for the U.S. Senate, Republican incumbent John Ensign defeated Democrat Jack Carter by a margin of 14%. Ensign had first been elected to the Senate in 2000 with 55% of the vote. Senator Clinton won the Nevada Democratic caucuses by a margin of almost 6%. Senator McCain lost the Nevada Republican caucuses.

*If the Obama-Biden ticket: (a) wins over more older voters, who comprise almost 40% of registered voters, (b) wins over more Catholic voters, who comprise almost 28% of the population, (c) increases its support among Hispanic-Latino voters, who comprise almost 20% of the population, and mobilizes them to register and vote; and (d) mobilizes younger voters, then the projected result may change. **Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: HIGH.** (No change since August assessment.)*

New Hampshire (4 electoral votes): Obama-Biden. Kerry won this state by 1% in 2004, and Bush won this state by 1% in 2000. Since 1948, this state had voted Democratic in Presidential elections only twice before: Clinton in '92 and '96. Of New Hampshire's registered voters, just over 30% are Republican, 26% are Democratic, and almost 44% are "Other." According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have a 14-point advantage in New Hampshire. In 2006, Democratic Governor John Lynch was re-elected with almost 74% of the vote. This represented a shift to the Democratic Party of almost 23 percentage points. Governor Lynch is running for re-election in 2008 against Republican state senator Joe Kenney. Republican incumbent John Sununu is in a close race against Democratic challenger former Governor Jeanne Shaheen for U.S. Senate. Recent polls show Shaheen with a slight lead. Senator Clinton won the New Hampshire Democratic primary by a margin of almost 3%. Senator McCain won the New Hampshire Republican primary.

*If the Obama-Biden ticket (a) fails to win over enough older voters, who comprise over 26% of registered voters, and (b) fails to win over enough Catholic voters, who comprise over 24% of the population, then the projected result may change. **Possibility of shifting to McCain-Palin in November: MODERATE.** (No change since August assessment.)*

New Mexico (5 electoral votes): Obama-Biden. Bush won this state by less than 1% in 2004 and Gore won this state by less than 1% in 2000. New Mexico has had major demographic changes in recent years. The overall state population grew by 20% in the 2000 U.S. census, making it the fastest growing state in the nation. Of New Mexico's registered voters, just over 49% are Democratic, 33% are Republican, and almost 18% are "Other." According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have an 8-point advantage in New Mexico. Democrat Bill Richardson was first elected Governor of New Mexico in 2002 with 56% of the vote. He was re-elected in 2006 with 69% of the vote. He

had succeeded Republican Governor Gary Johnson, who had first been elected in 1994 with 50% of the vote and re-elected in 1998 with 55% of the vote. In the 2006 election for the U.S. Senate, Democratic incumbent Jeff Bingaman defeated Republican Allen McCulloch by a margin of 42%. Bingaman was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1982 with 54% of the vote. He had last been re-elected in 2000 with 62% of the vote. In 2008, Republican Senator Pete Domenici, who was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1972 with 54% of the vote, is retiring. In 2002, Domenici won re-election with 65% of the vote. Democratic Congressman Tom Udall is leading Republican Congressman Steve Pearce in recent polls. Senator Clinton won the New Mexico Democratic primary by a margin of almost 1%. Senator McCain won the New Mexico Republican primary.

*If the Obama-Biden ticket (a) fails to increase its support among Hispanic-Latino voters, who comprise over 42% of the population (in his 2006 re-election, Governor Richardson won the Hispanic/Latino vote by a margin of 57%), (b) fails to win over enough older voters, who comprise over 33% of registered voter (in his 2006 re-election, Governor Richardson won older voters by a margin of 34%) and (c) fails to win over enough Catholic voters, who comprise over 21% of the population, then the projected result may change. **Possibility of shifting to McCain-Palin in November: MODERATE.** (No change since August assessment.)*

North Carolina (15 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Bush won this state by 12% in 2004, a 1-point decrease in his margin of 13% in 2000. Since 1964, the Democratic Presidential ticket has carried this state only once – Carter-Mondale by 11% in 1976. North Carolina has voted for the Republican ticket in nine out of the last ten Presidential elections. Of North Carolina’s registered voters, over 45% are Democratic, over 34% are Republican, and 20% are “Other.” In the 2004 race for Governor, Democratic incumbent Michael F. Easley was re-elected with 56% of the vote. Easley had been first elected Governor in 2000 with 52% of the vote. In 2008, Democratic Lt. Governor Bev Perdue is running against Republican Pat McCrory, Mayor of Charlotte, to succeed Governor Easley. In 2008, Republican incumbent Elizabeth Dole is being challenged by Democratic state senator Kay Hagan for the U.S. Senate. Senator Dole is leading in recent polls. Senator Obama won the North Carolina Democratic primary by a margin of over 14%. Senator McCain won the North Carolina Republican primary.

If the Obama-Biden ticket: (a) wins over more older voters, who comprise almost 30% of registered voters, and (b) registers and mobilizes younger and African-American voters,

who comprise over 21% of the population, then the projected result may change.

Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: LOW. (Change from MODERATE possibility in August assessment.)

Ohio (20 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Bush won this state by 2% in 2004, a 2-point decrease from his margin of 4% in 2000. No Republican has ever been elected President without carrying Ohio. Ohio does not have party registration. According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have a 7-point advantage in Ohio. Democrat Ted Strickland was elected Governor in 2006 with 60% of the vote. This represented a shift to the Democratic Party of 18 percentage points. He succeeded Republican Bob Taft, who had first been elected Governor in 1998 with 50% of the vote. Taft was re-elected in 2002 with 58% of the vote. In the 2006 election for the U.S. Senate, Democrat Sherrod Brown defeated Republican incumbent Mike DeWine by a margin of 12%. This represented a shift to the Democratic Party of 22 percentage points. DeWine was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1994 with 53% of the vote and had been re-elected in 2000 with 60% of the vote. Republican George Voinovich, who was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1998 with 56% of the vote, won re-election in 2004 with 64% of the vote. Senator Clinton won the Ohio Democratic primary by a margin of over 10%. Senator McCain won the Ohio Republican primary.

If the Obama-Biden ticket: (a) wins over more older voters, who comprise almost 28% of registered voters, and (b) registers and mobilizes younger and African-American voters, who comprise over 11% of the population, then the projected result may change.

Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: HIGH. (No change since August assessment.)

Pennsylvania (21 electoral votes): Obama-Biden. Kerry won this state by 3% in 2004, a decrease of 1 percentage point from Gore's margin of 4% in 2000. Of Pennsylvania's registered voters, almost 48% are Democratic, just over 40% are Republican, and 12% are "Other." The ratio of newly registered Democrats to Republicans in this state in 2008 is reportedly 4-to-1. The ratio of registered voters switching parties is reportedly 11-to-1 Democratic – Democrats in Pennsylvania have gained 11 voters for every one gained by Republicans. Democratic Governor Ed Rendell was re-elected in 2006 with 60% of the vote. He had been elected Governor in 2002 with 53% of the vote. Senator Clinton won the Pennsylvania Democratic primary by a margin of just over 9%. Senator McCain won the Pennsylvania Republican primary.

If the Obama-Biden ticket (a) fails to win over enough older voters, who comprise over 32% of registered voters, (b) fails to win over enough Catholic voters, who comprise over 29% of the population, and (c) fails to mobilize enough younger and African-American voters, who comprise almost 10% of the population, then the projected result may change.

Possibility of shifting to McCain-Palin in November: HIGH. (No change since August assessment.)

Virginia (13 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Bush won this state by 8% in 2004 and in 2000. The Republican Presidential ticket carried the state by 2% in 1996 and by 4% in 1992. No Democratic Presidential candidate has won Virginia since 1964. Virginia does not have party registration. In the 2006 election for the U.S. Senate, Democrat Jim Webb defeated Republican incumbent George Allen by a margin of 1%. This represented a shift to the Democratic Party of 3 percentage points. Allen had first been elected to the Senate in 2000 with 52% of the vote. In 2008, Republican Senator John Warner, who was first elected to the Senate in 1978, is retiring. In 2002, Warner won re-election with 83% of the vote. Former Gov. Mark Warner, who was elected in 2001 with 52% of the vote, had considered being a candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2008, but decided not to run. He is running for the U.S. Senate seat of John Warner and is leading his opponent, former Governor James Gilmore, by double digits in recent polls. Democrat Tim Kaine was elected Governor in 2005 with 52% of the vote. Senator Obama won the Virginia Democratic primary by a margin of over 28%. Senator McCain won the Virginia Republican primary.

If the Obama-Biden ticket: (a) wins over more older voters, who comprise over 27% of registered voters, and (b) registers and mobilizes younger and African-American voters, who comprise over 19% of the population, then the projected result may change.

Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: MODERATE. (No change since August assessment.)

West Virginia (5 electoral votes): McCain-Palin. Bush won this state by 13% in 2004, an increase of 7 percentage points over his margin of 6% in 2000. No Democrat has won the White House since 1916 without carrying West Virginia. Of West Virginia's registered voters, 57% are Democratic, 30% are Republican, and almost 13% are "Other." According to 2006 Gallup party identification figures, however, Democrats have a 13-point advantage in West Virginia. Democratic Governor Joe Manchin was elected with over 63% of the vote in 2004. He succeeded Democratic Governor Bob Wise. His election marked the first time that two persons of the same political party have followed one another in the West Virginia Governor's office since 1964. He is running for re-election in 2008 against former Republican state senator Russ Weeks. Democratic incumbent Senator Jay Rockefeller is running for re-election in 2008. Senator Clinton won the West Virginia Democratic primary by a margin of almost 45%. Senator McCain won the West Virginia Republican primary.

If the Obama-Biden ticket wins over more older voters, who comprise almost 32% of registered voters, then the projected result may change. Possibility of shifting to Obama-Biden in November: LOW. (No change since August assessment.)

Wisconsin (10 electoral votes): Obama-Biden. Kerry won this state by less than 1% in 2004 and Gore won this state by less than 1% in 2000. The last Republican Presidential candidate to win Wisconsin was Ronald Reagan in 1984. Wisconsin does not have party registration. Democratic Governor Jim Doyle was elected in 2002 with 45% of the vote, defeating Republican incumbent Scott McCallum. Governor Doyle was re-elected in 2006 with almost 53% of the vote. Senator Obama won the Wisconsin Democratic primary by a margin of over 17%. Senator McCain won the Wisconsin Republican primary.

If the Obama-Biden ticket (a) fails to win over enough older voters, who comprise almost 25% of registered voters, (b) fails to win over enough Catholic voters, who comprise 29% of the population, and (c) fails to mobilize enough younger voters, then the projected result may change. Possibility of shifting to McCain-Palin in November: MODERATE. (No change since August assessment.)

KEY SWING GROUPS ANALYSIS

Why, despite all of the factors that should make the 2008 election a resounding victory for Democrats, is the Obama-Biden ticket trailing today? What does the Democratic Party need to do to turn this around between now and November?

For the Democrats to win the Presidency, they must do better than they have in recent elections with three key swing groups of voters: Catholics; Hispanics-Latinos; and older voters, particularly women. With each of these key groups, Senator Obama needs to improve or sustain his appeal. This should come as no surprise, as he consistently lost each of these groups to Senator Hillary Clinton, often by large margins and even in states where he won easily in the primaries and caucuses.

Catholics

Catholics will make up just over one-in-four voters nationwide in November. Of Catholic voters in 2004, the Republican Presidential ticket had a margin of 5 percentage points, which was a significant shift from the Democratic Presidential ticket's margin of 2 percentage points in 2000. Among this segment, 56% of white Catholics voted for the Republican Presidential ticket.

Catholics comprise significant percentages of the population in the key battleground states of Pennsylvania (29%), Wisconsin (29%), Nevada (28%), New Hampshire (24%), Minnesota (22%) and New Mexico (21%). National polls currently show Senators Obama and McCain running neck and neck with Catholics. According to John Halpin and Ruy Teixeira, writing in *The American Prospect* in 2006, the top reason cited by white Catholics on why Kerry lost the 2004 election was "not clear on what he stood for." Nearly one-in-two Catholic voters selected this reason as one of the two top reasons Kerry lost, and this was twice as many as selected "permissive views on issues like abortion and gay marriage" as one of the reasons.

Having Senator Joe Biden, a Catholic, on the ticket as Vice President, particularly since he has roots in Pennsylvania (one of the above states), may help a bit. The Democratic Party platform's language on issues like abortion may also cause some Catholic voters to give Senator Obama more consideration than they typically give to progressive Democrats. Overall, however, his chances of making

major gains among this segment of the electorate are slim, especially if Republicans succeed in characterizing him as a “flip-flopper.”

Hispanics-Latinos

Hispanics-Latinos comprise almost 15% of the U.S. population, and 9% of the voting-age population nationwide. As a percentage of actual voters, however, they are expected to represent less than 7% of the turnout. Approximately 57% of Hispanic-Latino registered voters identify themselves as Democrats or say they lean to the Democratic Party, while just 23% align with the Republican Party.

In 2004, the Democratic ticket nationwide won Hispanic-Latino voters by a margin of 11 percentage points. In 2000 and 1996, the Democratic tickets nationwide won Hispanic-Latino voters by margins of 36 and 51 percentage points respectively. The 2004 Presidential election represented a continuing trend of Hispanic-Latino voters away from the Democratic ticket.

Hispanics-Latinos comprise significant percentages of the population in the key battleground states of New Mexico (42%), Nevada (20%), Colorado (17%), and Florida (17%).

The most recent polls show the Obama-Biden ticket winning about two-thirds of the Hispanic-Latino vote against the McCain-Palin ticket, which is a significant improvement over his primary/caucus performance, earlier polls, and that of the Kerry-Edwards ticket in 2004.

The Democratic Party needs to keep its focus on mobilizing this segment, which will also help Democrats with the small but growing Hispanic-Latino portion of Catholic voters and with the youth vote. Nearly three-quarters of Hispanics-Latinos are Catholic and they make up over half of the U.S. Catholic population. While 56% of white Catholics voted for the Republican Presidential ticket in 2004, 58% of Hispanic Catholics voted for the Democratic Presidential candidate. Approximately two-out-of three young voters are Hispanic-Latino.

Older Voters

Voters age 60 and older comprise about one-quarter of the voting population nationwide. Boomers (between ages 44 and 62) comprise about one-third.

In 2004, the Democratic ticket nationwide lost older voters to the Republican ticket by a margin of 8 percentage points. In 2000, the Democratic ticket nationwide won older voters by a margin of 4 percentage points. This represented a shift of 12 percentage points away from the Democratic Party.

Older women, however, have been shifting noticeably toward Democratic candidates. Senator Obama consistently lost the votes of older women in the primaries/caucuses. Many were fervent supporters of Senator Clinton, who continue to harbor negative feelings about Senator Obama because of the type of campaign he waged and the perception of unfairness in the Democratic Party's rules, especially in connection with caucuses.

Older voters comprise significant percentages of the voting-age population in the key battleground states of Florida (44%), Nevada (40%), New Mexico (33%), Pennsylvania (32%), West Virginia (32%), North Carolina (30%), Iowa (29%), Ohio (28%), Virginia (27%), and Missouri (26%).

Current polls show the Obama-Biden ticket trailing the McCain-Palin ticket among older voters in general, and among older white voters in particular, by double-digit margins. The Obama-Biden campaign might not be able to win this segment, but the margin of loss must be cut substantially. To do this, the Democratic ticket needs to make Social Security and Medicare priority issues, which it is beginning to do.

Next Analysis

A follow-up analysis will be completed in October after the three Presidential and one Vice Presidential debates. A final analysis will be completed just prior to the November election.

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