

# FOX/Rasmussen Swing State Polling - October 12, 2008

Monday, October 13, 2008

## Overview

Fox News/Rasmussen Reports polling this week in [Florida](#), [Missouri](#), [North Carolina](#), [Ohio](#) and [Virginia](#) shows a very stable race whose underlying dynamic strongly favors Barack Obama over John McCain. Obama holds a narrow advantage ranging from two to five percentage points in four of the five states and is tied with McCain in North Carolina. Keep in mind that all five of these states were carried by George W. Bush in Election 2004.

The only notable change in the horse race results this week come from Ohio where Obama is now on top, 49% to 47%. For each of the previous two weeks, McCain was up by a point in the Buckeye State after enjoying larger leads earlier this fall. The race for Ohio's 20 Electoral College votes is now well within the margin of sampling error but trending towards the Democrat.

In Virginia, a state that no Democrat has won since 1964, Obama earns 50% support for the third straight week while McCain is at 47%. Those results are essentially unchanged from each of the past two weeks.

In Florida, it's Obama 51%, McCain 46%. That's a bit closer than last week when Obama enjoyed a seven-percentage point lead. But, as recently as mid-September, McCain had been leading by five. This is the second straight week that Obama has been over the 50% mark in Florida. McCain has not topped 47% in any of the last three Florida Fox News/Rasmussen Reports polls.

In Missouri, the results are unchanged from a week ago—Obama 50%, McCain 47%. A month ago, before Wall Street's financial problems became visible on Main Street, McCain was up by five points in Missouri.

The first Fox News/Rasmussen Reports poll in North Carolina finds a tie in the Tar Heel State. Both McCain and Obama earn 48% of the vote. These numbers represent a very slight improvement for McCain compared to earlier Rasmussen Reports polling in North Carolina but the fact that the race is even competitive in this southern state signals trouble for McCain.

Overall, these swing state results confirm what the national numbers are showing. For the past two-and-a-half weeks, Obama's support has stayed in a very narrow range from 50% to 52% every day in the Rasmussen Reports [daily Presidential Tracking Poll](#). During that time, McCain has been at 44% or 45% every day.

The national results indicate that Obama is running eight or nine points better than John Kerry did four years ago. The state polling released this week generally shows Obama doing eight or nine points better than Kerry as well.

A number of other themes emerge from the data that are worth noting:

- In the earliest polling this fall, McCain was trusted more than Obama in all states. That advantage has disappeared. In Virginia, Obama is now trusted by 48%, McCain by 47%. In early September, McCain had the edge 50% to 44%.
- In Ohio, McCain now has a three-point advantage on the "trust" question, down from 13 points on September 7. In Florida, McCain's advantage is now just a single point—48% to 47%—down from a 50% to 44% edge in the first survey of this series.
- A similar trend, moving in Obama's direction, is found on the question of who voters would rather get advice from on the toughest decision of their life.
- In the three states where we have polled every week since September 7, McCain's favorable ratings are lower in all three—down three in Virginia, down eight in Ohio, and down seven in Florida.
- Obama's favorable ratings are little changed in those states.
- In all five states this week, the number who would be "extremely comfortable" with Obama as President is higher than the comparable number for McCain.
- Also, in all five states this week, the number who would be "not at all comfortable" with Obama as President is higher than the comparable number for McCain.
- In all five states, more voters trust Obama than McCain on economic issues.
- Economic issues remain far and away the top priority in all states. In the states where we have polled each week since early September, the number saying the economy is the top issue is higher now than it was earlier.

## Things to Look For

The horse race numbers have stabilized and underlying questions about trust suggests that some voters are getting more comfortable with Obama. With the economy as the dominant issue and Obama having the edge on that issue even in these previously Republican states, the race appears to have stabilized for the moment.

The question going forward is whether the McCain campaign can do anything to change this dynamic. The upcoming debate on Wednesday night may be the best chance for McCain directly to alter the national

dialogue or hope for an Obama mistake. Polls following the first two debates found that Obama was perceived as the winner, but neither debate had any significant impact on the national polling numbers.

#### Trends

<b>FLORIDA</b>	Obama	McCain	Barr	Nader	McKny	Not Sure
10/12/2008	51%	46%	1%	0%	0%	2%
10/05/2008	52%	45%	0%	1%	0%	2%
09/28/2008	47%	47%	0%	1%	0%	5%
09/21/2008	46%	51%	0%	0%	0%	3%
09/14/2008	44%	49%	2%	2%	0%	3%
09/07/2008	48%	48%	0%	2%	0%	2%
<b>MISSOURI</b>	Obama	McCain	Barr	Nader	McKny	Not Sure
10/12/2008	50%	47%	0%	1%	0%	2%
10/05/2008	50%	47%	1%	1%	0%	2%
09/11/2008	46%	51%	*	*	*	2%

**Note: Results prior to October 5 are from a Rasmussen Reports poll.**

<b>N. CAROLINA</b>	Obama	McCain	Barr	Nader	McKny	Not Sure
10/12/2008	48%	48%	1%	0%	0%	3%
10/08/2008	49%	45%	*	*	*	2%
09/30/2008	50%	47%	*	*	*	5%
09/23/2008	49%	48%	*	*	*	3%
09/18/2008	47%	50%	*	*	*	3%

**Note: Results prior to October 12 are from Rasmussen Reports polls.**

<b>OHIO</b>	Obama	McCain	Barr	Nader	McKny	Not Sure
10/12/2008	49%	47%	0%	1%	0%	3%
10/05/2008	47%	48%	1%	1%	0%	3%
09/28/2008	47%	48%	0%	0%	0%	4%
09/21/2008	46%	50%	1%	1%	0%	2%
09/14/2008	45%	48%	0%	1%	0%	6%
09/07/2008	44%	51%	0%	1%	0%	3%
<b>VIRGINIA</b>	Obama	McCain	Barr	Nader	McKny	Not Sure
10/12/2008	50%	47%	1%	0%	0%	2%
10/05/2008	50%	48%	1%	0%	0%	1%
09/28/2008	50%	47%	0%	1%	1%	1%
09/21/2008	48%	50%	1%	0%	0%	1%
09/14/2008	48%	48%	0%	1%	0%	2%
09/07/2008	47%	49%	1%	1%	0%	2%

#### Selected Data

State	Cand.	Total	GOP	Dem	Other
FL	Obama	51%	11%	87%	56%
	McCain	46%	87%	10%	37%
MO	Obama	50%	8%	91%	48%
	McCain	47%	92%	7%	47%
NC	Obama	48%	10%	82%	46%
	McCain	48%	85%	16%	49%
OH	Obama	49%	12%	84%	49%
	McCain	47%	86%	15%	42%
VA	Obama	50%	6%	91%	48%
	McCain	47%	91%	7%	48%

#### Background

Rasmussen Reports conducted five state telephone surveys in partnership with Fox News Channel on October 12, 2008. The surveys were conducted in Florida, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia. A total of 1,000 Likely Voters were interviewed in each state using the Rasmussen Reports automated telephone survey methodology (see [www.RasmussenReports.com](http://www.RasmussenReports.com) for details). The margin of sampling error for the full sample in each state poll is +/- 3 percentage points with a 95% level of confidence. Caution should be used in interpreting subsets of the data as such results will have an even larger margin of sampling error. In four of the five states—Florida, Missouri, Ohio, and Virginia—Rasmussen Reports

had conducted similar surveys for Fox News on October 5. In Florida, Ohio, and Virginia, similar surveys have been conducted each Sunday since September 7.

<u>National</u>	<u>Latest RR Poll</u>	<u>With Leaners</u>	<u>Electoral College</u>	<u>Fav Rating</u>	<u>Ras Mkts</u>
McCain (R)	43%	45%	163	53%	<u>23.4</u>
Obama (D)	48%	50%	255	56%	<u>77.7</u>

Rasmussen Reports - Electoral College Balance of Power Summary	
<u>Republicans</u>	163
<u>Democrats</u>	255
<u>Toss-Ups &amp; Leaners</u>	120