

Reuters/C-SPAN/Zogby Poll

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: Obama 49%, McCain 44%

Obama gains a bit heading into the final presidential debate

UTICA, New York - Democrat Barack Obama maintained his small edge over Republican John McCain Wednesday, gaining slightly among independent voters heading into last night's final presidential debate, the latest Reuters/C-SPAN/Zogby telephone tracking poll shows.

This latest report came out of the field just hours before the debate began.

Obama's edge grew to 5.5 points over McCain today, up from a 3.8 point advantage in yesterday's report. Each day's report includes a three-day rolling average of likely voters nationwide. Since the beginning of the Reuters/C-SPAN/Zogby tracking poll reports on Oct. 6, 2008, Obama has always led. His lead had been as small as 1.9 points and as large as 6.2 points.

Compared to yesterday, McCain lost 0.9 points, while Obama gained 0.8 points.

The tracking poll included a sample of 1,208 likely voters collected over the previous three 24-hour periods spanning four calendar days - approximately 400 per 24-hour period from Oct. 12-15, 2008. The poll was conducted by live telephone operators in Zogby's in-house call center in Upstate New York and carries a margin of error of +/- 2.9 percentage points.

Obama leads among independents, 49% to 35%, a gain over yesterday, where the rolling average had him ahead among that demographic group by 8 points. The rest of the independent voters - 16% - were either undecided or favored another candidate. Both candidates continue to perform well among their respective party members.

Three Day	10-13	10-14	10-13	10-12	10-11	10-10	10-9	10-8	10-7	10-6
Tracking Poll										
Obama	49.0%	48.2%	49.0%	47.9%	48.9%	47.6%	47.6%	47.8%	47.1%	47.7%
McCain	43.5%	44.4%	42.8%	43.6%	42.8%	43.8%	43.4%	44.2%	45.2%	45.3%
Others/Not sure	7.5%	7.4%	8.2%	8.5%	8.3%	8.6%	9.0%	8.0%	7.7%	7.0%

The two candidates have been battling to a near tie each day among men, and today Obama holds a slight two-point advantage. McCain led in this group yesterday, but only by one point. Among women, Obama leads by eight points, 51% to 43%.

Obama has captured 85% of the support of liberal voters, but John McCain is only winning 74% of conservative voters. Obama wins 20% of the conservative vote in this latest tracking poll. Moderates favor Obama by a two-to-one margin.