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Reuters/C-SPAN/Zogby Poll: Obama 48%, McCain 44%

Obama holds edge as race remains stable

UTICA, New York – The race for the White House has developed a familiar ebb and flow in advance of tonight’s final presidential debate, as Democratic Party presidential nominee Barack Obama remains slightly ahead of Republican John McCain, but cannot seem to break away, the latest results from the Reuters/C-SPAN/Zogby daily tracking telephone poll shows.

After making a move forward the day before, edging outside the margin of error, yesterday’s three-day rolling average showed Obama again sliding back. He still leads McCain by a 48.2% to 44.4% margin, an advantage of 3.8 percentage points. This comes after leading by 6.2 percentage points the day before.

In this latest report on the three-day rolling average, McCain gained 1.6 percentage points, while Obama lost 0.8 percentage points.

The stagnant nature of this race comes as tonight’s final presidential debate looms. The first two presidential face-offs have been somewhat lackluster, failing to gain a television audience as large as the debate between the vice-presidential candidates, Senator Joe Biden and Governor Sarah Palin. Tonight’s event is the last time Obama and McCain will stand on the same stage before the election.

The rolling telephone tracking poll included a sample of 1,210 likely voters collected over the previous three 24-hour periods spanning four calendar days – approximately 400 per 24-hour period from Oct. 11-14, 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 lost ground among independents in this latest edition of the tracking poll, and now leads McCain by just 8 points, 44% to 36%, with the rest of the independents either favoring a different candidate or remaining undecided. Obama’s lead just yesterday among independents in the three-day rolling average was 17%. Both candidates continue to perform well among their respective party members.

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

McCain has flipped places with Obama among men, and now leads by an insignificant one percent, while Obama leads by 8 points among women, down from 11 points in yesterday’s report.

Liberal voters support Obama over McCain by an 85% to 11% margin, while McCain leads among conservatives by a 74% to 19% edge. Among moderates, 61% support Obama, while 33% support McCain.

McCain has regained the lead among those in military families, and now leads in the group, 49% to 44%. Obama has held a small edge in that demographic group for a few days.

Among those voters who said they have registered to vote in the last six months, Obama leads McCain by a 55% to 34% margin. Among those who have already voted – about seven percent of the sample – Obama leads by a 56% to 40% edge over McCain.