



News Release

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McCain leads Obama in Virginia

Also...

- **Warner leads Gilmore in U.S. Senate Race**
- **Virginia voters increasingly uneasy about direction of state**

McCain leads Obama in Virginia

(NEWPORT NEWS, VA) – With just under seven weeks to go before Election Day, Senator John McCain leads Senator Barack Obama in Virginia by 7.6% among registered voters, 53.8% to 46.2%. Two groups appear to be giving McCain a boost over Obama: independent voters and women. McCain leads Obama among independent voters by a margin of 52.9% to 47.1%, and is even with Obama among women voters, 49.6% to 50.4%. Obama has strong support among African American voters (91.8%), and nearly four in ten white voters support him (40.7%). These findings are from the Christopher Newport University *Virginia Poll* conducted September 10-14 of 500 registered voters.

Voters view McCain as better able to handle many of the issues important in this year’s election, with the exception of health care. On the economy, the war in Iraq, the high cost of fuel, and Terrorism, voters say that McCain is better able to handle the job than Obama. On health care, Obama get the nod of voters.

If the election for president were held today, for whom would you be most likely to vote, Barack Obama the Democrat or John McCain the Republican? [includes leaners]

46.2%Barack Obama
53.8%John McCain

	Obama	McCain
Democrats	91.3%	8.7%
Republicans	6.2%	93.8%
Independents	47.1%	52.9%
Men	42.0%	58.0%
Women	50.4%	49.6%
African American	91.8%	8.2%
White	40.7%	59.3%

*Who is best able to handle...

	Obama	McCain
The economy	46.0%	46.8%
War in Iraq	38.2%	56.8%
High cost of fuel	40.6%	46.2%
Terrorism	31.4%	61.2%
Health care	46.0%	41.6%

*does not include respondents who said “Don’t know or refused to answer the question.

Voters approve of the picks of both Sarah Palin as John McCain’s running mate and Joe Biden as Barack Obama’s running mate. Nearly six in 10 voters (57.4%) say Palin was an excellent or good pick, while just over half (52.6%) say that Biden was an excellent or good pick.

Overall, voters are unhappy with the direction of country, with 64.4% saying things are headed in the wrong direction. Nearly a quarter of voters (24.2%) say the country is headed in the right direction. Nearly six in ten voters (64.4%) disapprove of the job George W.

Bush is doing as president, with 33.4% giving the president mixed reviews and only 7.6% approving of the job he is doing.

Warner leads Gilmore by wide margin

In the race to replace retiring U.S. Senator John Warner, former Governor Mark Warner leads former Governor Jim Gilmore by 25.6%. Just over six in ten (62.8%) voters support Warner while 37.2% support Gilmore. Warner's strength stretches across all groups, leading Gilmore amongst independents, men, women, African Americans, and white voters. Warner even garners support from a quarter (24.4%) of Republicans.

Voters view Warner as better able to handle all of the important issues in this election, many by double digit margins.

Energy and the cost of oil and gas have become an issue in this year's U.S. Senate race. Voters overwhelmingly support drilling for oil off the coast of Virginia, with nearly seven in ten saying they strongly support it or support it. However, voters recognize that drilling alone will not solve the energy crisis.

Over nine in ten voters also strongly support or support the development of alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, hydrogen, and electric cars. Asked which one – expanded domestic oil and gas exploration or the development of alternative sources of energy – is most likely to provide long term relief to the high cost of oil, just over six in ten voters say the development of alternative sources of energy compared to 9.4% who say expanded oil and gas exploration.

If the election were held today, for whom would you be most likely to vote, Warner the Democrat or Gilmore the Republican?
[includes leaners]

62.8%Mark Warner
37.2%Jim Gilmore

	Warner	Gilmore
Democrats	97.1%	2.9%
Republicans	24.4%	75.6%
Independents	69.2%	30.8%
Men	60.4%	39.6%
Women	65.2%	34.8%
African American	91.8%	8.2%
White	59.5%	40.5%

Percentage of voters who strongly support or support...

Drilling for oil off the coast of Virginia	69.0%
Developing alternative sources of energy	93.0%
If you had to pick between expanding domestic oil and gas exploration or the development of alternative energy sources, which do you think is most likely to provide long term relief to the high cost of oil in the United States....	
Expand domestic oil and gas exploration	19.4%
Develop alternative sources of energy	62.4%
Neither one	9.4%

Voters increasingly worried about direction of state

Only 45% of voters say the state is headed in the right direction. This is a 5% drop from September 2007, and a 3% drop from January 2008. Just over three in ten (32.2%) of voters think the state is headed in the wrong direction, an increase of 8% since fall 2007.

Asked who they blame for the failed special legislative session on transportation, voters spread the blame far and wide, with 64.6% saying that the Republicans who control the House, Democrats who control the Senate, and Governor Kaine all share responsibility for the failure.

A majority of voters would like the Governor and General Assembly to cut all programs equally if budget cuts have to be made. Nearly six in ten voters (55.4%) take that position, while 14.8% say cut transportation first and just over ten percent (11.6%) say cut social services first.

Finally, looking ahead to 2009, all of the potential 2009 gubernatorial candidates have their work cut out for them in terms of introducing themselves to the voters. Attorney General Bob McDonald is the best known among the potential candidates, with 25.8% of voters having either a favorable or unfavorable view of him. However, nearly six in ten voters have not heard of him. Nearly six in ten voters have not heard of Bill Bowling, and three out of every four voters have not heard of Creigh Deeds or Brian Moran.

Overall, would you say right now that things in the Commonwealth of Virginia are headed more in the right direction or the wrong direction?

	Current	Spring '08	Fall '07
Right	45.0%	48.0%	50.0%
Mixed	15.6%	15.0%	13.0%
Wrong	32.2%	27.0%	24.0%
DK/refused	9.2%	10.0%	13.0%

Who do you think is most to blame [for the failed special session on transportation]?

Republicans (House)	12.8%
Democrats (Senate)	5.6%
Governor Kaine	9.0%
All share blame	64.6%
DK/refused	8.0%

If spending cuts have to be made, which of the following areas would you cut first, or would you cut all of them equally?

Education	2.2%
Public safety	4.2%
Transportation	14.8%
Health care	1.4%
Social services	11.6%
Cut all equally	55.4%
DK/refused	10.4%

Percentage of voters who have not heard of...

Brian Moran	74.0%
Creigh Deeds	72.0%
Bill Bowling	60.2%
Bob McDonnell	57.2%

Percentage of voters who have favorable views of...

Tim Kaine	58.0%
Mark Warner	73.2%
Jim Gilmore	44.2%

Survey Methodology

The Virginia Poll is provided as a public service to the citizens of Virginia. It is an omnibus public opinion survey of registered Virginia voters conducted by telephone between September 10-14, 2008. Results for the full sample have a margin of error of plus or minus 4.38% at the 95% confidence level. This means for the full sample we can be 95% confident that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 4.38%. In addition to sampling error, the other potential sources of error include non-response, question wording, and interviewer error. Where percentages for subgroups are reported, the margin of error would be higher. The poll was designed by the Center for Public Policy at CNU and conducted for CNU by MSL TeleServices of Stamford, CT. For information or requests, contact Dr. Quentin Kidd, at (757) 594-8499 or qkidd@cnu.edu.

Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University
September 2008 Virginia Poll
Final Topline
Field: September 10-14, 2008
N=500

Q1 First, are you registered to vote in Virginia?

100.0 Yes
 0 No

Q2 Did you register to vote recently so you could vote in the presidential election this year, or were you already registered to vote?

6.0 Registered to vote recently
 94.0 Already registered to vote

Virginia General:

Q3 Overall, would you say right now that things in the Commonwealth of Virginia are headed more in the right direction or the wrong direction?

45.0	.....	Right direction	Spring '08	Fall '07
15.6	.....	Mixed	48	50
32.2	.....	Wrong direction	15	13
9.2	.....	Don't Know/Refused	27	24
			10	13

Q4 As you know, the Virginia General Assembly recently held a special session to try to solve the state's transportation problem, but failed to do so.

Who do you think is most to blame for the failure,

12.8 Republicans who control the House of Delegates,
 5.6 Democrats who control the state Senate,
 9.0 Governor Tim Kaine
 64.6 They all share some of the blame?
 8.0 Don't Know/Refused

Q5 I'm now going to read to you the names of some people in politics. Tell me whether you have a favorable or unfavorable view of each, or if you haven't heard of them [names rotated].

Q5A

Bob McDonald

18.2 Favorable
 7.6 Unfavorable
 57.2 Haven't heard of him
 17.0 Don't Know/Refused

Q5B

Brian Moran

8.8	.....	Favorable
6.8	.....	Unfavorable
74.0	.....	Haven't heard of him
10.4	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q5C

Creigh Deeds

8.6	.....	Favorable
5.2	.....	Unfavorable
72.0	.....	Haven't heard of him
14.2	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q5D

Tim Kaine

58.0	.....	Favorable
30.6	.....	Unfavorable
3.4	.....	Haven't heard of him
8.0	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q5E

Bill Bowling

14.8	.....	Favorable
8.2	.....	Unfavorable
60.2	.....	Haven't heard of him
16.8	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q5F

Mark Warner

73.2	.....	Favorable
19.4	.....	Unfavorable
2.4	.....	Haven't heard
5.0	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q5G

Jim Gilmore

44.2	.....	Favorable
36.2	.....	Unfavorable
8.4	.....	Haven't heard of him
11.2	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q6 As you know, the economy has slowed in recent months and this may cause the Governor and the General Assembly to cut spending. If spending cuts have to be made, which of the following areas would you cut first, or would you cut all of them equally?

2.2	.....	Education
4.2	.....	Public safety
14.8	.....	Transportation
1.4	.....	Health care
11.6	.....	Social services to low-income Virginians
55.4	.....	Cut all equally
10.4	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Virginia Senate Election:

Q7 Shifting now to the U.S. Senate race in Virginia...As you know, former governors Mark Warner and Jim Gilmore are running for the U.S. Senate. If the election were held today, for whom would you be most likely to vote, [names rotated] Warner the Democrat or Gilmore the Republican, or haven't you decided?

54.4	.....	Warner the Democrat
30.0	.....	Gilmore the Republican
15.6	.....	Undecided

Q8 [UNDECIDED in Q7 only] Toward whom are you leaning, [names rotated] Warner the Democrat or Gilmore the Republican?

53.8	.....	Warner the Democrat
46.2	.....	Gilmore the Republican

Horse Race including leaners:

62.8	.....	Warner the Democrat
37.2	.....	Gilmore the Republican

Q9 Regardless of whom you support for U.S. Senate, which candidate - Warner or Gilmore - would do a better job as a U.S. Senator addressing:

Q9A

The economy

59.4	.....	Warner
28.6	.....	Gilmore
12.0	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q9B

The war in Iraq

46.8	.....	Warner
32.4	.....	Gilmore
20.8	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q9C

The high cost of fuel

47.6	.....	Warner
28.0	.....	Gilmore
24.4	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q9D

Terrorism

47.4 Warner
33.4 Gilmore
19.2 Don't Know/Refused

Q9E

Health care

54.4 Warner
26.8 Gilmore
18.8 Don't Know/Refused

Q10 One proposal to deal with the high cost of oil in the United States is to expand domestic oil and gas exploration, including potentially drilling off the coast of Virginia.

Would you say that you strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose drilling for oil off the coast of Virginia?

28.4 Strongly Support
40.6 Support
13.4 Oppose
11.6 Strongly Oppose
6.0 Don't Know/Refused

Q11 Another proposal to deal with the high cost of oil in the United States is to develop alternative sources of energy such as wind, solar, hydrogen, and electric cars.

Would you say that you strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose the development of alternative sources of energy?

62.2 Strongly Support
30.8 Support
1.8 Oppose
3.4 Strongly Oppose
1.8 Don't Know/Refused

Q12 If you had to pick between expanding domestic oil and gas exploration or the development of alternative energy sources, which do you think is most likely to provide long term relief to the high cost of oil in the United States, or don't you think either one will?

19.4 Expand domestic oil and gas exploration
62.4 Develop alternative sources of energy
9.4 Neither one
8.8 Don't Know/Refused

U.S. Presidential Election:

Q13 Turning now to national politics...Overall, would you say right now that things in the United States are headed more in the right direction or the wrong direction?

24.2 Right direction
7.0 Mixed
64.4 Wrong direction
4.4 Don't Know/Refused

Q14 In general do you approve or disapprove of the job George W. Bush is doing as president?

7.6 Approve
58.4 Disapprove
33.4 Unsure
.6 Don't Know/Refused

Q15 If the election for president were held today, for whom would you be most likely to vote, [names rotated] Barack Obama the Democrat or John McCain the Republican, or haven't you decided?

39.0 Barack Obama the Democrat
48.4 John McCain the Republican
12.6 Undecided

Q16 [UNDECIDED in Q15 only] Toward whom are you leaning, [names rotated] Obama the Democrat or McCain the Republican?

57.1 Obama the Democrat
42.9 McCain the Republican

Horse Race including leaners:

46.2 Obama the Democrat
53.8 McCain the Republican

Q17 Regardless of whom you support for president, which candidate - Obama or McCain - would do a better job addressing:

Q17A

The economy

46.0 Obama
46.8 McCain
7.2 Don't Know/Refused

Q17B

The war in Iraq

38.2 Obama
56.8 McCain
5.0 Don't Know/Refused

Q17C

The high cost of fuel

40.6	.....	Obama
46.2	.....	McCain
13.2	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q17D

Terrorism

31.4	.....	Obama
61.2	.....	McCain
7.4	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q17E

Health care

46.0	.....	Obama
41.6	.....	McCain
12.4	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q18 How would you rate the selection of Sarah Palin, the Governor of Alaska, as John McCain's Vice Presidential candidate? Would you rate the selection as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

34.8	.....	Excellent
22.6	.....	Good
13.8	.....	Fair
25.6	.....	Poor
3.2	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q19 How would you rate the selection of Joseph Biden, the Senator from Delaware, as Barack Obama's Vice Presidential candidate? Would you rate the selection as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

18.8	.....	Excellent
33.8	.....	Good
24.6	.....	Fair
18.8	.....	Poor
4.0	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Demographics:

Q20 [respondent gender]

50.0	.....	MALE
50.0	.....	FEMALE

Q21 [respondent age]

3.0	.....	18-29
9.2	.....	30-39
22.4	.....	40-49
25.0	.....	50-59
13.6	.....	60-64
26.6	.....	65-older
.2	.....	Refused

Q22 [respondent education]

50.6	.....	Four-year university degree or higher
27.8	.....	Some college or two-year associates degree
18.4	.....	High school diploma or GED
3.0	.....	Did not finish high school
.2	.....	Refused

Q23 [respondent income]

44.0	.....	\$75,000 or higher
22.8	.....	Between \$50,000 and \$74,999
14.8	.....	Between \$25,000 and \$49,000
8.4	.....	Less than \$25,000
10.0	.....	Don't Know/Refused

Q24 [respondent party identification]

27.6	.....	Democrat
32.0	.....	Republican
37.8	.....	Independent
2.6	.....	Other/Refused

Q25 [respondent race/ethnicity]

9.8	.....	African-American
78.6	White
1.8	Latino/Hispanic
2.4	Asian American
4.8	Other
2.6	Don't Know/Refused

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