

*Mike Berman's*

## WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

Snapshot 4

October 28, 2008

### THE FINAL ACT IS ALMOST OVER The final scene has begun

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### THE COMMON WISDOM

The "common wisdom" is that this election is Barack Obama's to lose.

A look at current national polling supports that "wisdom".

Gallop	10/22-24	O+8
Hotline	10/22-24	O+7
Newsweek	10/22-23	O+12
ABC/WP	10/21-24	O+9
GWU/Battle	10/19-23	O+3
CBS/NYT	10/19-22	O+13
Fox	10/20-21	<u>O+9</u>
	Average	O+8.7

Obama's lead has been progressive.

In national polling from 8/15-20, the average of surveys conducted by CBS/NYT, NBC/WSJ, Fox, LATimes/Bloomberg, and Gallop showed Obama with a 2.8 point lead.

Then, in polls taken from 9/15-22, by Hotline, Gallop, CNN, LATimes/Bloomberg, ABC, and NBC/WSJ Obama was leading by 6.0 points.

Can John McCain win? Of course he can. But if he does, it will be an upset the likes of which has not been seen in modern national elections. The only circumstance that comes close is Ronald Reagan leap-frogging Jimmy Carter in 1980.

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## TRACKING THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

A number of organizations maintain daily tracking polls. While some knowledgeable sources question the reliability of these surveys, they are the best way we have of tracking the election on a "daily" basis.

WW has chosen to follow the Gallop, Hotline/Diego, and Washington Post/ABC tracking polls. Gallop and Hotline surveys accumulate 3 days worth of interviews; WP/ABC accumulates 4 days of interviews. The date in the chart below is the last day on which interviews were conducted for that particular result. Gallop accumulates 2700 interviews (margin of error +/- 2 points). Hotline/Diego accumulates 900 interviews (margin of error +/- 3.3 points). Washington Post/ABC accumulates 4 days of interviews (margin of error +/- 3.9 points) [RV - registered voters; LV - Likely voters- based on respondents' professed intention to vote, [O - Obama; M - McCain]

<u>Date</u>	<u>Gallop</u>	<u>Hotline/Diego</u>	
9/24	Tie RV	O + 4 RV	
9/25	O + 3 RV	O + 7 RV	
9/26 Pres Debate	O + 5 RV	O + 5 RV	
9/29	O + 6 RV	O + 6 RV	
10/1	O + 5 RV	O + 5 RV	
10/2 VP Debate	O + 7 RV	O + 6 RV	
10/5	O + 8 RV	O + 6 LV	
10/6	O + 9 RV	O + 2 LV	
10/7 Pres Debate	O + 11 RV	O + 1 LV	
10/10	O + 9 RV	O + 10 LV	
10/11	O + 6 LV	O + 8 LV	
10/13	O + 10 LV	O + 6 LV	
10/14	O + 8 LV	O + 8 LV	
10/15 Pres Debate	O + 6 LV	O + 8 LV	
10/16	O + 6 LV	O + 10 LV	
10/17	O + 4 LV	O + 7 LV	
10/18	O + 7 LV	O + 7 LV	
			<u>WP/ABC</u>
10/19	O + 9 LV	O + 5 LV	O + 9 LV
10/20	O + 10 LV	O + 6 LV	O + 9 LV
10/21	O + 8 LV	O + 5 LV	O + 11 LV
10/22	O + 6 LV	O + 5 LV	O + 11 LV
10/23	O + 7 LV	O + 7 LV	O + 9 LV
10/24	O + 8 LV	O + 8 LV	O + 9 LV
10/25	O + 9 LV	O + 8 LV	O + 7 LV
10/26	O + 10 LV	O + 8 LV	O + 7 LV

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## THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

A review of the electoral vote over the past 4 Presidential elections provides a basis for the reality that John McCain has a higher hill to climb than Barack Obama.

135 electoral votes - Republican won these 16 States in last 4 elections  
10/21/08

- 12 states Solid McCain
- 1 states Lean Obama
- 1 state Leans McCain
- 2 states Even

64 electoral votes - Republican won these 5 States in 3 of last 4 elections

- 1 state Solid McCain
- 1 state Lean McCain
- 1 state Lean Obama
- 2 state Even

75 electoral votes - Republicans and Democrats each won these 8 states in 2 of last 4 elections

- Republicans won all these states in last 2 elections
- 4 states Solid McCain
- 1 state leans McCain
- 1 state Leans Obama
- 2 states Even

16 electoral votes - Democrat won these 3 states in 3 of last 4 elections

- 1 states Solid Obama
- 2 states Lean Obama

248 electoral votes - Democrats won these 18 states + D.C. in last 4 elections  
18 states + DC Solid Obama

Obama is challenging McCain in States with 39 electoral votes, out of the 135 which Republicans won in the last 4 elections.

McCain is not challenging Obama in any of the States of the 248 electoral votes that Democrats won in last 4 elections.

State	Electoral Vote	1992	1996	2000	2004	Recap	Total	10/20/08
Idaho	4R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
North Dakota	3R	R	R	R	R	4R		Lean M
South Dakota	3R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Wyoming	3R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Utah	5R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Alaska	3R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Nebraska	5R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Kansas	6R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Oklahoma	7R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Indiana	11R	R	R	R	R	4R		Even
Texas	34R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Virginia	13R	R	R	R	R	4R		Lean O
North Carolina	15R	R	R	R	R	4R		Even
Alabama	9R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
South Carolina	8R	R	R	R	R	4R		Solid M
Mississippi	6R	R	R	R	R	4R	135	Solid M
Montana	3D	R	R	R	R	3R		Even
Arizona	10R	D	R	R	R	3R		Solid M
Colorado	9D	R	R	R	R	3R		Lean O
Florida	27R	D	R	R	R	3R		Even
Georgia	15D	R	R	R	R	3R	64	Lean M
West Virginia	5D	D	R	R	R	2D/R		Lean M
Nevada	5D	D	R	R	R	2D/R		Even
Kentucky	8D	D	R	R	R	2D/R		Solid M
Missouri	11D	D	R	R	R	2D/R		Even
Ohio	20D	D	R	R	R	2D/R		Lean O
Arkansas	6D	D	R	R	R	2D/R		Solid M
Tennessee	11D	D	R	R	R	2D/R		Solid M
Louisiana	9D	D	R	R	R	2D/R	75	Solid M
New Hampshire	4D	D	R	D	D	3D		Lean O
New Mexico	5D	D	D	R	R	3D		Lean O
Iowa	7D	D	D	R	R	3D	16	Solid O
Maine	4D	D	D	D	D	4D		Solid O
Vermont	3D	D	D	D	D	4D		Solid O
Oregon	7D	D	D	D	D	4D		Solid O

Hawaii	4	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Washington	11	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Minnesota	10	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Rhode Island	4	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Massachusetts	12	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Wisconsin	10	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
California	55	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Connecticut	7	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Pennsylvania	21	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
New Jersey	15	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Michigan	17	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Illinois	21	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
New York	31	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Delaware	3	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
Maryland	10	D	D	D	4D	Solid O
DC	3	D	D	D	4D	248 Solid O

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Various news organizations maintain electoral vote counts that are periodically reassessed and updated. Each organization has its own formula for deciding which candidate will receive a State's electoral votes. The chart below summarizes a number of those reports as of October 27, 2008.

This is the first time that all of these organizations have shown Obama with enough electoral votes to be elected.

(WW has taken the liberty of lumping together firm and leaning counts to the extent those categories are used by a given organization.)

	<u>Obama</u>	<u>Toss-UP</u>	<u>McCain</u>
CNN	277	87	174
538.com	341	---	187
MSNBC	286	89	163
NYTimes	277	76	185
Pollster.Com	306	90	142
RCP	306	75	157

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## PREVIOUS ELECTIONS AND RESULTS

<u>Election day</u>	<u>Poll dates</u>	<u>GOP</u>	<u>DEM</u>	<u>Final</u>
11/4/08	10/24-26	McCain 43	Obama 53	
11/2/04	10/22-24	Bush 51	Kerry 46	B+2.5
11/7/00	11/1-3	Bush 47	Gore 43	G+.5
11/5/96	10/20-11/1	Dole 37	Clinton 50	C+8
11/3/92	10/28-29	Bush 40	Clinton 41	C+5
11/8/88	10/23-26	Bush 52	Dukakis 41	B+12
11/2/84	10/26-29	Reagan 57	Mondale 40	R+18
11/4/80	10/24-26	Reagan 42	Carter 45	R+10
11/2/76	10/22-25	Ford 44	Carter 49	C+2
11/7/72	11/2-4	Nixon 61	McGovern 35	N+24
11/5/68	10/29-11/2	Nixon 40	Humphrey 42	N+1

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## SENIORS COME AROUND TO OBAMA

Over the last two months, those 18-29 years of age have increased their support for Obama over McCain, and those 65 and over have come around to Obama.

	<u>8/15-18</u>	<u>18-29</u>	<u>10/17-20</u>	
McCain	32%		25%	- 7
Obama	56		62	+ 6
		<u>18-34</u>		
McCain	35		28	- 7
Obama	52		59	+ 7
		<u>35-49</u>		
McCain	40		45	+ 5
Obama	39		44	+ 5
		<u>50-64</u>		
McCain	41		42	+ 1
Obama	46		47	+ 1
		<u>65+</u>		
McCain	41		40	- 1
Obama	39		51	- 12

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## HOW MANY WILL COME TO THE ELECTION?

How many Americans will have cast their ballot for President when the polls close on November 4th?

In 1992, 7% of voters voted early. 12 years later, in 2004, that number had grown to just over 20%. Gallup reports that 11% of registered voters have already voted this year. In Georgia, more folks have already voted than cast ballots in that State in the 2004 Presidential race.

Huge increases in early voters are being experienced in most States that provide for early voting. What there is no way to know is whether this increase signals an increase in total turnout or is simply the result of folks deciding to stand in line now rather than on election day.

Over the last 10 Presidential elections the average increase in the number of votes cast from one election to the next has been 6.2%. However, if you take out the two elections in which the number of votes cast actually fell from the preceding election, 1988 and 1996, than the average increase is 9.2%.

If the 9.2% holds in this election, which could well be the minimum increase, at least 133,500,000 will have cast ballots. It could well exceed that number.

### Presidential Election Results 1968-2004

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Votes Cast</b>	<b>% Growth</b>	<b>Dem %</b>	<b>GOP %</b>	<b>Other %</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>122,295,345</b>	<b>8.60%</b>	<b>48.30%</b>	<b>50.70%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>105,396,627</b>	<b>9.10%</b>	<b>48.40%</b>	<b>47.90%</b>	<b>3.70%</b>
<b>1996</b>	<b>96,277,223</b>	<b>-10.80%</b>	<b>49.20%</b>	<b>40.70%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>
<b>1992</b>	<b>104,425,014</b>	<b>8.77%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>37.40%</b>	<b>19.60%</b>
<b>1988</b>	<b>91,594,809</b>	<b>-1.01%</b>	<b>45.60%</b>	<b>53.40%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>1984</b>	<b>92,652,842</b>	<b>9.30%</b>	<b>40.60%</b>	<b>58.80%</b>	<b>0.60%</b>
<b>1980</b>	<b>86,513,813</b>	<b>9.40%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>50.70%</b>	<b>8.30%</b>
<b>1976</b>	<b>81,555,889</b>	<b>9.50%</b>	<b>50.10%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>1.90%</b>
<b>1972</b>	<b>77,718,554</b>	<b>9.40%</b>	<b>37.50%</b>	<b>60.70%</b>	<b>1.80%</b>
<b>1968</b>	<b>73,211,875</b>	<b>9.60%</b>	<b>42.70%</b>	<b>43.40%</b>	<b>13.90%</b>

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## THE MONEY GAME

When Obama decided to forgo the Federal grant in the general election, questions were raised as to whether he had made the right decision.

While political party spending is not quite as valuable as dollars in a candidate's campaign account, those funds can be used very effectively. In the discussion below they are treated together.

On September 1st:

<u>McCain</u>	
Campaign account	84,000,000
RNC	94,000,000
Total	178,000,000

<u>Obama</u>	
Campaign account	77,000,000
DNC	17,000,000
Total	94,000,000

McCain was \$84,000,000 ahead.

Added during the month of September:

<u>McCain</u>	
Campaign	00,000,000 (campaign cannot raise money for its own account)
RNC	66,000,000
Total income	244,000,000

<u>Obama</u>	
Campaign	150,000,000
DNC	50,000,000
Total income	294,000,000

Obama is \$50,000,000 ahead as of September 30.



Added during the October 1-15:

<u>McCain</u>	
Campaign	00,000,000
RNC	15,000,000
Total income	269,000,000

<u>Obama</u>	
Campaign	37,000,000
DNC	17,000,000
Total income	348,000,000

The Obama campaign raised \$5,000,000 per day during September. It has raised roughly half that amount on each of the first 15 days of October.

The McCain campaign is limited by what the RNC can raise. The RNC reports raising \$15,000,000 in the first half of October. The DNC reported raising \$17,000,000, effectively off setting all of what the RNC raised and then some.

It is WW's prediction that, by election day, the Obama campaign + the DNC will have had available for the general election \$125-150,000,000 more than the McCain campaign + the RNC.

Obama made the right call in deciding not to accept Federal funds in the general election. In taking Federal funds, McCain also made the right call. It is unlikely he could have raised sufficient funds in the time allowed to exceed the \$84,000,000 Federal grant.

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If Barack Obama is elected President on November 4th, which seems increasingly likely, there will be an unlimited amount of commentary on how he did it. And why McCain lost. This is WW's view.

- 1) There is something about Obama that caught the imagination of a whole lot of Americans.
- 2) The more potential voters came to know John McCain the less they were attracted to him as a possible President.
- 3) Obama and his team ran an exceptional campaign. Looking at it from the outside and observing results, it is the kind of campaign that those of us who have been involved in the past have always dreamed about. Stumbles along the way did not pull them off their game plan. The same people are in charge of the campaign today as were in charge on the first day. And I doubt that there has been a campaign with less internal drama.

4) The McCain campaign went through a series of ups and downs and changes. The overall campaign plan was not obvious. The theme seemed to change from week to week and month to month. For a period of time one needed a score card to keep track of who was in charge.

To be sure, McCain was running against a tide not of his own making. It appears that the campaign may have bought into the idea that folks who went with Hillary Clinton against Obama would consider voting for McCain on cultural grounds. That is not happening.

5) Obama's success at fundraising and his decision not to take Federal funds in the general election gave him an important advantage throughout the long campaign.

6) McCain's decision to stick with Federal funding, which may have been the only realistic option open to him, resulted in his campaign operating at a substantial financial disadvantage.

7) Obama's principal competitors in the primary and the general election were not well served by their campaigns.

8) John McCain forgot who he was, and his stature and attractiveness deteriorated as the campaign wore on. Whether it was admitting that he knew little about the economy when it was destined to be the most important issue of the campaign, or questions about his judgement when it came to selecting a running mate, McCain's decisions did not accrue to his benefit.

9) The loss of support for President Bush and his Administration provided a convenient backdrop for Obama's message of change. This situation was compounded by the meltdown in the structure of the financial system, for which the President is held accountable by Americans in greater numbers than any other cause, including Wall Street behavior.

10) McCain showed a temperament that does not encourage confidence in how he would act as a leader.

11) Early-on Obama drew the attention of an important constituency. That attention turned to support and a desire to see him elected. That constituency served him well, first in the primary and then in the general election. The myriad pollsters, who measure the support of various groups, do not even attempt to assess the feelings of this constituency.

John McCain was a favorite of this constituency for many years. But something changed, perhaps in who they came to see McCain to be, or perhaps they were just fickle.

The constituency in question? The media. Did it involve every member of that group or every communications outlet? Of course not. But the preponderance of the media essentially adopted Obama and supported his campaign. Obama offered the chattering class an idea they could adopt.

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## ABOUT SARAH PALIN

It is important to remember that Governor Palin did not pick herself to be the Republican Vice Presidential nominee. Even if, as some suggest, she was quietly campaigning for the job, to the extent she is not equipped for the job, it says much more about McCain than it does about Palin.

It is hard to remember a circumstance in which a candidate of this consequence has been so ill-served.

While WW is hardly an expert on women's fashions, this is an era in which big time designers are selling their designs through stores at which an average person can afford to shop. Spending upwards of \$150,000 on the wardrobe of Palin and her family is just plain nuts.

Why do you put Palin on "Saturday Night Live," when the show has been drawing record audiences making a caricature of her? Are American voters now casting their ballots on whether their candidates are good sports?

Some of the questions that Palin missed in early interviews suggest that she did not get some of the most basic of briefings.

Why did the campaign wait so long to have her talk about a subject on which she could reach the hearts of so many parents with challenged children?

The story of what has happened to Palin since she was selected is not positive.

By every measurement, Palin's image has fallen, dramatically, since she was introduced to the greater public at the Republican Convention, with a speech that can only be described as a tour de force.

	<u>Post/convention</u>	<u>10/23</u>
Unfavorable opinion	29%	51%
among women	33%	56%
among white women	24%	48%
among Ind women	27%	59%

Does not have necessary experience	45%	58%
Does not understand problems of people like you	37%	47%

As a comparison, Joe Biden was viewed unfavorably by 14% after the Democratic Convention and on 10/23, while favorable opinions of him rose from 36% post-convention to 50% on 10/23. [WashPost/ABC]

And, in the CBS/NYT surveys of 9/24 and 10/19, Palin was first viewed unfavorably by 29% and then by 41%.

Palin was viewed as not qualified to be President by 49% on 9/22 and by 55% on 10/20. [NBC/WSJ]

Yet, there is little doubt that Palin did resolve any misgivings that the conservative base of the Republican Party had about wholeheartedly supporting John McCain.

Governor Sarah Palin's first 15 minutes is about to come to an end. But the end of this campaign will not mark the last time that those who live in the lower 48 or Hawaii will hear from or about her.

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## 2008 CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS

### THE U.S. SENATE

Democrats 49  
 Republicans 49  
 Independents 2 (caucus Dem)

Here is how the 35 Senate elections (12 Democratic incumbents, 23 Republican incumbents) look to me at this time (underlining reflects retirements). (D=Dem incumbent in office, R=GOP incumbent in office, I=Ind. incumbent in office)

In the chart below WW is pushing each race, as far as possible, in making a final cut on the Senate races for 2008.

Safe <u>Democratic(13)</u> Arkansas Delaware Illinois Iowa Massachusetts Michigan Montana New Jersey New Mexico Rhode Island So. Dakota <u>Virginia</u> West Virginia	Leaning <u>Democratic(5)</u> Alaska <u>Colorado</u> Louisiana NewHampshire Oregon	<u>Toss-Up(4)</u> Georgia Minnesota Mississippi (B) No. Carolina	Leaning <u>Republican(2)</u> Kentucky Maine	Safe <u>Republican(11)</u> Alabama Idaho Kansas Mississippi(A) <u>Nebraska</u> Oklahoma So. Carolina Tennessee Texas Wyoming(A) Wyoming(B)
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	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Ind</u>
Seats not up in 2008	37	26	2
Safe in 2008	13	11	0
Leaning in 2008	5	2	0
Total	55	39	2
Toss-ups	4 (4R)		

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	<u>Democrats</u>
Seats not up in 2008	37
Safe in 2008	13
Leaning Dem in 2008	5
1 independent	<u>1</u>
	56
2 additional Toss-Ups	<u>2</u> ( Mn & NC)
	58

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THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Democrats 236 (includes 1 vacancy)

Republicans 199

While it may not appear from the chart below that all that much is going on, the anecdotal information suggests otherwise.

WW's best guess at the moment: 23 - 25 Democratic pickups.

	<u>6/19/08</u>	<u>8/15/08</u>	<u>9/15/08</u>	<u>10/27/08</u>
Total Dem	238	241	241	244
Solid Dem	203	203	206	211
Likely Dem	14	15	12	16
Lean Dem	14	15	15	11
TossUp	26	25	27	30
D	7	8	8	6
R	19	17	19	24
Lean GOP	8	11	11	15
Likely GOP	18	33	30	18
Solid GOP	152	133	134	134
Total GOP	197	194	194	191

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### IF OTHER COUNTRIES COULD VOTE FOR U.S. PRESIDENT

Who would you personally rather see elected President of the United States? [Gallup]			
	Obama	McCain	Undecided
Canada	67%	22%	11%
Japan	66%	15%	18%
Australia	64%	14%	22%
Saudi Arabia	50%	19%	31%
South Korea	50%	24%	25%
Lebanon	45%	18%	38%
Palestinian Territories	33%	11%	56%
Kuwait	32%	12%	56%
South America	31%	9%	58%
Philippines	28%	20%	52%
Mexico	27%	9%	64%
Central America and Mexico	27%	9%	63%
Latvia	23%	15%	62%
Turkey	22%	8%	70%
Estonia	22%	17%	62%
Lithuania	13%	13%	74%
Pakistan	5%	5%	91%

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## ABOUT CELLPHONES

WW has received a number of questions about whether current survey samples may understate young people, because so many of them are only available by cellphone. U.S. Government surveys estimate that the number of cellphone-only adults at this time is about 17%. As you would guess, a substantial number of these adults are under in the 18-29 age group.

It is possible to include cellphone-only users in surveys.

At least at the moment, landline-only surveys produce approximately the same results as surveys that combine landlines and cellphones. However, surveys conducted only on cellphones demonstrate that these users are substantially more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than the Republican Party. For that reason, in the current setting they show greater support for Obama over McCain than landline-only or combined landline/cellphone samples. This result is driven by the preponderance of young people in the cellphone-only universe.

If you want to pursue this question, WW suggests that you go to the internet site for Pew Research Center and read two reports:

"The Impact of 'Cell-onlys' on Public Opinion Polling" (1/31/08)

"Cell Phones and the 2008 Vote: An Update" (9/23/08)

*Mike*

Suite 500  
2100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-728-1100  
mberman@dubersteingroup.com