

CBS News/UWIRE/Chronicle of Higher Education Poll

STUDENTS IN FOUR BATTLEGROUNDS STATES WEIGH IN ON THE 2008 ELECTION

CBS News, UWIRE (a news service powered by student journalists at more than 800 colleges), and the Chronicle of Higher Education polled nearly 25,000 students in a representative sample of four-year colleges in four states: Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina and Colorado. The purpose of this poll was to investigate and understand the political views of these young voters, many of whom are participating in a presidential election for their first time. In fact, half say this November will be the first election they vote in, and another quarter say they voted for the first time in a primary earlier this year.

Students in these four states are more alike than they are different, and not just in their overall preference for president (six in 10 favor Barack Obama).

Interest in this campaign is high among college students in these four states: about half are paying a lot of attention to the campaign, and most say the outcome of the election matters. Many say that if Obama becomes president it will make a difference in their lives.

Like adults nationwide, they are concerned about the economy, the top issue for them. Many have been motivated by registration drives from their schools or from the campaigns themselves. They are more likely to get their news from non-traditional sources like the Internet and talk shows rather than newspapers and magazines, although television news also matters.

To conduct these ground-breaking polls of undergraduate students, CBS News and UWIRE enlisted the assistance of Cornell University's Survey Research Institute, which programmed and hosted the questionnaire on the web. Participating colleges and universities or the Cornell Survey Research Institute emailed invitations to participate to random samples of their students.

ENGAGEMENT IN THE CAMPAIGN

Students in these four states are paying almost as much attention to this election campaign as are older voters. They have been the target of registration campaigns by both the campaigns and by their schools.

- Roughly half of students in each state are paying a lot of attention to the campaign. Among students in Colorado, that rises to 58%. It is lowest in Pennsylvania, with 47%.
- Only about one in 10 students are paying not much or no attention.

ATTENTION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU	Adult Voters
A lot	47%	50%	50%	58%	52	65%
Some	44	43	39	36	42	29
Not much/none	9	7	6	6	6	6

This is slightly lower than the level of attention being paid by adult registered voters. Among all adult registered voters interviewed in the most recent CBS News/New York Times Poll, 65% said they were paying a lot of attention to the campaign.

Students have been encouraged to participate in this election --both by their schools and to a lesser extent, the campaigns.

- The schools themselves have reached out to register students; about seven in 10 students in each state report they have been contacted by their school about registering to vote.

CONTACTED BY SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION PROGRAMS

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Yes	76%	71%	69%	70%	72
No	23	29	30	30	28

- Fewer say the campaigns have contacted them directly. Still, over half the students in each state say they have been contacted by a campaign.

More students in Ohio (58%) and Colorado (59%) have been contacted directly by the campaigns.

CAMPAIGN CONTACTED YOU DIRECTLY?

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
About registering to vote	33%	23%	30%	26%	23
About getting absentee ballot	3	5	4	4	4
Both	17	30	18	29	33
No	46	41	48	40	39

REGISTRATION AND VOTING

The high level of attention and contact may have had an effect. More than nine in ten students in each state say they are registered to vote.

REGISTERED TO VOTE

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Yes	93%	95%	95%	94%	95
No	7	5	5	6	5

In Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Colorado about half of these students say they will be voting for the first time in November.

- In Ohio, just 40% say this will be their first time voting - but 26% voted for the first time in their state's highly contested Democratic primary earlier this year.

VOTING FOR FIRST TIME?

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
November will be first time	52%	40%	47%	52%	46
Voted for first time earlier in '08	22	26	24	7	22
Voted before 2008	24	34	28	41	31

- Nearly all registered students in these states say they will definitely vote on Election Day.

LIKELIHOOD OF VOTING

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Definitely will	85%	82%	87%	91%	82
Probably will	11	8	8	7	6
Probably/definitely will not	2	2	2	1	1

- But many students will be voting absentee or early, especially in Ohio (36%) and Colorado (38%). However, at the time of the interview (between October 6 and 19), as many as one in ten has not applied for a ballot, and many others had not received theirs.

HOW ARE YOU VOTING?

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Voting in person	71%	51%	66%	52%	46
Voting absentee	<u>22</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>38</u>
Already voted	1%	1%	1%	1%	2
Have not returned ballot yet	5	8	6	12	9
Have not received ballot yet	10	20	9	21	19
Have not applied for ballot yet	6	7	8	4	8

Most students are registered to vote in the state in which they go to school, although not necessarily in their school's town or city.

WHERE ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Registered to vote in school town	51%	41%	46%	51%	40
Registered in school state, not town	34	49	38	42	32
Registered in another state	14	10	16	6	28

VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATES

With one exception, Barack Obama rates more highly than John McCain on every candidate quality measured in this poll.

- Obama has successfully connected with many of these students; he is viewed particularly strongly on being someone they can relate to and as caring about people like them.
- The only area in which McCain is stronger than Obama is on being an effective commander-in-chief: more students in each state say McCain would be effective in this role than say the same for Obama. Still, about half of these students say Obama would also be effective as commander-in-chief.
- Where most see McCain as a typical Republican, just over half see Obama as a different type of Democrat.

CANDIDATE QUALITIES

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Is someone you can relate to					
Obama	64%	61%	62%	67%	62
McCain	25%	28%	31%	27%	33
Would bring about real change					
Obama	71%	68%	69%	71%	68
McCain	27%	30%	30%	27%	34
Effective commander-in-chief					
Obama	52%	49%	51%	54%	45
McCain	67%	70%	68%	66%	76
Cares about people like yourself					
Obama	78%	76%	75%	79%	77
McCain	34%	39%	40%	34%	45
If elected, will make difference in Your life for the better					
Obama	55%	51%	53%	58%	49
McCain	18%	22%	23%	20%	25
Will improve image of U.S. in world					
Obama	68%	64%	66%	71%	66
McCain	17%	20%	20%	19%	22

CANDIDATE QUALITIES CONT.

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Obama different kind of Democrat	53%	51%	55%	56%	52
Obama typical Democrat	46	48	44	44	48
McCain different kind of Republican	32%	36%	36%	36%	45
McCain typical Republican	67	63	63	64	55

- About four in ten students worry about John McCain's age, and just as many see Obama's as an advantage. Few think Obama's youth makes him too inexperienced to serve as president, but four in ten think McCain's age would make it more difficult for him to serve as president.

THE IMPACT OF AGE

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Obama's age:					
Makes him too inexperienced	17%	18%	19%	15%	22
Gives him fresh new ideas	43	39	40	41	37
Wouldn't matter	40	42	41	43	40
McCain's age:					
Makes Presidency too difficult	44%	42%	41%	43%	34
Gives him experience	26	27	28	24	32
Wouldn't matter	30	31	31	33	34

THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Democratic vice presidential nominee Joe Biden is viewed favorably; Republican Sarah Palin has a negative image.

- About half of the students in each state don't much like Palin; that rises to 60% among students in Colorado.

IMAGE OF THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Joe Biden					
Really like	33%	30%	32%	35%	27
Think he is all right	28	28	28	31	32
Don't much like	14	16	16	16	16
Don't know enough to say	22	23	23	17	22
Sarah Palin					
Really like	17%	21%	20%	18%	22
Think she is all right	15	17	16	13	21
Don't much like	53	49	49	60	46
Don't know enough to say	12	10	11	7	9

- Students are in agreement as to why John McCain chose Palin; not because she is well-qualified, but because McCain thought she would help him win.

WHY OBAMA/McCAIN CHOSE THEIR RUNNING MATE

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Joe Biden					
Well qualified	41%	40%	40%	46%	37
Would help win	16	19	18	15	22
Both equally	37	35	37	34	36
Something else	5	5	4	5	4
Sarah Palin					
Well qualified	4%	5%	4%	5%	4
Would help win	73	72	71	75	73
Both equally	17	18	18	16	19
Something else	5	4	6	4	4

VOTE CHOICE

During the primaries, and in current pre-election polls, Obama has run strongly with younger voters. Not surprisingly, he holds a large lead over John McCain among students in these states.

VOTE FOR PRESIDENT

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Obama-Biden	67%	61%	62%	66%	56
McCain-Palin	29	35	34	29	40

- Obama voters are more enthusiastic than McCain voters about their candidate in all four states.

ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT OBAMA

(Among registered voters)

	Obama Voters				
	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Enthusiastically support	51%	55%	60%	61%	49
Support with reservations	41	38	34	32	47
Support because party nominee	2	1	1	1	0
Support because dislike other candidate	6	5	4	6	3

- Enthusiasm for Obama is highest in North Carolina and Colorado.
- About half of McCain voters say they have reservations about their candidate.

ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT MCCAIN

(Among registered voters)

	McCain Voters				
	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Enthusiastically support	29%	29%	31%	34%	27
Support with reservations	54	52	54	49	53
Support because party nominee	5	5	3	4	5
Support because dislike other candidate	12	13	12	13	14

- More Obama than McCain voters in all states say their minds are made up. About one in five McCain voters say they could still change their minds.

MIND MADE UP?

(Among registered voters)

	Obama Voters				
	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Mind made up	82%	75%	83%	87%	76
Could still change	16	16	14	11	24

	McCain Voters				
	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Mind made up	71%	74%	76%	78%	75
Could still change	26	20	21	21	25

There won't be too much political discord at home over Thanksgiving; most students in each state say their parents will vote for the same candidate they will.

- By a large margin, students who are McCain voters are more likely than Obama voters to share their parents' vote choice. About eight in ten McCain voters say their vote will be the same as their parents' on election day; just over half of Obama voters say that.
- Their parents' vote will split between the two candidates in about one in five Obama voters' homes.

PARENTS' VOTE FOR PRESIDENT

(Among registered voters)

	Obama Voters				
	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Same candidate as student	58%	56%	62%	57%	46
Different candidate	16	19	15	17	27
One will vote same, one different	21	21	17	20	25
They won't vote	5	4	4	6	1

	McCain Voters				
	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Same candidate as student	73%	80%	83%	76%	82
Different candidate	6	4	4	7	5
One will vote same, one different	15	13	10	11	11
They won't vote	3	2	2	4	1

POLITICAL INFORMATION AND ACTIVITY

- Large majorities of students overall in each state have utilized the internet to visit a candidate's web site or watch a video about a candidate.
- About a quarter to a third have visited a candidate's Facebook or MySpace page, forwarded email or other commentary about a campaign, or signed up as a fan on a social networking site.
- Two in three have watched a video relating to the election on YouTube, although only a few have posted one themselves.

WHICH ONLINE ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU DONE THIS ELECTION?

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Watched video on YouTube	67%	66%	70%	68%	69
Visited candidate's web page	63%	65%	65%	68%	68
Visited candidate's Facebook/MySpace page	27%	28%	27%	28%	23
Forwarded email/commentary about campaign	23%	26%	32%	36%	29
Signed up as fan on social network site	22%	24%	23%	21%	22
Signed up for email/twitter alerts	20%	21%	22%	27%	22
Started/joined political/campaign group	15%	17%	17%	17%	18
Posted video on YouTube	2%	2%	2%	2%	1

- A third of students have adopted political buttons and clothing, and about a quarter have attended a political event. That rises to 32% in Colorado.
- Just about one in ten have donated to a campaign, about the same proportion who have volunteered their time.

WHICH OTHER ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU DONE THIS ELECTION?

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Displayed campaign sign/button/clothing	32%	38%	32%	36%	40
Recruited friend to support candidate	29%	32%	32%	32%	31
Attended political event with candidate	23%	21%	23%	32%	21
Participated in voter registration drive	13%	12%	14%	11%	12
Volunteered for campaign/candidate	12%	13%	12%	14%	17
Donated to a campaign	10%	11%	12%	15%	9

- Television and the internet are the most prevalent sources of election news for these students; about four in 5 reference those sources every day or once or twice a week. Discussions with friends and family are also important.
- Students' use of paper newspapers varies; more than half the students in Pennsylvania get political information from them at least a few times a week, but just 41% of Colorado's students do.
- Among the least popular sources of political information for these students are magazines in paper form. Most students are using traditional news web sites, not blogs, for their political information. Less than a third read blogs for political information.

GET POLITICAL INFORMATION FROM:

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Every day/once or twice a week:					
TV News	79%	81%	81%	80%	79
Internet news sites	77%	79%	80%	80%	77
Discussions with friends/family	77%	80%	82%	84%	83
Talk, entertainment, comedy shows	65%	67%	64%	63%	62
Discussions in classrooms	52%	50%	53%	49%	58
Newspapers in paper form	52%	49%	44%	41%	49
Radio	31%	37%	40%	43%	34
Blogs/other web sites	27%	26%	29%	29%	23
Magazines in paper form	21%	20%	22%	23%	21

- The classroom is also an important source of political information. One in three students in each state say politics is discussed in class very often, and an additional four in ten say it is brought up sometimes.

TALK ABOUT POLITICS IN CLASS:

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Very often	30%	27%	32%	32%	35
Sometimes	42	43	40	36	46
Rarely	23	25	21	24	17
Never	5	5	6	8	2

DOES THE ELECTION MATTER?

Large percentages of these students in each state say that it matters who is elected president.

IMPORTANCE OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
It makes no difference who is elected President					
Agree	20%	20%	17%	16%	19
Disagree	80	79	83	84	81

And half think the government in Washington cares at least somewhat about their generation -- making Obama's ability to connect with them particularly important.

GOVT. IN WASHINGTON CARES ABOUT YOUR GENERATION

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
A lot	6%	6%	7%	6%	8
Some	42	43	46	40	47
Not much	42	41	38	42	39
Not at all	10	9	8	12	6

ISSUES

With the economy in bad shape, the stock market fluctuating, and Wall Street precarious, it comes as no surprise that, by a wide margin,

students in each state view the economy as the most important issue in their vote choice.

- The war in Iraq, education and energy policy all follow. Few students see immigration as extremely important, but it is more important to students in North Carolina and Colorado.

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN VOTE CHOICE

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Economy and jobs	76%	75%	77%	73%	72
War in Iraq	50%	48%	49%	51%	42
Education	48%	51%	50%	55%	47
Energy policy	45%	45%	48%	53%	44
Health care	41%	40%	44%	43%	36
Environment	33%	32%	36%	38%	30
Immigration	14%	13%	20%	19%	13

Obama is viewed as having the best plan for dealing with the issue they say will be most important.

CANDIDATE WITH BEST PLAN FOR DEALING WITH THAT ISSUE

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Obama	61%	56%	58%	61%	53
McCain	23	28	28	24	32
Someone else	4	5	4	6	3
Neither	11	10	10	9	10

The economy is viewed as nearly uniformly bad by students in each state. This is consistent with poll findings among the general public.

RATING THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Very good	0%	0%	0%	0%	0
Fairly good	5	7	6	5	6
Fairly bad	48	49	47	48	52
Very bad	46	43	47	46	41

Despite their concerns about the economy, most students in each state think their opportunities to succeed in life are about the same as or better than those of their parents.

- But about one in five thinks their opportunities are worse. That concern is highest in Ohio and Colorado.

COMPARED TO PARENTS, YOUR OPPORTUNITIES TO SUCCEED ARE:

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Better	47%	43%	50%	42%	45
Same	33	35	33	35	35
Worse	19	22	17	22	19

- While most think they'll get a job, about one in five is not confident about being able to get a job after graduation.

CONFIDENCE IN GETTING A JOB

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Very confident	30%	30%	35%	32%	36
Somewhat confident	51	51	50	47	50
Not too confident	16	15	14	18	12
Not at all confident	2	3	2	2	2

- Students are at least somewhat confident about being able to pay back their student loans.

CONFIDENCE IN PAYING BACK STUDENT LOANS

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Very confident	21%	22%	20%	20%	26
Somewhat confident	38	36	32	31	45
Not too confident	19	18	14	17	22
Not at all confident	6	5	4	6	7

When it comes to the war in Iraq, most students are willing to have U.S. troops stay in Iraq for only two years or less.

WAR IN IRAQ: WILLING FOR TROOPS TO REMAIN THERE:

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Less than a year	36%	32%	32%	34%	26
One to two years	34	34	35	35	34
Two to five years	11	12	11	9	15
Five to ten years	1	1	2	2	2
As long as it takes	17	21	20	20	23

Finally, when it comes to education issues, it is the cost of higher education that is the top concern for these students - it far outweighs other education issues as most important to them.

IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION ISSUES

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
<u>Extremely Important:</u>					
Controlling costs	65%	65%	58%	65%	59
Improving quality	46%	49%	50%	52%	42
Affirmative action programs	14%	13%	18%	15%	2
Availability of private loans	39%	34%	32%	32%	31
Wide range of political views on campus	37%	37%	41%	41%	36

RACISM, SEXISM AND THE ELECTION

Majorities of students feel there has been too much talk about race and gender in this election. And while many see racism as a serious problem and think Obama has been judged more harshly because of his race, large majorities also think the country is ready for a black president.

HAS CAMPAIGN FOCUSED ON RACE/GENDER...?

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Too much	67%	75%	75%	69%	75
Not enough	3	2	2	2	1
About right	22	23	22	22	24

- Sexism is also viewed as a problem by most students. Fewer think the country is ready for a woman president than think it's ready for a black president.

COUNTRY READY FOR ... PRESIDENT?

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Black					
Yes	78%	78%	77%	84%	81
No	22	21	22	16	19
Woman					
Yes	63%	63%	59%	67%	62
No	36	36	40	33	38

- There is little difference in opinions on race and gender by state, though black students in North Carolina are more likely than white students there to see each as a serious problem. More than half of black students see racism as very serious, while only 12% of whites view it as very serious.

SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE U.S. TODAY

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Racism	62%	62%	66%	65%	65
Sexism	59%	60%	64%	65%	62

- About a third of students think people have judged Obama more harshly because he is black.
- Black students in North Carolina are especially likely to say that Obama has been treated more harshly because of his race: 66% think that is the case, compared to 31% of white students in North Carolina.

PEOPLE JUDGE OBAMA DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE HE IS BLACK?

(Among registered voters)

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
More harshly	38%	38%	39%	30%	30
Less harshly	12	12	15	12	14
No difference	49	49	46	58	50

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THESE STUDENTS

- Those in Pennsylvania are most likely to describe themselves as Democrats.
- Students in Ohio were the most Republican (with North Carolina students a close second).
- Those in North Carolina are more heavily black than in other states. A quarter describes themselves as conservative.
- Students in Colorado are more liberal and independent.

DEMOGRAPHICS

	PA	OH	NC	CO	XU
Male	48%	48%	42%	46%	40
Female	51	52	58	54	60
Republican	26%	30%	29%	24%	34
Democrat	48	40	43	40	35
Independent	25	29	27	35	31
Liberal	38%	36%	35%	41%	30
Moderate	43	41	41	42	45
Conservative	17	22	23	16	24
White	84%	86%	73%	83%	84
Black	7	8	19	3	8

Methodology:

The CBS News/UWire Poll of college students was conducted with undergraduates in four-year colleges and universities in each state. Sample sizes and the margin of error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample are listed below. The error for subgroups is higher.

STATE	SAMPLE SIZE	MARGIN OF ERROR
Pennsylvania	7,298	+/- 1 pt
Ohio	5,914	+/- 1 pt
North Carolina	7,617	+/- 1 pt
Colorado	4,019	+/- 2 pts
TOTAL	24,848	

The schools were selected based on their size, tuition and their competitiveness to represent all four-year colleges in the state. Within each school, email invitations to participate were sent to a random sample of undergraduates (in smaller schools all students were sent invitations).

Cornell University's Survey Research Institute programmed and hosted the questionnaire on the web.

The total weighted number of respondents from each school is proportional to the number of undergraduates represented by that school in the sampling process. Within each school, the weighted results reflect the academic class, gender and race of each school's undergraduate population.

The following is a state-by-state listing of participating schools:

Pennsylvania

Bloomsburg University, Bucknell University, Drexel University, East Stroudsburg University, La Salle University, Lebanon Valley College, Mercyhurst College, Penn State University, Penn State University Berks campus, Shippensburg University, Temple University, Thiel College, University of Pennsylvania, West Chester University

Ohio

Bluffton University, Bowling Green State University, Kent State University, Miami University, Ohio University, Ohio State University, Ohio State University at Newark, University of Cincinnati, University of Dayton, University of Toledo, Wittenberg University, Wright State University, Xavier University

North Carolina

Appalachian State University, Duke University, Elon University, Fayetteville State University, Meredith College, Mount Olive College, North Carolina State University, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina-Wilmington, Wake Forest University, Western Carolina University, Wingate University, Winston Salem State University

Colorado

Adams State College, Colorado College, Colorado State University at Pueblo, Metropolitan State College of Denver, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, University of Colorado at Denver, University of Denver, University of Northern Colorado

