

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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IPPSR Outlook '08 Unveiled: Poll of Polls Points to 11 Battleground States

If the nation had voted last week, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama would face 11 “battleground” states in their race for the White House, an Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) analysis shows.

The toss-up states include Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota and Virginia.

Together, the states yield 130 Electoral College votes that will make the difference in the 2008 presidential outcome, said IPPSR Director Douglas B. Roberts, Ph.D.

“These states are where the candidates will be spending their time. These are the states where the election will be decided and that’s why McCain and Obama are in Michigan this week and most likely will be in the state again before November,” he said.

A candidate needs 270 of the 538 Electoral College’s votes to win the presidency. Electoral College votes are allocated primarily on the basis of population with each state and the District of Columbia assigned at least three. Michigan has 17 electoral votes for its 15 members of the House of Representatives and two U.S. Senate members.

IPPSR’s Outlook ’08 poll of polls is distinct from other research that determines battleground states on the basis of past elections, said Senior Researcher Nat Ehrlich, Ph.D.

Outlook ’08 reviews public opinion surveys in all 50 states, analyzes the latest surveys available, identifies battleground states by mathematical algorithm, and assesses the closeness of the Electoral College vote on that basis.

The latest analysis shows McCain with 178 Electoral College votes and Obama with 230 likely Electoral College votes, not including states designated as narrowly divided battlegrounds.

“We hear about the popular vote, but it’s in the Electoral College where the election is won,” said Roberts. “Without a combination of the toss-up states, neither candidate has yet enough Electoral College votes to win.”

IPPSR’s latest analysis is based upon polls as of Monday, Aug. 4. The analysis will be updated at least weekly initially and more frequently as November’s election approaches. Results and analysis will be published on IPPSR’s website at <http://www.ippsr.msu.edu>.

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IPPSR Outlook '08/2

IPPSR Senior Researcher Nat Ehrlich, Ph.D., has been analyzing patterns in 20 national polls since early July.

Combining early July analysis with the latest polls from across the country – including surveys conducted by ABC News/The Washington Post, CBS News/The New York Times, Newsweek and others – Ehrlich found:

- *Undecided voters edging up toward mid-July, then flattening out as the month ended.

- *Undecided citizens taking votes from both McCain, a U.S. senator from Arizona, and Obama, a U.S. senator from Illinois.

- *Wide variation among projections made by survey research organizations.

Note to Media: Analysis, charts and results are available at www.ippsr.msu.edu/Outlook.htm

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