

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

**Contacts:** Nat Ehrlich, Office for  
Survey Research,  
[ehrichn@msu.edu](mailto:ehrichn@msu.edu), 517-353-2639,  
or Cynthia Kyle, IPPSR,  
[kylec@msu.edu](mailto:kylec@msu.edu), 517-353-1731

## McCain Takes Electoral College Lead – and Michigan – Over Obama In Weekly IPPSR Outlook '08

Republican John McCain outpaced Democrat Barack Obama last week for the first time since Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research began tracking this year's likely Electoral College vote.

Obama maintained a slight lead in last week's average of 20 national polls of the popular vote, but fell behind in the Electoral College as McCain edged ahead, IPPSR researchers said Wednesday.

In Michigan, where the lead between the two U.S. senators has tipped one way and then the other over the past weeks, McCain overtook Obama by a percentage point in the latest national polling.

Obama had been leading in the Electoral College standings since IPPSR's Office for Survey Research began tracking the election in early July.

Outlook '08 follows more than 30 individual state polls to identify "battleground" states where the voters are narrowly split on the candidates and demonstrates how the Electoral College might be calculated. It then examines more than 20 national polls that are estimates of how the popular vote would look at the time of the survey.

"Outlook '08 was not designed to predict the presidential race," said IPPSR Director Douglas B. Roberts, Ph.D. "It was designed to shed light on the candidates and their campaign strategies and to showcase the importance of the Electoral College in presidential elections."

Without votes from the battleground states, McCain's Electoral College standings rose from 182 last week to 212 this week. Obama's status fell from 226 to 157 likely Electoral College votes. Together, the 13 states identified as battlegrounds represent 169 Electoral College votes.

"This is the most volatile and unpredictable presidential race since 1948," said IPPSR Senior Researcher Nat Ehrlich, Ph.D., who designed the analysis.

more

## IPPSR

INSTITUTE FOR  
PUBLIC POLICY AND  
SOCIAL RESEARCH

Douglas B. Roberts, Ph.D.  
Director

Michigan State University  
321 Berkey Hall  
East Lansing, MI  
48824-1111  
517/355-6672  
FAX: 517/432-1544  
[www.ippsr.msu.edu](http://www.ippsr.msu.edu)

## Presidential Race/2

"The shift to support for Senator McCain has been significant, but each state has its own demographic splits. In Michigan, young voters are more inclined to vote for McCain by a 50-37 margin, in contrast to the trend in neighboring Ohio where the youth vote splits 53-40 in favor of Obama."

A candidate needs 270 of the nation's 538 Electoral College's votes to win the presidency.

As established in the U.S. Constitution, Electoral College votes are allocated primarily on the basis of population with each state and the District of Columbia assigned at least three votes. Michigan has 17 electoral votes for its 15 members of the House of Representatives and two U.S. Senate members.

IPPSR's latest analysis is based upon the latest national and statewide polling as of Monday, Sept. 15. The poll of polls is updated weekly every Tuesday.

Results, analysis and a complete list of the latest battleground states are published on IPPSR's website at <http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/outlook.htm>

MSU's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research specializes in scholarly work through applied and survey research, public policy forums and political leadership training.

###