

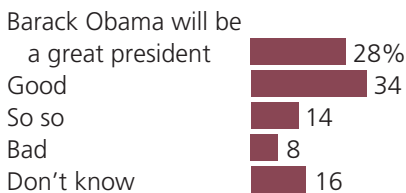
AEI Political Report

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Obama!

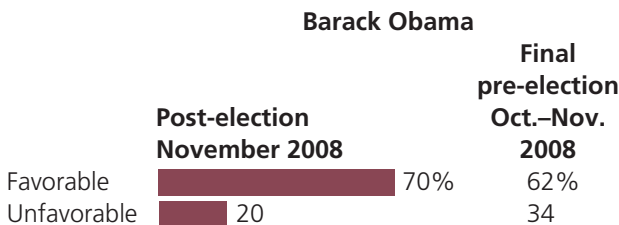
Optimism about President-elect Obama is high. His favorable ratings are up, and more than a quarter of Americans think he will be a great president. A solid majority expect the transition to go smoothly. Two-thirds believe the country will be better off four years from now. Nearly six in ten say one-party control of the presidency and Congress will be good for the country.

Q: Do you think . . . ?



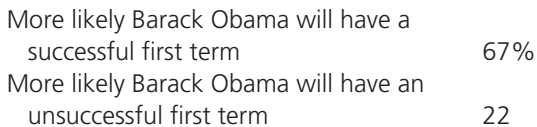
Source: Quinnipiac, November 2008.

Q: As I read each name, please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of these people . . . ?



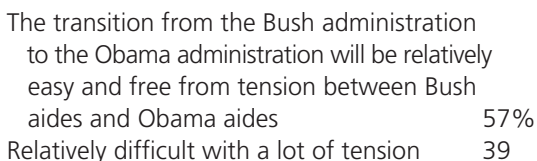
Source: Gallup/USA Today.

Q: Thinking ahead to the next four years, which is more likely to happen? Do you think it is . . . ?



Source: Pew Research Center, November 2008.

Q: Do you think . . . ?



Source: CNN/ORC, November 2008.

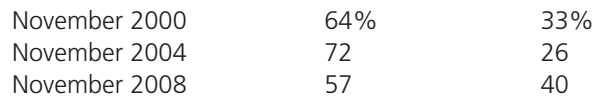
Q: Do you think . . . ?



Source: Gallup/USA Today, November 2008.

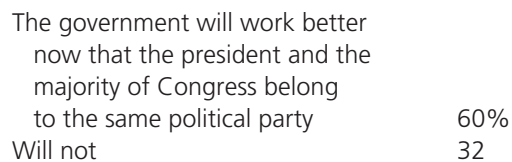
Q: Do you think . . . ?

The country is more deeply divided on major issues than it has been in the past several years



Source: Gallup/USA Today, November 2008.

Q: Do you think . . . ?



Source: Quinnipiac, November 2008.

Q: As you may know, the Democrats will control both the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as the presidency. Do you think this will be . . . ?



Source: CNN/ORC, November 2008.



Obama's Coattails

According to *Roll Call*, 2008 was “the first time in forty-eight years and only the fourth time in history” that a sitting member of Congress was elected to the White House. Given the track record of recent Democratic candidates in bringing members of their party along, Obama can claim substantial bragging rights.

	Seats gained in the	
	House	Senate
John F. Kennedy (1960)	-22	-2
Lyndon Johnson (1964)	+37	+1
Jimmy Carter (1976)	+1	0
Bill Clinton (1992)	-10	0
Barack Obama (2008)	+20 (prelim)	+7 (prelim)

Rating Republicans

Q: As I read each name please say if you have a . . . ?

	The Republican Party	
	Favorable opinion	Unfavorable opinion
September 2004	49%	45%
November 2006	38	52
November 2008	38	54

Note: Last asking in each month shown.
Source: CNN/ORC.

Q: Over the next few years, would you . . . ?

	National	Rep.	Ind.
Like to see the Republican Party and its candidates move in a more conservative direction	37%	59%	35%
Less conservative direction	37	12	35
Stay about the same	20	28	22

Source: The Gallup Organization, November 2008.



Pelosi and Palin

Q: Do you . . . ?

Approve of the way Congress is handling its job	19%
Disapprove	74

Source: Gallup/USA Today, November 2008.

Q: As I read each name please say if you have a . . . ?

	Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi	
	Favorable opinion	Unfavorable opinion
January 2007	44%	22%
November 2008	42	41

Source: Gallup/USA Today.

Q: As I read each name please say if you have a . . . ?

	Sarah Palin	
	Favorable opinion	Unfavorable opinion
August 2008	38%	21%
September	53	35
October	51	41
November	49	43

Note: Last asking in each month is shown.
Source: CNN/ORC, November 2008.

Q: Would you . . . ?

	Like to see Sarah Palin be a major national political figure for years to come		Would not
	to come		
Total	45%		52%
Republican response	76		23
Democrat response	20		77
Independent response	43		53

Source: Gallup/USA Today, November 2008.

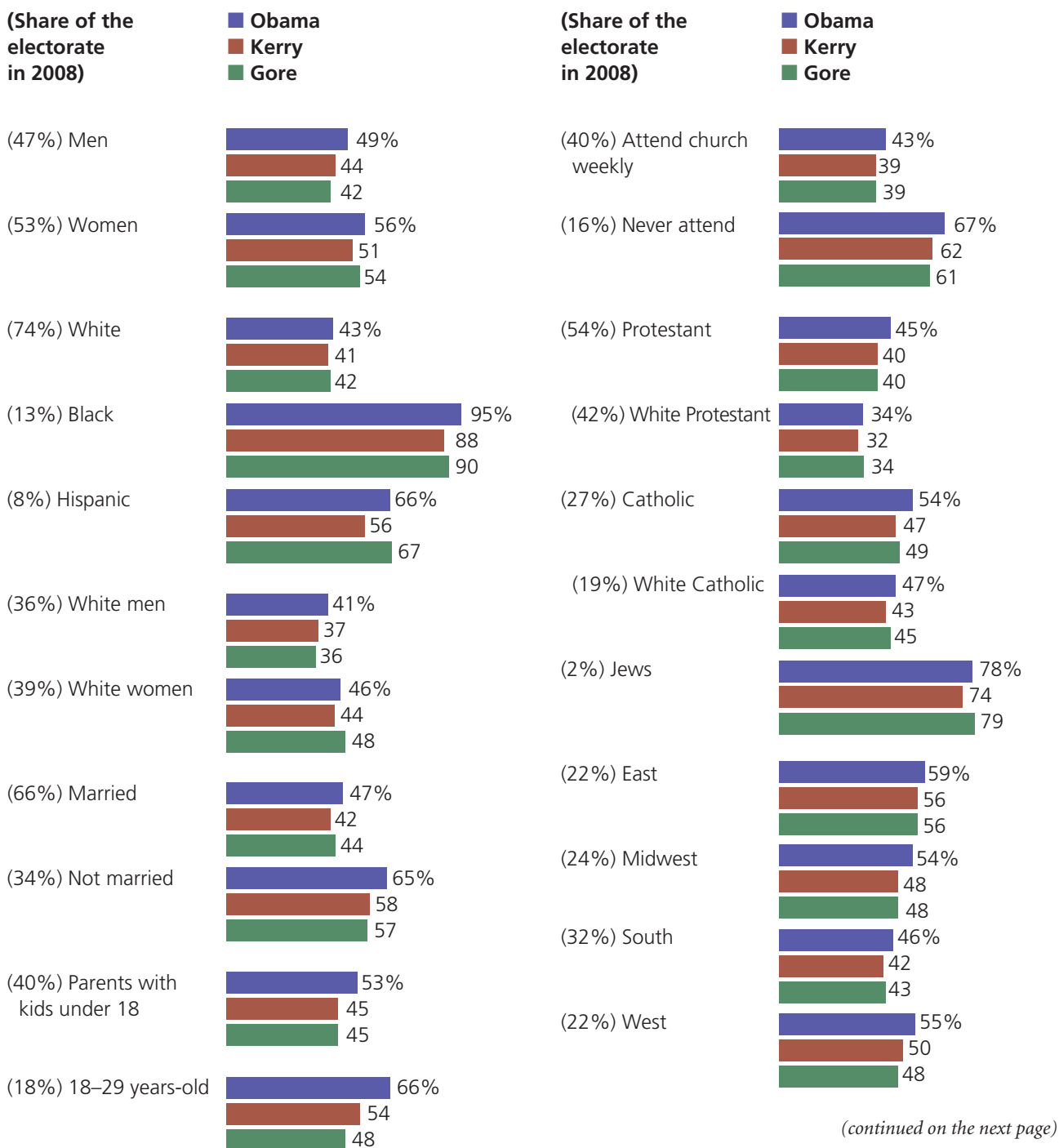
Q: Regardless of your opinion of her, if you had to guess, do you think . . . ?

	Total
Sarah Palin will be a major national political figure for years to come	49%
Will not	49

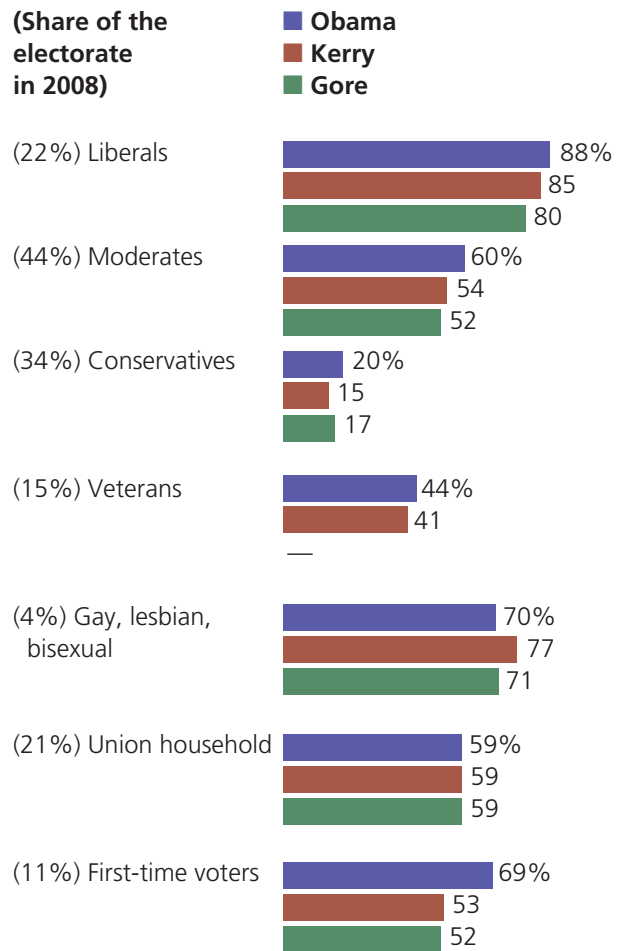
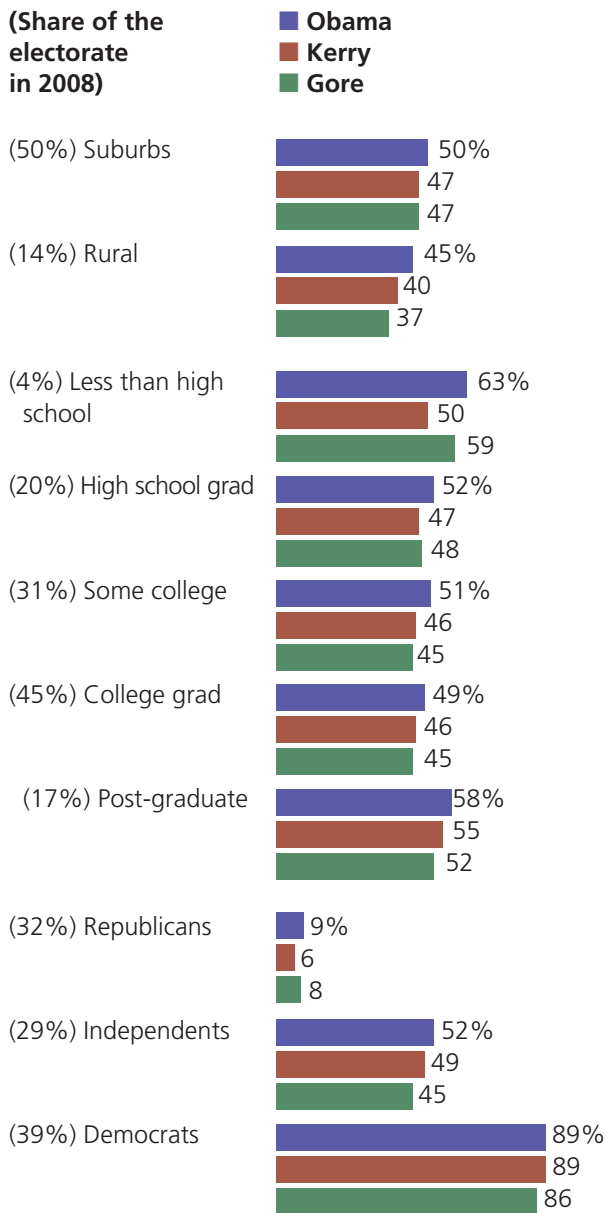
Source: Gallup/USA Today, November 2008.

Categorically Improved Obama

Only three Democratic presidential candidates other than Barack Obama have ever received 51 percent of the popular vote or more: Andrew Jackson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson. Obama's vote (53 percent) was slightly higher than George W. Bush's in 2004, but lower than George H. W. Bush's in 1992. As the figure below shows, Obama improved on the electoral performance of the two previous Democratic nominees in many groups.



(continued from the previous page)



Source: National Election Pool Consortium.



More Election Night Losers: The Networks

The networks lost ground on election night, while the cable channels gained.

2008:

ABC, CBS, NBC 31.9 million
 FOX, CNN, MSNBC 27.7 million

2004:

ABC, CBS, NBC 38.0 million
 FOX, CNN, MSNBC 17.1 million

Source: Nielsen.

Q: How did you get most of your news about the presidential election campaign?

Main source of campaign news

Cable TV	44%
Internet	36
Newspapers	33
Network TV	18
Radio	16

Note: Sample is those who said they voted.

Source: Pew Research Center, November 2008.

High Expectations

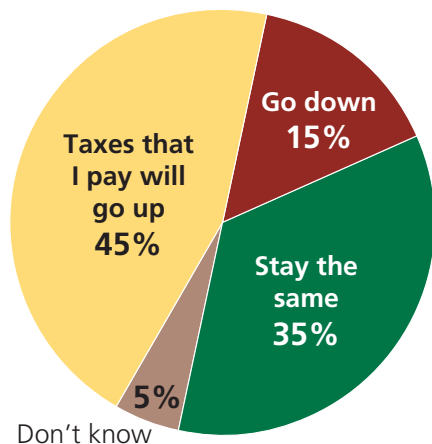
Q: Regardless of which presidential candidate you preferred, do you think the Obama administration will or will not be able to do each of the following?

	Yes, will	No, will not
Improve conditions for minorities and the poor	80%	19%
Improve respect for the United States abroad	76	22
Improve education	71	27
Improve the quality of the environment	70	28
Reduce unemployment	67	32

Note: Only the top five categories shown.
Source: Gallup/USA Today, November 2008.

Taxes

Q: Do you think during Barack Obama's presidency . . . ?



Source: Quinnipiac, November 2008.

The Rescue Plan

Q: Do you . . . ?

	Voters' response
Support the \$700 billion government plan to assist failing financial companies	39%
Oppose	56

Source: National Election Pool Consortium, 2008.

Q: As you may know, the government is investing billions to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure. Do you think investing billions to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure . . . ?

	Is the right thing to do	Wrong thing
Sep. 19–22, 2008	57%	30%
Sep. 27–29	45	38
Oct. 16–19	47	37
Nov. 14–17	40	43

Source: Pew Research Center.

Drilling

Q: Do you . . . ?

	Voters' response
Favor drilling for oil offshore in U.S. waters where it is currently not allowed	68%
Oppose	29

Source: National Election Pool Consortium, 2008.

Guantanamo

Q: Should President Obama close . . . ?

Yes, President Obama should close Guantanamo	29%
No	44

Source: Quinnipiac, November 2008.

Hail to the Chief (of Staff)

The post of White House Chief of Staff is one that the president-elect has usually filled shortly after the election. Barack Obama's choice of Rahm Emanuel came nine days earlier than Ronald Reagan's relatively early choice of James Baker following the 1980 election and seven days earlier than George H. W. Bush's selection of John Sununu in 1988.

Chief of Staff	Date Appointed	Number of Days after Election
James Baker (Reagan)	November 15, 1980	11
John H. Sununu (G. H. W. Bush)	November 17, 1988	9
Mack McLarty (Clinton)	December 12, 1992	40
Andrew Card (G. W. Bush)	November 26, 2000	19
Rahm Emanuel (Obama)	November 6, 2008	2

Iran

Q: *Should President Obama . . . ?*

Should personally negotiate with Iran to limit their nuclear program	62%
Should not	28

Source: Quinnipiac, November 2008.

Q: *After Barack Obama becomes president do you . . . ?*

Think he should meet with the leader of Iran without any preconditions	34%
Should meet only if Iran agrees to change some of its policies	42
Should not meet regardless of what the Iranian government might agree to do	22

Source: CNN/ORC, December 2008.

Universal Health Care

Q: *Do you think . . . ?*

It's the government's responsibility to make sure that everyone in the U.S. has adequate health care	60%
No, it's not	36

Note: In the National Election Pool Consortium survey, 9 percent said health care was the most important issue in casting their vote. It was tied with terrorism for the third most important issue behind the economy (63 percent) and the war in Iraq (10 percent). Source: Quinnipiac, November 2008.

Less is More?

Inaugural addresses have varied greatly in length. Some have been short and to-the-point—George Washington's second inaugural address, for instance, was only 135 words long. Others have been much longer; William Henry Harrison holds the record for the longest one with an 8,445-word-long speech—more than sixty-two times the length of Washington's second inaugural address. To put this in perspective, all inaugural addresses since Harry Truman's speech have ranged between 1,000 and 2,600 words.

Shortest Inaugural Addresses

President	Number of Words
Washington ^a	135
F. Roosevelt ^b	559
Lincoln ^a	698
T. Roosevelt	985
Taylor	996

Longest Inaugural Addresses

President	Number of Words
W. H. Harrison	8,445
Taft	5,433
Polk	4,776
Monroe ^a	4,467
B. Harrison	4,388

Notes: a) Second address. b) Fourth address.

Source: Joseph Nathan Kane, *Facts About the Presidents* (New York, H. W. Wilson, 1993).

Down the Ballot

In the past two elections, Democrats gained more than a dozen seats in the Senate and fifty in the House. They didn't lose a single Senate seat in 2008. In 2006, they made significant strides in state legislatures, so it was probably unrealistic to expect them to pick up a large number of additional seats. Democrats picked up 106 seats out of the 5,823 state House and Senate seats up nationwide. The table below looks at the partisan make-up of governors and state legislatures before and after the election.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures:

- ❖ New Hampshire became the first state in U.S. history to give women the majority in a legislative chamber.
- ❖ The South Carolina Senate went the opposite direction and will be the only state legislative chamber without any female members. The last all-male chamber was the Louisiana Senate which had no women from 1980 to 1991.
- ❖ Colorado is on the cusp of becoming the first state to have black lawmakers leading both legislative chambers.

Governors

Pre-election

22 Republicans
28 Democrats

Post-election

21 Republicans
29 Democrats

State Legislatures

Pre-election

14 Republican
23 Democrat
12 Divided
1 Nonpartisan

Post-election

14 Republican*
27 Democrat
8 Divided
1 Nonpartisan

Note: *At the time of printing, Republicans held a one-seat edge over Democrats in the Texas House, 75-74, with one race still undecided. Depending on the outcome of that election, Republicans may hold onto the majority in the Texas House, or control may be split between the two parties.

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2010 Senate Races

After two disastrous election cycles, Republicans are looking to avoid a third in 2010. In the House, there is a strong historical trend for the party out of power in the White House to pick up House seats in midterm elections. Republicans will likely pick up seats, but the Democratic majority is large enough that retaking the majority in a single election seems almost impossible.

The party out of the White House also tends to pick up Senate seats. But the landscape in 2010 is very unfavorable to Republicans. Nineteen Republicans will stand for election, nearly half of the forty-one or forty-two Republicans who will be in the 111th Congress. Democrats will have seventeen seats to defend, fourteen whose six-year terms will conclude and three more as Senators Obama, Biden, and Clinton will be replaced with temporary appointees who will stand for election in 2010.

Of the Republican incumbents up for re-election, six have only served one full term: Richard Burr (NC), Tom Coburn (OK), Jim DeMint (SC), Lisa Murkowski (AK), John Thune (SD), and David Vitter (LA). Five Senate seats are in competitive states won by Barack Obama: Mel Martinez (FL), Chuck Grassley (IA), Judd Gregg (NH), George Voinovich (OH), and Arlen Specter (PA). Kit Bond (MO) comes from a state John McCain narrowly won.

Republican fortunes may also weaken if retirements create open seats. Sam Brownback (KS) has already announced that he will honor his two-term limit pledge and step down, and Democrats have a strong potential candidate in governor Kathleen Sebelius. Mel Martinez will also step down in competitive Florida. And retirements could come from eight of the seventeen Republicans who will be at least 71 years-old by November 2010.

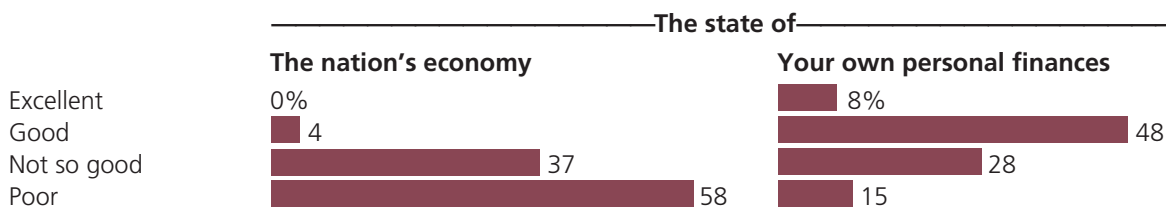
On the Democratic side, there is only one freshman, Ken Salazar (CO), who will be on the ballot in 2010. He may be joined by new freshmen who replace Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton and run for the first time for Senate in 2010. Senator Joe Biden's replacement Ted Kauffman has indicated that he will not run in 2010 creating an open seat.

Only Blanche Lincoln (AR) and Byron Dorgan (NE) hail from states that John McCain won in 2008. Salazar, Harry Reid (NV), and Evan Bayh (IN) come from states won by George Bush in 2004.

As for potential retirements, Democrats Daniel Inouye, Barbara Mikulski, and Harry Reid will be at least 71 years-old by November 2010.

Failing Finances?

Q: How would you describe . . . ?



Source: Quinnipiac, November 2008.

Recognizing Recession

Q: Do you . . . ?

	Dec. 2008	Jun. 2008	Dec. 2007
Think the economy is in a recession	89%	75%	57%
<i>Serious recession</i>	42	27	NA
<i>Moderate recession</i>	34	29	NA
<i>Mild recession</i>	12	19	NA
Is not	10	25	42

Source: CNN/ORC.

Q: As you may know, the U.S. went through a depression in the 1930s in which roughly one out of four workers were unemployed, banks failed across the country, and millions of ordinary Americans were temporarily homeless or unable to feed their families. Do you . . . ?

Think it is very likely that another depression like that will occur in the U.S. within the next twelve months	10%
Somewhat likely	28
Not very likely	41
Not likely at all	20

Source: CNN/ORC, December 2008.

Black Turnout Higher than White Turnout!

David Bositis, senior political analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, released a new study in early December on the black vote and the 2008 election. Using data from the exit poll and the 2006 Census Bureau Current Population Survey, Bositis estimates that black turnout will be 66.8 percent, far exceeding the previous high of 58.5 percent in 1964. Perhaps more impressive according to his preliminary analysis, black turnout appears poised to exceed white turnout for the first time in our history.



Q: Are you saving a newspaper with election headlines?

	National	Whites	Blacks
Yes	23%	18%	55%
No	76	82	44

Source: Pew Research Center, November 2008.

Missing the Campaign?

Q: Will you miss following campaign news?

	National	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
Yes	17%	10%	25%	13%
No	82	87	75	85

Source: Pew Research Center, November 2008.

