

## DAILY WOMEN'S HEALTH POLICY REPORT

### ELECTION 2008 | McCain's Position on Abortion Pushes 'Critical Bloc' of Women Voters to Obama, Poll Finds

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Republican and independent women who support abortion rights in 12 presidential election "battleground" states were more likely to favor Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) when told of Sen. John McCain's (Ariz.) position on abortion rights, according to a poll released Monday by **NARAL Pro-Choice America**, *U.S. News and World Report* reports. According to some pollsters, the results indicate that Obama could win that "critical bloc" of swing votes in the general election in November (Halloran, *U.S. News and World Report*, 6/16).

The poll was conducted by Democratic polling firm **Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research** between May 29 and June 8 among 1,788 likely women voters who support abortion rights in Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. The margin of error was plus or minus 3.1 percentage points (NARAL Pro-Choice America **release**, 6/16).

#### Findings

The survey found that when the women were asked who they would vote for without any descriptions, 47% said Obama and 45% said McCain. After the women were given a "balanced description" of both McCain's and Obama's stance on abortion rights, 53% of the women said they would vote for Obama and 40% said they would vote for McCain.

Obama's description said, "Barack Obama believes that the decision to have an abortion is profoundly difficult for women and families and that these decisions are personal, between a woman, her family, her God and her doctor, and that politicians should stay out of it. As president, Obama will oppose any constitutional amendment to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and he will work to reduce unintended pregnancies through prevention and education by expanding access to birth control and sex education."

McCain's description said, "John McCain is pro-life, and on the issue of abortion, he opposes a woman's right to choose. McCain says that, quote, 'abortion is a human tragedy,' and he believes that we must end abortion by overturning *Roe v. Wade*. As president, he will nominate Supreme Court judges who will vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and return the issue to the states to decide."

After the descriptions were given, Obama gained 13 percentage points among independent women and nine percentage points among Republican women who support abortion rights (*U.S. News and World Report*, 6/16). According to a

NARAL Pro-Choice America release, the gain for Obama translates to a 1.6 percentage-point gain in the general election (NARAL Pro-Choice America release, 6/16).

"The poll shows that [abortion] can have real impact in a presidential election," Al Quinlan of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research said, adding, "A clear choice on this issue moves votes to Barack Obama. It moves the swing vote with independent women, more crossover vote with Republican women who are pro-choice, and, in Obama's case, it begins to consolidate the base by bringing home Democratic women." Nancy Keenan, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, said the group will be working to educate women over the next five months on the candidates' positions on abortion rights. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, a McCain campaign spokesperson declined to comment on the poll (*U.S. News and World Report*, 6/16).

A **summary** and **full results** of the poll are available online.

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