



SPECIAL EDITION: ELECTION 2008

MAJORITY OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY SUPPORT BARACK OBAMA

By BECCA HAMM (VI)

Unlike in 2004, when a majority of students supported President George W. Bush and a majority of faculty supported Senator John Kerry, the Pingry Record's 2008 Election poll shows that both students and faculty strongly support Senator Barack Obama.

Older students were more likely to lean republican, with 39% of seniors sup-

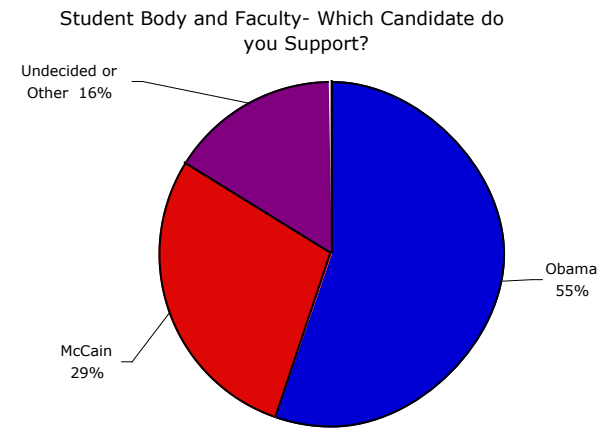
porting McCain compared to only 26 percent of freshman. Overall, the junior class was the most likely to report their vote as "other/undecided," and the sophomore class was the most likely to lean democrat, with 58 percent supporting Obama.

There was not a significant gender gap among students, with Obama leading by 20 percent among males and 25 percent among fe-

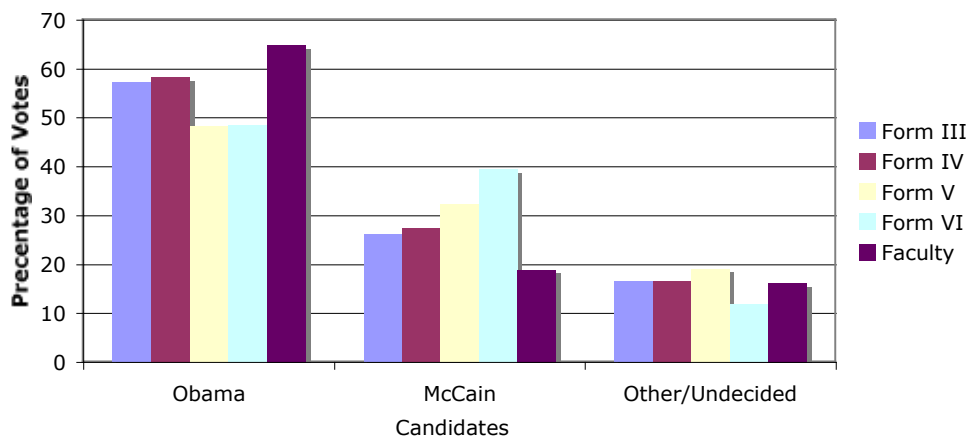
males. The most significant difference between genders was that while only 9 percent of males reported themselves as undecided or other, 25 percent of females did.

Of the 362 students and faculty members who responded to the poll, 55 percent support Obama, 29 percent support McCain, and 16 percent chose undecided/other. Among the write-ins for "other" were Bob Barr,

Hillary Clinton, Ron Paul, Frank Sinatra, and Ralph Nader. Compared to the rest of New Jersey, Pingry has more McCain supporters, and approximately the same percent of Obama supporters. According to the Quinnipac University Poll, 59 percent of New Jersey supports Barack Obama, while 36 percent supports McCain, and 6 percent is undecided. Similarly, a CNN National Poll from October 21-26 has 51 percent in favor of Obama, 43 percent in favor of McCain, and 6 percent undecided.



Which Candidate do you Support?



Parents Play Influential Role in Shaping Children's Political Views

By IAN MARTIN-KATZ (VI)

Adolescents face a difficult choice as they reach voting age: do they vote with their parents or against them? Parents may have a heavy hand in their children's upbringing, but parental influence over their children's political views is not as assured.

Some Pingry seniors are completely indifferent to their parents' political views. "Honestly, I don't even know if my parents are

Democrats or Republicans," Brendan Burgdorf (VI) said. Nevertheless, he supports Obama. "I get most of my information about politics from school and my friends anyway," he added.

Katie Salvaggio (VI) agreed that she wasn't affected by her parents' views, but thinks that "everyone is unknowingly influenced by their parents."

Others are impervious to the influence of their parents' opinions. "Both of my parents are somewhat

conservative," Eric Oplinger (VI) said, "but that doesn't affect me—I would vote for Obama." Oplinger doesn't look to his parents for political information; instead, he finds sources, such as YouTube, that allow him to form his own stance.

He also admits that the differences between his views and those of his parents could be consequential. "I might be more liberal because I don't have to deal with certain issues. I want to see better healthcare, for example, but it's my parents who would pay higher taxes as a result of such policies."

Cory Babcock (VI) has a similar relationship with his parents' political views. "There's a pretty conservative atmosphere in my house, but I'm a liberal," Babcock said. He attributes this discrepancy to his education. "My parents just aren't as politically savvy as I am. What I've learned in AP Gov has taught me enough to form my own opinions. I believe that Obama will usher in an era of economic flowering."

Jenny Palacios (VI) says that her background influences her more than her

Understanding the Electoral College

By ALBERT MAGNELL (IV)

The election in 2000 sparked a major stir in our system of voting. Although George W. Bush was elected President, Al Gore had a higher percentage of the popular vote. This was not the first time that a candidate won the Presidency without winning the popular vote. John Quincy Adams, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Benjamin Harrison all won the Presidency but did not win the popular vote. While the popular vote is a good indicator of who will be the next President, it is the Electoral College that decides the outcome.

Why is our system of voting set up this way? The answer lies in how state representation was created by the framers of the Constitution.

In early discussions for a system of representation, two proposals were advanced, the second a response to the first, out of which a compromise emerged. Members of the Virginia Delegation put forward a proposal that came to be called the Virginia Plan. It called for a bicameral legislature, meaning that the legislative branch was to consist of two chambers. The number of delegates that each state could appoint to each chamber was based on the state's population. At the time, Virginia had the largest population.

States with small populations did not like this plan and feared that bigger states would drown out their say in the legislature. In response, delegates from New Jersey drafted what was called the New Jersey Plan, in which they proposed a single-chamber legislature, where each state had the same number of representatives.

With the goal of gaining advantages from both plans as well as votes for approval, members of the Connecticut delegation forged the Connecticut Compromise, from which came the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Connecticut Compromise

was an essential step in bringing otherwise separate states together to form the Federation of the United States.

The number of members in the Electoral College per state is the sum of the state's numbers of Senators and Representatives. In order to be elected by the Electoral College, a candidate must receive the majority of electoral votes. Because each state has a minimum of three Electoral College representatives, Presidential candidates tend to invest time and money in order to campaign in as many states as possible. In swing-states like Ohio and Florida, which carry a lot of electoral votes and lack strong trends in going for a specific party, candidates campaign even more.

Another significant effect of the Electoral College is that people tend to associate with one of two major political parties, the Republican Party and the Democrat Party, instead of a small third party. It also builds strong associations in Congress to the two parties because with the potential of a tie, people want as many members of Congress as possible to be affiliated with one of the two parties. While this makes it nearly impossible for someone from the Libertarian, Green, or Constitution parties to be elected President, our Founding Fathers thought that maintaining a representative federation was more desirable than promoting a direct democracy.

When no candidate receives a majority of votes in the Electoral College, the election is then thrown into the House of Representatives. This has happened before. When Thomas Jefferson ran for President, there were six other candidates. At the time, members of the Electoral College would choose two of the candidates to be President. The winner became President and the runner-up became Vice President. This situation led to a serious issue when Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr both received the same number of electoral votes. Jefferson be-

came President, and Burr Vice President, from votes in the House of Representatives.

Although it seems overly complicated, the system that we have to elect our President insures that everyone from each state has a voice. It recognizes that states with a higher population should have more electoral representatives.

If it were not for the Electoral College, candidates might never campaign in states such as Vermont, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Alaska, or even Maine, Hawaii, Idaho, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. Here as well, the Electoral College represents our Founding Fathers' desire to maintain a representative federation of states, both small as well as large. It helps to cement the capstone of our Constitution, the Tenth Amendment: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." The Tenth Amendment is what emphasizes the importance of the federation, the States individually and ultimately, the American people.

The number of members in the Electoral College changes whenever the number of representatives in the House or Senate changes. In this election, there will be a total of 538 Electoral College members, which means that a candidate needs at least 270 votes to win. If both candidates somehow receive 269 votes, then because of the Twelfth Amendment, passed after the turmoil of the election between Jefferson and Burr, the House of Representatives will decide the winner.

Soon, we will find out who the next President will be. The next President will have to deal with a troubled economy, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and nuclear proliferation. Although we indirectly vote for a President through the Electoral College, the important choice is ours. Let's choose the best!

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Courtesy of CNN.com

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Results reveal trends in the political stances of the students and faculty. P. 4.

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Neoconservative Ideas Lack Credibility

By NED ADRIANCE (VI)

The idea that after eight long years of failed economic, foreign, and domestic policies and a crisis of leadership, Republicans have decided to field a candidate for the Presidential election in 2008 is rather preposterous. The party that has brought such disasters as Iraq and the current economic recession has the gall to ask for four more years in the White House as a reward for the last two terms.

Republicans should sit the election out, begging for defeat because if they manage to squeeze this one out by employing whatever Rovian tactics they can throw at the other side, the GOP risks losing its very identity and viability as a national party. It will take a crushing landslide and a liberal realignment in this country for the Republicans to finally realize just how severely they've lost their way in the Post-Cold War Era.

It's no surprise that I am a liberal Democrat. Anyone who knows me knows my political views. But I've always respected the viewpoints that comprise the foundations of the Republican Party: free trade, small government, non-interventionism, and personal liberty. The liberal versus conservative debate is always fascinating, and each side

little, and lets taxpayers do as they please with their money. Yet, these stump speeches fail to acknowledge that President Bush—the leader of the Republican Party—has presided

out of private enterprise in history or that the Senator himself endorsed it. It seems as though Republicans are blind to their own actions and have very little faith in the free market that they

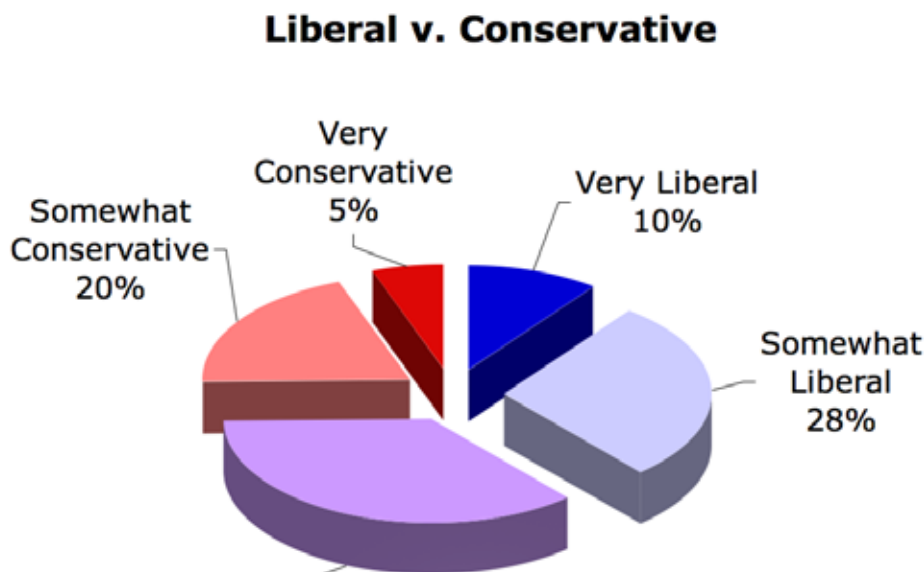
taken this country into a war that shouldn't have been authorized or waged against a nation that never posed a legitimate threat. Yet, we've seen this administration continue to come up with

a host of different reasons for taking us to war: weapons of mass destruction, stopping genocide, ending a dictatorship, and the list continues.

It boils down to a simple notion that American supremacy should exist throughout the world, and that America should police and install democracy in fledgling nations. It's important that people be reminded that this is the single biggest abandonment of conservative principles that the new GOP has ever undertaken. Believe it or not, the Republican Party was once an instrument of peace, a voice of

reason that called foreign intervention an atrocity. American military, according to conservatives, was responsible for defending the sovereignty of this great nation and nothing more. Yet, the party's nominee for President and the effective standard bearer of the GOP is the single biggest hawk in the Senate—a man who views the American military as a hand to guide the world with the barrel of a gun.

I've long been a sucker for the idea of personal liberty.



Data compiled from Record Poll requesting students to rank their political ideology on a scale of one to five: one being very liberal, five being very conservative

over the single biggest federal spending increase since that of Lyndon Johnson.

Even worse, Bush has exemplified the disjoint in the philosophy of his party by continually cutting taxes for the rich. Bush simply lacks the money to account for the runaway spending of his administration, although Republicans often criticize them for excessive spending, at least liberals have taxes to pay for this spending that the GOP greatly mistrusts. For Bush, it's a simpler equation: why not get rid of those pesky taxes and just

claim to worship.

I'm personally not a believer in severe deregulation. But when you are, as the President and the Senator from Arizona have been, it makes no sense to rescue institutions when they have made bad decisions. It goes against our understanding of free-market capitalism: industries are encouraged, supposedly, to make smart decisions (like not giving loans to people who can't pay them back) because if they don't, they will fail.

According to true conservatives, the incentive to do well



Republicans have squandered any claim they might have as the party of individual rights and small government. They have violated the central tenets of their claim to power: that ultimate responsibility should be in the hands of the people; that the federal government has no right to impose its values and its will on the citizens of this country.

The rhetoric of the modern Republican Party is so tragically distant from the policies it advocates that the two are virtually irreconcilable. Instead of defending the individual decisions of the people, the GOP has decided that it is the government's job to decide what is moral: even to the point of regulating what two consenting adults may do in the privacy of their own bedroom. Neoconservatives will fight to the death to uphold the second amendment but deny

that a woman has a basic right to privacy. And over the last eight years, the years of Rove and Schmidt, they have decided that any non-Christian individual cannot seek public office lest he be smeared.

If they wish to change the politics in this country, the burden is on the Republicans to reevaluate their betrayal of the core principles of their philosophy. It will probably take a devastating defeat for the party to reach an ideological consistency and logic in their platform. Thus, it will take a defeat of the Republicans for political debate in this country to be intelligent and civil again, with both sides having a sensible claim to power. America would be wise to hand a victory to the Democrats next Tuesday: not only for the good of the country but for the sake of the Grand Old Party.



presents valid points. But what we're seeing today isn't liberal versus conservative—it's liberal versus, well, nothing.

The modern GOP has no clear, consistent ideology. The party's platform is riddled with neoconservative incoherence, and it is becoming clearer and clearer that the Republican Party of 2008 is nothing more than an assortment of wedge issues designed to win votes. On nearly every issue, Republicans have compromised their core values to drive an axe through the electorate and polarize this country even more.

The GOP loves to run as the party of fiscal responsibility: in fact, that's their biggest trump card. They decry socialism in their campaign rallies and speak of a free market where government spends little, regulates

spend instead?

For these reasons, the President has turned the surplus that his Democratic predecessor gave him into a massive deficit. This failure in management isn't just a campaign liability for the Republicans running for office around the country. In the years to come, it will be the citizens who have to bear the burden of the debt this President has wrought. Conservatism makes sense: when you cut spending, you can afford to cut taxes for your constituents. But Bush conservatism—neo-conservatism—fails the first grade logic test.

It's always amusing for me to hear John McCain or his running mate rail against the socialist policies of his opponent. It's not as if the leadership of the man's party has just implemented the most massive government bail-

and to avoid failure is sufficient regulation of business. But, when the government bails out CEOs when they mess up, where's the incentive for big corporations not to be greedy? After all, they can reap the benefits of deregulation until their self-interest gets the best of them, and then the good old federal government will step in to save them. It's just another example of the pitfalls of this new neoconservative philosophy. Once again, real conservatism makes sense, but the governing ideology of the last eight years falls flat on its face.

Considering the betrayal of the Bush years, it's no surprise that despite running on a platform espousing nation building and foreign intervention, this President and the neoconservatives of his party (most vocally, Sen. John McCain) have

That's what I love most about this country and what I respect most about libertarianism and true conservatism. On this issue,

Taking Another Look at Senator McCain

By DAN ELKIND (VI)

With the presidential election growing nearer, the candidates engaged in a metaphorical "war of attrition" on the national stage, and with the political discourse, even in my own house, turning more and more towards desperate mudslinging, I think it is time to take a step back and take a final, level-headed look at Senator McCain.

I am an undecided voter of moderate political countenance, although some might say I tend to be slightly more liberal. I state this qualifica-

tion outwardly and openly for two reasons. For one, I intend my general alignment to serve as a political "disclaimer" of sorts. This article should not be viewed in a strictly partisan light; I merely mean it to inform a simple discussion of the policy and the record of Senator McCain with respect to those of Senator Obama.

Secondly, I want to make it clear that I am not trying to shepherd anyone toward the one side or the other—I am not sure myself who is the better choice. I do regret,

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McCain's Policies Show Experience Can The United States Maintain Superiority in Today's World?

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however, the way that many liberal Democrats have seemingly disregarded Senator McCain's candidacy without thoroughly or properly investigating it.

Of course, much of the liberal antipathy towards the McCain candidacy has come as the result of Senator McCain himself. He has led one of the least honorable, least honest (and not to mention, least effective) campaigns that I have witnessed in my lifetime. Between his selection of Sarah Palin as his Vice President, his repeated emphasis on the non-issues of Bill Ayers and Jeremiah Wright, and his often-angry demeanor, he has badly misrepresented himself. He is so wedded to the support of the Radical Right that comprises his "base," that many Democrats can hardly remember his independent, freethinking, politically savvy persona of the 1980's and 90's.

Nevertheless, despite his shortcomings during the campaign season, there are aspects of Senator McCain's policy that seriously challenge and perhaps, at least in my view, are better than the policy of Senator Obama.

To cite one example, Senator McCain's economic policy, specifically his tax plan, is superior to Senator Obama's because it exposes a significant contradiction between Senator Obama's fundamental interpretation of the role that government can and should play and that of many Americans.

According to Senator Obama's campaign website, the cornerstone of the Democratic candidate's tax proposal is creating "a new 'Making Work Pay' tax credit of up to \$500 per person, or \$1,000 per working family" which "will completely eliminate income taxes for 10 million Americans." However, according to the Tax Foundation's 2007 predictions, over 50 million working individuals — many of whom will be eligible for the new tax credit — will already be paying zero income tax before the plan is even implemented.

By my thinking, this suggests a serious problem. People who are already exempted from income tax payments would be receiving direct government subsidies,

for the first time, through the income tax system. Many Republicans have been quick to classify these types of subsidies as "handouts" (a socially loaded term, as we know), but in truth they simply represent a continuing expansion of the income tax to take on a new role in American society.

The concept of using the income tax to redistribute wealth may date back to the Bush, Clinton, and even earlier administrations, but that does not necessarily make it effective or appropriate. Although many Americans (liberals, for the most part) have embraced a new direction for the income tax system, I am wary. Though it may seem cliché, we must keep in mind that the institution of wealth redistribution of this kind can be a slippery slope, that there are other political avenues for providing aid to low-income families, and that income tax reform is not one of them.

Senator McCain's policy also explores an alternate approach to fueling economic growth: small business tax initiatives. And although it seems that it has become somewhat taboo to say it, maintaining relatively low corporate and capital gains rates has been, in both theory and practice, a successful strategy in the past.

We must keep in mind that if we see a tightening of corporate profits in the future, it will only spell cut-backs and more unemployed workers. Tax breaks for the middle class can easily be marginalized if unemployment reaches the projected figure of 7 or even 8 percent by this time next year. Keeping businesses in the black might be the most important economic priority at hand given the current economic climate.

It is difficult for me to make a really compelling case for either tax plan because the truth of the matter is that neither candidate has made clear the extent of "take" in the give and take of their policy. Although Senator McCain is often criticized for possessing what Democrats call a "trickle down" approach to the economy, Senator Obama has not given any evidence

that increased taxation of the business sector will not have dire consequences in the job market and on main street, or even that his tax plan will have any substantial mitigating effects on the overall economic plight of the country.

I would like to end with a brief note on some of the other charges levied against Senator McCain that have alienated him from America's liberals. For one thing, the idea that Senator McCain "voted with Bush 90 percent of the time" (which, in a grave political blunder, actually came out of one of McCain's own rallies) is bogus.

President Bush is not a Senator — he does not vote in the Senate. The closest thing to "voting with Bush" that McCain could have done was voting with the Republican Party. And on that front, Senator McCain's record has proven to be one of the least partisan in the Senate. During his tenure, he has been ranked between 90th

and 70th of the 100 members of the Senate in the frequency of his party-line voting (his overall percentage was around 83 percent). Senator Obama's frequency was ranked 12th during his Senatorial term (88 percent party-line voting).

Also, to the charge that Senator McCain has supported the Bush deregulation of the financial sector that has flowered into the current economic crisis, I would cite his co-sponsorship of the 2005 Federal Housing Enterprise Regulatory Reform Act, which proposed a new federal agency to regulate the housing market. The Democratic 109th Congress voted the bill down, but the fact stands: Senator McCain actually recognized (at least to a certain extent) the growing instability in the housing market three years before it became one of America's most substantial problems.

The major issue that I still struggle with regarding Senator McCain's candidacy is this: would President McCain be the honest and insightful Senator of the past 25-some years or the staunchly-right-wing politician of his 2007-2008 presidential campaign? The latter may be easy to hate, Liberals, but be sure not to write off the former

By ANDREW SARTORIUS (VI)

America's image in the world is at a crossroads: as a result of perceived military failure in Iraq combined with the rise of China and India. Our nation no longer possesses the status as the sole world superpower that we held throughout the Cold War. Yet this is not to say that America has disappeared off the world scene; in fact, our nation still has a very important role to play in directing and influencing international politics. Foreign policy will play a crucial role in this year's presidential election. The next president will be saddled with the monumental task of reshaping and rebuilding America's reputation in the world.

With a few exceptions, John McCain's foreign policy is more nuanced than Barack Obama's as it takes into account the realities of the twenty-first century world. As much as I would like to believe Obama's idealized belief that the world's problems can be solved solely through rhetoric, let's face it: such a policy disappeared in 1914. The twentieth and the twenty-first centuries have been centuries of action and conflict. Organizations and nations that have wrung their hands and tried to talk it out have been thrown by the wayside. Now, I'm not a proponent of America involving itself in any more costly wars, but America can't rely solely on words, as Obama would have you believe, to navigate the treacherous waters of foreign affairs. Obama can use as many words as he wants, but ultimately,

he will be accountable to the American people when the next disastrous terrorist attack occurs in the United States.

Coming into the first debate, I was undecided. However, one of Barack Obama's responses in that debate immediately placed me in the McCain camp. Obama says that we should sit down at the discussion table without any preconditions with countries, such as Iran and Syria, which are known to fund and harbor terrorist organizations. How can we speak without preconditions with countries that are consciously trying to destroy our democratic way of life? Such a policy is akin to sitting down at a table with a

withdrawal would throw the entire Middle East into chaos since Al-Qaeda wants the United States to leave and would see withdrawal as a significant victory and motivation for future jihads. Also, unless Iraq is stable, the country will certainly fall under Iran's influence, undoing all our progress in the region.

Perhaps the most important battle has shifted to the Afghan and Pakistan borderlands. Here, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have been resurgent, targeting Pakistani civilians and American soldiers. Also, Osama bin Laden is still rumored to be hiding in the mountains between these two countries. Pakistan, an important ally,

has just undergone a change in government and is starting to question its alliance with the United States. Both candidates agree that Afghanistan poses serious problems for NATO and coalition forces. For once, Obama looks past his party's ideological views on war and says that Afghanistan is "the war

known killer who has a gun in his pocket: it would only encourage these countries to continue their practices. Look, I'm all for negotiating with rogue nations, but I agree with McCain when he says that if these countries want to talk with us and try to negotiate treaties, they must first be prepared to make some concessions.

In terms of the Iraq War, both candidates agree that troops should eventually be completely withdrawn. However, they differ greatly on the timetable of this withdrawal. Obama has called for a "responsible and phased 16-month reduction," while McCain has called for troops to remain in Iraq until "there is political reconciliation and economic revival and Iraqi forces can operate alone." While the liberal media would have you believe that the war in Iraq has been a disaster, significant progress has been made: the number of suicide bombings have significantly reduced over the past five years, and Iraqis are slowly beginning to resume their daily lives.

To leave in sixteen months, regardless of whether the job has been accomplished or not, would be irresponsible. We must stand firm until there are clear indications that the country can run itself and the scourge of Al-Qaeda has been removed. To set a specific date for

win." Both candidates support increasing the number of troops in Afghanistan. While Obama favors sending thousands more American troops, McCain has called for local Pakistani tribes of the borderlands to "fight foreign terrorists." While McCain's idea is an interesting one and probably the best solution, it has a dangerous historical precedent; during the Soviet-Afghan War, the United States supplied local tribes with supplies to repel the Soviets. These tribes, after expelling the Soviet Union, became the modern-day Taliban. Obama's plan is equally dangerous since it would require significant numbers of troops to be withdrawn from Iraq.

All in all, I believe the most important foreign policy theme in this year's election is to restore America's role as the world policeman. Europe has washed its hands of such a position, and the United Nations makes loud noises but rarely takes action. Ultimately, the question is not whether the United States will again become the world's sole superpower — the era of single superpowers and ideologies vanished with the end of the Cold War — but whether the United States will continue to participate in the world community and make the world a safer place.



Students Weigh Parents' Political Stances

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parents. "I tend to agree with my culture. Since I'm Colombian, [I'm] mostly Democratic."

Many teens are in the same political camp as their parents but have diverging views of the upcoming election.

"Although the members of my family are all conservative, we support different candidates," Andrew Weinstock (VI) said, "I'm for McCain while my parents favor Obama." Luckily, conflicting politics haven't created too much tension in the Weinstock household. "[Mom and Dad] might not like McCain, but they're proud that I've formed my own opinions and

that I'm sticking to the things in which I believe."

Sometimes disagreement between spouses complicates decision-making for young voters. "My mom is staunchly liberal, while my dad is conservative," Giancarlo Rizzato (VI) said. He was on his mother's side until the 2004 elections. "I realized that I had blindly supported Kerry without really understanding the issues. After that, I did some research and began to identify with my dad's more conservative views."

Meha Patel (VI) also used her own research to develop political views. "I happen to agree with my parents, but not because they're my family," she said.

Even though some students may feel torn by their

parents' political disagreements, diverse political views within the household can also be beneficial. Andrew Babbitt (VI) enjoys that his parents disagree over politics because he gets to see both sides of every debate. "Neither parent tries to impose his or her views on me, so I get a well-rounded understanding of all the issues," he said.

"I can make unbiased decisions and view things objectively because I see both ends of the arguments at home," agreed Will Stamatis (VI), who has a conservative father and liberal mother. Stamatis forgot to send in his registration but supports Obama.

Some families enjoy complete political harmony. Ned

Adriance (VI) agrees with the liberal views of his mother, father, and brother. "The liberalism of my family has definitely influenced me," he said.

Adriance cites the 2000 elections as an example of his family's influence over his political stance. "I was really upset when Al Gore lost. I didn't know much at all about politics, though, so I was probably just reacting to the emotions of the other members of my family."

It's not always the parents who affect their children's political views, however. "My older brother has definitely had the biggest influence. He's always been very liberal and I've always looked up to him," Adriance concludes.



Polls Indicate Moderation and Indecision Amongst Students

By NICK RICE (V)

It is not surprising that indecision complicates something like a political poll. The act of simply choosing one of two candidates, colors, or parties defines a simple two-dimensional plane ranging from left to right. The grandfather clock of the two party system lets its pendulum dangle as the liberals and conservatives scramble to shove the pendulum to each party's respective side, causing it to eternally and steadily swing back and forth in that bland, and boring, and monotonous fashion. Though boring and monotonous, this left versus right mentality is rather easy to measure and graph simply due to a majority rule.

The undecided provide a nice kick to this pendulum, sending it into a wild swing in all directions and breaking the aforementioned monotony while opening an entirely new dimension of views and opinions.

One question on the Record election poll, for example, inquired about the United States' national security policy. Fifty-five percent of Senator John McCain's supporters answered "undecided". This percentage is even greater than that of the people who were undecided on their candidate.

Twenty-two percent, the second largest percentage of McCain supporters, chose "redeployment of troops to Afghanistan", a policy actually supported by Senator Barack Obama.

Ironically, only sixteen percent of Obama supporters chose this answer. Instead, forty-eight percent of Obama supporters chose "full withdrawal", a policy favored by neither candidate.

Regarding the economy, forty-five percent of McCain supporters were, again, undecided. In this instance, twenty-nine percent of McCain supporters favored tax cuts for corporations, McCain's actual policy. However, twenty-six percent of McCain supporters still chose to "cut middle class taxes", a policy supported by Obama. Sixty-four percent of Obama supporters chose Obama's stance, twenty-nine

percent chose undecided, and seven percent chose McCain's stance.

The choices for the final poll question, regarding fuel economy were "cut oil company taxes", "tax oil company profits", or "undecided." Fifty-four percent of McCain supporters responded "undecided" to this question.

The decision to "cut oil company taxes" came second at twenty-five percent with Obama's stance behind by only four percent. Fifty-one percent of Obama supporters sided with Obama on this issue, forty percent were undecided, and nine percent sided with McCain.

I would like to think that the high number of students undecided on certain issues is an example of casting off the sense of party affiliation and turning to independent thought. However, that is not always the case. Truly independent thinkers may be prone to answer "undecided" when faced with the choice between the policies of just two candidates because they think beyond the simplified ideas of just two individuals. Alternatively, when a student circles Obama and responds as undecided on all issues, it seems evident that the student may have chosen Obama because he was affected by Obama's charismatic talk of change and hope.

Similarly, a student who supports McCain and responds as undecided on all issues may have been affected by advertising terms like "maverick." In addition to people who support a candidate while undecided on all issues, there are people who just answer undecided on everything. It would seem that this group of individuals simply don't care.

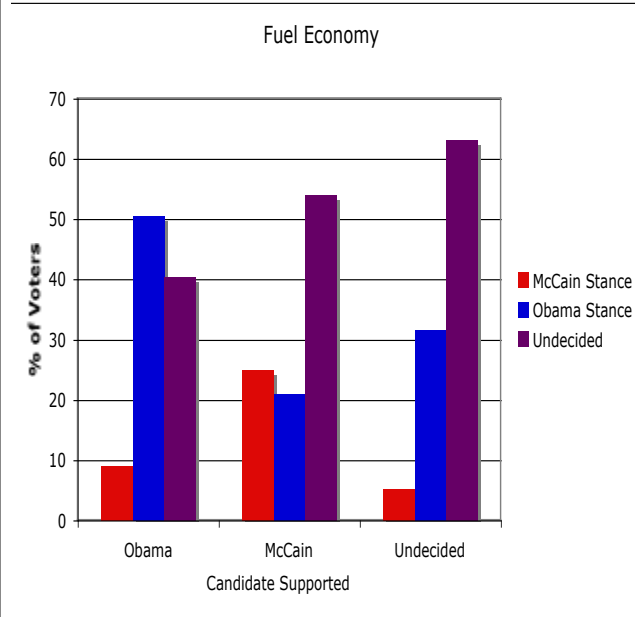
In other seemingly mismatched results, aside from those who were undecided about the candidates, twenty-two percent of McCain supporters supported Obama's stance of redeployment of troops to Afghanistan, while only seventeen percent favored McCain's policy.

Forty-eight percent of Obama supporters chose full withdrawal, which in reality is supported by neither candidate.

While these statistics seem to offer a chance to point fingers and accuse people of not knowing their candidate's policies, there is no reason that a McCain supporter can't openly support redeployment to Afghanistan, as there is no reason a person can't support Obama, but still support full withdrawal from the Middle East.

So what exactly does this overwhelmingly undecided poll show? That students are so apathetic and uninformed they are unable to form opinions on issues? Or that students are extremely informed and therefore unable to simplify their decision to just one of two choices? While I do hope for the latter, I'll have to get back to you on that one; I'm still undecided.

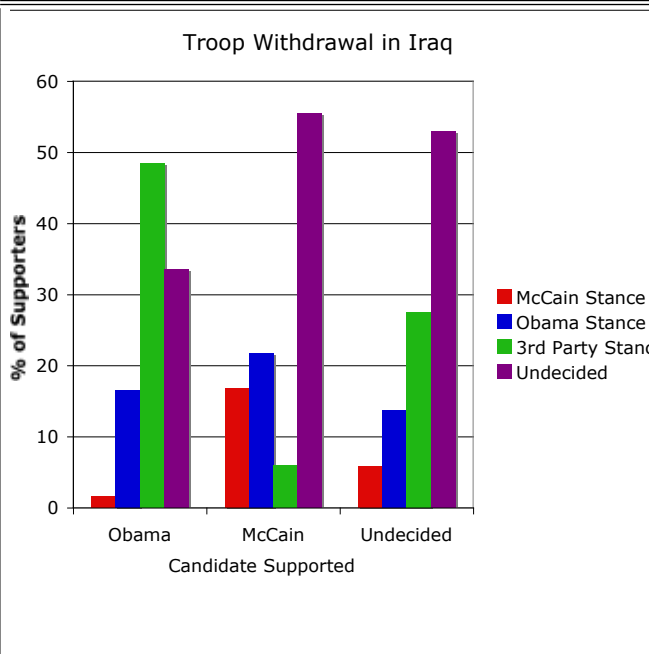
Students Agree With Candidates on Taxes, Split on Iraq



Cutting oil company taxes. According to CNN, McCain "opposes windfall profits tax on US oil companies." This is the position that is listed on the graphs as the "McCain Stance."

Taxing oil company profits. According to CNN, Obama "advocates a windfall profits tax on oil companies." This is the position that is listed on the graphs as the "Obama Stance."

Some additional suggestions and comments that were written in included taxing oil company profits to be invested in alternative sources, increasing the development of alternative energy sources, and lowering the gas prices.

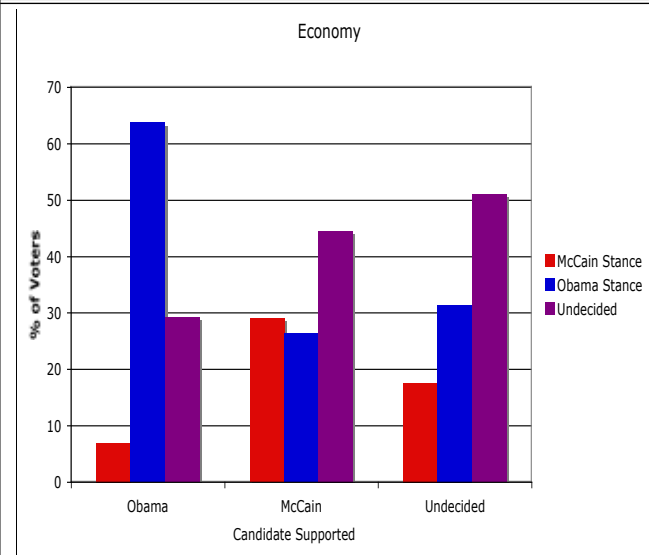


More troops is a general statement. More specifically, the position means supporting the surge and recognizing it as the most successful strategy. It also means recognizing that the only way to achieve success in Iraq is through additional troops and funding. Kori Schake, a senior policy advisor to Senator McCain, said that "General David Petraeus believes Iraq is the central front in the war on terror." This is the position that is listed on the graphs as the "McCain Stance."

Redeployment is different than complete withdrawal, because there would still be a residual force remaining in Iraq for at least two

years. It means recognizing Afghanistan as the military priority in the Middle East, and gradually transferring troops from Iraq to Afghanistan until both areas are stable militarily and politically. This is the position that is listed on the graph as the "Obama Stance."

Full withdrawal is the immediate withdrawal of all American troops from Iraq. It does not include any stipulations for troops in Afghanistan, nor is it related to the political and military status of Iraq and nearby regions. There is no major candidate that supports this position, so it is listed on the graph as the "3rd Party Stance."



Cutting corporate taxes means cutting the taxes of businesses to encourage economic development and eventual prosperity. It is based on the "trickle down" effect originally introduced to American politics by Republican President Ronald Reagan and rejects the theory that deregulation is the cause of the economic crisis. This is the position that is listed on the graphs as the "McCain Stance."

Cutting middle-class taxes entails lessening the

tax burden on Americans making \$250,000 or less a year and increasing taxes on the percentage of Americans who make more than \$250,000 a year. This is the position that is listed on the graphs as the "Obama Stance."

Some additional suggestions and comments that were written in included cutting small-business taxes, cutting government spending, cutting all taxes and putting money into circulation, and creating more job opportunities.

Word in the Hall: How Do You Get Your Information on Politics?



NICK CANAVAN (III)
"Does 'The Onion' count?"



MALVI HEMANI (IV)
"'NY Times' or 'CNN News', both online and TV."



NANCY ECKENTHAL (V)
"I usually watch the 11 o'clock news on channel 7 after 'Grey's Anatomy.' For Serious."



LOUIS SCHERMERHORN (VI)
"Jimmy Tilson, first period Econ."



MS. FUNG-KEE-FUNG (FACULTY)
"'NY Times,' NPR, PBS and Mr. Delman."