

# Voters' Experiences in 2008 and the Future of Engagement



A Public Agenda report  
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## Voters' Experiences In 2008 And The Future Of Engagement

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### Voters Had Positive Experience In 2008 Election, And Intend To Remain Active In Communities, Post- Election Survey Finds

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#### Concerns About Balloting Problems Persist, But Aren't Driven By Personal Experience

*New York City* – January 15, 2009 – Despite problems at the polls in 2000 and 2004, and fears that they would reoccur in the last election, the vast majority of Americans said they had a positive voting experience in 2008. Even more strikingly, citizens expressed strong enthusiasm about being engaged in their communities, according to a Public Agenda survey of voters conducted immediately following the presidential election.

"Given the historic nature of the recent presidential election, we thought that it would be enlightening to get a sense of what this civic experience meant for voters," Ruth Wooden, president of Public Agenda, said. "Our Voter Experience Survey did exactly that, suggesting that Americans feel a strengthened sense of engagement with public life."

The survey examined American voters' views about the voting process and how those experiences affect their role as citizens and their engagement in their communities. Many observers believe that a troubled election system can undermine voter turnout, views of electoral legitimacy, and civic participation in general. This survey, fielded in the weeks following the presidential election, attempted to see what kinds of reactions people had to the voting experience.

Stephen B. Heintz, president of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, said, "At a time when the President-elect is calling for 'active citizenship' to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we were especially heartened by the fact that Public Agenda's survey emphatically indicated that voters overall had a high level of engagement and are primed for further civic involvement."

Conducted by Public Agenda, a non-partisan, nonprofit organization devoted to public opinion and public policy, and funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the survey did reveal significant doubts about the legitimacy of the election system, even though most people say their own experience was positive.

The results of the survey are based on 1,485 telephone interviews conducted with a national random sample of adults aged 18 and older. It was conducted between November 5 and November 16. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

### **Voting Experience Overwhelmingly Positive**

The vast majority of voters were happy with their voting experience:

- 9 in 10 said that their voting experience was positive and that poll workers did a good job overall
- Very few reported long lines, technical problems or improper practices at their polling places
- 95% said they were glad they spent the time voting, no matter how long the lines
- Polling places got good marks compared to other institutions where people transact business in person. More people (79%) rate their polling place as “very-organized” than give good marks to their local bank (78%), post office (65%), Department of Motor Vehicles (54%) or fast food franchise (35%)
- 72% said that their voting experience was better than the last time they voted

### **Low-Income Voters More Concerned**

Although low-income voters were more likely to say they were excited about voting, they expressed more concerns about their polling place:

- 79% of low-income voters said they were excited about voting, compared with 63% of upper-income voters.
- More low-income voters (18%) say poll workers were not able to answer questions compared to 7% of upper-income voters.

And more low-income voters (13%) say the results from their polling places may not be accurate compared to 6% of upper-income voters. Not surprisingly, satisfaction with the experience seems partly driven by whether their candidate won. While only 9% reported a negative experience, 50% of those were McCain voters, compared to 26% Obama voters.

### **Concerns About Legitimacy of Process Persist**

Nevertheless, voters expressed concerns about the legitimacy of the election system. This seems, however, to be driven more by perceptions and media coverage, rather than personal experience at their own polling place:

- Only 8% are worried about the accuracy of the results at their polling place
- But 62% are concerned there were organized efforts to register people who weren't eligible
- 55% are concerned some people who are registered may not have been allowed to vote
- 53% are concerned that some people were not allowed to register
- 51% are concerned there were organized efforts to discourage voting among some groups



## **Vast Majority Had Strong Involvement with the Election**

Voters said they were highly involved with election and valued the act of voting:

- 87% say they feel like they are a part of democracy when they vote
- 79% say talked about the issues that came up during the election
- 73% say their vote made a difference in this election
- 71% say they feel guilty when they don't vote
- 65% say they were more excited about **voting in** this election than other elections

## **Engaged Citizens Have Unique Traits**

Engaged citizens—those who not only vote, but also are involved in local affairs apart from elections—had several unique characteristics when compared to those who only vote.

In fact, 61% of our sample of voters indicated that they volunteered on a frequent basis in the past year; participated in civic organizations, such as the PTA, Rotary Club, or a neighborhood association; or attended local meetings of organizations, such as the school board meetings or city council.

Nine in 10 (89%) of these engaged citizens say they vote in every election, including local ones, compared with 75% of non-engaged voting citizens.

## **Strong Interest in Future Civic Engagement**

Looking ahead:

- 61% of all voters say they will "give as much or more" to charity over the next year
- 59% say they will participate in community organizations "as much or more" as they did this past year
- 53% say they will be "as much or more" active in political campaigns over the next few years.

## **African American and McCain Voters Primed for Further Engagement**

Surveys often find that people overstate their willingness to do "good deeds," and this "halo effect" may be stronger in this case because of enthusiasm surrounding the election of the nation's first black president. "Nevertheless, we find it highly significant that two groups that had significantly different views of the outcome, African Americans and McCain voters, both report a high willingness to engage in their communities," Wooden said. "African Americans were clearly energized by the results—and McCain voters, on the whole, were not deterred. Both seem especially primed for further civic engagement."

- 80% of African Americans agree that they'll participate as much or more in community activities next year, compared with 57% of whites

- 74% of African Americans agree that they'll give as much or more to charity next year, compared with 59% of whites
- 74% of African Americans agree that they'll be as active in political campaigns next year, compared with 50% of whites
- 62% of McCain supporters say they will give to charity
- 60% of McCain voters say they will participate in local organizations
- 52% say they will be active in political campaigns

### **Early Voting Driven by Convenience, Not Dissatisfaction**

When it comes to the phenomenon of voters who vote early, the survey found that people did so primarily for convenience (86%) rather than out of a sense of necessity, frustration or a previous bad experience. The other significant factor for voting early was that people (74%) said it was because they had already made up their mind.

Given that large numbers of voters were engaged during the campaign; they had a good voting experience; and they report their intention to stay engaged next year. One of the major and timely implications of the survey is that there currently is a fertile environment and genuine opportunity for civic engagement.

The complete survey results are available at <http://www.publicagenda.org/reports/the-voting-experience>.

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Public Agenda, [www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org), is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public opinion research and civic engagement organization whose mission is to close the gaps between leaders and the public. Public Agenda is well respected for its influential public opinion polls, balanced citizen education materials and community-based engagement initiatives.

## Complete Survey Results

The results of this study are based on 1,485 telephone interviews conducted with a national random sample of adults aged 18 and older. It was conducted between November 5 and November 16. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

Results of less than 0.5 are signified by an asterisk (\*). Results of zero are signified by a dash (-). Responses may not always total 100% due to rounding. Combining answer categories may produce slight discrepancies between the numbers in these survey results and numbers in the report.

	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
<b>2</b>	<b>Did you vote in person on November 4, 2008?</b>				
Yes	80	78	88	78	82
No	20	22	12	22	18
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	-	-	-
<b>3</b>	<b>Did you vote by mail (such as an absentee ballot), or vote in person before November 4, 2008?</b>				
<i>Base: Did not vote in person on November 4 (n=345)</i>					
Vote by mail	63	66	46	58	72
Vote in person	36	34	54	41	28
[VOL] Don't know	*	-	-	1	-
<b>4</b>	<b>How did you cast your vote? Was it...</b>				
<i>Base: Those who voted in person (n=1,260)</i>					
A paper ballot using a pencil or pen	51	53	35	46	56
A paper punch card ballot	3	2	2	3	4
Recorded on a computer screen	26	25	41	31	20
Mechanical voting machine, or	19	19	21	19	18
Something else	1	1	1	1	1
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	-	*	1
<b>5</b>	<b>Was this your first time voting?</b>				
Yes	11	10	15	9	14
No	89	90	85	91	86
[VOL] Don't know	-	-	-	-	-
<b>6</b>	<b>Thinking about the days leading up to when you voted, Please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the following: (SCRAMBLED)</b>				
<b>6a</b>	<b>I talked a lot about the issues that came up during the Presidential campaign with people I know</b>				
Agree strongly	55	54	64	62	47
Agree somewhat	24	25	18	22	28
Neither agree nor disagree	6	6	5	4	7
Disagree somewhat	9	9	8	8	10
Disagree strongly	5	5	2	4	6
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	2	*	1
<b>6b</b>	<b>I was more excited about voting this year than in previous elections</b>				
Agree strongly	49	43	86	49	49
Agree somewhat	15	18	6	16	15

	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
Neither agree nor disagree	10	11	2	11	8
Disagree somewhat	13	15	2	13	13
Disagree strongly	11	12	4	10	13
[VOL] Don't know	1	*	-	*	1
<b>6c</b> There was less negative campaigning this year than in previous elections					
Agree strongly	12	11	20	9	16
Agree somewhat	17	15	26	18	16
Neither agree nor disagree	9	9	6	10	7
Disagree somewhat	21	23	13	22	20
Disagree strongly	38	39	32	39	38
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	3	2	3
<b>7</b> Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right: (ROTATE)					
Overall, the campaign process helped you sort through the issues and decide who you wanted to vote for [OR]	59	57	82	59	60
Overall, the campaign process made it harder to sort through the issues and decide who you wanted to vote for	32	36	9	34	30
[VOL] Don't know	7	6	7	7	8
<b>8</b> We'd like to know how well -organized you find different places that you visit. For example, overall how organized would you say... (SCRAMBLED) <i>Base: Those who voted in person (n=1,260)</i>					
<b>8a</b> The post office was the last time you mailed a letter or package there					
Very organized	65	67	64	67	61
Somewhat organized	25	22	25	25	25
Not very organized	5	5	2	4	5
Not at all organized	3	2	6	2	3
[VOL] Never done this	2	2	1	1	3
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	2	1	2
<b>8b</b> Your local bank the last time you made a deposit or withdrawal					
Very organized	78	79	75	80	76
Somewhat organized	14	15	12	14	15
Not very organized	1	1	-	1	1
Not at all organized	1	1	2	1	1
[VOL] Never done this	3	2	8	2	4
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	2	2	2
<b>8c</b> Your closest Department of Motor Vehicles the last time you had your license renewed or changed					
Very organized	54	52	67	57	50
Somewhat organized	30	31	23	28	33
Not very organized	6	7	2	6	7
Not at all organized	5	6	3	5	5
[VOL] Never done this	1	1	3	1	2
[VOL] Don't know	3	3	*	2	3
<b>8d</b> Your local McDonald's, Burger King or other fast food restaurant the last time you ordered food there					
Very organized	35	35	40	34	36
Somewhat organized	39	39	36	41	37
Not very organized	9	9	7	9	9
Not at all organized	5	5	9	6	4
[VOL] Never done this	7	8	3	6	8
[VOL] Don't know	4	4	6	4	5

	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
<b>8e The polling place where you voted in this last election</b>					
Very organized	79	80	80	81	75
Somewhat organized	16	16	14	14	18
Not very organized	3	3	3	3	4
Not at all organized	1	1	3	1	1
[VOL] Never done this	*	*	-	*	*
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	-	*	*
<b>9 How would you rate your overall voting experience this year? Would you say it was...?</b>					
Mostly positive	69	67	86	71	67
Somewhat positive	20	22	11	18	23
Somewhat negative	5	6	1	4	6
Mostly negative	4	3	2	4	2
[VOL] Don't know	2	1	*	1	2
<b>10 Overall would you say your experience voting this year was a better experience or a worse experience than the last time you voted? Base: Voted previously (n=1,423)</b>					
Much better	32	27	70	33	31
Somewhat better	40	44	19	39	41
Somewhat worse	11	12	1	11	11
Much worse	4	4	2	5	2
[VOL] Don't know	12	12	6	11	13
<b>11 I'm going to read two phrases, for each one please tell me which one comes closer to the experience you had in your polling place when voting this year, even if neither is exactly right: (SCRAMBLED) Base: Voted in person (n=1,260)</b>					
<b>11a Inviting or uninviting</b>					
Inviting	89	89	96	90	88
uninviting	8	8	3	7	8
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	1	2	2
<b>11b Safe or unsafe</b>					
safe	99	99	100	99	98
unsafe	1	1	-	*	1
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	-	1	*
<b>11c Frustrating or not frustrating</b>					
frustrating	11	10	12	14	9
not frustrating	87	89	87	85	90
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	-	1	1
<b>11d Took too long or did not take too long</b>					
took too long	12	11	14	13	10
did not take too long	87	89	86	86	89
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	*	*	*
<b>11f Easy to get to or difficult to get to</b>					
easy to get to	97	97	99	98	95
difficult to get to	3	2	1	2	4
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	-	*	*



	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
<p>Now think about the experience you had when you went to vote. Please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the following... (SCRAMBLED) <i>Base: Voted in person (n=1,260)</i></p>					
12a	The people working at my polling place did a good job overall				
	84	84	88	84	83
	11	11	6	11	11
	1	1	2	1	2
	2	2	1	2	1
	1	1	2	1	2
	1	*	-	*	1
12b	Poll workers could not answer people's questions				
	6	5	11	6	6
	5	4	4	3	6
	6	7	2	5	8
	13	11	21	13	14
	64	66	60	68	59
	5	5	3	4	6
12c	I think the poll workers were biased for one of the candidates				
	5	3	10	5	5
	2	3	2	3	1
	5	4	6	5	5
	8	7	14	10	6
	77	80	65	75	79
	2	2	4	2	2
12d	I had to wait in line way too long				
	8	7	13	10	6
	4	4	6	4	4
	2	2	3	1	3
	8	7	12	10	6
	76	79	65	74	79
	1	1	1	1	1
12e	I had to wait outside for a while				
	11	8	28	14	6
	5	5	6	5	5
	1	1	2	1	1
	5	4	7	3	7
	76	81	54	75	78
	1	1	2	1	1
12f	I had a hard time finding parking at my polling place				
	5	5	9	6	4
	6	6	1	7	5
	4	3	5	3	5
	9	10	6	7	11
	74	75	75	75	72
	2	1	3	2	1
12g	I think some people at my polling place were not allowed to vote even though they were eligible				
	1	1	3	2	*
	4	4	4	5	2
	7	8	4	8	7
	8	8	9	8	7
	71	71	70	71	71

	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
[VOL] Don't know	9	8	9	6	12
<b>12h I think people at my polling place who may not have been eligible were allowed to vote</b>					
Agree strongly	4	4	5	5	3
Agree somewhat	3	3	2	4	2
Neither agree nor disagree	8	9	4	7	10
Disagree somewhat	9	9	11	7	11
Disagree strongly	66	65	73	68	64
[VOL] Don't know	9	9	4	9	8
<b>12i I am worried that the results from MY polling place may not have been accurate</b>					
Agree strongly	4	3	6	4	3
Agree somewhat	4	4	2	5	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3	3	2	2	3
Disagree somewhat	11	11	16	10	11
Disagree strongly	77	78	73	76	77
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	1	1	2
<b>12j I knew exactly where my polling place was</b>					
Agree strongly	89	88	96	91	86
Agree somewhat	5	5	-	4	5
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1	-	1	1
Disagree somewhat	3	4	3	2	5
Disagree strongly	2	2	1	2	1
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	-	*	1
<b>13 Did a poll worker question you about whether you were registered to vote or not?</b>					
Yes	34	33	36	34	34
No	62	64	62	64	61
[VOL] Don't know	3	3	2	2	4
<b>14 Why did you vote early or by absentee ballot? For each that I read please tell me if it was a reason or not: (SCRAMBLED)</b> <i>Base: Did not vote in person on November 4 (n=345)</i>					
<b>14a Had an unpleasant experience at the polls last time</b>					
Yes, is a reason	4	3	8	4	3
No is not a reason	93	93	92	92	96
[VOL] Don't know	3	3	-	4	2
<b>14b It's too difficult for me to vote on a week day because of my job, because of child care or for other reasons</b>					
Yes, is a reason	30	31	10	30	31
No is not a reason	67	66	90	70	63
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	-	1	5
<b>14c I knew my mind was made up on who to vote for</b>					
Yes, is a reason	74	73	70	81	64
No is not a reason	25	26	30	19	34
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	-	*	2
<b>14d Someone recommended this to me</b>					
Yes, is a reason	25	23	33	23	27
No is not a reason	73	75	67	76	67
[VOL] Don't know	2	3	-	-	6
<b>14e It was just more convenient this way</b>					
Yes, is a reason	86	84	95	87	84
No is not a reason	13	14	5	12	14
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	-	1	2

	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
<b>14f I was out of town</b>					
Yes, is a reason	18	17	12	20	15
No is not a reason	81	82	88	80	83
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	-	-	2
<b>14g It would be physically difficult to vote in person</b>					
Yes, is a reason	24	26	9	22	29
No is not a reason	73	72	83	77	67
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	8	1	3
<b>14h Wanted to make sure my vote was counted</b>					
Yes, is a reason	57	55	68	61	50
No is not a reason	41	43	30	37	47
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	2	2	3
<b>15 In the next Presidential election do you think you will vote on Election Day, vote early or will you probably not vote at all?</b>					
Vote on Election Day	60	62	48	63	57
Vote early	34	33	48	32	35
Not vote at all	2	1	2	1	2
[VOL] Don't know	4	4	2	4	5
<b>16 Please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the following... (SCRAMBLED)</b>					
<b>16a I believe my vote made a difference in this election</b>					
Agree strongly	54	50	86	56	51
Agree somewhat	19	21	9	19	20
Neither agree nor disagree	6	6	*	4	7
Disagree somewhat	9	10	*	9	9
Disagree strongly	11	12	4	11	10
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	*	*	2
<b>16b Overall, I am happy I spent the time voting</b>					
Agree strongly	86	88	78	91	79
Agree somewhat	9	8	6	6	13
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1	1	1	2
Disagree somewhat	2	1	8	2	2
Disagree strongly	2	1	6	1	3
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	1	*	*
<b>16c I found my ballot to be difficult to understand</b>					
Agree strongly	3	3	4	3	2
Agree somewhat	7	7	5	7	7
Neither agree nor disagree	2	2	-	2	1
Disagree somewhat	14	15	9	13	16
Disagree strongly	73	73	82	75	71
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	-	*	1
<b>16d I feel like I am part of a democracy when I vote</b>					
Agree strongly	71	71	79	74	66
Agree somewhat	16	17	10	16	17
Neither agree nor disagree	4	3	1	2	6
Disagree somewhat	4	4	3	4	5
Disagree strongly	3	3	6	2	4
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	*	1	1
<b>16e I feel guilty when I don't vote</b>					
Agree strongly	54	53	64	56	51
Agree somewhat	17	19	4	18	16
Neither agree nor disagree	6	6	3	3	5
Disagree somewhat	8	8	7	6	11

	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
Disagree strongly	10	9	20	9	12
[VOL] Don't know	4	4	2	5	3
<b>16f I don't really think they have done nearly enough to make voting convenient for people who have to work or have other obligations.</b>					
Agree strongly	14	13	20	15	14
Agree somewhat	13	12	14	15	11
Neither agree nor disagree	5	6	2	2	9
Disagree somewhat	18	20	7	15	23
Disagree strongly	47	47	54	52	41
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	2	2	2
<b>16g I like voting in person because I feel more like part of the community</b>					
Agree strongly	60	58	77	60	61
Agree somewhat	17	18	7	18	15
Neither agree nor disagree	8	8	2	8	7
Disagree somewhat	7	7	9	8	7
Disagree strongly	6	7	4	5	7
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	1	1	3
<b>16h I don't really think they have done nearly enough to make sure that votes are collected and counted accurately.</b>					
Agree strongly	15	13	24	14	15
Agree somewhat	12	13	10	14	10
Neither agree nor disagree	9	10	7	7	13
Disagree somewhat	20	21	18	21	19
Disagree strongly	39	39	35	40	37
[VOL] Don't know	5	4	6	4	5
<b>16i I try to vote in every election, including local elections</b>					
Agree strongly	70	72	66	77	61
Agree somewhat	14	11	23	12	15
Neither agree nor disagree	4	4	1	3	4
Disagree somewhat	7	7	4	5	10
Disagree strongly	5	5	4	2	9
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	2	*	*
<b>17 Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right: (ROTATE)</b>					
I think we need to do as much as we can to get everyone to vote [OR]	67	64	81	65	69
If some people aren't interested enough to vote, they might not make such a good decision anyway	29	32	16	31	28
[VOL] Don't know	4	4	3	4	2
<b>18 How concerned are you that the following may have happened in the 2008 Presidential election, even if it did not happen to you. Would you say...? (SCRAMBLE ITEMS a-f; ITEM g ALWAYS LAST)</b>					
<b>18a There may have been human error in counting the votes</b>					
Very concerned	27	25	43	26	29
Somewhat concerned	29	31	23	33	25
Not too concerned	21	23	8	19	22
Not at all concerned	20	20	25	20	21
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	1	2	1
<b>18b Some people who are registered to vote may not have been allowed to vote</b>					
Very concerned	36	34	50	37	34
Somewhat concerned	20	20	16	19	20



	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
Not too concerned	16	18	2	16	15
Not at all concerned	25	24	28	26	25
[VOL] Don't know	3	3	3	2	4
<b>18c Some people were not allowed to register to vote</b>					
Very concerned	33	31	51	35	30
Somewhat concerned	20	21	14	18	22
Not too concerned	17	18	6	16	17
Not at all concerned	24	24	25	26	22
[VOL] Don't know	6	5	4	4	7
<b>18d The voting machines were faulty</b>					
Very concerned	25	23	41	26	25
Somewhat concerned	17	19	7	19	15
Not too concerned	18	18	20	18	19
Not at all concerned	35	36	30	35	37
[VOL] Don't know	3	4	2	3	3
<b>18e There were organized systemic efforts to discourage voting among some groups</b>					
Very concerned	36	33	54	38	32
Somewhat concerned	15	16	10	15	16
Not too concerned	17	19	8	16	18
Not at all concerned	28	28	26	27	30
[VOL] Don't know	3	3	3	3	3
<b>18f There were organized, systematic efforts to register people who weren't eligible</b>					
Very concerned	39	39	39	40	38
Somewhat concerned	23	25	15	22	24
Not too concerned	16	15	24	17	14
Not at all concerned	17	16	20	16	19
[VOL] Don't know	4	4	2	4	5
<b>18g That Barack Obama really did not win this election</b>					
Very concerned	22	19	47	19	26
Somewhat concerned	5	6	2	6	5
Not too concerned	10	11	3	10	10
Not at all concerned	58	59	47	60	54
[VOL] Don't know	3	3	1	3	4
<b>19 Which comes closer to your own view, even if none is exactly right: (ROTATE)</b>					
The way the election process was handled in my district this year gives me more confidence in how my local government does business	25	23	42	25	25
The way the election process was handled in my district this year gives me less confidence in how my local government does business	8	7	12	10	7
The way the election process was handled in my district this year does not change how I view my local government	63	67	40	62	65
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	6	3	3
<b>20 Please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the following. (SCRAMBLED)</b>					
<b>20a It is important to stay informed about issues in my community</b>					
Agree strongly	83	84	85	88	76
Agree somewhat	13	13	9	10	17
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1	3	1	2
Disagree somewhat	1	1	1	*	2
Disagree strongly	1	1	1	*	2
[VOL] Don't know	1	*	1	*	1

	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
<b>20b I intend to follow national news next year as much or more as I did during the campaign</b>					
Agree strongly	54	53	59	57	50
Agree somewhat	25	25	25	22	28
Neither agree nor disagree	9	9	8	10	8
Disagree somewhat	6	7	3	5	8
Disagree strongly	6	5	5	6	4
[VOL] Don't know	1	*	*	*	1
<b>20c I intend to participate in community activities as much or more next year, such as in the PTA, with my church or synagogue, my block association, or with organizations like the rotary club, more than I did this year</b>					
Agree strongly	32	28	62	40	21
Agree somewhat	27	29	18	30	23
Neither agree nor disagree	13	14	4	12	15
Disagree somewhat	14	15	5	10	19
Disagree strongly	12	12	10	6	19
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	*	2	2
<b>20d I plan on giving as much or more to charity next year</b>					
Agree strongly	34	33	44	40	27
Agree somewhat	27	26	30	29	25
Neither agree nor disagree	16	17	11	14	18
Disagree somewhat	12	13	8	9	15
Disagree strongly	8	9	6	6	12
[VOL] Don't know	2	2	-	2	2
<b>20e I plan on being as or more active in political campaigns over the next few years</b>					
Agree strongly	31	29	44	38	20
Agree somewhat	22	20	30	24	20
Neither agree nor disagree	16	18	12	14	19
Disagree somewhat	15	17	5	12	20
Disagree strongly	14	14	9	10	18
[VOL] Don't know	2	1	-	1	2
<b>21 How many times would you say you have volunteered in the past year, either for a campaign, a political cause, with your place of worship, or in any other manner. Would you say...?</b>					
Not at all	36	37	38	16	62
A few times in the past year, or	35	36	32	34	36
On a frequent basis	28	27	30	49	-
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	-	1	1
<b>22 Last year did you give any money to charity, including your place of worship or not?</b>					
Yes	86	87	86	92	79
No	13	13	13	8	19
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	1	*	1
<b>23 Was the total that you gave last year more or less than \$300? Base: Gave money last year (n=1,348)</b>					
More	66	68	57	72	58
Less	29	28	42	23	39
[VOL] Don't know	3	2	2	3	2
<b>24 Last year did you give any money to a political campaign, party or cause?</b>					
Yes	20	21	14	26	12
No	79	78	86	73	87
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	*	*	*

	Total (n=1,485) %	White (n=1,275) %	African- American (n=108) %	Engaged (n=903) %	Not Engaged (n=582) %
25 Last year did you participate in any organizations like the PTA, rotary club, neighborhood association or to a political club or not?					
Yes	34	34	29	59	-
No	65	65	71	40	98
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	*	*	*
26 Last year, were you active in a church, synagogue or other faith-based organization or not?					
Yes	57	58	62	63	49
No	41	42	37	36	49
[VOL] Don't know	1	*	-	1	*
27 Last year, did you attend any local meetings like school board or city council meetings					
Yes	36	35	41	63	-
No	64	65	58	37	99
[VOL] Don't know	*	*	*	*	*
28 Which comes closer to your view? <i>Base: Voted previously (n=1,423)</i>					
I regularly vote in elections, including non-presidential elections	75	77	68	81	67
I regularly vote, though usually in presidential elections	17	15	23	15	20
I vote, but not regularly	8	7	8	4	12
[VOL] Don't know	1	*	1	*	2
29 In the 2008 election who did you vote for President? Did you vote for...?					
John McCain	35	41	3	38	31
Barack Obama	50	43	93	47	54
Someone else	4	4	1	4	3
[VOL] Don't know	1	1	*	1	1

## Demographics

	Total (n=1,485) %
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	48
Female	52
<b>Age</b>	
18-24	10
25-34	17
35-44	18
45-54	21
55-64	16
65-74	9
75 or older	7
Refused	1
<b>Level of education</b>	
Less than High School	10
High School Graduate	25
Some College/Vocational	33
College Graduate	20
Post-Graduate	10
Refused/Don't know	2
<b>Estimated Income for 2007</b>	
Less than \$15,000	8
\$15,000 to \$29,999	14
\$30,000 to \$49,999	16

	Total (n=1,485) %
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12
\$100,000 or more	19
Refused	10
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White/Caucasian	68
Black/African American	11
Hispanic/Spanish/Latino	13
Other	4
Refused	3
<b>Region</b>	
West	24
North Central	23
Northeast	17
South	36



**Public Agenda is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research and public engagement organization.**

Here are some other resources we'd like to recommend to other participants in The National Civic Summit:

\* The Citizen's Survival Kit

<http://www.publicagenda.org/citizen/electionguides>

Guides to key facts, public opinion, and possible approaches to some of the most controversial public policy issues

\* Publications from the Center for Advances on Public Engagement (CAPE)

<http://www.publicagenda.org/cape/#CAPEworkingpaper>

Resources for professionals in the public engagement field, including best practices both in person and online, all available for download.

\* Case Studies in Public Engagement

<http://www.publicagenda.org/publicengagement/case-studies-list>

Some of our experiences in the field with public engagement and framing for engagement and deliberation.

<http://www.PublicAgenda.org>

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