

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**October 15, 2008**

## **Americans' Confidence in Their Leaders Declines Sharply**

*Most agree on basic aspects of presidential leadership,  
but candidate preferences reveal divisions*

**Cambridge, MA**—80% of Americans believe that the U.S. faces a leadership crisis today—up from 77% in 2007 and 65% in 2005—according to poll results just released by the **Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School** and the **Merriman River Group**.

Many Americans also agree that they are not getting the leadership they need from President Bush and his advisers. 60% say they have *not much* or *no* confidence in the leadership of the executive branch, up from 49% last year.

Despite this lack of confidence in presidential leadership, the poll results reveal important points of agreement on how the next president should lead. Moreover, Americans place great importance on the 2008 election: 77% believe it matters a great deal for the future of the country, up from 65% a year ago.

“We hear a lot about deep political divides in this country, but this poll shows that Americans have clear ideas about the kind of leadership they expect from their presidents,” said David Gergen, Director of the Center for Public Leadership.

The poll asked a demographically representative sample of 997 U.S. citizens (margin of error  $\pm 3.1\%$ ) to choose between alternate conceptions of good presidential leadership. Many basic aspects of presidential leadership, such as building alliances and preserving checks and balances, are favored by a majority of Americans. For example:

- 72% say presidents should use the military only to defend America and react to enemy attacks
- 71% say presidents should share power equally with Congress and the Supreme Court
- 64% say presidents should make decisions based on fairness
- 56% say foreign policy should focus on building alliances
- 55% say they prefer presidents who are never willing to be unethical or bend the rules.

**-more-**

The poll also revealed some key differences in the facets of presidential leadership favored by supporters of John McCain and Barack Obama. “These core debates about presidential leadership give us some clues about how the candidates’ leadership profiles attract supporters,” notes the study’s lead author, Seth Rosenthal.

“McCain supporters have a general preference for presidents who act as independent moral agents and focus on the country’s safety and strength,” noted Rosenthal. “In contrast, Obama supporters seem to prefer practical presidents whose decisions are more directly responsive to Americans’ opinions and needs.” For instance, when asked to choose between alternate conceptions of presidential leadership:

- 62% of McCain supporters say presidents should be willing to offend people and make enemies when necessary, while 61% of Obama supporters prefer that presidents always be respectful and diplomatic
- 60% of McCain supporters say presidents should lead based on moral beliefs about what is right and wrong, while 52% of Obama supporters counter that presidential leadership based on practical beliefs about what works and doesn’t work is more important.
- 58% of McCain supporters say presidents should protect the public’s safety, even if it infringes on their freedom, while 49% of Obama supporters believe that presidents should protect the public’s freedom, even if it infringes on their safety
- 40% of McCain supporters want presidents to reduce the government’s power to allow Americans to succeed and fail on their own, a sentiment with which only 15% of Obama supporters agree

Moreover,

- 70% of Obama supporters want presidents to keep religious faith a personal or private matter, while 54% of McCain supporters prefer that presidents express their religious faith in public
- 64% of Obama supporters say presidents should do what the American people think is right, while 50% of McCain supporters want presidents to do what they themselves think is right
- 63% of Obama supporters want presidents to ensure that America is respected for its fairness, while 53% of McCain supporters say it’s more important for presidents to ensure that America is respected for its strength
- 63% of Obama supporters say that presidents should focus on uniting people, while McCain supporters are about equally split on whether a president should focus on uniting people or on accomplishing goals, even if it divides people.

**-more-**

## **Crisis in Confidence**

The crisis in confidence in America's leaders is clearly reflected in the *National Leadership Index 2008*, which presents the public's confidence in the leaders of multiple sectors of society. From 2007 to 2008, many sectors experienced their steepest annual declines in confidence since the inception of the *National Leadership Index* in 2005. Among the survey's key findings:

- Confidence in the leaders of seven sectors—business, the Executive Branch, Congress, religious, educational, the Supreme Court, and state government—fell more sharply in the past year than ever before
- Confidence in business leaders dropped further than did confidence in leaders of any other sector
- Confidence in the Executive Branch and educational leaders has declined for three years in a row
- The only sectors in which Americans have more than a moderate amount of confidence are military and medical leadership
- Confidence held steady from 2007 for military, medical, nonprofit & charitable, and local government leaders
- For the third year in a row, confidence in leaders has not increased for any sector.

However, Americans may see some light at the end of the tunnel. A plurality, 39%, believe that things will be better after the 2008 election, while only 7% believe things will be worse.

“The American people are experiencing tremendous anxiety at the uncertain state of the nation, and they're holding those at the top responsible,” said Todd Pittinsky, Research Director at the Center for Public Leadership. “The next president will face significant challenges. And one of the most important will be to take the lead in restoring Americans' confidence.”

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### **About the Center for Public Leadership**

Established in 2000 through a generous gift from the Wexner Foundation, the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard Kennedy School provides cutting-edge teaching and research as well as hands-on training in the skills of leadership for people in government, nonprofits, and business. For more information, go to: [www.hks.harvard.edu/leadership](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/leadership)

### **About the Merriman River Group**

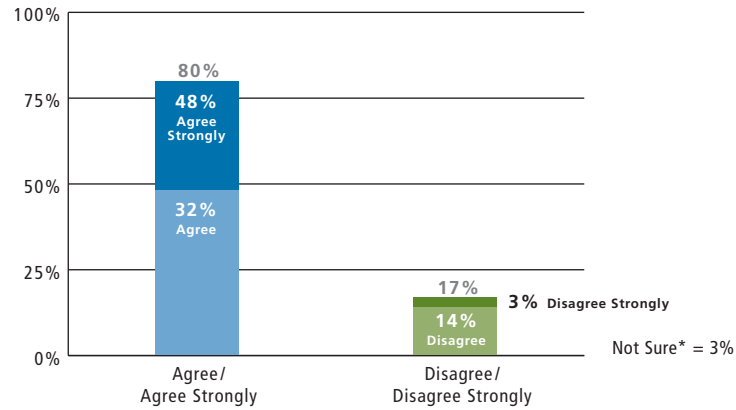
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# CONFIDENCE IN LEADERSHIP 2008

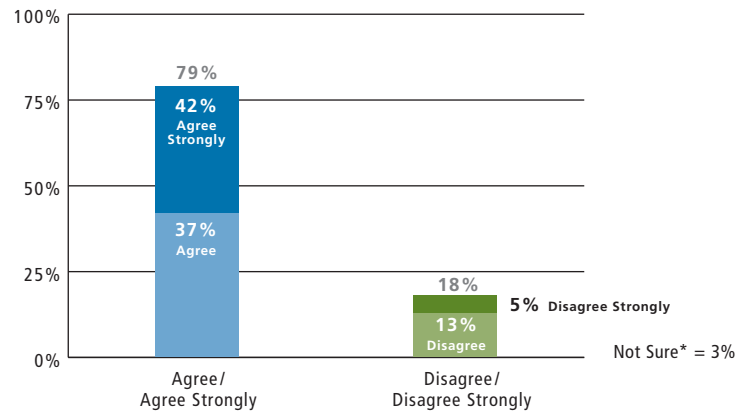
## Americans have a crisis of confidence in their leaders

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

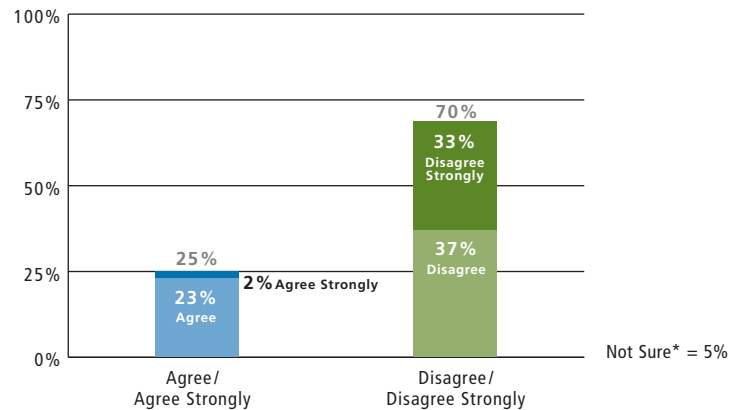
*We have a leadership crisis in the country today*



*Unless we get better leaders, the United States will decline as a nation*



*Overall, our country's leaders are effective and do a good job*

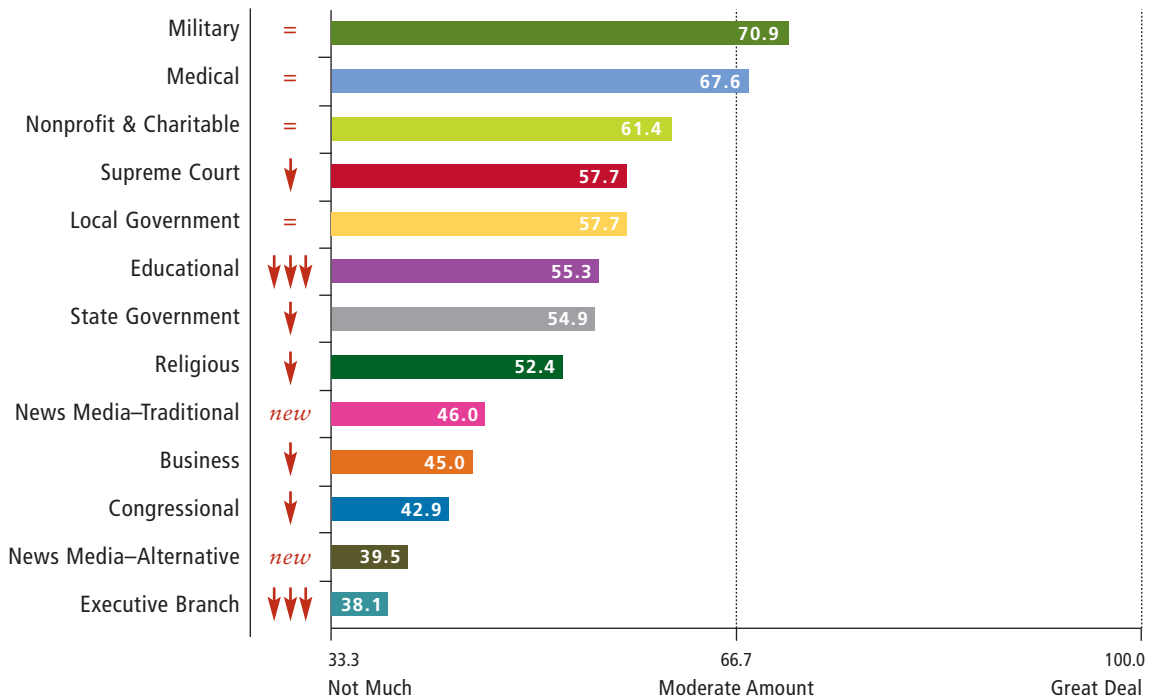


- 80% of Americans *agree* or *agree strongly* that "we have a leadership crisis in the country today"—a 3% increase from 2007 and an 15% increase from 2005
- As in 2007, 79% *agree* or *agree strongly* that "unless we get better leaders, the U.S. will decline as a nation"—a 6% increase from 2006
- Only 25% of Americans *agree* or *agree strongly* that "the country's leaders are effective and do a good job"

## NATIONAL LEADERSHIP INDEX 2008

How much confidence do you have in the leadership of the following sectors, a great deal, a moderate amount, not much, or none at all?

Range: 0 (none at all) – 100 (a great deal)

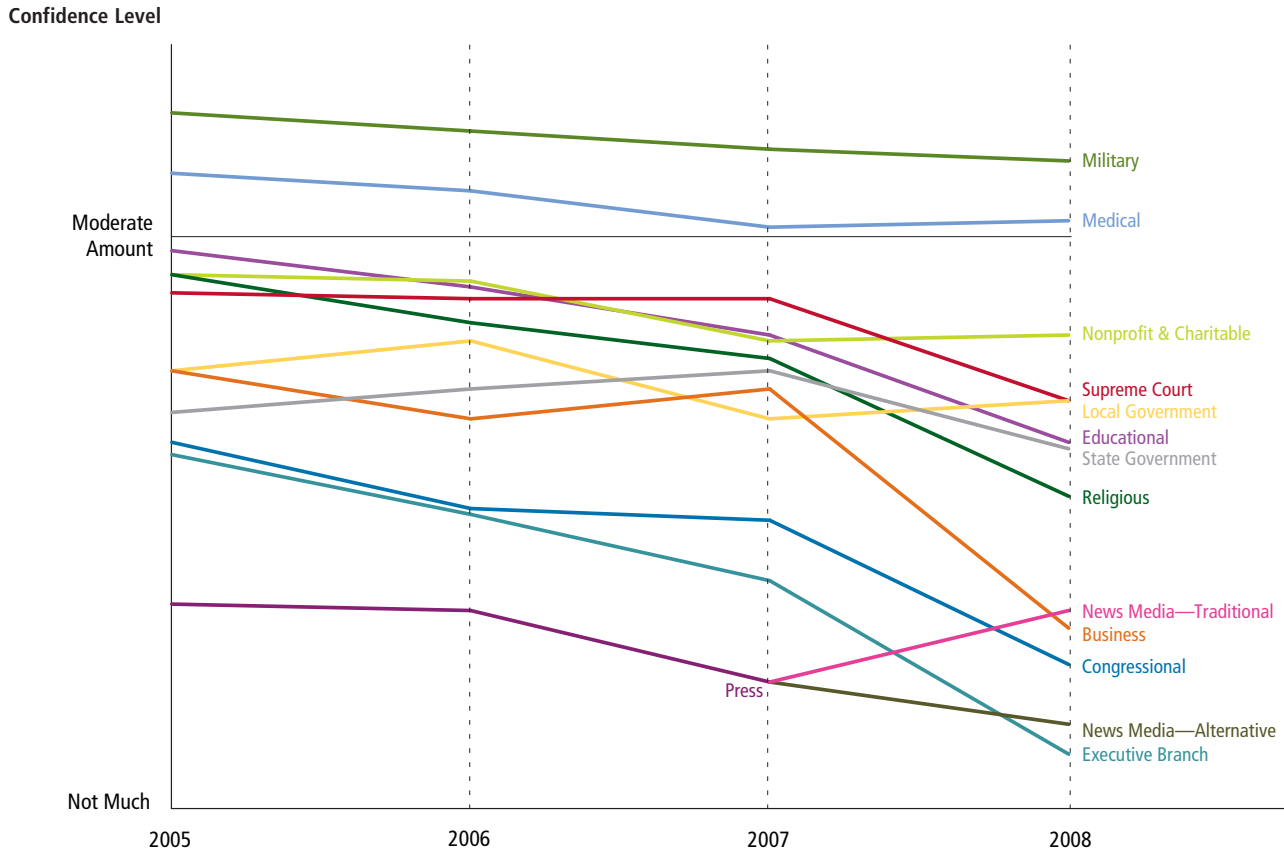


- ↓ indicates a statistically significant decrease from 2007
- ↓↓↓ indicates a statistically significant decrease three years in a row
- = indicates no significant change from 2007
- new indicates a new question for 2008

### Key Findings

- Confidence in the leaders of seven sectors—business, Executive Branch, Congress, religious, educational, Supreme Court, and state government—has fallen sharply in the past year. Confidence in the leaders of each of these sectors experienced its largest decrease since the survey began in 2005.
- Confidence in business leaders dropped more than did confidence in leaders of any other sector.
- Confidence in the Supreme Court dropped for the first time since the inception of this survey. This decrease is fully attributable to Democrats' decreased confidence in the Supreme Court.
- Confidence in the Executive Branch and educational leaders has declined for three years in a row.
- As in 2007, the only sectors of leadership in which Americans have more than a moderate amount of confidence are military and medical leadership, and for the fourth year in a row, military leadership inspires the most confidence.
- Confidence is higher in leadership of the traditional news media than leadership of alternative forms of news media.
- Confidence held steady from 2007 for military, medical, nonprofit & charitable, and local government leaders.
- For the third year in a row, there were no statistically significant increases in confidence in any sector's leaders.

## SECTOR LEADERSHIP CONFIDENCE, YEAR-TO-YEAR



Changes in Confidence By Sector (Alphabetical)

|   | 2005 Mean (SD) | 2006 Mean (SD) | 2007 Mean (SD) | 2008 Mean (SD) | Mean change (2007-2008) | Cohen's <i>d</i> (2007-2008) |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Business  | 59.3 (26.1)    | 56.8 (26.1)    | 58.5 (25.3)    | 45.0 (29.0)    | -13.5                   | -0.50**                      |
| Congressional                                     | 55.2 (28.7)    | 51.7 (28.0)    | 51.0 (28.5)    | 42.9 (29.6)    | -8.1                    | -0.28**                      |
| Educational                                       | 66.1 (27.4)    | 63.9 (28.0)    | 61.4 (28.2)    | 55.3 (29.8)    | -6.1                    | -0.21**                      |
| Executive Branch                                  | 54.7 (37.2)    | 51.3 (36.2)    | 47.7 (35.9)    | 38.1 (36.2)    | -9.6                    | -0.27**                      |
| Local Government                                  | 59.2 (28.5)    | 61.0 (27.8)    | 56.8 (29.6)    | 57.7 (28.7)    | 0.9                     | 0.03                         |
| Medical   | 70.5 (24.4)    | 69.2 (25.8)    | 67.5 (26.6)    | 67.6 (27.3)    | 0.1                     | 0.00                         |
| Military  | 73.8 (27.3)    | 72.6 (28.4)    | 71.7 (29.1)    | 70.9 (29.9)    | -0.8                    | -0.03                        |
| News Media—Alternative                            | -              | -              | -              | 39.5 (30.7)    | -                       | -                            |
| News Media—Traditional                            | -              | -              | -              | 46.0 (30.8)    | -                       | -                            |
| Nonprofit & Charitable                            | 64.6 (27.5)    | 64.5 (27.9)    | 61.0 (26.1)    | 61.4 (28.3)    | 0.4                     | 0.01                         |
| Press   | 46.2 (30.6)    | 46.0 (30.2)    | 42.0 (30.7)    | -              | -                       | -                            |
| Religious   | 64.6 (29.5)    | 61.9 (30.6)    | 60.0 (30.3)    | 52.4 (33.5)    | -7.6                    | -0.24**                      |
| State Government                                  | 57.0 (29.5)    | 58.5 (29.7)    | 59.5 (29.0)    | 54.9 (29.7)    | -4.6                    | -0.16**                      |
| Supreme Court                                     | 63.8 (28.7)    | 63.3 (28.6)    | 63.4 (28.0)    | 57.7 (31.1)    | -5.7                    | -0.19**                      |
| Confidence, in General, in Leaders of All Sectors | -              | -              | -              | 46.4 (24.0)    | -                       | -                            |

### Notes

- For 2005, *N* = 1,374; for 2006, *N* = 1,604; for 2007, *N* = 1,207; for 2008, *N* = 997
- Data from 2005-2007 National Leadership Index reports converted to an equivalent 100-point scale
- \*\* indicates a statistically significant change at the *p* < .05 level
- Cohen's *d* provides a standardized estimate of the magnitude of the difference in means (effect size), which is calculated by dividing the difference in means by the pooled standard deviation

I. “I am going to ask you some questions about how presidents lead. I will read you sets of two or three statements about what presidents of the United States can be like. These questions are about presidents in general, not just about the current candidates or president. For each set, please choose the statement that comes closest to what you believe. In your opinion, which of these would you say is more important to you in American presidents? That presidents...”

**--Presidential Leadership Traits**

|           |  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|-----------|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>A. Lead based on moral beliefs about what is right and wrong</b>                    | 52%            | 40%                  | 60%                   |
|           | <b>B. Lead based on practical beliefs about what works and doesn't work</b>            | 41             | 52                   | 31                    |
|           | Both equally*  | 4              | 4                    | 3                     |
|           | Don't know*  | 3              | 4                    | 6                     |
|           |  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>A. Are always respectful and diplomatic</b>   | 48%            | 61%                  | 33%                   |
|           | <b>B. Are willing to offend people and make enemies when they think it's necessary</b> | 45             | 32                   | 62                    |
|           | Both equally*  | 3              | 2                    | 2                     |
|           | Don't know*  | 4              | 5                    | 3                     |
|           |  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Keep religious faith a personal or private matter</b>                               | 57%            | 70%                  | 41%                   |
|           | <b>Express religious faith in public</b>   | 37             | 25                   | 54                    |
|           | Both equally*  | 2              | 2                    | 1                     |
|           | Don't know*  | 4              | 3                    | 4                     |

**--Presidential Power and Autonomy**

|           |  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|-----------|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>4.</b> | <b>A. Do what the majority of Americans think is right</b> | 55%            | 64%                  | 46%                   |
|           | <b>B. Do what they think is right</b>                      | 40             | 32                   | 50                    |
|           | Both equally*  | 2              | 2                    | 1                     |
|           | Don't know *   | 3              | 2                    | 3                     |

|   | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 5.  |                |                      |                       |
| <b>A. Ensure that America is respected for its fairness</b> | 50%            | 63%                  | 33%                   |
| <b>B. Ensure that America is respected for its strength</b> | 38             | 26                   | 53                    |
| Both equally*   | 10             | 8                    | 11                    |
| Don't know*   | 2              | 3                    | 3                     |

|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 6.   |                |                      |                       |
| <b>A. Are never willing to be unethical or bend the rules</b>                          | 55%            | 56%                  | 54%                   |
| <b>B. Are willing to be unethical or bend the rules when they think it's necessary</b> | 37             | 38                   | 35                    |
| Both equally*  | 2              | 2                    | 3                     |
| Don't know*  | 6              | 4                    | 8                     |

|   | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 7.  |                |                      |                       |
| <b>A. Share power equally with Congress and the Supreme Court</b> | 71%            | 74%                  | 66%                   |
| <b>B. Have more power than Congress and the Supreme Court</b>     | 23             | 20                   | 27                    |
| Both equally*   | 4              | 4                    | 2                     |
| Don't know*   | 2              | 2                    | 5                     |

|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 8.   |                |                      |                       |
| <b>A. Believe that other countries may have different, but equally acceptable ways of life</b> | 72%            | 73%                  | 67%                   |
| <b>B. Believe that the United States has a superior way of life to other countries</b>         | 24             | 22                   | 29                    |
| Both equally*  | 1              | 1                    | 1                     |
| Don't know*  | 3              | 4                    | 3                     |

**--Presidential Philosophy of Government**

|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 9.   |                |                      |                       |
| <b>A. Protect the public's safety, even if it infringes on their freedom</b> | 48%            | 40%                  | 58%                   |
| <b>B. Protect the public's freedom, even if it infringes on their safety</b> | 41             | 49                   | 34                    |
| Both equally*  | 5              | 4                    | 4                     |
| Don't know*  | 6              | 7                    | 4                     |



|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>10.</b>   |                |                          |                           |
| <b>A. Put the needs of future generations of Americans first</b> | 43%            | 48%                      | 38%                       |
| <b>B. Put the needs of today's Americans first</b>               | 39             | 38                       | 44                        |
| Both equally*  | 13             | 10                       | 14                        |
| Don't know*  | 5              | 4                        | 4                         |

|   | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>11.</b>  |                |                          |                           |
| <b>A. Use the military only to defend America and react to enemy attacks</b>    | 72%            | 75%                      | 66%                       |
| <b>B. Use the military to actively further America's interests in the world</b> | 21             | 20                       | 23                        |
| Both equally*   | 4              | 2                        | 7                         |
| Don't know*   | 3              | 3                        | 4                         |

|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>12.</b>   |                |                          |                           |
| <b>A. Use the government's power to make the country a fair place in which Americans can compete</b> | 40%            | 49%                      | 32%                       |
| <b>B. Reduce the government's power to allow Americans succeed and fail on their own</b>             | 28             | 15                       | 40                        |
| <b>C. Use the government's power to directly solve problems that many Americans face</b>             | 26             | 30                       | 22                        |
| All equally*   | 2              | 1                        | 2                         |
| Don't know*  | 4              | 5                        | 4                         |

|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>13.</b>   |                |                          |                           |
| <b>A. Build mutual alliances with other countries</b>                            | 56%            | 58%                      | 54%                       |
| <b>B. Keep America out of the affairs of other countries as much as possible</b> | 32             | 33                       | 30                        |
| <b>C. Assert America's power and influence over other countries</b>              | 8              | 8                        | 11                        |
| All equally*   | 2              | 0                        | 2                         |
| Don't know*  | 2              | 1                        | 3                         |

**--Presidential Public Engagement**

|   | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>14.</b>  |                |                          |                           |
| <b>A. Focus on uniting people, even if it slows progress</b>      | 56%            | 63%                      | 45%                       |
| <b>B. Focus on accomplishing goals, even if it divides people</b> | 37             | 32                       | 47                        |
| Both equally*   | 3              | 3                        | 5                         |
| Don't know*   | 4              | 2                        | 3                         |

|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>15.</b>   |                |                      |                       |
| <b>A. Clearly understand the day-to-day experiences of average Americans</b> | 43%            | 44%                  | 43%                   |
| <b>B. Clearly understand the complexities of the wider world</b>             | 41             | 40                   | 39                    |
| Both equally*  | 14             | 13                   | 15                    |
| Don't know*  | 2              | 3                    | 3                     |

|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>16.</b>   |                |                      |                       |
| <b>A. Believe that dissent is good for the country</b> | 62%            | 65%                  | 62%                   |
| <b>B. Believe that dissent is bad for the country</b>  | 26             | 25                   | 27                    |
| Both equally*  | 2              | 2                    | 1                     |
| Don't know*  | 10             | 8                    | 10                    |

|  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>17.</b>   |                |                      |                       |
| <b>A. Make decisions based on fairness, even if they don't help Americans like you</b> | 64%            | 68%                  | 62%                   |
| <b>B. Make decisions because they benefit Americans like you</b>                       | 27             | 26                   | 29                    |
| Both equally*  | 4              | 2                    | 4                     |
| Don't know*  | 5              | 4                    | 5                     |

## II. Questions about Leadership and the 2008 Presidential Election

| <b>18a. We have a leadership crisis in this country today (2008)</b> | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>  | 48%            | 63%                  | 31%                   |
| <b>Agree</b>   | 32             | 32                   | 32                    |
| <b>Disagree</b>  | 14             | 5                    | 28                    |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b>   | 3              | 0                    | 6                     |
| Not Sure*  | 3              | 0                    | 3                     |

| <b>18b. We have a leadership crisis in this country today (2005-2007)</b> | <b>2005</b> | <b>2006</b> | <b>2007</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>   | 28%         | 36%         | 38%         |
| <b>Agree</b>  | 37          | 33          | 39          |
| <b>Disagree</b>   | 26          | 21          | 16          |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b>  | 7           | 8           | 6           |
| Not Sure*   | 2           | 2           | 1           |

|             |  |                |                      |                       |
|-------------|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>19a.</b> | <b>Unless we get better leaders, the United States will decline as a nation (2008)</b>   | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|             | <b>Strongly Agree</b>  | 42%            | 56%                  | 25%                   |
|             | <b>Agree</b>   | 37             | 36                   | 38                    |
|             | <b>Disagree</b>  | 13             | 4                    | 24                    |
|             | <b>Strongly Disagree</b>   | 5              | 2                    | 9                     |
|             | <b>Not Sure*</b>   | 3              | 2                    | 4                     |
| <b>19b.</b> | <b>Unless we get better leaders, the United States will decline as a nation (2005-2007)</b>  | <b>2005</b>    | <b>2006</b>          | <b>2007</b>           |
|             | <b>Strongly Agree</b>  | 33%            | 37%                  | 39%                   |
|             | <b>Agree</b>   | 38             | 36                   | 40                    |
|             | <b>Disagree</b>  | 21             | 20                   | 16                    |
|             | <b>Strongly Disagree</b>   | 6              | 6                    | 3                     |
|             | <b>Not Sure*</b>   | 2              | 1                    | 2                     |
| <b>20.</b>  | <b>Overall, our country's leaders are effective and do a good job</b>  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|             | <b>Strongly Agree</b>  | 2%             | 1%                   | 4%                    |
|             | <b>Agree</b>   | 23             | 7                    | 47                    |
|             | <b>Disagree</b>  | 37             | 40                   | 35                    |
|             | <b>Strongly Disagree</b>   | 33             | 50                   | 10                    |
|             | <b>Not Sure*</b>   | 5              | 2                    | 4                     |
| <b>21a.</b> | <b>How much confidence do you have in the executive branch, including the president, vice president, and advisers? (2008)</b>      | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|             | <b>A great deal</b>  | 14%            | 5%                   | 29%                   |
|             | <b>A moderate amount</b>   | 24             | 10                   | 47                    |
|             | <b>Not much</b>  | 22             | 25                   | 13                    |
|             | <b>None at all</b>   | 38             | 60                   | 11                    |
|             | <b>Not sure*</b>   | 2              | 0                    | 0                     |
| <b>21b.</b> | <b>How much confidence do you have in the executive branch, including the president, vice president, and advisers? (2005-2007)</b> | <b>2005</b>    | <b>2006</b>          | <b>2007</b>           |
|             | <b>A great deal</b>  | 29%            | 22%                  | 19%                   |
|             | <b>A moderate amount</b>   | 28             | 33                   | 31                    |
|             | <b>Not much</b>  | 21             | 20                   | 23                    |
|             | <b>None at all</b>   | 22             | 24                   | 26                    |
|             | <b>Not sure*</b>   | 0              | 1                    | 1                     |

|             |  |                |                      |                       |
|-------------|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>22.</b>  | <b>Do you think that things will be better after the 2008 election, worse after the election, or that things won't change?</b> | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|             | <b>Better</b>  | 39%            | 46%                  | 36%                   |
|             | <b>Worse</b>   | 7              | 4                    | 7                     |
|             | <b>Won't change</b>  | 25             | 16                   | 31                    |
|             | Depends who wins*  | 27             | 31                   | 24                    |
|             | Don't know*  | 2              | 3                    | 2                     |
| <b>23.</b>  | <b>Putting aside who you are supporting, who do you think the American voters will choose as the next President?</b>           | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|             | <b>Obama</b>   | 48%            | 78%                  | 18%                   |
|             | <b>McCain</b>  | 38             | 15                   | 71                    |
|             | Don't know*  | 14             | 7                    | 11                    |
| <b>24a.</b> | <b>How much confidence do you have that Barack Obama would be a good leader?</b>   | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|             | <b>A great deal</b>  | 36%            | 69%                  | 4%                    |
|             | <b>A moderate amount</b>   | 24             | 28                   | 15                    |
|             | <b>Not much</b>  | 17             | 1                    | 36                    |
|             | <b>None at all</b>   | 20             | 1                    | 45                    |
|             | Not sure*  | 3              | 1                    | 0                     |
| <b>24b.</b> | <b>How much confidence do you have that John McCain would be a good leader?</b>  | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|             | <b>A great deal</b>  | 19%            | 6%                   | 41%                   |
|             | <b>A moderate amount</b>   | 36             | 24                   | 50                    |
|             | <b>Not much</b>  | 23             | 35                   | 7                     |
|             | <b>None at all</b>   | 19             | 35                   | 1                     |
|             | Not sure*  | 3              | 0                    | 1                     |
| <b>25.</b>  | <b>And who would you like to become the next president?***</b>   | <b>Overall</b> | --                   | --                    |
|             | <b>Obama</b>   | 47%            | --                   | --                    |
|             | <b>McCain</b>  | 37             | --                   | --                    |
|             | Other*   | 7              | --                   | --                    |
|             | Don't know*  | 8              | --                   | --                    |
|             | Don't care*  | 1              | --                   | --                    |

|            |   |    |                      |                       |
|------------|---|----|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>26.</b> | <b>How strongly would you say you support that candidate?</b> | -- | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|            | A great deal  | -- | 76%                  | 71%                   |
|            | Somewhat  | -- | 17                   | 22                    |
|            | A little  | -- | 5                    | 4                     |
|            | Not much at all   | -- | 2                    | 3                     |

|             |   |                |                      |                       |
|-------------|---|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>27a.</b> | <b>In your view, how much does it matter to the future of the country which candidate becomes president? (2008)</b> | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|             | A great deal  | 77%            | 83%                  | 79%                   |
|             | Somewhat  | 12             | 12                   | 12                    |
|             | A little  | 3              | 2                    | 3                     |
|             | Not at all  | 6              | 3                    | 4                     |
|             | Not sure*   | 2              | 0                    | 2                     |

|             |   |                |    |    |
|-------------|---|----------------|----|----|
| <b>27b.</b> | <b>In your view, how much does it matter to the future of the country which candidate becomes president? (2007)</b> | <b>Overall</b> | -- | -- |
|             | A great deal  | 65%            | -- | -- |
|             | Somewhat  | 21             | -- | -- |
|             | A little  | 7              | -- | -- |
|             | Not at all  | 5              | -- | -- |
|             | Not sure*   | 2              | -- | -- |

|            |   |                |                      |                       |
|------------|---|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>28.</b> | <b>And how much does it matter to you personally which candidate becomes president?</b> | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|            | A great deal  | 67%            | 76%                  | 70%                   |
|            | Somewhat  | 18             | 13                   | 20                    |
|            | A little  | 3              | 2                    | 2                     |
|            | Not at all  | 9              | 6                    | 5                     |
|            | Not sure*   | 3              | 3                    | 3                     |

**III. Weighted demographics**

|            |               |                |                      |                       |
|------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>D1.</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support Obama</b> | <b>Support McCain</b> |
|            | Male          | 48%            | 49%                  | 45%                   |
|            | Female        | 52             | 51                   | 55                    |

|   | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>D2. Median Age</b>                       | 44 years       | 42 years                 | 49 years                  |
| <b>D3. Party Identification</b>             | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
| Democrat                                    | 31%            | 55%                      | 5%                        |
| Republican                                  | 24             | 3                        | 56                        |
| Independent                                 | 40             | 41                       | 36                        |
| Other*                                      | 2              | 0                        | 2                         |
| Not Sure/Refused*                           | 3              | 1                        | 1                         |
| <b>D4. Household Income</b>                 | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
| Less than \$20,000                          | 12%            | 13%                      | 10%                       |
| \$20,000 - \$34,999                         | 14             | 17                       | 11                        |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999                         | 13             | 12                       | 10                        |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999                         | 17             | 17                       | 18                        |
| \$75,000 - \$99,000                         | 12             | 10                       | 15                        |
| \$100,000 - \$124,999                       | 9              | 9                        | 10                        |
| \$125,000 - \$149,000                       | 4              | 4                        | 7                         |
| \$150,000 and above                         | 8              | 8                        | 10                        |
| Refused*                                    | 11             | 10                       | 9                         |
| <b>D5. Born Again/Evangelical Christian</b> | <b>Overall</b> | <b>Support<br/>Obama</b> | <b>Support<br/>McCain</b> |
| Yes   | 35%            | 28%                      | 44%                       |
| No, neither                                 | 61             | 68                       | 54                        |
| Not Sure/Refused*                           | 4              | 4                        | 2                         |

## Method

Survey results were obtained through telephone interviews of a weighted, representative sample of U.S. citizens, 18 years of age or older, in the continental United States.

Study data were collected by Merriman River Group. A total of 997 respondents were interviewed. Random-digit dialing was used to ensure that individuals with unlisted numbers and cell phones would be included in the study. U.S. Census data were used to weight key demographic dimensions to ensure that the sample was representative of the adult population. Statistical weighting was conducted by Martin R. Frankel, Ph.D.

Interviews were conducted from September 13-22, 2008. Calls were made from 12:00 noon to 9:00 P.M. in each local time zone. The order of the presidential leadership questions and the response choices within each question were randomized for each interview. The response rate was 28%.

The survey is part of the *National Leadership Index 2008*, a collaboration between the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School and the Merriman River Group. The National Leadership Index is an annual report of the Center for Public Leadership's National Study of Confidence in Leadership, which was pioneered in 2005 by the Center's Research Director, Professor Todd L. Pittinsky. Full results of the 2008 study will be released on November 24, 2008. Past editions of the National Leadership Index can be found on-line at:  
<[http://content.ksg.harvard.edu/leadership/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=413&Itemid=98](http://content.ksg.harvard.edu/leadership/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=413&Itemid=98)>

## Notes

\*All responses of *don't know/not sure, other, equally, depends who wins, and don't care* were volunteered by interviewees. In some cases, data in *not sure, don't know, or refused* response categories were adjusted to correct for rounding.

\*\*All differences reported are statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level

\*\*\*Data are adjusted to be demographically representative, but are *not* adjusted with respect to voter registration status, likelihood of voting, or voter turnout models. Accordingly, the candidate preference question should not be interpreted in the context of any potential outcome of the voting in the 2008 presidential election.

Center for Public Leadership: <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/leadership/>

Merriman River Group: <http://www.merrimanriver.com>

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