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Washington, DC – A new Ipsos/McClatchy poll of undecided voters who watched last night's second Presidential debate indicates that Barack Obama seems to be picking up momentum among the small number of voters who have not yet decided on a candidate. Before the debate, these undecided voters leaned toward John McCain (Obama 45%/McCain 55%) – but after last night's debate, nearly six in ten lean toward supporting Obama (Obama 57%/McCain 43%).

Both Candidates Improving, But Obama Still Rated Better...

Roughly four in ten undecideds feel that both John McCain and Barack Obama improved in relation to the first debate (Obama – 40% better than first debate; McCain – 41% better than first debate). However, despite the improvement of both candidates, undecided voters chose Barack Obama as the better performer last night (61% Obama / 39% McCain). In addition, Barack Obama is perceived more favorably following the debate by 31% of undecideds (12% less favorable), while only 18% of undecideds feel more favorably toward McCain (and 25% feel less favorably).

Obama Tops on Positive Characteristics...

The poll also indicates a more positive perception of Barack Obama on several qualities during the debate – undecided voters feel Obama expressed his opinions more clearly (65%; McCain 35%), was more likable (68%; McCain 32%), and able to think on his feet (63%; McCain 37%).

McCain Seen More Negatively...

John McCain, on the other hand, was seen by undecideds as more mean spirited (62%; Obama 38%) and disrespectful (62%; Obama 38%). The candidates run neck-and-neck on the qualities of understanding the issues (49% Obama/51% McCain), and being ready to be President (49% Obama/51% McCain).



McCain Holds a Lead on Foreign Affairs...

Undecided voters clearly see John McCain as ahead on issues related to defense and foreign affairs. Nearly six in ten (56%) trust John McCain more to handle the responsibilities of commander-in-chief (Obama 44%). McCain is also seen as stronger on defending the U.S. against foreign aggression (McCain 74%/Obama 26%) and working to stop the spread of terrorism (McCain 61%/Obama 39%).

But Obama Connects with Middle Class America...

On the issues which seem to resonate most with the middle class, Obama is viewed by undecideds as able to do a better job. Obama is seen as most able to bring change to Washington (Obama 69%/McCain 31%) and getting America on the right track (Obama 58%/McCain 42%). Barack Obama is also seen by three-quarters of undecideds (73%) as better able to help the middle class achieve the American dream (McCain 27%) as well as better able to create more jobs (Obama 63%/McCain 37%).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos online poll conducted October 7-8. For this survey, a national sample of 389 undecided voters from Ipsos' U.S. online panel was interviewed online. Weighting then was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the U.S. adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls because they are based on samples drawn from opt-in online panels, not on random samples that mirror the population within a statistical probability ratio. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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