



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Partisan and Racial Divisions Over Significance of Obama’s Win
MOST AMERICANS SEE A BLACK NOMINEE AS IMPORTANT FOR COUNTRY

A solid majority of Americans say it is at least somewhat important to the country that an African American has won the presidential nomination of a major political party. But there are wide political and racial divisions over the significance of Barack Obama’s history-making achievement.

Overall, 36% of the public says it is very important to the country that an African American won a major party’s nomination, while another 27% see this as somewhat important. A third of Americans say it is either not too important (15%) or not at all important (18%) that a black candidate has become a major party nominee.

The Importance of Obama’s Nomination						
<i>How important is it to the country that a black has been nominated for president?</i>	<u>Total</u> %	<i>---Party ID---</i>			<i>---Race---</i>	
		<u>Rep</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Ind</u> %	<u>White</u> %	<u>Black</u> %
Very important	36	20	51	32	32	59
Somewhat important	27	30	24	31	28	24
Not too important	15	16	14	16	17	6
Not at all important	18	32	8	16	20	7
Don’t know/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>(Sample Sizes)</i>		<i>(277)</i>	<i>(361)</i>	<i>(307)</i>	<i>(780)</i>	<i>(101)</i>

About half of Democrats (51%) say it is very important to the country that an African American has secured the nomination of a major party; that compares with a third of independents (32%) and just 20% of Republicans. Republicans are evenly divided over the importance of this milestone: while 50% view it as either very or somewhat important, nearly as many (48%) say it is not too important (16%) or not at all important (32%).

Nearly six-in-ten blacks (59%) say the nomination of an African American is very important to the country; just 32% of whites express this view. Nearly four-in-ten whites (37%) believe it is not too important (17%) or not at all important (20%) – roughly three times the percentage of blacks (13% not too, not at all important).

Strong Interest in Campaign News

Public interest in the presidential race increased somewhat with last week's dramatic events. Nearly four-in-ten (38%) say they followed news about the campaign very closely, up from 30% the previous week. This is the highest level of interest recorded since mid-March. Interest was much higher among Democrats (51% followed very closely) than among Republicans (34%) or independents (27%).

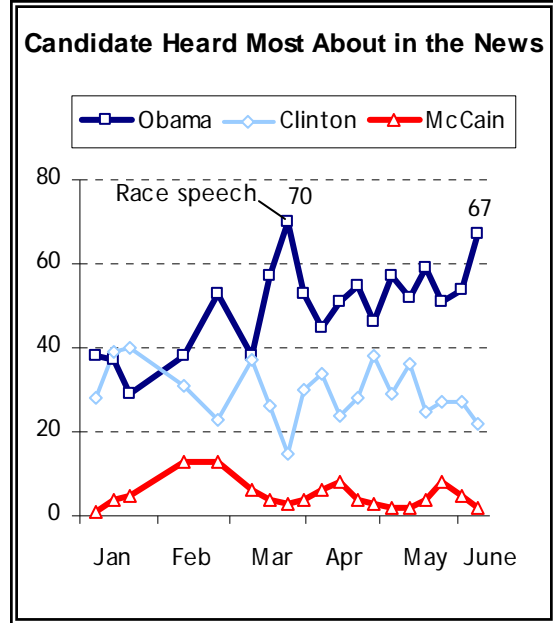
Fully 73% say they heard a lot about Obama winning enough delegates to secure the Democratic nomination. That news registered more widely than any other campaign development so far. There also was broad interest in Hillary Clinton's decision late in the week to suspend her campaign and endorse her Democratic rival. More than half of the public (55%) heard a lot about Clinton's decision; Clinton's withdrawal from the race was the third most widely heard about campaign story thus far.

By week's end, Obama was the top newsmaker among the three leading presidential candidates, according to the Project for Excellence in Journalism's (PEJ) Campaign Coverage Index. Obama was featured prominently in 77% of all campaign news stories while Clinton was featured in 60% of all stories. McCain trailed both Democrats; only 21% of the campaign stories featured the Arizona senator.

	<i>How much have you heard...</i>			
	A lot	A little	Nothing at all	DK
	%	%	%	%
Obama securing Dem nomination	73	20	7	*=100
Rev. Wright's recent speeches	62	22	15	1=100
Clinton suspending campaign	55	32	12	1=100
Obama's delegate majority	55	31	14	*=100
Obama's race & politics speech	54	31	15	*=100
Obama's "bitter" statement	52	26	21	1=100
Clinton pressed to drop out	52	33	15	*=100
Rev. Wright videos (3/24)	51	28	21	*=100
McCain and female lobbyist	48	33	19	*=100
Dem debate before PA primary	42	37	21	*=100

Last week's events highlighted.

Obama was by far the most visible candidate in the news last week. Two-thirds of the public (67%) named Obama as the candidate they've been hearing the most about in the news in the past week or so. Roughly one-in-five (22%) named Clinton and just 2% named McCain. While Obama has remained the most visible candidate for 13 straight weeks, he has not dominated Clinton and McCain to this extent since mid-March when he gave his speech on race and politics.

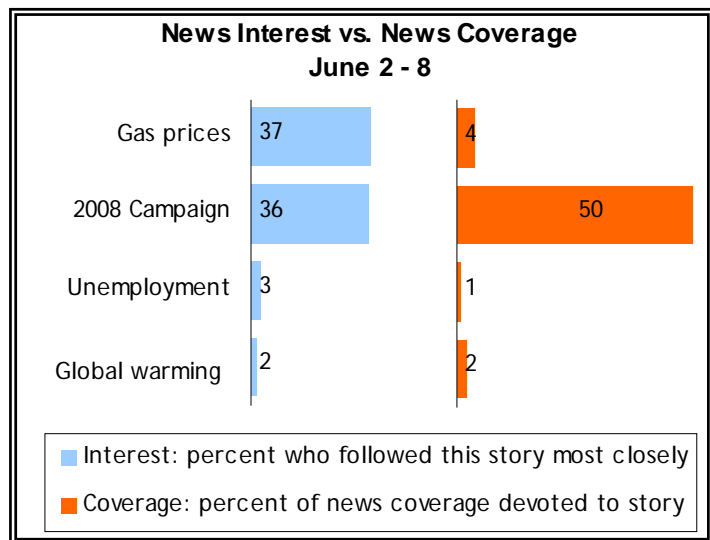


Steady Interest in Gas Prices

The national news media focused heavily on the presidential race last week – devoting 50% of its overall coverage to the campaign, according to PEJ.

Public interest was split evenly between the campaign and the rising price of gasoline. Two-thirds of the public paid very close attention to news about gas prices last week – unchanged from the previous week and up moderately from early last month. Fully 37% listed gas prices as the single news story they were following more closely than any other last week, roughly equal to the proportion (36%) naming the campaign as their most closely followed story.

One-in-four Americans paid very close attention to reports about the rising unemployment rate, and 3% listed this as their most closely followed news story of the week. There was relatively little interest in the debate in Congress over legislation to combat global warming. Only 13% followed this story very closely and 2% listed this as their top story of the week.



These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly

News Interest Index, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media's agenda. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news

outlets on an ongoing basis. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage was collected from June 2-8 and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week was collected June 6-9 from a nationally representative sample of 1,004 adults.

About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Sunday through Friday) PEJ will compile this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey will collect data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.

About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of eight projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
 JUNE 6-9, 2008 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
 TOPLINE
 N=1,004**

Q.1 Apart from who you support, which presidential candidate have you heard the most about in the news in the last week or so? [OPEN-END. RECORD FIRST MENTION ONLY]

	<u>Hillary Clinton</u>	<u>Barack Obama</u>	<u>John McCain</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Don't know/Refused</u>
June 6-9, 2008	22	67	2	1	8=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	27	54	5	1	13=100
May 22-25, 2008	27	51	8	2	12=100
May 16-19, 2008	25	59	4	2	10=100
May 9-12, 2008	36	52	2	2	8=100
May 2-5, 2008	29	57	2	2	10=100
April 25-28, 2008	38	46	3	1	12=100
April 18-21, 2008	28	55	4	1	12=100
April 11-14, 2008	24	51	8	2	15=100
April 4-7, 2008	34	45	6	1	14=100
March 28-31, 2008	30	53	4	2	11=100
March 20-24, 2008	15	70	3	1	11=100
March 14-17, 2008	26	57	4	2	11=100
March 7-10, 2008	37	38	6	4	15=100

Q.2 Please think about each of the following presidential candidates [INSERT NAME. ROTATE]. In the past few days, have you come to have a MORE favorable opinion of (him/her), a LESS favorable opinion, or hasn't your opinion of (him/her) changed lately?

	<u>More favorable</u>	<u>Less favorable</u>	<u>Opinion has not changed</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
a. Hillary Clinton	17	16	64	3=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	15	21	61	3=100
May 22-25, 2008	13	26	59	2=100
May 16-19, 2008	15	22	60	3=100
May 9-12, 2008	12	25	61	2=100
May 2-5, 2008	14	16	65	5=100
April 25-28, 2008	16	26	56	2=100
April 18-21, 2008	11	31	55	3=100
March 28-31, 2008	13	30	55	2=100
March 20-24, 2008	16	25	57	2=100
b. Barack Obama	19	17	61	3=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	17	21	58	4=100
May 22-25, 2008	18	20	60	2=100
May 16-19, 2008	19	19	59	3=100
May 9-12, 2008	20	23	55	2=100
May 2-5, 2008	11	25	59	5=100
April 25-28, 2008	16	24	58	2=100
April 18-21, 2008	18	24	54	4=100
March 28-31, 2008	18	27	52	3=100
March 20-24, 2008	22	30	46	2=100
c. John McCain	14	15	65	6=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	11	20	64	5=100
May 22-25, 2008	15	18	63	4=100

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	More <u>favorable</u>	Less <u>favorable</u>	Opinion has <u>not changed</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
May 16-19, 2008	14	21	62	3=100
May 9-12, 2008	12	18	67	3=100
May 2-5, 2008	10	13	71	6=100
April 25-28, 2008	14	16	65	5=100
April 18-21, 2008	18	15	61	6=100
March 28-31, 2008	18	20	57	5=100
March 20-24, 2008	18	18	61	3=100

ASK ALL:

Q.3 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
a. Reports about the rising unemployment rate	25	31	23	21	*=100
b. The debate in Congress over legislation to combat global warming	13	22	27	37	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
April 5-9, 2007: Global warming reports	26	29	23	21	1=100
February 2-5, 2007: Global warming reports	26	37	21	16	0=100
December, 1997: <i>Kyoto conference</i>	11	19	24	43	3=100
November, 1997: <i>U.S. policy debate</i>	9	24	33	33	1=100
c. The rising price of gasoline	66	19	7	7	1=100
May 22-25, 2008	65	22	9	4	*=100
May 16-19, 2008	64	21	10	4	1=100
May 2-5, 2008	63	23	9	4	1=100
April 25-28, 2008	62	23	10	5	*=100
May 24-27, 2007	52	29	10	8	1=100
May 18-21, 2007²	48	27	16	8	1=100
August, 2006 ³	60	26	7	5	2=100
June, 2006	58	26	10	5	1=100
May, 2006	69	21	6	3	1=100
April, 2006	65	22	8	4	1=100
December, 2005	61	27	7	4	1=100
Early November, 2005	61	27	9	2	1=100
Late October, 2005	67	23	7	3	*=100
Early October, 2005	65	25	6	3	1=100
Early September, 2005	71	19	7	3	*=100
Mid-May, 2005	58	27	9	5	1=100
Mid-March, 2005	50	32	13	5	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	64	22	8	5	1=100

¹ April 5-9, 2007 asked about: "Recent reports about global warming research and policies." February 2-5, 2007 asked about: "Recent reports about the causes of global warming." December, 1997 asked about: "The conference on global warming taking place in Kyoto, Japan." November, 1997 asked about: "The debate over U.S. policy concerning global warming."

² For May 18-21, 2007 the item was not asked as part of a list.

³ From October, 2000 to August, 2006, the story was listed as "The high price of gasoline these days." From August, 1990 to June, 2000, the story was listed as "Recent increases in the price of gasoline."

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
August, 2004	52	29	10	8	1=100
July, 2004	56	25	11	7	1=100
June, 2004	58	26	9	6	1=100
April, 2004	46	30	15	8	1=100
Early April, 2004	58	23	10	8	1=100
Mid-March, 2004	47	27	14	10	2=100
September, 2003	45	27	15	11	1=100
March 2003	52	27	11	9	1=100
February, 2003	53	25	12	9	1=100
June, 2001	56	31	7	5	1=100
May, 2001	61	26	6	6	1=100
Early October, 2000	56	25	12	6	1=100
June, 2000	61	25	9	5	*=100
March, 2000	58	28	10	4	*=100
October, 1990	62	26	8	4	*=100
September, 1990	56	28	11	5	*=100
August, 1990	57	27	10	5	1=100
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
The rising price of oil					
March 7-10, 2008	43	33	12	11	1=100
November 9-12, 2007	44	28	14	13	1=100
d. Big Brown trying to become the first horse to win the Triple Crown in 30 years					
	14	19	19	47	1=100
e. The heat wave striking the east and south					
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁴	20	24	21	35	*=100
August 10-13, 2007	33	29	21	17	*=100
August, 2006	38	34	17	9	2=100
August, 1998	38	39	14	8	1=100
August, 1988	42	32	15	10	1=100
f. News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election					
	38	35	17	10	*=100
May 30-June 2, 2008	30	35	21	14	*=100
May 22-25, 2008	32	37	20	11	*=100
May 16-19, 2008	33	37	19	10	1=100
May 9-12, 2008	35	36	18	11	*=100
May 2-5, 2008	27	35	23	14	1=100
April 25-28, 2008	34	37	18	11	*=100
April 18-21, 2008	29	41	19	10	1=100
April 11-14, 2008	31	37	22	10	*=100
April 4-7, 2008	33	36	17	14	*=100
March 28-31, 2008	31	41	18	10	*=100
March 20-24, 2008	34	37	18	11	*=100
March 14-17, 2008	40	37	16	7	*=100
March 7-10, 2008	39	36	15	9	1=100
February 29-March 3, 2008	43	34	14	9	*=100
February 22-25, 2008	42	37	13	8	*=100

⁴ August, 2006 and August 10-13, 2007 asked about: "The hot weather this summer and its impact on the country." August, 1998 asked about: "The heat wave and its impact throughout the country." August, 1988 asked about: "The hot weather this summer and the greenhouse effect."

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
February 15-18, 2008	44	36	10	10	*=100
February 8-11, 2008	39	37	15	9	0=100
February 1-4, 2008	37	35	16	12	*=100
January 25-28, 2008	36	37	14	12	1=100
January 18-21, 2008	36	34	18	12	*=100
January 11-14, 2008 ⁵	32	31	19	17	1=100
January 4-7, 2008	33	36	19	11	1=100
December 14-17, 2007	25	34	22	19	*=100
December 7-10, 2007	24	35	22	19	*=100
November 30 – December 3, 2007	23	35	23	19	*=100
November 23-26, 2007	20	33	26	20	1=100
November 16-19, 2007	26	33	21	19	1=100
November 9-12, 2007	21	33	25	21	*=100
November 2-5, 2007	27	30	21	21	1=100
October 26-29, 2007	21	34	26	19	*=100
October 19-22, 2007	23	32	22	23	*=100
October 12-15, 2007	13	31	26	30	*=100
October 5-8, 2007	22	30	24	24	*=100
September 28 – October 1, 2007	21	34	25	20	*=100
September 21-24, 2007	24	31	22	23	*=100
September 14-17, 2007	22	31	24	23	*=100
September 7-10, 2007	18	34	26	22	*=100
August 30-September 2, 2007	19	35	21	25	*=100
August 24-27, 2007	22	28	24	26	*=100
August 17-20, 2007	19	27	24	30	*=100
August 10-13, 2007	23	32	21	24	*=100
August 3-6, 2007	19	31	25	25	*=100
July 27-30, 2007	19	32	22	26	1=100
July 20-23, 2007	16	26	30	27	1=100
July 13-16, 2007	17	29	27	27	*=100
July 6-9, 2007	24	29	24	22	1=100
June 29-July 2, 2007	20	32	25	23	*=100
June 22-25, 2007	18	31	21	30	*=100
June 15-18, 2007	17	32	26	25	*=100
June 8-11, 2007	19	30	24	26	1=100
June 1-4, 2007	16	27	32	24	1=100
May 24-27, 2007	22	33	23	22	*=100
May 18-21, 2007	18	31	24	27	*=100
May 11-14, 2007	18	30	23	28	1=100
May 4-7, 2007	23	34	21	21	1=100
April 27-30, 2007	14	30	29	26	1=100
April 20-23, 2007	18	28	27	27	*=100
April 12-16, 2007	18	28	27	27	*=100
April 5-9, 2007	25	30	26	19	*=100
March 30-April 2, 2007	20	29	27	23	1=100
March 23-26, 2007	20	32	22	26	*=100
March 16-19, 2007	15	28	29	27	1=100
March 9-12, 2007	24	30	23	23	*=100
March 2-5, 2007	19	31	26	23	1=100
February 23-26, 2007	22	33	24	21	*=100
February 16-19, 2007	18	32	22	27	1=100

⁵ January 11-14, 2008 asked about: “News about the New Hampshire primaries and the presidential campaign.”

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
February 9-12, 2007	24	30	24	21	1=100
February 2-5, 2007	24	36	22	18	*=100
January 26-29, 2007	24	33	23	20	*=100
January 19-22, 2007⁶	24	27	22	26	1=100
2004 Presidential Election					
November, 2004 (RVs)	52	36	8	4	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	46	30	12	11	1=100
August, 2004	32	38	16	14	*=100
July, 2004	29	37	18	15	1=100
April, 2004	31	33	19	16	1=100
Mid-March, 2004	35	34	18	13	*=100
Late February, 2004	24	40	23	12	1=100
Early February, 2004 ⁷	29	37	20	13	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	16	30	27	26	1=100
Early January, 2004	14	32	30	23	1=100
December, 2003	16	26	27	30	1=100
November, 2003	11	26	34	28	1=100
October, 2003	12	27	28	32	1=100
September, 2003	17	25	30	27	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	12	27	27	33	1=100
May, 2003	8	19	31	41	1=100
January, 2003	14	28	29	28	1=100
2000 Presidential Election					
Early November, 2000 (RVs)	39	44	12	5	*=100
Mid-October, 2000 (RVs)	40	37	15	8	*=100
Early October, 2000 (RVs)	42	36	15	6	1=100
September, 2000	22	42	21	15	*=100
July, 2000	21	38	20	20	1=100
June, 2000	23	32	23	21	1=100
May, 2000	18	33	26	23	*=100
April, 2000	18	39	22	20	1=100
March, 2000	26	41	19	13	1=100
February, 2000	26	36	21	17	*=100
January, 2000	19	34	28	18	1=100
December, 1999	16	36	24	23	1=100
October, 1999	17	32	28	22	1=100
September, 1999	15	31	33	20	1=100
July, 1999	15	38	24	22	1=100
June, 1999	11	25	29	34	1=100
1996 Presidential Election					
November, 1996 (RVs)	34	45	15	6	*=100
October, 1996	31	39	18	12	*=100
Early September, 1996	24	36	23	17	*=100

⁶ January 19-22, 2007 asked about: "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008."

⁷ From May 2003 to Early February 2004 and in March 1992, the story was listed as "The race for the Democratic nomination." In January 2003, the story was listed as "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2004." In September 2000, Early September and July 1996, and May 1992, the question asked about "the presidential election campaign." In January, March and April 1996, the story was listed as "News about the Republican presidential candidates." In August 1992, the story was listed as "News about the presidential election." In July 1992, the story was listed as "News about the presidential campaign." In January 1992, the story was listed as "News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination." In 1988, the story was introduced as being from "this past year" and was listed as "News about the presidential campaign in 1988."

Q.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
July, 1996	22	40	23	14	1=100
March, 1996	26	41	20	13	*=100
January, 1996	10	34	31	24	1=100
September, 1995	12	36	30	22	*=100
August, 1995	13	34	28	25	*=100
June, 1995	11	31	31	26	1=100
1992 Presidential Election					
October, 1992 (RVs)	55	36	7	2	0=100
September, 1992 (RVs)	47	36	11	6	*=100
August, 1992 (RVs)	36	51	11	2	0=100
July, 1992	20	45	26	9	*=100
May, 1992	32	44	16	8	*=100
March, 1992	35	40	16	9	*=100
January, 1992	11	25	36	27	1=100
December, 1991	10	28	32	30	*=100
October, 1991	12	26	31	29	2=100
1988 Presidential Election					
October, 1988 (RVs)	43	44	11	2	*=100
August, 1988 (RVs)	39	45	13	3	*=100
May, 1988	22	46	23	6	3=100
November, 1987	15	28	35	21	1=100
September, 1987	14	34	37	14	1=100

Q.4 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]**

- 37 The rising price of gasoline
 - 36 News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election
 - 3 The heat wave striking the east and south
 - 3 Big Brown trying to become the first horse to win the Triple Crown in 30 years
 - 3 Reports about the rising unemployment rate
 - 2 The debate in Congress over legislation to combat global warming
 - 9 Some other story (SPECIFY)
 - 7 Don't know/Refused
- 100

Now thinking about the presidential campaign...

Q.5 How much if anything have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? **[READ ITEMS, ROTATE]**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. Barack Obama winning enough delegates to claim the Democratic nomination	73	20	7	*=100
b. Hillary Clinton's decision to suspend her campaign and endorse Barack Obama	55	32	12	1=100

Q.6 In your opinion, with Barack Obama's victory, how important is it to the country that an African American has become the nominee of a major political party? Would you say it is . . .
[READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER]?

36	Very important to the country
27	Somewhat important
15	Not too important
18	Not at all important to the country
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	