



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Continued Doubts About Financial Bailout

POST-DEBATE: PALIN STILL SEEN AS UNQUALIFIED, A BUMP FOR BIDEN

While last week’s vice-presidential debate had a larger audience than any other in history, voters’ impressions of Sarah Palin have changed little. A special re-interview this weekend of voters who had been first polled a week ago found that most (55%) continue to have a favorable view of Palin, but most (52%) also still believe that she is not qualified to serve as president, if it becomes necessary.

In contrast, voters’ opinions of Joe Biden have improved since the previous Pew survey conducted Sept. 27-29. Biden’s favorability rating among registered voters recontacted over the weekend climbed from 54% to 63%, and the percentage believing he is qualified to serve as president jumped to 77% from 69% a week earlier.

	Sarah Palin		Joe Biden	
	Pre-debate	Post-debate	Pre-debate	Post-debate
	%	%	%	%
Favorable	51	55	54	63
Unfavorable	42	40	33	31
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	100	100	100
Qualified to serve as president	40	42	69	77
Not qualified	51	52	20	16
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>
	100	100	100	100

Based on 710 registered voters participating in a callback survey Oct 3-5. Voters were initially interviewed Sept. 27-29.

Both candidates get high marks for their debate performances, though Biden receives substantially better marks overall. Roughly eight-in-ten voters (81%) who watched the vice-presidential debate rate Biden’s performance as excellent or good, compared with 65% offering positive ratings for Palin. Biden receives higher marks for his debate performance than Barack Obama did in the first presidential debate (72% excellent/good). Palin, too, is viewed as doing a better job than did John McCain (65% vs. 59% excellent/good).

	--Oct 3-5--		--Sep 27-29--	
	Palin	Biden	McCain	Obama
	%	%	%	%
Excellent	27	28	14	22
Good	38	53	45	50
Only fair	25	15	28	20
Poor	10	4	12	6
Don't know	*	*	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100
NET: Exc/Good	65	81	59	72

Based on registered voters who watched the debates.

The latest survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press was conducted on landline phones and cell phones Oct. 3-5 among 820 adults, including 710 registered voters, who were previously interviewed. It finds that congressional passage of the massive financial rescue bill did not increase public support for the plan.

Overall, people who were re-interviewed over the weekend are even more divided as to whether this is the right thing or the wrong thing for the government to be doing (42% right thing vs. 39% wrong thing). In the Sept. 27-29 survey, 45% said it was right for the government invest billions of dollars to try to secure financial markets and institutions, while 38% said it was the wrong thing.

Republicans More Positive about Biden

Overall, 8% of voters nationwide changed their view of Joe Biden from unfavorable to favorable over the past week. Biden changed the minds of a number of Republicans and independents. Among Republicans interviewed both before and after the debates, 14% changed their view of Biden from unfavorable to favorable, as did 12% of independents. By comparison, Biden had little room to gain among Democrats, 81% of whom already viewed him favorably before the debates.

Biden's image also improved over the past week among lower-income voters. Among those with household incomes under \$30,000 annually, 16% changed their opinion of Biden from unfavorable to favorable, compared with just 6% of those in higher income categories.

Overall, 5% of voters changed their opinion of Sarah Palin from unfavorable to favorable over the past week. Palin did not substantially improve her image in any subgroups of voters.

Biden Favorability				
	Pre-Debate			Total
	Fav %	Unfav %	DK %	
Post-Debate				
Favorable	49	8	6	= 63
Unfavorable	4	24	3	= 31
Don't know	1	1	4	= 6
Total	54	33	13	= 100

Palin Favorability				
	Pre-Debate			Total
	Fav %	Unfav %	DK %	
Post-Debate				
Favorable	46	5	3	= 54
Unfavorable	3	35	2	= 40
Don't know	2	2	2	= 6
Total	51	42	7	= 100

Based on 710 registered voters interviewed Sept 27-29 and re-interviewed Oct 3-5.

Who Went from Unfavorable to Favorable		
	Biden %	Palin %
All voters	8	5
Men	7	4
Women	9	6
Republican	14	3
Democrat	3	7
Independent	12	4
Certain McCain	13	2
Certain Obama	3	7
Swing voters	13	6
Under \$30,000	16	6
\$30-\$74,999	6	7
\$75,000 and over	6	3

Cell entries show the percent of voters who expressed an unfavorable view of the candidate when interviewed Sept. 27-29 and a favorable view when re-interviewed Oct. 3-5.

Many Words Used to Describe Palin

Among those who watched the debate, the word “knowledgeable” was used most often to describe Biden’s debate performance. “Experienced” and “competent” were also frequently used words. Less positive words used to describe Biden included “politician” and “old.”

Debate viewers used a somewhat different set of words to describe their impression of Palin. “Confident” was the most commonly used word followed by “honest” and “good.” The fourth and fifth most common responses to Palin’s debate performance were “inexperienced” and “unqualified.”

<u>Biden</u>		<u>Palin</u>	
Knowledgeable	53	Confident	15
Experienced	32	Honest	15
Competent	23	Good	14
Confident	17	Inexperienced	14
Good	16	Unqualified	13
Politician	14	Energetic	12
Fair	12	Prepared	9
Intelligent	12	Excellent	8
Old	11	Knowledgeable	8
Prepared	11	Competent	7
Excellent	8	Enthusiastic	7
Qualified	8	Fresh	7
Informed	7	Impressive	7

Responses from those who watched the debate. Figures show numbers of respondents who offered each response; these numbers are *not* percentages.

In general, debate viewers used a wider variety of words to describe Palin, though in many cases no more than three or four respondents mentioned the same word. In Biden’s case, more people used the same word, such as the 53 who said “knowledgeable.”

Debate’s Modest Impact

There is little evidence that the events of the past week have changed minds of many voters about the presidential election. Just 4% of those questioned moved from saying there was a chance they might back McCain to saying they definitely would not – largely offset by 2% who moved from definite opposition to maybe giving him consideration. A similar mixed change in opinions about voting for Obama was evident in the panel back survey.

Post-VP Debate	Pre-VP Debate		DK	Total
	Definitely not McCain	Chance might vote for		
Definitely not McCain	72	4	1	= 77
Chance might vote for	2	9	5	= 16
Don’t know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	= <u>7</u>
	75	15	10	100

Post-VP Debate	Pre-VP Debate		DK	Total
	Definitely not Obama	Chance might vote for		
Definitely not Obama	67	2	4	= 73
Chance might vote for	4	8	4	= 16
Don’t know	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	= <u>11</u>
	72	15	13	100

* Based on 405 voters who either backed Obama or expressed no preference in the pre-debate survey.
 ** Based on 365 voters who either backed McCain or expressed no preference in the pre-debate survey.

Partisan Division on the Bailout

The poll finds that public reaction to the \$700 billion economic bailout package signed into law last week is decidedly mixed, with a narrow plurality of 42% saying it was the right thing to do and 39% saying it was the wrong thing to do; 19% are unsure. The overall division in public opinion was similar prior to the measure's passage (45% right thing to do, 38% wrong thing in interviews conducted Sept. 27-29).

However, the relative stability in the overall numbers obscures considerable movement in public opinion about the package. The survey finds that many people changed their minds as the debate unfolded in Washington, with nearly four-in-ten (37%) holding a different opinion in the re-interview survey than they had when interviewed a week ago.

In particular, Democrats and Republicans moved in opposite directions. In the Sept. 27-29 survey, members of both parties held similar views, with small pluralities favoring the plan (49% among Republicans, 46% among Democrats). Independents were almost evenly divided, with 42% saying the plan was the right thing to do and 40% saying it was the wrong approach.

Now, Republicans are significantly more negative about the package; 45% now say it is the wrong thing to do, up from 38% a week ago. Independents have moved in the same direction and now oppose the plan by a margin of 47% to 36%. Meanwhile, 48% of Democrats now say the bailout is the right thing to do.

Echoing the divided public verdict on the bailout, 45% are pessimistic that the plan will keep financial markets secure; 42% say they are optimistic. A majority of independents (54%) say they are pessimistic about whether the bailout will work. Republicans (49% optimistic) and Democrats (47%) are more optimistic.

Republicans Now More Negative about Bailout Plan				
<i>Gov't plan is the...</i>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
	%	%	%	%
Oct 3-5				
Right thing to do	42	41	48	36
Wrong thing to do	39	45	31	47
Don't know/Refused	<u>19</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>17</u>
	100	100	100	100
Sept 27-29				
Right thing to do	45	49	46	42
Wrong thing to do	38	38	38	40
Don't know/Refused	<u>17</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>18</u>
	100	100	100	100
Sept 19-22				
Right thing to do	57	64	56	54
Wrong thing to do	30	28	29	32
Don't know/Refused	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>
	100	100	100	100
Sept 27-29 to Oct 3-5				
<i>Change in "Wrong"</i>	+1	+7	-7	+7
Current wording: "As you may know, Congress has passed a bill that authorized the government to invest billions to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure. Do you think this is the right thing or the wrong thing for the government to be doing?"				

Optimistic or Pessimistic about the Plan?			
<i>Optimistic or pessimistic plan will work?</i>	<u>Opti-</u>	<u>Pessi-</u>	<u>DK</u>
	%	%	%
Total	42	45	13=100
Republican	49	41	10=100
Democrat	47	41	12=100
Independent	32	54	14=100
Certain Obama	47	41	12=100
Certain McCain	44	45	11=100
Swing voters	32	51	17=100
\$75,000+	50	42	8=100
\$50-\$74,999	47	47	6=100
\$30-\$49,999	32	54	14=100
Less than \$30,000	41	39	20=100

Public judgments about how Congress has handled the situation are now more negative than they were in late September. A plurality of 39% says Congress was too hasty, up from just 22% who said this earlier. About a quarter (23%) thinks Congress took too much time debating, while 29% say lawmakers gave the issue about the right amount of consideration. Independents, in particular, are more likely to say Congress acted too fast: 46% now say this, up from 25% a week ago.

How Congress is Handling the Crisis				
<i>Congress ...</i>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
Oct 3-5	%	%	%	%
Took too much time debating	23	21	25	24
Was too hasty	39	40	34	46
Right amount of consideration	29	31	34	23
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
	100	100	100	100
Sept 27-29				
Is taking too much time debating	32	31	30	35
Being too hasty	22	21	22	25
Right amount of consideration	37	40	40	33
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Change in "Too Hasty"</i>	<i>+17</i>	<i>+19</i>	<i>+12</i>	<i>+21</i>

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this report are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a sample of 820 adults, 18 years of age or older, from October 3-5, 2008. The interviews were conducted among a population of 1,505 adults previously interviewed by Pew from September 27-29. Interviews were conducted on both landline telephones ($N=617$) and cell phones ($N=203$). The data were weighted using demographic weighting parameters derived from the March 2007 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, along with an estimate of current patterns of telephone status in the U.S. derived from the 2007 National Health Interview Survey.

In order to assure comparability of the recontacted cases with the original sample, the data were also weighted to match the distribution of the Sept. 27-29 sample results on key political questions, including leaned party affiliation, whether Sarah Palin is qualified to be president and whether the government plan to secure the markets is a good or bad thing to do. This step helps to minimize bias that could occur because certain types of respondents may have been easier or harder to re-interview. The weighting used an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distributions of all weighting parameters.

The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	820	4.5 percentage points
Registered voters	710	4.5 percentage points
Republican voters	203	8.0 percentage points
Democratic voters	271	7.0 percentage points
Independent voters	207	8.0 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.

ABOUT THE CENTER

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 seven 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
EARLY OCTOBER CALLBACK STUDY
FINAL TOPLINE
October 3-5, 2008
N=820

ASK ALL:

RTHOUGHT How much thought have you given to the coming presidential election . . . Quite a lot or only a little?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=710]:

	Late Sept <u>2008</u>
83 Quite a lot	80
3 Some (VOL.)	3
12 Only a little	14
1 None (VOL.)	2
<u>1</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100

ASK ALL REGISTERED VOTERS (REGICERT=1):
IF RESPONDENT DID NOT CHOOSE MCCAIN (Q5HORSE=2,3,9) ASK:
ROTATE R.1 AND R.2

R.1 Do you think there is a chance that you might vote for John McCain in November, or have you definitely decided not to vote for him?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=710]:

	Late Sept <u>2008</u>
9 Chance might vote for him	10
44 Decided not to vote for him	42
<u>4</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>6</u>
57%	58%

ASK ALL REGISTERED VOTERS (REGICERT=1):
IF RESPONDENT DID NOT CHOOSE OBAMA (Q5HORSE=1,3,9) ASK:
ROTATE R.1 AND R.2

R.2 Do you think there is a chance that you might vote for Barack Obama in November, or have you definitely decided not to vote for him?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=710]:

	Late Sept <u>2008</u>
8 Chance might vote for him	8
37 Decided not to vote for him	37
<u>6</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>6</u>
51%	51%

ASK ALL:

R.3 Would you say your overall opinion of... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? How about (NEXT NAME)? [IF NECESSARY: would you say your overall opinion of [NAME] is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN “NEVER HEARD OF” AND “CAN’T RATE.”]]

	-----Favorable-----			-----Unfavorable-----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never Heard of	Can't rate/Ref
a. Sarah Palin								
Early October, 2008 (callback)	49	19	30	43	20	23	1	7=100
Late September, 2008	47	18	29	40	21	19	4	9=100
Mid-September, 2008	50	25	25	34	15	19	6	10=100
b. Joe Biden								
Early October, 2008 (callback)	61	20	41	30	10	20	1	8=100
Late September, 2008	49	15	34	30	10	20	8	13=100
Mid-September, 2008	48	14	34	30	11	19	8	14=100

ASK ALL:

ROTATE R.4 AND R.5

R.4 Based on what you know about the Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin, do you think she is qualified to serve as PRESIDENT, if it becomes necessary, or not?

		-NII-	
		Late Sept	Sept. 5-8
		<u>2008</u>	<u>2008</u>
40	Yes, qualified	37	52
52	No, not qualified	51	39
8	Don't know/Refused	12	9
100		100	100

ASK ALL:

ROTATE R.4 AND R.5

R.5 Based on what you know about the Democratic vice presidential nominee Joe Biden, do you think he is qualified to serve as PRESIDENT, if it becomes necessary, or not?

		-NII-	
		Late Sept	Sept. 5-8
		<u>2008</u>	<u>2008</u>
73	Yes, qualified	63	66
18	No, not qualified	20	22
9	Don't know/Refused	17	12
100		100	100

ASK ALL:

R.6 Did you happen to watch the vice presidential debate between Sarah Palin and Joe Biden on Thursday night, or didn't you get a chance to see it? **IF YES, ASK:** How much of the debate did you watch: all of it, some of it, or only a little?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=710]:

		<i>McCain/Obama</i>
		<u>Late Sept 2008</u>
68	Yes (NET)	60
45	Yes, all	34
20	Yes, some	20
3	Yes, a little	6
32	No, didn't watch	39
<u>0</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100		100

IF RESPONDENT WATCHED (R.6=1-3) ASK:

ROTATE R.7 AND R.8

R.7 All in all, would you say Sarah Palin did an excellent, good, only fair or poor job in the debate?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO WATCHED THE DEBATE [N=533]:

		<i>McCain</i>
		<u>Late Sept 2008</u>
27	Excellent	14
38	Good	45
25	Only fair	28
10	Poor	12
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100		100

IF RESPONDENT WATCHED (R.6=1-3) ASK:

ROTATE R.7 AND R.8

R.8 All in all, would you say Joe Biden did an excellent, good, only fair or poor job in the debate?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO WATCHED THE DEBATE [N=533]:

		<i>Obama</i>
		<u>Late Sept 2008</u>
28	Excellent	22
53	Good	50
15	Only fair	20
4	Poor	6
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>2</u>
100		100

NO QUESTIONS R.9 THROUGH R.11

ASK ALL:

On a different subject...

R.12 As you may know, Congress has passed a bill that authorizes the government to invest billions to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure. Do you think this is the right thing or the wrong thing for the government to be doing?

		-NII-	
		Late Sept <u>2008¹</u>	Sept. 19-22 <u>2008</u>
42	Right thing	45	57
39	Wrong thing	38	30
<u>19</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>17</u>	<u>13</u>
100		100	100

ASK ALL:

R.13 What is your opinion of how Congress responded to the recent problems in the financial markets, do you think they [**READ AND RANDOMIZE**].

		Late Sept <u>2008²</u>
23	Took too much time debating the issue	32
39	Were too hasty [Or are they]	22
29	Gave it the right amount of consideration	37
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused (DO NOT READ)	<u>9</u>
100		100

ASK ALL:

R.14 From what you've read and heard, are you optimistic or pessimistic that the government plan to invest billions to try to keep financial markets secure will work?

42	Optimistic
45	Pessimistic
<u>13</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

¹ In Late September 2008 and in the Sept. 19-22 *News Interest Index* the question was worded, "As you may know, the government is potentially investing billions to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure. Do you think this is the right thing or the wrong thing for the government to be doing?" In Late September 2008, an experiment testing the word "committing" instead of "investing" showed no difference in the results. Results for the two versions have been combined.

² In Late September 2008, the question was asked in the present tense.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
OCTOBER 3-5, 2008 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=612 DEBATE WATCHERS

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 6 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ROTATE Q.6A and Q.6B

IF RESPONDENT WATCHED (Q.6=1-3) ASK [N=612]:

Q.6A Please tell me what one word best describes your impression of Sarah Palin in the debate. Tell me just the ONE best word that described him. **(OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE ONLY IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS “DON’T KNOW”.)**

15	Confident
15	Honest
14	Good
14	Inexperienced
13	Unqualified
12	Energetic
9	Prepared
8	Excellent
8	Knowledgeable
7	Competent
7	Enthusiastic
7	Fresh
7	Impressive

The numbers listed represent the number of respondents who offered each response; they are not percentages.

IF RESPONDENT WATCHED (Q.6=1-3) ASK [N=612]:

Q.6B Please tell me what one word best describes your impression of Joe Biden in the debate. Tell me just the ONE best word that described him. **(OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE ONLY IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS “DON’T KNOW”.)**

53	Knowledgeable
32	Experienced
23	Competent
17	Confident
16	Good
14	Politician
12	Fair
12	Intelligent
11	Old
11	Prepared
8	Excellent
8	Qualified
7	Informed

The numbers listed represent the number of respondents who offered each response; they are not percentages.