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Asian Americans Likely Favor Obama, Could Affect Outcome of Presidential Election, Says Nat'l Survey

From the *Nichi Bei Times* Weekly October 9, 2008

By **HEATHER HORIUCHI**
Nichi Bei Times

WASHINGTON, D.C. — While many Asian American voters are supporting presidential candidate Barack Obama, (D-Ill.), a sizable amount remain undecided, indicating that they could play an important role in the outcome of the election, according to a new national survey released Oct. 6.

Researchers predict that the non-partisan vote, comprised of a number of Asian Americans, will likely come into play in next month's presidential election.

"A very large number of Asian Americans are non-partisan," UC Berkeley associate professor of political science Taeku Lee said in a statement. "The Asian American vote is very much up for grabs: Non-partisans who see either the Democratic or Republican party as closer to them on issues that matter to them are much likelier to vote for that party's candidate."

Karthick Ramakrishnan, an associate professor of political science at UC Riverside, described many undecided Asian Americans as the "quintessential swing vote." Furthermore, "with such a high proportion of undecided voters, Asian Americans are a critical source of potential votes for either candidate in the final weeks of the campaign," he said.

More than 4,000 Asian Americans of various ethnicities who are likely to vote were interviewed in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese from Aug. 18 to Sept. 26.

The survey was conducted by researchers from Rutgers University, UC Berkeley, UC Riverside and USC.

The Asian American Vote

Some selected findings of the 2008 National Asian American Survey:

- **41 percent of Asian Americans are likely to favor Obama, while 24 percent support McCain** and more than a third of Asian American voters (34 percent) remain undecided. In nationwide polls of the general population, undecided voters are approximately 8 percent of the electorate.
- **32 percent of all Asian Americans identify themselves as Democrats; 14**

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percent as Republicans; 19 percent as independents and 35 percent identified themselves as non-partisan.

- **42 percent of Japanese Americans identify themselves as Democrats; 14 percent as Republicans; 17 percent as independents and 28 percent as non-partisan.**
- **Japanese Americans are much more likely to support Senator Obama than Senator McCain by a margin of 60 to 17 percent.**
- Vietnamese Americans are much more likely to support Senator McCain than Senator Obama by a margin of 51 percent to 24 percent.
- Almost two thirds (61 percent) of Asian Americans who are likely to vote, view the economy as the single most important problem facing the nation, followed by the war in Iraq as the second most important issue at 9 percent.
- After Latinos, Asian Americans are the fastest growing group of the U.S. population. Asian Americans comprise 5 percent of the U.S. population and will likely play a significant role in battleground states such as Virginia, Nevada and Washington where they account for 5 percent or more of the population.
- Asian Americans make up a significant proportion of the total population in states such as Hawaii (56 percent), California (13 percent), New Jersey (8 percent), Washington (8 percent), and New York (7 percent).

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