

The Big Switch: States That Went from Red to Blue

The Democratic presidential victory was won in the following nine states -- Bush carried all of them in 2004, but Obama won them in 2008:

	Obama Margin 2008	Bush Margin 2004	Vote Shift
Colorado	7 points	5 points	+12
Florida	3	5	+8
Indiana	1	21	+22
Iowa	9	1	+10
Nevada	9	1	+10
New Mexico	15	1	+16
North Carolina	1*	12	+13
Ohio	4	2	+6
Virginia	6	8	+14

** less than .5 percent*

The double-digit R-to-D shifts – especially in Indiana, New Mexico, Virginia, North Carolina and Colorado – were truly remarkable.

Home State Advantage

All four candidates on the two major tickets carried their home states: Obama won Illinois by 25 points,

McCain won Arizona by 9 points, Biden won Delaware by 25 points, and Palin won Alaska by 25 points.

National candidates don't always carry home states. Two recent examples: Al Gore lost Tennessee in 2000 and VP nominee John Edwards lost North Carolina in 2004.

Interestingly, Democrats greatly expanded victory margins in their candidates' home states in 2008 over where they were in 2004, while Republican margins slightly contracted in their candidates' home states:

- Kerry won Illinois by 10 points in 2004; Obama carried his home state by 25 points in 2008.
- Bush won Arizona by 10 points in 2004; McCain carried his home state by 9 points in 2008.
- Kerry-Edwards won Delaware by 8 points in 2004; Obama-Biden won Biden's home state by 25 points in 2008.
- Bush-Cheney carried Alaska by 26 points in 2004; McCain-Palin won Palin's home state by 25 points in 2008.

Sailing Against the Wind

Republicans increased their presidential margins of victory in four states in 2008 over where they were in 2004. Interestingly, these four states are contiguous:

Arkansas +10 points (Republicans won by 10 in '04, by 20 in '08)
Louisiana +4 (Republicans won by 15 in '04, by 19 in '08)
Tennessee +1 (Republicans won by 14 in '04, by 15 in '08)
Oklahoma +0.2 (Republicans won by 31.1 in '04, by 31.3 in '08)

Gale Force Wins

Between 2004 and 2008, Democrats expanded their margins of victory by 10 points or more in the following Blue states:

Hawaii +36 points (Democrats won by 9 in '04, by 45 in '08)
Delaware +17 (Democrats won by 8 in '04, by 25 in '08)
Vermont +16 (Democrats won by 20 in '04, by 36 in '08)
Illinois +15 (Democrats won by 10 in '04, by 25 in '08)
California +14 (Democrats won by 10 in '04, by 24 in '08)
Wisconsin +14 (Democrats won by 0.4 in '04, by 14 in '08)
Connecticut +13 (Democrats won by 10 in '04, by 23 in '08)
Michigan +13 (Democrats won by 3 in '04, by 16 in '08)
Oregon +12 (Democrats won by 4 in '04, by 16 in '08)
Maryland +11 (Democrats won by 13 in '04, by 24 in '08)
Washington +10 (Democrats won by 7 in '04, by 17 in '08)

Republican Red State Shrinkage

Between 2004 and 2008, Republican margins of victory declined by 10 points or more in the following Red states:

Montana - 19 points (Republicans won by 21 in '04, by 2 in '08)
North Dakota - 18 (Republicans won by 27 in '04, by 9 in '08)
Nebraska - 17 (Republicans won by 33 in '04, by 16 in '08)

Utah - 17	(Republicans won by 46 in '04, by 29 in '08)
Idaho - 13	(Republicans won by 38 in '04, by 25 in '08)
South Dakota - 13	(Republicans won by 21 in '04, by 8 in '08)
Georgia - 12	(Republicans won by 17 in '04, by 5 in '08)
Texas - 11	(Republicans won by 23 in '04, by 12 in '08)
Kansas - 10	(Republicans won by 25 in '04, by 15 in '08)

Tightest States

The following states were won by less than 5-point margins in the 2008 presidential race (according to current counts):

- Missouri: McCain won by 0.2 points
- North Carolina: Obama won by 0.3 points
- Indiana: Obama won by 1.0 point
- Montana: McCain won by 2.5 points
- Florida: Obama won by 2.8 points
- Ohio: Obama won by 3.8 points

5 Best Obama States

Obama received his highest percentages in these four states and the District of Columbia:

- DC 92 percent
- Hawaii 72
- Vermont 67
- RI 63
- NY 62

5 Best McCain States

McCain received his highest percentages in these five states:

- Oklahoma 66 percent
- Wyoming 65
- Utah 63
- Idaho 62
- Alaska 61

County Highs, Lows

Obama won 871 counties, McCain 2,241. The following are Obama's and McCain's five best counties (based on current counts).

Obama's 5 best counties:

- DC 92 percent
- Prince George's, MD 89
- Shannon, SD 89
- Petersburg, VA 89
- Bronx, NY 88

McCain's 5 best counties:

- Roberts TX 92 percent
- King TX 92

- Ochiltree TX 92
- Glasscock TX 90
- Beaver OK 89

Hey Big Spenders

Obama spent more money on his campaign than any candidate in presidential election history. At last count, he had spent over \$638 million, breaking all fundraising records with a massive base of small donors.

Compared to Obama, McCain's spending – at \$360 million – seems anemic. But McCain spent more money than every other presidential candidate in American history (except for Obama). McCain's per vote spending was less than Obama's: he spent \$6.33 per vote; Obama spent \$9.88.

Nebraska Splits

Nebraska appears to have split its five Electoral Votes for the first time, with its one Electoral Vote from the state's Second Congressional going to Obama and the other four (one each for the state's two other congressional districts and two for winning the statewide popular vote) going to McCain. The last time Nebraska cast an Electoral Vote for a Democrat was 1964.

Electoral Vote Contest

Assuming the current presidential returns hold, and Obama wins one Electoral Vote from Nebraska and McCain retains his Missouri lead, Obama will ultimately win 365 Electoral Votes. In our Electoral Vote contest, we called three winners who predicted Obama would receive 364 Electoral Votes – and we awarded each our Great Predictors of 2008 awards. Those three winners will keep their titles since they came closest based on the current count – no one in our contest predicted that Obama would receive the revised total of 365 (or 366) Electoral Votes.

Again, congratulations to our contest winners: *Alvin L. Murphy* of Metairie, Louisiana, *Seth Samuel* of Washington, DC, and *Mitchell Auster* of East Windsor, New Jersey. In addition to coming within one Electoral Vote of the current total, Al Murphy predicted Obama would win 53 percent of the popular vote and Seth Samuel and Michael Auster each predicted Obama would win 52 percent of the popular vote. Based on incomplete returns, Obama is winning 52.505 percent of the popular vote.

Correction: *In our last newsletter, we said that our final pre-election "Swing State Update" showed Obama with a slight lead in Indiana and Montana. That was a misprint. Our final, pre-election "Swing State Update" showed McCain with a slight lead in both Indiana and Montana. On Election Day, Obama carried Indiana by one percent and McCain carried Montana by 2.5 points.*

IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER, WE WILL EXAMINE:

- CHANGING VOTER COMPOSITION IN THE ELECTORATE
 - WAS THERE A BRADLEY-WILDER EFFECT? RACIAL VOTING PATTERNS IN THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
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Thanks very much,
Ron

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