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Republicans and independents are more likely to think the United States is ready to elect a president who is a woman now that Governor Sarah Palin is Senator John McCain's running mate, according to the National Annenberg Election Survey.

After Senator John McCain chose Alaska Governor Sarah Palin as his running mate on Friday, August 29, 2008, self-identified Republicans and Independents are significantly more likely to think that the United States is ready to elect a president who is a woman, according to the National Annenberg Election Survey.

The findings, released today, are based on across-time analyses of the 10 days prior (8-19-2008 to 8-28-2008; N=2,238) and 10 days after (8-29-2008 to 9-7-2008; N=2,319) Republican presidential candidate Senator John McCain announced Governor Sarah Palin as his running mate. Governor Palin is the first woman the Republican Party has nominated to run on a national ticket.

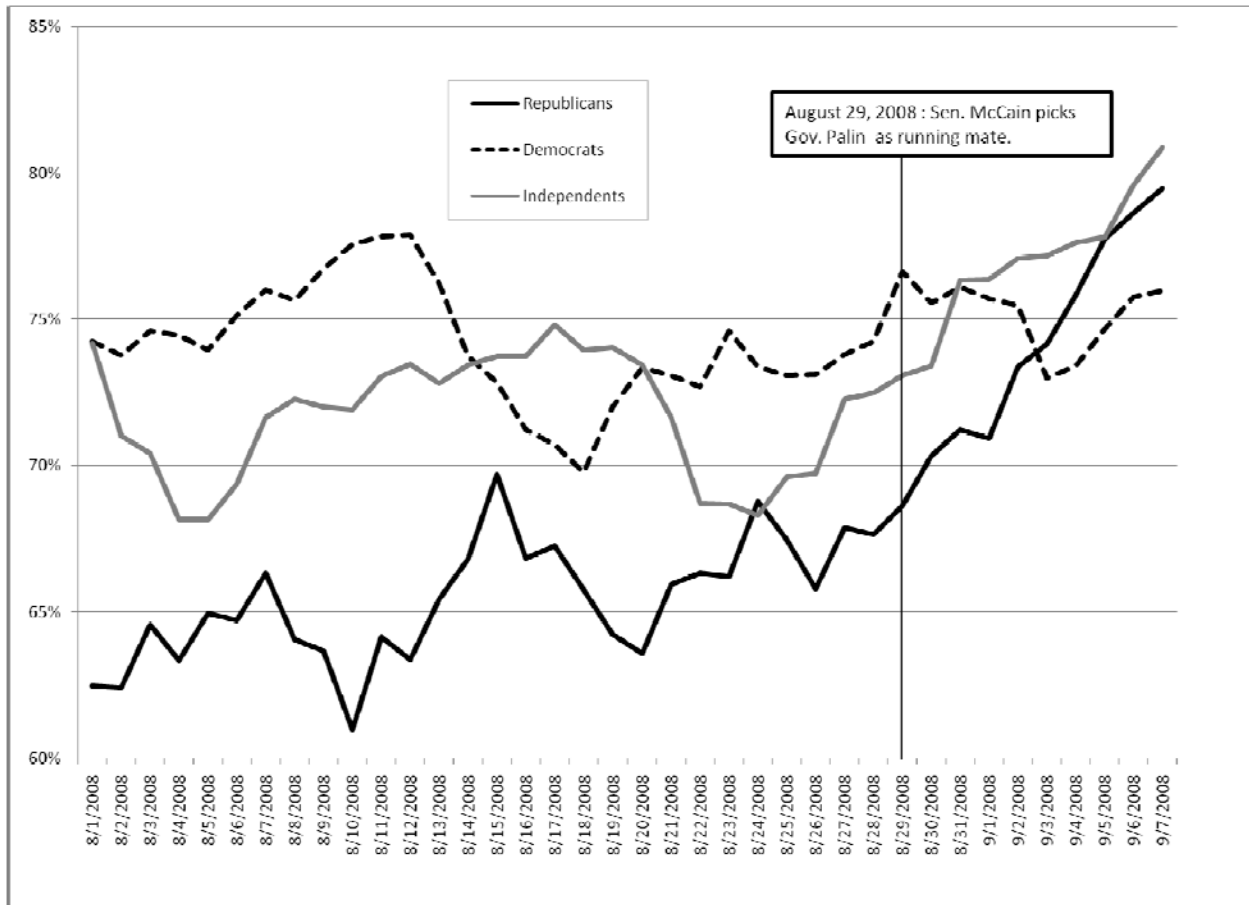
The percent of Republicans thinking that the U.S. is ready to elect a president who is a woman jumped almost 10 percent (9.7%) after the introduction of Governor Sarah Palin while independents jumped 8.4 percent (See Table 1 & Figure 1). Both increases are statistically significant. There is a not a statistically significant shift among Democrats on this question.

Data for this study were collected between August 1 and September 7, 2008 from 8,974 adults in the United States. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 1.0 percentage point for the sample overall. For subsamples within the study, the margins of sample error are larger, depending on the sample sizes of the groups being analyzed.

Table 1. Percent of respondents who think the United States is ready to elect a president who is a woman by party identification

	<i>Before Palin</i> 8-19-2008 to 8-28-2008 (N=2,238)	<i>After Palin</i> 8-29-2008 to 9-7-2008 (N=2,319)
Republicans ** (N = 1435)	66.9%	76.6%
Democrats (N=1802)	74.6%	76.0%
Independents ** (N=1320)	70.7%	79.1%
Note: ** $p < .01$		

Figure 1. Percent of respondents who think the United States is ready to elect a president who is a woman by party identification (5- Day rolling average, 8-01-08 to 9-07-2008; N = 8,503).



Appendix:

The National Annenberg Election Survey is the largest academic election survey being conducted in the 2008 campaign. It ultimately will include approximately 100,000 interviews and reflect the views of citizens as the campaign evolves. About half of the survey consists of rolling cross-section interviews conducted by telephone. The remainder is being conducted over the internet with five waves of web panel interviews gathered from 20,000 participants. The first web wave began in October 2007; the final interviews will be completed following the general election, November 4, 2008. The data reported here are drawn from the rolling cross-sectional phone survey.

National Annenberg Election Surveys also were conducted in 2000 and 2004.

The 2008 survey, as with past NAES polls, will examine a wide range of political attitudes about candidates, issues and the traits Americans want in a president. It will also place a particular emphasis on the effects of media exposure through campaign commercials and news from radio, television, newspapers and the internet. Additionally, the survey measures the effects of other kinds of political communication, from conversations at home and on the job to various efforts by campaigns to influence potential voters.