

76% of Sportsmen Say They Prefer to Elect a President Who Hunts or Fishes

John McCain is the preferred Presidential candidate among sportsmen, as well as the preferred sporting partner

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Sportsmen have a solid history of voting, with 9 in 10 currently registered to vote and of those 83 percent say they will vote in the November election, according to a new survey by the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. Overall, there are an estimated 40 million sportsmen of voting age in the United States.

"Sportsmen are active voters and prefer candidates who align with them on hunting and fishing issues," said Jeff Crane, president of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. "The attention presidential candidates give to sportsmen's issues is well-aimed."

Among sportsmen, Republican John McCain holds a significant lead over White House opponent Barack Obama, with a 14-point margin according to the survey.

Asked who they planned to vote for in November, 45 percent said McCain and 31 percent said Obama.

Support for McCain among sportsmen extends from the voting booth to the field, the survey found.

Asked who they'd like to go hunting with, 49 percent said McCain and 27 percent said Obama. As a fishing buddy, 44 percent said they'd prefer McCain and 31 percent chose Obama.

"Sportsmen view John McCain as good company in the great outdoors," said Steve Sanetti, president of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, which helped underwrite the survey. "They're just not sure how much fun Barack Obama would be in a duck blind."

By a 2 to 1 margin sportsman said McCain would be a better president on sportsmen's issues than Obama.

"Politically engaged sportsmen see John McCain as a supporter of their concerns," Sanetti said. "To sportsmen, I would say, don't be fooled. Make it a point to know where the candidates you're considering for office truly stand on hunting and firearms issues."

A majority of sportsmen polled said that it is important for a candidate to share their views on hunting and fishing issues, although the survey indicated the economy, homeland security and the war in Iraq are the top concerns for all Americans this election season.

When it comes to sportsmen-related issues, sportsmen are most likely to say that it's essential that a candidate support ensuring gun rights, clean water initiatives, and sustainable energy development.

"With an estimated \$76 billion economic impact on the economy annually and direct support of 1.6 million jobs, the next president will need to pay attention to issues that impact hunting and fishing," said Crane. "Sportsmen need to ask candidates where they stand on our outdoor issues and take this into account when they vote on November 4th."

Other key findings of the survey include:

A significant portion of sportsmen say this November's election is more important than past elections regarding their ability to hunt and fish.

On the specific topic of gun rights, sportsmen say firearm issues are more important now than in past elections.

Three-quarters (74%) say they would prefer to elect a president who personally owns firearms.

The telephone survey of 1,009 sportsmen was conducted July 10-24 by Braun Research on behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and Ketchum Global Research. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent.

The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan group headquartered in Washington, D.C. A leader in promoting sportsmen's issues with elected officials, CSF works with the bi-partisan Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus in the U.S. Congress, as well as sportsmen's caucuses in state legislators around the country. The CSF does not endorse political candidates.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, based in Newtown, Conn., works to increase participation in and understanding of hunting and the shooting sports; to reaffirm and strengthen their members' commitment to the safe and responsible use of their products, and to promote a political climate supportive of America's traditional firearms rights.

The survey was also supported by National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers, Outdoor Channel, American Sportfishing Association and the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

For more information on the survey results go to www.sportsmenslink.org.