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California-specific results of the National Asian American Survey will be presented at USC Oct. 15

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(Media-Newswire.com) - A new national survey reveals that while many Asian Americans support Barack Obama, a sizable portion remain undecided – which means that this demographic could play a pivotal role in certain key swing states.

The most comprehensive survey of Asian American political views ever conducted comes from Janelle Wong of USC College; Jane Junn at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; Taeku Lee at the University of California, Berkeley; and S. Karthick Ramakrishnan at the University of California, Riverside.

The National Asian American Survey profiles one of the fastest-growing segments of the electorate, identifying an influential voice in the 2008 presidential election. Between 1990 and 2000, the Asian American population more than doubled in 19 states, growing fastest in key battlegrounds such as Florida, Nevada, Georgia and New Hampshire.

The multi-ethnic survey of more than 4,000 Asian American likely voters was conducted from Aug. 18 to Sept. 26, in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

“Most national polls cannot report the preferences of these likely voters because they do not interview in multiple languages, and the number of interviews they conduct among Asian Americans is very small,” Wong noted.

California-specific results of the survey will be presented by Wong and Karthick Ramakrishnan at USC on Oct. 15, followed by a panel discussion with ethnic media and community organizations, including Tanzila Ahmed (Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance), Dan Ichinose (Asian Pacific American Legal Center), Karin Wang (Asian Pacific American Legal Center/API Equality-LA) and Julian Do (New American Media).

As Ramakrishnan explained, “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.”

The research turned up key findings:

- Forty-one percent of Asian American likely voters support Obama, while 24 percent support John McCain.
- More than one-third (34 percent) of likely Asian American voters remain undecided. By comparison, in the general population, only about 8 percent are undecided, per recent surveys. In the National Asian American Survey, even among those who were interviewed in the second half of September, more than 30 percent remained undecided. “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,” Ramakrishnan said.
- In battleground states, 43 percent of Asian American likely voters support Obama, 22 percent support McCain, and 35 percent are undecided.
- Among Asian American likely voters who supported George W. Bush in 2004, 51 percent plan to vote for McCain in November, while 18 percent intend to vote for Obama, and 29 percent remain undecided. Among those who favored John Kerry in 2004, 65 percent plan to vote for Obama, 6 percent intend to vote for McCain, and 30 percent are undecided.
- Asian American Democratic primary voters supported Hillary Clinton over Obama by a 2-to-1 margin. More than half of former Clinton supporters (59 percent) intend to vote for Obama in November. Only 10 percent of former Clinton supporters plan to vote for McCain, and 29 percent are undecided.
- Preferences for the presidential candidates vary by national origin. Support for McCain is highest among Vietnamese likely voters, with 56 percent planning to vote for the Republican candidate. By contrast, a majority of Japanese Americans (60 percent) and Indian Americans (52 percent) intend to vote for Obama. Chinese and

Korean likely voters favor Obama over McCain, but a large share remain undecided. Filipino likely voters are evenly divided between the two candidates, and nearly a third remain undecided.

- Among Asian American citizens, 65 percent can be described as “likely voters.” Japanese Americans are the most likely to vote (82 percent), followed by Indian Americans (73 percent), Koreans (72 percent), Filipinos (67 percent), Vietnamese (65 percent) and Chinese (60 percent).
- A very strong majority (79 percent) of Asian American likely voters believe that “the economy” is one of the most important problems facing the nation, while 35 percent say that “the war in Iraq” is among the top problems.
- Support for getting out of the war in Iraq is closely tied to vote choice among Asian American likely voters, with those wanting to end the war supporting Obama (57 percent) and those who most strongly disagree with this sentiment supporting McCain (71 percent).
- Similarly, views on the economy sharply divide Obama and McCain supporters. Sixty-one percent of Asian American likely voters who see the Republican Party as closer to their views on the economy plan to vote for McCain, while only 4 percent plan to vote for Obama. Seventy-two percent who see the Democratic Party as closer to their views on the economy intend to vote for Obama, while only 4 percent favor McCain.
- Language access and ethnic-language media are important dynamics for the Asian American electorate. One-third of Asian American citizens get information about politics from Asian-language television and newspapers, and about one in five obtain political information from Asian-language radio and Internet sources. Access to election materials in non-English languages is a significant issue for the Asian American electorate. More than one in four (28 percent) say they would use such materials.
- Asian Americans lean toward the Democratic Party, but the demographic includes a sizable nonpartisan group: 32 percent identify with the Democratic Party, 14 percent identify with the Republican Party, 19 percent identify as Independent, and 35 percent are nonpartisan, saying they do not identify as Democrat, Republican or Independent. Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Indians and Koreans tend to affiliate with the Democratic Party more than with the Republican Party. Vietnamese are more likely to identify as Republicans.

“A very large number of Asian Americans are nonpartisan,” Lee said. “The Asian American vote is very much up for grabs.”

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