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(October 24, 2008)

### US Asians play key role in poll outcome

WASHINGTON Minority Asians may be the biggest group of undecided voters in the upcoming US presidential and congressional elections and will play a key role in the outcome of the ballot.

With the current economic troubles their top concern, many of the 7-million eligible Asian American voters were likely to choose Democratic presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama, and were clamouring to send more of their representatives to Congress and state legislatures, officials said.

Among those who had made up their mind ahead of the November 4 elections, 41% were likely to vote for Obama and 24% for Republican Senator John McCain, polls showed.

Obama, who spent part of his childhood in Asia, has sent a personal message to the voters, saying he considers himself an honorary member of the community. I was born in Hawaii, a majority Asian American state, where I spent much of my childhood, and Ive lived in Indonesia & I had college room-mates who were Indian and Pakistani, he said in a blueprint for the change we need for community of 13-million. My sister is half Indonesian, and she is married to a Chinese Canadian, he said. Obama is travelling to Hawaii to be with his sick grandmother this weekend.

McCain also has powerful Asian connections, including having served in the Vietnam War and having an adopted 17-year-old Bangladeshi daughter.

And many Asian-Americans are attracted by his immigration reforms and bipartisanship.

The 71-year-old Vietnam War hero enjoys two-thirds of Vietnamese Americans support, according to polls.

Despite the two candidates strong lobbying efforts, 34% of all likely Asian American voters remained undecided on who to send to the White House, compared to about 8% among the general population, a recent national survey revealed. 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, said Karthick Ramakrishnan from the **University of California, Riverside**, among four universities that conducted the poll.

Also, the number of eligible Asian American voters had exceeded the margin of victory in about 50 congressional races, said Naomi Tacuyan, deputy director of the APIA Vote, a group campaigning for greater community participation in electoral and public policy processes.

Asian Americans are contesting 11 seats for the House of Representatives, including six seats they currently hold.

The top five states where Asian Americans reside are California, New York, Texas, Hawaii and New Jersey, and all, with the exception of Hawaii, are significant in the elections.

Obama enjoyed a support rate as high as 75% among polled Chinese, state media said yesterday, with an analyst saying he personified the American Dream. The pronouncement was based on the result of an online poll conducted on the China Daily website by the US embassy.

Another survey, issued by Horizon Research also showed that Obama was strongly favoured in China over his Republican rival, McCain.

<http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1658847291&z=950239508>

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