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Obama leads McCain among Indian Americans, other Asians: survey

October 7th, 2008 - 8:43 pm ICT by IANS -

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Join the RNC and Help Elect A Real Commander In Chief GOP.com/JohnMcCain08 Washington, Oct 7 (IANS) Most Asian ethnic groups including Indian Americans support Democrat Barack Obama over Republican McCain by a substantial margin, but a still undecided one-third could impact the US presidential race in swing states. a new shows.Obama is doing well among most Asian ethnic groups, the largest of Asian ethnic groups conducted by four universities and



released Monday found. Japanese and Indian-Americans strongly favour Obama, and he has a lead among Chinese, Filipino and Korean voters.

In percentage terms, 41 percent of Asian Americans support Obama and 24 percent McCain, with 34 percent undecided, including 43 percent of Chinese Americans.

In breakdowns by country of origin, all groups favoured Obama except Vietnamese, a traditionally Republican community that backs McCain over him 51 percent to 24 percent.

Asian Americans "are the quintessential swing vote, and a large chunk of them have not made up their minds", said Karthick Ramakrishnan, who studies immigration at the University of California-Riverside.

Because two-thirds of Asian American voters plan to vote next month, and so many are undecided, they could play an important role in close battleground states such as Virginia, Florida and Nevada, the researchers said. Most national surveys show less than 10 percent of all voters are undecided.

Asian Americans tend not to be as politically involved as other ethnic groups, the survey showed. Party identification is low: 32 percent identify with the Democratic Party, 14 percent with the Republican Party, 19 percent were independent and 35 percent described themselves as non-partisan.

Obama owes his support to several factors, the researchers said: The economy is by far the dominant issue, which has helped Democrats; many Asian Americans supported former president Bill Clinton; and most who backed Hillary Clinton in the primaries have shifted to Obama.

"Many Asians started voting in the 1990s and tend to lean Democratic because of President Clinton," said Janelle Wong of the University of Southern California.

Wong said the undecided number is high because many recent immigrants "are not experienced in the political system, and are just getting to know it".

While Latinos can be reached in English and Spanish, Asian Americans are a more diverse and multilingual group, and "they aren't targeted as much as other voters", said Taeku Lee of the University of California-Berkeley.

James Lai, a University of Santa Clara professor who studies demographics, said "neither party has done a particularly good job at outreach, and Asian American groups feel kind of slighted".

Four foundations and think tanks funded the survey, conducted by researchers for UC-Riverside, University of Southern California, UC-Berkeley and Rutgers in New Jersey.

A breakdown of data from the survey for several states including California will be released next week. According to a Field Poll last month, 45 percent of Asian Americans in California backed Obama, 35 percent supported McCain and 17 percent were undecided.

After Latinos, Asian Americans are the fastest growing group in the US, constituting about five percent of the population. The researchers said Asian Americans make up about five percent of the vote in two battleground states, Virginia and Nevada.

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