

# Survey: Protestant pastors favor McCain, but many still undecided

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) — A majority of Protestant pastors say they plan to vote for Republican presidential nominee John McCain, but just days before the Nov. 4 election nearly one in four is undecided, according to the latest LifeWay Research poll.

McCain outpolled Democrat Barack Obama 55 percent to 20 percent among Protestant pastors, according to the survey by the Southern Baptist Convention's publishing-and-research arm. The margin is even wider among those who identify themselves as evangelicals — 66 percent plan to vote for McCain compared to 13 percent for Obama.

But Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research, noted "a surprising number of undecideds" for so late in the race.

While as a group Protestant pastors tilt toward McCain, the proportion varies by denomination. Thirty-seven percent of mainline Protestant pastors plan to vote for Obama, 36 percent for McCain and 24 percent are undecided.

More than half (53 percent) of Protestant pastors surveyed said they have "personally endorsed candidates for public office this year," but outside of their church roles. Less than 3 percent reported publicly endorsing candidates for public office during a church service. Official church endorsements of candidates or parties violate federal tax law.

An earlier [survey](#) by LifeWay Research found church members

overwhelmingly believe churches should not campaign or endorse candidates, but 54 percent said it is OK for a pastor to endorse candidates outside of their church role.