

CLIP©[®]
NEWS THAT WORKS FOR YOU.
www.ClipandCopy.com



Sign-up
for **free** at
ClipandCopy.com

AP Associated Press

November 1, 2008

Vote might widen divide between children, parents

By ROB RUNYAN

Medill News Service for The Associated Press

Growing up in northeast Ohio, Tara Moncheck and her three younger sisters were always taught to form their own opinions. Now they have.

All four are voting for Democratic candidate Barack Obama. Their parents are supporting Republican John McCain and voted for President Bush in the last two elections.

"There was a chance I could have voted Republican," said Moncheck, a 27-year-old television producer in New York who said she's not registered with any party. "Actually, I really liked John McCain in 2000 when he ran. This time around I feel Obama is a better candidate."

In some ways Moncheck and her sisters are an anomaly. The authors of "The American Voter Revisited," published this year, found that parents who have the same party affiliation pass it to their children about 75 percent of the time.

But polling suggests that more children may break from their parents' preferred candidate this election.

In the latest Pew Research Survey, Obama enjoyed a nearly 45-percentage-point lead among 18-to-29-year-olds, a group that John Kerry won by just 9 points in 2004. The same survey showed Obama had only a 10-point lead with 50-to-64-year-olds.

In essence, it's more likely for a young liberal to be from a conservative family than for a young conservative to come from a liberal family, said Mike McDevitt, associate professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

McDevitt's research has found that young people who identify themselves as Democrat or as liberals are programmed differently from their conservative counterparts.

Almost 79 percent of students surveyed in Colorado, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania who said they will vote for McCain reported that their parents will vote the same way, according to a CBS News/UWIRE/Chronicle of Higher Education poll out this week. That compares to 58 percent of Obama supporters who said they share the same candidate preference as their parents.

In Washington, Sara Herbst, who was not part of the survey, said she would fit into the additional 20 percent of Obama supporters in the CBS poll who agree with one parent and not the other. She thinks her mom will end up voting for Obama, but her dad is a registered Republican in Westchester County, N.Y., who plans to vote for McCain.

"I wouldn't say I'm a die-hard liberal, but I am passionate about what I believe and he's passionate about what he believes," said Herbst, a 23-year-old graphic designer for a Democratic political marketing company in Washington. "It can cause conflict just walking through the kitchen."

Jonathan Herbst said he's not disappointed his daughter has branched off politically.

"I wouldn't want Sara to have only my views," he said. "Sara is 23, and I'm 58. I was once her age."

Whether it's a single issue or a complete partisan shift, some young people are eager to separate themselves from their parents, McDevitt said.

"That's just a normal, healthy part of human development," he said. "Children need to assert an identity that is at least somewhat autonomous from parents."

Some are not convinced that there will be an extraordinary number of parent-child political splits this year.

Kent Jennings, a political science professor at University of California in Santa Barbara, has studied shared political party and candidate preference among parents and children since 1965. In a study following the same sets of parents and children and eventually the children's children, he found remarkably similar rates of agreement through 1997.

"In 1964, for example, there was a huge tide toward the Democratic side, so you had kids who were defecting from their Republican parents," Jennings said. "I doubt if we have that much of a tide this year."

McDevitt said a lot has changed over the last 10 years, particularly the influence of the media and Internet social networks. College students are no longer just concerned with the job market but whether the jobs will offer health insurance, he said.

Then there is the Obama factor. His unique appeal with young voters and his aggressive Internet campaign to mobilize them could also contribute to a wider separation between parents and offspring this election, McDevitt said.



© 2008 Associated Press. Permission granted for up to 5 copies. All rights reserved.

You may forward this article or get additional permissions by typing http://license.icopyright.net/3.5721?icx_id=D9461MMG0 into any web browser. Press Association and Associated Press logos are registered trademarks of Press Association. The iCopyright logo is a registered trademark of iCopyright, Inc.