

Election 2008 Fervor Takes Over WHS

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As Election Day grows nearer, Barack Obama T-shirts and McCain-Palin buttons have become the new accessories at Wilton High School. All of a sudden, political debate isn't limited to Government class; in almost any classroom, every aspect of the presidential campaign from lipstick on bulldogs to Bill Ayers is discussed. Recently, students actively involved in politics talked about this newfound transformation in our generation from politically apathetic teenagers to students interested in the future of our country.

"This election has no doubt generated a lot of buzz," said **Thomas Dec**, Wilton High senior and president of the Connecticut chapter of Students for Obama. "Between Senator Obama, and Senator McCain's VP pick of Gov. Palin, students at WHS seem to be engaged in this election."

Sarah Gustafson, Wilton High junior and founder of the school's chapter of Teenage Republicans, adds, "I think that there can be no doubt that so important an election has excited voters of all ages - from young adults to senior citizens. I would not be surprised if this election has the greatest voter turnout in generations."

But what do students think about the nation's first Republican female vice presidential nominee?

"I think Sarah Palin is a breath of fresh air. I have seen how difficult it is to question the status quo, even in your own party. That she was successful in not only questioning it, but confronting it, and changing the direction is remarkable," said Sarah.

Another junior disagreed. "She's clearly incompetent. I'm not sure if Sarah Palin is ready to lead a pack of sled dogs, let alone the country."

Ben McArdle, a sophomore, said, "Sarah Palin's charisma attracts voters like Obama's eloquence does. I thought McCain was too liberal, but when he picked Gov. Palin as his running mate, it drew me to the ticket because of her conservative values."

In some cases students are questioning leadership on both tickets. "Even with Obama's many advisers with whom he has been training for the last two years in his campaign, his lack of executive experience has been made obvious," said Sarah.

"I think Gov. Palin as the vice president would be a large liability," said **Thomas**.

However there was one issue that all students seemed to agree on: the importance of youth participation in politics. "In such a perilous age, our generation has the responsibility to be careful that soaring clichés and partisan quid-pro-quo do not obstruct common sense and transparency, thus risking our happiness to the danger around the corner," said Sarah.

Some students appear to be tired of the current administration's decision making and policies, and that has made Senator Obama's "hope/change" theme popular.

"It seemed like McCain and Palin tried too hard to ride the 'change' theme that Obama has going. I could tell right away how phony they were being to attract voters, because their stances on the issues are just more of the same of George Bush," said sophomore Michael Serpa.

So where exactly do WHS students' political views line up? In a recent poll conducted by the school

newspaper, Barack Obama was the preferred candidate, winning 59% of the vote, while John McCain received 29%; 12% of students were undecided.