



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Election 2008: Where are the Independents?  
In Boston, Providence, RI and Hartford, CT, According  
to the Latest Scarborough Survey**

NEW YORK (June 17, 2008) – The three cities with the highest percentage of self-proclaimed political Independents\* are located in the Northeast, according to a recent analysis by local consumer and media measurement firm Scarborough Research. Scarborough asks survey respondents across 81 U.S. cities to select the political party label that best describes how they see themselves, regardless of how they may have voted in the past.

Scarborough finds that Boston is the top U.S. city for self-proclaimed Independents, with fifty percent of Boston adults characterizing themselves this way. Providence, RI (47 percent cited Independent) and Hartford, CT (41 percent) round out the top three markets for Independents. By contrast, Pittsburgh, PA (17 percent), Lexington, KY (15 percent), and Oklahoma City, OK (14 percent) are the cities where adults are least likely to consider themselves Independent. Nationally, 27 percent of adults consider themselves to be politically Independent.

“Effectively reaching voters in today’s fragmented media landscape is increasingly difficult. As illustrated by the presidential primaries, campaigns are tasked with really getting to know their constituents and making meaningful connections. We saw this demonstrated in the hotly contested Pennsylvania primary last April – with Hillary’s ‘shot and beer’ and Obama’s bowling,” said Bob Cohen, Ph.D., president & CEO, Scarborough Research. “The candidates utilized knowledge of local behaviors and preferences to help forge a more relevant connection with potential voters.”

\* In its survey, Scarborough asks respondents, “Regardless of how you may have voted in the past, do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, Independent, Independent But Feel Closer to Democrat, Independent But Feel closer to Republican, or None of these.” The term “Independent” as used in this press release is defined as those respondents who answered “Independent”, “Independent but closer to Republican”, or “Independent but Closer to Democrat.”

This type of knowledge will be critical in forging voter connections and targeting Independents, particularly as the presidential election campaigns gain momentum. To illustrate just how different Independents can be from city to city, Scarborough examined self-proclaimed Independents in Boston and Green Bay, two cities with high representation of this group. The company analyzed consumer and lifestyle preferences of Independents in these two cities to illustrate the different approach candidates will need to employ to connect with these potential voters.

If a candidate is choosing to have a drink with voters, as Hillary did in Pennsylvania, red wine would be the libation of choice among Green Bay Independents. This group is more likely than adults overall in their market to enjoy red wine. In Boston, a candidate would drink a microbrew, a popular beverage for Independents .

Bowling was the activity Obama engaged in with voters during the Pennsylvania primary. But, if he or another candidate seeks to connect with Independents in Boston, Scarborough recommends trading in the bowling shoes for a fishing rod or a yoga mat. Fishing and yoga are two popular leisure activities among Boston Independents. Power boating or a day at the golf course would be the activities of choice to connect with Independents in Green Bay.

“What is significant about this information is that we are looking at people’s political self-image. People may register with a major party in order to vote in a primary, or may have voted a certain way in response to a particular candidate. But past behavior and formal party affiliation can often be misleading, especially as party loyalty declines. Therefore, the concept of ‘self-proclaimed’ political identity becomes more important,” said Dr. Cohen.

Even characteristics as fundamental as demographics play an important role in helping forge voter connections, and can vary from city to city. For example, Green Bay Independents are 24 percent more likely than the market as a whole to be single, whereas Boston Independents are 11 percent less likely to have this marital status. There are income differences between Independents in these two markets as well. Independents in Boston are nine percent more likely than all adults there to have an annual household income of \$75k+, whereas Green Bay Independents are 12 percent

less likely to be in this income bracket. Boston Independents are seven percent more likely to be homeowners; Green Bay Independents are market average for home ownership.

Scarborough also examined the “Leaning Independents” \*\*. Seattle, WA and Providence, RI are leading cities for Democrat-leaning Independents, with seventeen percent of adults in these markets describing themselves this way. Nationally, nine percent of adults are Democrat-leaning Independents. Salt Lake City and Spokane, WA, are the leading cities for Republican-leaning Independents, with fifteen percent of adults in these markets selecting this political description. Nationally, eight percent of adults are Republican-leaning Independents.

*\*\* Leaning Independents are those adults who describe themselves in the Scarborough study as “Independent, but feel closer to Democrat,” or “Independent, but feel closer to Republican.”*

#### **Top 10 Local Markets for Self-Proclaimed Independents\***

National Average: 27%

1. Boston, MA (50%)
2. Providence/New Bedford, RI (47%)
3. Hartford/New Haven, CT (41%)
4. Des Moines/Ames, IA (36%)
5. Green Bay/Appleton, WI (36%)
6. Spokane, WA (35%)
7. Flint/Saginaw/Bay City, MI (35%)
8. St. Louis, MO (35%)
9. Seattle/Tacoma, WA (34%)
10. Grand Rapids/Kalamazoo/Battle Creek, MI (34%)

*\*Self-Proclaimed Independents include those leaning Democrat or Republican*

#### **Top 10 Local Markets for Self-Proclaimed Democrat-leaning Independents**

National Average: 9%

1. Seattle, WA (17%)
2. Providence, RI (17%)
3. Boston, MA (16%)
4. Des Moines, IA (14%)
5. St. Louis, MO (14%)
6. Syracuse, NY (14%)
7. Flint, MI (13%)
8. Austin, TX (13%)
9. Green Bay, WI (13%)
10. Honolulu, HI (13%)

#### **Top 10 Local Markets for Self-Proclaimed Republican-leaning Independents**

National Average: 8%

1. Salt Lake City, UT (15%)
2. Spokane, WA (15%)
3. Grand Rapids, MI (13%)
4. Birmingham, AL (13%)
5. Indianapolis, IN (13%)
6. Green Bay, WI (12%)
7. Milwaukee, WI (12%)
8. St. Louis, MO (11%)
9. Flint, MI (11%)
10. Houston, TX (11%)

SOURCE: Scarborough Research: Scarborough USA+ Release 2 2007, Green Bay Local Market Study Release 2, 2007; Boston Local Market Study Release 1 2008. All local market is based on DMA, or Designated Market Area, which is a trademark of Nielsen Media Research.

### **About Scarborough Research**

Scarborough Research ([www.scarborough.com](http://www.scarborough.com), [info@scarborough.com](mailto:info@scarborough.com)) measures the lifestyle and shopping patterns, media behaviors and demographics of American consumers, and is considered the authority on local market research. Scarborough's core syndicated consumer insight studies in 81 Top-Tier Markets and its Multi-Market Study are Media Rating Council (MRC) accredited. Other products and services include Scarborough USA+ (a national database), Mid-Tier Local Market Studies, Hispanic Studies and Custom Research Solutions. Scarborough measures 2,000 consumer categories and serves a broad client base that includes marketers, advertising agencies, print and electronic media (broadcast and cable television, radio stations), sports teams and leagues and out-of-home media companies. Surveying more than 220,000 adults annually, Scarborough is a joint venture between Arbitron Inc. ([www.arbitron.com](http://www.arbitron.com)) and The Nielsen Company ([www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com)).

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