

AEI Political Report

ELECTION SNAPSHOT

As the Democratic contest winds down, pollsters are turning their attention to a general election contest in which Democrats have substantial advantages. In the latest polls, far more Americans call themselves Democrats than Republicans. And, as the polls below show, Americans expect a Democratic candidate will win and say their preference is for that result. But . . . When John McCain is paired with the Democratic contenders, the race looks very close.

Expect to Win

Q: Regardless of how you intend to vote for president in 2008, who do you expect to . . . ?



Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, April 2008.

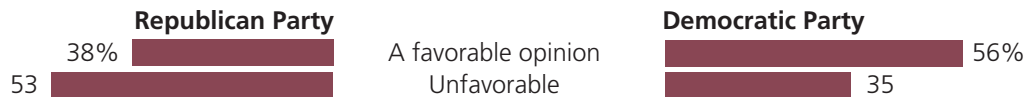
Q: Putting aside for a moment the question of who each party's nominee might be, what is your . . . ?



Source: NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, April 2008.

Favored Party

Q: We'd like to get your overall opinion of some people in the news. As I read each name, please say if you have . . . ?



Source: CNN/ORC, April 2008.

Who Will Win

Q: Regardless of who you might support, who do you think . . . ?



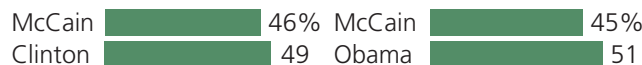
Source: Pew Research Center, April 2008.

Who's Ahead Now

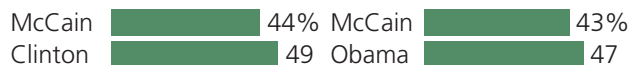
Q: If the 2008 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were John McCain, the Republican, and _____, the Democrat, for whom would you vote?

Q: Suppose the election were being held today. If [Hillary Clinton/Barack Obama] were the Democratic Party's candidate and John McCain were the Republican Party's candidate, who would you be more likely to vote for . . . ?

ABC News/*Washington Post*



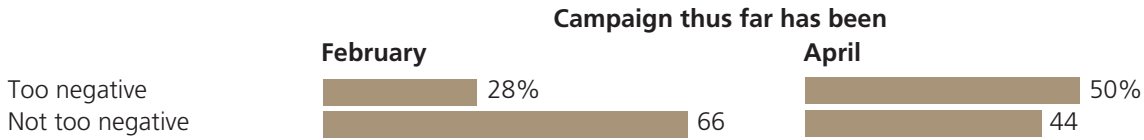
Gallup's Latest Three-Day Tracking



Source: ABC News/*Washington Post*, May 2008; The Gallup Organization, May 7–11, 2008.

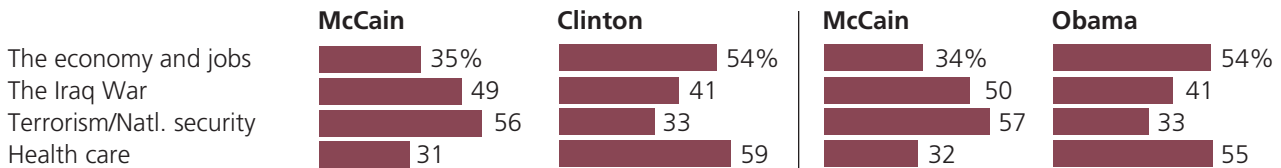
Campaign Tone

Q: How would you describe the presidential election campaign so far—is it . . . ?



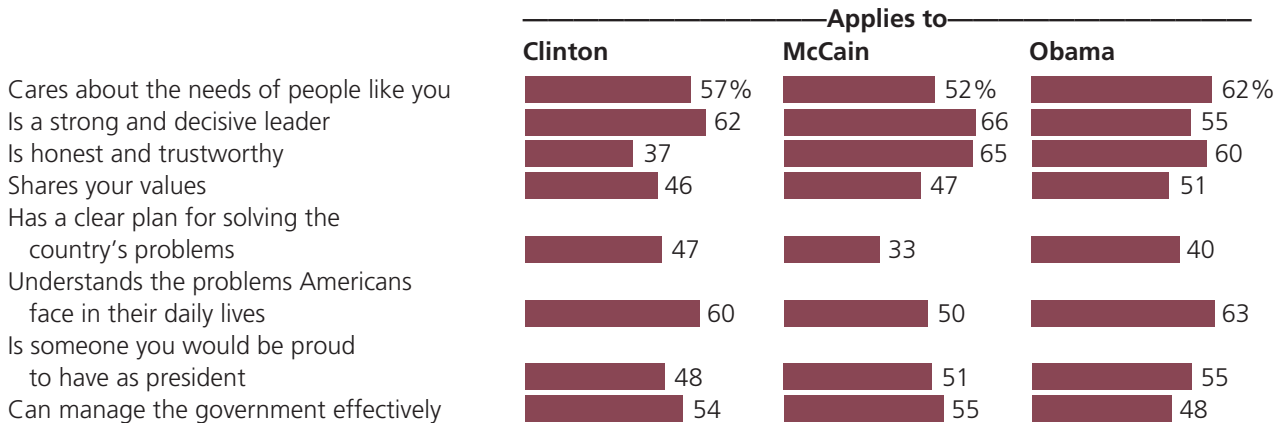
Source: Pew Research Center, April 2008.

Q: We'd like your views on whether _____ or _____ would do a better job of handling certain issues as president. What about . . . ?



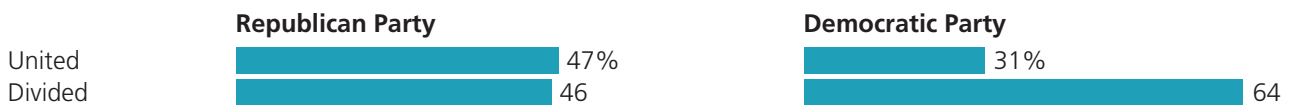
Source: PSRA/Newsweek, April 2008.

Q: Thinking about the following characteristics and qualities, please say whether you think each applies or doesn't apply to _____. How about . . . ?



Source: Gallup/USA Today, April 2008.

Q: Would you describe the _____ as . . . ?



Source: CBS News/New York Times, April 2008.

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It All Comes Down to a Bunch of Things

Q: Now I'd like you to compare Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama on a few qualities that people might look for in a president. For each one, please tell me whether you think that Hillary Clinton would be better or Barack Obama would be better on that item.

	Democrats and those who say they would vote in a Democratic primary —Would be better when it comes to—		
	Clinton	Obama	Both equally
Being knowledgeable and experienced enough to handle the presidency	52%	16%	26%
Representing traditional American values	36	22	31
Being a strong leader	35	28	32
Being patriotic and devoted to the country	29	16	50
Bringing real change to the country	26	44	23
Being able to unite the country and get people working together	25	43	22
Being optimistic and forward-looking	21	43	31
Being honest and trustworthy	20	42	26

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, April 2008.

Marching On. . . . And on. And on.

Q: Do you think . . . ?

The Democrat primary has gone on too long	62%
Democrats' response	67
Not long enough	7
About the right amount of time	29

Source: Fox New/Opinion Dynamics, April 2008.

Q: If Obama is the nominee, how confident are you that Democrats will come together and support him against McCain in November . . . ?

Democrats' response	
Very/somewhat confident	85%
No so/not at all confident	14

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, May 2008.



Q: It now appears that the contest for the Democratic nomination between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama may continue at least through the end of the primary season in June. Do you feel . . . ?

	—Democratic Primary Voters—	
	April 2008	March 2008
This is good for the Democratic Party	21%	25%
Bad for the Democratic Party	37	38
No difference	38	31

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, April 2008.

Q: Given the current standings, do you think Clinton should . . . ?

Stay in the race	
Democrats' response	64%
Obama supporters' response	42

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, May 2008.

Getting Jazzed

Q: Please tell me whether you would feel . . . ?

	Response of registered Democrats			
	If Hillary Clinton is the nominee		If Barack Obama is the nominee	
	March	April	March	April
Enthusiastic	38%	33%	45%	36%
Satisfied but not enthusiastic	37	38	33	34
Dissatisfied but not upset	17	20	12	14
Upset	8	9	11	14

Source: CNN/ORC, April 2008.

Wright Wrongs Obama

Q: We'd like to get your overall opinion of some people in the news . . . ?

Favorable opinion of the Reverend Jeremiah Wright	9%
Unfavorable	59
Never heard of	17
No opinion	16

Source: CNN/ORC, April 2008.

Q: Do you believe . . . ?

Reverend Wright has damaged Obama's campaign	70%
Has not	25

Note: Forty-three percent of blacks said Wright had damaged it; 54 percent said he had not.

Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, April 2008.

Al Gore in the Wings?

Q: Suppose that when the party's national convention starts this summer, neither Obama or Clinton has enough delegate support to secure the Democratic presidential nomination. Do you think . . . ?

Democrats' response

The Democratic Party should consider nominating Al Gore to try to unite the party and break the deadlock	49%
Should not	43

Source: PSRA/Newsweek, April 2008.

Spouses' Strengths . . . And Weaknesses

Q: On another subject, looking at the list of spouses of the presidential candidates, please indicate whether you think they are an . . . ?

	Spouse is an asset	Liability	Neither
Bill Clinton	37%	46%	7%
Michelle Obama	32	24	27
Cindy McCain	28	8	43

Source: Harris Interactive online survey, April 2008.

Q: If Bill Clinton returns to the White House, do you think . . . ?

It is likely that he will be involved in another scandal like the Monica Lewinsky affair	31%
Not likely	57

Source: PSRA/Newsweek, April 2008.

Q: How would you rate the overall job . . . ?

Clinton did an excellent/good job as president	63%
Only fair/poor	35

Source: Harris Interactive online survey, April 2008.



Monitoring McCain

Q: In your opinion, is . . . ?

National response

John McCain is a different kind of Republican	45%
Basically the same as most other Republicans	48

Source: Gallup/USA Today, April 2008.



Q: Based on what you have heard or read about _____'s military service, do you, personally . . . ?

	McCain 2008	Kerry 2004
Consider to be a war hero	66%	48%
Democrats	58	NA
Republicans	NA	29

Note: Fifty-three percent in another question said McCain's record of military services does not make any difference in terms of their vote, 38 percent said it would make them more likely to vote for him, and 7 percent less. Source: The Gallup Organization, April 2008.

Convention Votes for Leading Candidates 1960–2004

Democrats

	Winner		Runners-Up						Total
2004	John Kerry	4,253	Dennis Kucinich	43					4,296
2000	Al Gore	4,339							4,339
1996	Bill Clinton	4,320							4,320
1992	Bill Clinton	3,372	Jerry Brown	596	Paul Tsongas	209	Robert P. Casey	10	4,187
1988	Michael Dukakis	2,876.25	Jesse Jackson	1,218.5					4,094.75
1984	Walter F. Mondale	2,191	Gary W. Hart	1,200.5	Jesse Jackson	458.5			3,850
1980	Jimmy Carter	1,981.1	Ted Kennedy	1,225.8	Other	2	Uncommitted	122.1	3,331
1976	Jimmy Carter	2,238.5	Mo Udall	329.5	Jerry Brown	300.5	George Wallace	57	2,925.5
1972	George McGovern	1,728.35	Henry M. Jackson	525	George Wallace	381.7	Shirley Chisholm	151.95	2,787
1968	Hubert Humphrey	1,759.25	Eugene McCarthy	601	George McGovern	146.5	Channing Philips	67.5	2,574.25
1964	Lyndon B. Johnson	Acclamation	George Wallace						2,316
1960	John F. Kennedy	806	Lyndon Johnson	409	Stuart Symington	86	Adlai Stevenson	79.5	1,380.5

Republicans

	Winner		Runners-Up						Total
2004	George W. Bush	2,509							
2000	George W. Bush	2,058	John McCain	1	Alan Keyes	6			2,065
1996	Bob Dole	1,928	Pat Buchanan	43					1,971
1992	George H. W. Bush	2,166	Pat Buchanan	18	Alan Keyes	1			2,185
1988	George H. W. Bush	2,277							2,277
1984	Ronald Reagan	2,233	Abstain	2					2,235
1980	Ronald Reagan	1,580	John Bayard Anderson	51	George H.W. Bush	253	Other	9	1,893
1976	Gerald Ford	1,187	Ronald Reagan	1,070	Elliot Richardson	1			2,258
1972	Richard Nixon	1,347	Pete McCloskey	1					1,348
1968	Richard Nixon	692	Nelson Rockefeller	277	Ronald Reagan	182	Other	127	1,278
1964	Barry Goldwater	883	William Scranton	214	Nelson Rockefeller	114	Other	97	1,308
1960	Richard Nixon	1,321	Barry Goldwater	10					1,331

Note: In many cases, losing candidates (Howard Dean, Bill Bradley, etc.) "free" their delegates to vote for the party nominee. Fractions of votes are attributable to caucus systems that allow votes to be allotted in fractions. For the GOP, others not shown.

Sources: *National Party Conventions, 1831–1976* (CQ Press); *Facts on File* (Facts on File News Service); The Green Papers.

Congress: What's Not to Dislike?

Q: Do you . . . ?

Approve of the way

Congress is doing its job 21%

Disapprove

68

Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, April 2008.

Q: If the 2008 election for the House of Representatives were being held today, would you . . . ?

	Now	Oct. 2006
Vote for the Democratic candidate	50%	52%
Republican	32	34

Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, April 2008.

The Economic Pulse: Getting Weaker

Q: Do you think . . . ?

The economy is getting better

4%

Worse

70

Same

24

Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, April 2008.

Q: Which best describes how you and your family are doing financially. Are you . . . ?

Doing great and have extra money each month	15%
Doing OK and making ends meet	61
Doing lousy and barely getting by	23

Note: Nine percent of Democrats compared to 26 percent of Republicans said they were doing great. Eleven percent of Republicans compared to 31 percent of Democrat said they were doing lousy. Source: Fox News/*Opinion Dynamics*, April 2008.

Q: Think about your household income, would you say it is . . . ?

	National	April			February National
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	
More than enough so that you can save and buy extras	27%	37%	20%	26%	38%
Just enough to meet your bills and obligations	48	51	53	42	46
Not enough to meet bills and obligations	23	11	26	30	13

Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, April 2008.

Pinched by Prices

Q: There has been a lot of news lately about problems with the economy. As a result of recent changes in the economy, have you and your family experienced any of the following problems . . . ?

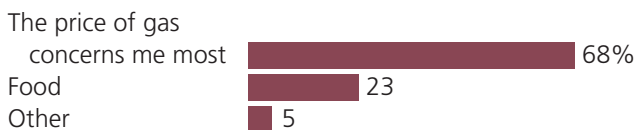
	Serious problem	Problem, but not serious	Not a problem
Problems paying for gas	44%	20%	35%
Problems paying for health care or insurance	28	14	58
Problems paying your rent or mortgage	19	10	70
Problems with credit card debt	18	11	71
Problems paying for food	18	15	66
Losing money in the stock market	16	19	63

Source: Kaiser Health Tracking Poll, April 2008.

(continued on the next page)

(PINCHED BY PRICES, continued from the previous page)

Q: And thinking specifically about recent increases in prices, which . . . ?



Source: CNN/ORC, April 2008.

Q: How good a job do you think each of the following candidates would do . . . ?

Do an excellent or pretty good job handling the economy



Note: Forty-two percent of independents gave this response about Clinton, 39 percent about Obama, and 44 percent about McCain. Source: Harris Interactive online poll, April 2008.

The Rebate Check Is in the Mail

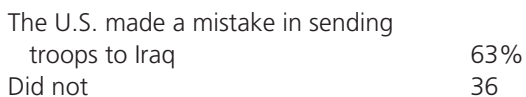
	U. Michigan		Gallup		CBS/NYT*
Spend it	29%	Spend it	24%	Spend it	18%
Save it	25	Save/invest	29	Save/invest	27
Repay debt	46	Pay off bills	41	Pay bills	51

Note: *Asked of those who expect to receive a rebate, 75 percent of those surveyed. Source: University of Michigan/Reuters; The Gallup Organization; CBS News/*New York Times*, April 2008.

Iraq: War Weariness

Sixty-three percent of Americans told Gallup recently that the United States made a mistake sending troops to Iraq. That's the highest response for this question since Gallup began asking it in March 2003, when only 23 percent gave that answer. The response is also the highest in Gallup's history of asking the question during periods of active combat. The response this month is 2 percentage points higher than in 1971, when 61 percent said the United States had made a mistake sending troops to Vietnam.

Q: Do you think . . . ?



Source: The Gallup Organization, April 2008.

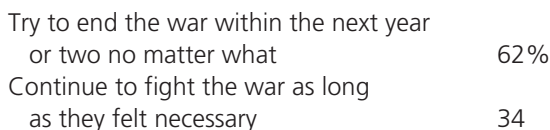
Q: In general, how would you say . . . ?

Things are going for the U.S. in Iraq

	Going very/ moderately well	Moderately/ very badly
April 2007	28%	69%
January 2008	46	54
April 2008	39	59

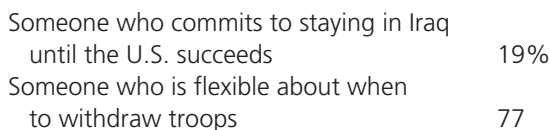
Note: Not all askings shown. The question was first asked by this organization in June 2006. Source: CNN/ORC.

Q: Regardless of how you intend to vote, what would you prefer the next president do about the war in Iraq . . . ?



Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, April 2008.

Q: Which is more important to you in a presidential candidate . . . ?



Note: Fifty-seven percent of Republicans preferred the flexible approach (40 percent wanted someone who would stay until the U.S. succeeds). Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, April 2008.

(IRAQ: WAR WEARINESS, continued from the previous page)

Q: General Petraeus, the U.S. commander in Iraq, has suggested pausing the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq starting this summer. Would you . . . ?



Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, April 2008.

Q: Thinking specifically about the number of troops the U.S. should have in Iraq, do you . . . ?

The number of troops in Iraq			
Agree more with Clinton	47%	Agree more with Obama	45%
Agree more with McCain	40	Agree more with McCain	41

Source: CNN/ORC, April 2008.

Q: And thinking more generally about the war in Iraq, who do you have . . . ?

Have more confidence in			
Have more confidence in Clinton	38%	Have more confidence in Obama	38%
McCain	57	McCain	56

The Summer of 1968: The Chicago Convention

It was also the year of a tumultuous convention and a spirited Democratic race. Here are a few polls that show us what was on the minds of most Americans at the time.

Q: Do you . . . ?

Approve of the way the Chicago police dealt with the young people who were registering their protest against the Vietnam War at the time of the Democratic convention	56%
Disapprove	31

Note: Forty-seven percent of 21- to 29-year-olds approved, and 41 percent disapproved. Approval of the way the police dealt with the situation was highest in the Midwest (64 percent), followed by the South (59 percent), the West (54 percent) and the East (47 percent.) Seventy-one percent of Wallace supporters approved, compared to 63 percent of Nixon supporters and 44 percent of Humphrey supporters.

Source: The Gallup Organization, September 1968.



McCain v. Bush

Q: Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of . . . ?

	McCain	Bush
Favorable		
National	60%	32%
Republicans	89	68
Democrats	36	9
Independents	62	29

Source: The Gallup Organization, April 2008.

Jon Stewart or Stephen Colbert?

Q: Whom do you prefer: Jon Stewart or Stephen Colbert?

	Response of 18–24 year-olds
Prefer Jon Stewart	30%
Prefer Stephen Colbert	26
Neither	28
Never heard of	16

Source: Harris Interactive online survey for the Institute of Politics at Harvard University, April 2008.

Cheating Today

Q: Do you know anyone who has an unfaithful wife or husband?

	Know someone with an unfaithful wife or husband	Do not
1964	24%	76%
2008	54	45

Source: Louis Harris and Associates, 1964 ; The Gallup Organization, 2008.

You Gotta Have Friends

Supporters on Facebook.com

Barack Obama	813,423
Hillary Clinton	154,838
John McCain	122,550
Ron Paul	86,255

Hillary Highlights

Q: Do you think . . . ?

Hillary Clinton is a positive role model

December 1992	66%
March 2008	59

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal.

Second Amendment Guarantee: *The District of Columbia v. Heller*

Q: Do you believe . . . ?

Second Amendment guarantees the right of Americans to own guns	73%
Guarantees members of state militias such a National Guard units the right to own guns	20

Note: Strong majorities of gun owners (91 percent) and non-owners (63 percent) said the amendment guaranteed the right to own guns.

Source: The Gallup Organization, February 2008.

Presidential Blues

Lowest Approval Rating while in Office

Eisenhower	Jul. 1960	49%
Kennedy	Sep. 1963	56
Johnson	Aug. 1968	35
Nixon	May 1975	25
Ford	Jan. 1975	35
Carter	Jun.–Jul. 1979	28
Reagan	Jan. 1983	37
G. H. W. Bush	Jul.–Aug. 1992	29
Clinton	Jun. 1993	37
G. W. Bush	May 2008	28

Source: The Gallup Organization.

Cultural Conservatism

Q: In politics, on social and culture issues such as religion and morality, do you think of yourself as . . . ?

On social and cultural issues I have

A liberal point of view	25%
Moderate	33
Conservative	39

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, April 2008.

Current Commentary

“There’s Value in Voter ID Requirement—If It’s Done Properly”

AEI resident scholar Norm Ornstein argues for the value of a Voter ID requirement in an era where election margins are often razor thin.

<http://www.aei.org/publication27952/>

“Special Elections an ‘08 Warning for GOP”

AEI research fellow John Fortier contends that the special elections thus far do not augur well for Republicans come November.

<http://www.aei.org/publication27949/>

