



ELECTION FOCUS 2008



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Inside This Issue:

[America.gov](#) | [Polls](#) | [Campaign 2008](#) | [Best of the Web: Calendar - News](#) | [Articles](#) |



[Young Delegates Eager to Cast Presidential Convention Ballots](#) (05-09-2008)

In late summer 2008, tens of thousands of people will arrive in Denver for the Democratic National Convention and Minneapolis-St. Paul for the Republican National Convention. In attendance will be well-known party leaders from across the United States and famous journalists reporting for dozens of countries. But those with the most important task at the conventions are ordinary citizens – delegates selected by their states' parties and sometimes their states' voters to nominate their parties' candidate for president. None will be paid for participation; most will come at their own expense.



Delegates cheer for President Bush at the 2004 Republican Convention. (© AP Images)



[Big Win in North Carolina Expands Obama's Lead](#) (05-07-2008)

Primary voters in Indiana and North Carolina put Democrat Barack Obama closer to his party's presidential nomination, despite a loss in the May 6 Indiana primary. With few nominating contests left and Obama's lead growing, political experts predict it will be difficult for Hillary Clinton to earn the nomination. In a speech celebrating his victory in the North Carolina Democratic primary, Obama congratulated Clinton "on what appears to be her victory in the great state of Indiana," but hours later political experts questioned whether the Illinois senator had congratulated her prematurely. With record numbers of Indiana voters turning out to participate in the state's first Democratic primary since 1968 that could affect the presidential nomination, counting votes was a slow process.

Campaign Trail Talk is your best source of information on the 2008 U.S. elections. More at: http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/online_discussions/elections.html

Daily updated information is available at a special **U.S. Elections page** on **America.gov**: <http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/>

Publications:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/elections-in-brief/>
Print version of the publication is available on request at the American Reference Center at arc_brat@state.gov



POLLS

[Obama's Support Similar to Kerry's in 2004](#) - Gallup Poll, May 7, 2008. Barack Obama's current level of support among white voters in a head-to-head matchup against John McCain is no worse than John Kerry's margin of support among whites against George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential election.

[Mich. Dems settle on how to split delegates](#) - Associated Press, May 7, 2008.

Michigan Democratic leaders settled today on a plan to give presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton 69 delegates and Barack Obama 59 as a way to get the delegates seated at the national convention. Clinton won the Jan. 15 Michigan primary and was to get 73 pledged delegates under state party rules, while Obama was to get 55. The state also has 29 superdelegates.

[Public Sees Different Strengths and Weaknesses in Democratic Contenders](#) - National Annenberg Election Survey – NAES 2008, May 6, 2008

After two months of controversies surrounding statements made by Democratic candidates Illinois Sen. Barack Obama and New York Sen. Hillary Clinton, Sen. Clinton maintains an edge among Democrats on the character traits of experience, strong leadership, patriotism and judgment. Democrats see Sen. Obama as stronger on the traits "trustworthy" and "saying what he/she believes." Democrats see no difference between the candidates on the trait "shares my values." These new findings are being released today by the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

[The Catholic Vote in the 2008 Democratic Primary Campaign](#) - The Brookings Institution, May 5, 2008.

Once the cornerstone of the Democratic coalition, Catholics in recent decades have become the most important bloc of swing voters...In the 2008 Democratic nominating contest, Catholics have emerged as key members of Hillary Clinton's base.

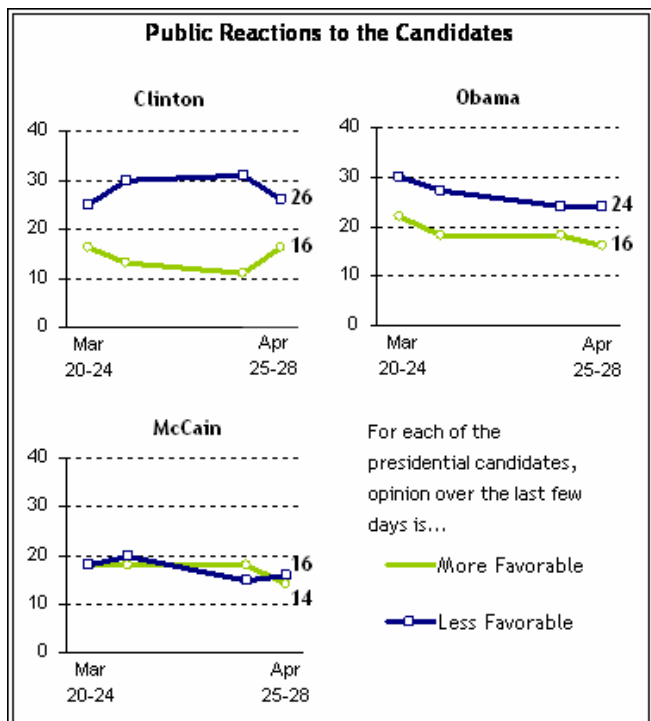
[Republicans Divided in Preferences for Democratic Nominee](#) - Gallup Poll, May 2, 2008.

With the Republican nomination long since settled, whom would the GOP faithful rather see John McCain take on in the fall campaign? According to the April 18-20 USA Today/Gallup poll, Republicans -- like Democrats -- are divided in their preferences, with 48% saying they would rather see Hillary Clinton win the Democratic nomination and 44% Barack Obama.

[Democratic Campaign Taking a Toll on Both Obama and Clinton](#) – Pew Research Center, May 1, 2008.

Over the past six weeks the intense, and often negative, contest between Obama and Clinton has dominated media coverage of the campaign as well as public attention. And over this period, more Americans have consistently said their views of Obama and Clinton have become less favorable, rather than more favorable, in recent days. In four separate surveys conducted since March 20, when asked about each of the Democratic candidates, between 25%-31% of the public has said their opinions have recently become less favorable.

Meanwhile, John McCain has received far less attention from the media or the public, and this is reflected in public reactions over this period. Relatively fewer people say their opinion has either improved or worsened. In the latest survey, just 14% say their impression of McCain has become more favorable in recent days, and just 16% say less favorable.



CAMPAIGN 2008



[Is Clinton Angling for a VP Slot?](#)

NPR (National Public Radio), May 14, 2008 · One theory is that Hillary Clinton is remaining in the Democratic race as a bargaining chip for the VP slot. A new poll finds Democratic voters enthusiastic about the idea of a "unity ticket." But party insiders harbor more mixed feelings.

[Edwards to Endorse Obama](#)

NPR (National Public Radio), May 14, 2008 · Barack Obama has gotten one of the most sought-after endorsements of the Democratic primary race. John Edwards will join Obama at a rally Wednesday night and announce his support. Edwards' endorsement has been the object of intense wooing — by both the Obama and Clinton campaigns.



[Foreign Policy and the 2008 Presidential Nominating Campaigns](#) – Council on Foreign Relations, May 12, 2008 Voters in nearly all U.S. states participating in the 2008 party nominating races have placed economic concerns ahead of the war in Iraq and national security. After the economy, Republicans have tended to split on whether immigration or the Iraq war is more important, while Democrats seem more focused on concerns about the war.

[MCCAIN'S VICE-PRESIDENT? Mitt Romney as running mate](#) - The Center for Politics, May 8, 2008 As he [Romney] ended his quest for the Republican presidential nomination, he staked for himself a position as leader for the conservative future. It's a good position to be in for a potential 2012 run for the presidency. And it's a position that makes him an attractive option for John McCain's No. 2 in 2008.

[OBAMA'S VICE-PRESIDENT? Jim Webb as running mate](#) - The Center for Politics, May 8, 2008 Senator Barack Obama is close to winning the Democratic nomination for president, and must soon turn to the choice of a running mate. The best choice, in my opinion, would be Senator Webb. To make the case, let's first dispose of two contrary arguments...

[Will states fix 2012 primary process?](#) - Stateline.org, May 7, 2008 What if the presidential primary worked more like a lottery with all the states having a chance at the ultimate prize of voting first in the nominating schedule, ending the coveted tradition of New Hampshire and Iowa leading the pack?... While voters go to the polls to help Democrats pick Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama as their nominee and Republicans rally behind John McCain, party insiders and state election officials are in informal talks to improve the presidential nominating contests for 2012 and beyond.

[Parsing the Generational Divide for Democrats](#) - NPR (National Public Radio), May 1, 2008 If you voted in one of the Democratic primaries or caucuses, your age probably determined your vote: The older you are, the more likely you were to vote for Clinton, and the younger you are, the more likely you were to vote for Obama.

BEST of the WEB

[CNN Election Center 2008:](#)

[100 Stories on Barack Obama](#)

[100 Stories on Hillary Clinton](#)

[100 Stories on John McCain](#)

[McCain's Speech on Climate Change Policy](#) – RealClearPolitics, May 12, 2008 ...Along with solar power, fuel-cell technology, cleaner burning fuels and other new energy sources, wind power will bring America closer to energy independence.

[Obama Speaks in West Virginia about Veterans](#) - RealClearPolitics, May 12, 2008 ...When our troops go into battle, they serve no faction or party; they represent no race or region. They are simply Americans.

[OLD MATH, NEW MATH, AND THE DISPUTE OVER THE "POPULAR VOTE": Little consensus on measure of primary participation](#) – Center for Politics, May 1, 2008 ... Give Hillary Clinton credit. She has shown toughness, stamina, and persistence in one of the longest presidential campaigns in American history...All that being true, the odds remain long that she will overcome Obama's lead...

Election Calendar



[Republican National Convention](#),
Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Minnesota,
September 1-4, 2008

[Democratic National Convention](#),
Denver, Colorado,
August 25-28, 2008



[2008 Republican Primary Schedule](#)

[2008 Democratic Primary Schedule](#)

[State Primaries](#) **May 20, 2008** - [Kentucky](#) - [Oregon](#)

ARTICLE ALERT

NEW MEDIA AS THE MESSAGE. By Simendinger, Alexis. *National Journal*, vol.40, no. 16, April 19, 2008, pp. 40-44)

National Journal staff writer Simendinger describes the Obama campaign's deft use of mainstream media to attract potential voters to its "offline" campaign network. Using text messaging and e-mail signals to young voters that Obama understands who they are and they should trust him, says political communications expert Kathleen Hall Jamison. The author quotes Arizona State University Professor Matthew Hindman, who adds that "Hillary Clinton would have been the nominee but for the Internet, and she would have secured the nomination -- as her campaign expected -- by Super Tuesday." Other experts wonder if the medium is as important as the message. All agree that the Internet, social networking and other new technologies for organizing potential voters will become even more important in future elections as young people rely less on mainstream media for news and political information. [FULL TEXT](#)

BEHIND THE BUSH-OBAMA SMACKFEST, By MASSIMO CALABRESI. *Time*, May. 15, 2008.

In the escalating smackfest between President George W. Bush and Barack Obama it's hard to know who needs whom more. Bush is struggling to keep his presidency relevant, and injecting himself into the presidential campaign is a sure way to do that. At the same time, Obama is happy for any opportunity to tie Bush to Republican nominee-to-be John McCain's side. [FULL TEXT](#)

Political news and commentary:

[The McCain Doctrines](#) (Matt Bai, This article will appear in Sunday's Times Magazine - May 18, 2008)

[Florida, Michigan cannot save Clinton](#) (Nedra Pickler, Associated Press, May 16, 2008)

[McCain believes Iraq war can be won by 2013](#) (Glen Johnson, Associated Press, May 16, 2008)

[Barack Obama's America: Fast forward to 2012.](#) (Michael Novak, National Review, May 15, 2008)

[What Obama Owes the Clintons](#) (Peter Beinart, Time, May 15, 2008)

[Hillary's Lessons for John McCain](#) (Jennifer Rubin, The New York Observer, May 15, 2008)

[The Race Perplex. Obama, the white vote and a venerable American argument](#) (Howard Fineman, Newsweek Web Exclusive, May 14, 2008)

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