

# Los Angeles Times / Bloomberg

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## NATIONAL INVESTOR SURVEY – MAY 2008

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Press Release #1: **Presidential Politics**

### DESPITE GRUELING DEMOCRATIC PRIMARIES, OBAMA AND CLINTON BEAT MCCAIN

**T**he Indiana and North Carolina Democratic primaries proved that Barack Obama can do well in a big state, and win big – by 14 points in North Carolina and run competitively with Hillary Clinton in Indiana, where she barely eked out a win. Many Democratic leaders are urging Senator Clinton to get out of the race so that the general election can start in earnest. But the grueling race for the Democratic nomination is not over, giving angst and frustration to the Democratic Party that their candidate's chances of winning is ultimately being hurt by the long and divided primary season. With neither candidate budging to get out of the race, presumptive Republican nominee for president John McCain is almost getting a free ride from being attacked by his Democratic opponents. Mathematically, Hillary Clinton cannot win and her chances of convincing the superdelegates to vote for her is slim. Some of her ardent supporters, such as Gov. George McGovern are moving their support to Obama. It takes 2024 delegates to become the nominee, excluding Florida and Michigan delegates. (There are about 260 super delegates uncommitted.)

Although the infighting between the two Democrats is not helpful, they are still beating the presumptive Republican John McCain in hypothetical match-ups, according to a new Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg Poll. Clinton is beating McCain by nine points and Obama leads McCain by six points. What may be driving this is the economy. As the saying went in Bill Clinton's campaign in 1992, "It's the economy, stupid", the saying goes in this election. Economy has overrun every other issue in terms of what voters want the presidential candidates to address. It is clearly the top mention by 56% to 34% over the war in Iraq. Just December of last year, the war in Iraq was the top mention, followed closely by the economy. The weakening economy, rising oil and gas prices and the housing crisis has added to the pessimism of the country. What should be a warning sign for McCain is that those voters who cite the economy, are solidly backing either Democratic candidate over him.

In the poll, more than three-quarters of voters believe the country is seriously off on the wrong track – that is the worst showing since asking the question back in 1991. And those who believe the country is heading in the wrong direction, are supporting both Democratic candidates over their Republican rival. The last time wrong track was in the 70% range was back in 1992 when the country was just about getting out of a recession. Along with this view, almost eight in 10 voters also believe the country is in a recession, including almost a quarter who said "a serious one". So when McCain says that the economy has done well under George W. Bush there is some disconnect. Both Democratic candidates are painting the Republicans,

and by association McCain, that the rich got richer and the corporations got bigger under the Republicans and that McCain will be a third term of the Bush administration. McCain also agrees with the president on making the tax cuts permanent (he was initially opposed to the tax cuts). Apart from the economy, McCain was also in favor of sending the additional 20,000 troops to Iraq (he thought the surge should have been done sooner) and believes we will be in Iraq for many, many years (he quipped at least 100 years). In prior Times/Bloomberg polls, most Americans want troop withdrawal within the next year and a half, which doesn't jive with McCain's assessment of how long troops should remain in Iraq. The race to the White House has not even begun and will not start in earnest, until the Democratic candidate is known.

**November Election**

If the November election were held today, Clinton leads McCain by nine points, Obama leads McCain by six points. This is a slight turnaround from the Times/Bloomberg poll in February where McCain led Clinton by six points and Obama by 2 points, within poll's margin of error, but the direction has changed in favor of the Democrats.

	<u>Now</u>	<u>2/08</u>	<u>1/08</u>
Hillary Clinton	47%	40%	46%
John McCain	38	46	42
Other cand/Don't know	15	14	12
Barack Obama	46%	42%	41%
John McCain	40	44	42
Other cand/Don't know	14	14	17

McCain is competitive against his Democratic challengers because he is neutralizing some of the groups that are mainstays for each Democratic candidate – older, white voters for Clinton and upscale voters and independents for Obama. Looked at another way, just three in 10 voters said they would vote for either Democrat, one in 10 said they would only vote for Clinton, less than one in ten would only vote for Obama and another three in 10 said they would vote for McCain in either match-up. If you combine all the Democratic options, 85% of Democrats would support either or both Democrats, almost the same share of Republicans that would support the lone Republican running. Among all registered voters, Clinton would beat McCain by 41% to 30% or Obama would beat McCain by 39% to 30%, with a fifth undecided.

*If the election were held today, how would you vote:  
(combining the two horserace questions and showing how the same voters would vote)*

		-----Party Affiliation-----		
	<u>RV's</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Independents</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Vote both Democrats	31%	57%	18%	2%
Vote Clinton only	10	12	10	4
Vote Obama only	8	6	16	4
Vote McCain	30	4	27	83
Undecided/Others	21	21	29	7

The following shows how some demographic groups would vote:

- McCain receives the support of almost nine in 10 voters who self-describe as Republicans in races against both Democrats, while both Democrat don't fare as well within their own party. More than seven in 10 of self-described Democratic voters said they would support Clinton or Obama in each of separate general election match-ups with McCain; one in seven of Democratic voters said they would vote for McCain (9%) or someone else (5%) if Clinton were the candidate, and a fifth would vote for McCain (15%) or someone else (5%) if Obama were the nominee. This may be because of the negative campaigning by both Democratic candidates and once a candidate is decided, these voters will probably come home.
- Independents are the group that both parties are vying for. Both Obama and McCain are popular with this group and they are depending on this constituency to help float them into the presidency. But this poll showed that this demographic group is divided between those two candidates – at least 40% each for Obama and his rival. Clinton, on the other hand, trails McCain by 11 points among independents.
- Liberals and moderates are supporting the Democratic candidates solidly, while strong support by conservatives are in McCain's column. However, 27% of moderates support McCain over Clinton, while almost a third support McCain over Obama. Less than a quarter of conservatives support each Democrat.
- More than a fifth of moderate Republicans would vote for Clinton; 14% for Obama. Conversely, less than a fifth of moderate Democrats would vote for McCain over Obama; 11% for McCain over Clinton.
- Young voters usually don't come out in large numbers to vote, but Obama has energized this group and they are becoming a larger share of the electorate for this presidential election. Whether this will be sustained over future elections is anyone's guess. In this poll, Obama leads McCain by a 17 point advantage (55%-38%) among 18 to 29 year olds. Clinton receives the backing of the younger voters, but in a narrower divide with McCain by 47% to 39%. The senior citizen vote has been a very loyal group for Clinton in the primaries, but in a general election, she and McCain are splitting the vote (43% for Clinton vs. 40% for McCain). Surprisingly, Obama does a little better with this group than he has in the primaries – although McCain leads with older voters by 47% to 41%. Baby Boomers gave both Obama and Clinton an eight point advantage over McCain.
- White voters are splitting their vote between Clinton and McCain, while narrowly giving their support to McCain over Obama by 45% to 41%. Black voters are overwhelmingly supporting Obama at 79%, while giving Clinton a 60% backing, but non-whites overall are supporting both Democratic candidates over their Republican opponent. In a Los Angeles Times exit poll in 2004, Bush received 14% of the black vote to Kerry's 86%; and in a Times exit poll in 2000, Bush received the support of 9% of black voters, compared to 90% for Gore. In the current survey, McCain gets the support of 3% of blacks against Obama, but 9% against Clinton. In this poll, Latinos make up almost 100 voters, and they overwhelmingly support Clinton against McCain, but split their vote between Obama and the Arizona Senator. In the same exit polls, Bush in 2004 made the most progress in trying to get the Latino vote. Then, he received 45% of their vote to 55% for Kerry. In 2000, Bush received 38% to Gore's 61%. In Times exit polls in 1996, Latinos supported Bill Clinton over Bob Dole by 71% to 21% and in 1992, Clinton beat George H. W. Bush by 53% to 31%.
- One of Clinton's core groups that have helped her win primaries in Pennsylvania and Ohio among other states, are the downscale voters (household incomes less than \$40,000). Nationally, she does as well by beating McCain with this group by 21 points; and by eight points among those with less than

a college degree. Plus, she is also narrowly getting the support of those with higher education by 48% to 43%. Obama's core group are the upscale voters. Yet, in this poll, he is splitting the voters with a college degree or more and voters with household incomes of more than \$100,000. The middle class (\$40,000 to \$60,000) are splitting their vote between Clinton and McCain and Obama and McCain.

- There is a gender gap in both races with women voting for the Democrats and men supporting the Republican. Men are supporting McCain over the NY Senator by eight points, but marginally support McCain over Obama by three points. Women give Clinton a 21 point advantage, while giving Obama a 13 point advantage over the Republican rival.
- Married voters are split in both races, while single/never married voters are backing the Democrats in both match-ups. Married men are supporting McCain over both Clinton and Obama; married women are backing Clinton by 50% to 36%, and supporting Obama over McCain by almost the same share as married men are supporting McCain. Single women are solidly behind Clinton and Obama over McCain by 40 points and 29 points, respectively.
- Voters who live in the East and Midwest support both Democratic candidates, while McCain takes the southern voters against Clinton, but split the vote between Obama and McCain. The voters living in the West support Clinton, while they would vote for McCain against Obama by 48% to 43%.

## **Issues and the Economy**

The economy has usurped Iraq as the most important problem voters want the candidates to address and more voters think Clinton is the candidate that would be best at handling the nation's economic policies. Obama and McCain are virtually tied for second place on this issue. Nearly three in five voters said that economy is the top priority for them, followed by Iraq at a distant second (34%). In December 2007, a Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll found that a third of voters said Iraq was the top priority, followed by a quarter who mentioned the economy. Health care which is an issue that both the Democrats and the Republicans have different proposals on, ranks third at 11%. And illegal immigration, a potent subject for conservative Republicans tied health care at 11%. (In the December poll, this issue was at 15%). Among those who cite the economy as the most important issue, Clinton has a 10 point advantage over McCain, and Obama has a 13 point advantage. McCain has prided himself on the fact that he wanted the surge to go into effect years before President Bush issued the command and he also said that he would keep troops in Iraq for as long as it takes. The Arizona Senator has made the war in Iraq and security a major issue in his campaign, but it appears that he does not get the support of voters on this issue. Among those voters who believe the war in Iraq should be the top priority, Clinton beats McCain by 31 points, while Obama beats McCain by 33 points.

*What issue or problem do you consider the top priority for candidates running for president to address this election? (Top 4 issues)*

-----Voters top priorities and who they would support-----

	<u>Economy</u> (56%)	<u>War in Iraq</u> (34%)	<u>Healthcare</u> (11%)	<u>Immigration</u> (11%)
All voters:				
Hillary Clinton	47%	57%	58%	21%
John McCain	37	26	30	59
Don't know	11	12	10	8
Barack Obama	50%	59%	41%	16%
John McCain	37	26	30	73
Don't know	10	10	23	9

*Does not add to 100% due to other category not shown*

*Regardless of your choice for president, who do you think would be best at handling the nation's economic policies:*

	<u>All Voters</u>
Hillary Clinton	32%
Barack Obama	26
John McCain	23
None/All equally	7
Don't Know	10

*Does not add to 100% due to other category not show.*

*Recession:* Almost eight out of 10 voters believe that the country is in a recession, including roughly a quarter who think the country is in a serious one. Voters in both major parties and independents also feel the country is in some level of recession. Among those who think this, more than half are backing either Obama or Clinton over their Republican rival. New government reports show that the economy grew only at a 0.6 percent annual rate over the last two quarters, the slowest since the 2001 recession. This is the worst rating that the Times poll has shown since the country was in a recession in 2001 and 2002 when 73% to 81% thought the country was in a recession and in the early 1990's – when 70% to 88% of respondents thought the country was in a recession.

*--- Analysis by Susan H. Pinkus*

Survey Methodology

The Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg Poll contacted 2,208 adults nationwide by telephone May 1 - 8, 2008. Included were 1,986 registered voters. Telephone numbers were chosen from a list of all exchanges in the nation, and random digit dialing techniques allowed listed and unlisted numbers to be contacted. Multiple attempts were made to contact each number. Areas with higher concentration of households with annual incomes greater than \$200,000 were disproportionately contacted in a separate random national sample to allow a more accurate analysis of higher income respondents, then weighted to represent households nationwide. Adults in the combined sample were weighted where necessary to conform with census proportions of sex, ethnicity, age, education, and national region. The margin of sampling error for all adults and all registered voters is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For smaller subgroups, the sampling error may be somewhat higher. Poll results may also be affected by factors such as question wording and the order in which questions are presented. Interviews were conducted by Interviewing Service of America, Inc. in Van Nuys.

# Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg

## Data Tables – Survey 555 – Release #1

### Guide to Column Headings:

REG	All Registered Voters
DEM, IND, REP	Affiliated Democrats, Independents and Republicans
LIB, MOD, CONS	Self-described liberals, moderates and conservatives

### Survey Notes:

- (vol) indicates a volunteered response
- ‘-’ indicates that a response added up to less than 0.5% of the question base
- The order of candidate names and the order of any arguments or statements are rotated in all questions that mention them. Question order is also rotated, whenever required to eliminate order bias.
- Numbers are percentages, tables are read vertically
- Unless otherwise noted, missing questions are operational or will be published in a subsequent release
- Tables are among registered voters, unless otherwise noted. Registered voters include respondents living in states that are not required to register in advance to vote.

Q1. Do you think things in this country are generally going in the right direction or are they seriously off on the wrong track?

----- Among Registered Voters -----

	<u>REG</u>	<u>DEM</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>REP</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
Right direction	15	5	11	36	9	10	27	18	13
Wrong track	77	88	82	50	90	80	62	73	80
Don't know	8	7	7	14	1	10	11	9	7

Q3. What issue or problem do you consider the top priority for candidates running for president to address this election: Is it the war in Iraq, or protecting the country from terrorist attacks, or the economy, or education, or the environment, or healthcare issues, or illegal immigration, or other social issues, such as abortion and gay rights, or is there another issue? *(Two replies accepted)*

-----REGISTERED VOTERS-----

	<u>REG</u>	<u>DEM</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>REP</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
None/all (vol)	9	8	8	5	7	6	10	9	8
War in Iraq	34	45	27	25	43	37	26	28	38
Protect country from attacks	7	3	7	16	5	3	14	8	7
Economy	56	56	61	53	61	59	53	60	53
Education	8	7	11	5	9	11	4	6	9
Environment	4	6	4	2	9	5	1	4	5
Healthcare issues	11	11	13	9	13	12	10	5	15
Illegal immigration	11	7	9	21	4	10	17	12	10
Issues like abortion/gay rights	2	2	3	4	2	4	3	4	1
Other	6	3	7	7	4	5	6	8	5
Don't know	1	1	-	2	1	1	1	1	1

Q4. If the November 2008 general election for president were being held today and the choices were Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, and John McCain, the Republican, for whom would you vote: Clinton or McCain, or would you vote for a candidate from some other party?

----- Among Registered Voters -----

	<u>REG</u>	<u>DEM</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>REP</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
H.R. Clinton	47	77	35	5	73	57	21	38	53
McCain	38	9	46	87	15	27	64	46	32
S/Else	4	5	6	3	2	3	6	4	4
Don't know	11	9	13	5	10	13	9	12	11

Q5. If the November 2008 general election for president were being held today and the choices were Barack Obama, the Democrat, and John McCain, the Republican, for whom would you vote: Obama or McCain, or would you vote for a candidate from some other party?

----- Among Registered Voters -----

	<u>REG</u>	<u>DEM</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>REP</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
Obama	46	74	40	7	66	56	24	42	49
McCain	40	15	41	87	19	31	64	45	36
S/Else	5	5	4	1	4	3	4	6	3
Don't know	9	6	15	5	11	10	8	7	12

Q6. Regardless of your choice for president, who do you think would be best at handling the nation's economic policies: Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama or John McCain?

----- Among Registered Voters -----

	<u>REG</u>	<u>DEM</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>REP</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
None of them (vol)	6	3	11	8	5	3	8	10	4
Hillary Clinton	32	47	32	8	45	36	16	28	35
Barack Obama	26	40	19	10	34	33	18	26	27
John McCain	23	4	20	64	7	15	44	27	20
Other candidate (vol)	2	-	3	3	1	1	3	3	1
All equally (vol)	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	1
Don't know	10	5	14	7	7	11	11	6	12

Q13. Do you think we are in an economic recession, or not? (IF YES) Do you think we are in a mild recession, or a moderate recession, or a serious recession?

	<u>REG</u>
No recession	17
Recession (net)	78
Mild recession	24
Moderate recession	31
Serious recession	24
Don't know (net)	5