

Program Brief

“A LOOK AT THE 2008 U.S. ELECTIONS”

A talk by

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Amy Walter is one of the nation's top political forecasters. As the editor-in-chief of *The Hotline*, Washington's premier daily briefing on American politics, she is the publication's primary voice. Her reliably accurate analysis of the national political environment is featured in the *Hotline's* daily Spotlight, her daily appearances on HotlineTV, her weekly on-air CSPAN briefings, and her weekly *National Journal* column, On The Trail.

©http://www.pbs.org/kcet/tavissmiley/special/election06/2006/06/will_democrats_take_control_of.html

Ms. Walter is widely known for giving frank yet genial interviews, which has gained her much airtime on the national television news circuit. Her astuteness and wit garner her choice platforms and friendly, interested discourse from colleagues with diverse political viewpoints.

A voice of reason. Amy Walter, recipient of *The Washington Post's* Crystal Ball award for her spot-on predictions in 2000, was dubbed one of the most powerful people in politics in *George* magazine for her insights into the mechanics that make the political machine run.

She is a political analyst for CNN and a frequent contributor to *The Newshour with Jim Lehrer* (PBS). Ms. Walter has also served as a panelist and commentator on *Face the Nation* (CBS), *Meet the Press* (NBC), *Washington Journal* (C-SPAN), *Real Time with Bill Maher* (HBO), and *The Early Show* (CBS). She provided election night commentary for CNN in 2002 and 2004, and was a member of CNN's Emmy-award winning election night team in 2006.

A multimedia multitasker. Ms. Walter provided election night analysis for Voter News Service in 1998 and 2000. In 2007, she concluded a banner decade operating as a senior editor of *The Cook Political Report*, a nonpartisan publication renowned for providing some of the nation's most respected and intuitive political analysis. There, she earned well-deserved accolades for successfully handicapping U.S. House races, and was frequently quoted as a congressional election expert in newspapers such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. During her tenure, she also contributed to *National Journal* magazine and *Congress Daily*.

Given her extensive experience, Amy Walter speaks with aplomb about the electoral process, congressional culture, and the Washington political scene on the whole. Being a familiar presence across the media spectrum, and as an academic -- having graduated summa cum laude from Colby College and having served as an adjunct professor at one of the nation's top communications schools -- Amy Walter's range of topics and expertise provides an engaging, compelling presentation that keeps audiences riveted.

"Every politician is always looking for that perfect sweet spot, that place where you can find the perfect balance."

National Journal: <http://nationaljournal.com/>
The Hotline: <http://nationaljournal.com/about/hotline/>

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...Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.

The electors shall meet in their respective states, and vote by ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves. And they shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each; which list they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted...

(Article II of the U.S. Constitution)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Elections 2008

U.S. Embassy Vienna, Austria

<http://www.usembassy.at/en/us/elections.htm>

Webpage with links on topics listed below:

General Information Texts in German Election Calendars and Primary Schedules Electoral College Candidates Debates CRS Reports for Congress	Legislation Campaign Finance Political Parties Washington File Items Webchats Foreign Press Center Briefings Media Sites Blogs	Frequently Asked Questions & Trivia Candidate Matching Sites Polling Sites Voter Turnout & Statistics Useful Links Think Tanks
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U.S. Elections – Guide to the 2008 Elections

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/index.html>

Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

Website including videos, podcasts, and information on the candidates, voting and the election process



The Long Campaign: U.S. Elections 2008

Published by the Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State, October 2007

This edition of *eJournal USA* presents an introduction to the upcoming 2008 U.S. elections. In these elections, U.S. voters will have the opportunity to vote for president and vice president, congressional representatives, state and local officials, and ballot initiatives. The journal describes aspects of this election which make it different from most recent elections and includes a pro-con debate of the Electoral College.

FULL TEXT:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/1007/ijde/ijde1007.htm>

- **How the Internet Is Changing the Playing Field**

By Andy Carvin

The 2008 U.S. general election will no doubt be a watershed year in American history but not necessarily because of any particular candidate or policy. As has been the case in recent election cycles, the Internet has become a potent political tool in terms of campaigning, fundraising, and civic engagement...

FULL TEXT: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/1007/ijde/carvin.htm>

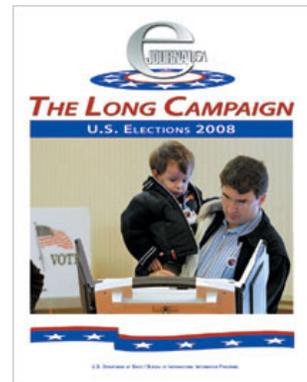
- **The Changing U.S. Voter**

By Daniel Gotoff

As the 2008 election for president approaches, the U.S. electorate finds itself in a unique — and tumultuous — situation. Polls show that the country is engaged in a war that a majority of Americans now oppose. Nearly six years after September 11, 2001, fears of another terrorist attack still permeate the public consciousness. And voters' outlook on a panoply of domestic matters is colored with intensifying concern. ... The shifting political tides over the past several years underscore the point that neither major party is able to boast a governing majority. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/1007/ijde/gotoff.htm>

- **Covering the Presidential Campaign: The View from the Press Bus**



By Jim Dickenson

A veteran political journalist shares the inside story of life on the road with a U.S. presidential candidate and discusses the reporter's role in conveying a candidate's message to the American people. ... Jim Dickenson is a retired political reporter for the *Washington Post*. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/1007/ijde/dickenson.htm>

USA Elections in Brief

Published by the Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State, January 2008

Free and fair elections are the keystone of any democracy. They are essential for the peaceful transfer of power.

When voters elect representatives, they elect the leaders who will shape the future of their society. This is why elections empower ordinary citizens: they allow them to influence the future policies of their government, and thus, their own future.

The United States has been a representative democracy since the ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 - although the electoral tradition began during the Colonial era and had its roots in British history. This book discusses the nature of the modern American electoral process, and how it works at the federal, state, and local levels. The process, complicated and sometimes confusing, has evolved to ensure universal suffrage to all men and women who are U.S. citizens — 18 years-of-age, or older. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/elections-in-brief/>

Presidential Nominating Process: Current Issues

CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service/Library of Congress, October 24, 2007

Every four years, the presidential nominating process generates complaints and proposed modifications, and the rapid pace of primaries and caucuses that characterized the 2000 and 2004 cycles will continue in 2008. Because many states scheduled early contests in the 2000 cycle, both parties subsequently created task forces on the process. For a time the parties pursued a cooperative effort to confront problems associated with front-loading for 2004. In the end, Democrats approved moving up state primary dates for 2004, but retained Iowa and New Hampshire's early events; Republicans rejected a proposed reform plan. At the state level, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) supports a regional primary plan that would rotate regional dates every four years...

FULL TEXT: <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/94833.pdf> (pdf)

Presidential Elections in the United States: A Primer

CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service/Library of Congress, April 17, 2000

Every four years, Americans elect a President and Vice President, thereby choosing both national leaders and a course of public policy. The system that governs the election of the President combines constitutional and statutory requirements, rules of the national and state political parties, political traditions, and contemporary developments and practices.

As initially prescribed by the Constitution, the election of the President was left to electors chosen by the states. Final authority for selecting the President still rests with the electoral college, which comprises electors from each state equal in number to the state's total representation in the House and Senate. All but two states award electoral votes on a winner-take-all basis to the candidate with a plurality of the state's popular vote.

The process of electing the President is essentially divided into four stages: (1) the prenomination phase, in which candidates compete in state primary elections and caucuses for delegates to the national party conventions; (2) the national conventions—held in the summer of the election year—in which the two major parties nominate candidates for President and Vice President and ratify a platform of the parties' policy positions and goals; (3) the general election campaign, in which the major party nominees, as well as any minor party or independent contenders, compete for votes from the entire electorate, culminating in the popular vote on election day in November; and (4) the electoral college phase, in which the President and Vice President are officially elected...

FULL TEXT: http://www.usembassy.at/en/download/pdf/elections_primer.pdf (pdf)

United States Election Assistance Commission

<http://www.eac.gov/>

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is an independent, bipartisan commission created by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002.

EAC is operating the federal government's first voting system certification program. It issues guidance about HAVA, adopts voluntary voting system guidelines, audits the use of HAVA funds, and provides best practices and resources to election officials throughout the nation.

EAC also administers a national clearinghouse of information about election administration and maintains the national mail voter registration form.

Federal Election Commission

<http://www.fec.gov/>

In 1975, Congress created the Federal Election Commission (FEC) to administer and enforce the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) - the statute that governs the financing of federal elections. The duties of the FEC, which is an independent regulatory agency, are to disclose campaign finance information, to enforce the provisions of the law such as the limits and prohibitions on contributions, and to oversee the public funding of Presidential elections.

The Commission is made up of six members, who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Each member serves a six-year term, and two seats are subject to appointment every two years. By law, no more than three Commissioners can be members of the same political party, and at least four votes are required for any official Commission action. This structure was created to encourage nonpartisan decisions. The Chairmanship of the Commission rotates among the members each year, with no member serving as Chairman more than once during his or her term.

Glossary

Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

... **Blue state**

Blue state is a term used to refer to a U.S. state where the majority of voters usually support Democratic candidates. ...

Caucus

A caucus is a meeting at the local level in which registered members of a political party in a city, town or county gather to express support for a candidate. For statewide or national offices, those recommendations are combined to determine the state party nominee. The term also is applied to a group of party members that meets to plan policy. Two well-known examples of such groups are the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, whose members discuss and advance the interests of their respective constituencies....

Hard money/Soft money

Hard money and soft money are terms used to differentiate between campaign funding that is, and is not, regulated under federal campaign finance law. Hard money describes donations by individuals and groups made directly to political candidates running for federal office. Such contributions are restricted by law. Soft money refers to donations not regulated by law that can be spent only on civic activities such as voter-registration drives, party-building activities, administrative costs and in support of state and local candidates. "Soft money" contributions, by law, may not be used to support directly a candidate for federal office. The U.S. Supreme Court in 2003 upheld congressional restrictions passed in 2002 on soft money contributions....

Primary

A state-level election in which voters choose a candidate affiliated with a political party to run against a candidate who is affiliated with another political party in a later, general election. A primary may be either "open" -- allowing any registered voter in a state to vote for a candidate to represent a political party, or "closed" -- allowing only registered voters who belong to a particular political party to vote for a candidate from that party. ...

Red state

Red state refers to a U.S. state where the majority of voters support Republican candidates....

Super-Duper Tuesday

A phrase coined for the 2008 election, when many states, in an attempt to have more influence on the outcome of the race, have moved their primaries or caucuses to earlier in the year. This resulted in at least 20 states choosing to hold their primaries or caucuses on Tuesday, February 5, 2008, giving that day the name "Super-Duper Tuesday."...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/pubs-english/2007/October/20071009122700hmnietsua0.2381555.html>

WASHINGTON FILE ITEMS

(published by the Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State)



Delegate System Aims to Give Nominating Power to the People

Rules for selecting delegates vary among states' political parties

March 24, 2008

Washington - U.S. voters may cast ballots for a presidential nominee in a primary or caucus, but they do not select their parties' nominees directly. That power is given to delegates - appointed party representatives - who cast votes at the national conventions held in the summer before the general election.

The system of appointing delegates to select party nominees is complex and has been revised over decades to ensure fairness. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/March/20080324140500hmnietsua0.4460871.html>

Senate Race Is Heating Up in Oregon

Contest pits incumbent Republican against two Democratic hopefuls

March 17, 2008

Portland, Oregon - It's that time in the American political calendar when even the most powerful party leaders have to sit back and see what the voters will give them to work with in the November elections.

Over the last few months millions of voters around the country, voting in state primaries, have been choosing not only their party's presidential candidate for the November election but the nominees for thousands of other elective offices. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/March/20080317191838abretnuh0.3042871.html>

Congressional Vacancies Filled by Special Elections

Obama wins nominating contests in Wyoming, Mississippi

March 13, 2008

Washington - While voters in Wyoming and Mississippi cast ballots for their presidential candidates, voters in other states elected officials to fill vacant seats in Congress.

Barack Obama won two Democratic nominating contests in a row -- March 8 in Wyoming and March 11 in Mississippi. He was favored to earn the most votes in both, and did so by large margins.

Neither Democratic candidate spent a great deal of time in these states. Both Obama and Hillary Clinton are campaigning heavily in Pennsylvania, which is the next state to hold a primary, scheduled for April 22.

...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/March/20080312172045hmnietsua0.208172.html>

The Path to the 2008 Presidential Nomination

Candidates collect delegates toward their party nominations

March 12, 2008

To become a party's nominee for president, a candidate must win the support of a majority of delegates to the party's national convention in the summer of 2008. For whom those delegates will cast their votes is determined by the outcomes of state caucuses and primaries. Convention delegates are divided among states proportionally. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080107110302hmnietsua0.6430017.html>

Education Unlikely to Be Predominant Campaign Issue

Americans not particularly concerned about educational reform

March 10, 2008

Washington - In the past five elections, education was one of the major issues discussed on the campaign trail, but this is not the case in 2008.

The biggest issues in American politics are "peace and prosperity," explained William Galston, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington. "When one of them is on the table in a particular [election] year, that is the dominant issue." ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/March/20080310124140mnietsua0.6571466.html>

John McCain Wins Enough Delegates to Become Republican Nominee

Democratic race continues as Clinton wins popular vote in three of four states

March 5, 2008

Washington - ... McCain received the majority of the votes in all four states and now has more than the 1,191 delegates needed to secure the Republican nomination. He does not officially become the party's nominee until delegates cast their votes at the Republican National Convention in September.

Speaking in Texas alongside a banner displaying the number "1,191," McCain told his supporters, "I am very pleased to note that tonight, my friends, we have won enough delegates to claim with confidence, humility and a sense of great responsibility that I will be the Republican nominee for president of the United States." ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/March/20080305104843hmnietsua0.9032099.html>

2008 Republican Convention Will Be Second Held in Minneapolis

45,000 people expected to come to Minnesota's "Twin Cities"

February 21, 2008

Washington - The 2008 Republican National Convention, to be held September 1-4 in Minnesota's "Twin Cities" of St. Paul and Minneapolis, will be the Republican Party's 39th national convention and the second such gathering the party has held in Minnesota.

...The 2008 convention will welcome delegates and alternative delegates representing all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

In all, 45,000 people, including volunteers and members of the media, are expected to attend. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080221120905AKllennoCcM0.1245539.html>

Turnout Mounts in U.S. Presidential Primaries

Democrats, especially, are voting in overwhelming numbers

February 20, 2008

Washington - Conventional wisdom holds that presidential primaries and caucuses attract voters with high political motivation. Frequently, they are party activists or agenda-driven voters who stand on the left or right of the political spectrum. Not so in 2008.

Voting turnout records are being broken in most states. States report that more people have registered to vote. Precincts have run out of ballots because of the unexpected rush. And the voters represent a broader constituency than usual. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080220154620mlenuhret0.1724512.html>

Talk Radio Has Minimal Influence on U.S. Presidential Election

Radio hosts inflate their own importance, knowledgeable observers say

February 13, 2008

Washington - Radio talk shows are having little or no influence on the 2008 U.S. presidential race, several observers of the radio business tell *America.gov*.

Tim Cuprisin, TV/radio columnist for Wisconsin's Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, said the supposed political influence of talk radio has "always been inflated by the actual" talk radio hosts themselves. The talk show format consists of conversation between the radio host and listeners who call into the program. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/200802131811151xeneerg0.4280512.html>

Democratic Race Could Continue for Weeks or Months, Experts Say

As Republican race nears end, Obama and Clinton remain in tight contest

February 8, 2008

Washington - Although the delegates still are being counted across the country, it is clear that neither Barack Obama nor Hillary Clinton emerged from Super Tuesday as a clear front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Voters showed up in record numbers February 5 and handed important victories to both Illinois Senator Obama and New York Senator Clinton. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080208171334hmnietsua0.6845209.html>

"Superdelegates" May Decide Democratic Nominee

Party leaders, elected officials can shape outcome of a close race

February 4, 2008

Washington - When Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy endorsed Illinois Senator Barack Obama January 28, he moved Obama one vote closer to becoming the Democratic Party's nominee. Kennedy is a "superdelegate" to the Democratic Party's convention, so his vote, along with other party leaders' votes, will be counted to determine the party's nominee.

Kennedy is one of hundreds of Democratic Party leaders, including former Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, former Vice President Al Gore and most current and former Democratic governors, senators and congressional representatives. These Democratic leaders and others appointed or elected by the Democratic National Committee will be able to vote as superdelegates at the convention this summer. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080204190330hmnietsua0.9187281.html>

Look Behind the Scenes in a Presidential Primary Election

A volunteer recaps how the system works in a Florida county precinct

February 4, 2008

Viera, Florida - The morning sun was not yet up when I entered the building to join nine other citizens to serve as an election official at one of thousands of Florida's voting precincts during the U.S. presidential preference primary. ...

Florida is a "closed primary" state, meaning voters must belong to one of the two major political parties to vote for one of that party's presidential candidates. Registered Republicans received different ballots from

registered Democrats. Independents or citizens who declared no party affiliation received a third ballot, listing only the two tax issues.

This procedure differs from that of “open primary” states, such as New Hampshire, where a voter can use any ballot he or she wishes. In those state, “spoilers” sometimes vote for the weakest candidate in the opposing party to undercut a leading candidate. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080204152910ndyblehs0.725857.html>

Americans Abroad Participate in Republican, Democratic Politics

Some Democrats overseas are able to cast their primary votes online

January 25, 2008

Washington – As Americans vote for party nominees in primaries and caucuses, so will many of the more than 6 million Americans who live overseas. And for the first time, some Democrats will cast their ballots on the Internet.

In 1976, Americans living overseas were granted the right to vote by absentee ballot in presidential and congressional elections. Since then, Americans living abroad have played an increasingly influential role in shaping politics back home where tight races can be swayed by the number of absentee ballots mailed from overseas. The organizations Republicans Abroad and Democrats Abroad help these Americans stay politically active....

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/January/20080125114352hmnietsua0.2439691.html>

Barack Obama’s U.S. Presidential Bid Bridges Racial Divisions

But “Obamamania” may not put first black person in White House

January 18, 2008

Washington - The candidacy of Barack Obama for U.S. president is galvanizing the American people, several students of the U.S. political scene tell *America.gov*.

With his stirring oratory sparking “Obamamania,” the Illinois Democratic senator connects to people of all different racial and ethnic backgrounds, said William Jelani Cobb, associate professor of history at Spelman College in Georgia.

Americans are attracted to Obama’s message of bringing people together and the fact that he is African American is “icing on the top,” said Cobb, also an author who specializes in 20th-century American politics. Cobb said Obama’s candidacy is “not driven by race.” ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/January/200801181212531xeneerg0.8178675.html>

Young Americans Paying Close Attention to Presidential Race

Supporters of both parties concerned about Iraq, health care

December 6, 2007

Washington - Young Americans are paying attention to the 2008 presidential race, and many are ready to help their preferred candidate achieve victory, a poll by Harvard University’s Institute of Politics (IOP) shows.

Like the national average, voter turnout among young Americans has been on the rise. From 2000 to 2004, turnout among 18- to 29-year-olds increased 9 percent, more than double the overall turnout increase. In the 2006 midterm elections, turnout in this age group was 3 percent higher than in 2002, nearly double the national turnout increase. The 2006 election was the first increase in young voter turnout in a nonpresidential election in 24 years. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/December/20071206173711hmnietsua9.809512e-02.html>

Americans' Political Divisions Not Necessarily Bad, Experts Say

Many factors contribute to "red state-blue state" divide

December 3, 2007

Washington - Although Americans feel politically divided today, this polarization is not necessarily a bad thing, political experts say.

Today, the division among Americans is often depicted in the colors red and blue. During the contested 2000 election between George W. Bush and then-Vice President Al Gore, Americans spent weeks looking at maps depicting in red the states that voted Republican and in blue the states that voted Democrat. Since then, defining political views as "red" (Republican) or "blue" (Democratic) is a regular occurrence. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/December/20071203092217hmnietsua1.266116e-02.html>

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections

CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service/Library of Congress, updated November 5, 2004

When Americans vote for a President and Vice President, they actually vote for presidential electors, known collectively as the electoral college. It is these electors, chosen by the people, who elect the chief executive. The Constitution assigns each state a number of electors equal to the combined total of its Senate and House of Representatives delegations; at present, the number of electors per state ranges from three to 55, for a total of 538, a figure which includes three electors for the District of Columbia. Anyone may serve as an elector, except for Members of Congress, and persons holding offices of "Trust or Profit" under the Constitution. In each presidential election year, a group (ticket or slate) of candidates for elector is nominated by political parties and other groups in each state, usually at a state party convention, or by the party state committee. It is these elector-candidates, rather than the presidential and vice presidential nominees, for whom the people vote in the election held on Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

...

FULL TEXT: http://www.usembassy.at/en/download/pdf/electoral_college.pdf (pdf)

Table 1. Electoral Vote Allocation by Jurisdiction, 2004-2008

State	Electors	State	Electors	State	Electors
Alabama	9	Kentucky	8	North Dakota	3
Alaska	3	Louisiana	9	Ohio	20
Arizona	10	Maine	4	Oklahoma	7
Arkansas	6	Maryland	10	Oregon	7
California	55	Massachusetts	12	Pennsylvania	21
Colorado	9	Michigan	17	Rhode Island	4
Connecticut	7	Minnesota	10	South Carolina	8
Delaware	3	Mississippi	6	South Dakota	3
District of Columbia	3	Missouri	11	Tennessee	11
Florida	27	Montana	3	Texas	34
Georgia	15	Nebraska	5	Utah	5
Hawaii	4	Nevada	5	Vermont	3
Idaho	4	New Hampshire	4	Virginia	13
Illinois	21	New Jersey	15	Washington	11
Indiana	11	New Mexico	5	West Virginia	5
Iowa	7	New York	31	Wisconsin	10
Kansas	6	North Carolina	15	Wyoming	3

(Source: The Electoral College: How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections)

Frequently Asked Questions

Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

What is the Electoral College?

The Electoral College is the group of citizens designated by the states to cast votes for the president and vice president on behalf of state citizens. The process for selecting electors varies from state to state, but usually the political parties nominate electors at state party conventions or by a vote of the party's central committee. The voters in each state, by casting votes for president and vice president, choose the electors on the day of the general election. The Electoral College, not the popular vote, elects the president, but the two votes are tied closely.

How does the Electoral College elect the president?

The Electoral College system gives each state the same number of electoral votes as it has members of Congress. The District of Columbia is allocated three electoral votes. There are a total of 538 votes in the Electoral College; a candidate for president must get 270 to win (a simple majority). All but two states have a winner-take-all system, in which the candidate who gets the most popular votes in the state is allocated all of the state's electoral votes.

The electors usually gather in their state capitals in December to cast their votes. The electoral votes are then sent to Washington, where they are counted in the presence of a joint session of Congress in January.

If no presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes, the 12th Amendment to the Constitution provides for the presidential election to be decided by the House of Representatives. In such situations, the House selects the president by majority vote, choosing from the three candidates who received the greatest number of electoral votes. Each state would cast one vote.

If no vice presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes, the Senate selects the vice president by majority vote, with each senator choosing from the two candidates who received the greatest number of electoral votes.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/pubs-english/2007/October/20071009122854hmnietsua7.178903e-03.html>

Electoral College – Frequently Asked Questions

U.S. National Archives & Records Administration

How did the terms "Electoral" and "Electoral College" come into usage?

The term "electoral college" does not appear in the Constitution. Article II of the Constitution and the 12th Amendment refer to "electors," but not to the "electoral college." In the Federalist Papers (No. 68), Alexander Hamilton refers to the process of selecting the Executive, and refers to "the people of each State (who) shall choose a number of persons as electors," but he does not use the term "electoral college."

The founders appropriated the concept of electors from the Holy Roman Empire (962 - 1806). An elector was one of a number of princes of the various German states within the Holy Roman Empire who had a right to participate in the election of the German king (who generally was crowned as emperor). The term "college" (from the Latin collegium), refers to a body of persons that act as a unit, as in the college of cardinals who advise the Pope and vote in papal elections. In the early 1800's, the term "electoral college" came into general usage as the unofficial designation for the group of citizens selected to cast votes for President and Vice President. It was first written into Federal law in 1845, and today the term appears in 3 U.S.C. section 4, in the section heading and in the text as "college of electors." ...

FULL TEXT: http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/print_friendly.html?page=faq_content.html&title=NARA%20%7C%20Federal%20Register%20%7C%20U.%20S.%20Electoral%20College

Has the Electoral College Outlived Its Usefulness?

Article from the *eJournal* "The Long Campaign: U.S. Elections 2008," published by the Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State, October 2007

Two scholars debate the pros and cons of the Electoral College, the system by which each state appoints electors who choose the U.S. president after the popular vote has been cast. Ross K. Baker makes the case for retaining the Electoral College as it was established by the U.S. Constitution in 1787. Baker is a

professor of political science at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Jamie Raskin presents the arguments for adapting the Electoral College system to ensure that election results reflect the national popular vote. Raskin is a Maryland state senator and a professor of constitutional law at American University in Washington, D.C. He introduced legislation that made Maryland the first state in the country to join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/1007/ijde/usefulness.htm>

Distribution of Electoral Votes

Federal Elections Commission

<http://www.fec.gov/pages/elevote.htm>

CANDIDATES

- **Meet the 2008 Presidential Candidates**

Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/candidates.html>

A look at the men and woman competing for the Republican and Democratic nominations

- **Candidates on the Issues**

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/issues.html>

A quick look at the candidates' views on key international issues (climate change, immigration, Iraq, security, trade)

- **The Presidential Field – Full coverage of the 2008 candidates**

The Washington Post

<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/>

- **Candidates**

The New York Times

<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/candidates/index.html>

- **Presidential Candidate Profiles**

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life – Religion & Politics

<http://pewforum.org/religion08/>

- **Candidates' Websites**

- Hillary Clinton

<http://www.hillaryclinton.com/>

- John McCain

<http://www.johnmccain.com/>

- Barack Obama

<http://www.barackobama.com/>

ELECTION CALENDARS AND PRIMARY SCHEDULES

- **NASS Calendar of 2008 State Primary & Caucus Dates**

National Association of Secretaries of State

http://nass.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=92 (pdf)

- **2008 Presidential Primary Calendar**

National Conference of State Legislatures

http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legismgt/elect/2008_Pres_Primary_Calendar.htm

- *The New York Times*

2008 Republican Primary Schedule

<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/primaries/republicanprimaries/index.html>

2008 Democratic Primary Schedule

<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/primaries/democraticprimaries/index.html>

- **2008 Presidential Primaries, Caucuses, and Conventions Chronologically**

The Green Papers

<http://www.thegreenpapers.com/P08/events.phtml?s=c>

PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Commission on Presidential Debates

<http://www.debates.org/>

The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) was established in 1987 to ensure that debates, as a permanent part of every general election, provide the best possible information to viewers and listeners. Its primary purpose is to sponsor and produce debates for the United States presidential and vice presidential candidates and to undertake research and educational activities relating to the debates. The organization, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation, sponsored all the presidential debates in 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004.

- **Commission on Presidential Debates Announces Sites, Dates, Formats and Candidate Selection Criteria for 2008 General Election, November 19, 2007**

... - First presidential debate: Friday, September 26, University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS

- Vice presidential debate: Thursday, October 2, Washington University in St. Louis, MO

- Second presidential debate: Tuesday, October 7, Belmont University, Nashville, TN

- Third presidential debate: Wednesday, October 15, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY

The two backup sites are Centre College in Danville, KY and Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC.

The Commission also announced formats for the debates.

All debates will be ninety minutes in length and start at 9:00 p.m. ET.

Each debate will be administered by a single moderator.

The first presidential debate will focus on domestic policy; the third presidential debate will focus on foreign policy.

The second presidential (town meeting format) debate will include any issues raised by members of that audience, and the vice presidential debate will include domestic and foreign policy. ...

FULL TEXT: http://www.debates.org/pages/news_111907.html

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

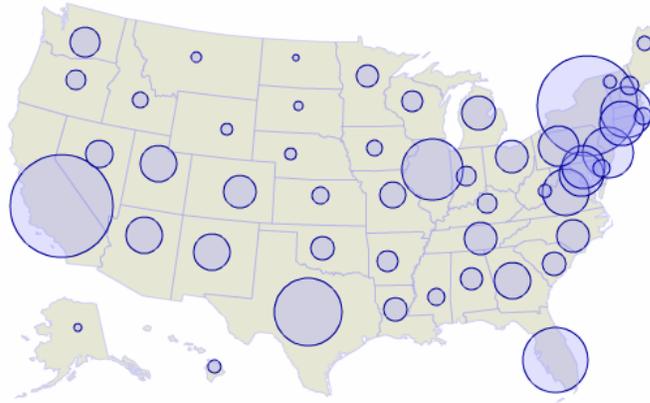
Presidential Campaign Finance

Federal Election Commission:

<http://www.fec.gov/DisclosureSearch/mapApp.do>

- Receipts of 2008 Presidential Campaigns
<http://www.fec.gov/press/presssummary.pdf> (pdf)

Contributions to All Candidates by State



Campaign Finance: Developments in the 110th Congress

CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service/Library of Congress, September 28, 2007

Recent events suggest continued congressional interest in campaign finance policy.

This report provides an overview and analysis of 110th Congress legislation addressed in hearings or that has passed at least one chamber. The report also discusses two policy developments: Federal Election Commission (FEC) nominations and a recent Supreme Court ruling that could affect future political advertising (*Federal Election Commission v. Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc.*) As of this writing, approximately 50 bills devoted largely to campaign finance have been introduced in the 110th Congress, but none have become law. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/93477.pdf> (pdf)

Campaign 2008: Campaign Finance

The Washington Post

<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/finance/>

Campaign Finance

CQ MoneyLine

<http://moneyline.cq.com/pml/home.do?MBF=pres>

'08 Presidential Fundraising

opensecrets.org

<http://www.opensecrets.org/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

United States Election Assistance Commission

Q. Why are federal elections held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November?

A. The Tuesday after the first Monday in November was initially established in 1845 (3 U.S.C. 1) for the appointment of Presidential electors in every fourth year. 2 U.S.C. 7 established this date for electing U.S.

Representatives in every even numbered year in 1875. Finally, 2 U.S.C. 1 established this date as the time for electing U.S. Senators in 1914.

Why early November?

For much of our history America was a predominantly agrarian society. Law makers therefore took into account that November was perhaps the most convenient month for farmers and rural workers to be able to travel to the polls. The fall harvest was over, (remembering that spring was planting time and summer was taken up with working the fields and tending the crops) but in the majority of the nation the weather was still mild enough to permit travel over unimproved roads.

Why Tuesday?

Since most residents of rural America had to travel a significant distance to the county seat in order to vote, Monday was not considered reasonable as many people would need to begin travel on Sunday. This would, of course, have conflicted with church services and Sunday worship.

Why the first Tuesday after the first Monday?

Lawmakers wanted to prevent election day from falling on the first of November for two reasons. November 1st is All Saints Day, a holy day of obligation for Roman Catholics. In addition, most merchants were in the habit of doing their books from the preceding month on the 1st. Congress was apparently worried that the economic success or failure of the previous month might influence the vote of the merchants. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.eac.gov/voter/faq/?searchterm=faq>

Quick Answers to General Questions

Federal Election Commission

Can non-US citizens contribute?

Foreign nationals are prohibited from making any contributions or expenditures in connection with any election in the U.S. Please note, however, that "green card" holders (i.e., individuals lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S.) are not considered foreign nationals and, as a result, may contribute. ...

FULL TEXT: http://www.fec.gov/ans/answers_general.shtml

Frequently Asked Questions

Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

Who can vote?

American citizens ages 18 and older can register to vote. To register, voters must meet the residency requirements of their states, which vary, and comply with voter-registration deadlines....

What are the requirements for running for elected office in the United States?

Each federal elected office has different requirements, which are laid out in Articles I and II of the U.S. Constitution.

A candidate for president of the United States must be a natural-born citizen of the United States, be at least 35 years old, and have been a resident of the United States for at least 14 years. A vice president must meet the same qualifications. Under the 12th Amendment to the Constitution, the vice president cannot be from the same state as the president. ...

When are primary elections held?

State and local governments determine the dates on which primary elections or caucuses are held. These dates, and the amount of time between a primary and general election, significantly influence how early candidates begin campaigning and the choices they make about how and when campaign funds are spent.

In the run-up to presidential elections, victories in primaries held very early in the election year, such as that in New Hampshire, can influence the outcome of later state primaries. ...

Why is voter turnout sometimes low in the United States?

Several factors seem to influence voter turnout, which was approximately 41 percent of eligible voters in 2006 and 61 percent in 2004. Many observers believe that current registration laws hinder voter turnout. The demographic composition of the electorate, long periods of political or economic stability, predictable outcomes in many races and some candidates' lack of popular appeal are other factors affecting voter turnout. Turnout tends to be higher in general elections than in primary elections. Turnout also tends to be higher in years in which the president is elected than in midterm elections. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/pubs-english/2007/October/20071009122854hmnietsua7.178903e-03.html>

TRIVIA

How Did Republicans Pick the Elephant, and Democrats the Donkey, to Represent Their Parties?

C-SPAN - Capitol Questions

They didn't pick these labels – they got stuck with them! Their origin as symbols for the parties is attributed to a political cartoonist, Thomas Nast, who used the donkey and the elephant in cartoons drawn for *Harper's Weekly* in the 1870's. Why Nast chose the donkey and the elephant is a pretty complicated story. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.c-span.org/questions/week174.htm>

Presidential Quizzes

Grolier Online - The American Presidency

<http://ap.grolier.com/quiz>

Trivia

President Elect – The Unofficial Homepage of the Electoral College

<http://www.presidentelect.org/trivia.html>

Just for Fun: Presidential Trivia

National Park Service

... *George W. Bush, 43rd President: 2001- Present*

First son of a president to become president since John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams. ...

William J. Clinton, 42nd President: 1993-2001

Clinton was the first U.S. Democratic president to win reelection since Franklin D. Roosevelt....

George H.W. Bush, 41st President: 1989-1993

Bush is distantly related to Presidents Pierce, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Ford, and Winston Churchill....

Ronald W. Reagan, 40th President: 1981-1989

At age 69, Ronald Reagan became the oldest person ever elected U.S. president....

FULL TEXT: http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/pres/trivia.htm

CANDIDATE MATCHING SITES

- **The Washington Post – Choose Your Candidate**
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/interactives/candidatequiz/>
- **ABC News: Match-o-Matic**
<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Vote2008/page?id=3623346>
- **USA Today Candidate Match Game**
<http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/candidate-match-game.htm>
- **Glassboth – Quiz to help you choose the best 2008 presidential candidate**
<http://glassbooth.org/>
- **WQAD – Select a Candidate 2008 Quiz**

<http://www.wqad.com/Global/link.asp?L=259460>

- **VAJoe.com Candidate Calculator**
http://www.vajoe.com/candidate_calculator.html

MEDIA

- **Elections - *The Washington Post***
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/elections/>
 - **Politics blog: The Fix, by Chris Cilliza**
<http://blog.washingtonpost.com/thefix/>
- **Election Guide 2008 – *The New York Times***
<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/primaries/states/index.html>
 - **Politics blog: The Caucus**
<http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/>
- **Election Center 2008 – CNN**
<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/>
 - **Blog: The Situation Room**
<http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/situation.room/blog/>
- **Campaigns: White House - CQPolitics**
<http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=6>
- **Campaign 2008 - C-SPAN**
<http://www.campaignnetwork.org/>
- ***Campaigns & Elections***
<http://www.campaignsandelections.com>
- **Election 2008 – NPR (National Public Radio)**
<http://www.npr.org/templates/topics/topic.php?topicId=1102>
- **Campaign 2008 – *The Hill***
<http://thehill.com/campaign-2008/>
- **Campaign Tracker 2008 - *National Journal***
<http://nationaljournal.com/campaigns/>
 - **Blog: The Hotline on Call**
<http://hotlineblog.nationaljournal.com/>
- **You Choose '08 – YouTube**
<http://www.youtube.com/youchoose>

POLLING/ PUBLIC OPINION SITES

- **Election 2008 – PollingReport.com**
<http://www.pollingreport.com/2008.htm>

- **Election 2008** – Gallup
<http://www.gallup.com/tag/Election%2b2008.aspx>
- **Polls** – *The Washington Post*
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/polls/>
- **Poll** – *Los Angeles Times*
<http://www.latimes.com/news/custom/timespoll/>
- **CBS News Polls**
<http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/opinion/polls/main500160.shtml>
- **ABCNews Polling Unit**
<http://abcnews.go.com/pollingunit/>
- **Election 2008: Presidential, Senate and House Races** – electoral.vote.com
<http://www.electoral-vote.com/>
- **The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press**
<http://people-press.org/>

FOREIGN PRESS CENTER BRIEFINGS

(<http://fpc.state.gov>)

The Race for the Delegates and Super Delegates

With Michael Barone, Senior Writer, *U.S. News & World Report*

Washington, D.C., February 27, 2008

...MR. BARONE: ... In the old days of conventions, nobody knew how many delegates people had until you actually had the roll call at the convention. The first network -- TV network delegate count, media delegate count, was taken by CBS in 1968. The delegate counts, network delegate counts, were shown to be accurate when they had a real test during the 1976 Republican fight between Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan when only a few delegate votes separated them, and the network delegate count proved to be accurate.

So we don't need a convention roll call to tell us who has how many delegates anymore. We know with a pretty high degree of certainty down to almost pinpoint accuracy. So this practice that we have is theoretically designed to lead to a national convention. That convention is no longer a deliberative body in any reasonable meaning of the word, but the rules are still shaped around amassing a majority of the delegates. ...

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/101429.htm>

Election 2008 - The African American Vote

With Hilary O. Shelton, Director of the NAACP's Washington Bureau; and Lorenzo Morris, Professor of Political Science, Howard University

Washington, D.C., February 11, 2008

... MR. SHELTON: ... We are expecting a tremendous turnout. What we have seen thus far, as you look at the primaries that have taken place and the caucuses is the African American community is mobilized and actively engaged like never before. That progression from 2000 to 2004, 2004, even looking at 2006 as a marker the African American community, and today as we prepare for those in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia to go to the polls, we're expecting record turnouts to show how committed they are to making sure that this President is the right President for all their concerns. ...

MR. MORRIS: ... the peculiar role of African Americans in the Democratic party. Ideologically, given the voting choices of black voters over the years, they have been effectively excluded from the Republican party since the 1980s in any significant way in terms of the choices expressed by any range of opinion sampling. So that when it comes to votes in primaries, their votes represent a minimum of a third and in some cases in some states half of the electorate that is making the choice. Which means that the choices between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are choices not just between black and white or man and woman but also between people who can represent this historically left-leaning range. ...

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/100247.htm>

Super Tuesday Program at the Washington Foreign Press Center

With Jonathan Margolis, Deputy Coordinator, Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S.

Department of State; Thomas Mann, Brookings Institution; John Mercurio, The Hotline; John Zogby, Zogby International; and John Fortier, American Enterprise Institute

Washington, D.C., February 5, 2008

Jonathan Margolis: "Introduction to www.America.gov"

Thomas Mann: "Super Tuesday: The End of the Presidential Nominating Process or a Waystation on the Route to the National Party Conventions?"

John Mercurio: "The 2008 Campaign: Covering the Coverage"

John Zogby: "Elections 2008 - The Battle for the Middle Ground"

John Fortier: "Winning the Delegate Count on Super Tuesday: An Assessment of the Candidate's Prospects"

VIDEOS: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/100042.htm>

Preview of the 2008 Presidential Election

With Ari Fleischer, Former Bush-Cheney 2000 & White House Spokesman

New York, New York, December 18, 2007

... MR. FLEISCHER: ... To put it in some type of perspective for you, this election in 2008 is the first time since 1952 that there is not a sitting President or Vice President on the ticket for both parties. Every single election, 1956, 1960, 1964, 1968, all the way up through 2004, there was either a sitting President or Vice President on the ticket for one of the two parties. This is the first election since 1952 without a sitting President or Vice President. Before that, you have to go back to 1928.

This is a very unusual, open ticket -- a very unusual open season in American politics. And it's one of the reasons you are seeing so much change, so much churning, so much who's up, who's down. When you have an incumbent President or a Vice President on the ticket, there is a lot more stability, a lot more knowledge about the candidates. This time, it's wide open for both parties and that's led to this turbulence in both political camps.

It's also tricky in the United States today because the mood of the American public is quite sour. Most Americans view the nation is on the wrong track. Most Americans are very dissatisfied. President Bush's job approval rating is historically low; it's in the mid-30s. Congress's approval rating is abysmally low; it's in the low 20s. President Bush, of course, a Republican, the Congress, of course, a Democrat. The American people are fed up and tired with both political parties. ...

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/99631.htm>

2008 Elections - The Big Picture - 576 Hours Until Iowa

With Chuck Todd, Political Director, NBC News

Washington, D.C., December 10, 2007

...MR. TODD: ... When you actually look at the history -- the issues, by the way, that are coming out and becoming -- they're all part of this umbrella of American exceptionalism, you know, the immigration thing. Oh, my God, they're, you know, our American way of life is changing, right? That's the first sign of why you get angry at immigration. You also get angry about immigration when you think your job's at stake, when you think your benefits are going to benefit another group of folks, so that's another reason why you would lash out on the immigration issue. So you're seeing various issues pop up -- trade pacts. All of a sudden, the majority on both sides, both parties, are anti-free trade agreements because they think somehow this is

undermining the economy. You know, the fear of globalization has absolutely, I think, taken hold in the middle class, working class America and they're not happy. Then, of course, you get news about toys from China potentially being, you know, problems with their kids. So that's a -- just sort of this other reminder that sits there and it makes people want to put up a wall, want to put that stuff, have the isolation mentality take place. ...

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/96834.htm>

Foreign Relations and Its Impact on the American Voter

With Peter Beinart, Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy, Council on Foreign Relations; and Max Boot, Senior Fellow for National Security Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Washington, D.C., December 4, 2007

... MR. BEINART: ... I think perhaps the first thing to say about foreign policy and the 2008 elections is so far I think one of the stories of the 2008 election is that foreign policy is not dominating the elections as much as some might have expected as I think as I would have thought over the summer, and I think the reason is pretty simple. The single biggest issue -- foreign policy issue in the campaign is certainly Iraq. That's the driver for a lot of the attention to foreign policy. And Iraq is not as big an issue in American politics as it was a few months ago. ...

When democrats and republicans talk about foreign policy, and you can particularly see this in the primaries when democrats are talking to one another and their base voters and republicans are talking to one another and their base voters. What you see is that foreign policy means something different for democrats than what it means for republicans.

For republicans, foreign policy, at least as discussed in the Presidential campaign, pretty much is the war on terror. ...

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/96218.htm>

Arab Americans and the Middle East Policy in the 2008 U.S. Elections

With Dr. James Zogby, President of the Arab American Institute

Washington, D.C., November 29, 2007

... DR. ZOGBY: ... First, let me start on Arab Americans. We've been polling on the Arab American community now for many, many years and we have found certain trend lines developing that have become interesting for us to observe at this point, because they are, in large measure, a result of the Middle East policy debate, although not exclusively the policy debate. There are some domestic concerns that have to be factored in. ...

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/95931.htm>

ARTICLES

(for full text please contact the American Reference Center at: arc@usembassy.at)

The Iron Lady: The Clinton Campaign Returns From the Dead, Again

By Ryan Lizza, *The New Yorker*, March 17, 2008

To watch Hillary Clinton during the final two weeks of the Ohio and Texas primary campaigns, as she defiantly ignored the pronouncements of her political demise and pounded away at her opponent in one more interview, at one more rally, was to bring to mind Jason or Freddy Krueger or the sitting governor of California, those Hollywood cyborgs and zombies who, despite bullets and stakes and explosions, will not under any circumstances be vanquished. Clinton's public performances were marked by an eerily unflappable persistence as she executed an ungentle two-pronged attack: raising doubts about the readiness of her young opponent, Senator Barack Obama, to be Commander-in-Chief and challenging the depth of his commitment to the bread-and-butter concerns of the middle class. ...

FULL TEXT:

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/03/17/080317fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=all

A Party Transformed

By Ronald Brownstein, *National Journal*, March 1, 2008

In the crucible of the searing competition between Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton, a new Democratic coalition is being forged.

Their gripping race for the party's presidential nomination has not only increased Democratic turnout around the country -- often to record levels -- it has also significantly changed the composition of that turnout, possibly tipping the party's internal balance of power.

From New Hampshire to California, and from Arizona to Wisconsin, exit polls from this year's contests show the Democratic coalition evolving in clear and consistent ways since the 2004 primaries that nominated John Kerry. The party is growing younger, more affluent, more liberal, and more heavily tilted toward women, Latinos, and African-Americans. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://nationaljournal.com/about/njweekly/stories/2008/0229nj1.htm>

On the Bus: Can John McCain Reinvent Republicanism?

By Ryan Lizza, *The New Yorker*, February 25, 2008

"This article focuses on John McCain's presidential campaign. It describes the campaign tour bus, known by the title 'Straight Talk,' and his public relations with the mass media describing how McCain has courted the press by granting generous access, appealed to voters by using town hall meetings, and taken advantage of the conservative split to woo moderates and all but lock up the Republican nomination. McCain's views on immigration, the war in Iraq, and his various campaign stops during the primary elections are also explored."

FULL TEXT:

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/02/25/080225fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=all

The Obama Effect - His Success Is Challenging the Rules of Race and Politics

By Jay Tolson, *U.S. News & World Report*, February 25, 2008

"Barack Obama says he stands for a new kind of politics, and many Americans clearly approve of that message. So many, in fact, that if the junior U.S. senator from Illinois doesn't win the presidency or even prevail in what is now a dead-heat run for his party's nomination, his candidacy will still be seen as what University of New Hampshire historian Harvard Sitkoff calls 'an important moment in American political history.' Important is an understatement. That a black man has mounted so successful a charge upon the nation's highest political office speaks volumes about changes that have occurred in America even since Jesse Jackson made his own impressive bids for that office in 1984 and 1988."

Woing the Superdelegates

By James A. Barnes and Peter H. Stone, *National Journal*, February 23, 2008

"Both Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama are courting superdelegates as if they will decide the outcome of the Democratic presidential Race - a position that many superdelegates are not eager to be in." This article takes a look at how the mating game is played.

The 51st State: The State of Online. Tech Tools for the American Voter and the 2008 Congressional Elections

By Laura Gordon-Murnane, *Searcher*, February 2008

Americans will be electing more than a president and vice president come November: 435 House and 33 Senate seats are up for grabs. In Part 2 of her continuing series, Laura Gordon-Murnane recommends sites for finding biographies, voting records, campaign finance, and more about the nation's congressional candidates.

FULL TEXT: http://www.infoday.com/searcher/feb08/Gordon-Murnane_51stState.pdf (pdf)

Mediator, Mobilizer, Or Both

By Ronald Brownstein, *National Journal*, February 16, 2008

Barack Obama's contrasting skills - as both mediator and mobilizer - could collide if he wins the White House and has to govern.

Will Superdelegates Decide Democratic Nomination?

By Ken Rudin, NPR.org, February 13, 2008

Super Tuesday has come and gone, and the battle for the Democratic presidential nomination is continuing. If you had raised that scenario six months ago, you would have been laughed outta town. But the fact is, nobody is sure who will come out on top. Hillary Clinton went into the contest as the prohibitive favorite, off her time as first lady, her experience in the Senate, her support among women, and at least 15 years of being an integral part of a nationwide campaign apparatus with proven success at raising money and assembling an organization.

Barack Obama, on the other hand, was not supposed to be able to stand up to the Clinton juggernaut. With just a couple of years in the Senate, he was thought to be a tad short in the substance/experience department. But here he is, raising tons of money (a record \$32 million in January alone) and lots of hope, and as of this date he has been the winner of 22 of the 32 primaries and caucuses held. He and Clinton are about even in votes and delegates. And that trend is expected to continue, with Obama thought to have an advantage in most, if not all, of the remaining February contests while Clinton awaits more favorable terrain in early March, when Ohio and Texas vote. A battle all the way to the convention?

Maybe not. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18914920>

Superdelegates May Break Democrats' Dead Heat

By David Welna, NPR.org, February 11, 2008

FULL TEXT: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18886401>

Separation Anxiety

By Kirk Victor, *National Journal*, February 9, 2008

As Election Day nears, political experts are paying close attention to Congressional elections as well. This article looks at the challenges Senators Susan Collins of Maine, Norm Coleman of Minnesota, John Sununu of New Hampshire and Gordon Smith of Oregon face in their 2008 re-election bids. The Republicans all share the same problem — in 2002, at the height of President Bush's popularity, they ran as strong Bush allies. Since then, the president's approval rating has dropped and their states have favored Democrats in recent elections. The author examines the current state of their races and identifies strategies the Senators are using to highlight their independent nature while their Democratic opponents try to tie them to the president.

Minority Reports

By Ryan Lizza, *The New Yorker*, January 21, 2008

"Of all the worrisome trends that reappeared for Obama in New Hampshire, the most vexing may be the potential impact of race. Pollsters are trying to determine whether he experienced the so-called "Bradley effect." In 1982, when the African-American mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, ran for governor, the final polls showed him with an average lead of eight points over his white Republican rival, George Deukmejian. And yet Deukmejian won, by a point." This article reports on the racial bias of the 2008 U.S. Presidential campaign between Iowa Senator Barack Obama and New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton.

FULL TEXT:

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/01/21/080121fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=all

When There's Bad Blood

By Kirk Victor, *National Journal*, January 12, 2008

When relations between rival presidential candidates within a party are strained, the result can be lethal in the general election. That's the lesson both parties may want to remember as the wide-open presidential campaign plays out in the coming weeks.

22 Gops Weigh in on Presidential Race

By Pamela M. Prah, *Stateline.org*, January 8, 2008

In the run for the White House, 22 governors have lined up behind candidates, so far, Governors' endorsements can provide ground troops and political donors needed to win the presidency and give governors an edge for plum spots if they made the right pick.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=269322>

Can You Count on These Machines?

By Clive Thompson, *New York Times Magazine*, January 6, 2008

"After the 2000 election in the US, counties around the country rushed to buy new computerized voting machines. But it turns out that these machines may cause problems worse than hanging chads. Indeed, in a more sanguine political environment, this level of error might be considered acceptable but in today's highly partisan and divided country, elections can be decided by unusually slim margins and are bitterly contested. Thompson discusses whether America is ready for another contested election."

The Candidates Make Their Case for Black Votes

By Sylvester Monroe and Kevin Chappell, *Ebony*, January 2008

"How do voters distinguish between Democratic front-runners Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards and Bill Richardson? Do they vote for Obama just because he is Black? Or for Clinton because of her husband's ongoing popularity among African-Americans? Or do Edwards and Richardson or others in the field offer real alternatives?" This article discusses the platforms of U.S. presidential candidates which address African American issues.

The 2008 Presidential Primaries and Arms Control

By Zachary M. Hosford, *Arms Control Today*, December 2007

The U.S. presidential campaign has given voice to a range of views on arms control and nonproliferation topics, ranging from ballistic missile defense to the status of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. The author points out that many of the candidates' positions reflect posturing for the primaries, and the rhetoric may be different once nominees have been endorsed at the Democratic and Republican conventions. Hosford also points out that world events may cause candidates to alter their positions in the final run-up. Still, there is general agreement among the candidates about certain issues, such as that Iran should not be equipped with nuclear weapons. ...

FULL TEXT: http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_12/NewsAnalysis.asp

Political Bloggers at Newspaper Sites Help Drive 2008 Campaign Coverage?

By Joe Strupp, *Editor & Publisher*, December 2007

Mainstream news outlets have embraced the Web log, making political blogs key features of campaign coverage. The author interviews political bloggers from the *Los Angeles Times*, *Reno Gazette-Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune* and *The Washington Post*. They say blogs provide more information sooner, but it's demanding work and the results are unpredictable. "It is an online newsreel," says Michael Tackett of the *Chicago Tribune's* "The Swamp," adding that anything goes: serious reporting comes alongside gossip, trivia and campaign ad videos. Blogs allow greater freedom and can give a local flavor. "It is like a conversation, and it does not take as much context as a story because it is for people who know the context," says the *Reno Gazette Journal's* Anjeanette Damon. But writing at a fever pitch opens the doors to more editorial slips and errors. Cross-referencing competitors is new. It is part of Internet culture to feature a "blogroll," links to other similar blogs. Blogs also invite readers to post comments. The author maintains that, thanks to blogs, candidates now receive unprecedented exposure.

FULL TEXT:

http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003685680

The Clinton Referendum

By Matt Bai, *New York Times Magazine*, December 23, 2007

The article reports on the ways in which ex-U.S. President Bill Clinton's legacy will affect the 2008 presidential race and Hillary Clinton's chances of being elected. Bill has been making stump speeches for Hillary's campaign, emphasizing how she will bring health care coverage to all U.S. citizens, build a jobs program around alternative energy, and improve the education system. But Clinton critics claim that Bill may have missed his chance to bring real change to the U.S.

FULL TEXT: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/23/magazine/23clintonism-t.html?_r=1&ref=magazine&oref=slogin

Super Donors

By Eliza Newlin Carney, *National Journal*, December 8, 2007

An analysis done for *National Journal* by the Center for Responsive Politics identified a select group of perhaps a dozen lobbyists who each double up with their spouses to give, as a couple, a staggering \$150,000 to \$200,000 to candidates and political parties per election cycle.

In Defense of Frontloading

By Walter Alarcon, *Campaigns & Elections*, December 2007

The author notes that there has been plenty of coverage regarding Americans' concerns with the early primaries schedule. Among the criticisms are that the schedule does not provide enough time for a candidate to recover from an early loss and results in an excruciatingly long general election. But, as Alarcon argues, there are some benefits to moving the primaries earlier. For instance, the new schedule allows more states and more voters to weigh in on the process before the nomination is locked up. It also allows for a diverse set of voters to have their opinion heard. For example, in the past, most attention was given to Iowa and New Hampshire, but Nevada's early primary allows for a greater number of Hispanic voters to influence the process. Alarcon also outlines some of the proposals suggested for setting future primary calendars. They include letting the smallest states vote first, rotating the order of primaries or picking the first primaries by lottery.

Elections: The Politics of the Permanent Campaign: Presidential Travel and the Electoral College, 1977-2004

By Brendan J. Doherty, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, December 2007

"This article undertakes an empirical assessment of a key element of the permanent campaign for the presidency by systematically examining presidential travel from 1977 through 2004. [The author] finds that presidential travel does target large, competitive states, and that such strategic targeting has increased over time, supporting the notion that the permanent campaign is on the rise. However, substantial differences between reelection and other years, as well as measures of the breadth of presidential travel and proportional attention to the states, indicate that electoral concerns do not thoroughly permeate patterns of presidential activity throughout a president's years in office, as the logic of the permanent campaign would suggest."

FULL TEXT: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2007.02623.x> (pdf)

Goodbye to All That

By Andrew Sullivan, *Atlantic Monthly*, December 2007

"In politics, timing matters. And the most persuasive case for Obama has less to do with him than with the moment he is meeting. The moment has been a long time coming, and it is the result of a confluence of events, from one traumatizing war in Southeast Asia to another in the most fractious country in the Middle East. [...] Obama's candidacy in this sense is a potentially transformational one. Unlike any of the other candidates, he could take America—finally—past the debilitating, self-perpetuating family quarrel of the Baby Boom generation that has long engulfed all of us."

FULL TEXT: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200712/obama>

Teacher and Apprentice

By Marc Ambinder, *Atlantic Monthly*, December 2007

"Hillary Clinton tried to teach Barack Obama about power, but then he got ideas of his own." The article discusses the political relationship between U.S. Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama before and after each made the decision to run for office in the 2008 U.S. Presidential election. The author reports that Obama sought Clinton out early in his career in the Senate, and that his aides often looked to hers for advice. Similarities between the two candidates are discussed, and their campaign strategies are contrasted.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200712/clinton-obama>

The Election: One Year Out

By Karlyn Bowman, *The American*, November/December 2007

"Americans complain that our presidential campaigns are too long and too expensive, but we take elections seriously and believe in the importance of voting. On Election Day 2008, Americans will choose their president freely for the 56th consecutive time, a record unbroken in any other democracy."

FULL TEXT: <http://www.american.com/archive/2007/november-december-magazine-contents/the-election-one-year-out>

The 51st State: The State of Online. The Presidential Campaign 2008 – Candidates and News Sources

By Laura Gordon-Murnane, *Searcher*, November/December 2007

"The presidential election of 2008 will be the first presidential "Internet election," an historical phenomenon in which the Internet and its technologies are playing integral roles for candidates and their campaigns, the mainstream media, and voters and citizens." Five extensive tables look at the Web sites of each of the 17 presidential candidates, as well as mainstream media sites, blogs, and aggregator tools, and show just how much the Internet is impacting the 2008 election. This is a key reference tool for anyone following the election.

FULL TEXT: http://www.infoday.com/searcher/nov07/Gordon-Murnane_51stState.pdf (pdf)

The National Security Election

By Kurt M. Campbell and Derek Chollet, *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2007/08

Some broad areas of philosophical convergence on foreign policy and national security issues have been articulated in campaign rhetoric from both parties to allow hope for a return to the broad and traditional contours of international engagement in U.S. foreign policy.

FULL TEXT: http://www.twq.com/08winter/docs/08winter_campbell.pdf (pdf)

In Praise of the Values Voter

By Jon A. Shields, *The Wilson Quarterly*, Autumn 2007

Political scientists and liberal reformers want to remove highly charged moral issues to the sidelines, but what is the purpose of politics if not to address fundamental moral questions?

FULL TEXT: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=303864

Don't Count Her Out

By Charlie Cook, *National Journal*, September 22, 2007

Four of the five times since World War II that a party has had a chance to win three consecutive presidential races, "time for a change" sentiment prevented it. Data and common sense suggest that Hillary Clinton has a hard-core level of opposition in the mid-40s—at most 46 percent, but perhaps a bit lower. "Can Hillary Clinton win?" That is one of the most common questions in American politics these days, except among people who flatly declare, "There is no way Hillary Clinton can win."

Are Americans Just Fed Up with Both Parties?

By Charles E. Cook Jr., *Washington Quarterly*, Fall 2007

There are two distinct schools of thought about the 2008 elections: that the Republican brand has been badly tarnished and that the public mood toward politics in general is just ugly. Which one is right?

FULL TEXT: http://www.twq.com/07autumn/docs/07autumn_cook.pdf (pdf)

THINK TANK ITEMS

(for full text please contact the American Reference Center at: arc@usembassy.at)

Political Water Cooler Conversation Features Ferraro, Rev. Wright Spitzer Scandal: Heavy Coverage, Moderate Interest

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, March 20, 2008

On the eve of Barack Obama's major speech on race and politics, most Americans said they had heard at least a little about the videos showing the Rev. Jeremiah Wright making racially-charged statements to his Chicago congregation.

At the time of the survey, however, there was greater public awareness of other recent campaign events. Last week, in fact, more Americans said they had heard a lot about Geraldine Ferraro's statements asserting that Obama's race has been a major advantage in his campaign than had heard about videos of Wright preaching to his congregation; 40% said they had heard a lot about Ferraro's statements, while 31% had heard a lot about videos of Wright's sermons. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/772/spitzer-ferraro-wright>

Fewer Voters Identify as Republicans Democrats Now Have the Advantage in "Swing" States

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, March 20, 2008

The balance of party identification in the American electorate now favors the Democratic Party by a decidedly larger margin than in either of the two previous presidential election cycles.

In 5,566 interviews with registered voters conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press during the first two months of 2008, 36% identify themselves as Democrats, and just 27% as Republicans.

The share of voters who call themselves Republicans has declined by six points since 2004, and represents, on an annualized basis, the lowest percentage of self-identified Republican voters in 16 years of polling by the Center. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/773/fewer-voters-identify-as-republicans>

Racial Tensions Roil Democrats' Media Narrative But 'Client 9' Dominated Front Page Coverage

By Mark Jurkowitz, Associate Director, Project for Excellence in Journalism, March 18, 2008

Maybe the good news for Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama last week was that the problems of another Democrat - Eliot Spitzer - generated almost as much media attention as they did.

But when the media were covering the race for president, the story for Democrats was ugly. It was dominated by the candidates disavowing inflammatory remarks from supporters, by lingering resentments in both camps, and by festering divisions along racial and gender lines.

For the first time since the primaries began in January, some other story besides the election seriously competed for the media's attention last week....

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/768/election-08-racial-tensions>

Tracking the Race Factor

By Anthony G. Greenwald, professor of psychology, University of Washington and Bethany Albertson, assistant professor of political science, University of Washington, Pew Research Center, revised March 14, 2008

In analyzing polling data as the primaries and caucuses progress, we have found that race still plays a role in American politics but that it showed up in surprising ways in the tallies from some of the states holding Democratic primary elections so far this year. The so-called "Bradley effect" was first noticed by survey researchers in 1982 when black Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley had a solid lead in the pre-election gubernatorial polls, but lost a close election in California to his Republican opponent. Results from that and other races involving black candidates indicated that, for whatever reason, pre-election polling tended to overstate support for black candidates compared with their actual vote percentages. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/755/tracking-the-race-factor>

Public Closely Tracking Details of Campaign

38% Have Heard a Lot about "Obama's a Muslim" Rumors

Survey Report, The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, released March 13, 2008

Not only are Americans following election news in record numbers this year, they are tracking the details of the campaign -- the charges, countercharges and controversial advertisements -- extremely closely. Large majorities say they have heard at least something about rumors that Barack Obama is a Muslim; Hillary Clinton's 3:00 a.m. phone call ad; and George Bush's endorsement of John McCain. And the revelation that a top foreign policy advisor to Barack Obama had referred to Clinton as a "monster," a one-day story at best, registered with a large percentage of the public.

The most widely recognized item tested in the survey was rumors that Obama, who has made clear that he is a Christian, is actually a Muslim. Nearly four-in-ten Americans (38%) have heard a lot about these rumors, while 41% have heard at least a little about them. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=402>

The Hispanic Vote in the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primaries

By Susan Minushkin and Mark Hugo Lopez, Pew Hispanic Center, updated March 7, 2008

Hispanics have emerged as a potentially pivotal constituency in the battle between Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination. This report examines the turnout, demographic characteristics, opinions and voting patterns of the Hispanic electorate in Democratic primaries and caucuses held so far in 2008. Where possible, it draws comparisons and contrasts between Latino, black and white voting patterns. It also compares Latino turnout in 2008 with turnout in 2004. The report is based on an analysis of Super Tuesday exit polling data about Hispanics that the Pew Hispanic Center received on a contractual basis from Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International, the firm that conducts exit poll surveys for the National Election Pool, a national consortium of media organizations. It also contains analysis of publicly available exit poll data for the Texas primary. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=86>

Just 28% Say Media Going Easy on Obama

Candidates' Foreign Policy Views Not Widely Known

Survey Report, The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, released March 6, 2008

As is often the case, voters say they would like to see more coverage of the candidates' positions on the issues and less coverage of which candidate is leading in the latest polls. More than three-quarters of the public (78%) would like to see more coverage of the candidates' positions on domestic issues and 74% would like to see more coverage of foreign policy positions.

But there may be more urgency to the public's plea in this election cycle than in the past. Fewer than half the public (40%) know a lot or a fair amount about Democratic front runner Barack Obama's foreign policy positions. This compares with 54% who know at least a fair amount about Hillary Clinton's positions on foreign policy and 52% who know as much about John McCain's positions. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=399>

The Caucus System in the U.S. Presidential Nominating Process

By Joanna Klonsky, Background, Council on Foreign Relations, March 3, 2008

Political party caucuses, once the dominant system for choosing candidates in the presidential nominating process, have been less influential than primary elections for decades. But 2008 could be different. Caucuses are open to any registered voter in a party, although experts say the process is dominated by party activists. Other than the Iowa caucus, the first race in the nominating season, caucuses have usually not been paid the same attention as primaries. Still, nineteen states hold caucuses, either for one party or for both. In all, more than 10 percent of the Democratic delegates and nearly 15 percent of the Republican delegates are at stake in caucus states. Such states could affect the outcome of the close race between Democratic candidates Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) and Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY). Delegates pledged through the caucuses to candidates who have left the race, like Democrat John Edwards, could realign with another campaign at the county or state conventions, where delegates to the national conventions are selected. ...

FULL TEXT:

http://www.cfr.org/publication/15640/caucus_system_in_the_us_presidential_nominating_process.html

Campaign Seen as Less Negative than 2004 Contest

Gore, Edwards Endorsements Would Have Modest Impact

The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, February 21, 2008

The public remains highly engaged in the presidential campaign, and strong majorities say the campaign is important, easy to follow, interesting and informative. The public's only major complaint about the campaign is its length: 57% say it is too long, while 40% disagree. However, campaign fatigue has not increased in recent months. If anything, the public is less concerned about the length of the campaign now than was the case last fall. In October, 66% said the campaign was too long, and 28% said it was not.

Relatively few Americans (28%) say the campaign has been too negative thus far. Two-thirds (66%) say it has not been too negative. By comparison, nearly half of the public found the campaign to be too negative at a comparable point in the 2004 election. In March 2004, 47% of Americans said the presidential campaign had been too negative, while 47% said it had not been too negative. By the fall of 2004, a solid majority of voters (57%) said the campaign was too negative. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/741/campaign-seen-as-less-negative-than-2004-contest>

Obama Inspiring but Inexperienced, Clinton Prepared to Lead but "Hard to Like"

The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, February 13, 2008

Barack Obama is seen by most Democrats as inspiring and as most likely to bring about change. Hillary Clinton is widely viewed as prepared to lead the country, but also hard to like. These are some of the major themes in campaign news coverage -- identified by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) -- which are registering with the public.

Obama has a clear advantage on three positive campaign themes. Fully 54% of Democrats and independents who lean Democratic say the word "inspiring" better describes Obama than Clinton, while 52% say the phrase "will bring change" applies more to the Illinois senator. By a wide margin (40%-21%), more Democrats also say that the phrase "honest and trustworthy" better describes Obama than Clinton. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/732/obama-experience-clinton-hard-to-like>

The Role of Delegates in the U.S. Presidential Nominating Process

By Joanna Klonsky, Backgrounder, Council on Foreign Relations, updated February 12, 2008

In recent decades, the presidential candidates of the two major political parties in the United States generally have emerged during state-by-state primary elections and caucuses that occur in the winter and spring before a general election. Officially, candidates only become their party's presidential nominee after a vote is taken by party delegates to the Republican or Democratic presidential nominating conventions later in the summer. These delegates are supposed to take their cue from the voters who cast ballots during their states' primaries and caucuses, though each party's rules make it possible for multiple rounds of balloting and horse trading if no candidate is able to gain a majority on the first ballot. But since 1976, no major party convention has opened with the identity of the nominee in question.

This year's election could see a return to contested conventions, due to the competitive state of both the Republican and Democratic primaries. The Democratic Party's nominating process could be especially

complex because its rules allow for a more proportional system of delegate voting and for the presence of “superdelegates,” comprising each state’s elected representatives in Congress, who are not obliged to commit to any particular candidate. In the case of both parties, the delegate system is aimed at making sure party faithful choose the most representative, as well as most competitive candidate to represent them in the general election. But even to those following the U.S. presidential campaign closely, the role of delegates in selecting the party nominees can be confusing. ...

FULL TEXT:

http://www.cfr.org/publication/15414/role_of_delegates_in_the_us_presidential_nominating_process.html

Young Voters in the 2008 Presidential Primaries

By Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research, Pew Research Center and an analyst for NBC News, Pew Research Center, February 11, 2008

A great deal of attention on Super Tuesday was focused on young voters, especially in the Democratic contests. Pew polling over the past few years has shown that young voters are trending Democratic and constitute an important constituency for the party. Currently, a clear majority of registered voters ages 18-29 say they are Democrats or lean to the Democratic Party while about a third identify with the Republican Party.

Partly as a reflection of this party affiliation advantage, young voters were the age group that provided John Kerry with his highest level of support in 2004; they were also the age group most supportive of Democratic Party congressional candidates in 2006. Also notable in those high-profile elections was the fact that voter turnout among young adults increased even more than it did among other age groups. The same thing is happening again this year in the Democratic primaries....

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/730/young-voters>

Public Sees Candidates Focusing on Economy

Many Democrats Say Media Tougher on Clinton than Obama

Survey Report, The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, released February 7, 2008

Public interest in economic news remained high last week as 40% of Americans followed news about the condition of the U.S. economy very closely. Nearly one-in-four Americans (23%) listed the economy as the single news story they were following more closely than any other, placing it second only to the presidential campaign.

In addition, Americans most often cite the economy as the single issue they have heard the most about recently from the presidential candidates. Three-in-ten (29%) name the economy as the issue they have heard the most about, while 23% name the Iraq war and 16% cite health care. Fewer people say they have heard the most about immigration (7%), the need for change (5%), taxes (4%) and race (2%). Terrorism is named by just 1% as the issue they are hearing the most about from the candidates. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=393>

Some Historical Analogies to the 2008 Election

Interview with Walter Russell Mead, Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy, Council on Foreign Relations, February 6, 2008

Walter Russell Mead, an award-winning historian and CFR senior fellow, says the U.S. electorate today can be compared to the public during the Cold War era, when security concerns were ever present but in the background to domestic issues. He says presidential candidates viewed as dovish fared poorly in the Cold War years, and that Democratic front-runners Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are carefully measuring their Iraq war policies, despite pledging a troop drawdown. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/15431/mead.html>

The South Carolina Democratic Primary in Black and White

By Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research for the Pew Research Center and an analyst for NBC News, Pew Research Center, January 28, 2008

The results in Saturday's Democratic primary in South Carolina offer important evidence -- if not yet answers -- to three big questions in this campaign: Can Barack Obama solidify all segments of the black vote behind him? Can he be competitive among white voters, especially in the South? And can we trust pre-election polls in races that involve Obama? ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/708/south-carolina-primary-black-vote>

Race, Ethnicity and Campaign '08 People...Can We All Get Along?

By Paul Taylor, Executive Vice President, Pew Research Center, January 17, 2008

Race, ethnicity and politics can sometimes make for a volatile mix, as the presidential field of 2008 has begun to discover. But in the world beyond politics, race relations in this country are on a pretty even keel. So say the real experts -- the people themselves.

A major Pew Research survey of racial attitudes taken this past fall found that whites, blacks and Hispanics all have generally favorable opinions of one another and all tend to see inter-group relations in a more positive than negative light. There are some differences in these attitudes by race, ethnicity, age, social-economic status and geography -- but these tend to be small. The overall portrait of race relations is one of moderation, stability and modest progress. ...

Full Text: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/694/race-ethnicity-and-campaign-08>

Democratic Primaries Register Strongly with Public News Audiences Much Less Interested in GOP Race

Survey Report, The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, released January 17, 2008

There has been no shortage of drama in either party's early presidential primaries, but in the public's view the Democratic contest has been far more compelling. Four-in-ten Americans (40%) say they find the Democratic primary race very interesting, nearly double the proportion describing the Republican race as very interesting (21%).

While press coverage of the campaign during the week of the New Hampshire primaries focused mainly on Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John McCain, the public remained focused primarily on the two Democratic frontrunners. McCain got virtually no boost in terms of his public visibility from the significant increase in press coverage of his campaign. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=386>

Internet's Broader Role in Campaign 2008 Social Networking and Online Videos Take Off

Survey Report, The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, released January 11, 2008

The internet is living up to its potential as a major source for news about the presidential campaign. Nearly a quarter of Americans (24%) say they regularly learn something about the campaign from the internet, almost the double the percentage from a comparable point in the 2004 campaign (13%).

Moreover, the internet has now become a leading source of campaign news for young people and the role of social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook is a notable part of the story. Fully 42% of those ages 18 to 29 say they regularly learn about the campaign from the internet, the highest percentage for any news source. In January 2004, just 20% of young people said they routinely got campaign news from the internet. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=384>

Primary Problems: How Exit Pollsters Plan to Cope with a Super-Crowded Election Season

An Interview with Joe Lenski, Interviewer: Andrew Kohut, Pew Research Center, December 14, 2007

In an exclusive interview, Joe Lenski, co-founder and Executive Vice President of Edison Media Research, discusses the special problems in conducting exit polls this campaign season given the unprecedented clustering of primaries and caucuses in the first two months of 2008.

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/662/exit-polls-primary-problems>

Hispanics and the 2008 Election: A Swing Vote?

By Paul Taylor and Richard Fry, Report, Pew Hispanic Center, released December 6, 2007

After spending the first part of this decade loosening their historic ties to the Democratic Party, Hispanic voters have reversed course in the past year, a new nationwide survey of Latinos by the Pew Hispanic Center has found.

Some 57% of Hispanic registered voters now call themselves Democrats or say they lean to the Democratic Party, while just 23% align with the Republican Party – meaning there is now a 34 percentage point gap in partisan affiliation among Latinos. In July, 2006, the same gap was just 21 percentage points – whereas back in 1999, it had been 33 percentage points. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/83.pdf> (pdf)

Has America Outgrown the Caucus? Some Thoughts on Reshaping the Nomination Contest

By Tova Andrea Wang, TCF Issue Brief, Century Foundation, October 23, 2007

Pointing to the Iowa caucus, the author argues that “[c]aucuses, as opposed to primaries, by their very structure violate fundamental principles of voting rights. Their time-consuming, inflexible, Byzantine procedures discourage broad participation, presenting substantial barriers to the right to vote. It is not that the caucuses violate the Constitution—they are run by the parties, not the states, and do not violate voting rights as a matter of law. Rather, because of their exclusionary nature, they go against some of the core values we express when we talk about voting rights, such as the fundamental nature of the right, equality of opportunity to participate in the process, and fair access to the ballot.”

FULL TEXT: <http://www.tcf.org/publications/electionreform/caucusbrief.pdf> (pdf)

Youth Vote 2008

By Kristen Oshyn and Tova Andrea Wang, Issue Brief, The Century Foundation, September 7, 2007

Election 2008 has the potential to be momentous for the youth vote. Young voters have turned out in consistently higher numbers for the past two election cycles, and speculation says that this trend will continue with a possible push even higher. Studies point out that voting is habit forming, with the odds increasing significantly that, once a person has voted, he or she will vote again, indicating long-term impacts on parties and politics.¹ Although young adults are still behind older counterparts when it comes to voter turnout, recent reports describe a young generation that is increasingly engaged in the electoral process and one that is planning on sticking around. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.tcf.org/publications/electionreform/youthvote.pdf> (pdf)

USEFUL LINKS

- **Elections ... the American Way** - The Library of Congress
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/election/home.html>
- **2008 Presidential Election** – U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/2008/>
- **Presidency 2008** - Politics1
<http://www.politics1.com/p2008.htm>
- **Presidential Election** - Project Vote Smart
http://www.vote-smart.org/election_president.php
- **electionline.org**
<http://www.electionline.org/>
- **The Green Papers**
<http://www.thegreenpapers.com>
- **Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections**
<http://www.uselectionatlas.org/>
- **Democracy in Action: P2008 - The Race for the White House**
<http://www.gwu.edu/~action/P2008.html>
- **The Cook Political Report**
<http://www.cookpolitical.com/>
- **League of Women Voters**
<http://www.lwv.org>
- **FairVote** – The Center for Voting and Democracy
<http://www.fairvote.org/>

Please visit the homepage of the U.S. Embassy Vienna, Austria at: <http://www.usembassy.at>



The program page on **“Understanding the American Presidential Selection Process”** will be available at:

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