

# Program Brief

## **“ELECTING THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT: DO NEW MEDIA, BLOGS, AND THE NET MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?”**

A talk by

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**American Reference Center**

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## Steven C. Clemons

([http://www.newamerica.net/people/steven\\_clemons](http://www.newamerica.net/people/steven_clemons))

(image: <http://www.steveclemons.com/clemons1.jpg>)



Steven Clemons directs the American Strategy Program at the New America Foundation, which aims to promote a new American internationalism that combines a tough-minded realism about America's interests in the world with a pragmatic idealism about the kind of world order best suited to America's democratic way of life. He is also a Senior Fellow at New America, and previously served as Executive Vice President.

Publisher of the popular political blog *The Washington Note*, Mr. Clemons is a long-term policy practitioner and entrepreneur in Washington, D.C. He has served as Executive Vice President of the Economic Strategy Institute, Senior Policy Advisor on Economic and International Affairs to Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and was the first Executive Director of the Nixon Center.

Prior to moving to Washington, Mr. Clemons served for seven years as Executive Director of the Japan America Society of Southern California, and co-founded with Chalmers Johnson the Japan Policy Research Institute, of which he is still Director. He is a Member of the Board of the Clarke Center at Dickinson College, a liberal arts college in Carlisle, Pa., as well as an Advisory Board Member of the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College in Chestertown, Md. He is also a Board Member of the Global Policy Innovations Program at the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs and a member of the board of the Citizens for Global Solutions Education Fund.

Mr. Clemons writes frequently on matters of foreign policy, defense, and international economic policy. His work has appeared in many of the major leading op-ed pages, journal, and magazines around the world.

**The Washington Note:** <http://www.thewashingtonnote.com/>

**The New America Foundation:** <http://www.newamerica.net/>

**American Strategy Program:** [http://www.newamerica.net/programs/american\\_strategy](http://www.newamerica.net/programs/american_strategy)

“The purpose of the American Strategy Program is to promote a new internationalism that adapts our best foreign policy traditions to the 21st century, combining tough-minded realism about America’s interests in the world with pragmatic idealism about the kind of world order best suited to America’s democratic way of life.”

**Steven C. Clemons’ website:** <http://www.steveclemons.com/>

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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:

<a href="#">General Information</a> <a href="#">Texts in German</a> <a href="#">Election Calendars and Primary Schedules</a> <a href="#">Electoral College</a> <a href="#">Candidates</a> <a href="#">Debates</a> <a href="#">CRS Reports for Congress</a>	<a href="#">Legislation</a> <a href="#">Campaign Finance</a> <a href="#">Political Parties</a> <a href="#">America.gov Items</a> <a href="#">Webchats</a> <a href="#">Foreign Press Center Briefings</a> <a href="#">Media Sites</a> <a href="#">Blogs</a>	<a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions &amp; Trivia</a> <a href="#">Candidate Matching Sites</a> <a href="#">Polling Sites</a> <a href="#">Voter Turnout &amp; Statistics</a> <a href="#">Useful Links</a> <a href="#">Think Tanks</a>
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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>

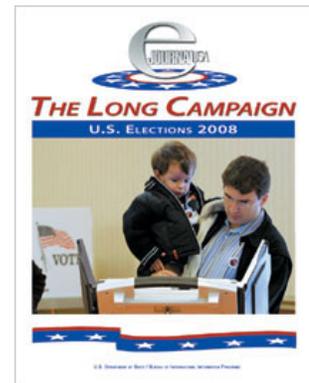
- **Covering the Presidential Campaign: The View from the Press Bus**

By Jim Dickenson

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Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center



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. ...

**FULL TEXT:** [http://www.usembassy.at/en/download/pdf/elections\\_primer.pdf](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/20071009122700hmnietua0.2381555.html>

## AMERICA.GOV ITEMS

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



### Next Administration Will Continue U.S. Programs to Fight Disease

Campaigns list strategies, priorities for meeting global health challenges

September 24, 2008

Washington — If elected president, John McCain or Barack Obama would continue to help foreign countries combat infectious disease. Both are committed to ensuring the United States is prepared to respond to a global pandemic.

Representatives from both campaigns participated in a debate on health issues September 18. The debate was sponsored by Scientists and Engineers for America, a nonpartisan educational organization that aims to increase respect for evidence-based debate and decision-making in politics and at all levels of government.

...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080924155236adkcilerog0.4767877.html&distid=ucs>

### Both U.S. Presidential Candidates “Profoundly Shaped” by Asia

Obama, McCain likely to have similar policies toward Asia as president

September 24, 2008

Washington – U.S.-Asian relations under the next U.S. administration are unlikely to vary much based on whether Democrat Barack Obama or Republican John McCain wins the U.S. presidential race in November, according to senior foreign policy advisers to both candidates.

“We have two men running for president, both of whom have been profoundly shaped by Asia in very profoundly different ways,” says Frank Jannuzi, an East Asia specialist for the Democratic staff of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. “I think that bodes well for our country, given the preponderance of Asia looming large economically [and] strategically.” ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080924151456ajesrom0.7561609.html&distid=ucs>

### Is Direct Democracy in Oregon Too Much of a Good Thing?

Oregon voters will weigh in on eight ballot initiatives in November

September 24, 2008

Portland, Oregon — Voters in Oregon’s 1st Congressional District are taking the law into their own hands. In fact, so are voters throughout the state, and they have been doing it for years.

Oregon is one of 24 states that give voters the right to place proposed laws and constitutional amendments on the state ballot via petition.

Since 1902, Oregon voters have used the petition to change the state’s political landscape. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080924104942abretnuh7.445925e-02.html&distid=ucs>

### Scholar Discusses New Media in 2008 U.S. Political Campaign

Ask America webchat transcript

September 23, 2008

David D. Perlmutter is a professor in the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas. He is the author or editor of seven books on political communication and persuasion and has most recently published *Blogwars: The New Political Battleground*, which

describes the growing impact of bloggers on elections. He discussed new media in the 2008 U.S. political campaign in a September 23 Ask America webchat. ...

David Perlmutter: Through the use of blogs and other OSIM, Barack Obama was able to gain a decisive edge in fundraising and appeal to youth voters to win the Democratic nomination for the presidency.

- All major American political candidates and campaigns are extensively creating OSIM and both employing OSIM professionals and reaching out to independent bloggers.
- Many people are creating their own political Web sites to self-organize on behalf of candidates and causes.
- Military bloggers (milbloggers) have affected perceptions of the Iraq war in the United States and thus affected its political role in the election.
- Most major media organizations, especially those concerned with politics, are "blogging up," asking their correspondents and editorialists to start blogs and hiring bloggers.
- Citizen journalism has redefined all of journalism, especially in politics. The proverbial "first draft of history" is no longer written or pictured by news professionals but often by ordinary citizens on the scene of news events, from the South Asia tsunami to the London bombings.
- The cell phone and the pocket digital camera have affected political discourse. Politicians never know who in a crowd might be videoing them.
- MySpace and Facebook have become significant loci for political argumentation and organization.
- YouTube is now the world's "network of record." People go to it to see breaking news and upload their own "I-reports." ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2008/September/20080923170808xjsnommis0.8612787.html>

### **Little Difference in Democratic, Republican Mideast Policies**

Both parties support Israel, creation of independent Palestinian state

September 23, 2008

Washington — In a presidential election in which candidates are trying to outdo each other in claiming who would bring greater change to Washington, John McCain and Barack Obama have more similarities than differences in their approaches to the Middle East. Those approaches are consistent with many policies of the Bush administration.

The two campaigns' stated views on the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts and the use of economic sanctions to halt Iran's development of nuclear weapons are nearly interchangeable. One contrast is on Iraq, where Obama's promise to redeploy U.S. troops there within 16 months runs counter to McCain's call for an eventual redeployment based on the advice of U.S. military commanders rather than a timetable set by the civilian leadership. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080923132251esnamfuak0.9882624.html&distid=ucs>

### **Oil Issue Key in One Virginia Congressional Race**

Drilling and its impact become hotly debated in Virginia 2nd

September 23, 2008

Washington — The chants of "drill, baby, drill" that emanated from the Republican National Convention are resonating in the Virginia 2nd Congressional District, where incumbent Representative Thelma Drake has made domestic oil exploration a key issue in her bid for re-election.

Drake is seeking her third term representing the Virginia 2nd — which covers Virginia Beach and parts of Norfolk, Hampton and the Eastern Shore — in a surprisingly competitive race with the Democratic challenger, political newcomer Glenn Nye. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080923105524hmnietsua7.769412e-02.html&distid=ucs>

### **Democrat Fights to Retain Congressional Seat in Republican Texas**

Presidential race could affect which voters turn out in Texas' 23rd District

September 23, 2008

San Antonio – Voters in southwest Texas must decide in November whether to re-elect a Democratic U.S. congressman or replace him with a popular grassroots Republican.

The Democrat is *Ciro Rodriguez*, incumbent representative for the Texas 23rd District, which stretches nearly 1,000 kilometers from San Antonio to El Paso. Republican challenger *Lyle Larson* has served in local government in the San Antonio area for 17 years. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080923094112hmnietsua0.2700006.html&distid=ucs>

### **Large Audiences Expected for Televised Presidential Debates**

McCain, Obama will participate in three debates, beginning September 26

September 23, 2008

Washington – Polls show the presidential contest between John McCain and Barack Obama is extremely close, but upcoming debates could change that, political experts say.

Debates give Americans a chance to compare the candidates as they respond to tough questions and react to unscripted moments on live television. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080923084728hmnietsua0.1910974.html&distid=ucs>

### **McCain, Obama Outline Views on Agriculture**

Candidates agree on lower payment limits, disagree on support for ethanol

September 22, 2008

Washington — The Republican and Democratic presidential candidates both say they support lowering farm payment limits and limiting such assistance to family farmers.

Payment limits were a focal point of debates in Congress on the 2008 Farm Bill, passed in June over President Bush's veto. Yet Democrat Barack Obama voted for the 2008 Farm Bill, saying it had more good provisions such as support for hunger and conservation programs, than bad provisions. Republican John McCain opposed the bill. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080922132519AKllennoCcM0.4158136.html&distid=ucs>

### **Arab Americans Encouraging Community to Make Voice Heard**

Economic issues top concern for two-thirds of Arab Americans

September 22, 2008

Washington — As part of its Yalla (“Let’s go”) Vote campaign, the Arab American Institute (AAI) is encouraging its community to engage in the political process and make its voice heard.

Many in the community are doing just that, saying that, like other Americans, their top concern in the 2008 election is the economy.

At least 3.5 million Americans are of Arab descent, and about one-third of Arab Americans live in battleground states — including Michigan, Virginia, Ohio, Florida and Pennsylvania. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080922103202hmnietsua0.7808802.html&distid=ucs>

### **McCain, Obama Would Fight Terrorism, Enhance Trade in South Asia**

Both U.S. presidential candidates pledge to build relationships in region

September 19, 2008

Washington — Mindful that the economy and security are among voters’ top concerns in the November 4 American elections, the two U.S. presidential candidates, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama are pledging to build economic and security relationships in South Asia.

“India and America will be close and vital partners,” McCain writes in an August *Indian Express* editorial that extolled the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement. “India has been a responsible, law-abiding power and it should be further integrated into the global effort to control proliferation of dangerous technologies.”

Obama has been less enthusiastic about the pact, but voted for it in 2006. He says he wants stronger nuclear nonproliferation mechanisms and U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080919181951mlenuhret0.7013208.html&distid=ucs>

### **Presidential Contest Remains Close in Battleground States**

American voters still have concerns about both presidential candidates

September 17, 2008

Washington — As Election Day nears, the U.S. presidential race remains extremely close, particularly in battleground states, a Republican and a Democratic pollster agreed.

Polls suggest that many states favor Republican John McCain or Democrat Barack Obama so strongly that there is little doubt which candidates will win those states' Electoral College votes. This means the outcome of the presidential race will depend on who wins the battleground states, Republican pollster Neil Newhouse and Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg reminded journalists at the State Department's Foreign Press Center September 16. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080917184603liame0.1307337.html&distid=ucs>

### **Presidential Hopeful John McCain Answers Science Policy Queries**

Nominee cites position on stem cells, climate change, science education

September 17, 2008

Washington — If elected president of the United States in November, John McCain says he will support federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, implement policies to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions to 60 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 and reform math and science education in schools.

McCain recently responded to 14 questions posed by Science Debate 2008, a grassroots initiative that seeks to make science and technology issues more prominent in the presidential election. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080917165601esnamfuak0.2781488.html&distid=ucs>

### **Senior Citizens Most Reliable Group of U.S. Voters**

Experts consider effect of elderly voters on Obama-McCain race

September 17, 2008

Washington — U.S. presidential nominees Barack Obama and John McCain are vying for the vote of senior citizens, who political analysts tell *America.gov* are the most reliable group to vote in American elections.

Curtis Gans, director of the nonpartisan Center for the Study of the American Electorate at American University in Washington, said seniors vote at a rate of about 60 percent more than young people and about 10 percentage points higher than the national average. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/200809171649211xeneerg0.88995.html&distid=ucs>

### **Parties Recruit More Women to Vote Than to Run**

Political action committees are getting more women elected

September 11, 2008

Washington — If the recent party conventions are any indication, women in American politics and the importance of women's votes today are acknowledged vigorously by Democrats and Republicans. Yet women remain numerically underrepresented in elected office.

More women hold public office in the United States than ever before, serving in both houses of Congress, and occupying important local- and state-level positions, including governorships. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080911121502mlenuhret0.638241.html&distid=ucs>

## **Next President Could Shape U.S. Judiciary More than Predecessors**

Likely judge retirements, new positions boost potential to shift balance

September 11, 2008

Washington — An elected official's power to make judicial appointments, especially to the Supreme Court of the United States, is a factor many U.S. voters consider when they go to the polls.

The next president of the United States likely will make one or more appointments for life to the bench of the Supreme Court, the highest level of the third co-equal branch of government (with the executive branch and the legislative branch). Supreme Court decisions are the final authority on contentious issues, whether mundane or revolutionary. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080911110810esnamfuak7.642764e-02.html&distid=ucs>

## **Presidential Race Statistical Tie in Swing State Florida**

State has improved voting systems since 2000 election

September 10, 2008

Viera, Florida — With less than two months left in the U.S. election campaign, at least one Florida poll shows Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama in a statistical tie.

A Fox News/Rasmussen Report telephone survey of likely Florida voters, reported September 8, shows both candidates at 48 percent. Results suggest the race remains extremely close and victory likely will be determined by voters who have yet to make up their minds. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080910185610snirog7.575625e-02.html&distid=ucs>

## **Minnesota Primary Finalizes Ballot for November Races**

Voters select party nominees for U.S. Senate, House of Representatives

September 10, 2008

Washington — Even though the presidential nominating contests were finished long ago, voters across the United States still are determining which candidates will face off for seats in the U.S. Senate, House of Representative, governor races, state legislatures and local offices.

In Minnesota, a September 9 primary determined that Al Franken, who soundly defeated his leading Democratic opponent, will be the Democratic candidate who faces incumbent Senator Norm Coleman, a Republican. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080910174550klennoccm0.9600031.html&distid=ucs>

## **Virginia 2nd Voters Face Familiar Choices in Senate Race**

Two former governors try to convince voters to send them to Washington

September 10, 2008

Washington — No matter whom Virginia voters elect to the U.S. Senate in November, the face will be familiar.

Candidates Mark Warner and Jim Gilmore are both former governors of the state, and readily recognizable to the voters of Virginia's 2nd Congressional District. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080910170830esnamfuak0.2411615.html&distid=ucs>

## **Obama, McCain Advisers Discuss Nominees' Views on Latin America**

Policy advisers outline candidates' major differences on free trade

September 9, 2008

Washington — John McCain and Barack Obama agree that nations in Latin America and the Caribbean need to provide better economic opportunity for their people but fundamentally disagree on specifics like the pending U.S. free-trade pact with Colombia, advisers to the U.S. presidential candidates tell *America.gov*. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/200809100932151xeneerg0.3041956.html&distid=ucs>

## **With Conventions Concluded, U.S. General Election Campaign Begins**

Focus turns to swing states with less than two months before Election Day

September 8, 2008

Washington — With the national political party conventions behind them, presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama are focusing their efforts on winning undecided voters in battleground states.

Although presidential nominating contests concluded in June, Republican McCain and Democrat Obama did not become their parties' official nominees until the national conventions. The conclusion of the Republican convention September 4 marked the beginning of the general election campaign. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080908181944hmnietsua0.8472559.html&distid=ucs>

## **John McCain Pledges to Be Guided by the Public Interest**

Arizona senator formally accepts Republican presidential nomination

September 5, 2008

Washington – With “gratitude, humility, and confidence,” Arizona Senator John McCain accepted the Republican nomination for president at the party’s convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, and pledged to confront challenges such as terrorism and energy sources by putting the public’s interests first.

Speaking September 4, at the culmination of the four-day convention, McCain criticized many of Democratic challenger Senator Barack Obama’s policy positions and his relative inexperience. However, he said Obama and his supporters have “my respect and admiration.” ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080905120443esnamfuak0.5993311.html&distid=ucs>

## **John McCain Tells Republican Convention “Change Is Coming”**

Republican describes himself as bipartisan leader who serves his country

September 5, 2008

St. Paul, Minnesota — After serving in the Vietnam War and then in the U.S. Congress for 26 years, Arizona Senator John McCain, who formally accepted the Republican nomination for president September 4, describes himself as a proven leader who can bring change.

“I have a privilege given few Americans, the privilege of accepting our party’s nomination for president of the United States,” McCain said over an energetic crowd shouting “U-S-A.” “I accept it with gratitude, humility and confidence.” ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080905155137hmnietsua0.3398249.html&distid=ucs>

## **Republicans Say John McCain Will Listen to American Allies**

Party leaders tout presidential nominee’s foreign policy experience

September 5, 2008

St. Paul, Minnesota — Throughout the Republican National Convention, party leaders stopped by the State Department’s Foreign Press Center to describe presidential nominee John McCain as one who will listen to America’s allies when formulating foreign policy.

To be a better leader, McCain believes the United States needs to “listen to the concerns and be responsive to the concerns of friends and allies,” Kori Schake, deputy foreign policy adviser for the McCain campaign, told journalists. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080905163810hmnietsua0.4309961.html&distid=ucs>

## **Obama, McCain Offer Stark Contrasts on Latin America Policy**

Regional specialists size up candidates’ differences on Western Hemisphere

12 “Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,”

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

September 5, 2008

Washington — The two major U.S. presidential candidates offer stark contrasts in their positions on Latin America and the Caribbean, several specialists on the region tell *America.gov*.

Michael Shifter, vice president for policy at the Washington-based nonpartisan Inter-American Dialogue, said Republican John McCain's "rhetoric" on Cuba and Venezuela is "certainly tougher" than that of Democrat Barack Obama. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/200809051751491xeneerg8.106631e-02.html&distid=ucs>

### **Civil Rights Remains Major Issue, but Candidates Saying Little**

Grassroots groups across voting spectrum are taking action

September 5, 2008

Washington — U.S. voters from minority groups and the shrinking white majority alike are concerned about civil rights issues in America today, and are channeling that concern into civic action.

Recent arrests of illegal immigrants and their employers — 595 were arrested in Laurel, Mississippi, in August — have focused additional attention on civil rights issues. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080905164436mlenuhret0.547909.html&distid=ucs>

### **Republican Party Leaders Call Sarah Palin a Reformer**

Alaska governor's experience touted at Republican convention

September 4, 2008

St. Paul, Minnesota — Journalists covering the Republican National Convention, and many Americans and people abroad watching the political events play out on television, asked the same two questions again and again this week: "Who is Sarah Palin, and is she ready to be vice president?"

When Republican nominee John McCain selected Palin to be his running mate August 29, many Americans had no idea who she was. Most Americans and international followers of U.S. politics learned the personal and political story of this first-term governor of the sparsely populated state of Alaska as details became available during the convention. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080904103638hmnietsua0.4859278.html&distid=ucs>

### **Republicans Nominate John McCain for President**

Vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin gives first national speech

September 4, 2008

St. Paul, Minnesota — At the Republican National Convention September 3, delegates formally nominated Arizona Senator John McCain to be their candidate for the presidency of the United States.

State by state, delegates verbally cast their votes, allowing the Arizona delegation to cast the ballots that gave McCain the majority vote count needed to earn the nomination. Delegates cheered as they named McCain their presidential nominee. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080904101048hmnietsua6.435794e-02.html&distid=ucs>

### **Will Globalization Move to Center Stage in American Election?**

Candidates should offer honest trade debate, not a blame game, experts say

September 3, 2008

Washington — International trade is likely to re-emerge as an election issue as the presidential race between Democratic candidate Barack Obama and Republican candidate John McCain heats up, according to trade specialists.

Trade deserves to be a primary election issue, according to Gary Gereffi, the director of the Center on Globalization, Governance and Competitiveness at Duke University. "We need a robust and honest debate

about how to increase competitiveness of the U.S. economy and continue to lead the world on innovation to create high-end manufacturing jobs,” he told *America.gov*. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080903135114saikceinawz0.4751703.html&distid=ucs>

### **Political Spirit Returns to Republican National Convention**

Party leaders stress John McCain’s willingness to "put country first"

September 3, 2008

St. Paul, Minnesota - The Republican National Convention began in earnest September 2, after the first day of convention activities were curtailed due to Hurricane Gustav. As political speeches and rallies resumed, party members focused on telling Americans that John McCain, if elected president, would put his country first.

While party leaders reminded delegates of the importance of helping those affected by the hurricane that struck the Gulf Coast September 1, the convention’s second day concentrated on rallying the party and helping Americans get to know the presumed Republican nominee better. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080903104326hmnietsua0.1365015.html&distid=ucs>

### **Presidential Campaigns Try to Garner African-American Voters**

Increased turnout, preference for Democrats, could swing close election

September 2, 2008

Washington - Both political parties are courting African-American voters in a 2008 presidential election that, pollsters and pundits agree, is likely to be extremely close.

The Democrats appear to enjoy an advantage: Blacks have been a key component of the party’s base for more than four decades, and that tilt likely will be increased by the Democrats’ selection of Barack Obama as the first African-American presidential nominee of a major U.S. political party. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080902154402hmnietsua0.2203943.html&distid=ucs>

### **Barack Obama Accepts Presidential Nomination**

Democratic nominee says it is “time to change America”

August 29, 2008

Denver – On the 45th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech August 28, Barack Obama formally accepted the Democratic Party’s nomination for the presidency of the United States.

As people shouted “Yes we can” and waved signs reading “Change,” Obama said, “[W]ith profound gratitude and great humility, I accept your nomination for the presidency of the United States.” ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080829091638hmnietsua0.4007074.html&distid=ucs>

### **Democrats Commemorate Martin Luther King Jr.’s Famous Speech**

King’s children address Democratic National Convention in Denver stadium

August 29, 2008

Denver - During the final day of the Democratic National Convention August 28, Barack Obama and other speakers commemorated the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous I Have a Dream speech.

On August 28, 1963, in an exercise of free speech and political dissent called the March on Washington, an estimated 250,000 people marched to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, where they heard King give his speech about equality. The speech gave impassioned voice to the demands of the U.S. civil rights movement - equal rights for all citizens. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080829092937hmnietsua0.1456262.html&distid=ucs>

## **John McCain Chooses Alaska Governor as Running Mate**

Sarah Palin will be first woman on Republican national ballot

August 29, 2008

Washington - Republican presidential candidate John McCain has chosen Sarah Palin, currently the governor of Alaska, as his running mate.

Palin, who would be the first woman to run on a Republican presidential ticket, also would be the first Alaskan to appear on a national ballot. In 2006 she became the first female governor of Alaska after serving six years as mayor of Wasilla City, Alaska. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080829155057ajesrom0.5963251.html&distid=ucs>

## **American Indian Vote Will Be a Factor in Several Swing States**

Electoral clout of America's indigenous peoples a fairly new phenomenon

August 28, 2008

San Antonio - Across the center of the United States, from the Great Plains to the Rocky Mountains, efforts are under way to register and educate American Indian voters for the November general election.

The indigenous peoples of the United States number about 3 million, or 1 percent of the U.S. population. But in some states they represent a significant voting bloc. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Indians make up 4.5 percent of the vote in Arizona, 4.8 percent in North Dakota, 6.4 percent in Montana, 7.7 percent in Oklahoma, 8.5 percent in South Dakota and almost 10 percent in New Mexico. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080828074932mnietsua0.2280237.html&distid=ucs>

## **Renewable Energy, Green Jobs Stressed by Democrats**

Venture capitalist Floyd predicts green technology transformation

August 27, 2008

Washington - Colorado, a renewable energy industry hub, proved an apt venue for Democrats to showcase energy policy during their national convention in Denver, where venture capitalist Nancy Floyd underscored renewable energy's potential.

"I can tell you that there are thousands of entrepreneurs, from Portland, Oregon, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with new solutions. Investors are lining up to back them. What's missing is leadership from Washington," Floyd told assembled delegates and millions of television viewers. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080827180523mlenuhret0.8215601.html&distid=ucs>

## **Democrats Stress Barack Obama's Willingness to Work with Allies**

Improving international relations essential, Obama campaign adviser says

August 27, 2008

Denver - Party leaders and campaign surrogates for presumed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama stress the candidate's multilateral approach to foreign policy, saying that the Illinois senator would improve America's image in the world.

"Our standing in the world and influence in the world has diminished," Joe Lockhart, a press secretary during President Bill Clinton's administration, said during a State Department Foreign Press Center briefing August 26. "I think you're going to see a different approach from the Democratic ticket and President Obama, which is, 'We are leaders in the world but we do want to work with people.' ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080827164209hmnietsua0.9672968.html&distid=ucs>

## **Debate Continues over Security, Reliability of Voting Technology**

Many states, localities may turn to paper ballots for November 4 elections

August 27, 2008

Washington - Even in a nation that has held elections for more than 232 years, advances in voting technology spark debates about the best designs for ballots and the most reliable, secure ways to collect and count votes.

Those questions will not be settled before November 4, the date of the next U.S. presidential election. And the questions - including whether the federal government rather than individual states should regulate voting technology, whether national standards for voting machines should be mandatory and whether one technology should be adopted nationwide - do not lend themselves to quick answers. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/200808271510021cnirellep2.584475e-02.html&distid=ucs>

### **U.S. Election Helping America's Image Worldwide**

Experts offer insights on U.S. public diplomacy efforts

August 26, 2008

Washington - The U.S. presidential race, with "the spectacle of democracy at work," is a great thing for America's image worldwide, and historically has given a boost to U.S. public diplomacy, Nicholas Cull, a professor of public diplomacy, tells *America.gov*.

Cull, director of the public diplomacy program at the University of Southern California, says both presumed presidential nominees, Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain, have mentioned the possibility of a "radical reform of U.S. public diplomacy, and there are multiple studies in progress to suggest what this might look like." ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/200808261256351xencerg0.679516.html?CP.rss=true>

### **New U.S. President Unlikely to Alter U.S. Policy toward Europe**

Russia, nuclear weapons are regional focuses for candidates Obama, McCain

August 25, 2008

Washington - Although Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain differ significantly on such national security issues as Iraq, the two presidential candidates' positions on Europe fall within the broad consensus that historically has marked U.S. policy in the region. Their differences lie in nuance and points of emphasis. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080825102133delauqsapid0.7446558.html&distid=ucs>

### **Barack Obama Selects Delaware Senator Joe Biden as Running Mate**

Long-serving leader brings years of foreign policy experience to ticket

August 25, 2008

Washington - Presumed Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama has selected Delaware Senator Joe Biden to be his running mate, saying, "Joe won't just make a good vice president - he will make a great one."

In a presidential-campaign first, thousands of supporters learned of Obama's selection via text message - which was sent at 3 a.m. EDT August 23. The announcement was followed by a joint appearance at a rally attended by about 30,000 in Springfield, Illinois. Springfield is the capital of Obama's home state and the site where he launched his presidential campaign. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080825093820hmnietsua0.4283106.html&distid=ucs>

### **Immigration Remains Important Campaign Issue in United States**

Outcome of U.S. presidential race could depend on it

August 20, 2008

Washington - The economy may top pollsters' lists of critical 2008 U.S. election campaign issues, but immigration is not far behind. In surveys, it consistently ranks among the top 10 voter concerns.

Where the presumed presidential candidates, Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain, stand on immigration could determine who wins the 2008 election - partly because many Hispanics, the largest minority group in the United States, are expected to go to the polls. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080820164517mlenuhret0.9053919.html&distid=ucs>

### **Obama, McCain Compete in Wooing Hispanic Voters**

Hispanics' growing numbers, influence could be decisive in a close election

August 19, 2008

Washington - Hispanics, a rapidly growing segment of the U.S. population, could play a deciding role in a close presidential election, and campaigns are making enormous efforts to attract those potential voters and turn them out on Election Day. Efforts range from speeches delivered before major Hispanic organizations, to creation of new Spanish-language campaign Web sites, to huge budgets for advertising - mainly television spots - aimed at Hispanic voters. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080819181648rressiehnad0.1129267.html&distid=ucs>

### **Economics Continues to Dominate Presidential Campaign**

Candidates use advertising to criticize each other's economic plans

August 15, 2008

Washington - The 2006 midterm elections, in which dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq helped Democrats gain control of Congress, seemed to indicate that foreign policy would dominate the 2008 campaign. But that has not been the case, and as Election Day nears it seems the economy will remain the dominant issue on voters' minds.

As the number of deaths in Iraq has declined and the coverage of the war by the news media has decreased, Americans are less concerned about the situation overseas and more concerned about their economic situation at home. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080815122222hmnietsua0.8663446.html&distid=ucs>

### **Congressional Candidates Take Campaigns to Facebook, MySpace**

Social networking sites are new frontier in Virginia 2nd's political landscape

August 13, 2008

Washington - Virginia Senate hopefuls Jim Gilmore, 58, and Mark Warner, 53, grew up in a world without Facebook or MySpace.

They didn't weigh friend requests, post their favorite photos online or leave messages on friends' walls.

But now, Warner's Facebook page broadcasts to the world that he's a fan of Bob Dylan and Star Trek. Gilmore's MySpace profile says he's a Libra and includes birthday wishes from supporters.

It's all part of campaigning in the digital age. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080812172744hmnietsua0.8840906.html&distid=ucs>

### **Journalist Daniel Schorr Says Youth Vote Key to 2008 Election**

Alleged news media favoritism to Barack Obama subject of new study

August 7, 2008

Washington - Record-breaking voter registration by young people will be "one of the big stories" of the 2008 U.S. presidential election, famed journalist Daniel Schorr tells *America.gov*.

The senior news analyst and commentator for National Public Radio said the youth vote could decide the election. Polls suggest a majority of young Americans support presumed Democratic nominee Barack Obama over presumed Republican nominee John McCain. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/200808070817331xeneerg0.5736658.html&distid=ucs>

## **Obama Emphasizes Multilateral U.S. Foreign Policymaking**

Illinois senator urges a responsible end to the Iraq war

July 25, 2008

Washington - The United States must bring the Iraq war to a responsible end and renew American leadership to meet new global challenges and capitalize on new opportunities, Democratic Senator Barack Obama says.

"America cannot meet this century's challenges alone; the world cannot meet them without America," Obama says. "Today, we are again called to provide visionary leadership." ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/July/20080725162819dmslahrellek0.840069.html?CP.rss=true>

## **Presidential Candidates' Foreign Trips Matter**

Political experts analyze reasons for Obama, McCain trips

July 15, 2008

Washington - Foreign trips by U.S. presidential candidates are more significant in 2008 than in previous American presidential campaigns, several political experts tell *America.gov*.

Andrew Bennett, professor of government at Georgetown University, said the trips are particularly important in this presidential cycle because of the perceived "gap in experience" between the presumed Republican Party candidate, Arizona Senator John McCain, and his presumed Democratic opponent, Illinois Senator Barack Obama. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/July/200807151307481xeneerg0.4912683.html&distid=ucs>

## **National Conventions Show Appreciation to Host Cities**

Parties sponsor projects to better communities, inspire volunteerism

July 10, 2008

Washington - As part of their national convention activities, the Democratic and Republican parties are creating and participating in community-service projects in their convention host cities.

The Republican National Convention (RNC) launched its American Neighbor Volunteer Program to give back to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, and the Democratic National Convention Committee (DNCC) is sponsoring monthly DNCC Service Days, a community-service initiative for Denver and its suburbs. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/July/20080710185218hmnetsua0.7968408.html&distid=ucs>

## **Presidential Spouses Play Important Role in American Politics**

Will Cindy McCain or Michelle Obama be the next first lady of the United States?

July 10, 2008

Washington - One of the highest-profile jobs in U.S. government comes with no official duties, no paycheck and is awarded based on family connections. But first lady of the United States is a job with almost limitless possibilities.

During their husband's terms, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a daily newspaper column and hosted a weekly radio program, and Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson promoted environmental conservation. Current first lady Laura Bush has championed women's rights and promoted reading programs. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/July/20080710170543xkknorb0.3995935.html&distid=ucs>

## **Internet Revolutionizes Campaign Fundraising**

Successful fundraising efforts appeal to average people online

July 10, 2008

Washington - Electioneering changed in the 2004 presidential campaign when Democratic contender Howard Dean used the Internet as his staging ground and the public responded by donating time and

18 "Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,"

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

money. Four years later, Internet fundraising has leapt ahead, with prospective Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama enjoying particular success thanks to Web 2.0 interactive and social networking tools that enhance online community participation. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/July/20080710130812mlenuhret0.6269953.html&distid=ucs>

### **Race Relations a Factor in 2008 Presidential Election**

Obama-McCain contest brings issue of race to the political forefront

June 30, 2008

Washington - Race relations will be a factor in the 2008 presidential election between presumed Democratic candidate Barack Obama and his presumed Republican opponent, John McCain, several political experts tell *America.gov*.

Arizona State University history professor Thomas J. Davis said various public opinion polls show “race will be a determinative issue for a significant number of voters” in the campaign between Obama, an Illinois senator who is African American, and McCain, a white senator from Arizona. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/June/200806301621521xeneerg0.7737543.html&distid=ucs>

## **ELECTORAL COLLEGE**

### **The Electoral College**

Published by the Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S.

Department of State, September 2008

More than 100 million voters are likely to cast ballots in nationwide U.S. elections November 4. But only 538 men and women will elect the next president of the United States, and those elections will take place in 50 state capitals and in Washington, D.C., December 15. This indirect election system, called the Electoral College and devised in 1787 by the framers of the Constitution, puzzles Americans and non-Americans alike. It reflects the federal governing system of allocating powers not only to a national government and to the people but also to the states. We hope that this issue of *eJournal USA* will improve your understanding of the historical reasons for the Electoral College system and how it functions.

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/0908.html>

- **How the Electoral College Functions**

How the Electoral College works is rooted in the Constitution. Here are some facts about how the Constitution's words have been interpreted through history.

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080903151419ebyessedo0.2763788.html>

- **Winning an Electoral College Majority**

By David Mark

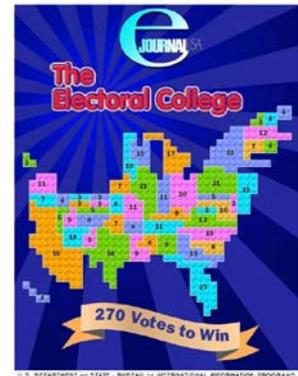
The Electoral College system makes electing the president of the United States much more complicated than simply counting all of the popular votes. The major political parties have to craft strategies for winning the few “swing states” that can determine the election.

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080904105939ebyessedo0.8551905.html>

- **When the Electoral Vote and the Popular Vote Differ**

By Thomas H. Neale

Four times in U.S. history, the Electoral College system resulted in election of a candidate for president who had received fewer popular votes nationwide than another candidate.



FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/September/20080905143744ebyeessedo0.8026239.html>

## 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](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 on the Electoral College

America.gov, Bureau of International Information Programs/U.S. Department of State

#### *What is the Electoral College?*

As prescribed in the U.S. Constitution, U.S. presidents are not elected directly by the people but instead by a group of designated citizens known as electors. This group of electors makes up the Electoral College. 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. On Election Day the voters in each state, by casting votes for president and vice president, actually are voting for the set of electors who will

vote for the voters' preferred candidate. The electors cast their votes in their states on December 15, and Congress officially counts the results in January.

***How does the Electoral College work?***

Each state elects the number of representatives to the Electoral College that is equal to its number of senators – two from each state – plus its number of delegates in the House of Representatives. The District of Columbia, which has no voting representation in Congress, has three Electoral College votes. There are 538 electors in the Electoral College; 270 votes are needed to win the presidential election. 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 casts one vote.

***How can a candidate win the most votes but lose the presidency?***

Every state except Nebraska and Maine award all of their Electoral votes to the winner of the state's popular vote. It is possible that a candidate can win the majority of the Electoral votes without receiving the majority of votes cast nationwide (the popular vote). This has happened three times in U.S. history, most recently in 2000. This typically happens when the Electoral College winner wins some states by narrow margins and loses others by large margins. This is one reason some advocate abolishing the Electoral College. Others argue the Electoral College is important to ensure smaller states' voices are heard. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080804120315hmnietsua0.4317133.html&distid=ucs>

## **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](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 Candidates**

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

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

A look at the candidates competing in the upcoming Presidential election

- **Candidates on the Issues**

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

A quick look at the candidates' views on key issues (e.g. international relations, energy and climate change, immigration, Iraq, security, trade)

- **2008 Presidential Candidates**

*The Washington Post*

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

- **The 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**

- John McCain

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

- Barack Obama

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

## 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 Hails 2008 Formats as “Historic Breakthrough,” September 21, 2008**

... Paul G. Kirk, Jr. and Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr., the co-chairmen of The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), today announced the finalized formats of the 2008 presidential and vice presidential debates agreed to by the Obama and McCain campaigns, calling them "a breakthrough in the history of televised debates." ...

The Commission's presidential debate formats were negotiated prior to the conventions of the major parties. The vice presidential format was negotiated following the vice president selections and was finalized Saturday. The vice presidential debate will embrace the same structure as the presidential debates. However, the discussion period for the vice presidential debate will necessarily be shorter than that of presidential debates. The presidential debates will devote one 90 minute debate exclusively to foreign policy and one 90 minute debate exclusively to domestic policy. The only vice presidential debate will include both foreign and domestic issues within a 90 minute format. The vice presidential format will also allow two minutes for each candidate to offer a closing statement. Town meeting, the format for the second presidential debate, was first introduced in 1992 and has proven very popular with the viewing public. This year the moderator will include questions submitted by Internet at MyDebates.org with questions from the citizen participants. ...

**FULL TEXT:** [http://www.debates.org/pages/news\\_092108.html](http://www.debates.org/pages/news_092108.html)

• **Commission on Presidential Debates Announces Moderators, August 5, 2008**

... - First presidential debate, Friday, September 26, The University of Mississippi, Oxford, Miss., Jim Lehrer, *Executive Editor and Anchor, The NewsHour, PBS*

- Vice presidential debate, Thursday, October 2, Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., Gwen Ifill, *Senior Correspondent, The NewsHour, and Moderator and Managing Editor, Washington Week, PBS*

- Second presidential debate (town meeting), Tuesday, October 7, Belmont University, Nashville, Tenn., *Tom Brokaw, Special Correspondent, NBC News*

- Third presidential debate, Wednesday, October 15, Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y., Bob Schieffer, *CBS News Chief Washington Correspondent, and Host, Face the Nation ...*

**FULL TEXT:** [http://www.debates.org/pages/news\\_111908.html](http://www.debates.org/pages/news_111908.html)

• **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](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**

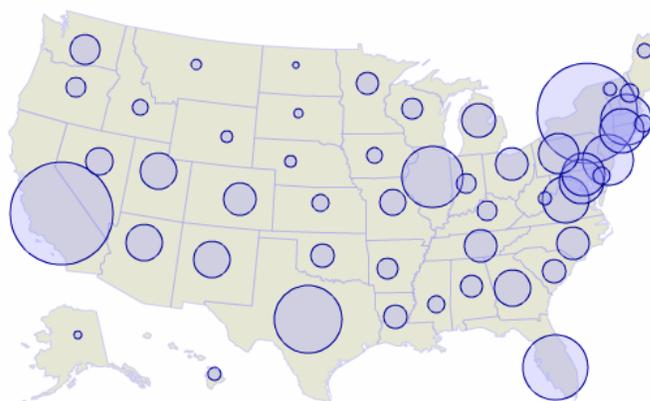
<http://www.fec.gov/press/presssummary.pdf> (pdf)

“Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,”

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

## Contributions to All Candidates by State



### Campaign Finance: Developments in the 110<sup>th</sup> 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.

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### ***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](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>

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## Frequently Asked Questions on Political Conventions

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

### *Why are national political conventions held?*

The processes of the political national conventions have evolved over more than a century, but the purpose has remained the same - to nominate presidential candidates and lay out goals and party priorities.

The first political convention was held in 1831 when the Anti-Mason party met in a Baltimore saloon to choose candidates and write a platform on which they would run. The next year, the Democrats met in the same saloon to select their nominees. Since then, the major parties and most minor parties have held national nominating conventions, attended by state delegates, to choose their presidential and vice presidential candidates and to agree on policy positions. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/August/20080804174936hmnietsua0.5952417.html&distid=ucs>

## 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](http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/pres/trivia.htm)

## MEDIA

- **Elections** - *The Washington Post*  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/elections/>
  - **Politics blog:** The Fix, by Chris Cilliza

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Program brief by the American Reference Center

<http://blog.washingtonpost.com/thefix/>

- **Election Guide 2008** – *The New York Times*  
<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008>
  - **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>)

### **Post-Convention, Pre-Debates: A Look at the Race to the White House in Key Battleground States**

With Stan Greenberg, Chairman and CEO, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner; and Neil Newhouse, Partner and Co-Founder, Public Opinion Strategies

Washington, D.C., September 16, 2008

... MR. NEWHOUSE: ... I just want to briefly go through the conventions. I do the NBC News-*Wall Street Journal* poll with another Democratic pollster by the name of Peter Hart, and we went through this data just recently. Both the Democrats – both Barack Obama and John McCain benefitted as a result of their conventions. Obama’s image increased 3 points. The Democratic Party’s image increased 6 points. The percent of people who say they’re excited about Barack Obama’s candidacy went up 9 points. People who say that they can identify with Barack Obama’s background went up 3 points, and they were more favorable to his candidacy by 6 points. Every measure went up for Barack Obama.

And yet, it was – so it was a good convention for Barack Obama, it was a better convention for John McCain. McCain’s image went up 5 points. The party went up 5 points. Percent of Americans – percent of his voters who said they were excited about voting for him went up 22 points. Now, I’ve got to think that probably has a lot more to do with Sarah Palin than it does John McCain, but we’ll take it nonetheless. Percent of Americans who believe that McCain represents change went from 21 percent to 35 percent, a 14 point shift. And then his information flow went up 13 points.

I’d argue with you that the Palin nomination as vice president was not a play to demographics, a play to women across the country, more than it was a play to the issue and the message of reform, of change. And that’s what I think the McCain camp was thinking about when they nominated Sarah Palin.

And you look at the outcome. We went into the convention down by 3 points, came out of the convention up – down by 1 point. But both Obama and McCain’s vote support increased. So they both benefitted. McCain just benefitted a little bit more. ...

**FULL TRANSCRIPT:** <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/109359.htm>

### **Overview of the Presidential Debates**

With Janet Brown, Executive Director, Commission on Presidential Debates

Washington, D.C., August 6, 2008

... MS. BROWN: ... the Commission on Presidential Debates ... is a non-partisan, tax-exempt, not-for-profit corporation headquartered here in Washington. It was started in 1987. A large part of the reason that it is formed the way it is is the result of Federal Election Commission law, which governs debate sponsors during the general election period.

There are two kinds of organizations that can sponsor debates during the general election. One is a not-for-profit, which is what we are. And the other is media organizations, which is what you are. And in either

event, the organization has to have criteria by which to decide who to invite in the debates, which you will also find on our website if that's of interest to you. These are applied to all of the people who have actually filed to run as president of the United States with the FEC, not just the major party nominees. So there are very few FEC requirements, but they are important ones and they largely determine why the Commission looks the way it does. ...

Yesterday, as some of you may be aware, we announced the moderators for the four debates. They will be Jim Lehrer of Public Broadcasting who will do the first debate. Gwenn Ifill, his colleague, will do the vice presidential debate. Tom Brokaw of NBC is going to do town meeting, and Bob Schieffer of CBS will do the last presidential debate.

The format is a little different this year. We hope that all of the debates, except for town meeting, will feature longer time segments given to one question. The moderator will pose a question to the candidate, the candidates will answer that question, and then the moderator will have the balance of ten minutes to pursue that topic in conversational style with the candidates. ... I think this will benefit viewers and listeners in this country and worldwide in understanding, in greater depth, the candidates' positions on important topics. ...

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/107977.htm>

### **Presidential Campaign Update: Overview of the Battleground States & The Key Issues**

With Kellyanne Conway, President & CEO, The Polling Company, Inc.; Jeffrey Pollock, President, Global Strategy Group

New York, New York, June 24, 2008

... MR. POLLOCK: ... We've been asked to intro and tell you what we think the electoral map on the national situation looks like. And I, to be fair, none of us know what the electoral map is going to look like. We all have a - somewhat of an understanding of what the swing states are going to be, but I think there's a lot of states that people are talking about today that are potentially in play that come 90 days from now and certainly after both the Democrat and Republican Conventions maybe they fall off the map.

But the states that I am looking at that I think are in play nationally speaking are Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, Iowa, New Mexico, Nevada, New Hampshire. It's a long list of states, and my list doesn't even include places that some people are talking about, like New Jersey for example, or some things I've heard, for example that the Republicans are going to play in California just to make Obama spend some money maybe. You know, we don't know. But that's where I see the election right now in terms of state of play. We can talk about it in depth each state if you all want, but that's where I see it. ...

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/107518.htm>

### **2008 Elections - The Latest Post-Primary Overview**

With Vaughn Ververs, Senior Political Editor, CBS News

Washington, D.C., June 17, 2008

... MR. VERVERS: ... Obviously, you've all watched as the primary campaign between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton went, you know, 15 rounds. It's sort of like the U.S. Open yesterday, if any of you are golf fans. You know, with the actual - the extra overtime, and then another overtime it had to keep going, and you know, we sort of saw the same thing in this primary system.

And as wonderful and as exciting and truly mind-blowing when you kind of step back and look at it and think for a moment, you know, how we got to the point where we've now nominated - the Democratic Party has now nominated the first African American to ever be a real contender for the Presidency, the first one ever nominated from any major party; how close they were to nominating the first woman to be elected - I think we're not even - we haven't even started to get into the real excitement of this election. So I would say everybody should hold on to your hats. This thing is probably only going to get a little bit better.

Now, when you're looking - when you step back and look at the big picture and the general dynamics of the campaign and the electorate, the Democrats have everything going for them. If you were to put down - this down on paper and really just do a statistical analysis of all the things that they have, some 37 million people came out and voted in the democratic primaries this year, almost twice as many as 2004. Of course, it did go a little bit longer, but even in those early contests we saw unprecedented excitement.

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On the Republican side, not so much, though. We had maybe a little bit of a bump in the turnout in those contested early primaries. Of course, once John McCain effectively wrapped up the nomination, that excitement went away. ...

**FULL TRANSCRIPT:** <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/105997.htm>

### **The 2008 Elections and the Hispanic Vote**

With Susan Minushkin, Deputy Director of the Pew Hispanic Center

Washington, D.C., May 30, 2008

... MS. MINUSHKIN: ... Today I would like to speak with all of you about the Latino vote in these 2008 primary seasons so far, and what we might - some information to help you think about, going into the general election season.

First of all, a little demography about Hispanics. How many Hispanics are there? About 46 million in the United States. That's an estimate, as of 2007. This number has tripled since 1980. And the number of Hispanics is expected to triple again by 2050. Now, when we say "triple again," it's important to note that we're taking the Hispanics today and projecting them into the future. So these will be some new immigrants, but also children and grandchildren of the Hispanics here today. We don't know if they'll identify themselves as Hispanic or not, but if we take who is here today, how many we expect to come, we will be looking at a rough tripling of the Hispanic population by 2050. Their share of the population right now, about 14-some percent, will rise to be about 29 percent of the U.S. population. ...

**FULL TRANSCRIPT:** <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/105433.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>

## **ARTICLES**

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

### **How Obama *Really* Did It**

By David Talbot, *Technology Review*, September/October 2008

Talbot, chief correspondent for *Technology Review*, writes that Barack Obama "has forever changed electoral politics by making new media platforms and his own social networking site fulcrums of his campaign." Jascha Franklin-Hodge, cofounder of Blue State Digital, the high-tech company working for the Obama campaign, states that the key is tightly integrating online activity with tasks people can perform in the real world -- "the core of the software is having those links to taking action." Those actions are donating money, making calls, writing letters and organizing house parties. McCain has an online campaign, but has a lot of catching up to

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do, according to Talbot; it needs a text messaging strategy to reach voters under age 25. Joe Trippi, who ran John Dean's campaign in 2004, states that "there won't be a campaign in 2012 that doesn't try to build a social network around it."

### **The Front-Runner's Fall**

By Joshua Green, *Atlantic*, September 2008

Hillary Clinton's campaign was undone by a clash of personalities more toxic than anyone imagined. E-mails and memos—published here for the first time—reveal the backstabbing and conflicting strategies that produced an epic meltdown.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200809/hillary-clinton-campaign>

### **Reconcilable Differences**

By Ronald Brownstein, *Atlantic*, September 2008

Obama and McCain both say they want to usher in a new, less divisive brand of politics. Which of them has the better chance? Is bipartisanship still possible?

FULL TEXT: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200809/partisanship>

### **Rhetorical Questions**

By James Fallows, *Atlantic*, September 2008

Who will win the presidential debates? What does each candidate's use of words say about how he would govern as president? Can Obama's rhetorical skills lift him to the heights of Lincoln, FDR, and Reagan—or will his speechmaking do him in? After watching all 47 (!) of the primary season's debates, our correspondent has the answers—and some harsh criticism for the moderators.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200809/fallows-debates>

### **Cable's Clout**

By Paul Farhi, *American Journalism Review*, August/September 2008

Repetition and prominence, not the ability to break news, give cable news television an enormous amount of clout, says Washington Post reporter Farhi. Using the example of the story of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Barack Obama's responses to stories about his controversial minister, Farhi argues that "few campaign stories have much impact or become an important part of the campaign narrative until they get heavy play on cable." The ability to function as "an engine of reaction and response" is cable television's greatest means for influence. "Cable's intense and often immediate coverage of the day's big controversy forces candidates to fire back, which then compels the rest of the media to cover the response," Farhi says. Whether they like to admit it or not, print media reporters are forced to consider addressing stories of whatever degree of merit if, thanks to cable television, enough people are talking about it.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4574>

### **The 2008 Primaries Elections: What in America's Name Is Going On**

By Charles E. Cook, Jr., *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2008

The article examines the U.S. presidential election and the primary election contests for the Republican and Democratic party nominations. Both of those campaigns were won by candidates deemed longshots before the process began in January, 2008, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama. McCain's victory is attributed to the overall weakness of his Republican rivals, notably the collapse of the campaign of Rudy Giuliani. Obama's ability to incorporate several popular themes in U.S. politics, the desire for change and an ability to transcend partisanship, is held responsible for his defeat of his better-known rival Hillary Rodham Clinton. The upcoming general election on November 4, 2008 is deemed to be extremely close between McCain and Obama.

FULL TEXT: [http://www.twq.com/08summer/docs/08summer\\_cook.pdf](http://www.twq.com/08summer/docs/08summer_cook.pdf) (pdf)

### **Balancing Act: The Other Wilsonianism**

By Peter Beinart, *World Affairs*, Summer 2008

"Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,"

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

John McCain has made this much clear: The 2008 election will be about national security. Barack Obama will discuss the economy, where he has an edge. He will even discuss Iraq, where his position enjoys public support. But McCain will broaden the discussion to the larger question of how the two candidates see the world. Today, even as majorities oppose the war in Iraq, polls show that Republicans still maintain the lead on the broader issue of 'national security.

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/2008%20-%20Summer/full-Beinart.html>

### **Web 2.0 Powers Political Campaigns - From Presidential Race to Local Elections**

By Chad Vander Veen, *Government Technology*, August 2008

According to the author, the World Wide Web is often dubbed “this generation's wild, Wild West,” a raucous, freewheeling digital expanse; like the frontier, the Web is a showcase for an emerging society with its own ideas, goals and morals. In the virtual world of the 21st century, the web has emerged as a “pivotal theater” in which candidates for office must battle — it has blossomed from a campaign novelty to an essential tool to reach voters. The difference during the 2008 election cycle for president is the advent of Web 2.0 applications; chief among these new applications are social networking sites, such as MySpace, Facebook and Flickr. Barack Obama's website, for example, features various links to social networking sites; some of them are broadly known, such as Digg and LinkedIn. Others target specific demographics, such as FaithBase, BlackPlanet and AsianAve; Obama uses each of these sites to deliver a message tailored to a niche audience. John McCain's site, meanwhile, makes heavy use of blogs and video. Both candidates' web site contain a feature that enables online donations, an innovation started by Howard Dean in his unsuccessful 2004 presidential race.

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.govtech.com/gt/380949>

### **Political Conventions. Have They Outlived Their Usefulness**

*CQ Researcher*, August 8, 2008

The Democrats and Republicans share a fundamental goal for their upcoming national conventions: to produce scripted television shows that will boost their candidates' prospects in the general election without showcasing any intra-party squabbling. Under that scenario, convention delegates seem to have nothing to do but cheer Barack Obama and John McCain, whose nominations were virtually assured before the conventions began. If the important decisions are made before the conventions begin, ask some politicians, political scientists and critics in the media, why bother to hold them? Convention supporters argue that the gatherings are needed in case a nomination isn't settled beforehand. The conventions also make decisions about party rules that can affect which candidates get nominated. And conventions are the one time every four years when the parties become truly national organizations, with delegates and activists from around the country mingling face-to-face.

### **Via Springfield**

By Alan Ehrenhalt, *Governing*, August 2008

Here's something I bet you didn't know: If Barack Obama becomes president, he will have spent more time serving as a state legislator (eight years) than anyone who has occupied the White House since Abraham Lincoln. In fact, he will be very close to the all-time record. John Tyler spent nine years in the Virginia House of Delegates. Nobody else has put in anywhere near that much time in a state legislative body." This article explains why a U.S. senator's experience might not trump a state senator's on a presidential candidate's résumé.

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.governing.com/articles/0808assess.htm>

### **McCain's Choice**

By Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, *National Interest*, July/August 2008

Neoconservatives and realists are battling to set the GOP's foreign-policy agenda—and the future of American diplomacy hangs in the balance. Who's on what side, what does each one want, and what can we expect if John McCain beats Barack Obama? Inside the struggle for the foreign-policy soul of the Republican Party.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=18692>

### **America Sorts Itself**

By Terry Teachout, *Commentary*, July/August 2008

Huckabee, a Southern Baptist minister turned more-or-less conservative Republican politician, was appealing to evangelical Christians; Obama, a liberal Democrat who grew up in Indonesia and Hawaii and attended Columbia University and Harvard Law School, was appealing to secular up-market urbanites. If either presidential candidate should do so successfully this year, it will mean that identity politics, in which a voter's political choices are best understood not as a set of rational responses to external circumstances but as a near-reflexive manifestation of his group affiliation, has come to dominate the American political process.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/america-sorts-itself-11459>

### **Race and Politics. Will Skin Color Influence the Presidential Election?**

*CQ Researcher*, July 18, 2008

The once unthinkable could happen this November: A black man may win the presidency. When freshman Illinois Sen. Barack Obama was born in 1961, African-Americans couldn't vote in parts of the United States. Now, as Obama prepares to accept the Democratic nomination in August, he is running slightly ahead of his presumptive Republican opponent, Arizona Sen. John McCain, a 71-year-old Vietnam War hero. First dogged by questions of whether he was "black enough," Obama now faces doubts about whether racial prejudice will prove a major obstacle to his historic campaign, especially among white working-class voters. Nonetheless, Obama is likely to benefit from changes in the country's demographic makeup, which is growing less white as immigration diversifies. At the same time, younger voters are showing notably less racial prejudice than older generations. Meanwhile, some top Republicans acknowledge the GOP needs to appeal to a broader range of voters if McCain is to win.

### **Closing the Enthusiasm Gap: McCain and Obama, by the Numbers**

By Stephen F. Hayes, *The Weekly Standard*, July 7, 2008

The conventional wisdom, adopted and internalized by many on the McCain campaign, is that McCain must move to the center to appeal to independents. So that's largely what he's done. Immediately after McCain became the de facto nominee, he toured the country touting his biography. Shortly after that he spent a week on a trip informally dubbed the 'Places Republicans Don't Go' tour. Not long afterwards, he traveled to Washington and Oregon talking about global warming. He has launched radio ads explicitly targeting Hispanics and last month held secret meetings with Hispanic and gay leaders. Twice in recent weeks, McCain has participated in virtual town halls targeting disaffected Democrats and moderates. One could reasonably argue that the strategy is working. [...] But it is a strategy that carries considerable risks.

FULL TEXT:

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/270rjcev.asp?pg=1>

### **The Evolution of John McCain**

By David Whitford, *Fortune*, July 7, 2008

This article examines Republican presidential candidate John McCain's plan to fix the economy. How does a tough, uncompromising former prisoner of war - a self-described maverick who built his political reputation on straight talk - handle competing demands for limited resources during hard times, meanwhile keeping the ideologues in his own party at bay?

FULL TEXT:

[http://money.cnn.com/2008/06/20/magazines/fortune/Evolution\\_McCain\\_Whitford.fortune/](http://money.cnn.com/2008/06/20/magazines/fortune/Evolution_McCain_Whitford.fortune/)

### **Redemption Politics**

By Ted Widmer, *New York Times Magazine*, July 6, 2008

The author traces the common ground between Democrats and evangelicals in relation to Barack Obama's bid for the presidency. He observes that for most of American history, evangelicals were Democrats or their

“Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,” 33

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equivalents, profoundly uncomfortable near the temple of the moneychangers. Among others, he cites Jefferson who attracted huge numbers of voters simply because his running mate, Aaron Burr, was the grandson of the great evangelist Jonathan Edwards.

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/06/magazine/06wwln-lede-t.html>

### **His Space: How Would Obama's Success in Online Campaigning Translate into Governing?**

By Marc Ambinder, *Atlantic Monthly*, June 2008

America's politics have regularly been transformed by sudden changes in the way we communicate. And revolutions in communications technology have always bestowed great gifts on those politicians savvy enough to grasp their full potential. It is still unclear how far Barack Obama's talent for online campaigning will take him. But it's worth noting that some of the best-known presidents in U.S. history have stood at the vanguard of past communications revolutions—and that a few have used those revolutions not only to mobilize voters and reach the White House but also to consolidate power and change the direction of politics once they got there.

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200806/ambinder-obama>

### **America's Next Chapter**

By Gary Hart, *The New York Times*, June 25, 2008

Former Sen. Gary Hart (D-CO) says the 2008 presidential election represents a new cycle of American political history. He says Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) should introduce a 'new, expanded, post-cold-war definition' of national security. He also says the United States must 'transition from a consumer economy to a producing one,' and says U.S. moral obligations to the environment 'must become paramount.'

**FULL TEXT:** <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/25/opinion/25hart.html>

### **It's not Race, It's Arugula**

By Noemie Emery, *The Weekly Standard*, June 23, 2008

On the way to his rendezvous with destiny, Barack Obama consistently lost white voters, especially of the Middle and working class, to Hillary Clinton - voters variously known as Appalachians or Reagan Democrats, rural voters and white ethnics in the industrial states. This article evaluates the sociological and historical precedents to this year's Democratic Party campaign and concludes that the "race theory" for Obama's difficulties with white working class voters isn't adequate to explain the phenomenon, nor does it conform to the known facts about voting in those states.

**FULL TEXT:**

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/215hpooz.asp>

### **It is Vetting Time**

By Marc Ambinder, *National Journal*, June 21, 2008

The history of the selection of modern-day presidential nominees is replete with missteps caused by haste or by presidential candidates being consumed with political calculations. John McCain and Barack Obama appear determined to avoid those pitfalls.

**FULL TEXT:**

[http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/print\\_friendly.php?ID=cs\\_20080621\\_9379](http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/print_friendly.php?ID=cs_20080621_9379)

### **Campaign Finance Reform: Have Efforts to Rein in Political Donations Failed?**

By Thomas J. Billitteri, *CQ Researcher*, June 13, 2008

As the 2008 presidential contest continues, the campaign finance system is in upheaval. Six years after Congress passed the landmark Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act to help curb the influence of unregulated "soft" money in politics, the so-called McCain-Feingold law is facing court challenges and persistent claims that it infringes on free-speech rights. Meanwhile, the system of public funding for federal campaigns is teetering. Presumptive Democratic nominee Barack Obama is poised to be the first major-party presidential candidate to bypass the system in a general election.

## Changing U.S. Electorate: Are Demographic Trends Reshaping U.S. Politics?

*CQ Researcher*, May 30, 2008

Demographics have played nearly as large a role in this year's presidential race as health care, war and the economy. [...], the Democratic candidate's first order of business will be reuniting party supporters against Republican John McCain. Many trends favor Democrats, including increased support among Latinos and voters under 30. But states that have supported George W. Bush are gaining in population and will gain electoral votes by 2012. One sign of changing voter dynamics is the white working class, which made up a majority of all voters not so long ago and is now the key "swing" group of voters. As the American electorate changes shape, the big question is which party stands to gain the most.

## They Cross the Divide

By Claude R. Marx, *Politics (Campaigns and Elections)*, May 2008

This article focuses on U.S. Presidents who crossed party lines and politics in U.S. Congress to work on their legislative agenda. President Harry Truman worked with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Arthur Vandenberg to get Congress to pass the Marshall Plan. President Lyndon Johnson forges alliances with key Republican leaders, including Republican Senator Everest Dirksen of Illinois. President Bill Clinton cooperated with Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich on issues related to budget and taxation.

## Off Target

By Paul Farhi, *American Journalism Review*, April/May 2008

The author, a *Washington Post* reporter, notes that media coverage of the presidential election in today's accelerated news cycle, with round-the-clock cable television coverage and newspaper journalists having to write for the Web as well as work on print stories, has resulted in a barrage of superficial reporting, analysis and forecasting, much of which has turned out to be inaccurate. As established news media are offering buyouts to expensive, seasoned reporters, younger reporters with less experience are covering the campaign without the context of having covered several campaigns and without the long view. Farhi writes that reporters should look beyond the "groupthink" of the political insiders and pose hard questions to the candidates.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4489>

## A 21st Century Campaign

By Ronald Brownstein, *National Journal*, April 19, 2008

The author examines the many reasons why he believes that the Democratic battle for the presidential nomination will be remembered as "the first true 21st-century campaign. [...] On virtually every front, [Barack Obama's and Hillary Clinton's] efforts dwarf those of all previous primary contenders — not to mention presumptive GOP nominee John McCain. It's easy to miss the magnitude of the change amid the ferocity of the Democratic competition. But largely because of their success at organizing supporters through the Internet, Clinton and, especially, Obama are reaching new heights in raising money, recruiting volunteers, hiring staff, buying television ads, contacting voters, and generating turnout. They are producing changes in degree from prior primary campaigns so large that they amount to changes in kind." Brownstein's article provides numerous examples of both Barack Obama's and Hillary Clinton's successful campaign techniques.

FULL TEXT:

[http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/cs\\_20080416\\_3324.php](http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/cs_20080416_3324.php)

## New Media as the Message

By Alexis Simendinger, *National Journal*, April 19, 2008

*National Journal* staff writer Simendinger describes the Obama campaign's deft use of mainstream media to attract potential voters to its "offline" campaign network. Using text messaging and e-mail signals to young voters that Obama understands who they are and they should trust him, says political communications expert Kathleen Hall Jamison.

"Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,"

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

## **The World According to John McCain**

By Michael Hirsch, *Newsweek*, April 7, 2008

He's both the consummate pragmatist and a zealous crusader for causes he feels just. The question is which America needs now.

FULL TEXT: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/129660>

## **The 51st State: The State of Online. Issues for Future Presidents**

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

Not getting all the answers you need from the debates? In her continuing series, Laura Gordon-Murnane provides websites that outline and dissect the candidates' views on the big issues, including healthcare, the economy, national security, the war in Iraq, energy resources, and global warming.

FULL TEXT: [http://www.infoday.com/searcher/apr08/Gordon-Murnane\\_51stState.pdf](http://www.infoday.com/searcher/apr08/Gordon-Murnane_51stState.pdf) (pdf)

## **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."

## **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](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.

## **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.

### **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](http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003685680)

### **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.

## **THINK TANK ITEMS**

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

### **Cell Phones and the 2008 Vote: An Update**

By Scott Keeter, Michael Dimock and Leah Christian, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, September 23, 2008

Current polling in the 2008 presidential election shows a very tight race between Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain. In part because of the strong support Obama is attracting among younger voters, and as the number of Americans who are reachable only by cell phones rises, interest continues to grow in the question of whether public opinion polls that do not include cell phones are accurately measuring the relative levels of support for the two candidates. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/964/cell-phones-and-the-2008-vote-an-update>

### **57% of Public Favors Wall Street Bailout**

#### **Obama Seen as Better Able to Address Crisis**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, September 23, 2008

By a margin of almost two-to-one the American public thinks the government is doing the right thing in investing billions of dollars to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure. Reacting to initial reports of the federal bailout plan over the weekend, 57% said the government was doing the right thing, while 30% said it was doing the wrong thing. At the same time, only 19% of the public believes that the government is currently doing an excellent or good job in handling the financial problems on Wall Street. Support for the administration's plan to bailout many of the nation's troubled financial institutions is largely bipartisan.

These are the principal findings of a Pew Research Center for the People and the Press survey conducted September 19-22, 2008 among 1,003 adults, which found that voters favor Barack Obama over John McCain as the presidential candidate best able to address the current financial crisis: 47% favor Obama, while 35% choose McCain. Independents prefer Obama over McCain by a margin of 44% to 30%, while Republicans and Democrats line up solidly behind their party nominees. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://people-press.org/report/452/public-favors-bailout>

### **How the Media Has Handled Palin's Faith**

By Jesse Holcomb, Research Analyst, Project for Excellence in Journalism, September 22, 2008

Who is Sarah Palin? The question has dominated campaign coverage in the weeks since her nomination as John McCain's running mate. In the mainstream media at least, the answer has focused almost as much on her family life as on her public record. But despite that focus, and the debate over her beliefs, coverage of her religious background and beliefs has often been a peripheral element in the story. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/961/news-media-palin-faith>

### **Views of Palin Fluid as Spotlight Remains on GOP Ticket Public Sees Obama Ads Getting More Negative**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, September 18, 2008

Sarah Palin continued to be a dominant factor in presidential campaign coverage last week, but her impact on the race remains unclear and her public image is very much in flux.

Palin clearly has boosted John McCain's visibility. From mid-June through the last week of August, Barack Obama consistently led McCain as the candidate the public was hearing the most about in the news. McCain received an expected bump following the Republican convention, but he continued to top Obama last week as 41% pointed to McCain as the more visible candidate while 32% named Obama. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/958/views-of-palin>

### **McCain Gains on Issues, But Stalls as Candidate of Change Presidential Race Remains Even**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, September 18, 2008

With two eventful and closely followed political conventions now in their rearview mirror, voters' views of Barack Obama and John McCain have changed in some ways, yet remain the same in others. What has not changed is that the race remains very close: a national survey of 2,509 voters interviewed Sept. 9-14 on both landline phones and cell phones finds that 46% support Obama, while 44% support John McCain. These results are almost identical to those in Pew's pre-convention survey in early August, which had 46% backing Obama and 43% McCain. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://people-press.org/report/450/presidential-race-remains-even>

### **Palin Comparison: Half of Campaign Storylines Revolve around GOP VP**

By Mark Jurkowitz, Associate Director, Project for Excellence in Journalism, September 16, 2008

Barack Obama may have generated more coverage, but as has been the case ever since her selection on Aug. 29, Sarah Palin still drove the media narrative last week.

Obama, the Democratic nominee for president, was a significant or dominant factor in 61% of the campaign stories from Sept. 8-14, according to the Campaign Coverage Index from the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. But for the second week in a row, the GOP vice presidential hopeful got more coverage (53%) than the man atop the ticket, John McCain (49%). Palin's Democratic counterpart, Joe Biden, has become the virtually forgotten candidate, registering at only 5% last week. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/954/palin-news-coverage>

### **McCain vs. Obama on the Web - Engagement and Participation**

Project for Excellence in Journalism, September 15, 2008

During the primary-election examination, the Obama Web site focused heavily—more than that of any other candidate from either party—on engaging supporters and motivating them to turn their enthusiasm into on-the-ground, grassroots activities.

Since the primary season, the Obama campaign has managed to stay more than a few steps ahead of the McCain campaign on both counts. But now the McCain campaign has taken steps to close the gap. It has redesigned his Web site to add more information, more customization tools, and advanced social networking capabilities. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://journalism.org/node/12773>

### **Support for the Presidential Ticket and Identification with Party Predicted Convention Speech Viewing**

The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, September 12, 2008

The Democratic and Republican Convention's speech audiences tended to be made up of supporters. Nearly two-thirds of those who saw or heard all of Senator Clinton's speech and about three-fourths of those who saw or heard all of Senator Obama's speech said they backed the Democratic nominee. Similarly, about six in ten of those who saw or heard the entire convention speeches given by Governor Palin and Senator McCain were supporters of that ticket, according to results from the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES).

Further, those who heard or watched all of the Obama and Clinton speeches were more likely to be Democrats and those who heard or watched all of the McCain and Palin speeches were more likely to be Republicans. ...

FULL TEXT:

<http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/Downloads/Releases/NAES%202008/ConventionSpeechFinal2.pdf> (pdf)

### **McCain's Image Improves - With Big Assist from Palin**

#### **Palin Press Coverage: Fair and Important**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, September 10, 2008

The American public paid a lot of attention to the presidential campaign last week as the Republican Party took center stage. More than half watched at least some television coverage of the Republican convention in St. Paul, and the speech by GOP vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin stands out as the highlight of the event. And perhaps as a consequence, by the end of the week, John McCain's image had improved significantly. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/946/mccain-image-palin-coverage>

### **Northern Exposure: Palin Dominates Campaign Coverage**

#### **McCain Finally Gets More Coverage than Obama, but Couldn't Top His VP**

By Mark Jurkowitz, Associate Director, Project for Excellence in Journalism, September 9, 2008

For the first time in the three months since the general election campaign began, John McCain last week generated more coverage than Barack Obama. But he was still outshone by another newsmaker during the GOP convention - his own running mate.

Sarah Palin, the first woman on a Republican ticket, was the focus of feverish attention as the media tried to find out more about her, convey her record and biography, and calculate her impact on the race. For the week of Sept. 1-7, Palin was a significant or dominant factor in 60% of the campaign stories, according to the Campaign Coverage Index from the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. McCain was fairly close behind, a significant or dominant factor in 52% of the stories. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/944/sarah-palin-news-coverage>

### **Republicans and Independents Are More Likely to Think the United States Is Ready to Elect a President Who Is a Woman Now That Governor Sarah Palin Is Senator John McCain's Running Mate, According to the National Annenberg Election Survey**

The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, September 9, 2008

“Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,”

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

After Senator John McCain chose Alaska Governor Sarah Palin as his running mate on Friday, August 29, 2008, self-identified Republicans and Independents are significantly more likely to think that the United States is ready to elect a president who is a woman, according to the National Annenberg Election Survey. The findings, released today, are based on across-time analyses of the 10 days prior (8-19-2008 to 8-28-2008; N=2,238) and 10 days after (8-29-2008 to 9-7-2008; N=2,319) Republican presidential candidate Senator John McCain announced Governor Sarah Palin as his running mate. Governor Palin is the first woman the Republican Party has nominated to run on a national ticket.

The percent of Republicans thinking that the U.S. is ready to elect a president who is a woman jumped almost 10 percent (9.7%) after the introduction of Governor Sarah Palin while independents jumped 8.4 percent. ... Both increases are statistically significant. There is a not a statistically significant shift among Democrats on this question. ...

**FULL TEXT:**

<http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/Downloads/Releases/NAES%202008/PalinReleasefinal.pdf> (pdf)

### **After Busy Week, Views of Both Candidates Improve High Marks for Obama's Speech**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, September 3, 2008

Interest in the presidential election surged last week, with the public following campaign news more closely than at any point since the Super Tuesday primaries in February. As attention to the campaign has increased, the images of both Barack Obama and John McCain have improved in recent days.

In a survey conducted Aug. 29-31, 29% say their opinion of Obama has become more favorable in recent days, while 19% say their opinion of the Illinois senator has become less favorable; 50% say their opinion of Obama has not changed. This marks the first time since the question was first asked in March that significantly more people said their opinion of Obama had become more favorable, rather than less favorable, in the days before the survey. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/943/views-of-candidates-improve>

### **Denver and Palin Fuel Biggest Campaign Week Yet**

By Mark Jurkowitz, Associate Director, Project for Excellence in Journalism, September 3, 2008

Coverage of the 2008 presidential campaign reached its highest level last week with the drama-filled Democratic convention and the stunning Republican choice of a running mate.

When it was over, the campaign filled 69% of the overall newshole from Aug. 25-Aug. 31, according to the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. That represents, by a substantial margin, the highest level of weekly election coverage since PEJ began tracking it in January 2007. The previous high was 55% the week of Super Tuesday. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/942/denver-palin-news-coverage>

### **Convention Buzz: A Split Decision**

By Mark Jurkowitz, Associate Director, Project for Excellence in Journalism, August 28, 2008

The Clinton team and the Obama team shared equal billing - perhaps for the last time - as the online universe reacted to the third night of the Democratic Convention.

To get a sense of the online buzz during the conventions, PEJ is monitoring five online destinations each morning at 9 a.m. The sample includes the top political headline on the Drudge Report, top political headline on the Huffington Post, the political story most linked to by bloggers in the previous 48 hours, according to the blog aggregating site Technorati, the most emailed political story on Yahoo! News, and the most viewed political video on YouTube. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/940/convention-buzz>

### **Obama's Background Better Known than His Issue Positions Biden Pick a Top Campaign Event**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, August 27, 2008

40 "Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,"

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

As Barack Obama prepares to accept the Democratic Party's nomination for president and frame his campaign message for the fall, many Americans still do not have a clear understanding of where he stands on the issues. Public awareness of Obama's policy positions has increased modestly over the past month. Still, fewer than half (48%) know a lot or a fair amount about his foreign policy positions, while 51% say they know just some or very little. Somewhat more people (56%) know at least a fair amount about Obama's economic positions, while 44% know just some or very little. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://people-press.org/report/447/obama-mccain-background-issue-positions>

### **It's All Veepstakes All the Time**

By Mark Jurkowitz, Associate Director, Project for Excellence in Journalism, August 26, 2008

In a week that culminated with the introduction of Senator Joe Biden as Barack Obama's running mate, the veepstakes dominated the campaign narrative, shunting other storylines - particularly policy differences - to the sidelines.

For the week of Aug. 18-24, speculation about Obama's choice - which centered on Biden, Virginia Governor Tom Kaine and Indiana Senator Evan Bayh - accounted for 27% of all campaign news, according to the Campaign Coverage Index from the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. Reaction to the Biden selection, revealed on Aug. 23, accounted for another 9%. With John McCain expected to name his running mate on Aug. 29, that buzz - which focused largely on Mitt Romney - garnered another 5% of the coverage.

In all its incarnations, the veepstakes accounted for 42% of last week's election coverage. No other storyline came close. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/936/its-all-veepstakes-all-the-time>

### **A Closer Look at the Parties in 2008**

#### **Convention Backgrounder**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, August 22, 2008

As the 2008 conventions approach, the Democratic Party's advantage in party identification remains as large as it has been over the past two decades, and the Democratic Party's image remains substantially more positive than the GOP's. The Democrats have a 13-point lead in party affiliation (51% vs. 38%) among registered voters, when independents who "lean" to either party are included. Four years ago, the Democrats held only a slim 47% to 44% lead by this same measure.

This report provides a detailed breakdown of party identification trends from 2004 to 2008, along with demographic profiles of Democrats and Republicans. These analyses are based on summary data of all registered voters interviewed by the Pew Research Center in each year. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/933/a-closer-look-at-the-parties-in-2008>

### **More Americans Question Religion's Role in Politics**

#### **Some Social Conservative Disillusionment**

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, August 21, 2008

Some Americans are having a change of heart about mixing religion and politics. A new survey finds a narrow majority of the public saying that churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters and not express their views on day-to-day social and political matters. For a decade, majorities of Americans had voiced support for religious institutions speaking out on such issues.

The new national survey by the Pew Research Center reveals that most of the reconsideration of the desirability of religious involvement in politics has occurred among conservatives. Four years ago, just 30% of conservatives believed that churches and other houses of worship should stay out of politics. Today, 50% of conservatives express this view. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=334>

### **Presidential Race Draws Even**

#### **GOP Base Getting Behind McCain**

Survey Report, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, released August 13, 2008

"Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,"

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

With less than two weeks to go before the start of the presidential nominating conventions, Barack Obama's lead over John McCain has disappeared. Pew's latest survey finds 46% of registered voters saying they favor or lean to the putative Democratic candidate, while 43% back his likely Republican rival. In late June, Obama held a comfortable 48%-to-40% margin over McCain, which narrowed in mid-July to 47% to 42%.

Two factors appear to be at play in shifting voter sentiment. First, McCain is garnering more support from his base - including Republicans and white evangelical Protestants - than he was in June, and he also has steadily gained backing from white working class voters over this period. Secondly and more generally, the Arizona senator has made gains on his leadership image. An even greater percentage of voters than in June now see McCain as the candidate who would use the best judgment in a crisis, and an increasing percentage see him as the candidate who can get things done. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://people-press.org/report/443/presidential-race-draws-even>

### **Foreign Policy Brain Trusts: McCain Advisers**

By Robert McMahon, Deputy Editor, Backgrounders, Council on Foreign Relations, updated August 4, 2008

Sen. John McCain's (R-AZ) presidential campaign has sought to highlight his diverse foreign policy experience derived from time as a naval aviator and later service in the U.S. Senate. Throughout the present campaign, McCain has been the strongest supporter of the U.S. military surge in Iraq. He has portrayed the Iraq war as a crucial part of a larger struggle against radical Islamic extremism that threatens U.S. security, a view shared by many top Republicans in Congress and the Bush administration. At the same time, McCain has broken with many fellow party members on issues such as climate change, immigration, and the need to ban interrogation methods characterized by many as torture. McCain's advisers include a wide range of veteran party strategists and former top policymakers. Media reports have pointed to a tug-of-war for influence in the campaign between policy pragmatists and a mixture of so-called neoconservatives and experts regarded as hard-liners over the projection of U.S. power globally. But some experts say such depictions oversimplify the views held by McCain advisers and underestimate the candidate's own grasp of foreign affairs. ...

**FULL TEXT:**

[http://www.cfr.org/publication/16194/foreign\\_policy\\_brain\\_trusts.html?breadcrumb=%2Fpublication%2Fpublication\\_list%3Ftype%3Dbackgrounder%26page%3D3](http://www.cfr.org/publication/16194/foreign_policy_brain_trusts.html?breadcrumb=%2Fpublication%2Fpublication_list%3Ftype%3Dbackgrounder%26page%3D3)

### **Latinos Overwhelmingly Support Obama and Democrats in 2008**

#### **Obama Is Doing Better among Hispanics Who Supported Clinton than He Is among Non-Hispanic White Clinton Supporters**

By Mark Hugo Lopez, Associate Director, and Susan Minushkin, Deputy Director, Pew Hispanic Center, July 24, 2008

Hispanic registered voters support Democrat Barack Obama for president over Republican John McCain by 66% to 23%, according to a nationwide survey of 2,015 Latinos conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, a project of the Pew Research Center, from June 9 through July 13, 2008.

The presumptive Democratic nominee's strong showing in this survey represents a sharp reversal in his fortunes from the primaries, when Obama lost the Latino vote to Hillary Clinton by a nearly two-to-one ratio, giving rise to speculation in some quarters that Hispanics were disinclined to vote for a black candidate. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/908/obama-latino-voters>

### **Foreign Policy Brain Trusts: Obama's Advisers**

By Joanna Klonsky, Backgrounders, Council on Foreign Relations, updated July 21, 2008

Sen. Barack Obama's (D-IL) foreign policy agenda has emphasized multilateralism and reinvigorated diplomacy to advance U.S. interests. He has pledged to take steps to end the war in Iraq soon after taking office, to negotiate with the leadership of U.S. adversaries like Iran and Cuba, and to revamp the U.S. approach to free trade to bolster labor and environmental protections. Obama has attracted as advisers a

number of top foreign policy experts who served under President Bill Clinton. Many of Obama's top advisers were opposed to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, although a number of prominent Democrats, including Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY), supported the action at the time. Obama's advisers generally appear to agree with his belief that it is "important for the United States not just to talk to its friends but also to talk to its enemies." ...

**FULL TEXT:**

[http://www.cfr.org/publication/16188/foreign\\_policy\\_brain\\_trusts.html?breadcrumb=%2Fpublication%2Fpublication\\_list%3Ftype%3Dbackgrounder%26page%3D2](http://www.cfr.org/publication/16188/foreign_policy_brain_trusts.html?breadcrumb=%2Fpublication%2Fpublication_list%3Ftype%3Dbackgrounder%26page%3D2)

### **McCain's Lead among Evangelicals Smaller than Bush's in '04 Religiously Unaffiliated Voters Strongly Favor Democratic Candidate**

By Allison Pond, Research Associate, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, July 17, 2008

Republican presidential candidate John McCain has a smaller lead among white evangelical Protestants than Republican George W. Bush had at a similar point in the 2004 campaign, even though Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama has made few inroads into this key constituency. Those who are unaffiliated with a particular religion, on the other hand, are just as supportive of the Democratic candidate as they were at this point in the 2004 campaign and are substantially more supportive of Obama than they were of Democratic candidate Al Gore in June 2000. Meanwhile, a major divide in candidate preference remains between those who regularly attend worship services and those who seldom or never attend services. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/905/mccain-evangelicals>

### **Should Women Worry Obama?**

By Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Research Associate, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, July 17, 2008

Whether female voters, who largely favored Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination, will give broad support to Barack Obama this fall remains a key to the outcome of the election. The latest survey from the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press finds that Obama is, in fact, performing quite well among this key voting bloc, largely as the result of his substantial lead among politically independent and younger women. However, a significant numbers of older women, especially those who backed Clinton for the Democratic nomination, are not yet ready to throw their support behind Obama. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/902/should-women-worry-obama>

### **18- to 29-year-olds More Likely to Be Liberal and Less Likely to Follow Presidential Campaign Very Closely, Annenberg Survey Shows**

The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, July 17, 2008

Young adults 18 to 29 years of age are more likely to describe themselves as liberal in comparison to other age groups, according to recent data collected by the Annenberg Public Policy Center's National Annenberg Election Survey. Thirty-four percent of 18- to 29-year-olds called themselves "liberal" or "very liberal," while only 27 percent of 30- to 44-year-olds, 25 percent of 45- to 64-year-olds, and 18 percent of those 65 years and older described themselves the same way.

The youngest cohort of potential voters is also less likely to describe itself as following the 2008 presidential campaign "very closely" in comparison to older cohorts. While 24 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds said that they are following the campaign very closely, 33 percent of 30- to 44-year-olds, 44 percent of 45- to 64-year-olds, and 48 percent of those 65 years and older stated that they are following the campaign very closely. ...

**FULL TEXT:**

[http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/Downloads/Releases/NAES%202008/AgeandIssuePositions\\_final.pdf](http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/Downloads/Releases/NAES%202008/AgeandIssuePositions_final.pdf) (pdf)

### **Candidates' Policy Positions Still Not Widely Known**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, July 16, 2008

"Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,"

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

While Barack Obama has been the dominant figure in the presidential campaign, both in press coverage and public visibility, most Americans say they do not know very much about his policy positions. Only 40% say they know a lot or a fair amount about his positions on foreign policy; 59% say they know just some or very little.

These numbers are unchanged from early March. Even among Democrats, just 49% currently know at least a fair amount about Obama's foreign policy positions, while 50% know just some or very little. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/899/candidates-policy-positions-still-not-widely-known>

## **Belief that Obama Is Muslim Is Durable, Bipartisan – but Most Likely to Sway Democratic Votes**

By Michael Dimock, Associate Director, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, July 15, 2008

The *New Yorker* magazine's controversial cover has renewed focus on public misperceptions of Sen. Barack Obama's faith. Despite recurrent media attention to the issue - including extensive coverage of his association with the controversial Protestant cleric, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright - the incorrect perception that the Democratic presidential candidate adheres to the Muslim faith or to another non-Christian faith has remained remarkably constant over the course of the 2008 election campaign. The belief that Obama is Muslim, however, appears to have virtually no effect on Republican voters - who overwhelmingly support McCain in any case. But Democrats who share the misperception are significantly less likely to support Obama. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/898/belief-that-obama-is-muslim-is-bipartisan-but-most-likely-to-sway-democrats>

## **Obama's Black Audience**

### **What Surveys Show about the Attitudes and Priorities of African Americans**

By Jodie T. Allen, Senior Editor, Pew Research Center, July 14, 2008

Who is more in touch with the African American public? Presidential aspirant Sen. Barack Obama, who has called for an expansion of faith-based social service programs and for more responsibility among black men in caring for their children? Or critics like the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, who was overheard saying that Obama was "talking down to black people," a comment he later explained was meant as suggesting that the candidate should focus more on "racial justice and urban policy and jobs," and University of Maryland Professor Ronald Walters who remarked that "we're not electing [Obama] to be preacher in chief"? ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/895/obamas-black-audience>

## **Likely Rise in Voter Turnout Bodes Well for Democrats**

### **McCain's Enthusiasm Gap, Obama's Unity Gap**

Survey Report, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, July 10, 2008

The outlook for the presidential election at mid-year is substantially different than at comparable points in time in recent campaigns. First, turnout is likely to be higher this fall - perhaps much higher than in previous elections - as voter interest continues at record levels. Second, as has been the case since the start of the campaign, Democrats enjoy a substantial engagement advantage over Republicans that may significantly alter the composition of the November electorate. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://people-press.org/report/436/obama-mccain-july>

## **Running on Faith**

### **Study Finds Media Coverage of Religion in Primary Campaign Rivalled That of Race and Gender Combined**

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, July 10, 2008

As the historic 2008 presidential primary season came to an end, the presumptive Republican and Democratic nominees faced similar dilemmas. Both Republican Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) and Democratic Sen. Barack Obama (Ill.) decided to sever ties with controversial religious figures who had been backing their campaigns.

44 "Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?,"

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2008

Program brief by the American Reference Center

As the general election campaign got under way, both candidates continued to face questions related to their religious backgrounds. Obama's decisions to relinquish his membership with Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ and to sever ties with its controversial former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, could influence voters' opinions of him, especially since he is a relatively new figure in national politics. And McCain's ability to turn out the conservative religious base of his party could be a deciding factor in how he fares in November. Indeed, religion could be at least as important in the 2008 presidential campaign as it was in 2000 and 2004. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=312>

### **Why Vice Presidents Are Important to Governing**

By Michael Barone, American Enterprise Institute (AEI), June 27, 2008

The office of the vice-president has long been the buff of the joke - you know the punch line - but as we await Barack Obama's and John McCain's choices for vice-president we do so with the knowledge that vice presidents in the last five administrations have been important officers of government. How the vice presidency has been transformed is an interesting story that takes us from the Founding Fathers to recent history.

**FULL TEXT:** [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28203,filter.social/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28203,filter.social/pub_detail.asp)

### **More Hear Negative News about Michelle Obama than Cindy McCain Coverage of the Candidates' Wives**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, June 18, 2008

With the major party nominations now settled, the images of the candidates' wives are coming into sharper focus. While opinions about Cindy McCain and Michelle Obama are mostly positive, Mrs. Obama has emerged as the more high profile and controversial spouse.

More Americans have heard a lot about Michelle Obama than about Cindy McCain, and Mrs. Obama has received much more media coverage than Mrs. McCain. However, somewhat more of those who have heard about Mrs. Obama say the coverage of her has been mostly negative rather than mostly positive (by 26% to 21%); by comparison, 31% of those who have heard about Mrs. McCain say coverage of her has been mostly positive while just 7% say it has been generally negative. ...

**FULL TEXT:** <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/871/campaign-spouses-public-hears-more-negatives-about-michelle-than-cindy>

### **The Internet and the 2008 Election**

By Aaron Smith and Lee Rainie, Pew Internet & American Life Project, June 15, 2008

A record-breaking 46% of Americans have used the internet, email or cell phone text messaging to get news about the campaign, share their views and mobilize others. A significant number of voters are also using the internet to gain access to campaign events and primary documents. Online activism using social media has also grown substantially since the first time we probed this issue during the 2006 midterm elections. Yet despite the growth in the number of people who are politically engaged online, internet users express some ambivalence about the role of the internet in the campaign. On one hand, 28% of wired Americans say that the internet makes them feel more personally connected to the campaign, and 22% say that they would not be as involved in the campaign if not for the internet. At the same time, however, even larger numbers feel that the internet magnifies the most extreme viewpoints and is a source of misinformation for many voters.

**FULL TEXT:** [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_2008\\_election.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_2008_election.pdf) (pdf)

### **Most Americans See a Black Nominee as Important for Country Partisan and Racial Divisions over Significance of Obama's Win**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, June 11, 2008

A solid majority of Americans say it is at least somewhat important to the country that an African American has won the presidential nomination of a major political party. But there are wide political and racial divisions over the significance of Barack Obama's history-making achievement.

Overall, 36% of the public says it is very important to the country that an African American won a major party's nomination, while another 27% see this as somewhat important. A third of Americans say it is either not too important (15%) or not at all important (18%) that a black candidate has become a major party nominee. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/866/obamas-nomination-important>

## **Many Say Coverage is Biased in Favor of Obama**

### **Primary Wrapup: Even as Obama Controversies Widely Registered**

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, June 5, 2008

Over the course of the primary campaign season greater numbers heard about controversies associated with Barack Obama than heard about other campaign events. Nonetheless, far more Americans believe that the press coverage has favored Barack Obama than think it has favored Hillary Clinton.

Nearly four-in-ten (37%) say that in covering the Democratic race, news organizations have been biased toward Obama while just 8% say they have been biased toward Clinton; 40% say news organizations have shown no bias in their coverage. Substantial minorities of Republicans (45%) and independents (40%) say the press has been biased toward Obama; somewhat fewer Democrats (35%) see a pro-Obama bias. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/862/campaign-news-interest>

## **Hispanics in the 2008 Election: Puerto Rico**

Pew Hispanic Center, May 29, 2008

On Sunday June 1, 2008, Puerto Rico will hold an open Democratic presidential primary contest. More than 3.9 million people reside in Puerto Rico and 2.8 million of them are eligible to vote. As of May 2, 2008, according to the government of Puerto Rico, 2.37 million Puerto Rican residents were registered to vote. This fact sheet provides key demographic information on eligible voters in Puerto Rico and compares them with eligible Latino voters and all eligible voters in the United States. All data is from the Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/855/puerto-rico-primary>

## **The Case for Keeping the Electoral College**

By Walter Berns, American Enterprise Institute (AEI), April 7, 2008

Debate over whether to keep the Electoral College or move to a system of direct popular election of the president is a hardy perennial of the presidential election season. In this article, the eminent constitutional scholar Walter Berns reminds us of the arguments in favor of the Electoral College and dissects the proposals of those who would nullify it without having to abolish it. ...

FULL TEXT: [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.27766/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.27766/pub_detail.asp)

## **Robo-Calls Now Top Type of Campaign Outreach**

### **Wealthy Democratic Donors Now Outnumber Wealthy GOP Donors**

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, April 3, 2008

As Congress considers a proposal to put restrictions on pre-recorded campaign calls, or "robo-calls," the frequency of such calls is increasing. Overall, 39% of voters say they have received a pre-recorded call about the campaign, up from 25% in November.

In states that have already held a primary or caucus, fully 44% of voters have received robo-calls. In states, that have not yet held their election or caucus, just 16% of voters have gotten recorded calls.

The use of robo-calls appears to be very much a bipartisan campaign practice. ...

FULL TEXT: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/785/robo-calls-election-2008>

## **Internet as Political Information Tool Popular, But Television Still Dominates, Annenberg Survey Finds**

The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, March 28, 2008

Despite the popularity of the Internet during this campaign season, television remains the top source among all age groups for obtaining information about the 2008 presidential campaign, according to data released today by the National Annenberg Election Survey of the University of Pennsylvania. Most adults (89%) say they get information about the presidential race from broadcast or cable television. The numbers are similar regardless of age and education levels for broadcast and cable as a source of information. ...

**FULL TEXT:**

[http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/Downloads/Releases/NAES%202008/NewsConsumptionMARCH\\_28\\_2008.pdf](http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/Downloads/Releases/NAES%202008/NewsConsumptionMARCH_28_2008.pdf) (pdf)

### **Americans Following Presidential Campaign More Closely Than In 2004, Annenberg Data Show**

The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, March 24, 2008

Americans are following the 2008 presidential campaign more closely than they did in 2004, according to data released today by the National Annenberg Election Survey of the University of Pennsylvania. The level of interest in the campaign has remained high throughout the campaign season among all ideological segments of the population, Democrats, Republicans, and independents.

More than three-quarters of adults in the United States (78%) report following the 2008 presidential campaign “very closely” or “somewhat closely.” When asked a comparable question in 2004, 57% of adults reported following the Democratic primary “very closely” or “somewhat closely.” ...

**FULL TEXT:**

<http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/Downloads/Releases/NAES%202008/CloselyFollowingFINALmarch242008.pdf> (pdf)

### **How and When Experience in a President Counts**

By Charles O. Jones, Issues in Governance Studies #12, The Brookings Institution, March 2008

Experience has become a dominant issue in the 2008 presidential campaign. Initially thought to be an open contest, the range and types of candidate experience have varied substantially: sitting and former senators, representatives and governors, and a former mayor and first lady. At this writing the campaign has narrowed to three candidates: Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton in a tight race for the Democratic nomination; John McCain having secured the Republican nomination.

The contrast in Washington-based experience among these three is striking. McCain leads in elective service with four years in the House of Representatives and just over 20 years in the Senate. Clinton is in her eighth year in the Senate; Obama in his third year.

Experience prior to elective government service in Washington has also been identified as relevant for accrediting candidacies. ...

Each of these rationales for candidacy and election has strengths and weaknesses. ...

**FULL TEXT:**

[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/03\\_presidency\\_jones/03\\_presidency\\_jones.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/03_presidency_jones/03_presidency_jones.pdf) (pdf)

### **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>

### **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>

### **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>

### **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>

## 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/>
- **Presidential Elections** – The American Presidency Project/ University of California, Santa Barbara  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/elections.php>
- **Presidency 2008** - Politics1  
<http://www.politics1.com/p2008.htm>
- **Presidential Election** - Project Vote Smart  
[http://www.vote-smart.org/election\\_president.php](http://www.vote-smart.org/election_president.php)
- **electionline.org**  
<http://www.electionline.org/>
- **The Green Papers**  
<http://www.thegreenpapers.com>
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<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 **“Electing the American President: Do New Media, Blogs, and the Net Make Any Difference?”** will be available at: <http://www.usembassy.at/en/embassy/photo/clemons.htm>

Information about the services and resources of the American Reference Center is available at: <http://www.usembassy.at/en/embassy/arc.htm>



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