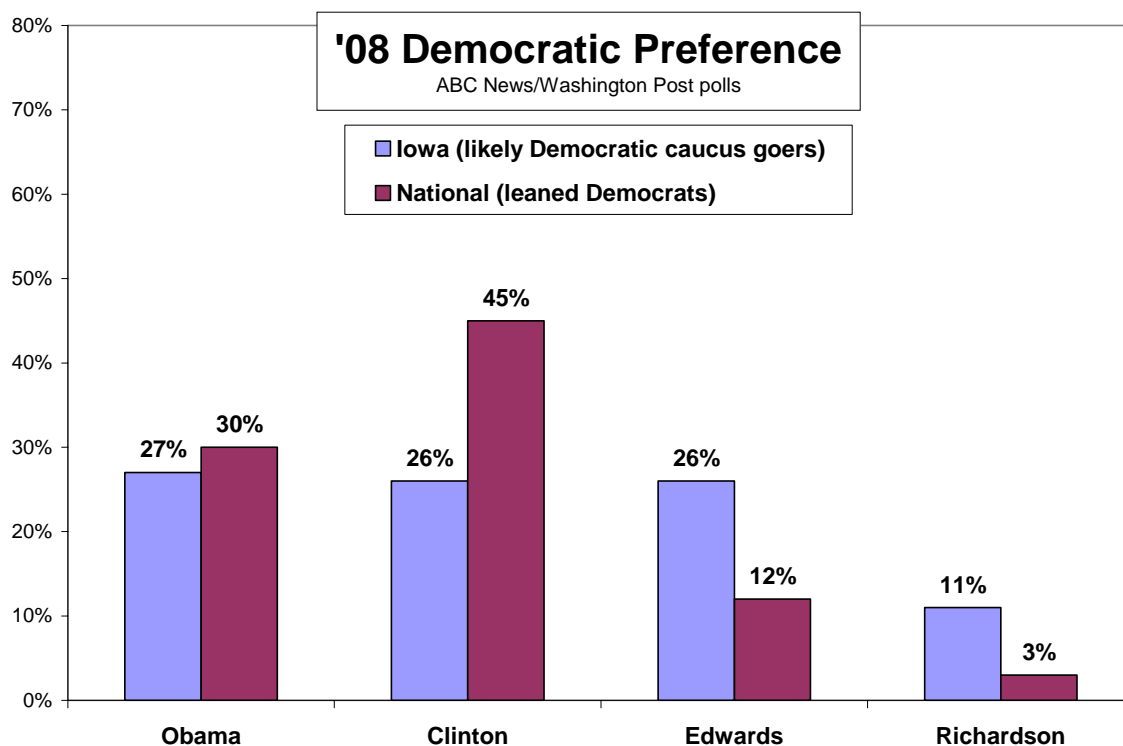


Obama, Clinton and Edwards Find Equal Appeal in Iowa

Iowa Democrats have found their perfect candidate. In three people.

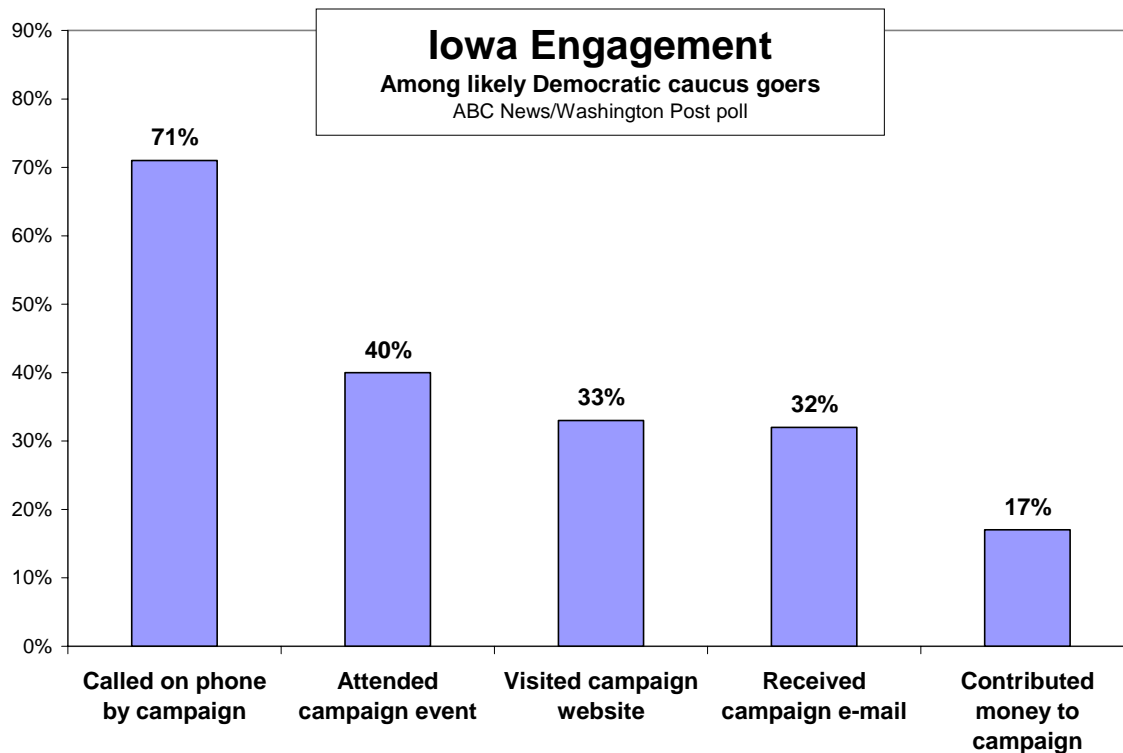
For experience, strength and electability – in Iowa as nationally – it's Hillary Clinton. But for likeability, empathy and a local focus, John Edwards pushes back strongly, far more so in Iowa than nationally. And Barack Obama has his own appeal, notably among younger Iowa voters and those looking for a new direction in politics.

The mix makes for the tightest of contests – a three-way tie among Obama, Edwards and Clinton among likely Iowa Democratic caucus goers in this ABC News/Washington Post poll, with 27, 26 and 26 percent support respectively. Bill Richardson, long strides back at 11 percent, is the only other candidate with better than low single-digit support.



Beyond current preferences, the candidates' support profiles provide a road map as the campaigns try to capitalize on their competing advantages in the race ahead. Much relies on their efforts, especially in a very low-participation event like the Iowa caucuses, where turnout is paramount. (The 2004 Democratic caucuses drew about 120,000 attendees. There are twice as many seats at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.)

The poll also shows very broad satisfaction with the field and a high level of engagement with the campaign. Seven in 10 likely Democratic caucus goers have gotten one or more campaign telephone calls, four in 10 report attending a campaign event and a third have received e-mails and visited candidate websites. One in six say they've made a campaign contribution.



Five months before the caucuses, just over four in 10 are following the race “very” closely – nearly double the rate among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents nationally. And most like what they see: Not only are 89 percent satisfied with their choices in the Democratic race (the same as nationally, and well ahead of satisfaction among Republicans), 53 percent in Iowa are “very” satisfied, compared with 33 percent nationally.

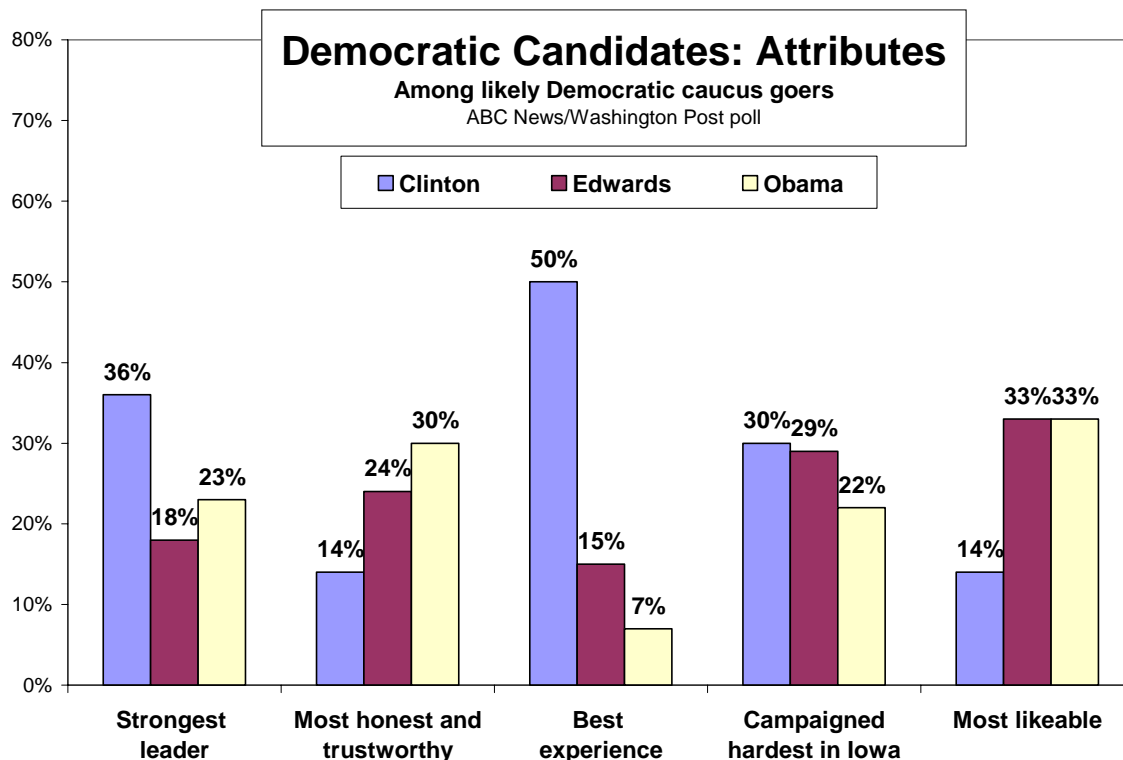
There is, most certainly, room to move: Around four in 10 of each of the leading candidates’ supporters are not “strongly” committed to their choice. At the same time, reallocating to second-choice preferences doesn’t meaningfully change the three-way dead heat.

ABC News, in conjunction with WOI-TV in Des Moines, is sponsoring two candidate debates in Iowa – one among the Republican candidates this Sunday morning (when a companion poll of Republican preferences will be released) and another among the Democrats on Aug. 19.

ATTRIBUTES – Personal attributes matter especially in primaries and caucuses, because there tends to be less differentiation on the issues among same-party candidates. For

Edwards, for instance, competitiveness in Iowa – he’s a distant third in national polls – depends in part on old-fashioned time on the ground, plus a favorable personal image.

Edwards runs evenly with Clinton, and ahead of Obama, as having campaigned hardest in the state (and indeed his supporters are much more likely than his opponents’ to have received a campaign phone call). At the same time Edwards runs evenly with Obama – and well ahead of Clinton – as the “most likeable” choice. Pulling from Clinton on hard work, and from Obama on personality, gives Edwards strength he lacks nationally.



There are good reasons Edwards is seen as having campaigned more in the state: He ran there in 2004, finishing a creditable second to John Kerry and leaving himself a pre-built campaign organization. He was back in Iowa earlier than his top competitors this cycle. According to a Washington Post count, he’s held 69 events in Iowa this year, compared with 60 by Obama and 41 by Clinton.

Edwards, by extension, has seen his message resonate better in Iowa. Among people who care more about “a new direction and new ideas” than about strong leadership, 31 percent support Edwards in Iowa, compared with 10 percent nationally.

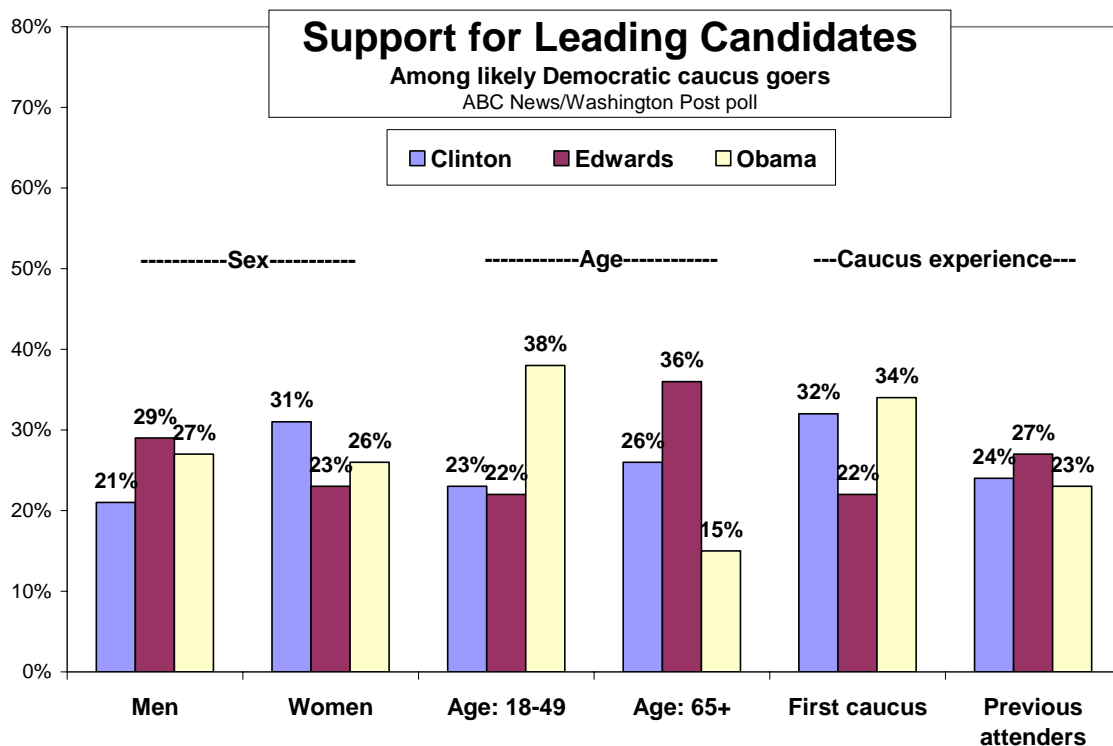
Clinton’s supported by just 15 percent of “new direction” voters in Iowa, vs. 39 percent nationally. This remains a key group for Obama; he gets 37 percent from “new direction” voters in Iowa (about the same as nationally). By contrast, among those more focused on strength and experience, Obama gets far less support, just 14 percent.

More important:	Choice of candidate:		
	Obama	Edwards	Clinton
Strength/experience	14%	21	38
New ideas/direction	37	31	15

Strength and experience are Clinton's attributes. She swamps her opponents especially on experience; 50 percent pick her as having the best background for the job, vs. just seven percent for Obama and 15 percent for Edwards. But she lags both of them in honesty and trustworthiness as well as likeability. And while Clinton nationally leads in her party by wide margins in understanding peoples' problems and in being "closest to you on the issues," Iowans divide much more closely on these among all three top candidates.

Clinton's supported by 31 percent of women in Iowa, compared with 21 percent of men, a gender gap not unlike the national figure; and, as nationally, she's stronger among lower-income voters. (Women also are 18 points more likely to be "very satisfied" with their choice of candidates, 61 percent to 43 percent.) But it's Obama who shows the most difference among population groups. He's got 38 percent support from likely caucus-goers under age 50 – leading Clinton and Edwards in this group – but just 15 percent support from senior citizens, a group in which Edwards leads.

Young people are notoriously hard to turn out, but Obama also leads among a more reliable voting group, highly educated adults. He's got 35 percent support from likely caucus-goers who have post-graduate degrees, compared with 19 percent among those who haven't gone beyond high school.



Obama also does better among Iowans who say it'll be their first caucus – 34 percent of them support him – than among those who say they've attended previously, 23 percent. The question again is to what extent newcomers do attend. (In the 2004 Iowa entrance poll, 55 percent said it was their first caucus, but that's partly because there hadn't been a highly contested Iowa caucus since 1988. In this poll, 31 percent say it'll be their first caucus.)

There are no significant differences among the top candidates in preferences among voters from union households, a sizable group in Iowa – 22 percent of likely caucus goers in this survey.

LIABILITIES – Looking at candidates' attributes underscores their liabilities as well as their strengths. In the most striking example, only a quarter of Obama's own supporters say he has the best experience in the field, as do just 45 percent of Edwards' supporters – compared with 89 percent of Clinton's. Indeed, Obama's own supporters are almost twice as likely to say Clinton has the best experience as to say Obama does.

But just 42 percent of Clinton's own backers call her the most likeable candidate, and just under half of her supporters (48 percent) call her the most honest and trustworthy. By contrast, 75 percent of Obama's supporters call him the most trustworthy, and 69 percent of Edwards' supporters say the same about their guy.

Who's the...	Choice of candidate:		
	Clinton	Obama	Edwards
Strongest leader			
Clinton	74%	19	24
Obama	10	59	9
Edwards	7	7	54
Best experienced			
Clinton	89	46	35
Obama	1	25	1
Edwards	2	10	45
Most likeable			
Clinton	42	1	6
Obama	22	68	19
Edwards	25	16	66

Clinton's pushbacks, again, are strength and experience. Three-quarters of her supporters call her the strongest leader in the race; among Edwards' supporters just 54 percent say he's the strongest leader (Obama, 59 percent). In a corollary, 73 percent of Clinton's supporters say she's the candidate best able to deal with the situation in Iraq, while barely over half of Obama or Edwards' supporters see their candidate as best on Iraq. And Iraq is the issue likely caucus-goers want to hear about most.

QUESTIONS – On issues, respondents in this poll were asked what questions they'd ask the candidates in a debate if they had the chance. Most common topics were the Iraq war,

mentioned by 32 percent, and health care, 21 percent, with all others in single digits. There aren't significant differences in vote preferences on the basis of these issues.

IOWA – To the extent there are differences between attitudes in Iowa and the nation as a whole, part may lie in the difference of Iowa. Among them, according to federal data:

- Just 55 percent of Iowans live in or around a major population center, compared with 83 percent of all Americans. Thirty-nine percent of Iowans live in outright rural areas, compared with 21 percent of the national population.

- Ninety-two percent of Iowans are non-Hispanic whites, compared with 67 percent of the nation's population.

- Among the country's 251 cities with more than 100,000 people, Iowa's biggest cities rank 107th (Des Moines) and 190th (Cedar Rapids).

- Four percent of Iowans were born in a foreign country, compared with 12 percent of all Americans. Of the 1.1 million immigrants admitted legally to the country in 2005, 4,536 settled in Iowa, fewer than one-half of one percent.

TURNOUT and SAMPLING – This survey was conducted by telephone calls to a random sample of Iowa homes with landline phone service. Adults identified as likely Democratic caucus goers accounted for 12 percent of respondents; with an adult population of 2.2 million in Iowa, that projects to caucus turnout of 260,000.

A more restrictive likely voter definition, winnowing down to half that turnout, or about what it was in 2004, does not make a statistically significant difference in the estimate – Edwards 28 percent, Obama 27 percent and Clinton 23 percent, all within sampling tolerances given the relatively small sample size. The more inclusive definition was used for more reliable subgroup analysis.

Other polls in Iowa have used registered voter lists rather than random-sample telephone calls; the approach can be more efficient in reaching people, but it also misses the substantial number of registered voters for whom there's no working phone number on the list. Some other Iowa polls also have a much higher number of "undecided" voters, a function of polling technique. The approach in ABC/Post polls is informed by the construct of the question – whom people would support "if the caucus were being held today."

THEIR WORDS – A fitting close to a study of likely Democratic caucus-goers in Iowa is to hear their own voices. Following are some of the questions they said they'd ask the candidates in a debate – questions that show the range of concerns to Iowans, as to all Americans, in the upcoming election.

"How would they get our boys back home quickly?"

“Tell me why my son has to go to Iraq to fight and why his buddies are all dead?”

“If you get us out of Iraq and al Qaeda takes over what will you do?”

“How will you defend the United States if you are going to withdraw the troops?”

“Can you tell how you would fund the cost on national healthcare?”

“When are you going to run all the illegal aliens back over the border?”

“What has happened to Osama? Everything is going to Iraq and Iraq had nothing to do with the World Trade Centers.”

“What are your thoughts on the legalization of gay marriage?”

“When are you going to start to bring jobs back to our country?”

“How will you straighten out the budget deficit?”

“Are you going to clean up the corruption in Washington?”

“Why haven’t we impeached Bush?”

“What are you going to do to help the struggling middle class and the poor?”

“I would ask about big companies taking over the farms. What would you do about that?”

“What is their plan to increase the graduation rate in inner-city schools?”

“What are you going to do about long-term Social Security?”

“What is the deal with global climate change?”

“If you're president would you quit promoting ethanol?”

“How are you going to change the country?”

“How do we know when you're telling the truth?”

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 26-31, 2007, among a random sample of 500 Iowan adults likely to vote in the 2008 Democratic presidential caucus. The results have a 4.5-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa. J. Ann Selzer, president of the public opinion research firm Selzer & Co. in Des Moines, consulted on project design.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. Vote registration.

2. How closely are you following the 2008 presidential campaign: very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not closely at all?

	--- Closely ---			---- Not closely ----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
7/31/07	88	42	46	12	9	3	*

3. Likelihood of attending caucus.

4. Choice of caucus.

5. If the Democratic caucus were being held today, and the candidates were: (Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Barack Obama, Bill Richardson, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, Dennis Kucinich, and Mike Gravel), who would you support?

NET LEANED VOTE:

	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	26
John Edwards	26
Barack Obama	27
Bill Richardson	11
Joe Biden	2
Chris Dodd	1
Dennis Kucinich	2
Mike Gravel	0
None of these (vol.)	2
No opinion	4

6. (IF NAMED CANDIDATE) Do you support (CANDIDATE) strongly, or somewhat?

7/31/07 - Summary Table

	Strongly	Somewhat	No opin.
All candidates NET	56	44	*
Hillary Clinton	60	39	1
John Edwards	53	47	0
Barack Obama	56	44	0

7. (IF NAMED CANDIDATE) Who would your second choice be?

NET LEANED VOTE:

	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	23
John Edwards	23
Barack Obama	26
Bill Richardson	12

Joe Biden	4
Chris Dodd	3
Dennis Kucinich	1
Mike Gravel	*
Other (vol.)	1
None of these (vol.)	4
Would not vote (vol.)	1
No opinion	3

First choice/Second choice NET

	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	48
John Edwards	48
Barack Obama	51
Bill Richardson	22
Joe Biden	5
Chris Dodd	4
Dennis Kucinich	3
Mike Gravel	*
Other (vol.)	1
None of these (vol.)	5
Would not vote (vol.)	1
No opinion	7

8. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the choice of candidates for the Democratic nomination for president - are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

	---- Satisfied -----			--- Dissatisfied ----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Very	opinion
7/31/07	89	53	36	10	9	1	1

9. Regardless of who you may support, which of the Democratic candidates do you think (ITEM) - (Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Barack Obama, Bill Richardson, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, Dennis Kucinich, or Mike Gravel)?

7/31/07 - Summary Table

	Clinton	Edwards	Obama	Richardson	Other/none/ no opin.
a. is the strongest leader	36	18	23	9	13
b. best understands the problems of people like you	22	25	27	9	17
c. is the most honest and trustworthy	14	24	30	8	24
d. has the best experience to be president	50	15	7	13	15
e. has campaigned the hardest in Iowa	30	29	22	3	16
f. has the best chance of getting elected president in November 2008	35	22	23	4	16
g. is closest to you on the issues	20	24	26	11	19
h. is best able to handle the situation in Iraq	29	16	17	12	25
i. is the most likeable	14	33	33	9	11

10-14 Held for release.

15. So far in the Democratic campaign, have you (ITEM)?

7/31/07 - Summary Table

	Yes	No	No opin.
a. Been called on the telephone by any of the campaigns	71	29	*
b. Attended a campaign event	40	60	0
c. Contributed money to any of the presidential candidates	17	82	*
d. Visited any of the candidates' Web sites on the Internet	33	67	0
e. Received e-mails from any of the campaigns	32	66	2

Trend: comparisons to Pew Research Center Iowa Democratic caucuses poll, December 2003.

a. Been called on the telephone by any of the campaigns

	Yes	No	No opin.
7/31/07	71	29	*
12/4/03	74	26	*

b. Attended a campaign event

	Yes	No	No opin.
7/31/07	40	60	0
12/4/03	34	66	*

c. Contributed money to any of the presidential candidates

	Yes	No	No opin.
7/31/07	17	82	*
12/4/03	20	79	1

d. Visited any of the candidates' Web sites on the Internet

	Yes	No	No opin.
7/31/07	33	67	0
12/4/03*	22	78	*

* 'No' includes 32 percent who don't go online.

e. Received e-mails from any of the campaigns

	Yes	No	No opin.
7/31/07	32	66	2
12/4/03*	27	73	*

* 'No' includes 32 percent who don't go online.

16. All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war with Iraq was worth fighting, or not? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Worth fighting -----			--- Not worth fighting ---			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
7/31/07	11	5	6	87	8	79	2

17. Have you attended any previous Iowa caucuses, or will this be your first caucus?

	Have attended	First caucus	No opinion
7/31/07	68	31	*

18. Which of these is more important to you in a candidate for president: (strength and experience) or (a new direction and new ideas)?

	Strength and experience	New direction and new ideas	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
7/31/07	39	49	11	*	1

19. (AMONG THOSE WITH A QUESTION) If you were attending a debate among the Democratic candidates and had a chance to ask them one question, what would it be?

	7/31/07
Iraq/war	32
Health care/health insurance/Medicare	21
Domestic policy mentions	9
Environment/global warming/energy issues	5
Foreign policy mentions	4
Future of the country/new direction for country	4
Economy/budget/deficit/trade	3
Personal finance/middle class issues/poverty	3
Immigration	3
Social security	3
Gov't reform/campaign finance/special interest	2
Social issues like abortion/gay marriage/religion	1
Terrorism	1
All other questions	11

END