

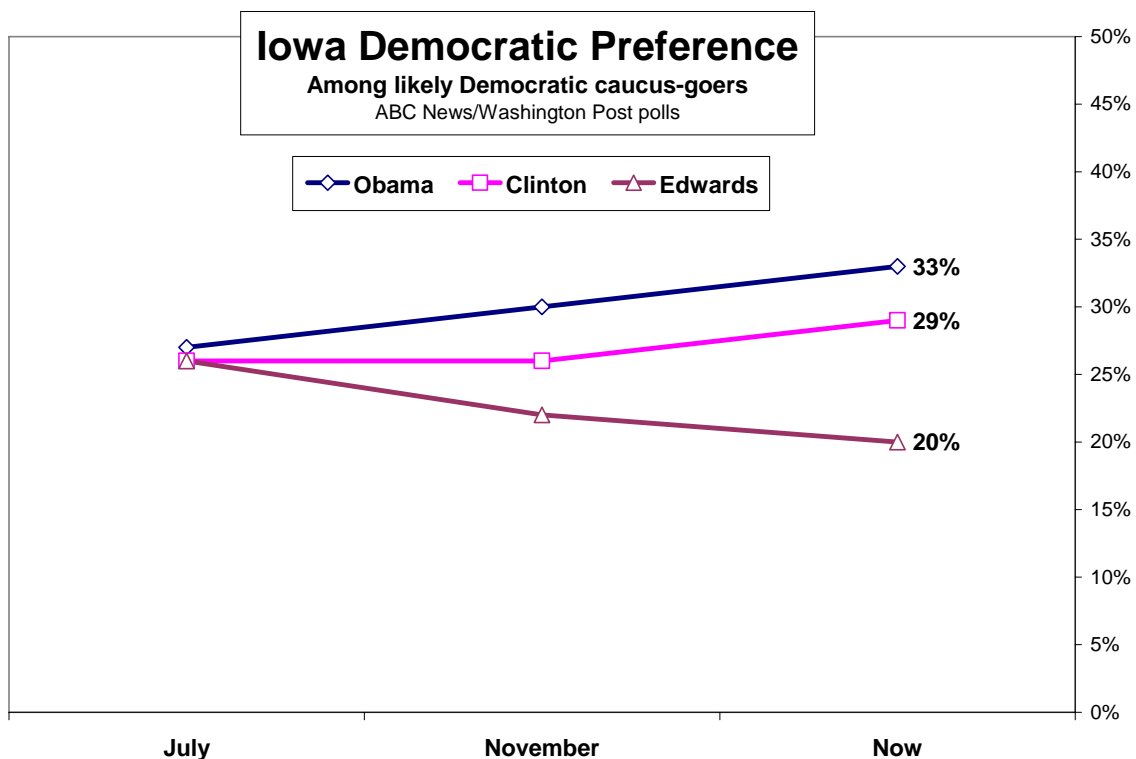
In Iowa Democratic Caucuses, Turnout Will Tell the Tale

Turnout will tell the tale of the Iowa Democratic caucuses, where Barack Obama's theme of a fresh start in the nation's politics is resonating strongly against the bulwarks of Hillary Clinton's campaign – strength, experience and electability.

Likely caucus-goers are increasingly polarized between these two themes. Obama's enlarged his already sizable lead among those looking mainly for new ideas and a new direction. But Clinton's gained among those focused on strength and experience, and has eased some of her recent negatives on forthrightness and empathy.

Clinton does better with voters who've definitely made up their minds, while Obama is stronger with changeable voters – still a third of the electorate. He may have more work to do to close the sale in the Iowa campaign's final weeks.

But Clinton has an equal challenge, motivating turnout; she's weaker, and Obama is stronger, among those who say they're absolutely certain to show up on caucus day. John Edwards, while trailing overall, also would benefit from low turnout by newcomers.

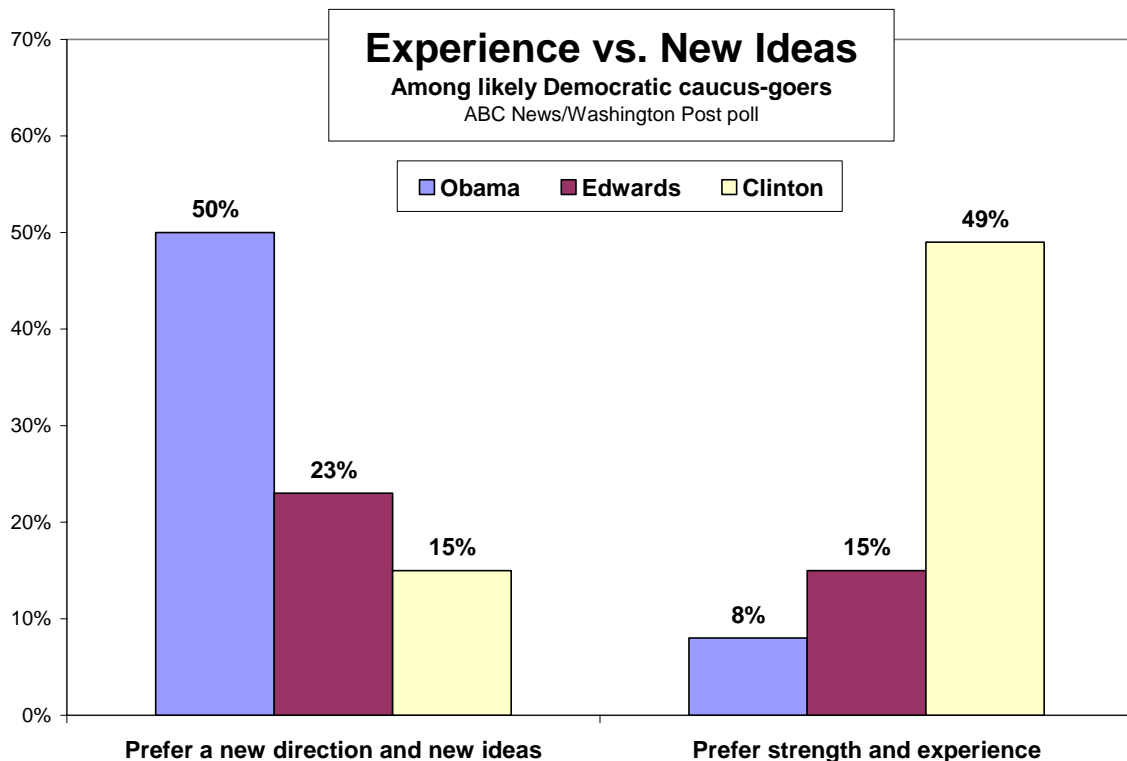


Currently, among likely Democratic caucus-goers in this ABC News/Washington Post poll, 33 percent support Obama, 29 percent Clinton and 20 percent Edwards, with single-digit support for the other Democratic candidates. That's similar to the 30-26-22 percent division in the last ABC/Post poll in Iowa a month ago.

Applying tighter turnout scenarios can produce anything from a 10-point Obama lead to a 6-point Clinton edge – evidence of the still-unsettled nature of this contest, two weeks before Iowans gather and caucus. And not only do 33 percent say there's a chance they yet may change their minds, nearly one in five say there's a "good chance" they'll do so.

Another factor is the Iowa Democratic Party's "viability" rule, in which, generally, candidates who garner less than 15 percent support in the first round of caucusing are dropped, and the contest continues without them. In this poll, when supporters of single-digit candidates are reallocated to their second choice among the top three, Obama goes to a lead, with 37 percent support; Clinton has 31 percent, Edwards 26 percent.

IDEAS and ELECTABILITY – Fifty-six percent of likely caucus-goers are looking mainly for "a new direction and new ideas," the root of Obama's support. He's backed by 50 percent of these voters, swamping Clinton by 3-1. But she comes back among those focused on "strength and experience," with 49 percent support to Obama's 8 percent.



The polarization between these groups has increased: Clinton's gained 11 points since last month among "strength and experience" voters, while Obama's gained 7 points among those focused on new ideas.

Obama's made notable gains elsewhere. For the first time he runs about evenly with Clinton in Iowa on electability: Thirty-five percent pick her as the candidate with the best chance to win in November, but 33 percent pick Obama – an 8-point gain for him from last month. He's also battled to an even race with Clinton as the candidate who's campaigned hardest in Iowa, a hard-won attribute in a state accustomed to retail politics.

Among groups, there are big divisions by age and education in the Iowa Democratic electorate: Obama leads Clinton by a wide 49-26 percent among likely caucus-goers age 18 to 39; Clinton, by contrast, leads Obama by 40-16 percent among seniors. Similarly, Obama leads by wide margins among college-educated Iowans; Clinton, among those without college degrees.

The race also continues to represent a battle of the sexes: Obama leads among men (with 33 percent, while Clinton and Edwards are about even, with 21 and 22 percent respectively), compared with a much closer Clinton-Obama race among women, 36-32 percent. (It helps Clinton that women account for a majority of likely caucus-goers.)

Clinton, meanwhile, has made progress fighting the notion that she's unwilling to speak her mind; 59 percent now say she is willing enough to say what she really thinks about the issues, up 9 points from last month. (Among those who say the opposite, however, Obama's increased his already big advantage – a further sign of polarization in the race.)

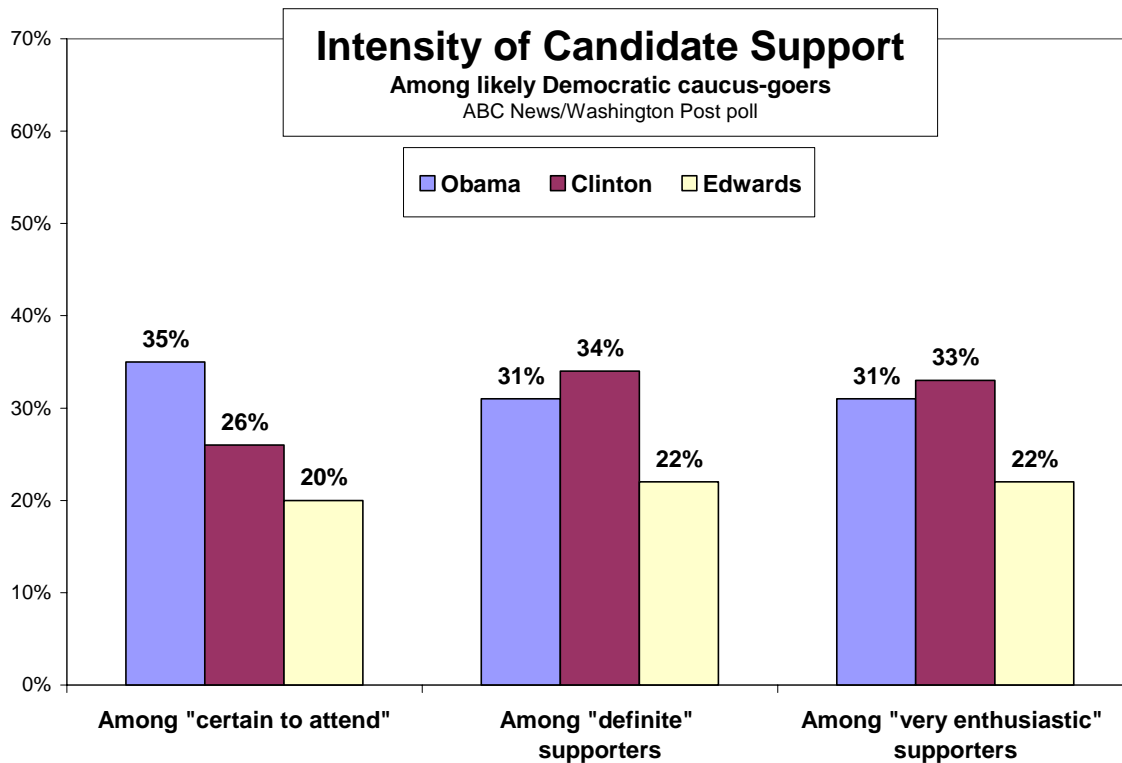
Clinton also has managed a slight, 5-point gain in empathy; 25 percent say she's the candidate who best understands their problems, approaching Obama's 31 percent. That's further evidence she's made some progress smoothing her campaign's recent rough spots.

DEFINITE/CERTAIN – Moreover, Clinton's support has solidified: Seventy percent of her supporters say they've definitely made up their minds whom to support, up 13 points from last month. Edwards' "definite" support similarly is up by 10 points, to 63 percent. Obama's, however, is unchanged at 55 percent definite.

Looking at these numbers another way, among "definite" voters Clinton has 34 percent support, up 7 points from last month; Obama has 31 percent, Edwards 22. Among the rest – changeable voters – Obama has 39 percent support, likewise up 7 points from last month; Clinton 24 percent, Edwards 20.

Fifty-nine percent of Clinton's supporters also say they're "very enthusiastic" about their choice; it's about the same, 56 percent, for Edwards, but 49 percent for Obama.

Still, if Clinton does better on enthusiasm and commitment, Obama pushes back with intention to vote: He leads Clinton by 35-26 percent among people who say they're "absolutely certain" to attend their caucus; it's about the opposite, 28-35 percent, among those who say they'll probably go. (Edwards gets 20 percent support in both groups.) That result underscores how key turnout will be.



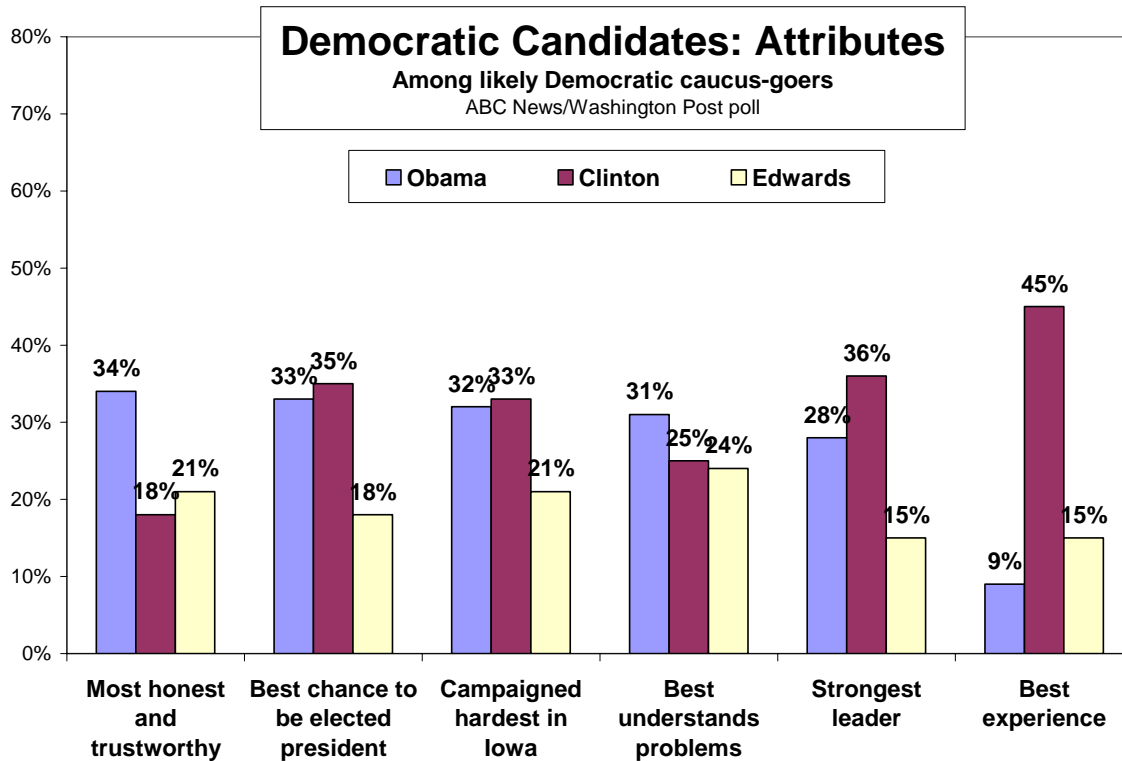
Another factor at play will be how many newcomers show up. Among people who say they've attended a previous caucus, the race is a three-way dead-heat – 26-25-24 percent for Obama-Clinton-Edwards. It's among first-timers that the contest shakes up – 42-33-15 percent among those three. How many first-timers appear, again, will be crucial.

Iowa Democrats do seem to be raring to go: In this survey 19 percent of the general public identified themselves as likely Democratic caucus-goers, up from 14 percent last month and far above usual turnout, 5 or 6 percent. (Intention to participate in the Republican caucuses is far lower.) As noted, models predicting lower turnout produce varying results depending on the factors included.

OTHER ISSUES/ATTRIBUTES – Clinton's single biggest advantage against Obama is on the attribute of having the best experience to be president – a 5-1 advantage, 45 percent to 9 percent, with a 7-point gain for Clinton from last month.

However, having the "best" experience may not be necessary; in another measure, 61 percent say Obama does have the kind of experience it takes to serve effectively. And those who say so support him over Clinton by a 3-1 margin.

Obama's single best attribute, and an important one, is in honesty and trustworthiness; he leads Clinton by 34-18 percent as best suited on this score, with Edwards at 21 percent. This is little changed from 31-15-20 percent last month; it continues as a significant weakness for Clinton and comparative strength for Obama.



On issues, Clinton continues to hold a significant (17-point) lead in trust to handle health care, one of the two top-cited concerns to likely caucus-goers. She has a more narrow, 7-point edge in trust to handle the economy; she and Obama run about evenly in trust to deal with the situation in Iraq. Among these, Iraq and health care now rank about evenly as the two top concerns, followed by the economy and education. As is often the case in primaries, though, the race seems more fueled by the candidates' personal attributes.

TONE – Lastly there's the tone of the campaign – which, perhaps surprisingly, is rated fairly well. Seventy percent of likely caucus-goers say the tone of the race has been mostly positive; 25 percent, about equally positive and negative. A mere 3 percent say the caucus campaign has been mostly negative in tone. Whether that holds, the next two weeks will tell.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Dec. 13-17, 2007, among a random sample of 652 adults likely to vote in the Iowa Democratic caucuses. The results have a 4-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

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
12/17/07	95	55	40	5	3	2	*
11/18/07	95	53	42	5	4	1	0
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, and Dennis Kucinich), who would you support?

NET LEANED VOTE:

	12/17/07	11/18/07*	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	29	26	26
John Edwards	20	22	26
Barack Obama	33	30	27
Bill Richardson	8	11	11
Joe Biden	4	4	2
Chris Dodd	1	1	1
Dennis Kucinich	1	2	2
Other (vol.)	*	1	0
None of these (vol.)	*	*	2
No opinion	3	3	4

*Asked Mike Gravel 11/18 and previous.

6. (IF NAMED CANDIDATE) Will you definitely support (NAME) as your first choice, or is there a chance you could change your mind and support someone else as your first choice? (IF CHANCE CHANGE MIND) Is there a good chance you'll change your mind, or would you say it's pretty unlikely?

	Definitely support	-Chance change mind -		No	
		NET	Unlikely	Good	opinion
12/17/07	63	33	16	18	4
11/18/07	55	43	23	20	2
Obama supporters					
12/17/07	55	40	23	17	5
11/18/07	56	43	22	21	1
Clinton supporters					
12/17/07	70	28	18	10	2
11/18/07	57	43	24	19	1
Edwards supporters					
12/17/07	63	33	12	21	4
11/18/07	53	43	27	16	4

7. (IF NAMED CANDIDATE) How enthusiastic are you about supporting (NAMED CANDIDATE) - very enthusiastic, fairly enthusiastic, not too enthusiastic, or not enthusiastic at all?

	--- Enthusiastic --			---- Not enthusiastic ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	
12/17/07	97	56	41	2	2	0	*
11/18/07	95	49	46	4	3	*	1
Obama supporters							
12/17/07	98	49	49	2	2	0	0
11/18/07	99	51	47	*	0	*	1
Clinton supporters							
12/17/07	95	59	35	5	5	0	*
11/18/07	96	49	47	4	4	0	0
Edwards supporters							
12/17/07	98	56	42	2	2	0	*
11/18/07	94	48	46	6	5	1	0

8-9. (IF RICHARDSON/BIDEN/KUCINICH/DODD SUPPORTER) If the only three viable candidates in your precinct were (Clinton), (Edwards) and (Obama), who would you support as your second choice?

5/8-9 NET

	12/17/07
Hillary Clinton	31
John Edwards	26
Barack Obama	37
Other (vol.)	*
None of these (vol.)	1
No opinion	4

10. What is the single most important issue in your choice for the Democratic candidate for president? (IF MENTIONED MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE) Is there one other issue that's nearly as important?

Top two important issues combined

	12/17/07	11/18/07
Iraq/War in Iraq	48	55
Terrorism/National security	3	1
Economy/Jobs	24	21
Education	16	10
Environment	3	4
Health care	46	50
Ethics/Honesty/Corruption in government	5	6
Immigration/Illegal immigration	6	6
Abortion	*	2
Morals/Family values	2	2
Federal budget deficit	1	2
Housing/Mortgages	0	*
Global warming	*	2
Social Security	2	5
Foreign policy	5	3
Iran/Situation in Iran	0	1
Taxes	2	2

Energy/Ethanol	2	3
Farming/Agriculture issues	1	1
None/Nothing	*	1
Other	15	12
No opinion	3	3

11. 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, or Dennis Kucinich)?

12/17/07 - Summary Table

	Clinton	Edwards	Obama	Richardson	Other/None/ No opinion
a. is the strongest leader	36	15	28	6	14
b. best understands the problems of people like you	25	24	31	7	14
c. is the most honest and trustworthy	18	21	34	7	20
d. has the best experience to be president	45	15	9	11	21
e. has campaigned the hardest in Iowa	33	21	32	1	14
f. has the best chance of getting elected president in November 2008	35	18	33	2	12

Trend:

a. is the strongest leader

	12/17/07	11/18/07	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	36	32	36
John Edwards	15	17	18
Barack Obama	28	27	23
Bill Richardson	6	10	9
Joe Biden	6	6	2
Chris Dodd	2	*	*
Dennis Kucinich	1	*	1
Mike Gravel	NA	0	0
All of them	1	*	*
None of them	1	1	2
No opinion	4	6	9

b. best understands the problems of people like you

	12/17/07	11/18/07	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	25	20	22
John Edwards	24	25	25
Barack Obama	31	30	27
Bill Richardson	7	9	9
Joe Biden	2	4	1
Chris Dodd	2	*	2
Dennis Kucinich	1	3	2
Mike Gravel	NA	0	*
All of them	2	2	1
None of them	2	3	4
No opinion	3	4	6

c. is the most honest and trustworthy

	12/17/07	11/18/07	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	18	15	14
John Edwards	21	20	24
Barack Obama	34	31	30
Bill Richardson	7	13	8
Joe Biden	4	4	2
Chris Dodd	3	1	2
Dennis Kucinich	3	5	3
Mike Gravel	NA	*	*
All of them	3	4	4
None of them	4	3	5
No opinion	3	4	9

d. has the best experience to be president

	12/17/07	11/18/07	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	45	38	50
John Edwards	15	16	15
Barack Obama	9	11	7
Bill Richardson	11	16	13
Joe Biden	10	9	5
Chris Dodd	3	1	2
Dennis Kucinich	*	1	*
Mike Gravel	NA	0	0
All of them	2	1	2
None of them	3	1	3
No opinion	4	6	4

e. has campaigned the hardest in Iowa

	12/17/07	11/18/07	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	33	34	30
John Edwards	21	25	29
Barack Obama	32	26	22
Bill Richardson	1	2	3
Joe Biden	*	1	0
Chris Dodd	1	*	1
Dennis Kucinich	0	0	0
Mike Gravel	NA	0	0
All of them	7	4	3
None of them	*	*	1
No opinion	5	8	10

f. has the best chance of getting elected president in November 2008

	12/17/07	11/18/07	7/31/07
Hillary Clinton	35	39	35
John Edwards	18	22	22
Barack Obama	33	25	23
Bill Richardson	2	2	4
Joe Biden	1	2	1
Chris Dodd	1	*	*
Dennis Kucinich	0	1	*
Mike Gravel	NA	0	0
All of them	1	*	1
None of them	1	1	2
No opinion	7	8	12

12. Regardless of who you may support, who do you trust most to handle (ITEM)?

12/17/07 - Summary Table

	Clinton	Edwards	Obama	Richardson	Other/None/ No opinion
a. The economy	33	21	26	7	13
b. Health care	40	22	23	4	11
c. The situation in Iraq	27	14	28	8	22

Trend:

a. The economy

	12/17/07	11/18/07
Hillary Clinton	33	28
John Edwards	21	21
Barack Obama	26	27
Bill Richardson	7	7
Joe Biden	3	5
Chris Dodd	2	2
Dennis Kucinich	1	2
Mike Gravel	NA	0
All of them	2	1
None of them	1	*
No opinion	3	6

b. Health care

	12/17/07	11/18/07
Hillary Clinton	40	36
John Edwards	22	27
Barack Obama	23	20
Bill Richardson	4	6
Joe Biden	1	2
Chris Dodd	2	1
Dennis Kucinich	2	1
Mike Gravel	NA	*
All of them	1	*
None of them	2	1
No opinion	4	4

c. The situation in Iraq

	12/17/07	11/18/07	7/31/07*
Hillary Clinton	27	23	29
John Edwards	14	15	16
Barack Obama	28	26	17
Bill Richardson	8	15	12
Joe Biden	11	8	5
Chris Dodd	2	1	2
Dennis Kucinich	1	3	1
Mike Gravel	NA	*	0
All of them	2	1	2
None of them	2	3	5
No opinion	4	5	12

* "Regardless of who you may support, which of the Democratic candidates do you think is best able to handle the situation in Iraq?"

13. Regardless of who you may support, do you think Hillary Clinton is or is not willing enough to say what she really thinks about the issues?

	Is	Is not	No opinion
12/17/07	59	37	4
11/18/07	50	45	5

14. Regardless of who you may support, do you think Barack Obama does or does not have the kind of experience it takes to serve effectively as president?

	Does	Does not	No opinion
12/17/07	61	35	4

15-22. Held for release.

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

	Have attended	First caucus	No opinion
12/17/07	55	45	0
11/18/07	63	36	*
7/31/07	68	31	*

24. 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 opinion
12/17/07	33	56	10	1	1
11/18/07	33	55	11	*	1
7/31/07	39	49	11	*	1

25. Held for release.

26. How would you describe the tone of the Democratic caucus campaign so far? Would you say it has been mostly positive, about equally positive and negative, or mostly negative in tone?

	Mostly positive	Equally positive and negative	Mostly negative	No opinion
12/17/07	70	25	3	2

27. Held for release.

END