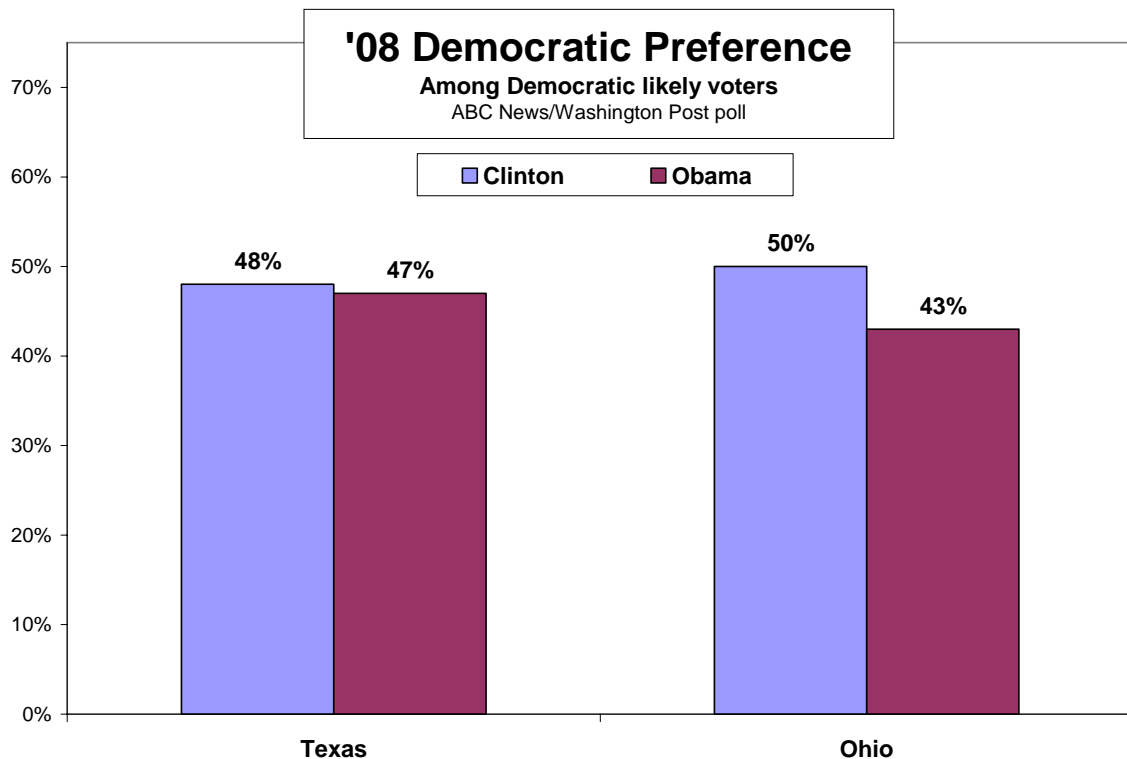


## **Obama Leads on Electability in Close Texas and Ohio Races**

Trailing on electability, Hillary Clinton is running in a dead heat with Barack Obama in the Texas Democratic primary and holds a single-digit lead in Ohio, lifted there by lunch-bucket voters and party regulars.

Both March 4 primaries have been described as critical to Clinton, who's lost 10 contests straight, including Tuesday's Wisconsin primary. Differing demographic and political profiles in Texas and Ohio change pieces of the puzzle – but both contests look close, with more than enough moveable voters to tip the balance either way.

With about two weeks until the primary, this ABC News/Washington Post poll finds a 48-47 percent Clinton-Obama race among likely voters in Texas, 50-43 percent in Ohio. A quarter in Texas, and a third in Ohio, could change their minds or are undecided.



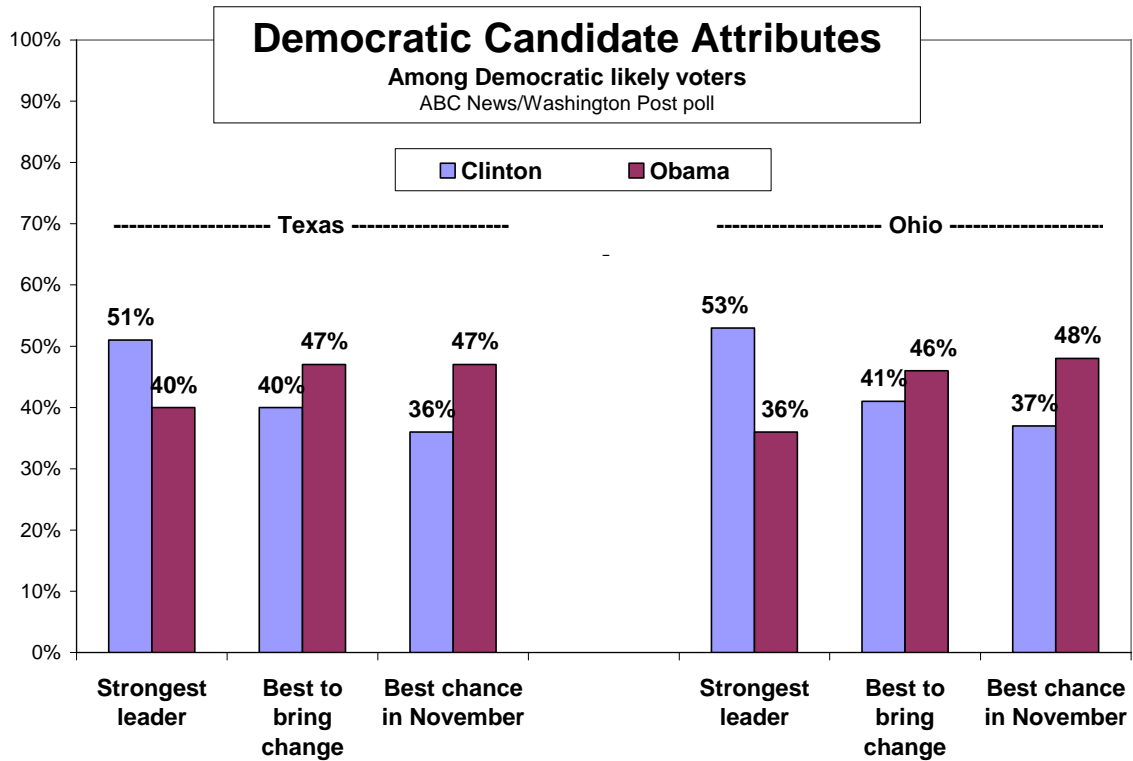
In Texas, Clinton's being kept competitive by support from Hispanics; she likely needs them to turn out in more-than-usual numbers, as they did in California, which she won Feb. 5. In Ohio she's benefiting from a greater number of Democratic Party regulars than

in Texas, fewer college-educated or higher-income voters, and support from union households.

In both states, senior citizens are crucial to Clinton’s side; independents and younger voters, to Obama’s. And he’s taken a lead over Clinton on electability, a point he may try to drive home, along with his mantle of “change,” in the days ahead.

**ELECTABILITY** – Obama beats Clinton in the perception that he’s got the best chance of winning in November by 47-36 percent in Texas and 48-37 percent in Ohio. He trounced Clinton as more electable in Wisconsin; he’s also made broad strides on electability in national ABC/Post polling, moving up from a 43-point deficit in mid-December to just 5 points earlier this month.

Obama’s lead on electability peaks among college graduates, a key group for him; nearly six in 10 of them say he has the best chance to win in November. Even women, less-educated voters and mainline Democrats – Clinton groups – roughly divide between her and Obama on who’s most electable. Indeed among seniors, her best group, well under half say Clinton’s got the best chance in November.

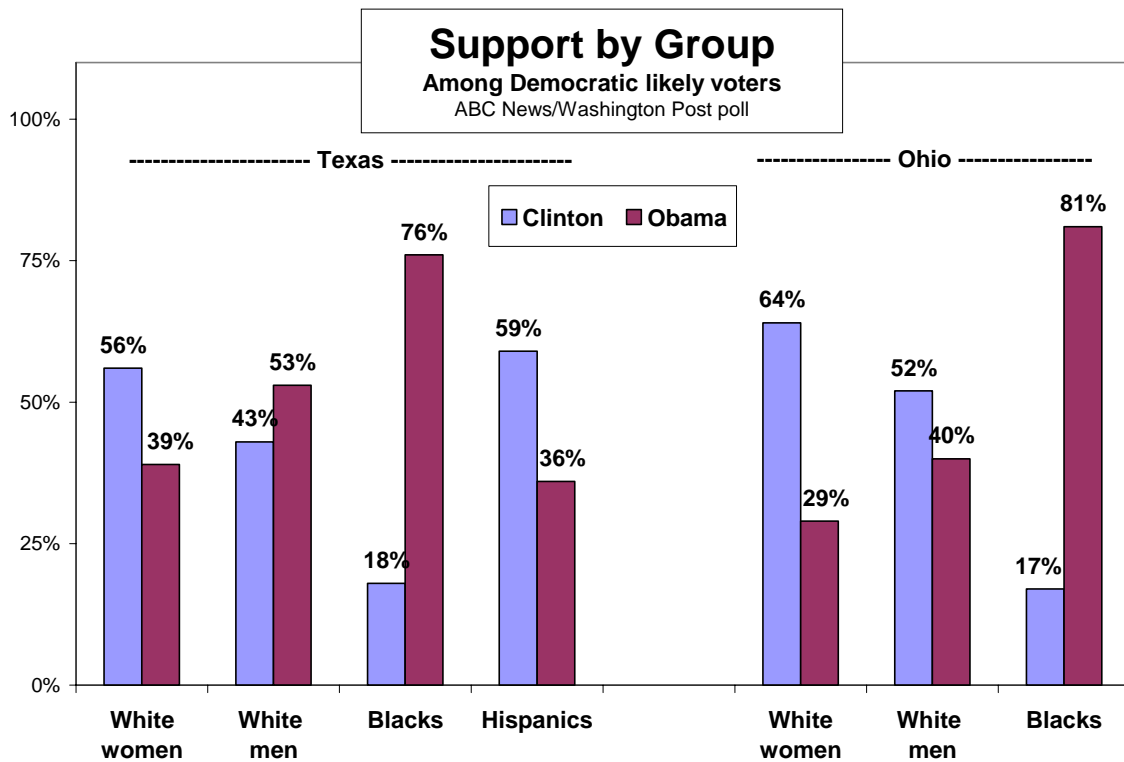


For her part, Clinton continues to prevail as the strongest leader, by 53-36 percent in Ohio and 51-40 percent in Texas. That edge extends to some issues; she’s ahead in both states in trust to handle the economy as well as health care, her signature issue. Clinton has a slight edge in Ohio in trust to handle the Iraq war; in Texas they’re even on it.

Voters in both states split about evenly on the key dynamic of the race, a “new direction and new ideas” vs. strength and experience; that mirrors the last national poll. It cuts overwhelmingly to vote: Eight in 10 voters who place more importance on “strength and experience” favor Clinton; about as many “new direction” voters go to Obama.

Obama is slightly stronger among “new direction” voters in Texas (80 percent support him) than in Ohio (75 percent) – part of the reason he’s a bit behind there.

GROUPS – Clinton does especially well among women, and particularly among white women, one of her core support groups, in Ohio; Obama makes more inroads among white women in Texas (39 percent support), though not up to his unusual 47 percent support from white women in the Wisconsin primary Tuesday.



Hispanics are key in Texas; they favor Clinton by 59-36 percent, about the same as the average in exit polls across all primaries to date (61-35 percent). By contrast, it’s a much closer 50-46 percent contest among whites in Texas, while African-Americans there are favoring Obama by a 4-1 margin, 76-18 percent. That, too, resembles the outcome in all primaries to date (79-17 percent for Obama among blacks), but it’s lower than some of his high-water marks, including his 91 percent support from blacks in Wisconsin.

Obama continues to do better with college graduates (who are less numerous among likely voters in Ohio than in Texas), with higher-income voters (also less numerous in Ohio); and with younger voters, particularly in Texas, albeit not at the level he achieved in Wisconsin. He leads by 59-39 percent among those under age 40 in Texas; Clinton

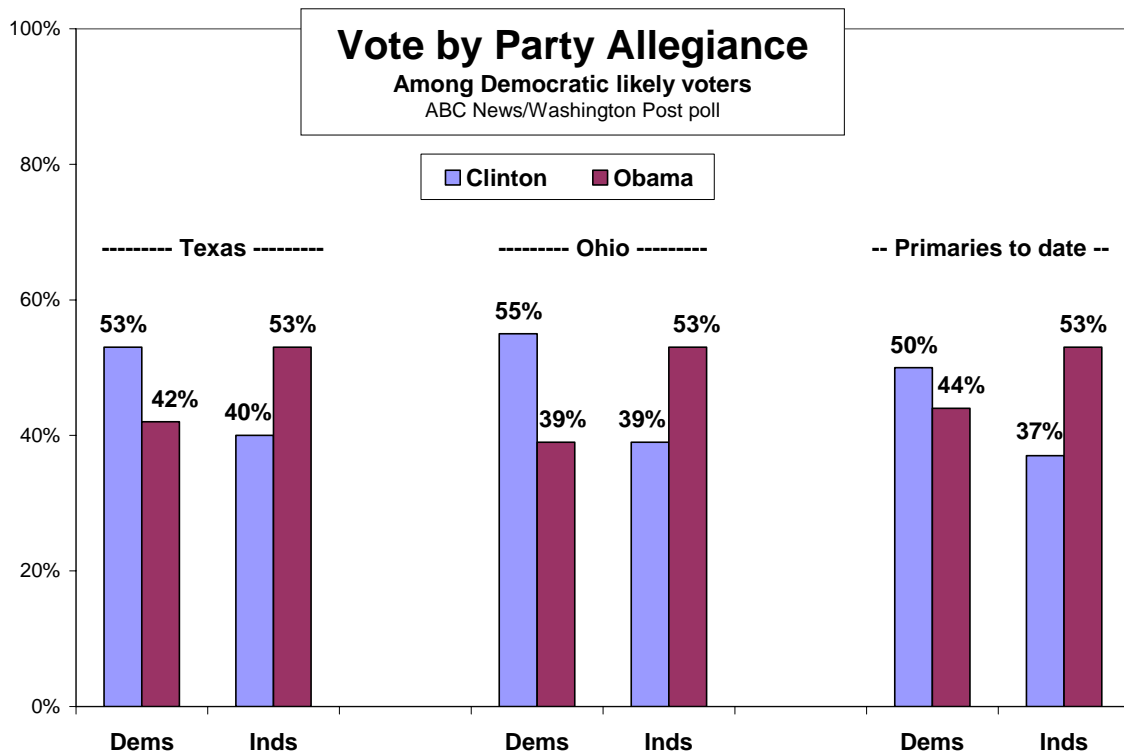
comes back with 60-25 percent support among seniors there. Seniors also are her best age group by far in Ohio, 57-33 percent.

Eleven percent of seniors in Texas are undecided, more than in any other group. But among likely voters who have a preference, it's the younger people in Texas who are most apt to say they may change their minds – 29 percent of under 40s. (And about as many in Ohio.)

The age gap shows up other ways. Texas seniors are much more apt to say they'd be "very satisfied" with Clinton than with Obama as the nominee; young people are more likely to be very satisfied with Obama. There are similar divisions by race. (In Ohio there's less of a gap by age, but a somewhat bigger one by race.)

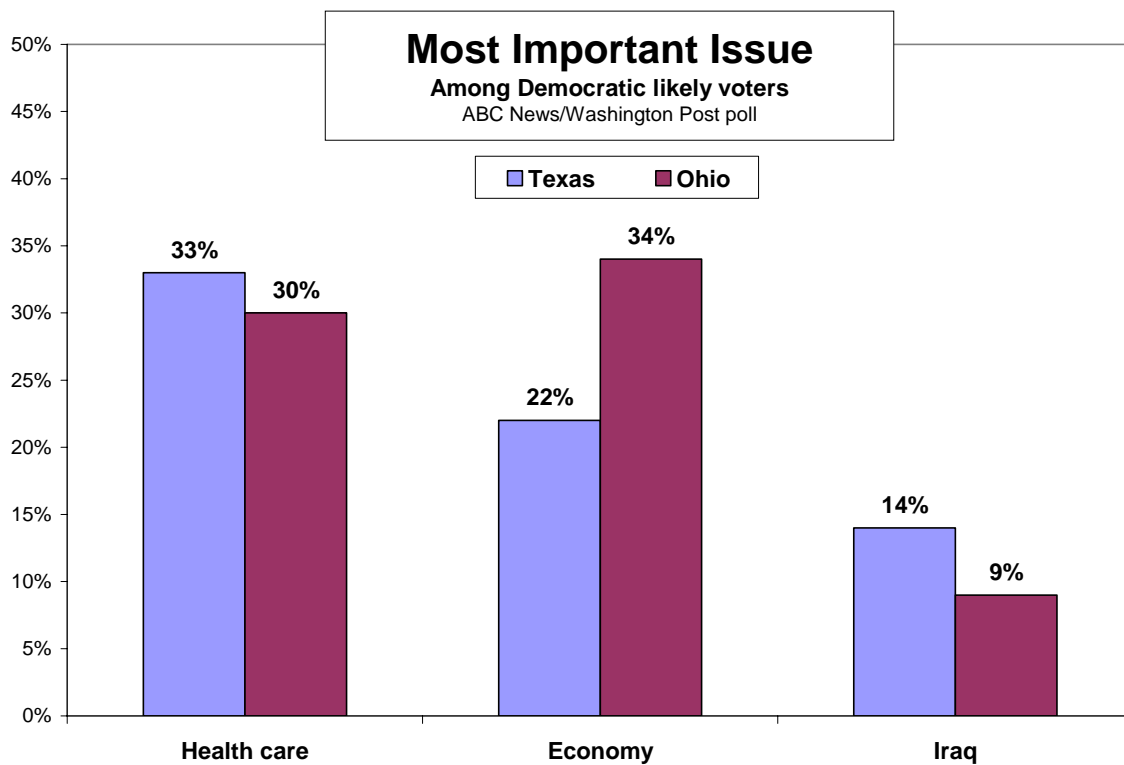
A quarter of likely voters in Ohio are from union households; they back Clinton by 53-37 percent, vs. a narrower 49-45 percent division among those from non-union households. Clinton lost union households voters to Obama in Wisconsin, though across all primaries to date she's won them by 50-43 percent. There are very few union voters in Texas.

**PARTY TIME** – Political allegiance also counts for much. Clinton leads among party regulars in Ohio (55-39 percent) and Texas (53-42 percent) alike; Obama owes his competitiveness to independents who intend to vote in these open primaries. He leads among independents by 53-39 percent in Ohio and 53-40 percent in Texas.



Those are similar to previous primaries this year: Clinton's won Democrats overall, by 50-44 percent; Obama's prevailed among independents, 53-37 percent.

ISSUES – There's a difference on issues between these states: The economy and health care rank about evenly as the most important issue to Democratic likely voters in Ohio, cited by 34 percent and 30 percent, respectively. In Texas, 33 percent cite health care, with the economy second, 22 percent.



Though demographics and personal attributes matter more, issue priorities do divide voters somewhat; in Texas, Clinton's supported by 53 percent of those who cite health care as their No. 1 issue, and 51 percent of those who cite the economy, vs. just 39 percent of those who say it's Iraq. Her lead among economy voters in Ohio, 52-37 percent, is bigger than her lead overall; that's not so among health care voters.

CHANGE/EXPERIENCE – As noted, Obama trounces Clinton among voters who care most about change, and she beats him as broadly among those more focused on experience. But another measure fleshes out this equation, and raises a potential vulnerability for Obama. Two-thirds in both states say Clinton, if elected, would “do enough” to bring needed change to Washington; fewer, 56 percent in Ohio and 53 percent in Texas, say Obama has the kind of experience it takes to serve effectively as president.

Obama still has the majority's endorsement on experience – but at a considerably lower level than Clinton's acceptability on change. (In only a few groups does Obama fall short of a majority on experience, such as seniors and Hispanics in Texas.)

	Obama :		Clinton:	
	Experienced enough?		Do enough to bring change?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ohio	56%	40	69%	26
Texas	53	43	67	30

Additionally, while Obama leads as the most electable in November, more than six in 10 likely voters in both states say either candidate could beat John McCain, the front-running Republican. In Texas, seniors and Hispanics say by 2-1 that only Clinton could beat McCain; African-Americans, by 3-1, say only Obama could do so. In Ohio, college graduates, independents and blacks pick only Obama by especially wide margins.

ENTHUSIASM and TURNOUT – Enthusiasm for the candidates – potentially a factor in turnout – is running about equal for Clinton and Obama, albeit a bit lower in Ohio than in Texas. That’s especially true for Clinton; in Texas 65 percent of her supporters describe themselves as “very enthusiastic” about supporting her; in Ohio, 53 percent. (Obama’s numbers are 62 percent in Texas, 56 percent in Ohio.)

Turnout, naturally, is crucial. Clinton leads in Texas and Ohio alike among people who say they voted in the 2004 primary; new voters are better for Obama. Given their sharp differences, the relative mix of Hispanics and blacks voting in Texas is equally critical; Clinton’s support may rely on a boost in turnout by Hispanics over 2004, when they accounted for 24 percent of voters. On the other hand, Clinton arguably could prevail without a big Hispanic turnout, if instead seniors showed up in large numbers; they accounted for a sizable 26 percent of voters in the Texas Democratic primary in 2000, but then dropped to 19 percent in 2004.

Likely voters in this poll account for 24 percent of the adult population in Texas and 30 percent in Ohio. While actual turnout at those levels is unlikely, vote preference results are similar in likely voter models positing much lower turnout.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 16-20, 2008, among a random sample of 611 Democratic likely voters in Ohio and 603 in Texas. The Ohio survey included an oversample of 27 African-Americans for a total of 104 blacks (weighted back to their share of the total population). Interviews in Texas were conducted in English or Spanish. The overall results in each state 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 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
2/20/08	Ohio	84	39	45	16	10	6	*
	Texas	82	43	39	18	12	6	*

3-4. Likelihood of voting/which primary.

5. If the Democratic primary were being held today, would you vote for (Hillary Clinton) or (Barack Obama)?\*

NET LEANED VOTE AMONG LIKELY VOTERS

		Hillary Clinton	Barack Obama	Other (vol.)	None of these (vol.)	No opinion
2/20/08	Ohio	50	43	1	1	6
	Texas	48	47	1	1	3

\*Past tense if already voted

6. (IF NAMED CLINTON/OBAMA AND NOT YET VOTED) Will you definitely vote for (NAME), or is there a chance you could change your mind and vote for (OTHER NAME)? (IF CHANCE CHANGE MIND) Is there a good chance you'll change your mind, or would you say it's pretty unlikely?

2/20/08 - Summary Table

		Definitely vote for	-Chance change mind - NET	Good	Unlikely	No opinion
Hillary Clinton						
	Ohio	72	27	11	16	2
	Texas	73	24	14	9	3
Barack Obama						
	Ohio	70	26	14	12	4
	Texas	79	21	12	9	*

7. (IF SUPPORT CLINTON/OBAMA) How enthusiastic are you/were you about voting for (NAMED CANDIDATE) - very enthusiastic, fairly enthusiastic, not too enthusiastic, or not enthusiastic at all?

2/20/08 - Summary Table

		-- Enthusiastic ---			-- Not Enthusiastic --			No
		NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	At all	opin.
Hillary Clinton								
	Ohio	91	53	38	8	6	2	2
	Texas	94	65	29	6	3	2	*
Barack Obama								
	Ohio	92	56	36	6	6	*	2
	Texas	94	62	32	6	4	2	*

8. What is the single most important issue in your choice for the Democratic candidate for president?

	----2/20/08----		-2/1/08-
	Ohio	Texas	National*
Iraq/War in Iraq	9	14	26
Terrorism/National security	1	1	*
Economy/Jobs	34	22	41
Education	2	3	2
Environment	*	0	1
Health care	30	33	10
Ethics/Honesty/Corruption in government	3	3	2
Immigration/Illegal immigration	*	4	1
Abortion	*	0	*
Morals/Family values	1	*	1
Federal budget deficit	1	*	*
Housing/Mortgages	*	0	*
Global warming	*	0	*
Social Security	*	1	*
Foreign policy	*	1	1
Taxes	*	*	1
Energy/Ethanol	0	0	1
Change	3	2	0
None/Nothing	0	1	*
Other	9	9	6
No opinion	7	6	6

\*Among leaned Democrats, "...in your choice for president"

9. How would you feel if (INSERT NAME) wins the nomination - very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

2/20/08 - Summary Table

	--- Satisfied ---			-- Dissatisfied --			No
	NET	Very	Smwht.	NET	Smwht	Very	opinion
Hillary Clinton							
Ohio	77	42	35	21	13	8	2
Texas	75	42	33	24	10	14	1
Barack Obama							
Ohio	71	39	32	27	13	14	2
Texas	77	44	33	21	10	11	2

10. Regardless of who you support, who do you think (ITEM) - (Clinton) or (Obama)?

2/20/08 - Summary Table

	Clinton	Obama	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. is the strongest leader					
Ohio	53	36	5	2	4
Texas	51	40	6	1	2
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	58	34	2	1	4
b. has the best chance of getting elected president in November					
Ohio	37	48	7	3	5
Texas	36	47	10	3	4
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	47	42	3	2	7
c. best understands the problems of people like you					



Ohio	44	40	8	5	3
Texas	43	43	7	5	1
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	48	41	5	2	4

d. would do the most to bring needed change to Washington

Ohio	41	46	5	4	3
Texas	40	47	7	3	3
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	42	49	3	2	3

11. Regardless of who you support, who do you trust most to handle (ITEM) - (Clinton) or (Obama)?

2/20/08 - Summary Table

	Clinton	Obama	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
a. The war in Iraq					
Ohio	45	39	6	6	4
Texas	43	44	5	6	2
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	48	40	6	3	3
b. The economy					
Ohio	53	34	6	5	3
Texas	51	38	4	4	2
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	52	38	4	1	5
c. Health care					
Ohio	54	34	5	4	3
Texas	54	37	4	4	1
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	60	32	4	1	3
d. Immigration issues					
Ohio	40	38	5	8	8
Texas	42	40	5	7	5
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	43	39	5	5	8

12. 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
2/20/08 Ohio	45	47	7	*	1
Texas	44	46	9	1	1
Compare to national, 2/1/08:	46	45	7	*	2

13. Regardless of who you 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
2/20/08 Ohio	56	40	4
Texas	53	43	4
Compare to national, 1/12/08:	53	41	6

14. Regardless of who you support, do you think Hillary Clinton would or would not do enough to bring needed change to Washington?

	Would	Would not	No opinion
2/20/08 Ohio	69	26	5

Texas	67	30	3
Compare to national, 1/12/08:	75	23	3

15. Do you think only (Clinton) could beat the Republican John McCain in November, only (Obama) could beat McCain, either could beat McCain, or neither could?

	Only Clinton	Only Obama	Either	Neither	No opinion
2/20/08 Ohio	12	14	63	7	3
Texas	14	15	62	7	2

\*\*\*END\*\*\*