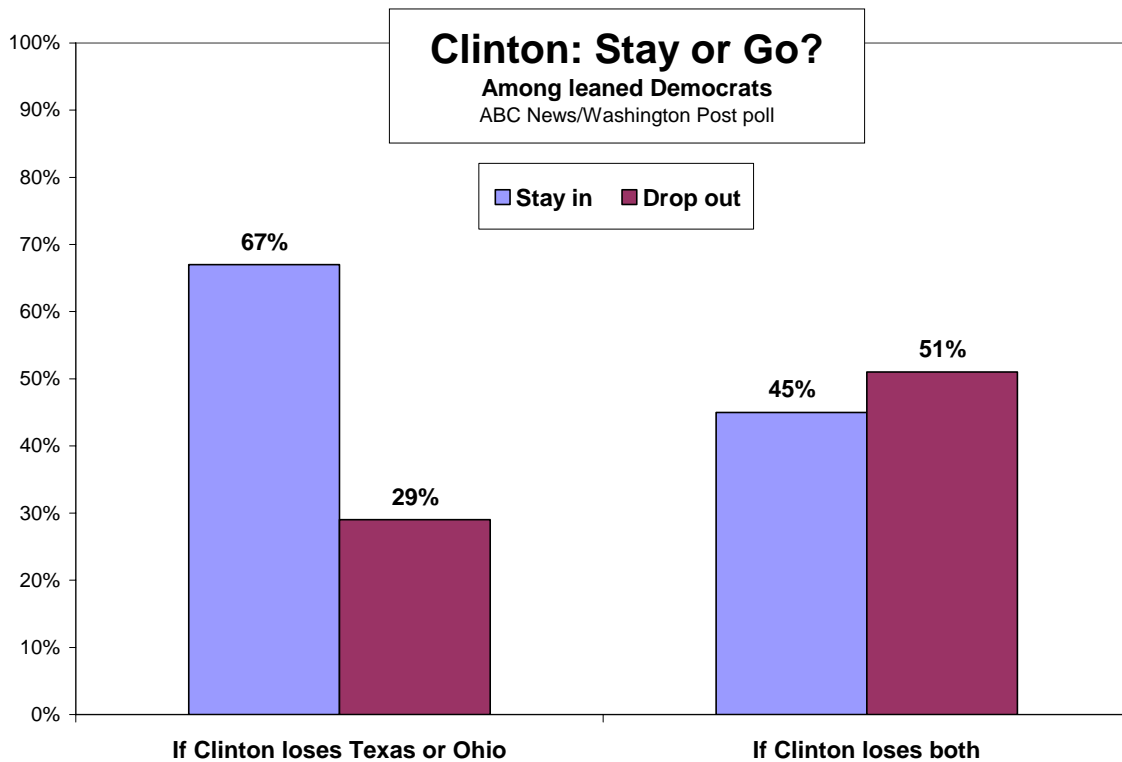


Should She Stay or Should She Go?

Democrats by more than a 2-1 margin say Hillary Clinton should stay in the presidential race even if she loses either the Texas or Ohio primary today. But if she fails in both, fewer than half say they'd want her to fight on.

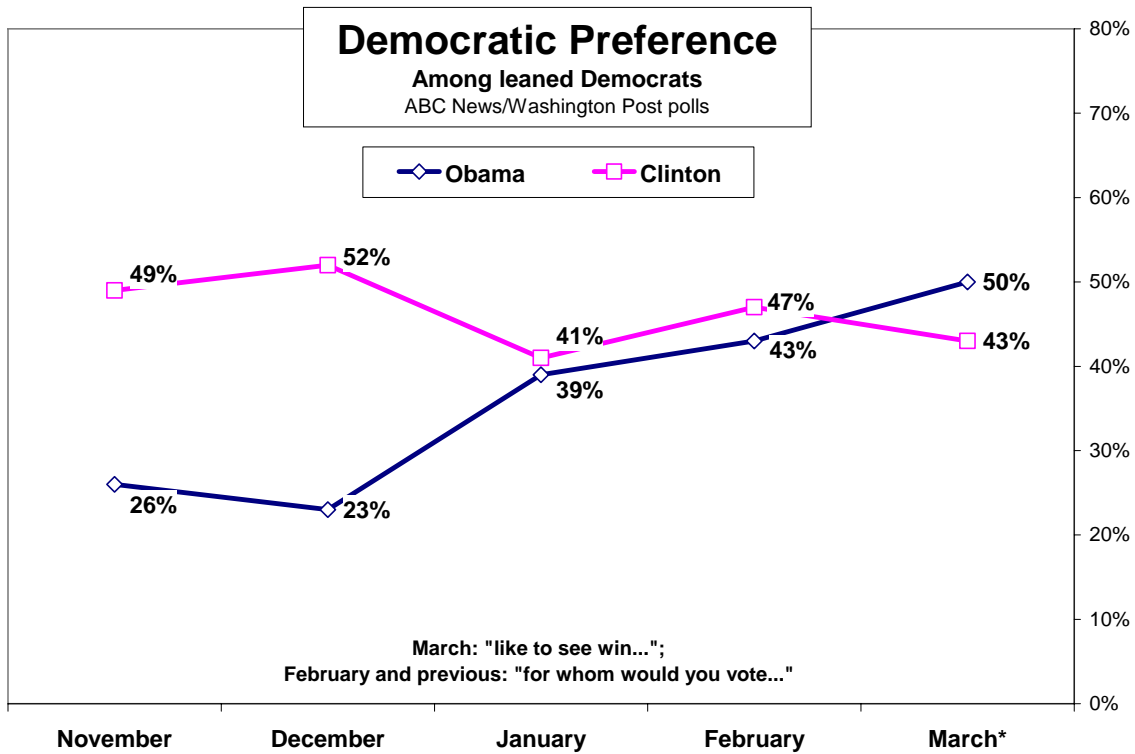
Many, in that case, have another idea for Clinton: the vice presidency.

The lead overall is now Barack Obama's. With his string of 11 consecutive primary and caucus victories, Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents by a 50-43 percent margin would like to see him nominated. That's a remarkable reversal: Clinton held a vast lead in ABC News/Washington Post polls before the Iowa caucuses. Campaigns clearly matter.



Despite the overall preference for Obama, Democrats by a very wide 67-29 percent say Clinton should stay in the race even if she loses either Texas or Ohio. But if she were to lose both, far fewer say they'd want her to continue – 45 percent, with 51 percent saying otherwise.

Prospective attitudes, of course, can shift with events – as vote preferences themselves have shown. At the same time, some within the Clinton campaign, as well as other Democrats, have described Ohio and Texas as must-wins.



VEEP – If she were to fail, many Democrats have a runner-up prize in mind. Asked whom they'd like Obama to pick for vice president, should he win the nomination, 36 percent name Clinton, a broad level of agreement on an open-ended question.

An additional 11 percent of Democrats suggest John Edwards, 3 percent Bill Richardson, 1 percent Al Gore and 1 percent Joe Biden. Clinton leads among all groups, notably among women – 41 percent pick her for vice president, compared with 28 percent of men.

There's less agreement on the Republican side, where John McCain has a chance to wrap up the nomination today. Seventeen percent of Republicans and GOP-leaning independents say that if he does win they'd like to see his last standing opponent, Mike Huckabee, on the ticket, half as many as pick Clinton on the Democratic side.

Eleven percent of Republicans prefer Mitt Romney, with seven other possible picks registering 1 to 3 percent.

In the Republican race a plurality has no opinion on a hypothetical McCain running-mate. Among Democrats, about as many have no opinion as pick Clinton – evidence in both cases that it’s the top of the ticket that carries the weight.

STAY or GO – It’s notable that nearly half of Obama’s supporters say that a Clinton loss in either Ohio or Texas should not be enough to force her out of the race; it could be that these Democrats simply are enjoying the contest. (Moderates who prefer Obama, rather than liberals, in particular say she should stay in.)

If she were to lose both states, far fewer Obama supporters – 26 percent – say she should keep running. There’s also attrition among Clinton’s own supporters – if she loses one state, 91 percent say she should fight on; if she loses both states, 69 percent.

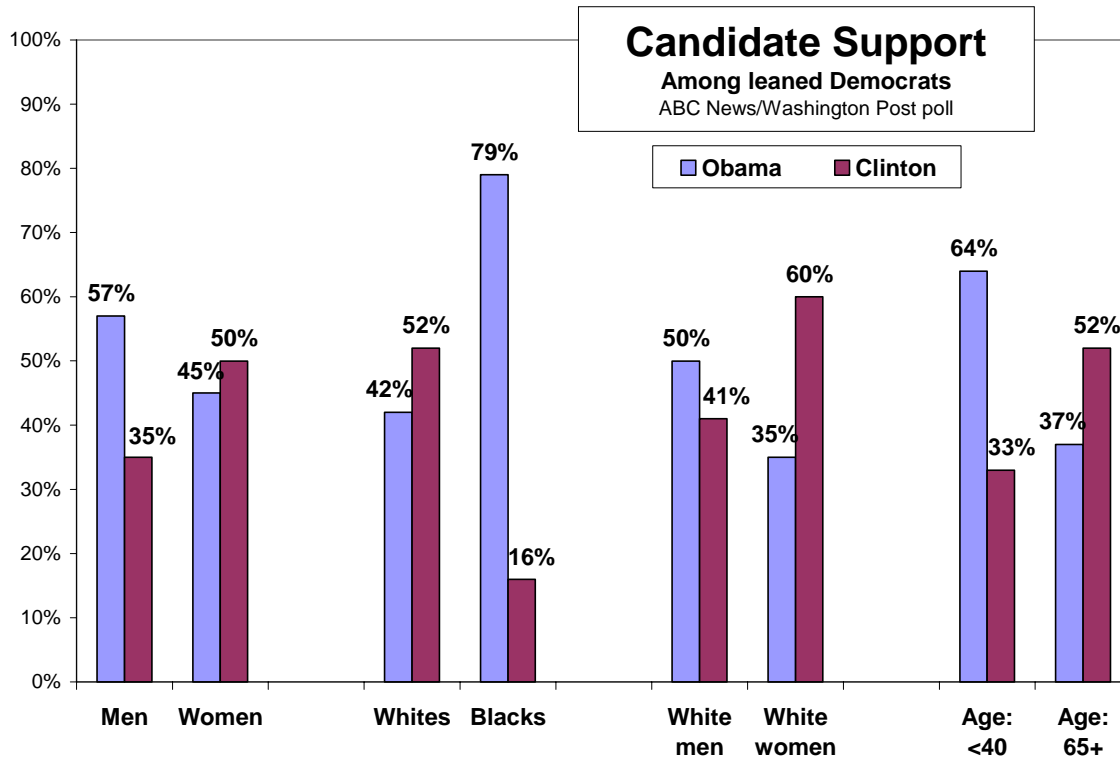
Two groups, in particular, shift from saying Clinton should stay if she loses one race to saying she should go if she loses both: White men and high-income Democrats. If she were to lose one state, 68 percent of white men say she should remain in the race; if she were to lose both, that drops to 36 percent, a 32-point drop. The decline among white women is much smaller, 19 points.

Similarly, the decline among people with household income over \$100,000 is 31 points, compared to just a 13-point drop in those with incomes under \$35,000.

	If Clinton...				"Stay in" diff.
	Loses TX or OH Stay in	Drop out	Loses both Stay in	Drop out	
All	67%	29	45%	51	22 points
Obama supporters	46	51	26	73	20
Clinton supporters	91	6	69	25	22
White men	68	29	36	63	32
White women	74	20	55	39	19
Income >\$100K	68	29	37	56	31
Income <\$35K	65	30	52	45	13 "

GROUPS – Rather than measuring vote preference, since 36 states have held their contests by now, this poll instead asked Democrats which candidate they’d like to see win the nomination. Obama does best in his core support groups: younger, better-educated and higher-income Democrats, men and those looking for new ideas.

Obama leads Clinton by 79-16 percent among African-Americans, almost exactly matching his margin in primaries to date. Critically, he has a 50-41 percent edge among white men, a swing group in this year’s primaries. Clinton, for her part, still is favored by a wide margin among white women, 60-35 percent, and by seniors, 52-37 percent.



The competing themes of experience vs. a new direction continue to animate the contest; among those Democrats who are looking chiefly for a “new direction and new ideas” more than six in 10 would like to see Obama win the nomination; among those more focused on strength and experience, two-thirds prefer Clinton. The difference in this poll is that “new direction” voters are more prevalent than ever.

In one other change, Obama has more support in this poll from mainline Democrats than from independents. That could in part be because more Americans than usual are identifying themselves as Democrats, with previously Democratic-leaning independents, energized by the campaign, now associating themselves with the party.

	Preference for Democratic Nomination		
	Clinton	Obama	Obama lead
Leaned Dems	43%	50%	+7
Men	35	57	+22
Women	50	45	-5
Whites	52	42	-10
Blacks	16	79	+63
White men	41	50	+9
White women	60	35	-25
Age <40	33	64	+31
Age 65+	52	37	-15

College grad	40	57	+17
Non-college	44	49	+5
<\$35K	50	46	-4
\$100K+	42	55	+13
Democrats	42	52	+10
Independents	49	47	-2
Prefer: Strength/ experience	66	27	-39
New ideas/ new direction	33	63	+30

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 28-March 2, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,126 adults, including an oversample of African-Americans for a total of 215 black respondents (weighted back to their correct share of the national population). The results have a 3-point error margin for the full sample, 4 points for the 629 Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents and 5 points for the 402 Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. 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).

1-4 Held for release.

5. (ASKED OF LEANED DEMOCRATS) Who would you like to see win the Democratic nomination for president this year - (Hillary Clinton) or (Barack Obama)?

NET LEANED PREFERENCE

	Hillary Clinton	Barack Obama	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
3/2/08	43	50	1	3	2

6-11 Held for release.

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
3/2/08	45	46	7	1	1
2/1/08	51	39	7	1	1
1/12/08	47	43	9	*	1

12/9/07	54	38	6	*	1
11/1/07	49	41	8	1	1
9/30/07	52	40	7	1	1
7/21/07	50	41	6	*	2

13-15 Held for release.

16. (ASKED OF LEANED DEMOCRATS) As you may know, the Texas and Ohio Democratic primaries will be held next Tuesday. If Clinton wins one of these primaries but loses the other, should she (stay in the race), or (drop out)?

	Stay in the race	Drop out	No opinion
3/2/08	67	29	4

17. (ASKED OF LEANED DEMOCRATS) If Clinton loses both the Texas and Ohio primaries, should she (stay in the race), or (drop out)?

	Stay in the race	Drop out	No opinion
3/2/08	45	51	4

18. (ASKED OF LEANED DEMOCRATS) If Obama is the Democratic nominee for president, who would you like him to choose as his vice presidential running-mate?

	3/2/08
Hillary Clinton	36
John Edwards	11
Bill Richardson	3
Al Gore	1
Joe Biden	1
Other	11
Up to him	5
No opinion	34

19. (ASKED OF LEANED REPUBLICANS) If McCain is the Republican nominee for president, who would you like him to choose as his vice presidential running-mate?

	3/2/08
Mike Huckabee	17
Mitt Romney	11
Condoleezza Rice	3
Colin Powell	2
Fred Thompson	2
Rudy Giuliani	2
Joe Lieberman	2
Mark Sanford	1
Mike Bloomberg	1
Other	13
Up to him	3
No opinion	43

20 Held for release.

END