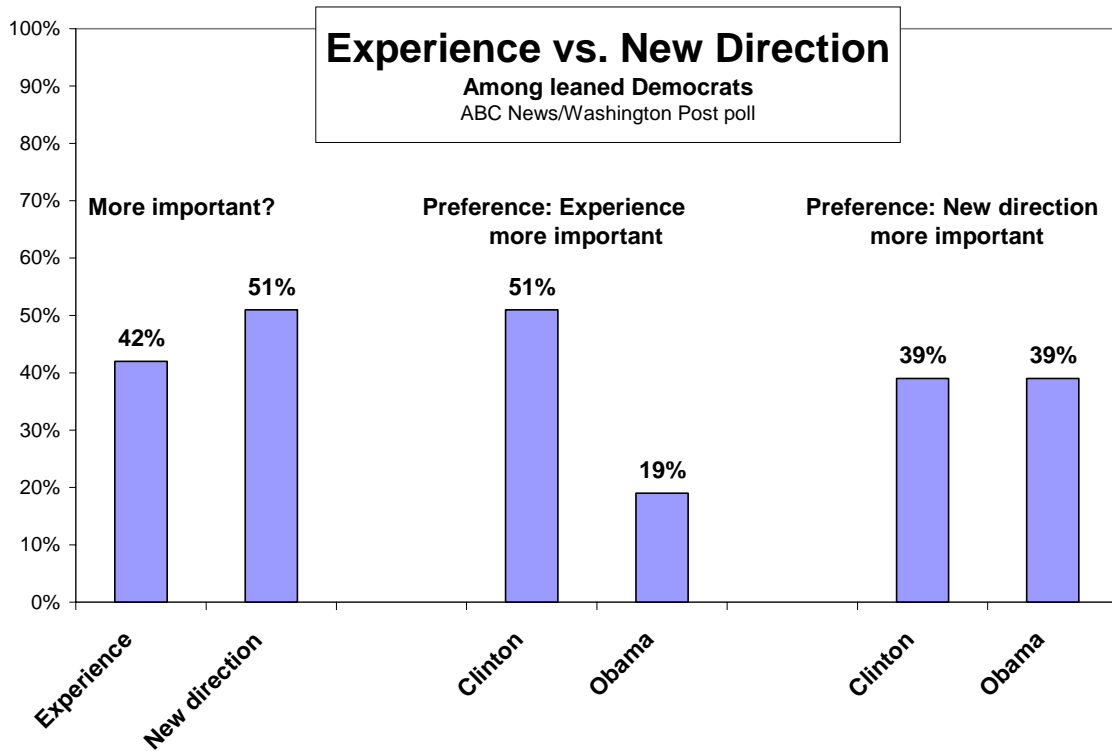


# Experience Trumps for Clinton; 'New Direction' Keeps Obama Going

A steady hand outscores a fresh face in uncertain times, much to the benefit of Hillary Clinton in the Democratic race for president. But demand for a new direction is strong nonetheless – a lurking threat to her front-running candidacy.

Clinton and Barack Obama are tied for support among Democrats who chiefly seek “a new direction and new ideas” in the nation’s leadership. By contrast she trounces him by more than 30 points among those looking more for strength and experience, maintaining the overall advantage she’s held all year in ABC News/Washington Post polls.

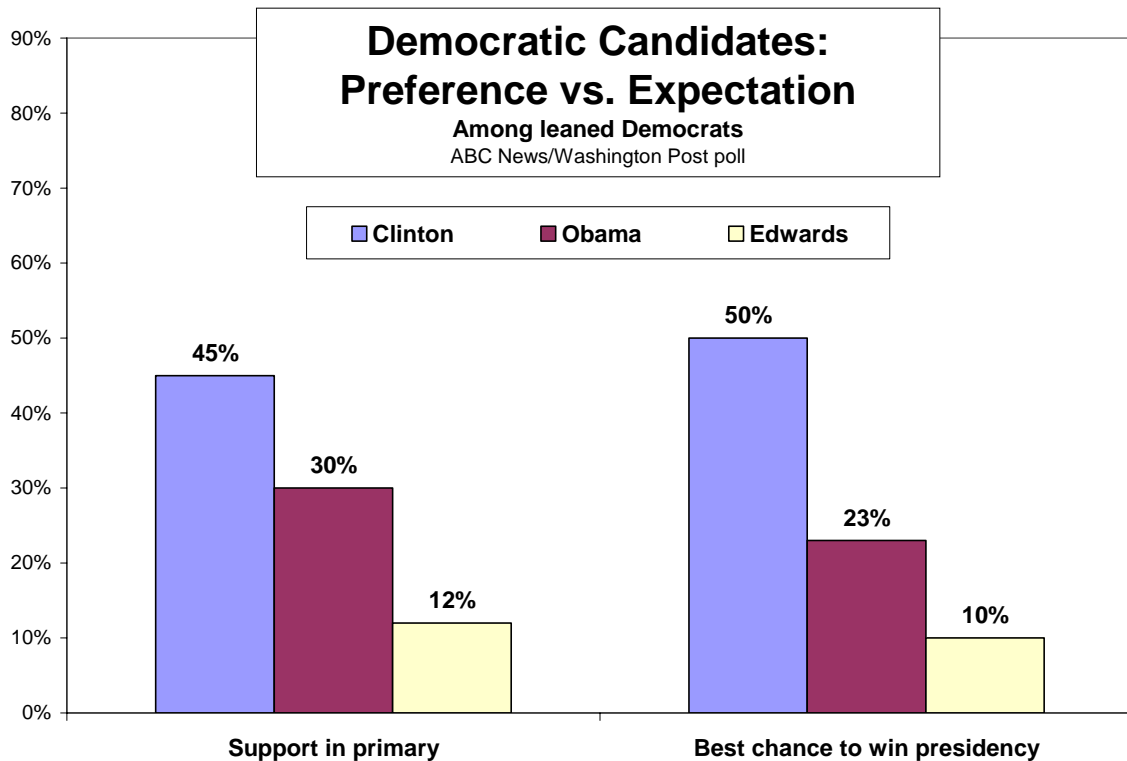
The challenge for Clinton is that a new direction and new ideas actually are more valued than strong leadership and experience, by 51 percent to 42 percent, among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents. That means her strongest cards are in a weaker suit; if Obama were able either to challenge her on strength and experience, or – more likely – better capitalize on his “new direction” image, the contest could tighten.



As things stand, Clinton’s now supported by 45 percent of leaned Democrats, Obama 30 percent, John Edwards 12 percent, with all others in the single digits. These numbers have been remarkably steady since February. (Putting Al Gore in the mix does the most damage to Clinton, knocking six points off her support, though she’d still hold a double-digit lead.)

**STRENGTH and ELECTABILITY** – One change is a surge in “strong” support for each of the major candidates, suggesting a hardening of positions as the campaign progresses. Sixty-eight percent of Clinton’s supporters now strongly back her, up 15 points to a new high. Fifty-six percent of Obama’s backers are strongly behind him, up 13 points from last month.

With Clinton’s continued lead comes an aura of electability, at least in her own party. Fifty percent of leaned Democrats pick her as the candidate who has the best chance to win in November, more than twice as many as name Obama. Indeed three in 10 of Obama’s own supporters see Clinton as having the better chance to win in November.

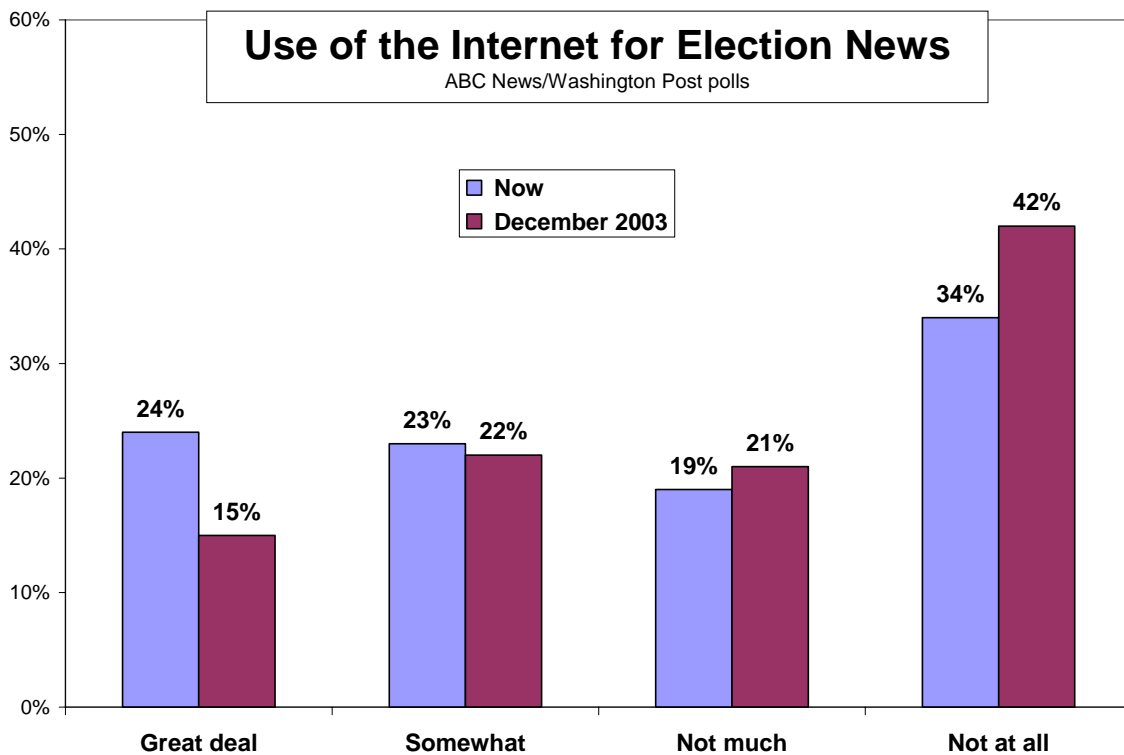


In all just 54 percent of Obama’s supporters think he has the best chance to win in a general election contest. By contrast, 78 percent of Clinton’s backers say she’s got the best shot against the eventual Republican nominee. (Republicans, for their part, are far less likely to see Clinton as the Democrats’ strongest candidate.)

Who has the best chance in November?		
	Clinton	Obama
Among:		
All leaned Democrats	50%	23
Clinton supporters	78	8
Obama supporters	29	54
All leaned Republicans	35	33

Tonight’s Democratic debate – their fourth this year – may not have much effect. Leaned Democrats by more than a 2-1 margin (69 percent to 31 percent) say they have not watched any of the debates so far. And vote preferences are essentially identical among those who have watched the debates, and those who have not.

ONLINE – A feature of tonight’s debate is its use of the Internet, with questions for the candidates offered by users of the video sharing site YouTube. That’s still a new activity: In a Washington Post/Kaiser/Harvard poll in May, 17 percent of adults said they use video-sharing sites for information about politics; four percent use them “a lot.” That compares with 85 percent who use television news for political information, 53 percent “a lot.”



But the Internet’s role is rising: Forty-seven percent in this poll say they use the Internet (either a great deal or somewhat) for news or information about political candidates, up from 37 percent in an ABC/Post poll in December 2003. Use peaks among younger

adults (66 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds go online for candidate news, compared with 23 percent of seniors), as well as among better-educated and higher-income Americans.

While young people are much more apt to use the Internet for campaign information, by other measures they remain, as usual, less politically engaged – for instance, less apt than their elders to be registered to vote, to be following the campaign very closely or to have watched any of the debates so far.

	Among all adults		
	Age 18-29	Age 30-64	Age 65+
Use Internet			
for election news	66%	47	23
Registered to vote	66	87	92
Watch debates	17	26	43
Following campaign			
very closely	14	23	33

Politically, use of the Internet for candidate news peaks among liberals and among supporters of Obama, who’s had notable fundraising success online. Sixty percent of his supporters go online for political news, compared with 47 percent of Clinton’s.

Obama’s support is higher among Internet users than among non-users (37 percent vs. 24 percent); that’s because Internet users better fit his support profile (younger, liberal). Use of the Internet itself does not significantly predict support for Obama, when controlled for age, education, ideology and other demographic factors.

**GROWTH** – Clearly there’s room for growth in use of the Internet for political information, both overall and in intensity of use. The number of adults who don’t use the Internet for political information at all still exceeds the number who use it “a great deal,” 34 percent to 24 percent.

As things stand, 48 percent of Americans say the Internet plays more of a positive role in the campaign, “because it provides easy and direct access to information about the candidates”; but 39 percent see its role as more negative, “because so much information there is unchecked or unreliable.” Naturally there’s a huge division on this question among users and non-users, as well as by the related factors of age and education.

**DYNAMICS** – As noted, the Democratic contest has been steady: Clinton has led Obama by 15 or 16 percentage points in each of four ABC/Post polls since he formally entered the race in February. Her 45 percent and his 30 percent support both are numerically their best in ABC/Post polls. Edwards has 12 percent support; he hit 17 percent in April.

But there are changes beneath the surface: One, as noted, is possible hardening of positions as shown by the top candidates’ growing “strong” support. Another is that Clinton has smoothed her support profile between the sexes. Last month she led Obama

by 2-1 among women, and tied him among men; this month her edge among women is less overwhelming, but she's recovered among men.

There's also an indication that some of Obama's early novelty may have subsided. In the February and April ABC/Post polls, he came nearest to Clinton among Democrats who were very closely following the race. In the last two polls, in June and now, that's no longer so. Closer interest has not continued to align with better numbers for Obama.

GROUPS – At the same time, these candidates continue to divvy up important Democratic constituencies. Obama has a slight numerical lead (within sampling tolerances) among African-Americans, and comes close to Clinton among liberals, both core Democratic groups. Obama runs evenly with Clinton, moreover, among college-educated leaned Democrats – and education is a strong predictor of voting.

Clinton has her biggest leads among low-income and low-education groups (not the most reliable voters) and conservatives (not a big group in the Democratic Party). But she also leads particularly among mainline Democrats, 50-31 percent, as opposed to Democratic-leaning independents; and among seniors, who do tend to turn out. Obama is much more competitive among independents who lean Democratic, a group that can be difficult to get to the polls in primaries – with the notable exception of the New Hampshire primary.

	Support among leaned Democrats		
	Clinton	Obama	Edwards
All	45%	30	12
Men	40	26	18
Women	49	33	7
Whites	44	29	12
Blacks	40	46	6
Democrats	50	31	9
Dem-leaning indeps.	34	30	17
Liberals	43	36	14
Moderates	41	32	10
Conservatives*	50	22	11
Age 18-29*	44	39	6
Age 65+	53	19	9
High school/less	51	24	11
College grad.	37	36	15

\*June and July data combined

EDWARDS – Edwards' support profile, while fairly flat and barely in the double digits, does include some differences. He does more than twice as well among men as women (18 percent support vs. seven percent), possibly a reason his wife has been touting his credentials on women's issues. Despite a populist campaign message based on economic

justice, his support is numerically lowest – single digits – among lower-income Democrats, young adults and blacks.

Edwards does not crack into second place in any individual group, though he essentially ties Obama among married men – 20 percent for Edwards, 23 percent for Obama (and 44 percent for Clinton).

COMFORT – Clinton would make history as the first woman presidential nominee, Obama as the first African-American. Most Americans are at least somewhat comfortable with that: Eighty-six percent describe themselves as entirely or somewhat comfortable with an African-American president, 79 percent with a woman president.

There are slight partisan differences on a black president, but bigger ones on the notion of a woman president: While 89 percent of Democrats describe themselves as comfortable with a woman president, that falls to 62 percent of Republicans, mainly because it’s just 54 percent among conservative Republicans. They may be thinking specifically about Clinton, who for years has been particularly unpopular among conservatives.

Comfortable with:	NET	Entirely	Somewhat
A woman president	79%	54	25
A black president	86	56	30
An Hispanic president	74	44	31

It’s noteworthy that while substantial numbers of Americans say they’d be at least somewhat comfortable with a black or woman president (or Hispanic – 74 percent), considerably fewer would be “entirely” comfortable with any of these – 56, 54 and 44 percent respectively. Should either current Democratic frontrunner win the nomination, the dynamics of race and sex could prove critical in the general election ahead.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 18-21, 2007, among a random national sample of 1,125 adults. Additional interviews were conducted with an oversample of randomly selected African-Americans for a total of 210 black respondents. The results have a three-point error margin for the full sample and four points for the sample of 606 Democrats and Democratic-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/pollvault.html>.

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

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

25. If you honestly assessed yourself, thinking in general about (ITEM) president of the United States, is that something you'd be entirely comfortable with, somewhat comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable or entirely uncomfortable?

7/21/07 - Summary Table

	----Comfortable----			---Uncomfortable---			No opin.
	NET	Ent.	Smwt.	NET	Smwt.	Ent.	
a. a woman	79	54	25	20	9	10	1
b. an African-American	86	56	30	12	7	5	1
d. an Hispanic	74	44	31	24	11	13	2

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

	----- Closely -----			----- Not closely -----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not too	At all	
7/21/07	70	22	48	30	20	10	*
6/1/07	66	18	48	34	22	13	*
4/15/07	66	20	45	34	20	14	*
2/25/07	65	20	44	35	25	10	*
Early 2004:							
10/29/03	54	15	39	45	30	15	0
9/13/03	56	16	40	44	27	17	*
Early 2000:							
12/15/99	45	12	33	55	31	24	*
10/31/99	61	16	45	38	25	13	*
Among leaned Dems:							
7/21/07	75	23	52	25	18	7	0
6/1/07	67	19	48	33	21	12	0
4/15/07	68	22	46	32	21	11	*
2/25/07	67	21	46	33	25	8	*
Early 2004*							
10/29/03	53	13	40	47	29	18	0
9/13/03	63	19	44	37	24	13	0
4/30/03	37	8	29	63	33	30	0
*"the race for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination"							
Among leaned Reps:							
7/21/07	66	23	44	34	22	11	0
6/1/07	65	16	50	34	24	10	*
4/15/07	68	22	46	31	17	14	1
2/25/07	66	22	44	34	26	8	0

27. (ASKED OF LEANED DEMOCRATS) If the 2008 Democratic presidential primary or caucus in your state were being held today, and the candidates were: (Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Barack Obama, Al Gore, Bill Richardson, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, Dennis Kucinich, or Mike Gravel), for whom would you vote?

NET LEANED VOTE:

	7/21/07	6/1/07	4/15/07	2/25/07	1/19/07	12/11/06
Hillary Clinton	39	35	37	36	41	39
Barack Obama	28	23	20	24	17	17
Al Gore	14	17	17	14	10	10
John Edwards	9	8	14	12	11	12
Bill Richardson	2	2	3	3	1	2
Joe Biden	2	2	2	1	3	2
Chris Dodd	*	1	*	*	*	*

Dennis Kucinich	1	1	1	*	1	NA
Mike Gravel	0	*	*	0	*	NA
John Kerry	NA	NA	NA	NA	8	7
Other (vol.)	*	*	*	*	1	*
None of these (vol.)	2	4	3	3	2	2
Would not vote (vol.)	2	1	*	1	*	1
No opinion	2	5	2	3	3	4

\*Asked Clark 4/15 and previous, Vilsack 2/25 and previous, Kerry 1/19 and previous, Bayh 12/11

28. (ASKED OF GORE SUPPORTERS) If Gore does not run, for whom would you vote?

NET LEANED VOTE IF NO GORE

	7/21/07	6/1/07	4/15/07	2/25/07
Hillary Clinton	45	42	41	43
Barack Obama	30	27	25	27
John Edwards	12	11	17	14
Bill Richardson	3	2	3	3
Joe Biden	2	2	2	2
Chris Dodd	1	1	*	*
Dennis Kucinich	1	2	1	*
Mike Gravel	0	*	*	*
Other (vol.)	1	*	*	*
None of these (vol.)	2	4	3	4
Would not vote (vol.)	2	1	1	1
No opinion	2	6	5	4

\*Asked Clark 4/15 and previous, Vilsack 2/25

29. (IF NAMED CLINTON OR OBAMA, Q27) Do you support (CANDIDATE) strongly, or somewhat?

7/21/07 - Summary Table

	Strongly	Somewhat	No opin.
Hillary Clinton	68	32	0
Barack Obama	56	43	1

Trend:

Hillary Clinton			
7/21/07	68	32	0
6/1/07	53	47	0
4/15/07	59	41	0
2/25/06	56	44	0
Barack Obama			
7/21/07	56	43	1
6/1/07	43	56	1
4/15/07	51	49	0
2/25/06	60	38	1

30. (ASKED OF LEANED DEMOCRATS) Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the choice of candidates for the Democratic nomination for president this year - are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

	---- Satisfied -----			--- Dissatisfied ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Very	
7/21/07	83	33	50	16	14	2	1
6/1/07	79	26	53	18	15	4	2



4/15/07	80	29	51	18	14	3	2
2/25/07	86	29	57	12	9	3	2
10/29/03	68	9	58	28	21	8	4
9/13/03	64	8	56	34	27	7	2
1/16/00	69	14	56	28	21	7	2

\*10/29/03 and previous: "candidates in the Democratic primary"

31-37. HELD FOR RELEASE

38. 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.
7/21/07	50	41	6	*	2

39. HELD FOR RELEASE

40. Now, thinking ahead to November 2008: Which Democratic presidential candidate do you think has the best chance to defeat the Republican nominee in the general election?

	7/21/07
Hillary Clinton	43
John Edwards	9
Barack Obama	27
Al Gore	7
Bill Richardson	1
Joe Biden	*
Chris Dodd	1
Dennis Kucinich	*
Mike Gravel	*
Other (vol.)	*
None of these (vol.)	4
No opinion	7

41-46. HELD FOR RELEASE

47. How much do you use the Internet to get news or information about political candidates - a great deal, somewhat, not much or not at all?

	-- Great deal/Somewhat --			---- Not much/at all ----			No
	NET	Grt. deal	Smwt.	NET	Not much	At all	opin.
7/21/07	47	24	23	53	19	34	0
12/21/03	37	15	22	63	21	42	*

48. Which of these comes closer to your own view: (Overall, the Internet plays more of a positive role in the election campaign because it provides easy and direct access to information about the candidates); OR (Overall, the Internet plays more of a negative role in the election campaign because so much information there is unchecked or unreliable).

	Positive	Negative	Both equally (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
7/21/07	48	39	3	5	5

49. Do you happen to have watched any of the recent debates between the candidates running for president, or not?

	Yes	No	No opin.
7/21/07	27	73	*

50. (ASKED IF NOT WATCHED DEBATES, Q49) Why not - is it mainly (because you're just not that interested), (because it's too early in the campaign), (because you've already decided who to support), or for some other reason?

	Not that interested	Too early in the campaign	Already decided who to support	Other reason	No opin.
7/21/07	9	47	7	37	*

49/50 NET

			-----Has not watched debates-----				
	Yes	NET	Not that interested	Too early	Already decided	Other reason	No op.
7/21/07	27	73	7	34	5	27	*

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