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[CNN Poll: Obama losing support](#)

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A new CNN poll shows Obama losing ground.

WASHINGTON (CNN) — A new national poll suggests the battle for the Democratic presidential nomination between Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama is a virtual tie.

Forty-six percent of registered Democratic voters questioned in a CNN/Opinion Research Corporation survey released Thursday support Obama as their party's nominee and 45 percent back Clinton, a statistical dead heat when taking into account the poll's 4.5 percent sampling error on that specific question.

"In mid-March, Obama had a 52 percent to 45 percent edge over Clinton, but his support has dropped six points while she has not gained any ground," says CNN Polling Director Keating Holland. He adds that "six percent now volunteer that they want neither one to be the nominee; no Democrats in the March poll felt that way."

So why is Obama losing support?

"Obama has lost his edge. Is it because of the controversy over his former pastor, Jeremiah Wright? While most Democrats have an unfavorable opinion of Wright, only 19 percent say Wright's statements have made them less favorable to Obama. More than two thirds say they've had no effect at all," says CNN Senior Political Analyst Bill Schneider.

"The bigger problem appears to be Obama's string of losses to Clinton in big states like Pennsylvania and Ohio. Those losses have not driven up Clinton's support. But they may have created doubts about Obama's ability to win," says Schneider.

But the poll suggests that Wright certainly doesn't help the Illinois senator.

"Among all Americans, Wright gets a 59 percent unfavorable rating; only 9 percent of the public has a favorable view and a third are unfamiliar with him. Among Democrats, the figures are virtually the same. Roughly a quarter of registered voters, and roughly one in five Democrats, say they have heard about Wright's remarks and think less favorable about Obama because of them. Most, however, say their view of Obama did not change after hearing about Wright," says Holland.

The poll also indicates that the public is more familiar with Wright now than they were in March, when he first became a presence in the campaign — but the number who feel less favorable toward Obama has not

grown since the second round of controversy about Wright erupted last week.

Overall, both Clinton and Obama remain extremely popular among Democrats, but enthusiasm for both candidates is flagging as the bitter battle for the nomination wears on.

Holland says that just one thing really separates Obama and Clinton in the minds of Democratic voters — by a 20-point margin, 57 to 37 percent, Obama is seen as the one who is more likely to become the party's standard-bearer.

Obama currently leads the New York senator when it comes to pledged delegates, the popular vote, and states won, in the primaries and caucuses held to date. A big question facing Democrats concerns the party coming together and backing the eventual nominee. Will die-hard Clinton supporters back for Obama if he's the nominee and will devoted Obama supporters get behind Clinton if she's the nominee?

According to the poll, the number of Democrats who would feel enthusiastic if Clinton were the nominee has fallen from 45 percent in January to 38 percent in March to 33 percent now. Enthusiasm for an Obama victory has also dropped from 45 percent in March down to 36 percent now.

As for possible November showdowns with Arizona Senator John McCain, the Democratic candidates have virtually identical but statistically insignificant advantages over the presumptive Republican nominee.

Clinton and Obama both claim that they are more likely to beat McCain, but the poll shows each of them winning 49 percent against the Arizona Senator, with Clinton topping McCain by five points and Obama beating him by four points. We should note that polls taken before both parties have settled on a nominee are not necessarily good indications of what will happen in November.

The CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll was conducted by telephone from April 28-30, with 1,008 adult Americans interviewed, including 906 registered voters and 441 registered voters who describe themselves as Democrats, or as independents who lean Democratic. The survey's sampling error is plus or minus 3 points for the overall poll and plus or minus 4.5 percent for the Democratic questions.