

DISPATCH POLL

## Clinton, McCain have edge in Ohio

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THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Barack Obama has convinced Iowa, South Carolina and even Teddy Kennedy.

But the Illinois senator has yet to make the sale in Ohio.

A new Dispatch Poll shows New York Sen. Hillary Clinton holds more than a 2-to-1 lead over Obama among Ohio Democrats.

Meanwhile, Buckeye State Republicans favor Arizona Sen. John McCain by 6 points over former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.

Although Ohioans have seen little firsthand of the intensely competitive 2008 presidential campaign, that almost certainly will change if the race stretches beyond this week's Super Tuesday contests in multiple states across the country.

Ohio's March 4 primary date, which it shares with Texas and two smaller states, would become by far the biggest delegate prize left in the campaign.

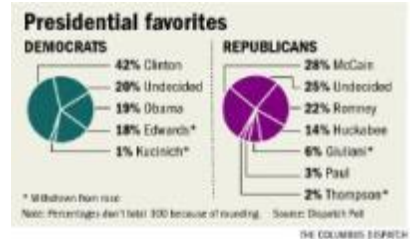
Obama's failure to win support from even one in five Ohio Democrats is the poll's most striking finding. He barely beat former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards, who withdrew last week. The poll included all candidates who qualified for the Ohio ballot; those who have quit the race have until 4 p.m. Monday to withdraw their names officially.

Clinton benefited from an overwhelming poll response from women, who make up two-thirds of her support, to build a 23-point lead over Obama.

"I like her determination when she chooses an issue. She's methodical," said poll participant Janet E. Cook, a Mount Vernon real-estate agent. "I would like to see some major changes and want someone who can get change accomplished in Congress."

She looks back fondly on the '90s and the presidency of Bill Clinton.

"I had pretty good times during the Clinton years," said Cook,



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### Dispatch Poll results

Results for the Democratic group among 1,194 Ohio Democrats and 2,839 Ohio Republicans (poll Feb. 23-25)

Democrats					Republicans				
	HILLARY CLINTON	BARACK OBAMA	JOHN EDWARDS	UNDECIDED	JOHN MCCAIN	MITT ROMNEY	ALICE HUCKABEE	AL GORE	UNDECIDED
<b>BY GENDER</b>	42%	20%	19%	18%	28%	25%	22%	14%	6%
<b>BY RACE</b>	42%	20%	19%	18%	28%	25%	22%	14%	6%
<b>BY AGE</b>	42%	20%	19%	18%	28%	25%	22%	14%	6%
<b>BY EDUCATION</b>	42%	20%	19%	18%	28%	25%	22%	14%	6%
<b>BY INCOME</b>	42%	20%	19%	18%	28%	25%	22%	14%	6%
<b>BY REGION</b>	42%	20%	19%	18%	28%	25%	22%	14%	6%

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Sally Key, 58, a Westerville homemaker who has a degree in marketing, likes Romney's proven expertise in the private sector.

"To say that Gov. Romney has been successful in all that he has pursued is quite an understatement," she said. "He has overachieved and exceeded expectations -- even his own -- at every turn. His business experience is proof that he knows how to take a poorly functioning organization and turn it into a productive enterprise. Is that skill ever needed in D.C.!"

Ohio's GOP contest likely will be decided by the 25 percent still undecided.

One of them is Jack W. Render, 68, of Salem in northeastern Ohio, who says he's never missed an election since he was old enough to vote.

A self-described "ultraconservative," the retired General Motors middle-manager said the favorite of many social conservatives, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, isn't a great choice, although he'd make a good vice president.

Render, a veteran, said he respects McCain's military service, but he said the longtime senator is too steeped in the Washington culture and harbors liberal views on such topics as illegal immigration and gay marriage.

Romney's religion is a deal-breaker for Render.

"I know that Mr. Romney is a Mormon," said Render, a Protestant. "He can call himself a Christian all he wants, but it's not a Christian faith."

Nancy Nanes, 49-year-old accountant from Lake Milton near Youngstown, is another Republican weighing her choices.

"I'm concerned that some of them are supporters of President Bush, and I'm not at all happy with what he's doing with the war," she said. "I tend to lean toward McCain, but his age is a big concern of mine."

Although she'll remain a Republican in the primary, Nanes said she is considering, for the first time in her life, voting for a Democrat for president -- possibly Hillary Clinton.

The mail poll of 2,156 Democratic voters and 2,139 Republican voters was conducted Jan. 23 through Thursday. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Dispatch reporters Catherine Candisky, Alan Johnson, James Nash, Mark Niquette, Jonathan Riskind, Jim Siegel and Jack Torry contributed to this story.

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Republican voters in Ohio were polled and responded. Error margins are greater for poll subsamples, such as female voters.

Like all polls, the Dispatch Poll is subject to possible error other than sampling error. Other sources of error include unintentional bias in the wording of questions, data entry error and nonresponse bias.

Nonresponse bias means those who responded might not necessarily reflect the views of those who did not participate. The response rate for both Democrats and Republicans was 28 percent.

The poll was designed, conducted and financed solely by *The Dispatch*.