

Poll: Obama trails Clinton in Calif.

By: [David Mark](#)

January 28, 2008 03:50 PM EST

Barack Obama continues to trail Hillary Rodham Clinton in California by a wide margin, according to a new Politico/CNN/Los Angeles Times poll, while John McCain has expanded his lead over Mitt Romney.

Clinton won the support of 49 percent of those polled by telephone by Opinion Research Corporation from Jan. 23-27, a period that covered several days in advance of the South Carolina Democratic primary and one day afterwards.

Obama came in second place with 32 percent to 14 percent for John Edwards.

The poll surveyed 690 likely Democratic primary voters, and margin of error was plus or minus four percent.

The results are similar to a Politico/CNN/Los Angeles Times poll taken Jan. 11-13, in which Clinton led 47 percent to 31 percent, with Edwards claiming 10 percent.

And perhaps most promising for the Clinton campaign, the new poll found that only 4 percent of likely Democratic primary voters had not made up their minds.

Moreover, 70 percent of Democrats said they were certain of their choice, while only 30 percent said they might vote for someone else.

Republicans also appear to be settling in on their choices.

According to the new poll McCain leads Romney 39 percent to 26 percent, with Rudy Giuliani a distant third at 13 percent and Mike Huckabee picking up 11 percent. The margin of error for the poll was 4.5 percent.

Those results, based on interviews with 437 likely Republican primary voters, mark a significant improvement for the Arizona senator, who led Romney by only four points – within the margin of error – in the Politico/CNN/Los Angeles Times poll two weeks earlier.

Support for McCain appears to be firming up, with only 4 percent of likely GOP primary voters undecided, compared to 11 percent in the last survey.

And 57 percent said they were certain in their pick, while 43 percent said they could back another candidate.

California is the delegate-rich anchor of the Feb. 5 “Super Tuesday” bloc of primary states.

Fifty-two percent of Democratic national convention delegates will be chosen that day, compared to 41 percent on the Republican side.

After Tuesday’s pivotal Florida Republican primary, candidates can be expected to invest significant time in California leading up to the primary there.

Other delegate-heavy states voting on Feb. 5 include Illinois, New York, New Jersey and

Massachusetts.

Among California Democratic primary voters, the poll found, Clinton rates best by wide margins at being able to handle the economy, health care and the situation in Iraq.

Even on Obama's signature line – calling for "change" in the way things are done in Washington – the Illinois senator beats Clinton only 40-39 percent.

McCain, too, is perceived by his party's faithful in California at being the best equipped by far to tackle illegal immigration, fight terrorism and protect national security, and handle the situation in Iraq.

The candidates will converge on Southern California this week during the final run-up to Super Tuesday. Republicans will debate on Jan. 30 at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, an event sponsored by Politico, CNN and the Los Angeles Times. Democrats will debate the next day at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles, in a forum also sponsored by the three news organizations.

Up-to-the-minute information about the debates can be found on Politico.com at <http://dyn.politico.com/debate/>.