

McCain favored in the fall

by: RANDY KREHBIEL World Staff Writer
12/26/2007 12:00 AM

Correction

An explanation of the Oklahoma Poll in this story listed the wrong numbers for Republicans and Democrats who were asked their preferences in the Feb. 5 presidential primary. Republicans totaled 330, with a margin of error of plus or minus 5.39 percentage points. Democrats totaled 358, with a margin of error of plus or minus 5.18 percentage points. Also, 735 registered voters who said they plan to vote in the Nov. 4 general election were asked whom they prefer in the U.S. Senate race. The margin of error on the U.S. Senate question was plus or minus 3.61 percentage points. In all, 745 registered voters took the survey, including 338 Republicans, 380 Democrats, 26 independents and one Libertarian. All Oklahoma Poll results listed in Wednesday's paper were correct.

But Clinton and Huckabee are the first choices of Oklahoma voters in the party primaries.

Frontrunners for Oklahoma's Feb. 5 presidential primary may not be the best choices for carrying the state in November's general election, the latest Oklahoma Poll suggests.

U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York was the first choice of Democrats surveyed and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee led Republicans.

But Republican U.S. Sen. John McCain was the only candidate from either party viewed favorably by a majority of all those surveyed and was the only GOP candidate to decisively defeat the top three Democratic candidates in head-to-head matchups.

Among Democrats polled, former North Carolina U.S. Sen. John Edwards came in a distant second to Clinton but he had the highest favorable rating among all voters -- 44 percent. Edwards won head-to-head matchups with Republicans Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney, and he came within 3 percentage points of Huckabee.

Conducted Dec. 16-19 by Sooner Poll.com for the Tulsa World and KOTV, channel 6, the poll surveyed 745 likely voters.

Poll consultant Al Soltow, vice president for research at the University of Tulsa, said the results suggest Oklahomans are not particularly fond of any of the candidates.

"There's no candidate that blows away the voters," Soltow said.

Clinton was the choice of 34 percent of Democrats surveyed, followed by Edwards at 25 percent and Barack Obama at 15 percent.

"What I'm looking for is somebody who could get in there and know how to be president," said Adrienne Humphrey, who took part in the poll. "She is by far the most

likely to do that because she has the experience."

Clinton lost head-to-head matchups against McCain (61-31), Huckabee (56-35), Romney (51-30) and Giuliani (50-38). And Clinton was viewed unfavorably by 61 percent of those surveyed.

Edwards, on the other hand, won matchups against Romney (50-37) and Giuliani (48-42) and was within the margin of error against Huckabee (47-44).

McCain beat Edwards by 11 percentage points, Clinton by 30 and Obama by 40.

Still, Huckabee led polling of Republicans. Twenty-nine percent said they favored him in the GOP primary, followed by McCain at 17 percent and Giuliani at 12 percent.

Soltow noted that "don't know" was actually second among Republicans and third among Democrats.

Poll respondents Robert Johnson and Leveda Baker are among those undecideds.

"I haven't made up my mind, other than I won't vote Republican," said Johnson. "I'm pretty fed up with the Republicans right now."

Johnson said he thinks this campaign has been too long and too expensive and has not addressed the concerns of the average person.

"They get up there on 'The Hill' and forget where they come from," he said.

Baker, meanwhile, said she is "not a Democrat in any way" and is looking for "a good Christian man" for president.

"And yes, I do mean man," she said.

Baker said she looks favorably on Romney and Giuliani. She is troubled by Romney's Mormonism, though, noting that, like many evangelical Christians, she does not consider it a true form of Christianity.

She said Giuliani's personal foibles, including two divorces, are also a drawback, but added, "The important thing is, he's a changed man now."

Baker is also interested in Huckabee, a Baptist minister.

"I am looking for a man who will listen to God and the Holy Spirit," Baker said. "I believe we are in the end time."

Soltow noted the importance of evangelicals in Oklahoma politics. Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed for the Oklahoma Poll identified themselves as evangelical Christians. Their highest marks went to Huckabee (51 percent approval) and McCain (49 percent), while fully two-thirds disapproved of Clinton and 61 percent had an unfavorable opinion of Obama.

Huckabee was the big winner and Giuliani the big loser since the Oklahoma Poll last asked voters about the presidential candidates.

Huckabee went from less than 3 percent of the vote and an approval rating below 20 percent in April to 29 percent of the vote and a 46 percent approval rating in last week's

survey.

Giuliani, meanwhile, went from a 32 percent share of the vote and a 52 percent approval rating -- both tops among Republicans -- to a distant third among voters and 32 percent approval.

In addition, Giuliani's disapproval rating increased 19 points to 58 percent, thus rivaling Clinton's.

McCain, Edwards and Edwards enjoyed small improvements in their ratings, while Obama fell slightly and Clinton and Republican Fred Thompson remained largely unchanged.

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Asked of Republicans

Mike Huckabee	29%
John McCain	17%
Rudy Giuliani	11%
Mitt Romney	9%
Fred Thompson	8%
Ron Paul	3%
Duncan Hunter.....	1%
Don't Know/Refused	22%

Asked of Democrats

Hillary Clinton	34%
John Edwards	25%
Barack Obama	15%
Bill Richardson	4%
Chris Dodd.....	1%
Dennis Kucinich	1%
Don't Know/Refused	20%

About the Oklahoma Poll

Soonerpoll.com conducted the scientific telephone survey Dec. 13 to 16 of 745 voters registered in Oklahoma.

Respondents included 338 Republicans, 380 Democrats, 26 independents and one


Libertarian selected randomly from voters who have established a frequent voting pattern.

The margin of error is plus or minus 3.59 percent.

For questions asked of Republicans only, the error margin is plus or minus 5.33 percent.
For questions asked of Democrats only, the error margin is plus or minus 5.03 percent.

The Oklahoma Poll is sponsored by the Tulsa World and KOTV, channel 6.

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