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## Obama, McCain Lead Among New Hampshire Likely Voters

Obama riding crest of great enthusiasm on Democratic side

by Frank Newport

PRINCETON, NJ - Sen. Barack Obama has taken a substantial lead over Sen. Hillary Clinton among Democratic likely voters in New Hampshire, and Sen. John McCain now has a modest lead among likely Republican voters. Obama does particularly well among independents who say they will vote in the Democratic primary, and Democratic voters' choice of Obama as the Democratic candidate best able to win next November has surged since mid-December. Despite his highly publicized victory in last Thursday's Iowa caucuses, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee only marginally improved his status among Republicans compared to Gallup's mid-December poll, and is in third place -- significantly behind McCain and Mitt Romney.

These results are from a *USA Today*/Gallup poll of likely voters in New Hampshire, conducted Jan. 4-6. Full details on the methodology of the poll are at the end of this story.

### The New Hampshire Democratic Primary

Sens. Obama and Clinton were essentially tied among both registered voters and likely voters in New Hampshire in the Dec. 17-19 *USA Today*/Gallup poll. By this past weekend, after the Iowa caucuses, Obama had moved slightly ahead of Clinton among registered voters, but jumped more significantly ahead among likely voters. Obama now has a substantial 13-point, 41% to 28% lead over Clinton among likely voters, with Sen. John Edwards following in third place, with 19% of the vote. This marks a dramatic shift from just 2 1-2 weeks ago.

Suppose the Democratic primary for president were being held today. If you had to choose among the following candidates, which candidate would you vote for --

	Likely voters, Jan 4-6	Likely voters, Dec 17-19	Registered voters, Jan 4-6	Registered voters, Dec 17-19
	%	%	%	%
Barack Obama	41	32	39	32
Hillary Clinton	28	32	34	35
John Edwards	19	18	17	16
Bill Richardson	6	8	4	6
Dennis Kucinich	3	3	3	3
Mike Gravel	*	--	*	--
Joe Biden	n/a	4	n/a	3
Chris Dodd	n/a	1	n/a	1
Other	1	*	1	*
No opinion	2	2	2	3

\* Less than 0.5%

n/a = Not asked

GALLUP POLL

All in all, Obama's share of the vote among likely voters went up by nine points between the two polls, Clinton's dropped by four points, Edwards' share went up by one point, Gov. Bill Richardson's dropped by two points, and Rep. Dennis Kucinich's share stayed the same. The "no opinion" or "other" percentage went from 2% to 3% between the two polls. (The mid-December *USA Today*/Gallup poll included the names of Sens. Joseph Biden and Christopher Dodd -- both of whom dropped out of the race after last Thursday's Iowa caucuses. Those two candidates had 5% support between them in the December poll.)

The *USA Today*/Gallup polls in New Hampshire included a question that asked Democratic voters to indicate which candidate best fits each of a list of "characteristics" or descriptions.

The percentage of Democratic likely voters selecting Obama went up at least a little for each of the six descriptions.

The largest shift came in Democratic voters' views of the candidate who "has the best chance of beating the Republican in November." Obama jumped by 19 points on this dimension between the two polls, while Clinton fell by 13 points. The result? Whereas Clinton led Obama on this dimension by 21 points in mid-December, Obama now leads Clinton by 11 points after Iowa.

These data underscore the conclusion that one significant effect of Obama's Iowa win was the apparent transformation of the first-term Illinois senator's image from that of a new kid on the block competing against Clinton's vast experience, to a candidate who has the best chance of winning against the Republican nominee in November.

## The New Hampshire Republican Primary

A key question since Huckabee's dramatic win in Iowa has been its potential impact on New Hampshire Republican primary voters. Iowa -- with a significant proportion of evangelical Christians -- was fertile ground for the former Baptist minister's campaign, but it has been unclear whether more secular New Hampshire would be as receptive to his appeal.

There are indications that Huckabee has moved up sharply among Republicans nationally since the Iowa vote (new national Gallup Poll data will be reviewed here at [gallup.com](http://gallup.com) on Tuesday). But the weekend poll in New Hampshire shows little sign that Huckabee has been able to transform his Iowa victory into anything approaching the type of surge seen for Obama among New Hampshire Democrats. Huckabee had 9% of the vote in mid-December and 13% in the weekend, post-Iowa poll, a gain of just four percentage points.

*Suppose the Republican primary for president were being held today. If you had to choose among the following candidates, which candidate would you vote for --*

	Likely voters, Jan 4-6	Likely voters, Dec 17-19	Registered voters, Jan 4-6	Registered voters, Dec 17-19
	%	%	%	%
John McCain	34	27	33	26
Mitt Romney	30	34	29	34
Mike Huckabee	13	9	14	9
Ron Paul	8	9	9	10
Rudy Giuliani	8	11	8	13
Fred Thompson	3	4	3	3
Duncan Hunter	1	1	1	1
Alan Keyes	*	--	*	*
Tom Tancredo	n/a	*	n/a	*
Other	1	--	1	*
No opinion	2	5	2	4

\* Less than 0.5%

n/a = Not asked

GALLUP POLL

The more significant change that occurred between the two polls was in the relative positioning of the two front-runners in the Republican field -- Romney and McCain. Whereas Romney led McCain among likely New Hampshire primary voters by seven points in mid-December, McCain now leads Romney by four points. The four-point McCain lead is not statistically significant, but suggests he has a real chance of coming away from New Hampshire with a victory, as he did in 2000. Rudy Giuliani's share of the New Hampshire vote dropped by three points, and he is tied with Ron Paul for fourth place in the poll. Fred Thompson, who tied McCain for third in Iowa, looks to be an afterthought in New Hampshire.

There has been some movement in the percentage of Republican voters in New Hampshire selecting various candidates as best fitting each of the six descriptive phrases included in the survey.

As was the case on the Democratic side, the biggest change here involved perceptions as to who is the candidate best able to win in November. McCain gained, while former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who did not compete in Iowa, and Mitt Romney both fell on this dimension.

### Composition of the Turnout

The success of both front-runners -- Obama and McCain -- in New Hampshire will depend on the impact of independents voting in the respective primaries. Both of these candidates do better among "undeclared" voters than among registered voters of the Democratic or Republican Parties; Clinton and Romney do better among their respective parties' more hard-core faithful. While Obama leads Clinton among registered voters, it is significantly smaller than among all Democratic voters. McCain and Romney tie among registered Republicans.

### Bottom Line

Obama has followed his dramatic victory in Iowa last Thursday with a jump to front-runner status among likely Democratic voters in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary. Obama -- tied with Clinton in mid-December -- is now ahead of her by 13 points.

Obama has gained significant leverage within the group of New Hampshire voters that Gallup deems most likely to actually turn out and vote in the Democratic primary. (He has only a small lead over Clinton among all registered Democratic voters in New Hampshire.) Obama enjoys relative strength among independents who lean toward the Democratic Party.

Obama's victory in Iowa apparently helped convince large numbers of New Hampshire Democratic likely voters that he can win in November if he is the Democratic nominee. He trailed Clinton in mid-December by 21 points as the candidate perceived to have "the best chance of beating the Republican in November," but now leads her on this dimension by 11 points.

The post-Iowa change on the Republican side has not been quite as dramatic. Romney led McCain by seven points in December; McCain now leads Romney by four points. Of note is the fact that the Iowa winner, Huckabee, appears unlikely to duplicate his feat in New Hampshire. He gained only four points in the post-Iowa poll in New Hampshire, and is in third place, far behind the two GOP front-runners.

The relatively close nature of the GOP race is reflected in the fact that McCain and Romney are now essentially tied as the candidate Republican voters in New Hampshire see as most likely to be able to win in November. A big change here was the decline of Giuliani, who has dropped significantly on this dimension since December.

### Survey Methods

The results for Republicans in this report are based on interviews conducted Jan. 4-6, 2008, with 776 New Hampshire residents deemed most likely to vote in the Republican primary. For this sample, the

maximum margin of error attributable to sampling is  $\pm 4$  percentage points.

The likely voter model assumes a turnout rate of 60% of those who say they plan to vote in the Republican presidential primary, approximately 25% of New Hampshire adults. The likely voter results are weighted to match this assumption (weighted sample size is 732).

All results reported here are based on likely voters.

	<b>Plan to vote in Republican primary</b>	<b>Likely voters</b>	<b>Margin of error, likely voter sample</b>
	(number of interviews)	(number of interviews)	pct. pts.
2008 Jan 4-6	1,217	776	$\pm 4$
2007 Dec 17-19	768	477	$\pm 5$

GALLUP POLL

The results for Democrats in this report are based on interviews conducted Jan. 4-6, 2008, with 778 New Hampshire residents deemed most likely to vote in the Democratic primary. For this sample, the maximum margin of error attributable to sampling is  $\pm 4$  percentage points.

The likely voter model assumes a turnout rate of 60% of those who say they plan to vote in the Democratic presidential primary, approximately 25% of New Hampshire adults. The likely voter results are weighted to match this assumption (weighted sample size is 722).

All results reported here are based on likely voters.

	<b>Plan to vote in Democratic primary</b>	<b>Likely voters</b>	<b>Margin of error, likely voter sample</b>
	(number of interviews)	(number of interviews)	pct. pts.
2008 Jan 4-6	1,224	778	$\pm 4$
2007 Dec 17-19	768	510	$\pm 5$

GALLUP POLL

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.