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Reuters/C-SPAN/Zogby Poll: Obama's Lead Shrinks in SC

Edwards continues to advance, nips at Clinton's heels

UTICA, NY – Illinois Sen. Barack Obama’s lead over New York Sen. Hillary Clinton narrowed yet a little more in South Carolina with just two days to go before the primary, the latest Reuters/C-SPAN/Zogby tracking poll shows.

Obama lost a point from the day before and sits at 38% support in the telephone poll, which was conducted Jan. 22-24 and included 811 likely Democratic voters. It carries a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points.

Clinton won 25% support, up one point from the day before but now just four points ahead of former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards, who continued to increase support and now sits at 21%.

Edwards has been edging upwards since Zogby International has been reporting its tracking survey ahead of Saturday’s vote. He is up six points in the past two days. Some of Edwards’ new support appears to be coming from voters who had been undecided. A day ago, 13% of likely voters were undecided, but now just 7% said they weren’t sure whom they’d vote for, the latest survey shows.

Democrats – South Carolina	1/22-24	1/21-23	1/20-22
Obama	38%	39%	43%
Clinton	25%	24%	25%
Edwards	21%	19%	15%
Kucinich	<1%	<1%	<1%

Gravel	<1%	<1%	<1%
Someone else	5%	4%	4%
Not sure	7%	13%	14%

Obama continued to dominate among African-American voters, with 55% support from that group, down just a point from the day before. Clinton, too, has held steady with that group, getting 18% of their support for a second day in a row. Edwards gained two points for a total of 7% support from African Americans.

The Illinois senator lost a few points among women, going from 36% to 34%, however he remained ahead of Clinton, who had 28%. Obama also lost ground among men, going from 50% of their support to 42%. Clinton had 21% of male support and Edwards 24%.

Obama, who has consistently polled high among the youngest group of voters - those aged 18-29 - did not disappoint. He gained seven points and now wins support from 49% of the group. Clinton gained some ground as well, going from 14% support to 18%, while Edwards lost a point, to end up with 24% of young support.

Voters over age 65 narrowly prefer Obama, as 30% supporting him, compared to 27% who support him and 24% who support Edwards.

Pollster John Zogby: *The real movement here is by John Edwards, who is the only one who continues to gain ground in our three-day tracking poll. His increase appears to be coming from African American voters who are slowly making up their minds – he is up to 7%. Can he catch Clinton by Saturday’s vote, perhaps bumping her from a second-place finish? Perhaps that is why she has returned to the state to campaign. While he has lost a small percentage of ground overall, Obama continues to lead among both men and women, and in all regions of the state. More evidence that the race is tightening down the stretch: Thursday’s polling alone had Obama leading with 36%, but Clinton was just five points back at 31% (a good day for her). Edwards came in with 19% yesterday alone. The one-day sample was not enough to draw sweeping conclusions, but it is an indicator that this race continues to change.*

In case you were wondering about the effectiveness of former President Clinton’s campaign work on behalf of his wife, here is an indication: South Carolina Democrats hold an overwhelmingly positive view of Bill Clinton – yesterday’s polling alone shows he has a 75% favorable rating, compared to just 20% who hold an unfavorable view of him.