



# MIKE DOWNS CENTER FOR INDIANA POLITICS

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Poll Shows Tight Races Obama Leads Clinton**

#### **Democratic Primary Election Vote Intention for Obama & Clinton**

578 registered Hoosier voters likely to participate in the May 6 Democratic primary prefer Barack Obama to Hillary Clinton. Obama received 50% of the support and Clinton received 45%, with 5% undecided (margin of error +/- 4.2).

Clinton's most solid support comes from the most partisan Democrats (51% Clinton to 45% Obama), with weaker Democratic identifiers, independents, and most Republicans tending to support Obama.

Obama outperforms Clinton with Indiana men (55% to 42%) while women are for Clinton (48% to 46%)--but within the margin of error.

Likely Indiana Democratic primary voters over 50 prefer Clinton to Obama (53% to 42%) while Obama leads among the voters under 50 (59% to 36%).

Meanwhile, white Democratic primary Hoosier voters also fall within the margin of error on vote preference with 48% indicating they would support Clinton and 47% who would support Obama. Obama dominates among African-Americans 78% to 17%.

The effects of income and education follow similar patterns concerning Democratic primary support. Higher educated likely Democratic primary voters support Obama while the less educated of these voters support Clinton. Clinton does relatively better than Obama among those with lower incomes, while Obama does particularly well among the highest income Hoosiers in this voting block.

## **Momentum: Vote Switching and Timing of Decision**

As a state whose primary comes later, Indiana provides a rare opportunity to demonstrate how momentum builds for candidates following primary and caucus results. Obama has gathered more support during the primary and caucus season, but it has come later than one would expect given the string of successes he put together throughout February.

Clinton's support has been more stable, but she also seems to have convinced many Hoosier Democrats to support her following her Ohio and Texas primary successes.

As the frontrunner coming into the nomination contest season, Hillary Clinton has enjoyed more consistent support among likely Democratic primary voters in Indiana. Sixty-six percent of the 262 likely Clinton primary voters surveyed always supported Clinton. 27% of her supporters switched their vote to her from another candidate (margin of error +/- 5.9).

Of the 288 Obama supporters, 55% had always supported him and 32% of his supporters switched to him from another candidate (margin of error +/- 5.9).

Interestingly, despite being Obama's worst period in the Democratic nomination season, 29% of Obama's Indiana supporters decided to vote for him after the early-March Ohio and Texas primaries. Fourteen percent of Obama supporters decided after the February 5 Super Tuesday contests, and 12% after the early-January Iowa and New Hampshire contests. Four of ten Obama supporters decided before the nomination primaries and caucuses began.

The patterns are very similar for Hillary Clinton, with slightly more of her supporters deciding before the primary and caucus season (47%). Thirteen percent decided after Iowa and New Hampshire, 10% after Super Tuesday, and 26% after the Ohio and Texas contests of March 4.

## **General Election Head-to-Head Results in Indiana**

For likely registered November voters deciding between John McCain and Barack Obama, McCain received 51% to Barack Obama's 44%, with 5% undecided (+/- 2.8 margin of error). McCain would best Hillary Clinton 53% to 42% if registered likely Hoosier general election voters were to have voted April 14 - April 16. 5% remain undecided in that race.

This is a mixed result for Democrats in a state that votes very Republican in presidential elections. While behind, the two Democrats are much closer at this point to the lukewarm 47% to 41.5% victory Bob Dole registered against Bill Clinton in the state in 1996 than the George Bush Indiana defeat of John Kerry 60% to 39% in 2004 or Bush's 57% to 41% victory over Al Gore in 2000.

The two Democrats attract different types of voters relative to Senator McCain. Clinton's support relies on traditional Democrats while Obama appeals slightly less to Democrats and more to independents and even some Republicans. Specifically, Hillary Clinton gets 83% of strong Democrats compared to 74% of strong Democrats for Obama, with 12% of strong

Democrats going to McCain if Clinton is the nominee and 19% of strong Democrats going to McCain if Obama is the nominee. These latter groups are likely ardent supporters of the opposing candidate who may swing back to the party for the general election following the sharp nomination battles.

Among swing voters, Obama ties McCain's draw of pure independents at 47% and offsets McCain's 74% of independents who lean Republican with 73% of Democratic-leaning independents. Obama even pulls in 32% of weak Republicans. In contrast, Hillary Clinton only draws one-third of pure independents to McCain's 60% and her 74% support of Democratic-leaning independents is eclipsed by McCain attracting 84% of independents who lean Republican. McCain beats Clinton in every age category while Obama bests McCain only in the category of Hoosiers between 18 and 34 years old by 53% to 44%.

One of Senator Clinton's important surrogates in the state is Senator Evan Bayh, who is often rumored to be on her short list for vice president. Adding Bayh would not help deliver the state for Clinton at this point. Only four percent of Hoosiers would switch from McCain to Clinton if Bayh were chosen as her running mate, and some of this gain would be lost by the two percent of Clinton supporters who would support McCain if Bayh were chosen. At this point, Bayh would not deliver this red state into Clinton's category if she were the nominee.

### **Issue Evaluations**

Forty-two percent of likely registered Hoosier voters view the economy as the most important issue for the next president, and this was the case for every partisan and independent group. Iraq (14%) is the second most important issue overall, but it is actually fourth most important for Republicans and second most important for Democrats. Health care is the third most important issue overall (12%) and terrorism and immigration are fourth (9% each) overall. Terrorism is the second most important issue for the next president according to Republican Hoosiers (31%) with immigration as the third most important issue for them (25%) followed by Iraq (22%).

For Democrats, Iraq is the second largest issue (41%) and health care (34%) third. Other important issues to Democrats include education (15%) and immigration (13%). Interestingly, the environment and Social Security each have 7% of Hoosier Democrats saying it is the most important issue for the next president to face, which is much larger than the small number (2%) of weak and strong Democrats who view terrorism as the key issue – a 29% difference from the number of weak and strong Republicans who viewed terrorism as the top issue awaiting the next president.

Independents' views on the issues tend to resemble the Democrats' views more closely than they do the Republicans' views. Pure independents' rank ordering of issues matches the rank ordering by Democrats.

## **Evaluation of Candidates and President Bush**

On a scale of one to ten with one meaning the respondent has a completely negative feeling toward the candidate and ten meaning the respondent has a completely positive feeling about the candidate, 1,254 likely November Hoosier voters in the sample (margin of error +/- 2.8) rated John McCain's slightly more positively than negatively with an average of 5.2. This was higher than either of his Democratic opponents' scores.

Senator Obama's average ended up slightly behind McCain with a rating of 4.9 out of ten and Senator Clinton ended up averaging 4.5. With the two Democrats ready to compete head-to-head in the state, these numbers could go down further relative to McCain.

Registered Indiana likely November voters had a relatively negative view of President Bush's job performance. On a scale that varies between one (Bush is doing a worse job than anyone in office possibly could) and ten (Bush is doing a better job in office than anyone possibly could), the average score for Bush was 4.1. The median falls at 3.5, however, because 37% of Hoosiers rated Bush as a one – no one could possibly do worse in the job. Obviously the lion's share of this negative view comes from Democrats (71% of strong Democrats rated Bush at the lowest possible ranking), but Bush also had only a quarter of his own strongest partisan Republicans rate him as a nine or ten. In a state that provided him with successive 16 and 21 point victories in his presidential campaigns, Bush's low job approval is noteworthy especially among pure independents, 38% of whom rated him with the lowest score possible.

It would be difficult to imagine Indiana in play in the general election. McCain leads both candidates and Obama and Clinton will have another two weeks of Democratic intraparty squabbling. Nevertheless, an unpopular president, and issues such as a bad economy, Iraq, and health care viewed as the most salient among Hoosiers do not provide McCain with an easy backdrop for the general election. McCain leads one Democrat by single-digits and the other barely by double-digits, despite this typically being the reddest of the Great Lake states and one where Republican presidential candidates tend to blow out their Democratic opponents.

## **Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics**

The Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics is a non-partisan organization that helps the people of Indiana understand the role of politics and government in their daily lives. By doing this, The Mike Downs Center hopes to encourage participation in political and public processes the same way its namesake Dr. Michael C. Downs did for more than 34 years. The Mike Downs Center is located on the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW).

**Statement of Methodology:** This SurveyUSA poll was conducted by telephone in the voice of a professional announcer. Respondent households were selected at random, using a registration based sample (RBS) provided by Aristotle, of Washington DC. All respondents heard the questions asked identically. The calls were conducted on April 14, 15, and 16. Calling was completed before the debate between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in Pennsylvania began on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The number of respondents who answered each question and the margin of sampling

error for each question are provided. Where necessary, responses were weighted according to the voter registration database. In theory, with the stated sample size, one can say with 95% certainty that the results would not vary by more than the stated margin of sampling error, in one direction or the other, had the entire universe of respondents been interviewed with complete accuracy. There are other possible sources of error in all surveys that may be more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. These include refusals to be interviewed, question wording and question order, weighting by demographic control data and the manner in which respondents are filtered (such as, determining who is a likely voter). It is difficult to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. Fieldwork for this survey was done by SurveyUSA of Verona, NJ

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