



# MIKE DOWNS CENTER FOR INDIANA POLITICS

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **What Clinton and Obama face in Indiana.**

Indiana's Democratic Party has large internal distinctions that make it different from many of its neighboring states. The Indiana Democratic Party receives significant support from labor where it exists, but it does not have the numerical strength that unions have in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. For example, numerous automobile plants in Indiana are not UAW plants. Governor Mitch Daniels eliminated the collective bargaining agreement for state workers. Finally, the recreational vehicle industry in northern Indiana has historically relied on rural and often Amish workers who are not pro-union. This means that the organization benefits of labor in mobilizing and organizing the Democratic Party are less in Indiana than elsewhere.

There has been much talk about the Reagan Democrat white working class that Hillary Clinton has done so well with in Ohio and Pennsylvania and how they will vote in Indiana. Indiana, however, is the reddest of all Upper-Midwest states. She will have a harder time reaching such voters here in nearly the same numbers because many of these voters were never Reagan Democrats swing voters but instead solid Republican presidential supporters in every year since 1964. They have voted for Democratic gubernatorial candidates in 1988, 1992, 1996, and 2000 while strongly supporting Republican presidential candidates. They have not been swing voters for presidential elections and may not even consider themselves Democrats – so whether they are even part of the equation for the May 6 Democratic primary is as much in question as whom they will support.

Hoosier Democrats are a diverse bunch with three regional Democratic Party cultures. This means that Obama and Clinton must make appeals to very different voters in different portions of the state. The northern part of the state is much more like other neighboring industrial Great Lake states. Large industrialized areas like Fort Wayne, South Bend, and parts of Lake County (Gary/Hammond/East Chicago) make this area competitive for both on paper. Clinton's success with the working class should be a plus here. However, the proximity of South Bend and Gary/Hammond/East Chicago to Chicago means that these communities may view themselves as Chicagoland and be quite familiar with Obama from Chicago media coverage. Further, each of these northern cities has a considerable African American population that likely leans Obama.

Not surprisingly, our Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics shows Obama ahead in this northern region 55% with Clinton receiving 39%.

The central portion of the state is dominated by Indianapolis, with Richmond and Terre Haute book-ending the eastern and western borders. Indianapolis has a decently sized Democratic presence. One interesting note, there is also an intense primary campaign for the Indianapolis congressional seat that may further divide Indianapolis voters. Despite this being Evan Bayh's home turf, Obama currently leads Clinton in the central portion of the state 51% to 46%. Finally, the southern portion of the state leans solidly toward Clinton 51% to 43%.

Southern Indiana has an orientation much more like southern border states such as Kentucky or Missouri than Upper-Midwest states. Evansville is the largest single city. Southern Indiana is where Clinton is winning 51% to 43% at this point.

Concerning the issues driving the Democratic primary, the economy is clearly tops and those listing this as most important do not favor one candidate significantly over another (Obama 50%, Clinton 47%). Iraq remains the second most important issues and Obama is supported by 57% of those viewing this as most important to Clinton's 40%. Health Care also breaks for Obama 52% to 44% for Clinton and is the third top issue for Democratic primary registered likely voters. Immigration (Clinton), Education (Obama), Social Security (Clinton), and the environment (Obama) among other issues show that the primary campaign is unlikely to shift to Clinton based on the issues Hoosiers hold dear.

One large benefit Clinton enjoys is the support of the state's highest Democrat Evan Bayh. Bayh has put himself out strongly to help Clinton and it should pay dividends. But what about the other elected Democrats? Democrats picked up three former-Republican seats for the U.S. House in 2006. None of these very moderate (if not conservative) Democrats Joe Donnelly (South Bend), Baron Hill (southeast), and Brad Ellsworth (Evansville) have yet to endorse. What remains to be seen is if they follow the pattern of other red-state Democrats who have embraced Obama's down-ticket attractiveness like Senator Claire McCaskill, Governor Kathleen Sebelius, or Governor Janet Napolitano.

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