

**NO CLEAR FAVORITE IN EITHER PARTY ON NATIONAL PRIMARY BALLOT,
DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN FRONTRUNNERS
FACE CLOSE COMPETITION**

***Republican Primary Voters Say Experience is Most Important Trait for Presidential Candidate
While Democratic Primary Voters Hungry for Candidate to Lead Country in a New Direction***

NEW YORK, December 18, 2007 – As the election cycle nears its official start date with the upcoming January 3rd Iowa caucus, the national race is close on the Democratic side, and remains relatively unsettled among the Republican candidates.

The Diageo/*Hotline* Poll of 812 registered voters conducted by FD from December 10-14, 2007 shows that Hillary Clinton’s lead over Barack Obama is effectively within the margin of error (35% to 30%) among registered voters that typically vote in the Democratic primary. John Edwards trails at 14%, and remains the only other Democratic candidate in double digits.

**Table 1: Primary Vote among
Democratic Primary Voters
(n=336)**

	Total
Hillary Clinton	35%
Barack Obama	30%
John Edwards	14%
Bill Richardson	2%
Joe Biden	2%
Dennis Kucinich	1%
Christopher Dodd	1%
Mike Gravel	1%

**Table 2: Primary Vote among
Republican Primary Voters
(n=291)**

	Total
Rudy Giuliani	21%
Mike Huckabee	17%
Mitt Romney	13%
Fred Thompson	11%
John McCain	10%
Ron Paul	7%
Duncan Hunter	1%
Tom Tancredo	*

On the Republican ballot, the race is close between Rudy Giuliani and Mike Huckabee, who are in a statistical tie for first place (21% to 17%). Despite Huckabee’s strong performance on the national ballot among Republican primary voters, he has the lowest familiarity rating of the top five Republican candidates (Huckabee, 61%; compared to Giuliani, 91%).

“We’ve known things were tight in the early primary states for some time, but now we’re seeing it nationally as well,” says *Hotline* Editor-in-Chief, Amy Walter. “For the Democrats, Obama has closed in on Clinton, with Edwards far behind. On the Republican side, Huckabee is demonstrating his potential to be more than just a ‘one-trick’ Iowa pony by seriously competing with Giuliani for the number one spot.”

For the GOP, 61% of Republican primary voters say it is possible they would change their mind before the primary, compared to 50% of Democratic primary voters who say the same. Of Republican primary voters who say they would support Giuliani, 29% say they “would definitely support” him (compared to 38% for Huckabee). In contrast, Clinton enjoys more solid support: 62% of her supporters say they “would definitely support” her, compared to only 46% of Obama supporters who say the same.

Voters were also asked which presidential traits are most important for a candidate to have. Democratic primary voters are more inclined to say that being able to “lead the country in a new direction” is the most important trait (Democratic primary voters, 50%; Republican primary voters, 28%). This corresponds with how Democratic voters view the direction of the country today, with 80% of Democratic primary voters saying that the country is “on the wrong track.” For Republican primary voters, the most important trait for a presidential candidate is having “the necessary experience to be President” (36%).

Table 3: Most Important Presidential Traits

	Democratic Primary Voters (n=336)	Republican Primary Voters (n=291)
Will lead country in new direction	50%	28%
Has necessary experience	20%	36%
Is inspirational leader	13%	23%
Has best chance of winning general election	7%	3%

Giuliani leads Huckabee by 21 points on the most important trait for Republican primary voters (“necessary experience”: Giuliani, 30%; Huckabee, 9%). Giuliani and Huckabee are statistically tied on the question of who would “lead the country in a new direction” (Giuliani, 16%; Huckabee, 20%). In addition, Republican primary voters are more likely to say Giuliani “is an inspirational leader” compared to Huckabee (Giuliani, 29%; Huckabee, 17%).

On the Democratic side, voters say that Clinton and Obama are equally as likely to “lead the country in a new direction” (tied at 37%). While Democratic primary voters say these traits are less important to them, Clinton leads Obama on both “most likely to win the general election” (Clinton, 53%; Obama, 22%) and “has the necessary experience” (Clinton, 52%; Obama, 11%).

To obtain complete poll results please see www.diageohotlinepoll.com.

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Methodology: The Diageo/*Hotline* Poll was conducted by telephone from December 10 through December 14, 2007, among a random, representative sample of 812 registered voters, age 18 and older (margin of error +/- 3.4%). The sample included a sub-sample of both 336 Democratic primary voters (margin of error +/- 5.3%) and 291 Republican primary voters (margin of error +/- 5.7%).

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