

2008 Electoral Vote Preliminary Preview

"In Clinton, the superdelegates have a candidate who fits their recent mold and the last two elections have been very close. This year is a bad year for Republicans. Just a slight shift from the Gore-Kerry level would give her the victory. In Obama, they have a new model candidate and the potential for a coalition of voter groups and states which break from the Gore-Kerry model."

-- David Sparks, McCormack School of Policy Studies,
University of Massachusetts at Boston

The following is a preliminary preview of the 2008 Presidential election on a state-by-state basis.

This analysis looks at the states that are likely to be solidly Republican, those that are likely to be solidly Democratic, and those that are likely to be up for grabs in November. It also includes the results thus far of the Democratic primaries and caucuses for the purpose of assessing which of the two remaining Democratic Presidential candidates – Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Barack Obama – has the better chance of winning in November. While the results of primary/caucus votes -- especially those that are closed to Independents and Republicans -- may not indicate how a particular state will vote in a general election, they do give some indication of the relative strength of each Democratic Presidential candidate vis-à-vis each other as the potential nominee.

Executive Summary

The key to capturing the Presidency in 2008 will be winning enough of the 17 states with a total of 190 electoral votes that might go either way. Of these 17 battleground states, 11 with a total of 114 electoral votes have been more likely to vote Republican in recent Presidential elections. Of the remaining battleground states, 6 with a total of 76 electoral votes have been more likely to vote Democratic.

Of the 17 states whose primaries/caucuses Senator Clinton has won, 3 are likely to be solidly Republican in November, 5 are likely to be solidly Democratic, and 9 are likely to be up for grabs. Of the 27 states whose primaries/caucuses Senator

Obama has won, 12 are likely to be solidly Republican in November, 9 are likely to be solidly Democratic, and 6 are likely to be up for grabs.

Of the 9 battleground states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Clinton has won, her average margin of victory has been 12.6 percentage points. Excluding Florida and Michigan, in the 7 other battleground states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Clinton has won, her average margin of victory has been 10.4 percentage points. Of the 6 battleground states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Obama has won, his average margin of victory has been 18.1 percentage points.

Assuming that (a) neither Sen. Clinton nor Sen. Obama will win those 19 states with 152 electoral votes that are likely to go Republican in November and (b) either Sen. Clinton or Obama will win those 15 states with 196 electoral votes that are likely to go Democratic in November, then based on the results of Democratic primaries/caucuses thus far in the battleground states, Sen. Clinton is more likely to win 9 battleground states with 116 electoral votes for a total of 312 electoral votes. Sen. Obama is more likely to win 6 battleground states with 54 electoral votes for a total of 250 electoral votes.

Florida's and Michigan's primary votes, however, are not currently recognized by the Democratic National Committee. Excluding these two states' 44 electoral votes, Sen. Clinton's projected electoral vote total in November would be 268.

To win the Presidency, at least 270 electoral votes are needed.

Based on the above, Sen. Clinton stands the better chance of winning the general election in November as the Democratic Presidential nominee.

Of the remaining states that have yet to hold primaries/caucuses, 4 are likely to be solidly Republican in November, one is likely to be solidly Democratic, and 2 are battleground states (North Carolina and West Virginia). If Sen. Obama were to win the 2 remaining battleground states with 20 electoral votes, then his November total of potentially winnable states would be 270 electoral votes, which would be just enough to win the Presidency. If he were to win only North Carolina, then his November total of potentially winnable states would be 265 electoral votes. If he were to win only West Virginia, then his November total of potentially winnable states would be 255 electoral votes. In either of the latter two situations, he would fall short of the number of electoral votes needed to win the Presidency.

If Sen. Clinton were to win both of these states, then her November total of potentially winnable states would be 332 electoral votes. If she were to win only North Carolina, then her November total of potentially winnable states would be 327 electoral votes. If she were to win only West Virginia, then her November total of potentially winnable states would be 317 electoral votes. In all of these situations, she would win enough electoral votes needed to win the Presidency.

Background

In the 2004 Presidential election, the Republican ticket of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney won 31 states with 286 electoral votes. The Democratic ticket of John Kerry and John Edwards won 20 states, plus the District of Columbia, with 252 electoral votes.

The following is a review of each state. States that are likely to be solidly Republican in November are listed as "R" in the Status column. States that are likely to be solidly Democratic in November are listed as "D." States that are likely to be battlegrounds in November are listed as "B." In parentheses is the last election year in which the Democratic Presidential ticket carried the state.

In categorizing each state, the following factors were used:

- Results of recent Presidential elections
- Results of recent statewide elections
- Demographic trends among key segments of the voting population, especially the four swing groups of voters that the Democratic Presidential ticket needs to carry – Catholics, Hispanics/Latinos, older voters, and women

State-by-State Numbers

<u>State</u>	<u>Electoral Votes</u>	<u>Democratic Prim/Cauc Winner</u>	<u>Margin Percent Points</u>	<u>Status</u>
Alabama	9	Obama	14.4	R (1976)
Alaska	3	Obama	50.5	R (1964)
Arizona	10	Clinton	8.0	R (1996)
Arkansas	6	Clinton	43.7	B (1996)
California	55	Clinton	8.3	D (2004)
Colorado	9	Obama	34.2	B (1992)
Connecticut	7	Obama	4.0	D (2004)
Delaware	3	Obama	10.8	D (2004)
District of Columbia	3	Obama	51.5	D (2004)
Florida	27	Clinton	16.9	B (1996)
Georgia	15	Obama	35.3	R (1992)
Hawaii	4	Obama	52.2	D (2004)
Idaho	4	Obama	62.3	R (1964)
Illinois	21	Obama	31.9	D (2004)
Indiana	11	<i>May 6 primary</i>		R (1964)
Iowa	7	Obama	8.1	B (2000)
Kansas	6	Obama	48.2	R (1964)

<u>State</u>	<u>Electoral Votes</u>	<u>Democratic Prim/Cauc Winner</u>	<u>Margin Percent Points</u>	<u>Status</u>
Kentucky	8	<i>May 20 primary</i>		R (1992)
Louisiana	9	Obama	21.8	R (1996)
Maine	4	Obama	19.6	B (2004)
Maryland	10	Obama	24.6	D (2004)
Massachusetts	12	Clinton	15.4	D (2004)
Michigan	17	*Clinton	10.6	B (2004)
Minnesota	10	Obama	34.9	D (2004)
Mississippi	6	Obama	23.4	R (1976)
Missouri	11	Obama	1.4	B (1996)
Montana	3	<i>June 3 primary</i>		R (1992)
Nebraska	5	Obama	35.3	R (1964)
Nevada	5	Clinton	5.7	B (1996)
New Hampshire	4	Clinton	2.6	B (2004)
New Jersey	15	Clinton	9.9	D (2004)
New Mexico	5	Clinton	0.9	B (2000)
New York	31	Clinton	16.8	D (2004)
North Carolina	15	<i>May 6 primary</i>		B (1976)

<u>State</u>	<u>Electoral Votes</u>	<u>Democratic Prim/Cauc Winner</u>	<u>Margin Percent Points</u>	<u>Status</u>
North Dakota	3	Obama	24.6	R (1964)
Ohio	20	Clinton	10.3	B (1996)
Oklahoma	7	Clinton	23.6	R (1964)
Oregon	7	<i>May 20 primary</i>		D (2004)
Pennsylvania	21	Clinton	9.4	B (2004)
Rhode Island	4	Clinton	18.0	D (2004)
South Carolina	8	Obama	28.9	R (1976)
South Dakota	3	<i>June 3 primary</i>		R (1964)
Tennessee	11	Clinton	13.3	B (1996)
Texas	34	Clinton	3.5	R (1976)
Utah	5	Obama	17.6	R (1964)
Vermont	3	Obama	26.4	D (2004)
Virginia	13	Obama	28.2	B (1964)
Washington	11	Obama	36.3	D (2004)
West Virginia	5	<i>May 13 primary</i>		B (1996)
Wisconsin	10	Obama	17.3	B (2004)

<u>State</u>	<u>Electoral Votes</u>	<u>Democratic Prim/Cauc Winner</u>	<u>Margin Percent Points</u>	<u>Status</u>
Wyoming	3	Obama	23.6	R (1964)
<i>State Totals</i>	538	<i>Clinton -- 17</i>	<i>12.8 average</i>	<i>R-19 (152EV)</i>
		<i>Obama -- 27</i>	<i>28.4 average</i>	<i>D-15 (196EV)</i>
				<i>U-17 (190EV)</i>

(*Florida's and Michigan's primary votes are not currently recognized by the Democratic National Committee.)

Analysis

Of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 19 are likely to be Republican and 15 are likely to Democratic. These 34 states have a total of 348 electoral votes. The Democratic Party leads the Republican Party among these states with 196 electoral votes to 152 electoral votes.

The key to capturing the Presidency in 2008 will be winning enough of the 17 states with a total of 190 electoral votes that might go either way. Of these 17 battleground states, 11 (Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia) with a total of 114 electoral votes have been more likely to vote Republican in recent Presidential elections. Of the remaining battleground states, 6 (Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) with a total of 76 electoral votes have been more likely to vote Democratic.

Presidential Elections of 2000 and 2004

In the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections, the two Democratic Presidential tickets (Gore-Lieberman and Kerry-Edwards) carried the 15 solidly Democratic states and 4 of the 6 states that are more likely to vote Democratic, but lost one of the latter states (Gore-Lieberman lost New Hampshire and Kerry-Edwards lost Ohio). Of the 11 states that are more likely to vote Republican, the two Democratic Presidential tickets lost 9 of these states, but won 2 (Gore-Lieberman won New Mexico and Iowa). As a result, the Democratic Presidential tickets lost the 2000 election by 5 electoral votes (266 vs. 271) and the 2004 election by 34

electoral votes (252 vs. 286). In both elections, the Democratic Presidential ticket carried 20 states, plus the District of Columbia.

Primary/Caucus Results Thus Far

Of the 17 states whose primaries/caucuses Senator Clinton has won:

- ❖ 3 are likely to be solidly Republican in November (Arizona, Oklahoma, Texas)
- ❖ 5 are likely to be solidly Democratic (California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island)
- ❖ 9 are likely to be up for grabs (Arkansas, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee)

Of the 27 states whose primaries/caucuses Senator Obama has won:

- ❖ 12 are likely to be solidly Republican in November (Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Wyoming)
- ❖ 9 are likely to be solidly Democratic (Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Vermont, Washington)
- ❖ 6 are likely to be up for grabs (Colorado, Iowa, Maine, Missouri, Virginia, Wisconsin)

Margins of Victory

Of the 3 likely Republican states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Clinton has won, her average margin of victory has been 11.7 percentage points. Of the 5 likely Democratic states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Clinton has won, her average margin of victory has been 13.7 percentage points. Of the 9 battleground states (Arkansas, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee) whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Clinton has won, her average margin of victory has been 12.6 percentage points. Excluding Florida and Michigan, in the 7 other battleground states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Clinton has won, her average margin of victory has been 10.4 percentage points.

Of the 12 likely Republican states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Obama has won, his average margin of victory has been 32.2 percentage points. Of the 9 likely Democratic states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Obama has won, his average margin of victory has been 30.3 percentage points. Of the 6 battleground

states whose primaries/caucuses Sen. Obama has won, his average margin of victory has been 18.1 percentage points.

Projected Electoral Votes in 2008

Assuming that (a) neither Sen. Clinton nor Sen. Obama will win those 19 states with 152 electoral votes that are likely to go Republican in November and (b) either Sen. Clinton or Obama will win those 15 states with 196 electoral votes that are likely to go Democratic in November, the following is a projection of total electoral votes, based on the results of Democratic primaries/caucuses in the 17 battleground states with 190 electoral votes, that Sen. Clinton and Sen. Obama are likely to win in November should either be the Democratic Presidential nominee.

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Solidly Democratic Electoral Votes</u>	<u>Battleground Electoral Votes</u>	<u>Total</u>
Sen. Clinton	196	116*	312
Sen. Obama	196	54	250

(*Florida's and Michigan's primary votes are not currently recognized by the Democratic National Committee. Excluding these two states' 44 electoral votes, Sen. Clinton's projected electoral vote total in November would be 268.)

To win the Presidency, at least 270 electoral votes are needed.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, Sen. Clinton stands the better chance of winning the general election in November as the Democratic Presidential nominee.

Of the remaining states that have yet to hold primaries/caucuses, 4 (Indiana, Kentucky, Montana, and South Dakota) are likely to be solidly Republican in November, one is likely to be solidly Democratic (Oregon), and 2 are battleground states (North Carolina and West Virginia). (This analysis does not include Guam (May 3 caucuses – 4 pledged delegates at stake) and Puerto Rico (June 3 primary – 55 pledged delegates at stake), as neither has electoral votes in the general election.)

If Sen. Obama were to win the 2 remaining battleground states with 20 electoral votes, then his November total of potentially winnable states would be 270 electoral votes, which would be just enough to win the Presidency. If he were to win only North Carolina, then his November total of potentially winnable states would be 265 electoral votes. If he were to win only West Virginia, then his November total of potentially winnable states would be 255 electoral votes. In either of the latter two situations, he would fall short of the number of electoral votes needed to win the Presidency.

If Sen. Clinton were to win both of these states, then her November total of potentially winnable states would be 332 electoral votes. If she were to win only North Carolina, then her November total of potentially winnable states would be 327 electoral votes. If she were to win only West Virginia, then her November total of potentially winnable states would be 317 electoral votes. In all of these situations, she would win enough electoral votes needed to win the Presidency.

Caveat

There may be, however, significant factors that differentiate the 2008 Presidential election from recent ones. Among these factors are:

- ⇒ Major recent demographic changes in a particular state
- ⇒ Local political developments in a particular state
- ⇒ The selection of a Vice Presidential candidate from a key state whose candidacy has a determinative impact on how that particular state votes
- ⇒ Voting patterns that shift because of the age, gender, race, or other characteristics of a Presidential candidate

⇒ Disaffected groups of voters who would otherwise have been more likely to support one party's Presidential ticket

As a result of one or more of the above factors, the following states might be characterized differently in 2008:

- Delaware: From likely Democratic to Battleground
- Florida: From Battleground to likely Republican
- Illinois: From likely Democratic to Battleground
- Louisiana: From likely Republican to Battleground
- Maryland: From likely Democratic to Battleground
- Michigan: From Battleground to likely Republican
- New Jersey: From likely Democratic to Battleground
- North Carolina: From Battleground to likely Republican
- Tennessee: From Battleground to likely Republican
- Virginia: From Battleground to likely Republican
- West Virginia: From Battleground to likely Republican

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