

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 74

May 15, 2007

STATE OF THE NATION

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BUSH NOT MOVING UP

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2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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2008 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

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THIS AND THAT

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RESTAURANTS JUST THINK "QUINCE" (see separate section)

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ABOUT THE COUNTRY

Americans are increasingly pessimistic about the state of the country. Only 24% think the country is headed in the right direction while 68% think it is off on the wrong track.(average of surveys below). In mid-January only 61% of those surveyed thought the country was on the wrong track.

Similarly in those polls that ask a satisfied/dissatisfied question the average number of those who are dissatisfied has also grown to 68% and the number who claim to be satisfied has fallen to 29%.

	<u>Right Direction</u>	<u>Wrong Track</u>	
5/9/07	25%	71%	AP-Ipsos
4/23/07	26%	67%	Harris
4/23/07	22% 66% NBC/WSJ		
	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	
5/3/07	25%	71%	Newsweek
4/5/07	33%	65%	Gallup

57% describe the nation's economy as not so good or poor. [Wash Post/ABC 4/07]

36% of Americans would allow illegal immigrants to remain in this country and become citizens if they meet certain requirements. An additional 42% would require that illegal immigrants leave the United States, but then let them return if they meet certain requirements. [Gallup 4/07]

61% of the public is dissatisfied with the position of the United States in the world today. 54% think this country rates unfavorably in the eyes of the world. [Gallup 2/07]

Americans split 49% to 47%, with the plurality believing that the government should redistribute wealth by heavy taxes on the rich. Further, 66% believe that upper income people are paying too little in the way of taxes. [Gallup 4/07]

49% believe that this is a good time to find a quality job. 4 years ago 76% held that view. And half of Americans know someone who has been laid off or lost a job in the last 6 months. [Gallup 4/07]

58% say that current economic conditions are only fair or poor. [Gallup 4/07]

While 57% believe that the war in Iraq was a mistake, 64% of those over 50 years of age have that view. And, of those over 70, 70% think it was a mistake. [Gallup 2007 to May]

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Overall, 58% of Americans think that race relations in this country are at least fairly good. This is up from 1995, when only 34% held this view, but down from 2005, when 63% took that position.

However, the view of African-Americans is quite different. Only 40% think relations are at least fairly good. That is up from 1995, when the number was 31%, but down from 2005, when 48% had the more positive view.

Hispanics, with 55% believing that relations are at least fairly good, are closer in their assessment to the public at large, and they rate race relations about the same as they did in 2005.

Among African-Americans, 76% believe we devote too little attention to race relations in this country, with 16% believing that we give it too much attention. Among whites, 49% think the subject gets too much attention, and 32% say not enough. A plurality of Hispanics, 47%, think we give this matter too little attention. [NBC/WSJ 4/07]

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In 2000, 69% of employers offered health insurance to their employees. In 2006 that number was 61%. [Money Magazine 6/07]

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82% believe the price of gasoline will go up in the next few months. [CBS/NYTimes 4/07]

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How particular countries rate, as friends or foes, was a question put to Americans by a Quinnipiac University survey taken during the last week of April. Respondents were asked to rate countries from 1 to 100. The higher the number the more friendly the country is seen to be.

England	80.4
Canada	76.2
Israel	66.7
Germany	61.2
India	57.9
Mexico	56.9
France	49.0
Russia	47.7
China	44.5
Saudi Arabia	42.6
Iraq	26.1
Syria	25.4
Palestinians	24.4
Cuba	23.0
North Korea	16.7
Iran	14.7

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66% of Americans think the United Nations is doing a poor job of solving the problems it has had to face. This is the largest number holding this view since Gallup began asking this question in 1953.

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In late April the Gallup survey gave its respondents an opportunity to name the "top priority for the President and Congress" (open-ended, multiple responses were accepted):

Situation in Iraq/war	66%
Healthcare issues	20%
Economy in general	14%
Immigration	14%
Fuel/oil prices	7%
Environment/Pollution	5%
National security	4%
Education	4%
Terrorism	4%
Federal deficit	3%
Social Security	3%

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Abortion does not come up as an important issue when Americans are given an opportunity to offer up their most important issues. But it is one of those issues on which folks have very determined positions when the issue is raised.

The Supreme Court has ruled that partial birth abortions may be barred. 66% of Americans agree with that proposition. 55% believe that the question of abortion should be left to a woman and her doctor; yet only 45% identify themselves as being pro-choice. [CNN/ORC 5/07;NBC/WSJ 4/07;CNN/ORC 5/07]

Another issue that does not show up on volunteered issue lists in any appreciable numbers, but on which strong opinions are beginning to form, is global warming/climate change.

Yet a March, 2007 Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner survey for The Center for American Progress found:

- 76% believe the effects of global warming are apparent now
- 61% believe global warming is caused more by human actions than by naturally occurring forces
- 69% think the country's energy policy is off on the wrong track
- 79% have the view that shifting to new, alternative energy production will help American security and create jobs.

And, at least anecdotally, there is a partisan split on the relative importance of the issue. In the March 3rd National Journal Insiders Poll, the "Insiders" were asked to name the issue other than Iraq that is likely to get more attention in the 2008 election than most people expect. Democrats named global warming second in their list of six, after health care. Republicans did not name it in their top six.

As much as anything else, the above responses may reflect the emphasis that the two Parties are likely to place on the issue in the coming election.

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PRESIDENT BUSH

The President's approval rating continues to sag. The 28% approval rating that Bush received in the May Newsweek poll was the lowest it has recorded for any President since Jimmy Carter in 1979.

		Approve	Disapprove
AP-Ipsos	5/9	35	61
CNN	5/6	38	61
Gallup	5/6	34	63
Newsweek	5/3	28	64
Diigo/Hotline	4/30	35	62
NPR	4/29	37	59
CBS/NYT	4/24	32	61
NBC/WSJ	4/23	35	60
Pew	4/22	35	57
Fox	4/18	38	54

The Gallup survey reports that Bush's run of sub-40% approval ratings, which has now extended to 6 months, is the longest sub-40% run of any President other than Harry Truman, Richard Nixon, and Jimmy Carter. [Truman has the record, 26 consecutive months below 40%.]

President Bush's approval rating remains the lowest of any President who got this far into his 2nd term in the last 48 years.

	Approve	Disapprove
Dwight Eisenhower	60	24
Bill Clinton	60	36
Ronald Reagan	48	43
Lyndon Johnson	45	39
George H.W. Bush	34	63
[Gallup]		

The President's handling of a variety of specific issues is also disapproved by the public:

	Disapproval
The situation in Iraq	70%
Immigration issues	64%
Energy situation	63%
The economy	59%
Ethics in government	57%
Environment	56%
Campaign against terrorism	53%

[CBS/NYT, Wash Post/ABC 4/07]

73% think that leaders of other countries don't have much respect for the President.
[Gallup 2/07]

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THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

2008 marks the 55th quadrennial election for President and Vice President of the United States. Americans will elect the 44th President and 47th Vice President.

This will be the 1st election since 1928 when there is no incumbent President seeking re-election or a Vice-President seeking to ascend to the Presidency.

3 of the 6 leading candidates for the office, 1 Republican and 2 Democrats, are members of the United States Senate. The last time a sitting Senator won the Presidency was in 1960.

The record for House members is worse. It has been 127 years since a sitting Member of the House was elected to the Presidency - James Garfield, the 20th President.

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THE FIELD

The field is pretty robust, with 10 Republicans and 8 Democrats having entered the race. And the field may not yet be complete. On the Republican side there are at least 2 possible additional entries, and 1 on the Democratic side. Of this group of possibles, the most likely additional entrant is Fred Thompson, a former Senator from Tennessee, and currently a prominent actor and commentator.

It remains to be seen whether the Green Party will enter a real candidate, and many folks are pressing the Mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, to run as an Independent.

<u>Name</u>	Talks About <u>Running</u>	Set up Explore <u>Committee</u>	Announces Presidential <u>Bid</u>	Out of <u>the game</u>
<u>Republican</u>				
Brownback	X	12/4/06	12/20/07	
Cox	X			
Gilmore	X	1/9/07	1/9/07	
Gingrich	X	(wait and see)		
Giuliani	X	11/20/06		
Hagel	X	(wait and see)		
Huckabee	X	1/27/07	1/28/07	
Hunter	X	1/12/01	1/25/07	
McCain	X	11/15/06	11/15/06	

<u>Name</u>	<u>Talks</u> <u>About</u> <u>Running</u>	<u>Set up</u> <u>Explore</u> <u>Committee</u>	<u>Announces</u> <u>Presidential</u> <u>Bid</u>	<u>Out of</u> <u>the game</u>
Pataki	X	(wait and see)		
Paul	X	1/11/07	3/12/07	
Tancredo	X	1/16/07	4/2/07	
Romney	X	1/3/07	1/3/07	
Thompson,F	X	(wait and see)		
Thompson,T	X	12/15/06	4/4/07	
* * * * *				
Allen	X	----	----	No start
Frist	X	----	----	11/29/06
Keating	X	----	----	1/18/07
Santorum	X	----	----	No start
<u>Independent</u>				
Bloomberg	X			
<u>Green Party</u>				
Nader	X			
<u>Democrat</u>				
Biden	X	----	1/7/07	
Clark	X	(wait and see)		
Clinton	X	1/20/07	1/22/07	
Dodd	X	----	1/10/07	
Edwards	X	1/3/07		
Gore	X	(wait and see)		
Gravel	X	----	4/4/06	
Kucinich	X	----	12/29/06	
Obama	X	1/16/07	2/10/07	
Richardson	X	1/22/07	1/22/07	
Sharpton	X	(wait and see)		
* * * * *				
Daschle	X	----	----	No start
Bayh	X	12/3/06	----	12/16/06
Feingold	X	----	----	11/12/06
Kerry	X			1/24/07
Vilsack	X	----	11/9/06	2/23/07
Warner	X	----	----	10/12/06
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Are there some aspects of the various Presidential candidates that could turn off some numbers of voters? Gallup inquired about this subject in two surveys this spring and here are the results:

- 41% would not vote for a person 72 years old
- 29% would not vote for someone has been married 3 times
- 22% won't vote for a Mormon
- 11% won't vote for a woman
- 5% won't vote for an African-American

At least that is what folks tell the pollsters

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When asked whether they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of various current and potential candidates for President, here is how Americans responded in an USA Today / Gallup Poll in early May:

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion	Never Heard of
Rudy Giuliani	61	24	8	7
Hillary Clinton	50	47	3	0
Barack Obama	50	24	12	13
John McCain	50	30	10	10
Al Gore	49	43	8	0
John Edwards	49	31	9	9
Fred Thompson	27	11	12	50
Mitt Romney	24	22	15	39

Many of these candidates have more room to grow, either because they have never been heard of or folks know of them, but are not yet ready to express an opinion about them. Here is the same list ranked on the basis of the greatest number of No opinion/Never Heard Of responses:

Fred Thompson	27	11	12	50
Mitt Romney	24	22	15	39
Barack Obama	50	24	12	13
John McCain	50	30	10	10
John Edwards	49	31	9	9
Rudy Giuliani	61	24	8	7
Al Gore	49	43	8	0
Hillary Clinton	50	47	3	0

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A few questions.

- * Will Obama be able to translate the outpouring of support that he has received in person and on the internet into an activated grass roots team?

- * Will Romney be able to overcome concerns about his Mormon religious beliefs?
- * Will Giuliani be able to hold onto core Republican support in the light of 3 marriages, an apparent estrangement from his children, his business dealings, his squirming about on abortion, and his positions on other social issues?
- * Will Clinton find the voice to show the public her more personal side?
- * Will McCain be able to overcome concerns about his age and loss of his maverick quality?
- * Will Edwards be able to overcome the apparent inconsistencies of \$400 hair cuts and working for a hedge fund that is into subprime loans?
- * Will Gore, Fred Thompson, and Gingrich join the race?

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What do we want in our next President?

Honesty/straight forward	33%
Leadership/strength	16%
Competent/capable/able to govern	10%
Integrity	10%
Represent people/not special interests	9%
U.S. first/focus on domestic issues	8%

[Gallup March 07]

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In late March (Republican candidates) and early May (Democratic candidates) Gallup survey respondents from each political Party were asked to explain their reasons for supporting one or the other of the two front runners in their Party over the other front runner.

Giuliani

His handling of 911 and terrorism	18%
Leadership/Giuliani is a strong leader	13%
Did a good job as Mayor of NYC	10%
Agree with his views on issues	10%
McCain too moderate/too much maverick	10%

McCain

More experienced	19%
More familiar with McCain	18%
Military background	16%
Agree with his views(other than moral issues)	16%
His honesty/integrity	14%
Agree with his view on moral issues	11%

Clinton

More experienced	35%
Like her views on issues	23%
Clinton is a woman	17%
Bill Clinton was President	10%
Don't know enough about Obama	10%

Obama

Like Obama better/do not like Clinton	17%
Agree with Obama's issues positions	18%
Obama fresh face/new ideas	19%
Clinton has too much baggage	11%
Obama better chance of being elected Pres.	10%

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THE PRIMARIES

The biggest change this year is the front loading of the primary/caucus election process.

In 2004, through the 1st Tuesday in February, 7 States had held their primaries and caucuses, and none of the States in that group were in the list of the 5 largest States by population.

In 2008, through the 1st Tuesday in February, at least 29 States will have held their primaries and caucuses, including all 5 of the largest States by population.

In her recent column in Politico, Elizabeth Wilner writes about the angst being expressed about the massing of early primaries. She wrote, "States with late primary dates have grown sick of being disenfranchised." And, "...the very understandable and healthy concept of voters wanting to play a bigger role than usual in the biggest race in history."

She points out that, in 2004, John Kerry had clinched the nomination by the close of business by the 1st Tuesday in February. And, in 2000, when "six weeks separated Iowa and New Hampshire from the next round of Democratic contests," Gore had clinched the nomination before the polls opened for the 2nd round.

While folks will continue to complain about how bad the new calendar is, keep in mind that their opinions are not based on history or experience.

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Another important element of this super, super Tuesday, February 5th, is early voting. Of the States that will hold primaries on or before February 5th, 14 of them permit "No Excuse required, early voting." For example, votes may be cast in California beginning on January 7th. In addition, all of the voting in Oregon, one of the early States, is by mail.

There is little doubt that we will know the nominees of the Democratic and Republican Parties by the end of February 5, 2008.

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THE EARLY PRIMARY RETURNS

Before 2007 began, Hillary Clinton, in the Democratic primary, and John McCain, in the Republican primary, were the putative favorites for the nomination.

4 months into the year, Barack Obama is proving to be a strong contender in the Democratic race, and John McCain is running a poor second to Rudy Giuliani in the Republican race.

National polls in primary campaigns can be misleading because they do not take into account what is happening in particular States. However, they are an indicator.

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In the Democratic primary, over the 3-month period from mid-January to mid-April, Obama has moved up, while Clinton has been steady. Edwards has had some ups and downs, but, at the end of the 3-month period, he is slightly ahead of where he was in mid-January.

In a hypothetical 2-way race between Clinton and Obama, both candidates are just about where they were at the beginning of the year.

Democrats - Gallup

	<u>5/4-6</u>	<u>4/13-15</u>	<u>4/2-4/5</u>	<u>3/23-3/25</u>	<u>1/12-1/14</u>
Clinton	38	31	38	35	29
Obama	23	26	19	22	18
Edwards	12	16	15	14	13
Gore	14	15	14	17	11
Clinton	56	53	61	56	53
Obama	37	41	33	37	39

In the 4 earliest states, Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina, Edwards leads in Iowa and Clinton in the other 3.

Primaries and Caucuses – Democratic

Iowa - January 14, 2008

(avg. of 4 surveys 3/26-4/30)

Democratic Caucus

Edwards	29
Clinton	24
Obama	20

Nevada - January 19, 2008

(Mason-Dixon 4/30-5/2)

Democratic Caucus

Clinton	37
Edwards	13
Obama	13

New Hampshire - January 22, 2008

(avg. of 4 surveys 3/27-5/6)

Democratic Primary

Clinton	33
Edwards	23
Obama	20

So. Carolina - January 29, 2008

(ARG 4/27-30)

Democratic Primary

Clinton	36
Obama	24
Edwards	18

A Sample of Other States:

Florida - January 29, 2008

(ARG 5/4-8)

Democratic Primary

Clinton	45
Obama	17
Edwards	15

California - February 5, 2008

(Mellman 5/4-8)

Democratic Primary

Clinton	37
Obama	28
Edwards	15

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In the Republican primary during the same period, Giuliani grew some and McCain declined. No other Republican candidate has more than single digit support. The wild card is whether former Senator Fred Thompson decides to get into the race.

In a hypothetical 2-way race between Giuliani and McCain, Giuliani has grown and McCain slipped slightly.

Republicans – Gallup

	5/4-6	4/13-15	4/2-4/5	3/23-3/25	1/12-1/14
Giuliani	34	35	38	31	31
McCain	20	22	16	22	27
Romney	7	9	6	8	7
Gingrich	8	7	10	8	10
F. Thompson	13	10	10	12	na
Giuliani	56	57	57	54	50
McCain	38	39	38	39	42

In the 4 earliest states, Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina, Giuliani leads in Iowa and Nevada, and McCain in the other 2.

Primaries and Caucuses – Republican

Iowa - January 14, 2008

(avg. of 4 surveys 3/28-4/30)

Republican Caucus

Giuliani	22
McCain	22
Romney	13
F. Thompson	9

Nevada - January 19, 2008

(Mason-Dixon 4/30-5/2)

Republican Caucus

McCain	19
Romney	15
F. Thompson	13
Giuliani	12

New Hampshire - January 22, 2008

(avg. of 4 surveys 3/27-5/6)

Republican Primary

McCain	26
Romney	25
Giuliani	22
F. Thompson	7

So. Carolina - January 29, 2008

(ARG 4/27-30)

Republican Primary

McCain	36
Giuliani	23
F. Thompson	10
Romney	6

A Sample of Other States:

Florida - January 29, 2008

(ARG 5/4-8)

Republican Primary

Giuliani	31
McCain	18
F. Thompson	13
Romney	11

California - February 5, 2008

(ARG 5/4-8)

Republican Primary

Giuliani	27
McCain	24
F. Thompson	12
Romney	11

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THE MONEY PRIMARY

On the overall numbers, Senator Hillary Clinton was the winner of the 1st "election" of the money primary, which ended on March 31st. A close second was Senator Obama, followed by Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani.

But the real winner, in the Democratic primary chase in particular, was Senator Obama. While Clinton raised \$26,054,000, Obama was only a hair's breadth behind, with \$25,709,000. John Edwards trailed, raising \$14,000,000.

"Everyone," with the possible exception of Obama, was surprised by the amount the Obama campaign raised.

Most notable is that Obama outraised Clinton by \$5,600,000 in contributions that can be used in the primary. Nearly \$7,000,00 of the total raised by Clinton can only be spent in the general election.

In reaching these totals, the Obama campaign received contributions from 104,000 donors, about half of whom contributed through the internet. The Clinton campaign claimed about 60,000 supporters.

While the amount that each candidate raised in the quarter is interesting, 1st the more important question is how much each candidate has available to spend at the beginning of the 2nd quarter.

The Clinton and Obama campaigns spent equal amounts in the 1st quarter. By that measure Obama should lead in cash-on-hand. However, Clinton ended up with \$4,400,000 more cash-on-hand because she began the 2nd quarter with \$22,400,000 net cash (cash minus debt). Obama had \$18,100,000 at the beginning of the quarter, and Edwards started the 2nd quarter with \$10,700,000 available.

The reason for Clinton's cash advantage is simple. Clinton transferred \$10,000,000 from her just-completed Senate campaign to her Presidential account. Other Democratic and Republican candidates have also engaged in such transfers. [See note #2 in the chart at the end of this section.]

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The Clinton campaign decided to actively raise primary and general election money at the same time from the outset, and sought contributions for both elections. Obama supporters could also opt to contribute to the primary and general, but the campaign did not push that alternative.

Based on an Opinion rendered by the Federal Election Commission to the Obama campaign, a candidate for President may solicit funds for the general election and still retain the option of taking the Federal grant of roughly \$85,000,000.

After securing the nomination, a candidate may decide whether to go with private financing or take the general election grant. However, if he or she has spent any of the general election money, that option disappears. If a candidate opts for Federal financing in the general, all of the funds raised for the general must be returned to the contributors.

It will be interesting to see how hard the Clinton campaign will push the general election contribution option now that she trails in the primary money derby.

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In the Republican money race, Romney raised \$20,983,000, to capture 1st place, running nearly \$5,000,000 ahead of Giuliani's \$16,100,000. The big surprise of the Republican chase was the 3rd place finish of McCain, who raised only \$13,680,000.

On the other hand, Romney spent \$13,675,000, while Giuliani held his spending to \$6,130,000. McCain sent \$11,400,000 out the door.

As they headed into the 2nd quarter, Giuliani had the greatest amount of net cash, with \$11,861,000 (including \$2,000,000 transferred from his aborted 2000 U.S. Senate campaign), followed by Romney, with \$9,514,000, whose total includes a \$2,350,000 personal loan that he made to his campaign.

McCain was hurting, with only \$3,368,000 on hand. He has subsequently revamped his fundraising operation. While the 2nd quarter fundraising/spending activity of all the campaigns is important, recovery is critical for McCain. As of this writing, the McCain campaign says it is meeting its fundraising goals for this quarter, and is working to get spending under control.

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To put 1st quarter fundraising in some kind of perspective, WW looked back at the successful 1984 Mondale primary campaign. [Your editor was Treasurer of that campaign.]

During the entire 19-month primary campaign, the Mondale campaign's total spending was \$25,000,000, the maximum amount allowed for a campaign that accepted primary matching funds. Of that total, about \$17,000,000 was raised by the campaign, and the balance came from the U.S. Treasury in matching funds.

The maximum allowable individual contribution was \$1,000, as compared to the current \$2,300.

With the simple application of inflation, that \$25,000,000 campaign would cost \$50,000,000 today. Several of these campaigns could well raise more than amount in the 1st six months of the current campaign.

[A detailed chart of primary fundraising follows. Please read the footnotes; they will explain why many of the numbers in this chart are different than those published in other media. WW believes that this is a more accurate reflection of fundraising and expenditure.]

Primary 2007-2008

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Contrib. Rec'd 1 Q & before⁽¹⁾</u>	<u>Total Contributions to Date⁽²⁾</u>	<u>Net Cash Available⁽³⁾</u>	<u>Total Spent⁽⁴⁾</u>
<u>Democrat</u>				
Clinton	26,054,000 ⁽⁶⁾	36,054,000	22,446,000 ⁽⁵⁾	6,643,000
Obama	25,709,000 ⁽⁶⁾	25,709,000	18,093,000 ⁽⁵⁾	6,745,000
Edwards	14,030,000	14,030,000	10,732,000	3,292,000
Dodd	4,044,000	8,783,000	7,482,000	1,313,000
Richardson	6,246,000	6,246,000	5,002,000	1,227,000
Biden	2,113,000	4,013,000	2,839,000	1,174,000
Kucinich				
Gravel				
<u>Republican</u>				
Romney	20,983,000	23,333,000	9,514,000	13,675,000
Giuliani	16,078,000	18,028,000	11,861,000	6,130,000
McCain	13,680,000	14,730,000	3,368,000	11,402,000
Brownback	1,291,000	1,866,000	807,000	1,030,000
Tancredo	1,186,000	1,256,000	560,000	711,000

(1) Includes contributions received before 1/1/07

Giuliani - \$1,307,000 (raised in 2006)

McCain - \$ 660,000 (raised in 2006)

(2) Includes

- transfers from previous Senate or House Committees Clinton - \$10,000,000

Biden - \$ 1,900,000

Brownback - \$ 575,000

Dodd - \$ 4,739,000

Giuliani - \$ 1,950,000

McCain - \$ 1,050,000

Tancredo - \$ 70,000

- loans guaranteed by candidate

Romney - \$ 2,350,000

(3) Net Cash = cash on hand minus debts owed by Committee + general election contributions that are escrowed (based on newspaper reports)

(4) Total Spent = operating expenditures + operating debt

(5) General Election Contributions deducted to arrive at net cash Clinton - \$ 6,946,000

Obama - \$ 909,000

(6) Primary Contributions Clinton - \$19,100,000 Obama - \$24,700,000

Any question that may exist as to whether Presidential candidates are likely to suffer voter irritation by not taking public funding seems to be decided on the side of not taking Federal funds.

56% think candidates for President should opt not to take public financing and spend whatever money they can raise on their own. [Gallup 4/07]

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THE GENERAL ELECTION

18 months from now and \$1 billion dollars in campaign-related expenses (from 1/1/07) Americans will cast their votes for President.

To add an historical complication to the race for the Democrats, the last time that a Party won the Presidency in the next election after it took back the Congress in a mid-term election was 1920.

By 50% to 35% Americans would like to see the Democrats gain the Presidency in the next election. But that margin does not translate into an automatic Democratic victory, at least based on current matchups between major Democratic and Republican candidates. [These early matchups don't mean much, but they make good fodder for conversation.]

Newsweek 5/2-3/07

<u>Republicans</u>		<u>Democrats</u>	
<u>Giuliani</u>	46	<u>Clinton</u>	49
Giuliani	43	<u>Obama</u>	50
<u>Giuliani</u>	44	Edwards	50
McCain	44	<u>Clinton</u>	50
McCain	39	<u>Obama</u>	52
McCain	42	<u>Edwards</u>	52
Romney	35	<u>Clinton</u>	57
Romney	29	<u>Obama</u>	58
Romney	27	<u>Edwards</u>	64

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On January 31st, your editor appeared on the Paula Zahn show in a segment that addressed the question of whether a fat person could be elected President of the United States.

I took the position that a really fat person could not be elected, given the general public attitude toward fat people. However, that was not always the case.

There were two pretty fat Presidents, Grover Cleveland, who was first elected in 1884, and William Taft, who was elected in 1908.

Both men were subject to a variety of unkind editorial comments.

When Cleveland arrived in Washington he was described as a “huge, bejeweled man, a walrus in wingtips, resembling Boss Tweed carrying 280 pounds on a small, beleaguered frame.” “Porcine” is another word that was used when describing him, while his suits were said to be “like Tarpaulins” and straining at the buttons. Toward the end of his second term he was called “The Fat Knight.”

William Taft, who was likely our heaviest President, was pictured in one cartoon as setting foot in Cuba and sinking one side of the island; in another he was characterized as a kewpie doll. Nathan Miller, in his book *America's Ten Worst Presidents*, refers to Taft as weighing somewhere between 300 and 350 pounds. Whether or not that fact had anything to do with how well he did or didn't do as President is a matter of conjecture.

WW decided to see how our Presidents have done when it comes to their size and weight. After all, we expect them to lead us in a variety of ways, why not when it comes to weight? WW was able to locate published information for only 23 of the 44 Presidents.

To make a "reasonable" comparison among Presidents, WW used the Body Mass Index (BMI), a standard that takes into account height and weight. The current BMI standard has been adopted by an expert panel appointed by the National Institutes of Health as the new standard for predicting the risks associated with overweight.

<18.5	underweight and potentially unhealthy
18.5 - 24.9	healthy weight
25.0 - 26.9	somewhat overweight, avoid gaining weight
27.0 - 29.9	overweight, elevated risk of health problems
30.0 - 34.9	Class 1 obesity, high health risk
35.0 - 39.9	Class 2 obesity, very high health risk
40.0+	Class 3 obesity, extremely high health risk

The smallest President was James Madison, who was reported to stand about 5'4" in height and weighed in at 100 pounds (BMI 17.8). The "heavy weight" was William Taft, who entered office at 6'0" and 330 pounds (BMI 44.65).

As you can see from the list that follows, most Presidents (whose data WW could locate) had BMIs that were within or close to the so-called "healthy" weight - 20 - class (a BMI of less than 25). (By the way, all but two of them would have been in that class before the standard was changed in 1998. But that is another story.)

<u>President</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>BMI</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>
Washington	6'2"	175	22.50	
J. Adams	5'7"	"corpulent"		
Madison	5'4"	about 100	17.8	least tall
Jackson	6'1"	140	18.50	
Taylor	5'8"	170	25.88	

<u>President</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>BMI</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>
Lincoln	6'4"	180	21.93	tallest
Hayes	5'8 ½"	170	25.50	
Cleveland	5'11"	260	36.31	
Taft	6'0"	316	42.91	
		330	44.85	(entering office)
Wilson	5'11"	170	23.74	
Hoover	5'11"	187	26.11	
F.D. Roosevelt	6'2"	188	24.16	
Truman	5'9"	167	24.69	
Eisenhower	5'10 ½"	171	24.22	
Kennedy	6'0"	173	23.49	
Johnson	6'3"	200	25.03	
Nixon	5'11.5"	175	24.10	
Ford	6'0"	195	26.48	
Carter	5'9 ½"	160	23.31	
Reagan	6'1"	185	24.43	
Bush	6'2"	191	24.55	
Clinton	6'2"	216	27.79	(entering office)
	6'2"	196	25.22	(10/98)
Bush (2nd)	6'0"	196	26.58	(8/06)

The current President Bush's classification on the BMI scale provides an important example of why all general population standards should be used as guidelines, but not definitive markers. The President is, in fact, in excellent physical condition, even though he gained 5 pounds during the last year.

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In the interest of full disclosure, I had a BMI of 47.63 at my highest, and even today it is 36. If you want to find your own BMI, there are several websites that will do the calculation for you. www.NHLbisupport.com/bmi is one.

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THE CONGRESS

During 2006, the average Congressional job approval rating in the NBC/WSJ surveys was 24% approval and 63% disapproval. In its final survey before the election, job disapproval of the Congress reached 75%.

For the 1st 3.5 months under the new Democratic control of the Congress there has been some improvement, but the Congress still has a long way to go. Its job approval stands at 31% and disapproval at 52% in the survey taken the 4th week in April.

In that same survey, 60% of respondents said that the Democrats had so far not brought much change either way, while 20% said they had brought the right kind of change, and 15% the wrong kind of change.

Interestingly, there has been a substantial drop in the number saying Democrats had brought the right kind of change. In the NBC/WSJ January survey, shortly after the Democrats had taken charge, 42% said they had brought the right kind of change.

In the most recent Gallup Poll (May 10-13) only 29% approve of the job that Congress is doing.

An average of a half dozen recent surveys shows that the Democrats have a lead of 52% to 41% in a generic Congressional vote.

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THE U.S. SENATE

The Democrats control the Senate by a slim 51-49 margin. Their 5-person majority includes two Senators who describe themselves as Independents.

One of the them, Bernie Saunders of Vermont, is often described as a socialist. But he votes with the Democrats on almost every issue, so for all practical purposes he is a Democrat.

The second Independent is Joe Lieberman of Connecticut. Lieberman was the incumbent Democratic Senator from that State, who ran as an Independent in 2006, when the Democratic Party denied him its nomination. His dispute with the Party centered almost exclusively on his support for the President on the Iraq war. Republicans generally supported Lieberman in the election, and that, added to a core group of Democrats, resulted in his victory. Other than on organization of the body, Lieberman's vote with the Democratic caucus is less reliable.

It is too early in the cycle to accurately assess the prospects for the Democrats to increase their margin. At least at present, the prospects of the Republicans regaining control is marginal at best.

One current Republican seat, Colorado, is rated as a tossup because the incumbent is not standing for re-election. The State has been leaning Democratic in recent elections.

One incumbent Democrat, Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, is considered vulnerable, given the continuing political unrest in that State following the devastating hurricanes. It is argued that a large number of her voters from New Orleans are now displaced, including some who have relocated to other States. The big question is whether folks who have lost their homes and community will bother to participate in the election.

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Other Senate seats that might come into serious contention, "if," are

- * Arkansas - if Republican Mike Huckabee drops out of the Presidential races and decides to take on Democratic incumbent Mark Pryor
- * South Dakota - if incumbent Democrat Tom Johnson ends up not running for re-election
- * Virginia - if incumbent Republican John Warner decides not to seek reelection
- * New Mexico - if incumbent Republican Pete Dominici decides not to run or if he is found to have violated Senate ethics rules around the replacement of the U.S. attorney in that State.

THE U.S. SENATE

Democrats 49

Republicans 49

Independents 2 (caucus Dem)

Here is how the 33 Senate elections (12 Democratic incumbents, 21 Republican incumbents) look to me at this time (underlining reflects retirement). (D=Dem incumbent in office, R=GOP incumbent in office, I=Ind. incumbent in office)

Safe	Leaning		Leaning	Safe
<u>Democratic(7)</u>	<u>Democratic(4)</u>	<u>Toss-Up(2)</u>	<u>Republican(5)</u>	<u>Republican(15)</u>
Delaware	Arkansas	Colorado	Maine	Alabama
Illinois	Iowa	Louisiana	Minnesota	Alaska
Massachusetts	Montana		New Hampshire	Georgia
Michigan	South Dakota		North Carolina	Idaho
New Jersey			Oklahoma	Kansas
Rhode Island				Kentucky
West Virginia				Mississippi
				Nebraska
				New Mexico
				Oregon
				South Carolina
				Tennessee
				Texas
				Virginia
				Wyoming

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Ind</u>
Seats not up in 2006	37	28	2
Safe in 2006	7	15	0
Leaning in 2006	4	5	0
Total	48	48	2
Toss-ups	2 (1R/1D)		

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THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

In the House the Democrats have a 233 to 202 margin, with 1 Democratic seat and 1 Republican seat currently vacant. It is too early to make a thorough assessment of what might happen in the 2008 election. However, the early view is that the Democrats could pick up additional seats. If that does occur, the principal driver will be that voters want to punish Republicans because of the Administration's policy on the war.

The Cook Political Report show 2 open Democratic seats in 2008 and 8 potentially open seats. On the Republican side, there is 1 open seat and 12 potentially open seats.

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THIS AND THAT

Would you stay on the 13th floor of a hotel? 13% of us would be bothered if we were assigned a room on the 13th floor, and 9% of us would ask for a room on a different floor. Women are more skittish than men about staying on the 13th floor. [Gallup 2/07]

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100 Years Ago

- * here were only 8,000 cars in the U.S., and only 144 miles of paved roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- * The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.
- * More than 95% of all births in the U.S. took place at home.
- * Sugar cost 4 cents a pound; eggs were fourteen cents a dozen; coffee was 15 cents a pound.
- * The population of Las Vegas, Nevada was 30. [It was smaller than Searchlight, Nevada is today.]

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