

Taubman Center for Public Policy Survey

Hillary Clinton Leads Barack Obama in Democratic Presidential Primary

A statewide survey of 571 registered Rhode Island voters conducted September 8-9, 2007 also finds a drop in the approval rating of Governor Don Carcieri and only 31 percent believing the state is headed in the right direction.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton is ahead in her race for the Democratic presidential nomination, according to a new statewide survey conducted by researchers at Brown University.

The survey was conducted September 8-9, 2007, at Brown University by Darrell M. West, director of the Taubman Center for Public Policy and the John Hazen White Sr. Public Opinion Laboratory. It is based on a statewide random sample of 571 registered voters in Rhode Island. Overall, the poll had a margin of error of about plus or minus 4 percentage points.

If the primary was held today, 35 percent of the 380 voters who indicated they were likely to vote in the 2008 Democratic primary say they will vote for Hillary Clinton, 16 percent support Barack Obama, 7 percent favor John Edwards, 3 percent want Joe Biden, 2 percent support Bill Richardson, 1 percent favor Chris Dodd, 1 percent want Dennis Kucinich, 0 percent favor Mike Gravel, and 35 percent are undecided. The margin of error for this Democratic primary sample is about plus or minus 5 percentage points.

In January, 2007, 33 percent of the 341 voters who indicated they were likely to vote in the Democratic primary said they would vote for Hillary Clinton, 15 percent supported Barack Obama, 8 percent favored John Edwards, 4 percent wanted Joe Biden, 2 percent favored Chris Dodd, 1 percent supported Bill Richardson, 1 percent favored Tom Vilsack, and 0 percent wanted Dennis Kucinich, and 36 percent were undecided.

If the presidential general election was held today and the nominees were Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican John McCain, 55 percent they would support Clinton, 26 percent favor McCain, and 19 percent are undecided (up from 49 to 36 percent in January). If the GOP nominee is Rudy Giuliani, Clinton has a lead of 54 to 28 percent, with 18 percent undecided (up from 49 to 37 percent in January). If the Republican choice is Mitt Romney, Clinton is favored by 56 to 25 percent, with 19 percent undecided (similar to her 56 to 26 percent lead in January). And if the GOP nominee is Fred Thompson, Clinton leads 56 to 23 percent.

If the Democratic nominee is Barack Obama and the Republican nominee is John McCain, 46 percent say they support Obama, 27 percent favor McCain, and 27 percent are undecided (up from 40 to 37 percent in January). If the GOP nominee is Giuliani, Obama's margin is 46 to 30 percent, with 24 percent undecided (up from 43 to 38 percent in January). If the Republican candidate is Romney, Obama holds a 50 to 25 percent advantage, with 25 percent undecided (similar to 52 to 26 percent in January). And if the GOP nominee is Fred Thompson, Obama leads by 50 to 23 percent.

Only 16 percent of state voters believe President George Bush is doing an excellent or good job (the same as last January). Sixty-one percent of Rhode Island voters rate the performance of Sen. Jack Reed good or excellent, up from 60 percent in the previous survey. Forty-one percent believe Senator Sheldon Whitehouse is doing a good or excellent job (up from 32 percent last time). Fifty-five percent feel Rep. Jim Langevin is doing a good job in Congress (down from 57 percent) and 51 percent believe Rep. Patrick Kennedy is doing a good job (the same as in January).

When asked about the job performance of state officials, 44 percent feel Carcieri is doing a good job as governor (down from 59 percent in January). Thirty-seven percent believe Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts is doing a good job (up from 28 percent). Forty-eight percent think Attorney General Patrick Lynch is doing a good job, up from 40 percent in January. Twenty-three percent feel Secretary of State

Ralph Mollis is doing a good job as secretary of state (up from 19 percent). Thirty-seven percent believe Treasurer Frank Caprio, Jr. is doing a good job (up from 22 percent).

Sixty-four percent say Providence Mayor David Cicilline is doing a good job, down from 67 percent in the last survey. Twenty-one percent believe House Speaker William Murphy is doing a good job (down from 26 percent) and 16 percent feel Senate President Joseph Montalbano is doing a good job, down from 19 percent.

Only 31 percent believe the state is headed in the right direction, while 57 percent feel it is headed on the wrong track. In January, 50 percent thought Rhode Island was headed in the right direction and 34 percent believed it was off on the wrong track.

We asked whether people believe it is a good or bad idea that a local radio station hired former Providence Mayor Buddy Cianci to host a radio talk show. Fifty-seven percent said they thought it is a good idea, 23 percent believe it is a bad idea, and 20 percent are unsure. When asked whether Cianci's felony conviction made them more likely, about the same, or less likely to listen to what he has to say, 12 percent say more likely, 51 percent indicate about the same, 22 percent say less likely, and 15 percent report that they don't know

A legal brief filed with the state ethics commission argues that for constitutional reasons, legislators cannot be prosecuted for ethics charges based on how they cast their legislative votes. Sixty-seven percent said that they believe state legislators should be subject to ethics rules concerning how they vote, while 18 percent think legislators should not be subject to ethics rules and 15 percent are unsure.

The survey press release can be found online at www.INSIDEPOLITICS.org. For more information, contact Darrell M. West at (401) 863-1163.

Survey Questions and Responses

If the Democratic presidential primary were held today, would you vote for: 3% Joe Biden, 35% Hillary Clinton, 1% Christopher Dodd, 7% John Edwards, 0% Mike Gravel, 1% Dennis Kucinich, 16% Barack Obama, 2% Bill Richardson, 35% don't know or no answer (based on 380 voters who indicated they were likely to vote in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary)

If the presidential general election were held today, would you vote for: 26% Republican John McCain or 55% Democrat Hillary Clinton? 19% don't know or no answer

If the presidential general election were held today, would you vote for: 27% Republican John McCain or 46% Democrat Barack Obama? 27% don't know or no answer

If the presidential general election were held today, would you vote for: 28% Republican Rudy Giuliani or 54% Democrat Hillary Clinton? 18% don't know or no answer

If the presidential general election were held today, would you vote for: 30% Republican Rudy Giuliani or 46% Democrat Barack Obama? 24% don't know or no answer

If the presidential general election were held today, would you vote for: 25% Republican Mitt Romney or 56% Democrat Hillary Clinton? 19% don't know or no answer

If the presidential general election were held today, would you vote for: 25% Republican Mitt Romney or 50% Democrat Barack Obama? 25% don't know or no answer

If the presidential general election were held today, would you vote for: 23% Republican Fred Thompson or 56% Democrat Hillary Clinton? 21% don't know or no answer

If the presidential general election were held today, would you vote for: 23% Republican Fred Thompson or 50% Democrat Barack Obama? 27% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job George W. Bush is doing as president? 3% Excellent, 13% good, 26% only fair, 54% poor, 4% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Jack Reed is doing as US Senator? 25% Excellent, 36% good, 20% only fair, 6% poor, 13% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Sheldon Whitehouse is doing as U.S. Senator? 7% Excellent, 34% good, 25% only fair, 10% poor, 24% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Patrick Kennedy is doing as U.S. Representative? 12% Excellent, 39% good, 23% only fair, 16% poor, 10% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Jim Langevin is doing as U.S. Representative? 14% Excellent, 41% good, 21% only fair, 6% poor, 18% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Don Carcieri is doing as governor? 9% Excellent, 35% good, 27% only fair, 20% poor, 9% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Elizabeth Roberts is doing as lieutenant governor? 5% Excellent, 32% good, 16% only fair, 2% poor, 45% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Patrick Lynch is doing as attorney general? 7% Excellent, 41% good, 26% only fair, 11% poor, 15% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Ralph Mollis is doing as secretary of state? 2% Excellent, 21% good, 28% only fair, 7% poor, 42% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Frank Caprio, Jr. is doing as general treasurer? 4% Excellent, 33% good, 19% only fair, 3% poor, 41% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job William Murphy is doing as House Speaker? 1% Excellent, 20% good, 24% only fair, 12% poor, 43% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job Joseph Montalbano is doing as Senate President? 1% Excellent, 15% good, 23% only fair, 15% poor, 46% don't know or no answer

How would you rate the job David Cicilline is doing as mayor of Providence? 20% Excellent, 44% good, 15% only fair, 7% poor, 14% don't know or no answer

Generally speaking, would you say things in Rhode Island are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track? 31% right direction, or 57% wrong track, 12% don't know or no answer

Former Providence Mayor Buddy Cianci has a new radio talk show. Do you think that it is a: 57% good idea, 23% a bad idea that a radio station hired him for this show, 20% don't know or no answer

Does Cianci's felony conviction make you: 12% more likely, 51% about the same, 22% less likely to listen to what he has to say, 15% don't know or no answer

A legal brief filed with the state ethics commission argues that for constitutional reasons, legislators

cannot be prosecuted for ethics charges based on how they cast their legislative votes. Do you believe that state legislators should be: 67% subject to, 18% not subject to ethics rules concerning how they cast their votes, 15% don't know or no answer