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CONTACT INFORMATION: Media Relations 1-202-715-3030
 Subscriber Relations 1-888-274-5447
 Gallup World Headquarters
 901 F Street, NW
 Washington, D.C. 20004

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Clinton Most Positively Rated Candidate Among Blacks, Hispanics

Blacks rate Obama positively by 8-to-1 margin

by Jeffrey M. Jones

GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

PRINCETON, NJ -- Of the leading candidates for president from the Democrat and Republican parties, New York Sen. Hillary Clinton easily has the highest favorable ratings among blacks and Hispanics. That helps to offset a net negative view of her among non-Hispanic whites. Blacks rate Illinois Sen. Barack Obama extremely positively, though about one in four are not familiar enough with him to give a rating. Blacks and Hispanics do not rate the Republican presidential candidates that favorably, but the two groups do rate former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani positively. Generally speaking, Hispanics show a substantial lack of familiarity with nearly all the candidates, including New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, who is himself Hispanic.

The poll was conducted June 4-24, 2007, interviewing 2,388 adults nationwide, including 868 non-Hispanic whites, 802 non-Hispanic blacks, and 502 Hispanics. The total sample is weighted to reflect the proper proportions of each group in the U.S. population. About one-quarter of the interviews with Hispanics were conducted in Spanish, with the remainder conducted in English.

Ratings Among Blacks

Due to his strong support in the African-American community, some have cleverly referred to former President Bill Clinton as America's "first black president." Blacks also view his wife Hillary Clinton positively, with 84% rating her favorably and only 10% unfavorably.

Blacks also have positive views of Obama, who is seeking to become the first official black president. Sixty-eight percent of blacks view him favorably, and only 8% unfavorably -- a better than 8-to-1 ratio (matching that for Clinton). Despite the potentially historical significance of his candidacy, about one in four blacks are still unfamiliar with Obama.

Given their strong Democratic political orientation, it is no surprise that blacks give positive ratings to former Vice President Al Gore (69% favorable/19% unfavorable) and former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards (48% favorable/15% unfavorable). Blacks are still largely unfamiliar with the other Democrat tested in the survey -- Richardson -- but those who have an opinion of him are as likely to rate him positively as negatively.

Favorable Ratings of Presidential Candidates Among Blacks

Candidate	Party	Favorable	Unfavorable	Never heard of/ No opinion
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		%	%	%
Hillary Clinton	Dem.	84	10	5
Al Gore	Dem.	69	19	11
Barack Obama	Dem.	68	8	24
John Edwards	Dem.	48	15	37
Rudy Giuliani	Rep.	34	35	31
John McCain	Rep.	26	33	41
Bill Richardson	Dem.	18	16	65
Fred Thompson	Rep.	15	17	69
Mitt Romney	Rep.	11	21	69

Blacks rate each of the four Republicans tested in the poll no more positively than negatively. Giuliani's 34% favorable rating is the best showing for a Republican candidate among blacks, but his 35% unfavorable rating is also the highest. The other Republicans are not familiar figures to blacks -- 4 in 10 have no opinion of Arizona Sen. John McCain, and nearly 7 in 10 have no opinion of former Tennessee Sen. Fred Thompson and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.

Ratings Among Hispanics

Clinton is also the most positively rated candidate among Hispanics, with a 63% favorable rating. In fact, she is the only candidate with a favorable rating of more than 50%. A substantial number of Hispanics are unfamiliar with all the other candidates, suggesting that Hispanics are less engaged with the election at this point. For example, more than half of Hispanics are unfamiliar with Obama -- his favorable rating is 33% among Hispanics and his unfavorable rating is 13%.

Perhaps more striking is that 7 in 10 Hispanics are unfamiliar with Richardson, seeking to become the first president of Hispanic descent. Hispanics who are familiar with the New Mexico governor are twice as likely to rate him positively as negatively, however.

In general, Hispanics rate the Democratic candidates more positively than they rate the Republican candidates, though Giuliani is a notable exception to this pattern, with a 46% favorable rating versus a 16% unfavorable rating. Hispanics do not show the same negativity toward the Republican candidates as do blacks, as each Republican has a net positive rating among Hispanics.

Favorable Ratings of Presidential Candidates Among Hispanics

Candidate	Party	Favor- able	Unfavor- able	Never heard of/ No opinion
		%	%	%

Hillary Clinton	Dem.	63	20	16
Al Gore	Dem.	48	21	31
Rudy Giuliani	Rep.	46	16	38
John Edwards	Dem.	35	16	49
Barack Obama	Dem.	33	13	53
John McCain	Rep.	31	22	47
Bill Richardson	Dem.	20	10	70
Fred Thompson	Rep.	13	8	79
Mitt Romney	Rep.	12	9	79

Ratings Among Non-Hispanic Whites

Whites rate Giuliani most positively among all the candidates, with a 64% favorable rating. Obama and Gore also have majority favorable ratings among whites, with McCain just below the 50% mark. Meanwhile, Clinton has a majority *unfavorable* rating among whites at 57%, easily the highest in the poll. Her 41% favorable rating is the worst among the better-known candidates, and Clinton is the only candidate who has a net negative rating among whites.

Favorable Ratings of Presidential Candidates Among Non-Hispanic Whites

Candidate	Party	Favorable	Unfavorable	Never heard of/ No opinion
		%	%	%
Rudy Giuliani	Rep.	64	27	9
Barack Obama	Dem.	53	31	16
Al Gore	Dem.	51	44	5
John McCain	Rep.	49	35	16
John Edwards	Dem.	45	38	17

Hillary Clinton	Dem.	41	57	3
Fred Thompson	Rep.	35	11	53
Mitt Romney	Rep.	29	28	42
Bill Richardson	Dem.	19	18	63

Clinton's strong showings among blacks and Hispanics make up for her weaker performance among whites -- her ratings among all Americans are 49% favorable and 46% unfavorable. That still is lower than the overall favorable rating for Giuliani (58%) and slightly below the ratings for Obama (51%) and Gore (52%). Her unfavorable rating among the general public is the highest. (Gore's is next at 38%.)

But Clinton remains well-positioned for the Democratic nomination as the leading candidate among whites and Hispanics (by a substantial margin) and running even with Obama among blacks, based on Gallup's polling of Democrats' nomination preferences.

Obama could be in an advantageous position given that he is still unknown to substantial proportions of blacks and Hispanics, who otherwise rate him positively. As of now, however, Obama is facing a double-digit deficit to Clinton in Democrats' nomination preferences, and he runs no better than she does in general election trial heats against the leading Republicans.

Survey Methods

Survey results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 2,388 adults, aged 18 and older, conducted June 4-24, 2007. The sample includes oversamples of 802 blacks and 502 Hispanics that are weighted to their proper proportion in the U.S. population. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum error attributable to sampling and other random effects is $\hat{\pm}5$ percentage points.

For results based on the sample of 868 non-Hispanic whites, the maximum margin of sampling error is $\hat{\pm}7$ percentage points.

For results based on the sample of 802 non-Hispanic blacks, the maximum margin of sampling error is $\hat{\pm}6$ percentage points.

For results based on the sample of 502 Hispanics, the maximum margin of sampling error is $\hat{\pm}6$ percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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