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NEVADA CAUCUSES: Clinton, Giuliani atop poll

Democrat far out in front; GOP race tight

By MOLLY BALL

REVIEW-JOURNAL

ON THE WEB Complete poll information

Las Vegas Review-Journal Opinion Poll: NEVADA CAUCUSES. If the 2008 Nevada Democratic caucus were held today, which of the following candidates would get your vote: Hillary Clinton 39%, Barack Obama 21%, John Edwards 9%, Bill Richardson 8%, Joe Biden 2%, Dennis Kucinich 1%, Undecided 20%. If the 2008 Nevada Republican caucus were held today, which of the following candidates would get your vote: Rudy Giuliani 28%, Fred Thompson 23%, Mitt Romney 17%, John McCain 9%, Mike Huckabee 2%, Duncan Hunter 2%, Ron Paul 1%, Undecided 18%.

If Nevada's presidential nominating caucuses were held today, the winners would be Hillary Clinton on the Democratic side and Rudy Giuliani among Republicans, according to a new Review-Journal poll.

Clinton, however, has a strong lead over her challengers, while Giuliani is just 5 percentage points ahead of Fred Thompson, a lead within the poll's margin of error.

But Clinton does not fare well in a hypothetical general-election matchup with Giuliani, with the former New York City mayor besting her 51 percent to 44 percent. The poll showed Clinton also trailing Thompson as well as the GOP voters' third preference, Mitt Romney.

Many factors between now and January are likely to influence results of the state's first early nominating contests. However, the poll is consistent with previous surveys showing Clinton clearly ahead among Nevada Democrats, while the Republican field is much closer and more fluid.

"Republican voters, I think, are sitting back and waiting for things to sort out a bit more," said Brad Coker, managing partner of Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc., which conducted the poll. "Nobody's captivated them yet, but I don't think anybody's turned them away either. They're still trying to figure out their best option."

The poll of presidential preferences surveyed 300 Republican and 300 Democratic voters who indicated they were likely to participate in the Nevada caucuses. It was conducted Tuesday through Thursday and carries a margin of error of plus or minus 6 percentage points.

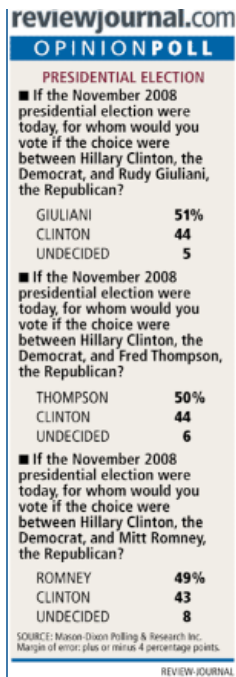
Lack of a Republican consensus can be seen by the fact that no candidate attracted so much as 30 percent of the poll respondents.

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Republicans at this point may be giving pollsters one answer one day and another answer the next as they try to sort out the field, he said.

"I recently went to dinner at the golf club I belong to," Coker, who lives in Florida, said by way of anecdotal illustration. "It's full of old, retired Florida Republicans, and nobody's committed to anybody. They know who's running. They know a little bit about everybody. They know some things they like and some things they don't about each of them. But nobody's got a bumper sticker on their car."

On the Democratic side, the poll showed some jostling for second place but no change to the basic story line that has held since the campaign began: New York Sen. Clinton ahead by double digits.

Clinton took 39 percent of the Democrats surveyed, nearly double the 21 percent garnered by Illinois Sen. Barack Obama. Former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards had 9 percent of the vote and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson 8 percent, while 20 percent of Democrats said they were undecided.

The other recent poll put Clinton even higher, with 51 percent, while Edwards was second and Obama third.

Coker said who's in second doesn't mean much when the first-place candidate has an 18-point lead.

"The only thing that will change these numbers is if something happens prior to Nevada to shake up the race," he said. "If Hillary loses Iowa, it might change the equation. Would it be enough to cost her the caucus? Who knows."

University of Nevada, Las Vegas political scientist David Damore agreed with the assessment that Clinton will be hard to topple.

"It will be interesting to see if it tightens up (as the caucus nears), but it's going to be hard to beat her unless she does something really stupid, and I don't think she's programmed for that," he said.

Obama's 21 percent is the best he's done here, but "if he only ends up with a bunch of second-place finishes, that's not good enough," Damore said. "Eventually, he has to break through and beat her somewhere, and I don't know where. It's probably not Nevada."

Damore was surprised to see Thompson drawing nearly a quarter of the vote. The late entrant to the race has been widely considered underwhelming since he dove into the field with high expectations.

Damore agreed that the Republican field remains wide open, and noted an irony: The Democratic candidates have been pouring resources into a state that doesn't look competitive for them, while the Republicans have all but ignored Nevada despite its up-for-grabs status.

The Review-Journal poll also measured the degree to which the candidates might appeal to the electorate at

Giuliani, the leader, drew 28 percent of the vote. Thompson, the actor and former Tennessee senator, got 23 percent.

Romney, the former Massachusetts governor who previously had seemed to be rising among Nevada Republicans, received 17 percent.

Arizona Sen. John McCain, once the odds-on favorite, drew just 9 percent.

No other candidate had more than 2 percent, while 20 percent of Republicans said they were undecided, an option that was not offered by poll takers.

Republican polls in Nevada have been all over the map. Giuliani, Thompson, Romney and McCain have all led at least one survey over the past year.

A poll conducted just days before this one by a different organization had Giuliani and Romney virtually tied, with 31 percent and 30 percent respectively, while Thompson pulled 18 percent and McCain 8 percent.

Coker said he'd all but write off McCain at this point but considered the other three competitive. Even politically active

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large if nominated.

A pool of 625 likely general-election voters from around the state, including independents, was asked if they would "at least consider voting for" a given candidate, or "would ... not consider voting for him/her under any circumstances."

In every case, the percentage of "would" and "would not" respondents fell between 45 percent and 55 percent, indicating that Nevada remains a closely divided state.

However, two candidates registered under 50 percent in the "would" category: Clinton, with 46 percent, and McCain, with 49 percent. Romney was precisely 50-50. All the other candidates would at least receive consideration from a majority of the electorate.

The Clinton campaign has had to contend with the persistent impression that the former first lady is a polarizing figure, so deeply disliked by so many voters that she can't change enough minds to win in November 2008. This poll reinforces that idea.

Although 82 percent of Democrats would consider Clinton, just 10 percent of Republicans and 42 percent of independents said they would give her a chance.

By contrast, 26 percent of Republicans would take a look at Obama, 19 percent Edwards and 22 percent Richardson.

Men seemed especially repelled by Clinton. Just a third, 34 percent, said they might be willing to vote for her; the lowest percentage of men who would consider any other candidate was 43, for Edwards.

When the poll pitted Clinton against the top three Republicans head-to-head, the results were no less discouraging for her chances of carrying this swing state.

Giuliani's 7-point lead over Clinton was nearly matched by the other candidates. Thompson defeated her 50 percent to 44 percent; and Romney was ahead by 49 percent to 43 percent. The margin of error for head-to-head questions was plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Based on the perception that Clinton is most likely to be nominated, the Review-Journal did not poll other Democratic candidates directly against the top Republicans.

"It looks like Hillary has a bit of an uphill battle in Nevada in the presidential election," Coker said. "Her overall name recognition is 99 percent. You're dealing with somebody who is very well known, and a majority are saying they absolutely would not vote for her."

Contact political reporter Molly Ball at mball@reviewjournal.com or (702) 387-2919.

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Lindsey wrote on *October 23, 2007 08:25 AM*:

The election is for the Democrats to lose. If they do like they have the past 8 years and nominate their worst candidate (Clinton) they lose. If they nominate anybody else they win. If Al Gore could have separated himself from the Clintons in 2000 he would have won easily. That baggage cost him dearly. Democrats need to smarten up. Bill Clinton never won over 50% of the popular vote. The only reason he won was that Ross Perot drained enough votes away from the Republican nominee to give him a plurality. As a registered Republican I can honestly say that most Republicans I know hope Hillary is nominated so we can win again. However, if not then we are in trouble because most of the rest of your field is comprised of very good quality candidates that many Republicans and Independents would consider voting for (myself included).

Michel Powell wrote on *October 18, 2007 11:47 PM*:

Greeting this is to inform you of a new Presidential candidate Michel Powell 1
for press contact press contact
heres22@yahoo.com
706 543 9907
www.myspace.com/heres22
pass the word fast ok thanks

Captain Sky wrote on *October 15, 2007 04:48 AM*:

Mr Mason-Dixon Just Which Republican Or Democratic Canidate Are You Supporting,It's A Known Fact That Your Polls Has

Mostly Been Contrast To Anti-Clinton So This Demoralizing Polls That You Put Together Are At Best Pretty Scary.For Anyone And Thats Both Party's Are Willing To Put Another Republican In Office,After The Last 7 Years Has To Be A Little Off Center,Hillary Will Be Our Next President Whether You Run Your Ridiculous Inaccurate Consistant Polls

madmilker wrote on *October 14, 2007 07:18 PM*:

well....it looks like Ron Paul is a shoe-in....37 paragraphs in that article and not one four letter "Paul" word. Caucuses in that State gonna put it all on number 18 and 01 cause they all got grand kids and great grand kids! Ain't no reason to put them in the same hole as "we the people" are in now.....money may talk but the pen in ones hand marking a voting ballot can make money mute over time.

Sean wrote on *October 14, 2007 04:27 PM*:

This is still a Republican red neck state. Many Republicans here continue to vote for their party even through the countless corruption scandals and inconceivably bad Iraq policy. Thank god the latest abc news poll has Hillary winning the electoral college, and the national polls 51-44 over Giuliani.

Michael Ray Thompson wrote on *October 14, 2007 04:16 PM*:

Thank you for the most recent poll data on Hillary Clinton. I just hope the rest of the nation agrees with us Nevadans that Hillary Clinton is not good for America. I also hope the rest of the nation agrees. I also hope that the nation agrees to give the next Republican president a Republican president so that he can accomplish his maximum potential. Thank you for letting me share my thoughts on the upcoming election, Michael R. Thompson

Michael Ray Thompson wrote on *October 14, 2007 03:52 PM*:

Well, what do you know? Hillary is hated by most people in Nevada. And probably every where else in the country. Yet she still leads the Democrats for the nomination. Evidently, the Democratic Party is not too smart. Maybe this is just a crazy way for Democrats to be paid back for the deadbeat leadership of Bill Clinton? I just hope that the next Republican president has a Republican majority in Congress to work with. Thank you for letting me share my thoughts. Sincerely yours, Michael R. Thompson

Mathew wrote on *October 14, 2007 01:06 PM*:

"Turkey's top general, Yasar Buyukanit, warned his nation's military ties with the U.S. would never be the same if Congress voted to label WWII killings as genocide". THIS STUPID DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS BETTER STOP TRYING TO CAUSE PRBOLEMS FOR PRESIDENT BUSH, THE TROOPS, AND AMERICA OR WE'RE GOING TO BE IN A REAL WORLD OF HURT. WHY BRING UP RESOLUTIONS CONDEMING WHAT HAPPENED A 100 YEARS AGO IN TURKEY, WHAT PURPOSE DOES IT SERVE EXCEPT TO UNDERMINE THE WAR EFFORT AND DIVIDE OUR ALLIES AGAINST US. THESE IDOIT MORONIC DEMOCRATES THINK IRAN IS A PROBLEM, WHAT TILL THEY GET TURKEY MAD AT US. HAVE THE OTTOMANS AND THE PERSIANS AGAINST US IS GAURENTING OUR LOSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THEY KNOW THIS AND THATS WHY IT IS BEING DONE. THIS COUNTRY CAN'T AFFORD HILLARY OR ANY OTHER WEAK KNEED JIMMY CARTER TYPE DEMOCRATE IN POWER.

Mathew wrote on *October 14, 2007 01:01 PM*:

"Turkey's top general, Yasar Buyukanit, warned his nation's military ties with the U.S. would never be the same if Congress voted to label WWII killings as genocide". THIS STUPID DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS BETTER STOP TRYING TO CAUSE PRBOLEMS FOR PRESIDENT BUSH, THE TROOPS, AND AMERICA OR WE'RE GOING TO BE IN A REAL WORLD OF HURT. WHY BRING UP RESOLUTIONS CONDEMING WHAT HAPPENED A 100 YEARS AGO IN TURKEY, WHAT PURPOSE DOES IT SERVE EXCEPT TO UNDERMINE THE WAR EFFORT AND DIVIDE OUR ALLIES AGAINST US. THESE IDOIT MORONIC DEMOCRATES THINK IRAN IS A PROBLEM, WHAT TILL THEY GET TURKEY MAD AT US. HAVE THE OTTOMANS AND THE PERSIANS AGAINST US IS GAURENTING OUR LOSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THEY KNOW THIS AND THATS WHY IT IS BEING DONE. THIS COUNTRY CAN'T AFFORD HILLARY OR ANY OTHER WEAK KNEED JIMMY CARTER TYPE DEMOCRATE IN POWER.

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