



Getting Dirty? New Hampshire Presidential Primary

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This Marist College Institute for Public Opinion poll reports:

- **Likely primary voters expect the worst is yet to come:** Although many voters likely to vote in New Hampshire's Democratic or Republican Primaries still think the candidates are discussing the issues, most voters think the campaigns will get more negative as primary day approaches. 61% of both likely Democratic primary voters and likely Republican primary voters think the candidates are mostly focused on the issues. However, 70% of likely Democratic primary voters and 66% of likely Republican primary voters think the tone of the campaign will get worse as primary day gets closer.

Question Wording: Do you feel that the Democratic/Republican candidates for president have spent more time talking about their positions on issues or attacking each other?

Likely Voters	Talking Issues	Attacking Each Other	Both	Neither	Unsure
Democratic primary voters	61%	26%	7%	1%	5%
Republican primary voters	61%	29%	5%	1%	4%

Question Wording: Do you think the tone of the Democratic/Republican presidential campaign is generally getting more negative or less negative as it gets closer to primary day?

Likely Voters	More Negative	Less Negative	Will Stay About the Same
Democratic primary voters	70%	23%	7%
Republican primary voters	66%	28%	6%

- Who's to blame for the negative tone?** About one in three likely Democratic and Republican primary voters aren't really sure any one candidate is more responsible for brandishing barbs against the others. Among likely Democratic primary voters who do point a finger, blame is mostly laid at the doorstep of their favorite candidate's major opponents. For instance, Hillary Clinton's supporters are more likely to hold Barack Obama responsible for the negative campaign tone as are backers of John Edwards. Obama's supporters are more likely to blame Edwards and Clinton. On the Republican side, 32% of likely Republican primary voters think Rudy Giuliani has done the most attacking. Although one in ten of Giuliani's supporters shares this view, this perception is largely fueled by 34% of John McCain's supporters and 48% of likely Republican primary voters who back Mitt Romney.

Question Wording: Which Democratic presidential candidate do you think is attacking the other candidates the most:

Likely Democratic Primary Voters	December 2007	Clinton Supporters	Edwards Supporters	Obama Supporters
Barack Obama	22%	30%	30%	2%
John Edwards	20%	18%	6%	29%
Hillary Clinton	12%	1%	19%	26%
Dennis Kucinich	4%	5%	2%	7%
Joe Biden	3%	4%	3%	3%
Bill Richardson	2%	4%	5%	<1%
Chris Dodd	2%	2%	<1%	5%
Mike Gravel	1%	2%	<1%	2%
Unsure	34%	34%	35%	26%

Question Wording: Which Republican presidential candidate do you think is attacking the other candidates the most:

Likely Republican Primary Voters	December 2007	Giuliani Supporters	McCain Supporters	Romney Supporters
Rudy Giuliani	32%	10%	34%	48%
Mitt Romney	14%	25%	26%	<1%
Ron Paul	8%	14%	6%	1%
John McCain	7%	7%	<1%	11%
Fred Thompson	5%	4%	6%	5%
Mike Huckabee	2%	1%	2%	1%
Tom Tancredo	1%	<1%	<1%	4%
Duncan Hunter	<1%	<1%	2%	1%
Unsure	31%	39%	24%	29%

- On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton is more likely to be seen as the target of negative attacks:** There is a consensus among likely Democratic primary voters that Hillary Clinton is the candidate most likely to be the recipient of negative attacks. 76% of likely Democratic primary voters think Clinton is the candidate who is attacked the most. But, likely voters divide over whether or not these attacks are deserved. About two-thirds of supporters of her closest opponents, Barack Obama and John Edwards, generally believe the attacks on Clinton are fair. This compares with 65% of Clinton’s backers who believe the attacks are unfair.

Question Wording: Which Democratic presidential candidate do you think is being attacked the most:

Likely Democratic Primary Voters	December 2007
Hillary Clinton	76%
Barack Obama	9%
John Edwards	2%
Dennis Kucinich	1%
Bill Richardson	1%
Joe Biden	<1%
Mike Gravel	<1%
Chris Dodd	<1%
Unsure	11%

Question Wording: Do you think the other Democratic presidential candidates are attacking Hillary Clinton fairly, unfairly, or not at all?

Likely Democratic Primary Voters	Attacks Are Fair	Attacks Are Unfair	Not Attacking At All	Unsure
December 2007	45%	42%	4%	9%
Clinton supporters	24%	65%	4%	7%
Edwards supporters	67%	26%	5%	2%
Obama supporters	65%	30%	1%	4%

- On the Republican side, Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani are seen as bearing the brunt of the attacks:** 38% of likely Republican primary voters think Romney is the target of negative campaign attacks. 26% think Giuliani is. Supporters of both Romney and McCain are more likely to think attacks of Mitt Romney are unfair than are backers of Rudy Giuliani who are more likely to think attacks against Romney are fair. 49% of likely Republican primary voters believe attacks against Giuliani are deserved including 62% of Romney’s supporters and 44% of McCain’s backers who share this view.

Question Wording: Which Republican presidential candidate do you think is being attacked the most:

Likely Republican Primary Voters	December 2007
Mitt Romney	38%
Rudy Giuliani	26%
John McCain	10%
Ron Paul	5%
Fred Thompson	3%
Mike Huckabee	1%
Tom Tancredo	<1%
Duncan Hunter	<1%
Unsure	17%

Question Wording: Do you think the other Republican presidential candidates are attacking Mitt Romney/Rudy Giuliani fairly, unfairly, or not at all?

Likely Republican Primary Voters	Attacks Are Fair	Attacks Are Unfair	Not Attacking At All	Unsure
Mitt Romney	37%	35%	15%	13%
Giuliani supporters	49%	21%	16%	14%
McCain supporters	20%	47%	22%	11%
Romney supporters	38%	47%	10%	5%
Rudy Giuliani	49%	25%	11%	15%
Giuliani supporters	30%	42%	13%	15%
McCain supporters	44%	30%	10%	16%
Romney supporters	62%	23%	9%	6%

- Attacks can be a turnoff:** A majority of likely Democratic primary voters characterize the use of campaign attacks as a turnoff to the political process. 53% of likely Democratic primary voters share this view compared with 34% who say it doesn't make any difference to them. 13% of likely Democratic primary voters believe the negative tone of a campaign provides useful information to them. Likely Republican primary voters are somewhat more divided on the issue. 44% of likely Republican primary voters consider a negative campaign tone to be a turnoff to politics but 39% feel it doesn't really make a difference to them. 17% of likely Republican primary voters say they learn something useful about the candidates from campaign attacks. However, most voters, regardless of political party, think at least some of the candidates "twist" the truth about their opponents to their own advantage.

Question Wording: When the Democratic/Republican candidates attack each other do you feel it provides useful information about the candidates, makes no difference to you, or turns you off to politics?

Likely Voters	Provides Useful Information	Makes No Difference to You	Turns You Off to Politics
Democratic primary voters	13%	34%	53%
Republican primary voters	17%	39%	44%

Question Wording: Do you think all, most, some, or none of the Democratic/Republican candidates for president deliberately twist the truth about their opponents?

Likely Voters	All	Most	Some	None
Democratic primary voters	20%	14%	55%	11%
Republican primary voters	17%	16%	51%	16%

Nature of the Sample: 1,343 New Hampshire Voters

This survey was conducted from November 28th through December 2nd, 2007. 1,343 registered voters and New Hampshire residents who are likely to register in time to vote in the New Hampshire Presidential Primary were interviewed. The sample was selected in proportion to the voter registration in each county in New Hampshire and adjusted for turnout in comparable elections. All interviews were conducted by telephone. There are 604 potential Democratic presidential primary voters including 363 Democrats and 241 Democratic leaning independents. There are 505 potential Republican presidential primary voters including 354 Republicans and 151 Republican leaning independents. The results are statistically significant at $\pm 4\%$ for potential Democratic presidential primary voters and $\pm 4.5\%$ for potential Republican presidential primary voters. There are 454 likely Democratic presidential primary voters and 343 likely Republican presidential primary voters. The results for these sub-samples are statistically significant at $\pm 5\%$ and $\pm 5.5\%$, respectively. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.