

Hillary support growing

By Bruce Sundlin

I support Hillary Rodham Clinton for the Democratic nomination for President, and I believe she will win both the nomination and the Presidency. However, with two quarters of 2007 behind us and just 6 months to go until the Iowa Caucuses, it's a good time to see where Hillary stands and why.

The bottom line? Hillary's electoral strength has grown in the last quarter, and she's better positioned today to win and become the next president. Recent polls have her at or near 40% with leads of 15-20 points over her nearest competitors.

Hillary's support in the last few months has strengthened, in both key states and in the general election. The debates have been key to where voters get to see the candidates side by side and they have shown by comparison just how ready Hillary is to be President. She has the strength and experience to make change happen.

The latest Newsweek poll, released after the second quarter fundraising, showed Hillary's lead in the Democratic primary nearly doubled, from 12 points in May to 23 points now. Hillary's favorability has risen to 57% among all Americans, and they show overwhelmingly that voters think she has the experience to be a good President (70%). Nearly two thirds say they will vote for her (62%).

Hillary leads top Republican Rudy Giuliani by 7 points (51% to 44%) in the last Newsweek poll, up from just 3 points a month ago. Hillary leads Giuliani in all the other national polls-CNN, Fox, Gallup, Newsweek, NBC/Wall Street Journal, Quinnipiac and Cook/RT Strategies. Interestingly, Hillary is tied or ahead of Giuliani in the key states where Democrats lost in both 2000 and 2004, Florida, Ohio and West Virginia.

Hillary's support is highest among key voter groups, who make up the core of the Democrat-

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ic coalition: women, Hispanics, African-Americans, Strong Democrats, and lower, middle income and working families. Her lead in the Democratic primary widens to 29 points among non-whites.

In recent election cycles, any time a candidate who's had as much as 35% or 40% of the vote consistently across polls in a multi-candidate field, that candidate goes on to win the nomination. The recent polls are:

CBS News June 26-28: HRC 48/Obama 24/Edwards 11

Cook/RT Strategies June 21-23: HRC 35/Obama 24/Edwards 15

CNN June 22-24: HRC 43/Obama 25/Edwards 17

Fox June 26-27: HRC 47/Obama 21/Edwards 13

Gallup June 4-24: HRC 41/Obama 24/Edwards 14

NBC/WSJ June 8-11: HRC 39/Obama 25/Edwards 15

Newsweek June 20-21: HRC 43/Obama 14/Edwards 14

Why has Hillary's lead grown as voters are exposed to all candidates?

Debates: Each time the voters have had the opportunity to compare the candidates head to head in a debate, Hillary comes out the overwhelming winner. In the June 28 Democratic debate in Washington D.C., 27 out of 33 participants in a Luntz Maslansky group (81%) said Hillary won, compared with just two (6%) for her closest competitor.

Hillary was also the overwhelming winner in the New Hampshire debate: among all Democratic primary voters: HRC 45/Obama 8/Edwards 4/Richardson 3/Biden 3. Among Democratic voters who watched the debate: HRC 47/Obama 11/Edwards 6/Richardson 4/Biden 3.

There will be another debate every month from now until the end of the year, and each debate

provides Hillary with another opportunity to demonstrate her experience, talk about her record on the issues, and show voters why she's the best qualified to be president. The reason for Hillary's growing support is that voters want change, and they know that only Hillary has the record of fighting for the kind of change they want, and the experience to execute it. On June 8-11, the NBC/Wall Street Journal poll showed 61% of Democrats and Democratic primary voters said that Hillary would bring real change to the direction of the country.

In the early primary states Hillary's lead is growing while the other leading contenders continue to lose support.

New Hampshire primary (Suffolk University): HRC 37/Obama 19/Edwards 9/Richardson 9.

South Carolina Primary (ARG): HRC 37/Edwards 22/Obama 21.

Nevada Caucus (Mason Dixon): HRC 39/Obama 17/Edwards 12/Richardson 7.

Iowa Hillary's locked in a competitive battle. Iowa Caucus (ARG) HRC 32/Edwards 29/Obama 13/Richardson 5.

In each primary state with the most votes, Hillary has an overwhelming lead:

Florida (Quinnipiac), June 18-25: HRC 43/Obama 16/Edwards 11/Richardson 2.

California (PPIC), June 12-19: HRC 41/Obama 25/Edwards 12/Richardson 3.

New York/Siena, June 18-21: HRC 43/Gore 19/Obama 11/Edwards 9/Richardson 1.

Ohio (Quinnipiac), June 18-25: HRC 40/Edwards 12/Gore 12/Obama 12.

Pennsylvania (Quinnipiac), June 18-25: HRC 22/Obama 18/Gore 16/Edwards 7.

Texas (Lyceum), April 26-May 7: HRC 33/Obama 21/Gore 10/Edwards 8/Richardson 3.

General election: Every major poll now shows Hillary leading Rudy Giuliani:

CNN, June 22-24: HRC 49/Giuliani 44.

Fox, June 26-27: HRC 39/Giuliani 37/Bloomberg 7.

Gallup, June 4-24: HRC 50/Giuliani 45.

Newsweek, June 20-21: HRC 51/Giuliani 44.

NBC/WSJ, June 8-11: HRC 48/Giuliani 43.

Quinnipiac, June 5-11: HRC 45/Giuliani 44.

If you have any other candidate with poll support, write it up.

The writer is a former governor of Rhode Island and a resident of Jamestown.

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