



# Political Insiders Poll



Who is your party's most overrated presidential candidate?

## ■ Democrats (72 votes)

John Edwards	42 percent
Barack Obama	40 percent
Hillary Rodham Clinton	7 percent
Bill Richardson	7 percent
None	2 percent
Joseph Biden	1 percent

### ■ John Edwards

"Edwards is slipping in the polls, and his message sounds more and more like the Howard Beale character from the movie *Network*."

"This is the classic guy with a bright future behind him."

"It is hard to see a state that went for Bush the last time that John would move to the Democratic side this time—including his own state of North Carolina."

"He won one election in his life, largely the result of enormous financial backing from one special-interest group—trial lawyers."

"The question would be, who would feel safer in a dangerous world with John Edwards in the White House?"

### ■ Barack Obama

"The senator from Illinois came out of the chute as the greatest thing since sliced bread, but his inexperience shows as he struggles to get his sea legs in the long voyage to Iowa and New Hampshire."

"He speaks well but lacks the experience and maturity to seriously contend in a general election."

"Very intelligent, but still making amateur mistakes."

"He seems like a great guy, but his résumé isn't strong enough to lead the free world—yet."

"A White House run is no time for on-the-job-training. The hits he's taking on his foreign-policy gaffes from his fellow Ds pale in comparison to what the Rs will do to him if he makes it to the general election. Send him down to Triple-A for a few seasons, then come talk to us in 2016."

### ■ Hillary Rodham Clinton

"Our party continues to drink Clinton Kool-Aid. President Clinton received 42.5 percent of the vote in 1992 and 48.9 percent of the vote in 1996, winning the first time because of Ross Perot and the second time because of a combination of Perot and a relatively weak Republican candidate in Bob Dole. Why does anyone think that Senator Clinton will do better than her husband did as a candidate?"

"She has huge negatives and carries a 3 to 5 percent deficit into November the other Democrats don't."

### ■ Bill Richardson

"Big résumé, big blowhard."

## ■ Republicans (76 votes)

Fred Thompson	58 percent
John McCain	14 percent
Mitt Romney	14 percent
Rudy Giuliani	11 percent
Sam Brownback	1 percent
Ron Paul	1 percent

### ■ Fred Thompson

"He better do something soon to justify the hype, or this campaign will be stillborn."

"He seems like he's auditioning for the part in a movie, not actually being a candidate."

"He was a below-average senator, has no real stump speech, has no substantive difference from John McCain, and doesn't work very hard. That dog won't hunt."

"Everybody's all-American until the real season starts. Organizational and fundraising problems do not augur well for when the real show begins."

"He can't get away with being 'none of the above' much longer."

"Anyone who thought the Senate was too much like hard work is not going to survive a presidential campaign."

### ■ John McCain

"It was his to lose, and it appears he has done so. His support was based on momentum that has faded. His organization is in shambles, with many trying to figure out how to get out early enough."

"The Washington crowd had no idea he enjoys such little support outside of Washington."

"Was an all-star in 2000, but a change in positions has cost him his home-run swing: Now he's one step away from retirement."

### ■ Mitt Romney

"His checkbook will probably carry the day in the Iowa straw poll, but it will fall far short of what is needed to make him electable in the Iowa caucuses, let alone all the way to the nomination."

"He has an invisible Mormon 'volunteer' army in 50 states, perfect for tipping small contests, but if nominated, he won't win 15 states in November—the worst Republican washout since Goldwater."

"The true test with Romney will begin once someone decides to take a shot at him over the airwaves."

### ■ Rudy Giuliani

"Making jokes about your moral weaknesses is great for *SNL* but probably not a strong selling point with conservative primary voters."

"May be leading in all polls, but won't make it through the nominating process, which is controlled by the extreme faction of the party."



## Who is your party's most underrated presidential candidate?

### ■ Democrats (72 votes)

<b>Bill Richardson</b>	<b>32 percent</b>
<b>Joseph Biden</b>	<b>28 percent</b>
<b>Christopher Dodd</b>	<b>22 percent</b>
<b>John Edwards</b>	<b>7 percent</b>
<b>Hillary Rodham Clinton</b>	<b>6 percent</b>
<b>Barack Obama</b>	<b>3 percent</b>
<b>Dennis Kucinich</b>	<b>1 percent</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>1 percent</b>

#### ■ Bill Richardson

"I keep hearing people tell me how much they trust him, think he has the common touch, and lord knows he has foreign-policy experience. Waiting for his campaign to catch fire."

"The 'herd' hates him, but he's the best governor in America, and he has the best foreign-policy experience, too."

"His résumé speaks for itself, and if we lived in a culture that was not so driven by celebrity, or worked in a political system not so driven by fundraising, he would be the most serious candidate in the field."

#### ■ Joseph Biden

"C'mon! This guy is the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and the biggest question in this election is the failed war in Iraq."

"He has the best message on Iraq, and he is the closest thing to a straight talker we have in the race."

#### ■ Christopher Dodd

"He has the most interesting and bold proposals, and he is performing well in all the debates as well as on the stump."

#### ■ John Edwards

"Defining the debate, forcing the other two to his positions, and the most consistent."

#### ■ Hillary Rodham Clinton

"She is a machine and is grinding it out with a classic front-runner's strategy, not pretty or exciting, but so far very effective."

### ■ Republicans (76 votes)

<b>Mike Huckabee</b>	<b>46 percent</b>
<b>Mitt Romney</b>	<b>25 percent</b>
<b>John McCain</b>	<b>12 percent</b>
<b>Rudy Giuliani</b>	<b>8 percent</b>
<b>Sam Brownback</b>	<b>3 percent</b>
<b>Tommy Thompson</b>	<b>3 percent</b>
<b>Duncan Hunter</b>	<b>1 percent</b>
<b>Ron Paul</b>	<b>1 percent</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>1 percent</b>

#### ■ Mike Huckabee

"He might be the surprise of the Iowa straw poll. His message and personality are well received. With a little better staff and financial resources, Huckabee could be an alternative choice."

"Great sense of humor, solid record in Arkansas, keen political senses. His only flaws are fundraising and sarcasm."

"He is bright, thoughtful, and conservative. He is rapidly becoming everyone's best man and could balance a number of tickets."

#### ■ Mitt Romney

"He has the financial ability to raise the funds necessary to win. He's smarter than most give him credit for."

"He's the real front-runner, although few people recognize it yet."

"He would be far and away the choice if it wasn't for his religion."

#### ■ John McCain

"Given the horrible six months that John McCain has had with the Iraq war, immigration, his campaign spending, and having to reorganize his campaign—he is still as close as the others in polling."

"He is still the best general election nominee and the best candidate on national security issues."

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL

## National Journal Insiders

■ The 202 participants in *National Journal's* Political Insiders Poll were selected because of their campaign experience, insider knowledge, and ties to key voting blocs. The votes of 148 insiders—72 Democrats and 76 Republicans—were counted this week.

■ **Democratic Political Insiders** Karen Ackerman, Jill Alper, David Axelrod, Brad Bannon, Dave Beattie, Andy Bechhoefer, Cornell Belcher, Mitchell W. Berger, Mike Berman, Donna Brazile, Mark Brewer, Ed Bruley, George Bruno, Deb Callahan, Bonnie Campbell, Bill Carrick, Martin J. Chavez, Tony Coelho, Jim Craig, Jerry Crawford, Jeff Danielson, Jim Demers, Tad Devine, Monica Dixon, Michael Donilon, Tom Donilon, Anita Dunn, Steve Elmendorf, Carter Eskew, Eric Eve, Vic Fazio, Scott Ferson, Tina Flournoy, Don Foley, Don Fowler, Gina Glantz, Joe Grandmason, Anna Greenberg, Stan Greenberg, Pat Griffin, Michael Gronstal, Marcia Hale, Paul Harstad, Laura Hartigan, Mike Henry, Harold Ickes, Marcus Jadotte, John Jameson, Steve Jarding, Jonathon Jones, Jim Jordan, Gale Kaufman, Shar Knutson, Kam Kuwata, Celinda Lake, David Lang, Sylvia Larsen, Jeff Link, Bill Lynch, Steve Marchand, Jim Margolis, Paul Maslin, Terry McAuliffe, Caroline McCarley, Gerald McEntee, Tom McMahon, David Medina, Mark Mellman, John Merrigan, Steve Murphy, Janet Napolitano, David Nassar, Marcia Nichols, John Norris, Tom Ochs, Tom O'Donnell, Scott Parver, Jeffrey Peck, Debora Pignatelli, John Podesta, Tony Podesta, Bruce Reed, Mame Reiley, Steve Ricchetti, Susan Rice, Will Robinson, Steve Rosenthal, John Ryan, Wendy Sherman, Terry Shumaker, Bob Stagle, Erik Smith, Doug Sosnik, Darryl Sragow, Karl Struble, Katrina Swett, Sarah Swisher, Eric Tabor, Jeffrey Trammell, Ed Turlington, Mike Veon, Rick Wiener, Bridgette Williams, and JoDee Winterhof.

■ **GOP Political Insiders** Dan Allen, Stan Anderson, Gary Andres, Saulius (Saul) Anuzis, Rich Ashooh, Whit Ayres, Brett Bader, Mitch Bainwol, Gary Bauer, David Beckwith, Wayne Berman, Charlie Black, Kirk Blalock, Carmine Boal, Jeff Boeyink, Jeff Buley, Luke Byars, Nick Calio, Danny Carroll, Ron Christie, Jim Cicconi, Cesar Conda, Jake Coman, Greg Crist, Diane Crookham-Johnson, Rick Davis, Mike Dennehy, Ken Duberstein, Steve Duprey, Debi Durham, Frank Fahrenkopf, John Feehery, Don Fierce, Carl Forti, Alex Gage, Sam Geduldig, David Girard-diCarlo, Bill Greener, Lanny Griffith, Janet Mullins Grissom, Doug Gross, Steve Hart, Ralph Hellmann, Chris Henick, Clark Judge, David Keating, David Kensingler, Bruce Keough, Bob Kjellander, Ed Kutler, Chris Lacivita, Jim Lake, Chuck Larson, Steve Lombardo, Joel Maiola, Gary Maloney, Mary Matalin, Dan Mattoon, Bill McInturff, Mark McKinnon, Kyle McSillarow, Ken Mehlman, Jim Merrill, Mike Murphy, Phil Musser, Terry Nelson, Neil Newhouse, David Norcross, Ziad Ojakli, Jack Oliver, Van B. Poole, Tom Rath, Scott Reed, David Rehr, Steve Roberts, David Roederer, Ed Rogers, Dan Schnur, Russ Schriefer, Rich Schwarm, Brent Seaborn, Rick Shelby, Andrew Shore, Don Sipple, Javier Soto, Fred Steeper, Bob Stevenson, Eric Tanenblatt, Heath Thompson, Jay Timmons, Warren Tompkins, Ted Van Der Meid, Dirk van Dongen, Jan van Lohuizen, Dick Wadhams, John Weaver, Dave Winston, and Ginny Wolfe.