2008 Democratic Presidential Preference Election

Primary versus Caucus: How millions of voters are systemically disenfranchised and election results are skewed

Overview of Primary versus Caucus

Voter Suppression in Caucuses

Disenfranchised Voter Groups & Statistics

Differential in Voter Turnout Rates

Popular Vote Disparity

Estimated Voter Suppression in 2008 Caucuses

Caucus Systems Distort Election Results

Vote-spread Differences

Impact on Allocation of Pledged Delegates

Disproportionate Votes-to-Delegates Ratio

More Math of Electability

Other Primary versus Caucus Considerations

2008 Democratic Election Snapshot

What IF: Florida & Michigan

Conclusion

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While the US General Election has a fairly uniform Primary-style voting system nationwide, the Democratic Presidential Preference Election has two largely different systems, ie, the primary and the caucus. In the 2008 election cycle these systems have produced two starkly disparate assessments of voter preference for the Democratic nominee. This research focuses on how the caucus system suppresses voter participation, distorts overall election results and has a grossly disproportionate impact on selecting the Democratic nominee.

A snapshot of primary versus caucus elections will help readers understand the differences between the two systems.

Comparison: Primary vs. Caucus		
General Considerations:	**Primary**	**Caucus**
Funding & administrative authority	State-run & financed	Party-run & financed
Governed by federal & state voting laws	yes	limited
HAVA compliant	yes	limited
ADA compliant - accessibility issues addressed	yes	limited - accessibility varies by state & caucus site
Assistance with language barrier	Generally, English & Spanish; other langs vary by state	limited
Election day physical attendance required	no	yes
Early / Absentee mail-in ballots; Surrogate Affidavits	yes	no - few exceptions
Transparency of process, auditable results	yes	generally no
Officially Certified & timely election results	yes	generally no
Voter ID required	yes	often no
Secret Ballot - Privacy of voting	yes	no

Primary elections are State-run and financed and therefore must comply with multiple Federal & State-specific laws regulating the entire election process. There's transparency in the system, more planning, organization & oversight in each phase, training of personnel and volunteers, clear lines of authority and accountability, auditable records and certified results. Primaries must be compliant with Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). They often offer assistance with the language barrier [at least Spanish] through bilingual ballots, printed materials and on-site help at polling places. Physical attendance is not mandatory on Election Day and alternatives such as Early/Absentee mail-in ballots are available. Usually, a voter ID card or other ID is required even to secure a mail-in ballot and normally at the polling site to prevent any fraud. Primaries are better designed to deal with large voter turnout and encourage higher participation via ease of process and alternatives to in-person voting.

In caucuses, the focus is on party-building and encouraging community residents to discuss political issues, the candidates & party platform and on building consensus around selecting a candidate to address community needs. A voter who supports a minority candidate [one with less than 15% support] can realign with another candidate. In a primary, there is no second choice. Further, caucus-goers can stay involved in the political process by working through the county and state conventions and possibly attend the national convention. So, on the positive side, caucuses can be grassroots democracy at its best.

Caucus elections are Party-run and financed and are not as regulated, transparent or accountable as primaries. Federal and state voting laws as well as Section 504, the ADA and HAVA do not have the same force of compliance since caucuses do not receive federal or state money to conduct the elections. Thereby, Equal Access to caucus sites and ballots are not as strictly followed as in primary states. Physical attendance on caucus day is required and few alternatives or exceptions are permitted.

Perhaps most troubling about caucuses is the lack of training for volunteers, the lack of uniformity in following the rules of procedure, lack of oversight and accountability in vote counting & reporting and the lack of audit trail for the results. These system deficiencies leave caucuses open to irregularities and outright fraud. So while caucuses can support the democratic process and the franchise [right to vote] the flip side is that since caucuses are Party-sponsored, they can represent entrenched party-power in direct opposition to the will of state voters who prefer the primary system and are basically democracy on the cheap.

Caucus systems result in massive voter suppression

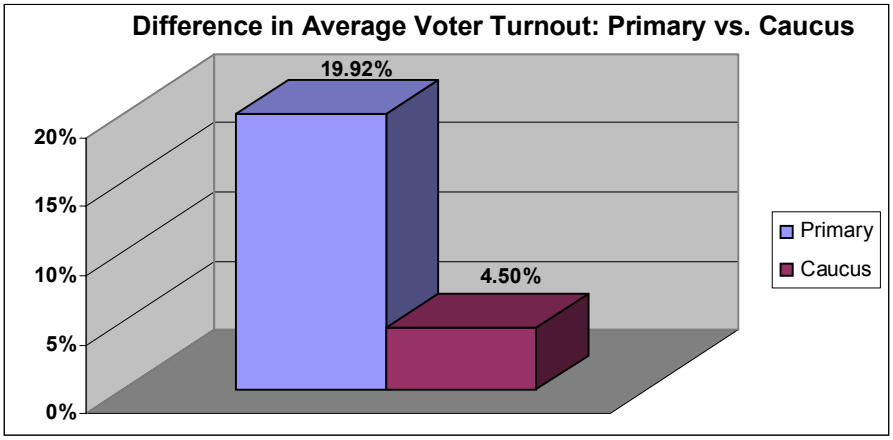
The 13 caucus states have roughly 3.2 Million voting-age people with disabilities. Neither the ADA nor HAVA cover full caucus-related accessibility issues & equal access to the ballot. According to the National Disability Rights Network, the courts have generally ruled that the "Parties" [Democratic and Republican] have the right to determine how their candidates are chosen so there is limited legal recourse to force the parties to comply with accessibility standards for caucuses. Furthermore, most caucus states do not offer alternative voting options such as Early or Absentee Ballots which would increase voter participation and compensate for lack of accessibility.

People with Disabilities: Caucus States			
2004 Census	16 to 64 years (000)	65 years & over (000)	Total: 16 to 64 & 65-plus
Alaska	57	19	76,000
Colorado	292	153	44,000
Hawaii	73	61	134,000
Idaho	111	69	180,000
Iowa	190	158	348,000
Kansas	196	125	321,000
Maine	128	67	195,000
Minnesota	310	193	503,000
Nebraska	125	83	208,000
Nevada	151	85	236,000
North Dakota	43	31	74,000
Washington	507	262	769,000
Wyoming	43	22	65,000
		Total	**3,153,000**

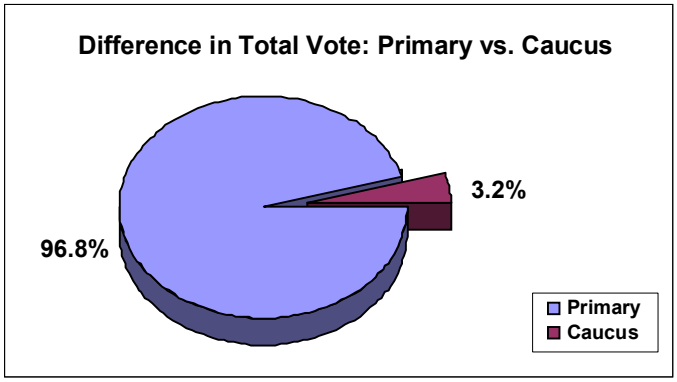
Moreover, caucus-goers must show up at an exact date, time and place, regardless of work schedule, military status, health issues, available/accessible transportation and other factors. All who can't attend forfeit their right to vote. Further, caucuses require English proficiency beyond workaday experiences, ie, political lingo is not part of the everyday norm. The result is extensive voter suppression that disproportionately impacts certain groups of would-be voters:

- Elderly / hospitalized / ill health
- Military oversees or on out-of-state assignment
- Voters out of state
- Voters with kids – especially small children – who can't get or afford a babysitter
- Workers who can not get time off work, or who can't afford the time off
- Citizens with limited English proficiency [estimated at 8 to 10 Million voters nationwide]

Inadequate accessibility, fluency issues and the "exact time and place" requirements lower voter participation in caucus elections. In 2008 primaries have averaged 400% greater voter turnout in eligible voters than caucuses.



The sizable difference in voter participation between primary and caucus states is even more startling when viewed as a comparison of total votes cast. Of the 33.5 million popular votes in the 2008 Democratic Primaries, caucus voters have collectively cast only 3.2% of the total or 1.1 million votes. In perspective, voters in the New Jersey primary alone cast 58,000 more votes than cast in all 13 caucus states combined. Further, Senator Obama has won 5 states where he drew nearly 1.1 million votes and Senator Clinton has won 5 states with more than the 1.1 million cumulative caucus votes.



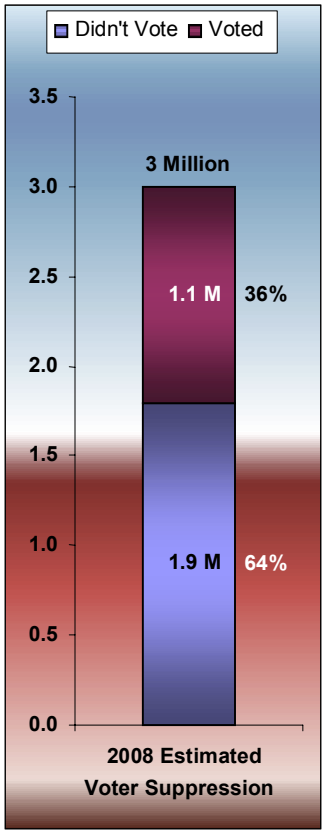
2008 Popular Vote: Primary vs. Caucus		
	Votes	%
Primary states	32,384,907	96.8%
Caucus States	1,057,136	3.2%
Total	33,471,484	100.0%

[1] Excludes FL & MI
[2] Incl. 29,441 Votes Abroad

Estimated Voter Suppression in 2008 Caucuses

If there weren't such stringent restrictions that filter-out so many would-be voters from caucusing, how many would have participated? And, how would those unheard voices have voted?

In aggregate, the 13 caucus states have 23.2 million eligible voters. The average Democratic voter turnout in 2008 caucuses has been 4.5% versus 19.92% in primaries. So, if caucus turnout was similar to all primaries roughly 4.6 million Dems would have voted. However, that estimate would ignore the "filtering effect" of the caucus requirements and the fact that 6 caucus states have not voted Democratic since 1964 – AK, ID, KS, NE, ND & WY – and two additional states CO & NV have had relatively weak Dem support since 1964 compared to HI, IA, ME, MN and WA.



2008 Caucuses: Estimated Voter Suppression						
Caucus States	Eligible Voters [1]	% Dem Turnout Caucuses	2008 Caucus Attendees	Would-be Caucus Attendees [2]	Estimated Voter Suppression [3]	Kerry's Vote 2004
Alaska	476,744	1.86%	8,868	43,851	34,983	111,000
Idaho	1,028,790	2.00%	20,535	94,628	74,093	181,000
Kansas	1,990,002	1.84%	36,634	183,040	146,406	434,000
Nebraska	1,269,738	3.04%	38,571	116,791	78,220	254,000
North Dakota	485,606	3.82%	18,573	44,666	26,093	111,000
Wyoming	392,533	2.21%	8,689	36,105	27,416	70,000
Colorado	3,402,196	3.50%	118,952	428,677	309,725	1,001,000
Nevada	1,703,913	6.90%	112,766	214,693	101,927	397,000
Hawaii	930,634	4.00%	37,182	134,942	97,760	231,000
Iowa	2,171,355	11.05%	160,369	314,846	154,477	741,000
Maine	1,035,982	4.23%	43,590	150,217	106,627	396,000
Minnesota	3,712,351	5.69%	211,103	538,291	327,188	1,445,000
Washington	4,614,253	5.42%	241,305	669,067	427,762	1,510,000
Subtotal	**23,214,097**	**4.50%**	**1,057,136**	**2,969,814**	**1,912,677**	**6,882,000**
TX caucus	15,011,648	TBD	TBD	1,891,468	TBD	
Total	**38,225,745**			**4,861,282**	TBD	

[1] Eligible Voters data: Dr. Michael McDonald, George Mason University
[2] Would-be Caucus Attendees: Total estimated caucus voters at 63% of Kerry's vote multiplied by 3-tier reduction factor
[3] Estimated Voter Suppression: Difference between "2008 Caucus Attendees" and "Would-be Caucus Attendees"

So, in order to present a conservative estimate of voter suppression, a percentage of Kerry's votes were used. The 3-tier reduction factor used [instead of the 19.92% average primary turnout] was 9.2% of Eligible Voters [VEP] for the 6 states, 12.6% of VEP for CO & NV & TX and 14.5% of VEP for the remainder.

> By extremely conservative estimate, 64% of would-be voters did not participate in the caucuses. If the caucus system were more inclusive, how would those 1.9 million citizens have voted if they had been given the chance? And, how would their votes have impacted the overall election results?

Certainly, the three states that have held both a caucus and primary election in the 2008 Democratic race give a glimpse of the vast difference in voter turnout and preference for Democratic nominee depending on the election system used.

Example 1: On February 9, Washington held its statewide caucus and an estimated 245,000 caucus-goers – 5.3% of eligible voters – chose Obama over Clinton by 67.5% to 31.2%, a whopping 36-point margin. Ten days later, WA held a primary attended by 691,381 [15% of eligible voters, ie, almost 3 times the caucus turnout] and Obama won by 51.2% to 45.7%. [Citizens of WA voted-in a State-run Primary. However, the Party-run caucus results are still the legal results.]

Washington allocated its 78 pledged delegates at a ratio of 2:1 [67% to 33%] and Obama got 52 versus Clinton's 26. He gained 26 delegates. If the pledged delegates had been allocated according to the primary results, Obama would have won roughly 41 delegates compared to Clinton's 37. He would be gained only 4 delegates. Bottom line: The caucus vs. primary election benefited Obama by a net 22 delegates – 14.5% of the 152 pledged delegates separating the two.

Example 2: Texas held a primary & caucus on March 4 and once again widely different results were recorded. Over 2.8 million Texans voted in the primary and gave Clinton a 100,000 vote margin over Obama, a 52% to 48% win. However, just hours later, the Texas caucus registered an Obama win over Clinton of 56% to 44% [with 41% of the precincts reporting, total caucus participation has not been released]. Allocation of the 126 primary pledged delegates were Clinton 65 and Obama 61. Allocation of the 68 caucus pledged delegates were Obama 38 and Clinton 29. Bottom line: Obama actually won 5 more pledged delegates than Clinton in Texas. Common sense begs the question if this result was truly in line with the will of the Texas voters.

Example 3: On February 9, Nebraska held a caucus and only 3.04% of the 1.3 million eligible voters participated. Those 38,571 caucus-goers chose Obama over Clinton 68% to 32% and he won 16 of the 24 pledged delegates. In stark contrast, on May 13th, Nebraska held a primary where nearly 94,000 voters [7.5% of eligible voters] chose Obama by 49.4% to 46.6% – only 2.8% instead of the 36% vote-spread recorded in the caucus. If delegates were allocated on the results of the primary instead of the caucus, Obama and Clinton would have received 12 pledged delegates each. Bottom line: Obama's 13,700 vote victory in the red-state Nebraska caucus netted him 8 pledged delegates. Compare that to Clinton's 204,000 vote victory in the battleground state of Ohio which netted her only 9 pledged delegates.

In fact, compare these Obama caucus wins with Clinton primary wins. Which states are more important to win in the General Election? Which are a stronger indicator of candidate strength and offer a better barometer for voter preference for the Democratic nominee? 42% of Obama's wins are caucus states, 95% of Clinton's wins are primary states.

Win	State	Eligible Voters	Electoral Votes	Total votes	Vote Difference	Pledged Del. Diff
BO	Alaska caucus	476,744	3	8,868	4,480	5
HRC	Texas primary	15,011,648	34	2,825,210	100,258	4
BO	Nebraska caucus	1,269,738	5	38,571	13,681	8
HRC	Ohio primary	8,518,501	20	2,315,389	203,851	9
BO	Idaho caucus	1,028,790	4	20,535	13,225	12
HRC	Pennsylvania primary	9,431,577	21	2,307,759	214,115	12
BO	Kansas caucus	1,990,002	6	36,634	17,710	14
HRC	New Jersey primary	5,520,305	15	1,114,872	112,128	11
BO	Washington caucus	4,614,253	11	241,305	88,763	26
HRC	California primary	21,725,632	55	4,794,846	421,522	36

Also consider this: Obama's 138 pledged delegates lead derived from the 12 caucus states he won is only 18 less than Clinton's 156 pledged delegates won from all of these hard-fought, primary states: California, Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Indiana, Tennessee, Arizona, Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, West Virginia, New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

These Clinton-won states have a combined 220 electoral votes, 87.2 million eligible voters and cast a total of 18,400,000 votes in these primaries. Compare that with the Obama-won caucus states with a combined 69 electoral votes, 21.5 million eligible voters and only 944,000 total votes cast.

> All delegates and states won should not be weighted equally in selecting the Democratic nominee. 42% of Obama's wins have been in caucus states wherein one-half have not voted Democratic since 1964, 70% voted Republican in 2004, 8 out of the 13 states had only 8,700 to 43,900 voters each and there is a total of 74 electoral votes for all caucus states.

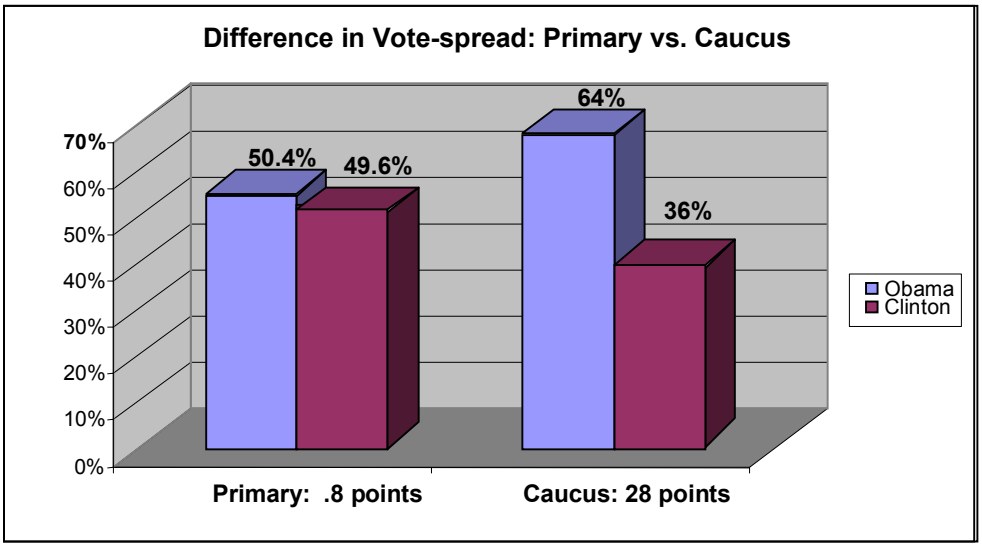
Caucus systems distort election results

These major elements have caused significant distortion in the 2008 Democratic Presidential Preference Election results:

- suppressed voter turnout in caucus vs. primary states
- lopsided vote-spread differential between Obama and Clinton in the caucus vs. primary states
- relative impact of caucus elections on the allocation of pledged delegates to each candidate
- disproportionate impact of caucus votes in relation to convention delegates

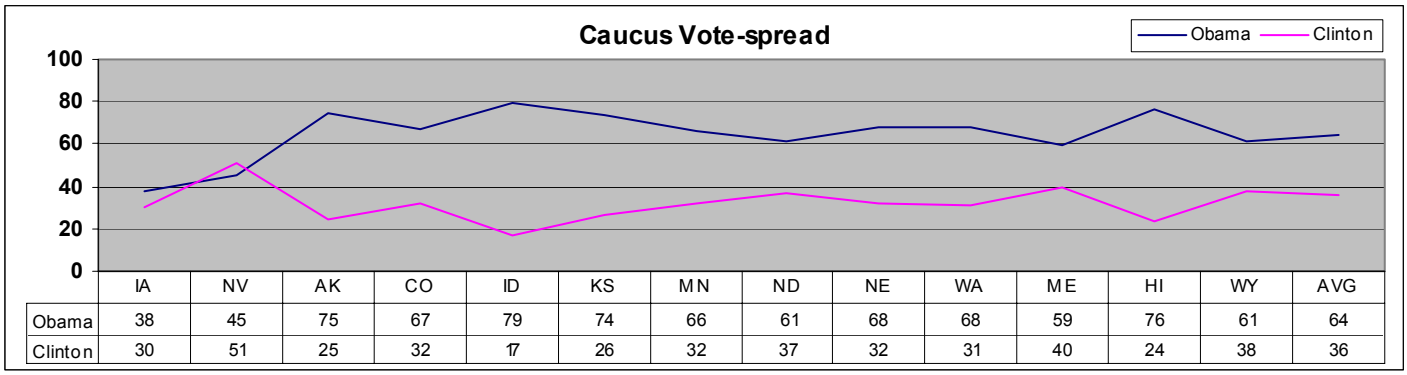
1. Suppressed voter turnout in caucus vs. primary states: The list of major groups who are filtered-out of the voting process in caucus states coupled with the documented 4-times smaller voter turnout and 32-times fewer votes cast are all indicators of the existence of voter suppression in caucus vs. primary states. Page 3 shows that an estimated 1.9 million would-be voters have been disenfranchised through caucuses during the 2008 Democratic Primaries.

2. Lopsided vote-spread differential between Obama and Clinton in the caucus vs. primary states: Because of the restrictions inherent in the caucusing process, participants traditionally include the most motivated voters, party partisans & loyalists and voters strongly committed to a candidate and/or the voting process itself. Since this is generally a relatively small subset of all voters, true voter preferences can be skewed. In 2008, the 34 primaries [excluding MI & FL] have produced an average .8 percent vote-difference between Obama and Clinton. By contrast, the 13 caucuses have had a 28 percent vote-spread.



> The vote-spread differential in 2008 caucuses versus primaries is 28% vs. .8%.
>
> Result: disproportionate allocation per candidate of the 498 pledged delegates allotted to the caucus states [including TX caucus].

The following graphic illustrates just how successful Obama was at dominating the historically low turnout caucuses. Notice that in state after state, he garnered a 2 to 1, 3 to 1 or 4 to 1 margin over Clinton – average 28% vote-spread.



	IA	NV	AK	CO	ID	KS	MN	ND	NE	WA	ME	HI	WY	AVG
Obama	38	45	75	67	79	74	66	61	68	68	59	76	61	64
Clinton	30	51	25	32	17	26	32	37	32	31	40	24	38	36

The graph visually illustrates the single greatest reason for Obama's delegate and vote lead over Clinton: since pledged delegates are allocated per candidate based roughly on vote percentages, the lopsided caucus vote-spread has produced a lopsided allocation of pledged delegates.

Contrast this average 28% vote difference in caucus states with the .8% [8/10 of 1%] vote-spread in the 34 primary states. Even though caucus-goers only cast a total 1.1 million votes in this election, the 28% pro-Obama preference has resulted in a net advantage of 148 pledged delegates and 299,768 votes. In this otherwise dead-heat race, those numbers have been sufficient to skew the overall election results in his favor.

Since the two voting systems have produced widely different election results, then why won't the media show the data broken down by the voting system used – primary vs. caucus – before integrating it to show the total results? American voters have only seen the picture from one perspective, ie, the boiled-down totals. Seeing the election results by source of origin would help voters, delegates and superdelegates make better informed decisions based on each candidate's strength.

When you look at election results by primary versus caucus, this race looks very different:

	Total Votes	Net Votes	Net Delegates [1]
35 Primaries w/FL	33,832,107	Clinton + 35,387	Clinton + 62
13 Caucuses + TX	1,057,137	Obama + 299,768	Obama + 193

[1] Pledged and Super delegates. MI omitted till resolved. Results as of May 25, 2008

35 Primaries with 33.8 million voters have Clinton leading in both votes and delegates.

Caucuses with 1.1 million voters gave Obama 300,000 more votes and 193 more delegates.

In this instance, the Florida primary has been included but the Michigan results were excluded because Obama withdrew his name from the ballot. And, while Florida's delegates are still unresolved, the primary was in every way a legitimately run, state-sponsored and regulated primary in which a record number of voters cast 1.75 million votes.

3. Relative impact of caucus elections on the allocation of pledged delegates to each candidate. Out of the 47 state elections so far [excluding FL & MI], Clinton and Obama have split the 34 Primaries, 17 to 17. In those primaries which account for 32.4 million votes, there is a .8% vote-difference [Obama 50.4%, Clinton 49.6%] and notably only 1 pledged delegate out of the 2,649 allocated separate the two candidates – .04% difference in pledged delegates.

   In comparison, Obama has dominated the Caucus contests by winning 12 of 13, plus the Texas caucus. 42% of his wins are caucus states. And, unlike the near-tie results for primary states, caucus voters favored Obama by an average of 64% to 36% over Clinton. Of the 494 pledged delegates allocated for the 13 caucus states plus the Texas caucus, Obama gained 148 pledged delegates.

After 47 state elections to date, Obama leads Clinton by 152 pledged delegates.
97% of the difference – 148 delegates – is directly attributable to lopsided victories in caucus contests.

2008 Delegate Summary

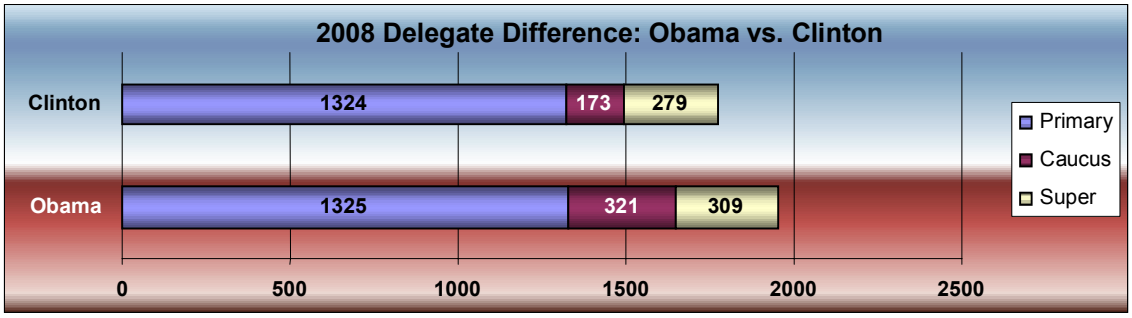
	Obama	Clinton	Total	Diff	% Diff	Favors
Primary Pledged	1325	1324	2649	**1**	**.04%**	Obama
Caucus Pledged	321	173	494	**148**	**30.0%**	Obama
Super Delegates	309	279	588	**30**	**5.1%**	Obama
*** Total**	**1965**	**1783**	**3748**	**182**	**4.8%**	Obama

* Total incl. Votes Abroad. Incl. TX caucus delegates. Excludes FL & MI. [May 23, 2008]

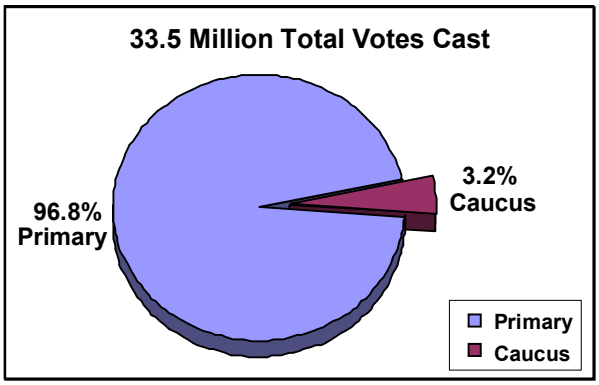
2008 Candidate States-Won Summary

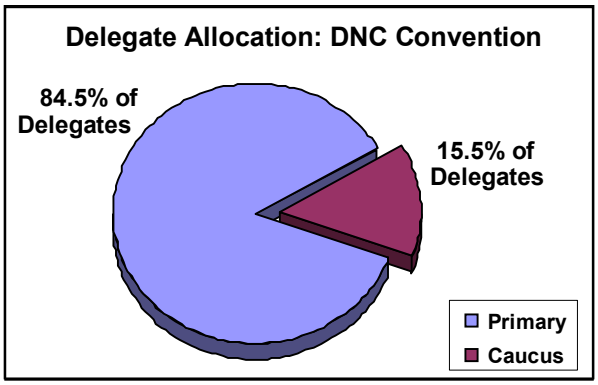
		Primary States		Caucus States		
	States Won	States	%	States	%	Electoral Votes
Obama	29	17	58%	12	42%	224
Clinton	18	17	95%	1	5%	264

Excludes: FL & MI. Source: CNN Election Center [May 23, 2008]



4. Disproportionate impact of caucus votes in relation to convention delegates. Though voters in all 13 caucus states have cast only 3.2% of the total 33.5 million votes so far – those votes control 15.3% of the pledged delegates and 16.4% of the Super delegates sent to the DNC Convention – average 15.5% of the total delegates [626 caucus / 4047 total]. After all remaining primaries the total votes could easily top 36 million, dropping the caucus vote to 2.9% of the total. In that event, 1 out of every 34 votes will determine and control 1 of every 6.5 delegates. Bottom line: caucus voters will have a grossly disproportionate role in determining the 2008 Democratic nominee.





34 Primary States
32.4 Million Votes

13 Caucus States
1.1 Million Votes

3.2% of the vote controls 15.5% of the delegate selection for the 2008 Democratic Convention

More Math of Electability

Since the two election systems have produced two vastly different pictures of voter preference for the Democratic nominee this section will analyze and compare the results of each. Certainly the scrutiny of caucuses is even more warranted because 97% of pledged delegate difference between Obama and Clinton is directly related to the caucus victories, caucus delegates' account for 1 in every 6.5 DNC delegates and nearly 2/3 of those delegates will vote pro-Obama – essentially giving them substantially more clout in determining the 2008 Democratic nominee.

- 21 of Obama's 29 states won are either caucus states or Red states – including 80% of the deepest Red that have not voted Democratic since 1964 to 1976. With a win in SD and MT, he will finish with 230 Electoral Votes – 121 of those from Red states. Notably, if Obama is the Democratic nominee, he will start the race for the Presidency with 109 Electoral Votes from blue or purple states. That's 40% of what he'll need to win in November.

  In contrast, only one of Clinton's 20 states won is a caucus and only 26% of her total Electoral Votes are from Red states. Further, 227 of Clinton's 308 EV are from blue and purple states meaning that she would start the Presidential race having won states that account for 84% of the EV needed to win the Whitehouse.

2008 Dem Data: Red, Blue, Purple				
	Electoral Votes		Eligible Voters	
	Obama	Clinton	Obama	Clinton
Red States	115	81	41,443,965	33,992,368
Blue States	66	117	23,224,674	45,392,040
Purple States	43	110	16,146,203	45,407,021
Total	**224**	**308**	**80,814,842**	**124,791,429**
Data for 36 Primaries and 13 Caucuses held as of May 20, 2008. Updated May 23, 2008				
Incl. MI & FL since Electoral Votes and Eligible Voters are relevant to the General Election.				

- The 13 Caucus states comprise 26% of all states voting in the 2008 Democratic Preference Election but account for only 74 of the total 538 Electoral Votes in the General Election.

- During the 2008 Democratic contests, Obama won 12 of the 13 caucus states. 1/2 of those states have not voted Democratic since 1964. In those 6 states, only 2.3% of the 5.7 million eligible voters caucused and the 131, 870 total votes cast was 20,000 votes less than Vermont, the second smallest primary state in terms of eligible voters. Nearly 32% of Vermont's voters participated in the Democratic primary. Notice also that another primary state New Jersey, with cumulatively the same total eligible voters as all 6 caucus states had 8.6 times more voter turnout. In the 2004 General Election, these 6 states voted pro-Bush by an average margin of 31.6 points.

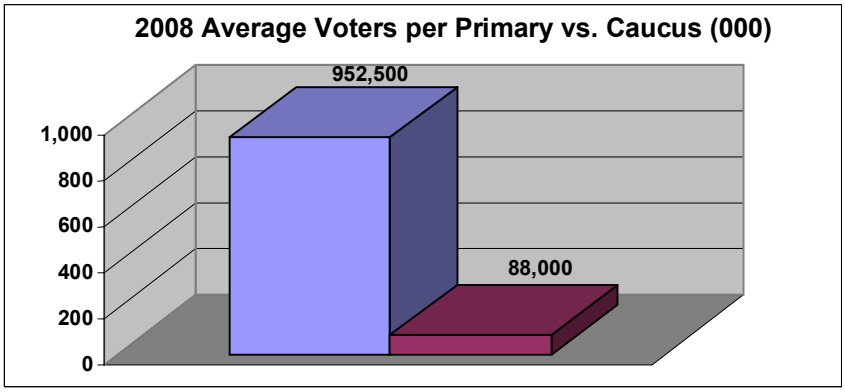
Caucus States	Electoral Votes	Eligible Voters	% Dem Turnout	Voted Dem	Obama Votes	Vote %	Clinton Votes	Vote %	Total Votes	Total Delegates	% All Delegates
Wyoming	3	392,533	2.21%	1964	5,378	61%	3,311	38%	8,689	18	0.44%
Alaska	3	476,744	1.86%	1964	6,674	75%	2,194	25%	8,868	18	0.44%
North Dakota	3	485,606	3.82%	1964	11,625	61%	6,948	37%	18,573	21	0.52%
Idaho	4	1,028,790	2.00%	1964	16,880	79%	3,655	17%	20,535	23	0.57%
Nebraska	5	1,269,738	3.04%	1964	26,126	68%	12,445	32%	38,571	31	0.77%
Kansas	6	1,990,002	1.84%	1964	27,172	74%	9,462	26%	36,634	41	1.01%
Total	**24**	**5,643,413**	**2.34%**		**93,855**	**71%**	**38,015**	**29%**	**131,870**	**152**	**3.80%**
Vermont	3	480,385	31.58%	2004	91,901	59%	59,806	40%	151,707	23	0.57%
New Jersey	15	5,520,305	20.20%	2004	501,372	45%	613,500	55%	1,114,872	127	3.10%

- 70% of the caucus states – 9 of 13 – voted Republican in the 2004 General Election. Those states held 45 of the 74 total electoral votes for all caucus states. In 2000, 8 of the13 states [62%] voted for Bush.

- Only one caucus state in the 2008 season has had double-digit Democratic voter turnout – Iowa had 11%. The other 12 caucuses ranged from a low of 1.8% for Kansas to a high of 6.9% for Nevada. In direct contrast, the 34 primary states have had only one state with single-digit turnout – Utah at 7.3% – has not voted Dem since 1964. In other words, the 13 caucuses have had only one state with greater than 10% Dem voter turnout whereas the 34 primaries have had only one state with less than 10% Dem voter turnout!

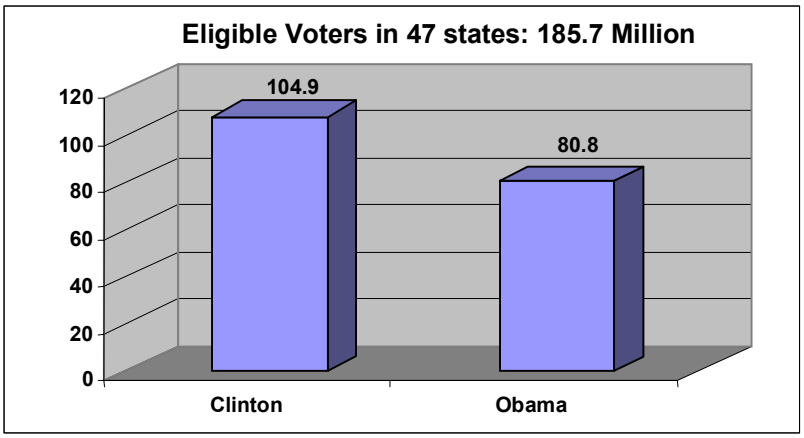
- In 2008, 8 of the 13 caucuses had less than 43,900 total voters each, with Wyoming and Alaska at the low end of the range with 8,700 to 8,900 voters respectively and Maine at the high end with 43,900 caucus-goers. In reverse correlation, only one primary state out of the 34 had less than 100,000 total voters – Delaware, the smallest

primary state with only 422,000 eligible voters [they had 92,000 votes, a 22% Dem turnout]. Moreover, 12 of the 34 primaries have topped 1,000,000 votes each – Clinton has won 8 of those primaries and Obama has won 4. 95% of Clinton's wins have been primaries versus 58% for Obama [42% of his wins are in caucus states].

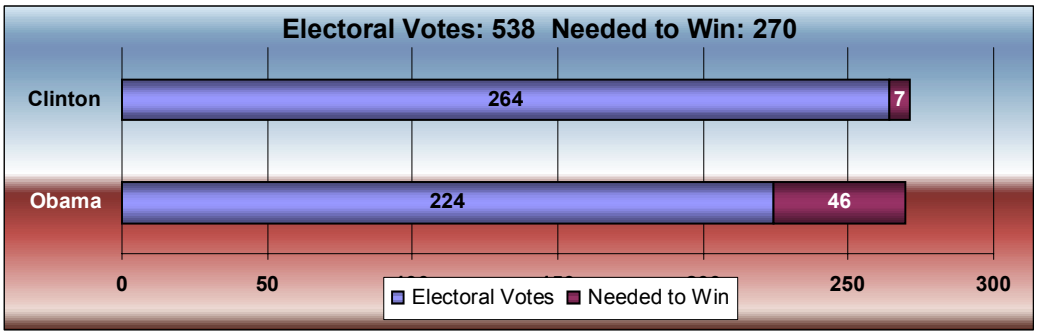


- In the 47 total election contests held so far during 2008, 10 states have not voted Democratic since 1964 and another 5 states since 1976. Obama has won 12 of those elections, Clinton has won 3. One more upcoming Primary that falls into this category is South Dakota. This fact is relevant since 14 of these 16 states have only voted Democratic 1 time in the last 11 Presidential election cycles [in the last 44 years]. The two exceptions are Texas (voted Dem 3 times) and North Carolina (voted Dem 2 times).

- There are 185.7 million total eligible voters [VEP] in the 47 state contests held so far. Clinton has won states with 104.9 million eligible voters and Obama has won states with 80.8 million. Moreover, based on VEP, the average Democratic voter turnout in Clinton's states was 20.1% compared to 15.4% turnout in Obama's states [17 primaries @ 19.4% turnout and 12 caucuses @ 4.4% turnout]. MI & FL are excluded.



- The United States has a total of 538 electoral votes and 270 are needed to win the Presidency. Clinton has won 18 states with 264 electoral votes versus Obama's 29 states with 224 electoral votes. MI & FL are excluded.



Other Primary versus Caucus Considerations

- Voters must physically attend a caucus and all who can not meet at the exact time and place forfeit their right to vote. As such, caucuses systemically discourage & suppress participation from certain major groups of voters:
  a) Disabled voters who do not have transportation or accessibility needs met
  b) Elderly or sick people who are physically incapable of participation
  c) Military oversees or on out-of-state assignment
  d) Workers who cannot get their employers to give them the time off or who cannot afford to take time off work are disenfranchised. Employers may not grant off-time since caucuses are "Party" related and not an "Election"
  e) Would-be voters who are out of state
  f) Voters with children who cannot easily/affordably get a baby-sitter or watch children in a crowd of strangers
  g) Citizens with limited English proficiency

- According to the National Disability Rights Network, neither the ADA nor HAVA (Help America Vote Act) cover full caucus accessibility & equal access to the ballot. Further, the courts have generally ruled that the "Parties" [Democratic and Republican] have the right to determine how their candidates are chosen so there is limited legal recourse to force the parties to comply with accessibility standards for caucuses.

- Generally, there are few alternatives for the physical attendance requirement for a caucus, ie, no Early/Absentee mail-in ballots. A few states have "Surrogate Affidavits" for military, but they still require another person to show up and vote for the soldier. Adopting simple alternatives, eg, Absentee Ballots would encourage voter participation.

- Caucuses have low voter turnout numbers. 30% of the states voting by caucus in 2008 have had 1%-2% turnout and the average of all caucus states is only 4.5%. Markedly, nearly 96% of eligible voters are NOT represented.

- Same day, on-the-spot caucus/voter registration – at times with no photo ID or other documentation of identification – allows for the very real possibility of voter fraud and double-voting [both Republican and Democratic elections].

- Since caucuses have much smaller, more limited voter participation, they can present a limited snapshot and even a very skewed picture of a) true voter preferences, b) the strength & make-up of voting blocks which will likely participate in the General Election and c) the true desirability of candidates within the caucus state. If one candidate dominates the caucuses, that candidate may not represent the true choice of the people in broad terms and thereby may weaken a party's chances of winning the General Election.

- Caucus voters may not well-represent General Election voters and preferences. Typically only the most avid political partisans – those on the extremes of a party – and the most committed voters will go through the time constraints and problems of a caucus. In the broader General Election, political extremes become marginalized in their overall impact.

- The 2008 Nevada caucus is an example of how the process can present skewed results. In Nevada, 5% of the population is Mormon, but 25% of the Republican turnout was Mormon, and 95% of that 25% voted for Mitt Romney. Romney won. In a larger primary election or the General Election, the impact of a smaller subgroup or voting block on the outcome would be more marginalized.

- The "open communication" format of caucus elections may impose restrictions on the expression of true voter preferences and biases that could ultimately impact the electability of a candidate. For instance, the "Bradley Effect" or gender-bias would naturally be suppressed or unstated in a caucus setting for fear of being labeled a racist or sexist. In the privacy of a voting booth, those preference factors may be significant enough to impact a candidate's electability.

- Primaries offer secret ballots, caucuses do not. Some voters prefer to vote in privacy and are uncomfortable talking about politics in front of others and may fear repercussions from their neighbors, boss or co-workers.

- Caucuses are complicated, often chaotic and disorganized. Volunteers with limited training oversee everything from presiding over the caucus to vote counting & reporting, procedures are not strictly followed and too frequently, intimidation and confusion reign. Even more troubling, is that caucuses are often rife with irregularities. Yet with lack of oversight and accountability these irregularities and potential fraud can go unreported and unaddressed.

2008 Democratic Election Snapshot

2008 Democratic Election Snapshot		
Election Data:	**34 Primary States [1]**	**13 Caucus States**
States won: Obama 29	17 states	12 states
States won: Clinton 18 (with FL & MI, 20)	17 states	1 state
Democratic voter turnout (eligible voters)	19.92% average	4.5% average
Total votes: 33.5 Million	32.4 million	1.1 million
Total vote percentage	96.8 percent	3.2 percent
Average vote %: Obama vs. Clinton	O: 50.4%; C: 49.6%; Diff .8%	O: 64%; C: 36%; Diff 28%
Obama votes	16,318,227	678,452 estimated
Clinton votes	16,060,389	378,684 estimated
Total Pledged Delegates Allocated	2,649 allocated	494 allocated
Obama	1,325 pledged	321 pledged
Clinton	1,324 pledged	173 pledged
Difference in pledged delegates	1 Diff (.04%)	148 Diff (30%)
Total Super Delegates: Obama 309 vs. Clinton 279	---	---
Total Delegates: Obama 1965 vs. Clinton 1783	---	---
Electoral Votes: Obama 224	---	---
Electoral Votes: Clinton 264 (with FL & MI 308)	---	---

[1] Excludes FL & MI. Data derived from comparison of CNN, NYT & realclearpolitics.com and thegreenpapers.com as of May 25, 2008

When the results of all 34 primaries are totaled and averaged there is only a .8% vote differential and .8% difference in total delegates – Obama is ahead by 259,000 votes out of 32.4 million and Clinton is ahead by 24 delegates out of 3,114. When Florida is added in, Clinton leads by 62 delegates and 35,387 votes. These dead-heat Primary results closely parallel national polls in the two candidate match-up since Super Tuesday.

However, when the results of all 13 caucus states are totaled and averaged there is a whopping 28.4% vote differential and 33.1% difference in total delegates – Obama leads by 299,768 votes out of only 1.1 million votes and he leads by 193 delegates out of 583. As noted after the "Caucus Vote-spread" graphic on page 6, the graph clarifies the core problem of how the caucus results distort the overall picture of this election: the 28-point vote margin – Obama 64% to Clinton 36% - simply does not align with the nearly even preference for these two candidates as shown by the primaries with nearly 34 million votes or in national head-to-head polls.

2008 Democratic Delegate Count								
	Obama Total Delegates			Clinton Total Delegates				
	Pledged	Super	Total	Pledged	Super	Total	NET Delegates [1]	NET Votes [1]
34 Primaries	**1325**	**220**	**1545**	**1324**	**245**	**1569**	**Clinton + 24**	**32,384,907**
Florida	67	0	67	105	0	105		1,447,200
Primary Total	**1392**	**220**	**1612**	**1429**	**245**	**1674**	**Clinton + 62**	**33,832,107**
Michigan	----		----	73	0	73		328,309
Primary Total	**1392**	**220**	**1612**	**1502**	**245**	**1747**	Clinton + 135	34,160,416
13 Caucuses	**321**	**67**	**388**	**173**	**22**	**195**	**Obama + 193**	**1,057,136**
All Votes Abroad	10	11	21	7	8	15	Obama + 6	29,441
Upcoming Elections	0	11	11	0	4	4	Obama + 7	0
Total without MI	**1723**	**309**	**2032**	**1609**	**279**	**1888**	**Obama + 144**	**34,918,684**
Total with MI	**1723**	**309**	**2032**	**1682**	**279**	**1961**	Obama + 71	35,246,993

[1] Vote count & Delegate count updated May 25, 2008 by cross-checking CNN, NYT, thegreenpapers.com, realclearpolitics.com & state websites

2008 Democratic Popular Vote							
	Obama Votes	Vote %	Clinton Votes	Vote %	Total Votes [1]	NET Votes	NET Delegates [1]
34 Primaries	**16,322,146**	**50.4%**	**16,062,761**	**49.6%**	**32,384,907**	**Obama + 259,385**	**Clinton + 24**
Florida	576,214		870,986		1,447,200		
Primary Total	**16,898,360**	**49.9%**	**16,933,747**	**50.1%**	**33,832,107**	**Clinton + 35,387**	**Clinton + 62**
Michigan	----		328,309		328,309		
Primary Total	16,898,360		17,262,056		34,160,416	Clinton + 363,696	Clinton + 135
13 Caucuses	**678,452**	**64.2%**	**378,684**	**35.8%**	**1,057,136**	**Obama + 299,768**	**Obama + 193**
All Votes Abroad	19,371		10,070		29,441	Obama + 9,301	Obama + 6
TOTAL without MI	**17,596,183**	**50.4%**	**17,322,501**	**49.6%**	**34,918,684**	**Obama + 273,682**	**Obama + 144**
Total with MI	17,596,183	49.9%	17,650,810	50.1%	35,246,993	Clinton + 54,627	Obama + 71

[1] Vote count & Delegate count updated May 25, 2008 by cross-checking CNN, NYT, thegreenpapers.com, realclearpolitics.com & state websites

What IF: Florida and Michigan

Since the DNC stripped Florida and Michigan of their delegates, results from these primaries have purposely been omitted from most discussion till now. No Democratic candidate campaigned or ran political ads in either state. However, since both states conducted a legitimate Primary election and posted certified results and since the states have a combined 44 electoral votes and nearly 20 million eligible voters that cast a cumulative 2,345,000 votes [twice the number of all caucus votes and roughly 7% of total votes] readers may want to consider the voter preferences expressed in order to assess candidate electability for the General Election.

2008 Democratic Preference Election Summary: with MI & FL													
States	Eligible Voters	% Dem Turnout	Obama Votes	Vote %	Obama Total Delegates Pledged	Super	Total	Clinton Votes	Vote %	Clinton Total Delegates Pledged	Super	Total	Total Votes
34 Primaries	162,503,614	19.9%	16,322,146	50.4%	1,325	220	1,545	16,062,761	49.6%	1,324	245	1,569	32,384,907
13 Caucus + TX	23,214,097	4.5%	678,452	64.2%	321	67	388	378,684	35.8%	173	22	195	1,057,136
Votes Abroad			19,371		10	11	21	10,070		7	8	15	29,441
Upcoming	3,954,889	0.0%	0		0	11	11	0		0	4	4	0
Total Now	**189,672,600**	**----**	**17,019,969**	**50.8%**	**1,656**	**309**	**1,965**	**16,451,515**	**49.2%**	**1,504**	**279**	**1,783**	**33,471,484**
34 Primaries	162,503,614	19.9%	16,322,146	50.4%	1,325	220	1,545	16,062,761	49.6%	1,324	245	1,569	32,384,907
Michigan	7,348,195							328,309	55%	73	0	73	328,309
Florida	12,540,365	14.0%	576,214	33%	67	0	67	870,986	50%	105	0	105	1,447,200
Incl. MI FL[1]	**182,392,174**		**16,898,360**	**49.5%**	**1392**	**220**	**1612**	**17,262,056**	**50.5%**	**1502**	**245**	**1747**	**34,160,416**
13 Caucus + TX	23,214,097	4.5%	678,452	64.2%	321	67	388	378,684	35.8%	173	22	195	1,057,136
Votes Abroad			19,371		10	11	21	10,070		7	8	15	29,441
Upcoming	3,954,889	0.0%	0		0	11	11	0		0	4	4	0
Total + MI & FL[1]	**209,561,160**	**----**	**17,596,183**	**49.9%**	**1723**	**309**	**2032**	**17,650,810**	**50.1%**	**1682**	**279**	**1961**	**35,246,993**
MI & FL[2]	19,888,560		814,382		122	0	122	1,199,295		178	0	178	2,013,677
Total + MI & FL[2]	**209,561,160**		**17,834,351**		**1,778**	**309**	**2,087**	**17,650,810**		**1,682**	**279**	**1,961**	**35,485,161**

[1] The Michigan ballot included Clinton & 3 other Dems. Obama removed his name. "Uncommitted" received 238,168 votes. Not shown in Total, See [2]

[2] This Total includes both FL and the "Uncommitted" for Michigan's Primary given to Obama: MI 238,168 votes and 55 delegates.

Delegate info: www.michigandems.com and www.fladems.com. No superdelegate allocation for MI or FL is available. Edwards had 13 pledged in FL.

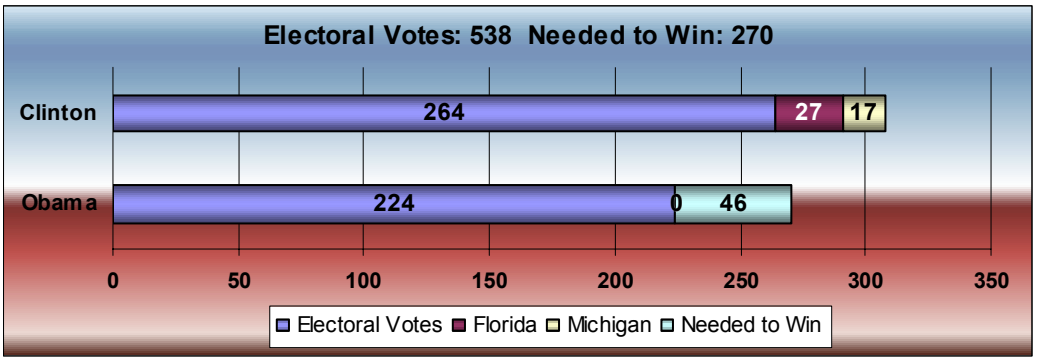
FL vote count includes Clinton & Obama; it does not include Edwards/other Dems. Total FL votes 1,749,920. 11 Primaries had 15% or lower turnout.

Florida will send 210 delegates to the Democratic National Convention - 121 district-level pledged, 24 party leader/elected officials (PLEO) pledged, 40 at-large pledged delegates, and 25 unpledged or "superdelegates." Michigan will send 128 pledged delegates and 29 superdelegates.

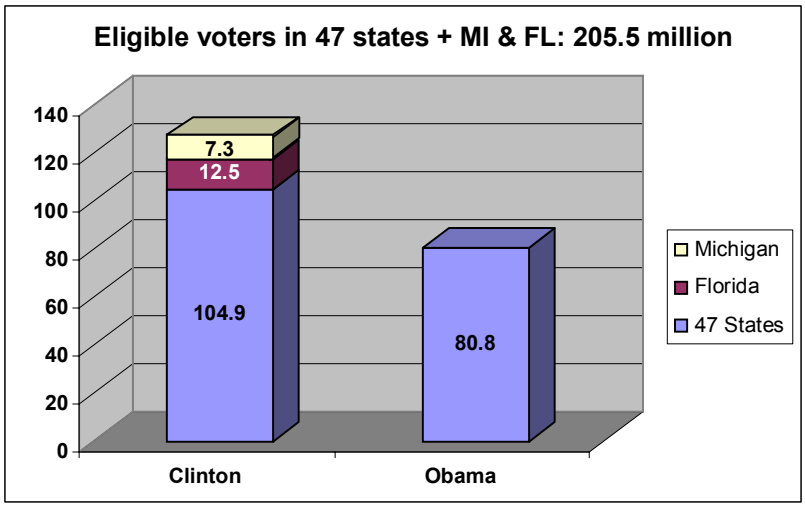
It is noteworthy that Michigan presents an “iffy” picture of Democratic candidate preference since John Edwards, Barack Obama, Joe Biden and Bill Richardson were not included [withdrew their names] on the ballot. In the run-up to the primary, a campaign to vote “Uncommitted” was promoted as an option for those who supported any of these candidates. Candidates on the ballot included Hillary Clinton, Dennis Kucinich, Chris Dodd and Mike Gravel.

The DNC meets on May 31, 2008 to resolve the seating of the Michigan and Florida delegates.

Also, if Florida and Michigan are added to all election results, Clinton would gain another 27 and 17 electoral votes respectively and would have a total of 308 – 38 more than the 270 needed to win the Presidency in the General Election. Obama’s 29 states won have 224 electoral votes which would be 46 short of the 270 needed to win.



Finally, if Florida and Michigan are added to the 47 state elections already concluded [34 primaries + 13 caucus states] there are 205.5 million total eligible voters [VEP]. Clinton has won states with 124.7 million eligible voters and Obama has won states with 80.8 million. In this instance, Clinton would have won 19 primaries versus 17 for Obama.



Conclusion

In the well researched, thoughtful paper entitled “Has America Outgrown the Caucus?” Tova Wang a Democracy Fellow at The Century Foundation wrote:

Caucuses, as opposed to primaries, by their very structure violate fundamental principles of voting rights. Their time-consuming, inflexible, Byzantine procedures discourage broad participation, presenting substantial barriers to the right to vote. It is not that the caucuses violate the Constitution—they are run by the parties, not the states, and do not violate voting rights as a matter of law. Rather, because of their exclusionary nature, they go against some of the core values we express when we talk about voting rights, such as the fundamental nature of the right, equality of opportunity to participate in the process, and fair access to the ballot.

Regardless of what reforms are considered, it is clear that the caucus is a deeply flawed method for selecting a nominee, and this problem can no longer be shunted aside. As much as many of us would like to cling to old but undoubtedly appealing images of how our democratic process operates, these notions simply are no longer in accord with present day realities. The nominating process has changed, it is no longer the exclusive province of insiders, and as such, the rules around it must also change with the times. The integrity of the process demands bringing voting rights to the system of choosing the two individuals who will vie to become the leader of the nation. Caucuses, as they are currently conducted, do not respect those rights and should not continue in their current form going forward.

Certainly, through this research report, it's been shown that caucus elections not only suppress voter participation but also literally systemically disenfranchise voters such as people with disabilities, military personnel on assignment, those physically incapable of participation and all other would-be voters who can not meet the "exact time and place" physical attendance requirement. Likewise, it's clear that caucus elections skew overall voting results and have a disproportionate impact on selection of the Democratic nominee for President at the DNC convention.

From a voting rights standpoint the questions become: When millions of Americans are filtered-out or systemically locked-out of the caucusing process, how can we say we have a nominee who is chosen democratically, by the will of the people? When so many citizens are excluded from the voting process how can we trust the outcome of elections?

From a pragmatic standpoint of nominating the most electable candidate the questions become: Are the results of the two voting systems in relative agreement? If not, how dissimilar are they? Are the caucus results likely to skew the true picture of voter preference? If so, which system results – which set of data – do you trust, primary or caucus?

Through the information and data documented in this report, it seems clear that the voter preference of the 34 million citizens who have voted through the open, inclusive Primary system should receive the more serious consideration. Their voices have shown a near-tie race between Clinton and Obama, with Clinton having an edge in both delegates and votes.

In the upcoming primaries plus Puerto Rico there are an additional 4 million eligible voters and if the 19.9% turnout continues, around 800,000 to one million more Democrats will weigh-in.

With the US in recession, fighting two wars and a battle against global terrorism, $9-plus trillion in debt, struggling with a weak dollar and large trade & budget deficits, in a housing industry bust with record foreclosures, with looming crises in healthcare and Social Security funding and with a tarnished image worldwide, now more than ever, Democratic voters and delegates must have the wisdom to look beyond the Primaries and decide on the nominee best positioned to win the General Election. As such, the questions that must be asked include:

Which candidate has the best overall education, experience and skill-set to prepare them for the Presidency? Which candidate is better suited to withstand the Republican attacks and unrelenting scrutiny? What core constituencies does each candidate draw? What is the size and voting record of those groups? How marginalized would each group's vote become in their state's overall election results in the General Election? How many voters will be lost if "their" candidate is not nominated, ie, will not vote at all or will cross-over and become the 2008 Reagan Democrats? Which future, powerful voting blocks are at stake, eg, Latinos and youth and would they vote for McCain? Which states are "must wins" for the needed electoral votes? In this Democratic Preference Election, which candidate emerges having won most of those "must win" states?

With so much at stake all delegates and states won should not be weighted equally in selecting the Democratic nominee.