EDWARDS, RODHAM CLINTON, MCCAIN NAMED MOST LIKELY TO HELP KERRY WIN PRESIDENCY IN CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY POLL

Cheney, Powell and Giuliani Top Republican Choices

CLEVELAND—U.S. Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., would be the vice presidential candidate most likely to help U.S. Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., win the Presidency in the November election, according to a national survey of 1,000 people of voting age. Twenty percent of respondents named Edwards and 12 percent U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., from a list of 10 contenders. U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was the third most popular choice at 11 percent, even though he’s a Republican.

The poll, conducted by telephone March 19 through 21, found surprises on the Republican side as well. Although 27 percent said Vice President Dick Cheney would be most likely to help President George W. Bush win reelection, Secretary of State Colin Powell ran a close second with 23 percent. Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani tallied 12 percent in the survey, which was commissioned by Case Western Reserve University, host of “The Race at Case” vice presidential debate on October 5, 2004.

But when asked which of six prospective Republican candidates would be “most qualified” to assume the presidency, Powell clearly outpaced Cheney, with 32 percent of those polled citing him, compared with 19 percent for the vice president.

“Potential vice presidential candidates continue to add interest to this year’s race for the White House,” said Case President Edward M. Hundert, M.D. “We look forward to being the forum for this important debate and to helping Americans learn more about the eventual nominees of all parties.”

The survey also asked for opinions of which potential candidate on the Democratic side would be “most qualified to assume the Presidency, should that be necessary.” McCain, whose name was included in the list with nine Democrats because of speculation that he might cross party lines if asked to run with Kerry, topped the list with 15 percent. He was followed by Edwards with 14 percent and Rodham Clinton, 12 percent. Nearly 36 percent said they didn’t know which potential vice presidential nominee was the most qualified in the Democratic lineup.
On the Republican side of the “most qualified” question, Powell and Cheney were followed by Giuliani with 11 percent of respondents. Twenty-five percent said they didn’t know who would be the most qualified Republican vice presidential nominee to assume the presidency.


Among Democrats

Among the 313 respondents identifying themselves as Democrats, Edwards’ standing as the most likely running mate to help Kerry rose substantially to 31 percent. He did best among Democrats aged 65 and older. Rodham Clinton was named by 18 percent of Democrats as most likely to help Kerry win. Her support was strongest among women and respondents aged 18 to 24. McCain reached double digits even among Democrats, with 10 percent of them saying he would be most likely to help Kerry achieve victory. Democratic women (13 percent) favored McCain more strongly than men (5 percent) in terms of adding strength to the ticket.

When asked to choose which Republican vice presidential candidate would help Bush win re-election, Democrats were equally split between incumbent Cheney (22 percent) and Powell (22 percent). However, many more Democrats saw Powell as most qualified to be President (33 percent), with 16 percent citing Cheney as most qualified.

Among Republicans

The 312 Republican respondents were far less likely to have an opinion about which potential running mate could help Kerry win the general election. Nearly 50 percent said they didn’t know who would be most likely to help Kerry defeat Bush.

“A fascinating finding is the strength of Colin Powell among all parties,” said elections and political parties expert Alexander P. Lamis, associate professor of political science at Case. “Regardless of party affiliation, voters respond favorably to him. They think he can help a presidential candidate win, and they think he is more qualified to be president than even the current sitting vice president.”
Powell vs. Cheney

Powell was the overall favorite among Republicans in terms of his qualifications to be president. Thirty-two percent named him as most qualified compared with 31 percent for Cheney. Powell was decisively the most qualified among voters 18 to 24. Fifty-one percent of that group said he was most qualified to be president—compared with only 15 percent who named Cheney.

Republicans thought Cheney was the best candidate to help Bush win re-election, however. Thirty-eight percent of Republicans named Cheney compared with 24 percent for Powell and 16 percent for Giuliani.

“We’re still a long way from November, and the race could take a decisive shift toward one of the two major candidates between now and then,” Lamis said. “But if it doesn’t and we have a replay of 2000, the choice of vice presidential nominees could appear as pivotal when we look back on the election.”

Case commissioned the research firm Synovate to conduct the nationwide phone survey of 1,000 people of voting age. The margin of error was +/- 3 percent.

About Case Western Reserve University

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