SEN. JOHN EDWARDS, SECRETARY OF STATE COLIN POWELL TOP VICE PRESIDENTIAL CHOICES IN CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL POLL

Nearly Two-Thirds Consider VP Nominees Important in Determining Their Voting Choices

CLEVELAND—As Super Tuesday approaches, a new survey of 1,000 people of voting age identified Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., as the candidate they would most like to see as Democratic Sen. John Kerry’s running mate, should Kerry win the party’s presidential nomination. When given a choice among six Democrats, 25 percent of respondents named Edwards and 14 percent cited Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y.

Even Edwards was outpolled by the undecideds, however. Twenty-seven percent said they didn’t know who they would choose as Kerry’s running mate in a survey commissioned by Case Western Reserve University, host of “The Race at Case” U.S. vice presidential debate on October 5, 2004.

“Clearly, the vice presidential debate plays a key role in helping voters make informed choices,” 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 candidates and the issues.”

On the Republican side, Secretary of State Colin Powell emerged as the preferred running mate for President George W. Bush, well ahead of incumbent Vice President Dick Cheney. When given a choice among five Republicans, 32 percent of respondents chose Powell, followed by 24 percent for Cheney. Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice were each named by 8 percent of respondents. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., was named by 1 percent. Nineteen percent said they didn’t know whom they would like to see as the Republican nominee.

The survey, conducted by phone February 20 through 22, 2004, asked respondents to express preferences for vice presidential nominees in both parties. Of the Democrats, former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, retired Gen. Wesley Clark, Rep. Dick Gephardt of Missouri, and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson all polled in the single digits.

—more—
At the time the survey began, Kerry had 497 delegates to the Democratic National Convention, and Edwards had 188. A total of 2,162 are needed to win the party’s nomination. On Super Tuesday, March 2, a total of 1,151 Democratic delegates are at stake in nine primaries and one caucus.

The Race at Case

The survey also found that nearly two-thirds of respondents of voting age said vice presidential nominees are important in determining their voting choices. Sixty-five percent said the No. 2 name on the ticket is either very important (25 percent) or somewhat important (40 percent) in determining their vote.

Vice presidential nominees were considered important by strong majorities in all demographic groups. However, women were more likely to say that vice presidential nominees made a difference in how they planned to vote (69 percent) than men (61 percent). Those aged 65 or older (70 percent) were also more likely to consider the No. 2 name on the ticket before making up their minds than were respondents aged 18 to 24 (58 percent).

Edwards vs. Rodham Clinton

On the Democratic side, Edwards made the strongest showing for vice president among respondents aged 65 or older (30 percent). Only 12 percent of respondents aged 18 to 24 said he was their choice for vice president. By contrast, Clinton enjoyed the strongest support from the youngest survey respondents. Nearly a quarter of respondents aged 18 to 24 named her as their pick for Kerry’s running mate while only 7 percent of those aged 65 and older did so. Support for Edwards was split evenly between men and women while Clinton had the support of 21 percent of women and only 8 percent of men.

“The surprising finding is that Sen. Edwards leads Sen. Clinton, especially given the widespread popularity of the former First Lady among Democrats,” said elections and political parties expert Alexander P. Lamis, associate professor of political science at Case. “Clearly voters are responding favorably to the North Carolina senator’s positive presidential campaign with its strong emphasis on economic issues.”

Powell vs. Cheney

Powell was the overall favorite among the Republicans listed and most decisively among voters 18 to 24. Forty percent of that group said they would prefer to see him on the ticket with Bush—twice as many as named Cheney. Powell led in all age groups, though the margins were smaller than in the youngest group.
Powell led Cheney among both male and female respondents, with 36 percent of men and 28 percent of women, compared with 28 percent and 20 percent for Cheney, respectively. Among female respondents, 12 percent favored Dole and 9 percent Rice.

“There has been some speculation that Vice President Cheney would not return for a second term as vice president,” Lamis said. “Secretary Powell’s strength in this survey indicates the broad-based appeal of a moderate candidacy, yet he may not be conservative enough for the Republican Party base. In many ways, both parties face the same delicate balancing act.”

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

Case is among the nation’s leading research institutions. Founded in 1826 and shaped by the unique merger of the Case Institute of Technology and Western Reserve University, Case is distinguished by its strengths in education, research, service, and experiential learning. Located in Cleveland, Case offers nationally recognized programs in the Arts and Sciences, Dental Medicine, Engineering, Law, Management, Medicine, Nursing, and Social Sciences. The Commission on Presidential Debates selected Case to host the U.S. vice presidential debate on October 5, 2004. www.case.edu

# # #