



The Potomac Primary

Brainroom Briefing Book



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Introduction

Republican and Democratic presidential candidates are preparing for Tuesday's first-ever regional primary, when voters in Virginia, Maryland and the District will go to the polls.¹

The primaries in the District and Maryland are open only to voters registered with political parties; Virginia does not register voters by party, so both of its primaries are open to all voters.²

The trio of contests on Tuesday are expected to offer a demographic advantage to Obama because of the sizable number of African American voters in all three places.³

Black Democrats, who have supported Obama in his bid to be the first black U.S. president, are expected to factor large in the three so-called Potomac primary races, named after the river that touches all three localities.

Obama is looking to the trio of races Tuesday to carry him past Clinton in their battle for the White House, while Clinton dismissed talk that her campaign was in trouble after a series of losses.⁴

An Obama sweep in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, which polls show is likely, could be one of the major turning points in the '08 campaign.⁵

Over the weekend, Obama secured a clean sweep in five races: Louisiana, Washington state, Nebraska, Maine and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Clinton's losses, coupled with her decision to replace her campaign manager with a longtime aide and Obama's infusion of new funds, fueled talk that the New York senator's campaign bid was falling on tough times. Clinton dismissed such speculation Monday.

McCain, the Republicans' presumptive nominee, is also eyeing the election contests in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., to rebound from embarrassing weekend losses to Huckabee and show that he can rally the party's conservative base behind him.

Excitement on the Republican side may have dimmed somewhat, now that McCain has been declared the presumptive Republican nominee. But McCain was embarrassed by losses to Huckabee on Saturday in Kansas and, especially, in the Louisiana primary, a result that Huckabee said surprised even him.⁶ McCain won narrowly in Washington state.

Huckabee's weekend victories highlight the difficulty McCain faces in convincing the party's core right-wing blocs that he is one of them.

Still, McCain is all but assured his party nod after rolling up huge numbers of delegates to the national convention in St. Paul, Minnesota.

McCain appeared likely to rebound on Tuesday in the next Republican contests. Polls conducted last week by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc. showed the Arizona senator leading Huckabee by nearly 30 percentage point margins in both Virginia and Maryland. The Republicans also compete in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday.⁷

"I think we have a shot at Virginia. I think we have a shot at Maryland," Huckabee said on NBC, though polls show him trailing badly in both states. "I'm just one of those people who thinks we have a shot everywhere we go."⁸

Election officials in Virginia, Maryland and the District expect a large, perhaps record-breaking, turnout in Tuesday's primaries.

Using absentee balloting and voter inquiries as their guide, officials said interest in the primary is unprecedented. The Democratic race is tight and historic, and many Republican voters say the direction of their party is at stake.

State officials in Virginia and Maryland are projecting that as many as four in 10 registered voters will show up at the polls.⁹

After Tuesday, the remaining Democratic contests will unfold at a more measured pace. The next significant day of voting will be March 4, when Ohio and Texas go to the polls. Only one primary - Pennsylvania's -- is scheduled in April.¹⁰

Delegates Available on Feb. 12	Democratic	Republican
Washington, D.C. Primary	15	16
Maryland Primary	70	37
Virginia Primary	83	60
Total	168	113

Virginia Primary – Poll Times	
6 AM – 7 PM ET	
Open Primary	

Virginia Democratic Primary	
Delegates Available on Feb. 12: 83	
Pledged Delegates: 83	
Unpledged Delegates: 18	
Both at-large and congressional district-level delegates awarded proportionally to candidates who get at least 15 percent of the vote. Congressional District delegates: 54 (proportional), At-large delegates: 18 (proportional), Party Leaders and Elected Officials delegates: 11 (proportional).	

Virginia Republican Primary	
Delegates Available on Feb. 12: 60	
Pledged Delegates: 60	
Unpledged Delegates: 3	
Winner-take-all.	

Virginia had a 2007 population of 7.7 million. About 63 percent of Virginia's voting-age citizens cast a ballot in the 2004 general election, which is not statistically different from the national rate of 64 percent. Virginia's population includes a higher percentage of blacks and a lower percentage of Hispanics than the nation as a whole, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics.

Selected Characteristics	Virginia	U.S.
Median age	36.9	36.4
Women	50.8%	50.7%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	67.7%	66.4%
Black alone	19.9%	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino	6.3%	14.8%
Median household income	\$56,277	\$48,451
Foreign born	10.1%	12.5%
Persons below poverty	9.6%	13.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher (age 25+)	32.7%	27.0%
Median home value	\$244,200	\$185,200 ¹¹

Virginia Voter Registration Statistics	
January 1, 2008	
Virginia voters do not register by party.	
Total	4,585,828

Democrats in Virginia

Virginia is the biggest prize in the "Potomac Primary" that also includes Maryland and the District of Columbia.

Clinton claims strength with rural and military voters. Obama boasts of appeal to moderates who elected Democratic Govs. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine and Sen. Jim Webb.¹²

In Charlottesville on Monday, Clinton addressed professor and pundit Larry Sabato's University of Virginia political science class.

Her husband, former President Bill Clinton, stumped for her in Fredericksburg, touting her plan for dealing with global warming, the oil crisis, the economy, health care, the deficit and Iraq. He scarcely mentioned Obama.¹³

While Democratic voters cluster in other parts of the state -- including a large African-American bloc in the harbor towns around Richmond and a liberal university community in Charlottesville -- strategists agree northern Virginia holds the key to the primary. Its demographics suggest pockets of strength for each candidate: affluent, educated voters for Obama in places like Fairfax, the nation's wealthiest county; Asian and Hispanic immigrants for Clinton, along with government workers who served in her husband's administration.

More than half of Virginia's 633,000 new residents since 2000 have settled in northern Virginia's suburbs and exurbs. Some 315,000 are immigrants, drawn equally from other states and from foreign lands, including Latin America and Pakistan, according to University of Virginia demographers.

At the ballot box, the newcomers helped a string of Democrats win recent marquee races in a longtime Republican state. This fall, they could make Virginia a presidential battleground for the first time in 30 years.

Clinton and Obama, and their surrogates, are hitting the electability theme hard. Obama said his refusal to take lobbyist donations and his early opposition to the Iraq war make him a better contrast to McCain, the likely GOP nominee.

Strategist Steve Jarding, who worked on the Warner and Webb campaigns but isn't advising a presidential candidate, said Clinton's appeal to women and economic pitch to downtrodden rural Virginians would work better in a general election. David "Mudcat" Saunders, who advised former Sen. John Edwards' aborted Democratic bid, said only Obama has a shot. "I don't think Hillary can win Virginia" in November, he said. "I don't think she has a chance in hell."

The last Democratic nominee to carry Virginia was Lyndon Johnson in 1964. Jimmy Carter was the last to make it close; in 1976 the state dealt him, by one percentage point, his only loss in the South.

Historians trace the party's troubles here to another presidential candidate, the anti-war Sen. George McGovern. His 1972 nomination drove conservatives to become Republicans or independents and "put the Democratic Party out of the running for years" in Virginia, said George Gilliam, a University of Virginia historian formerly active in state Democratic politics.

The Democrats who did win statewide in the ensuing decades tended to be moderates, like L. Douglas Wilder, who in 1990 became the nation's first elected African-American governor. National Democrats rediscovered the state after Webb followed up on Warner and Kaine's back-to-back gubernatorial wins by upsetting Republican Sen. George Allen in 2006.

For Kaine and Webb in particular, northern Virginia made the difference. Seventy percent of the new voters there voted Democratic, Jarding said.

The trend is clear. In 2000, Fairfax County narrowly backed George W. Bush over Al Gore. In 2004, John Kerry narrowly defeated Bush. By 2005, the county went 60 percent for Kaine and, a year later, 59 percent for Webb.¹⁴

Pollster	Dates	N/Pop	Clinton	Edwards	Obama	Undecided
ARG	2/8-9/08	600 LV	38	-	56	4
MSNBC-McClatchy/ Mason-Dixon	2/7-8/08	400 LV	37	-	53	9
Rasmussen	2/6-7/08	719 LV	37	-	55	-

Republicans in Virginia

McCain, surrounded Monday by Virginia's GOP elite and by nationally known abortion foe Gary Bauer, stood beside an A-4 Navy Skyhawk attack jet like the one in which he was shot down over Vietnam, and promised a relentless war on al Qaeda.

McCain was joking and ebullient with Bauer, Sen. John Warner, and former Govs. George Allen and Jim Gilmore and Paul Galanti, a fellow prisoner of war in North Vietnam, at his side and with a weekend poll showing ahead of Huckabee by a 2-to-1 ratio. McCain, 71, teased the 80-year-old Warner about his age.

In remarks to reporters later, McCain rejected claims Huckabee made Monday morning that Republican insiders wanted a quick coronation for McCain.

"We will have a fair election in Virginia tomorrow and we will have fair elections in Maryland and the District of Columbia," McCain said. "I know we've got a sizable lead in delegates, but we're not easing off."

"We're not quitting, we're not easing off, we're not taking anything for granted," McCain said. "I respect Governor Huckabee and expect him to stay in the race."

Huckabee sought to rally Christian conservatives in Virginia and Maryland. But Bauer, a presidential candidate himself in 2000, lent McCain credibility with the religious right Monday with his endorsement and said it's time for other conservatives to close ranks around McCain.¹⁵

When McCain came to Virginia eight years ago for the Republican presidential primary, he called two of Virginia's most prominent religious leaders, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, "agents of intolerance."

McCain is back, but unhealed wounds remain among conservative voters in Virginia and across the nation, challenging the Arizona Republican to make peace with a voting bloc he will need if he is to win the general election in November.

With the national GOP paying scant attention to Democrat-rich Washington and Maryland, Virginia stands out as the first bellwether as to whether McCain can heal those wounds, political and religious observers say.

"This is the acid test for McCain," said Charles Dunn, dean of the School of Government at Regent University, a Christian school in Virginia Beach founded by Robertson. "Huckabee comes here, and he speaks their language. Virginia is critical for John McCain."

McCain has found rapprochement with key conservative leaders in Virginia, including Falwell before he died last year. But Huckabee, a Baptist minister, is expected by many to fare well with the estimated one-third of Virginia adults who call themselves evangelical Protestants. Just how

many of them turn to Huckabee on Tuesday could help determine the level of unity and momentum that McCain will carry into the fall campaign.

The national Republican Party is scrambling to unify the GOP faithful behind McCain, and Virginia leaders are doing the same. On Thursday, former governor and U.S. senator George Allen, a longtime icon of Virginia's conservative movement, endorsed McCain. And Friday, U.S. Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Va.) and Virginia Attorney General Robert F. McDonnell, who has served on Regent's board, threw their support behind the front-runner.

Those conservatives join moderate Virginia Republicans such as Sen. John W. Warner and Rep. Thomas M. Davis III, who hold leadership posts on McCain's Virginia team. The message is clear: Republicans must unite behind their strongest candidate if they are to defeat Clinton or Obama in November.

McCain, a prisoner of war in Vietnam, is sure to do well among Virginia's sizable military population. Even in 2000, when President Bush defeated him by 53 percent to 44 percent in the state primary, McCain won the Virginia Beach-based 2nd Congressional District, which has the highest concentration of military voters of any district in the nation. McCain also won the Northern Virginia-based 8th District, where there is a large military population.

McCain's camp is also optimistic that he can pick up voters who had supported Mitt Romney for his economic message -- including social conservatives who view the economy as a more critical issue. He might also pick up evangelical votes for his tough stand against terrorism.

It is in the heartland of Virginia's conservative base -- the southern and southwestern areas -- where the state's evangelical voters are more likely to choose Huckabee than McCain.¹⁶

Pollster	Dates	N/Pop	Giuliani	Huckabee	McCain	Paul	Romney	Undecided
ARG	2/8-9/08	600 LV	-	32	54	5	-	5
MSNBC/McClatchy/ Mason-Dixon	2/7-8/08	400 LV	-	27	55	5	-	11

Primaries in Virginia

Two decades ago, Virginia's black electorate helped the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson win the 1988 Democratic primary with 45 percent of the vote, ahead of Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis (22 percent), the eventual Democratic nominee, and Tennessee Sen. Al Gore (22 percent), who later served as vice president.¹⁷

Republicans held an open primary in 2000, in which Bush won 53% of the vote to John McCain's 44%.

In 2003, Virginia moved the presidential primary to February 2004, in order to gain the attention of presidential candidates and the national media; it was held February 10, two weeks after New Hampshire and on the same day as Tennessee. Wesley Clark concentrated on Tennessee and John Edwards spent time in Tennessee and southwest Virginia. They may have thought that Kerry had an insuperable lead in Northern Virginia; as it turned out Kerry carried every part of the state and won 52% of the votes, to 27% for Edwards and 9% for Clark.¹⁸

High turnout is expected for the 2008 primary. Officials in parts of Virginia have received a record number of absentee ballots, a key barometer of turnout. In Fairfax County, the state's largest jurisdiction, requests for Democratic absentee ballots have more than tripled over 2004. "Saturday was one of our busiest absentee voting days for any election, not just for any primary," said Jackie Harris, the Fairfax general registrar.

"We are seeing unprecedented interest for a presidential primary," said Susan S. Pollard, a spokeswoman for the Virginia State Board of Elections. Last week, the board fielded more than 8,000 phone calls, eight times as many as it usually does in the week before an election.¹⁹

Virginia has an open primary. Democratic and Republican strategists count on 20 percent or more of Virginia voters being independents. In a Washington Post survey in October, 34 percent of registered voters identified themselves as independent. In the 2004 Democratic primaries, self-identified independents made up 22 percent of all Democratic primary voters, and in 2000, they made up 29 percent of all Republican primary voters.²⁰

February 29, 2000 Republican Presidential Primary		
Bush (R)	350,588	(53%)
McCain (R)	291,488	(44%)
Other	22,017	(3%)

April 15, 2000 Democratic Presidential Caucuses		
Gore (D)		(96%)
Others		(4%)

February 10, 2004 Democratic Presidential Primary		
Kerry (D)	204,129	(52%)
Edwards (D)	105,489	(27%)
Clark (D)	36,566	(9%)
Dean (D)	27,634	(7%)
Sharpton (D)	12,863	(3%)
Other	9,500	(2%)

Maryland Primary – Poll Times	
7 AM – 8 PM ET	
Closed Primary	

Maryland Democratic Primary	
Delegates Available on Feb. 12: 70	
Pledged Delegates: 70	
Unpledged Delegates: 29	
Both at-large and congressional district-level delegates awarded proportionally to candidates who get at least 15 percent of the vote. Congressional District delegates: 46 (proportional), at-large delegates: 15 (proportional), Party Leaders and Elected Officials delegates: 9 (proportional).	

Maryland Republican Primary	
Delegates Available on Feb. 12: 37	
Pledged Delegates: 37	
Unpledged Delegates: 0	
Of 37 pledged delegates, 13 are allocated from statewide voting (at-large), and 24 are allocated by congressional district. All at-large delegates go to highest vote getter statewide. All votes in a congressional district go to winner of that district.	

Maryland had a 2007 population of 5.6 million that includes a higher percentage of blacks, a lower percentage of non-Hispanic whites and a lower percentage of Hispanics than the nation as a whole, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics. About 66 percent of Maryland's voting-age citizens cast a ballot in the 2004 general election, not significantly different from the national rate of 64 percent.

Selected Characteristics	Maryland	U.S.
Median age	37.2	36.4
Women	51.6%	50.7%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	58.4%	66.4%
Black alone	29.5%	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino	6.0%	14.8%
Median household income	\$65,144	\$48,451
Foreign born	12.2%	12.5%
Persons below poverty	7.8%	13.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher (age 25+)	35.1%	27.0%
Median home value	\$334,700	\$185,200 ²¹

Maryland Voter Registration Statistics	
January 22, 2008	
Democratic	1,733,102 (55.27%)
Republican	889,849 (28.38%)
Green	8,048 (0.26%)
Libertarian	5,279 (0.17%)
Unaffiliated & Other	499,495 (15.93%)
Total	3,135,773

Democrats in Maryland

A day before the first Potomac Primary, presidential candidates gave Maryland unusual attention Monday, and a state elections official said she hoped the unprecedented contest would drive voter turnout higher than in past Maryland primaries.

Meanwhile, political observers pointed to evidence of strong support in Maryland for Obama in the Democratic race.

Tom Schaller, a political science professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, predicted an Obama victory, saying the state's large black populations in the city of Baltimore and Prince George's County help make Maryland a state for him to excel with voters. "It would be a catastrophic failure for him if he lost," Schaller said.

Michael Cain, director of the Center for the Study of Democracy at St. Mary's College of Maryland, said he was wondering more about the momentum Obama could pick up in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., after winning the Maine caucus Sunday and scoring victories Saturday in Louisiana, Nebraska and Washington state.

"It's exciting for our region to have this Potomac Primary," Cain said. "I think everyone's excited to be actually playing some role, for a change, in deciding the presidential primary."

Obama held a rally Monday at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he continued to tell voters he was the person to change the country for the better.

Clinton, who toured a General Motors plant outside of Baltimore, said she remained confident. "If you look at the states ... upcoming, I am very confident."²²

The politicians in Maryland government's four statewide-elected posts are lining up behind the candidates before voters hit the polls on Tuesday. Gov. Martin O'Malley and Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown are backing Clinton and Attorney General Douglas Gansler and Comptroller Peter Franchot are standing behind Obama.²³

U.S. Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md. Rallied Friday for Clinton in Annapolis with Clinton's mother and brother, Dorothy and Hugh Rodham.²⁴

Pollster	Dates	N/Pop	Clinton	Edwards	Obama	Undecided
ARG	2/8-9/08	600 LV	37	-	55	6
MSNBC-McClatchy/ Mason-Dixon	2/7-8/08	400 LV	35	-	53	-
Rasmussen	2/6/2008	925 LV	31	-	57	-

Republicans in Maryland

At a Monday news conference in Annapolis, McCain pledged to compete in Maryland in the general election in November if he becomes the Republican nominee. Maryland Democrats have a 2-to-1 margin of registered voters, making it difficult for Republicans to compete in the state. Republicans have not carried the state since George H.W. Bush narrowly defeated Michael Dukakis in 1988.

McCain was joined at the news conference by Robert L. Ehrlich Jr., who in 2002 became the first Republican in a generation elected governor in Maryland. Hewas defeated in his 2006 bid for re-election by Gov. Martin O'Malley (D).

Ehrlich, who recently endorsed McCain, said he was heartened to hear his pledge to compete in Maryland in November. "Republicans in Maryland are somewhat accustomed to being given the cold shoulder," Ehrlich said.²⁵

Janet Huckabee, Mike Huckabee's wife, made four stops in Maryland on Monday, including Hagerstown, Arbutus, Ellicott City and Annapolis. "We are here for the long haul," she told supporters in Annapolis.²⁶

Pollster	Dates	N/Pop	Giuliani	Huckabee	McCain	Paul	Romney	Undecided
ARG	2/8-9/08	600 LV	-	25	50	11	-	-
MSNBC/McClatchy/ Mason-Dixon	2/7-8/08	400 LV	-	23	54	7	-	-

Primaries in Maryland

Since 1992, Maryland has held its presidential primaries a week before Super Tuesday to try to get noticed, with limited success. The one notable result: In 1992, Paul Tsongas beat Clinton 41%-33%, with all his margin and more coming from suburban Baltimore and Montgomery County. In 2008, the primary will be held on February 12.²⁷

Past Maryland primaries have been held in March, after the race has usually been decided already. The General Assembly voted last year to move it up three weeks, hoping to increase the importance of the state's primary.

Maryland voters will pick a candidate to win the state's 2008 primaries for the Republican and Democratic presidential nomination and for all but one of Maryland's congressional seats. Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger, in the 2nd congressional district, is running unopposed in the Democratic primary, as is his Republican challenger, Richard Matthews.

State elections chief Linda Lamone predicted a voter turnout of about 35 percent. However, she hoped it would be higher because of the added attention the state was getting. Voter turnout was 27 percent in the 2004 presidential primary in Maryland and 35 percent in 2000.

The number of absentee ballots is on the rise, Lamone said. As of Monday morning, the state had received 61,416 applications for absentee ballots, with 35,556 that have been returned to local board of elections offices. That compares to 16,787 total absentee ballots counted in the 2004 primary and 12,037 counted in 2000. "So there obviously are going to be more absentees counted than in prior years," Lamone said.

Young voters are among those showing interest in the races. The elections board has seen an increase in the number of 17-year-olds who will be able to vote Tuesday, following a decision to let them vote in the state's primaries if they'll be 18 by the general election in November. There were 6,872 new 17-year-old registrations between Jan. 1 and Jan. 22, for a total of 15,237.²⁸

In Maryland, Democratic leaders predicted that turnout in the party could reach 1 million voters, shattering the record. Four years ago, about 470,000 Democrats voted in the primary. The record is about 596,000 in 1976, when Jerry Brown defeated Jimmy Carter in the state.

"Voter turnout among all voters is going to skyrocket," said David Paulson, spokesman for the Maryland Democratic Party.

"It's extremely busy," said Rudolph McGann, a staff attorney with the District's Board of Elections and Ethics, who was helping out with yesterday's crush of phone calls from voters seeking last-minute information about polling places and other details. "There will be a big turnout."²⁹

1992 Republican Presidential Primary		
Bush (R)	168,374	(70%)
Buchanan (R)	71,647	(30%)

1992 Democratic Presidential Primary

Tsongas (D)	230,490	(41%)
Clinton (D)	189,905	(34%)
Brown (D)	46,500	(8%)
Uncommitted	36,155	(6%)
Harkin (D)	32,899	(6%)
Kerrey (D)	27,035	(5%)
Other	4,259	(1%)

1996 Republican Presidential Primary

Dole (R)	135,522	(53%)
Buchanan (R)	53,585	(21%)
Forbes (R)	32,207	(13%)
Alexander (R)	14,061	(6%)
Keyes (R)	13,718	(5%)
Lugar (D)	2,872	(1%)
Other	2,281	(1%)

1996 Democratic Presidential Primary

Clinton (D)	247,492	(84%)
Uncommitted	33,417	(11%)
LaRouche (D)	12,920	(4%)

March 7, 2000 Republican Presidential Primary

Bush (R)	211,439	(56%)
McCain (R)	135,981	(36%)
Keyes (R)	25,020	(7%)
Other	3,594	(1%)

March 7, 2000 Democratic Presidential Primary

Gore (D)	341,630	(67%)
Bradley (D)	144,387	(29%)
Other	16,935	(3%)
LaRouche (D)	4,510	(1%)

March 2, 2004 Democratic Presidential Primary

Kerry (D)	286,955	(60%)
Edwards (D)	123,006	(26%)
Sharpton (D)	21,810	(5%)
Dean (D)	12,461	(3%)
Kucinich (D)	8,693	(2%)
Other	28,551	(6%)

Washington, D.C. Primary – Poll Times	
7 AM – 8 PM ET	
Closed Primary	

Washington, D.C. Democratic Primary	
Delegates Available on Feb. 12: 15	
Pledged Delegates: 15	
Unpledged Delegates: 23	
Delegates awarded proportionally to candidates getting at least 15 percent of the vote. District delegates: 10 (proportional), at-large delegates: 3 (proportional), Party Leaders and Elected Officials delegates: 2 (proportional). The district delegates are allocated based on the presidential primary vote in 2 delegate districts comprised of specific wards in D.C. Wards 1 through 4 are located entirely in the first delegate district, and wards 5 through 8 are located entirely in the second delegate district.	

Washington, D.C. Republican Primary	
Delegates Available on Feb. 12: 16	
Pledged Delegates: 16	
Unpledged Delegates: 3	
Winner-take-all.	

The District of Columbia had a 2007 population of about 588,000 that includes a higher percentage of blacks and a lower percentage of Hispanics than the nation as a whole, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics. About 69 percent of the voting-age citizens in the nation's capital cast a ballot in the 2004 general election. That's above the national rate of 64 percent.

Selected Characteristics	D.C.	U.S.
Median age	35.0	36.4
Women	53.1%	50.7%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	31.7%	66.4%
Black alone	56.5%	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino	8.2%	14.8%
Median household income	\$51,847	\$48,451
Foreign born	12.7%	12.5%
Persons below poverty	19.6%	13.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher (age 25+)	45.9%	27.0%
Median home value	\$437,700	\$185,200 ³⁰

Washington, D.C. Voter Registration Statistics	
January 14, 2008	
Democratic	279,411
Republican	28,502
No Party/Other	69,094
Total	377,007

Democrats in Washington, D.C.

Voters in the United States' capital city will have a rare chance on Tuesday to affect national politics. The District of Columbia has no voting representation in Congress, and the city's overwhelmingly Democratic tilt means presidential candidates rarely bother to campaign there in general elections.

Blacks make up 57 percent of the population in the District, 30 percent in Maryland and 20 percent in Virginia, above the national average of 13 percent. Blacks have heavily favored Obama, who would be the first black president, over Clinton in Democratic state contests so far.³¹

Mayor Adrian M. Fenty opened a D.C. campaign office for Obama on Friday and used the occasion to stress the importance of Tuesday's primary election for a city that is seeking congressional voting rights and to urge residents to turn out in large numbers at the polls. Fenty (D) endorsed Obama's bid last summer.

In a city where African Americans make up such a high percentage of registered voters, Obama, who has drawn heavy support in black communities, appears well positioned.

With Obama and Clinton in a tight battle, the District's vote -- coming on the same day as primaries in Maryland and Virginia -- could for the first time play a significant role in determining the Democratic nominee.³²

Clinton has the support of DC council members Mary M. Cheh (D-Ward 3), Jack Evans (D-Ward 2), and Jim Graham (D-Ward 1).³³

Republicans in Washington, D.C.

There is a Republican primary in D.C., but McCain and Huckabee have focused their attentions on the much larger delegate prizes in Virginia and Maryland.

Primaries in the District of Columbia

Four years ago, District leaders staged a nonbinding, first-in-the-nation primary to call attention to the lack of representation. Sixteen percent of the city's registered Democrats participated. That was higher than the usual 10 percent for presidential primaries in D.C. but still not a particularly strong showing.³⁴

May 2, 2000 Democratic Presidential Primary

Gore (D)	(96%)
Other	(4%)

May 2, 2000 Republican Presidential Primary

Bush (R)	(73%)
McCain (R)	(24%)
Other	(3%)

January 13, 2004 Democratic Presidential Primary

Dean (D)	(43%)
Sharpton (D)	(34%)
Kucinich (D)	(8%)
Other	(15%)

February 14, 2004 Democratic Presidential Caucuses

Kerry (D)	(47%)
Sharpton (D)	(20%)
Dean (D)	(17%)
Edwards (D)	(10%)
Other	(5%)

Endnotes

- ¹ The Washington Post, "Va. Race a Litmus Test for McCain," 9 February 2008.
- ² Washington Post, "Democrats Rally for Potomac Primaries," February 11, 2008.
- ³ The Washington Post, "Campaigns Prepare for a Long Haul," 9 February 2008.
- ⁴ Associated Press Newswires, "Clinton tries to stop Obama momentum in three Tuesday primaries," 11 February 2008.
- ⁵ The Baltimore Sun (MCT), "Maryland's turn," 11 February 2008.
- ⁶ The Baltimore Sun (MCT), "Maryland's turn," 11 February 2008.
- ⁷ Associated Press Newswires, "Clinton tries to stop Obama momentum in three Tuesday primaries," 11 February 2008.
- ⁸ The Baltimore Sun (MCT), "Maryland's turn," 11 February 2008.
- ⁹ Washington Post, "Tight Race and Deep Interest Augur Big Turnout Today," February 12, 2008.
- ¹⁰ The Washington Post, "Campaigns Prepare for a Long Haul," 9 February 2008.
- ¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau Total Population Estimates (2007), State Population Estimates by Characteristics (2006), American Community Survey (2006).
- ¹² Chicago Tribune, "Longtime GOP stronghold on a blue streak," 9 February 2008.
- ¹³ Associated Press Newswires, "On eve of primaries, candidates appeal for Virginia votes," 11 February 2008.
- ¹⁴ Chicago Tribune, "Longtime GOP stronghold on a blue streak," 9 February 2008.
- ¹⁵ Associated Press Newswires, "On eve of primaries, candidates appeal for Virginia votes," 11 February 2008.
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