

IS DEM TURNOUT SO HIGH BECAUSE THEY LIKE US ... OR BECAUSE WE'RE SPENDING MONEY?

This is a question I've been pondering for about a week. We know that, in just about every state—including many bright red ones—Democratic turnout for the primaries has dwarfed Republican turnout. Nevertheless, national head-to-head polls still show a fairly even race, particularly when polling McCain against either Hillary or Obama. So what does the big turnout tell us? Some possibilities are:

- The national polls are wrong, and either Democratic candidate would have, in reality, a much larger lead on McCain or any other Republican
- Democrats and anti-Bush independents and Republicans are just so determined to get someone better, they're turning out in larger numbers
- Democrats are spending more money on every kind of campaign expenditure—ads, ground game, calls, candidate appearances—than Republicans, which has resulted in higher turnout
- Democrats are finally building grassroots support

in every state, which is resulting in greater turnout

These aren't mutually exclusive. It could be the money invested in offices and local campaign staff is resulting in the grassroots networks that will build turnout, and that while this doesn't show in national polls, yet, it will lead to greater support. And undoubtedly, the anti-Bush energy is real, but so is the pro-great candidates (both of them) energy.

Check out the analysis below. But I'm going to make a really rough guesstimate that about 5% of our increased turnout stems from enthusiasm for Democrats, whereas we're getting about 5-10% greater turnout because we're spending money in states. I consider this post an outtamyarse speculation at this point, but I'd love your opinion.

Candidate Spending

Here's the candidate fundraising and spending through the end of last year.

Candidate	Total Raised	Total Spent	COH	Debt
Clinton	\$118,301,658	\$80,353,784	\$37,947,874	\$4,987,425
Obama	\$103,802,535	\$85,176,287	\$18,626,248	\$792,681
Edwards	\$44,259,384	\$36,468,927	\$7,792,217	\$9,400,863
Dem Total	\$266,363,577	\$201,998,998	\$64,366,339	\$15,180,969
Giuliani	\$60,238,856	\$48,476,576	\$12,776,812	\$1,166,509
Huckabee	\$9,003,808	\$7,107,362	\$1,896,445	\$97,676
McCain	\$40,383,022	\$37,907,049	\$2,948,427	\$4,516,030
Paul	\$28,219,349	\$20,379,929	\$7,839,420	\$0
Romney	\$90,076,401	\$87,644,953	\$2,431,447	\$35,350,000
Thompson	\$21,812,644	\$19,672,377	\$2,140,266	\$404,221
	\$249,734,080	\$221,188,246	\$30,032,817	\$41,534,436

The top three Democrats had actually spent less than the top five Republicans through the end of last year (though eventual losers Giuliani, Paul, and Thompson account for a huge chunk of that; and Hillary and Obama spent close to what Romney spent). But the Democrats had a lot more cash-on-hand left to spend after Iowa and New Hampshire—**almost 10 times as much** of the viable

Republicans. And while I have seen estimates for how much the Republicans raised in January, we know that Obama and Hillary, between them, raised more than \$40 million, with an added \$15 million since Super Tuesday (though no one is saying how much of both these figures represent general election funds).

These numbers are really just rough estimates. But they suggest that Hillary and Obama have probably spent at least three times as much in all post-New Hampshire states as the Republicans, and possibly quite a bit more.

There are just two exceptions. We know that McCain and Romney spent a lot in MI, where Hillary and Obama spent nothing. And all McCain, Romey, and Giuliani spent a lot in FL, where Hillary and Obama spent nothing (see, I knew I could make the clusterfucks useful somehow).

Turnout percentages

Here's the percentage of total turnout we're getting compared to 2004. In this table, I'm comparing the Democratic percentage of total turnout from the 2004 presidential election against the percentage of total primary turnout this year.

	2004 Dem %	2008 Dem %	Difference	Democratic	Republican
AL	37%	48.91%	11.91%	539,743	563,822
AK	36%	39.81%	3.81%	8,600	13,000
AZ	44%	45.29%	1.29%	397,642	480,351
AR	45%	57.68%	12.68%	298,338	218,897
CA	54%	63.90%	9.90%	4,059,731	2,293,212
CO	47%	68.09%	21.09%	119,184	55,845
CT	54%	70.01%	16.01%	350,595	150,159
DE	53%	65.72%	12.72%	95,979	50,062
FL	47%	46.73%	-0.27%	1,684,390	1,920,350
GA	41%	52.30%	11.30%	1,046,485	954,462
IL	55%	69.36%	14.36%	2,003,800	885,009
IA	49%	65.93%	16.93%	220,588	114,000
KS	37%	65.73%	28.73%	36,695	19,133
LA	42%	69.61%	27.61%	357,547	156,101

MA	62%	71.49%	9.49%	1,244,133	496,171
MI	51%	40.64%	-10.36%	593,837	867,271
MN	51%	77.34%	26.34%	212,251	62,200
MO	46%	58.39%	12.39%	820,453	584,618
NV	48%	72.50%	24.50%	116,000	44,000
NH	50%	54.90%	4.90%	284,104	233,381
NJ	53%	66.58%	13.58%	1,109,369	556,855
NY	59%	74.06%	15.06%	1,721,262	602,747
ND	36%	65.93%	29.93%	18,856	9,743
OK	34%	54.88%	20.88%	401,230	329,843
SC	41%	54.49%	13.49%	530,322	442,918
TN	43%	52.86%	9.86%	614,096	547,614
UT	26%	30.17%	4.17%	122,617	283,759

Several things are clear. In general, we're outperforming our 2004 percentages in primaries by 10-17% (we're outperforming in caucuses by much more). There are some key exceptions:

- In the native or near-native son states of Arizona and Utah we're outperforming by just 1-4%
- In Alaska and New Hampshire, we're out-performing our 2004 percentages by 4-5%
- In the great clusterfuck of Michigan, we under-performed by 10% (some of this may be attributed to native son support for Romney)
- In the moderate clusterfuck of Florida, we just barely (less than 1%) underperformed

Let's start with Alaska and New Hampshire. I suspect they're both states in which Democratic and Republican spending was about even—that is, lots for New Hampshire, particularly with McCain focusing on it by himself for several months,

and no spending in Alaska. This suggests that roughly 4-5% of our turnout comes from excitement about Democrats, independent of any spending we're doing. The results in California (which shows us out-performing in the low end of the range) may support that, too. Since it's so big and so expensive, there were few if any state wide ads.

The Florida results also seem to support this general estimate. If you assume the Republicans got 5% greater turnout because they were spending money; but we got 5% greater turnout because of the excitement surrounding Democrats this year, the results would be a wash, which is, indeed, what we got.

You might explain the Michigan turnout by a few percentage points support for native son Romney, the 5% for the spending Republicans were doing, and roughly 4% because the election was purportedly meaningless (there may be a bit attributable to cross-over voting).

One more thing. The fact that Democrats are out-performing by even higher margins in caucus states, particularly in dark red states like Kansas and Nebraska, may mean that grassroots organization is having a bigger effect than money. But that'd primarily be true for Obama, since almost all the people who would make the difference between a primary and a caucus result seem to be caucusing for Obama.

Now, it's unclear whether this is showing up in polls. Against almost any Republican, either Hillary or Obama had been leading by about 5% or more. That's not true of McCain, who currently ties Hillary in head-to-head polls (though Obama is pulling out a margin in head-to-heads). So you might think the 5% or so of turnout that stems from excitement comes from more people being excited about our top candidates than the top Republican candidates. Though even yesterday's turnout, at least for Louisiana (I haven't found good turnout numbers for Washington yet) beat the pattern, even though there were a lot of voters coming out to support

a Huckabee upset.

Finally, here's another question. I think we can assume at least some of our greater turnout comes from the money we're spending. But will our campaigning in these states **now** have benefits come November? That is, can we expect to retain some of this bump for the general election?