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John S. Jackson

*Southern Illinois University Carbondale*

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**The 2008 Presidential Nominations Process, a Marathon and a Sprint:  
An Analysis of What Happened and Why**

**By: John S. Jackson**

**Visiting Professor**

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## **The 2008 Presidential Nominations Process, a Marathon and a Sprint: An Analysis of What Happened and Why**

### **Introduction**

The 2008 nominations process will certainly go down in history as one of the longest, most contentious, and most expensive in the nation's history. It was also one of the most interesting and exciting ever. The race had more officially declared candidates, had more money spent on it, and for the Democrats was more closely contested than any race in recent history. It was one for the record books in many respects. For the Democrats it unexpectedly became a marathon which extended from January of 2007 through early June of 2008, almost eighteen months of intense combat. The slug fest between Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Barack Obama for a while seemed endless, and it appeared that neither candidate could score a definitive victory. Each state contest was important. The rules of the game were also important and set the calendar and the parameters for the allocation of delegates in such a fashion that both became bones of great contention within the party as both major candidates fought every step for every minute advantage. Indeed, the rules which typically should have been settled long before the contest began became a fulcrum for the contest between Clinton and Obama, and some of the most crucial decisions were not made until the meeting of the Rules Committee of the Democratic National Committee met in Washington, D. C. on May 31<sup>st</sup> to settle on what to do about the disastrously unsettled Michigan and Florida primaries rules. That decision was a signal that Obama would probably prevail and was the beginning of the last stage for the Clinton campaign. It ultimately came down to the last set of contests on June 3rd before the Obama campaign could point to an insurmountable lead in the delegate count and thus claim victory. The Democratic race truly turned into a marathon (Whitcover, 1977). It very nearly exhausted both candidates, and threatened to exhaust the patience of the American public. Because the Democratic nomination was so divisive and so hard fought, this paper will devote more attention to an analysis of it, and to the rules which govern the Democratic contest; however, the nominations season is but a prologue to the main event which is the general election which will end on November 4, 2008.

The Republican race is also important because it allowed Senator John McCain to emerge relatively unscathed from the Republican nominations contest, and it helped to define the parameters of the fall election just as surely as did the longer and more divisive Democratic primary season. John McCain certainly did not have it easy in the early stages of the Republican nominations race, but he ran a sprint by comparison with Barack Obama. In the early days of the so called "invisible primary season", McCain struggled to gain any traction. In the summer of 2007 his campaign seemed to be going nowhere and it was mired in deep trouble with funding shortages, staff dissention, and organizational problems. There was a real doubt as to whether McCain could continue. At one point in the Fall of 2007 he fired staff and cut the expenses to the bare essentials. Rudolph Giuliani led the polls and Mitt Romney led in the campaign funding category. McCain faced a formidable array of opponents, particularly among the more conservative elements of the Republican Party. He had also alienated many members of the evangelical church movement, and some of their leaders vowed never to support McCain even if he were to be the Republican nominee. As if to confirm his problems, McCain only ran third in the Iowa Caucuses held on January 3, 2009. He trailed both Mike Huckabee, the former

Governor of Arkansas, who was the favorite of the more fundamentalist church base of the Iowa Republican Party, and Mitt Romney, who had been campaigning steadily in Iowa for a full year and who had spent an enormous amount of money there. McCain, however, scored a very solid victory in New Hampshire on January 8<sup>th</sup>, and his campaign seemed to be launched. He quickly picked up some high profile support from some of the major Republican figures, and he seemed to gather momentum very rapidly based on New Hampshire. McCain followed his New Hampshire victory with a quick win in the crucial South Carolina Primary on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Even though he lost Michigan to Mitt Romney on January 15<sup>th</sup>, South Carolina clearly gave McCain the momentum in the race. Then on January 29<sup>th</sup>, McCain won a close race in Florida. With the endorsement and help of the popular Republican Governor, Charlie Crist, McCain was able to prevail over Romney who came in second, and Giuliani who finished third. Florida proved to be the death knell for Giuliani because he had placed all his focus on winning a convincing victory in Florida. When it didn't happen, the Giuliani candidacy was effectively finished, and the man who had been the frontrunner for the Republicans for almost a year dropped out of the race immediately after his loss in Florida. South Carolina and Florida were the most crucial victories for McCain and became the tipping point in the Republican race. Both were important individually, and when taken together, the two were crucial to McCain's ultimate triumph. Coming off those high profile victories, McCain quickly picked up prominent endorsements and his campaign funds began to flow again. McCain seemed to be emerging as the Republican Party's "establishment" choice, and he gathered momentum based on the advantages which accrue to the front-runner and the favorite, especially in the Republican Party. On "Super Tuesday" or what some termed "Mega-Tuesday" to denote its unprecedented scope, held on February 5<sup>th</sup>, McCain consolidated his place as the presumptive nominee for the Republicans. McCain did not win all the states that day; however, he won the biggest and most prominent races and he got credit in the media for being the prohibitive favorite based on that victory. (See Appendices A and B for detailed results). Suddenly McCain's nomination seemed to be a certainty. Romney dropped out on February 7 and endorsed McCain on February 14. Only Huckabee and Ron Paul remained in the contest although both of their odds seemed insurmountable by then. Huckabee withdrew on March 4<sup>th</sup> and endorsed McCain. McCain went from a candidacy which was barely viable in the Fall of 2007 to having the Republican nomination sewed up on February 5, 2008. By American presidential nominations standards this was a sprint rather than a marathon on the Republican side. McCain was then freed to replenish his campaign finances, solidify his staff, and to turn his attention to the general election campaign. It was four months later before Barack Obama had that same option. When the primary season finally came to an end for the Democrats, the polls showed that the fall election would probably be a close and competitive one. The four months between June 3 and November 4 and the campaign would be critical.

### **The Importance of the Rules and the Calendar**

Certainly anyone who was paying any attention in 2008 must have been impressed with the importance of the rules the two parties had adopted for conducting their presidential nominations and the importance of the calendar in the outcome of the process. For the Republicans, it was over relatively quickly as had become the norm in recent years. Indeed, in both 2000 and 2004, the races on both sides effectively ended in early March. Thus, John McCain's early victory followed the pattern that

had been established in the contemporary frontloaded system. That is also the reason that the extended marathon for the Democratic nomination was so extraordinary. It may be technically true, as Hillary Clinton frequently asserted, that Bill Clinton had opposition from Jerry Brown all the way through the California Primary in early June of 1992; however, it was also effectively over long before that in the 1992 season. Indeed, one would have to go all the way back to California and early June of 1964, when Barry Goldwater beat Nelson Rockefeller, to find another last day of the season primary victory which settled a closely contested race. While this final day of the regular season victory by Obama over Clinton was not absolutely unprecedented, it was nevertheless quite unusual and unexpected when the season began. There were fifty states and seven territories which held primaries and caucuses in 2008, and each contest, the scheduling of those contests, and the spacing between each contest day all became important to the candidates as they tried to employ their resources in the most strategically advantageous manner possible and important to the public in their perception of who was ahead, who was about to win, and what the odds were. It also has some impact on the waxing and waning of the flow of that most precious campaign resource of all, money. Clinton, particularly, experienced great difficulty in raising enough money to stay competitive with Obama, especially in those stretches of the campaign when it appeared her campaign was increasingly likely to lose the race. At the end of May the Obama campaign had raised over \$295 million and the Clinton campaign had raised \$225 million during the primary season. The McCain campaign trailed with a reported \$122 million for the primaries (FEC Reports through May of 2008).

The point at which the calendar made the most intrusive impact on the campaign also had to do with the initial establishment of the rules of the game regarding when the primaries and caucuses could be held. Both parties agreed initially that the first day of the regular primary season would be February 4, 2008. This was when the so-called "window" would be open for business. Both parties also agreed to give an exception to New Hampshire and Iowa in recognition of their traditional "first in the nation" status (Buell, 2000; Squire, 1989). After considerable maneuvering, and uncertainty, Iowa finally chose January 3 as its caucus date, only two days after New Year's day, and New Hampshire chose January 8<sup>th</sup>, only five days after Iowa. This was the earliest the two early bird states had ever scheduled their contests. Then the Democratic National Committee, mindful of the criticism of both New Hampshire and Iowa being very homogeneous and unrepresentative states, decided to give both South Carolina and Nevada special dispensation to go next, in the month of January, and before the official season opener of February 5<sup>th</sup>. In effect, these four contests were to be a sort of exhibition season, but games which counted in the season's standings, to adopt a baseball analogy. Later Florida and Michigan decided they wanted in on that early act, and they scheduled their primaries in the month of January, on the 15<sup>th</sup> for Michigan and on the 29<sup>th</sup> for Florida. The state governments of both states took these actions to move forward into January and to ignore the warnings from the national committees of both parties that they would be penalized if they chose to do so. Later the RNC decided to penalize Michigan and Florida half of their delegate seats for this violation of the party rules. The Democrats initially decided to penalize both states all their votes by refusing to seat their entire delegation. It was this more draconian decision by the Democrats which became the bone of so much contention later in the season. This was the decision that the DNC's Rules Committee then decided on May 31 to change to the lesser penalty of seating the entire delegation but only giving each delegate a half vote and allocating

each side a partial slice of the pie. Since McCain wrapped up his party's nomination so early, the Republicans' decision to penalize both states never did become an issue which received much notice and it simply faded from the media's coverage. On the other side, the Democrats' decision became a cause célèbre, and it also became a major source of the controversy between the Clinton and the Obama camps. Both sides initially agreed to comply with the DNC's rules on Florida and Michigan, and they pledged not to campaign in either state. Obama took the further step of having his name removed from the ballot in Michigan, thus leaving the field entirely to Clinton and to the other candidates whose names remained on the ballot. This conflict threatened to engulf the Democratic Party's nominations process as the contest got closer and as Senator Clinton changed her mind and decided that every vote should be counted, and that her victories in both Michigan and Florida should be recognized by the seating of at least some, and preferably all, of the delegates from those states. 2008 proved to be one of those years when the rules of the game were in flux all the way through the nominations season, and the conflicts even threatened to spill over into the national conventions when the Clinton campaign publicly discussed the possibility of a challenge before the Credentials Committee at the national convention in late August. Many observers quite accurately believed that based on past performance, if the Democrats had a contentious fight before either the Credentials Committee or on the floor of the convention itself, this image of internal party conflict would substantially hamper the candidacy of their party's nominee in the two months which would be then remaining before the general election.

There were other rules which the Democrats had adopted in the previous three decades of party rules making which threatened to derail the party's nominations process or which at least came in for an unusual level of scrutiny when people searched for answers to why the Democrats were taking so long to settle their differences. The media and the mass public discovered both the "Super Delegates" and the concept of "Proportional Representation" seemingly for the first time in the 2008 contests. The Super Delegates were simply high level elected and appointed public and party officials who were given automatic seats in the Democratic convention. In the wake of the McGovern Fraser Commission reforms which were initiated in 1970 and promulgated for the first time in 1972, the party had totally changed and revamped the way it conducted the nomination of a president and the conduct of the national conventions (Jackson and Crotty, 2001). As a result, the presidential primaries became much more crucial than they had been during the pre-reform era from 1968 all the way back to the initial presidential primaries right after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Many states which had conducted caucuses or conventions decided to turn to the presidential primaries to select their delegations to the national conventions. As the number of primaries, and the proportion of delegates selected in the primaries grew, so did the interest in them grow among the mass media and the public. In short the primaries became the primary scene of action in the nominations process. The presidential candidates had to adopt a much more extensive and much more comprehensive plan for which primaries to contest, how to present themselves to the primary voters, and how to expend their precious resources of time and money. The challenge of acting strategically became much more compelling for the candidates, and indeed rising to that challenge became the mark of the successful versus the unsuccessful candidates. But, one of the unintended effects of the increased reliance on the primaries was that the high level public and party officials either had to get down into the congressional district level delegate races and secure themselves a position by getting elected there, or they had to rely on an

increasingly small supply of state-wide at-large positions reserved for a few of the more notable officials and increasingly also used for ticket balancing purposes. It became hard, if not impossible, for some of these party and public officials to secure a seat for themselves without at the same time depriving some of the party activists at the grassroots, who might have been their friends and supporters, of a seat at the convention. The number and percentage of public officials attending the conventions as delegates declined during the 1970s. By 1980 the Democrats were aware of their problems on this front and determined to take action on it. In that convention they decided to guarantee a certain number of seats in each state's delegation to the party and public officials they wanted to attend for 1984. They also hoped that this would unify the party's support behind the nominee for the fall campaign. So, they decided to take special precautions to ensure the seating of Democratic Governors, Senators, state party chairs, members of the DNC and originally a certain percentage of their U. S. House members with automatic delegate status. These delegates were generally not noticed in the ensuing years since their presence was just accepted as expected by the public and the media. There was some talk about them in 1984 when the Super Delegates appeared to favor Walter Mondale over Gary Hart; however, they were not crucial to the outcome. In 2008, by contrast, it appeared increasingly likely that neither Obama nor Clinton could reach the necessary majority of the delegate votes by relying on the committed delegates coming out of the caucuses and primaries alone. That majority was originally deemed to be 2026 without counting Florida and Michigan. The bar was then moved to 2118 after May 31<sup>st</sup> when the Michigan and Florida decision was rendered. All of a sudden, the Super Delegates appeared to hold the balance of power, and it became increasingly evident that they would provide the necessary margin to the victor. All of a sudden, the mass media and the public discovered the Super Delegates and there was much speculation and many articles about them and where they had come from and the fairness of letting them hold the balance of power by favoring one candidate over the other. Initially Senator Clinton held a significant majority among the announced Super Delegates. Then as Obama won more and more contests, his total of announced Super Delegate supporters began to inch upward. It was late May when his total exceed Clinton's total of announced Super Delegate support. This, then, became one of the crucial turning points in the long and contentious campaign. It came from a long standing rule which had been adopted decades earlier; however, that rule had been hiding in plain sight for the entire period before 2008 when it became so prominent and so public.

The other rule which became very prominent unexpectedly was the formula for the allocation of delegates. Since the advent of the McGovern-Fraser reform the Democrats, predominantly had used a Proportional Representation (P R) system. This means that the candidate gets an allocation of delegate seats in approximate proportion to his or her popular vote totals. In other words, if one candidate receives 60 percent of the popular vote and a second candidate receives 40 percent of the popular vote, the first candidate should receive approximately 60 percent of the delegate seats available and the second candidate should receive 40 percent. This assumes that there are only two candidates, and it ignores the problem that there is a 15 percent threshold which is required before a candidate receives any delegate votes at all. No P R system is ever mathematically pure; however, this is the theory that the system is predicated on. It was this system which was given the credit or the blame for helping to prolong the Democratic Party's race in 2008. Bill Clinton several time asserted that if the Democrats had been using the Republicans' rules the race would have ended early. The rules to which Clinton referred

were the use by the Republicans of a “winner take all” formula. The Republicans generally left the rules for the selection of delegates up to the states. Most state Republican parties preferred the winner take all formula, and that is what they used. The Republicans have a long history of nominating a candidate who has made a previous race, who is already well known, and who is also the front runner. They also have a history of wanting to get the nominations race over quickly and with a minimum of internal party divisiveness. The winner take all rules facilitate exactly that outcome. In most Republican primaries, if a candidate wins the most popular votes, that candidate wins all the convention delegate votes. Unlike the Democrats’ proportional representation plan, there is no reward for coming in second or third. Thus, it is quite likely that a frontrunner candidate who wins a few early primaries will pick up a disproportionate reward for coming in first, and thus develop the requisite momentum early to begin to look like the unstoppable nominee. This places a very large premium on the early contests, and the rule of thumb is “win early and win often” in those first primary and caucus states. This also means that those states which are positioned well back in the calendar virtually count for nothing in their presidential primaries and caucuses. Once a candidate becomes the “presumptive nominee” the rest of the states are left out of the calculus. It is often an after-thought that those states are even holding contests and the media pay virtually no attention to them. It is little wonder, then, that there is such a rush to the early dates, and even in the cases of Florida and Michigan a willingness to violate the party’s national rules in order to get a piece of the action. Thus, the relatively new term of “frontloading” has become the hall mark of this era. The Republican race, with its winner take all rules, and with the early John McCain victory in 2008 will only reinforce this compelling tendency to rush to the early contests and put maximum resources in them.

### **Alternative Rules Scenarios**

The rules we have currently which control the presidential nominations process are an awkward and complicated mixture of state law and party rules mixed with national party rules adopted by the Democratic and Republican National Committees and prior national conventions. It is a jury-rigged mixture of national and local interests with the state interests often predominant over the national interest as is sometimes the case in the federal system. If New Hampshire and Iowa feel strongly enough about their primaries, and are prepared to fight for their first in the nation places, they can usually prevail. On the other hand, if Florida and Michigan decide to make a fight over their desire to join the early bird caucus, they may have some consequences to suffer, although just how long those sanctions imposed initially will last is unclear. There is just no rhyme nor reason one can discern sorting out and controlling the clash between parochial versus national interest in the rules regime adopted by both parties. Every four years there seems to be a rediscovery of the rules and their importance; however, the national parties have been reluctant to tamper with the fundamentals of the nominations process in recent elections. There was a long season of rules making in the 1970s and early 1980s, led by the Democrats and followed at some distance reluctantly by the Republicans. The national parties put into place a serious and demanding set of national party rules and directed the state parties to comply with them in conducting the presidential nominations contests. Those rules were much more detailed and demanding for the Democrats as they exercised the prerogative of the national party to set up the rules for the presidential selection process and the Supreme Court of the United States upheld



their right to do so. The Republicans being much more solicitous toward federalism and states' rights did not entirely embrace the extensive development of national party law to the extent that the Democrats did. However, both parties have evidenced significant concern toward controlling the calendar and getting a grip on the excessive frontloading of the nominations calendar which has developed in recent years. This is illustrated by the fact that both parties adopted the same window opening date of February 5, 2008, although both parties also agreed to leave New Hampshire and Iowa outside that window, and the Democrats added Nevada and South Carolina in order to increase the diversity of the states allowed to go first. (See Appendix A for the 2008 calendar). Nevertheless the states continued to pursue their own interests as they maneuvered to maximize their state's position on the calendar and to try everything possible to attract more attention to their contests, more candidates to their states, and more money to be spent on the media, the hotels and restaurants, and car rental agencies in their states. It was all this maneuvering for advantage which led to the conflict and confusion surrounding the rules regimes in both parties, but particularly the Democratic Party, in the 2008 presidential nominations cycle.

It is quite possible to clear up all the confusion and to conduct these elections differently. No other nation on earth comes anywhere near to having a party nominations process as complicated, confusing, long, and expensive as the system we have adopted in the United States. In this area, the United States is clearly number one; however, the designation is not one that many citizens would necessarily want to boast about. The 2008 nominations contests, being filled with so much rancor and confusion about the rules, are just the latest in a long line of complicated and expensive races; however, 2008 set a number of records which may lead to a renewed call for change in the way we do presidential nominations in the future, perhaps as early as for the 2012 election cycle.

There are many other ways to make nominations for national office. The president of the United States is, after all, the only elected national officer we have, along with the Vice President who is inextricably tied to the presidential candidate. It is the most powerful office in the world as we like to say. If so, it may be well to constantly consider how we nominate our presidents, how we take all the aspirants for that unique office, and boil them down to the top two, one of whom will almost inevitably be elected president of the United States in early November. In other democratic nations, the nomination of the nation's number one leader and the candidate the party will run with in the general election is considered mostly to be the business of the political party. Thus, for example, the nominees grow out of the major party caucuses, or conventions as we would term them, in Great Britain, the nation from which we drew so many models. This tends to be the rule in most democratic nations, although some nations, such as France and Mexico, have recently moved more in the American direction by adopting something resembling a national primary for their nominations procedure. In the case of the United States, the primaries have been a part of our tradition so long, and the presidential primaries have become so important in our political culture, there is little chance we will abandon them or significantly reduce our reliance on the primary dominant system. There is a mass expectation in our culture that the people will be consulted in making these major decisions about their candidate choices, and the primaries are central to fulfilling that expectation. Nevertheless, there is enough popular concern over the complexities and uncertainties of the current system and frustration over the excessive

length of the nominations season, which dominated all of 2007 and the first half of 2008 in the most recent iteration, and the exploding costs of funding all this, that there is a serious debate about what other nominations plans could be adopted which have a chance of containing some of the trends which now seem to be verging on chaos at times. At the very minimum, the desire to control the calendar and to get some predictability and transparency in how the calendar is established, and the insurance that the states and all the candidates will play by the same rules appeals to the American sense of fair play and justice. The national parties clearly have the authority of the Supreme Court to devise alternative sets of rules for 2012, and many observers have urged them to take advantage of that authority and settle on an alternative plan for the next presidential cycle. The major alternatives are the following:

1. **A National Primary-** All states would vote in a primary on that day. The winner of each party's primary would then be the presidential nominee. (Alternatively, there could be a runoff later if no candidate reached some threshold, such as forty percent of the total vote cast). This proposal has been long discussed and public opinion polls show it to be very popular when put to the mass public. The national primary also has many problems and many critics, and it is the most radical departure from the current system; however, in some senses we are also drifting in that direction in an unplanned manner. The February 5<sup>th</sup> "Super Tuesday" or "Mega Tuesday" primaries and caucuses were so numerous and so imposing that some analysts started calling them a "de facto national primary".
2. **Regional Primaries-** There are numerous proposals for regional primaries that have been advanced by those who would like to reform the current system. (See Jackson, 2008). The two most prominent and most relevant to this paper are the Rotating Regional Primaries Plan advanced by the National Association of Secretaries of State. Senators Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, and Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut have introduced a variation on the regional primaries plan in the United State Senate. Both plans would provide for four regional primaries, a Northeastern Region, a Southern Region, a Midwestern Region, and a Western Region. (See Appendix C). The regional primaries would be staggered on alternative dates spread across four cycles, with several weeks to a month between. The sequence of which region goes first, second, etc. would be determined by lot. Both plans would leave New Hampshire and Iowa out of the window and would preserve their traditional first in the nation priorities. The major differences between the two plans is that the Klobuchar Plan would adopt the national rules by federal law through action by the Congress and the President while the NASS plan would require the national parties to take this action (National Association of Secretaries of State, October 29, 2007).
3. **Other Alternatives-** There are numerous other alternatives which have been offered by other reformers. For example, prominent Political Scientist, Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia, has advocated what he termed a "Regional Lottery Plan". That plan would include four regional primaries as advanced by the NASS; however, the order would not be set until January of election year in order to prevent too much campaigning and expenditures in specific states and regions prior to the firing of the starter's gun. Sabato also advocated taking the preferred first in the nation designation away from New

### **An Assessment of the Alternative Plans**

The next section of this paper presents empirical data providing an assessment of some of these alternatives using 2008 as a test case. In effect this will constitute a hypothetical re-run of the 2008 primary and caucus season using the assumptions of a different set of rules. In the academic literature there is no doubt that the rules matter (Ranney, 1972). We often adopt various sports metaphors and terminology to describe the race for the presidency. The title of this paper combines two such metaphors from the track world. The “horserace”, the “dark horse”, “the frontrunner”, the “also ran”, “the contender”, “the knock-out punch” etc. are all terms taken directly from the sports world and imported into the coverage of presidential contests. In sports as in politics, it is clear that the rules matter. Adopting a different set of assumptions about the rules can help us assess some of the impact of the possibility of changing the rules for 2012.

There are also some decided limitations to such a methodological approach. There is absolutely no doubt but what candidates and their campaign staffs are strategic thinkers (Polsby and Wildavsky, 2008). They will attempt to coolly and rationally calculate their best interests and allocate their scarce resources accordingly no matter what rules regime they encounter. The most successful candidates are usually the ones who do the best job of maximizing their payoffs under whatever conditions the rules and the political circumstances of the times create. However, some are much better and more successful than others in making those calculations. For example, Senator Clinton’s campaign is now widely faulted for assuming that the advantages of her position as frontrunner and as the candidate with the most extensive network and the best name identification would carry her to victory in the early contests and to an almost inevitable designation as the Democratic nominee (Dumas, 2008). The impression that the Clinton campaign had no fall back strategy for not winning the nomination on the Super Tuesday date of February 5<sup>th</sup> is seen by many critics as one key to her failure to turn her initial frontrunner status into a final victory. Likewise, on the Republican side, Rudolph Giuliani put almost all

of his resources into winning a decisive victory in Florida on January 29<sup>th</sup>. When that victory did not happen, Giuliani was forced out of the race even though he had led the polls for most of 2007. It is clear that candidates are strategic thinkers and can make rational decisions; however, they are not infallible and they do make mistakes and miscalculations no matter how capable at calculating their odds they may seem to be.

In addition, the campaign can only have so much impact on the decisions of the voters. There are partisan, ideological, economic and demographic factors which also figure into the decision making of most voters (Niemi and Weisberg, 1993). Some of the literature in political science even raises fundamental questions about just how much real impact any campaign can have on the predispositions of the voters to vote for one party or the other or one candidate over another. In a sense in a primary, the powerful impact of partisanship is “controlled” by virtue of the fact that the voters must initially decide what primary they will vote in and everyone who chooses that party’s primary is in effect a member of that party at least for election day. Thus, all the other campaign variables, those variables often called the “short term” factors in the voting behavior literature, take over and influence the vote. The images of the candidates, their stances on the issues, the questions of the “goodness or badness of the times” for example come to the fore. In addition, there are the questions related to the mix of the demographics of the candidates and the voters, and the questions of which groups affiliations will matter the most in compelling the final choice in the voting booth. It is no secret that questions of gender and race came to the fore in the Democratic Primary season of 2008 and they were so deeply embedded in the calculus of some voters that those two fault lines threatened, at least temporarily, to split the Democratic Party’s coalition in lasting ways. In addition, such questions as to whether white, blue collar voters in the Appalachian region of the United States would ever vote for Obama came to the fore and became a prominent part of the campaign narrative. Those variables are some of the fundamentals of the campaign season which probably cannot be impacted a great deal by the quality of the campaign conducted by one side or the other. They are also the “givens” which are not likely to be much influenced by the rules of the game, by the sequencing of the primaries, and all of the other legal and institutional factors which can be affected by the national political parties as they plan their nominations. Having stipulated that all these are factors which probably do not matter as much as the candidates, the voters, and the circumstances of the political times, it is nevertheless worthwhile to try to create the hypothetical conditions which may have influenced the candidates in 2008 and the outcomes of the hotly contested primaries and caucuses of that year.

### **The National Primary Experiment**

It is difficult to create the conditions necessary to conduct a hypothetical national primary. Of course, if there had been a national primary the candidates would have planned for it and they would have allocated their resources in the manner they thought conducive to giving them the greatest return on the campaign dollar spent. That does not negate the fact, however, that some analysts and some candidates utilized language and reasoning at least related to the national primary model. For example, at first the Obama campaign suggested that winning the largest number of popular votes nationally was an important metric and one which should be taken into account by the Super Delegates as they make up their minds about their vote. Much later, when it appeared that she might be ahead in the popular

vote category, the Clinton campaign took up this refrain and made it a central part of their rationale for the Super Delegates to vote for her and perhaps for some of the previously committed Obama and Edwards delegates to come over to her side. At the very end the Clinton campaign consistently referred to her popular vote victory and to the almost eighteen million voters who had supported her. Many commentators in the mass media adopted this narrative in discussing Clinton’s claims to a popular vote mandate and as reasons the Super Delegates might break in her favor although some took care to point out that her popular vote claims were hotly disputed by the Obama camp. There then ensued a furious credit claiming contest in the blog-world where supporters of both Obama and Clinton debated and disputed which candidate had indeed won the most popular votes nationally. Table 1 attempts to address this dispute with some data.

**Table 1**

**A Comparison of the Popular Vote**

|                        |                                     |            |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Obama Primaries Vote   | With Florida and Michigan Included* | 16,967,193 |
| Obama Primaries Vote   | Without Florida and Michigan        | 16,161,429 |
| Obama Caucuses Vote    |                                     | 390,048    |
| Clinton Primaries Vote | With Florida and Michigan included  | 17,088,282 |
| Clinton Primaries Vote | Without Florida and Michigan        | 15,902,923 |
| Clinton Caucuses Vote  |                                     | 187,890    |

\*In the case of the Obama popular vote total for Michigan we used the “Uncommitted” category as a surrogate since it was widely reputed to be a holding place for Obama supporters after Obama had his name removed from the Michigan ballot. These are the totals for the fifty states plus the District of Columbia. Various news organizations got approximately these same totals using different data and definitions. For example, ABC News reported that the popular vote totals were Clinton 17,802,135 and Obama 17,501,599 with Florida and Michigan included and Clinton 16,602,840 versus Obama 16,925,385 without those two states, but ABC included all the territories. Taken from [www.abcnews.go.com/politics/vote20008](http://www.abcnews.go.com/politics/vote20008), accessed June 9, 2008.

There are a number of lessons directly visible from these data. First, the election results were obviously very close. The winner of the popular vote really does depend on how you define the relevant electorate. Senator Clinton’s claim of a popular vote mandate depends on the crucial question of whether one includes her votes in Michigan and Florida. With those votes included, and examining only the primaries, Clinton has a slight margin; with those votes out, Obama has a somewhat larger margin. It is also notable how much better Obama did in the caucus category. His victory there could hardly have been more complete. That marked difference should be somewhat surprising since the Clintons had many years of building a network within the party organization and among the types of party

activists we usually associate with being the committed caucus attendees. Obama was the newcomer to national party wars, and it should have been his campaign that experienced the most difficulty in getting to know the necessary allies in all the precincts and recruiting them to go and endure the three to four hours of debate and the tedious decision-making process which is required under the caucus rules. This requires dedicated people and the fact that Obama was able to find and recruit so many more caucus attendees than Clinton is truly surprising. It is one indicator of how dedicated and how widespread the Obama supporters were at the grassroots in some of the more out of the way caucus states. It also indicates that the Obama camp's ground game was much better planned and more thorough than the Clinton camp's was. This difference indicates some very serious strategic mistakes made by the Clinton campaign. They should have been better prepared to fight both the caucus and primary battles in far more widespread and diverse jurisdictions than they apparently were. In a capsule, one could summarize the Clinton campaign strategy as predominantly a big state strategy while Obama's campaign resembled more of the kind of fifty state strategy that the Democratic National Committee Chair's Howard Dean has urged on his party since he took office. Otherwise, whoever had the most legitimacy in their claim to have won the most popular votes depends very directly on what definition of the most relevant contests you adopt. Here it is clear that the rules of the game really mattered, and it is also clear that not having those rules worked out well in advance, and the squabble over Michigan and Florida, materially divided and harmed the Democratic Party during the spring primary season. Whether the harm is lasting will have to be determined by who wins those two crucial states ultimately in the fall, but at the very least, the unsettled status of the two states' delegations to the national convention handed the Republicans and John McCain some very resonate talking points for the fall campaign.

None of this directly constitutes a national primary result, but it does make use of the same rationale for the victor claiming a popular vote mandate and for claiming the legitimacy which would accrue to the winner of such a national primary. In this case much of the rhetoric for those claims was directed toward the uncommitted Super Delegates, the national media, and the attentive public. It is noteworthy that both the Obama camp and the Clinton camp at one time or the other thought that this metric was an important indicator as to which side was winning and which side ought to be the nominee. It was a cogent argument. The language of a national primary is very much with us because the appeal to the legitimacy of whoever wins the most votes should win the contest is a powerful one in the American political culture. It is only in the election of the president, in the Electoral College, that this norm is institutionally violated. In the past, before the maximizing of the role of the primaries, it was entirely possible for a candidate, like Hubert Humphrey in 1968 or Adlai Stevenson in 1952, to be the product of the party leaders' choices rather than to be the choice of the mass voters. However, the elevation of the primaries to a preeminent position in the post reform era after 1972 has changed all that. Now the appeal to popular vote endorsement is a powerful one, but we still add an important element of leavening that vote with the role of the Super Delegates as was evident in 2008.

### **The Regional Primaries Experiment**

Next we come to the hypothetical re-run of 2008 under the Regional Primaries model. A combination of the data provided in Table 2 plus the information found in Appendix B is necessary to address the hypothesis of what might have happened to the candidates under a very different time

table. The various plans for conducting regional primaries have been presented above and in an earlier publication (Jackson, January 2008). To conduct this hypothetical re-run of the 2008 nominations under a different scenario, various simplifying assumptions must be made. We will adopt the essentials of the “Rotating Regional Primaries” Plan advocated by both the NASS and by the Klobuchar, Alexander, and Lieberman group. The only important difference in the plans advocated by those two groups is the question of the authority under which the regional primary plan is adopted, i.e. by the national parties or the Congress. In addition, with one exception which will be explored below, the Sabato Plan is also compatible with the Rotating Regional Primaries Plan. Table 2 provides a summary of the results.

**Table 2**

**The Regional Primaries Plan Results**

| <b>Region</b>           | <b>Clinton Delegates won</b> | <b>Obama Delegates won</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| The Southern Region     | 536                          | 610                        |
| The Midwestern Region   | 359                          | 566                        |
| The Western Region      | 422                          | 516                        |
| The Northeastern Region | 560                          | 469                        |

Table 2 does not adopt any assumptions about the sequence in which the primaries might have been conducted since all the plans assume random assignment of the sequence for the different regions. Table 2 does provide the data to determine that the sequence might have mattered in only one particular scenario. As the data indicate, Obama wins three of the four regional primaries under the regional primaries approach. Only the Northeastern Primary is won by Senator Clinton, and there the vote is fairly decisive because of the influence of the big state victories Senator Clinton achieved in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. One can build a reasonable hypothesis that a Clinton victory in the Northeast, if it came first, might have been the tipping point for her campaign. She could have used the momentum from that victory to propel her into the next region with a narrative which might have been hard to resist. Her victory there was by almost 100 delegates, and her popular vote victory there was substantial. An early Northeastern Primary victory might have been very helpful to Senator Clinton. However, there are some other mitigating factors which suggest that the final outcome might not have changed no matter if the Rotating Regional Primaries had been in place in 2008. First, if one leaves New Hampshire and Iowa in place, as both the Klobuchar Plan and the NASS Plan do, Obama would have won Iowa first and then presumably Clinton would have won New Hampshire second. This split alone, coupled with a P R driven diversion of the delegates to the second place finisher, may have been enough to encourage the Obama Camp to hang on and see what happened in the next region. With a delegate count of 469 to Clinton’s 560 at that point (or 505 to 577 counting Iowa going first) the Obama camp could have found grounds for a wait and see attitude.

The remainder of the data in Table 2 plus Appendix B indicates that Obama would have been the most likely nominee under any other combination of regional primaries no matter which of the

other three regions went first and which of the subsequent sequences might have been produced by the random draw. Obama took three of the four regions, and his margin in each of the three was fairly large. Obama's margin in both the Midwestern and the Western primaries was substantial, over 200 delegates in the Midwest and just under 100 in the West. Only the Southern Primary was fairly close, and it was close if one counts Florida in from the start and uses the final formula for the distribution of delegates which was agreed to on May 31<sup>st</sup> by the Rules Committee. If one leaves Florida out of the mixture, the Obama victory in the South would have been considerably more convincing. It is also clear that no matter what the sequence, the race was so close that regardless of which region came in what sequence, it very likely would have required a march through the entire calendar of four regional primary days to settle on a nominee. That inclusion of all regions and thus of all states is one objective the designers of the regional primaries plans seek to achieve.

A final decision would also probably have required the intervention of the Super Delegates in our hypothetical match ups, just as it did in the much messier real-world contests which actually played out over many months across most of 2007 and much of the first half of 2008. The advantage of the regional primary approach would have been a much more truncated calendar, where the four contests would have attracted enormous attention and resources, but they would have been over relatively quickly. In fact, one can build a theory to support the assertion that four regional primaries would have been no more costly in campaign finance, and perhaps less costly, than the almost half a billion dollars that the Obama and Clinton camps combined spent on the 37 contests that were actually held between the first of January and the third of June. Economies of scale, savings on travel, and regional media buys in the same regional markets alone might have helped hold down the total costs in a regional primary system. This hypothesis cannot be addressed directly because the campaigns would undoubtedly have adapted their strategies to conform to whatever set of rules they confronted, and candidates and campaigns typically raise and spend all the funds they can access. However, it cannot be discounted either, and it is plausible to assert that the upper limit on campaign donations available to a candidate in a set amount of time is inelastic rather than elastic to adopt the economists' jargon. This means that there is an upper limit on how much each candidate could raise in the time and circumstance which prevailed at the moment. Clinton, for example, seemed to have hit that upper limit in the later days of her campaign when she began to run out of funds. If one could limit the time and the number of contests involved, one may have been able to hold down the total costs on both sides. In light of the fact that both parties have already decided to decimate the campaign finance ceilings in the nominations process, which prevailed up through 2000, it is worthwhile to explore other alternatives for reducing the total price tag and the ever-growing role of money in American elections. If the parties are interested in cost containment, the regional primaries system could be a step in that direction however counter-intuitive that may seem since most critics have maintained that the regional primaries would actually make the nominations process more expensive. That proposition is not entirely self-evident without further examination.

### **The Proportional Representation versus Winner-Take-All Systems**

As noted earlier there were several times during the primary season when former President Bill Clinton complained about the Democratic Party's nominations rules and he asserted that, "If we were



using the same rules the Republicans use, this thing would already be over. “ Presumably he was referring to the Republicans’ use of Winner Take All rules versus the Democrats’ use of Proportional Representation. The Republicans leave this rule up to the states, and in most, but not all of the states the Republicans give all the state’s delegates to the winner of the popular vote. President Clinton’s comment offers an intriguing hypothesis and one that is subject to testing at least in a hypothetical re-run of the 2008 contest. There is also some anecdotal evidence from inside the Clinton camp that they had not taken into account the import of the party’s use of Proportional Representation and its effect in allowing Senator Obama , or any second place finisher, to pile up significant numbers of delegates even in states such as New York and California which Clinton won (Dumas, 2008). If this is correct, it represents a major strategic mistake on the part of the Clinton campaign since those rules had been in place over several decades and were well known to party activists. At any rate, the hypothesis is worth a test which is provided in Table 3 and Appendix B.

**Table 3**

**The Winner Take All Plan Applied to the Democrats**

Obama’s New Delegate Total = 1785      Obama’s Actual Total = 2206\*

Clinton’s New Delegate Total = 2151      Clinton’s Actual Total = 1906\*

\*These are the total announced pledged delegates as of June 17, 2008 and the totals do not include the Super-Delegates. At that point Obama had 441 announced Super-Delegates and Clinton had 266.(Washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/delegates/d). The goal was 2118 delegates needed to win with Florida and Michigan. It was 2026 without them.

It is necessary to make some simplifying assumptions in order to construct a re-run of the Democratic primaries and caucuses using the Republican rules; however, the assumptions are fairly straight-forward. Instead of the P. R. method actually used, each state will have its total of committed delegates assigned to the winner and the loser gets nothing from that state. This is the convention adopted in constructing Table 3. The results indicate that Bill Clinton was probably correct in his assertion regarding the impact of the rules. By virtue of her winning more of the big states, most notably New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, and California, Clinton would have won enough delegates by our estimate (N = 2151) to pass the threshold number of 2118 required to win by depending on the committed delegates alone. This total leaves aside the role of the Super Delegates and counts only on those who are committed through the primaries or the caucuses. Obama won more states than Clinton, 29 states to 19, and he won more total contests, 33 to 21 when counting the District of Columbia and the territories. However, because of the bias that winning the big states introduces in a winner take all system, Clinton probably would have won under the Republican rules. At minimum the Obama campaign would have been forced to adjust and modify their overall strategy in ways that would allow them to have a better opportunity to win more of the big states with their big caches of delegates.

The Republican rules, as noted above, are designed to help the frontrunner and to help the winner of the greatest number of the early state contests to close the deal earlier and to get their race

over with early so they can turn their attention to the more important task of challenging the Democrats in the general election. A second test of the flip side of that proposition is the hypothetical re-run of the 2008 Republican contest using the Democrats' P R rules. While this is a more strained and perhaps less unrealistic analysis, preliminary analysis of the early contest results (data not shown) indicate that John McCain, at the very least would have had to wait much longer into the season to get to the required number of delegates to claim victory convincingly. Huckabee and Romney, especially, won enough votes in many of the early Republican contests to hang on well beyond the date when McCain was declared the "putative" Republican nominee and when Romney dropped out if they had been operating with the stringent P R rules adopted by the Democratic Party. In addition, both Mike Huckabee and Ron Paul continued to have their names on the ballot and to gain substantial blocks of votes in the Republican primaries long after McCain had claimed victory and the media had declared him the presumptive nominee and moved on to the contest between Clinton and Obama. If the Republicans had used P R, they would have undoubtedly experienced a longer wait before McCain's victory party could begin.

## **Conclusion**

Much of the most intriguing science fiction literature is based on the proposition of "what if" we could rewind history and re-write the script. Could someone have warned Abraham Lincoln not to go to the play that evening or warned John F. Kennedy not to go to Dallas? What would have happened if Kennedy had lived and he had refused to escalate the war in Vietnam and even started the pull out after the 1964 election, as some of his closest advisers now assert was his plan? What if the "butter fly ballot" used in West Palm Beach Florida had been designed better and Al Gore had received an additional 19,000 votes which actually were counted for Pat Buchanan? (Brady, et. al, 2001, 59-69) What if the F B I and C I A had coordinated what they knew about the 19 terrorists more closely before September 11, 2001? The possibilities are endless and are the stuff of much great fiction. We know that history cannot actually be re-written, but alternative scenarios can be considered. Rational people can construct hypotheses and can bring facts and data to bear on those alternatives. Those hypothetical cases can then be useful in guiding potential changes for the future. The rules clearly matter. One party conducted a sprint and the other party conducted a marathon in 2008. The differences were systematically related to their very different rules for the allocation of delegates. The early location of the Iowa caucuses, won handily by Obama, and then the New Hampshire primary, won narrowly by Clinton, presaged the long and close race which was about to unfold. The equally close and inconclusive contests held in 21 states on "Mega-Tuesday" reinforced the narrative which held that this was going to become a long and divisive campaign season. However, the rules do not determine everything. Our hypothetical re-running of the 2008 race as a four event Rotating Regional Primary provides some evidence for the proposition that Obama was a candidate with such widely arrayed strength, one who won in a variety of states, and with a variety of demographic groups, and one who would have prevailed even if the Democrats had already adopted a regional primary system. In the real world of recent history, Al Gore beat Bill Bradley handily and early in 2000. Al Gore was the stronger candidate and the one with the most resources, and he won quickly. John Kerry, after struggling early, overcame a strong field and won the nomination equally early in 2004. Both candidates operated under the same Proportional Representation rules as were in place for the Democrats in 2008. But, early closure was

not possible in 2008 because the two candidates were so evenly matched and because the rules continued to reward the second place finisher week after week no matter whether it was Obama or Clinton. It was only near the end, probably the night of the North Carolina and Indiana primaries, that the tipping point was reached and it became very evident that Obama had a real, and probably insurmountable lead in the delegate count. It also became evident that the Super Delegates, long ignored in the competitive calculus, would all of a sudden become the holders of the balance of power. Their vote had never determined the outcome of the election in the past, but it did in 2008. With regard to who had the right to claim allegiance from the Super Delegates, it is relevant to note that Obama's victory in more primary and caucus states and territories, and his small, but generally consistent leads over Clinton, and over McCain, in the head to head public opinion polls, were undoubtedly factors in the voting calculus of the Super Delegates.

The two major parties are preparing for their national conventions, and the general election campaign has been under way with the contenders firmly known since June 3, 2008. Whoever wins, the general election will always be termed "historic" and rightly so. Obama has the chance to be the first African-American to win the highest office in the land and is already assured a place in the history books as the first to win a major party's nomination. When one considers that up until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, African Americans had a very difficult time in even casting a vote in many parts of the United States, the Obama candidacy is indeed deserving of its historic designation. The fact that a woman won as many primaries as Clinton did, and as many popular votes as she did, is also absolutely unprecedented and deserving of another place in the record books. If elected, John McCain will be the oldest candidate to ever win that office for a first term. Either McCain or Obama will be the first United States Senator elected directly from the Senate since John F. Kennedy accomplished that feat in 1960. McCain would also be the first former prisoner of war ever elected to the presidency. Under either final scenario, the 2008 nominations have already provided material for historians and political scientists to ponder and analyze for generations. The research in this paper represents one step toward opening that dialogue and providing a contribution to that analytical research agenda. In addition, both parties will have the opportunity for rules changes in their national conventions at the end of the summer. There is an active movement to challenge each party to consider the Rotating Regional Primary system as one way to confront the constant "frontloading" problem and there will be reason enough to reconsider the window and what to do with it in order to avoid another Florida and Michigan imbroglio in 2012. Such a debate can be tutored by a systematic consideration of what happened in 2008 and this paper also makes a contribution to that potential public policy dialogue. History does not necessarily repeat itself, and it can't be rewound as neatly as was done in this paper, but history does provide some important parameters, precedents, and cultural lessons which are relevant in the next electoral contest. It will be many years before the story of 2008 fades from the public's consciousness and from the narrative attempting to provide answers to what happened and why in this most interesting contest.

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**Appendix A**

**2008 Presidential Primaries and Caucus Calendar and Results**

**January**

|                       | <b>Democrats</b> |     | <b>Republicans</b> |     |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| 3- Iowa (Caucus)      | Obama            | 38% | Huckabee           | 34% |
|                       | Edwards          | 30  | Romney             | 25  |
|                       | Clinton          | 29  | Thompson           | 13  |
|                       | Others           | 3   | McCain             | 13  |
|                       |                  |     | Paul               | 10  |
|                       |                  |     | Giuliani           | 3   |
| 5- Wyoming (R-Caucus) |                  |     | Romney             | 67% |
|                       |                  |     | Thompson           | 25  |
|                       |                  |     | Hunter             | 8   |
| 8- New Hampshire      | Clinton          | 39% | McCain             | 37% |
|                       | Obama            | 36  | Romney             | 31  |
|                       | Edwards          | 17  | Huckabee           | 11  |
|                       | Richardson       | 5   | Giuliani           | 9   |
|                       | Kucinich         | 1   | Paul               | 8   |
|                       | Others           | 2   | Others             | 4   |
| 15- Michigan          | Clinton          | 55% | Romney             | 39% |
|                       | Uncommitted      | 40  | McCain             | 30  |
|                       | Others           | 5   | Huckabee           | 16  |
|                       |                  |     | Paul               | 6   |
|                       |                  |     | Others             | 9   |
| 19- Nevada (Caucuses) | Clinton          | 51% | Romney             | 51% |
|                       | Obama            | 45  | Paul               | 14  |
|                       | Edwards          | 4   | McCain             | 13  |
|                       |                  |     | Huckabee           | 8   |
|                       |                  |     | Thompson           | 8   |
|                       |                  |     | Giuliani           | 4   |
|                       |                  |     | Hunter             | 2   |

|                                   |         |     |          |     |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----|----------|-----|
| 19-South Carolina<br>(Caucuses-R) |         |     | McCain   | 33% |
|                                   |         |     | Huckabee | 30  |
|                                   |         |     | Thompson | 16  |
|                                   |         |     | Romney   | 15  |
|                                   |         |     | Paul     | 4   |
|                                   |         |     | Giuliani | 2   |
| 26- South Carolina (D)            | Obama   | 55% |          |     |
|                                   | Clinton | 27  |          |     |
|                                   | Edwards | 18  |          |     |
| 29- Florida                       | Clinton | 50% | McCain   | 36% |
|                                   | Obama   | 33  | Romney   | 31  |
|                                   | Edwards | 14  | Giuliani | 15  |
|                                   | Others  | 3   | Huckabee | 13  |
|                                   |         |     | Paul     | 3   |

**February**

|                      |  |  |          |     |
|----------------------|--|--|----------|-----|
| 2-Maine (Caucuses-R) |  |  | Romney   | 52% |
|                      |  |  | McCain   | 21  |
|                      |  |  | Paul     | 19  |
|                      |  |  | Huckabee | 6   |
|                      |  |  | Others   | 2   |

**5- February Super Tuesday Summary**

Alabama, Alaska (R-Caucuses), Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado (R-Caucuses), Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho (D-Caucuses), Illinois, Kansas (D-Caucuses), Massachusetts, Minnesota (Caucuses), Missouri, Montana (R-Caucuses), New Jersey, New Mexico (D), New York, North Dakota (Caucuses), Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia (R-Caucuses)

|                           |               |     |          |     |
|---------------------------|---------------|-----|----------|-----|
| 5- Alabama                | Obama         | 56% | Huckabee | 41% |
|                           | Clinton       | 42  | McCain   | 37  |
|                           | Edwards       | 1   | Romney   | 18  |
|                           | Uncommitted < | 1   | Paul     | 3   |
| 5- Alaska<br>(Caucuses-R) | Obama         | 74% | Romney   | 44% |
|                           | Clinton       | 25  | Huckabee | 22  |
|                           | Others <      | 1   | Paul     | 17  |
|                           |               |     | McCain   | 16  |
| 5- Arizona                | Clinton       | 50% | McCain   | 47% |
|                           | Obama         | 42  | Romney   | 35  |

|                             |            |     |          |     |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----|----------|-----|
|                             | Edwards    | 5   | Huckabee | 9   |
|                             | Richardson | 1   | Paul     | 4   |
|                             |            |     | Giuliani | 3   |
|                             |            |     | Thompson | 2   |
| 5- Arkansas                 | Clinton    | 70% | Huckabee | 60% |
|                             | Obama      | 26  | McCain   | 20  |
|                             | Edwards    | 2   | Romney   | 14  |
|                             | Others     | 1   | Paul     | 5   |
| 5- California               | Clinton    | 52% | McCain   | 42% |
|                             | Obama      | 43  | Romney   | 35  |
|                             | Edwards    | 4   | Huckabee | 11  |
|                             | Others     | < 1 | Giuliani | 5   |
|                             |            |     | Paul     | 4   |
|                             |            |     | Thompson | 2   |
| 5- Colorado<br>(Caucuses-R) | Obama      | 67% | Romney   | 59% |
|                             | Clinton    | 32  | McCain   | 19  |
|                             | Unc.       | 1   | Huckabee | 13  |
|                             |            |     | Paul     | 8   |
| 5- Connecticut              | Obama      | 51% | McCain   | 52% |
|                             | Clinton    | 47  | Romney   | 33  |
|                             | Edwards    | 1   | Huckabee | 7   |
|                             | Unc.       | 1   | Paul     | 4   |
|                             |            |     | Giuliani | 2   |
| 5- Delaware                 | Obama      | 53% | McCain   | 45% |
|                             | Clinton    | 42  | Romney   | 33  |
|                             | Biden      | 3   | Huckabee | 15  |
|                             | Edwards    | 1   | Paul     | 4   |
|                             |            |     | Giuliani | 2   |
| 5- Georgia                  | Obama      | 66% | Huckabee | 34% |
|                             | Clinton    | 31  | McCain   | 32  |
|                             | Edwards    | 2   | Romney   | 30  |
|                             |            |     | Paul     | 3   |
| 5- Idaho (Caucuses-D)       | Obama      | 80% |          |     |
|                             | Clinton    | 17  |          |     |
|                             | Unc.       | 3   |          |     |

|                               |            |          |          |     |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|-----|
| 5-Illinois                    | Obama      | 65%      | McCain   | 47% |
|                               | Clinton    | 33       | Romney   | 29  |
|                               | Edwards    | 2        | Huckabee | 16  |
|                               |            |          | Paul     | 5   |
|                               |            |          | Other    | 2   |
| 5- Kansas<br>(Caucuses-D)     | Obama      | 74%      |          |     |
|                               | Clinton    | 26       |          |     |
|                               | Others     | < 1      |          |     |
| 5- Massachusetts              | Clinton    | 56%      | Romney   | 51% |
|                               | Obama      | 41       | McCain   | 41  |
|                               | Edwards    | 2        | Huckabee | 4   |
|                               |            |          | Paul     | 3   |
|                               |            |          | Giuliani | 1   |
| 5-Minnesota<br>(Caucuses)     | Obama      | 66%      | Romney   | 41% |
|                               | Clinton    | 32       | McCain   | 22  |
|                               | Unc/Others | 1        | Huckabee | 20  |
|                               |            |          | Paul     | 16  |
| 5- Missouri                   | Obama      | 49%      | McCain   | 33% |
|                               | Clinton    | 48       | Huckabee | 32  |
|                               | Edwards    | 2        | Romney   | 29  |
|                               | Others     | <1       | Paul     | 4   |
| 5- Montana **<br>(Caucuses-R) |            |          | Romney   | 38% |
|                               |            |          | Paul     | 25  |
|                               |            |          | McCain   | 22  |
|                               |            |          | Huckabee | 15  |
| 5- New Jersey                 | Clinton    | 54%      | McCain   | 55% |
|                               | Obama      | 44       | Romney   | 28  |
|                               | Edwards    | 1        | Huckabee | 8   |
|                               | Others     | <1       | Paul     | 5   |
|                               |            | Giuliani | 3        |     |
| 5- New Mexico                 | Clinton    | 49%      |          |     |
|                               | Obama      | 48       |          |     |
|                               | Edwards    | 1        |          |     |
|                               | Richardson | 1        |          |     |



|                                  |            |        |          |     |
|----------------------------------|------------|--------|----------|-----|
| 5- New York                      | Clinton    | 57%    | McCain   | 51% |
|                                  | Obama      | 40     | Romney   | 28  |
|                                  | Edwards    | 1      | Huckabee | 11  |
|                                  | Kunich     | 1      | Paul     | 6   |
| 5-North Dakota<br>(Caucuses)     | Obama      | 61%    | Romney   | 36% |
|                                  | Clinton    | 37     | McCain   | 23  |
|                                  | Edwards    | 1      | Paul     | 21  |
|                                  | Others     | <1     | Huckabee | 20  |
| 5- Oklahoma                      | Clinton    | 55%    | McCain   | 37% |
|                                  | Obama      | 31     | Huckabee | 33  |
|                                  | Edwards    | 10     | Romney   | 25  |
|                                  | Richardson | 2      | Paul     | 3   |
|                                  | Others     | 3      | Giuliani | 1   |
| 5- Tennessee                     | Clinton    | 54%    | Huckabee | 34% |
|                                  | Obama      | 41     | McCain   | 32  |
|                                  | Edwards    | 4      | Romney   | 24  |
|                                  | Unc.       | 1      | Paul     | 6   |
|                                  |            |        | Thompson | 3   |
| 5- Utah                          | Obama      | 57%    | Romney   | 90% |
|                                  | Clinton    | 39     | McCain   | 5   |
|                                  | Edwards    | 3      | Paul     | 3   |
|                                  | Others     | <1     | Huckabee | 1   |
| 5- West Virginia<br>(Caucuses-R) |            |        | Huckabee | 52% |
|                                  |            |        | Romney   | 47  |
|                                  |            |        | McCain   | 1   |
| 9- Louisiana                     | Obama      | 57%    | Huckabee | 43% |
|                                  | Clinton    | 36     | McCain   | 42  |
|                                  | Edwards    | 3      | Romney   | 6   |
|                                  | Others     | 4      | Paul     | 5   |
|                                  |            | Others | 3        |     |
| 9-Kansas (R-Caucuses)            |            |        | Huckabee | 60% |
|                                  |            |        | McCain   | 24  |
|                                  |            |        | Paul     | 11  |
|                                  |            |        | Others   | 5   |

|                         |          |     |             |     |
|-------------------------|----------|-----|-------------|-----|
| 9-Nebraska (D-Caucuses) | Obama    | 68% |             |     |
|                         | Clinton  | 32  |             |     |
| 9-Washington (Caucuses) | Obama    | 68% | McCain      | 26% |
|                         | Clinton  | 31  | Huckabee    | 24  |
|                         | Others   | 1   | Paul        | 22  |
|                         |          |     | Romney      | 15  |
|                         |          |     | Uncommitted | 13  |
|                         |          |     |             |     |
| 10- Maine (D-Caucuses)  | Obama    | 59% |             |     |
|                         | Clinton  | 40  |             |     |
|                         | Others   | 1   |             |     |
| 12- D. C.               | Obama    | 75% | McCain      | 68% |
|                         | Clinton  | 24  | Huckabee    | 17  |
|                         | Others   | 1   | Paul        | 8   |
|                         |          |     | Romney      | 6   |
|                         |          |     | Giuliani    | 2   |
|                         |          |     |             |     |
| 12-Maryland             | Obama    | 60% | McCain      | 55% |
|                         | Clinton  | 37  | Huckabee    | 29  |
|                         | Others   | 3   | Romney      | 6   |
|                         |          |     | Paul        | 6   |
|                         |          |     | Others      | 4   |
| 12-Virginia             | Obama    | 64% | McCain      | 50% |
|                         | Clinton  | 35  | Huckabee    | 41  |
|                         | Others   | 1   | Paul        | 5   |
|                         |          |     | Romney      | 4   |
| 19- Hawaii (Caucus-D)   | Obama    | 76% |             |     |
|                         | Clinton  | 24  |             |     |
| 19-Washington           | Obama    | 51% | McCain      | 49% |
|                         | Clinton  | 46  | Huckabee    | 24  |
|                         | Edwards  | 2   | Romney      | 17  |
|                         | Kucinich | 1   | Paul        | 8   |
|                         |          |     | Others      | 2   |
| 19-Wisconsin            | Obama    | 58% | McCain      | 55% |
|                         | Clinton  | 41  | Huckabee    | 37  |
|                         | Edwards  | 1   | Paul        | 5   |
|                         |          |     | Others      | 4   |

**March**

|                               |             |     |             |     |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|
| 4- Ohio                       | Clinton     | 54% | McCain      | 60% |
|                               | Obama       | 44  | Huckabee    | 31  |
|                               | Edwards     | 2   | Paul        | 5   |
| 4- Rhode Island               |             |     | Romney      | 3   |
|                               |             |     | Thompson    | 2   |
|                               | Clinton     | 58% | McCain      | 65% |
|                               | Obama       | 40  | Huckabee    | 22  |
|                               | Edwards     | 1   | Paul        | 7   |
| 4- Texas-Primary              | Uncommitted | 1   | Romney      | 4   |
|                               |             |     | Uncommitted | 2   |
|                               | Clinton     | 51% | McCain      | 51% |
|                               | Obama       | 47  | Huckabee    | 38  |
| 4- Texas- Caucus (D)          | Edwards     | 1   | Paul        | 5   |
|                               |             |     | Romney      | 2   |
|                               |             |     | Others      | 4   |
| 4- Vermont                    | Obama       | 56% |             |     |
|                               | Clinton     | 44  |             |     |
| 4- Vermont                    | Obama       | 59% | McCain      | 72% |
|                               | Clinton     | 39  | Huckabee    | 14  |
|                               | Edwards     | 1   | Paul        | 7   |
|                               | Kucinich    | 1   | Romney      | 5   |
|                               |             |     | Giuliani    | 2   |
| 8- Wyoming- (Caucus -D)       | Obama       | 61% |             |     |
|                               | Clinton     | 38  |             |     |
|                               | Uncommitted | 1   |             |     |
| 11- Mississippi (Caucus-D)    | Obama       | 61% |             |     |
|                               | Clinton     | 38  |             |     |
|                               | Unc.        | 1   |             |     |
| <b>April</b> 22- Pennsylvania | Clinton     | 55% | McCain      | 73% |
|                               | Obama       | 45  | Paul        | 16  |
|                               |             |     | Huckabee    | 11  |

## May

|     |                   |             |     |             |     |
|-----|-------------------|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|
|     | 6- Indiana        | Clinton     | 51% | McCain      | 78% |
|     |                   | Obama       | 49  | Huckabee    | 10  |
|     |                   |             |     | Paul        | 8   |
|     |                   |             |     | Romney      | 5   |
|     | 6- North Carolina | Obama       | 56% | McCain      | 74% |
|     |                   | Clinton     | 42  | Huckabee    | 12  |
|     |                   | Others      | 2   | Paul        | 7   |
|     |                   |             |     | Others      | 7   |
| May | 13- Nebraska      | Obama       | 49% | McCain      | 87% |
|     |                   | Clinton     | 47  | Paul        | 13  |
|     |                   | Others      | 4   |             |     |
|     | 13- West Virginia | Clinton     | 67% | McCain      | 76% |
|     |                   | Obama       | 26  | Huckabee    | 10  |
|     |                   | Edwards     | 7   | Paul        | 5   |
|     |                   |             |     | Romney      | 4   |
|     |                   |             |     | Others      | 2   |
|     | 20- Kentucky      | Clinton     | 65% | McCain      | 72% |
|     |                   | Obama       | 30  | Huckabee    | 8   |
|     |                   | Uncommitted | 3   | Paul        | 5   |
|     |                   | Edwards     | 2   | Uncommitted | 5   |
|     |                   |             |     | Romney      | 5   |
|     |                   |             |     | Giuliani    | 2   |
|     |                   |             |     | Keyes       | 1   |
|     | 20- Oregon        | Obama       | 59% | McCain      | 85% |
|     |                   | Clinton     | 41  | Paul        | 15  |
|     | 27- Idaho         | Obama       | 56% | McCain      | 70% |
|     |                   | Clinton     | 38  | Paul        | 24  |
|     |                   | Uncommitted | 5   | Uncommitted | 6   |

## June

|  |                 |         |     |        |     |
|--|-----------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
|  | 1- Puerto Rico, | Clinton | 68% |        |     |
|  |                 | Obama   | 32  |        |     |
|  | 3- Montana**    | Obama   | 56% | McCain | 76% |
|  |                 | Clinton | 41  | Paul   | 22  |

|                 |         |     |          |     |
|-----------------|---------|-----|----------|-----|
| 3- South Dakota | Clinton | 55% | McCain   | 70% |
|                 | Obama   | 45  | Paul     | 17  |
|                 |         |     | Huckabee | 7   |
|                 |         |     | Romney   | 3   |
|                 |         |     | Unc.     | 3   |
| 3- New Mexico   |         |     | McCain   | 86% |
|                 |         |     | Paul     | 14  |

**\*\*Note:** Obama won enough super-delegates plus committed delegates in Montana and South Dakota to reach the 2118 committed delegates mark and declare victory on June 3, 2008. The Montana Republican caucuses held on Feb. 5 are where their delegates are determined. The Republican Primary in Montana on June 3 is a non-binding preferential primary.

### **August**

**25-28- Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado**

### **September**

**1-4- Republican National Convention in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota**

**Source: Based on National Association of Secretaries of State Calendar, November 29, 2007 and January 15, 2008.**

**Data compiled by Associated Press and published by the Chicago Tribune Web site. Accessed May 8, 2008 and June 4, 2008.**

**Appendix B**  
**2008 Democratic Primary and Caucus Results**

| <u>State</u> | <u>Type</u> | <u>Winner</u> | <u>Winner %</u> | <u>Winner Delegates</u> | <u>Loser %</u> | <u>Loser Delegates</u> |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Alabama      | Primary     | Obama         | 56              | 29                      | 42             | 28                     |
| Alaska       | Caucus      | Obama         | 75              | 14                      | 25             | 4                      |
| Arizona      | Primary     | Clinton       | 50              | 35                      | 42             | 29                     |
| Arkansas     | Primary     | Clinton       | 70              | 38                      | 27             | 8                      |
| Calif.       | Primary     | Clinton       | 51              | 231                     | 43             | 202                    |
| Colorado     | Caucus      | Obama         | 67              | 45                      | 32             | 23                     |
| Conn.        | Primary     | Obama         | 51              | 36                      | 47             | 24                     |
| Delaware     | Primary     | Obama         | 53              | 13                      | 42             | 8                      |
| Florida      | Primary     | Clinton*      | 50              | 55                      | 33             | 45                     |
| Georgia      | Primary     | Obama         | 66              | 70                      | 31             | 30                     |
| Hawaii       | Caucus      | Obama         | 76              | 21                      | 24             | 8                      |
| Idaho        | P/C         | Obama         | 80              | 19                      | 17             | 3                      |
| Illinois     | Primary     | Obama         | 65              | 133                     | 33             | 49                     |
| Indiana      | Primary     | Clinton       | 51              | 42                      | 49             | 41                     |
| Iowa         | Caucus      | Obama         | 38              | 36                      | 29**           | 17                     |
| Kansas       | Caucus      | Obama         | 74              | 30                      | 26             | 10                     |
| Kentucky     | Primary     | Clinton       | 65              | 40                      | 30             | 16                     |
| Louisiana    | Primary     | Obama         | 57              | 38                      | 36             | 26                     |
| Maine        | Caucus      | Obama         | 59              | 23                      | 40             | 9                      |
| Maryland     | Primary     | Obama         | 61              | 57                      | 36             | 37                     |
| Mass.        | Primary     | Clinton       | 56              | 65                      | 41             | 53                     |
| Michigan     | Primary     | Clinton***    | 55              | 38                      | 40             | 37                     |

|                |         |         |    |     |    |     |
|----------------|---------|---------|----|-----|----|-----|
| Minn.          | Caucus  | Obama   | 66 | 60  | 32 | 25  |
| Miss.          | Primary | Obama   | 61 | 25  | 37 | 13  |
| Missouri       | Primary | Obama   | 49 | 45  | 48 | 41  |
| Montana        | Primary | Obama   | 57 | 18  | 41 | 7   |
| Nebraska       | P/C     | Obama   | 58 | 22  | 32 | 8   |
| Nevada         | Caucus  | Clinton | 51 | 13  | 45 | 20  |
| N. H.          | Primary | Clinton | 39 | 12  | 36 | 17  |
| New Jersey     | Primary | Clinton | 54 | 71  | 44 | 54  |
| New Mexico     | Primary | Clinton | 49 | 20  | 48 | 18  |
| New York       | Primary | Clinton | 57 | 180 | 40 | 99  |
| North Carolina | Primary | Obama   | 56 | 78  | 42 | 51  |
| North Dakota   | Caucus  | Obama   | 61 | 16  | 37 | 5   |
| Ohio           | Primary | Clinton | 54 | 79  | 44 | 81  |
| Oklahoma       | Primary | Clinton | 55 | 25  | 31 | 21  |
| Oregon         | Primary | Obama   | 59 | 41  | 41 | 23  |
| Penn.          | Primary | Clinton | 55 | 100 | 45 | 82  |
| R. I.          | Primary | Clinton | 58 | 21  | 40 | 10  |
| S. C.          | Primary | Obama   | 55 | 39  | 27 | 14  |
| S. D.          | Primary | Clinton | 55 | 11  | 45 | 11  |
| Tennessee      | Primary | Clinton | 54 | 46  | 40 | 32  |
| Texas          | P/C     | C/O**** | 51 | 113 | 47 | 108 |
| Utah           | Primary | Obama   | 57 | 18  | 39 | 11  |
| Vermont        | Primary | Obama   | 59 | 14  | 39 | 7   |
| Virginia       | Primary | Obama   | 64 | 62  | 35 | 34  |
| Wash.          | P/C     | Obama   | 68 | 68  | 31 | 27  |

|              |            |         |    |    |    |    |
|--------------|------------|---------|----|----|----|----|
| W. Vir.      | Primary    | Clinton | 26 | 23 | 57 | 12 |
| Wisconsin    | Primary    | Obama   | 58 | 56 | 41 | 34 |
| Wyoming      | Caucus     | Obama   | 61 | 12 | 38 | 6  |
| D. C.        | Primary    | Obama   | 75 | 25 | 24 | 12 |
| P. R.        | Primary    | Clinton | 68 | 42 | 32 | 19 |
| V. I.        | Caucus (?) | Obama   | 90 | 6  | 8  | 3  |
| Dems. Abroad | Primary(?) | Obama   | 67 | 7  | 33 | 4  |
| Guam         |            | Obama   | 50 | 5  | 50 | 4  |
| Samoa        |            | Clinton | 57 | 6  | 42 | 3  |

- \* Because of a dispute over the party rules and the date of the Florida primary, neither Clinton nor Obama campaigned in the state. Allocation of the delegate votes was done later in a compromise worked out by the Rules Committee of the DNC.
- \*\* Second place actually went to Edwards who received 30 percent in the Iowa caucuses. The 29 percent reported here is for Senator Clinton who finished third.
- \*\*\*Because of a dispute over the party rules and the date of the Michigan primary, neither Clinton nor Obama campaigned in the state. Obama actually had his name removed from the ballot. The second place finish is for the Uncommitted line on the ballot. The allocation of the delegate votes was done later in a compromise worked out by the Rules Committee of the DNC.
- \*\*\*\*Texas used an unusual combination of both presidential primary and caucuses held on the evening of the day of the primary. Clinton won the presidential primary and Obama won the caucuses. The totals reported here are for both the primary and the caucus.
- \*\*\*\*\*Note, in some instances, the “winner” which is designated by the statewide totals received fewer delegates than the second place finisher. This is the result of the vagaries of the P. R. rules and the requirement that the Congressional Districts are the predominant level where the race of delegates take place and where the allocation of delegates to the winner of the C. D. takes place.

Source: Assembled by the author from data provided by the [Washington Post](http://WashingtonPost.com) and the [Chicago Tribune](http://ChicagoTribune.com) web sites. [Washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidate/delegates/d](http://Washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidate/delegates/d). and [ChicagoTribune.com](http://ChicagoTribune.com). Both offer a compilation of unofficial data from the Associated Press. Last accessed the Washington Post site, June 17, 2008 and last accessed the Chicago Tribune site , June 4, 2008.



## Appendix C

### States Included in Each Region for a Regional Primary

| <b>Northeast</b> | <b>South</b>   | <b>Midwest</b> | <b>West</b> |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Pennsylvania     | Alabama        | North Dakota   | Alaska      |
| Maryland         | Arkansas       | South Dakota   | Arizona     |
| Delaware         | Louisiana      | Nebraska       | California  |
| New Jersey       | Mississippi    | Kansas         | New Mexico  |
| New York         | Georgia        | Minnesota      | Nevada      |
| Connecticut      | South Carolina | Iowa           | Montana     |
| Rhode Island     | Florida        | Missouri       | Colorado    |
| Massachusetts    | North Carolina | Wisconsin      | Idaho       |
| Maine            | Tennessee      | Illinois       | Utah        |
| New Hampshire    | Kentucky       | Indiana        | Washington  |
| Vermont          | West Virginia  | Michigan       | Oregon      |
| D. C.            | Virginia       | Ohio           | Hawaii      |
|                  | Oklahoma       |                | Wyoming     |
|                  | Texas          |                |             |

