

Las Vegas lights up for Dems' debate

by UPI

LAS VEGAS -- Democratic presidential hopefuls meet in Las Vegas Thursday night, each hoping to land verbal jabs and avoid a knockout in a nationally televised debate. Political observers say the candidates' performances during the CNN-televvised debate can help define their path to the first primaries next year, the Las Vegas Review-Journal said. "It's coming at a critical moment in the run-up to the January contest," said political expert Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia. "The candidates are primed to attack, and they need to. If they're ever going to make their case for themselves and against their opponents, it's now." A Nevada poll of 389 likely voters released Wednesday showed Sen. Hilary Clinton, D-N.Y., enjoys a substantial lead in the Silver State. Clinton had the support of 51 percent of likely Democratic caucus-goers in the survey, conducted for CNN by Opinion Research Corp. Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois was second with 23 percent, while former Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina had 11 percent. No other candidate had more than 5 percent of the vote in the poll, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

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