

Half of US adults would not vote for Hillary Clinton as democratic candidate

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Twenty-one percent of Democrats also say they would not vote for United States Senator Hillary Clinton

Senator Hillary Clinton is still the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States according to recent polls, even as Senator Barack Obama gains ground on her in the race. However, according to a new Harris Poll, half of U.S. adults say they would not vote for Senator Clinton if she were the Democratic candidate, while only 36 percent say they would, with 11 percent unsure. Her own party is not unanimously behind her either, as 21 percent of Democrats say they would not vote for her. In the all-important contest for Independents, 48 percent say they would not vote for Senator Clinton, while 37 percent say they would.

Gender also plays an important role. While one would expect that women would be more likely than men to lean towards Senator Clinton, this is not the case as 38 percent of women and 34 percent of men both say they would vote for her. Even among women there is a divide as four in 10 (41%) single women say they would vote for Senator Clinton, compared to 36 percent of married women. Over half of both men (56%) and married women (52%) say they would not vote for her for president.

These are just some of the results of a Harris Poll of 2,223 U.S. adults conducted online between March 6 and 14, 2007 by Harris Interactive.

Clinton's track record, political opinion and personality

In looking deeper, a picture begins to emerge as to what critics dislike about Hillary Clinton. When asked about her track record as First Lady, just under half (48%) say they like her track record, while 41 percent say they do not. Four in 10 (42%) like her track record as a U.S. Senator, while 38 percent dislike it. Moving from the offices to the personal, the dislikes edge out the likes -- by a 45 percent to 44 percent margin, adults dislike Hillary Clinton as a person and by a 45 percent to 42 percent margin, they dislike her political opinions.

Unsurprisingly, Republicans and Conservatives are much more likely than Democrats and Liberals to dislike Senator Clinton on these issues. Men are also more likely than women to dislike her on these issues. There is also a large generational gap. Those who are "Matures" (aged 62 and older) are, across the board, more likely to dislike Hillary Clinton. Over half (54%) dislike her track record as a U.S. Senator and 60 percent feel the same about her track record as First Lady. But, two-thirds (65%) of matures say they dislike Hillary Clinton's personal opinions and 61 percent dislike her as a person. Among the generations, Generation X (31-42) is the age group which provides her the most support. This is also seen in the 44 percent of Gen Xers who would vote for her, compared to 23 percent of Matures.

Other personal assets and liabilities

Besides her track records and politics, there are other reasons why so many people do not like Senator Clinton. Fully half (52%) agree that she does not appear to connect with people on a personal level, and this number is even higher among married women (53%), men (56%), Matures (68%), and, of course, Republicans (73%). This may be her big problem.

There is also an issue with things that happened during the Bill Clinton presidency. A plurality (45%) agrees that it is difficult to trust her because of Whitewater and other scandals in the Clinton White House, while 42 percent disagree. Similar numbers (44%) agree that her handling of health care in the White House raises questions about her ability and 34 percent disagree.

Nevertheless, the news is not all bad for Senator Clinton. Three-quarters of adults (76%) agree that she is a very intelligent person and this is the sentiment across the board. Even 65 percent of Republicans agree. Just over half (52%) of adults agree that Hillary Clinton understands family and children's issues, while 44 percent say she inspires confidence personally. When it comes to her experience, 39 percent say she lacks experience and is unqualified to be president, but 49 percent of adults disagree with that statement.

Additionally, Senator Clinton's supposed liberalism is not a major liability. One area that the Senator has had to deal with has been her perceived inconsistencies on issues and claims that she has moved from liberal to the middle and back to liberal again. When asked about her political philosophy, one-third (31%) say Hillary Clinton is too liberal and 41 percent say she is neither too liberal nor too conservative. Just four percent say she is too conservative, but among liberals that number rises to 11 percent. What the Clinton campaign may have to address is the 25 percent who say they are not sure, including 22 percent of their own party. This could be a plus or it could be a minus.

While the first votes are still many months away, there are a few groups that Senator Clinton and her team need to target. First, married women are consistently more likely to have negative feelings toward the Senator than single women. Second, those over age 62 have some of the highest negatives for her -- behind only Republicans and Conservatives. Since this is the age group that votes in the highest numbers, there is work to be done here. Finally, the Clinton campaign may not want to use the slogan "a vote for Hill is one for Bill." Only just over one-third (37%) feel it would be good to have both Hillary and Bill Clinton back in the White House.

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