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DEMOCRATIC VOTERS SHOW STRONG SUPPORT FOR HILLARY CLINTON AS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

KERRY, EDWARDS TIED FOR DISTANT SECOND IN 2008 DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY

*Diageo/Hotline Poll Conducted by Financial Dynamics Finds
John McCain More Popular among Democrats than Reid, Pelosi and Dean;*

Democrats Cite Iraq War as Primary Reason for Disapproval of Bush

NEW YORK, April 26, 2006 – Democratic voters overwhelmingly support Senator Hillary Clinton as the party's presidential nominee in 2008, with 38% supporting her candidacy to 14% for John Kerry and 13% for John Edwards. Clinton's support among Democrats is strong across the party's ideological spectrum: liberals (42%), moderates (34%) and conservatives (40%) all support Clinton in a Democratic primary.

Among non-white voters in the Democratic party, Clinton's support is even more impressive -- 55% of non-white voters would support Clinton in a primary, compared to 16% who would support Kerry and 9% for Edwards.

"The depth and breadth of Hillary Clinton's support among Democrats is daunting for other potential Democratic candidates in 2008, especially coupled with her enormous fundraising edge," said Chuck Todd, Editor-in-Chief of *The Hotline*. "Frankly, to call her an 800 pound gorilla would be under-selling her. Forget Barry Bonds on steroids, her strength with Democratic primary voters right now is more like Hank Aaron on steroids with a corked bat."

The Diageo/*Hotline* Poll of 603 registered Democratic voters, conducted by Financial Dynamics from April 19 to 23, with analysis by Ed Reilly (D) and Ed Rollins (R), found that Clinton dominates potential head-to-head match-ups with other prominent Democratic candidates, garnering over 50% support in each race. She beats Senator John Kerry by a 57%-30% margin, former Virginia Governor Mark Warner by 66%-15%, and former Vice President Al Gore, 57%-29%. Former Senator John Edwards is the only potential rival who holds Clinton under 55%, with Clinton beating Edwards by a 52%-33% margin.

When asked why they would vote for Clinton in the 2008 primary, voters pointed to general agreement with Clinton's positions as the most compelling reason to vote for her (27%), followed by "works in bipartisan ways with both Democrats and Republicans" (18%) and "she says what she means" (16%). Only 12% of Democratic voters said she has the "best chance of winning the general election."

With Clinton leading the field and Kerry and Edwards trailing a distant second, other potential Democratic candidates in 2008 barely registered with voters. Joe Biden was a distant fourth place candidate with 5% support in a Democratic primary, followed by Wesley Clark (3%), Senator Russ Feingold (3%), Mark Warner (2%) and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (2%).

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Republican Senator John McCain showed surprisingly strong support among Democratic voters, with a 55% expressing a favorable opinion of the Senator and 22% expressing an unfavorable opinion. Among Democrats, McCain's 55% favorability rating dwarfs the favorable opinions of Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (23%), House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (33%) and Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean (47%).

"The fact that Democratic voters view John McCain more favorably than the Democratic leadership speaks volumes about the party's leadership vacuum," said Republican strategist Ed Rollins. "At the same time, John McCain's popularity with Democrats may actually be a liability for him in the Republican primary, especially with supporters of President Bush."

Unlike McCain, President Bush enjoys no bipartisan support in the poll. In approval ratings among Democrats, 87% disapproved of the way Bush is handling his job compared to only 11% approving. Among Democrats, liberals have the strongest antipathy for the President's job performance, with 83% expressing "strong disapproval" of Bush's job performance.

When asked why they *disapprove* of Bush's job performance, 26% of Democrats cited opposition to the president's handling of the war in Iraq and 18% said his economic policies.

A comparison with last month's Diageo/*Hotline* Poll of Republican voters underlines how polarizing President Bush is with Republican and Democrats. In last month's poll, support for President Bush among Republican voters remained rock-solid, with 80% of Republican voters approving of his job performance, and 84% expressing a strongly or somewhat favorable opinion of him. Evangelicals reported an 85% approval rating of Bush, and 89% had an overall favorable opinion of the president.

To obtain complete poll results please see www.diageohotlinepoll.com

To schedule an interview with Ed Rollins, Ed Reilly or Chuck Todd, contact Megha Narayan at (212) 850-5600 or Megha.Narayan@fd.com

Methodology

The Diageo/*Hotline* Poll was conducted by telephone from April 19 to 23 among a random, nationally representative sample of 603 registered Democratic voters (margin of error +/- 4%), ages 18 and older.

Complete results available at www.diageohotlinepoll.com

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