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To: Friends of Democracy Corps  
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## The New Electorate

*A targeting analysis based on Democracy Corps' post-primary polls*

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This targeting memo for the general election will identify first the groups where Obama is doing well and shaping the image of the current coalition of support, but then will focus on groups where he is underperforming relative to history and other Democrats, and where there are signs of movement and receptivity. Finally, the memo will identify underperforming groups, where Obama is not making gains, that pose special challenges. This is to help progressive groups and those working for change to target their work most effectively.

Obama currently leads John McCain by about 4 points – 6 points ahead of Kerry's 2.4 point margin of defeat against Bush in 2004, but 4 points behind congressional Democrats' landslide performance of 2006. Obviously, Obama's goal is to run better than Kerry did, but the Democrats' 2006 performance provides a useful point of comparison for any aspirations of replicating the wave election of two years ago.

This special report is based on the 3,000 interviews conducted by Democracy Corps over the past month – a large data base that will enable us to refine the analysis.<sup>1</sup>

- ***Obama's margin vs. McCain over the last month compared to Kerry's margin in the 2004 vote for each group.*** We consider this the most important indicator and look at it first. Statistically, this is the Obama margin minus the Kerry margin.
- ***Obama's margin over the last month compared to the Democrats' congressional candidates in the 2006 election for each group.*** In aspiring to a big win, Obama ought to be approaching what the Democrats achieved for these groups, and this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority in targeting – where Obama is falling short.
- ***Obama's current percentage of the vote compared to what the congressional Democratic candidates are now receiving.*** Whether Obama is running ahead or behind the Democratic candidates on the same ticket will be a measure of opportunity or challenges. Statistically, this is Obama's percentage of the vote minus the percentage for the Democratic congressional candidate in the named ballot.



- ***Obama's current percentage of the vote compared to partisan Democratic performance.*** For many groups, more people self-identify as Democrats or independents who lean Democratic than are currently supporting Obama. That allows us to identify targets of opportunity.
- ***Change in Obama's thermometer rating this month compared to three months ago.*** This measures where Obama is making headway or losing ground – so we know whether gains will be hard or easy with particular groups. Statistically, we subtract Obama's net favorability (positive/warm ratings minus negative/cool ratings) of three months ago from his current standing.
- ***Change in Obama's vote percentage this month compared to three months ago.*** This measures whether Obama is making any progress with particular groups in the post-primary period – again, indicating whether one can feel some confidence of future gains or whether he is facing resistance.

### **Obama's Overperforming Groups**

Much of Obama's strength is built on his support with young voters and African Americans as well as his appeal, and the Republicans' problems, with moderates. He is also performing extremely well with certain groups of white younger women and in the suburban areas that have been slowly trending Democratic across the nation. Here, Obama is currently outpacing both Kerry and, in most cases, 2006 congressional Democrats by significant margins. He has increased his personal favorability and vote percentage with nearly all these groups. In most of these key areas, he runs as strong as or stronger than the congressional Democrats and partisan identification.



Obama's Overperforming Groups									
Group	Current Results			Obama Performance				Obama Therm Change Since Ap/My <sup>2</sup>	Obama Vote Gain Since Ap/My <sup>3</sup>
	Obama	McCain	Margin	Obama. Margin vs. <sup>4</sup>		Obama Vote Vs. <sup>5</sup>			
				Dem Pres. 2004	Dem Cong. 2006	Dem Cong.	Identify & lean Dem		
Under 30 <sup>6</sup> (14%)	60	33	+27	+18	+7	n/a	+8	+10	+7
White Under 30 <sup>7</sup> (9%)	46	45	+1	+11	-4	n/a	+2	+5	-1
African Americans (11%)	92	5	+87	+10	+9	+15	+9	+6	+5
White Younger <sup>8</sup> Non-College Women (9%)	46	48	-2	+22	+4	-1	-5	+5	+11
White Younger Married Women (13%)	41	54	-13	+16	0	+2	-2	+4	+2
Moderates (40%)	60	35	+25	+16	+4	+2	+1	+6	+5
White Liberal/Moderate Republicans (12%)	16	80	-64	+15	+11	-2	n/a	-3	-1
Suburban (16%)	52	43	+9	+14	+6	-1	0	+1	0

### Decently Performing Obama Groups

Obama is doing fairly well with many of the women's groups that supported Hillary Clinton in the primary – contributing importantly to his current gain in the vote. With white non-college women and younger women, Obama has shot past Kerry's performance and is close to matching Democratic performance in 2006. With white non-college women, especially, he has gained in vote and personal favorability. Obama has also made significant personal and electoral gains with white younger married men and whites age 40-49, again easily surpassing Kerry's performance and approaching Democrats' margin of 2006.

Obama is also doing fairly well among white non-South rural voters – key to the bigger Electoral College map and why he may be running well in western states, like Colorado, Montana and even North Dakota. Still, despite his gains in personal favorability and the vote he runs behind congressional Democrats on the ticket.



Finally, after making big personal favorability gains with Hispanics since the primary, Obama is performing very well here, beating Kerry's margin by 13 points and outpacing congressional Democrats, though still lagging Democrats' record 2006 pace. These results, however, may well underestimate Obama's support among Hispanics, as these respondents were part of our national survey and were most interviewed in English. Both Democracy Corps' and other Hispanic surveys using special samples and Spanish-language interviewers have produced bigger margins for Obama.<sup>9</sup>

<b>Decently Performing Obama Groups</b>									
Group	Current Results			Obama Performance				Obama Therm Change Since Ap/My	Obama Vote Gain Since Ap/My
	Obama	McCain	Margin	Obama. Margin vs.		Obama Vote Vs.			
				Dem Pres. 2004	Dem Cong. 2006	Dem Cong.	Identify & lean Dem		
<b>White Younger Women (19%)</b>	46	49	-3	+14	-1	+1	-2	+2	+3
<b>White Non-College Women (24%)</b>	43	50	-7	+12	-2	-3	-6	+8	+12
<b>White Younger Married Men (12%)</b>	35	60	-25	+14	-1	-3	+4	+9	+13
<b>White 40-49 (15%)</b>	43	55	-12	+13	-1	-1	0	+11	+14
<b>White Non-South Rural (10%)</b>	42	49	-7	+11	+2	-6	-3	+5	+9
<b>White Mainline Protestant (21%)</b>	46	48	-2	+10	+2	-4	-4	+2	+2
<b>Hispanics (9%)</b>	59	37	+22	+13	-17	+2	-4	+17	+3

### **Challenged but Improved Progressive and Democratic Obama Groups**

Since May, Obama has made major progress in improving his personal standing and vote with older Democrats and Democratic women, but he continues to significantly lag Kerry and the 2006 congressional Democrats. He also underperforms among white liberal Democrats and, surprisingly, white younger Democrats, though he has made gains with both groups.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps it is not possible to push McCain's vote below 6 percent among liberal Democrats and 15 percent among younger Democrats in the post-Bush era. We are somewhat skeptical of the results with younger Democrats, but this may be evidence that McCain has some appeal to that group.



Meanwhile, Obama is not living up to his full potential with white older unmarried women despite recent gains in favorability and the vote.

<b>Challenged Progressive and Democratic Voters</b>									
Group	Current Results			Obama Performance				Obama Therm Change Since Ap/My	Obama Vote Gain Since Ap/My
	Obama	McCain	Margin	Obama. Margin vs.		Obama Vote Vs.			
				Dem Pres. 2004	Dem Cong. 2006	Dem Cong.	Identify & lean Dem		
<b>White Younger Democrats (11%)</b>	83	15	+68	-9	-14	-2	n/a	+13	+13
<b>White Liberal Democrats (12%)</b>	90	6	+84	-7	-5	+1	n/a	+6	+7
<b>White Democratic Women (15%)</b>	81	13	+68	-6	-16	-4	n/a	+16	+18
<b>White Older Democrats (14%)</b>	80	14	+66	-4	-16	-5	n/a	+16	+15
<b>White Older Democratic Women (8%)</b>	81	13	+68	-3	-16	-5	n/a	+19	+19
<b>White Older Unmarried Women (9%)</b>	51	43	+8	-7	-10	-2	-5	+6	+16

### Challenged but Improving Conservative Democratic Obama Voters

Obama is winning only about 75-80 percent of voters in most conservative Democratic subgroups, well below the 85 percent and higher that Kerry and 2006 Democrats were able to achieve. He is, for instance, underperforming Kerry by a net of 12 points among white non-college Democrats and 9 points among white Democratic men. These are groups where big gains are possible if Obama can bring his support closer to historical Democratic levels. Importantly, Obama appears to be making headway with these voters, posting significant improvements in his vote and personal favorability over the last three months, particularly with white non-college Democrats and moderate and conservative Democrats.



### Challenged Conservative Democratic Obama Voters

Group	Current Results			Obama Performance				Obama Therm Change Since Ap/My	Obama Vote Gain Since Ap/My
	Obama	McCain	Margin	Obama. Margin vs.		Obama Vote Vs.			
				Dem Pres. 2004	Dem Cong. 2006	Dem Cong.	Identify & lean Dem		
<b>White Non-College Democrats (15%)</b>	76	18	+58	-12	-19	-7	n/a	+20	+20
<b>White Democratic Men (10%)</b>	80	16	+64	-9	-16	-4	n/a	+10	+6
<b>White Older Democratic Men (6%)</b>	78	16	+62	-7	-18	-5	n/a	+9	+6
<b>White Moderate/ Conservative Democrats (22%)</b>	76	17	+59	-2	-17	-2	n/a	+14	+18
<b>White Union Households (16%)</b>	52	40	+12	+7	-6	-4	-5	+4	+7

### Challenged Swing Obama Voters

Obama is also locked in a dogfight with McCain over independent voters, and he is currently lagging the performance of Kerry in 2004 and especially congressional Democrats in 2006 among some key groups of white independents. In particular, Obama is underperforming among white independent men and women, older white independents and white independents with a college degree. In the past three months, he has lost personal favorability with most of these key independent groups, one reason McCain and Obama are splitting these voters.

He is also underperforming with the relatively small group of white baby-boom college women – who were no doubt strong supporters of Hillary Clinton in the primary.

Obama is outperforming Kerry among white Catholics, but 2004 was a low point. Obama has a special challenge among these white ethnic Catholics where he is running behind 2006 and the current congressional Democrats. He has also made no gains in the last three months in his personal favorability with white Catholics.

White seniors are probably among the most challenging groups in this analysis. Obama is trailing by 15 points among these voters, which puts him behind Kerry's performance by a net of 4 points. Moreover, his vote share is 6 points lower than the current congressional candidate. As with white Catholics, Obama has gained little in terms of favorability or the vote since the conclusion of the primary.



The challenge of white seniors is best captured with the broader group of white older (over 50 years) non-college voters. While Obama outperforms Kerry among this group, he trails 2006 Democrats by a net 6 points and is running well below congressional Democrats and Democratic partisan performance.

The challenge here of ethnic Catholic and older voters may reproduce John Kerry's weaknesses – reducing Obama's margin in the Eastern deep blue states without impacting the Electoral College and perhaps making older and Catholic states, like Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan, a little closer than they should be.

<b>Challenged Swing Obama Voters</b>									
Group	Current Results			Obama Performance				Obama Therm Change Since Ap/My	Obama Vote Gain Since Ap/My
	Obama	McCain	Margin	Obama. Margin vs.		Obama Vote Vs.			
				Dem Pres. 2004	Dem Cong. 2006	Dem Cong.	Identify & lean Dem		
<b>White College Independent (10%)</b>	44	47	-3	-7	-22	0	+5	-2	+7
<b>White Older Independent (11%)</b>	38	52	-14	-7	-23	-6	+1	-12	-3
<b>White Independent Women (10%)</b>	44	45	-1	-4	-14	-1	+2	0	-4
<b>White Independent Men (12%)</b>	36	50	-14	-2	-25	-4	+4	-11	+4
<b>White Older College Women (7%)</b>	49	47	+2	-7	-8	-5	-4	-1	-8
<b>White Catholics (17%)</b>	44	49	-5	+8	-6	-5	-4	0	+1
<b>White Seniors (17%)</b>	39	54	-15	-4	-6	-6	-5	+2	+2
<b>White Older Non-College (23%)</b>	39	54	-15	+6	-6	-5	-7	+6	+7



**Appendix A: Where Obama Is Gaining Ground**

Group	Current Results			Obama Performance				Obama Term Change Since Ap/My	Obama Vote Gain Since Ap/My
	Obama	McCain	Margin	Obama. Margin vs.		Obama Vote Vs.			
				Dem Pres. 2004	Dem Cong. 2006	Dem Cong.	Identify & lean Dem		
<b>White Non-College Democrats (15%)</b>	76	18	+58	-12	-19	-7	n/a	+20	+20
<b>Exurban (12%)</b>	49	47	+2	+13	n/a	+1	-3	+18	+20
<b>White Democratic Women (15%)</b>	81	13	+68	-6	-16	-4	n/a	+16	+18
<b>White Moderate/ Conservative Democrats (22%)</b>	76	17	+59	-2	-17	-2	n/a	+14	+18
<b>White Older Unmarried Women (9%)</b>	51	43	+8	-7	-10	-2	-5	+6	+16
<b>White Older Democrats (14%)</b>	80	14	+66	-4	-16	-5	n/a	+16	+15
<b>White 40-49 (15%)</b>	43	55	-12	+13	-1	-1	0	+11	+14
<b>White Younger Democrats (11%)</b>	83	15	+68	-9	-14	-2	n/a	+13	+13
<b>White Younger Married Men (12%)</b>	35	60	-25	+14	-1	-3	+4	+9	+13
<b>White Older Non-College Women (14%)</b>	42	51	-9	+4	-4	-3	-6	+9	+12

**Appendix B: Where Obama Is Losing Ground**

Group	Current Results			Obama Performance				Obama Therm Change Since Ap/My	Obama Vote Gain Since Ap/My
	Obama	McCain	Margin	Obama. Margin vs.		Obama Vote Vs.			
				Dem Pres. 2004	Dem Cong. 2006	Dem Cong.	Identify & lean Dem		
<b>White Unmarried Men (10%)</b>	45	48	-3	+4	-18	-2	-5	-12	-11
<b>White Older College Women (7%)</b>	49	47	+2	-7	-8	-5	-4	-1	-8
<b>White College Republicans (12%)</b>	8	90	-82	+5	-1	-3	n/a	+1	-7
<b>White Older College Men (8%)</b>	41	53	-12	+5	-4	-7	0	-11	-7
<b>White College Women (17%)</b>	47	49	-2	-1	-9	-1	-2	+1	-7
<b>White Devout Mainline Protestants (7%)</b>	42	52	-10	+17	+11	-2	-7	0	-5
<b>White Republican Men (13%)</b>	7	89	-82	+7	-1	-7	n/a	+1	-5
<b>White Older Republicans (14%)</b>	6	91	-85	+3	-2	-6	n/a	-3	-5
<b>White Irregular Catholics (9%)</b>	50	46	+4	+10	-3	-2	0	0	-4

<sup>1</sup> Democracy Corps national survey of 2,000 likely voters conducted June 22-25, 2008 and Democracy Corps national survey of 1,004 likely voters conducted July 21-24, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> This column shows the change in Obama's net favorability rating between our April/May and June/July combined runs.

<sup>3</sup> This column shows the change in Obama's net performance between our April/May and June/July combined runs.

<sup>4</sup> These columns show the net difference between Obama's current margin and previous Democrats' margins.

<sup>5</sup> These columns show the difference between Obama's vote share and Congressional Democrats' vote share or the percent of each group that self-identifies as a Democrat or independent who leans towards the Democrats.

<sup>6</sup> Based on Democracy Corps surveys of 600 adults age 18-29 conducted March 30 – April 9 and July 15-29, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Based on Democracy Corps surveys of 600 adults age 18-29 conducted March 30 – April 9 and July 15-29, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> "Younger" indicates respondents under 50. "Older" indicates respondents over 50.

<sup>9</sup> Pew national survey of 2,015 Hispanic, conducted June 9 – July 13, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, Obama is overperforming Kerry among white younger voters by a net of ten points, but he is underperforming Kerry among white younger Democrats by a net of 11. Obama's improvement over Kerry among white younger voters is almost entirely due to the large change in the partisan makeup of this group. In 2004, Republicans had an 18-point party ID advantage among younger whites. Today, that is down to just two points.