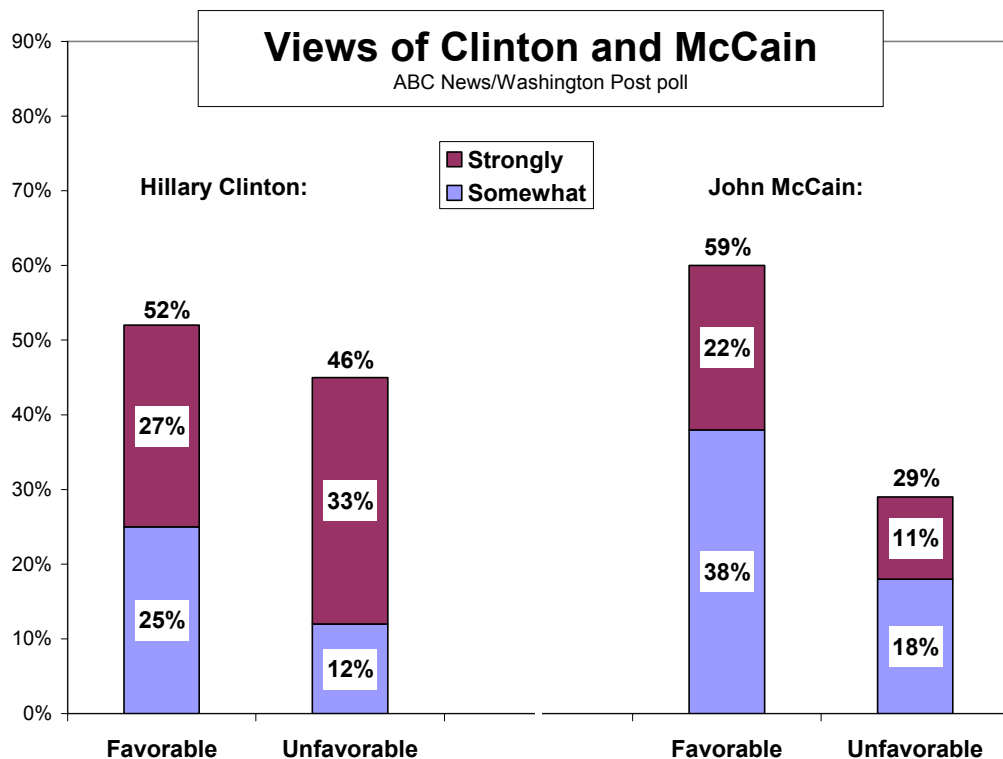


Clinton vs McCain: Base vs. Beyond

More than two years out, most Americans have favorable views of the two most talked about potential '08 presidential candidates, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and Sen. John McCain (R-AZ). But their support profiles are vastly different: Clinton, much stronger in her base; McCain, far more appealing beyond his.

Fifty-two percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll have a favorable opinion of Clinton, compared with 59 percent for McCain. McCain's popularity is at once broader across partisan lines and less divisive in terms of intensity of sentiment. Yet the flipside is that he's considerably weaker among Republicans than Clinton is among Democrats.

Overall 46 percent view Clinton unfavorably, compared with 29 percent for McCain (more have no opinion of McCain). More ominously for Clinton, 33 percent have a "strongly" unfavorable impression of her, compared with just 11 percent for McCain.



CLINTON – Positive views of Clinton are highest by far in her own political party. Eight in ten Democrats view her favorably, compared with only two in 10 Republicans. And negative sentiment is extraordinarily intense across the aisle: Almost three-quarters of

conservative Republicans have strongly negative feelings toward her – likely the long hangover from her “vast right-wing conspiracy” complaint.

That intensity is unmatched by their political opposites: Fewer than half of liberal Democrats have a strongly favorable opinion of Clinton.

In positive changes for Clinton, compared with June 2003, those with “no opinion” are down by six points, her favorable rating is up by eight points, and her “strongly” favorable rating is up by 12. Her strong unfavorables, though, didn’t budge.

McCain – In stark contrast to Clinton, majorities across political and ideological groups see McCain favorably. Only seven points separate Democrats’ and Republicans’ favorable opinions, 57 percent and 64 percent. And remarkably, McCain is viewed favorably by six in 10 liberal Democrats as well as seven in 10 conservative Republicans.

	Clinton			
	---Favorable---		--Unfavorable--	
	NET	Strongly	NET	Strongly
All	52%	27	46	33
Democrats	80	50	16	7
Republicans	19	5	79	64
Independents	53	25	45	32
Conserv. Reps	14	4	84	73
Liberal Dems	86	48	12	3

	McCain			
	---Favorable---		--Unfavorable--	
	NET	Strongly	NET	Strongly
All	59	22	29	11
Democrats	57	23	33	13
Republicans	64	25	27	11
Independents	59	20	29	10
Conserv. Reps	69	29	24	9
Liberal Dems	61	29	31	12

These views present challenges for both candidates. Clinton has 16 points more favorability within her own party than McCain has within his; that makes a primary campaign look easier for her. But McCain has more cross-party appeal, he edges out Clinton in favorable ratings among independents by six points and his “strongly” unfavorable ratings among independents are a third of Clinton’s. All those would help in a general election campaign – if he got there.

A challenge for Clinton is that those strong disapprovers might be especially motivated to vote against her; another is that, because nearly everyone already has an opinion of her, winning more support means convincing people who currently are inclined against her.

More Americans, 12 percent, still have no opinion of McCain; he's got 971 days to make the sale. But so does she.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone March 2-5, 2006, among a random national sample of 1,000 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman and Drew Allen.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (NAME)? IF FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE: Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

3/5/06 - Summary Table

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
b. Hillary Rodham Clinton	52	46	2
c. John McCain	59	29	12
a, d Released 3/6/06			

Trend:

b. Hillary Rodham Clinton

	Favorable			Unfavorable			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
3/5/06	52	27	25	46	12	33	2
6/5/05	51	NA	NA	46	NA	NA	3
6/1/03	44	15	29	48	16	32	8
9/2/99	49	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	7
6/6/99	59			35			6
3/14/99	60			36			4
2/14/99	63			31			6
11/1/98	64			31			5
11/1/98 LV	60			36			3
8/21/98	64			28			8
8/19/98	64			32			4
4/4/98	58			33			10
1/30/98	60			30			10
1/19/98	52			39			9
3/9/97	47			44			9
9/4/96 RV	47			42			12
6/30/96	44			47			9
1/21/96	28			36			36
1/19/96	32			34			34
10/31/94	47			44			8
5/15/94	54			41			5
3/27/94	53			39			8
1/23/94	55			34			11

11/14/93	58			33			9
8/8/93	59			33			8
4/26/93	54			26			20
2/23/93	59			24			18
1/17/93	51			20			29
7/8/92	30			26			43
3/28/92	28			22			51

c. John McCain

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
3/5/06	59	22	38	29	18	11	12
6/5/05	57	NA	NA	32	NA	NA	11
7/30/01	57			30			12
2/27/00	60			21			19
10/31/99	36			22			41
9/2/99	22			10			68
3/14/99	20			10			69

END