



## READY, SET, CAMPAIGN: 2008 PRESIDENTIAL RACE STARTS EARLY

*In the first presidential election since 1928 without a sitting president or vice president running, more than a dozen hopefuls already have lined up for the race, making for one of the longest campaign seasons ever.*

While some potential nominees, like Senators Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., and John McCain, R-Ariz., are already well-known across the country, both parties' nominations are wide open.

### **Presidential primaries**

The Democratic and Republican parties each officially nominate one candidate to run for president at their respective national conventions the summer before the election.

Leading up to those conventions, candidates earn votes from convention delegates through a primary election or caucus held in each state. During a primary, citizens vote directly for the primary candidate of their choice within their party. A caucus is different because voters meet to choose local delegates who will then support a primary candidate.

In the past, the first such events were the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primary. These contests set the tone for the presidential race and some candidates that don't do well drop out of the race entirely.

The Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary are planned for January 2008, but other states, including California and Florida, are pushing to make their primaries early to gain more influence over the nomination process.

### **Raising money**

The potential rush of early primaries means candidates must raise money quickly.

"There will be more early events than we've ever seen before," Dan Balz, a political reporter for the Washington Post told the NewsHour. "The fundraising requirements are going to be greater than ever."

Political strategists say presidential candidate will need to raise \$100 million in 2007 to compete effectively in the early 2008 primary season.

### **Democratic contenders**

By the end of January, seven Democrats had officially stated their candidacy for president, but two potential contenders attracted the spotlight.

Senator Hillary Clinton of New York formally announced her candidacy this month, while Barack Obama, a senator from Illinois serving his first term in Congress, opened an exploratory committee to look into the prospect of running.

The two senators have garnered media attention in part because Clinton would be the first female president and Obama, who is mixed race, would be the first black president.

Clinton is a second term senator and former first lady who has established a reputation as a moderate Democrat in Congress.

Obama attracts such crowds at speaking events that Jon Stewart of "The Daily Show" coined the term "Obamania" to describe the response.

Other Democratic candidates include former North Carolina senator John Edwards and Bill Richardson, the governor of New Mexico.

Edwards ran for vice president with Massachusetts senator John Kerry in 2004 and now runs an anti-poverty center at the University of North Carolina.

Richardson, who would be the first Hispanic president, was the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under former President Clinton and then was Clinton's secretary of energy.

### **Republican contenders**

On the Republican side, Senator John McCain of Arizona and former mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani have been favored potential candidates for several years.

McCain, who lost the Republican nomination to George W. Bush in 2000, is one of the most prominent politicians in Congress. McCain is a Vietnam veteran who has a reputation for speaking out against some of his own party's policies.

Giuliani is still exploring the possibility of running. He impressed the country with his leadership as mayor of New York City when 9/11 occurred, but his pro-gay rights, pro-choice and pro-gun control positions could alienate some Republican voters.

New faces in the race include former governor of Arkansas Mike Huckabee, and former governor of Massachusetts Mitt Romney.

Both are known for being health care advocates. Huckabee focused attention on personal health and health care reform after losing more than 100 pounds in response to being diagnosed with diabetes. Romney put Massachusetts in the national spotlight when he made health insurance mandatory in the state.

### **Still too early to tell**

With all the familiar and new faces joining the race, the year leading up to the first primary could show big swings in the public's favorites.

"One of the problems of being a front-runner like Hillary and Barack, if they make a mistake, it will be magnified way beyond its own dimensions," Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa, who ran for the nomination in 1992, told the New York Times. "A lot can change in a month."

-- *Compiled by Talea Miller for NewsHour Extra*

## Potential Candidates

### Democrats

Joseph Biden, Delaware senator  
Hillary Rodham Clinton, New York senator  
Christopher Dodd, Connecticut senator  
John Edwards, former North Carolina senator  
Dennis Kucinich, Ohio representative  
Barack Obama, Illinois Senator  
Bill Richardson, New Mexico governor  
Tom Vilsack, former Iowa governor

### Republicans

Sam Brownback, Kansas senator  
James Gilmore III, former Virginia governor  
Rudolph Giuliani, former New York mayor  
Mike Huckabee, former Arkansas governor  
Duncan Hunter, California representative  
John McCain, Arizona senator  
Ron Paul, Texas representative  
Mitt Romney, former Massachusetts governor  
Tom Tancredo, Colorado representative  
Tommy Thompson, former Wisconsin governor

(Potential candidates as of Jan. 2007)

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