

# THE WMUR NH PRIMARY POLL

## IMPORTANCE OF DEBATES NOT DEBATEABLE

By: Andrew E. Smith, Ph.D. 603/862-2226  
Dennis M. Junius, M.A.  
UNH Survey Center [www.unh.edu/survey-center](http://www.unh.edu/survey-center)

**EMBARGO UNTIL**  
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DURHAM, NH – Political debates are important to likely Democratic primary voters in New Hampshire. More than one-third of likely Democratic primary voters have already watched a debate and more than half say debates are "very important" or "somewhat important" in their decision about who to support.

These findings are based on the latest **WMUR New Hampshire Primary Poll**, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center, and sponsored by WMUR-TV, Manchester, New Hampshire.\* Four hundred forty-six (446) randomly selected likely Democratic primary voters were interviewed by telephone between November 6 and November 13, 2003. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/-4.6 percent. (For more detailed results, visit the Survey Center web site at [www.unh.edu/survey-center](http://www.unh.edu/survey-center) and click on Press Releases.)

### **An Informed Electorate**

Political debates are a long standing tradition in American politics and voters in the New Hampshire Democratic primary election think that debates are important to their decision about who they will support. Fifteen percent of likely voters say that debates are "very important" to their decision about who they will vote for, 39 percent say they are "somewhat important", 29 percent think they are "not very important" and 16 percent think they are "not important at all".

Recently, Wesley Clark announced that he would skip the first debate in New Hampshire in December to attend a fundraising event and political analysts have questioned the impact of this decision. "George W. Bush skipped the first debate in 1999, and I believe many voters never forgave him for that," said Andrew Smith, Director of the UNH Survey Center. "It remains to be seen if voters will hold this decision against Clark, but he is passing up a chance to talk to a lot of undecided Democrats." Among the 27 percent of the likely Democratic electorate who are still undecided, 15 percent say debates will be "very important" in their decision about whom to vote for and another 40 percent say debates will be "somewhat important". But perhaps Clark's decision makes sense as his supporters are least likely to think that debates will influence their vote. Only 8 percent of Clark's supporters think debates are "very important" to their decision about whom to support and 29 percent think debates will be "somewhat important".

Already, 35 percent of likely Democratic voters say they have watched one of the debates that have been televised from other places in the U.S and 65 percent say they have not watched a debate. Supporters of North Carolina Senator John Edwards are most likely to say they have watched a debate while supporters of Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman are least likely to say they have watched a debate

Older voters and upper income voters are most likely to have watched a debate. Voters who are least likely to have watched a debate include union households, voters with lower levels of education, middle income voters, and undecided voters.

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### Primary Source for New Hampshire News

One reason that the December debate will be of added importance is that it will be broadcast on WMUR TV, which is where likely Democratic primary voters are most likely to get most of their news and information about what is happening in New Hampshire. Twenty-nine percent of likely Democratic primary voters say they get most of their news and information about New Hampshire from WMUR, 20 percent get it from their local paper, 17 percent from radio, 8 percent from the *Union Leader*, 6 percent from the *Boston Globe*, 6 percent from a Boston television station, 6 percent from the Internet, and 8 percent from some other source. Perhaps of greatest importance to candidates in the primary, 42 percent of undecided voters say they get most of their news and information about New Hampshire from WMUR.

### WMUR NH Primary Poll Methodology

These findings are based on the most recent WMUR NH Primary Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center from November 6 to November 13, 2003. A random sample of 446 likely New Hampshire Democratic primary voters was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 4.6 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of voters and telephone lines within households, respondent sex, and region of the state. In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.

### Watched a Debate? (Likely Dem. Primary Voters)

“I’d like you to think for a minute about the debates between the Democratic candidates for president. Have you watched any of the debates that have been held so far?”

	<u>Percent</u>
Yes, have watched	35
No, have not watched	65
(N=)	(423)

### Importance of Debates (Likely Dem. Primary Voters)

“How important are the debates in your deciding who you plan to vote for in the Democratic primary ... very important ... somewhat important ... not very important ... or not important at all?”

	<u>Percent</u>
Very Important	15
Somewhat Important	39
Not Very Important	29
Not At All Important	16
(N=)	(422)

**News Source**  
**(Likely Dem. Primary Voters)**

“On another topic, from what source would you say you get MOST\_of your news and information about what is happening in the State of New Hampshire?”

	<u>Percent</u>
WMUR	29
Local Newspaper	20
Radio	17
Union Leader	8
Boston TV	6
Boston Globe	6
Internet	6
Other	8
(N=)	(415)

## Watched a Debate?

	Yes, Watched <u>Debate</u> 35%	No, Have Not <u>Debate</u> 65%	<u>(N)</u> 423
<b>STATEWIDE</b>			
Clark Voter	32	68	21
Dean Voter	43	57	164
Edwards Voter	61	39	22
Gephardt Voter	39	61	13
Kerry Voter	30	70	66
Lieberman Voter	9	91	17
Undecided	27	73	109
Registered Democrat	37	63	202
Undeclared	34	66	221
Liberal	38	62	148
Moderate	33	67	225
Conservative	35	65	36
Union household	24	76	59
Non-union	37	63	360
NH Native	27	73	122
Massachusetts	37	63	128
Other NE	37	63	44
Mid Atlantic	45	55	36
Other	41	59	90
5 Years or less in NH	42	58	42
6 to 10 years	38	62	46
11 to 20 years	44	56	78
More than 20 years	31	69	252
18 to 34	30	70	74
33 to 49	27	73	137
50 to 64	40	60	142
65 and over	49	51	59
Male	35	65	170
Female	36	64	253
High school or less	23	77	68
Some college	40	60	96
College graduate	34	66	150
Post-graduate	41	59	105
Less than \$30K	32	68	44
\$30K to \$60K	34	66	111
\$60K to \$75K	25	75	60
\$75K to \$100K	26	74	48
More than \$100K	43	57	63
Northern NH	32	68	50
Western NH	40	60	42
Central/Lakes	33	67	67
Hillsborough County	40	60	130
Seacoast	32	68	133

**Importance of Debates**

	<u>Very</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Not Very</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Not At All</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>(N)</u>
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>422</b>
Clark Voter	8	29	36	27	0	21
Dean Voter	12	45	29	13	0	164
Edwards Voter	44	27	24	6	0	22
Gephardt Voter	10	52	24	14	0	13
Kerry Voter	13	36	32	19	0	66
Lieberman Voter	22	34	35	8	0	17
Undecided	16	38	29	18	0	108
Registered Democrat	16	34	31	19	0	202
Undeclared	14	45	27	14	0	220
Liberal	14	39	32	15	0	148
Moderate	16	40	27	17	0	224
Conservative	9	43	29	18	1	36
Union household	9	37	42	12	0	59
Non-union	16	40	27	17	0	359
NH Native	11	44	28	16	0	122
Massachusetts	11	41	29	19	0	127
Other NE	29	29	21	21	0	44
Mid Atlantic	25	33	36	6	0	36
Other	14	40	33	14	0	90
5 Years or less in NH	19	36	31	14	0	42
6 to 10 years	30	29	25	16	0	46
11 to 20 years	14	47	28	12	0	77
More than 20 years	12	40	31	17	0	252
18 to 34	14	49	28	8	0	74
33 to 49	13	41	33	13	0	135
50 to 64	18	35	27	20	0	142
65 and over	13	32	32	22	1	59
Male	13	42	29	16	0	169
Female	17	38	29	16	0	252
High school or less	14	44	25	18	0	68
Some college	16	41	19	25	0	95
College graduate	14	36	37	13	0	150
Post-graduate	15	42	31	11	0	104
Less than \$30K	27	28	26	19	0	44
\$30K to \$60K	19	35	30	15	0	111
\$60K to \$75K	13	38	34	15	0	59
\$75K to \$100K	15	40	39	6	0	48
More than \$100K	7	41	29	23	0	63
Northern NH	14	36	29	21	0	50
Western NH	21	39	25	14	1	42
Central/Lakes	12	37	34	17	0	67
Hillsborough County	17	45	29	9	0	129
Seacoast	14	37	28	21	0	133

Source of News

	<u>WMUR</u>	<u>Boston</u>	<u>Union</u>	<u>Local</u>	<u>Boston</u>	<u>Radio</u>	<u>Internet</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>(N)</u>
STATEWIDE	29%	6%	8%	20%	6%	17%	6%	8%	415
Clark Voter	8	0	10	27	4	23	11	17	19
Dean Voter	21	7	8	19	8	21	8	9	161
Edwards Voter	24	0	6	24	15	11	7	13	22
Gephardt Voter	54	0	6	9	8	12	12	0	12
Kerry Voter	35	12	13	11	5	15	7	3	66
Lieberman Voter	30	18	14	19	6	13	0	0	15
Undecided	42	5	4	24	2	12	3	10	107
Registered Democrat	29	5	9	22	7	17	5	7	197
Undeclared	30	8	8	17	4	17	8	9	219
Liberal	23	5	7	21	8	19	7	10	147
Moderate	29	5	9	21	4	18	7	6	221
Conservative	39	18	14	10	1	9	0	9	36
Union household	41	4	5	12	4	23	8	3	58
Non-union	27	7	9	21	6	16	6	9	356
NH Native	33	7	9	19	4	16	6	7	122
Massachusetts	35	5	10	16	4	11	9	10	124
Other NE	25	7	11	15	8	25	1	8	44
Mid Atlantic	19	0	6	42	5	25	0	2	35
Other	20	9	6	18	8	20	9	8	87
5 Years or less in NH	17	8	9	23	10	24	6	3	42
6 to 10 years	21	5	10	16	0	23	11	13	44
11 to 20 years	34	10	4	9	8	22	5	10	78
More than 20 years	31	5	9	23	5	13	6	7	249
18 to 34	26	9	5	14	0	22	15	8	74
33 to 49	30	8	9	18	3	19	6	8	135
50 to 64	30	4	8	22	5	19	5	7	139
65 and over	31	6	7	23	17	5	0	9	58
Male	24	7	6	20	6	20	10	6	164
Female	32	6	10	19	5	15	4	9	251
High school or less	43	8	10	13	3	9	2	10	68
Some college	39	8	10	15	5	12	7	3	96
College graduate	22	6	7	28	5	15	6	11	150
Post-graduate	20	4	8	15	8	30	9	6	101
Less than \$30K	27	9	7	25	4	12	3	12	44
\$30K to \$60K	31	8	7	17	7	16	7	7	109
\$60K to \$75K	28	6	9	23	2	20	9	3	60
\$75K to \$100K	25	4	22	7	3	21	10	8	45
More than \$100K	25	5	4	15	6	28	8	9	62
Northern NH	24	4	8	20	4	19	7	15	50
Western NH	26	5	5	17	1	31	2	12	41
Central/Lakes	22	5	4	38	4	18	5	3	65
Hillsborough County	30	8	16	11	6	13	6	9	128
Seacoast	34	7	5	19	8	14	8	5	131