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News » Politics USA TODAY On Politics Candidates — In cooperation with 

Upper-income black donors back Obama over Clinton

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Enlarge By Beverly Rivers Maurice

Orlan and Zina Johnson pose with Barack Obama during an April 2007 event at the Columbus Club that raised more than \$400,000. Obama has received nearly double the number of contributions from zip codes with high concentrations of wealthy African Americans than his closest Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton, USA TODAY analysis shows.

"I think (Barack Obama is) the right guy at the right time. The fact that he's African-American is part of it. But at the end of the day, he's got the educational pedigree, the intelligence. He's got the skills, all the things you'd like to see in your leader."

— Democratic contributor Orlan Johnson

CLOSE-UP: BARACK OBAMA

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ANALYZING DATA

USA TODAY compiled this analysis using campaign contribution reports of Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton with the Federal Election Commission and from demographic data supplied by Claritas, a marketing information firm.

ZIP codes were included if they contained a

By **Fredreka Schouten and Paul Overberg, USA TODAY**

WASHINGTON — Democrat Barack Obama is surpassing rival Hillary Rodham Clinton in campaign contributions from areas with blacks of above-average income, a USA TODAY analysis shows.

The Illinois senator has received more than double the number of campaign contributions from ZIP codes with sizable concentrations of upper-income blacks than Clinton, according to the analysis of first-quarter campaign records.

FIRST-TIME DONOR: 'He's the right guy at the right time'

Obama collected more than 2,200 donations from ZIP codes that ranked above average in both the share of black households and black household incomes, the analysis found.

Clinton received 1,000 donations from these areas. Overall, Obama raised nearly as much as the New York senator did in the first quarter from all sources.

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Polls show the former first lady attracts more support from women and lower-income workers than her party rivals. Obama does better with independents and higher-income voters. The analysis is another sign that economics drives their support as much as race or gender.

Black voters are crucial to choosing a Democratic presidential nominee. In South Carolina, host of an early nominating contest, blacks account for nearly half the voters in the Jan. 29 Democratic primary. Obama is seeking to be his party's first black presidential nominee.

Obama's early success raising money from blacks is a sign of how much he has energized them and the challenge posed to Clinton, who is aggressively courting black voters.

Although blacks "can be excited about and loyal to politicians of other races ... people lean toward members of their own group," said Carol Swain, a professor at Vanderbilt University. She said the donor patterns are a "reality check" for Clinton, whose husband was popular among blacks.

Minyon Moore, a senior Clinton adviser, said it was "natural" that Obama would appeal to black donors. "We're not ceding that ground," Moore said. Clinton "has a great deal of support in the African-American community."

Obama spokesman Bill Burton said the campaign is "proud of the level of support we have achieved from all groups."

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larger share of black households than the national average (13%). A ZIP code also was included in the analysis if its black median household income topped the comparable national figure of \$31,000. USA TODAY also studied subgroups of ZIP codes where black median household incomes topped \$50,000 and \$75,000.

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Comments: (201)



MCalavera wrote: 3d 6h ago

Because this is key to understanding your values, Kate, which candidate do you feel the strongest about right now? I find it hard to accept your criticism of Senator Obama without knowing who you support. Also, please go read "The Audacity of Hope." It will give you a firm understanding of the accomplishments and experience of Barack. And please don't try to convince anyone that you have already read it. We all know that you wouldn't want word getting around that you were considering other views.

And only because I can't resist the jibe, if that book is too much for you check out "My Pet Goat." I hear your party finds it irresistible to put down, regardless of the situation.

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Mickey_Doodle1 wrote: 3d 12h ago

Steveb said it well earlier. Blacks for blacks, women for women, Democrats against Republicans, Republicans against Democrats. That's how we get our Presidents generally. This President enjoyed a situation which most everyone wanted the Democrats out, at any cost, so without consideration who might be worthy, we got what we got...

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BIG AL COMETH wrote: 3d 13h ago

Tito Sancho wrote: "The reason why Obama will not win is because white people can't get past the fact that he is black."

Exactly the point, Tito. Maybe we might all get surprised here and white people will see through the color thing, but I wouldn't bet on it happening. Racists will always vote against him simply because he is black, while others (like myself, I must admit) would probably vote against him because he is so inexperienced. Both are the kiss of death to his chances. Personally, I would love to see a Gore-Obama ticket. I believe that is an unbeatable combination, and would give Barack both the experience (I feel) he needs for the next job, and a chance for white America to just get over themselves and accept a black President. If he performs well as Vice President, he would be the natural choice in 2016.

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Tiamatty wrote: 3d 14h ago

I disagree that his race will make much impact on his chances of being nominated or elected. As the campaign goes along, the novelty of a black man as a major contender will fade, and he'll be based more on his merits. Hopefully, people will agree his merits make him worth electing. Because I really like Barack Obama.

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Tito Sancho wrote: 3d 15h ago

The reason why Obama will not win is because white people can't get past the fact that he is black. At least conservatives try to go after his record. These "black" articles written about Obama just affirm the fact that white Americans can't get past his race. Rich white people give white candidates money all the time. Why is this news? I've been middle class since I was 25 and more than 75% of the candidates I've voted for the past 25 years have been white. Oh, another thing. Black people have money. I live a 100% black neighborhood where the average house is 650K. We love to give our money away. Matter fact I was giving some away right before I wrote this. Also, Norabuck, get a clue. Not all black people are backing and voting for Obama because he is black. Your statements are ignorant. Not stupid, just ignorant.

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Tiamatty wrote: 3d 17h ago

I don't get all the hostility here towards Kate. She didn't say anything particularly racist; she didn't even say something terribly controversial. So when I complain about the rampant stupidity on this thread, I'm not referring to her; I'm referring to the people who can do nothing but insult her.

As for Obama, I like him. I'm rooting for him, even though I can't vote for him. He's exactly what I want a politician to be: Smart, charismatic, inspiring, passionate, able to reach consensus on issues. He gives me hope, and that alone puts him head and shoulder above most of the candidates. He may not have the experience some others have, but he's a very intelligent man, willing to listen to all sides of a debate and make a decision. And, I'm sure he'd surround himself with good advisors.

Besides, experience in Washington is overrated. Washington jades people, makes them cynical. I don't want a cynic in office, I want someone optimistic about the system, who believes it can be made to work for the people.

And Obama strikes me as the most like that.

And I should point out that he does have experience as an activist and as a legislator. The Senate isn't the be-all and end-all of political experience, you know.

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BIG AL COMETH wrote: 3d 17h ago

Sure...I believe that the South will vote for a woman or a black man for President in 2008...just as soon as they finish recounting all those votes in Florida. I'll believe it when I see it. Sad to say, but neither Clinton nor Obama are electable in George W. Bush's version of the United States of America. Republicans are just dying for us to nominate either one of them as the Democratic Presidential candidate.

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steveb wrote: 3d 18h ago

SORRY I KNOW THIS IS POLITICAL INCORRECT BUT WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS A WOMAN FOR WOMEN AND A BLACK FOR BLACKS. WHY CAN'T WE HAVE SOMEONE FOR EVERYONE WHO HAPPENS TO BE BLACK OR A WOMAN. I COULD VOTE FOR SOMEONE LIKE THAT

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mjc63 wrote: 3d 18h ago

Obama is not a black candidate. He is a candidate who is black. I think the reason he is getting their money is that they would otherwise support a REPUBLICAN!!! They're just hedging their bets hoping for internships (or more) for their kids, just like anyone else paying \$1,000 a plate for chicken salad. So I think if Obama can win over wealthy black voters to the democratic side, he should definitely be offered the Vice Presidency when Hilary Clinton is nominated !!! Hil-Ama 2008

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tishaustin wrote: 3d 18h ago

what is the issue? that Obama is receiving backing from affluent blacks most who have never contributed in their voting history as the article reports, the fact that Obama is young and may not be ready for the oval office, or as Kate hs pegged that blacks should not stand up for their own race but let it be an unbiased race and vote only on the person best suited for the job? but refresh my memory when has there been a choice to vote for another color than what we have been getting lately? so to some folks since we have been allowing america to be ran by the slowly sinking majority (yup ur clan kate) maybe we can give the kid a shot and he may have some forward thinking ideas since he was not allowed in the same boardrooms, brothels(oops i mean boys clubs) and private clubs where the elite meet to decide our fate so therefore he is nott tainted. no one turned it into a racist thing but with comments about how u know black people okay i do too but i am not waving a flag standing on top of my car to show people that i do. thats where the problem is u may not perceive yourself as but you present a compelling argument. (the comment Any minority that is capable and qualified to do my job, have at it!) bad statement beacsue kate the only job i feel a minority cannot hold that u do is be president of the KKK other than that there a lot of highly intelligent(did i get it right this time) persons of color that may even supercede you we have made the world safe from all black persons that are financially situated i bid everyone a good

nite and maybe some of us will be better persons because of this in the morning.

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