

# 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday

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“Nothing could be more ill-judged than that intolerant spirit, which has, at all times, characterized political parties. For, in politics as in religion, it is equally absurd to aim at making proselytes by fire and sword. Heresies in either can rarely be cured by persecution.”

– Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist*, No. 1

## **Election 2008**

During the months leading up to the 2004 Presidential Election, 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday sought to be a comprehensive and reliable source of polling information for interested observers who lacked the time and resources to stay on top of the fickle fluctuations of public opinion.

As we enter the 2008 Election Cycle, 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday will again seek to provide reliable polling information and insight into the Presidential Election, all 33 Senatorial Races and all 435 House Races – with special emphasis on those Republican Seats that are most vulnerable.

## **What Is 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday?**

This newsletter started early in the 2004 Presidential Election Cycle to fill a need that some grassroots Democratic Party swing state organizers perceived because no comprehensive source of polling was readily available at little or no cost. I volunteered to provide research for a friend and found that what started somewhat grudgingly as my “night job” soon became a useful tool for the readers and an interesting labor of love for me. All information is publicly available, although I will admit that I scour some rather obscure sources.

The initial mailing list included a handful of e-mail addresses. By November 2004, the e-mail list had grown to several hundred addresses through word-of-mouth and requests from individuals who had received a copy from a friend. If you have received this first issue for the 2008 Election Cycle, either you received this newsletter in 2004 or you have been added to the mailing list because of your association with the publisher through the Democratic Party.

**You can be removed from the list now and forever by simply replying to this e-mail message with the word “REMOVE” written in the subject line.**

If you choose to receive future editions, they will arrive on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month every month through November 2008. This first issue includes polling information for all 33 Senate races. The February 2008 issue will include an update for Senate races and a separate set of polling information for all 435 House races. The March 2008 issue will include updates to the Senate and House races and a separate set of polling information for the Presidential election, prepared on a state-by-state basis. From April through the General Election, all polling information will be updated monthly; with final projections provided shortly before the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in November.

## Polling Reliability

Before reading polling information, it's important to know that all polls are not created equal. Some are created for the purpose of influencing public opinion and some are created for the purpose of measuring public opinion. We're interested in those polls that are reliable measures of public opinion.

The 13 National Polling Organizations that predicted state-by-state outcomes during the 2004 Presidential Election Cycle have been statistically evaluated based on their performance and reliability in that race. Those organizations, ranked by percent of winners called correctly, are shown in the matrix below. The color-coding indicates reliability, based on a variety of factors. For the statistically inclined, the 3 factors not shown in this matrix that influenced the reliability color-coding include the percentage of polls outside the margin of error; the Root Mean Square Error (Mosteller #2) and Root Mean Square Error (Mosteller #5).

Organization	# of Winners Called	% Called Correctly	Political Leaning	Ranking
Quinnipiac University	5	100.0%	GOP Bias (3.9%)	1
Survey USA	49	98.0%	No Bias (-0.1%)	2
Rasmussen	39	97.4%	Dem Bias (-2.2%)	3
Research 2000	25	92.0%	Dem Bias (-1.2%)	4
Zogby International	24	91.7%	Dem Bias (-3.0%)	5
Mason-Dixon Polling	34	91.2%	Dem Bias (-0.5%)	6
Market Shares	7	85.7%	Dem Bias (-3.2%)	7
Los Angeles Times	5	80.0%	Dem Bias (-2.7%)	8
Strategic Vision	17	76.5%	GOP Bias (1.6%)	9
Opinion Dynamics	8	62.5%	Dem Bias (-0.8%)	10
American Research Group	10	60.0%	No Bias (0.4%)	11
Gallup Organization	11	54.5%	No Bias (-0.3%)	12
Global Strategy	7	42.9%	Dem Bias (-6.9%)	13

Legend	Color	Reliability
	Light Green	Highly Reliable
	Yellow	Reliable
	Orange	Marginal
	Red	Unreliable

## US Senate – A First Look

Any way you cut it; this is going to be a good year for Democrats in the United States Senate.

- Democratic Incumbents stand for re-election in 12 of the 33 seats that will be determined this year.
  - Ten of those 12 Democratic Seats are “Safe.”
  - Only twelve of those 21 Republican Seats are “Safe.”

- Republicans are significantly more vulnerable this year than during the 2004 election cycle.
- Republicans currently hold all five open seats.
  - Two of those five Republican Seats are “Safe.”
  - Democrats are likely to pick-up at least two seats out of the five.
- In the nine incumbent races likely to be the most competitive, Republicans hold seven of those nine seats today.
  - Republicans are significantly more vulnerable this year than during the 2004 election cycle.

**At this very early point in what will be long campaigns in twelve potentially competitive races (including three open seats) the Democrats appear capable of changing the balance of power in the Senate by picking up a total of six seats – without losing a single seat currently held by an incumbent Democrat. If that “optimistic projection” holds, the composition of the Senate would be:**

- **55 Democratic Seats**
- **43 Republican Seats**
- **2 Seats Held by Independents who Caucus with the Democrats**

Let us keep working for that outcome – and keep watching as the tides turn over the next eleven months.

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Best regards,  
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