

Republican candidates bring variety to table

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November of '08 is still eleven months away, yet the major presidential candidates have been campaigning for months. The frontrunners for the Republican party, Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney, Mike Huckabee, John McCain and Ron Paul have insinuated themselves into the public eye and are jockeying for the lead in the ever-important primaries.

The candidates represent a party divided by the legacy, good and bad, of the Bush administration. As a result this batch of hopefuls balances ideals as varied as their backgrounds. The race is full to the brim of governors, senators, representatives and even a mayor.

Rudy Giuliani: Often described as a moderate, Giuliani has a right-leaning position on issues such as health care, education, environment, foreign policy and taxes. Giuliani is against universal health care and supports tax credits for those families that choose private health insurance policies.

He has also consistently supported the war in Iraq and is one the proponents of invading Iran. He has suggested that the President possesses the power to divert any amount of federal funding despite any opposition from Congress. Giuliani is also unopposed to the use of tactical nuclear weapons to eradicate any threat.

On education, Giuliani has clashed with the New York Board of Education, expressing frustration with the way it works. He supports education vouchers, a move that would allow more children to attend private school.

In a rare position for Republicans, Giuliani is fully behind the idea of global warming. He has said that Al Gore's movie did not go far enough in explaining the dangers of global warming.

Despite his anti-tax stance, Giuliani has acted many times in his reign as mayor to retain certain taxes, such as commuter taxes and income taxes. Recently, he has expressed reluctant support for a flat tax, while admitting the difficulties there would be in adopting one.

Mitt Romney: The governor of Massachusetts has made resolutions in the past requiring that the majority of Massachusetts

residents acquire health care. He has also supported dental and eyeglass coverage for low-income families.

A longtime supporter of the Iraq war, Romney's goal is to seek stability in the region, to avoid civil war and to reduce the numbers of insurgents.

Romney has declared his support of governmental policies about education and has stood behind the No Child Left Behind act. He is also against sex education in kindergarten.

His campaign features a strong commitment to the environment; Romney supports stronger emissions standards and the regulation of greenhouse gas. Despite this, he also supports drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Romney has seesawed back and forth on taxes. During the middle of his terms, his actions have caused taxes to increase, but

during the election season, Romney has stood in favor of large tax cuts.

Mike Huckabee: Huckabee's position on health care lies strongly on the prevention

side rather than the treatment side. He is an advocate of exercise and has promoted healthy eating. He is also against universal health care, and wants citizens to take a more active role in their own health.

Huckabee is a strong supporter of the Iraq war, believing it is an uncompleted job that must be finished. Also a supporter of the troop surge, he believes it is the responsibility of the American people to not leave Iraq in chaos and to clean it up before withdrawing.

Huckabee is a believer in character education, and a supporter of charter schools. Part of his platform is his support of the presence of the Ten Commandments in schools.

His support of environmentalism is unwavering, as he believes that a commitment to preventing global warming is a moral issue. He has expressed his support for the environment throughout his term as governor of Arkansas.

Huckabee is unequivocally against taxes. As well as supporting the FairTax system, Huckabee lowered taxes 94 times while he was governor.

John McCain: McCain has made a strong stance on health care. He supports expanded taxes on cigarettes

and providing funding to purchase prescription drugs for the elderly. McCain has a goal to expand health care to 11 million uninsured children.

McCain's stance on foreign policy is complicated. Despite his continued support for the war, he has also criticized the president several times over his actions and the Pentagon on the amount of troops in Iraq.

McCain is not popular among teachers, receiving a 45% rating from the National Education Association. He supports vouchers along with merit pay for teachers. He swings both ways though, and supports the immediate firing of teachers who aren't up to standards.

McCain has a moderately friendly voting record on the environment. He is opposed to drilling in the Arctic and supports global warming policies.

His stance of taxation

shows support for both sides. He refused to sign a pledge banning new taxes and voted against tax cuts in 2001. However, in 2006 McCain voted to extend Bush's tax cuts.

Ron Paul: Paul voted against the Iraq war resolution and has continuously opposed U.S. presence in Iraq. He feels that he would only support the war if it were against those responsible for the events of September 11, 2001.

A strong supporter of health care, Paul is in favor of reduced health costs for families and the use of medical marijuana. He also voted to allow the government to negotiate the best prices for prescription drugs for Medicare.

Against federal control of education, Paul opposes the No Child Left Behind policies. His support lies behind education tax credits so families can choose which

schools their children attend.

Paul is strongly for environmental controls and protection. He feels that polluters should not be granted any kind of immunity from accountability and has supported issues such as hemp production and the opposition of nuclear power plants.

Paul is strongly against taxes and large government. He has supported removal of the Internal Revenue Service and supports the repeal of the Sixteenth Amendment, which authorizes the levying of income taxes.

On Jan. 3, the results of the Iowa caucuses came in, with Huckabee and Romney claiming the top two spots. In a disappointing finish, McCain, Paul and Giuliani grabbed the fourth, fifth and sixth spots. While these are only the primary results from Iowa, the outcome could have a ripple effect on further polls.

Democratic candidates preview future

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As George W. Bush's final year as president slowly comes to a close, one can't help but notice the campaigns surrounding the democratic candidates and wonder, who is next? On Aug. 26-28 Denver, Colo. will be host to the Democratic National Convention, where the state delegates will vote for who will be their presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the '08 race.

With eight candidates running for the democratic nomination, the field of contenders is quite diverse. The three front runners Barack Obama, an African-American senator, Hilary Clinton, senator from New York and former first-lady, and John Edwards, former senator returning after a run for vice-president in 2004.

Hilary Clinton: Her strong health care policy is threefold, affordable, available and reliable. She plans to make it more affordable by providing tax credits for working families. Clinton proposes to make it more reliable by letting families keep their health care, even if they lose or change jobs. Lastly, she plans to make it more available by making it impossible for insurance companies to deny coverage if one has a pre-existing condition.

Clinton hopes to decrease

the U.S.'s involvement in Iraq as soon as possible. She wants to implement a plan to withdraw the troops and focus on stabilizing Iraq through diplomatic initiative as well as engaging other countries in securing Iraq's future.

On education, Clinton plans to reform the No Child Left Behind Act employed by Bush, keeping its promise and rewarding schools with resources that maintain accountability.

Clinton addresses the environment by promising to strengthen energy and auto efficiency standards and

significantly increase the funding for green research as well as reduce

America's reliance on foreign oil.

Barack

Obama: He plans to develop the U.S.'s health care system by providing affordable and portable health care coverage to every American with the formation of a National Health Care Exchange. This would ensure affordable coverage for all, lower health care costs and increase cost competition between insurance companies.

Obama, who voted against entering the war from the beginning, plans to put an end to it by immediately starting to withdraw troops at a steady rate and complete it by the end of next year. In order to better the situation in Iraq, he plans to convene

with the United Nations and Iraq's Leaders.

Another policy Obama is focusing on is education. To improve education Obama plans to put more money into the system. He wants teachers to get paid more and make it easier for students to pay for college by making funding more accessible. He also plans to offer more rigorous courses at the high school level. To attract teachers, he plans to offer Teacher Service Scholarships that will cover four years of undergraduate education and two more years of graduate school in exchange for teaching for at least four years in a high-need location.

Obama's environmental policy looks to reduce the U.S.'s negative environmental effects by starting a program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, invest \$150 billion dollars over the next ten years to develop new energy sources and improve our energy efficiency.

John Edwards: Edwards, currently third in the polls, wants to create a universal health care program that will directly involve insurance and drug companies, cover everyone and decrease the cost.

Edwards' efforts to end the war in Iraq are similar to other candidates. He wants to start withdrawing troops immediately. Also, he plans to make certain that troops are obtaining the proper training and to make certain that Congress knows that Bush overstepped his boundaries in the funding of Iraq.

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