

ILLINOIS
Winner: Democrat

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Date: April 1, 2008

So far, the 2008 General Election has been an unprecedented occurrence of events. On the Republican side, Senator John McCain has clinched the Republican party's nomination while the two candidates for the Democratic party, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, are still battling it out. Usually by this point in time during the election both parties have a clear identified winner but it is not the case this year. Although there has yet to be a nomination from the Democrats, I am predicting that their party will win the state of Illinois in the general election.

By looking at some of the demographic data of Illinois, one would think that the election would belong to the Republican candidate but based on past election data, it is more likely that the Democratic candidate will take the state. Every year since 1992, Illinois has gone to the Democratic candidate and they have usually acquired more than 54% of the vote. (Liep. 2008) One can see the trend towards the Democratic candidates in the elections for the US Senate and House of Representatives. Since 1990, the majority winner of the Senate elections have been the democratic candidate, with the exception of the 1998 election. The majority of the seats in the House of Representatives were also won by the Democratic candidate. From 1994-2000, though there was no clear majority winner in the Representatives but this was later fixed when their representative limit was set at 19 instead of 20. The General Assembly of Illinois election results also show that it is more likely that the Democratic nominee will win the state. In 3 out of the last 4 elections for the state General Assembly, the majority has gone to the Democratic party. (National Conference of State Legislatures.)

There has been a trend towards the Democratic Party in the last several years in Illinois. A lot of the reasoning behind this is due to the city of Chicago, one of the largest cities in the country. Usually in cities you tend to see a more of a leaning to the Democratic Party than the Republican. Most of the people living in cities like that have lower income and have feelings more inclined to the Democratic Party's platform. About 16% of the state's population is located in Chicago and this can have an impact on the voting totals of the state. (US Census Bureau) One thing that could really be the determining factor for the race to claim the state will be who wins the Democratic Party's nomination. Barack Obama is a United States Senator from Illinois and if he gets the nomination it is a given that he will win the state. On the other hand Clinton is originally from Illinois yet she is running from New York. It is unlikely that this fact will have much impact on if she gets the state or not if she were to win the party nomination. A lot of people though do not like Hillary and this may have some impact on her election but I think the state would still go blue regardless of who is running.

Based on the past election data I feel safe is saying that Illinois will be a blue state during the Presidential election this year. There is always the chance that a surprise upset may occur but overall it is highly unlikely. Even in the past public opinion polls in the state, Obama has received a higher percentage than any of the Republican nominees and the gap between them has grown. In one poll he was ahead of McCain by only 3

percentage points then only days later he was up by 10 percentage points. (SurveyUSA and American Research Group, Inc.) This shows that his popularity is growing everyday in the state. There is still a chance that Illinois may go red but looking at the past data, I believe that Illinois will be a blue state in the next election.

SOURCES

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