

## **MISSOURI**

***Winner: Republican***

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Missouri is a very interesting state. Many people consider it a microcosm of the United States. Its percentage of the African-American population mirrors the United States, which is good for Democrats. The percentage of Union workers is also representative of the nation which is another good sign for Democrats. The state also has a rural and urban mixture throughout the state, which is similar to the United States, which is a good sign for both Republicans and Democrats respectively (Sullentrop, 2004). The state is 84% white, about 11% African-American, and about 3% Hispanic (Missouri Census Data, 2006).

Missouri has been known as the bellwether state because it has picked the winner of every presidential election since 1900, with the exception of the 1956 election (Sullentrop, 2004). The margins between the winner and the loser of the state are usually close, which explains its swing state status. The close margins also mirror the national margins, for example in 2004 Bush beat Kerry nationally by 3% and in the state by 7%. In 1996 Clinton beat Dole nationally by 8% and in the state by 7%. In 1988 Bush beat Dukakis nationally by 7% and in the state by 4% (Leip, 2008).

In the U.S. Senate, the Republicans have won four out of the last six Senate races. In 2006 Democrat Claire McCaskill beat incumbent Republican Jim Talent with 49.6% of the vote (Miller, 2006). This has given some Democrats hope that they could win the state in 2008. In the U.S. House, the Republicans have controlled the majority of the seats since 2000. They controlled five out of the nine seats (Tradahl, 2000, 2002, 2004; Miller, 2006). The Democrats were in control from 1990-1998. They controlled from five (1996-1998) to six (1990-1994) seats out of nine (Anderson, 1990, 1992; Carle 1994, 1996; Tradahl 1998).

In the past three gubernatorial elections both parties have won. They have all won with at least 50% of the vote. Republican Matt Blunt won 51% of the vote in 2004 (AllPolitics, 1996; Cable News Network, 2000, 2004). In the state House, Republicans have controlled the majority of seats since 2004. The Democrats were in control in 2000. But in the state Senate the Republicans were in control of the seats since 2000 (StateVote, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006).

Recent polling data has shown that the presumptive nominee John McCain beating the two remaining Democratic candidates by an average of 12% (Rasmussen Reports, March 24, 2008). The polling firm Rasmussen Reports has Missouri in its Leans Republican column for its Electoral College calculator (Rasmussen Reports, 2008). At this time I am calling the state for the Republican candidate, but it is too early to be certain that it will stay that way. Looking at the past election results this state could swing either way. But at this time the Republican candidate probably has the edge.

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