

**RHODE ISLAND**  
***Winner: Democrat***

***Analyst: Vera Attaway***  
***Date: April 2, 2008***

Located in Northeast, one of the most Blue or Democratic regions, Rhode Island is what is considered Democratic state. For almost a decade, Rhode Island has voted Democrats into federal office with the exception of only four Republicans (Rhode Island Board of Election.1988-2006.). In the past five presidential elections Rhode Island has voted for the Democratic candidate (Rhode Island Board of Election. 1988-2006). In the past four governor elections Republicans have won by receiving close to 50% of the votes, however in 1990 the democrats won by 74.2% (Rhode Island board of Elections.1990.1994.1998.2002.2006.). On the other hand, the state legislature has been predominantly Democrats (Rhode Island Board of Elections.1998-2006). The Democrats have out numbered the Republicans in no less than 26 seats in the Rhode Island senate for the past four terms (Rhode Island Board of Elections. 1998-2006). In the house, the Democrats have control more than 75% of the seats in the past decade (Rhode Island Board of Elections. 1998-2006).

The overwhelming Democratic support in Rhode Island can be somewhat attributed to the 35.5% of voters who are registered democrats (Rhode Island Board of Election. "Registered..." 2008). Although this is not a majority it is significant when compared to the Republicans 11.1% of registered voters (Rhode Island Board of Election. "Registered..." 2008.) Most Rhode Island voters are registered as unaffiliated with 53.1% (Rhode Island Board of Election. "Registered..." 2008). Some claim that the high number of unaffiliated voters can be attributed to Chafee campaign efforts to get Democrats to register as unaffiliated in order to vote in Republican primary (Rothenberg). However, when the 13,596 democrats re-registered as unaffiliated, 3,768 republicans did the same resulting in each party loosing about 5% of party members (Rothenberg). Therefore, the democratic registered voters still significantly out number registered republicans.

The large number of unaffiliated voters is very influential in any election especially when they consist of over half registered voters. Although, some say that today the independent votes are beginning to swing more to the left, it is hard to tell with Rhode Island (Abramowitz). As we can tell with the past election data, unaffiliated voters can swing elections as well as vote both ways. Unaffiliated voters must have voted Republicans into the governor's office in several elections because the Republican Party alone is not large enough to have a large influence on the vote. However, they have also casted their votes for the Democratic Presidential candidates causing the state to go "Blue". In the Taubman Center for Public Policy Survey, the Democratic candidates were both projected to win when paired against McCain (Taubman). Hillary Clinton won over McCain with 43% of the vote compared to McCain's 32% (Taubman). Obama is also projected to win over McCain with 42% over McCain's 30% (Taubman).

Overall, Rhode Island has favored the Democratic party and will probably remain a blue state in the 2008 election. Rhode Islander's believe the most important issues in this year's election are first of all the economy with 57% and then the war in Iraq with only 26% (Fleming and Associates). Terrorism and

Immigration, big republican issues, only favored by 4% and 5% respectively (Fleming and Associates). The priorities of the state's voters may influence the election. A significantly smaller focus on Terrorism and Immigration levels the playing field and moves the debated issues away from strong Republican issues. Democrats also have the advantage of being established in federal offices with approval ratings around 50% (Taubman). The Republican president in office has an approval rating of 15% giving the democrats an advantage because they offer change (Taubman).

As all of this proves, Rhode Island is a Democratic state and is expected to go blue this election.

#### **SOURCES**

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Presidential Election Results" RI General Election. 2004.  
[http://www.elections.ri.gov/2004GE/results\\_main/pres\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/2004GE/results_main/pres_CT.htm)

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Presidential Election Results" RI General Election. 2000.  
[http://www.elections.ri.gov/Election2000/GE2000President\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/Election2000/GE2000President_CT.htm)

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Vote for President by City/Town." 1996.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/1996/presvote.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "General Election: Vote for President by City/Town." 1992.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/1992/GE1992President.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "RI General Election: Vote for President by City/Town." 1988.  
<<http://www.elections.ri.gov/1988/1988GEPresident.htm>>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Federal and Statewide Races." RI General Election. 2006.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/2006GE/TopTicket.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "General Election Results: US Senate by Community." RI General Election. 2002.  
[http://www.elections.ri.gov/2002GE/USsenate\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/2002GE/USsenate_CT.htm)

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "US Senate Election Results by Community." 2000.  
[http://www.elections.ri.gov/Election2000/GE2000USSenate\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/Election2000/GE2000USSenate_CT.htm)

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Us Senate Results by City/Town." 1996.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/1996/ussenate.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "General Election: US Senate." 1994.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/1994/GE94USSenate.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Vote for US Senate and US Congress." 1990.  
<[http://www.elections.ri.gov/1990/1990\\_USSEN\\_CONG.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/1990/1990_USSEN_CONG.htm)>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Federal and Statewide Races." 2006.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/2006GE/TopTicket.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "1st Congressional District Results." 2004.  
<[http://www.elections.ri.gov/2004GE/results\\_main/cong1\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/2004GE/results_main/cong1_CT.htm)>; Rhode Island Board of Elections. "2nd Congressional District Results." 2004.  
[http://www.elections.ri.gov/2004GE/results\\_main/cong2\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/2004GE/results_main/cong2_CT.htm)

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "1st Congressional District Results." 2002.  
<[http://www.elections.ri.gov/2002GE/UScongress1\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/2002GE/UScongress1_CT.htm)>; Rhode Island Board of Elections. "2nd Congressional District Results." 2002. [http://www.elections.ri.gov/2002GE/UScongress2\\_ct.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/2002GE/UScongress2_ct.htm)

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "1st Congressional District Results." 2000.  
<[http://www.elections.ri.gov/Election2000/GE2000USCongress1\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/Election2000/GE2000USCongress1_CT.htm)>; Rhode Island Board of Elections. "US Congressional District 2 Results" 2000.  
[http://www.elections.ri.gov/Election2000/GE2000USCongress2\\_CT.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/Election2000/GE2000USCongress2_CT.htm)

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "US Congress: District 1 Election Results." 1998.  
<[http://www.elections.ri.gov/GE98/GEus1\\_CTY.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/GE98/GEus1_CTY.htm)>; Rhode Island Board of Elections. "US Congress: District 2 Election Results." 1998. <  
Rhode Island Board of Elections. "US Congress Results by City/Town." 1996.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/1996/usrep.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "General Election: US Congress-District 1." 1994.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/1994/GE94USCong1.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "General Election: US Congress-District 2." 1994.  
<http://www.elections.ri.gov/1994/GE94USCong2.htm>

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "RI General Election: Vote for Congress by County." 1992.  
[http://www.elections.ri.gov/1992/GE\\_USCONGRESS\\_CTY.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/1992/GE_USCONGRESS_CTY.htm)

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Vote for US Senate and US Congress." 1990.  
<[http://www.elections.ri.gov/1990/1990\\_USSEN\\_CONG.htm](http://www.elections.ri.gov/1990/1990_USSEN_CONG.htm)>\

Rhode Island Board of Elections. "Registered Voters as of February 7, 2008 by Precinct." 2008. RegSum-Feb7 excel worksheet from <http://www.elections.ri.gov/electmain.htm>

Rothenberg, Stuart. "Rhode Island Senate: Don't Be Fooled-The Bull's-Eye is Still on Lincoln Chafee." July 26 2006. The Rothenberg Political Report. < <http://rothenbergpoliticalreport.blogspot.com/2006/07/rhode-island-senate-dont-be-fooled.html>>

Abramowitz, Alan. "Ruy Teixeira's Donkey Rising: The New Independent Voter." April 26 2005. The Democratic Strategists.  
[http://www.thedemocraticstrategist.org/donkeyrising/2005/04/the\\_new\\_independent\\_voter.html](http://www.thedemocraticstrategist.org/donkeyrising/2005/04/the_new_independent_voter.html)

Taubman Center for Public Policy. February 9-10 2008. West, Darrell. "Hillary Clinton Holds Slim Lead Over Barack Obama in Democratic Presidential Primary." Taubman Center for Public Policy Survey. 2008.<<http://www.insidepolitics.org/REL208.pdf>>

Fleming and Associates. February 24 and 27 2008. WPRI 12. "RIPolitics.TV Exclusive Poll Results." 2008.<[http://resources.wpri.com/Sales%20Packages/RI%20Politics/Poll\\_Results\\_Page2.html](http://resources.wpri.com/Sales%20Packages/RI%20Politics/Poll_Results_Page2.html)>