

### **Southern Presidential Primaries**

The South Carolina Democratic primary turned a spotlight on the South's role in national politics. In the run-up to the primary, candidates and commentators debated the role that the South plays in contemporary politics. At issue is whether Democrats should challenge Republicans in Southern states or concentrate on more promising regions.

This issue of *SouthNow Update* provides resources that help frame the debate over the South's role in presidential elections.

#### **1. Southern Journalists Roundtable in Charleston, S.C.**

The Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life ([www.southnow.org](http://www.southnow.org)) and the College of Charleston ([www.cofc.edu](http://www.cofc.edu)) convened a Southern Journalists Roundtable in Charleston, S.C., on January 30, 2004. Funded in part by the Charleston *Post and Courier* ([www.charleston.net](http://www.charleston.net)), the Roundtable featured a panel of experts on Southern and South Carolina politics.

A highlight of the Roundtable was a presentation by Scott Keeter of The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press ([www.people-press.org](http://www.people-press.org)). Keeter explained how the South resembles the rest of the nation in most areas of public opinion. The few differences, however, cluster around the emotionally charged issues of race, sexuality and religion. On such social issues, the South is more culturally conservative than the rest of the nation. See [www.people-press.org/commentary/display.php3?AnalysisID=85](http://www.people-press.org/commentary/display.php3?AnalysisID=85) for a summary of Keeter's analysis.

#### **2. Resources and Commentary**

“All Eyes on Dixie” by Kevin Phillips. *The American Prospect*, February 1, 2004.  
([www.prospect.org/print/V15/2/phillips-k.html](http://www.prospect.org/print/V15/2/phillips-k.html))

\* An analysis of Democratic possibilities in the South.

“All Eyes on Dixie” by Cliff Schecter and Ruy Teixeira. *The American Prospect*, February 1, 2004.  
([www.prospect.org/print/V15/2/schecter-c.html](http://www.prospect.org/print/V15/2/schecter-c.html))

\* A companion piece to Phillips article, this piece argues that Democrats should focus on non-Southern states and selectively engage the South.

“Fishing for Votes in Dixie” by Ferrel Guillory. *The Anniston (AL) Star*, February 1, 2004.  
([www.annistonstar.com/opinion/2004/as-insight-0201-0-4a30r1821.htm](http://www.annistonstar.com/opinion/2004/as-insight-0201-0-4a30r1821.htm))

\* A discussion of a paradox of Southern politics – Republicans need the South but Democrats nationally succeed with Southern candidates.

“Forget the South, Democrats” by Timothy Noah. *Slate.com*, January 27, 2004.  
([www.slate.com/id/2094552](http://www.slate.com/id/2094552))

\* An argument for why the Democratic Party should not concentrate on the South.

“A Route for 2004 that Doesn’t Go through Dixie” by Thomas Schaller. *The Washington Post*, November 16, 2003.

([www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A40359-2003Nov14?language=printer](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A40359-2003Nov14?language=printer))

\* An argument for why the Democratic Party should focus on the West rather than the South.

“The Solid South,” a PBS documentary broadcast as part of the series *NOW with Bill Moyers*.

([www.pbs.org/now/politics/solidsouth.html](http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/solidsouth.html))

\* This documentary details the South’s political history from Reconstruction to the present and includes an interview with historian Dan Carter.

“John Edwards’ Southern Strategy” by Terry Eastland. *The Weekly Standard*, February 3, 2004.

([www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/003/691zbdss.asp](http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/003/691zbdss.asp))

\* A discussion of John Edwards’ relationship to the Southern electorate.

### **3. Southern Primary Schedule**

The schedule of the remaining Southern primaries follows:

February 10 – Tennessee, Virginia

March 2 – Georgia

March 9 – Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas

May 4 – North Carolina

May 11 – West Virginia

May 18 – Arkansas, Kentucky

June 1 – Alabama

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