

Reagan, FDR Lead Presidential Role Models

When American voters were asked which past President they wanted Barack Obama to model his new presidency after, they did not pick Lincoln or Kennedy or even Washington as their top choice. They picked Ronald Reagan.

According to a nationwide survey conducted by Clarus Research Group this past week, Reagan was the top choice among all voters with 26 percent, followed by Franklin Roosevelt with 18%, John Kennedy with 17% and Abraham Lincoln with 13%.

"Based on these top four choices," said Dr. Ron Faucheux, President of Clarus, "the American people clearly want a President who leads boldly, embodies change, and who can effectively communicate that change."

Presidents among the nation's Founders -- George Washington and Thomas Jefferson --received 4 and 3 percent, respectively. Cold War Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower also received 4 and 3 percent, respectively. Theodore Roosevelt captured 4 percent and Andrew Jackson received 1 percent.

"Reagan was the overwhelming favorite among Republican voters," continued Faucheux. "He was chosen by 59 percent of GOP voters. Nobody else came close."

"Democrats scattered their choices more," pointed out Faucheux. "FDR was their top pick, at 27 percent. He was closely followed by John Kennedy, who received 26 percent. Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, ranked third among Democrats with 14 percent." (*See chart.*)

CLARUS POLL: Best Presidential Model for Barack Obama

Results from a national poll of 1,000 registered voters conducted by Clarus Research Group Jan. 13-18, 2009



	All Voters	Republicans	Democrats	Independents		
Ronald Reagan	26	59	8	22		
Franklin Roosevelt	18	7	27	16		
John Kennedy	17	7	26	15		
Abraham Lincoln	13	8	14	16		
George Washington	4	3	4	4		
Thomas Jefferson	3	2	2	5		
Theodore Roosevelt	4	4	3	6		
Harry Truman	4	2	4	5		
Dwight Eisenhower	3	4	3	3		
Andrew Jackson	1	1	1	1		

	Under 30	Over 65	White	Black	Other
Ronald Reagan	17	21	30	8	21
Franklin Roosevelt	12	27	19	11	12
John Kennedy	21	14	14	38	21
Abraham Lincoln	16	13	12	17	16
George Washington	8	2	3	4	7
Thomas Jefferson	4	2	4	1	2
Theodore Roosevelt	5	3	4	*	9
Harry Truman	1	6	4	4	1
Dwight Eisenhower	6	3	4	3	1
Andrew Jackson	4	*	1	2	2

Other Findings

- Independents favored Reagan, followed by FDR, Lincoln and Kennedy.
- Younger voters (under 30) selected JFK as their favorite. Reagan and Lincoln followed.
- Older voters (over 65) put Franklin Roosevelt first. Reagan was second.
- White voters picked Reagan as their top choice with FDR in second place.
- African American voters favored Kennedy by a wide margin. Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, came in second.
- Home regions of past Presidents can still have political impact. Reagan, from California, did the best in the West (30 percent) and the worst in the Northeast (22 percent). FDR, a New Yorker, scored highest in the Northeast (26 percent) and lowest in the Midwest (15 percent).
- Reagan dominated small town and rural America, winning 31 percent. Among urban voters, FDR led with 23 percent. Reagan was also favored among suburbanites, capturing 28 percent.
- Reagan won high-income voters (over \$100,000 a year) with 33 percent followed by FDR with 21 percent. JFK and Reagan, at 21 percent, tied among voters with incomes under \$50,000 a year.
- Education was a factor in some cases. FDR received 14 percent among voters without a college degree but 25 percent among those with graduate degrees. Kennedy won 27

percent of voters with high school educations and 14 percent among college graduates.

Of the ten presidential choices provided in the survey, four were Democrats, four were Republicans, and two were Founding Fathers. Presidents currently alive were not included.

The following question was asked in the survey: *"If Barack Obama were to select one President from the past as a role model for his presidency, which past President would you want him to use as an example: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, or Ronald Reagan?"*

Clarus Research Group, a nonpartisan and full-service survey research company based in Washington, D.C., conducted the nationwide survey through live telephone interviews Jan. 13-18, 2009 among a random, representative sample of 1,000 registered voters. More information on Clarus is available at www.ClarusRG.com.



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