

By now, I'm sure you've all seen the will.i.am Obama video, "[Yes We Can](#)" (if not, where have you been – under a rock?). But the McCain campaign* has responded with the john.he.is video. [Check it out](#).

(* not really)

The latest count of states won by popular vote in the Democratic primary process, plus the margin of victory:

Obama (19)

Idaho +62
Alaska +50
Kansas +48
Washington +37
Georgia +36
Nebraska +36
Colorado +35
Minnesota +35
Illinois +32
South Carolina +32
North Dakota +24
Louisiana +21
Maine +18
Utah +18
Alabama +14
Delaware +10
Iowa +9
Connecticut +4
Missouri +1

Clinton (10)

Arkansas +43
Oklahoma +24
New York +17
Massachusetts +15
Tennessee +13
California +10
New Jersey +10
Arizona +9
Nevada +6

New Hampshire +3

Assuming Obama takes DC, Virginia and Maryland tomorrow, he will be 7-0 since Super Tuesday (8-0 if you include the Virgin Islands). According to the [AP](#)'s calculations, Obama picked up 90 to Clinton's 60 this weekend. But for reasons that are unclear to me, that doesn't reflect all the delegates at stake. According to the Obama campaign, they came out ahead 118 to 67 (for a net gain of 51), which makes more sense to me.

Obama should also do well the following Tuesday, February 19, with the caucus in Hawaii and the primary in Wisconsin.

This morning I heard a ridiculous segment on NPR's Morning Edition where Juan Williams was noting with concern that Obama's "base" is young people of all races and both sexes, well-educated people, white males and African-Americans. Hence, he is the "Black Candidate," which is a Serious Problem. Huh?

As Kos [notes](#):

One of the hilarious side-effects of every Obama victory is the spin from Clinton quarters and its surrogates and supporters explaining why said victories "don't matter".

Iowa didn't matter because it was a caucus state, and it's undemocratic. Same goes for every other caucus state including **Maine**. The only caucus state that mattered was Nevada.

Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Alaska, and Utah don't matter because they're small Red states that Democrats won't carry in November.

Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Louisiana don't matter because they have black people. Expect the same spin out of DC this Tuesday. Black people don't apparently count.

Washington and Minnesota don't matter because they have educated white people.

In any case, **Washington, Nebraska, and Louisiana** didn't matter on Saturday because everyone expected Obama to win them anyway.

Virginia and **Maryland**, assuming they're won by Obama, will be a combination of the "black people" and "educated people" rationalizations. Throw a little of "Obama was expected to win anyway", and you've got the trifecta.

Illinois doesn't matter because that's Obama's home state. Expect the same spin when Obama wins Hawaii by double-digit margins in two weeks.

Missouri doesn't matter because Clinton sent out a press release claiming she won it.

Colorado was a caucus state, so that leaves **Delaware** and **Connecticut**.

Those are the only two states that apparently matter, giving Hillary Clinton a commanding 10-2 lead among states that matter.

Where does the delegate count stand at the moment? The counts are all over the place. Making matters unnecessarily confusing is the fact that the media has been mixing together "pledged" delegates chosen by the voters in primaries and caucuses and "committed" superdelegates, who are really ***not*** committed in any legal sense and are free to change their minds up to the last moment. Because I believe the superdelegates will ultimately be compelled to follow the will of the voters (more on that below), the only numbers I take seriously are the delegates chosen by the voters. And it can be tough to find those numbers broken out separately.

Associated Press probably has the best delegate tracking system (albeit incomplete), which you can find [here](#). The numbers may have changed by the time you read this, but it has Obama leading Clinton by 59 delegates 952 to 893 among "pledged" delegates (i.e., delegates chosen by voters – the ones that count). ([NBC News](#) has the tally at 943 for Obama and 895 for Clinton.) It shows Clinton with a 243 to 156 lead among superdelegates who have committed to a candidate. Even if you count Clinton's big lead among superdelegates, she would be ahead by only 28 delegates – a margin that will probably disappear on Tuesday.

According to NBC News, the vote count in primaries and caucuses to date is (roughly): Obama 8,230,000 to Clinton 8,029,000 (and bear in mind that there are many fewer voters in the caucuses, which Obama has dominated, than in the

primaries). So Obama has won more states, more total votes and more delegates. He has raised more money (Clinton has had to lend her campaign funds from the fortune she and Bill have amassed by peddling his influence over the past seven years) and he has the momentum. Looks good to me. (But Clinton has the establishment machine.)

Here is the **complete** schedule after Tuesday (with [delegates at stake](#) in parentheses – these numbers include superdelegates from that state **not** just the delegates at stake in the primary or caucus):

Feb 12: DC; Virginia; Maryland (primaries) (237)
Feb 19: Hawaii (caucus); Wisconsin (primary) (121)
March 4: Ohio, Texas, Rhode Island, Vermont (all primaries) (444)
March 8: Wyoming (caucus) (18)
March 11: Mississippi (primary) (40)
April 22: Pennsylvania (primary) (188)
May 3: Guam (other?) (9)
May 6: Indiana; North Carolina (primaries) (218)
May 13: West Virginia (primary) (39)
May 20: Kentucky; Oregon (primaries) (125)
June 3: Montana; South Dakota (primaries) (47)
June 7: Puerto Rico (caucus) (63)

In the absence of some kind of major change in the trajectory of this race, I don't see how Obama fails to come out with a non-trivial lead in delegates chosen by voters. At the same time, given that 796 delegates are NOT chosen by voters, it is unlikely he will have the 2025 delegates need for the nomination. Democrats are starting to come around to the idea that it would DESTROY the party if the party insiders, known as the superdelegates, vetoed the will of the voters. The original idea behind the superdelegates was that they could provide put a front-runner over the top, with a solid mandate, if the outcome of the primaries was fractured among several candidates with no one candidate getting majority support from the voters. But it certainly was NOT intended to **substitute** for the will of the voters.

Democratic strategist Tad Devine had a [good piece](#) on this in the *New York Times* over the weekend:

February 10, 2008
OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Superdelegates, Back Off

By TAD DEVINE

Washington

... [T]he Democratic Party is once again engaged in a nominating process — this time between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama — in which the margin of victory will be achieved only with broad support from the superdelegates, the nearly 800 party leaders and elected officials who become delegates not on the basis of votes cast in primaries and caucuses, but because of their status under party rules.

Democrats created these superdelegates after the 1980 election with several purposes in mind.

Party leaders had been underrepresented on the floor of the 1980 convention, which was the culmination of a bitter contest for the nomination between President Jimmy Carter and Senator Ted Kennedy that left our party deeply divided and contributed to the party's loss of the presidency that year.

Many party leaders felt that the delegates would actually be more representative of all Democratic voters if we had more elected officials on the convention floor to offset the more liberal impulses of party activists.

But the superdelegates were also created to provide unity at the nominating convention.

They are a critical mass of uncommitted convention voters who can move in large numbers toward the candidate who receives

the most votes in the party's primaries and caucuses. Their votes can provide a margin of comfort and even victory to a nominee who wins a narrow race.

The superdelegates were never intended to be part of the dash from Iowa to Super Tuesday and beyond. They should resist the impulse and pressure to decide the nomination before the voters have had their say.

The party's leaders and elected officials need to stop pledging themselves to either Mrs. Clinton or Mr. Obama, the two remarkable candidates who are locked in an intense battle for the Democratic presidential nomination.

If the superdelegates determine the party's nominee before primary and caucus voters have rendered a clear verdict, Democrats risk losing the trust that we are building with voters today. The perception that the votes of ordinary people don't count as much as those of the political insiders, who get to pick the nominee in some mythical back room, could hurt our party for decades to come.

The damage would be amplified if African-Americans or women, two of the party's key constituencies, feel that a candidate who represents their most fervent hopes and aspirations is deprived of a nomination rightfully earned by majority support from voters.

Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Obama, and their campaigns, are pressuring superdelegates to pledge support to them before Democratic voters in the remaining primaries and caucuses have made their decisions. But Democratic leaders need to let the

voters sort out which one of these two remarkable people will lead our party and, we hope, the nation.

After listening to the voters, the superdelegates can do what the Democratic Party's rules originally envisioned. They can ratify the results of the primaries and caucuses in all 50 states by moving as a bloc toward the candidate who has proved to be the strongest in the contest that matters — not the inside game of the delegate hunt, but the outside contest of ideas and inspiration, where hope can battle with experience and voters can make the right and best choice for our party and our future.

Tad Devine, a Democratic strategist, was the chief political consultant to Al Gore's presidential campaign in 2000.

There is a movement afoot among Democrats to demand that elected superdelegates public commit to voting as their constituents have chosen. I will be forwarding some of these things in due course.

I consider it **highly** unlikely that the superdelegates will overturn the will of the voters if Obama emerges with a non-trivial but non-decisive delegate lead from the primaries and caucuses. As Democratic political consultant, Superdelegate-at-Large and DNC Rules and Bylaws Committee member Donna Brazile said on CNN's Situation Room:

"If 795 of my colleagues decide this election, I will quit the Democratic Party. I feel very strongly about this. ... There's no reason why we should decide this election. I feel very strongly."

Like most people, I am often guilty of allowing what I **want** to happen color my judgment as to what I think **will** happen. But I don't see how Obama doesn't take it.