



WMRC Article

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US Elections 2004: Liberal
Howard Dean Thrives on
Novelty

United States: US Elections 2004: Liberal Howard Dean Thrives on Novelty

Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean has leapt up the ranks of centre-left Democrat contenders with a brave anti-war, liberal agenda and wide grassroots support, but can the momentum last? This is the first in a series of articles building up to the November 2004 elections.

WMRC Perspective	
Significance	According to some measures Howard Dean is now the centre-left Democrats' front-runner, under intense scrutiny as a potential challenger to Republican President George W. Bush in 2004.
Implications	Dean has won impressive support by attacking President Bush on areas other Democrats fear to tread. If Dean can sustain momentum (admittedly against the odds) he promises a swing away from the Bush agenda to a more liberal politics.
Outlook	WMRC believes that Dean will ultimately prove unable to sustain his current momentum and that his star will fade once the Democrat heavyweights get into their stride.



Between now and Election Day on 2 November 2004, WMRC will provide extensive coverage and in-depth analysis of the 2004 election campaigns in the US. Analyses will be divided into five different series: 1) Major candidate profiles, of which this is the first; 2) key US House races; 3) US Senate races; 4) and 5) domestic and foreign policy issues influencing the election.

Howard Dean, now one of the leading candidates for the Democratic Party's nomination for US President, was catapulted from near-obscure to front-runner status in the span of one week. He has momentum, a fresh message, a growing army of young, upset supporters who share his drive and idealism, and, moreover, the attention of the media and the other candidates. Can Dean keep up the momentum through the summer doldrums? Will anyone remember who he is by September? Will he be able to keep pulling off fundraising feats to match his unprecedented US\$3m over the internet in a single week? Dean has shown he can sprint with the best of them, but does he have enough to win the marathon?



John Pettitt / DeanForAmerica.com

The Doctor is In

After 11 years as Governor of one of the smallest states in the country, Vermont, Howard Dean announced his candidacy on 23 June for the Presidency of the United States. As the only major candidate from outside the 'beltway' of Washington, DC, Dean is appealing to voters who are tired of the same old politicians. Up until his announcement and subsequent history-making fundraising effort, mostly online, he was catapulted from obscurity to front-runner status almost overnight. The former governor and medical doctor has excited the Democratic base, which consists of the party's liberal wing and most ideological members. His straight talk and willingness to directly and aggressively engage his opponents has captured the attention of liberals and the media.

Ambiguity is the Enemy

Dean has staked out his liberal territory in the crowded field of

Democratic hopefuls by championing the anti-war in Iraq cause, gay marriage, and universal healthcare. This is a hard turn to the left for a governor whose 20 years in Vermont politics were characterised as moderate by most and even conservative by some of his more liberal Democratic colleagues in the legislature. He has even picked up the banner so vigorously waved by the late Senator Paul Wellstone, considered the most liberal member of the US Senate before his tragic death, stating 'I represent the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party.' Dean has also taken the most unambiguous positions on key Democratic issues such as healthcare, the environment, and US foreign policy, often confronting his challengers as the 'me too' candidates because their positions resemble those of President Bush.

The Tortoise vs. The Hare

The eight days following Dean's announcement were electric and carefully choreographed to be just that. With an appearance on the ever-important Sunday morning political programme 'Meet the Press' (which actually went very badly for Dean), his announcement the following day, his victory in an online 'primary' conducted by an advocacy group three days later, and his astonishing last-minute fundraising surge during the following four days, Dean has enjoyed a flurry of national media coverage as he exploded onto the scene. However, after this dash out of the starting gate, Dean's ultimate challenge is to be able to continue to set a steady pace for the next six months. The campaign for US President is a marathon, not a sprint.

The Bottom Line

Howard Dean has enjoyed a meteoric rise into the stratosphere of presidential politics. His emergence from asterisk status to being among the front-runners has been unprecedented. However, his star will slowly cool and fade as the initial burst of energy and national attention dies down. Money will be harder to raise in the third quarter as his army of small contributors becomes tapped out, while his opponents begin to put the squeeze on big contributors to fill their campaign coffers. As their cash rolls in and their campaigns begin to really start up, the heavies will begin to dwarf Dean and his legions of dedicated, yet poorer by comparison, supporters. He will be brash, unapologetic, hot-tempered and interesting to watch, but he will not win.

Campaign Summary

<p>Standing/Poll</p> <p>How the candidate holds up against other candidates, according to the latest poll.</p>	<p>Gallup Organization Poll, 26 June 2003: Dean 6%, behind Lieberman (20%), Gephardt (15%), Kerry (13%), and Sharpton and Edwards (7%).</p> <p>The poll is outdated as Dean has since made his formal announcement and received a strong push in national press coverage for his fundraising at the end of the second quarter. However, it shows that although Dean has risen in notoriety lately, fundamentally, he has a long way to go if he expects to win the Democratic nomination.</p>
<p>Fundraising</p> <p>How much the candidate has raised to date, based on quarterly reports filed with the Federal Elections Commission.</p>	<p>First Quarter 2003: US\$2.6 million (ranked 5th out of 9).</p> <p>Second Quarter 2003: US\$7.5 million (estimate) (1st out of 9).</p> <p>Dean's fundraising in the second quarter was boosted by his formal announcement and his winning of an online poll by a left-leaning advocacy group called MoveOn.org, which occurred within the same week. This helped him to raise more than half of his total for the quarter in just eight days, the bulk of it over the internet.</p>

Curriculum Vitae	
Hometown	Burlington, Vermont
Personal	Age: 54 Wife: Dr Judith Steinberg, two children
Religion	Congregationalist
Education	Yale University, 1971; Albert Einstein College of Medicine, 1978
Professional	Physician, started and ran own medical practice with wife Judy in Vermont
Political	Governor of Vermont, 1991-2002 Lieutenant Governor, 1987-1991 Vermont House of Representatives, 1983-1987 (Assistant Minority Leader, 1985-1986)
Website	www.DeanForAmerica.com

<p>Supporters</p> <p>Who the typical backers of the candidate are.</p>	<p>More than 59,000 individuals have contributed to the Dean campaign and another 53,000 have registered for 'MeetUp', which is an online community-building initiative used by a number of the Democratic candidates, although none so effectively as Dean. Dean's supporters are from the liberal wing of the Democratic party - people who identify with his anti-war stance and his support for gay marriage. He has tapped into the liberals' discontent with fellow Democrats using his mantra, which he borrowed from the late Democratic, ultra-liberal US Senator Paul Wellstone, 'I represent the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party.'</p>
<p>Domestic Agenda</p> <p>Highlights from the candidate's stated domestic policy goals (only issues that are expected to be frequently discussed during the campaign are mentioned).</p>	<p>Gay Rights: Dean established Vermont as the only state in the country that legally recognises same-sex unions and supports leaving the decision up to individual states and extending same-sex benefits to all employees of the federal government.</p> <p>Affirmative Action: Supports the recent US Supreme Court decision upholding affirmative action programmes and would nominate justices that would uphold such programmes in the future.</p> <p>Education: Would reform the 'Leave No Child Behind' programme created by President Bush, scaling it back to give schools more autonomy and increase special education funding</p> <p>Healthcare: Would expand government-provided health insurance programmes to US\$88bn per year to cover all poor children and the poorest families, allow small business to participate in federal programmes, and encourage larger companies to provide more comprehensive coverage.</p> <p>Environment: Supports stricter standards than those in the Kyoto Protocol, and would require power plants to reduce emissions, restore provisions of the Clean Water Act removed by the Bush administration, institute a moratorium on oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and support the development of renewable energy resources and cleaner-burning fuels.</p> <p>Homeland Security: Would dedicate more funds to border control and protecting critical infrastructure, divert funds from the ballistic defence initiative to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and support more programmes to train and prepare 'first-responders' at the state and local level.</p>
<p>Foreign Agenda</p> <p>Highlights from the candidate's stated objectives for foreign policy (only issues that are expected to be frequently discussed during the campaign are mentioned).</p>	<p>War in Iraq: The only Democratic candidate for the Presidency that opposed the war. Now that the war is over, he is critical of the 'lack of preparedness' to quickly restore stability and would send an additional 50,000 US soldiers to support the troops already there. He also criticises the 'false pretences' for going to war considering evidence of weapons of mass destruction has yet to be found and is calling for a formal investigation into the intelligence that existed leading up to the war.</p> <p>North Korea and Iran: Advocates engaging in bilateral negotiations with North Korean leaders to dissuade them from continuing their development of nuclear weapons, and would encourage international economic and diplomatic sanctions against Iran for their efforts to develop the same.</p> <p>Afghanistan: Supports sending additional troops from the US and from allied nations to continue the hunt for Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda and increase security throughout the country rather than just in the capital of Kabul.</p> <p>Pre-Emptive Strikes: Opposes a policy of forcefully and unilaterally taking down regimes the US deems to be a threat, but supports using diplomatic means, economic sanctions, and multilateral coalitions to deal with rogue or failed states.</p> <p>War on Terrorism: Supports aggressive, proactive measures to keep terrorists from</p>

	<p>reaching US shores through a greater US presence in key countries abroad and greater co-operation with allies.</p> <p>Sustainable Development: Advocates the US should more aggressively support international development programmes and programmes to combat social problems that create instability such as AIDS/HIV, environmental degradation and poverty.</p> <p>Foreign Trade: Supports further liberalisation of trade with developed and developing nations but in such a way that benefits the poor of those countries more than the wealthy, and protects workers and the environment.</p>
<p>Campaign Strategy</p> <p>The candidate's strategy for the Primary campaign.</p>	<p>As a governor, Dean is taking a classic 'outsider' approach to the race against his major opponents, all of whom serve in Congress. He is also hoping his hands-on experience will be seen as more appealing than the experience of his major opponents who sponsor legislation to do things, whereas Dean will argue he has actually had to govern and manage; a role more akin to the role of President. He is also differentiating himself from the 'me too' candidates, meaning the other Democrats whose positions may resemble those of Bush, and characterising himself as the liberal in the race. Dean also knows he will not attract the big donors such as the trial lawyers, unions and big business, so he is focusing his campaign on the grassroots level by using the internet. He is counting on strong showings in Iowa and New Hampshire that will convince people he may actually win the whole contest, making it acceptable for those who want to vote for him to do so without fear that they are 'wasting' their vote. Assuming a strong showing in these early primaries in January 2004, he will begin to build momentum going into the medium-sized primaries in early February. If he can survive February, the biggest test comes at the beginning of March with primaries in key states such as California, Minnesota, Massachusetts and New York.</p>
<p>Strengths</p> <p>Best attributes of the candidate.</p>	<p>Dean is a straight-talking, brash, scrappy, unpolished candidate who is unafraid of taking an unambiguous position on even the most controversial of issues. Neither does he shy away conflict with his opponents, which makes for more interesting debates and makes him more memorable to the voter. His experience as a governor sets him apart from his opponents and allows him to take credit for more tangible successes. Dean is a medical doctor, which gives him credibility, since most people trust their physicians, and allows him to criticise his opponents of being 'career politicians'. He is also a dedicated family man with no known questionable financial dealings or personal failings that could be potentially embarrassing if brought to light.</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Potential pitfalls facing the candidate.</p>	<p>Now that Dean has achieved the status of being one of the front-runners and is no longer the underdog, his opponents will begin to go on the attack and the media will increase its scrutiny of his record and take him to task for even the slightest false step. Opponents have already promoted the idea that Dean cannot beat Bush in the effort to peel away his supporters who want, more than anything, a Democrat, any Democrat, instead of four more years of Bush. As governor of a small state, Dean was rarely challenged by the press and never had any political opposition to speak of. The bright lights of the Washington press will test Dean in new ways, and his renowned short temper will likely give him a reputation for being a 'loose cannon' and reckless. Dean is particularly weak on foreign policy issues, and even on some domestic issues he will be challenged since Vermont is one of the smallest states in the country and arguably among the easier to govern. His strategy to 'go left' to win the primary will come back to haunt him in the General Election should he win, since the majority of voters consider themselves to be more in the centre of the political spectrum. Dean's biggest foe is not having enough money to be competitive through the medium-sized primaries in early February, which will not change unless he wins Iowa and New Hampshire or at least comes in a close second with the third-place finisher a distant third.</p>

Outlook and Implications

Presidential campaigns are defined by key moments throughout the race. As the situation stands, this is how WMRC expects events to unfold for Howard Dean at each stage of the primaries.

WMRC Predictions

Iowa Caucuses 19 January 2004	Dean has invested more than any other candidate so far (he began running television ads in late June) and Iowans like to support a more non-traditional candidate. Dean will finish a strong second in Iowa, just behind Representative Richard Gephardt, but it will not give him the bounce he needs going into New Hampshire, as importance of the Iowa caucuses' results has lost prominence with each passing presidential election.
New Hampshire Primary 27 January 2004	Dean will finish a distant third behind Senator John Kerry in first and Gephardt a close second. Senator John Edwards will finish just behind Dean in fourth, taking away any chance Dean has to issue a strong challenge to Kerry and Gephardt.
Overall Primary June 2004	After running out of money and steam following poor finishes in the medium-sized primaries in early February, Dean will drop out of the race before the major contest, in early March.

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