



Friday's political round-up

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Today's installment of campaign-related news items that wouldn't generate a post of their own, but may be of interest to political observers:

* In an interview with the WaPo, Barack Obama explained [his approach](#) to negative campaigning. "I want to campaign the same way I govern, which is to respond directly and forcefully with the truth," Obama said. "That means I'm not going to paint a caricature of Senator Clinton. I think she's a smart, able person. I think anybody who tries to paint her as all negative is engaging in caricature, and when you start slipping into that mode, it's hard to come back." Responding to the notion that this might make him appear timid, Obama said, "First of all, you start losing credibility. Secondly, I'm not that good at saying things I don't really believe. Maybe this is considered a weakness in my political style. I try to stick to what I think."

* In the same interview, the Post noted that John Edwards was critical of Obama yesterday, saying his style is too conciliatory, and the times call for a leader who won't compromise. [Obama suggested](#) Edwards had reconstituted himself since his last campaign. "John wasn't this raging populist four years ago when he ran" for the previous Democratic nomination, he said. "He certainly wasn't when he ran for the U.S. Senate. He was in the U.S. Senate for six years, and as far as I can tell wasn't taking on the lobbyists and special interests. It's a matter of, do you walk the walk that you talk?"

* In still more Obama news, the Illinois senator is [still screwing up the Social Security argument](#). He told the National Journal, "You know, Senator Clinton says that she's concerned about Social Security but is not willing to say how she would solve the Social Security crisis, then I think voters aren't going to feel real confident that this is a priority for her." There is no "Social Security crisis."

* [AP](#): "The Republican Party said Thursday that it would deprive New Hampshire, Florida, South Carolina, Michigan and Wyoming of half their delegates to the national convention because they planned to hold their presidential nominating contests on dates earlier than the party's rules allow. The rules require the punishment of states that hold their nominating contests before Feb. 5." The Republican National Committee vote to punish the five states was 121 to 9.

* The latest [Zogby poll](#) out of Iowa shows Mike Huckabee moving up into second place in the GOP presidential race, while Mitt Romney holds a comfortable lead in the top spot. Zogby poll shows Romney leading with 31%, followed by Huckabee with 15%. Rudy Giuliani is third with 11%, while Fred Thompson is fourth with 10%. No other Republican was in double digits.

* ***Edwards is [poised to pick up](#) the endorsement of Iowans for Sensible Priorities, which reportedly has 10,000 committed caucus goers. The group's litmus-test issue is support for shifting "15% of wasteful Pentagon spending into other priorities." Apparently, Edwards said what the group wanted to hear.***