

Edwards wins 10,000 Iowa pledges

Posted: Friday, November 09, 2007 4:01 PM by Domenico Montanaro
Filed Under: [2008](#), [Edwards](#)



From NBC/NJ's Tricia Miller

DES MOINES, IA -- In what might have been the sweetest endorsement so far, **Edwards** this afternoon got the nod from Caucus for Priorities, the brainchild of Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream.

Caucus for Priorities is the political branch of Iowans for Sensible Priorities, a state branch of Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities. Peggy Huppert, executive director of Caucus for Priorities, said that in the past two years Caucus for Priorities staffers in Iowa attended more than 550 events and asked more than 250 questions. Edwards himself answered questions from Caucus for Priorities staffers 36 times, she said.



Caucus for Priorities represents 10,000 Iowa caucusgoers who signed a non-binding pledge to support the candidate who will cut back Pentagon spending in favor of more domestic spending on programs like education and health care.

"Ten-thousand caucusgoers can tip the scales in a tight caucus," Huppert noted.

Cohen described the endorsement decision process: "There was three criteria," he said. "One was the answers on the questionnaires and the answers to our bird doggers on the stump. The second was viability, the likelihood that the candidate could come out in the top three in Iowa and go on to win the White House. That was where most of the other candidates were kind of ruled out -- the candidates who scored higher than [Edwards]. Third, the criteria was willingness to speak out on the issue, and the senator was excellent on that issue."

He cited Edwards' stand against new nuclear weapons and echoed parts of Edwards' stump speech when he called for caucusgoers to support a candidate who would stand up to special interests in Washington.

"Our politicians in Washington have neither the spine nor the wit to make these choices, and the people who end up paying the price are our kids," he said. "We need a president who will answer to the people, not a bunch of lobbyists."

Huppert said the group would drive get-out-the-vote efforts for Edwards through phone banking, e-mails and direct mailing. She said they also hoped to make him the second choice for caucusgoers who support candidates who were unlikely to be viable in their precincts.

Caucus for Priorities is recognized for its use of political theater, including the priorities moms who give out cookies with the federal budget pie chart on them in icing, the [Topsy Turvy Bus](#) (an upside-down bus with wheels on top), the [Oreo Mobile](#), a car which displays the [federal budget pie chart](#) over the back seat and the [Pig Mobile](#).

In a question-and-answer session afterward, Edwards denied that his campaign has turned negative during this campaign. In response to a question about why he doesn't often draw distinctions between himself and **Obama**, he reiterated that he sees more overlap between his candidacy and Obama's and sees more distinctions between his and **Clinton's**.