

The Huffington Post



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America's Pollsters: I'm Standing By to Take Your Call

Posted April 14, 2008 | 11:10 AM (EST)

I'm starting to feel inadequate. Across the decades since I have been eligible to vote, I have not received one single phone call asking me how I plan to vote.

So I did a mass mailing from my e-mail address file including friends, relatives, people I barely know and people I used to know, but now have no idea who I am. And I asked them: Has any political pollster ever asked you about which candidate you plan to support?

And so far I have not found one single person who has ever been contacted by a pollster. You would think that over the decades a random sample somewhere, sometime, would have touched someone I know. Not yet, maybe not ever!

Maybe you just have to get on more lists. I wonder if I should start entering Publishers Clearing House. Or maybe I'll start voting on *American Idol*. There's an informed electorate for you.

I do believe, however, that the people pollsters pick are out there somewhere. But then I also believed there were WMD in Iraq and that rehab would get Lindsay Lohan to stop downing Jaeger shots.

Faith, after all, is the belief in things unseen. But recent events have badly shaken my faith in those unseen opinion givers who have determinedly shunned me -- and everybody else I know.

One primetime belief-rattler is the curious case of Mark Penn, who somehow thought that it made sense to earn one pay check from Hillary Clinton for gauging voter distrust about trade agreements while he earned a different paycheck lobbying on behalf of Colombia for a trade agreement. Even by today's bizarre political standards, Penn is one strange bedfellow.

This primary season has been especially interesting. For instance, I would love to do a Drexler Poll of the people polled in New Hampshire. The poll results that started with [Barack Obama](#) bopping around the stage like a high school kid who just got a hot prom date were supposed to presage a vote that would spell Hillary's final demise. Instead, with a few well-timed sniffles, Hillary turned a negative into a positive and lived to fight another day.

As I listened to the media's post- New Hampshire excuse-fest, I thought of something Winston Churchill said a long time ago: "Politics is the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month and next year; and to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen."

In my personal Drexler Poll of people polled, I would pin them down: When the pollster interrupted your evening "did you say one thing, and then change your mind? Or did you lie just for fun? If you did lie, were you messing with a system that allows one of the smallest, whitest states in the union to knock people out of the race?"

Being a pollster, I imagine, is not an easy job -- not with absentee ballots, swing-inducing low primary turnouts, and a surly, abused electorate that on any given day is trying to figure out who scares them the least.

And, of course, people tend to say what they feel and not what they'll do -- as brutally honest pollsters have known for a long, long time.

I'm sure that 80 percent of those surveyed would say they would pay \$50 to watch Ann Coulter fight a big mean dog on television. But in this economy, most people would probably not go higher than \$20.

But then again, being a pollster is a great job. Like weather forecasters and other dreamy futurists, you never have to be right. You just have to say something. For weather forecasters, tomorrow is another day. And the futurists, well, they'll be dead by the time we learn we're not going to have flying cars.

So, next up is Pennsylvania, Indiana and then North Carolina. I don't live in any of those places, so I don't expect a call.

But to all the pollsters who want to give us a guide to results of the general election campaign 20 minutes after it starts, I just want you to know: Like the fella in Irving Berlin's song, "I'll be all alone by my telephone ... waiting for ring, a ting-a-ling." And within a five point-margin of error, I promise to tell you the truth.