

[Print](#) | [Close this window](#)

## Women view Clinton withdrawal with sorrow, pride

---

Wed Jun 4, 2008 11:15am EDT

By Andrea Hopkins

CINCINNATI (Reuters) - The win by Barack Obama over Hillary Clinton in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination has left American women both sad and elated -- that a woman came so close, but ultimately missed making history.

"It's a shame," said Cincinnati nurse Nicole Jones, 32. "I can't help but think her being a strong, powerful woman has played a role -- I'm not sure the general public is ready for a strong, powerful female. It's very disappointing."

While Clinton has not yet conceded defeat, Illinois Sen. Obama captured enough delegates on Tuesday to clinch the Democratic nomination, becoming the first black American to win the presidential nomination of a major U.S. party.

Obama will face Republican John McCain in the November race for the White House.

Clinton, 60, a New York senator and former first lady who entered the Democratic race as a heavy favorite, said she would consult party leaders and supporters about her next move.

Some women said Clinton should run again in 2012.

"I would like to have a woman as president. The country is almost there, some people just have to get used to the idea," said Julie Miller, 34, manager of a Cincinnati coffee shop. "She should definitely try to run again."

Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, said there will be a grieving process for those who believed Clinton was the best chance to see a female in the Oval Office any time soon.

"For women of a certain age, and a lot of working class women, that real core of her support, these women never actually thought before there might be a woman president in their lifetime and they started to believe it could happen. And now that's gone. That's the disappointment," Walsh said.

But while some women voters said they were saddened that 2008 is not the year the first woman U.S. president will be elected, others said the historic nomination of an African American took some sting out of the loss.

"I'm not putting my female side first. It's also amazing that we have the first black man who is going to be the candidate. It's historic on both sides," said Heidi Henning, 42, a manager at a trade association in Chicago.

### SEXISM, INSPIRATION

Others hoped it could still be a historic year for women.

"I heard (Clinton) could be the vice president, and that would be great," said Cincinnati marketer Nikki Smith, 25. "It's awesome that she ran and got as close as she did. It's important for women to be in these positions."

Marie Wilson, president and founder The White House Project, which trains

women for political leadership, said women may look at Clinton's campaign with some sorrow because she did not win -- but will also be inspired.

"It's a continuum. It's be an agony at first that she got this far, then it will shift," said Wilson. "Women have latched onto her persistence and courage rather than the fact that she's had a hard time. (We're seeing) more young women saying they are motivated because they have seen her persist."

As the long battle between Clinton and Obama wore on, many women began to believe sexism -- particularly in the media -- was hurting Clinton's chances.

But Rosemary Camposano, communications director of the WomenCount political action committee formed to fight for Clinton's right to continue her campaign, said even that could ultimately be beneficial.

"What it has done is energized a lot of women to get into the process, because women have taken it personally when she is called a bitch ... because that is not about her policies, that is an attack on her as a woman," said Camposano.

"She has sparked what will be the second generation of -- I don't want to say the women's movement -- but women have found a voice with this process that will not go away."

Feminist and author Naomi Wolf said that while she was frustrated by the sexism in the media coverage of Clinton, her loss perhaps had less to do with Clinton being a woman than the fact she faced such a strong opponent in Obama.

"(Women) will give her credit for being up against formidable new product, a fresh, charismatic visionary leader exactly in sync with the times," Wolf said. "There is a lot to be proud of and a lot to regret .... She's already made issue of 'Can a woman run?' much less important."

Cincinnati architect Jane Goode agreed.

"I think people have trouble hearing women, hearing what we have to say. When we're tough they don't like," Goode said as she stopped for coffee at Starbucks. Still, while Clinton ran "an admirable race," Goode did not base her vote on gender.

"I've been an Obama supporter for quite a while."

(Additional reporting by Andrew Stern in Chicago; editing by David Wiessler)

© Thomson Reuters 2008. All rights reserved. Users may download and print extracts of content from this website for their own personal and non-commercial use only. Republication or redistribution of Thomson Reuters content, including by framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Thomson Reuters. Thomson Reuters and its logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of the Thomson Reuters group of companies around the world.

---

Thomson Reuters journalists are subject to the Editorial Handbook which requires fair presentation and disclosure of relevant interests.