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## **Measuring Progress: Analyzing the Use of Progressive Language in Senatorial Platforms**

Today, two years before the 2008 presidential election, policy wonks everywhere are refining their predictions about potential candidates. After disappointment in 2000 and 2004, Democrats are increasingly realizing how crucial long-term positioning is to political victory. The new progressive movement in American politics attempts to use language as a way to connect traditionally Republican voters with progressive ideals. Are Democratic politicians adopting progressive language to prepare themselves for victories? How is 'progressive language' defined? Connecting these questions to speculation on the 2008 race, this paper analyzes progressive language in the platforms of four senators who are potential presidential candidates. Based on content analysis and rhetorical strategies advocated by progressive linguist George Lakoff, it appears that the platforms of Senators Bayh and Biden are particularly strong examples of overall progressive messaging. The platforms of Senators Clinton and Feingold employ less specifically progressive language, but each contains examples of progressive positioning.