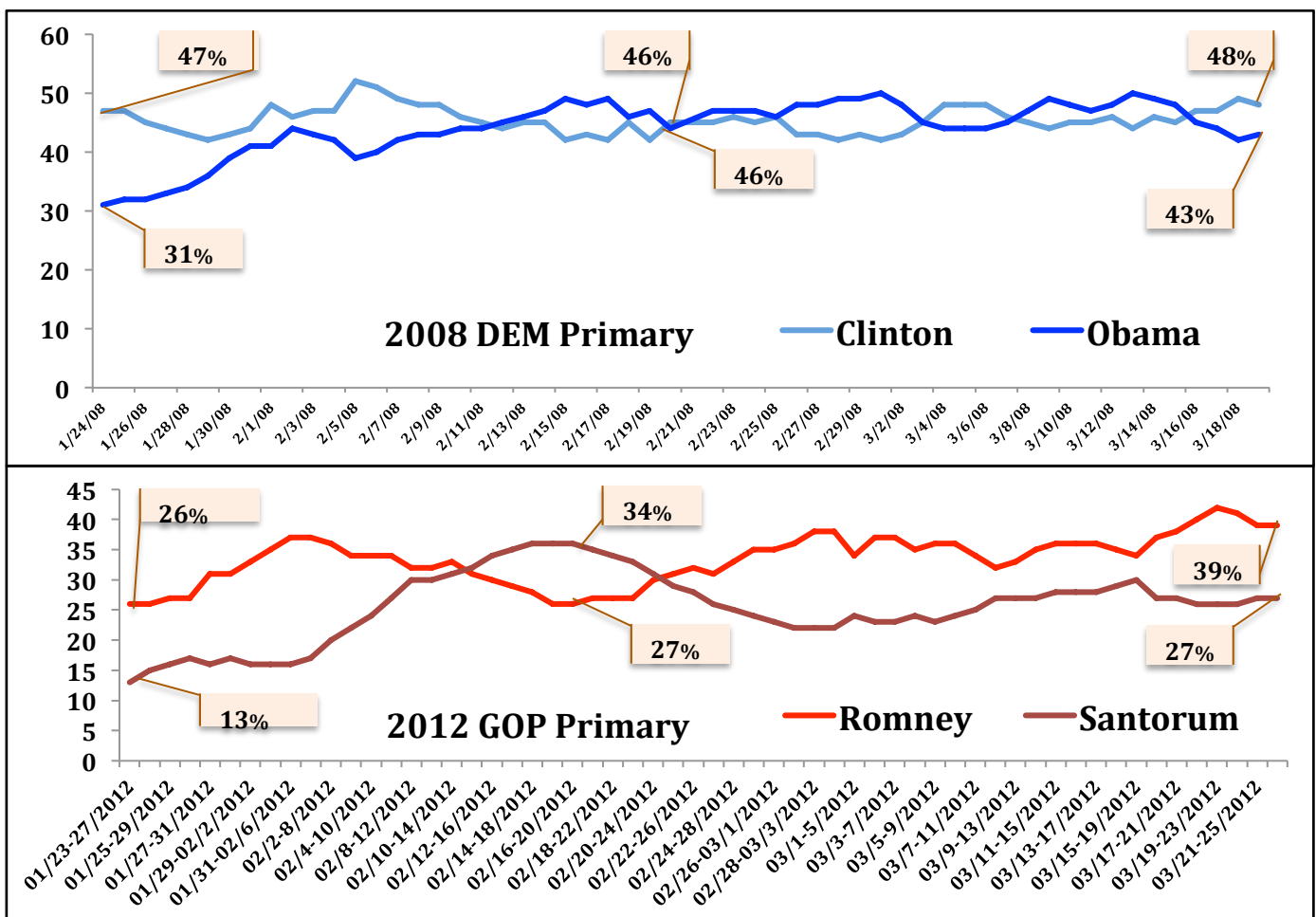


**2008 Democratic Primary Closer Than GOP 2012 Race:** As the Republican primary continues, so does the narrative that the contest has gone on for too long, is headed for a brokered convention, or proves Republicans are disappointed with their candidates. It is important to remember that at this point in 2008, the race between the Democratic front-runners was even tighter.

In Gallup's daily tracking on March 18, 2008, Barack Obama was just five points behind Hillary Clinton, 43%-48%. In earlier Gallup polls, Mr. Obama led Ms. Clinton only briefly at the end of February and beginning of March, and generally by no more than ten points.



In the same time frame, 2012 GOP front-runner Mitt Romney has maintained a wider lead over his closest challenger, Rick Santorum. For example, on March 22, 2012, Mr. Romney led Mr. Santorum by twelve points, 39%-27%, and has been leading most of the time since the Michigan primary in late February.

These trends are a useful reminder that close primaries do not necessary ruin a general campaign. Just like Mr. Obama in 2008, the eventual Republican nominee most likely will emerge stronger and better able to win in the November.