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With anywhere from a third to a half of all people in the undecided column, swing voters are the campaigns' Eldorado. Our two bloggers are decidedly uncommitted. It will be interesting to watch how things develop.



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Two more handshakes

By Beth Todgham, 10/24/03

I had the opportunity to hear two more of the candidates speak this week. An organization called the Every Child Matters Education Fund is holding a series of forums and has invited each candidate to come and answer questions relating to children and families. Each of the candidates will be asked the same six questions by the head of the Every Child Matters organizations and the political reporter from WMUR tv.

John Edwards and John Kerry kicked off the series last Monday.

It was an interesting. With just a single candidate being given all the time they wanted to answer a questions, you could really get a feel where their strengths and weaknesses were on children's issues. Child care, health coverage, economic issues were some of the main topics that were covered in the forum.

I went by myself, but ran into some friends at the forum and joined them for lunch. Edwards had gone first and presented a strong case for universal health coverage for all children as part of his presentation. It was the kind of crowd (child advocates) where no one would disagree with the intent; at lunch, there was some question about how it could be paid for. His solution (and Kerry's, too) when he spoke on the subject was that it could/would be covered by rolling back Bush's tax cuts to the wealthy. I believe everyone at the table

believed that that was too easy and solution and universal coverage would take a bit more to make happen.

It was the first time I had seen Edwards and I have to admit that I was impressed by the ease in which he answered the questions asked. Granted, he was prepped, but I found him very comfortable with the subject matter very interested in what the audience was thinking as well.

Kerry was the same way, but a bit more polished in his approach. He certainly has a wealth of experience behind him in his run for the White House. He was someone I wanted to take a closer look at and it was a good opportunity to start to find out more about him.

Needless to say, I positioned myself to shake both their hands after each of the forums were over. Edwards was on his way to another event, so it was quick handshake. Kerry made a brief stop at a reception after his forum so it was a real handshake there.

The forums are continuing over the next couple of weeks; I hope to make as many of them as possible, but I need to take it a day at a time, depending on what's going on in my real life when they are scheduled. Being an active observer of the New Hampshire Primary can be a full-time job!