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by Kerra L. Bolton, staff writer
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RALEIGH - Independent and Republican voters gave him the boost in Wisconsin.

But to carry that big momentum through the potentially make-or-break Super Tuesday primaries, John Edwards will need a lot more help from traditional Democrats, political analysts said Wednesday.

Independents and Republicans are excluded from voting in six of the 10 Democratic presidential primaries on March 2. In Wisconsin, they pushed

him to a strong second-place finish behind U.S. Sen. John Kerry.

The U.S. senator from North Carolina points to that backing as showing "why I'm the best candidate to take on George Bush." But the message needs to get through to voters who so far have gone to Kerry, the analysts said.

"I don't know how you do that without winning some primaries and caucuses to demonstrate that to Democratic voters," said James Campbell, author of "The American Campaign" and a political science professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo. "If you can't beat other Democrats, then Democrats figure you can't beat Bush."

Super Tuesday is the first test of a national campaign in the Democratic primary because of the fact that 10 states hold presidential contests on the same day. There also are 1,151 delegates up for grabs - more than half needed to secure the nomination.

A CNN poll of Wisconsin voters showed that Edwards beat Kerry among swing voters, 40 percent to 28 percent.

But Kerry triumphed over Edwards among traditional Democratic voters in Wisconsin 47 percent to 32 percent.

Despite that, Edwards might take comfort that he gathered momentum in a state where he had trailed in the polls.

Among independents who said they made up their minds within the last three days but not Tuesday, two-thirds voted for Edwards.

Campaign aides say Edwards raised \$200,000 in new contributions over the Internet since the Wisconsin primary. He has campaign stops scheduled today in New York City, Atlanta and Savannah.

He will be campaigning in Maryland, New York, Minnesota and Ohio in the next few days.

Analysts also contend that out of these states, Edwards has the strongest chances in Georgia, Ohio and New York. These states have the highest number of rural voters or those who faced severe job losses over the past few years.

"The trade issue is important here," said Emery Lee, a political science professor at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. "Ohio has lost 150,000 manufacturing jobs in the past three years."

Edwards' Southern credentials could give him a boost in Georgia. But he could face hurdles in New England states such as Kerry's home state of Massachusetts, Vermont and Rhode Island. The outcome of California, with 370 delegates up for grabs, is anybody's guess.

"It's a Democratic state that just elected a Republican governor," said Anthony York, editor of Political Pulse, a newsletter about California politics. "The main issue among California Democrats seems to be who can beat Bush."

But each state holding a presidential contest on Super Tuesday has its own quirks and concerns.

Here's a snapshot of five states:

- Maryland: A progressive, diverse state. The populace tends to be highly educated. The top issues include environment, urban issues, federal programs and education.

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According to Paul Herrnson, professor of political science and director of the Center for American Politics and Citizenship at the University of Maryland

- New York: A traditionally Democratic state. New York City is heavily Democratic and quite liberal. The loss of jobs, the overall economy and war in Iraq are top concerns for everyone, said Campbell.
- Georgia: The top issue is anxiety over jobs and the economy, said Bobby Kahn, interim chairman of the Georgia Democratic Party. Rural Georgia tends to have a lot of conservative, "yellow dog" Democrats. Edwards' Southern roots will help him in Georgia, Kahn said. But Kerry will do well with veterans in Georgia.
- Ohio: Northern Ohio is part of the "rust belt," a thriving steel industry that is now in decline. Jobs, economy and trade are the top issues, said Lee, a political science professor in that state.
- California: California is a big media state, where campaigns are fought with television ads. Hollywood has a lot of traditional liberals who donate large sums to candidates. Jobs and the economy are top concerns in the Bay Area and Silicon Valley. The state is dealing with a fiscal crisis, York said.

The Associated Press Contributed to this story.

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