

Nationally, Mitt Romney Leads Newt Gingrich By 6%

In a general election match-up, Mitt Romney and Ron Paul do best against President Obama

NEW YORK, N.Y. – January 30, 2012 – As voters in Florida get ready to name the next victor in the first batch of Republican primaries and caucuses, nationally, Mitt Romney is ahead of Newt Gingrich. Among Republicans, over one-quarter (27%) would vote for former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney in the primary while 21% would vote for former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. One in ten would each vote for Congressman Ron Paul (11%) and former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (11%) and three in ten Republicans (29%) are still not at all sure who they would vote for in the Republican primary.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,099 adults surveyed online between January 25 and 27, 2012 by [Harris Interactive](#).

Among Conservatives it is a closer race. One in five Conservatives would each vote for Newt Gingrich (21%) and Mitt Romney (20%) while 13% would vote for Ron Paul and 12% would vote for Rick Santorum. One third of Conservatives (34%), however, are not at all sure who they would vote for in the primary.

Head to head match-ups

When looking at how the four remaining Republicans stack up against President Obama, Mitt Romney and Ron Paul make it the closer race. If the presidential election were held today, 43% of Americans would vote for President Obama, 39% would vote for Mitt Romney and 19% are not at all sure. This is similar to last month when 43% said they would vote for President Obama and 40% said they would vote for Mitt Romney. Among Independents, it's a closer race with 39% voting for the President and 38% voting for the former governor.

It's also a four point race for Ron Paul as 42% of Americans would vote for President Obama and 38% would vote for the Congressman while 20% are not at all sure. Among Independents, Paul is ahead 40% to the President's 36%. It's a nine point race between both President Obama (45%) and Newt Gingrich (36%) and President Obama (45%) and Rick Santorum (36%). Among Independents, President Obama leads Newt Gingrich 42% to 36% with 22% not at all sure and President Obama leads Rick Santorum 42% to 34% with 24% not at all sure.

So What?

So far there have been three contests and so far there have been three different winners, so Florida has the potential to be a real game changer for the Republican primary contest. If Republicans are looking ahead long term to the November contest, then Mitt Romney or Ron Paul should do well as they make it the closest contest against the President. But, Newt Gingrich's big win in South Carolina could give him the momentum to do well in Florida and make it two in a row. As February begins on Wednesday, a new primary race will also most likely be beginning.

TABLE 1
REPUBLICAN PRIMARY ELECTION

"If you were voting in the Republican primary election and these were the candidates, who would you vote for?"

Base: All adults

	Total Jan 2012	Political Party			Political Philosophy		
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mitt Romney	19	27	18	17	20	19	18
Ron Paul	17	11	16	22	13	17	22
Newt Gingrich	13	21	10	12	21	11	7
Rick Santorum	7	11	7	5	12	7	2
Not at all sure	43	29	49	44	34	46	51

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding;

TABLE 2
ROMNEY VS. OBAMA

"If the presidential election were held today and these were the two candidates, for whom would you most likely vote?"

Base: All adults

	Total Oct	Total Nov	Total Dec	Total Jan	Party ID			Philosophy		
					Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Barack Obama	41	41	43	43	9	81	39	16	47	74
Mitt Romney	40	41	40	39	80	10	38	69	30	11
Not at all sure	18	18	17	19	11	9	23	15	23	15

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 3
GINGRICH VS OBAMA

"If the presidential election were held today and these were the two candidates, for whom would you most likely vote?"

Base: All adults

	Total Dec	Total Jan	Party ID			Philosophy		
			Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Barack Obama	45	45	11	82	42	19	50	76
Newt Gingrich	38	36	76	9	36	68	27	9
Not at all sure	17	19	13	8	22	13	23	15

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 4
PAUL VS. OBAMA**

"If the presidential election were held today and these were the two candidates, for whom would you most likely vote?"
Base: All adults

	Total Oct	Total Nov	Total Jan	Party ID			Philosophy		
				Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Barack Obama	41	40	42	9	80	36	17	46	71
Ron Paul	36	38	38	71	11	40	61	32	17
Not at all sure	23	21	20	20	9	24	22	22	12

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 5
SANTORUM VS. OBAMA**

"If the presidential election were held today and these were the two candidates, for whom would you most likely vote?"
Base: All adults

	Total Jan	Party ID			Philosophy		
		Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Barack Obama	45	10	83	42	19	50	75
Rick Santorum	36	75	9	34	66	27	10
Not at all sure	19	15	8	24	15	23	15

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between January 25 and 27, 2012 among 2,099 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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