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Media Relations

UNH Survey Center: Romney Leads Unsettled GOP Field In New Hampshire

May 24, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – Mitt Romney continues to lead a very unsettled field vying for the Republican presidential nomination in New Hampshire. Romney is viewed more favorably than his competitors in almost all policy issues and personality characteristics.

These findings are based on the latest CNN/WMUR New Hampshire Primary Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. Seven hundred eighty-four (784) randomly selected New Hampshire adults were interviewed by telephone between May 28 and May 22, 2011. The margin of sampling error for the entire sample is +/- 3.5 percent. Included was a sample of 347 likely 2012 Republican Primary voters (margin of sampling error +/-5.2 percent) and 289 likely Democratic Primary voters (margin of sampling error +/- 5.8 percent).

In the past several weeks, there has been significant change in the field of potential candidates for the Republican nomination. Mike Huckabee, Donald Trump, Haley Barbour, and Mitch Daniels have all decided not to run, while Newt Gingrich, Herman Cain, Ron Paul, Tim Pawlenty, and Rick Santorum have formally announced their candidacies. In addition, several nationally known Republican figures have not officially entered the race, but have also not discounted a run, including Mitt Romney, Sarah Palin, Rudy Giuliani, Michele Bachman, and Jon Huntsman. But among New Hampshire Republicans, Mitt Romney continues to hold a sizable lead over other Republicans.

In the most recent CNN/WMUR New Hampshire Primary Poll, 32 percent of likely Republican primary voters said they would vote for Romney if the election were held today, followed by Paul (9 percent), Giuliani (6 percent), Gingrich (6 percent), Palin (5 percent), Bachmann (4 percent), Pawlenty (4 percent), Cain (4 percent), Huntsman (4 percent), Santorum (2 percent). Mitch Daniels, who dropped out of the race Sunday, held 4 percent of the Republican vote, 3 percent preferred some other candidate and 17 percent were undecided about who they would support.

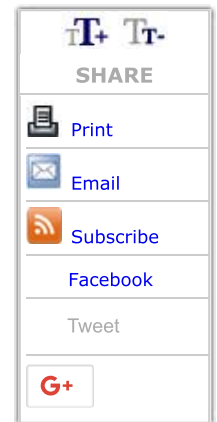
Daniels dropping out of the race has little impact on the field. When the second choice of Daniels supporters is included, Romney still leads with 33 percent, followed by Paul (9 percent), Gingrich (7 percent), Giuliani (6 percent), and Palin (5 percent).

A further indication of the unsettled nature of this race is that the great majority of New Hampshire Republicans have not decided who they will eventually support. When asked how sure they are in their support, only 4 percent of likely Republican primary voters say they have definitely decided who they will vote for, 9 percent say they are leaning toward voting for a candidate, while 87 percent say they have no idea who they will end up voting for.

"The shifting nature of the Republican field and a perception that the 'perfect candidate' candidate has not appeared, has led many New Hampshire Republicans to support the best known candidate, Mitt Romney," said Andrew Smith, director of the UNH Survey Center. "Romney has been the clear favorite among New Hampshire Republicans for more than two years and no other candidate has persuaded voters to move away from Romney."

For complete tabular results, visit http://www.unh.edu/survey-center/news/pdf/primary2012_primary052311.pdf.

The UNH Survey Center has conducted survey research projects at the University of New Hampshire since 1976. The center has grown rapidly during the past 30 years and now conducts approximately 40 to 50 major survey projects each year.



The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

PHOTO

Andrew Smith, director of the UNH Survey Center.

http://www.unh.edu/news/img/Andy_Smith.jpg

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