

The Republican Race for the Nomination: Romney Leads

January 12-17, 2012

- Mitt Romney now leads the other candidates among Republican primary voters nationally in the race for the Republican nomination. He is increasingly viewed as the most electable candidate.
- By a large margin, these voters prefer a candidate who has business experience, and they are focused more on economic issues than social issues. Romney and Gingrich top the list of candidates who would be best at handling the economy.
- Key constituencies within the Republican party – notably, Tea Party supporters and conservatives -- are still divided between supporting Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich, and in the case of conservatives, Rick Santorum. Conservatives will support Romney if he becomes the nominee, but not as enthusiastically as they would Gingrich or Santorum.

The National Race and Key Republican Constituencies

Nationally, Mitt Romney has opened up a lead now in Republican primary voters' preference for the Republican presidential nomination, pulling away a bit from a fractured field. Newt Gingrich is in second, with Rick Santorum and Ron Paul (each coming off a strong early-state showing) just behind.

Behind the horserace numbers lies a still-tight race among some key groups – including, importantly, Tea Party backers, the voters who powered the party's gains in 2010 and may yet be pivotal in 2012. They comprise 44% of Republican primary voters in this poll.

2012 Republican Nomination for President
 (among Republican primary voters nationwide)

	All	Tea Party Supporter	Non-Tea Party Supporter
Mitt Romney	28%	29%	28%
Newt Gingrich	21	28	15
Rick Santorum	16	18	14
Ron Paul	15	12	16
Rick Perry	7	3	12
Jon Huntsman*	2	2	3
Undecided/ Don't know	7	3	8

*Part of the poll was conducted before Jon Huntsman dropped out of the race.

Romney's business experience may be keeping him competitive among Tea Party backers: they're more likely than other primary voters to seek someone with a business background specifically, and not government experience. That may be balancing out the fact that Tea Partiers see Santorum – not Romney – as sharing their values.

What's More Important: Government or Business Experience?

(among Republican primary voters nationwide)

	All	Tea Party Supporter	Non-Tea Party Supporter
Government	12%	8%	15%
Business	44	54	36
Doesn't matter	41	34	47

Voters say issues dominate over personal qualities in this race, and the economy takes precedence over social concerns by wide margins.

Which Matters More in Your Primary Vote?

(among Republican primary voters nationwide)

Types of issues

Economic	75%
Social	17

Candidates'...

Issue positions	73%
Personal qualities	18

It's also still a tight race among other critical groups within the Republican Party, including conservatives (who account for six in 10 voters) and white evangelicals, who make up a large number of Republican primary voters, especially in southern and Midwestern states.

Ron Paul, who is fourth nationally but coming off a second-place showing in the New Hampshire primary - does much better with men than with women, as he did in the Granite state. He also scores well, along with Mitt Romney, among moderates.

2012 Republican Nomination for President

(among Republican primary voters)

	Romney	Gingrich	Santorum	Paul	Perry
Men	29%	18	12	22	7
Women	27%	24	22	7	7
White evangelicals	27%	23	23	13	8
Conservatives	25%	25	24	10	6
Moderate	38%	10	4	23	9
Republicans	28%	21	17	15	9
Independents	29%	23	16	15	2

In many states' primaries, independents can join in the voting along with Republicans; Mitt Romney currently does well with both groups among primary voters, and that may help explain why he draws even in a general election matchup with President Obama, too.

Strength of Support

As this and other polls have noted throughout the contest, the lion's share of voters (74%) say they could still change their minds about whom to support, and the race remains fluid.

In fact, all the top tier candidates elicit reservations among their current supporters, and 62% of voters overall have reservations about their candidate.

Do You Support Your Candidate....?

(Among Republican Primary Voters with a choice)

Strongly favor	15%
Like, but with reservations	62
Because I dislike the others	20

Republican primary voters remain unsatisfied with the Republican field. 68% say they want more candidate choices. This is the highest dissatisfaction has been among Republican primary voters since this question was first asked of them in September, and far higher than it was in January 2008.

Satisfied with Republican Candidates for President

(among Republican primary voters)

	Now	1/9/2012	10/2011	9/2011	1/2008
Yes, satisfied	30%	37%	46%	43%	59%
No, want more choices	68	58	46	50	39

Enthusiasm

After top finishes in both the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary, Mitt Romney holds a lead over the other candidates in this national poll. Should Romney win the Republican nomination, many Tea Party supporters and evangelicals would support him with reservations or only because he would be the Republican nominee – but very few say they would not support him.

35% of Tea Party supporters say they will enthusiastically support Romney if he is the nominee, but they are more enthusiastic about Santorum (45%) or Gingrich (41%).

26% of evangelical voters would be enthusiastic about Romney – but the candidate they would be most enthusiastic about is Santorum (38%).

Among conservatives, 27% would be enthusiastic about Romney, lower than for Gingrich (33%) or Santorum (38%). But 31% of moderates would be enthusiastic about Romney as the nominee, and that's higher than their enthusiasm for Santorum or Gingrich.

If Romney Becomes the Nominee...

(among Republican primary voters)

	All	Tea Party	Evan-gelicals	Conservatives
Enthusiastically support him	28%	35%	26%	27%
Support him with reservations or only b/c he is the nominee	59	58	66	64
Not support him	10	6	7	7

If Gingrich Becomes the Nominee...

(among Republican primary voters)

	All	Tea Party	Evan-gelicals	Conservatives
Enthusiastically support him	26%	41%	27%	33%
Support him with reservations or only b/c he is the nominee	55	52	58	54
Not support him	14	7	12	11

If Santorum Becomes the Nominee...

(among Republican primary voters)

	All	Tea Party	Evan-gelicals	Conservatives
Enthusiastically support him	30%	45%	38%	38%
Support him with reservations or only b/c he is the nominee	51	52	51	52
Not support him	12	2	6	4

Candidate Qualities

Mitt Romney is increasingly likely to be viewed as the most electable candidate: 56% say that, up from 49% earlier in January, and 37% in December.

Which Candidate Has Best Chance of Beating Obama?

(Among Republican Primary Voters)

	Now	1/9/2012	Last month
Romney	56%	49%	37%
Gingrich	17	13	31
Perry	7	5	5
Santorum	5	8	2
Paul	4	4	8

Romney is also viewed as best at handling the economy and unemployment, although Gingrich is close behind, and has risen since earlier this month.

Which Candidate Best at Handling Economy and Unemployment?

(Among Republican Primary Voters)

	Now	1/9/2012
Romney	28%	31%
Gingrich	27	16
Paul	13	13
Santorum	9	12
Perry	7	7

Despite Romney's strengths in electability and managing the economy, it's Rick Santorum who is viewed as best representing the values these voters live by.

Which Candidate Best Represents the Values You Live by?

(Among Republican Primary Voters)

	Now	1/9/2012
Santorum	25%	22%
Romney	20	21
Paul	18	13
Gingrich	16	14
Perry	6	6

Views of the Candidates

With 39% holding a favorable view of him, Mitt Romney is viewed the most positively of the five candidates remaining in the Republican race. 34% have a favorable opinion of Newt Gingrich, though slightly more – 36% - view him unfavorably. 33% view Rick Santorum favorably, though more than half say they still have not formed an opinion of him. Ron Paul and Rick Perry receive net negative evaluations: more of these voters view each negatively than positively.

Views of Republican Presidential Candidates

(Among Republican Primary Voters)

	Favorable	Not favorable	Don't Know/Haven't heard
Romney	39%	22	39
Gingrich	34%	36	30
Santorum	33%	10	57
Paul	27%	34	38
Perry	16%	35	49

Religion and Politics

Most voters do not place much importance on whether or not a candidate shares their own religion; 41% say it is at least somewhat important that they do, but 59% say it's not important.

Important Candidate Shares Your Religion?

(among registered voters)

	Now	9/2011	10/2007	6/2007
Very important	14%	19%	20%	15%
Somewhat important	27	21	30	23
Not very/not at all important	59	60	49	61

But religion could play a role in this year's Republican primaries. Religion is more important to Republican primary voters, and rises to even greater importance among white evangelical primary voters.

Important Candidate Shares Your Religion?

(among Republican primary voters)

	All	White Evangelicals
Very important	20%	38%
Somewhat important	36	47
Not very/not at all important	44	15

40% of voters think presidential candidates should discuss the role of religion in their lives, but most, 56%, think they should not. Here too, views differ among Republican primary voters: More than half – 54% - says candidates should discuss the role of religion in their lives.

Should Candidates Discuss Role of Religion in Their Lives?

(among registered voters)

	All	Rep. Primary Voters
Yes	40%	54%
No	56	43

Campaign Finance

Americans support limiting contributions to political campaigns. 64% favor limiting individual contributions and 67% favor limiting the amount groups unconnected to a campaign can spend on ads. Americans of all political persuasions agree.

Campaign Contributions by Individuals

	Now	7/1999
Should be limited	64%	62%
Allow unlimited contributions	31	36

Spending on Ads by Unaffiliated Groups

	Now	10/2010
Should be limited	67%	72%
Should not be limited	29	20

This poll was conducted by telephone from January 12-17, 2012 among 1,154 adults nationwide. 1,021 interviews were conducted with registered voters and 340 with voters who said they plan to vote in a Republican primary. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The margin of error for the sample of registered voters could be plus or minus three points and five points for the sample of Republican primary voters. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES NATIONAL POLL
The Republican Race for the Nomination: Romney Leads
January 12-17, 2012

q1-q11 SEPARATE RELEASE

q12 How much attention have you been able to pay to the 2012 presidential campaign -- a lot, some, not much, or no attention so far?

***** REGISTERED VOTERS *****

**** Party ID ****

	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	Rep. Primary Voters %	Jan12a %
A lot	35	39	32	35	42	35
Some	41	44	45	36	44	37
Not much	17	14	16	21	12	19
None	6	4	6	7	2	9
DK/NA	0	0	0	0	0	0

q13 Are you generally satisfied with the candidates now running for the Republican nomination for President, or do you wish there were more choices?

* Republican Primary Voters *

	%
Satisfied	30
More choices	68
DK/NA	2

q14 Which one of these candidates would you like to see the Republican Party nominate for President in 2012 - Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, or would you like to see someone else nominated?

q15 IF "SOMEONE ELSE", "UNDECIDED" OR "DON'T KNOW" ASK: If you had to choose, which one of these candidates would you like to see the Republican Party nominate for President in 2012 - Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Rick Santorum?

Mitt Romney	28
Newt Gingrich	21
Rick Santorum	16
Ron Paul	15
Rick Perry	7
Jon Huntsman	2
Someone Else (vol.)	3
Undecided (Vol.)	6
No/No one	1
DK/NA	1

q16 Is your mind made up or is it still too early to say for sure?

Republican Primary Voters W/Choice

Mind made up	25
Still too early	74
DK/NA	1

q17 Which of these best describes your preference for the Republican nomination for President in 2012: 1. I strongly favor my candidate, 2. I like my candidate but with reservations, or 3. I dislike the other candidates?

Republican Primary Voters W/Choice	
	%
Strongly favor	15
Like with reservations	62
Dislike others	20
DK/NA	3

q18 Compared to past Presidential elections, how would you describe your level of enthusiasm about voting in the 2012 Presidential election -- are you more enthusiastic than usual, less enthusiastic, or about the same as usual?

***** REGISTERED VOTERS *****						
**** Party ID ****						
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep. Primary Voters	Jan12a
	%	%	%	%	%	%
More	25	36	25	17	38	27
Less	27	25	27	30	23	24
Same	47	39	49	53	39	48
DK/NA	1	0	0	0	0	1

q19 Which of the following matters more to you in deciding which presidential candidate to support - the candidate's views on economic issues or the candidate's views on social issues?

Economic issues	70	75	68	69	75
Social issues	19	13	22	21	17
Both (vol.)	8	9	8	7	7
Neither	1	1	1	1	1
DK/NA	2	2	1	2	0

q20 If you had to choose, which is more important to you in deciding who to vote for president -- a candidate's position on the issues, or a candidate's personal qualities?

						Oct04b
Position on the issues	76	73	78	78	73	71
Personal qualities	17	18	16	19	18	19
Both (vol.)	5	9	4	2	8	9
Don't know/No answer	2	0	2	1	1	1

q22 Is your opinion of Newt Gingrich favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Newt Gingrich yet to have an opinion?

						Nov11a
Favorable	17	31	6	18	34	19
Not favorable	49	34	60	49	36	41
Undecided	21	25	14	25	24	18
Haven't heard enough	13	10	20	8	6	22

Q21 SEPARATE RELEASE

q23 Is your opinion of Jon Huntsman favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Jon Huntsman yet to have an opinion?

***** REGISTERED VOTERS *****

**** Party ID ****

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep. Primary Voters	Nov11a
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Favorable	8	8	9	9	9	8
Not favorable	19	18	24	15	17	15
Undecided	20	20	16	24	21	18
Haven't heard enough	49	51	49	49	50	59
Refused	4	3	2	3	3	0

q24 Is your opinion of Ron Paul favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Ron Paul yet to have an opinion?

Favorable	20	20	13	27	27	16
Not favorable	33	38	39	24	34	32
Undecided	23	19	18	32	19	21
Haven't heard enough	23	23	30	17	19	31
Refused	1	0	0	0	1	0

q25 Is your opinion of Rick Perry favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Rick Perry yet to have an opinion?

Favorable	10	20	4	7	16	13
Not favorable	43	28	51	47	35	40
Undecided	22	29	16	24	29	21
Haven't heard enough	25	23	29	22	20	26
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0

q26 Is your opinion of Mitt Romney favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Mitt Romney yet to have an opinion?

Favorable	21	37	12	19	39	25
Not favorable	35	19	48	34	22	31
Undecided	29	29	24	34	29	26
Haven't heard enough	15	15	17	13	10	18
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0

q27 Is your opinion of Rick Santorum favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Rick Santorum yet to have an opinion?

Favorable	16	29	7	14	33	7
Not favorable	23	10	32	25	10	17
Undecided	18	15	14	25	20	15
Haven't heard enough	42	45	47	36	37	60
Refused	1	1	0	0	0	1

q28 Regardless of how you intend to vote in 2012, which one of these candidates do you think has the best chance of beating Barack Obama in the general election in November 2012 -- Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Rick Santorum?

	Republican Primary Voters	Jan12a
	%	%
Mitt Romney	56	49
Newt Gingrich	17	13
Rick Perry	7	5
Rick Santorum	5	8
Ron Paul	4	4
Jon Huntsman	0	1
All of them (Vol.)	2	1
None of them (Vol.)	2	3
DK/NA	7	16

q29 Regardless of how you intend to vote in 2012, which one of these candidates do you think most represents the values you try to live by -- Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Rick Santorum?

Rick Santorum	25	22
Mitt Romney	20	21
Ron Paul	18	13
Newt Gingrich	16	14
Rick Perry	6	6
Jon Huntsman	3	3
None of them (Vol.)	2	3
DK/NA	10	18

q30 Regardless of how you intend to vote in 2012, which candidate do you trust most to deal with the economy and unemployment -- Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Rick Santorum?

Mitt Romney	28	31
Newt Gingrich	27	16
Ron Paul	13	13
Rick Santorum	9	12
Rick Perry	7	7
Jon Huntsman	1	2
None of them (Vol.)	3	2
All of them (vol.)	na	1
DK/NA	12	16

q31 Would you prefer the Republican nominee for president be someone whose experience has been mostly in politics and government, or someone whose experience has been mostly in the business or private sector, or doesn't it matter to you?

		Nov11a
Mostly politics & government	12	14
Mostly business	44	40
Doesn't matter	41	41
DK/NA	3	5

q32-33 BLANK

q34 If Newt Gingrich became the Republican nominee for President, would you enthusiastically support him, support him but with reservations, support him only because he is the Republican Party nominee, or not support him?

	Republican Primary Voters	Jan12a
	%	%
Enthusiastically support	26	29
Support with reservations	33	33
Support only because nominee	22	18
Not support	14	17
Don't know/No answer	5	3

q35 If Jon Huntsman became the Republican nominee for President, would you enthusiastically support him, support him but with reservations, support him only because he is the Republican Party nominee, or not support him?

Enthusiastically support	8	12
Support with reservations	33	27
Support only because nominee	30	33
Not support	15	17
Don't know/No answer	14	11

q36 If Ron Paul became the Republican nominee for President, would you enthusiastically support him, support him but with reservations, support him only because he is the Republican Party nominee, or not support him?

Enthusiastically support	17	15
Support with reservations	35	35
Support only because nominee	24	26
Not support	19	20
Don't know/No answer	5	4

q37 If Rick Perry became the Republican nominee for President, would you enthusiastically support him, support him but with reservations, support him only because he is the Republican Party nominee, or not support him?

Enthusiastically support	16	17
Support with reservations	31	35
Support only because nominee	28	22
Not support	20	20
Don't know/No answer	5	6

q38 If Mitt Romney became the Republican nominee for President, would you enthusiastically support him, support him but with reservations, support him only because he is the Republican Party nominee, or not support him?

Enthusiastically support	28	27
Support with reservations	38	40
Support only because nominee	21	22
Not support	10	9
Don't know/No answer	3	2

q39 If Rick Santorum became the Republican nominee for President, would you enthusiastically support him, support him but with reservations, support him only because he is the Republican Party nominee, or not support him?

	Republican Primary Voters	Jan12a
	%	%
Enthusiastically support	30	33
Support with reservations	31	26
Support only because nominee	20	22
Not support	12	11
Don't know/No answer	7	8

q40-q63 SEPARATE RELEASE

q64 Should presidential candidates discuss the role of religion in their lives or is this something that should not be part of a presidential campaign?

	***** REGISTERED VOTERS *****					
	**** Party ID ****					
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep. Primary Voters	Jun04a
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Should discuss	40	54	31	38	54	42
Should not	56	42	66	56	43	53
Don't know/No answer	4	4	3	6	3	5

q65 What worries you more--public officials who don't pay enough attention to religion and religious leaders, or public officials who are too close to religion and religious leaders?

						Nov04a
Don't pay enough	29	42	20	27	40	35
Pay too much	61	48	71	61	52	51
Depends (Vol.)	3	4	3	3	4	3
Don't know/No answer	7	6	6	9	4	11

q66 Thinking about your vote for president this year, how important is it that a candidate shares your religious beliefs -- is it very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

						Jan12a
Very important	14	22	13	9	20	23
Somewhat important	27	34	25	24	36	25
Not very important	23	19	21	28	20	20
Not at all important	36	26	41	40	24	32
DK/NA	0	0	0	0	0	0

q67 Which one of the following two positions on campaign financing do you favor more: limiting the amount of money individuals can contribute to political campaigns, or allowing individuals to contribute as much money to political campaigns as they'd like?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jul199a
	%	%	%	%	%
Limiting	64	62	66	65	62
Allowing	31	32	32	29	36
DK/NA	5	6	2	6	2

q68 Currently, groups not affiliated with a candidate are able to spend unlimited amounts of money on advertisements during a political campaign. Do you think this kind of spending should be limited by law, or should it remain unlimited?

**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****

***** Party ID *****

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Oct10e
	%	%	%	%	%
Should be limited	67	62	70	68	72
Should remain unlimited	29	34	27	28	20
Don't know/No answer	4	4	3	4	8

Q69-q70 SEPARATE RELEASE

q71 Which of these comes closest to your view? 1. Abortion should be generally available to those who want it, 2. Abortion should be available but under stricter limits than it is now, or 3. Abortion should not be permitted?

					Sep11a
Generally available	37	23	47	37	31
Available but limits	37	41	38	33	42
Should not be permitted	23	33	12	26	23
Don't know/No answer	4	2	4	4	4

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1154	
Republicans	322	286 (25%)
Democrats	400	403 (35%)
Independents	432	465 (40%)

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Registered Voters	1021	911
Republicans	302	253 (28%)
Democrats	359	325 (36%)
Independents	360	333 (36%)
Republican Primary Voters	340	293