

## The Republican Nomination Race: Romney, Cain Move to the Top

September 28-October 2, 2011

- Mitt Romney and Herman Cain are now the leading preferences of Republican primary voters nationwide, followed by Rick Perry. But this is still a very fluid race; three-quarters say they could still change their minds.
- Tea Party backers have shifted this race: they've now thrown more support behind Herman Cain, pushing him up into a first-place tie, and away from former frontrunner Rick Perry.
- Republicans name Romney (32%), by a wide margin over Perry (21%) and Cain (8%), as the candidate with the best odds of winning the White House for them.
- 63% of Republican primary voters have yet to form an opinion of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. They are mixed about the idea of Christie entering the race, and three in 10 don't have an opinion on that.

### The Republican Race

In the past few weeks, there has been a shuffle atop the still fluid -- and crowded -- Republican race for the presidential nomination. Mitt Romney and Herman Cain are now tied atop the leaderboard of Republican primary candidates; businessman Herman Cain has vaulted into that position with strong Tea Party backing. Rick Perry - who led this field just weeks ago - has slipped to third place, his Tea Party support cut in half.

Still, no candidate has separated themselves from the pack. Romney has not significantly added to his total support; rather, some conservatives' preference has shifted from Perry to Cain.

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

	Now	Two weeks ago
Mitt Romney	17%	16%
Herman Cain	17	5
Rick Perry	12	23
Newt Gingrich	8	7
Ron Paul	7	5
Michele Bachmann	4	7
Rick Santorum	3	1
Jon Huntsman	2	1
Undecided/Don't know	18	22

Two weeks ago, Cain was an afterthought among the conservatives who comprise the majority of Republican primary voters -- polling at just 6% support. Today Cain is the leading candidate

among self-described conservatives, with 21%. Romney is second among this group at 15% - holding about steady – and Perry has slipped slightly to 13% from 16%.

And Cain is now the favorite of Tea Party supporters. He gets 24% from them (up from 7% in this poll two weeks ago) and leads Romney (17%), Gingrich (13%) and Perry (12%).

**Tea Party Supporters: 2012 Republican Nomination for President**

(among Republican primary voters who support the Tea Party)

	Now	Two weeks ago
Herman Cain	24%	7%
Mitt Romney	17	12
Newt Gingrich	13	8
Rick Perry	12	30
Michele Bachmann	4	8
Ron Paul	2	6
Jon Huntsman	1	0
Rick Santorum	1	1
Undecided/Don't know	16	18

However, it is still early in the nomination process, and the race remains fluid: 76% of Republican primary voters with a choice say it's too soon to say for sure who they support for the nomination, and just 19% say their minds are made up. This is similar to the state of the race in late 2007.

**Mind Made Up Whom to Support?**

(among Republican Primary Voters with a Choice)

	Now	12/2007
Yes	19%	23%
Too early	76	76

Among the candidates, no one has solidified support: everyone's voters say their choice is changeable.

**Candidate Qualities**

The “electability” argument has been a point of contention in the race so far. To primary voters, Mitt Romney is widely seen as the candidate with best shot to defeat President Barack Obama: 32% pick him when asked who is best able to do that. Perry is named by 21%. Cain, at 8%, is not among the top mentions on this measure.

**Which Candidate is Most Likely to Beat Obama?**

(Among Republican Primary Voters)

Mitt Romney	32%
Rick Perry	21
Herman Cain	8
Michele Bachmann	3
Newt Gingrich	2
Ron Paul	2
Rick Santorum	2
Jon Huntsman	1
Undecided/Don't know	16

Romney is also the top pick when asked who exhibits the strongest leadership. Perry follows with 23%, and Newt Gingrich comes in third. Just 9% mention Cain.

Cain's strongest suit is being seen as caring: he and Mitt Romney top the list of candidates who are seen to care most about people. Rick Perry follows.

The candidates are more closely crowded on who best shares voters' values; Romney, Perry, Bachmann and Cain all do well on this measure.

	<b>Which Candidate...</b>		
	(Among Republican Primary Voters)		
	Strongest Leadership	Cares about People	Shares Your Values
Mitt Romney	26%	16%	15%
Rick Perry	23	12	12
Newt Gingrich	14	6	6
Herman Cain	9	16	14
Michele Bachmann	3	8	13
Ron Paul	3	9	8
Jon Huntsman	2	2	1
Rick Santorum	2	3	5
Undecided/Don't know	13	18	19

### Other Possible Candidates

As is typical in a nomination race's early stages, Republican voters voice mixed satisfaction with their choices; voters routinely ask for more and this year is no exception. Satisfaction with the candidates is currently about the same level as it was in the fall of 2007.

	<b>Satisfied with Republican Candidates for President</b>		
	(among Republican primary voters)		
	Now	Two weeks ago	9/2007
Yes, satisfied	46%	43%	45%
No, want more choices	46	50	49

The poll asked whether Republican voters would like to see New Jersey Chris Christie (the subject of speculation last week) or former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin run for the nomination.

Republican primary voters are ambivalent about Christie's possible entry, and outright negative about Sarah Palin's. Tea Party backers are as mixed on the prospect of Christie as all Republican voters are. Those who want more choices are a bit more likely than those who are satisfied to want Christie to get in.

	<b>Would You Like to See.... Get In the Race?</b>		
	(Republican Primary Voters)		
	Yes	No	Not sure/Don't know
Chris Christie	32%	38	30
Sarah Palin	23%	74	3

Christie is seen favorably by Republican Primary voters (including conservatives and Tea Party supporters), but most still don't have an opinion of him; among voters overall he is even less well known.

### Views of Chris Christie

	All voters	Republican Primary Voters
Favorable	14%	29%
Unfavorable	15	9
Undecided/Haven't heard enough	70	63

Palin continues to receive negative ratings from voters overall, but views of her are more positive among Republican primary voters.

### Views of Sarah Palin

	All voters	Republican Primary Voters
Favorable	21%	41%
Unfavorable	50	33
Undecided/Haven't heard enough	28	26

## The Debates

Eight in ten Republican primary voters say candidates' debate performances are at least somewhat important to their candidate assessments, and most Republican primary voters say they've watched some of them.

### Are You Watching the Republican Debates?

	All	Republican primary voters
Yes	40%	58%
No	60	42

Some of the debates' more spontaneous exchanges have drawn attention. Rick Perry's policies in Texas regarding in-state tuition for the children of illegal immigrants drew fire from other candidates; most Republicans oppose the general notion of providing this tuition, to an even greater degree than Americans overall.

### Should Children of Illegal Immigrants Qualify for In-State Tuition?

	All	Republicans
Yes	25%	10%
No	68	86

Americans favor the idea of allowing gays and lesbians to serve in the armed forces openly. Republicans are more mixed.

### Should Gays and Lesbians Be Able to Serve Openly in the Military?

	All	Republicans
Favor strongly	50%	28%
Favor somewhat	18	20
<b>NET Favor</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>48%</b>
Oppose somewhat	15%	29%
Oppose strongly	7	12
<b>NET Oppose</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>41%</b>

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This poll was conducted by telephone from September 28-October 2, 2011 among 1,012 adults nationwide. 903 interviews were conducted with registered voters and 324 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 six 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 POLL**

**The Republican Nomination Race: Romney and Cain Move to the Top  
September 28 - October 2, 2011**

q18 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 **				Sep11a
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
A lot	32	40	29	29	30
Some	38	38	37	39	39
Not much	22	18	22	24	22
None	8	4	12	8	8
DK/NA	0	0	0	0	1

q19 Are you generally satisfied with the candidates now running for the Republican nomination for President, or do you wish there were more choices?

	* REPUBLICAN PRIMAY VOTERS *		Sep11a
	Total	Tea Party	
	%	%	%
Satisfied	46	60	43
More choices	46	36	50
DK/NA	8	4	7

q20 Which one of these candidates would you like to see the Republican Party nominate for President in 2012 - Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, or would you like to see someone else nominated? IF SOMEONE ELSE, ASK: Who would you like to see nominated?

Mitt Romney	17	17	16
Herman Cain	17	24	5
Rick Perry	12	12	23
Newt Gingrich	8	13	7
Ron Paul	7	2	5
Michele Bachmann	4	4	7
Rick Santorum	3	1	1
Jon Huntsman	2	1	1
Undecided (Vol.)	8	9	12
No/No one	2	3	2
Someone else	10	8	11
DK/NA	10	7	10

q21 Is your mind made up or is it still too early to say for sure?

	REPUBLICAN PRIMARY VOTERS WITH A CANDIDATE CHOICE	
	%	
Mind made up	19	
Too early to say for sure	76	
DK/NA	5	

q22 Which one of these candidates do you think cares most about the needs and problems of people like yourself? Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Rick Santorum?

\* REPUBLICAN PRIMAY VOTERS \*

	Total	Tea Party
	%	%
Mitt Romney	16	12
Herman Cain	16	21
Rick Perry	12	13
Ron Paul	9	6
Michele Bachmann	8	10
Newt Gingrich	6	8
Rick Santorum	3	1
Jon Huntsman	2	2
All of them (vol.)	4	6
None of them (vol.)	6	3
DK/NA	18	16

q23 Which one of these candidates do you think has the strongest leadership qualities? Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Rick Santorum?

Mitt Romney	26	25
Rick Perry	23	21
Newt Gingrich	14	20
Herman Cain	9	10
Michele Bachmann	3	3
Ron Paul	3	1
Jon Huntsman	2	2
Rick Santorum	2	0
All of them (vol.)	1	1
None of them (vol.)	4	4
DK/NA	13	13

q24 Which one of these candidates do you think most represents the values you try to live by? Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Rick Santorum?

Mitt Romney	15	14
Herman Cain	14	20
Michele Bachmann	13	17
Rick Perry	12	13
Ron Paul	8	5
Newt Gingrich	6	10
Rick Santorum	5	2
Jon Huntsman	1	1
All of them (vol.)	2	2
None of them (vol.)	5	4
DK/NA	19	12

q25 Which one of these candidates do you think has the best chance of beating Barack Obama in the general election in November 2012? Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, or Rick Santorum?

\* REPUBLICAN PRIMAY VOTERS \*

	Total	Tea Party
	%	%
Mitt Romney	32	31
Rick Perry	21	19
Herman Cain	8	13
Michele Bachmann	3	2
Newt Gingrich	2	4
Ron Paul	2	1
Rick Santorum	2	0
Jon Huntsman	1	0
All of them (vol.)	7	9
None of them (vol.)	6	4
DK/NA	16	17

q26 BLANK

q27 How important is a candidate's debate performance in deciding your vote for the Republican nominee for president -- very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important?

Very important	34	33
Somewhat important	48	52
Not very important	11	9
Not at all important	7	5
DK/NA	0	1

q28-29 BLANK

q30 Is your opinion of Sarah Palin favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Sarah Palin yet to have an opinion?

\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*

	Total	Rep. Primary voters	Sep11a
	%	%	%
Favorable	21	41	20
Not favorable	50	33	62
Undecided	18	22	14
Haven't heard enough	10	4	3
Refused	1	0	1

q31 Is your opinion of Chris Christie favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Chris Christie yet to have an opinion?

Favorable	14	29
Not favorable	15	9
Undecided	18	18
Haven't heard enough	52	45
Refused	1	0



q32 Would you like to see Sarah Palin run for President of the United States in 2012, or not?

	** REGISTERED VOTERS **		
	Total	Rep. Primary voters	Jun11a
	%	%	%
Would	20	23	25
Would not	75	74	66
Don't know/No answer	5	3	9

q33 Would you like to see Chris Christie run for President of the United States in 2012, or not?

Would	20	32
Would not	42	38
Don't know/No answer	38	30

q34-47 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q48 So far, have you watched or listened to any of the recent debates among the Republican candidates running for president?

	**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****	
	Total	Rep. Primary voters
	%	%
Yes	40	58
No	60	42
DK/NA	0	0

q49-50 BLANK

q51 Do you favor or oppose allowing the children of illegal immigrants to attend state college at the lower tuition rate of state residents?

	*** Party ID ***			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Favor	25	10	32	29
Oppose	68	86	60	63
DK/NA	7	4	8	8

q52 BLANK

q53 Do you favor or oppose allowing gay men and lesbians to serve openly in the military?  
IF FAVOR/OPPOSE, ASK: Do you favor/oppose that strongly or not so strongly?

					Nov10c
					%
Favor strongly	50	28	68	49	53
Favor not so strongly	18	20	13	20	16
Oppose strongly	15	29	8	13	15
Oppose not so strongly	7	12	3	6	8
DK/NA	10	11	8	12	8

	<b>UNWEIGHTED</b>	<b>WEIGHTED</b>
Total Respondents	1012	
Total Registered Voters	903	799
Total Republicans	266	247 (24%)
Total Democrats	343	316 (31%)
Total Independents	403	449 (45%)
Total Republican Primary Voters	324	274