



Monmouth University Poll

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NATIONAL: TRUMP WIDENS LEAD

GOP voters prefer two split-field debates over a "Top Ten"

West Long Branch, NJ – Donald Trump has widened his national lead in the latest **Monmouth**University Poll of Republican voters and now holds a more than 2-to-1 advantage over his nearest rivals,
Jeb Bush and Scott Walker. The poll also found that few GOP voters like the idea of a "Top Ten" debate, with many preferring back-to-back debates with the field randomly split in half.

When Republicans and Republican-leaning voters are asked who they would support for the GOP nomination for president, Donald Trump leads the pack at 26%, with Jeb Bush (12%) and Scott Walker (11%) following behind. The remainder of the "top ten" includes Ted Cruz (6%), Mike Huckabee (6%), Ben Carson (5%), Chris Christie (4%), Rand Paul (4%), Marco Rubio (4%), and John Kasich (3%). Carly Fiorina and Rick Perry each earn 2% and Bobby Jindal, Rick Santorum, Lindsey Graham, George Pataki, and Jim Gilmore each get 1% or less. Another 10% of GOP voters say they still are unsure who they will support for the party's nomination.

Compared to the *Monmouth University Poll* released three weeks ago, Trump's support has increased by 13 points. Walker's support has increased by 4, while Bush and Cruz have decreased by 3 points. No other candidate's support has changed by more than 2 percentage points, but the undecided vote went down by 8 points.

Trump's support spans nearly all demographic groups:

- *Ideology* Trump leads Walker 27% to 16% among very conservative voters; has 22% support among somewhat conservative voters to 14% for Bush and 12% for Walker; and takes 28% of the moderate to liberal voter compared to 20% for Bush.
- *Tea Party* Tea Party supporters back Trump (35%) over Walker (15%) and Cruz (11%). Non-Tea Party supporters split their top support between Trump (20%) and Bush (16%).
- Age Trump (26%) has a clear lead over Bush (15%) and Walker (12%) among voters age 50 and older. Those under 50 years old also prefer Trump (26%) over Walker (10%) and Bush (9%).

• Gender – Trump leads among both male and female Republicans, with men (32%) giving him a large advantage over Bush (13%) and Walker (11%). Women (20%) give him a narrower lead over Walker (12%) and Bush (11%).

"Republican support for Donald Trump just continues to grow with no clear sense of who his constituency really is," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ. "This makes it very difficult for his opponents to figure out how to take him on in the upcoming debate."

The top ten candidates in the field, based on a national polling average, will make it into the first sanctioned GOP debate later this week. Few Republican voters are on board with this idea. When presented with three possible scenarios to determine who gets into the first debate, nearly half (45%) prefer to have two back-to-back debates with the field randomly split in half. Another 29% say it would be better to put all the declared candidates together on one stage. Just 23% favor using polls to select a "top ten" group of candidates for the main debate while having the remaining candidates participate in a separate debate.

The chart to the right shows just how close some of these candidates are to the debate cut-off and how the sampling margin of error alone has the potential to change their order in the polling average. Only five candidates – Trump, Bush, Walker, Cruz, and Huckabee – are definitely in the top tier of candidates, while just two – Pataki and Gilmore – would not make it into the top ten even when margin of error is taken into account. The poll results for the remaining 10 candidates overlap when the margin of error is considered, making it unclear who is truly in the top ten.

"I suppose Fox hoped that a top tier would emerge by the time the first debate rolled around. But based on current polling, there's no good rationale for arbitrarily selecting a top ten," said Murray.

GOP Candidate Support Range including margin of potential sampling error							
Monmouth University Poll – August 2015							
Candidate	Support	Lower Margin	Upper Margin				
Trump	26.0%	21.8	30.2				
Bush	12.2%	9.1	15.3				
Walker	11.1%	8.1	14.1				
Cruz	5.8%	3.6	8.0				
Huckabee	5.7%	3.5	7.9				
Carson	4.6%	2.6	6.6				
Christie	4.4%	2.4	6.4				
Paul	4.4%	2.4	6.4				
Rubio	4.4%	2.4	6.4				
Kasich	3.2%	1.5	4.9				
Fiorina	1.9%	0.6	3.2				
Perry	1.8%	0.5	3.1				
Jindal	1.2%	0.2	2.2				
Santorum	1.0%	0	2.0				
Graham	0.7%	0	1.5				
Pataki	0.4%	0	1.0				
Gilmore	0%	n/a	n/a				

Note: margin of error calculation is based on actual proportion of support rather than the hypothetical 50% proportion used to calculate the maximum margin of error for the entire poll.

GOP Candidate Ratings

The *Monmouth University Poll* also found that GOP voter opinion of Donald Trump continues to improve. It now stands at 52% favorable to 35% unfavorable. It was 40% favorable to 41% unfavorable three weeks ago. Before he announced in June, it stood at a significantly negative 20% favorable to 55% unfavorable.

There was little movement in other candidates' ratings since last month with just a few exceptions. John Kasich's favorable rating went up 8 points to 27% since he threw his hat into the ring, while his unfavorable rating held steady at 14%. Still, 58% of Republican voters say they don't know enough to form an opinion about him. Scott Walker's favorability rating went up 8 points to 50%, while his negative rating held stable at 10%. Rick Santorum's favorable rating went down 9 points to 31% and his unfavorable rating went up 6 points to 24%.

Other GOP candidates with solid ratings from voters in their own party include: Marco Rubio (54% favorable to 11% unfavorable), Ted Cruz (52% to 14%), Jeb Bush (52% to 30%), Mike Huckabee (51% to 23%), Rand Paul (48% to 23%), Rick Perry (46% to 21%), and Ben Carson (45% to 10%). Bobby Jindal (36% to 16%) and Carly Fiorina (30% to 11%) also earn net positive ratings but remain less known.

The remainder of the field earns net negative ratings from Republicans and Republican-leaning voters. This includes Chris Christie (30% favorable to 45% unfavorable), Lindsey Graham (18% to 36%), George Pataki (12% to 31%), and Jim Gilmore (8% to 15%).

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from July 30 to August 2, 2015 with 1,203 adults in the United States. This release is based on a sample of 423 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. This voter sample has a margin of error of ± 4.8 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows: (* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. I know the 2016 election is far away, but who would you support for the Republican nomination for president if the candidates were – [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

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ſ		August	July	June	April
ı		2015	2015	2015	2015
ı	Jeb Bush	12%	15%	9%	13%
ı	Ben Carson	5%	6%	11%	7%
ı	Chris Christie	4%	2%	4%	5%
ı	Ted Cruz	6%	9%	5%	11%
ı	Carly Fiorina	2%	1%	2%	1%
ı	Jim Gilmore	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
ı	Lindsey Graham	1%	<1%	2%	1%
ı	Mike Huckabee	6%	7%	8%	9%
ı	Bobby Jindal	1%	2%	1%	1%
ı	John Kasich	3%	1%	1%	1%
ı	George Pataki	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
ı	Rand Paul	4%	6%	6%	6%
ı	Rick Perry	2%	2%	4%	5%
ı	Marco Rubio	4%	6%	9%	5%
ı	Rick Santorum	1%	2%	3%	1%
ı	Donald Trump	26%	13%	2%	7%
l	Scott Walker	11%	7%	10%	11%
ı	(VOL) Other	0%	0%	0%	1%
ı	(VOL) No one	1%	1%	2%	2%
l	(VOL) Undecided	10%	18%	20%	14%

2. I'm going to read you a few names of people who are running for president in 2016. Please tell me if your general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

,	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush	52%	30%	18%
July 2015	50	30	20
June 2015	40	35	25
April 2015	49	31	21
December 2014	39	30	31
Commentator and Doctor Ben Carson	45%	10%	45%
July 2015	48	11	41
June 2015	45	12	43
April 2015	39	16	<i>4</i> 5
December 2014	32	12	57
New Jersey Governor Chris Christie	30%	45%	25%
July 2015	25	<i>4</i> 5	30
June 2015	26	<i>4</i> 3	31
April 2015	33	42	25
December 2014	36	34	31
Texas Senator Ted Cruz	52%	14%	34%
July 2015	48	16	35
June 2015	49	17	35
April 2015	49	19	32
December 2014	39	15	46
Businesswoman Carly Fiorina	30%	11%	58%
July 2015	30	18	51
June 2015	29	18	54
April 2015	18	20	62
December 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a
Former Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore	8%	15%	77%
July 2015	6	14	80
June 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a
April 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a
December 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a

(Question 2 continued)			
South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham	18%	36%	46%
July 2015	17	33	50
June 2015	17	34	48
April 2015	18	32	50
December 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a
Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee	51%	23%	26%
July 2015	53	23	24
June 2015	50	20	30
April 2015	53 45	21	26
December 2014	45	22	33
Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal	36%	16%	47%
June 2015	35	15	51
June 2015	27	16	57
April 2015	30	21	<i>4</i> 8
December 2014	28	14	58
Ohio Governor John Kasich	27%	14%	58%
July 2015	19	16	65
June 2015	20	18	62
April 2015	24 21	14 11	61 60
December 2014			69 0
Former New York Governor George Pataki	12%	31%	57%
July 2015 June 2015	13 14	31 29	57 58
June 2015 April 2015	1 4 15	33	52
April 2013 December 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kentucky Senator Rand PaulJuly 2015	48% <i>44</i>	23% 26	29% <i>30</i>
June 2015	39	24	37
April 2015	47	22	31
December 2014	42	18	39
Former Texas Governor Rick Perry	46%	21%	33%
July 2015	<i>4</i> 5	21	34
June 2015	45	20	35
April 2015	42	20	39
December 2014	<i>4</i> 3	20	37
Florida Senator Marco Rubio	54%	11%	36%
July 2015	53	19	28
June 2015	54	13	34
April 2015	41	18	40
December 2014	38	16	46
Former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum	31%	24%	45%
July 2015	40	18	43
June 2015	33	22	45
April 2015	36	22	42
December 2014	28	22	51
Businessman Donald Trump	52%	35%	13%
July 2015	40	41	19
June 2015	20	55	25
April 2015	28	56	15%
December 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker	50%	10%	40%
	42	11	46
July 2015		46	
July 2015 June 2015 April 2015	42 44	12 9	46 46

3. The first Republican candidate debate is coming up. Do you think that all declared candidates should get to share the same stage - OR - Do you think there should be one debate with the top ten candidates according to recent polls and another debate with the remaining ones - OR - Do you think there should be two back-to-back debates with half the candidates randomly assigned to each one? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

	August 2015
All candidates share the same stage	29%
One top ten debate and another with remainder	23%
Two back-to-back debates randomly assigned	45%
(VOL) Don't know	3%

The Monmouth University Poll was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from July 30 to August 2, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,203 adults age 18 and older. This includes 842 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 361 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). The results in this poll release are based on a subsample of 423 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.8 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)							
FULL SAMPLE - ALL ADULTS 49% Male 32% 18-34 66% White							
49% Male	32% 18-34	66% White					
51% Female	36% 35-54	12% Black					
	32% 55+	15% Hispanic					
		7% Asian/Other					

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)
REPUBLICAN VOTERS ONLY

54% Male 25% 18-34 82% White

47% Female 41% 35-54 3% Black
34% 55+ 8% Hispanic
7% Asian/Other

MARGIN OF ERROR										
	REPUBLICAN	PAR	TY ID	GEN	IDER		PARTY ORTER	POLI	TICAL IDEOL	LOGY
	VOTER	Rep	Lean Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	Very cons.	Somewhat cons.	Mod/ liberal
Unweighted N	<i>4</i> 23	292	131	219	204	151	245	166	137	113
moe	4.8%	5.7%	8.6%	6.6%	6.9%	8.0%	6.3%	7.6%	8.4%	9.2%

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