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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 <br> including margin of potential sampling error Monmouth University Poll - August 2015 |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Candidate | Support | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Lower } \\ & \text { Margin } \end{aligned}$ | 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 $\pm 4.8$ 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]

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

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 | 45 |
| --December 2014 | 32 | 12 | 57 |
| New Jersey Governor Chris Christie | 30\% | 45\% | 25\% |
| --July 2015 | 25 | 45 | 30 |
| --June 2015 | 26 | 43 | 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 | 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 | 48 |
| --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 | 14 | 61 |
| --December 2014 | 21 | 11 | 69 |
| Former New York Governor George Pataki | 12\% | 31\% | 57\% |
| --July 2015 | 13 | 31 | 57 |
| --June 2015 | 14 | 29 | 58 |
| --April 2015 | 15 | 33 | 52 |
| --December 2014 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Kentucky Senator Rand Paul | 48\% | 23\% | 29\% |
| --July 2015 | 44 | 26 | 30 |
| --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 | 45 | 21 | 34 |
| --June 2015 | 45 | 20 | 35 |
| --April 2015 | 42 | 20 | 39 |
| --December 2014 | 43 | 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\% |
| --July 2015 | 42 | 11 | 46 |
| --June 2015 | 42 | 12 | 46 |
| --April 2015 | 44 | 9 | 46 |
| --December 2014 | 30 | 10 | 61 |

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 |
| :--- | :---: |
| All candidates share the same stage | $\mathbf{2 0 1 5}$ |
| One top ten debate and another with remainder | $\mathbf{2 9 \%}$ |
| Two back-to-back debates randomly assigned | $\mathbf{2 3 \%}$ |
| (VOL) Don't know | $\mathbf{4 5 \%}$ |

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.


