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NATIONAL: HOUSE SPEAKERSHIP SHADOWS GOP 2016

GOP voters dissatisfied with own leaders in Congress

West Long Branch, NJ – The latest *Monmouth University Poll* of Republican voters nationwide finds no movement in the GOP presidential nomination contest. However, the results suggest that voter dissatisfaction with the party’s Congressional leadership has cast a shadow over the 2016 race. With no end in sight for the selection of a new House Speaker, GOP voters are divided over how much influence the conservative Freedom Caucus should wield in Congress.

When Republicans and Republican-leaning voters are asked who they would support for the GOP nomination for president, Donald Trump continues to lead the pack at 28%, Ben Carson remains in second at 18%, and Ted Cruz holds third at 10%. They are followed by Carly Fiorina (6%), Marco Rubio (6%), Jeb Bush (5%), Mike Huckabee (4%), Rand Paul (4%), and Chris Christie (3%). None of the other six candidates garners more than one percent support.

These results have changed little from Monmouth’s September poll, with most candidates’ support shifting by no more than 2 percentage points, which is well within the poll’s margin of error. Jeb Bush’s standing, however, has slipped in every *Monmouth University Poll* taken since the summer and is now a significant 10 points lower than it was in July.

The poll also tracked the favorability ratings of the top six candidates and found that Bush is the only one who has taken a significant turn for the worse. His current rating stands at a negative 37% favorable and 44% unfavorable. He held a 41% - 39% split decision last month and had a much more positive 52% - 30% rating back in August.

“The money train may be chugging along for the Bush campaign, but the polling train has been steadily losing steam,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

Favorable opinions of the other five candidates shifted only slightly over the past month. Donald Trump holds a 52% favorable and 33% unfavorable rating, down from his campaign high of 59% - 29% last month. Ben Carson has a 65% favorable and 11% unfavorable rating, compared to 67% - 6% in September. Ted Cruz stands at 50% favorable and 23% unfavorable, compared to 52% - 14% in August, which was Monmouth's last poll reading of the Texas senator. Carly Fiorina holds a 46% favorable and 22% unfavorable rating, compared to 43% - 13% last month. Marco Rubio has a 49% favorable and 16% unfavorable rating, compared to 54% - 11% in August.

Overall, the three GOP candidates who have never held political office continue to command a majority of support among Republican voters – combining for 52% in the current poll. Ted Cruz, while a U.S. Senator, could also be considered more of an outsider than insider. That leaves the 11 “establishment” candidates with just 25% support among them.

In this context, then, it is not surprising that more Republican voters say that the national Republican Party does a bad job (50%) representing their concerns than say it does a good job (41%). One problem for the national GOP is that this attitude spans the ideological spectrum, including Republicans who call themselves very conservative voters (51% bad job to 39% good job), somewhat conservative (48% to 43%), and moderate to liberal (51% to 41%). Tea Party supporters (59% bad job to 32% good job) are even more likely than Republicans who have a neutral or negative view of the movement (46% bad job to 46% good job) to feel the national GOP does not represent their concerns.

This attitude extends to the base's view of the party leadership in Washington. A majority of 57% are dissatisfied with the Republican leaders in Congress – including 29% who are very dissatisfied and 28% who are somewhat dissatisfied. Only 42% are satisfied, including just 5% who are very satisfied and 37% who are somewhat satisfied. Majorities of all ideological groups are dissatisfied.

“The turmoil over selecting a new Speaker of the House reflects an unhappy party base. Because this disaffection reaches every corner of the GOP electorate, there is no clear indication about which route the party should take to right this ship,” said Murray.

The conservative Freedom Caucus stymied a smooth transition after John Boehner's surprise resignation announcement last month. However, somewhat more Republican voters say that the Freedom Caucus and similar conservative members of Congress have too little (39%) rather than too much (25%) power, with another 21% saying they have the right amount of influence.

The poll offers some contradictory advice for party leaders on how to handle this group – 39% of GOP voters say the Republican Congressional leadership should stand up to the Freedom Caucus more, while 35% say it should do more of what the Freedom Caucus wants. Not surprisingly, there is a strong ideological divide in this opinion – 47% of very conservative voters say the GOP leadership should give

in more to the Freedom Caucus while 52% of moderate to liberal Republicans say the leadership should stand up to the caucus.

A slight majority (52%) of Republican voters believe that the moderate and conservative wings of the Republican Party in Congress will be able to work together in the coming year – but only 7% say this is very likely, with most (45%) saying it is just somewhat likely. More than 4-in-10 say the two wings working together is either not too likely (30%) or not at all likely (13%).

With the House in an uproar, there has been a lot of pressure on Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan to take the reins of the speakership. Nearly half (45%) of Republican voters think he would be a good choice for the job and just 13% feel he would be a bad choice, with 42% offering no opinion. The prospect of a “Speaker Ryan” receives positive marks from both conservative (46% good to 13% bad) and moderate (44% good to 11% bad) voters in the party.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from October 15 to 18, 2015 with 1,012 adults in the United States. This release is based on a sample of 348 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. This voter sample has a margin of error of ± 5.3 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]*

	October 2015	September 2015	August 2015	July 2015	June 2015	April 2015
Jeb Bush	5%	8%	12%	15%	9%	13%
Ben Carson	18%	18%	5%	6%	11%	7%
Chris Christie	3%	2%	4%	2%	4%	5%
Ted Cruz	10%	8%	6%	9%	5%	11%
Carly Fiorina	6%	4%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Jim Gilmore	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
Lindsey Graham	1%	0%	1%	<1%	2%	1%
Mike Huckabee	4%	4%	6%	7%	8%	9%
Bobby Jindal	1%	<1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
John Kasich	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%
George Pataki	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Rand Paul	4%	2%	4%	6%	6%	6%
Marco Rubio	6%	5%	4%	6%	9%	5%
Rick Santorum	0%	0%	1%	2%	3%	1%
Donald Trump	28%	30%	26%	13%	2%	7%
(VOL) Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
<i>Rick Perry</i>	n/a	1%	2%	2%	4%	5%
<i>Scott Walker</i>	n/a	3%	11%	7%	10%	11%
(VOL) No one	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
(VOL) Undecided	9%	9%	10%	18%	20%	14%
(n)	348	366	423	336	351	355

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	37%	44%	19%
--September 2015	41	39	20
--August 2015	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	65%	11%	23%
--September 2015	67	6	26
--August 2015	45	10	45
--July 2015	48	11	41
--June 2015	45	12	43
--April 2015	39	16	45
--December 2014	32	12	57
Texas Senator Ted Cruz	50%	23%	26%
--September 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a
--August 2015	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	46%	22%	31%
--September 2015	43	13	43
--August 2015	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
Florida Senator Marco Rubio	49%	16%	35%
--September 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a
--August 2015	54	11	36
--July 2015	53	19	28
--June 2015	54	13	34
--April 2015	41	18	40
--December 2014	38	16	46
Businessman Donald Trump	52%	33%	15%
--September 2015	59	29	12
--August 2015	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

3. Overall, is the national Republican Party doing a good job or bad job representing the concerns of voters like you?

	October 2015
Good job	41%
Bad job	50%
(VOL) Depends	6%
(VOL) Don't know	3%

4. How satisfied are you with the Republican leaders in Congress – are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

	October 2015
Very satisfied	5%
Somewhat satisfied	37%
Somewhat dissatisfied	28%
Very dissatisfied	29%
(VOL) Don't know	1%

5. Do you think the more conservative members of the Republican Party, such as the Freedom Caucus, have too much, too little, or the right amount of power in Congress?

	October 2015
Too much	25%
Too little	39%
Right amount	21%
(VOL) Don't know	16%

6. Should the Republican leadership in Congress do more of what the Freedom Caucus wants or stand up more to the Freedom Caucus?

	October 2015
Do more of what they want	35%
Stand up more	39%
(VOL) Don't know	25%

7. How likely is it that the moderate wing and the conservative wing of the Republican Party in Congress will be able to work together in the coming year – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

	October 2015
Very likely	7%
Somewhat likely	45%
Not too likely	30%
Not at all likely	13%
(VOL) Don't know	5%

8. Do you think Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan would be a good choice or bad choice for Speaker of the House, or do you have no opinion?

	October 2015
Good choice	45%
Bad choice	13%
No opinion	42%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from October 15 to 18, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,012 adults age 18 and older. This includes 712 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 300 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 348 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 5.3 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
51% Female	37% 35-54	12% Black
	32% 55+	15% Hispanic
		7% Asian/Other

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted) REPUBLICAN VOTERS ONLY		
52% Male	20% 18-34	86% White
48% Female	42% 35-54	4% Black
	38% 55+	6% Hispanic
		3% Asian/Other

	MARGIN OF ERROR									
	REPUBLICAN VOTER	PARTY ID		GENDER		TEA PARTY SUPPORTER		POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
		Rep	Lean Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	Very cons.	Somewhat cons.	Mod/ liberal
Unweighted N	348	262	86	184	164	138	196	115	130	98
moe	5.3%	6.1%	10.6%	7.2%	7.7%	8.4%	7.0%	9.1%	8.6%	9.9%

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