

Election 2008: Florida Republican Primary

Florida: Romney 25% McCain 20% Giuliani 19%
Monday, January 21, 2008

The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey finds Mitt Romney with a slight lead in Florida's Republican Presidential Primary. John McCain and Rudy Giuliani are close behind in what may develop into a three-man race. It's Romney at 25%, McCain at 20%, and Giuliani at 19%. Romney has picked up seven points over the past week while McCain and Giuliani each inched up a point.

Last week, before the Michigan and South Carolina Primaries, Rasmussen Reports polling found essentially a four-way tie for the lead in Florida. However, Mike Huckabee has slipped to 13% in the current poll. A week ago, he was the top choice for 17%.

One major wild card in the race may be Fred Thompson. The former Senator from Tennessee is considering dropping out of the race after a disappointing showing in South Carolina last Saturday. Twelve percent (12%) of Florida's Likely Republican Primary Voters still support the actor turned politician.

Even though early voting has already begun, the race remains incredibly fluid. Just 54% of likely voters say they are "certain" of how they will vote. Six percent (6%) have not yet made up their mind and 12% say there's a good chance they could change their mind.

Giuliani and Huckabee have the most solid support at this time. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of Giuliani's supporters are "certain" they will vote for him along with 65% of those who favor Huckabee. For Romney, just 55% are that certain. For McCain, just 48% are that certain. In fact, 22% of McCain's supporters still say there's a good chance they could change their mind.

Among those who are "certain" how they will vote, Romney is the pick for 25%, Giuliani 24%, and McCain 17%.

Florida represents both a major challenge and a major opportunity for McCain. Both result from the fact that Independent voters are not allowed to participate in Florida's Republican Primary. In McCain's earlier victories, he has been competitive among Republican voters but won with the votes of Independents. If he is to win the GOP nomination, McCain must sooner or later show that he can win among Republicans. On the other hand, if McCain can win a Republican-only Primary in Florida, he will have a major advantage heading into Super Tuesday a week later.

In Florida, Romney leads among conservative voters, attracting 28% of them. Giuliani is second with 18%.

Among moderates, McCain dominates with 34% support. Giuliani is second with 23%.

Huckabee leads among the state's Evangelical Christian voters, but his lead is not as substantial as in earlier states. Huckabee currently attracts 25% of the Evangelical vote, Romney 20%, and Thompson 17%.

Giuliani is viewed favorably by 74% of Likely Primary Voters. Romney's favorables are at 70%, Thompson at 66%, McCain at 64%, Huckabee at 54% and Paul at 28%.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of Likely Primary Voters view Thompson as politically conservative, 45% say the same about Huckabee and 43% view Romney as a conservative. Just 21% see McCain in that way while 14% see Giuliani as a conservative.

Eighty-three percent (83%) see Giuliani as politically moderate or liberal and 76% say the same about McCain. Fifty percent (50%) see Huckabee as moderate or liberal and 49% hold that view of Romney.

Last week's survey found that Giuliani and McCain were seen as the most electable Republican candidates.

McCain and Romney lead nationally in the Rasmussen Reports daily Presidential Tracking Poll.

Before the caucuses and primaries began, Huckabee led the Florida Primary in December. Giuliani held the lead in November. A victory in Florida is crucial for Giuliani who has chosen to stay out of earlier contests in Election 2008. The high risk strategy calls for Giuliani to accept defeats in the early states, win Florida, and translate that momentum into victory on Super Tuesday, February 5.

**Survey of 754 Likely GOP Voters, Florida Primary
January 20, 2008**

Mitt Romney	25%
John McCain	20%
Rudy Giuliani	19%
Mike Huckabee	13%
Fred Thompson	12%
Ron Paul	5%
Not Sure	6%

