

TX Pres Primary 1/30-31



Friday, 01 February 2008

With Edwards and Giuliani dropping out, I decided to poll the race in Texas before Super Tuesday next week. Among Republicans, Mitt Romney has gained the most from the narrowing field. While he has stayed in the low to mid teens since summer, conservative Thompson and Giuliani voters have picked Romney over John McCain, raising his support to 30%, a hair ahead of the Arizona Senator's 29%. Mike Huckabee follows with 20%, down for the second poll in a row. Ron Paul has his best showing at 8%, up from 4% last month. Alan Keyes, who has decided to base his campaign in Texas until March, follows with 3%. 10% are undecided.

Looking into the numbers, McCain and Romney have opposite gender gaps, with men choosing Romney by a nine point margin and women choosing McCain by a nine point margin. Huckabee had no gender gap. Huckabee And Romney tied for the lead among voters under 40, followed by Ron Paul with McCain well back. In both the 40-59 and 60+ age groups, McCain led, followed closely by Romney. Huckabee was just below his overall average in these groups, while Paul had very little support.

Voters were asked to rate different issues of importance to the next president. Compared to earlier ratings, it is clear that Romney's new supporters are much more conservative than McCain's. Romney supporters were 30% more likely to give illegal immigration the top rating. Half gave global warming the lowest rating, compared to only 20% for McCain supporters. Ratings for both healthcare and the economy were much lower. Only a quarter of Romney's supporters would support even a gradual reduction in troop levels in Iraq, while this idea had around 40% approval from supporters of McCain and Huckabee, as well as undecided Republicans. In earlier polls, Romney supporters were much closer to the average. In contrast, McCain's supporters were more moderate this time when compared to the last poll. This suggests conservative supporters of former candidates are moving to Romney while the moderates are moving to McCain.

The issue profile of undecided Republicans most closely matches Romney on illegal immigration and the economy, McCain on troop levels and Huckabee on healthcare.

- Romney 30% (11%)
- McCain 29% (24%)
- Huckabee 20% (26%)
- Paul 8% (4%)
- Keyes 3% (0%)
- Undecided 10% (8%)

November and December polls both gave Hillary Clinton a hefty 51% to 17% lead over Barack Obama, but that has changed considerably over the last two polls. Current results give her just a ten point lead over her main rival, 48% to 38%. Mike Gravel received 3% while 12% were undecided. Much of Obama's increase has come from his increase in support among Latinos. In December, Clinton had a 70 to 7 lead in this group. The January 10 poll was 63-18. In this poll, the margin was down to 60-29. That is still a wide margin, but 2-1 is a lot different from 10-1. Edwards was at 5% among Latinos in the January 10 poll, so Obama's gain cannot be completely explained by his departure. There is a significant gender gap as Latino men under 60 were more likely to support Obama while Latinas under 60 gave Clinton large margins. Clinton easily led both sides of the 60+ group.

Obama's support among African-Americans actually dipped slightly as the number of undecided women increased. Obama still has a large lead 55-21, with 24% undecided.

Both candidates gained among white voters with Edwards departure. Obama gained eight points while Clinton gained five. I can't distinguish between former Edwards voters and prior movement, but my best guess would be that it was a combination of the two. Undecided was also up two points.

Clinton's support was even between men and women, but Obama had seven points higher support among men. Women were seven points more likely to be undecided.

Clinton supporters gave all issues higher importance ratings than Obama supporters did. Maybe I asked about the wrong issues. There was usually high correlation between the rankings of undecided Democrats and Clinton supporters. The exceptions were global warming and troop levels. Undecided Democrats were midway between the candidates on global warming, and closer to Obama on troop levels with more opting for removing troops gradually as opposed to bringing them home quickly, but the differences on troop levels was much smaller than other issues.

- Clinton 48% (46%)
- Obama 38% (28%)
- Gravel 3% (0%)
- Undecided 10% (8%)

1573 past primary voters polled Jan 30-31, 2008

734 Republicans and 534 Democrats considered likely voters

R MoE 3.5% - D MoE 4.3%

This model is consistent with the model I have used on these tracking polls since May. If the Texas primary is meaningful at the presidential level, I will modify the model to reflect the higher expected turnout in future polls.

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