

Election 2008: Florida Republican Primary

Florida: McCain 31% Romney 31%
Monday, January 28, 2008

For most of the past week, John McCain was slightly behind Mitt Romney in Florida's Republican Presidential Primary. Then, on Saturday, the Arizona Senator switched the subject of the campaign to his comfort zone--national security issues. Saturday night, the Arizona Senator got another bit of good news—an endorsement by popular Florida Governor Charlie Crist.

Polling on Sunday showed that McCain picked up four percentage points from the day before. Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani lost two points each and Mike Huckabee also slipped a point. As a result, it's all tied heading into the final full day of campaigning before Florida's Republican Presidential Primary.

The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey in Florida shows McCain and Romney tied at 31%, Giuliani is a distant third at 16% and Huckabee is in fourth place at 11%. The number of persuadable voters is also dwindling. Only 2% are undecided and just 6% say there's a good chance they could change their mind.

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of McCain's voters have already voted or are certain they will vote for him. That number is identical for Romney voters. Just 5% of McCain voters and 7% of Romney voters say there's a good chance they could change their mind.

The election may be decided by the number of Giuliani and Huckabee supporters who decide to abandon their first choice in hopes of influencing the outcome. Many may have already done so. On Saturday, 15% of Giuliani supporters said there was a good chance they could change their mind. Just 7% of the remaining Giuliani voters said the same on Sunday.

Fifty-two percent (52%) of Florida's Republican Primary Voters say that it's more important to select a President who can handle national security issues than one who can handle economic issues. Thirty-five percent (35%) take the opposite view.

Voters have this preference for national security credentials despite the fact that 43% name the economy as the top voting issue. Just 28% name either the War in Iraq or national security as the top issue. One reason may be that Republican voters in Florida generally believe that the best thing the government can do to help the economy is to get out of the way. In terms of stimulating the economy, 47% say cutting government spending is the best policy. Thirty-nine percent (39%) say cutting taxes is most important.

It is hard to overstate the impact of Florida's Republican Primary. While it is highly likely that both McCain and Romney will continue regardless of the outcome, a win for McCain would make him the heavy favorite for the nomination. He already leads or is tied for the lead in

several Super Tuesday states including in California, New York, New Jersey, Missouri and Alabama.

On the other hand, a victory for Romney could give Romney a bounce for Super Tuesday and set the stage for a long, drawn-out competition.

**Survey of 578 Likely GOP Voters
January 27, 2008**

Election 2008: Florida GOP Primary

Mitt Romney	31%
John McCain	31%
Rudy Giuliani	16%
Mike Huckabee	11%
Ron Paul	4%
Some Other Candidate	4%

Election 2008: Florida Democratic Primary

Florida: Clinton 47% Obama 25%
Monday, January 28, 2008

The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey in Florida finds Senator Hillary Clinton leading Barack Obama by nineteen percentage points, 47% to 25%. That's little changed from earlier surveys. A poll on Saturday found Clinton leading 44% to 25%. Earlier this week, Clinton held a twenty-five point advantage, 51% to 26%.

Former Senator John Edwards attracts support from 16% of Likely Primary Voters. Nine percent (9%) say they have voted for or will vote for some other candidate and 4% are not sure.

Florida's Democratic Primary is mired in controversy. In May, a state law set January 29 as the Primary date even though national committee rules said it could not be held before February 5. The Democratic National Committee then said that Florida's delegates will not be seated at the Party's convention unless it abides by the rules. The national party leaders encouraged leading candidates to avoid campaigning in Florida and all the candidates agreed. However, Clinton and Obama have each accused the other campaign of bending the no-campaigning rules and local

activity has generated a substantial level of early voting. Clinton has recently called for all of Florida's delegates to be seated at the Convention and even flew into the state for fundraisers and photo ops.

As elsewhere, voters in the Sunshine State are divided along gender and racial lines. Clinton leads Obama by 31 percentage points among women but only by eight among men. Obama leads among African-American voters while Clinton leads among White and Hispanic voters.

The poll was conducted before Ted Kennedy endorsed Barack Obama. Noting that endorsement, a Rasmussen Reports analysis suggests that something really might have changed in the race for the democratic nomination.

Looking ahead on the Primary calendar, Obama leads in Georgia. However, Clinton leads Missouri, Alabama, California, New York, and New Jersey.

**Survey of 474 Likely Democratic Primary Voters
January 27, 2008**

Florida Democratic Primary

Hillary Clinton	47%
Barack Obama	25%
John Edwards	16%
Some Other Candidate	9%
Not Sure	4%