

Election 2008: South Carolina Republican Primary

South Carolina: McCain 24% Huckabee 24%
Thursday, January 17, 2008

The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey of South Carolina's Republican Presidential Primary shows that John McCain and Mike Huckabee are tied at 24%. In a race that has already seen four different candidates with the lead, much could still change in the coming days--7% of voters have yet to make up their mind, 10% say there's a good chance they could change their mind, and another 24% might change their mind.

Mitt Romney attracts 18% support and Fred Thompson 16%. Those figures are little changed from the previous survey. Both Romney and Thompson have led in South Carolina at some point over the past several months. The latest survey was conducted the night after Mitt Romney's victory in Michigan. Ron Paul attracts 5% support and Rudy Giuliani 3%. Giuliani is betting his entire campaign on a strong showing in Florida, where he is now tied for the lead with three others.

In South Carolina, however, McCain and Huckabee have been battling for the top spot for several weeks. Huckabee was ahead following his victory in Iowa. McCain took a narrow lead after his victory in New Hampshire. Then, just before the Michigan Primary, McCain opened a nine-point lead, 28% to 19%. McCain's lead grew as Fred Thompson chipped away at Huckabee's support.

Thirty-one percent (31%) of South Carolina Republican Primary voters say that the economy is their top voting issue. Twenty-three percent (23%) name immigration. Exit polling showed that these issues hurt McCain in Michigan but they may not be the best issues for Huckabee, either. Among those who see the economy as the most important issue, McCain currently leads Huckabee by eight points. Thompson and Romney currently earn the most support from those who name immigration as the top issue.

Seventeen percent (17%) of the state's Likely Republican Primary Voters named national security as the top issue while 14% said the War in Iraq. McCain and Thompson are the top choices for those who name national security as their number one issue. McCain and Huckabee are essentially even among those who name the War in Iraq as their top priority.

McCain, Huckabee, and Romney lead nationally in the Rasmussen Reports daily Presidential Tracking Poll. McCain also has a slight edge over Giuliani in the Super Tuesday Primary in New Jersey.

Sixty-four percent (64%) of Huckabee's supporters are "certain" they will vote for him while 63% of McCain voters say they won't change their mind. Sixty-three percent (63%) Thompson supporters are that "certain" along with 55% of Romney backers. Seventeen percent (17%) of Romney voters say there's a good chance they might change their mind. That's a far higher total than for other leading candidates, a fact that might benefit McCain.

McCain is also seen as the most electable Republican. Seventy-five percent (75%) say that he would be at least somewhat likely to win in November if nominated. Sixty-five percent (65%) say the same about Romney and 61% have similar confidence in a Huckabee candidacy.

Fifty-two percent (52%) say Thompson would have a chance in November, 50% say the same about Giuliani, and 17% believe Ron Paul could win it all if nominated.

In South Carolina's Democratic race, Barack Obama's lead is growing and so is the racial divide.

Survey of 895 Likely GOP Voters January 16, 2007

Election 2008: South Carolina GOP Primary

John McCain	24%
Mike Huckabee	24%
Mitt Romney	18%
Fred Thompson	16%
Ron Paul	5%
Rudy Giuliani	3%

Election 2008: South Carolina Democratic Primary

South Carolina: Obama 44% Clinton 31%
Thursday, January 17, 2008

Barack Obama has regained a double-digit lead over Hillary Clinton in South Carolina's Democratic Presidential Primary.

The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey in South Carolina shows Obama earning 44% of the vote, Clinton attracting 31%, and John Edwards at 15%. This is the third poll out of four conducted in recent weeks showing Obama with either a 12 or 13 percentage point lead. However, last weekend, Clinton had closed the gap to five percentage points. At that time, Rasmussen Reports noted that her support was less solid than Obama's.

It is unclear whether Clinton gained ground as the result of a bounce from her New Hampshire victory or if the apparent gains were merely statistical noise caused by movement within the margin of sampling error.

What is clear is that Obama is increasing his support among African-American voters who make up roughly half of Democratic Primary Voters in South Carolina. Obama now leads Clinton 64% to 20% among African-Americans in the Palmetto State. This is similar to the racial divide found in national polling.

Obama's 44-point advantage among African-Americans is nearly double his 23-point edge in the previous survey. Clinton now leads Obama 44% to 20% among white voters in the state with John Edwards picking up 26% of that vote.

By a 43% to 31% margin, African-American primary voters say that most Americans are racist. By a 57% to 22% margin, white primary voters in South Carolina disagree.

Forty-one percent (41%) of Democratic Primary Voters consider the economy their most important voting issue. Twenty-three percent (23%) say it's the War in Iraq while 11% name health care.

When it comes to the economy, Democratic Primary voters are divided on the impact of tax cuts—39% say they help the economy while 32% say they hurt.

In December, Obama and Clinton were tied in South Carolina at 33%. In November, Clinton had a ten-point advantage.

In South Carolina's GOP Primary, the race is much closer between John McCain and Mike Huckabee.

Survey of 571 Likely Democratic Primary Voters January 16, 2008

Election 2008: South Carolina Democratic Primary

Barack Obama	44%
Hillary Clinton	31%
John Edwards	15%
Some Other Candidate	6%

Not Sure

5%