

Friends,

Below you will find the weekly Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Summary, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week, we decided to take a look at what Republican voters think, what they're looking for and who they are, rather than which candidate they're currently supporting.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

Media coverage on polling always focuses on the horse-race, but it's important to remember that at this point in 2007, Rudy Giuliani led the field by a double-digit margin in national polls of Republican primary voters. With that in mind, we decided to take a look this week at what Republican primary voters think, what they're looking for and who they are, rather than which candidate they're currently supporting.

Fiscal Conservatism Trumps Social Conservatism

Like everyone, GOP primary voters are focused on economic issues above all else. A recent [Fox News poll](#) found that 76% of these voters said that economic issues such as taxes and government spending would be the most important factor in their vote, with just 8% saying national security and 6% citing social issues. This is a stark change from four years ago, when an October 2007 [Fox survey](#) found nearly half of Republican primary voters identifying national security related issues as most important, with just 14% citing the economy and jobs.

When it comes to the economy, GOP voters place a greater emphasis on job creation than on the deficit, but the gap is far narrower than among the rest of the electorate. An [October NBC/Wall Street Journal poll](#) found that job creation and economic growth were most important to GOP primary voters (39%), but the deficit and government spending were not too far behind (27%). No other issue exceeded single digits.

In terms of specific policy proposals, few get Republicans more excited than repealing the new healthcare law, with 80% saying that they would feel more favorable towards a candidate who takes that position, including 70% who say they would feel *much* more favorable. Reducing the deficit solely by cutting spending was also strongly supported (67% more favorable), while implementing a national sales tax to lower income taxes (53% more favorable / 32% less

favorable) and turning Medicare into a voucher program (50% more favorable / 33% less favorable) also earned net positive ratings.

Although Republicans strongly back a candidate who wants to reduce the deficit solely by cutting spending, they exhibit little appetite for cutting the programs that make up the biggest part of the budget. A [Washington Post/Bloomberg poll](#) finds that over three-quarters of self-identified Republicans oppose reducing Social Security (79%) or Medicare benefits (77%), and a majority (56%) are against reducing military spending. However, the poll finds that a majority of Republicans (54%) do support one step that would have a meaningful impact on the deficit: raising taxes on households earning over \$250 thousand a year.

Disqualifiers

Given Republicans' intense support for repealing the new healthcare law, many political observers assumed that "Romneycare" would doom its namesake's hopes for the GOP nomination. However, while Romney's Massachusetts healthcare legislation will certainly plague him, it is not necessarily a fatal flaw. When asked whether they would feel more or less favorable towards Romney if he opposed the new federal law, but signed a similar plan into law as Governor, less than half (43%) of respondents in the [NBC/WSJ poll](#) said it would negatively impact their view of Romney. Additionally, a [Des Moines Register poll](#) found that only 44% of likely Iowa caucus-goers felt that support for an individual mandate was a "deal-killer," leaving Romney with an opening with over half of the voters there. His Mormon faith is much less of a concern, with just [13%](#) saying that they are uncomfortable with Romney being a Mormon.

The issues that were most likely to be seen as disqualifiers in the [Des Moines Register poll](#) were supporting civil unions for gay couples (58% said it was a "deal-killer"), raising taxes to reduce the deficit (51%), and raising the debt-ceiling (49%).

Views On Other Issues

Republican primary voters disagree with mainstream science on both global warming and evolution. The difference is particularly stark with the former, as 62% in a September [PPP poll](#) say that they do not believe in global warming. However, despite their skepticism, only [a third](#) of Iowa caucus-goers say they could not support a candidate who wanted to tackle climate change with environmental policies. A candidate's belief in evolution would likely be less of a problem; views on this issue are more mixed, though [a plurality say](#) that they do not subscribe to Darwin's theory. Among likely Republican primary voters in South Carolina, disbelief in evolution rises to [57%](#).

Despite the President's release of his long form birth certificate, many Republican primary voters still harbor doubts about his citizenship. A recent [PPP poll](#) finds that nationally, Republican primary voters are split on whether President Obama was born in the United States. A [Winthrop University poll](#) of Republicans in South Carolina finds a little more credence in the President's citizenship, with 54% saying that they are inclined to believe that he was born here, yet the same poll finds that only one-third (34%) of these voters believe he is Christian. Nearly half believe he is either Muslim (30%) or "something else" (17%).

While there is division on the the President's faith and place of birth, there is no uncertainty when it comes to whether he is a socialist, as 71% of Republican primary voters believe that he is according to a recent [PPP poll](#).

What They Are Looking For In A Nominee

Despite their deep desire to unseat President Obama, the [NBC/WSJ poll](#) finds that these voters are far more focused on a candidate who shares their views (46%) or who has the right personal style and leadership qualities (32%) rather than one who has the best chance to defeat President Obama (20%). A [Washington Post/ABC poll](#) finds similar views of Republicans overall, with three-quarters saying that they prefer a candidate that they agree with on the issues over one who is most likely to win next November (20%).

As is apparent from their issue focus, these voters also place much more importance on nominating a fiscal conservative than a social one. The [Des Moines Register poll](#) finds that 62% would prefer the former, while just 20% are looking for the latter. However, this may be a distinction without a significant difference, as [Pew's most recent typology study](#) highlights the emergence of voters who are across-the-board conservatives.

Tea Party

There is clearly significant overlap between tea-partiers and conservative Republicans, though while Republicans strongly support the Tea Party, the vast majority do not consider themselves to be part of the movement. The [Winthrop University poll](#) of Republicans in South Carolina found that three-quarters (74%) agreed with the principles of the Tea-Party movement but also revealed that just 28% considered themselves members of the Tea Party.

Demographics

It should come as no surprise that Republican primary voters skew heavily towards the conservative end of the ideological spectrum. [PPP](#) finds that nationally, over three-quarters

(77%) identify themselves as conservative, with a third (32%) indicating that they are *very* conservative.

Of the first three states in the GOP nomination battle, Iowa boasts the most conservative electorate, with 88% of caucus-goers identifying themselves as conservative according to [2008 exit polls](#). Meanwhile, South Carolina's primary electorate clocked-in at [68% conservative](#), while New Hampshire's open primary led to a less, but still mostly conservative electorate ([55%](#)). With the absence of a competing Democratic primary this year, there is reason to suspect a higher turnout among independents for the 2012 New Hampshire primary, presumably to Romney's benefit.

These contests are also almost uniformly white (New Hampshire's primary was the most diverse with a non-white electorate of [4%](#)) and skew older. Four years ago in Iowa, there were as many caucus-goers over 65 as there were under 45 ([27%](#) for both). In contrast, according to 2008 general election exit polls, the under-45 group was [three times as large](#). In both Iowa and New Hampshire, the electorates skewed heavily male by [double-digit margins](#), though in [New Hampshire](#), that may have been driven by independent women flocking to the Democratic primary to vote for Hillary Clinton.

While fiscal issues will certainly trump social issues in the upcoming primaries, it won't be due to an absence of devout voters. In both Iowa and South Carolina in 2008, [60%](#) of caucus and primary voters identified themselves as evangelical. Religious voters will still be dominating these two contests, but this year, even among the devout, the economy is preeminent.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Members of Congress are doing just fine, thanks for asking: [Financial disclosure forms](#) show that in 2009, 46% of members of Congress were millionaires. In contrast, just one percent of Americans are millionaires.

The middle class? Not so much: Two-thirds of likely voters say that the middle-class is shrinking and 55% say that income inequality has become a big problem in the country according to [The Hill Poll](#).

On a related note, political parties are increasingly unpopular: A new [ABC/Washington Post poll](#) finds that just 48% of Americans view the Democratic party favorably, the first time the

party has fallen below 50% since 1984. Republicans fare even worse, however, with just 40% rating them favorably.

And do not inspire confidence on reaching a debt deal: [Quinnipiac](#) finds that 67% of Americans do not believe that the Super Committee will be able to reach an agreement to reduce the debt.

Romney struggling to win over influential Republicans in early states: A [Huffington Post/Patch poll](#) of influential Republican activists in early primary states finds that two-thirds have not yet endorsed a GOP presidential candidate.

Missed a past newsletter? They can be found on our website, [here](#).

PUBLIC POLLING

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
Quinnipiac University	10/25-31/11	Registered Voters	47%	49%
FOX	10/23-25/11	Registered Voters	43%	50%
CBS/New York Times	10/19-24/11	Adults	46%	46%
AP-GfK	10/13-17/11	Adults	46%	52%
CNN/ORC	10/14-16/11	Adults	46%	50%
Time	10/9-10/11	Adults	44%	50%

PARTY SELF ID

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind / other
Pollster.com Trend	11/3/11	Adults	31.3%	23.0%	42.1%

GOP NATIONWIDE PRIMARY

Polling Firm	Date	Sample
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Cain	30%
Romney	23%
Gingrich	10%
Perry	8%
Paul	7%
Bachmann	4%
Huntsman	2%
Santorum	1%

GOP CAUCUSES AND PRIMARIES

	Iowa	New Hampshire	South Carolina
Polling Firm	<i>Des Moines Register</i>	<i>CNN/Time</i>	<i>CNN/Time</i>
Date	<i>10/23-26/11</i>	<i>10/20-25/11</i>	<i>10/20-25/11</i>
Sample	<i>Likely GOP Caucus-goers</i>	<i>Republican Registered Voters</i>	<i>Republican Registered Voters</i>
Cain	23%	13%	23%
Romney	22%	40%	25%
Paul	12%	12%	12%
Gingrich	7%	5%	8%
Perry	7%	4%	11%
Bachmann	8%	2%	4%
Santorum	5%	1%	1%
Huntsman	1%	6%	1%

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Right Direction	Wrong Track
CBS News/New York Times	10/19-24/11	Adults	21%	74%
Democracy Corps.	10/15-18/11	Adults	15%	76%
AP-GfK	10/13-17/11	Adults	24%	72%
Time	10/9-11/11	Adults	13%	81%

GENERIC HOUSE BALLOT

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Unsure
Quinnipiac University	10/25-31/11	Registered Voters	42%	34%	19%
Democracy Corps.	10/15-18/11	Likely Voters	46%	45%	7%

OBAMA POPULAR VOTE SHARE

Polling Firm	Date	Polly Vote	Polls	Iowa Electronic Markets	Econometric Models	Index Models
PollyVote	11/3/11	50.4%	48.3%	49.4%	49.3%	54.5%