



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on May 6, 2011

CNN Poll: Ron Paul Stands Best Chance Against Obama

In a hypothetical match-up between Paul and Obama, Obama beats Paul by only seven percentage points (52 to 45 percent). Meanwhile, Obama bests former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee by eight points, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney by 11 points, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich by 17 points, former Alaska Governor and vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin by 19 points, and Trump by a whopping 22 points. (The poll, by the way, was taken April 29 - May 1 and completed before Obama's announcement of Osama bin Laden's death. It has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.)



CNN, which buried this most interesting facet of the poll's results halfway into its story, itself given the bland headline "CNN Poll: Still no front-runner in the battle for the GOP nomination," still hastened to add that such hypothetical match-ups are meaningless. CNN Polling Director Keating Holland remarked, "It should be obvious to any political observer that hypothetical general election match-ups at this stage of the game have relatively little predictive value."

Holland did, however, point out: "GOP primary match-ups are another matter — since the modern era of presidential primaries began in 1972, there have been six times when the GOP nomination was up for grabs. In five of those six election cycles, the eventual GOP winner was leading the polls taken in April of the previous year. That may mean little in 2011 since no Republican hopeful has a commanding lead, but it also means that the history books won't let us completely dismiss these polls."

That the results of the Republican primary match-ups are more comforting to the Beltway consensus may also explain Holland's willingness to accept those results while dismissing the Paul-Obama match-up out of hand. Sixteen percent of Republicans and independents who lean Republican prefer Huckabee for the GOP nomination, 14 percent support Trump, 13 percent back Romney, 11 percent go for Palin, 10 percent like Gingrich, and another 10 percent pull for Paul. With only six points separating the first choice from the last, Holland did say "it's way too soon to start talking about frontrunners," so the yawner of a headline is accurate if unlikely to induce many mouse-clicks to see the details.

This is not the first time Paul has performed well against Obama in opinion polls. A 2010 Rasmussen poll found that [Paul and Obama were virtually tied](#) in a hypothetical election, Obama at 42 percent and Paul at 41 percent. Such repeated results should put paid to the notion that Paul, who has won 11 House races, is unelectable, particularly against the increasingly unpopular Obama.

They also show all those Republicans who say they agree with Paul but won't vote for him because he can't win for just what they are: fair-weather friends of freedom who are more concerned with their own image than with the future of the country. If all those folks who claim to be strict constructionists with regard to the Constitution actually voted that way, Paul would be leading the GOP pack by a



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country mile. That these other characters poll as well as or better than Paul among likely Republican voters despite the fact that the poll finds Paul has the best chance of beating Obama proves that many Republicans, like the politicians they elect, give only lip service to the Constitution. They don't have a problem with a gigantic federal government; they just want to be the ones in charge of it.

Perhaps these poll results, and similar ones likely to come, will convince Republican voters — even those who simply want to pick a winner — that constitutionalism and electoral success can coexist. Then, should Trump decide to run, primary voters next year will enthusiastically “hire” Paul and bluntly tell Trump, “You’re fired!”

Photo: AP Images

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