



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on September 25, 2011

Herman Cain Wins Florida "President 5" Straw Poll

"Folks, this is what you call momentum," Cain, a former Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank Chairman, [said](#) in a victory statement. "The Herman Cain Train is picking up steam."

The Florida "President 5" straw poll measured Florida party establishment support for GOP presidential candidates rather than campaign energy, as only registered party members and registered convention-goers were allowed to vote in the poll. Campaigns were not allowed to bus in supporters or buy convention tickets, as most straw polls allow. This may explain the relatively poor showing for Texas Representative Ron Paul, who has won most straw polls but [placed fifth](#) in Florida with only 10 percent of the vote.



Cain's victory was seen by most observers as a major loss by Perry, the GOP frontrunner who deployed substantial campaign resources into what ended up as a distant second place finish. Perry faced [withering criticisms](#) for his lackluster debate performance September 22 and was [mocked on Saturday Night Live](#) for that poor performance. The *Tampa Tribune* [suggested](#) that Cain's victory may have been engineered by the Perry camp, explaining that Perry campaign officials desperately tried to prevent their defecting supporters from moving over to his chief rival Mitt Romney and offered up Cain as an acceptable alternative. The rationale behind the argument, according to the *Tampa Tribune*, was that the Perry camp — unable to secure a clean victory for themselves — could at least deny Romney the victory. The Romney campaign has not spent campaign resources on straw polls this time around, including the Florida "Presidency 5" poll, though the Romney campaign devoted massive campaign resources toward winning straw polls during his unsuccessful 2008 presidential run.

Ron Paul campaign blogger Jack Hunter [suggested](#) that Perry's apparent fall from frontrunner status had more to do with his record being exposed than with mental lapses during the September 22 debate. "Judging by the reaction to his debate performance ... the enthusiasm of many conservatives for Perry was significantly diminished and for good reason — they are discovering that Perry is not very conservative. He never has been. Ask Al Gore." Perry had endorsed Al Gore's campaign for President in 1988. Hunter labeled both Cain and Perry a "flavor of the moment."

The *Tampa Tribune* also said the poll may have damaged the weight of governor Scott in picking a nominee. "The outcome also appears to be a blow to Scott," the *Tampa Tribune* [noted](#), "who hasn't endorsed any candidate but praises Perry in virtually every speech he makes."

Photo of Herman Cain: AP Images



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