



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 6, 2011

Iowa Poll: Ron Paul Only GOP Contender Who Can Beat Obama

An Iowa poll published by the *Des Moines Register* [shows](#) Paul in second place with 18 percent of support, behind Newt Gingrich at 25 percent, but ahead of Mitt Romney at 16 percent. That same poll shows that Paul is considered highly favorable by registered Iowa voters.

Ron Paul's presidential campaign website notes, "Paul's Iowa support has grown in the last three *Des Moines Register* polls from 7 percent in June to 12 percent in October to 18 percent presently. Paul is also among those whose support did not wane over the period the poll was taken."



Additionally, those polled indicated that if elected, Gingrich would be most likely to have a scandal in the White House. Paul is ranked the least likely of all GOP contenders to have a scandal while President.

The *Des Moines Register* poll also finds that 24 percent of those questioned view Paul as the most principled candidate, seven points ahead of Michele Bachmann and 13 points ahead of Gingrich. Furthermore, Paul, with 32 percent, was determined by voters in Iowa to be the most fiscally responsible. Gingrich came in second with 15 percent.

"Iowans, after testing Bachmann, after testing Perry, after testing Cain, and now Gingrich, are realizing that Ron Paul, all along, has been their candidate," says Fritz Wenzel, Paul's pollster. Unlike many primary fights, "this is becoming a race about principles," he says, "and Ron Paul has stood up for true conservative principles for decades, not just in the last month."

The same poll shows that Ron Paul with 17 percent is considered one of the most socially conservative of all the candidates — seven percentage points ahead of Newt Gingrich. The poll also credits Paul with being the candidate most likely to bring about change, economic and otherwise.

According to the latest NBC News/Marist Poll, Ron Paul is in third place, with 17 percent of the vote, just one percent behind Mitt Romney. In the lead is former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, with 26 percent. Those figures do not come as a significant surprise, as Paul has remained among the top three candidates virtually since the start of the race.

The most significant finding in that poll, however, is that the Texas Congressman appears to be the only GOP candidate who has a chance of beating President Obama in 2012. The poll indicates that 42 percent of registered voters in Iowa support Ron Paul, while 42 percent support Obama. A remaining 16 percent are undecided.

In other hypothetical matchups, the numbers are not nearly as close. In matchups with Romney and Gingrich, Obama comes out on top by seven and 10 percentage points respectively, with 15 and 16



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percent respectively undecided.

Among Independents in Iowa, Paul leads Obama 42 to 35 percent, attracting 15 percent of Iowa Democrats. When those aged 45 and under were polled, Paul beat Obama by 14 points.

“Ron Paul is definitely for real out here,” says Tim Albrecht, the communications director for Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, who has not endorsed any GOP candidate. “He is going to get 18 percent in the caucuses no matter what. If there’s a snowstorm, he’ll probably win, since he has such dedicated, passionate supporters. The question is whether he can move higher than that.”

Appearing on CNN Sunday, Paul asserted his belief that he can close the gap between himself and Gingrich. “We’re getting pretty close to it being within the margin of error,” said Paul. “I think we can continue to do what we’re doing.”

He also addressed his ability to capture support from all parties:

You don’t win just with a hard-core Republican base. You have to have a candidate that’s going to appeal across the political spectrum.

I think with my views, they’re quite different than the hard-edge views [that] so many on the Republican side are frequently showing.

During that same interview, Paul called himself “the flavor of the decade,” as opposed to all the other “flavors of the month,” referring to the roller-coaster campaigns of his fellow candidates.

Some attribute Paul’s current success in Iowa to his efficiently run Iowa campaign, comprised of a strong online presence, fervent volunteers, and significant fundraising.

“He’s run the most traditional caucus campaign of the year,” Albrecht says. “Multiple mailers, multiple ads, and multiple visits. Rick Perry has run ads, but hasn’t really visited. Mitt Romney has taken the shy approach, and Newt Gingrich hasn’t been here as often.”

Trygve Olson, a senior Paul advisor, adds,

Ron Paul’s Internet operation is to Republicans in 2012 what Barack Obama’s Internet operation was to Democrats in 2007 and 2008. It’s very grassroots and national, with thousands of very active supporters who spread the message in every state.

That energy is the undercurrent to what’s happening on the ground, where people are going person to person.

While Paul’s fellow candidates have witnessed major shifts in their support — taking the opportunity to rain blows on one another — Paul’s campaign has remained relatively quiet, and has managed to raise a great deal of money and build an efficient operation in Iowa.

“This was a movement when he first started running in 2008,” says Olson. “Now it’s turned into a highly professionalized campaign, but the energy from that last run is still there, and at the heart of what’s keeping up his momentum.”

CBS News [notes](#) the significance of a Paul victory in Iowa:

If Paul wins Iowa, the upset could upend what many politicians say is a two-man race between Gingrich and Romney. According to state GOP insiders, a Paul victory is a real possibility. In background conversations, many say Paul is much stronger than outside observers believe, with deep and wide support among a frustrated electorate. With Herman Cain’s departure from the



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race, operatives see Paul potentially collecting a quarter of caucus attendees.

Meanwhile, Paul's campaign is beginning to show some teeth. His most recent television advertisement, entitled "[Big Dog](#)," highlights Paul as the only candidate with a concrete plan to cut spending and significantly reduce the deficit. The ad describes the other GOP contenders as "whimpering like little Shih-Tzus" when it comes to spending cuts.

"Department of Education? Gone. Interior? Energy? HUD? Commerce? Gone," the ad says. "Want to drain the swamp? Ron Paul. Do it."

Driving that point home may be essential in Paul's campaign, because a new poll finds that among Republican caucus-goers, support to close federal departments is significant. That poll finds that 60 percent would like to see the Department of Housing and Urban Development closed, while 54 percent favor shutting down the Department of Education. Likewise, 57 percent of respondents want to do away with the Environmental Protection Agency. A significant number support the closing of the Department of Energy (45), the Transportation Security Administration (42), the Federal Reserve Bank (36), Department of Commerce (34), and the Department of the Interior (32).

Photo of Rep. Ron Paul: AP Images



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