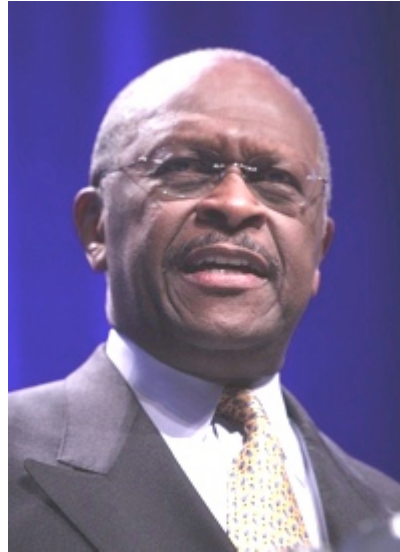




Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 13, 2011

New Poll Shows Herman Cain as Frontrunner

The political climate surrounding the GOP presidential nomination has changed dramatically over the course of the last few months. Months ago, when Texas Governor Rick Perry entered the race, he virtually skated into the frontrunner position. However, in the weeks that followed, and after a few failed debates, Perry has quickly fallen, and former Godfather Pizza CEO Herman Cain has emerged as a new top tier candidate. In fact, according to a new poll, Cain is the man to beat at the moment.



Fox News reports on Cain's quick and unpredictable ascension to [popularity](#), "Herman Cain's star has risen steadily in the past two months, from a largely unknown CEO running for president to a top-tier candidate in the Republican field for 2012 — and now voters even rank him above the presumed front-runner Mitt Romney, in a poll released Wednesday evening."

According to that poll, by the *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News, Cain now has 27 percent of Republican primary voters, while Romney is supported by 23 percent of Republican primary voters. Rep. Ron Paul was the only other candidate in that poll to receive double digit approval, with 11 percent.

Pollster Bill McInturff, who conducted the poll with Democrat Peter Hart, noted the significance of the poll, as it fully represents Perry's fall and Cain's rise. The poll reveals that Perry has plummeted from 38 percent in August to 16 percent in October, while conversely, Cain jumped from 5 percent in August to 27 percent in October.

The poll indicates that Cain is particularly popular among Tea Party supporters, with whom he has 69 percent favorability. Just 5 percent of Tea Partiers give Cain an unfavorable rating, according to that poll. Among those respondents who labeled themselves as "very conservative," his score is even higher, 72 to 2.

Some [wonder](#) how Cain manages to score so well among those who call themselves "very conservative," given his defense of the Federal Reserve and his assertions that it is not an unconstitutional institution and does not require an audit. It was only after it became a clearly popular stance to take that Cain vocalized agreement with the other candidates that the Federal Reserve in fact should be audited and subjected to congressional scrutiny.

He has also drawn some condemnation for his failure to take a stance on the war in Afghanistan, a criticism that Cain strangely did not understand. "Ever since the South Carolina Republican presidential debate, reporters have continued to challenge me for not having a specific plan for our nation's involvement in Afghanistan," he complained. "They continue to think that if you are running for



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President, then you must have an answer for everything. I don't!"

And even as Cain's popularity is growing, and he begins to develop positions on these vital items, there are a number of other things he has to answer for, including his glaring intolerance, it seems, for Islam. On more than one occasion, Cain suggested that he would not appoint any Muslims to the executive or judicial branches if he were elected President. Appearing on Fox News, Cain said Americans should have a right to ban the construction of mosques.

Another item that may be troubling for some conservatives is Cain's declaration that he would be interested in repealing ObamaCare (which certainly attracts Republicans) but then replacing it with another form of big government healthcare — a point of contention for a number of conservatives.

Still, Cain's popularity among conservatives underscores Romney's unpopularity. Hart explains that the results of the poll indicate that Romney is just "acceptable" to Republicans, since his favorability rating is 55 percent to 20 percent among Tea Party supporters, and 60 to 19 among the "very conservative."

Fox News contends that it is Cain's performance in the debates that has launched him to such a prominent position. And Wednesday's speech before members of the New Hampshire state legislature in the state capitol proved to be yet another opportunity for Cain to showcase his passion and folksy style that has arguably impressed Republicans. Fox News writes, "Herman Cain fired up the crowd. His fiery speech drew several standing ovations in defending his 9-9-9 plan."

Whether Cain will be able to maintain his position of prominence is questionable at this point. This particular Republican primary campaign has already reflected a number of surges and declines, some of which have been short-lived, as in the cases of Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann and Rick Perry.

Cain contends this is not simply a flash-in-the-pan moment for him. "Will I be the flavor of the week? Well, the answer is an emphatic, 'No,' because Häagen-Dazs black walnut tastes good all the time."

Cain has been spending a significant amount of money on his campaign, but when asked for specifics on how much, he simply answers "enough." He adds, however, that he has witnessed a rapid influx of campaign contributions following his significant victory in the Florida Republican straw poll last month. During the second quarter of the year, he has raised \$2.5 million, and predictions indicate he likely raised close to the same amount in the quarter that ended last month.

Still, even as the candidates' popularities have fluctuated through the course of their campaigns, this most recent poll shows that in theoretical match-ups against Obama, the President leads among all of the top-tier candidates. Against Romney or a generic Republican, Obama leads only by 2 points, but against Cain, he leads by 11 points and against Perry, Obama leads by 12.



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