



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 27, 2011

Paul Surges in New Hampshire Poll

With the Republican Party changing the rules for this year's primaries so that there are virtually no more winner-takes-all states and the delegates are split on a proportional basis, how candidates do in the polls can be a significant indication of how those delegates are proportioned. In Iowa, at the moment, Ron Paul remains in the lead over Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich. And in New Hampshire, where Ron Paul has been in third place trailing behind Romney and Gingrich, there has been some slight shifting, as Gingrich's surge is slowing and Paul is gaining momentum.



Boston.com [reports](#), "Romney has the support of 39 percent of the state's likely Republican voters, a drop of 3 percentage points since last month but a strong indication he is weathering Gingrich's national comeback in a state vital to his campaign."

In fact, Ron Paul and Newt Gingrich are both currently tied for second place in New Hampshire at the moment, with 17 percent. They are followed by Jon Huntsman, who has the support of 11 percent of likely Republican voters.

Paul is the only candidate who seems to be making any progress in New Hampshire at the moment. He has surged 5 percentage points since November, while Huntsman has picked up 3 points, and Gingrich 2.

The State Column [reports](#):

Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX), a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, is rising faster in New Hampshire than former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, according to the latest *Boston Globe* poll of likely New Hampshire Republican Presidential Primary voters released Sunday. Mr. Paul tied Mr. Gingrich for second place with 17 percent of the votes. Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who is the favorite in the Granite State, pulled in 39 percent of the votes to win the *Boston Globe* poll.

The only other contender for a top-tier finish in New Hampshire is former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman. Mr. Huntsman, who has spent his entire campaign in the Granite State, garnered 11 percent of the votes in the latest New Hampshire poll. The other GOP candidates finished with support in the single digits.

In fact, the *State Column* contends that a Ron Paul victory in Iowa could potentially bring about a Ron Paul defeat of Newt Gingrich in New Hampshire. That could also put a lot of pressure on Mitt Romney in the South Carolina poll.

Though Romney's lead is still a commanding one at the moment, upon closer inspection, his popularity in New Hampshire could be in trouble. While he remains favored among Republicans in the Granite State, his status amongst Independents is another story. Over 50 percent of Independent voters in New



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Hampshire remain undecided, and that critical bloc could change the face of the New Hampshire primary.

In fact, a *Boston Globe* poll released on Monday shows that Ron Paul leads among Democrats and Independents who plan to vote in the January 10 primary.

"Part of the logic of Romney's campaign is that he's best able to appeal to independents who will be decisive in the general election," said Linda Fowler, a Dartmouth College government professor. "If he can't pull the votes of independents in New Hampshire, then that assumption becomes questionable."

Andrew Smith, director of the Survey Center, claims Romney's strength in New Hampshire is affected by the fact that the majority of Republicans in New Hampshire are "moderate," as opposed to more conservative party activists.

"The biggest benefit Romney has out of the New Hampshire electorate is that New Hampshire primary voters are nowhere near as ideological as primary voters in other states," Smith said. "He is in a really strong position being near 40 percent in a multicandidate race."

The *Washington Examiner* [notes](#) that a significant amount of Paul's support in New Hampshire is not from Republicans:

In New Hampshire, Paul is the choice of just 13 percent of Republicans, according to the new poll, while he is the favorite of 36 percent of independents and 26 percent of Democrats who intend to vote in the primary. Paul leads in both non-Republican categories.

"Paul is doing the best job of getting those people who aren't really Republicans but say they're going to vote in the Republican primary," explains Smith. Among that group are libertarians, dissatisfied independents and Democrats who are "trying to throw a monkey wrench in the campaign by voting for someone who is more philosophically extreme," says Smith.

Paul is facing similar obstacles in South Carolina. According to David Woodard, who runs the Palmetto Poll at Clemson University in South Carolina, Paul's support in South Carolina is "higher among those who usually don't vote in GOP primary elections." Paul is 28 points behind Gingrich in the most recent Palmetto Poll.

"The economic positions of libertarians are popular here, but Paul's positions on gay marriage, abortion, illegal immigration, and national defense are all antithetical to South Carolina's conservative culture," says Woodard. "About 13 percent of the GOP primary electorate are military veterans, and they don't want to bring everyone home. We have a strong pro-life network, and it is knit into the Republican Party at its roots, and the amendment declaring marriage to be something between a man and a woman won with over 70 percent of the vote in South Carolina."

As a strict constructionist of the Constitution and champion of states' rights, Paul's views that the federal government should defer to the states in matters pertaining to personal actions (abortion, gay marriage, etc.) are often misconstrued as advocacy of those choices, which is not the case.

Still, the non-Republicans could play a major role in Iowa's, New Hampshire's and South Carolina's caucuses. In Iowa, anyone may show up at the caucus, register, and vote right there, while undeclared voters are permitted to participate in New Hampshire's GOP primary, and in South Carolina, anyone may vote in the GOP primary.



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