



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 14, 2011

Paul Virtually Tied for First Place in Iowa

With the January 3 Iowa Caucus just around the corner, every tiny fluctuation in the polls seems to matter. Just weeks ago, there was a four-way tie in Iowa among Texas Congressman Ron Paul, former Godfather Pizza CEO Herman Cain, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. Those numbers have changed several times since then, particularly with Herman Cain dropping out of the race, and according to the most recent Public Policy Polling, Ron Paul and Newt Gingrich are now tied for first.



Just last week, Newt Gingrich held a clear lead in Iowa, but Paul has now [closed](#) the gap, polling at 21 percent, virtually matching Gingrich's 22 percent. Ron Paul reportedly has a great deal of support in Iowa and Romney is now coming in third in the Hawkeye State, with 16 percent.

Paul's [campaign](#) has been extremely successful in reaching Iowa voters, and intends to continue in its efforts. Paul's campaign has organized a "Christmas Vacation with Ron Paul" program which will feature approximately 500 youth in Iowa knocking on doors and manning the phone bank for their candidate. Additionally, the campaign purchased a \$1-million ad buy in Iowa, which includes radio, TV, and mail advertisements, many of which focus on Newt Gingrich, who is currently Paul's greatest rival.

"Whenever I hear Newt try to sweep his Big Government record under the rug, I can hardly help but shake my head," Paul said in an email to his supporters Monday. "If you and I are truly serious about defeating President Obama in 2012 and turning our country around, nominating Newt Gingrich is the absolute last thing the Republican Party should do," he added.

Paul's mention of the facts of Gingrich's track record has proven to be successful, thus far, as Gingrich's lead has shrunk from nine percentage points to just one point, according to the most recent PPP poll.

"Newt Gingrich's momentum is fading in Iowa," commented [Public Policy Polling](#) (PPP) President Dean Debnam. "Meanwhile Ron Paul is building an unusual coalition of support for a Republican primary. The big question is: will they really turn out?"

PPP reports:

Gingrich has dropped 5 points in the last week and he's also seen a significant decline in his favorability numbers. Last week he was at +31 (62/31) and he's now dropped 19 points to +12 (52/40). The attacks on him appear to be taking a heavy toll — his support with Tea Party voters has declined from 35% to 24%.

Paul meanwhile has seen a big increase in his popularity from +14 (52/38) to +30 (61/31). There are a lot of parallels between Paul's strength in Iowa and Barack Obama's in 2008 — he's doing well with new voters, young voters, and non-Republican voters....



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That poll reveals that among those who are “new” for the 2012 election, Paul leads Gingrich 25-17, with Romney remaining at 16 percent. PPP writes, “Paul is doing a good job of bringing folks who haven’t done this before.”

Not surprisingly, Paul also maintains a great deal of popularity among young voters. Voters under 45 overwhelmingly choose Paul over Gingrich, 30 percent to 16 percent. Voters over 45, however, choose Gingrich over Paul, 26-15 percent, with Romney earning 17 percent.

Those who identify themselves as Republicans prefer Gingrich over Paul, 25-17 percent, but those who are more closely aligned with the Democratic Party or who consider themselves Independents overwhelmingly prefer Paul, 34 to 14 percent, with Romney coming in at 17 percent.

Noting the unique quality of these figures, PPP reports, “Young voters, independents, and folks who haven’t voted in caucuses before is an unusual coalition for a Republican candidate ... the big question is whether these folks will really come out and vote ... if they do, we could be in for a big upset.”

Another major observation in the poll is the loyalty and determination of the Paul supporters, who PPP notes are “considerably more committed to him than Gingrich’s are.” That same Public Policy Poll shows that Paul’s supporters are strong, with 77 percent indicating that Paul is their definite choice. Gingrich’s supporters, on the other hand, are not so strong, with only 54 percent who are certain.

Meanwhile, Romney’s support has remained at 16 percent, with no change from last week’s poll. Gingrich’s support is waning in Iowa, and Romney’s has not increased. PPP recalls that Romney has failed to gain support, even as Cain’s, Perry’s, and Bachmann’s campaigns have collapsed.

Even worse for Romney is that among those who voted for him in 2008, just 44 percent say they would vote for him again.

PPP believes the reason for Romney’s failure to excite voters is the fact that voters are increasingly disoriented by what has been referred to as the Republican establishment. Thirty-one percent of those polled maintain a favorable view of the Republican establishment, while an equal percentage hold an unfavorable view, and 38 percent are unsure. PPP contends, “When Romney rolls out endorsement after endorsement, to a lot of voters, that’s actually coming across as a negative thing.”

For Paul, on the other hand, that lack of support for the Republican establishment bodes well. Those who maintain a negative view of the Republican establishment are particularly enamored with Ron Paul. Among that group, Paul is ahead with 34 percent, while Gingrich sits at 18 percent, Romney at 10 percent, and Santorum at 12 percent.

Where Romney has Gingrich beat, however, is in values. Thirty-nine percent of voters believe Romney to have stronger values than Gingrich, with just 18 percent of voters choosing Gingrich in that area. Perhaps most surprisingly is that 43 percent remain unsure.

Bachmann’s support has fallen from 13 percent to 11 percent, and her favorability rating is now 55/37.

Though Perry’s camp has made an effort to revive his popularity, with ads regarding “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and the “War on Christmas,” they have failed to stimulate his support. He was at nine percent last week and remains there this week. His favorability is 43 percent, while his unfavorability is 47 percent. The only other candidate with less favorability than Perry is Jon Huntsman.

PPP contends that Perry may be going the wrong route to attract Republicans, particularly by calling for the reinstatement of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” since just 41 percent of Republicans are opposed to gays serving in the military. Twenty-eight percent support it, and a whopping 31 percent remain



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unsure.

Currently, 30 percent of Republican voters believe Gingrich to be the most viable candidate, while 21 percent believe it's Romney, and 14 percent assert it's Paul. No other candidate is in the double digits.

There is one major exception to all of these numbers, however: Tim Tebow. PPP humorously added Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow to the equation. Tebow, in fact, has the greatest favorability amongst all of the Republican contenders, 48 percent compared to just 13 percent unfavorable. Of course, Tebow is too young for the presidential age requirement and has never once voiced an interest in political ambitions, but his wholesome nature and outward faith resonate among voters.

How the January 3 Iowa Caucus will close remains to be seen, but one of the online bloggers for *Forbes* magazine's "Benzinga Insights," John Thorpe, commented on Paul's increasing success last week, predicting, "In one month, Paul will shock the world and win the Iowa Caucuses."



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