



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on February 5, 2012

Romney Wins Nevada, Gingrich Second, Paul Third

The Nevada caucuses marked Romney's second straight state win. Despite an Internet rumor earlier in the day of the caucuses that former House Speaker Newt Gingrich would pull out of the race (Gingrich [blamed](#) the rumor on the Romney campaign), none of his three rivals gave any indication of pulling out of the race.

Gingrich's second-place finish came as the *New York Times* published [an investigative piece](#) revealing that the former Georgia congressman had deep ties to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac back to the early 1990s, not just since leaving Congress in 1999. While it has been widely published that Gingrich earned \$1.6 million in consulting fees from Freddie Mac since 1999, both Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac sponsored a Gingrich junket to Ireland in 1998 during his speakership. The *New York Times* also noted that in 1999 Fannie Mae hired Gingrich's chief of staff Arne Christenson as its chief lobbyist at the same time Gingrich was hired as a political "consultant" for Freddie Mac.



Romney won all of the various [demographics](#) in exit polls, except independents and young voters, who were won by Ron Paul. As in recent state primaries and caucuses, Romney and Gingrich — who backed both the 2008 TARP bailout and an individual healthcare mandate that is the core of Obamacare — won the overwhelming majority of voters claiming to support the Tea Party. Romney did not, however, win the confidence of a majority of GOP voters. In the five primary and caucus states that have voted thus far, no candidate has won an outright majority of GOP voters. Of the four GOP presidential candidates, Texas Congressman Ron Paul is the only candidate that has not won a primary or caucus in a state.

The largest deciding factor in primary voting was electability; 43 percent described "can beat Barack Obama" as being more important than being a "true conservative" (17 percent), "strong moral character" (20 percent) or the "right experience" (15 percent). Romney won three quarters of the electability vote, even though he polls nationally against Obama at a comparable level with Ron Paul (who won only five percent of that demographic).

Electability in the presidential race can be seen from another perspective as well. Electability also means the ability to attract independent and new voters; much of the reason Barack Obama won in 2008 was that he was able to win a majority of independents and new voters. In that contest, Ron Paul becomes the most electable.

Part of the reason Romney is doing better in the state returns may be the media coverage. HighBeam



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Research has conducted a [study](#) that showed that in Florida, Rep. Paul was virtually shut out of the traditional media coverage. "Paul's vote total was surprisingly high considering this fact: There was an almost-complete Ron Paul blackout in the Florida media," the *Houston Chronicle* [reported](#) February 3. The *Chronicle*, traditionally hostile to Rep. Paul, acknowledged that "Of the four candidates for the GOP nomination, Paul received less than one-twentieth the coverage of the fellow losers Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich in Florida print-based publications, according to a study by HighBeam Research." The story went on to note that "Paul appeared in less than 1 percent of all Florida print-based media coverage, the study found. Mitt Romney received 60 percent of the attention, while Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum each had 20 percent."

Photo of Mitt Romney: AP Images



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