



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on December 15, 2011

Surging Ron Paul Stumps in New Hampshire

"The campaign is going well," he told a gathering of about 60 people at the Glass and Gear company. "I wish the country were going just as well." The campaign, he said, appears to be "peaking at just the right time, just a few weeks before the [primary] election. A lot of decisions are being made in the next few weeks."



With the Iowa caucuses coming on January 3 and the New Hampshire primary seven days later, candidates have only a short time to make their cases to voters. But with Congress scheduled to adjourn at the end of this week, Rep. Paul (R-Texas) will have more time out of Washington to spend in both Iowa and New Hampshire next week and in New Hampshire from January 3 until primary day January 10.

In New Hampshire, Mitt Romney still holds a double-digit lead over Gingrich and also possibly home-field advantage, having been Governor of neighboring Massachusetts from 2002-2006. Romney also has a summer home in the New Hampshire town of Wolfeboro on Lake Winnepesaukee. The Rasmussen poll has Romney at 33 percent and Gingrich at 22 percent of likely voters in New Hampshire's Republican primary. But Paul — at 18 percent — is closing on Gingrich in a primary that political experts have all but conceded to Romney. That makes a second-place finish all the more important, since the "expectations game" has always been a part of "spinning" the New Hampshire primary. A second-place finish by Paul would wildly exceed the expectations of a political and media establishment — whose ignoring of him through the early stages of the campaign prompted TV satirist Jon Stewart to [wonder](#) on his Comedy Central *Daily Show* why Paul was being treated "like the thirteenth floor in a hotel." Paul seemed pleased but not surprised by his showing in the latest polls.

"The momentum is building up and a lot of the candidates so far would come and go," he told reporters after meeting voters in Amherst, New Hampshire, Tuesday morning. "They would shoot to the top and drop back rapidly. Ours has been very steady growth — then in this last week or two there has been a sudden extra growth." Indeed, after Michele Bachmann defeated Paul by only 152 votes in the Ames Iowa straw poll in August and Texas Governor Rick Perry had just entered the race, TV journalists were nearly unanimous in announcing a "top tier" of candidates consisting of Romney, Perry, and Bachmann. Lately Bachmann has all but disappeared in the media coverage and Perry, with his stumbling and often incoherent performances in interviews and debates, appears also to have fallen out of contention.

And in Iowa, it is Romney who is sinking quickly. The Public Policy Polling survey shows Romney at just 16 percent, trailing both Gingrich with 22 percent and Paul at 21 percent, putting Paul in a statistical dead heat with the former Georgia congressman and speaker of the U.S. House.

At the Manchester stop, Paul delivered his message of limited federal government and a non-



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interventionist foreign policy to a mixed audience of Paul supporters and Independent voters. He named the federal departments of Education and Energy among those he would seek to eliminate and said his plan to cut one trillion dollars from the federal government in the first year of his administration would merely cut the federal budget back to where it was in 2006.

"I don't think too many people in '06 thought our government was too small," he observed wryly.

Asked what he would do to help the middle class, Paul said the government-inflated housing bubble near the end of the last decade and the bailouts of giant financial corporations have forced middle-class taxpayers to subsidize the wealthy, thus widening the gap between the middle class and the very rich. He also blamed the Federal Reserve, which he proposes to abolish, for printing more money, thereby devaluing the dollars of poor and middle-class workers.

When a woman asked about the difficulty of getting medical insurance for her son because of his preexisting heart condition, Paul said the budget cuts he is proposing would not cut Social Security, Medicare, or child health programs. He maintained, however, that the federal role in healthcare has raised the costs for everyone. A retired obstetrician, Paul said in the mid-1960s he worked at a Catholic hospital for \$3 an hour "and nobody was turned away." A Shriners hospital in Galveston, Texas treats patients for free, he said.

Kevin Hallenbeck, who runs a private-sector training program for sales people, is an undecided voter who spoke with the candidate for a few minutes before his speech. He is not committed to any candidate, he said, but is favorably impressed with Paul. Hallenbeck, who had heard that Paul is an "isolationist," said he told the candidate, "I don't believe we should disengage from the entire world." He later said he was impressed by Paul's "thoughtful response."

"He basically said it's not our responsibility to tell other people how to live their lives and spend their money. And the other thing he said is that we can't afford it." He likes what he heard from Paul, Hallenbeck said.

"What I hear are core values coming through. I don't hear a stump speech," he said. "I like that."

Photo of Ron Paul: AP Images



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