



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 13, 2012

What's in Store for GOP Candidates in S.C., Nev., and Fla.?

And polls for the upcoming caucuses reveal that there is a lot of movement within the states.

The next caucus is set to take place in South Carolina on January 21. While most analysts believe that Republicans in the state of South Carolina are too conservative to consider a candidate such as Ron Paul, who has garnered a reputation for being libertarian-minded, though he is in fact a constitutionalist, it seems that he is closing in on the top candidates in South Carolina.

One would expect a candidate such as Rick Santorum to be the frontrunner in South Carolina because of his strict social conservatism, but Mitt Romney continues to maintain frontrunner status, despite the fact that his stance on abortion remains unclear.

Santorum is actually in third place according to the most recent poll, the newest Insider Advantage [poll](#); Mitt Romney's once commanding 37 percent lead has dropped significantly to 23 percent. He is followed by Newt Gingrich who stands at 21 percent. In third is Rick Santorum with 14 percent, and just behind him is Ron Paul, with 13 percent.

"In the three other major South Carolina polls completed in the new year, Romney was earning 37 percent, 27 percent, and 30 percent, according to Real Clear Politics — meaning his 23 percent in the latest poll marks a precipitous decline," [reports The Hill](#).

Exactly what is behind Romney's significant decline is believed to be advertisements by Newt Gingrich which undermine Romney's alleged conservatism. Ironically, the man behind those advertisements could arguably be more liberal than Romney, having supported Nancy Pelosi's cap-and-trade agenda, socialized healthcare, and global governance.

The latest poll seems to indicate that the election in South Carolina is far from decided.

Likewise, in the state of [Nevada](#), where the fifth primary is scheduled to take place, Paul, Gingrich, and Romney are vying for the frontrunner position. According to an 8NewsNow/*Las Vegas Review-Journal* [poll](#), Mitt Romney is currently leading in Nevada with 33.1 percent of the vote, followed by Newt Gingrich, with 29.2 percent, and Ron Paul with 12.7 percent. Every other candidate polls at five percent or less. The Nevada caucuses are scheduled for February 4, just one month after the January 3 Iowa caucus.

Some analysts say that even in third place, Paul's position could prove to be a threat to the current leaders. His campaign in the Silver State is already strong, having established two offices there in October. At the time the offices were opened, Ron Paul 2012 Nevada executive director Steve Bierfeldt declared in a press release, "Dr. Paul's team will work hard to spread his message of liberty throughout





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the state.”

Just three weeks ago, Paul was polling in the single digits, prompting the *Christian Science Monitor* to write, “Most opinion polls for [South Carolina](#), the third state to hold a 2012 Republican nominating contest, give a resounding ‘no’ to Paul. The Texan has been polling in single digits in the state, home to many active and retired military personnel who may not take kindly to Paul’s non-interventionist military doctrine.”

Boston University professor Tobe Berkowitz articulated similar sentiments: “He’s a libertarian Republican. Will that play in South Carolina, [Georgia](#) and elsewhere? The fact that he’s a libertarian throws a lot of monkey-wrenches into Republican orthodoxy.”

The Florida primary is a bit exceptional, however. In August 2010, the Republican Party adopted the following new rule:

Any presidential primary, caucus, convention, or other meeting held for the purpose of selecting delegates to the national convention which occurs prior to the first day of April in the year in which the national convention is held, shall provide for the allocation of delegates on a proportional basis.

In other words, any primary conducted before April 1 will be done so on a proportional basis. The only state to be exempted from that rule was Florida, which was granted permission to be a “winner take all” state, giving Florida even greater significance.

According to a January 12 Rasmussen Report poll, that race at the moment belongs to Mitt Romney, who is said to be “running away with the race.”

The Rasmussen Report poll [indicates](#):

Coming off his decisive win in Tuesday’s New Hampshire Primary, Romney earns 41% support with former House Speaker Newt Gingrich a distant second at 19%. A new telephone survey of Likely Florida Republican Primary Voters finds former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum running third with 15% of the vote.

Texas Congressman Ron Paul and former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman are next with nine percent (9%) and five percent (5%) support respectively.

What will complicate the Florida primary for candidates such as Ron Paul and Jon Huntsman is that the primary is open to Republicans only, whereas Iowa and New Hampshire permit Independents to vote in the primaries.

Still, in politics, most things are rarely ever set in stone, and Florida is no exception. While 51 percent of Florida’s primary voters have indicated that they are certain of how they will vote, 41 percent assert that they may still change their minds.

Those who are sure of their votes in the Florida primary include 79 percent of Perry supporters, 63 percent of Romney supporters, 60 percent of Paul’s supporters, and 58 percent of Gingrich’s supporters. Just 33 percent of Santorum’s supporters and 32 percent of Huntsman’s supporters are fully committed to their candidates at the moment.

Interestingly enough, eight percent of Florida’s likely primary voters contend that they still do not have a preference, with the primary just two weeks ago, scheduled for January 31.

As for favorability in Florida, the numbers are significant. Rasmussen Report reveals, “Romney is



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viewed favorably by 76 percent of likely Florida Republican primary voters, followed by Santorum at 61 percent, Gingrich at 59 percent, Perry at 43 percent, Huntsman at 34 percent, and Paul at 33 percent.”

[Nationally](#), Mitt Romney remains in the lead with 29 percent of the vote, followed by Santorum with 21 percent. Ron Paul has continued to surge, now sitting at 17 percent alongside Newt Gingrich. Perhaps if Paul continues to assert his argument that Gingrich is a “chickenhawk” with a globalist agenda, he could tip the scales in his favor.

And according to a [Reuters/Ipsos poll](#), the only two candidates who seemingly have a shot at defeating President Obama in a hypothetical presidential race are Mitt Romney and Ron Paul. According to those polls, Romney would receive 43 percent against Obama’s 48 percent, while Paul would receive 41 percent against Obama’s 48 percent.

Strangely, however, when asked about a generic Republican presidential candidate versus Obama, Obama loses, 47 to 43 percent, underscoring once more how poorly Americans view this body of candidates.



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