Republican Presidential Primary Wide Open in Oklahoma

With support from 27% of registered voters, John McCain currently leads the field in Oklahoma. The recent survey of 300 Registered Republican Voters in Oklahoma, conducted as part of the Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates’ Sooner Survey, reveals that McCain holds a lead while only two other prospects, former Mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani (17%) and unannounced candidate former Senator Fred Thompson (12%), are in double-digits. Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who recently canceled an appearance at the State Republican Party Convention, was among a second tier of candidates in the single-digits, including Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee (5%), Kansas Senator Sam Brownback (2%), California Congressman Duncan Hunter (1%) and former Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson (1%).

It should be noted that Giuliani suffers in the Sooner State among the more conservative elements that tend to participate in primaries. For example, 24% of the Republican primary electorate describes itself as being “evangelical Christians.” Among this critical voting bloc, Giuliani is a distant third (McCain 30% vs. Fred Thompson 21% vs. Giuliani 10%). Similarly, among the 33% of Republicans that say pro-life issue is of top importance, Giuliani only has support of 8%, while McCain (33%) and Fred Thompson (17%) improve their showing.

Fred Thompson’s potential in the Sooner State is best exemplified by how well he does among those with an actual history of voting. Among the 28% of Republicans that have voted in at least 4 of the last 5 statewide primary elections, Thompson actually leads (24% Fred Thompson vs. 18% Giuliani vs. 17% McCain).

-Hillary Clinton Leads Among Democrats where Edwards, not Obama, is Top Rival

New York Senator Hillary Clinton currently commands support from 29% of the state’s Democrats, while John Edwards is well within striking distance at 20% and Illinois Senator Barack Obama is in third at 15%. New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson currently places a distant fourth at 7%; no other candidate exceeds 1%. Interestingly, the group at 1% includes the 2004 Oklahoma Democrat Presidential Primary winner, General Wesley Clark.

A clear ideological divide among state Democrats is evident in their choice for President. Among the 12% who always vote pro-choice, Clinton (21%) and Obama (28%) are the clear favorites, while John Edwards trails badly (6%). In contrast, Edwards wins among the 15% who always vote pro-life (17% Clinton vs. 17% Obama vs. 22% Edwards). Fully 29% of the Democrat electorate in Oklahoma describe themselves as liberals, and this group is solidly behind Senator Clinton (40% Clinton vs. 19% Obama vs. 16% Edwards); however the 22% who say they are “strong conservatives”, opt for Edwards (20% Clinton vs. 8% Obama vs. 22% Edwards) and Obama sees his numbers plummet.

Among the 19% of Democrats who have voted in each of the last five statewide primaries, the race is a three-way dead heat (21% Clinton vs. 21% Obama vs. 22% Edwards). Clearly, this race is as wide open as western parts of the state.

-Pat McFerron

Pat McFerron is a nationally recognized pollster who has been with Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates since 1993. He has supervised polling numbers for numerous successful gubernatorial, U.S. Senate, Congressional and legislative clients throughout the nation. In addition, McFerron conducted polling for Oklahoma’s Right-to-Work campaign, Oklahoma City’s MAPS for Kids, Tulsa’s Vision 2025, Fortune 500 companies, and many local and legislative campaigns.

This edition of the Sooner Survey was taken between April 23rd and 26th, 2007. It was a telephone survey of 300 registered voters in each party in the State of Oklahoma. The sample accurately reflects the Oklahoma electorate. The confidence interval associated with a sample of this type is such that 95% of the time, the results are within +/-5.6% of the “true values,” where “true values” refer to the results obtained if it were possible to interview every voter in the state.
1. (Republicans only) If the Republican primary election for President were held today, for whom would you vote if the candidates were: (Rotate)

- Rudy Giuliani: 17%
- John McCain: 27%
- Mitt Romney: 7%
- Sam Brownback: 2%
- Fred Thompson: 12%
- Mike Huckabee: 5%
- Duncan Hunter: 1%
- Tom Tancredo: 0%
- Tommy Thompson: 1%
- Undecided (vol.): 28%

2. (Democrats only) If the Democrat primary election for President were held today, for whom would you vote if the candidates were: (Rotate)

- Hillary Rodham Clinton: 29%
- Barack Obama: 15%
- John Edwards: 20%
- Joe Biden: 1%
- Wesley Clark: 1%
- Christopher Dodd: -
- Dennis Kucinich: 1%
- Bill Richardson: 7%
- Al Sharpton: -
- Undecided (vol.): 27%