

Rubio, Santorum, Christie for Vice President

Asked who should be the Republican nominee for Vice President, Florida's Senator Marco Rubio tops the list, followed by the surging former Pennsylvania Senator, Rick Santorum, and New Jersey's unvarnished Governor Chris Christie, according to a new national poll of registered voters by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™.

Rubio is mentioned 66 times in the study, or a little more than 8 percent of the time, by a mixture of registered Republicans, "lean" Republicans, and independents. "The question was open-ended," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll, "so people came up with his name without any prompt."

The same is true for Jersey Boy Chris Christie. He is mentioned 47 times, or 6%, without any prompt, placing third in mentions ahead of Sarah Palin, the GOP's Vice Presidential candidate last time around.

"Anytime you place ahead of Sarah Palin," said Woolley, "call yourself a winner. Her name recognition and presence are formidable."

Rick Santorum gets 56 mentions, 7%, to place second. He was already mentioned in the questionnaire before the Vice Presidential question was popped. "The fact that Santorum is surging in visibility and that his name had already been brought up in interviews combined to push him toward the top of the VP list," said Woolley.

Newt Gingrich, another active presidential candidate, who was considered hot two months ago, has fallen to the back of the pack, not just for president, but for vice-president too. He had 60 mentions in the December poll tying him for second place, but just 32 mentions in the recent study, placing fifth.

Gingrich is followed by another active presidential candidate, Ron Paul, in sixth place. Paul is followed by Mitt Romney, the putative but struggling front runner for the nomination, with just 16 mentions. In a similar poll in December, he was suggested 38 times.

Michele Bachmann, who dropped out of the presidential race, has also disappeared from vice-presidential sight. She got 60 mentions in the December poll, nearly as many as Marco Rubio, but gets just 16 mentions in the recent study.

Many other names were offered from Hillary Clinton to David Duke.

"Ronald Reagan was summoned from the grave by one respondent," said Woolley "Clearly, that person has watched too many of Republican debates."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 799 registered Republican and independent voters nationwide was conducted by both landlines and cell phones from Feb. 6 through Feb.12, 2012, and has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points.

And, no matter who is the Republican nominee for President, if you could pick the Vice Presidential nominee who would it be?		
<i>name or characteristic</i>	<i># of mentions</i>	<i>2 months ago</i>
Mark Rubio	66	61
Rick Santorum	56	19
Chris Christie	47	29
Sarah Palin	35	13
Newt Gingrich	32	60
Ron Paul	30	24
Mitt Romney	16	38
Michele Bachmann	16	60
Hilary Clinton	10	16
Rick Perry	8	17
a conservative	8	11
Jon Huntsman	8	11
Mitch Daniels	8	3
Herman Cain	7	25
Paul Ryan	7	6
a woman	6	14
a moderate	6	22
Condoleezza Rice	6	5
Bobby Jindal	5	1
Mike Huckabee	4	1
Colin Powell	4	1
Bill Clinton	4	1
Tim Pawlenty	4	0
someone young	3	4
John McCain	2	6
Donald Trump	2	3
a southerner	2	2
Allen West	2	0
Gary Johnson	2	0
Michael Bloomberg	2	1
Glen Beck	1	1
Olympia Snowe	1	1
Joe Lieberman	1	1
Jeb Bush	1	1
a Christian	1	1
Bill Bennett	1	0
Chuck Grassely	1	0
David Duke	1	0
Elizabeth Dole	1	0
Eric Cantor	1	0
Fred Thompson	1	0
David Petraeus	1	0
Jesse Ventura	1	0
John Cornyn	1	0
John Kasich	1	0
Mike Castle	1	0
Nikki Haley	1	1
Ronald Reagan	1	0
Sam Brownback	1	0
Sam Nunn	1	0
Norman Schwarzkopf	1	0
Rand Paul	1	0
an African American	0	1
A Hispanic/Latino/Latina	0	2
a minority	0	2
various others	14	n/a
don't know	355	266

Methodology, Questions

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from Feb. 6 through Feb. 12, 2012, using a randomly selected national sample of 799 registered Republican and independent voters, including an oversample of 200 Republican households (435 Republicans and 365 independents) contacted on both landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for a sample of 799 randomly selected respondents is +/- 3.5 percentage points. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone-only and dual cell-phone and land-line households, interviewed in the same time frame.

Question Wording and Order

US1-3d, D1, USP1a-b released 02.14.12.

USP2. And, no matter who is the Republican nominee for President, if you could pick the Vice Presidential nominee who would it be.... OPEN END, PRECODE, SPECIFY ANY OTHER?