



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on March 26, 2011

Romney Polls High Among Tea Party in Recent Survey

P.T. Barnum and Abraham Lincoln have both been credited with having that you can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can never fool all of the people all of the time. Fortunately for politicians, they only have to worry about fooling a few of the people (those that actually vote) every few years.



Given the paucity of powerful potential candidates filling the GOP roster of presidential wannabes, old Mr. Barnums axiom is likely a soothing tonic.

Proof of this postulate of the geometry of elections is found in the results of a new Pew Research Center [poll](#) which reveals that among those who self-identify as proponents of the Tea Party, almost 25 percent would choose Mitt Romney to be the Republican challenger to President Barack Obama in 2012.

Romneys 24 percent support number is 5 points higher than his nearest likely primary challenger, Mike Huckabee.

Sarah Palin, typically portrayed as the sweetheart of the Tea Party movement, comes in with half of Romneys support number. In fact, in the poll, respondents chose Texas Representative Ron Paul over Palin by a three point margin. These numbers may be a sign that Palins pull with the Tea Party faithful is waning, despite her former prominence and overwhelming name recognition advantage.

Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich finished in the top five with 15 percent of Tea Party respondents selecting him as the man they want to lead their party into 2012 and beyond.

Among all 538 respondents who categorized themselves as Republican or Leaning Republican, Romney came out on top again with 21 percent of this group signaling to him as their favorite.

Not surprising, given the uniqueness of his message, Representative Ron Paul finishes a strong third (12 percent) among Republican voters ages 18-39. Romney finishes second behind former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

There was one subset of the Republican electorate where Romney didnt come out on top and that was among white, evangelical Protestants. That bloc voted nearly 2 to 1 in favor of Governor Huckabee. This statistic is not as surprising as the Tea Partys support for Romney given the two mens devotion to their respective religious faiths (Romney is a devout Mormon while Huckabee is a former Southern Baptist minister).

Romney, as the former governor of a state that is small in area, 14th in population, but influential politically (Massachusetts) is not typically considered to be a staunch conservative. His positions on



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abortion, same-sex marriage, and state-funded health care have often placed him at odds with the majority of the right-wing of the GOP.

In fairness, Romneys views on these hot button issues have shifted over the years and perhaps his gradual slide toward the right has settled the fears of some of his potential supporters in the 2012 campaign and convinced them that he can be the standard bearer of the Republican party.

A look at a Washington Post/ABC News [survey](#) conducted a few weeks ago confirms the upward trend of Mitt Romneys support among conservatives. According to that poll, over 70% of those respondents who classified themselves as very conservative reported bearing a favorable opinion of Romney.

In most circumstances, one would expect the members of the various Tea Party-affiliated groups to already be engaged in researching the issues and throwing support behind this or that candidate. The rest of the voting public traditionally starts paying more attention to the election and the relevant issues as the election day draws nearer.

The Pew Poll, however, indicates that 81 percent of Republican likely voters are following news about possible candidates not at all closely or not too closely. That seems a shockingly high number of as yet disinterested voters given the radical agenda followed by the Obama Administration during the presidents first term.

ObamaCare, gays in the military, the protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the continuing incarceration of prisoners at the Guantanamo Prison Camp in Cuba, and the new undeclared war in Libya would all seem to be fodder for the cannons of the host of Obama detractors. But, as of March 13 when the poll was conducted, more than 8 in 10 Republicans report that they just arent paying attention.

Whether voters are tuning in or not to the speeches and travels of potential Republican challengers to President Obama, there is little doubt that as the pages of the calendar are torn off, Romney will use his substantial wealth and modest support base to convince Tea Party members of the genuineness of his (seemingly) limited list of conservative cause bona fides, his ideological similarity to them, and the difference of the health care bill he signed into law in Massachusetts from the nearly identical version signed into law just over a year ago by President Obama.



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