

THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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**McCain and Romney Battling for
First Place in California's GOP
Presidential Primary, but more
than one in five are undecided.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

During the past month, there has been a complete reordering of candidate preferences among Republicans likely to vote in California's February 5th primary election. Four weeks ago, Rudy Giuliani stood atop the field at 25%, followed by Mike Huckabee at 17%.

Now, John McCain, who was in fourth position in December, has vaulted to first place with 22%, just ahead of Mitt Romney, who is now in second place, with 18%.

Support for Giuliani has plummeted to 11% in the current poll, putting him in a tie with Huckabee for third place, just ahead of Fred Thompson (9%) and Ron Paul (7%).

The proportion of GOP voters who are undecided has grown to 21% and is nearly equivalent to that of frontrunner McCain.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* of 377 likely voters in California's February 5th Republican primary for President.

Table 1
Trend of voter preferences in the California Republican primary for president
(among likely voters in the CA Republican primary)

	Mid- January <u>2008</u>	December <u>2007</u>	October <u>2007</u>	August <u>2007</u>	March <u>2007</u>
John McCain	22%	12%	12%	9%	24%
Mitt Romney	18	15	13	17	7
Rudy Giuliani	11	25	25	35	37
Mike Huckabee	11	17	4	1	3
Fred Thompson	9	6	12	13	8
Ron Paul	7	3	4	1	1
Other	1	4	3	4	5
Undecided	21	18	22	20	15

Note: The March 2007 survey included the names of Tommy Thompson, Newt Gingrich and Chuck Hagel. For comparative purposes voters favoring these candidates were allocated to their second choice preferences.

Republican sub-group preferences

McCain leads Romney three to one (27% to 9%) among Republicans who describe themselves as moderately conservative, moderate or liberal. By contrast, strong conservatives, who constitute about half of the likely GOP electorate, favor Romney over McCain 26% to 16%.

Huckabee leads among those GOP voters who are born-again Christians, although his support among this segment has declined from 31% in December to 20% in the current poll.

While McCain and Romney draw about equally from GOP voters with household incomes of \$80,000 or more, the Arizona Senator has an edge over Romney and Huckabee among those who make less than \$80,000.

McCain also holds an advantage among voters age 50 and older, while younger voters are about evenly split between himself and Romney.

There are no significant differences in preferences by gender or between Northern and Southern California Republicans.

Table 2
Likely voter preferences in the California Republican
primary for president – by subgroup

	<u>McCain</u>	<u>Romney</u>	<u>Giuliani</u>	<u>Huckabee</u>	<u>Thompson</u>	<u>Paul</u>	<u>Other/ Undecided</u>
Statewide	22%	18	11	11	9	7	22
<u>Political ideology</u>							
(.51) Strongly conservative	16%	26	14	14	11	4	15
(.49) Moderately conservative/moderate/liberal	27%	9	8	8	8	9	31
<u>Born-again Christian</u>							
(.31) Yes	17%	17	14	20	9	6	17
(.69) No	25%	18	10	7	9	7	24
<u>Region</u>							
(.59) Southern California	22%	18	12	12	9	6	21
(.41) Northern California	22%	17	10	10	10	8	23
<u>Gender</u>							
(.51) Male	22%	18	13	11	10	7	19
(.49) Female	21%	18	9	11	9	6	26
<u>Age</u>							
(.40) 18-49	18%	19	11	14	4	6	28
(.61) 50 or older	24%	16	11	9	13	7	20
<u>Household income</u>							
(.45) Less than \$80,000	23%	12	12	15	8	6	24
(.55) \$80,000 or more	22%	20	12	10	10	7	19
<u>Voting method</u>							
(.51) Precinct voter	24%	18	15	12	5	5	21
(.49) Mail ballot voter	19%	18	7	9	14	8	25

* Small sample base.

Thompson voters would prefer Romney and Giuliani over McCain

There has been some speculation that Thompson is considering withdrawing from the nomination race. The current survey asked his supporters who their second choice preferences would be. The results indicate that Romney would be the chief beneficiary in California if Thompson were to withdraw, with 30% of Thompson supporters favoring him, followed by Giuliani at 20%, McCain at 11%, Huckabee at 8% and 31% undecided.

Favorability ratings

Large majorities of the GOP rank-and-file, on the order of about three to one, have favorable impressions of McCain and Romney. While Giuliani and Huckabee are also viewed positively, they hold narrower five to three favorability ratios.

Table 3
Image ratings of the four leading GOP candidates for President
(among likely voters in the CA Republican primary)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
McCain	68%	22	10
Romney	59%	23	18
Giuliani	54%	31	15
Huckabee	51%	26	23

Appraisal of personal attributes

McCain, who holds a narrow lead in overall preferences, rates higher than the other candidates in respect to "having the right experience," with 36% of voters choosing him on this attribute, followed by Romney (21%).

McCain also holds an advantage as the candidate with the best chance of winning the November general election and being able to unite the U.S.

Romney (27%) and McCain (24%) are rated above the others in respect to being the candidate who shares your values.

Romney outscores McCain (32% to 20%) and the others as being the candidate that best represents what the Republican party stands for. Romney also holds a smaller advantage as the candidate who best represents change.

Table 4
Comparing voter perceptions of the four leading GOP candidates on six personal attributes
(among likely voters in the CA Republican primary)

	<u>McCain</u>	<u>Romney</u>	<u>Giuliani</u>	<u>Huckabee</u>	<u>Other/ None</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Has the right experience	36%	21	21	4	8	10
Has the best chance of winning the November general election	32%	20	18	7	6	17
Will be able to unite the U.S.	29%	20	20	5	14	12
Shares your values	24%	27	12	15	12	10
Best represents change	18%	23	16	14	12	17
Best represents what the Republican Party stands for	20%	32	10	13	10	15

Most important issues to GOP primary voters

The issue that the largest proportion of GOP voters rates as being most important to them in deciding whom to support for president is illegal immigration (40%). Next in order of importance among Republican's likely to vote on February 5th is the terrorist threat (37%), followed by the war in Iraq (33%) and jobs/the economy (33%).

Three other issues are rated by somewhat smaller proportions as being most important – foreign policy (25%), taxes (24%), and health care (18%).

Table 5
Matters rated among "the most important" issues to Republican primary voters when deciding whom to support for President
(among likely voters in the CA Republican primary)

	<u>Among the most important</u>	<u>Important, but not the most important</u>	<u>Not important</u>
Illegal immigration	40%	48	11
The terrorist threat	37%	51	12
The war in Iraq	33%	59	8
Jobs and the economy	33%	60	7
Foreign policy	25%	66	8
Taxes	24%	68	8
Health care	18%	60	22

Differences between the sum of percentages for each item and 100% equals proportion with no opinion.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 1,033 registered voters in California, including 377 voters deemed likely to vote in the Republican primary election. The overall sample was divided into two random subsamples on some of the survey questions.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish January 14-20, 2008. Up to six attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. For this survey, the sample of registered Republicans was augmented to increase the number of interviews conducted among likely GOP voters in the February 5th primary. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews can be conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, the overall sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depend on sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of 377 likely GOP voters is +/- 5.2 percentage points. The maximum sampling error is based on percentages in the middle of the sampling distribution (percentages around 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (percentages around 10% or around 90%) have a smaller margin of error. While there are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error, the overall design and execution of the survey minimized the potential for these other sources of error. The maximum sampling error will be larger for subgroups of the overall sample.

Questions Asked

(IF HAVE NOT ALREADY VOTED, ASK:)

I am going to read the names of some Republicans who are running for the Republican presidential nomination this year. For each, please tell me whether there would be a good chance, some chance or no chance that you would vote for that person in California's presidential primary election. You may name as many or as few persons as you like as people you would be inclined to vote for. (NAMES AND TITLES OF CANDIDATES READ IN RANDOM ORDER) I am going to read back the names of the candidates you said you would have at least some chance of voting for. (NAMES OF CANDIDATES READ BACK) Of these persons, who would be your first choice if the California Republican primary election for President were being held today? (IF FIRST CHOICE GIVEN) Who would be your second choice?

(IF ALREADY VOTED, ASK:)

For whom did you vote in the Republican presidential primary election? (NAMES READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF REPUBLICANS)

Which of the four leading Republican candidates do you think (PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES READ IN RANDOM ORDER) – Rudy Giuliani, Mike Huckabee, John McCain or Mitt Romney? (SEE RELEASE FOR ITEMS READ)

When considering this year's election for President, how important (are) (were) the candidates' position on each of the following issues to you in deciding whom to support? (ISSUES READ IN RANDOM ORDER) (Is) (Was) this the most important issue, an important issue but not the most important issue, or not an important issue in your vote for President? (SEE RELEASE FOR ISSUES READ)

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of (NAME)? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES READ)

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Release #2261 Addendum

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Thompson's Withdrawal Makes Republican Presidential Contest Closer in California

By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

The withdrawal of Fred Thompson from the Republican presidential race yesterday tightens up the already close California Republican primary election. When voters who previously supported Thompson are allocated to the other candidates based on these voters' second choice preferences, John McCain's lead over Mitt Romney declines to two percentage points, 23% to 21%. In this setting, Rudy Giuliani receives 13% of the preferences, Mike Huckabee 12%, Ron Paul 7%, 1% for other candidates and 23% undecided.

Voter preferences in the California Republican primary for President (among likely voters in the CA Republican primary)

	<u>Without Thompson</u>	<u>With Thompson</u>
McCain	23%	22%
Romney	21	18
Giuliani	13	11
Huckabee	12	11
Thompson	--	9
Paul	7	7
Other	1	1
Undecided	23	21
