

In Basic Popularity, it's Opportunity: Gingrich

With Herman Cain embroiled in a sexual harassment scandal and Rick Perry continuing his fumbling debate performances, opportunity's knocking for Newt Gingrich, whose unpopularity now matches its lowest in his sometimes controversial public career.

Not all is well for any of these conservative GOP favorites; among all Americans in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll, each is viewed more negatively than positively, never a comfortable position for a public figure. But within his own party, Gingrich has the edge.

Republicans see Gingrich favorably by 57-23 percent, compared with 50-36 percent for Cain, whose unfavorable score is up by 19 points among Republicans in the past month. Perry, for his part, only manages a split within his own party – 42-38 percent – a 14-point gain in unfavorable views from a month ago.

Among very conservative adults, moreover – a group among which these three are tussling for support – Gingrich has a favorable-unfavorable advantage of 51-27 percent; Cain, a similar 48-28 percent. But Perry only manages a 40-36 percent draw among this critical group, with his favorable ratings down 10 points from last month. That's an indication that his troubles are more substantive than just a nationally televised brain freeze.

Outside their party, though, each of these candidates fares far less well in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). Each is under water in terms of basic popularity: Americans overall view Gingrich more unfavorably than favorably by 43-32 percent; Cain by 44-29 percent (see [separate story](#)), and Perry 46-24 percent.

For comparison, Barack Obama had a 47-46 percent favorable-unfavorable score when last tested in September. Mitt Romney, in mid-October, was at 33-36 percent among all adults.

Cain's unfavorable ratings are up by 17 points from mid-October, and Perry's by 8 points from last month and 15 points from September, while their favorability ratings have remained unchanged. That suggests they've kept what popularity they initially attained – but that more recent judgments have turned decisively against them.

PARTY – Majorities of Democrats see Gingrich, Cain and Perry unfavorably – 59, 58 and 53 percent, respectively. More important, if any of these three were to survive the primaries and emerge as the GOP nominee, is that they're seen more unfavorably than favorably by independents, the key swing voters in national elections.

Favorable-unfavorable ratings
Gingrich Cain Perry

All	32-43%	29-44	24-46
Republicans	57-23	50-36	42-38
Independents	29-44	28-41	20-49
Democrats	20-59	19-58	19-53
Very conservatives	51-27	48-28	40-36
Somewhat conservatives	51-27	40-39	33-42
Moderates	24-53	27-48	17-53
Liberals	17-58	16-57	18-51

Gingrich finds himself at nearly the identical level of popularity he had among Republicans last spring, when he had a 58-23 favorable-unfavorable rating. Unfavorable views of Gingrich exceeded his favorable scores consistently in ABC/Post polling from 1995 to 1998, during his tenure as speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. His unfavorable rating reached 59 percent in 1997, and never dropped below 43 percent, same as it is today.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Nov. 9-13, 2011, among a random national sample of 1,018 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (NAME)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

11/13/11 - Summary table

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
a. Herman Cain	29	11	18	44	21	23	26
b. Rick Perry	24	6	18	46	23	23	30
c. Newt Gingrich	32	10	21	43	21	21	26

Trend:

a. Herman Cain

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/13/11	29	11	18	44	21	23	26
10/16/11	31	10	20	27	14	13	42

b. Rick Perry

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/13/11	24	6	18	46	23	23	30
10/16/11	26	5	21	38	16	22	35
9/18/11	23	7	16	31	12	19	46

c. Newt Gingrich

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/13/11	32	10	21	43	21	21	26
11/1/98	34	NA	NA	58	NA	NA	9
8/21/98	34			46			19
7/12/98	31			47			22
5/12/98	34			53			13
4/4/98	34			43			23
1/31/98	27			46			27
1/30/98	27			46			27
1/19/98	32			49			19
9/10/97	26			52			22
4/24/97	23			59			18
9/4/96 RV	26			55			19
6/30/96	25			57			18
10/30/95	29			45			26
7/17/95	34			46			20
6/8/95	32			51			18
3/19/95	31	"	"	46	"	"	23

END