

For Santorum, a High in the GOP; For Gingrich: Trouble with Women

Rick Santorum reached a new high in favorable ratings from Republicans in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll, numerically outpointing Mitt Romney among party regulars. But both remain underwater more broadly, a sign of the toll of their contentious primary campaign.

And then there's the thrice-married Newt Gingrich, resoundingly rejected, in particular, by women: A mere 19 percent of them see him favorably, vs. a remarkable 60 percent unfavorably. He's also unpopular among men, by a less garish but still-wide 23-point margin.

Within the GOP, 63 percent express a favorable opinion of Santorum, vs. 58 percent for Romney – not a statistically significant difference, but a challenging one for Romney given his advantages in campaign spending and, until recently, name recognition. Gingrich trails with just 43 percent favorability in his own party, a point from his low two weeks ago.

Among other groups, Santorum is seen favorably by 54 percent of conservatives, 59 percent of “very” conservatives and 72 percent of conservative Republicans in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). That's 9 points more than Romney's score in each of those groups, with Gingrich again trailing them both.

Romney, for his part, has been consistently better-rated than Santorum among moderates, liberals and independents. On balance this essentially evens their scores: Among all Americans, 38 percent see Romney favorably; 36 percent, Santorum.

That said, 42 and 40 percent, respectively, see them unfavorably. (Gingrich fares worse: 24 percent favorable, 56 percent unfavorable.)

While unwelcome for any public figure, those net negative ratings are not new for the GOP candidates. More Americans have seen Romney unfavorably than favorably in seven of 10 ABC/Post polls this election cycle, Santorum in four of six, Gingrich in seven of seven.

While Santorum does better than Romney in some elements of the GOP base, he's weaker in the political center – net negative by 15 points among independents and 13 points among moderates, vs. -3 scores in both groups for Romney.

Among Republicans, Santorum's rating is numerically his best to date, albeit by a scant 2 points. Among independents, though, he was rated lower just once, in early January, when many more were undecided about him.

Neither Romney nor Santorum suffers from a gender gap of Gingrichian proportions. Romney's seen more favorably by men than women by a 6-point margin, Santorum by a bare 3 points.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone March 14-18, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,004 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.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

Media contacts: [David Ford](#), (212) 456-7243, and [Julie Townsend](#), (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

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

a. Mitt Romney

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
3/18/12	38	10	28	42	19	23	20
3/4/12	35	9	26	45	20	25	20
2/26/12	33	6	27	46	22	24	21
2/19/12	37	10	27	44	21	23	19
2/12/12	36	9	27	43	18	24	22
1/22/12	31	6	25	49	25	23	21
1/8/12	39	10	28	34	18	16	28
11/27/11	38	9	29	38	20	17	25
10/16/11	33	8	26	36	20	15	31
9/18/11	33	5	27	31	16	14	37

b. Rick Santorum

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
3/18/12	36	11	24	40	16	24	25
3/4/12	32	10	22	40	16	23	28
2/26/12	34	10	24	37	15	22	29
2/19/12	36	12	24	34	16	18	30
2/12/12	36	11	24	31	14	18	33
1/8/12	27	7	20	29	15	14	44

c. Newt Gingrich

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
3/18/12	24	8	16	56	24	33	19
3/4/12	23	6	17	56	21	35	21
2/19/12	26	8	19	54	21	33	20
1/22/12	29	8	20	51	20	31	20
12/11/11	35	12	23	48	21	27	18
11/27/11	35	11	24	42	18	24	23

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 ***