

Gingrich, Romney Outstrip Paul in Popularity Within the GOP

Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney are maintaining broad popularity in the Republican Party, both far outstripping GOP rival Ron Paul in basic favorability. But among independents – crucial swing voters in the general election – the advantage is Romney’s.

The latest ABC News/Washington Post poll finds that all three have challenges among the general public overall. Gingrich remains underwater in basic favorability, with more Americans seeing him unfavorably than favorably. Romney gets no better than an even split on this measure; Paul, roughly the same.

Nonetheless this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that Romney’s favorability rating has advanced by 13 points among independents since mid-October; 45 percent now see him favorably, 30 percent unfavorably. That’s improved from a more negative 32-36 percent split on Romney among independents a month and a half ago. Romney’s gained ground among very conservative potential GOP voters as well.

Gingrich, for his part, also has gained slightly among independents, up by 7 points in favorability from mid-November, to 36 percent. But more independents continue to view him unfavorably than favorably, essentially unchanged at 43 percent.

Paul, for his part, has gained 11 points in favorable ratings among independents since earlier this fall, to 38 percent – but also has seen his unfavorable score in this group rise by 9 points, to 34 percent. He’s become better known among independents, but not better liked.

	Favorable-unfavorable ratings		
	Romney	Gingrich	Paul
All	38-38%	35-42	32-35
Democrats	23-55	19-60	26-42
Republicans	56-29	60-26	39-34
Independents	45-30	36-43	38-34
Liberals	28-51	24-57	31-41
Moderates	40-38	32-48	36-35
Somewhat conservatives	45-35	44-36	28-37
Very conservatives	57-28	59-21	44-33
Liberal Democrats	23-62	16-73	25-48
Conservative Republicans	63-25	67-24	39-37
Very conservative Reps and inds	65-27	65-24	50-37

GOP – Paul’s more immediate concern is in his own party. Republicans only divide, 39-34 percent, in favorable vs. unfavorable views of the libertarian congressman. His favorable score is unchanged from the last ABC/Post measurement in mid-September.

Favorability is the most basic measure of a public figure’s popularity. Compare Paul’s 39 percent among Republicans to Gingrich’s 60 percent and Romney’s 56 percent. The difference between Gingrich and Romney in favorability is not statistically significant given the sample size – but slightly more Republicans see Gingrich “strongly” favorably, 22 percent, than do Romney, 15 percent.

OTHERS – In addition to bragging rights among independents, Romney, as noted, has improved among Republicans and independents who describe themselves as “very” conservative, a group in which his support has been comparatively weaker. Regardless of whom they support for the nomination, 65 percent in this group now express a favorable opinion of Romney overall, up from 52 percent in mid-October, and the same as Gingrich. It’s a far lower 50 percent for Paul.

These candidates have challenges across the political spectrum, of course. Romney and Paul are viewed favorably by about a quarter of Democrats – 23 and 26 percent, respectively – and Gingrich has just a 19 percent favorable rating from Democrats, about as low as Barack Obama’s, earlier this fall, among Republicans.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Nov. 22-27, 2011, excluding Nov. 24, among a random national sample of 1,009 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>.

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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?

11/27/11 - Summary table

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
a. Mitt Romney	38	9	29	38	20	17	25
b. Ron Paul	32	8	24	35	20	15	33
c. Newt Gingrich	35	11	24	42	18	24	23

Trend:

a. Mitt Romney

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
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. Ron Paul

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/27/11	32	8	24	35	20	15	33
9/25/11	25	6	19	27	17	10	49

c. Newt Gingrich

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
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
9/4/96RV	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