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IOWA: CARSON, TRUMP TIE FOR LEAD

Most voters can see themselves supporting several candidates

West Long Branch, NJ – The ***Monmouth University Poll*** of likely Iowa Republican caucusgoers finds Ben Carson and Donald Trump tied for the top spot. This marks the first time since July 26 that a poll in any of the first four nominating states has not shown Trump with a nominal lead. Not surprisingly, given the top two contenders in the poll, most Iowa Republicans prefer someone without a traditional political pedigree. At this early stage, though, the vast majority of voters say their eventual support could go to one of several other candidates in spite of their current preference.

When Iowa Republicans are asked who they would support in their local caucus, Ben Carson (23%) and Donald Trump (23%) tie for the top spot. The next tier of candidates includes Carly Fiorina (10%) and Ted Cruz (9%), followed by Scott Walker (7%), Jeb Bush (5%), John Kasich (4%), Marco Rubio (4%), and Rand Paul (3%). The last two Iowa caucus victors, Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum, each garner 2% of the vote. None of the other six candidates included in the poll register more than 1% support.

“These results mark a significant shake-up in the leaderboard from Monmouth’s Iowa poll taken before the first debate,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ. “Carson and, to a lesser extent, Fiorina have surged, while Walker has faded into the background.”

In mid-July, Walker was the front runner in Iowa, with Trump and Carson following behind. Since then, Walker’s support has dropped by 15 points, while Carson’s has increased by 15 points and Trump’s by 10 points. Support has also increased for Fiorina by 7 points since Monmouth’s last Iowa poll.

Only 12% of likely Republican caucusgoers say they are completely decided on which candidate they will support in February. Another 42% have a strong preference now but are willing to consider

other candidates, 27% percent have a slight preference, and 20% say they are really undecided even if they are able to name a choice now. Just 1-in-4 voters (25%) say they have their choice narrowed down to one or two candidates, while most (54%) say they can see themselves caucusing for any of 3 to 4 candidates currently in the race. Another 17% say they are realistically considering giving their support to 5 or more candidates in field.

Among voters who say their current decision is strongly locked in, Trump leads with 30%, compared to 22% for Carson. Among those who say they only have a slight preference or are up in the air, 25% support Carson and 16% back Trump.

“Trump’s support is currently more solid than Carson’s, but Iowa voters are still considering quite a few candidates before they come to a final decision,” said Murray.

Iowa GOP caucus goers say that, regardless of who they support in the primary, the country needs a president from outside of government who can bring a new approach to Washington (66%) rather than someone with government experience who knows how to get things done (23%). Among those who prefer an outsider, more than two-thirds are backing one of the three candidates who have never held elected office – Trump (32%), Carson (26%), or Fiorina (13%). However, even among those who say the country needs someone with government experience, 30% are currently supporting one of these three candidates.

Looking at the fundamental strengths of leading candidates, Iowa Republicans now hold an almost universally positive opinion of Ben Carson at 81% favorable to just 6% unfavorable, compared to 63% favorable and 11% unfavorable in July. Carly Fiorina has also seen her numbers improve to 67% favorable and 8% unfavorable, up from 44% and 10% in July. John Kasich’s name recognition has also gone up but the gap between his positive and negative ratings remains similar at 32% favorable and 23% unfavorable, compared to 24% and 17% in the prior poll.

Donald Trump’s rating has ticked up slightly – now standing at 52% favorable and 33% unfavorable, compared to 47% and 35% in July – while the ratings for Scott Walker and Jeb Bush have taken a dip over the past month. Walker’s rating is now 64% favorable and 16% unfavorable, compared to 73% and 9% last month. Bush’s rating is now 32% favorable and 51% unfavorable, compared to 40% and 42% last month. Ted Cruz’s rating of 58% favorable and 21% unfavorable is similar to the 53% and 17% rating he held last month.

The poll also identified candidate support among key groups of GOP caucus goers, including:

- *Tea Party* – Trump leads Carson 27% to 22% among Tea Party supporters, with Cruz at 16%. Among non-supporters of the Tea Party, Carson takes a 25% to 19% lead over Trump.
- *Ideology* – Very conservative voters split their vote among Carson (24%), Trump (23%), and Cruz (16%). Somewhat conservative voters are most likely to back either Carson

(25%) or Trump (23%). Moderate to liberal voters prefer Trump (26%), followed by Fiorina (18%) and Carson (17%).

- *Evangelicals* – Evangelical voters favor Carson (29%) followed by Trump (23%). Non-evangelical voters prefer Trump (24%), Carson (18%), and Fiorina (13%).
- *Gender* – Men prefer Trump (27%) over Carson (17%), while women prefer Carson (30%) over Trump (19%).

“After more than a month of Trump winning virtually every Republican demographic group, we’ve finally got a little variation in voting blocs to talk about,” said Murray.

Hawkeye State Republicans are divided on whether their final decision about who to support in the Republican primary will come down to the candidate’s positions on the issues (45%) or their personal qualities and experiences (45%).

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from August 27 to 30, 2015 with 405 Iowa voters likely to attend the Republican presidential caucuses in February 2016. This sample has a margin of error of ± 4.9 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Who would you support if the presidential caucus was being held today and the candidates for the Republican nomination were – [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

	August 2015	July 2015
Jeb Bush	5%	7%
Ben Carson	23%	8%
Chris Christie	1%	1%
Ted Cruz	9%	7%
Carly Fiorina	10%	3%
Jim Gilmore	0%	0%
Lindsey Graham	0%	0%
Mike Huckabee	2%	6%
Bobby Jindal	1%	4%
John Kasich	4%	2%
George Pataki	<1%	<1%
Rand Paul	3%	5%
Rick Perry	1%	3%
Marco Rubio	4%	5%
Rick Santorum	2%	3%
Donald Trump	23%	13%
Scott Walker	7%	22%
(VOL) Other	0%	0%
(VOL) Undecided	5%	11%
(n)	405	452

2. And who would be your second choice?

	August 2015	July 2015
Jeb Bush	5%	6%
Ben Carson	12%	6%
Chris Christie	3%	2%
Ted Cruz	13%	7%
Carly Fiorina	8%	3%
Jim Gilmore	0%	<1%
Lindsey Graham	<1%	<1%
Mike Huckabee	5%	5%
Bobby Jindal	6%	8%
John Kasich	2%	1%
George Pataki	0%	<1%
Rand Paul	3%	4%
Rick Perry	2%	5%
Marco Rubio	8%	9%
Rick Santorum	1%	3%
Donald Trump	10%	9%
Scott Walker	9%	13%
(VOL) Other	0%	0%
(VOL) No one	6%	4%
(VOL) Undecided	7%	15%
(n)	405	452

3. Which of the following best describes where your decision stands at this moment: I am completely decided on which candidate I will support, I have a strong preference right now but I am willing to consider other candidates, I have a slight preference among a group of candidates I like, or I am really undecided among a number of candidates?

	TOTAL
Completely decided	12%
Strong preference	42%
Slight preference	27%
Undecided	20%

4. About how many of the Republican candidates now running can you realistically see yourself caucusing for in February – do you have it narrowed down to one or two candidates, 3 to 4 candidates, 5 to 6 candidates, or are there more than 6 candidates who could realistically get your vote?

	TOTAL
One or two candidates	25%
3 to 4 candidates	54%
5 to 6 candidates	11%
More than 6 candidates	6%
(VOL) Don't know	3%

5. I'm going to read you a few names of people who are running for president in 2016. Please tell me if your general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. *[NAMES WERE ROTATED]*

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush	32%	51%	17%
--July 2015	40	42	18
Commentator and Doctor Ben Carson	81%	6%	14%
--July 2015	63	11	26
Texas Senator Ted Cruz	58%	21%	21%
--July 2015	53	17	29
Businesswoman Carly Fiorina	67%	8%	25%
--July 2015	44	10	46
Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee	53%	27%	21%
--July 2015	58	23	19
Ohio Governor John Kasich	32%	23%	45%
--July 2015	24	17	59
Florida Senator Marco Rubio	64%	13%	23%
--July 2015	64	14	22
Businessman Donald Trump	52%	33%	14%
--July 2015	47	35	18
Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker	64%	16%	20%
--July 2015	73	9	18

6. Regardless of who you support, what do you think the country needs more in the next president: someone with government experience who knows how to get things done OR someone outside of government who can bring a new approach to Washington? *[CHOICES WERE ROTATED]*

	TOTAL
Someone with government experience	23%
Someone outside of government	66%
(VOL) Both	9%
(VOL) Don't know	3%

7. In deciding who to support for the Republican nomination for president, is it more important to you that the candidate has the right positions on issues that are most important to you OR that the candidate has the personal qualities and experiences you feel are needed for the job? *[CHOICES WERE ROTATED]*

	TOTAL
Right positions on issues	45%
Personal qualities and experiences	45%
(VOL) Both	9%
(VOL) Don't know	2%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from August 27 to 30, 2015 with a statewide random sample of 405 Iowa voters drawn from a list of registered Republican voters who voted in at least one of the last two state primary elections and indicate they are likely to attend the Republican presidential caucuses in February 2016. This includes 255 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 150 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for age and gender based on state registration list information on the pool of voters who participate in primary elections. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and Aristotle (voter list). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.9 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)		
53% Male	8% 18-34	97% White, non-Hispanic
47% Female	18% 35-49	3% Other
	35% 50-64	
	39% 65+	

	LIKELY CAUCUS- GOER	GENDER		TEA PARTY SUPPORTER		POLITICAL IDEOLOGY			EVANGELICAL	
		Male	Female	Yes	No	Very cons.	Somewhat cons.	Mod/ Lib	Yes	No
Unweighted N	405	218	187	192	202	172	174	56	211	183
moe	4.9%	6.6%	7.2%	7.1%	6.9 %	7.5%	7.4%	13.1%	6.8%	7.3%

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