



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

MEMORANDUM

TO: ROMNEY NATIONAL FINANCE TEAM

FROM: NEIL NEWHOUSE - ROMNEY CAMPAIGN POLLSTER

SUBJECT: FLORIDA POLL UPDATE/ELECTABILITY

DATE: JANUARY 26, 2012

The purpose of this memo is to briefly update you with respect to recent polling in the upcoming Florida GOP primary.

Speaker Gingrich got an initial bump in Florida following his South Carolina win.

Reversing the double-digit lead that Gov. Romney had in Florida a couple of weeks ago, Speaker Gingrich took a significant lead in the days immediately following his win in South Carolina last weekend. A Rasmussen poll completed on Sunday (Jan 22) showed Gingrich leading by a 41%-32% margin.

But then came Monday night.

Not only did Gov. Romney have a strong performance in the debate Monday night (when Speaker Gingrich was unable to appeal the audience for support), but he followed that up with two strong days of campaigning where he put the Speaker on the defensive.

Polling completed following the debate show a definite swing toward Mitt.

Three firms have completed polls on Tuesday/Wednesday evening this week and the results show a dramatic turning of this campaign. They ALL show Mitt leading Newt outside the margin of error of each poll.

American Research Group:	Romney 41%	Gingrich 34%	Santorum 9%	Paul 7%
Insider Advantage:	Romney 40%	Gingrich 32%	Santorum 8%	Paul 9%
Rasmussen:	Romney 39%	Gingrich 31%	Santorum 12%	Paul 9%

Today's Florida polls also shoot down Newt's "electability" argument.

Two polls released in Florida over the past 24 hours show Newt struggling in a general election against President Obama. But, that conclusion isn't mine – it's from the two independent pollsters:

Suffolk pollster David Paleologos: "If Florida is one of six key states that swings the national election, independents hold that key, and this poll suggests that Newt won't be able to secure Florida for his party."

Quinnipiac pollster Peter Brown had this to say: "At least in Florida and at least at this point in the campaign, the data indicates that Gov. Romney is clearly the stronger Republican candidate against President Obama. As our mothers told us growing up, 'You never get a second chance to make a first impression,' and Speaker Newt Gingrich's initial impression on the overall Florida electorate is not a positive one. It is certainly possible that Gingrich can change the overall unfavorable view that Florida voters have of him, but for him to carry Florida in November he would have to prove mother wrong."

Their numbers prove their points:

Suffolk University Poll (600 sample – Jan 22-24)

Mitt Romney overall image: 44% favorable – 37% unfavorable

Newt Gingrich overall image: 29% favorable – 58% unfavorable

Romney vs. Obama – 47%-42%

Gingrich vs. Obama – 40%-49%

Among Independents:

Romney vs. Obama – 38%-44%

Gingrich vs. Obama – 29%-56%

Quinnipiac University Poll (1,518 sample – Jan 19-23)

Mitt Romney overall image: 43% favorable – 37% unfavorable

Newt Gingrich overall image: 32% favorable – 50% unfavorable

Romney vs. Obama – 45%-45%

Gingrich vs. Obama – 39%-50%

Among Independents:

Romney vs. Obama – 42%-41%

Gingrich vs. Obama – 33%-50%

Bottom Line

The tide seems to have turned in Florida. Going into tonight's debate, Gov. Romney's campaign appears to be gaining the upper hand. And, as far as Speaker Gingrich's "electability," Suffolk pollster Paleologos has it right when he says "this poll suggests that Newt won't be able to secure Florida for his party."