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NATIONAL: GOP ALL OVER THE 2016 MAP

But Paul Ryan gets highest ratings from party faithful

West Long Branch, NJ – When asked to name their top choice for 2016, Republicans and Republican-leaning voters volunteer a large field of contenders, with none breaking away from the pack. Although Paul Ryan is not on voters’ radar for the “horse race” question, he far outpaces the field when it comes to candidate favorability. The **Monmouth University Poll** also finds that most GOP voters are at least somewhat willing to give a little on the issues in order to support a candidate with the best shot at winning the White House.

When asked to name who they would like to see as the party’s nominee for president, Republicans and Republican leaning voters volunteer more than a dozen names, with none exceeding 10% support. Contenders include Mitt Romney (8%), Ben Carson (7%), Chris Christie (7%), Jeb Bush (6%), Ted Cruz (5%), Rand Paul (5%), Mike Huckabee (3%), Scott Walker (3%), Bobby Jindal (2%), Rick Perry (2%), Marco Rubio (2%), and Rick Santorum (1%).

The poll question asked survey participants to name a preference without providing a list of suggested candidates. A majority are able to volunteer a choice more than a year before the first official nominating contest. Another 37% say they are undecided at this stage and 8% report that they do not plan to support any Republican candidate in 2016.

Favored contenders for the GOP nomination among self-identified Tea Party supporters include Ben Carson (13%), Ted Cruz (10%), and Mitt Romney (9%). Among Republicans who are not aligned with the Tea Party, 9% prefer Chris Christie, 7% name Jeb Bush, and 7% pick Mitt Romney as their choice for 2016.

“The Republican field is wide open, with different factions of the party circling around very different candidates,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey. “This could lead to a bruising nominating contest, but most GOP voters say they are at least somewhat willing to put their ideological preferences aside in order to get behind the most electable candidate.”

The *Monmouth University Poll* found that a majority (57%) of Republicans and Republican leaning voters say they are willing to support a candidate they don't fully agree with on the issues in order to nominate someone who would have the best shot at winning the White House. This includes 12% who are very willing and 45% who are somewhat willing. Another 18% are not too willing to do this and 22% are not at all willing. Slightly more Tea Party-aligned voters (66%) than non-Tea Party supporters (54%) claim they are willing to consider electability over ideology.

"The willingness of Tea Party supporters to prioritize electability may depend on which candidate they are being asked to support. Some seem to be more palatable than others," said Murray. "Two of the most talked about possibilities, Chris Christie and Jeb Bush, are viewed negatively by a significant number of Tea party voters."

The poll asked Republican voters for their general impression of 15 potential candidates for the party's presidential nomination in 2016. Wisconsin Congressman, and the 2012 nominee for Vice President, Paul Ryan has the strongest net positive personal rating among his party's voters while New Jersey Governor Chris Christie has the weakest rating among top tier candidates, particularly with Tea Party supporters.

Overall, Chris Christie gets a favorable rating from 36% of GOP voters and an unfavorable rating from a similar 34%. He does better among those who are not aligned with the Tea Party – 41% favorable to 27% unfavorable, but is viewed negatively by Tea Party supporters – 27% favorable to 46% unfavorable. Christie is the only candidate tested in the poll with an "upside down" rating among Tea Party-aligned Republicans.

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush is another high-profile contender who gets mixed ratings from Republican voters – 39% favorable to 30% unfavorable. Tea Party supporters are evenly divided on Bush – 39% positive to 38% negative, while those unaligned with the Tea Party give him a more positive 39% favorable to 24% unfavorable rating.

Paul Ryan, on the other hand, garners an overall favorable rating from 50% GOP voters and an unfavorable rating from just 11% of party voters – for a net positive evaluation of 39 percentage points. This is even better than the net rating received by former Massachusetts Governor and 2012 presidential nominee Mitt Romney – who gets a 55% favorable to 30% unfavorable for a net positive score of 25 points.

Other potential 2016 candidates who have net positive ratings of 22 to 24 points include: Texas Governor Rick Perry (43% favorable to 20% unfavorable), Kentucky Senator Rand Paul (42% to 18%), former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee (45% to 22%), Texas Senator Ted Cruz (39% to 15%), and Florida Senator Marco Rubio (38% to 16%).

Potential 2016 Republican Candidate Favorability Ratings					
GOP VOTER RATING				TEA PARTY	
Net rating	Favorable	Unfavorable		Supporters	Non-supporters
+39	50%	11%	Paul Ryan	60 - 13	45 - 11
+25	55%	30%	Mitt Romney	58 - 30	52 - 33
+24	39%	15%	Ted Cruz	60 - 11	26 - 19
+24	42%	18%	Rand Paul	60 - 16	32 - 21
+23	45%	22%	Mike Huckabee	58 - 23	38 - 21
+23	43%	20%	Rick Perry	59 - 16	34 - 22
+22	38%	16%	Marco Rubio	53 - 15	29 - 17
+20	32%	12%	Ben Carson	51 - 8	20 - 14
+20	30%	10%	Scott Walker	45 - 9	20 - 11
+14	28%	14%	Bobby Jindal	44 - 16	19 - 14
+10	21%	11%	John Kasich	23 - 7	18 - 14
+9	39%	30%	Jeb Bush	39 - 38	39 - 24
+6	28%	22%	Rick Santorum	39 - 18	22 - 25
+2	36%	34%	Chris Christie	27 - 46	41 - 27
+1	12%	11%	Mike Pence	19 - 6	9 - 14

Fewer than half of Republican voters have an opinion about other candidates asked about in the poll, but those who do express an opinion tend to be positive. These include commentator Dr. Ben Carson (32% favorable to 12% unfavorable), Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker (30% to 10%), Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal (28% to 14%), Ohio Governor John Kasich (21% to 11%), former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum (28% to 22%), and Indiana Governor Mike Pence (12% to 11%).

Tea Party supporters are most enthusiastic about Ted Cruz (60% favorable to 11% unfavorable), Paul Ryan (60% to 13%), Rand Paul (60% to 16%), Rick Perry (59% to 16%), and Mike Huckabee (58% to 23%). Other than Christie and Bush, Tea Party Republicans also have favorable views of the other possible candidates mentioned in the poll.

Among Republicans and Republican leaning voters in the poll, 19% call themselves strong Tea Party supporters and 19% support the Tea Party somewhat. Nearly half (47%) say they are neutral toward the Tea Party and just 11% oppose the Tea Party.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from December 10 to 14, 2014 with 1,008 adults in the United States. This release is based on a sample of 399 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. 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, New Jersey.

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

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

1. I know the 2016 election is far away, but who would you like to see as the Republican nominee for president? *[LIST WAS NOT READ]*

	TOTAL
Mitt Romney	8%
Ben Carson	7%
Chris Christie	7%
Jeb Bush	6%
Ted Cruz	5%
Rand Paul	5%
Scott Walker	3%
Mike Huckabee	3%
Bobby Jindal	2%
Rick Perry	2%
Marco Rubio	2%
Rick Santorum	1%
Paul Ryan	<1%
Mike Pence	<1%
John Kasich	<1%
Other	4%
No one, do not want	8%
Republican as president	
Undecided	37%

2. I'm going to read you a few names of people who might run 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
New Jersey Governor Chris Christie	36%	34%	31%
Florida Senator Marco Rubio	38%	16%	46%
Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney	55%	30%	14%
Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan	50%	11%	39%
Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush	39%	30%	31%
Texas Senator Ted Cruz	39%	15%	46%
Kentucky Senator Rand Paul	42%	18%	39%
Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker	30%	10%	61%
Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee	45%	22%	33%
Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal	28%	14%	58%
Ohio Governor John Kasich	21%	11%	69%
Indiana Governor Mike Pence	12%	11%	77%
Commentator Dr. Ben Carson	32%	12%	57%
Texas Governor Rick Perry	43%	20%	37%
Former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum	28%	22%	51%

3. How willing would you be to support a candidate you don't fully agree with on the issues in order to nominate someone who would have the best shot at winning the White House – very willing, somewhat willing, not too willing, or not at all willing?

	TOTAL
Very willing	12%
Somewhat willing	45%
Not too willing	18%
Not at all willing	22%
(VOL) Neither – refuse choice	1%
(VOL) Don't know	3%

4. Do you support, oppose, or are you neutral about the Tea Party movement? [If SUPPORT: Do you support it strongly or just somewhat?]

	TOTAL
Strong support	19%
Somewhat support	19%
Oppose	11%
Neutral	47%
(VOL) Don't know	4%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from December 10 to 14, 2014 with a national random sample of 1,008 adults age 18 and older. This includes 677 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 331 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). The results in this poll release are based on a subsample of 399 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. For results based on this 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. 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) FULL SAMPLE - ALL ADULTS		
49% Male	32% 18-34	66% White
51% Female	36% 35-54	12% Black
	32% 55+	15% Hispanic
		7% Asian/Other

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted) REPUBLICAN VOTERS ONLY		
51% Male	25% 18-34	79% White
49% Female	39% 35-54	4% Black
	36% 55+	9% Hispanic
		8% Asian/Other

	REPUBLICAN VOTER	PARTY ID		GENDER		TEA PARTY SUPPORTER	
		Rep	Lean Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Unweighted N	399	255	144	204	195	170	216
moe	4.9%	6.1%	8.2%	6.9%	7.0%	7.5%	6.7%

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