University of Massachusetts Lowell

Center for Public Opinion

UMass Lowell/7News
Daily Tracking Poll of New Hampshire Voters, Release 8 of 8

Feb. 5 - 7, 2016

N=1411 New Hampshire Registered Voters with a subsample of a 407 Democratic Primary Likely Voters and 464 Republican Primary Likely Voters.

The RV sample has an adjusted margin of error of +/-2.99% the Dem LV sample has an adjusted margin of error of +/-5.52% and the Rep LV sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-5.13%

See http://uml.edu/polls for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

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Do you have a question about this poll? If so, tweet @UML_CPO and we'll get back to you.

HIGHLIGHTS

Final Poll Margins: Trump +21; Sanders +16

Today's release marks the eighth and last consecutive daily release of the UMass Lowell/7News Tracking Poll of New Hampshire Primary voters. Our final likely voter model has double digit leads for two outsider candidates – on the Republican side, businessman and reality TV star Donald Trump leads his nearest competitors by 21 points. Meanwhile, Independent U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, a self-described Democratic Socialist, leads Fmr. Sec. of State Hillary Clinton by 16 points.

Donald Trump has led by double digits in every day of our tracking poll; in the last day, he tracked downward two points, but his nearest rival, Sen. Marco Rubio, also tracked down one. Trump leads with 34%, followed by Rubio and Sen. Ted Cruz, who are both at 13%. Gov. Jeb Bush is at 10% (no change), Gov. John Kasich is at 10% (up 1%), Gov. Chris Christie is at 5% (no change), Carly Fiorina is at 4% (no change) and Dr. Ben Carson is at 3% (no change). Little has changed over the course of the race and while New Hampshire voters are notorious for deciding at the last minute, it would take an incredible surge by a candidate to unseat Trump. At present, this appears to be a very competitive race for second place between Cruz, Rubio, Bush and Kasich.

Sanders, meanwhile, has also led since the first day of our tracking poll release. His lead was as large as 33 points, but has settled at 16 points. It remains to be seen if a strong victory in New Hampshire can propel Sanders forward to surges in subsequent primary states where Clinton presently enjoys an advantage.

Given that New Hampshire primary voters are known for delivering surprises, we want to discuss several potential surprise scenarios and consider the stability of our polling release.

Surprise Scenario 1 – Snow and Low Turnout

Snow is in the forecast for Monday into Tuesday across New England. The worst of the system, at press, is supposed to be south of New Hampshire, but in the event of a major weather system, we can imagine that turnout would be considerably lower. We considered a very tight likely voter screen where only those who are paying the closest attention, always vote when there's a primary and say they will definitely vote are included in the model (new voters are also included if they are following the primary very closely and say they will definitely vote/have already voted). Under the low turnout scenario, Sanders still leads Clinton 55-40. On the Republican side, a low turnout scenario increases Trump's support by +2 points, Rubio's by +1, Kasich's by +1, and it decreases Bush's margin by -2. In sum, a low turnout model has Sanders +15 and Trump +22, only a point different in each case from our final likely voter model.

Surprise Scenario 2 – Mobilization and High Turnout

An alternative scenario is that with so many candidates and so many undecided voters, we may see a turnout surge that would slightly exceed the Obama turnout of 2008. Under such a scenario, Sanders lead grows to 18, 57% to Clinton's 39%. Meanwhile, on the Republican side, a high turnout scenario increases Trump's vote share by one point (to 35%) and decreases Ted Cruz's vote share by one (to 12%). His lead stands at +22 points under such a scenario. We do not think that either turnout scenario is as likely as the model we present in the headline, but we have added these to show that our data project a level of stability in both races between high and low turnout outcomes.

Surprise Scenario 3 – Undecided Voters and Soft Support

A final "surprise" scenario is simply that our likely voter models are not capturing a late surge and/or surges by a candidates or candidates. On the Democratic side, this looks unlikely. Only 4% of Democratic likely primary voters are undecided. Furthermore, only 22% of voters say there is a chance they could change their mind before voting – the "could change mind" number is higher for Clinton (21%) than Sanders (18%).

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On the Republican side, 9% of voters remain undecided, up two points from yesterday. If undecided candidates break for a certain candidate, we could observe a surge on election night. Furthermore, 44% of Republican likely voters say that they could still change their mind. This number has remained above 40% throughout the entire eight-day track. Trump's support remains the most stable, with only 25% of his supporters saying they could still change their mind. That number is 43% for Cruz, 49% for Rubio, 47% for Kasich and 37% for Bush. A surge would occur if a soft support were to switch between these four candidates. With only one day until Granite State voters go to the polls to vote, the race for second place on the GOP side remains very much open.