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Suffolk University Iowa Poll: Trump Maintains Strong Lead, Haley Surges Into Second

BOSTON—Four days before Iowa’s Republican Caucus, former President Donald Trump is still the clear GOP favorite in that state, although former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley has gained enough ground to pull into second place ahead of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, according to a new Suffolk University poll of likely Republican caucus-goers.

Trump, with 54%, led Nikki Haley, with 20%. Ron DeSantis trailed with 13%, followed by Vivek Ramaswamy, with 6%, and Chris Christie, with 2%. Christie announced Wednesday, after the survey was completed, that he would drop out of the race. The poll was conducted ahead of Wednesday night’s debate between Haley and DeSantis.

“Ron DeSantis went all in to challenge Trump in Iowa at the expense of New Hampshire,” said David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center. “This poll suggests that he won’t even finish in second place, as Nikki Haley has overtaken him in Iowa.”

Despite trailing Haley in the race, DeSantis’s favorability ratings in Iowa (58%) are still stronger than hers (49%). Among all voters including Trump voters, he remains a strong second choice.

But that may not be enough to change the political landscape and prevent a Trump GOP landslide in Iowa, according to Paleologos.

“Being the top second choice doesn’t get you very far in Iowa,” he said. “DeSantis succeeded in becoming more likable than Haley, but not well-enough liked to be the first choice for president.”

Trump leads in ballot test

The survey shows Trump led Haley 60%-17% among registered Iowa Republicans and 40%-28% among independents. Haley led Trump 42%-31% among moderates/liberals, but trailed

Trump among those right of center on the political spectrum. Among Iowan caucus-goers who identified as conservative, Trump led 55%-16%, and among those who identified as very conservative Trump led 70%-11%.

When those voters *not* selecting Donald Trump as their first or second choice were asked who they would support in November, less than half—45%—of these Republican caucus-goers chose Trump, followed by independent Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. (16%), Democrat Joe Biden (15%), Libertarian Lars Mapstead (2%), prospective No Labels Party candidate Senator Joe Manchin (1%), with 18% undecided.

Issues

The poll captured what Iowa GOP caucus-goers see as the top three issues facing the country: immigration and border security (39%), the economy (26%), and the future of American democracy (20%). Trump led Haley in each issue group. Among those most concerned about immigration, Trump led Haley 64%-15%; among voters who said the economy is the most important issue, Trump led 54%-22%; and among those choosing the future of American democracy, Trump led 43%-24%.

Methodology

The nationwide Suffolk University survey was conducted from January 6-10, 2024, through live interviews of 500 likely Iowa Republican caucus-goers. Quota and demographic information—including region, gender, age, and race—were determined from 2020 national census data and entrance polling data from like elections. States were grouped into five general regions. The margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is +/-4.4 percentage points. Marginals and full cross-tabulation data are posted on the [Suffolk University Political Research Center](#) website. For more information, contact David Paleologos at 781-290-9310, dpaleologos@suffolk.edu.

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