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Rick Santorum has erased 7.91 point deficit to move into a statistical tie with Mitt Romney the night before voters go to the polls in Michigan.

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Santorum and Romney go down to the wire in the Michigan Republican Presidential Primary. The movement within the Michigan's primary is fluid. Despite gains from the final debate prior to Tuesday's election, Mitt Romney ceded most of his lead to Rick Santorum. "A deeper analysis shows that not only is Mitt Romney in danger of losing Michigan, but he is in danger of losing most of the congressional districts and geographical regions of his home state", per Eric Foster, chief pollster and President of Foster McCollum White & Associates.

Overall, Mitt Romney has 2.14 point margin (37.90% to 35.86%) over Rick Santorum. Ron Paul is third with 9.12%, Newt Gingrich is fourth with 8.31% and 8.90% of the respondents were undecided. Our poll had 1,359 respondents with a margin of error of 2.66% with a confidence interval level of 95%.

The Michigan Republican primary has shifted rapidly in the days since the last CNN debate. "Rick has regained footing with a number of his core constituencies and geographical regions of Michigan that has larger bases of Evangelical Christian and very conservative voters", found Attorney Tarek Baydoun, founder/President of Baydoun Consulting, Michigan's largest political robodialer. Former Governor Mitt Romney had benefited from an unexpectedly poor debate performance by former Senator Rick Santorum. The shifting narrative to social issues from the economy had taken a negative impact on Santorum's numbers. Our findings suggest however, that delivering a dual message of faith, social and economic issue items has helped Santorum rebuild his advantage in the Southwestern region of the state and with Evangelical voters.

Santorum is currently leading among the following key cross tab groups of Republican voters including:

- Evangelical Christians,
- Voters in the Southwestern, Central, Thumb and Northern Lower Peninsula regions of Michigan,
- Voters in the 6 major Republican Counties (Kent, Jackson, Ottawa, Lapeer, Livingston, Eaton and Berrien counties),
- Male voters, and
- Very conservative self identified voters.

Candidate Romney currently is leading Santorum among the following constituency groups:

- Somewhat Conservative Republicans,



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- Moderate Republicans,
- Catholic voters,
- Non-Evangelical Christians,
- Voters in Southeastern Michigan and Upper Peninsula region, and
- Voters in the 17 Major Michigan Counties (produces a minimum of 75% of the state-wide turnout since 1970), the Democratic 7 major counties (Wayne, Washtenaw, Saginaw, Genesee, Ingham and Muskegon) and the 4 swing counties (Oakland, Macomb, Monroe and Kalamazoo).

Overall, we found that our respondents self identified with the following political ideology

39.44% identified as very conservative.

37.24% identified as somewhat conservative.

16.50% identified as moderate.

3.41% identified as somewhat liberal.

2.65% identified as somewhat liberal.

Additionally, we found that our respondents self identified with the following religious affiliation:

36.69% identified as Evangelical Christian.

30.73% identified as Catholic.

16.10% identified as Non Evangelical Christian.

1.63% identified as Jewish.

1.08% identified as Muslim.

13.78% identified as having other religious affiliations.

We believe any solid assessment of the Michigan electorate must be deeper due to the complexities of our population and the paths they live. Based on this need for a deeper analysis, we segmented a number of key statistical cross tabulation groups for analysis. Some of those highlights include:

Ideology

39.44 of Michigan likely Republican primary voters are self-identified as very conservative. Rick Santorum has increased his lead with this important constituency by 6.4 points. He now holds a lead of 48.75% to 29.37%. Santorum has a 19.38 point margin, which is an increase of 8.37 points from our February 23rd poll. Romney's lead among somewhat conservative has stayed consistent with our last poll, but he has increased his share by 3.72 points with this constituency. Romney has a 51.83% to 28.46% margin (23.37 points) among somewhat conservative voters. Romney has lost a significant part of his lead among moderate voters. Romney had a 25.17 point lead in our last poll. His advantage over Santorum among moderate voters is now down to 9.64 points (37.16% to 27.52% for Santorum), a drop of 15.53 points. The liberal vote may be the deciding factor in this election due to the narrow aggregate margin. The data should be concerning for the Romney campaign. Ron Paul is leading among both liberal categories with Mitt Romney in third place.

Somewhat liberal identified voters

Ron Paul – 37.78%

Rick Santorum – 28.89%



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Mitt Romney – 13.33%

Very liberal identified voters

Ron Paul – 31.43%

Rick Santorum – 25.71%

Mitt Romney – 17.14%

These two groups combined make up 6.06% of the potential Republican primary turnout. :With a 2.14 point margin separating Romney and Santorum, this group may well be a bell weather indicator of Mitt Romney’s ability to win Michigan,” says Tarek Baydoun.

Gender

58.27% of our respondents self identified as female and 41.73% self identified as male. Mitt Romney has a slight lead among female voters, 40.95% to 36.62% for Santorum (a margin of 4.33 points). Santorum is in a statistical tie with Romney among male voters (35.85% to 33.96% for Romney).

Religious affiliation

36.69% of Republican primary voters self-identified as Evangelical Christian. Rick Santorum has reestablished his lead among the Evangelical Christians voter base. Santorum vote support has rebounded by 8.04 points from 37.53% to 45.57%. Gov. Romney’s Evangelical voter base has decreased by 3.71 points from 37.53% to 32.07%. Santorum now leads among Evangelicals with a 13.50% margin (45.57% to 32.07% for Romney)

Romney has maintained his lead with Santorum home base, Catholic voters. Romney has a 4.34 point lead with self identified Catholic voters (40.15% of the Catholic vote to Santorum’s 35.81%). Romney has increased his lead among non Evangelical Christians. Romney has 55.29% of the non-Evangelical Christian vote to 25.48% for Santorum, a margin of 29.81 points. While some of Santorum’s positions have helped him win Evangelicals, it has also hurt him among Catholic and Non Evangelical voters. “If Rick Santorum loses Michigan, it will be because he wasn’t able to connect and win with Catholic voters. This is a natural base for him to carry,” stated Eric Foster of Foster McCollum White & Associates. Santorum has moved into a statistical tie with Romney among voters who have other religious affiliations. Romney has 30.34% of the support while Santorum has 29.78%.

Voting regions

Upper Peninsula – Rick Santorum has lost his advantage among voters in this region of Michigan. Santorum is now trailing Romney by 4.92 points (26.23% to 31.15% for Romney). Santorum’s lead has decreased from our last poll by 18.20 points.

Northern Lower Peninsula – Rick Santorum has regained the lead over Mitt Romney by a slight margin in this region of Michigan. Rick Santorum received 37.41% of the primary voter support vs. 34.53% of the primary voter support for Romney, a margin of 2.88 points and a swing of 5.06 points in favor of Santorum since our last poll.

Southwest Region – Santorum has regained the lead over Romney with 40.77% of the Southwest



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region primary voters while Romney received 30.31% of the primary voter support. Santorum's margin is 10.46 points, which is a swing of 15.12 points since our last poll.

Central Region – Santorum has moved into a statistical tie over Romney with 36.28% of the Central region primary voters while Romney received 33.95% of the primary voter support. Santorum's margin is 2.33 points. The swing margin in this region is 6.22 points in favor of Santorum since our last poll.

Thumb Region – Santorum has regained the lead over Romney with 46.10% of the Thumb region primary voters while Romney received 34.04% of the primary voter support, a margin of 12.06 points and a swing of 15.05 points since our last poll.

Southeastern Region – Romney has maintained his lead in Southeastern Michigan with 46.30% of the Southeastern Michigan region primary voters while Santorum received 30.74% of the primary voter support. This is a significant margin of 15.56 points and a swing of 2.59 points in favor of Romney since our last poll.

Five of the six Michigan geographical regions have flipped since our last poll, with Santorum regaining the lead in 3, moving into a statistical tie in one and Romney gaining one region. The movement in the central, Thumb and southeastern Michigan may relate to the dual efforts of the Obama campaign to portray Romney as anti Michigan regarding the auto bailout and Rick Santorum's new economic message advertising. Santorum movement in the Southwestern and Northern Lower Peninsula regions is likely tied to his rebounding strength with very conservative and Evangelical Christian voters in these regions.

Major 17 Michigan Counties Factor

Upon review of Michigan general election contest dating back to 1970, we found an interesting voter population trend that is a predictive indicator of the outcome of partisan and ballot question campaign success. Over this time period Michigan's voter turnout is weighted disproportionately to a small number of counties, 17 of the 83 with the state. In each election since the 1992 Presidential election cycle, these 17 counties have produced a consistent range of 75% to 84% of the total State wide vote. These 17 counties are not always reflected among the top 17 Michigan counties in voter registration, yet consistently, they produce voter turnout results that lead the state's turnout numbers per county.

In these 17 counties, six are consistently strong Democratic voting communities in state-wide elections. These counties are:

Wayne, Washtenaw, Muskegon, Ingham, Genesee, Saginaw

Seven of the top 17 counties are consistently strong Republican voting communities

Berrien, Eaton, Jackson, Kent, Lapeer, Livingston, Ottawa

Four of the 17 have become the swing communities, the harbinger to predict success in a partisan election. These counties are:

Oakland, Macomb, Kalamazoo, Monroe

For the purposes of this poll, we will review cross tab data for these 17 counties and analyze the three voting clusters of the 17 with respect to the Republican Presidential Primary. 65.85% of our respondents were from the Major 17 counties of Michigan.



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Our findings identified positive movement for Romney. Governor Romney has maintained his lead among the 17 major counties. Romney has a 7.3 point lead among these counties (41.00% to 33.70%). The margins in these 17 counties in our prior polls were as follows:
February 23rd poll – Romney 11.98 point margin (40.81% to 28.93% for Santorum).
February 16th poll – Santorum 0.56 point margin (36.40% to 35.84% Romney).
Additional data on these counties will be forthcoming in our next press release.

Congressional Districts

Michigan’s Republican Primary will award its delegates through a combination of individual congressional district winners and overall State winner. This hybrid model will allow a second place or third place state-wide contestant to pick up delegates by winning one of Michigan’s congressional districts. Santorum is leading in the following congressional districts (above the margin of error of 2.66%):

- 2nd District – Santorum 36.39% to Romney 30.25%, a lead of 6.14 points for Santorum.
- 3rd District – Romney 33.03% to Santorum 35.78%, a lead of 2.74 points for Santorum.
- 4th District – Santorum 40.57% to Romney 31.13%, a lead of 9.44 points for Santorum.
- 6th District – Santorum 46.08% to Romney 23.53%, a lead of 22.55 points for Santorum.
- 10th District – Santorum 42.24% to Romney 33.62%, a lead of 8.62 points for Santorum.

Romney is leading in the following districts (above the margin of error of 2.66%):

- 1st District – Santorum 30.99% to Romney 33.80%, a lead of 2.81 points for Romney.
- 8th District – Santorum 33.03% to Romney 42.20%, a lead of 9.17 points for Romney.
- 9th District – Romney 48.39% to Santorum 33.33%, a lead of 15.06 points for Romney.
- 11th District – Romney 50.00% to Santorum 29.03%, a lead of 20.97 points for Romney.
- 12th District – Santorum 33.90% to Romney 42.37%, a lead of 8.47 points for Romney.
- 13th District – Santorum 30.00% to Romney 36.67%, a lead of 6.67 points for Romney.
- 14th District – Romney 57.14% to Santorum 16.07%, a lead of 41.07 points for Romney.

There are two districts that are a statistical tie (within the margin of error of 2.66%)

- 5th District – Romney 41.77% to Santorum 41.77%, a tie between Romney and Santorum.
- 7th District – Romney 37.07% to Santorum 37.93%, a lead of 0.86 points for Santorum.

The past week has shown the continual fluidity in the Republican field. In our initial poll, Rick Santorum was in the lead in 8 congressional districts and in a statistically relevant position to win 12 of Michigan’s 14 Congressional districts. Our next study found that Mitt Romney has regained the advantage in 10 of Michigan’s 14 congressional districts. Based on our latest data, Romney is leading in 7 congressional districts. Santorum is leading in 5 and two are in a statistical tie. The following districts could still change hands and will be worth watching as election night progresses:

- 1st district
- 2nd district
- 3rd district
- 13th district



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Polling Study Overview

- Foster McCollum White & Associates, a Political and Governmental Affairs and Organizational Development consulting firm based in Troy Michigan and Baydoun Consulting, a political communications consulting firm based in Dearborn, Michigan conducted a telephone-automated polling random survey of Michigan registered and Most Likely Republican Primary voters to determine their voting preferences for the 2012 February Presidential Primary Election. This 5-question automated poll survey was conducted on the evening of February 27, 2012 between the hours of 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm. 27,028 Households were called, and 1,496 Respondents participated in the survey. The response rate for this survey was 5.03%.
- Our initial qualifying question for the polling study was the likelihood of the respondent's participation in the February 28th Republican Presidential Primary. Of our 1,496 Respondents who participated, 1,359 self-identified that they were certain or likely to participate in the Primary election and 137 self-identified that they were not likely to participate in the Primary election. We disqualified the not likely respondents from our reporting pool.
- A list base sample of traditional Michigan high participation registered voters who have participated in a minimum of 70% of the Republican primaries since 1992 and voted for Republican candidates in general elections since 1992. These voters also have a minimum 70% participation rate in February & May elections and Odd year municipal and county elections in Michigan since 1993 was used. The list based sample was equally pre-weighted towards Republican voting participation rates by geographical regions and congressional districts of Michigan who are certain or likely to vote in the February 28th Republican election.
- Our polling study compared voter sentiment for the February ballot. For reporting purposes, we will focus our findings on the following general election contest:
 - o Republican Nomination and commitment to their selection,
- The margin of error for this polling sample is 2.66% with a confidence level of 95%. Our polling study produced sub populations within each of the surveyed election contest. Results within the sub populations will be reported with respect to the individual cross tab and sub population group as it exist.



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Cross tabulation groups for comparison purposes

Gender

Religious affiliation – Evangelical Christian, Catholic, Non Evangelical Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other religious affiliations

Voter Political Ideology Preference – Conservative, Moderate and Liberal

Michigan Voter Regions

Michigan Congressional Districts – 28 Delegates are awarded by winner of individual congressional districts

Major 17 voting counties (Counties combined traditional represent 75% to 83% of the voter participation in Michigan State-wide elections)

This poll was commissioned by Foster McCollum White & Associates and Baydoun Consulting and not commissioned on behalf of or by any candidate or political organization. We strive to adhere to the principles and standards of the National Council on Public Polls in the gathering and reporting of polling data.



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Data Analysis Statement

The data has been separated analytically into results in all of the voter regions of Michigan, Congressional districts, voter's religious and political ideological affiliation, significant voter counties that impact the outcome of Michigan elections, Tea Party affiliation, geographical regions of the state and congressional districts. Any sectional analysis within the aforementioned categories can be useful when inferring strengths and weaknesses and possible strategy.

For the assessment of individual cross tabulation categories, we use a correlation coefficient model based on the *Pearson r correlation*, also called *linear* or *product-moment* correlation. Pearson correlation (hereafter called *correlation*), assumes that the two variables are measured on at least interval scales and it determines the extent to which values of the two variables are "proportional" to each other. The value of correlation (i.e., correlation coefficient) does not depend on the specific measurement units used. Our proportional model for correlating the statistical relevance of a geographical region, age grouping or congressional district is based on the random proportionality of our respondent pool to the specific proportionality of the group's weight to the aggregate model. The correlation coefficient (r) represents the linear relationship between these two variables (aggregate and cross tabular category).

The aggregate State-wide sample size of 1,359 respondents has a 2.66% margin of error, any reviewer of the polling report allows for the statistical relationship between the aggregate and cross tabulation margin of error for the reported clusters. The poll sample was pre weighted for gender and ethnicity based upon historic Republican participation demographics throughout Michigan. This poll was commissioned by Foster McCollum White and Associates & Baydoun Consulting and not commissioned on behalf of or by any candidate or political organization. We strive to adhere to the principles and standards of the National Council on Public Polls in the gathering and reporting of polling data