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IOWA: CARSON HOLDS 14 PT LEAD IN GOP CAUCUS

Outsider candidates ride voter dissatisfaction with party

West Long Branch, NJ – The **Monmouth University Poll** of likely Iowa Republican caucusgoers finds Ben Carson has taken a double digit lead over Donald Trump. The outsider candidates remain on top amid a prevailing attitude that the national Republican Party has not served its voters well.

When Iowa Republicans are asked who they would support in their local caucus, Ben Carson (32%) tops the list, with Donald Trump (18%) holding second. In Monmouth's last poll of GOP caucusgoers in August, the two were tied for the top spot at 23% each. The next tier of candidates includes Ted Cruz (10%), Marco Rubio (10%), and Jeb Bush (8%). They are followed by Carly Fiorina (5%), Rand Paul (3%), Mike Huckabee (2%), Bobby Jindal (2%), and John Kasich (2%). None of the other five candidates tested topped 1%.

Compared to two months ago, Carson is up by 9 points and Rubio is up by 6 points. Trump has dropped by 5 points and Fiorina's share of the vote has also decreased by 5 points. Carson's support has gone up among all ideological groups. He now leads Trump by 9 points (31%-22%) among very conservative voters compared to a single point two months ago and by 21 points (39%-18%) among somewhat conservative voters compared to 2 points in August. He also has a 17 point (29%-12%) lead among moderate to liberal voters, which is a reversal since the prior poll when he trailed Trump by 9 points (17%-26%) among this group.

Carson maintains a 36% to 18% lead over Trump among evangelical Christian voters, which is somewhat larger than the 29% to 23% advantage he held two months ago. However, Carson also holds a 28% to 19% edge among non-evangelicals, reversing an 18% to 24% deficit in August. Carson's 34% to 17% lead over Trump among women is similar to his 30% to 19% advantage two months ago. He now leads among men as well, 31% to 20%, which wipes out the 17% to 27% deficit he had to Trump in the prior poll.

"Trump's support has eroded in a number of key areas, with the beneficiary being another outside candidate. One question is how secure Carson's new found support really is," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

Just 1-in-5 (19%) Iowa GOP caucusgoers say they are completely set on their choice, although this is up from 12% two months ago. Another 43% say they have a strong preference right now, 19% have a slight preference, and 18% are really undecided. Three-in-ten voters say they would be either very unhappy (11%) or a little unhappy (19%) if their chosen candidate did not win the Republican nomination, but most (52%) would be okay if someone else was the GOP standard bearer. There are few significant differences in these findings by candidate support.

"While the leaderboard positions have changed, the outsider candidates still dominate this race. The GOP's leadership may hope that an establishment figure will emerge, but that may not happen while their voters remain dissatisfied with the party as a whole," said Murray.

Nearly 6-in-10 (57%) Iowa caucusgoers say that the national Republican Party does a bad job representing the concerns of voters like them. Just 32% say it does a good job. Majorities of very conservative (60%), somewhat conservative (56%), and moderate to liberal (52%) voters alike say the national party does a bad job representing them.

The poll found that Ben Carson continues to hold the best voter rating in the field at 84% favorable and 7% unfavorable, which is basically unchanged from August (81% - 6%). Donald Trump's rating is 53% favorable and 38% unfavorable. Trump's positive rating is basically the same as in August (52%), but his negative rating has increased by 5 points from 33%.

Other candidates with positive voter ratings include Marco Rubio (65% favorable – 16% unfavorable), Carly Fiorina (63% - 18%), Ted Cruz (59% - 24%), Bobby Jindal (56% - 23%), and Mike Huckabee (52% - 33%). Jeb Bush receives a negative rating of 42% favorable and 46% unfavorable, but that is improved from 32% - 51% two months ago. Negative ratings are also given to John Kasich (31% - 35%), Rand Paul (32% - 49%), and Chris Christie (30% - 53%).

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from October 22 to 25, 2015 with 400 Iowa voters likely to attend the Republican presidential caucuses in February 2016. 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, NJ.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:
(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Who would you support if the presidential caucus was being held today and the candidates for the Republican nomination were – [*NAMES WERE ROTATED*]

	October 2015	August 2015	July 2015
Jeb Bush	**8%**	5%	7%
Ben Carson	**32%**	23%	8%
Chris Christie	**1%**	1%	1%
Ted Cruz	**10%**	9%	7%
Carly Fiorina	**5%**	10%	3%
Jim Gilmore	**0%**	0%	0%
Lindsey Graham	**0%**	0%	0%
Mike Huckabee	**2%**	2%	6%
Bobby Jindal	**2%**	1%	4%
John Kasich	**2%**	4%	2%
George Pataki	**0%**	<1%	<1%
Rand Paul	**3%**	3%	5%
Marco Rubio	**10%**	4%	5%
Rick Santorum	**1%**	2%	3%
Donald Trump	**18%**	23%	13%
(VOL) Other	**0%**	0%	0%
Rick Perry	***n/a***	*1%*	*3%*
Scott Walker	***n/a***	*7%*	*22%*
(VOL) "Uncommitted"	**1%**	*n/a*	*n/a*
(VOL) Undecided	**5%**	5%	11%
(n)	***400***	*405*	*452*

2. And who would be your second choice?

	October 2015	August 2015	July 2015
Jeb Bush	**5%**	5%	6%
Ben Carson	**19%**	12%	6%
Chris Christie	**1%**	3%	2%
Ted Cruz	**14%**	13%	7%
Carly Fiorina	**8%**	8%	3%
Jim Gilmore	**0%**	0%	<1%
Lindsey Graham	**<1%**	<1%	<1%
Mike Huckabee	**2%**	5%	5%
Bobby Jindal	**6%**	6%	8%
John Kasich	**1%**	2%	1%
George Pataki	**0%**	0%	<1%
Rand Paul	**<1%**	3%	4%
Marco Rubio	**14%**	8%	9%
Rick Santorum	**1%**	1%	3%
Donald Trump	**12%**	10%	9%
(VOL) Other	**0%**	0%	0%
Rick Perry	***n/a***	*2%*	*5%*
Scott Walker	***n/a***	*9%*	*13%*
(VOL) No one	**6%**	6%	4%
(VOL) Undecided	**9%**	7%	15%
(n)	***400***	*405*	*452*

3. Which of the following best describes where your decision stands at this moment: I am completely decided on which candidate I will support, I have a strong preference right now but I am willing to consider other candidates, I have a slight preference among a group of candidates I like, or I am really undecided among a number of candidates?

	October 2015	August 2015
Completely decided	**19%**	12%
Strong preference	**43%**	42%
Slight preference	**19%**	27%
Undecided	**18%**	20%

[*QUESTION 4 WAS ASKED OF THOSE WITH A FIRST CHOICE; n=378, moe = +/-5.1%.*]

4. How would you feel if someone other than [*FIRST VOTE CHOICE*] won the Republican nomination – would you be very unhappy, a little unhappy, or would you be okay with it?

	October 2015
Very unhappy	**11%**
A little unhappy	**19%**
Would be okay with it	**52%**
(VOL) Depends on who wins	**18%**
(VOL) Don't know	**1%**

5. I'm going to read you a few names of people who are running 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
Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush	**42%**	**46%**	**12%**
--August 2015	*32*	*51*	*17*
--July 2015	*40*	*42*	*18*
Commentator and Doctor Ben Carson	**84%**	**7%**	**9%**
--August 2015	*81*	*6*	*14*
--July 2015	*63*	*11*	*26*
New Jersey Governor Chris Christie	**30%**	**53%**	**18%**
--August 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--July 2015	*26*	*51*	*23*
Texas Senator Ted Cruz	**59%**	**24%**	**18%**
--August 2015	*58*	*21*	*21*
--July 2015	*53*	*17*	*29*
Businesswoman Carly Fiorina	**63%**	**18%**	**19%**
--August 2015	*67*	*8*	*25*
--July 2015	*44*	*10*	*46*
Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee	**52%**	**33%**	**15%**
--August 2015	*53*	*27*	*21*
--July 2015	*58*	*23*	*19*
Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal	**56%**	**23%**	**21%**
--August 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--July 2015	*59*	*12*	*29*
Ohio Governor John Kasich	**31%**	**35%**	**34%**
--August 2015	*32*	*23*	*45*
--July 2015	*24*	*17*	*59*
Kentucky Senator Rand Paul	**32%**	**49%**	**19%**
--August 2015	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
--July 2015	*42*	*32*	*26*
Florida Senator Marco Rubio	**65%**	**16%**	**19%**
--August 2015	*64*	*13*	*23*
--July 2015	*64*	*14*	*22*
Businessman Donald Trump	**53%**	**38%**	**9%**
--August 2015	*52*	*33*	*14*
--July 2015	*47*	*35*	*18*

6. Overall, is the national Republican Party doing a good job or bad job representing the concerns of voters like you?

	October 2015
Good job	**32%**
Bad job	**57%**
(VOL) Depends	**8%**
(VOL) Don't know	**4%**

7. Have you had the opportunity to meet or see any of the Republican or Democratic candidates for president in person this year, or not?

	October 2015
Yes	35%
No	63%
(VOL) Don't recall	1%

8. *If YES:* Which ones? [*MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED.*]

	October 2015
Jeb Bush	7%
Ben Carson	11%
Chris Christie	5%
Ted Cruz	8%
Carly Fiorina	11%
Mike Huckabee	10%
Bobby Jindal	12%
John Kasich	4%
Rand Paul	5%
Marco Rubio	9%
Donald Trump	11%
Scott Walker	6%
Lindsey Graham	1%
Rick Santorum	1%
Rick Perry	1%
Hillary Clinton	3%
Bernie Sanders	2%
Other	1%
No one (from Q7)	63%
Don't know	1%

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