

# POLLING THE CLUSTERFUCK

Yesterday I said there were no MI polls. Well, now there are two, which still support my clusterfuck analysis, but also suggest that the Mitten might finish off Mitt. Here are the two polls:

Rossman Group/MIRS/Denno-Noor  
January 6 and 7, MOE 5.8%

Huck 23%  
Mitt 22%  
McCain 18%  
Rudy 8%  
Frederick of Hollywood 4%  
Paul 3%  
Hunter 1%  
Uncommitted 13%  
Unsure 7%

Hillary 48%  
Kooch 3%  
Gravel 1%  
Uncommitted 28%  
Unsure 11%  
Other 10%

Strategic Vision  
January 4-6, MOE 4%

John McCain 29%  
Mitt Romney 20%  
Mike Huckabee 18%  
Rudy Giuliani 13%  
Fred Thompson 5%  
Ron Paul 5%  
Duncan Hunter 1%  
Undecided 9%

So let's start with the Democrats (only MIRS polled Dems). The poll was pre-NH, so you might assume that Hillary would pick up a bit for her NH victory, which might put her over 50%. However, state pols have really just started their campaigns to get Dems to vote uncommitted,

including the rather amusingly named, Detroiters for Uncommitted Voters and radio ads from Congressman Conyers. As more people realize what "uncommitted" means, Hillary may well lose some points to ... no one. What I'm most interested in with the MIRS is the 10% who voted "other," which is what I'd answer if I were given a Democratic ballot and asked who I planned to vote for if I planned to cross-over and add to the Republican clusterfuck. In other words, I take this poll to suggest, very very very roughly, that the Republicans might be hosting at least 10% of self-identified Democrats. Though of course, who they'll vote for is anyone's guess.

Onto the Republican clusterfuck. After Iowa but before NH, Strategic Vision has McCain winning, Romney and Huck tied, and Rudy getting more votes than he got anywhere else. That pretty much reflects one real change since mid-December (in a different poll), McCain gaining 20 points over Christmas, yet before his NH win. The poll included "700 Republican primary voters," but it doesn't say whether that means 700 Republicans who plan to vote in the primary, or 700 people who say they plan to vote in the Republican primary. If it's the latter, it might explain the huge McCain surge...

But then MIRS shows Huckabee ahead, perhaps a delayed surge resulting from his Iowa win (I guess it takes Republicans two or three days to actually read the leading news). In the MIRS poll, Huckabee is winning MI, with the two people who (until yesterday) were the only two contestants coming a very close second and third, but with McCain solidly third. MIRS appears to have separated people by party before asking them who they'd vote for, so presumably this may reflect an absence of any Democratic cross-overs.

Now, presumably, McCain has picked up some support from his win the other night (though, as a potential front-runner, will he lose cross-over voters trying to mess with the

Republicans??). So if I had to guess, I'd favor him to win this primary, though either of the other two still have a shot.

But that doesn't change the most important detail from this polling:

If Huck exceeds expectations—even marginally—then he can probably knock Mitt out of the race. Huck has a real possibility of bumping Mitt to third place in his Daddy's state, which I gotta believe would chase him from the race.

And then we'd be left with Huck versus McCain. A Baptist preacher who will chase away the corporatists versus a war-monger who will chase away the nativists and evangelicals. While I think either Huck or McCain may do well in the General election (I'd rather be running against Mitt), I think a two-way contest between Huck and McCain has the real potential to cause the GOP a while lot of angst between now and whenever they do get to the General.

I gotta believe that Huck looked at this polling and realized he had the ability to hit Mitt with a real body blow, taking out the one other guy who can appeal to the values voters. Which makes this very interesting indeed.