



Conservatives Divided on '08 Candidate

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For the second straight year, conservatives failed to identify a frontrunner for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination, according to a poll taken at this year's Conservative Political Action Conference in Washington, D.C.

However, Sen. George Allen (R.-Va.) went from a middle-of-the-road presidential candidate one year ago to the favorite among conservatives in the 2006 straw poll, conducted by Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates.

The unscientific poll of CPAC attendees gave Allen 22% -- double the 11% he received in last year's straw poll. Although conservatives remain divided, Allen's plurality cements his status as one the leading Republicans.

Finishing second was Sen. John McCain (R.-Ariz.) with 20%. One year ago, McCain tied Allen at 11%. McCain's strong showing came as somewhat of a surprise given his role as a maverick unafraid of bucking his party. McCain has also rankled conservatives for his support of a campaign-finance law strongly opposed by those on the right.

The biggest losers in the 2006 straw poll were two moderates: former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who dropped from first place last year (with 19%) to third this year (with 12%); and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who went from second last year (with 18%) to fourth (with 10%).

Here are the results:

Thinking ahead to the 2008 presidential election, who do you think will be the next Republican nominee for President?

George Allen: 22%

John McCain: 20%

Rudy Giuliani: 12%
Condoleezza Rice: 10%
Bill Frist: 6%
Tom Tancredo: 5%
Mitt Romney: 5%
Newt Gingrich: 5%
Rick Santorum: 3%
George Pataki: 3%
Undecided: 4%

*All others tested received 1% or less

When conservatives were polled about Democrats, Sen. Hillary Clinton (D.-N.Y.) maintained her status as the frontrunner among CPAC attendees. With 62% of the vote, Clinton was the clear leader in the straw poll.

Former Virginia Gov. Mark Warner was the only other Democrat to hit double digits. Warner is considered the moderate alternative to the liberal Clinton. However, he faces an uphill battle against the well-known former first lady.

Somewhat surprisingly, Sen. John Kerry (D.-Mass.), the 2004 Democrat nominee, pulled in just 2% among CPAC attendees.

Here are the results:

Of the following whom do you believe Democrats will nominate for President in 2008?

Hillary Clinton: 62%
Mark Warner: 10%
John Edwards: 7%
Bill Richardson: 4%
Wesley Clark: 3%
Russ Feingold: 2%
Evan Bayh: 2%
John Kerry: 2%
Tom Vilsack: 1%
Other: 1%

Undecided: 4%

More than 1,200 CPAC attendees participated. An overwhelming number of college students swayed the results of the poll. According to a breakdown by age, those 18-25 made up 81% of respondents.

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