

# Paul tops GOP straw poll in Manchester

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MANCHESTER — Texas Congressman Ron Paul grabbed support from two-thirds of the people voting in a Republican straw poll over the weekend in Manchester, a result that an organizer said shows the enthusiasm of Paul supporters.

Paul took 66 percent of the 173 votes cast during a five-hour period, said Phil Greazzo, who helped organize the straw poll. The runner-up was television actor Fred Thompson, at 10 percent.

"The Ron Paul folks seem to have all the activists. They win the activist award," Greazzo said.

The straw poll was part of a Manchester Republican City Committee rally that was held at Veterans Park on Sunday.

The event featured six bands and speeches from several politicians. Greazzo said the straw poll was open to any New Hampshire resident, regardless of political affiliation.

Will Infantine, a city Republican activist, said this is the second or third time that Paul supporters have topped straw polls. On Sunday, they showed up early, and organizers had to check IDs to make sure Paul supporters from out of state were not voting, Infantine said.

"It's always disappointing when certain groups abuse a straw poll. That's why they lose their importance," said Infantine, a supporter of former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.

Romney placed fifth in the poll, at 3 percent.

Third place went to former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, 9 percent; former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, 7 percent; Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo, 2 percent; Chicago businessman John Cox, 2 percent; Arizona Sen. John McCain, 1 percent; Kansas Sen. Sam Brownback, 1/2 percent.