

REAGAN TOPS FORD AS GALLUP FINDS A SHARP REVERSAL

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Republicans Said to Choose
Californian, 40 to 32%—
Independents Also Shift

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By R. W. APPLE Jr.

Former Gov. Ronald Reagan of California has overtaken President Ford among both Republicans and independents, according to a Gallup poll.

The poll, taken from Nov. 21 to Nov. 24, showed a striking reversal of position between the two candidates for the Republican Presidential nomination in the space of only about a month. Mr. Ford was ahead in mid-October.

Persons reached by the Gallup organization were asked the following question:

"Here is a list of people [a card with 10 names] who have been mentioned as possible Presidential candidates for the Republican nomination in 1976. Which one would you like to see nominated as the Republican candidate in 1976?"

Groups Favor Reagan

Among Republicans, Mr. Reagan was chosen by 40 percent and Mr. Ford by 32 percent. Among independents, Mr. Reagan polled 27 percent and Mr. Ford 25 percent.

In mid-October, Republicans gave Mr. Ford 48 percent and Mr. Reagan 25 percent. Independents then gave Mr. Ford 26 percent and Mr. Reagan 20 percent.

Although the November sample—352 Republicans and 497 independents—was relatively small and thus subject to an error of as much as 8 percentage points in either direction, the poll's findings were a major political event in themselves, certain to create further problems for the President's already stumbling campaign.

Mr. Ford's quest for the nomination has been hurt by such developments as the resignation of two senior campaign aides, the decision of the Republican National Committee to withhold crucial mailing lists, and slow organizational starts, in New Hampshire and Florida, which have early primaries.

Result Discounted

The former Governor's eight-point margin in the new poll was discounted by the chairman of the Ford campaign committee, Howard H. Callaway Jr., who said the picture would change before the New Hampshire voting Feb. 24.

"This poll," he said in a statement released in Washington, "obviously reflects the publicity which Ronald Reagan received from his announced candidacy. As soon as the voters find out the record behind his rhetoric and are able to compare it with the President's solid accomplishments in office, the results will be much different."

Other Ford supporters reacted more gloomily, albeit usually in private.

"At best it's a public-relations disaster," said a Ford man in New England. "At worst it means we're in far deeper trouble than even the pessimists among us thought."

Lyn Nofziger, Mr. Reagan's press secretary, said in Newport

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Beach, Calif., that he was "always pleased to be ahead." But Mr. Nofziger added that it was still very early in the campaign, too early to relax and protect a lead.

1,507 Interviews

The Gallup survey, which was conducted after Mr. Reagan's announcement on Nov. 20, just before the President's departure for China and just after the shakeup in Mr. Ford's cabinet, included interviews with 1,507 adults across the nation, though not all of them were Republicans or independents who might be expected to vote in Republican primaries.

Choosing among 10 possibilities, Republicans gave the following responses in October and November:

	Oct.	Nov.
Ronald Reagan	25%	40%
Gerald R. Ford	48%	32%
Barry Goldwater	7%	10%
Nelson A. Rockefeller	5%	6%
Charles Percy	2%	2%
Howard H. Baker Jr.	2%	2%
Elliot L. Richardson	3%	2%
Mark O. Hatfield	1%	2%
John B. Connally	1%	1%
James Buckley	1%	1%
No choice	5%	1%

The total for the three sharply defined conservatives on the list—Mr. Reagan, Mr. Goldwater and Mr. Buckley—reached 51 percent in the November survey, suggesting that the party's right wing retains a dominant position.

Independents' Choices

Among independents, who in some states can vote in Republican primaries, Mr. Reagan's lead was smaller, 27 percent to 25, although this, too, represented a reversal from Mr. Ford's lead of six points in the poll taken in mid-October.

Further potential difficulties for Mr. Ford developed yesterday in Massachusetts, where the primary will take place on March 2, a week after New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation balloting. But the problems seemingly evaporated by the end of the day.

The Secretary of State, Paul Guzzi, issued a list of names he intends to place on the primary ballot unless those involved send him by Jan. 9 affidavits stating that they are not candidates and do not intend to become candidates.

In addition to the announced and almost-announced candidates, Mr. Guzzi included such Democrats as Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Edmund S. Muskie, George McGovern and Edward M. Kennedy and such Republicans as Vice President Rockefeller, Senator Charles McC. Mathias Jr. and former Gov. John B. Connally.

Affidavits Promised

Spokesmen for all of those who could be reached said the requisite affidavits would be filed. Among them was Mr. Rockefeller, whose 1976 intentions have been unclear since he announced that he would not be a candidate for Vice President.

Mr. Rockefeller could create real complications for Mr. Ford in Massachusetts, a state where he has always been popular and where Mr. Ford has been counting on a solid victory over Mr. Reagan.

But the Vice President said from his plane en route to Houston that he was not a candidate for President and would do "whatever is necessary to do — including filing an affidavit," to get his name off the Massachusetts list.

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