

President Leads GOP Rivals

By Louis Harris

In a trial heat for President among Republicans and independents, President Ford beats former California Gov. Ronald Reagan, his closest potential rival, by 30-23 per cent.

This is the smallest lead an incumbent President has ever received in a Harris Survey since Lyndon Johnson's term.

President Ford has more support among rank-and-file Republicans than independents. He leads Reagan 40-24 per cent among those who call themselves Republicans. But among independents, whose vote would be crucial for the GOP in next year's election, Reagan leads Mr. Ford 23-22 per cent.

These latest results indicate that President Ford is vulnerable to attacks by the right wing of the Republican Party. They also demonstrate the seriousness of Reagan's threat to Mr. Ford.

The Harris Survey asked a cross section of 703 Republicans and independents earlier this month:

Here is a list of people who have been mentioned as pos-

sible nominees of the Republican Party for President in 1976. (Hand respondent card.) If you had to choose right now, who would be your first choice for the Republican nomination for President in 1976?

Now which ones on that list do you feel you could not vote for if they became the Republican nominee for President in 1976? Any others?

	1st Choice	Could Not Vote for
President Ford	30%	15%
Former Gov. Ronald Reagan	23	18
Vice President Rockefeller	9	32
Sen. Charles Percy	8	18
Sen. Howard Baker	7	12
Sen. Edward Brooke	3	14
Ambas. Elliot Richardson	3	11
Others	2	
None	2	
Not Sure	12	

Mr. Ford's strength is spotty. The President runs strong in the East, where he finishes 18 points ahead of Reagan. But he trails Reagan in his native geographic area, the Midwest, 27-25 per cent, and he loses the West to Reagan 32-31 per cent.

Among conservatives, the President holds a narrow 34-31 per cent edge, even though his lead among Republicans and among moderate and liberal independents is substantially higher—eight percentage points.

Mr. Ford also shows some weakness among older voters, industrial workers who are Republicans, people who voted for Nixon in 1972, and Catholics.

But his worst showing by far is in the small towns of the country, where Reagan leads him by a substantial 33 to 25 per cent.

And in the South, which has been a pivotal area in recent years for any Republican running for President, Mr. Ford holds a slim, 33-28 per cent lead over Reagan.

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Drug Store, Hospital Held Up

The credit union office at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Southeast was held up at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday by a gunman who fled with \$2,000, D.C. police said.

Reports also stated that a Drug Fair at 4463 Connecticut Ave., NW was robbed of an undetermined amount of cash shortly before 8 p.m. Tuesday by three men, two with pistols.