

The Gallup Poll

Kennedy and Ford Lead As Contenders for '76

By George Gallup

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Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts leads Vice President Gerald Ford, 50 to 39 per cent, in an early presidential trial heat between possible 1976 contenders. About one person in nine (11 per cent) is undecided.

Kennedy is the top choice of Democratic voters for their party's nomination, as determined by a recent Gallup survey. Ford has a slight lead as the nomination choice of Republican voters, as determined by another survey conducted in early 1974.

Although Kennedy holds a

fairly wide margin over his potential rival at present, Ford's showing must be regarded as impressive in view of the fact that his party's popularity is currently at an all-time low. Only 24 per cent of U.S. voters classify themselves as Republicans, compared with 42 per cent who classify themselves as Democrats and 34 per cent who say they are independents.

In the current survey, Catholics give Kennedy a 65 to 25 per cent lead over Ford. Protestants choose Ford by 47 percent to 42 per cent.

Kennedy's current lead over Ford is accounted for

in large measure by the vote of non-whites, who choose him over Ford by a more than 9-to-1 ratio. In fact, if the current trial test findings were based on the choices of whites only, the vote would be extremely close.

Southern whites lean to Ford, 48 to 41 per cent, but Northern whites pick Kennedy by the margin of 47 to 41 per cent.

Kennedy has particular appeal to younger voters, between 18 and 29 years old, who choose him over Ford by about a 3-to-1 ratio.

Here are the questions asked in the survey to determine the relative popularity of presidential candidates at this early stage of the race for 1976:

"Suppose the presidential election were being held today. If Vice President Gerald Ford were the Republican candidate and Senator Edward Kennedy were the Democratic candidate, which would you like to see win?"

All those who indicated another preference or had no opinion were then asked:

"As of today, who do you lean more to, Ford or Kennedy?"

CHOICES OF REGISTERED VOTERS

	Kennedy	Ford	Undecided
Nationwide	50%	39%	11%
Catholics	65	25	12
Protestants	42	47	11
Men	53	36	11
Women	47	41	12
College	45	46	9
High School	51	36	13
Grd. School	53	35	12
Outside So.	50	38	12
South	49	40	11
So. Whites	47	41	12
No. Whites	41	48	11
18-29 Years	66	23	11
30-49 years	50	40	10
50 and Older	42	46	12
Professional and Bus.	47	42	11
Clerical and Sales	48	33	19
Man. Labor	57	32	11
Repubs.	14	75	10
Demos.	73	17	10
Independ.	46	39	15

(NOTE: The number of non-whites in the sample of registered voters is too small to permit the reporting of percentages.)

The latest trial-heat findings are based on the proportion (approximately 71 per cent) of the population who are currently registered to vote out of a total sample of 1543 adults, 18 and older. The survey was conducted in more than 300 localities during May 10-13.