

# Poll Finds Ford Is First Choice of G.O.P. for 1976

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Vice President Ford has emerged as the first choice among Republicans polled on their party's Presidential nomination in 1976.

According to findings of a Gallup Poll, released yesterday, the Vice President is ahead of Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona and Gov. Ronald Reagan of California, all of whom were close contenders for first place early in the year.

Mr. Ford has 27 per cent. Mr. Goldwater and Mr. Reagan both have 16 per cent, with Nelson A. Rockefeller trailing with 12 per cent of the party's support.

In the Gallup survey, respondents were asked to choose from a list of 11 men whose names have been mentioned as possible candidates for the 1976 G.O.P. nomination.

Substantially behind the Vice President and the others were Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee and John B. Connally, former Treasury Secretary both of whom received 5 per cent.

Senator Charles H. Percy of Illinois registered 4 per cent and Elliot L. Richardson, former Attorney-General, got 3 per cent.

Senator James L. Buckley of New York and Senator Mark O. Hatfield of Oregon both had 2 per cent and Senator Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts trailed with 1 per cent.

Seven per cent expressed no preference or gave other choices.

With the G.O.P. at its lowest point in 10 years in terms of national support, according to the Gallup poll, Republican candidates will have to appeal to voters outside the party to win the election.

In an assessment of the Vice President's and other G.O.P. candidates ranking among independents, the Gallup survey found Mr. Ford in the lead with 20 per cent.

Mr. Reagan and Mr. Rockefeller both received 13 per cent of the independent vote while Senators Goldwater and

conducted last March Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, was first choice for his party's nomination in 1976 by a wide margin. Senator Kennedy had 44 per cent compared with 17 per cent for Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama, the runner-up.

A review of Gallup surveys since 1938 indicates that the candidate in the top position at the beginning of the Congressional election year usually received his party's nomination two years later.

In the latest survey, in person interviews were conducted among 326 respondents who classified themselves as Republicans and 511 who said they were independents.

The first question in the survey was: "Here is a list of people who have been mentioned as possible Presidential candidates for the Republican party in 1976 [list of 11 names]. Which one would you like to see nominated as the Republican candidate for President in 1976?"

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