



**Paul Simon
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**OBAMA BESTS GOP RIVALS IN HEAD-TO-HEAD HOME-STATE POLL;
CAIN JOINS ROMNEY AT TOP OF GOP PREFERENCES IN ILLINOIS**

If the 2012 presidential election were held today, President Barack Obama would win his home state of Illinois against any one of four top GOP contenders, but the margins at this stage look close, according to the results of the 2011 statewide Simon Poll.

The survey, conducted by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, also shows weak job-approval ratings for Obama, and worse ratings for Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn.

Among respondents to the survey who said they would vote in the March 2012 Republican primary, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and retired Godfather's Pizza CEO Herman Cain were the top two vote-getters.

In a series of hypothetical head-to-head matchups, asked of all survey respondents, Obama did best against Texas Gov. Rick Perry and least well against Romney. The GOP challenger with the highest percentage was Romney; the one with the lowest percentage was Texas Congressman Ron Paul.

Candidate	GOP Vote	Obama Vote
Mitt Romney	38.5%	46.1%
Herman Cain	34.0%	46.3%
Rick Perry	32.8%	50.8%
Ron Paul	30.3%	49.3%

“You could look at this as being uncomfortably close for the president in his home state,” said Simon Institute Director David Yepsen. “On the other hand you could say Obama is holding up fairly well in Illinois, given the difficult year he has had politically and the continued poor performance of the economy.”

Among the smaller subset of respondents who said they would vote in the Republican primary election next March, Cain is in a statistical tie with Mitt Romney, 23.4% to 20.6%, respectively, with none of the other candidates in double digits.

<u>GOP Candidate</u>	<u>% Prefer</u>
Herman Cain	23.4%
Mitt Romney	20.6%
Newt Gingrich	7.5%
Rick Perry	7.2%
Ron Paul	6.6%
Michele Bachman	3.8%
Jon Huntsman	2.5%
Rick Santorum	2.2%

“Our Republican Primary findings in the statewide Simon Poll look much like nationwide polls, with Herman Cain slightly ahead of, though statistically tied with, Mitt Romney,” said Charles Leonard, the Simon Institute visiting professor who supervised the poll. We can’t speculate from these data on Cain’s staying power, nor on the reason he has risen so precipitously, but we can posit that the Cain phenomenon in Illinois looks much like it does in the rest of the country.”

Leonard also cautioned that these results must be interpreted carefully, given the relatively small sample size of Republican voters and because of the large number of GOP candidates in the field.

Barely half (51.8%) of voters surveyed approve of the job their fellow Illinoisan is doing as president, though this is ten points higher than his national approval rating as measured by the latest Gallup Poll. Obama’s 2011 rating in Illinois is essentially identical to the 51.2% approval rating he received in the fall 2010 Simon Poll. Gov. Quinn fares far worse among survey respondents, with only 35.5% approving of his job performance. (An approval question for the governor was not included in the 2010 poll.)

<u>Official</u>	<u>% Approve</u>	<u>% Disapprove</u>
Pres. Barack Obama	51.8%	46.4%
Gov. Pat Quinn	35.5%	56.4%

Quinn's and Obama's low approval ratings reflect continued pessimism among Illinois voters regarding the direction of the nation and the state. Fewer than one in five voters in the Simon Poll (19.2%) said they thought things in the country were going in the right direction, down significantly from the three in ten (30.2%) who said so in 2010. Perception of the direction of the state may have bottomed out. Only 14.9% said Illinois was heading in the right direction, statistically equivalent with last year's 12.2% "right direction" response.

The 2011 Simon Poll is the fourth annual statewide survey the Institute has conducted, part of an ongoing series addressing political and public policy in Illinois. The Institute conducts an annual Southern Illinois Poll in the Spring.

The mission of the non-partisan Paul Simon Public Policy Institute polling is to provide citizens, policy-makers and academic researchers with objective information about trends and issues facing society.

This survey of 1,000 registered voters was taken October 11 through October 16, 2011, and has a margin for error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that if we were to conduct the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances the results would vary by no more than plus or minus 3 points from the results obtained here. The margin for error will be larger for demographic, geographic, and response subgroups.

Telephone Interviews were conducted by Issues + Answers Global Media Research of Virginia Beach, VA. Cell phone interviews were included as well as land-line interviews. Issues + Answers reports no Illinois political clients. The survey was paid for with non-tax dollars from the Institute's endowment fund.

Note: The "Paul Simon Public Policy Institute Poll," the "Simon Poll" and the "Southern Illinois Poll" are the copyrighted trademarks of the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University. Use and publication of these polls is encouraged – but only with credit to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIUC.

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