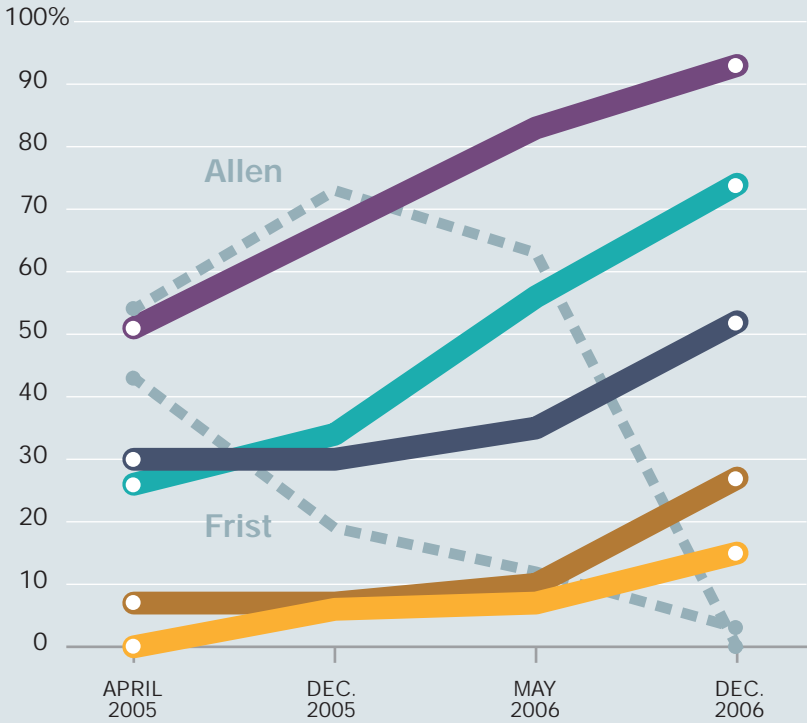
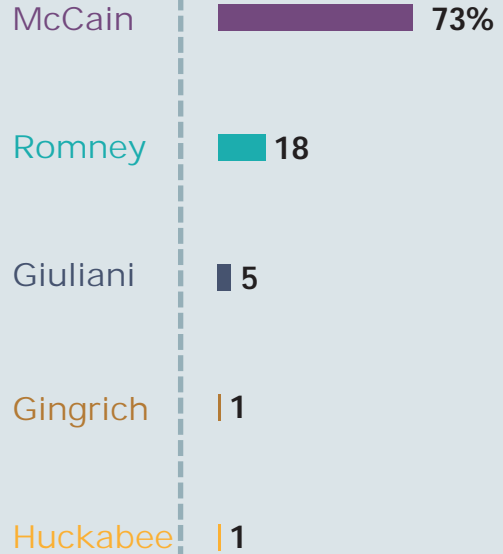


Republican Insiders: Who Will Be the Nominee?*

Percent of maximum points

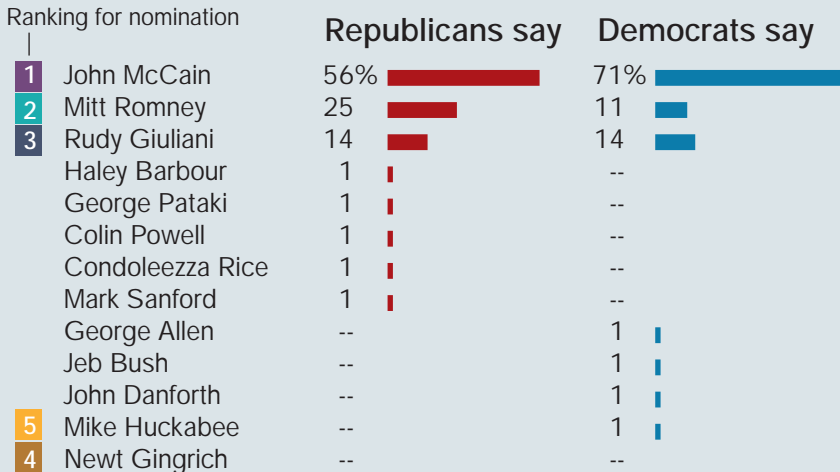


Percent of first-place votes

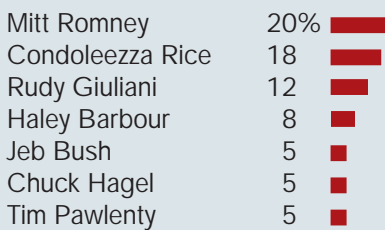


*SCORING: A first-place vote was worth 5 points, a second-place 4 points, and so on through fifth place.

Strongest Republican general election candidate for the 2008 presidential race



Strongest Republican vice presidential candidate



Newt Gingrich ranks fourth when GOP Insiders predict who their 2008 standard-bearer will be, yet none of them says the former speaker would be the party's strongest nominee.



Republican Insiders

Q: Who has the best chance to be your party's 2008 presidential nominee?

■ On McCain

"His long-established personal style fits perfectly with the public mood. And, he won't have to pretend to be independent-minded."

"Republicans usually nominate our front-runners, and people who have run before. We're the party of primogeniture."

"McCain's to lose, and he's capable of doing that with his call for more troops for Iraq. He's three years late, and he needs some fresh ideas—and someone to talk straight to him."

"An old, tired warhorse. A maverick Bob Dole. It is his turn and, unfortunately, he is the best we got."

■ On Romney

"The breathtaking, self-inflicted collapse of George Allen moves Romney [into being] the main conservative alternative to McCain."

"He has the looks, the communication skills, the appeal to big donors, and the advantage of a large group of establishment figures and grassroots activists looking for an alternative to McCain. However, he has no foreign-policy credentials in a wartime era and precious little national political experience to draw on."

■ On Giuliani

"Personal charisma trumps non-GOP policy positions: The clear choice for those who like to roll the dice."

"Has great name ID and plenty of ambition, but he's a social issues liberal running for the nomination of the conservative party."

"He will attract a lot of initial interest but will become less interesting as voters learn more about him."

■ On Gingrich

"Could be short-lived, but Newt's always been known as the idea guy. And, right now, the party is struggling to find some fresh ideas."

"If you think about it, has anybody actually implemented more of the conservative agenda than Newt? And he did it without the White House."

■ On Huckabee

"He will rally social conservatives but does not have the appeal to win a general election."

"With Frist and Allen collapsing, the Southern strategy is open to him."

Q: Republicans' strongest general election candidate?

■ On McCain

"McCain still has broad appeal to independents, and his national security credentials give him room to maneuver on Iraq."

"This one is not even a close call. The times and stumbles of '43' seem perfectly designed for a candidate like McCain to exploit. If nominated, it will be very hard for any Democrat to beat him."

"He is a proven reformer in an era of governmental corruption, a decorated warrior in an era of war, and a maverick in a time of cynicism about the national political establishment. Best of all, he is separated from the

Bush administration. Problems? Age, eccentricity, temper, and his constant urge 'to pull the elephant's trunk' at every opportunity."

■ On Romney

"Because he comes from outside Washington, and the public's dim view of Congress is likely to get worse, not better, during the next two years."

"Can run as an outsider, but more importantly, as we have learned, our winning candidates come from the ranks of our governors."

■ On Giuliani

"He has rock-star personal charisma and major appeal to independents. Hillary's nightmare: A major challenge winning her own (adoptive) state."

"He would do extremely well with independents. Conservative Republicans would still support him to prevent the election of a Democrat who probably would be to Giuliani's left on everything."

Q: Strongest vice presidential nominee?

■ On Romney

"Romney is the best candidate to excite the Republican base and appeal to moderates and independents."

■ On Rice

"Any GOP nominee who isn't smart enough to ask her isn't smart enough to win."

■ On Giuliani

"Putting him second on the ticket would be a way to use his vote appeal that the cultural right in the party might accept."

■ On Barbour

"Governor Barbour of Mississippi would add great strength to the ticket, regardless of whether the nominee is ultimately Romney or McCain."



RICHARD A. BLOOM

Condoleezza Rice



APRIGELIO SOLIS

Haley Barbour

Democratic Insiders

Q: The strongest Republican presidential nominee?

■ On McCain

"McCain, by far. Despite his age, he will be seen as a formidable candidate and potential president—a tough combination."

"Greatest potential for bipartisan appeal but also greatest potential for meltdown."

■ On Giuliani

"Giuliani is the strongest Republican candidate, unless, like John McCain, he becomes preoccupied with his overtures to the Far Right."

■ On Romney

"A red governor in the ultimate blue state. But can religious Republicans accept a Mormon?"

"His only perceived weakness is his religion, but he's the only major Republican contender who's only had one wife. I know I'm supposed to be concerned about McCain, and I was in 2000, but for '08, I'm more concerned about Mitt."