

You Will Never Guess Who's Surging in New Hampshire

A new poll of likely New Hampshire Republican Primary voters shows a surprise candidate is suddenly surging in the Granite State.

WBUR, an NPR affiliate in Boston, conducted its poll Dec. 6-8, speaking with about 400 likely GOP voters, of which 90 percent were previous primary participants. It found Donald Trump still leads the field in New Hampshire with 27 percent support.

The surprise is in who took second place: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie.

Christie garnered 12 percent support, while U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) received 11 percent. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) polled at 10 percent. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush received 8 percent, Ohio Gov. John Kasich got 7 percent, and Dr. Ben Carson netted 6 percent.

No other candidate polled above 3 percent. The poll had a margin of error of 4.9 percent.

WBUR's month-by-month comparison shows Christie polling at just 2 percent in September. He rose to 8 percent in October, and appeared to be fading at just 6 percent in November.

He continues to lag far behind in Iowa, despite the support of Gov. Terry Branstad. A strong showing in either of the first two states will be necessary for any candidate to maintain a campaign deep into the primary race.

Donald Trump's support also appears to be growing, according to WBUR's month-by-month comparison. He stood at 22 percent in September, but had dipped to just 18 percent in October. He

moved up slightly to 23 percent in November.

Based on the time frame of the poll, it is unlikely his comments about Muslim immigration had any sizeable impact on the numbers. However, 87 percent of those polled consider ISIS a “major threat,” compared to 57 and 49 percent for illegal immigration and mass shootings, respectively.

Rubio was the top “second choice” candidate, taking 15 percent, while Christie received 11 percent. Cruz got 10 percent, while Bush and Fiorina each received 9 percent. Carson and Trump each were the second choice of 8 percent of those polled.