

You Won't Believe the Numbers in Last Poll

Last week, a Monmouth University poll of likely Iowa Republican Caucus voters thrust U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz into the role of "anti-Trump challenger." The results, while shocking to many observers, couldn't have been as shocking as Monmouth's latest national poll.

The new results, released Monday afternoon—and the first poll fully reflective of the electorate following Donald Trump's comments about Muslim immigration—show the billionaire businessman with a "commanding" lead over the rest of the GOP field. Trump's 41 percent is 27 points higher than Cruz, who is in second with 14 percent.

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) was four points behind Cruz at 10 percent, while Dr. Ben Carson sits at 9 percent. No other candidate received more than 3 percent.

"It has become abundantly clear that Trump is giving his supporters exactly what they want, even if what he says causes the GOP leadership and many Republican voters to cringe," Monmouth University Polling Institute director Patrick Murray said.

The polling also gives ammunition to the notion of a Trump-Cruz Divide within the conservative movement. Aside from Trump's own supporters, more than 60 percent of Cruz' supporters said they would be OK with a Trump nomination.

That compares with 53 percent of all other Republican-leaning voters who say they would be "dissatisfied" or "upset" if Trump becomes the party's standard bearer in 2016.

The poll also found Trump has a diverse base of support. He draws very similar levels of support from very conservative

(41%), somewhat conservative (45%), and moderate (40%) voters, but does better among strong tea party supporters (52%).

“Trump voters may skew toward a lower educational level, but it’s important to keep in mind that he draws support from significant segments of every voting bloc. You simply can’t pigeonhole his supporters as representing one or two particular factions of the party,” Murray said.

The poll was conducted through 1,006 live interviews with random American adults, with a ratio of 2-to-1 landline to cell phone users, and with a subsample of 385 registered voters who identify themselves as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party. It has a margin of error of 5 percentage points.

Quinnipiac University released a poll Monday afternoon, as well, which showed Trump and Cruz running neck-and-neck in Iowa. Trump led, 28-27, over Cruz with Rubio at 14 percent and Carson at 10 percent. No other candidate received more than 5 percent in that poll.