



Bill's Daily Briefing

October 25, 2011

Herman Cain tops Mitt Romney in latest CBS/NYT poll / Perry plunges

Businessman Herman Cain is now atop the field of Republican White House hopefuls, squeaking past former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney in the latest [CBS News/New York Times poll](#). The poll was conducted Oct 19-24 among 1,650 adults. 1,475 interviews were conducted among registered voters and 455 voters who said they plan to vote in a Republican primary. The margin of error among primary voters is plus or minus four percentage points.

- Cain garnered 25 percent support of Republican primary voters in the poll released Tuesday, compared to Romney's 21 percent. In early October, the two men were tied at 17 percent.
- Cain's support surged among voters who identified with the conservative Tea Party wing of the Republican party, rising to 32 percent in mid-October from 18 percent just a few weeks ago. That's more than four times the level of support he had from the group in mid-September.
- Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich took 10 percent of likely primary voters, while Texas Rep. Ron Paul's support was at 8 percent.
- Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who led the poll in mid-September, plunged to just 6 percent support. He had 12 percent in early October and 23 percent in mid-September. Romney's Tea Party support has held steady in October, at 18 percent, after a modest increase from September's 12 percent. Perry, however, has seen his Tea Party backing go up in steam. He had just 7 percent support in the latest poll, compared to 12 percent in early October and a staggering 30 percent in mid-September.
- Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum and former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman were at the back of the pack, with 2 percent, 1 percent and 1 percent respectively.

Rick Perry readies assault on Mitt Romney

The Rick Perry relaunch has finally arrived. After weeks battling questions about how he plans to salvage his listing presidential bid, the Texas governor has finally started spelling out an answer. It involves opening his \$15 million campaign war chest, hitting Mitt Romney harder and moving to reclaim the role of the populist conservative outsider in the race. Perry will deliver a policy address Tuesday in South Carolina outlining his support for a national flat tax – a proposal that for the first time extends beyond his record in Texas.

His campaign has reserved statewide television airtime in Iowa to start as early as this week. Perhaps most importantly, Perry has brought on board a new group of media consultants known for their brass-knuckled tactics and sharp read on the GOP base. Joe Allbaugh, a former top aide to President George W. Bush, added major national heft to the Perry team by signing on as a senior adviser. ([Politico](#))

Really Bizarre Herman Cain Video

Another bizarre campaign video from Herman Cain. This one features his Chief of Staff Mark Block smoking outside a nondescript building:

Bachmann's ex-NH staff releases scathing letter about campaign

A backbiting joint letter from presidential contender Michele Bachmann's former New Hampshire staffers spells out how frustration with the Minnesota Republican's national staff led the entire team to jump ship. The disgruntled remarks open the curtain to fractures within Bachmann's campaign that she and her aides have insisted don't exist. "The manner in which some in the national team conducted themselves towards Team-N.H. was rude, unprofessional, dishonest, and at times cruel," the former staffers wrote Monday. The sour resignation of Bachmann's New Hampshire staff added to a series of campaign departures that have left many wondering whether Bachmann's top supporters are losing faith in her candidacy.

The letter released Monday offered a glimpse into how that type of miscommunication could occur. "Team members were repeatedly ignored regarding simple requests, sometimes going weeks with little or no contact with the national team," they wrote. The former New Hampshire staffers said they maintained a sense of loyalty to Bachmann as a candidate and were willing to continue helping her despite lingering uncertainty about payment of wages. "Sadly, they were deceived, constantly left out of the loop regarding key decisions, and relegated to second-class citizens within a campaign in which they were the original members," the group said. The ex-staffers laid out a timeline very different from the one put forth by the Bachmann campaign, claiming that the New Hampshire campaign manager, Jeff Chidester, resigned in an email 10 days ago. When nobody reached out to the other staffers to address their concerns, they called it quits. ([The Hill](#))

Government announces new program to help 'underwater' homeowners

President Obama on Monday responded to growing concerns about the nation's battered housing market by unveiling a plan to help reduce the monthly mortgage payments of homeowners who owe more than their properties are worth. As he met with distressed homeowners in Las Vegas, the foreclosure capital of the nation, Obama announced steps to allow "underwater" borrowers to refinance their mortgages at today's ultra-low rates — near 4 percent. The move comes amid a rapidly growing consensus that the nation's moribund housing market is holding back the economic recovery. Home values are hovering at eight-year lows, and more than 10 million people are underwater, or owe more than their homes are worth. The administration's proposal underscored the scope of the problem as well as the limits of public policy in addressing it. By reducing monthly payments, officials hope to free up cash for consumers to spend elsewhere. Housing regulators say that 1 million borrowers might be eligible, but that is only one-tenth of the number of homeowners who need help. And while estimates cited by the administration suggest the average homeowner might save \$2,500 per year, other projections from housing regulators were in the range of \$312 per year, depending on upfront fees the borrower pays, which may include several thousand dollars in closing costs. ([Washington Post](#))

Senators Outraged U.S. Borrowing Big From China While Also Giving It Aid

China is one of the biggest economies in the world and grew at more than 9 percent over the last year. It also has loaned more than \$1 trillion to the U.S. to fund its deficit-spending. But at the same time, the U.S. sends foreign aid to China, which lawmakers of all stripes say is just plain nuts. "Why in the world would we be borrowing money and then turn around and giving it back to the countries that we're borrowing it from?" Republican Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma said. "If they have enough of a surplus to loan us money, they have enough of a surplus to take care of their own needs." Democratic Sen. Jim Webb of Virginia asked the same question in a recent appearance on Fox News: "Hey, in the crisis that we're in right now, should we really be continuing to send American taxpayer dollars over to China for these purposes?"

It isn't a lot of aid -- tens of millions in bilateral aid, much more through international institutions to which the U.S. contributes. But the question is why a nation that's competing with the U.S. economically and politically in every corner of the globe should get any money from the U.S. "I think the Chinese are just laughing whenever they receive a check," said Dan Ikenson, a trade economist at the CATO Institute. "How silly this is of the United States to be subsidizing the faster-growing, second-largest economy in the world." So why'd we start giving aid in the first place? "The hope and the operating assumption is that to the extent that we engage them in a variety of ways, that we can stay influential. And we can influence them," Dan Runde of the Center for Strategic and International Studies said. But Runde notes China's record of flaunting trade rules -- violating intellectual property laws, including multiple openings of fake Apple stores there recently, as well as patent infringements. He suggests the aid has had little positive impact. ([Fox News](#))

Mexican ID Becomes Valid ID in Sonoma County

In Sonoma County, a California driver's license is accepted as valid identification -- but so is a card issued by the Mexican consulate. Mexican nationals will be able to give their country's state-issued identification cards as valid ID to Santa Rosa police officers and Sonoma County sheriffs, [the Santa Rosa Press Democrat reported](#). The idea is to reduce the immigration-related duties of local cops, the newspaper reported. Accepting Mexican consulate-issued cards will reduce the number of people booked into jail for lacking ID, and ergo, will reduce deportations from Santa Rosa County Jail, the newspaper reported. ([NBC-SF](#))

Ex-McCain lawyer: Barack Obama 'mugged' John McCain in 2008

Sen. John McCain felt like he was "mugged" by Barack Obama when the Democrat broke a promise to use public financing during the 2008 presidential campaign, according to a top McCain adviser. Trevor Potter, who served as the lead lawyer for McCain's Republican presidential campaigns in 2000 and 2008, suggested Obama's move was unprincipled and effectively killed the Watergate-era public-financing program. He spoke in an on-camera interview to [Politico.com](#):

POTTER: I think he [McCain] feels he got mugged first by the Democratic nominee, Barack Obama, who walked away from the public financing of the general election, and then by the press, who let Obama get away with it. McCain had agreed, he thought, with Obama, that if they became their parties' nominees they would take general election public funding. McCain did. Obama didn't. Obama basically said look at the political reality -- I can raise more money without it. And I think McCain felt the principle there wasn't the political reality of who could raise more money. It was his belief in the importance of a public funding system, which he thought Obama shared, until he didn't share it.

State mum on Libya's Sharia law

The Obama administration on Monday treaded carefully around the announcement that Sharia law will be enforced in post-Muammar Qadhafi Libya, refraining from expressing disapproval of Islamic law as the foundation of the country's new legal system. "We've seen various Islamic-based democracies wrestle with the issue of establishing rule of law within an appropriate cultural context," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters on Monday when quizzed about Libya's National Transitional Council leader Mustafa Abdul-Jalil's declaration on Sunday that Sharia law will shape the country's legal system. Nuland added that the "number one" priority for the U.S. was that universal human rights, as well as rights for women, minorities, due process and transparency, be fully respected in Libya. Pressed on whether this meant the administration had no objections to Libya's new government using the Sharia law as a basis for the country's legal system, Nuland responded: "The term has broad application and is understood differently." ([Politico](#))

Qaddafi and son 'buried in secret desert location'

Ousted Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi and his son Mutassim were buried today in a secret desert location, a National Transitional Council official said, ending a wrangle over their rotting corpses that led to fears for Libya's stability. With their Western allies uneasy that Qaddafi was roughed up and shot after his capture on Thursday, NTC forces had put the body on show in a cold store while they argued over what to do with it, until its decay forced them to close the doors on Monday. "Qaddafi and the son, Mutassim, were buried at dawn in a secret place with proper respects paid. We will release more details officially later," an interim government official said. ([Reuters](#))

Names of Casey Anthony jurors released in Fla. 3 months after her acquittal in child's death

A court released the names of the jurors in the Casey Anthony trial for the first time since they acquitted the Florida woman of murdering her 2-year-old daughter, Caylee. The "cooling off" period a Florida judge cited in delaying the release for three months ended Tuesday, and the names of 12 jurors and three alternates were released by the Pinellas County Clerk of Court. ([AP](#))

Baby Lisa case: Newest media focus is surveillance video

Surveillance footage taken on the night of Baby Lisa's disappearance seems to capture a man -- who, oddly enough, seems to be dressed all in white -- emerging from a wooded area about the time that the Kansas City, Mo., 10-month-old reportedly vanished from her crib. The video, [obtained](#) by "Good Morning America," is brief and grainy, and it's difficult to determine whether the person is carrying anything at all, much less a baby. But the footage -- plus two reported sightings of a man carrying a baby that night -- could help bolster the parents' claim that they had nothing to do with their child's disappearance, says the story accompanying the video. The Kansas City Police Department could not be reached for comment Monday on what might, or might not be, a development in the case of the missing child known as Baby Lisa. ([LA Times](#))

Bill Press On Iraq: Republicans 'Refuse To Give A Black Man Credit'

On Al Sharpton's MSNBC show this evening, Bill Press ascribed Republican reluctance to give President Obama credit on Iraq to the fact that "the Republican party is like some of the banks down South. They refuse to give a black man credit." ([Newsbusters](#))

AL SHARPTON: Bill is writing about the Iraq pull-out, calling it a promise made, promise kept. Bill, what will it take for Republicans to give this president credit?

BILL PRESS: You know what, Reverend Al? As one of my callers said this morning on my show, the Republican party is like some of the banks down South. They refuse to give a black man credit. Period.

NBC Unable to Shake Slide in Ratings

NBC's downward slide is getting steeper. Long a ratings laggard, the network has fallen further behind its competitors this fall, heightening the challenge facing its new owner Comcast Corp. as it works to mount a turnaround. Through the first four weeks of the TV season ending Oct. 16, about 3.3 million adults under 50 years old have been watching prime-time TV shows on NBC, according to the latest figures from Nielsen Holdings NV. That is down 9.3% from the same period a year earlier. Much of the decline is concentrated in NBC's entertainment shows. Leaving out National Football League games, which NBC airs on Sunday nights, the network's 18-to-49-year-old audience is 2.2 million—down 16% from a year earlier. That demographic is the audience group most valued by advertisers. Among the shows demonstrating particularly severe declines are long-running programs like "Law & Order: SVU" and "The Biggest Loser," each of which lost one of its stars. The 18-to-49-year-old audiences for those shows have fallen 20% to 3.4 million and 23% to 3 million, respectively, this season compared to last season, according to Nielsen. ([Wall Street Journal](#))

Possible study of anthrax vaccine's effectiveness in children stirs debate

The Obama administration is wrestling with the thorny question of whether scientists should inject healthy children with the anthrax vaccine to see whether the shots would safely protect them against a bioterrorism attack. The other option is to wait until an attack happens and then try to gather data from children whose parents agree to inoculate them in the face of an actual threat. A key working group of federal advisers in September endorsed testing, sparking objections from those who consider that step unethical, unnecessary and dangerous. The National Biodefense Science Board (NBSB), which advises the federal government, is to meet Friday to vote on its working group's recommendation. ([Washington Post](#))

Guess Who's Making a Whitey Bulger Movie?

Matt Damon tells [GQ](#) that he and Ben Affleck have chosen their next collaboration: a movie about the reputed former godfather of the Irish Mob, one of the coldest, most ruthless figures in the history of organized crime. "We're doing a Whitey Bulger movie," Damon says of the leader of South Boston's Winter Hill Gang, who had been on the lam for 16 years and was wanted for 19 murders, among other things, when he was apprehended in Santa Monica in June. "Warner's got it for us." Damon will star as Bulger, Affleck will direct, and Terence Winter, of *The Sopranos* and *Boardwalk Empire* fame, is writing the script.

Lindsay Lohan To Appear In Playboy?

Lindsay Lohan has lined up a new gig – as a Playboy girl. LiLo is posing for Hugh Hefner's Playboy magazine, a source told [Access Hollywood](#). The source told Access Lohan is disrobing for the spread, which is being shot this week in LA. In the meantime, Lohan's other gig is community service. The actress has been ordered to spend 16 hours of community service at the Los Angeles Coroner's Office before her next hearing on Nov. 2, where she'll face the music after a judge ruled she violated her probation. She already performed one shift at the Coroner's Office last Friday.

Posted by Eugene Flamben at 6:36 AM

