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Snowe in trouble but leads primary challengers—so far

Raleigh, N.C. – Since PPP last polled Maine’s Republican primary electorate right before last November’s election, Senator Olympia Snowe’s troubles have only grown, with an even larger majority of her base thinking her too liberal and eager to nominate someone to her right. On top of that, two candidates have announced bids to oppose her re-nomination. The problem for these challengers is that still few people know who they are, and they are not well-liked by those who do. So Snowe still has a significant plurality in an early test of the primary race. But that election is more than a year away, and Andrew Ian Dodge and Scott D’Amboise still have plenty of time to make their case.

Politicians usually are viewed very favorably by their own partisans, but Snowe barely breaks even on the job-performance front, with 47% approving and 44% disapproving. That is a huge decline from a still respectable if weak 53-39 margin last October. 58% view Snowe as too liberal for their taste (up from 50%), with only 37% saying her beliefs are “about right” (down from 45%). In that context, more think she belongs as an independent (34%) or even a Democrat (33%) than think she is at home in her current and lifelong party (27%). So it is no surprise that 58% would cast a ballot for a generic “more conservative challenger,” with only a third sticking with their incumbent.

Yet for all her weakness, she still pulls 43% in a three-way primary, with D’Amboise at 18% and Dodge at 11%. A large 28% are undecided, meaning that not only can Snowe’s level of support decline, but those on the fence can easily consolidate behind D’Amboise or Dodge and put one of them over the top. To do that, though, both will have to improve their respective 17% and 14% name recognition and -7 and -10 net favorability margins.

“It continues to look like it will be very difficult for Olympia Snowe to win a Republican primary next year,” said Dean Debnam, President of Public Policy Polling. “Getting less than 50% against a couple of no-names and trailing a generic conservative by 25 points is not the recipe for fending off a serious challenge.”

Maine continues to buck Mitt Romney’s New England strength. He places fourth at only 15%, behind Mike Huckabee and Newt Gingrich (19% each) and Sarah Palin (17%). In October, Palin led with 23% to Romney’s 18%, Huckabee’s 16%, and Gingrich’s 14%.

PPP surveyed 434 usual Maine Republican primary voters from March 3rd to 6th. The survey’s margin of error is +/-4.7%. Other factors, such as refusal to be interviewed and weighting, may introduce additional error that is more difficult to quantify.



Maine Survey Results

Q1 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Newt Gingrich?

Favorable 54% *Not sure* 22%
Unfavorable 24%

Q2 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Mike Huckabee?

Favorable 56% *Not sure* 22%
Unfavorable 22%

Q3 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Sarah Palin?

Favorable 59% *Not sure* 8%
Unfavorable 33%

Q4 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Mitt Romney?

Favorable 47% *Not sure* 22%
Unfavorable 31%

Q5 Do you approve or disapprove of Senator Olympia Snowe's job performance?

Approve 47%
Disapprove 44%
Not sure 9%

Q6 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Scott D'Amboise?

Favorable 5% *Not sure* 84%
Unfavorable 12%

Q7 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Andrew Ian Dodge?

Favorable 2% *Not sure* 86%
Unfavorable 12%

Q8 Do you think Olympia Snowe is too liberal, too conservative, or about right?

Too liberal 58%
Too conservative 3%
About right 37%
Not sure 2%

Q9 Do you think Olympia Snowe most properly belongs in the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or as an independent?

Democrat 33%
Republican 27%
Independent 34%
Not sure 6%

Q10 If the candidates for Senate next year were Olympia Snowe, Scott D'Amboise, and Andrew Ian Dodge who would you vote for?

Olympia Snowe 43%
Scott D'Amboise 18%
Andrew Ian Dodge 10%
Undecided 28%

Q11 Generally speaking if the Republican primary for Senate next year was between Olympia Snowe and a more conservative challenger, who would you vote for?

Olympia Snowe 33%
More conservative challenger 58%
Not sure 9%





Q12 If the Republican candidates for President in 2012 were Haley Barbour, Mitch Daniels, Newt Gingrich, Mike Huckabee, Sarah Palin, Ron Paul, Tim Pawlenty, and Mitt Romney who would you vote for?

<i>Haley Barbour</i>	2%
<i>Mitch Daniels</i>	4%
<i>Newt Gingrich</i>	19%
<i>Mike Huckabee</i>	19%
<i>Sarah Palin</i>	17%
<i>Ron Paul</i>	8%
<i>Tim Pawlenty</i>	3%
<i>Mitt Romney</i>	15%
<i>Someone else/Undecided</i>	13%

Q13 Would you describe yourself as very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

<i>Very liberal</i>	1%
<i>Somewhat liberal</i>	4%
<i>Moderate</i>	19%
<i>Somewhat conservative</i>	38%
<i>Very conservative</i>	38%

Q14 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

<i>Woman</i>	52%
<i>Man</i>	48%

Q15 If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

<i>18 to 29</i>	6%
<i>30 to 45</i>	31%
<i>46 to 65</i>	39%
<i>Older than 65</i>	24%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Gingrich Favorability						
Favorable	54%	80%	14%	33%	56%	66%
Unfavorable	24%	20%	63%	37%	21%	16%
Not sure	22%	-	23%	30%	23%	18%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Huckabee Favorability						
Favorable	56%	61%	9%	38%	57%	69%
Unfavorable	22%	39%	59%	33%	22%	11%
Not sure	22%	-	31%	29%	20%	20%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Palin Favorability						
Favorable	59%	-	21%	34%	58%	79%
Unfavorable	33%	100%	71%	56%	35%	14%
Not sure	8%	-	8%	10%	7%	7%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Romney Favorability						
Favorable	47%	80%	20%	49%	52%	43%
Unfavorable	31%	20%	43%	27%	27%	36%
Not sure	22%	-	37%	24%	20%	21%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Snowe Approval						
Approve	47%	80%	73%	74%	54%	21%
Disapprove	44%	20%	24%	19%	37%	68%
Not sure	9%	-	4%	7%	9%	11%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
D'Amboise Favorability						
Favorable	5%	61%	-	2%	2%	8%
Unfavorable	12%	20%	22%	7%	12%	12%
Not sure	84%	20%	78%	91%	86%	80%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Dodge Favorability						
Favorable	2%	61%	-	2%	1%	2%
Unfavorable	12%	-	23%	5%	13%	13%
Not sure	86%	39%	77%	92%	86%	85%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Snowe Ideology						
Too liberal	58%	-	17%	20%	53%	88%
Too conservative	3%	20%	11%	6%	2%	-
About right	37%	80%	68%	70%	42%	12%
Not sure	2%	-	4%	4%	3%	0%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Snowe Belongs As Dem, GOP, or Ind?						
Democrat	33%	20%	5%	14%	27%	52%
Republican	27%	20%	47%	47%	33%	9%
Independent	34%	61%	29%	34%	34%	34%
Not sure	6%	-	20%	4%	6%	6%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
2012 GOP Sen Primary						
Olympia Snowe	43%	80%	68%	73%	48%	19%
Scott D'Amboise	18%	-	16%	8%	16%	27%
Andrew Ian Dodge	10%	-	9%	3%	5%	19%
Undecided	28%	20%	7%	16%	31%	35%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Snowe or Con Challenger?						
Olympia Snowe	33%	80%	67%	65%	37%	7%
More conservative challenger	58%	-	24%	13%	55%	90%
Not sure	9%	20%	9%	22%	7%	3%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
2012 GOP Pres Primary						
Haley Barbour	2%	61%	-	1%	1%	2%
Mitch Daniels	4%	-	15%	2%	4%	5%
Newt Gingrich	19%	-	8%	14%	26%	16%
Mike Huckabee	19%	-	5%	19%	17%	23%
Sarah Palin	17%	-	5%	13%	18%	20%
Ron Paul	8%	-	24%	8%	7%	7%
Tim Pawlenty	3%	-	4%	1%	3%	5%
Mitt Romney	15%	20%	16%	26%	15%	10%
Someone else/Undecided	13%	20%	24%	14%	10%	12%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Gingrich Favorability			
Favorable	54%	50%	59%
Unfavorable	24%	23%	25%
Not sure	22%	28%	16%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Huckabee Favorability			
Favorable	56%	54%	58%
Unfavorable	22%	19%	25%
Not sure	22%	27%	17%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Palin Favorability			
Favorable	59%	56%	63%
Unfavorable	33%	34%	32%
Not sure	8%	10%	5%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Romney Favorability			
Favorable	47%	48%	46%
Unfavorable	31%	23%	40%
Not sure	22%	29%	14%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Snowe Approval			
Approve	47%	50%	43%
Disapprove	44%	39%	50%
Not sure	9%	11%	7%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
D'Amboise Favorability			
Favorable	5%	4%	6%
Unfavorable	12%	9%	15%
Not sure	84%	88%	80%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Dodge Favorability			
Favorable	2%	2%	3%
Unfavorable	12%	10%	13%
Not sure	86%	88%	84%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Snowe Ideology			
Too liberal	58%	54%	61%
Too conservative	3%	1%	4%
About right	37%	41%	33%
Not sure	2%	3%	1%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Snowe Belongs As Dem, GOP, or Ind?			
Democrat	33%	30%	35%
Republican	27%	25%	29%
Independent	34%	37%	31%
Not sure	6%	7%	4%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
2012 GOP Sen Primary			
Olympia Snowe	43%	48%	38%
Scott D'Amboise	18%	13%	24%
Andrew Ian Dodge	10%	8%	13%
Undecided	28%	31%	26%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Snowe or Con Challenger?			
Olympia Snowe	33%	37%	29%
More conservative challenger	58%	52%	65%
Not sure	9%	11%	6%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
2012 GOP Pres Primary			
Haley Barbour	2%	2%	2%
Mitch Daniels	4%	2%	7%
Newt Gingrich	19%	18%	19%
Mike Huckabee	19%	18%	19%
Sarah Palin	17%	18%	16%
Ron Paul	8%	5%	11%
Tim Pawlenty	3%	2%	5%
Mitt Romney	15%	18%	13%
Someone else/Undecided	13%	17%	7%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Gingrich Favorability					
Favorable	54%	69%	50%	52%	59%
Unfavorable	24%	23%	23%	26%	22%
Not sure	22%	8%	27%	23%	19%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Huckabee Favorability					
Favorable	56%	69%	55%	55%	55%
Unfavorable	22%	15%	19%	25%	23%
Not sure	22%	15%	27%	19%	23%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Palin Favorability					
Favorable	59%	62%	63%	60%	54%
Unfavorable	33%	31%	34%	32%	34%
Not sure	8%	8%	3%	8%	13%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Romney Favorability					
Favorable	47%	69%	39%	45%	55%
Unfavorable	31%	8%	38%	34%	24%
Not sure	22%	23%	23%	21%	21%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Snowe Approval					
Approve	47%	54%	44%	45%	52%
Disapprove	44%	46%	48%	44%	39%
Not sure	9%	-	8%	11%	9%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
D'Amboise Favorability					
Favorable	5%	15%	3%	5%	3%
Unfavorable	12%	15%	6%	12%	16%
Not sure	84%	69%	91%	83%	81%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Dodge Favorability					
Favorable	2%	8%	2%	2%	3%
Unfavorable	12%	23%	5%	15%	12%
Not sure	86%	69%	94%	84%	86%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Snowe Ideology					
Too liberal	58%	46%	63%	62%	48%
Too conservative	3%	-	3%	3%	3%
About right	37%	54%	33%	34%	44%
Not sure	2%	-	2%	1%	6%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Snowe Belongs As Dem, GOP, or Ind?					
Democrat	33%	31%	36%	34%	28%
Republican	27%	38%	16%	30%	35%
Independent	34%	31%	44%	29%	31%
Not sure	6%	-	5%	7%	7%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
2012 GOP Sen Primary					
Olympia Snowe	43%	54%	36%	40%	54%
Scott D'Amboise	18%	8%	20%	21%	14%
Andrew Ian Dodge	10%	8%	13%	10%	9%
Undecided	28%	31%	31%	29%	23%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Snowe or Con Challenger?					
Olympia Snowe	33%	38%	28%	33%	38%
More conservative challenger	58%	54%	63%	58%	54%
Not sure	9%	8%	9%	9%	8%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
2012 GOP Pres Primary					
Haley Barbour	2%	8%	-	2%	2%
Mitch Daniels	4%	8%	3%	5%	5%
Newt Gingrich	19%	8%	17%	17%	25%
Mike Huckabee	19%	15%	22%	20%	14%
Sarah Palin	17%	31%	25%	12%	11%
Ron Paul	8%	15%	9%	8%	4%
Tim Pawlenty	3%	-	3%	4%	3%
Mitt Romney	15%	-	9%	19%	21%
Someone else/Undecided	13%	15%	11%	12%	15%

