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**Red Racing Horses Survey - MS US Senate Republican Primary: Cochran 1 point ahead of McDaniel, 42-41; Runoff Looks Possible**

Ahead of next week’s Mississippi US Senate Primary, Incumbent Sen. Thad Cochran looks to be in a very close race with State Sen. Chris McDaniel, leading his challenger by a razor-thin 42-41 margin. Indeed, the possibility of a June 24 runoff forced by a third spoiler candidate, Thomas Carey, looks increasingly likely. However, twelve percent of voters are still undecided at this late date. The survey of 374 adults, with a margin of error of +/- 5%, was conducted on May 28 and 29, 2014. Calls were made by PMI inc., Marianna, Fla., with all survey design and data analysis by Red Racing Horses. RRH has no connection to any candidate or independent group active in this race; funding for this poll was provided from the generous donations of RRH readers and a presenting sponsorship from our partner blog, amerikanskpolitikk.no. To contact Red Racing Horses about this poll, please e-mail us at redracinghorses@yahoo.com.

**Methodology:**

Calls were placed to 374 adults who voted in the 2011 Republican primary. As many offices were up for election in 2011, we felt that this electorate was a rough approximation of the electorate likely to turn out this year, in which fewer races are up for grabs but the most prominent race on the ballot (the Senate contest) is more high profile. Respondents who did not state an inclination to vote in the primary or did not give a topline preference were not included in the survey. If a respondent stated a topline choice but did not complete the survey, data was derived for the other questions to the greatest extent possible from the voter file. Where that was not possible, responses were marked as “other.” In keeping with RRH’s philosophical mission to use as much concrete data instead of our own assumptions wherever possible, the only weighting of the data was for age, gender, and geography increasing the proportion of young and male voters in the sample to bring the sample more in line with projections for the Mississippi primary electorate, and decreasing the number of CD-4 voters, who were oversampled in the initial population.

**Toplines:**

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| --- | --- |
| Candidate | Performance |
| Sen. Thad Cochran | 42% |
| State Sen. Chris McDaniel | 41% |
| Thomas Carey | 6% |
| Undecided | 12% |

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| Self-Idendification | Percentage |
| Tea Party | 27% |
| Conservative but not Tea Party | 57% |
| Neither Conservative nor Tea Party | 16% |
| Other | 7% |

The poll was weighted in three dimensions, age, gender, and geography:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | Weight |
| Male | 47% |
| Female | 53% |
| 18-44 | 14% |
| 45-64 | 42% |
| 65+ | 44% |

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| --- | --- |
| Geography | Weight |
| CD-1 | 20% |
| CD-2 | 15% |
| CD-3 | 30% |
| CD-4 | 35% |

CD-4 was upweighted slightly relative to its population due to the competitive congressional primary between Rep. Steven Pallazzo and ex-Rep. Gene Taylor, while CD-2 was downweighted due to the dramatically lower proportion of Republicans in the district. CD-1 was also downweighted because the voters in that district have been more likely to pull Democratic ballots due to continued Democratic identification among white voters that does not exist in the rest of the state.

Racial Data (derived from voter file)

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| --- | --- |
| Race | Percentage |
| White | 84% |
| Non-White | 16% |

As one would expect for a Republican primary electorate in Mississippi, the electorate is overwhelmingly white.

Toplines by age and gender:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Candidate | Male | Female |
| Carey | 7% | 6% |
| Cochran | 34% | 48% |
| McDaniel | 46% | 36% |
| Undecided | 12% | 11% |

There is a very pronounced gender gap; Male voters go strongly for McDaniel while Female voters go strongly for Cochran.

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| Candidate | Under 45 | 45-65 | 65+ |
| Carey | 4% | 8% | 6% |
| Cochran | 25% | 40% | 49% |
| McDaniel | 47% | 44% | 35% |
| Undecided | 24% | 8% | 11% |

Young voters are McDaniel’s strongest constituency; conversely, seniors are strongest for Cochran.

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| Ideological Self-ID | Tea Party | Conservative non-TP | Not Conservative | Other |
| Carey | 5% | 5% | 11% | 18% |
| Cochran | 25% | 53% | 45% | 11% |
| McDaniel | 67% | 33% | 18% | 25% |
| Undecided | 4% | 9% | 26% | 47% |

As one would expect, Tea Party voters break overwhelmingly for McDaniel, while non-Tea Party voters break strongly for Cochran.

Due to the small percentage of nonwhite voters, racial crosstabs are not particularly informative.

We also asked how these voters would vote in November if a candidate they didn’t vote for won the primary.

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| Support R in Nov? | Overall | Cochran Voters | McDaniel Voters |
| Definitely support R | 57% | 56% | 65% |
| Could support either | 18% | 21% | 18% |
| Support D | 7% | 9% | 5% |
| Won’t vote | 3% | 2% | 4% |
| Other | 15% | 11% | 8% |

The data show that a significant percentage, about one in four, would at least consider voting for the Democratic nominee if their chosen candidate lost the primary. Cochran voters are only slightly more likely than McDaniel voters to consider crossing party lines in November.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Geography | CD-1 (20%) | CD-2 (15%) | CD-3 (30%) | CD-4 (35%) |
| Carey | 5% | 6% | 6% | 7% |
| Cochran | 38% | 40% | 48% | 38% |
| McDaniel | 45% | 50% | 36% | 40% |
| Undecided | 13% | 3% | 10% | 15% |

Cochran’s strongest area is the 3rd district, dominated by the upper-middle class suburban Rankin county.

**Discussion:**

RRH finds the race between Thad Cochran and Chris McDaniel close; indeed, we see the race close enough that the presence of unheralded third candidate Thomas Carey may throw the contest to a runoff on June 24. As expected, McDaniel’s support comes from younger, male, and Tea Party voters, while Cochran does best among older, female, and non-Tea Party primary voters. Unlike all previous polls of the race, RRH finds the race so close, and spoiler Thomas Carey drawing enough votes, that we see that the possibility of a June 24 runoff is very real.

**About Red Racing Horses & Contact Info:**

Red Racing Horses (redracinghorses.com) is a collaborative, Republican-oriented blog focusing on horserace politics. We offer daily news updates on the American political landscape and stimulating discussion of upcoming elections. RRH is run by a team of eight volunteer hobbyists, and our website and polling are funded by generous donations from our readers. We have previously conducted polls of congressional elections in [Louisiana](http://www.redracinghorses.com/diary/diary/2777) and [South Carolina](http://www.redracinghorses.com/diary/diary/3085), and [Florida](http://www.redracinghorses.com/diary/3608). RRH is not affiliated with any campaign or partisan organization. To contact Red Racing Horses about this poll, e-mail us at redracinghorses@yahoo.com.