

## **Trump's Populist Appeal Divides Conservatives**

by

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Donald Trump continues to hold his position as the GOP front-runner a week after former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin gave her endorsement to Trump's bid for the Republican Party's nomination. With the Iowa caucus only a week away, this has left many within the folds of the Republican Party perplexed. Others aren't surprised at the appeal Trump seems to hold for voters.

James Hanley, Associate Professor of Political Science at Adrian College in Michigan, states that Trump's appeal lies in his populist message. "It's past time to stop viewing Trump in traditional left/right terms. He's a nationalistic populist, an appeal which cuts across liberal and conservative categories," he said.

This broad populist appeal could explain why a survey conducted by Mercury Analytics indicated that 20 percent of Democratic voters would vote for Trump. While this defection of likely Democratic voters could be concerning to Democrats, it is worth noting that the survey also indicated that Democratic Party front-runner Hillary Clinton remained ahead of Trump.

Recent polls conducted by CNN/ORC and Fox News also indicate defection from the party ranks within both parties. However, those numbers were nowhere near as high as those from the Mercury Analytics survey.

Trump's current popularity could also be attributed to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center that revealed only 19 percent of Americans trust the federal government. Professor Hanley believes that this inherent distrust of the establishment combined with Trump's "anti-establishment campaign promises" makes Trump an appealing candidate to many.

Hanley also thinks that Palin's recent endorsement of Trump continues to add to his populist appeal. He cautions that while it may temporarily boost Trump's standings in the polls, it could also backfire and cause him to lose support over the long term.

Trump's popularity is a matter of contention amongst local conservative voters. Brad Wion, 40, of Piqua, Ohio, supports Trump's run for president. "I'm tired of career politicians. Trump is not afraid to speak about what needs to be fixed with this country and he doesn't care what people think."

"This will be the largest voter turn out in history. Trump will win because the majority of Americans are thinking like me," Wion said.

But some Republican voters aren't as happy with Trump's surging poll numbers. John Woodrow, 33, of Urbana, Ohio, is one of them.

“My entire voting life I’ve ended up voting for a Republican. I would really like to see Kasich get the ticket. That is my stance...However, there is no way I will vote for Trump,” he said.

Woodrow’s main concerns lie with Trump’s rhetoric and the four bankruptcies in the business mogul’s past.

“A good politician with a great record beats a terrible failure in the business world and ‘meh’ reality TV head. Trump spells disaster,” Woodrow said. “He’s got a strong simple message with no real plan and he doesn’t care what people think. I don’t think he has a chance of being president and putting him up against whichever Dem makes it, will give them the White House.”