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**TRUMP POISED TO WIN SOUTH CAROLINA. CRUZ AND RUBIO BATTLE FOR SECOND PLACE.  
EVANGELICALS AND INDEPENDENTS FAVOR TRUMP.**

**Boston, MA** – In a new poll in South Carolina, Donald Trump holds a strong lead among likely Republican primary voters with 33% of the vote, followed by Ted Cruz (20%) and Marco Rubio (19%). John Kasich and Jeb Bush are far behind, with 9% each, and Ben Carson comes in last with 5%, despite a two-year focus on the state and the highest favorability rating (70%) of all the Republican candidates.

Trump's lead is striking in light of his negative favorability (-6). Only 41% of voters see him in a positive light, compared to 47% who hold an unfavorable view. In contrast, Rubio enjoys a +21 differential (53% favorable to 32% unfavorable), and Cruz is at +7 (51% to 44%).

Among independent voters, Trump garners the most support with 39%, followed by Rubio (17%), Kasich (14%) and Cruz (13%). Bush and Carson bring up the rear, with 8% and 6%, respectively. Evangelical voters, who are widely viewed as a stronghold for Cruz, favor Trump over the Texas senator, 39% to 27%.

During a week when several candidates repeatedly accused each other of lying, voters said the two front-runners were also the most dishonest in portraying their own records and that of their opponents. Forty-four percent (44%) said Trump was the most dishonest, followed by 33% who felt Cruz has earned that distinction. Only a small percentage of voters perceived Rubio (12%), Bush (7%), and Kasich (3%) as dishonest. A minute 1% said Carson was dishonest.

The number one issue in South Carolina for GOP primary voters is the rise of ISIS and terrorism (36%), followed by jobs and the economy (22%) and the national deficit (16%). Of those who said ISIS was the most important issue, 39% support Trump compared to 20% for Cruz and 19% for Rubio.

Geographically, Trump's support is widespread, as he wins five of the state's seven congressional districts. Trump is most popular in the Seventh District (57%), while Cruz takes the Sixth (32%) the only majority/minority district in the state.

The poll results suggest that 17% of those who plan to vote in the upcoming GOP primary did not vote in the 2012 primary.

#### Caller ID

The Emerson College Polling Society poll was conducted from Monday, February 15 through Tuesday, February 16. The polling sample for the GOP primary consisted of 375 likely voters, with a margin of error of +/-5% and a 95% confidence level. Data was collected using an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. The full methodology and results can be found at [www.theecps.com](http://www.theecps.com).