

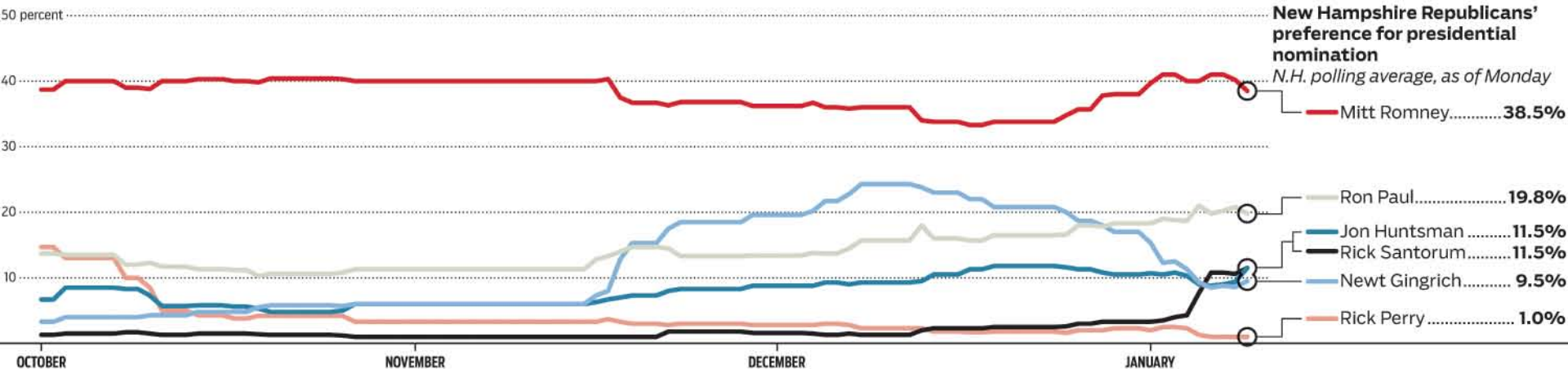
Round 2: Battle in New Hampshire

BY MAX RUST AND CHAD YODER | Tribune Newspapers graphics

While the oft-quoted phrase "In Iowa they pick corn and in New Hampshire they pick presidents" is only partially accurate, the Granite State's importance on the road to the Republican presidential nomination cannot be underestimated. For months the GOP competitors have courted the state's voters, known

for their strong independent streak, hoping to close in on the nomination or, in some cases, to just stay in the hunt. After Tuesday's contest, the focus shifts to South Carolina, site of a primary on Jan. 21. Here's a look at New Hampshire's political landscape.

Polling in the Granite State



Newt Gingrich

A poor showing in Iowa marked what many analysts view as the beginning of the former House speaker's crash landing. Gingrich's sharp rise in the polls in November was followed by a quick drop due largely to a negative ad campaign against him.



Jon Huntsman

The Utah ex-governor experienced his biggest drop in the New Hampshire polls the night of the Iowa caucuses, in which he placed last. Huntsman has spent all of his time and money in New Hampshire, which might account for a recent uptick in the polls in the past few days.



Ron Paul

With political stances mirroring the spirit of the state's "Live Free or Die" motto, Rep. Paul of Texas has made inroads in New Hampshire, particularly among the state's famous independent voting bloc. But his position is unlikely to change much Tuesday.



Rick Perry

The Texas governor has sunk to the bottom of the pack, which shouldn't be surprising given his decision to essentially skip the state and focus on South Carolina, where analysts predict he has a better chance of turning his campaign around.



Mitt Romney

The front-runner has enjoyed the highest polling, most advertising money and biggest name recognition of any candidate by far. Despite a dip in the polls over the past week, a loss for the former Massachusetts governor seems implausible.



Rick Santorum

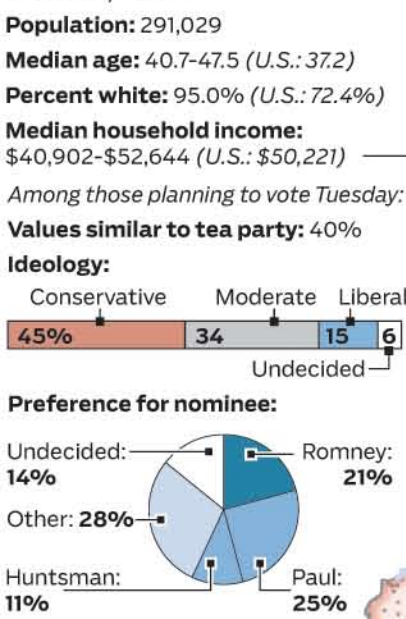
After his near-win in Iowa propelled him in the polls, the former Pennsylvania senator has the most to gain Tuesday. Santorum is hoping a decent showing will boost his chances of winning in South Carolina, home to many social conservatives.



Dissecting the Granite State electorate

The political challenge of New Hampshire is winning enough votes in each of the state's regions, which have differing demographics and voting tendencies. Romney has done well enough in each part of the state to possibly take them all.

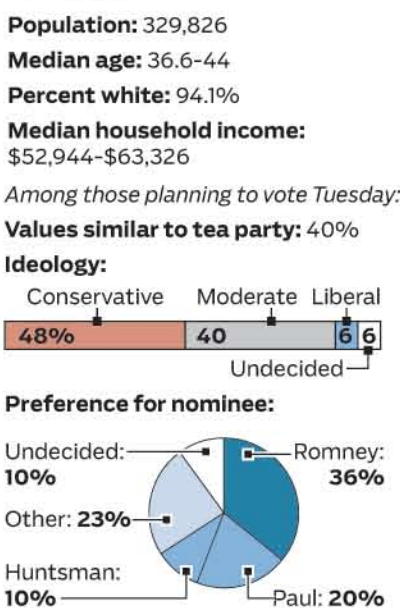
North/West



This mostly rural area is home to a large number of independents and the state's older population. Among both liberal and conservative factions, Paul has managed to gain popularity for his libertarian stances but will not likely overtake Romney, who has polled in mid- to low 30 percent range. This was the part of New Hampshire that the unconventional candidate Howard Dean dominated during the 2004 Democratic primary campaign; he ultimately lost to John Kerry.

MAP KEY:
One dot (•) equals 50 people

Central



This area, including the state capital, Concord, and several bigger towns on the eastern border, is considered one of the state's more socially conservative regions and where the tea party movement finds relatively strong support. As Gingrich has lost steam, Santorum has capitalized, picking up votes from social conservatives who have largely eschewed Romney.

Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary

No Republican has won both the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary, but the last five Republican presidential nominees have won at least one of the contests.

YEAR	WON IOWA	WON N.H.	NOMINEE/ RESULT
2008	Mike Huckabee	John McCain	McCain Lost to Barack Obama
2000	George W. Bush	John McCain	Bush Beat Al Gore
1996	Bob Dole	Pat Buchanan	Dole Lost to Bill Clinton
1988	Bob Dole	George H.W. Bush	Bush Beat Michael Dukakis
1980	George H.W. Bush	Ronald Reagan	Reagan Beat Walter Mondale

2012 GOP primary calendar

Tuesday: New Hampshire (12 delegates)

Jan. 21: South Carolina (25)
Jan. 31: Florida (50)

Feb. 4: Maine, Nevada (52)
Feb. 7: Colorado, Minnesota (76)
Feb. 28: Arizona, Michigan (59)

March 3: Washington (43)
March 6 (Super Tuesday): Alaska, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Wyoming (467)
March 10: Kansas (40)
March 13: Alabama, Hawaii, Mississippi (110)
March 17: Missouri (52)
March 20: Illinois (69)
March 24: Louisiana (46)

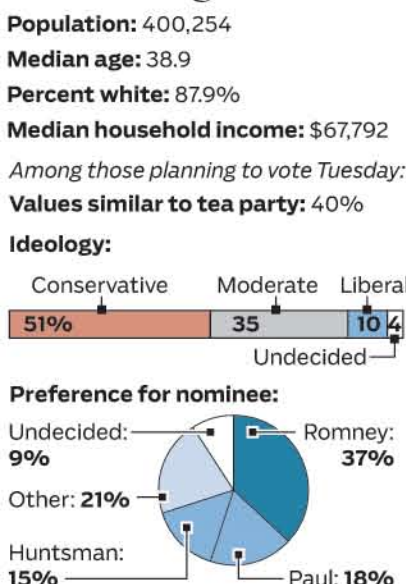
April 3: District of Columbia, Maryland, Texas, Wisconsin (253)
April 24: Connecticut, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island (231)

May 8: Indiana, North Carolina, West Virginia (132)
May 15: Nebraska, Oregon (63)
May 22: Arkansas, Kentucky (81)

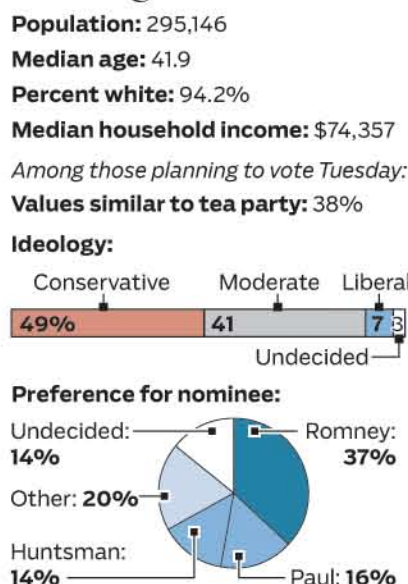
June 5: California, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, South Dakota (299)
June 26: Utah (40)

August 27-30: Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla.

Hillsborough



Rockingham



Making up half of New Hampshire's total votes, the state's two southeastern counties are Romney country. Many residents work in or have moved here from neighboring Massachusetts and are familiar with the former Bay State governor. The region's relatively high level of household income and business activity also bode well for the front-runner, who has focused his campaign here.

SOURCES: David Paleologos, director, Suffolk University Political Research Center; Suffolk University/7News poll of 500 likely New Hampshire Republican primary voters taken Jan. 7-8 with a margin of error +/- 4.4 percentage points (regional data); RealClearPolitics; U.S. Census Bureau; National Association of Secretaries of State; Des Moines Register; File photos