

Polling News & Notes

Overlooked Recent Polling and Insights • February 5, 2015

Be Wary Of Early Polls: They may provide insight into how Americans perceive the presidential primaries and candidates, but take them with a grain of salt. In the last two presidential contests, almost all the early polls failed to pick the winner.

There were five national polls in January and February 2007 on potential candidates for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination. Four polls showed former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani as the leader, while the fifth had Senator John McCain in front. Four national polls taken in January and February of 2007 on the 2008 Democratic presidential contest all had then-Senator Hillary Clinton as the clear frontrunner. None reflected the eventual nominee, then-Senator Barack Obama, as a strong contender at that point.

There was mixed picture story for the 2012 GOP field. Of the four national polls in January and February of 2011, two favored former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee and two favored former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney.

While the pace of polling will increase over the next several months, their predictive value will not improve until perhaps the end of the fall.

