

**The More They Know:** Back in July, [Polling News and Notes](#) pointed out that “most GOP candidates were still unknown to primary voters,” suggesting that many had room to grow as Republicans began to focus on the field of candidates. Now that caucus-goers and primary voters are preparing to make their primary vote decisions in just over three months, Republicans are beginning to take a closer look and learn more about their field of fifteen potential nominees. These Republicans are discovering they like some candidates more than others as they learn more about them.

A new *Washington Post*/ABC News [poll](#) offered six Republican contenders and asked Republican-leaning voters if they liked a candidate more or less, the more they learned about each. Many of the candidates who were unknown to voters over the summer are now impressing their fellow Republicans. Dr. Ben Carson did best in this measure, with 64% of Republican-leaning voters saying they liked him more after learning more about him and only 18% saying they liked him less, a forty-six-point advantage. Republicans were also impressed with Florida senator Marco Rubio the more they learned about him, 52% to 29% (+23). These were the only two who made good impressions on more than half of those polled, but Republicans also liked what they heard from former Hewitt-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina, 47% to 30% (+17) and Texas senator Ted Cruz, 41% to 33% (+8). While he is leading in the horse race of national polls, Republicans are statistically split on whether they like businessman Donald Trump the more they learn about him, 47% to 45% (+2), likely because he has yet to offer substantial blueprints on his vision for the country’s future. Former Florida governor Jeb Bush also lags on this, with only 41% saying they like him more and 47% saying they like him less (-6). That said, both Messrs. Trump and Bush had the highest name recognition of the field and smallest room to grow.

The Republican primary enters a new phase in a few months. In the meantime, it would benefit all candidates to continue to lay out their plans and ideas – providing details, not just talking points – to win over voters as they begin to take a closer look.

