

Rick Santorum most trusted on gay marriage, Ron Paul ranks last

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A new poll has Rick Santorum surging past Mitt Romney to rank as the most trusted GOP presidential candidate on gay marriage.

According to the <u>Washington Post/ABC News</u> poll released Monday, 31 percent of Republican-leaning respondents said they trust Santorum the most with social issues such as abortion and gay marriage. Mitt Romney trails with 22 percent, followed by Newt Gingrich (15%) and Ron Paul (13%). Six percent of respondents said they did not trust any of the candidates on social issues.

Santorum's polling numbers on social issues have increased substantially since January, when he received 14 percentage points, to overtake Romney, whose numbers have remained stuck in neutral.

On the campaign trail, Santorum frequently discusses his opposition to marriage equality, comparing it to a paper towel during an Iowa Falls campaign stop, blaming it for the wrecked the economy, and, most recently, suggesting gay marriage supporters don't respect him.

While Romney has said he supports a limited partnership for gay couples which would include "such things as hospital visitation rights and similar things," he also favors an amendment to the U.S. Constitution which would define marriage as a heterosexual union.

Santorum opposes both marriage and civil unions for gay couples.