

## MEMO

TO: Interested Parties  
 FROM: Justin Clark – Partner, National Public Affairs  
 DATE: February 18, 2025  
 RE: National Public Affairs Polling - 2026 Ohio Governor Republican Primary Research

National Public Affairs Polling recently completed a survey of 602 likely Republican primary voters in Ohio (see methodology at end of memo). Recent [surveys](#) have reinforced the flawed notion that Vivek Ramaswamy is the presumed frontrunner for the Republican nomination for Ohio Governor. **None of these surveys tell the whole story.**

Our findings indicate that this early advantage is a “sugar high” driven by a pre-inauguration media saturation that led to high name ID and perceived association with President Trump. That said, even at this high point of public opinion, polling support for Ramaswamy is incredibly soft. Beyond the temporal component of his losing the “sugar high” after quitting the Trump administration before it even started, the survey is clear that voters align closest to the candidate that receives the backing of President Trump...whoever that candidate is.

**Both Yost and Ramaswamy, the two frontrunners for the GOP gubernatorial nomination in 2026, remain immensely popular with the primary electorate.**

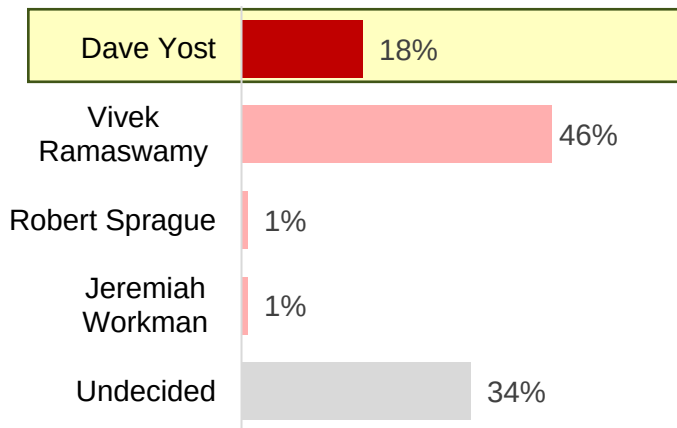
- Dave Yost is the only candidate on the ballot with a proven track record of running statewide in Ohio having won the Buckeye State in four consecutive election cycles.
- While Yost enjoys broad support across demographic groups, the Attorney General overperforms among ‘traditional conservative Republicans’ and Evangelical Protestants – two key components of the Republican primary base in Ohio.
- It should not come as a surprise that Ramaswamy has high name ID having run on the national stage against President Trump and having worked on the transition team before abandoning the Trump administration to fulfill his own political ambitions.

|                  | Total<br>fav | Total<br>unfav | Very<br>fav | Some<br>fav | Some<br>unfav | Very<br>unfav | No<br>opin | NHO | Net<br>fav |
|------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-----|------------|
| Donald Trump     | 82%          | 16%            | 74%         | 8%          | 3%            | 13%           | 2%         | <1% | +66        |
| JD Vance         | 81%          | 16%            | 73%         | 8%          | 3%            | 12%           | 2%         | 1%  | +65        |
| Bernie Moreno    | 65%          | 22%            | 39%         | 26%         | 9%            | 13%           | 10%        | 3%  | +42        |
| Vivek Ramaswamy  | 64%          | 15%            | 46%         | 18%         | 4%            | 10%           | 11%        | 10% | +50        |
| Dave Yost        | 53%          | 14%            | 21%         | 32%         | 7%            | 7%            | 22%        | 11% | +39        |
| Robert Sprague   | 11%          | 5%             | 3%          | 8%          | 2%            | 2%            | 25%        | 59% | +7         |
| Jeremiah Workman | 5%           | 2%             | 2%          | 3%          | 1%            | 1%            | 21%        | 72% | +3         |

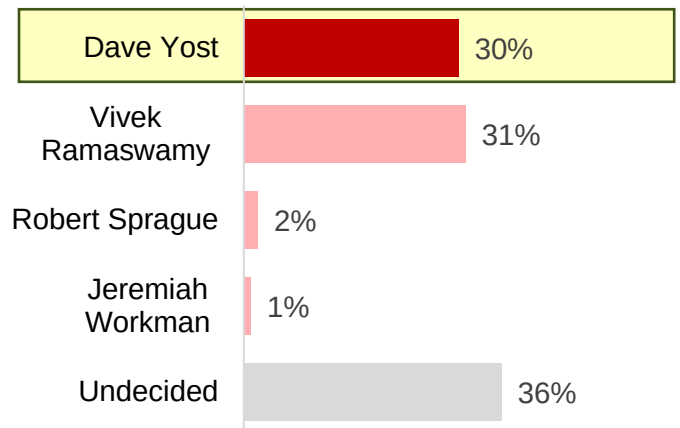
**Of course, Ramaswamy has an early lead on an uninformed ballot. His lead is propped up by a national profile contingent on an endorsement from President Trump. However, as this “sugar high” wears off and when voters are provided with more information regarding both candidates, the race turns into a statistical tie.**

- 85% of voters supporting Yost on the initial ballot continue to support him on the informed ballot compared to just 63% of Ramaswamy voters who continue to support him after hearing more about his record.
- A quarter of initially undecided voters switch their support to Yost on the informed ballot.

GOP Primary Ballot (Uninformed)



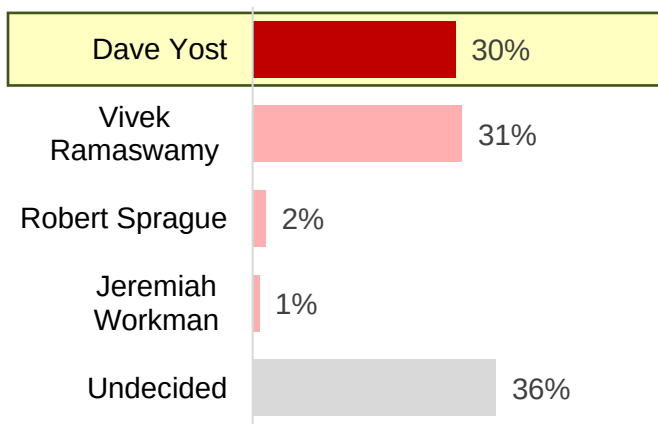
GOP Primary Ballot (Informed)



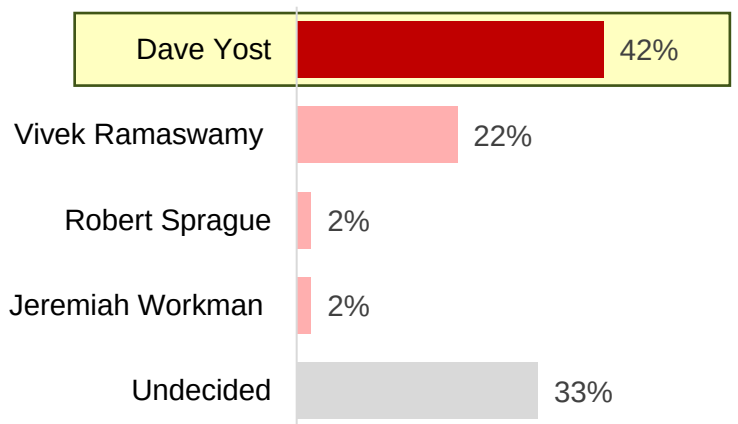
If that weren't bad enough for Ramaswamy, once the myth of President Trump's support for him is taken away the race completely flips to Yost. In the scenario where Yost is endorsed by President Trump – as he was for his race in 2022 - the Ohio Attorney General opens up a commanding 20-point lead over Ramaswamy on the primary ballot.

- Ramaswamy's early lead is driven entirely by voters associating him with President Trump despite neither candidate currently being endorsed by the 47<sup>th</sup> President. One thing is clear: whichever candidate does receive the support of President Trump will enjoy instant frontrunner status to become the next Governor of Ohio.
- On the post-Trump endorsement ballot, only 43% of initial Ramaswamy voters continue supporting him , further signaling that Ramaswamy's early support is artificially driven by his perceived association with Trump world.

GOP Primary Ballot (Informed)



GOP Primary Ballot (informed and Trump Endorsement)



## Methodology

The sample size for the survey is 602 Republican primary voters in Ohio. Interviews were collected via live landline calls (25%), live cellphone calls (35%) and SMS/text messaging to web (40%). The live telephone calls, both landlines and cellphones, were conducted by professional interviewers. Text messages were personalized to the individual and they were invited to complete the survey via a secured online platform. Interview selection was random, and respondent quotas were set for political, geographic and demographic categories to reflect voter turnout for previous Republican primary elections. The margin of error is +/- 4.0% with a confidence interval of 95%. Interviews were conducted February 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

## Demographics

### Age

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| 18-44          | 13% |
| 45-54          | 12% |
| 55-64          | 22% |
| 65+            | 54% |
| Unsure/refused | <1% |

### Gender

|        |     |
|--------|-----|
| Male   | 52% |
| Female | 48% |

### Media Market

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Charleston-Huntington    | 3%  |
| Cincinnati               | 15% |
| Cleveland-Akron (Canton) | 30% |
| Columbus, Oh             | 20% |
| Dayton                   | 13% |
| Ft. Wayne                | 1%  |
| Lima                     | 2%  |
| Parkersburg              | 1%  |
| Toledo                   | 8%  |
| Wheeling-Steubenville    | 2%  |
| Youngstown               | 5%  |
| Zanesville               | 1%  |

### Race

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| White or Caucasian        | 94% |
| Black or African American | 2%  |
| Hispanic or Latino        | <1% |
| Asian                     | <1% |
| Other                     | 3%  |

### Partisanship

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Republican                 | 81% |
| Democrat                   | 3%  |
| Independent/something else | 16% |

### Education

|                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| Some high school                             | 1%  |
| High school diploma / GED                    | 24% |
| Some college or Associate's Degree           | 35% |
| Four-year undergraduate or Bachelor's Degree | 23% |
| Graduate Degree or further                   | 17% |
| Unsure/refused                               | 1%  |