

Does Governor Snyder's Record Invite a Primary Challenge?

The Question, As Presented

In your opinion, does Governor Snyder's agenda and record invite a primary challenge to his re-nomination in 2014?

- Yes, a primary challenge is warranted and reasonable
- No, a primary challenge would be unwise or ill-advised
- Unsure / Need more information

District-by-District Breakdown of Responses

In your opinion, does Governor Snyder's agenda and record invite a primary challenge to his re-nomination in 2014?			
Margin of error = $\pm 4.08\%$	Yes	No	Unsure
Statewide Totals	48.39%	38.71%	12.90%
District # 1	52.94%	38.82%	8.24%
District # 2	63.24%	30.88%	5.88%
District # 3	38.16%	44.74%	17.11%
District # 4	54.72%	37.74%	7.55%
District # 5	43.18%	52.27%	4.55%
District # 6	45.90%	42.62%	11.48%
District # 7	47.06%	30.88%	22.06%
District # 8	40.30%	46.27%	13.43%
District # 9	29.73%	43.24%	27.03%
District # 10	53.57%	33.93%	12.50%
District # 11	53.52%	36.62%	9.86%
District # 12	46.15%	26.92%	26.92%
District # 13	60.00%	33.33%	6.67%
District # 14	47.06%	35.29%	17.65%

• Margin of error, response deviation, and ballot lead analysis cannot be reliably applied to the district-by-district results. They are for informational purposes only.

Notably, the opinion that “a primary challenge is warranted and reasonable” isn’t universal across all districts. The 3rd, 8th, and 9th poll pluralities of the opinion that “a primary challenge would be unwise or ill-advised” (and the 5th District polls a majority opposed to a primary challenge). The 1st, 4th, 10th, and 11th districts poll majorities open to a primary challenge, and the 2nd and 13th districts both poll supermajorities in support. Uncertainty on this question is strongest in the 9th and 12th districts. Of note is that, though Lieutenant Governor Calley’s home district (the 3rd) polls in Snyder’s favor, the governor’s own home district (the 12th) polls convincingly against him on the question.

Breakdown of Responses by Self-Identified Philosophy

In your opinion, does Governor Snyder’s agenda and record invite a primary challenge to his re-nomination in 2014?				
	Margin of error = ±4.08%	Yes	No	Unsure
(actual tie)	Statewide Totals	48.39%	38.71%	12.90%
	Conservative Republican	42.42%	42.42%	15.17%
	Liberal Republican	30.77%	69.23%	0.00%
	Libertarian Republican	62.63%	24.24%	13.13%
	Moderate Republican	5.80%	89.86%	4.35%
	Tea Party Republican	68.97%	18.97%	12.07%

- Margin of error, response deviation, and ballot lead analysis cannot be reliably applied to the self-identified philosophy results. They are for informational purposes only.

As with the district-by-district breakdown, the opinion regarding a primary challenge isn’t universal across the philosophical spectrum within the party (specifically noting that self-identified Conservative Republicans are evenly divided on the question). Moderate Republicans are the philosophical group most opposed to a primary challenge, while Tea Party Republicans are most in support.

Discussion and Analysis

The ballot lead analysis that we ran on these results shows a 0% probability of sampling error explaining Δp . Thus, we can say that Governor Rick Snyder is “clearly vulnerable” to a primary challenge to re-nomination coming from a credible challenger. However, as the “primary challenge is warranted and reasonable” opinion doesn’t comprise a majority of the statewide response, we stop short of calling it a “mandate for replacement.”

Out of all of the questions that we asked, this one was intended as the sole “money question” of the entire survey. By this we mean that every other question in the survey is connected to this one, and on this question any credible analysis of the entire survey must hinge.

Given the position of this question in the survey (after questions on specifics of Governor Snyder’s first-term record, but before any specific challengers are mentioned), we can infer that regardless of what type of challenger could credibly threaten Snyder’s internal incumbency (let alone a specific named challenger), the party base – the motivated, informed, and engaged high-probability known-republican primary voters – clearly views Governor Snyder’s record as such that he’s considered as being open to a primary challenge.

We find it amusing that a competing poll run two days after our press release on this survey focused on name recognition and one particular hypothetical head-to-head matchup, apparently ceding the validity of the key question of our survey.ⁱ In our opinion, such an approach could be viewed as a tacit admission by the Snyder-Calley campaign team, and perhaps by even the Michigan Republican Party staff, that Governor Snyder is indeed more vulnerable to a credible

primary challenge than they'd rather were public knowledge. We have already addressed those criticisms elsewhere in this report, and see no need to rehash them here.

Those who complain that only Governor Snyder can beat Congressman Mark Schauer in the 2014 general election, and extend their logic to suggest squelching any mention of challenging an incumbent governor in a primary, should, we think, heed the advice of a certain conservative talk radio host out of Muskegon, who said that the absence of a primary challenge assumes either pre-existing consensus, internal apathy, or blind allegiance. Given that we see clear evidence of a lack of consensus, we're curious as to which of the other two motivators is behind the mindset of those who are stridently objecting to a primary challenge to Governor Snyder.

Of course, agreeing that "Governor Snyder's agenda and record invite a primary challenge to his re-nomination" doesn't necessarily translate into supporting a specific challenger, and the hypothetical head-to-head matchups prove that, while the party's base of support does indeed hold that "a primary challenge is warranted and reasonable," we don't see an "Anyone But Snyder" mandate in these results. However, we do see credible support for a particular type of challenger, as the head-to-head matchups will make clear.

ⁱ Harper Polling; "9/5 Conservative Intel poll of Michigan GOP primary"; Conservative Intelligence Briefing; 05 Sep 2013.