

Media Relations

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UNH Pollsters Explore 100 Years of New Hampshire Primary in New Book

DURHAM, N.H. – A new book by University of New Hampshire surveying experts Andrew Smith and David Moore examines the history and impacts that the New Hampshire first-in-the-nation primary has on American presidential politics. *The First Primary: New Hampshire's Outsize Role in Presidential Nominations* is available now.

Smith and Moore are well poised to write about New Hampshire's primary from their vantage point as pollsters. Smith has been the director of the UNH Survey Center for 17 years where he oversees the Granite State Poll, a quarterly survey of public opinion and public policy. Moore was senior editor at the Gallup Poll for 13 years, frequently polling in New Hampshire. Before that, he was professor of political science at UNH where, in 1976, he founded the UNH Survey Center and served as its director for over 15 years.

With the 100th anniversary of the New Hampshire primary approaching in 2016, Smith said the time was right to both look back at the history of the state's primary and also explore why New Hampshire plays such an important role in the nation's presidential races.

"David and I have, between us, been observing and polling on the New Hampshire Primary since 1976, giving us a unique perspective on the institution," said Smith. "We have a wealth of historical and polling information to rely on that is not available to other researchers. We also have great contacts with people in New Hampshire who have run campaigns in the state, sat on the national party committees, and helped keep the New Hampshire primary the first primary."

In *The First Primary*, Smith and Moore use their rich resources to trace the New Hampshire primary from its beginning, including the many efforts by other states to wrest the first-in-the-nation status from New Hampshire. Starting with the 1952 race (the first in which voters could select presidential candidates rather than simply vote for delegates to party conventions), the book takes an in-depth look at the players, issues, and outcomes of each primary, demonstrating which factors had the most impact in determining results. Smith and Moore define New Hampshire voters—who are they and how they compare to voters around the nation. They also dispel some common myths. For example, despite the high percentage of registered independents in the state, the number of registered voters who identify with one of the two major parties is remarkably similar to other states around the country. New Hampshire voters may not be as independent as candidates, the media, and the voters themselves suggest.

Smith and Moore also address head-on the limitations of their own primary polling. The 2-point victory by Hillary Clinton in the 2008 New Hampshire primary was a shock given that all polls, including the UNH Survey Center's own, showed Obama winning by a wide margin. The authors

explore the difficulties of primary polling, citing factors such as voter indecision, changeability, and even indifference when faced with a slate of candidates who may all share similar views. The authors advise caution about the predictive value of primary polls.

In the final chapter of their book, Smith and Moore look ahead to the 2016 election: candidates will send their best campaign staff to the state; they'll spend millions of dollars and make more visits to New Hampshire than to any other state, except maybe Iowa. The authors note: "Understanding how this primary works is essential for anyone who wants to understand who will become the two next nominees."

To learn more about the New Hampshire primary, register for "FIRST! Understanding New Hampshire's Presidential Primary," a FREE online course open to anyone, anywhere. Taught by UNH professors Andrew Smith and Dante Scala, the class runs October 19 through December 1, 2015. [Enroll now.](#)

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