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Alabama Poll: McCarron Would Have Scrambled Field; Affordability Dominates GOP Primary Voters' Concerns

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – New results from The Alabama Poll find that former University of Alabama quarterback AJ McCarron led the Republican primary field for Lieutenant Governor at the time of the survey, receiving 31% support among likely May 2026 Republican Primary voters. McCarron has since withdrawn from the race, but the result underscores how fluid the down-ballot landscape remains and how quickly candidates can consolidate attention in a still-developing contest.

The poll also shows a major throughline shaping Alabama's 2026 Republican primary electorate: affordability. When asked the most important issue facing Alabama, likely GOP primary voters overwhelmingly pointed to cost pressures, with affordability-related concerns totaling 80% across inflation/cost of living, insurance costs, and the economy/jobs. When voters were asked to identify which costs cause them the most concern, groceries and food topped the list at 58%, followed by insurance costs (33%) and healthcare (30%).

"The 2026 Republican primaries will be won on the issues, and if you're not talking about lowering costs for families, you're not winning," said Michael Lowry, principal of The Alabama Poll. "This survey shows that affordability isn't a side issue – it's the main event, and it's likely to define how voters evaluate candidates up and down the ballot."

Key Findings:

Lieutenant Governor (GOP Primary): At the time of the survey, AJ McCarron led with 31%, followed by Wes Allen (18%), Rick Pate (8%), and Nicole Wadsworth (2%). 41% were undecided. (McCarron withdrew after the poll was conducted.)

U.S. Senate (GOP Primary): Steve Marshall continues to lead with 30%, followed by Barry Moore (12%), Jared Hudson (8%), Rodney Walker (3%), and Morgan Murphy (1%). 46% remain undecided, signaling substantial room for movement.

Attorney General: The contest remains wide open with 72% undecided. Jay Mitchell receives 12%, followed by an improving Katherine Robertson (10%) and Pamela Casey (7%).

Secretary of State: While 64% remain undecided, at the time the survey was conducted Andrew Sorrell led Caroleene Dobson 21% to 14%. He has since stated his intention to run for reelection as State Auditor.

Commissioner of Agriculture: Nearly eight in ten voters (79%) are undecided. Jack Williams leads at 10%, with Corey Hill (7%) and Christina Woerner McInnis (5%).

Affordability is the Dominant Issue: Voters identified affordability-related concerns as the clear priority: inflation/cost of living (28%), insurance costs (12%), and the economy/jobs (11%). Safety and security issues came in at 18%, driven primarily by concerns about crime and public safety.

When asked to select the two cost categories causing the most concern, the top responses were:

Groceries and food – 58%

Insurance costs – 33%

Healthcare – 30%

Conservative Electorate, Strong Trump Approval

Likely May 2026 Republican Primary voters in Alabama continue to fit a strong conservative profile: 83% self-identify as conservative, including 56% who say they are "very conservative." 75% identify as Evangelical or Born-Again Christians, and 47% identify as both very conservative and born-again.

President Trump's job approval is 88% among likely GOP primary voters, including 72% who approve of him personally and his policies. Approval rises to 95% among conservatives and 96% among Republicans.

Candidate Images

A range of candidates were also tested on favorability. Steve Marshall posted the highest favorability rating at 45% favorable / 12% unfavorable, followed by AJ McCarron (44% / 14%) and Wes Allen (27% / 8%).

Survey Methodology

The Alabama Poll surveyed 600 likely May 2026 Republican Primary voters in Alabama on December 15, 16, and 18, 2025. A multi-modal approach was used, combining live telephone interviews (landline and cell) and self-administered text-to-online surveys via a secure platform. Interviews were randomly selected and stratified by area, race/ethnicity, age, gender, and vote history to reflect actual turnout patterns from prior even-year primary elections. Respondents had to indicate they are likely to vote in the May 2026 Republican Primary.

This poll has a margin of error of ±4.0% at the 95% confidence interval. The margin of error increases for cross-tabulations. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding and refusals.

About The Alabama Poll

The Alabama Poll is a subscription-based public opinion research service providing high-quality survey research and analysis focused on Alabama politics, public policy, and elections. For additional information, interviews, or data requests, contact Michael Lowry or visit The Alabama Poll.