



**PRESS RELEASE: Political Science Professors See a Big Role for Michigan in
GOP Primary**

Sandy C Gholston to: Archive

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Included below is a press release that features Ferris State University Political Science professors Richard Griffin and Donald Roy offering analysis of today's GOP primary in the state of Michigan. Any questions about this release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, interim assistant director of News Services.

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Sandy Gholston
Ferris State University
Interim Assistant Director of News Services
sandygholston@ferris.edu, (231) 591-2021

Political Science Professors See a Big Role for Michigan in GOP Primary

BIG RAPIDS – A victory in today's (Tuesday, Feb. 28) Michigan primary by Rick Santorum could mean the end of the line for Mitt Romney in his bid for the GOP nomination for president, said two Ferris State University Political Science professors.

As voters head to the polls to decide between Romney, a Michigan native whose father served as governor, and his current top challenger, Ferris professors agree that the stakes are high.

“If Romney loses, especially by a sizable margin, he's in big trouble,” said Donald Roy, an associate professor of Political Science who has taught at Ferris for 23 years. “This is a big state. He needs a win.”

Former House speaker Newt Gingrich and Texas Congressman Ron Paul also are seeking the nomination, but the race between Romney, a former Massachusetts governor, and Santorum, a former Pennsylvania senator, appears to be the one to watch. Recent polls show that the vote could go either way.

“It's a tossup – we'll see,” said Professor Richard Griffin, who has taught at Ferris for 22 years. “It's sort of surprising, because Romney was so far out front at one time, but the conservative wing of the Republican party – the Tea Party movement – has been looking for a candidate to focus on and right now it's Santorum.”

The battle for the best candidate to take on President Barack Obama in November has been “confusing” for Republican voters, Roy said.

“This race has hurt the Republican party,” he said. “The candidates have been beating each other up ... instead of seriously addressing issues appealing to voters.”

In Michigan, the main issue for voters is job creation, both professors agreed. But the

campaign's focus has drifted away from that, Griffin said.

"Romney is trying to focus on the economy, but the Tea Party is effectively pulling the campaign away from economic issues and pulling it into social, lifestyle, issues," Griffin said. "That allows Santorum to capture that wing of the Republican Party. Whether it's enough for him to get the nomination for the general election, I don't know."

Besides Michigan's 30 delegates, also at stake today are 29 in Arizona. But Romney and Santorum have focused on winning Michigan.

"Romney knows he can't lose Michigan," Griffin said.

The campaign has been "depressing" for Roy, who said the focus should more seriously address issues such as job creation.

"Is it credible to believe that more tax cuts and cutting regulations will work? The Republicans say yes. Or, is it credible to believe that government programs and this Social Security tax holiday (putting more money in the pockets of people to stimulate demand) will work? The Democrats argue this way," he said.

Obamacare will be controversial, and, in general, skepticism about Congress and its failure to reach decisions are issues, he said. But what concerns Roy is that people will vote for who they feel more comfortable with – "personality contests, in effect, and not hard issues."

"People are so negative about politics that perhaps we will just see a drop of 5 to 10 percent in voting," Roy said. "The bloom is off the rose called Obama and people just tend to believe that there are no real choices. How exactly do you vote against politicians and vote for a politician?"

To learn more about the Political Science program at Ferris, visit here:

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/colleges/artsands/social-sciences/programs/political-science/>

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Sandy Gholston
Interim Assistant Director of News Services/Social Media PR
Ferris State University
420 Oak Street
Prakken Building 108
Phone: (231) 591-2021
News Services Web site: www.ferris.edu/news
Ferris State University News Blog: ferrisstatebulldogs.blogspot.com/

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