

Mitt's poll toll Romney pays big bucks for voter picture

By Dave Wedge | Tuesday, November 6, 2007 |



Photo by AP

Polls may be just a snapshot in time, but [Mitt Romney](#) has spent nearly \$1 million to get a clear picture of how voters view his bid for the White House, far more than his GOP rivals are investing in such surveys.

The wealthy former Bay State governor has slapped down \$982,000 on polling, which is second only to Democrat Sen. Hillary Clinton, who spent \$1.05 million. And Romney's tab is more than triple the \$271,000 spent by his Republican rival, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

"He's keeping an eye on those conservatives that he's been wooing," said Bridgewater State College political science professor Dr. George Serra. "He's being very methodical in his collecting of information, and money helps."

Choosing two polling firms used by President Bush, Romney has paid \$375,000 to Washington, D.C.'s Targetpoint Consulting and \$535,000 to Houston-based Voter Consumer Research.

He spent another \$345,000 for "strategy consulting" with Targetpoint, federal campaign finance records show.

Georgetown University government Professor Stephen Wayne said it's not surprising that Romney leads the pack on poll spending.

"Mitt Romney is not a household name," Wayne said. "Therefore, he wants to see if his speaking is making any impact. He wants to see what's working and what isn't working."

Mitchell Moss, professor of urban policy at New York University's Wagner School, said Romney "has no choice but to aggressively poll" because he's a "blank slate" to many national voters.

"He's better known for his looks than his policies," Moss said.

Polling also can help Romney determine how voters feel about his Mormon upbringing and record as a Massachusetts lawmaker, Moss said.

"He's trying to find a persona which is neither Mormon nor Puritan. That's quite a challenge, even for all the money he can spend on polling," he said.

Romney spokesman Eric Fehrstrom chalked up the hefty poll tab to the cost of doing business.

"If we didn't (hire pollsters), we'd have to rely on the polling done by newspapers, and with all due respect, we'd rather not take that risk," he said.