

Saturday, March 8, 2008

EXPERTS

PODCASTS

VIDEO

EVENTS

SUBSCRIBE

Featured Videos

Expert Sources

Immigration Fellowship
Election 2008
Tipsheets
Faculty Op-Eds
Search All Experts

Campus News

myVU
Vanderbilt View
BlogVU
VU in the News
Science News
Medical News
Sports News
InsideVandy Student News
VUCast Home

Resources

TV Studio with Vyvx
Vanderbilt on iTunes U
Vanderbilt on YouTube
RSS News Feeds
Podcasts
Writing an Op-Ed
Radio
Photography
Media Fellowships
VU Names & Places
Grammar & Style Guide
Staff Biographies
Contact Us

About Vanderbilt

People Finder
VU Quick Facts
Directions to Campus
Webcams
Vanderbilt Home

News from Vanderbilt University

RSS

**Vanderbilt poll explains why Romney's flip-flopper label sticks;
Political scientist says anti-Mormon bias finds cover** 1-18-2008


John Geer

Bias against Mitt Romney's religion is one of the reasons that the tag "flip-flopper" sticks with the former Massachusetts governor but not his Republican opponents, according to Vanderbilt political scientist [John Geer](#). "There is no question that Romney has changed his positions on some issues, but so have some of the other candidates," Geer said. "Why does the label stick to Romney but not his opponents? At least some of the answer lies in Romney's Mormon beliefs."

Geer and colleagues [Brett Benson](#) of Vanderbilt and [Jennifer Merolla](#) of [Claremont Graduate University](#) designed an Internet survey to assess bias against Mormons, how best to combat it and its potential impact on the nomination process and general election campaign.

"We find that of those who accuse Romney of flip-flopping, many admit it is Romney's Mormonism and not his flip-flopping that is the real issue," Benson said. "Our survey shows that 26 percent of those who accuse Romney of flip-flopping also indicate that Mormonism, not flip-flopping, is their problem with Romney." Benson noted that the pattern is especially strong for conservative Evangelicals. According to the poll, 57 percent of them have a bias against Mormons.

The poll, which was conducted by Polimetrix, included an oversample of Southern Evangelicals that Geer said measured bias with far more precision than previous efforts. The survey shows that 50 percent of conservative Evangelicals evaluate a moderate Christian candidate more positively than a conservative Mormon candidate.

The study's findings suggest that criticizing Romney for flip-flopping is an effective campaign strategy because it sticks with two different groups: those who are genuinely concerned about Romney's shifts on certain issues and those who use the label as cover for the fact that they do not want to vote for a Mormon for president.

"As the campaign continues to unfold, these data become increasingly relevant as the Republicans choose a presidential nominee," Geer said.

Media Contact: Ann Marie Deer Owens, (615) 322-NEWS
annmarie.owens@vanderbilt.edu



[VUCast Special Report: Nicholas Zeppos named chancellor](#)

**[Midsouth Emmy-Winning Video](#)**

Students from four Nashville universities boarded buses last January to retrace history with many of the original Freedom Riders from the 1960s. Watch this rolling history lesson, and hear firsthand from the civil rights leaders.

**[Midsouth Emmy-Winning Video](#)**

Rev. James Lawson returns to Vanderbilt as a distinguished professor after being expelled decades earlier for his Civil Rights work.

**VANDERBILT
NEWS SERVICE**
615-322-6397

Fax: 615-343-7708
After Hours: 615-322-2706
news@vanderbilt.edu

Baker Building
110 21st Avenue South
Suite 802
Nashville, TN 37203

VU in the News

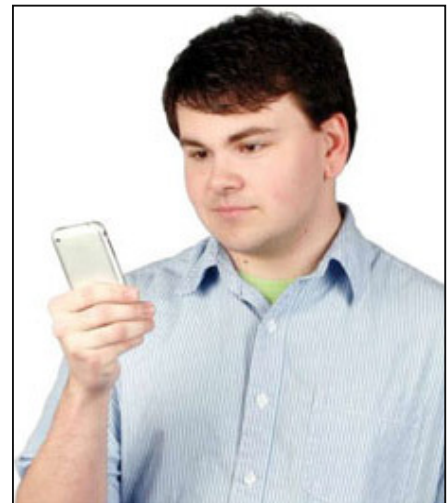


The Tennessean: [Extra month before kindergarten can make a difference in kids' development](#)

Nancy Nolan, adjunct instructor of human and organizational development, authors this opinion piece about a recent debate over whether to move back the cutoff age for kindergarten enrollment by a month.

[More news clips >](#)

AlertVU



Win an iPhone

Register for AlertVU through March 21 to be eligible to win an iPhone.

You must sign up for AlertVU to be eligible. You may register only once.

AlertVU will replace MobileVU. MobileVU will be discontinued March 21.

Copyright 2005 Vanderbilt University Division of Public Affairs.

For more information or to report problems with this web page, please contact the [webmaster](#).