

**ROAD TO THE  
NOMINATION:**



**THE POLITICAL AD WARS  
OF THE REPUBLICAN  
PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## WHAT IS INSIDE

This report analyzes the **spending and messaging landscape of the Republican Presidential primary as of 1/5/2024**. Ad support is measured by combining the political ad spend of candidates and the issue groups supporting those candidates.

# 3

**2024 PRESIDENTIAL OVERVIEW**

# 4

**REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY SPENDING AND MESSAGING INSIGHTS**

# 6

**CANDIDATE SPEND AND MESSAGING BREAKDOWNS**

# 13

**STATE OF THE RACE: THE IOWA CAUCUS AND NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY**

# PRESIDENTIAL TOPLINES

**\$318.7M** TOTAL SPENT

**\$227.8M** ISSUE GROUPS

**\$73.7M** CANDIDATE CAMPAIGNS

**\$17.2M** COORDIATED BUYS

**472** UNIQUE ADS AIRED

**172K** TOTAL AIRINGS

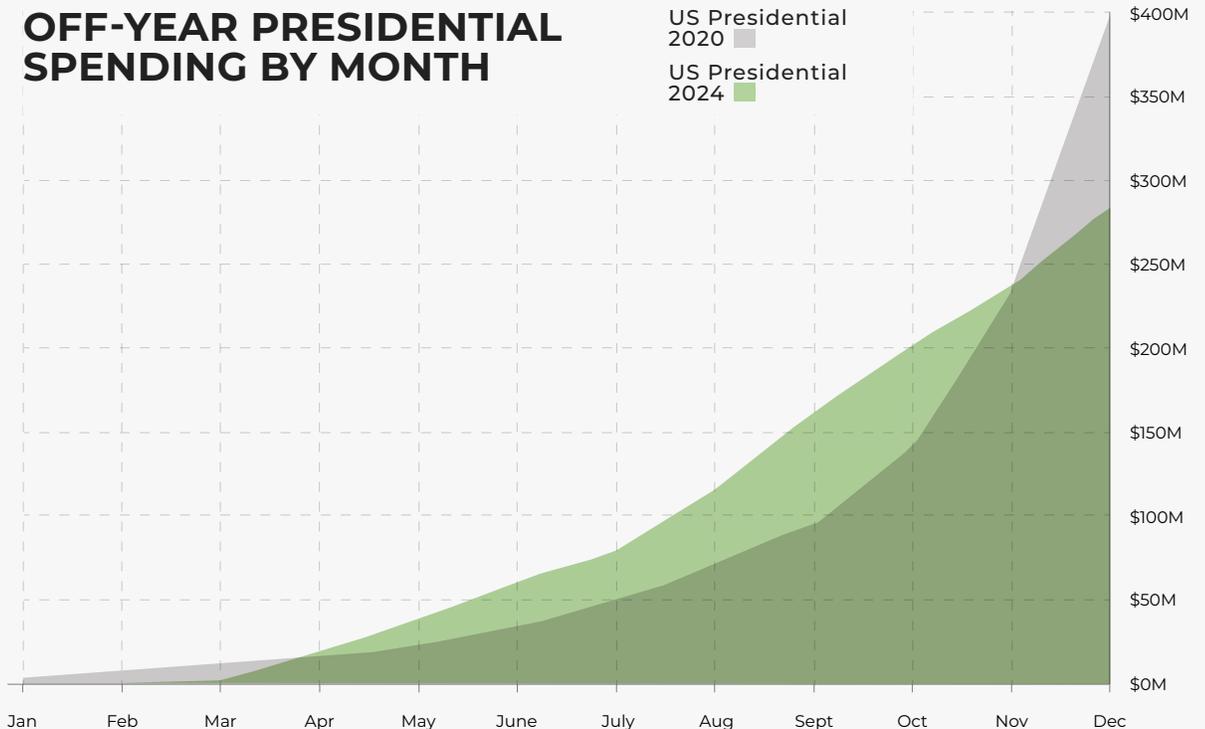
*Ron DeSantis has the most unique ads and airings supporting his campaign.*

In 2019, Democrats spent \$362.7M on political ads while in 2023, Republicans spent \$229.1M.

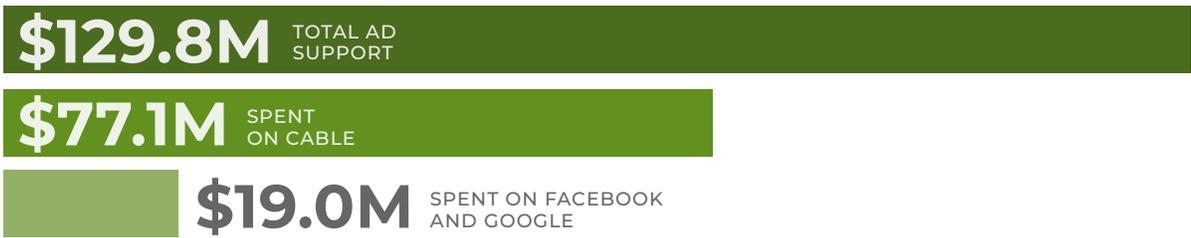
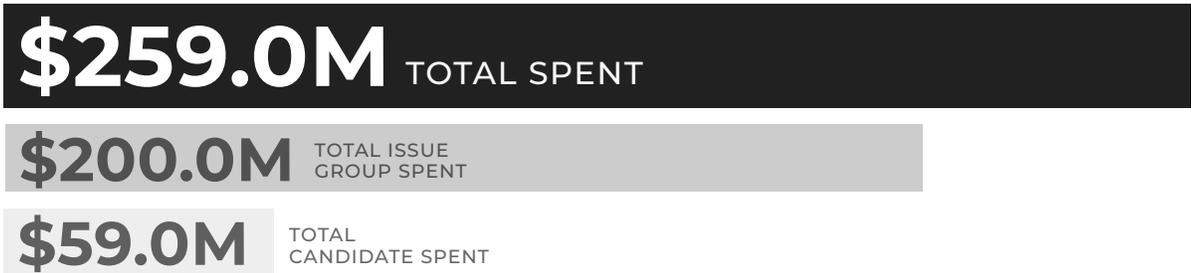
Pro-Trump advertisers spent \$36.5M in 2019, supporting the incumbent President, while in 2023, Pro-Biden advertisers spent \$49.5M

*Presidential primary spending in 2019 (\$400.6M) compared to 2023 (\$285.6M)*

## OFF-YEAR PRESIDENTIAL SPENDING BY MONTH

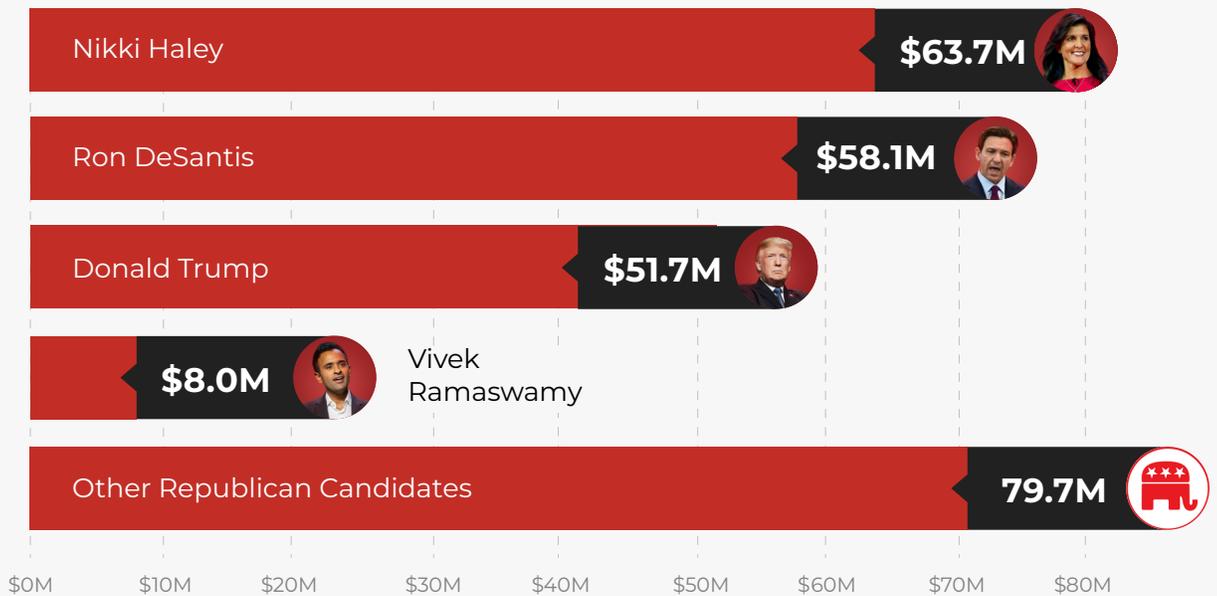


# REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY SPENDING OVERVIEW



## TOTAL AD SUPPORT

Ad support includes candidates and issue groups spending supporting candidate. This includes future reservations placed as of 1/5/2024



# REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY MESSAGING OVERVIEW

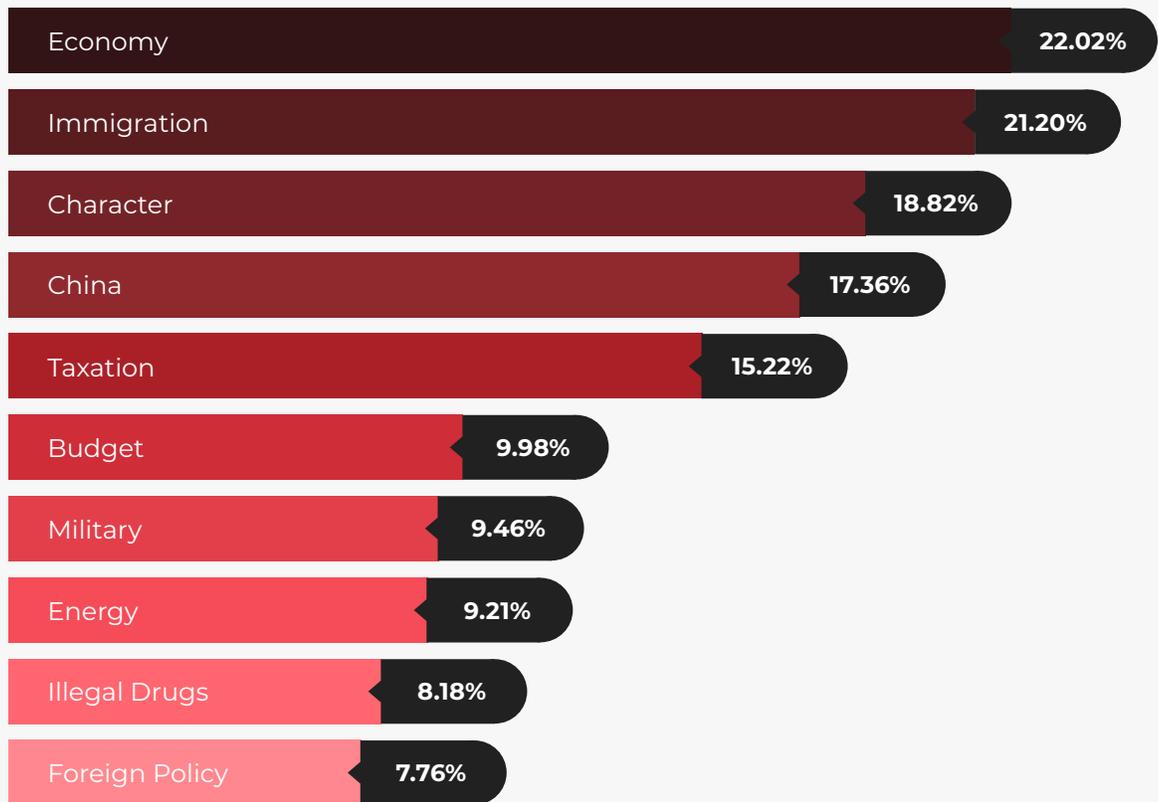
The economy, immigration, candidates' characters, and China have dominated TV ad messaging across the Republican Presidential primary.

During the primary phase, out of the total 146K TV ad airings captured, **54.4%** were classified as either negative or contrast ads. Joe Biden was the primary focus of these ads, being the subject of **60%** of them. Within the Republican primary contenders, Ron DeSantis was targeted by **20%** of these ads, while Donald Trump and Nikki Haley each were the focus of **10%** of the ads

Abortion has not featured as a prominent issue within Republican Presidential primary messaging, despite its increasing relevance in political advertising in recent years. In 2022, there were a record 1.05M airings mentioning abortion, with 150K coming from Republican advertisers. Abortion was Republicans' 14th most mentioned issue of the Midterms. **Among Republican Presidential advertisers, abortion ranks as the 26th most mentioned issue through 1/5/2024.**

## MOST MENTIONED ISSUES

Top 10 issues mentioned by advertisers



**146K** TOTAL AIRINGS

**54.39%**

CONTRAST OR NEGATIVE BROADCAST ADS

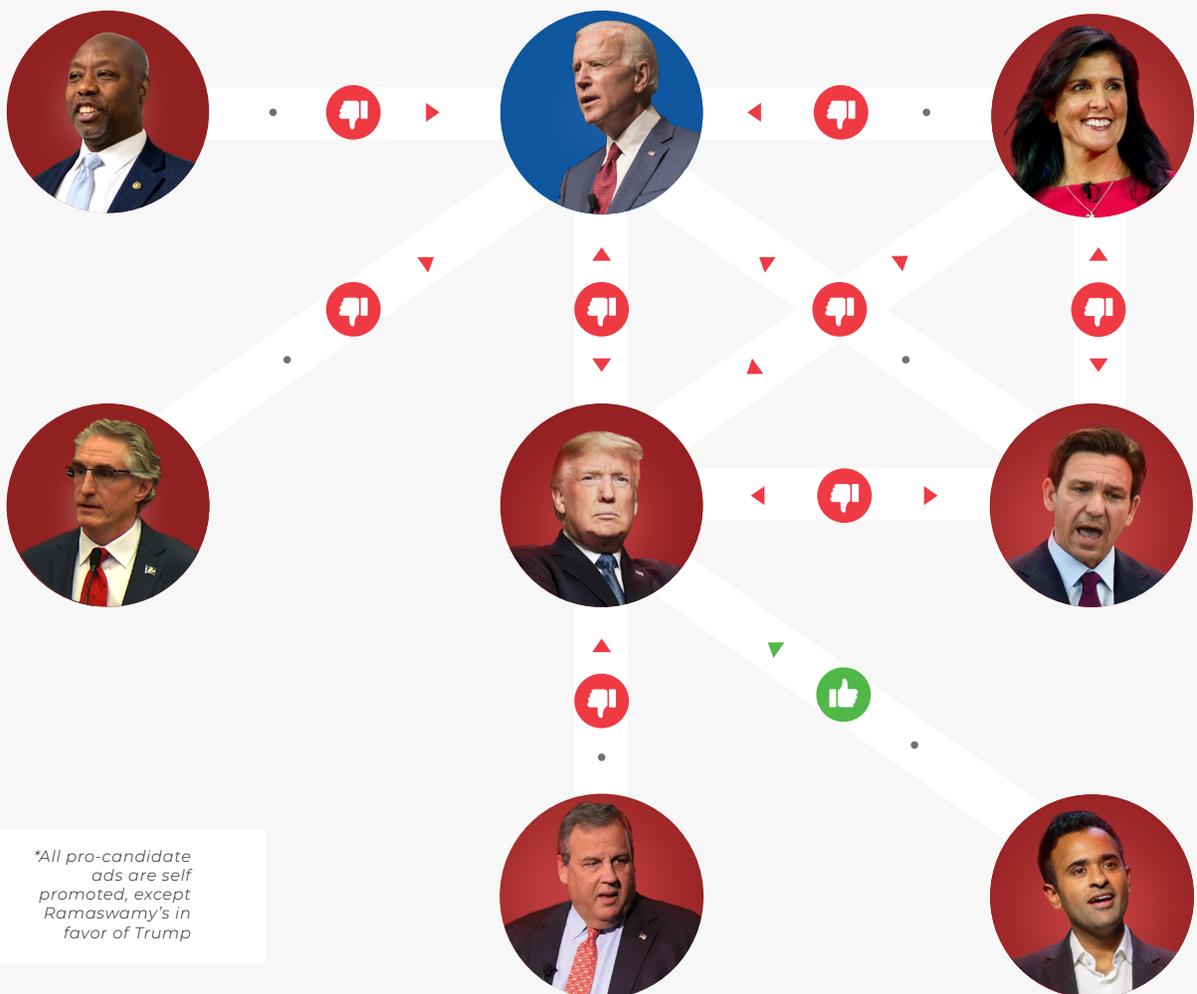
**271** TOTAL UNIQUE ADS

# CANDIDATES MENTIONED IN ADS

For an airing to be considered as 'targeting a candidate,' the ad must directly mention that candidate by name. Ads that indirectly reference a candidate or only include the image of a candidate are not included in this analysis. The targets below include broadcast airings from campaigns and their allied PACs.

Former President Trump, however, has received much less attention from Republican advertisers. While DeSantis, Haley, Christie, and Ramaswamy, or their allied PACs, have all included mentions of Trump in their ads, only 3% of Republican airings have included his name.

Republican candidates and their allied PACs have targeted Joe Biden in their broadcast ads during the primary, with nearly 33% of airings mentioning the President.



*\*All pro-candidate ads are self promoted, except Ramaswamy's in favor of Trump*

# NIKKI HALEY

Nikki Haley initiated her Presidential campaign in February 2023, becoming one of the earliest candidates to enter the race.

FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE UN

TOTAL AD SUPPORT **\$63.7M**

CANDIDATE **\$9.2M** GROUP **\$54.5M**

**28.5K**  
Total Airings in Support



### Top issues Mentioned

- China
- Foreign policy
- Character

#### IOWA



**\$35.5M** **21.7K**

#### NEW HAMPSHIRE



**\$26.4M** **6.4K**

#### NATIONAL



**\$45.0K** **200**

Despite the early start, her campaign did not begin spending on TV ads until November. Her PAC, Stand for America Fund (SFA Fund), did not begin spending until August.

By this time, ten other candidates had already seen substantial TV ads supporting their candidacies. Pro-Haley spending significantly grew in the latter half of 2023, peaking in December at \$21.1M. As of January 2024, Pro-Haley spending leads all candidates at \$63.7M.

# RON DESANTIS

Ron DeSantis has received the second-highest ad backing during the primary.

## GOVERNOR OF FLORIDA

**TOTAL AD SUPPORT** **\$58.1M**

**CANDIDATE** **GROUP**  
\$4.7M \$53.4M

**28.3K**

Total Airings in Support



### Top issues Mentioned

- Character
- Immigration
- China

### IOWA



**\$33.2M** **22.6K**

### NEW HAMPSHIRE



**\$8.0M** **1.9K**

### NATIONAL



**\$9.7M** **350**

DeSantis has received spending support from three issue groups (Never Back Down, Fight Right, and Good Fight), the most of any candidate.

In recent weeks, Pro-DeSantis advertisers have exclusively focused their advertising efforts on Iowa, with the last Pro-DeSantis ad airing in New Hampshire in mid-November. DeSantis has the second most ad support in Iowa and the third most ad support in New Hampshire.

# DONALD TRUMP

Donald Trump is the frontrunner in the primary, as the former President leads nearly every poll by double digits.



## FORMER PRESIDENT

**TOTAL AD SUPPORT** **\$51.7M**

**CANDIDATE** **GROUP**  
 \$13.9M \$37.8M

**26.5K**  
 Total Airings in Support



### Top issues Mentioned

- Immigration
- Illegal Drugs
- Taxation

### IOWA



**\$17.2M** **21.6K**

### NEW HAMPSHIRE



**\$12.7M** **4.4K**

### NATIONAL



**\$19.5M** **1.2K**

Despite this lead, Pro-Trump advertisers have still focused their attention on Iowa and New Hampshire. Among Republicans, Trump has the third most ad support overall, the third most ad support in Iowa, the second most in New Hampshire, and the most ad support on national networks.

In recent months, Pro-Trump advertisers have increased their spending in New Hampshire, with 67% of all Pro-Trump spending in December and January targeting the state.

# VIVEK RAMASWAMY

**BUSINESS MAN**

Ramaswamy has the fourth most ad support in the primary among the remaining candidates in the primary, with spending coming from his campaign and American Exceptionalism PAC.



**TOTAL AD SUPPORT \$8.0M**

**CANDIDATE \$4.7M GROUP \$3.3M**

**4.1K**  
Total Airings in Support



**Top issues Mentioned**

- China
- Military
- Foreign Policy

**IOWA**



**\$4.0M** **3.3K**

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**



**\$2.3M** **700**

**NATIONAL**



**\$121.0K** **100**

In total, Ramaswamy has seen \$8M in ad support. American Exceptionalism PAC is responsible for 41%.

Towards the end of December, Ramaswamy announced his campaign would stop placing TV ads and instead focus on digital and radio advertising. The last TV ad supporting him aired in Iowa in mid-December.

# THOSE WHO DROPPED OUT

Of the \$259M spent on the Republican Presidential Primary, \$65.7M was spent supporting major candidates who are no longer in the race.

Significant contributions came from ad spend supporting former Vice President Pence, Senator Scott, Governor Burgum, and former Governor Christie.

OCT 28, 2023



## Mike Pence

The former Vice President Mike Pence dropped out of the race on October 28th after struggling poll numbers barred him from joining the third Presidential debate. His PAC, Committed to America PAC, made up 89% of all Pro-Pence spending in the primary.

**\$534K**  
SPENT

**\$61K**  
CANDIDATE

**\$473K**  
GROUP

NOV 12, 2023

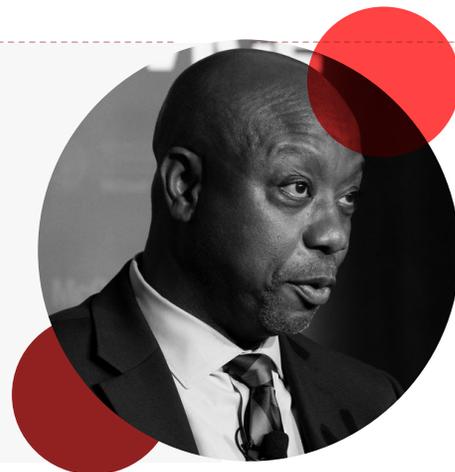
## Tim Scott

South Carolina Senator, Tim Scott dropped out on November 12th. A month before dropping out, weak polling drove Pro-Scott group, Trust in the Mission PAC to cancel \$14M in TV ad reservations in Iowa and New Hampshire. Throughout the summer of 2023, Tim Scott led the pack in ad support and reservations, and despite dropping out in November, Scott still holds the fourth most total ad support in the race.

**\$24.3M**  
SPENT

**\$13.1M**  
CANDIDATE

**\$11.2M**  
GROUP



# THOSE WHO DROPPED OUT



DEC 4, 2023

## Doug Burgum

The Governor of North Dakota dropped out of the race on December 4th after failing to qualify for the third and fourth debates. He was supported by Best of America PAC. Despite dropping out, Burgum maintains the fifth most total ad support in the race.

**\$20.3M**  
SPENT

**\$6.0M**  
CANDIDATE

**\$14.3M**  
GROUP

JAN 10, 2024

## Chris Christie

The Former New Jersey Governor dropped out of the race on January 10th, five days before the Iowa caucuses. Christie and his PAC, Tell it Like it Is, exclusively directed their advertising efforts on New Hampshire and National ad buys. Pro-Christie advertisers focused their messaging on attacking Trump, with 77% of all their airings mentioning the former President.

**\$8.7M**  
SPENT

**\$1.3M**  
CANDIDATE

**\$7.4M**  
GROUP



## DROP OUT TIMELINE

OCT 28, 2023

**Mike Pence**  
DROPS OUT

NOV 12, 2023

**Tim Scott**  
DROPS OUT

DEC 4, 2023

**Doug Burgum**  
DROPS OUT

JAN 10, 2024

**Chris Christie**  
DROPS OUT

1/15/2024

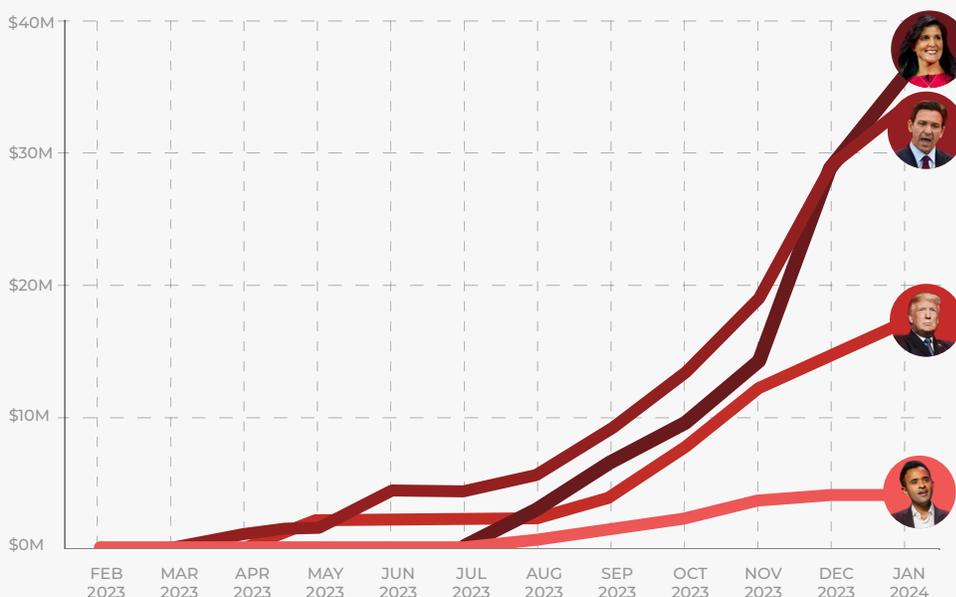
# THE IOWA CAUCUSES

Iowa, the first contest in the Republican Presidential primary, has seen more ad spending than any other state to this point. The \$119.6M targeting the Hawkeye state makes up 46% of all Republican primary spending.

Haley has received the most ad support in Iowa with \$35.5M. DeSantis, who was endorsed by Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, has seen the second-highest support with \$33.2M. Trump has received the third-most ad support at \$17.2M, but maintains a double-digit lead in most recent polls.

**\$119.6M** TOTAL SPENT

**107.3K** TOTAL AIRINGS



1/23/2024

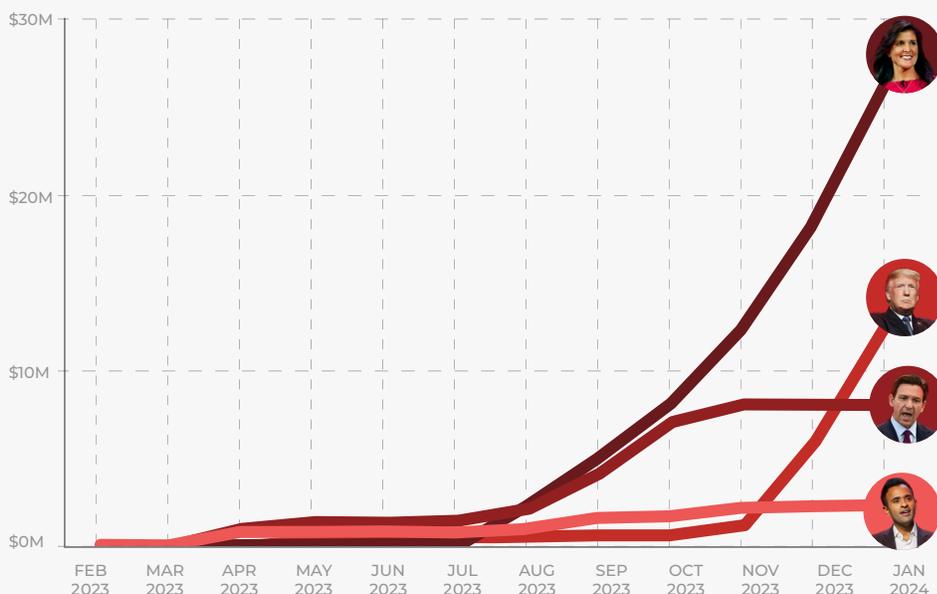
# THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY

The Granite State will host the second contest of the Republican Presidential primary eight days after the Iowa caucuses. **New Hampshire has seen \$70.8M in total ad spending from Republican candidates and groups.** In total, 27% of all Republican Presidential primary spending has gone toward New Hampshire.

**Nikki Haley, endorsed by New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu, has received the most ad support in the state, with \$26.4M.** Donald Trump is second with \$12.7M in ad support. While most polls indicate Trump is leading in New Hampshire, Haley has been narrowing the gap in recent weeks.

**\$70.8M** TOTAL SPENT

**21.6K** TOTAL AIRINGS





## Contact Us

[jlink@adimpact.com](mailto:jlink@adimpact.com)

AdImpact LLC  
1427 Leslie Ave  
Alexandria, VA 22301

[www.adimpact.com](http://www.adimpact.com)



PUBLISHED DATE  
1-12-2024

ALL DATA UPDATED AS OF  
01-05-2024