

# Poll: Mormons excited about Romney's rise, but wary of media

by [Daniel Burke](#)

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c. 2012 Religion News Service (RNS) Most Mormons in Utah believe that Mitt Romney's rise to become the likely GOP presidential nominee is a good thing for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But many do not trust the media to cover the church fairly, according to a new poll released Monday (June 25).

The study, conducted by Key Research and Brigham Young University's Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, is believed to be the first to gauge Mormons' reaction to Romney's barrier-breaking achievement. He is the first Mormon to clinch the presidential nomination of a major U.S. political party.

More than eight in 10 Utah Mormons said they are "very excited" or "somewhat excited" about Romney's feat. Nearly as many (77 percent) said his nomination is a good thing for the LDS church; just 2 percent told pollsters it was a negative development.

Utah Mormons do not differ in many respects from Mormons in other states, according to studies conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Kelly Patterson, a political science professor at Brigham Young University, said it is not clear whether the positive feelings toward Romney derive from shared faith or politics. Separate polls show that Mormons are more than twice as likely as other religious groups to vote Republican.

Despite their excitement about Romney, many Mormons remain wary of the media, according to the Key Research/BYU survey.

More than two-thirds of Utah Mormons said the Romney's nomination will bring bad and good publicity for the LDS church. An identical percentage (68 percent) said they do not trust the media to cover the church fairly.

"It seems like the excitement is higher than the dread," Patterson said, "even though many members of the LDS faith know that there will be some very uncomfortable moments during this campaign."

The survey, first published on the blog, Utah Data Points, is based on telephone interviews with 341 Mormons who are registered to vote in Utah. It was conducted June 12-19 and the margin of error is plus or minus 5.3 percentage points.