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## Stockton poll numbers may be troubling for 1st District Assembly incumbents

By DANIEL WALSH Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, October 22, 2009 |

The 1st District Assembly has closed to the point where each major party could win one of the two seats, according to a poll released Thursday.

Republican Assembly candidate John McCann led with 49 percent in the poll commissioned by Richard Stockton College's William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. Incumbent Democratic Assemblyman Nelson Albano scored 44.1 percent in the poll, while McCann's running mate, Mike Donohue, garnered 43.5 percent. Incumbent Democratic Assemblyman Matt Milam garnered 30.1 percent.

The poll was taken from Oct. 19 to Oct. 21 and was part of a broader survey across southern New Jersey. The Hughes Center commissioned Zogby International to survey 800 likely voters, including 160 people from each of five different districts, including the 1st District, which spans all of Cape May County, eastern Cumberland County, and parts of Atlantic County.

Both parties have questioned the validity of the Stockton poll, which, according to Sharon Shulman, director of the Hughes Center, has a margin of error of 7.8 percent. That margin is larger than most polls because of the relatively small sample on the polls of the individual districts.

"They were off two years ago," Albano said. "They were way off. They're way off again this year. They're very off."

Albano said a 2007 poll by Stockton had Milam in fourth place, but he finished in second, ahead of Donohue in that race.

Stockton produced a similar poll last month, in which a relatively large sample of southern New Jersey was taken but in which the individual districts had smaller samples. Last month, it was 120 people per district. This month, it was 160.

McCann and Donohue questioned the validity of that first poll, which had Albano at 53 percent,

Milam at 37 percent, and McCann and Donohue at 24 and 23 percent, respectively. McCann said the fact that this poll had a larger sample may make it more valid.

"There were more people in this poll," McCann said. "New Jersey generally breaks late with paying attention to the election, with work and summer businesses (involved). Now, they're starting to focus."

Zogby and Stockton also polled likely voters in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 9th districts.

Results showed comfortable leads for Democratic incumbents in the 3rd District, which spans western Cumberland, all of Salem and southern Gloucester counties, and Republican incumbents in the 2nd District, which spans most of Atlantic County. Republicans led in the 9th District, which includes parts of Atlantic, Ocean and Burlington counties, while Democrats lead in the 4th District, which includes parts of Gloucester and Camden counties.

1st District: McCann (R) 49%, Donohue (R) 43.5%, Albano (D) 44.1%, Milam (D) 30.1%, Not Sure 10%, Someone Else 2.8%.

2nd District: Amodeo (R) 43.6%, Polistina (R) 40.7%, Floyd (D) 29.9%, Martinez (D) 28.2%, Not Sure 19.7%, Someone Else 6%.

3rd District: Burzichelli (D) 47.1%, Riley (D) 39.2%, Villare (R) 25.7%, Lucas (R) 24.4%, Not Sure 24%, Someone Else 3.8%.

4th District: Moriarity (D) 47.3%, Collins (D) 41%, DiCicco (R) 29.4%, Lawrence (R) 28.3%. Not Sure 21.5%, Someone Else 3.8%.

9th District: Rumpf (R) 45.3%, Gove (R) 43%, Visotcky (D) 23.7%, Rue (D) 22.3%, Not Sure 29.6%, Someone Else 2.7%

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