

Stockton poll shows little recognition for LoBiondo's opponent

By **DEREK HARPER**, Staff Writer | Posted: Friday, September 28, 2012 11:09 am

More than half of the Second Congressional District either has no idea or no opinion on who is challenging incumbent U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo this year, according to a new poll by The Stockton Polling Institute.

The poll found that 56 percent of the sprawling district was either unfamiliar with or unsure of what they thought of Democratic candidate Cassandra Shober. By comparison, just 18 percent of the district was unaware of LoBiondo, R-2nd, a nine-term incumbent.

And those who knew LoBiondo generally liked him, the poll showed.

Fully 62 percent rated his performance as excellent or good, compared to 36 who thought he was doing a fair or poor job.

Pollsters found 30 percent of those surveyed had a similarly positive opinion of Shober, versus 19 percent who thought negatively of her.

The poll also found that LoBiondo carried a 20-point lead going into the final stretch of the campaign, leading Shober by 55 percent to 35 percent.

The poll “says that Frank LoBiondo is a longtime incumbent and has all the advantages of an incumbent including name recognition,” said Daniel J. Douglas, director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, which operates the polling institute.

“She just isn’t known,” Douglas said of Shober. “It’s hard to get attention for a challenger.”

Shober is running for congress in this, her first bid for public office.

But the district is sprawling, covering parts of eight southern New Jersey counties from the Delaware Memorial Bridge to Long Beach Island and from Waterford to Cape May Point. The campaign’s outreach effort appears to largely rely on small community forums sprinkled across the nearly 2,000 square mile district.

LoBiondo has refused to debate her, with his campaign saying she was not a serious candidate.

Douglas also said the poll shows that prominent Democratic candidates at the top of the ticket will not apparently aid Shober’s bid.

In other races, the poll showed Democratic President Barack Obama lead Republican Mitt Romney by a comfortable 57 percent to 35 percent margin. Obama won the redistricted but substantially similar district by a 54 percent to 45 percent margin in 2008.

The district also supported Democratic Sen. Robert Menendez over the Republican challenger, state

Sen. Joseph Krillos, by a similar, sizable 56 percent to 33 percent margin, according to the poll.

The poll found that 2nd District voters are split on what they think about Gov. Chris Christie.

Forty-seven percent thought he was doing either an excellent or good job, while 51 percent rated it as fair or poor.

But on the other hand, 51 percent had an either very or somewhat favorable opinion of the governor, versus 46 percent who view him unfavorable.

The poll of 624 voters, conducted between Sept. 19 and 24, had a 4 percent margin of error, meaning Christie's ratings are essentially tied.

The polling institute plans to conduct additional polls this fall on statewide issues and voter preferences in the 2nd and 3rd Congressional Districts.