

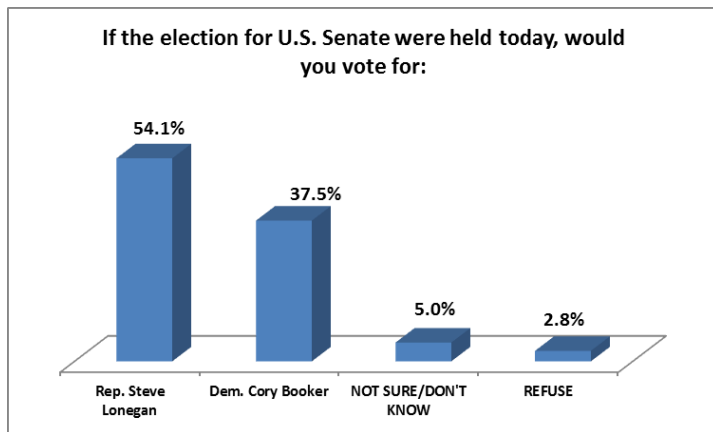
Stockton Poll: GOP Candidates Lead in 9th District, Including Lonegan for Senate

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, October 01, 2013

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Galloway Township, NJ- Republican candidates are leading in all state-level races in the GOP-leaning 9th Legislative District, with Republican Steve Lonegan leading Democrat Cory Booker in the district by 16 points, according to a Stockton Polling Institute poll released today.



The poll shows Gov. Chris Christie leading his Democratic opponent, state Sen. Barbara Buono, by nearly 50 points in the 9th, which includes much of Ocean County and parts of Burlington and Atlantic counties.

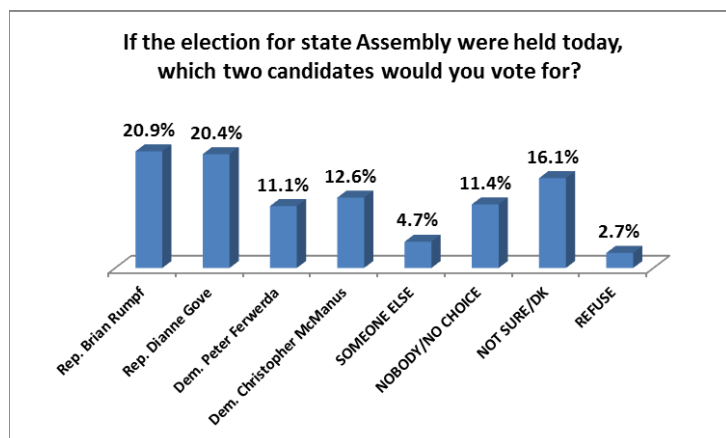
Incumbent Republican state Sen. Chris Connors and Assembly members Brian Rumpf and Dianne Gove are leading their Democratic challengers by comfortable margins, according to the poll.

Sen. Connors holds a 31-point lead over Democrat Anthony Mazzella, with 57 percent for the incumbent and 26 percent for Mazzella.

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In the state Assembly race, Republicans Rumpf and Gove hold leads of about 10 points over Democrats Peter Ferwerda and Christopher McManus. More than a quarter of respondents say they are unsure or are unable to pick an Assembly candidate, a trend reflected in high numbers who are unfamiliar with the candidates.



The poll was conducted with 611 likely 9th District voters from Sept. 27-30, 2013. Interviewers called both land lines and cell phones. The survey has a margin of error of +/-3.9 percent, although MOE is higher in data subsets. The Stockton Polling Institute is part of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

“The 9th Legislative District is traditionally a Republican stronghold,” said Daniel J. Douglas, Director of the Hughes Center. “This trend continues in the special and general elections this year.”

U.S. Senate poll results in the 9th District run contrary to statewide polls so far, which have shown Booker with a consistent but narrowing lead over Lonigan. In the 9th District, including those who say they are leaning toward Booker or Lonigan, the Republican is leading with 54 percent to 37.5 percent for Booker, the mayor of Newark.

Gov. Christie is leading in the district with 70 percent to 21 percent for Buono, with 6 percent undecided or refusing to identify a choice.

Connors has the highest name recognition in the district of all legislative candidates, with 45 percent saying their opinion of him is somewhat or very favorable and only 7 percent with unfavorable views. Nearly 47 percent say they are unfamiliar with him. However, 72 percent say they are not familiar with Mazzella.

Mazzella’s Democratic running mates also are unfamiliar to more than 70 percent of District 9 respondents. Rumpf is unfamiliar to 54 percent of respondents and Gove is unfamiliar to 62 percent.

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With strong support for Republican incumbents, 61 percent say they believe New Jersey is headed in the right direction, with 28 percent saying it is on the wrong track. Twelve percent are unsure.

Jobs is identified as the most important issue facing New Jersey by 23 percent, while 20 percent cite property taxes and 14 percent cite taxes in general. The economy is named by 11 percent. Four percent in the region, parts of which were devastated by Superstorm Sandy, say storm recovery is the most important issue, with another 1 percent citing disaster preparedness.

Seventy-six percent say property taxes have gone up in the past three years, including one-third who say they went up “a lot.” Fifteen percent said property taxes stayed the same, while 5 percent say they decreased.

A strong majority of 74 percent support increasing the minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$8.25 and providing annual cost of living increases. Twenty-four percent oppose the proposal. Also, 75 percent support a plan to allow veterans organizations to use proceeds from raffles to fund operating expenses.

Methodology

Interviews were conducted at the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy’s Stockton Polling Institute by live interviewers calling from the Stockton College campus. The poll was conducted with 611 likely voters from Sept. 27-30. Interviewers called both land lines and cell phones. Likely voters were screened separately for the general election and special Senate election on Oct. 16, 2013. All prospective respondent households in the state have the same chance of joining the sample because of random selection. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.9 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for the 9th District population.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey. The Center is named for William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton College. The Hughes Center can be found at www.facebook.com/Hughes.Center.Stockton.College and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter.



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