



Hughes Center Poll: 9th District Republicans Retain Comfortable Lead

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Contact: Daniel J. Douglas, Director, William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy
Daniel.Douglas@stockton.edu, (609) 626-3504, (C) 609-204-1314
Tim Kelly, Office of Public Relations
Tim.Kelly@stockton.edu, (609) 652-4950

Galloway, NJ – Likely voters in the 9th Legislative District prefer the incumbent Republican legislative team by wide margins over the Democratic challengers, according to a Stockton College-Zogby poll released today by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy.

In a low-intensity race featuring large percentages of still-undecided voters, incumbent Republican Sen. Christopher J. Connors at 48 percent leads Democrat Dorothy Ryan, with 29 percent, by more than 19 percentage points.

More than 14 percentage points separate the Assembly candidates, with the Republicans comfortably ahead. Incumbent GOP Assemblyman Brian Rumpf leads with 45 percent, and Republican Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove is at 40 percent, the survey shows. Democratic challengers Carla Kearney and Bradley Billhimer each polled at just less than 26 percent.

More than 22 percent are not sure who they will vote for in the Senate race, and nearly 28 percent are undecided in the Assembly contest. The Democrats would have to win over the vast majority of those voters to catch the Republicans. But there may not be as much opportunity for Billhimer and Kearney as it appears.

“Redistricting and the low-key nature of this campaign seem to have produced the high level of ‘not sure’ voters,” said Daniel J. Douglas, director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. “The legislative redistricting process has changed the boundaries of the 9th legislative district and the all the district in the state, putting unfamiliar voters in low interest contests.”

Douglas said the numbers generally have not moved since an earlier Stockton-Zogby 9th District poll was taken in late September. Although Ryan gained 4 percentage points on Connors since then, the incumbent has led by similarly large margins in both surveys and is not losing support. And the Assembly Republican candidates increased their lead since September.

This campaign has been extremely civil and devoid of negative attacks that might force the election onto voters’ radar. A 9th District debate sponsored by the Hughes Center and The Press

of Atlantic City on Oct. 19 produced more compliments among opponents than criticisms, Douglas noted.

Gov. Chris Christie, a Republican, enjoys great popularity in the district, with 71 percent viewing him somewhat favorably or very favorably, the poll found. Not surprisingly, 61 percent say the state is going in the right direction.

The numbers are not that good for Democratic President Barack Obama. Slightly less than 43 percent of likely voters view Obama favorably, while 58 percent have a somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable view of the president.

The Stockton-Zogby poll of 602 likely voters in the 9th District was conducted from Oct. 31 through Nov. 2 and has a margin of error of 4.1 percentage points.

9th LD Senate Race				9th LD Assembly Race			
Candidate	May	Sept	Nov	Candidate	May	Sept	Nov
	%	%	%		%	%	%
Christopher Connors	39.2	46.4	47.9	Brian E. Rumpf	35.1	40.1	44.9
Dorothy Ryan	27.1	23.5	28.5	Diane C. Gove	31.6	31.6	40.0
Someone else	3.2	2.0	1.1	Bradley Billhimer	26.4	22.3	25.6
Not sure	30.4	28.1	22.5	Carla Kearney	23.6	20.8	25.6
				Someone else	2.1	1.2	1.4
				Not sure	35.6	35.8	27.7

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the political, economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey.

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