

Van Drew Maintains Lead In Race For LoBiondo's Seat In New Poll

Jeff Van Drew still has the support of 55 percent of respondents in a Stockton poll, but Seth Grossman picked up some votes.

By [Anthony Bellano](#) | Oct 25, 2018 11:36 am ET | Updated Oct 25, 2018 11:41 am ET



With less than two weeks to go until Election Day, Democrat Jeff Van Drew maintains his lead among voters in the Second Congressional District, according to a recent poll.

Van Drew held steady with 55 percent of the respondents in a recent Stockton University poll voicing their preference for the State Senator. Republican Seth Grossman pulled in 38

percent of the vote. Five percent say they will vote for some other candidate and 2 percent are unsure or picking nobody.

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While Van Drew held steady with 55 percent, Grossman was actually up six percentage points from a poll that was also conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University a little more than a month ago. At that time, [32 percent said they would vote for Grossman](#).

Libertarian John Ordille and independent candidates Steven Fenichel, Anthony Parisi Sanchez and William Benfer are also running for the seat that will be vacated by the retiring Frank LoBiondo at the end of the year.

The Second Congressional District includes Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, and parts of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Ocean counties.

Van Drew currently leads by double-digit percentages in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Ocean counties. Grossman's only lead is in Gloucester County, while Van Drew and Grossman were tied in Salem County.

The poll of 597 likely voters finds that 52 percent hold a favorable view of Van Drew while 16 percent see him unfavorably and 32 percent are unfamiliar with him. In the State Senate, Van Drew represents Cape May and parts of Atlantic and Cumberland counties.

About half (49 percent) are not familiar with Grossman. In Atlantic County, where he served as a county freeholder and Atlantic City councilman, one-third are unfamiliar. Twenty-eight percent district-wide view him favorably and 23 percent view him unfavorably.

Van Drew is favored by Democrats at a rate of 92 percent, while he leads Grossman among independent voters, 66 percent to 31 percent. Thirteen percent of Republicans back Van Drew.

Grossman is supported by 78 percent of Republicans and gets virtually no Democratic support. Grossman and Van Drew are statically tied among men, but women voters prefer Van Drew to Grossman by 31 percentage points.

“Senator Van Drew has been a member of the New Jersey Legislature since 2002, so it is clear that he is known and liked by a majority of 2nd District voters. His double-digit lead also reflects the evolving political makeup of the congressional district that has sent a Republican to Congress – Frank LoBiondo -- for the past 24 years,” Hughes Center Interim Executive Director Michael W. Klein said. “Between November 2017 and September 2018, 59 percent of the new voters in District 2 – almost 4,700 out of 7,965 -- registered as Democrats, and the number of unaffiliated voters shrank by over 1,500. The voters are picking sides, and many are lining up against the party of President Trump, whose job performance was rated fair or poor by over 57 percent of the respondents to our poll.”

The Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University interviewed 597 adult residents of the 2nd District who were screened as likely voters. Live interviewers working from the Stockton campus called landline and cell telephones Oct. 17-23, 2018. The poll’s margin of error is +/- 4.0 percentage points.

Health care is cited by 12 percent most often as the most important issue in the election. Ten percent say helping Democrats to control Congress is their top issue, and 7 percent say Donald Trump is the major issue. Eight percent cite the economy and 7 percent cite taxes. Eleven percent cite immigration issues as important, the second highest percentage in the poll.

During the [Oct. 10 debate at Stockton University](#), Grossman embraced President Donald Trump’s agenda and emphasized a hard line on immigration. When asked directly about immigration, 72 percent in the poll say it is extremely important or a significant factor in deciding how to vote.

However, majorities reject the Trump positions on several specific issues. Sixty-nine percent say legal immigration is good for South Jersey, with only 7 percent calling it harmful and 22 percent saying it is neutral. Sixty-four percent support allowing

undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children to remain here and apply for citizenship, while 31 percent oppose. Fifty-seven percent oppose building a wall along the southern border, and 41 percent support it. And 74 percent oppose a policy of separating families who enter the country illegally, while 19 percent support it.

Regarding the Stockton debate, which was cosponsored by the Hughes Center, The Press of Atlantic City and SNJ Today, 11 percent of respondents said they saw or heard the debate, not counting those who only read about it. Respondents say that Van Drew won the debate over Grossman by a 2-to-1 margin.

In the U.S. Senate race, Republican Bob Hugin's lead over incumbent Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez shrunk to seven percentage points. Hugin leads 47-40 among district voters. In September's poll, Hugin had a 10-point lead, 46-36.

In the poll results released on Thursday, Libertarian Murray Sabrin garnered 5 percent, with 5 percent voting for some other candidate and 3 percent undecided.

Menendez, who has been attacked by Hugin over corruption charges that were dismissed after a mistrial, is seen unfavorably by 59 percent in the district, and favorably by 29 percent. Hugin is viewed favorably by 40 percent and unfavorably by 26 percent, and is not familiar to 35 percent.

Election Day is Nov. 6.

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