



Stockton Poll: MacArthur leads Belgard by 5 Points in 3rd Congressional District Race

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Galloway Township, NJ - Republican Tom MacArthur has opened a 5-percentage-point lead over Democrat Aimee Belgard in the hard-fought 3rd Congressional District, according to a poll released today by the Stockton Polling Institute.

MacArthur leads 46 percent to 41 percent when voters who lean toward one candidate or the other are included, with 8 percent undecided. Without those voters who are leaning one way or the other, MacArthur leads 44 percent to 38 percent, with 12.5 percent undecided and 5 percent favoring neither candidate, or someone else.

A Stockton Poll released Sept. 15 found the race to succeed retiring Rep. Jon Runyan, a Republican, tied at 42 percent for each candidate.

The poll was conducted with 617 likely voters by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. Live interviewers on the Stockton campus called both landlines and cell phones from Oct. 25-28, 2014. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.9 percentage points.

"This election is trending toward the Republican," said Daniel J. Douglas, director of the Hughes Center. "A fair number of voters have not yet committed as the candidates continue to battle."

Still, some key demographic indicators appear to favor MacArthur.

The Stockton Poll shows that MacArthur has the support of 84 percent of Republicans, while Belgard is backed by 75 percent of Democrats. MacArthur holds a five-point lead among unaffiliated voters. Each candidate is leading in his or her geographic base. Belgard leads 45 percent to 37 percent in her home Burlington County, and MacArthur leads 52 percent to 30 percent in Ocean County.

Belgard draws support from young voters and racial and ethnic minorities, while MacArthur leads among senior citizens. That is an important demographic in Ocean County, which has the

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second-largest population of seniors among New Jersey's 21 counties.

MacArthur is leading among men and is tied with Belgard among women voters, the poll shows.

MacArthur and Belgard have become more familiar to voters, but not necessarily in a positive fashion. Both were unknown to more than one-third of voters in the Sept. 15 Stockton Poll. In the new poll, only 15 percent are unfamiliar with MacArthur and 16 percent with Belgard.

Belgard is viewed favorably by 42 percent, up 4 points since September. But she is viewed unfavorably by 39 percent, an increase of 13 points over the 26-percent unfavorable rating in September.

MacArthur is viewed favorably by 48 percent, up 7 points since September. He is viewed unfavorably by 31 percent, 10 points higher than in September.

"What voters have learned about these candidates has come largely from negative advertising," Douglas said.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter). Live interviewers on the Stockton campus called both landlines and cell phones from Oct. 25-28, 2014. The poll was conducted with 617 adults who are likely voters in New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.9 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for the 3rd 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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