

Stockton Poll Shows Brown Slightly Ahead in 2nd District Race; Democrats Lead in Assembly

For Immediate Release

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Galloway, NJ - Republican Chris Brown leads Democrat Colin Bell by three percentage points for the 2nd Legislative District Senate seat. The race remains tight with a significant number of voters undecided less than a week before the election, according to a Stockton University Poll released today.

Brown leads Bell 46 percent to 43 percent, with 10 percent undecided or not expressing a choice. In a Stockton poll released Sept. 29, the candidates were tied at 46 percent. Since then, the candidates have debated several times, and spending on advertising by the campaigns and outside groups has intensified.

A few poll findings appear to favor Brown, a state assemblyman. He is viewed favorably by 48 percent and unfavorably by 14 percent, with 32 percent unfamiliar. Brown is doing better among white, middle-aged and older voters. Eighty-nine percent of Republicans support Brown, while 78 percent of Democrats support Bell.

Forty-three percent remain unfamiliar with Bell, whose favorable rating is 31 percent to 21 percent unfavorable. Bell is ahead among racial and ethnic minorities and slightly ahead among women voters. Bell, who succeeded the late Sen. Jim Whelan after his death in August, leads by a wide margin in Atlantic City, which is also holding a mayoral election.

“Many undecided voters will make up their minds this weekend and determine the outcome of this race,” said Sharon Schulman, Executive Director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy

The Stockton Polling Institute of the Hughes Center at Stockton University interviewed 530 adult residents of the 2nd District who were screened as likely voters. Interviewers working from the Stockton campus called landline and cell telephones Oct. 26-Nov. 1, 2017. The poll’s margin of error is +/- 4.3 percentage points.

Democrats led by incumbent Vince Mazzeo hold comfortable leads in the 2nd District state Assembly race. Mazzeo tops the field at 31 percent, followed by Democratic running mate John Armato at 27 percent. Republicans Vince Sera and Brenda Taube trail with 17 and 18 percent respectively. Seven percent are undecided or not expressing a choice.

Mazzeo is the best known of the field, with a favorable rating of 46 percent to 19 percent unfavorable and 31 percent unfamiliar. Armato is unknown to 57 percent, and more than 65 percent are unfamiliar with Sera and Taube.

As in the earlier Stockton poll, property taxes (27 percent) and taxes in general (14 percent) are seen as the most important issues in the election. The economy, health care, Atlantic City casino issues and education were each cited as the top issue by 4 percent.

In other poll results:

- In the governor's race, Democrat Phil Murphy holds a 19-point lead over Republican Kim Guadagno (52 percent to 33 percent) in the 2nd District, which is located in Atlantic County.
- More than half would be less likely to support a candidate who was endorsed by Governor Chris Christie (56 percent less likely) or President Donald Trump (54 percent).
- The district's voters strongly support a proposed Constitutional amendment to dedicate funds received in pollution case settlements to environmental protection, with 80 percent in favor, 12 percent opposed and 8 percent unsure.
- A majority of 57 percent support a ballot question proposing to borrow \$125 million for library construction, with 37 percent opposed and 6 percent unsure.

See full poll results [here](#).

Methodology

The poll was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. Live interviewers on the Stockton University campus called both landlines and cell phones from Oct. 26-Nov. 1, 2017. The poll was conducted with 530 adults who were screened as likely voters in New Jersey's 2nd Legislative District. The poll's margin of error is +/- 4.3 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 2nd District population.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy

solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. 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. The Hughes Center can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/StocktonHughesCenter> and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter.

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