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Christie, Van Drew Maintain Large 1st District Leads; Assembly Race Remains Tight

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

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Galloway Township, NJ – Incumbent Democratic Sen. Jeff Van Drew leads his Republican challenger Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt by 29 percentage points, according to a Stockton Polling Institute poll released today.

The state Assembly race remains much tighter, with only four to five percentage points separating the GOP challengers from incumbent Bob Andrzejczak, who places second after Assemblyman Nelson Albano.

In both races, the results are substantially similar to a Stockton Poll taken late in September, although Van Drew has lost 4 percent.

“In the 2011 race for state Senate, Van Drew had large lead in first poll, a reduced lead in a second poll, but managed a 54 to 46 percent margin of victory on Election Day,” said Daniel J. Douglas, director of the William J. Hughes Center.

Republican Gov. Chris Christie has increased his lead in the Republican-leaning district to nearly 40 points (from 32 points) over Democrat Barbara Buono, a state senator. The governor leads Buono 66 percent to 27 percent, with 7.5 percent undecided or refusing to answer.

But Christie’s popularity is not translating into a coattails effect. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) say an endorsement of a legislative candidate by Christie would have no effect on their vote. Van Drew leads Adelizzi-Schmidt 58 percent to 29 percent, only four percentage points less than the 33-point spread found in September. Six percent are unsure, with another 6 percent saying they will vote for someone else/nobody or refusing to identify their candidate.

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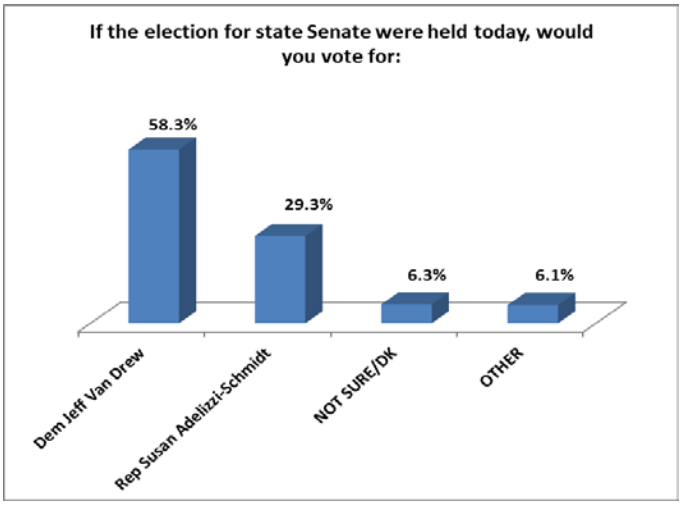

The poll was conducted with 613 likely voters from Oct. 11-13, 2013. Interviewers called both land lines and cell phones. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.95 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. The Stockton Polling Institute is part of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

“The strength of the governor’s margin does not seem to be helping down ballot Republican candidates,” said Douglas, of the Hughes Center.

Despite weeks of fall campaigning, Adelizzi-Schmidt remains an unknown to a majority of voters (63 percent). Only 12 percent are unfamiliar with Van Drew, a former state assemblyman who moved to the Senate in 2007. He is rated favorably by 66 percent.

Both Van Drew and Christie are siphoning significant percentages of voters from their opponents’ party bases. Thirty percent of 1st District Republicans say they are voting for Van Drew; only 4 percent of Democrats support Adelizzi-Schmidt. A greater percentage than Van Drew’s is crossing party lines to vote for Christie, who is supported by 43 percent of Democrats in the district.

The race for state Assembly continues to be tight. Democrat incumbent Albano leads all candidates with 25 percent, and Assembly mate Andrzejczak is second at 22 percent. Republicans Sam Fiocchi and Kristine Gabor garner 18 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

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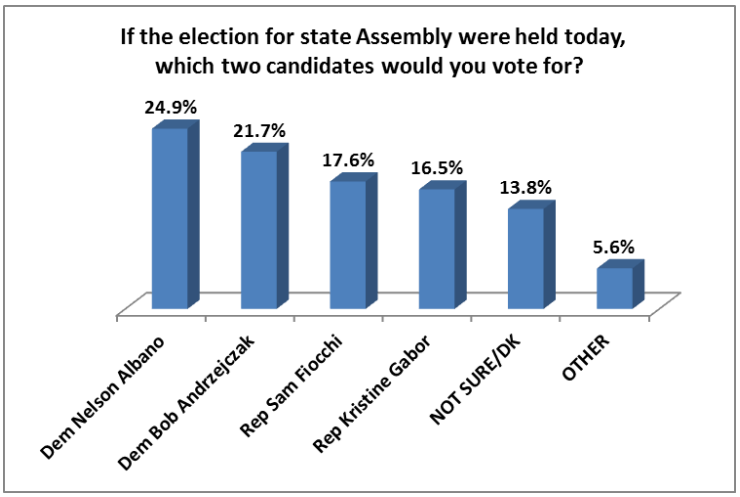

Albano is the best known of the four Assembly candidates. Only 22 percent are not familiar with Albano, whereas 49 percent are not familiar with Andrzejczak. The GOP candidates are unknown by more than 50 percent.

The poll was conducted amid continuing news coverage of the partial shutdown of the federal government. Respondents were asked to identify whom they hold most responsible for the shutdown. More than one in three (35 percent) blame Republicans in Congress, while 21 percent blame President Obama and 4 percent blame Democrats in Congress. Thirty-eight percent blame "all of the above equally."

"The negative feelings about the federal government shutdown could be making it a somewhat more difficult election environment for Republicans," Douglas said.

In other Stockton Poll results:

- 60 percent believe New Jersey is headed in the right direction, with 28 saying it is on the wrong track and 13 percent unsure or refusing to respond.

- 73 percent say property taxes have increased "a lot" or "a little" in the past three years.

- 76 percent support raising the state's minimum wage from $7.25 per hour to $8.25 per hour and providing annual cost of living increases; 21 percent oppose the proposal, with 3 percent unsure.

- 71 percent support allowing veteran groups to use money raised in raffles and games of chance to fund their operations; 23 percent oppose and 6 percent are unsure.

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 613 likely voters from Oct. 11-13, 2013. Interviewers called both land lines and cell phones. 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 +/- 3.95 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for the 1st District population.

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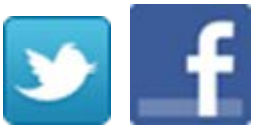
About the Hughes Center
The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey. The Center is 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 on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/Hughes.Center.Stockton.College and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter.



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