

Pharos Research Group

North Dakota Polling Report

10/12/12-10/14/12



Analysis

Pharos Research Group did a live call poll of 757 likely voters in North Dakota from October 12, 2012 through October 14, 2012. The breakdown was 377 men, 380 women, representing a 49.8%/50.2% split. There were 223 self-identified Democrats, 313 self-identified Republicans and 221 Independents representing a 29/41/29 split.

The numbers read like this: in the general election for President, 40.16% of respondents indicated an intention to vote for President Barack Obama, while 48.88% indicated a preference for Republican nominee Willard "Mitt" Romney. In the United States Senate race, 47.95% prefer the Democratic, former Attorney General Heidi Heitkamp, while 46.24% chose Republican nominee, Congressman Rick Berg. In the open House race, Democrat Pam Gulleon trails Public Service Commissioner Kevin Cramer, 44%-53%, while in the race for Governor, Jack Dalrymple, the incumbent, who ascended to office in January 2011 when popular former Governor John Hoeven was sworn in as a US Senator, is leading Democratic State Senator Ryan Taylor, 61%-34%.

Compared to the 10/5-10/7 poll, we see a widening lead for the challenger in the Presidential race. While the widening lead is incremental, barring an unforeseen development, Romney should carry the state comfortably in three weeks.

In the Senate race, the race has tightened significantly against the previous two polls we have released. Some of this is a function of the Republican tilt of the state, some is a function of a barrage of advertising in the low cost state. We continue to consider this state a true toss-up, as Heitkamp remains personally quite popular, while Berg's bruising election to the House in 2010 has left a residual bad taste in the minds of many in the state. Add in that despite the lean of the state on a legislative and Presidential level, Hoeven is the only Republican to win a US Senate seat in North Dakota since 1980, when Mark Andrews won a single term, and that both Byron Dorgan and Kent Conrad had tough first races, and this race will be competitive right up to election day.

In the House race, while Gulleon is an attractive candidate, running a professional campaign, Cramer has held statewide elective office and retains a large name identification edge from his failed races for this seat in the past, and has none of the negative cachet which seems to be holding Berg back. This race is not particularly competitive, nor is it likely to become so, barring a major gaffe or scandal involving Cramer.

In the Governor's race, Taylor while personally attractive, appears to be running into a combination of a perception of competence and personal popularity for Dalrymple and a partisan trend-line which has not seen a Democrat win the statehouse since 1988. This race is not competitive and is exceptionally unlikely to become so.

REPORT

S3) CODE SEX 1= Female 2=Male

1= 380 50.20%

2= 377 49.80%

S4) Thinking of the last four general elections (the Presidential Elections in 2004 and 2008 and the Congressional Elections in 2006 and 2010), how many of those elections did you vote in?

CODE: ENTER NUMBER

2= 100 13.21%

3= 321 42.40%

4= 336 44.39%

S5) Are you registered as a Democrat or a Republican or are you an Independent?

CODE 1= Democrat, 2= Republican, 3= Independent

1= 223 29.46%

2= 313 41.35%

3= 221 29.19%

P1) Thinking about the election for President, if the election were held today would you vote for (rotate) Barack Obama or Mitt Romney? (Probe for undecided, ask lean)

CODE 1= Obama, 2= Romney, 3= Undecided

1= 304 40.16%

2= 370 48.88%

3= 83 10.96%

P2) Thinking about the election for the US Senate, if the election were held today would you vote for (rotate) Heidi Heitkamp or Rick Berg? (Probe once for undecided, ask lean)

CODE 1= Heitkamp, 2= Berg, 3=Undecided

1= 363 47.95%

2= 350 46.24%

3= 44 5.81%

P3) Thinking about the Democratic nominee for President, Barack Obama, do you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of him?

CODE 1= Favorable, 2= Unfavorable

1= 331 43.73%

2= 418 55.22%

P4) Thinking about the Republican nominee for President, Mitt Romney, do you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of him?

CODE 1= Favorable, 2= Unfavorable

1= 367 48.48%

2= 366 48.35%

P5) Thinking about the Republican nominee for the US Senate, Rick Berg, do you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of him?

CODE 1= Favorable, 2= Unfavorable

1= 350 46.24%

2= 384 50.73%

P6) Thinking about the Democratic nominee for the US Senate, Heidi Heitkamp, do you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of her?

CODE 1= Favorable, 2= Unfavorable

1= 421 55.61%

2= 250 33.03%

P7) Thinking about the economy, which of the Presidential candidates do you feel would be best equipped to deal with the prolonged economic downturn?

CODE 1= Obama 2= Romney

1= 337 44.52%

2= 397 52.44%

3= 23 3.04%

P8) Thinking about the many reasons people might vote for or against someone, earlier you indicated a preference for President and the US Senate, thinking about the condition of the economy, using a scale of very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important, how much is the candidates plan to fix the economy important in who you prefer?

CODE 1= Very important, 2= Somewhat important, 3= not very important, 4= not at all important

1= 493 65.13%

2= 150 19.82%

3= 73 9.64%

4= 41 5.42%

P9) Thinking about the public debt, using the same scale, how important is the candidates' plan to fix the budget on who you prefer?

CODE 1= Very important, 2= Somewhat important, 3= not very important, 4= not at all important

1= 398 52.58%

2= 259 34.21%

3= 95 12.55%

4= 5 0.66%

P10) In the election for the US House of Representatives, do you intend to vote for (rotate) Kevin Cramer or Pam Gulleon?

CODE 1= Gulleon, 2= Cramer

1= 332 43.86%

2= 402 53.10%

3= 23 3.04%

P11) In the election for Governor, do you intend to vote for (rotate) Jack Dalrymple or Ryan Taylor?

CODE 1= Taylor, 2= Dalrymple

1= 258 34.08%

2= 462 61.03%

3= 37 4.89%

Margin of Error of plus or minus 3.2%.