

McCrorry Tops Cooper In Latest Monmouth Poll

By Administrator
Tuesday, 25 October 2016 11:52 -

West Long Branch, NJ - In the contest for governor, GOP incumbent Pat McCrorry holds a negligible 48% to 47% lead over Democratic Attorney General Roy Cooper. Two months ago, Cooper actually had a sizable 52% to 43% advantage over McCrorry.

- . Another 2% say they will vote for Libertarian Lon Cecil, compared with 3% last month.

Tar Heel voters are divided on the incumbent's performance as governor, but are slightly more positive than they were in August, when state law HB2 that prohibits local governments from allowing transgender public restrooms was a clear drag on his support. McCrorry currently earns a 49% approve and 45% disapprove job rating, compared with a 45% approve and 46% disapprove rating in August.

"HB2 seemed to be the contest's driving factor during the summer, but the devastation left by Hurricane Matthew may be a more immediate concern for many voters. This could be contributing to the swing in this race," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Voters' personal rating of McCrorry remains divided at 43% favorable and 42% unfavorable, compared with 39% favorable and 41% unfavorable in August. Cooper has a net positive personal rating of 40% favorable and 26% unfavorable, compared with 38% favorable and 18% unfavorable in August.

The poll also noted a small down-ballot turnout effect that could cut into Republican leads. When those who are considered to be least probable to turn out on November 8th are removed from the pool of likely voters, the presidential race margin remains about the same, but the race for U.S. Senate and governor shifts about 3 to 4 points toward the Democrats.

"The least probable voters include Trump supporters who feel the prospect of victory is

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slipping away and Republicans who are reluctantly voting for Clinton at the top of the ticket. If both types of voters stay away from the polls on Election Day, it could have a negative impact on GOP candidates down the ballot," said Murray.

The presidential race in North Carolina remains extremely tight with Hillary Clinton holding a negligible one point lead over Donald Trump - virtually unchanged from two months ago. The U.S. Senate race finds incumbent Richard Burr holding a 6 point lead, up from 2 points in August. The biggest shift in voter support has occurred in the race for governor, where incumbent Pat

McCrory

has taken a slim one point lead after trailing his challenger by 9 points in the prior Monmouth University Poll .

Among North Carolina voters likely to cast ballots in November's presidential election, 47% currently support Clinton and 46% back Trump, while another 4% intend to vote for Libertarian Gary Johnson. In the Monmouth poll taken in late August, Clinton had 44% support, Trump had 42% support, and Johnson had 7% support.

Clinton has a large lead among black, Hispanic, and Asian voters (78% to 16%), while Trump continues to lead among white voters (59% to 35%). Trump maintains leads among both white men (60% to 32% compared with 51% to 29% in August) and white women (58% to 38% compared with 56% to 33% in August).

Trump has increased his sizable advantage among white voters without a college degree - 72% to 23%, compared with 66% to 22% two months ago. However, he still trails among white voters with a college degree - 43% to 50% for Clinton, which is slightly worse than his 39% to 43% deficit two months ago.

"The main thing that's moved in this race is a drop in support for Gary Johnson and more undecided voters making up their minds. In any event, it remains a nail-biter," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Murray added, "Clinton appears to hold a sizable lead among early voters, but Trump is staying close because of his large lead among white voters who have not yet cast their

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ballots." About 12% of likely voters polled report that they have already voted.

Tar Heel voters continue to give nearly identical ratings to the two major party nominees. Just 33% have a favorable opinion of Trump and 54% have an unfavorable view, which has changed little from his 34% favorable and 54% unfavorable rating in August. Likewise, 35% have a favorable opinion of Clinton and 55% have an unfavorable view, which is similar to her 36% favorable and 52% unfavorable rating in August.

Turning to the U.S. Senate race, GOP incumbent Richard Burr has improved his lead over former Democratic state legislator Deborah Ross. The race now stands at 49% to 43% in the incumbent's favor, compared with his 45% to 43% lead two months ago. Another 2% of voters say they will support Libertarian Sean Haugh , compared to 4% in August.

Burr earns a narrowly positive job rating from North Carolina voters - 46% approve and 38% disapprove of his performance in the U.S. Senate, which is slightly more negative than his 46% to 30% rating two months ago. The results are similar for voters' personal opinion of the two-term senator, with 36% holding a favorable view and 32% having an unfavorable view of him personally, while 33% have no opinion. His August rating stood at 32% favorable, 21% unfavorable, and 47% no opinion. The Democratic challenger earns similar ratings as her name recognition has improved substantially since the summer. Ross currently earns a 30% favorable and 30% unfavorable personal rating, with 39% having no opinion of her. This compares with her August rating of 23% favorable, 6% unfavorable, and 71% having no opinion.

"This contest became a surprise entry on the list of close races that will determine control of the U.S. Senate. Burr seems to be holding off a tough challenge, at least for now," said Murray.

The Monmouth University Poll was conducted by telephone from October 20 to 23, 2016 with 402 North Carolina residents likely to vote in the November election. This sample has a margin of error of ± 4.9 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

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