



MEMORANDUM

TO: GERLACH FOR PENNSYLVANIA COMMITTEE
FROM: WILSON RESEARCH STRATEGIES
SUBJECT: BASELINE POLL RESULTS
DATE: JULY 16, 2009

This memo summarizes key findings from a statewide poll of 600 Pennsylvania Republican primary voters conducted June 17-18, 2009.

Key Findings

Candidate Backgrounds

- Each respondent was read a brief biography of the three Republican candidates for Governor, without hearing the names of the candidates. Based on their biographies alone, 53% of Republican primary voters chose Jim Gerlach, with 26% choosing Tom Corbett and 13% choosing Pat Meehan.
- Respondents were also asked whether they would prefer their next Governor have a background as a legislator dealing with a variety of issues versus a background as a prosecutor who has experience dealing with crime and political corruption. 73% of respondents said they would prefer the next Governor have a legislative background, while only 16% said they would prefer a prosecutor. In a political environment that is, and likely will be dominated by the economy, jobs and taxes, voters clearly want a candidate that has experience on all issues.

Region-Specific Data

- Jim Gerlach and Pat Meehan are both known chiefly in the Philadelphia area, while Tom Corbett is well-known statewide. The Philadelphia media market constitutes about 35% of the overall electorate and is the most expensive market in the state to campaign in.
- Jim Gerlach leads in the Philadelphia market with 25% compared to 20% for Corbett and 14% for Meehan.
- A Gerlach lead in the only part of the state where voters are familiar with all three candidates bodes well for his chances in a contested statewide primary.
- This result also indicates that Pat Meehan is unlikely to be able to be a competitive candidate for Governor, as he polls third even in his own geographic base.

Party Direction

- Two statements were read to respondents to determine what Pennsylvania Republican voters see as the best direction of the Party.
- Interestingly, 46% of Pennsylvania Republican primary voters believe that the Republican Party should stay true to its fiscally conservative policies and can only regain its majority status by embracing a big-tent philosophy that appeals to moderate and independent voters.
- In contrast, 43% say that the Republican Party should reject the big tent philosophy and become more conservative, both fiscally and socially.
- Republican women overwhelmingly believe the Republican Party should be more inclusive.

Gubernatorial Ballot

- The initial gubernatorial ballot proves that Tom Corbett's support is a half a mile wide and a half inch deep, and proves there is a clear path to victory in the primary for Jim Gerlach.
- Not unexpectedly Tom Corbett currently leads the early Republican field with 39% of the primary vote, with Jim Gerlach winning 11% and Pat Meehan trailing with 7%. What is unexpected is that Corbett not only fails to break the 50% mark, but also the 40% mark considering he has run two state wide campaigns, served as Attorney General over the last five years and was the US Attorney for Western Pennsylvania prior to that.
- Among voters who have an opinion of Gerlach, he leads on the ballot with 36% to 32% for Corbett and 8% for Meehan.
- After asking a series of questions regarding the backgrounds and resumes of each of the candidates running for Governor and issues facing each of them, Jim Gerlach is the clear frontrunner in the Primary and virtually all of Corbett's support is evaporated.
- The informed ballot shows Gerlach with a substantial lead; Gerlach 52%, Corbett 19%, Meehan 6%.
- An open ended question was also asked of the respondents to find out why they changed their support from one candidate to the other from the initial ballot to the informed ballot. Overwhelmingly, respondents answered that Gerlach was the more well-rounded candidate whose background as a state legislator and congressman gave him unique qualifications over a one dimensional candidate.

Conclusions

- In the course of the primary campaign, voters across the state will hear from each of the candidates for Governor. The results of this study indicate that when Pennsylvania Republicans have the opportunity to hear from all three Republican candidates, they move away from Tom Corbett and choose Jim Gerlach.
- These findings reflect similar trends in recent general election polling which found a vulnerable Tom Corbett losing significantly within his own southwestern Pennsylvania base in a hypothetical match-up to Democrat Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato.
- Jim Gerlach's profile – that of a legislator with experience on fiscal issues and the economy – matches what voters are looking for in this tough economy. Gerlach's early lead in the parts of the state where voters are familiar with him bears this out.
- With his high name identification and early lead in the expensive Philadelphia media market, Gerlach has a built-in financial advantage over his opponents. His path to victory involves introducing himself to voters in less expensive media markets around the state, while his opponents will have to buy expensive Philadelphia TV time.
- Overall, the poll results indicate that Jim Gerlach is well positioned in the Republican gubernatorial primary, and has a clear path to victory in 2010.

Methodology

Wilson Research Strategies conducted a research study of likely Republican primary voters in Pennsylvania.

Respondents were contacted by phone via a live telephone operator interview June 17-18, 2009. The study has a sample size of n=600 Likely Republican Primary Voters. The margin of error is equal to $\pm 4.0\%$ in 95 of out 100 cases. The same was stratified to represent the Pennsylvania Republican primary electorate based on age, gender, and geographic distribution.



About Wilson Research Strategies

Since 1998, WRS has been a leading provider of political polling for campaigns from Mayor and City Council to Governor and U.S. Senate in 47 states and several foreign countries. In 2007-2008 alone, WRS conducted polling in 252 races for campaigns, caucuses and independent expenditure efforts.

In addition to our political and policy research, WRS provides donor research to Christian and other not-for-profits and alumni research to colleges and universities. More than 200 Christian and other not-for-profit organizations around the country and dozens of large and small colleges and universities have relied on WRS's data and analysis.

WRS's corporate research arm has provided market research to more than 100 of the Fortune 500 and to hundreds of small and medium businesses nationwide.