

November 2, 2010 7:45 PM

PRESS RELEASE: Harwich Exit Poll May Indicate a Long Night for the Governor and Tenth District Races and Question 3

The U.S. Government students at Harwich High School again conducted an exit poll today at the Harwich Community Center between 7:30 AM and 2:00 PM. They interviewed 303 voters, asking them each 25 questions. The poll focused on the very competitive Governor and U.S. Representative (Tenth District) races. While a poll in one town can't reliably predict the overall election, our results may indicate a very close race for Congress.

Overall, for governor, the poll had Patrick leading with 52% over Baker with 43%, Cahill with 4% and Stein with 1%. For U.S. Representative, the poll had Keating leading at 50%, Perry at 46%, Lewis at 3% and Sheets and Van Nes with less than 1%. For State Senate, Wolf was comfortably ahead of Crocker 65% to 35%, and for State Representative Peake was well ahead of Dunford 63% to 36%. Question 1 was leading with 54%, while questions 2 and 3 were trailing with 33% and 42%, respectively.

These results may be skewed somewhat toward the Democratic candidates, as our survey consisted of 34% Democrats, 22% Republicans, and 44% Independents. Democrats have a registration advantage in Harwich, as well as in the district and state, but in the last general election in January, we had even numbers of Democrats and Republicans in our poll. If our poll is accurate, then the often-discussed enthusiasm gap (which existed in January) has not materialized today.

In the race for Governor, while we had Patrick ahead with a 9 point lead, Baker led among Independents 50% to 45%, and this may help him keep the race close across the state. Baker also did better among those who decided in the last week or month, and his supporters were 10% more likely to say they strongly support him. Baker also had a lead among the 47% of voters who cited the economy as the most important issue.

In the race for U.S. Representative, Keating had only a 4% lead. Similar to Baker, Perry was leading among Independents 50% to 45%, but he was doing better than Baker with both Republicans (92% compared to 89%) and Democrats (10% to 4%). Perry had an even bigger enthusiasm advantage than Baker, with 65% saying they strongly support him, compared to 51% for Keating. He also had a greater advantage with those who cited the economy as the top issue. In addition, his supporters were more likely to report being influenced by campaign ads, 26% to 16%. Among these, a lot of respondents expressed disgust with the negative tone of the Tenth District campaign, and most of this anger was directed at Keating. This race could be very close.

It will be interesting to see if our results for the ballot questions hold up. If the overall poll is a bit more Republican, this may help Question 3 approach a majority of support. Like the Governor and Congressional races, we will watch the returns closely tonight.

In the state legislative races, our results were very positive for Peake and Wolf. However the State Senate result may not be a fair indicator since Wolf lives in Harwich.

The full results of the poll will be posted tomorrow morning at www.harwich.edu/depts/history/dickson/gov.html

We would like to thank all the voters who took the time to talk with us today, and to town clerk Anita Doucette and the rest of the town for supporting us in this important educational exercise.

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