UMass Lowell
Survey of New Hampshire Likely Voters

September 17-25, 2020

N=657 New Hampshire Likely Voters

The sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-4.6%

See http://uml.edu/polls for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

Survey design and analysis by Joshua J. Dyck, Director and John Cluverius, Associate Director, Center for Public Opinion, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Do you have a question about this poll? If so, tweet @UML_CPO and we'll get back to you.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Biden leads Trump by 8 points in the Granite State

Former Vice President Joe Biden has an 8-point lead over President Donald Trump in the contest for New Hampshire's 4 Electoral Votes in a new swing state poll of New Hampshire likely voters released by the UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion. New Hampshire was hotly contested in 2016 with Hillary Clinton besting Trump by fewer than 3000 total votes, a margin of less than half of a percent.

With minor party candidates included on the ballot, Biden polls at 52%, Trump at 44%, other candidates at 3%, and only 1% of New Hampshire likely voters say they are undecided. In early October of 2016, UMass Lowell polling in New Hampshire showed Hillary Clinton with a 6-point lead over Donald Trump, but a much larger portion of the electorate at that time said they intended to vote for a third party candidate (14%) or said they were undecided (4%). Polling now reflects a very different race –the vast majority of Granite State voters have settled on either Biden or Trump, and almost no voters are entertaining 3rd party candidates or say they are undecided.

Biden is winning 95% of self-identified Democrats, while Trump is winning 90% of Republicans. However, among pure Independents, 50% are for Biden compared to only 35% for Trump. Biden's support is much higher among respondents with a Bachelor's degree (65% Biden to 32% for Trump) while Trump does better among those without a college degree (52% Trump to 44%

Biden). While women are more likely to vote for Biden (56% Biden, 40% Trump), Biden is polling about even with Trump among men in New Hampshire (48% Biden, 49% Trump); Trump needs to improve this number in order to carry the state.

While Trump trails head-to-head against Biden, his approval rating is at 45% approve and 55% disapprove. Among those who approve, 30% do so strongly and 15% somewhat. However, among Trump disapprovers, 9% do so somewhat, and 46% strongly disapprove of the way he is handling his job as President. Among Democrats, 96% disapprove of President Trump's job performance, including 85% who strongly disapprove. Among independents, 62% disapprove of his job performance, including 46% who strongly disapprove. Among Republicans, 10% disapprove of his job performance, including 5% who strongly disapprove. As reelection campaigns are often a referendum on the incumbent, the approval numbers indicate a polarized electorate and also indicate strong disdain for the President among his disapprovers – *those who dislike Trump really dislike him*. If that ends up being a metric for turnout, which it often is, this could spell trouble for the sitting President's reelection chances.

Further evidence of polarization in this country comes from two questions on whether the Biden and Trump campaigns, respectively, have been cheating in order to win the election. Less than half of New Hampshire likely voters say that Biden and his allies have been cheating "a great deal" (23%) or "somewhat" (18%), while over half say that Trump and his allies have been cheating "a great deal" (40%) or "somewhat" (16%). As expected, these numbers break down by party identification, but the perception of partisan cheating by Trump among Democrats is exceptionally high: 74% of Democrats think Trump and his allies are cheating "a great deal," and 46% of Republicans think Biden and his allies are cheating "a great deal."

Shaheen, Sununu with double-digit leads in other statewide races

New Hampshire is a state known for its fiercely independent streak. Two incumbents are seeking reelection in prominent statewide races – US Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat, is facing Republican challenger Corky Messner and Governor Chris Sununu, a Republican, is facing Democratic challenger Dan Feltes. Shaheen and Sununu are both viewed in a positive light by Granite Staters and have large leads headed into the November 3rd general election.

Shaheen leads Messner by 19 points, 56% to 37% with 1% saying they will vote for another candidate and 6% still undecided. Shaheen is winning the support of an impressive 96% of Democrats, but also 52% of Independents and 17% of Republicans.

Meanwhile, Sununu leads Feltes by 26 points, 60% to 34%, with 1% saying they will vote for another candidate and 6% saying they are undecided. Sununu wins the support of 92% of Republicans, but also 70% of Independents and 27% of Democrats.

New Hampshire voters prefer that the President wait on nominating Ginsburg's successor

Respondents were also asked whether the next Supreme Court justice – the replacement for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg – should be appointed by the current President or by the winner of the 2020 Presidential election. Here, we see a large majority, 58%, of New Hampshire likely voters say that the winner of the Presidential election should appoint Justice Ginsburg's successor to the high court, while only 42% say that the sitting President should appoint her successor.

This appears to be a potentially damaging issue for President Trump and Republicans. Democrats are unified – 97% say the winner of the 2020 election should appoint Ginsburg's successor. Likewise, 59% of Independents agree that it should be the winner of the 2020 election and not the sitting President. Finally, nearly 1 in five Republicans (18%) dissent from the party stance here and believe that the winner of the election should appoint Ginsburg's successor. When we look at the data by gender, 64% of women believe that Ginsburg's successor should be appointed by the 2020 winner, while only 36% believe it should be the sitting the President. Men are split evenly, with 51% saying the 2020 winner should appoint and 49% saying the current President should appoint.

Other Findings from the poll

- A majority (54%) of New Hampshire likely voters think it's not safe to re-open local public schools for face-to-face instruction (21% say definitely not safe, 33% say probably not safe, 30% say probably safe, 16% say definitely safe).
- Asked who they think will win the 2020 Presidential election, Granite State likely voters give Biden the edge: 45% say Biden will win and 40% say Trump will win.
- 32% of NH likely voters think things in the country are headed in the right direction, while 68% say things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track.
- The New Hampshire Secretary of State announced a COVID-19 exception to absentee ballot laws earlier this summer, which allows concerns about COVID-19 as a valid excuse for requesting an absentee ballot in the state. Among likely voters, 31% say they plan to vote by mail, while 69% plan to vote in person.