University of Massachusetts Lowell

Center for Public Opinion

UMass Lowell/Boston Globe
Survey of MA3 Democratic Primary Voters

April 11-18, 2018

N=490 MA3 Likely Democratic Primary Voters

The LV sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-5.5

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

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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

Gifford Leads a Crowded Field with over half undecided

UMass Lowell and the Boston the Globe have partnered to release the first public poll in the Massachusetts 3rd Congressional District race to succeed outgoing incumbent Niki Tsongas, who announced last year she would be retiring from the US Congress. In the poll of Democratic primary likely voters, Rufus Gifford, the former US Ambassador to Denmark, leads a crowded field of 13 Democratic candidates, with 11% of the vote, followed by State Senator Barbara L'Italien (7%), Lori Trahan (5%), Dan Koh (4%), Juana Matias (4%), Alexandra Chandler (3%), Bopha Malone (2%), and all other candidates at 1% or below.

A campaign that has thus far been waged as a series of fundraising disclosures shows an electorate that still is relatively unfamiliar with many of the candidates. More than half (59%) of Democratic primary likely voters surveyed said that they have not yet made up their mind about who to vote for in this race. Thus far, the electorate reports modest interest in the race with just over one third of likely voters (36%) saying they haven't really been following the race much at all.

Gifford's early lead in the race is notable, however, as his campaign has clearly been most effective in establishing name recognition in a short amount of time in the district. It remains to be seen how undecided Democratic primary voters will make sense of this crowded field and who will be able to sustain the type of campaign needed to establish themselves as a contender for this district's coveted congressional seat.

Approval Ratings

Our poll also asked Democratic primary voters about their approval of President Donald Trump. Not surprisingly, a large majority, 88%, of Democratic likely primary voters in the 3rd Congressional District disapprove of the way Trump is handling his job as President – this includes 81% who *strongly disapprove*. Asked further if they believe impeachment hearings should be held to remove the President from office, 55% of Democratic primary voters said that they should hold these hearings, compared to just 32% who said they should not; 13% were unsure or refused to answer the question. The support for impeachment was highest among women (63%) as compared to men (45%), Hispanics (68%) as compared to whites (53%), and Democrats (58%) as compared to independent/unaffiliated voters (51%).

An incredible contrast to Trump, however, is the approval rating of the Republican Incumbent Governor of Massachusetts among Democratic primary likely voters in the Massachusetts 3rd Congressional District. Baker has a strong approval among what would normally be a hostile group; 80% of Democratic primary likely voters in MA3 approve of the way he is handling his job as Governor of Massachusetts (40% strongly and 40% somewhat). Just 11% of Democratic primary likely voters in this district disapprove of their Republican Governor. These are astounding numbers and highlight the truly bipartisan nature of Baker's appeal.

From a net approval standpoint, Baker is as popular as Senator Elizabeth Warren, who gets the approval of 81% of Democratic primary likely voters in the 3rd Congressional district of Massachusetts. Among those, 60% strongly approve and 21% somewhat approve. Warren's positives are clearly more positive, but her negatives are also more negative; of the 15% who disapprove of her, 10% disapprove strongly, including 16% of men and 13% of Independents who plan to vote in the Democratic primary.

Other findings in the poll

Our poll also asked Massachusetts 3rd Congressional district Democratic primary likely voters what the most important issue problem facing the district was today. The most common answers had to do with the state of the economy (unemployment, poverty, etc.), which was noted by 16% of respondents. That tied (16%) with mentions surrounding dissatisfaction with government, much of which was targeted at Donald Trump and current Republican

incumbents, but also included issues like lack of leadership, integrity, honesty and trust. Drugs, drug addiction and opioids came in at 11%, tied with education/schools. A range of other issues were mentioned with mentions in the single digits ranging from health care to guns/gun safety to housing price/cost of living to traffic.

Finally, we also asked respondents whether they thought the Democrats were likely to take back the House of Representatives in the midterm elections this Fall; Democratic primary likely voters in MA3 are confident that this is going to happen, with 68% saying the Democrats are poised to take back the house and just 20% saying the Republicans will retain control. Should the Democrats take back control of the House, we asked Democratic primary likely voters if they think that Congressional Democrats should pick Nancy Pelosi to serve as Speaker of the House or if they should pick someone else. Only 27% said that they should pick Pelosi, while 55% said to pick someone else; 17% said they were unsure. There is a large gender gap on the question. Only 19% of men say that they should pick Pelosi compared to 33% of women. Likewise, registered Democrats are more likely to say pick Pelosi (30%) than unaffiliated voters (23%). However, there is no subgroup category where a majority say to pick Pelosi.