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UMass Lowell/Boston Globe Survey of MA3 Democratic Primary Voters

August 14-21, 2018

N=553 MA3 Likely Democratic Primary Voters

The sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-5.2

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

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HIGHLIGHTS

Dan Koh Leads a Field of 10 Candidates; 3 out of 10 Voters Still Undecided

UMass Lowell and the Boston Globe have partnered to release the second public nonpartisan poll in the Massachusetts 3rd Congressional District race to succeed outgoing incumbent Niki Tsongas. In the poll of Democratic primary likely voters, Dan Koh, the former chief of staff to Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, has surged into the lead with 19% of the vote, a 15 point increase from our last poll in April. Rufus Gifford, the former U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, and State Senator Barbara L'Italien are tied for second place with 13% of the vote. They are trailed by Lori Trahan (8%), Juana Matias (6%), Alexandra Chandler (4%), and four other candidates who all received 2% of the vote or less (Beej Das, Jeff Ballinger, Leonard Golder and Bopha Malone).

Our first poll on this race, released in April, suggested that the voters were overwhelmed by the number of candidates and new faces in this race, with nearly 60% of voters undecided. With less than two weeks until the primary, this number has decreased, but 29% of likely voters are still undecided about who they will vote for in the race. A panel of questions on candidate favorability helps us understand the problem that 10 candidates have in vying for voters' limited attention. Only one of the Massachusetts 3rd Congressional District Democratic candidates has a favorability rating in excess of 50% or higher: the frontrunner Koh. None of his opponents are viewed negatively; rather, many of them are still relatively unknown, even



among likely voters. Majorities say they have never heard of Golder (59%), Das (56%), Malone (55%), and Ballinger (50%). If we take ratings of “no opinion” and “never heard of” together, majorities of Massachusetts 3rd District likely Democratic primary voters have no opinion or have never heard of 9 of the 10 candidates running for office. The exception, again, is Koh.

This is not for the lack of campaign efforts. Nearly half of the likely Democratic primary voters surveyed (48%) indicated that they had been contacted by phone by one of the campaigns and nearly a third (30%) indicated that they had been contacted in person by the campaigns. Here we begin to see the effectiveness of the campaign operations of the leading candidates, particularly Koh, Gifford, and L'Italien: 19% of likely voters say they've been contacted by the Koh campaign by phone, 18% say they've been contacted by the Gifford campaign, and 15% say they've been contacted by the L'Italien campaign. A similar pattern emerges for in-person contacts: 10% say they've been contacted by Koh, 8% Gifford, and 6% L'Italien. Part of the reason Dan Koh is the best-known candidate in the district is that he has, according to the data available to us, covered the most ground with his campaign operation. This is a feat that we should perhaps not find all that surprising given his sizable campaign war chest advantage vis-à-vis the other candidates.

Candidate Characteristics

Respondents in the survey were asked about a variety of candidate characteristics. Majorities said that it was important (33% very; 37% somewhat) that a candidate has lived in the district all their life. They also indicated that it was important (49% very; 29% somewhat) that a candidate has not taken money from lobbyists or political action committees. A strong majority said that it is important (73% very; 14% somewhat) to elect someone who will stand up to President Donald Trump. A smaller majority said that it is important (34% very; 39% somewhat) that the representative from the 3rd District increase the diversity of the Massachusetts congressional delegation. Asked to rank the most important of these issues, 51% said that standing up to Donald Trump is most important, 18% said not taking money from lobbyists, 15% said being from the district, and 9% said increasing the diversity of the Congressional delegation.

Issues

Asked to identify the most important issue facing the district, we saw a variety of issues raised by 3rd District residents. The most popular answer had to do with issues surrounding the economy (12%) with health care (10%) and general dissatisfaction with government (9%) a close second and third.

Asked about immigration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement specifically, most 3rd District Democratic primary voters place themselves in the middle. A large majority (80%) say



that ICE is in need of changes, but 9% believe that ICE should be abolished, following a popular talking point of progressive reformers.

Other Findings in the Poll

- Outgoing Congresswoman Niki Tsongas will leave office with a 72% favorability rating and a +60% net favorable rating in the district.
- Both U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Gov. Charlie Baker have strong favorability ratings in the district. Interestingly, Baker's rating of 72% with net favorables of +62% is stronger than Warren's (70%, net favorable +54%) – this among Democratic primary likely voters. This again goes to the point of why Charlie Baker remains America's most popular governor.
- Donald Trump does not fare nearly as well as Baker or Warren. His favorability rating is a 10% among Democratic primary likely voters, with 80% saying they have an unfavorable view of the President.
- By contrast, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has a 47% favorability rating with 25% unfavorable, for a net of +22%.