



MIKE DOWNS CENTER FOR INDIANA POLITICS

NEWS RELEASE

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Thompson Has Large Lead over Schellinger

Who is leading in the race for the Democratic nomination for governor?

Among 689 likely Democratic primary voters, Jill Long Thompson has a large lead over Jim Schellinger - 53% to 33% with 14% undecided. Thompson's lead has grown from six points two weeks ago. Thompson leads in every demographic category except Republicans who say they will be crossing over to vote in the Democratic primary. This is a dramatic shift from two weeks ago when Schellinger led among independents who lean Democratic, self-identified independents, and Republicans who claim they will be voting in the Democratic primary. The leads Schellinger had two weeks ago among men and respondents younger than 50 also have disappeared.

Where is Indiana heading?

Respondents (1,500) were asked whether Indiana was heading in the right direction or if Indiana had gotten off on the wrong track. Fifty-five percent of the respondents said that Indiana was off on the wrong track. This is up four points from two weeks ago.

Not surprisingly, Democrats and independents who lean Democratic were more likely than Republicans and independents who lean Republican to think that things were off on the wrong track. Respondents who identified themselves as independent without leaning toward either major political party think Indiana has gotten off on the wrong track (55% to 36%). The more optimistic view of the Republicans is not enough to overcome the pessimistic views of Democrats and -independents.

Two weeks ago the only age category with less than 50% of the respondents thinking things were off on the wrong track was 65 years of age and older (47% wrong track). This has not changed in the current survey with 49% of respondents 65 years of age and older thinking that things are off on the wrong track and a majority of all other categories thinking the same thing.

There continues to be a relationship between church attendance and opinions about the direction Indiana is heading. The more often a respondent attends church, the more positive their view. Forty-four percent of those who attend church every week think that Indiana is heading in the right direction. This is the most optimistic view. The less often a respondent attends church, the more likely they are to think that the state has gotten off on the wrong track. Seventy percent of the respondents who almost never attend church think the state has gotten off on the wrong track.

The percentages of white respondents and African-Americans who think that things are on the wrong track have not changed much in the last two weeks. Fifty-four percent of the white respondents think that things are on the wrong track (50% two weeks ago). That percentage jumps to 69% among African-Americans (64% two weeks ago).

Respondents with a college degree were the most optimistic about where the state is heading (42% right direction). Respondents with a high school degree were the most pessimistic about the direction of the state (60% wrong track).

No income category thinks that Indiana is heading in the right direction. The respondents making \$105,000 or more were the most optimistic (46% right direction). Two weeks ago this was the only category with a majority of respondents thinking things were headed in the right direction (52%). The lower a household income, the more pessimistic the respondents were. The most pessimistic view came from those living in a household making less than \$15,000. Sixty-four percent of them think that things in Indiana have gotten off on the wrong track (52% two weeks ago).

What is the most important issue in Indiana?

As was the case on the national level, the economy was by far the most important issue with 49% of the 1,274 respondents selecting that as the issue the next governor should focus on ahead of all other issues. This is virtually unchanged from two weeks ago. Property taxes came in a distant second at 26% (21% two weeks ago). Two issues that some thought would be important are government privatization (3%) and daylight saving time (5%), but neither ranked very high.

What will happen in November?

It is dangerous to speculate in very early May about what will happen in November especially when voters seem to be very motivated by the Democratic primary. There is no way to know if Democrats will be able to maintain this momentum or if the independents and Republican leaning independents who seem to be excited about participating in the Democratic primary will continue to be excited about Democratic candidates in November. In spite of these concerns, this most recent poll did gather data that could provide insight into what will happen in Indiana in November.

Likely general election voters (1,274) were asked to rate the performance of Mitch Daniels on a scale of 1 to 10. One meant that Daniels was doing the job worse than anyone in the office could possibly do and 10 meant he was doing the job better than anyone in the office could possibly

do. His average rating was 5.3, virtually unchanged from two weeks ago (5.4). As would be expected, the rating was highest among Republicans (7.2) and lowest among Democrats (3.8). There were no significant differences regarding gender or educational attainment.

Respondents 18-64 years old had very similar opinions about Governor Daniels' performance. Their ratings ranged from 5.0 to 5.3. People 65 years and older had the highest opinion of Governor Daniels (5.7). This is a slight change from two weeks ago when there was no significant difference regarding age.

The more often someone attends church, the higher the rating Governor Daniels receives. Those who attend every week averaged 5.7 while those who almost never attend averaged 4.5. These ratings are similar to those from two weeks ago.

The average rating Governor Daniels received from whites was 5.3 and 4.3 from African-Americans. This difference is smaller than it was two weeks ago, but the difference between the two polls is small enough that it may not indicate a trend.

Those living in households making \$105,000 or more gave Governor Daniels the highest rating (5.7). This was true in the previous survey as well. The lowest rating came from those living in households making \$15,000 to \$25,000 (4.4).

Once again the respondents from the central region gave Governor Daniels the highest ratings (5.8). The central region of the state has the most comprehensive news coverage of Daniels and that likely contributes to the rating. The northern region continued to give him the lowest rating (4.5).

Two weeks ago respondents were asked two head-to-head questions pitting Mitch Daniels against each of the candidates seeking the Democratic nomination. Those results showed a virtual tie. These results are similar to those found in the new poll. Schellinger and Daniels were tied at 47%. Thompson was ahead by three points (49% to 46%).

The support for Daniels was very consistent regardless of which Democratic candidate was facing him. This is similar to the findings from two weeks ago.

Daniels holds the support of Republicans well with 82% of them saying they would vote for him regardless of the Democratic opponent. He does not get much support from Democrats (15% against Schellinger and 14% against Thompson). Both Democratic candidates hold the support of Democrats well with 82% supporting Thompson and 81% supporting Schellinger. Their support among Republicans is as weak as Daniels' support among Democrats (14% for Thompson and 15% for Schellinger). One difference between the previous survey and this one is that Daniels does noticeably better among independents when facing Schellinger (53%) than when facing Thompson (41%). Another difference is that Daniels does noticeably better among independents who lean Republican when facing Thompson (81%) than when facing Schellinger (72%).

Daniels holds 50% of the support of the male voters when facing Schellinger and 51% when facing Thompson. Forty-five percent of the female respondents said they would support Daniels over Schellinger. That number drops to 42% when Daniels faces Thompson.

There continue to be no discernible patterns regarding age.

Over half of those who attend church weekly support Daniels (54% to 41% against Schellinger; 56% to 38% against Thompson). Those who almost never attend church are the least likely to support Daniels (34% to 62% against Schellinger; 32% to 65% against Thompson).

Whites are closely divided in this race (Daniels 48% to Thompson 47%; Daniels 50% to Schellinger 45%) while African-Americans are solidly behind the Democrats (Schellinger 79% to Daniels 15%; Thompson 73% to Daniels 20%).

There is an expected relationship between income and support. As income rises, so does the support for Daniels.

Given the similarities in performance between both Democratic candidates against Daniels, this election is shaping up to be a referendum on Governor Mitch Daniels.

What is the Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics?

The Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics is a non-partisan organization that helps the people of Indiana understand the role of politics and government in their daily lives. By doing this, The Mike Downs Center hopes to encourage participation in political and public processes the same way its namesake, Professor Michael C. Downs, did for more than 34 years. The Mike Downs Center is located on the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW).

Statement of Methodology: This SurveyUSA poll was conducted by telephone in the voice of a professional announcer. Respondent households were selected at random, using a registration based sample (RBS) provided by Aristotle, of Washington DC. All respondents heard the questions asked identically. The calls were conducted on April 28, 29, and 30. The number of respondents who answered each question and the margin of sampling error for each question are provided. Where necessary, responses were weighted according to the voter registration database. In theory, with the stated sample size, one can say with 95% certainty that the results would not vary by more than the stated margin of sampling error, in one direction or the other, had the entire universe of respondents been interviewed with complete accuracy. There are other possible sources of error in all surveys that may be more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. These include refusals to be interviewed, question wording and question order, weighting by demographic control data and the manner in which respondents are filtered (such as, determining who is a likely voter). It is difficult to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. Fieldwork for this survey was done by SurveyUSA of Verona, NJ

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