



# MIKE DOWNS CENTER FOR INDIANA POLITICS

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Daniels Has Large Lead Over Thompson Other State Races Much Closer**

#### **Who is leading in the race for Indiana governor?**

Among 900 likely voters, Republican incumbent Governor Mitch Daniels has a substantial lead over Democratic challenger Jill Long Thompson - 55% to 38% with 4% for Libertarian Andrew Horning and 3% undecided. Daniels leads among men and women, in all age categories, and in almost every other category. The only categories where Thompson leads are early voters (52% to 44%), voters who identify themselves as strong Democrats (81% to 13%), Democrats (53% to 38%), or independents who lean Democratic (58% to 32%), those who support Barack Obama for president (64% to 28%), those who almost never attend a religious service (46% to 43%), divorced respondents (49% to 45%), and African Americans (68% to 23%). Her leads in these categories are smaller than the leads of the other statewide Democratic candidates (Obama, Pence, and Wood) in the same categories.

Respondents who said they were voting for Daniels were asked if their support was a vote for Daniels or a vote against Thompson. Respondents who said they were voting for Thompson were asked if their support was a vote for Thompson or a vote against Daniels. The results to these questions help to explain why Daniels has such a large lead. Almost nine out of 10 (88%) of Daniels' supporters are voting for him because of him and only 10% are voting for him as a vote against Thompson. The numbers are very different for Thompson. Not quite half (47%) of her supporters are voting for her because of her and just over half (51%) are voting for her as a vote against Daniels. This suggests that Thompson has not effectively delivered a message about why she should be elected other than she is not Mitch Daniels.

#### **Who is leading in the race for Indiana Attorney General?**

Among 900 likely voters, Republican Greg Zoeller has a slight lead over Democrat Linda Pence for this open seat (46% to 42%). The fact that 10% of the respondents are not sure yet who they will be supporting means this race should remain exciting till the end. The tightness of the race

can be seen in the fact that in more than half of the demographic categories used in this survey, neither candidate has a lead of 50% or more. In the categories where a candidate does have a lead of 50% or more, it either is barely over 50% or is in a category where it would be expected to be large such as among strong partisans.

Zoeller has expected leads among Republicans and McCain supporters. He also has a sizeable lead among respondents who attend church every week (56% to 34%), married respondents (51% to 38%), respondents with a graduate or college degree (11 point leads). A final interesting finding is that Zoeller is leading among the respondents who said they have made up their minds in the past few days about who to support for president (51% to 25%). It is a small percentage of respondents who have decided in the past few days (7% of all respondents), but if this trend continues among the undecided voters it could help push Zoeller to victory. Almost half of the people still undecided regarding the presidential race are undecided regarding the attorney general race.

Pence has expected leads among Democrats and Obama supporters. She has sizeable leads in several categories (African Americans, 70% to 16%; respondents who decided who to support in the presidential race after the debates, 56% to 34%; respondents who almost never go to church, 52% to 33%; divorced respondents, 55% to 30%; and widowed respondents, 59% to 33%). Unfortunately for Pence, many of these categories are small parts of the electorate. Like other Democratic candidates, Pence seems to be benefiting from the aggressive early voting effort of the Barack Obama campaign. She leads Zoeller among early voters (59% to 33%). If she can maintain her lead among early voters and cut into Zoeller's lead among those who will vote in Election Day, she could pull off a victory.

An analysis of the undecided voters confirms that this probably will be a close race to the end, but that it might be leaning toward Zoeller. Nineteen percent of the independents are undecided and the independents who have decided who support in this race are evenly divided (37% Zoeller – 37% Pence). Two of the next highest percentages of undecided voters are independents who lean Republican (14%) and independents who lean Democratic (13%). Not surprisingly among the independents who lean Republican who have decided who they are supporting in this race, Zoeller is winning (75% to 10%). Pence is leading among the independents who lean Democratic who have decided who they are supporting in this race (62% to 22%). Finally, 21% of the respondents who made up their minds about who to support in the presidential race in the past few days still are undecided in the race for attorney general. This is good news for Zoeller because the respondents who have made up their minds about the presidential race in the past few days and have decided who to support in the attorney general race have broken decisively for Zoeller (51% to 25%).

### **Who is leading in the race for Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction?**

Among 900 likely voters, Republican Tony Bennett is leading Democrat Richard Wood for this open seat (45% to 41%). This has not been a high-profile race and that might explain why 14% of the respondents still are undecided. There are many aspects of this race that are similar to the race for Attorney General. The Republican candidate is leading overall, but has significant leads

in fewer demographic categories than the Democratic candidate. While the Democratic candidate may have significant leads in more demographic categories than the Republican candidate, they are categories that make up small parts of the electorate.

Bennett leads in the categories that he would be expected to lead such as strong Republicans, Republicans, independents who lean Republican, and McCain supporters. His biggest lead other than the categories mentioned above is among respondents who attend religious services every week (56% to 31%). He has 19 point leads among voters who decided who support in the presidential race in the past few days (47% to 28%) and respondents with a college degree (52% to 33%). Finally, he has a 15 point lead among respondents who are married (51% to 36%).

Wood also leads in the categories that he would be expected to lead such as strong Democrats, Democrats, independents who lean Democratic, and Obama supporters. He also has a large lead among African Americans (68% to 16%). He has 20 point or larger leads among early voters (60% to 32%), voters who made up their minds about who to support in the presidential race after the debates (54% to 33%), respondents who almost never go to religious services (53% to 32%), and divorced respondents (50% to 29%).

There are several ways to analyze the undecided voters. One is to look at the categories with the largest percentages of undecided voters. Another is to look at the categories that make up the largest percentages of the population that have a large percentage of undecided voters. Independents have the largest percentage of undecided voters (29%). Bennett and Wood have split the decided independents evenly (Bennett 36%, Wood 35%). One quarter of the voters who have made their decision regarding the presidential race in the past few days are undecided on the race for superintendent of public instruction. This may benefit Bennett since he is 19 points up on Wood in this category among respondents who have made up their minds (47% to 28%). Wood may benefit from the 21% of the divorced respondents who are undecided since he currently leads in this category by 21 points (50% to 29%). Sixteen percent of females, who make up 53% of the respondents, are undecided on this race. Bennett and Wood are in a virtual tie in this category among those who have decided (Bennett 42%, Wood 41%). Sixteen percent of the respondents younger than 50, who make up 55% of the respondents, are undecided on this race. If the undecided voters younger than 50 vote the way the decided voters have, Bennett stands to gain quite a bit (Bennett 45%, Wood 38%). Sixteen percent of the respondents who said they will be voting on Election Day are undecided. These voters make up 83% of the respondents and break solidly for Bennett (Bennett 47%, Wood 37%). This is a close race that seems likely to be won by Bennett.

### **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 October 27, 28, and 29. 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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