



POLLING MEMORANDUM

FR: Fritz Wenzel, President, Wenzel Strategies

RE: Survey of Likely General Election Voters in Kentucky

Wenzel Strategies LLC is a national survey research firm with clients at all levels of politics. The company was established in 2005 and is based in Columbus, Ohio. It conducted a survey of likely voters in Kentucky regarding the race for US Senate 2014. The survey was conducted May 23-24, 2014 and included 608 respondents. The poll was balanced for party affiliation, gender, regional population, race, and age. The survey carries a margin of error of +/- 3.95 percentage points.

The latest survey of likely General Election Voters in Kentucky, and the first survey since Republican Mitch McConnell's convincing Primary Election victory last week, shows McConnell with a slight lead over Democratic Party challenger Alison Lundergan Grimes. McConnell leads Grimes by a 47% to 44% margin, with 8% yet undecided in the race.

While the ballot test in the race is close, the survey details reveal that McConnell enjoys a significant positive bump, likely from his primary victory and the publicity it generated, and that voters appear disinclined to change their Senate representation. McConnell's favorability rating is improved from the mid-40s a month ago to 55% today, while 42% hold an unfavorable opinion of him. By comparison, Grimes is seen favorably by 51%, compared to 42% who have an unfavorable opinion of her.

McConnell's primary victory has boosted his partisan support, as 66% of Republicans now say they would vote for him in the General Election, compared to 27% of GOPers who said they would rather vote for Grimes. This figure is better than Grimes' standing among her own party, as 58% of Democrats said they would vote for her, and that 34% of Democrats said they would rather vote for McConnell. The poll also shows McConnell has solidified the conservative wing of his party, as 73% of those who self-identified as "very conservative" are supporting McConnell. Grimes wins 57% of the "very liberal". While Grimes wins 22% of the "very conservative" vote, McConnell wins 35% of the "very liberal" vote.

Another indicator of McConnell's strength: he leads Grimes by a 41% to 25% margin among those who said they might be considering someone other than McConnell for U.S. Senate this November. This segment of respondents only represents 15% of the electorate, but it will very likely be the class of voters who will decide this election. On the same question about whether McConnell deserves re-election, 42% said he definitely deserves re-election, while 43% said he definitely does not deserve re-election. So, like in so many races, this slice of undecided voters will be key to both campaigns – but at this point McConnell has a clear and substantial advantage over Grimes.

Because the vast majority of likely voters in Kentucky already have formed some sort of opinion about both of these candidates, it appears that this race will come down to basic questions about who can best serve the needs of Kentucky, and the nation. McConnell clearly has an edge in that regard, and given that the national issues landscape this year is already tilting hard against Democrats and in favor of Republicans, this latest poll is strong evidence that McConnell holds a clear advantage in this race.