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GUADAGNO STRUGGLES WITH A NJ REPUBLICAN PARTY RE-SHAPED BY TRUMP

Fairleigh Dickinson University, October 25, 2017 – The sizable deficit in voter support facing Republican nominee and current Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno in her run for New Jersey governor could have a source outside of the state, in the form of President Donald Trump. The latest results from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind poll of likely voters in the 2017 gubernatorial election show that many formerly Republican voters have left the party, a movement that seems linked with disapproval of the polarizing President.

Recent reports that Guadagno is shifting policy positions to move closer to Trump and thus energize her base seem to make sense: the President remains somewhat popular among Republicans in New Jersey, with 76 percent of self-described Republican likely voters saying that they approve of the job he's doing. At the same time, he remains almost uniformly unpopular among self-described Democratic likely voters, with 94 percent disapproving, and only three percent saying that they approve.

But the figures tell a tale when they take account how voter loyalties have shifted. This study examined the differences between how likely voters in New Jersey are registered to vote, reflecting their previously held political preferences, and what they say about their partisanship now.

For instance, about six percent of likely voters registered as Democrats now say they are Republicans, while 14 percent of voters in New Jersey who are registered as Republican now identify as Democrats.

"It's pretty common for voters, especially those who are less engaged in politics, to move between being independent and partisan," said Dan Cassino, a professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson and an analyst for the poll. "It's much rarer to see this many people moving between Republican and Democrat."

Among likely voters currently registered as Republican, regardless of how they currently describe themselves, 64 percent say that they support Trump, with 21 percent disapproving. This is a sizable difference from the 74 percent approval among those voters who currently say that they're Republicans, whether they're registered as such or not. Similarly, while 94 percent of current Democrats disapprove of the job Trump is doing, the figure is lower – 84 percent – among voters who are registered as Democrats.

"While Trump still has pretty good approval numbers among New Jersey Republicans, that's partly because Republicans who don't like him have left the party," said Cassino. "There's been some replacement from former Democrats who like Trump, but the end result is a smaller, more uniform party."

Voters might shift between parties for all sorts of reasons, but the fact that both parties have become more uniform in their views of Trump indicates that the President is the driving force. There aren't many likely voters who are registered as Democrats and now say that they approve of the job Trump is doing as President – but 35 percent of them now call themselves Republicans.

In contrast, many New Jersey voters who are registered as Republicans, but now disapprove of Trump, are distancing themselves from the GOP. Take likely voters who are registered Republicans, and disapprove of the job Trump is doing: 30 percent still say that they're Republicans, but 59 percent now say that they're Democrats. All told, such shifts don't mean a smaller Republican Party, or a larger Democratic Party – but both parties being increasingly polarized with regard to Trump.

“These shifts put Guadagno in a tough place,” said Cassino. “It seems that some of the moderate Republicans that she and other candidates were banking on just aren’t Republicans any more.”

Such results also have major implications for other Republicans in New Jersey, who may have to please an increasingly pro-Trump Republican electorate, as well as voters in the general electorate who are much more skeptical of the President.

“Republican candidates, especially in states like New Jersey, might like to ignore the President,” said Cassino. “But given the space that he takes up the culture and in the media, that seems less and less possible.”

Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>

Radio actualities at 201.692.2846

For more information, please call 201.692.7032

Methodology - The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone October 11-15, 2017, using a listed sample of registered voters with a known history of voting in past elections. Results for the pool of 658 likely voters have a margin of sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points, including the design effect. The analyses based on voter registration are drawn from the subset of those responses that could be definitively matched with a registered voter, on the basis of the phone number, gender and age, a total of 320 respondents (MoE +/- 5%).

Likely voters are determined based on their responses to questions concerning their voting intentions and attentiveness to the 2017 gubernatorial election.

Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

The total combined sample is mathematically weighted for age, sex, and race based on the state’s voter registration list. 389 interviews were conducted on landlines and 269 were conducted on cellular telephones.

The sample was purchased from Marketing Systems Group and Aristotle and the research was funded by Fairleigh Dickinson University.

PublicMind recently received an “A” rating from statistician Nate Silver’s FiveThirtyEight blog. The ratings measure both accuracy and bias for all major polling services in the United States, providing an update to similar research the poll watchers conducted in 2014. PublicMind’s “A” rating puts it in the top 14 of the more than 380 polling institutes reviewed and graded from A+ through F. PublicMind was found to have a 94 percent accuracy rate for predicting election results, and is one of only two A-rated polling institutes with zero bias to their rankings.

Tables

And turning to the US, do you approve or disapprove [rotate options] of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

	Current (stated) Party ID			
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind
Approve	31%	3	76	28
Disapprove	62%	94	15	64
Don't Know	5%	2	7	8
Refused	2%	1	3	1

And turning to the US, do you approve or disapprove [rotate options] of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

	Party Registration (N 320 = ; MoE +/- 5%)			
	All	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	29%	14	21	64
Disapprove	65%	84	77	21
Don't Know	4%	1	2	11
Refused	2%	1	0	4

And turning to the US, do you approve or disapprove [rotate options] of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

		Party Registration (N 320 = ; MoE +/- 5%)			
Trump Approval	Current (stated) Party ID	All	Dem	Indp/None	Rep
Approve	Democrat with lean	8%	35		
	Republican with lean	80%	35	83	96
	Independent	12%	30	17	4
Disapprove	Democrat with lean	82%	90	66	59
	Republican with lean	7%	2	15	29
	Independent	11%	9	20	12
Don't Know	Democrat with lean	17%	50		11
	Republican with lean	50%			67
	Independent	33%	50	1	22
Refused	Democrat with lean	20%	50		
	Republican with lean	60%			100
	Independent	20%	50		

Question wording and order

ELEC1 through ELEC2 released previously

US1. And turning to the US, do you approve or disapprove [rotate] of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 8 DK
- 9 Refused (vol)

US2 through FARM7 released previously

D1 Regardless of who you might vote for, do you consider yourself a....ROTATE... Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent?

- 1 Democrat [Ask NJ11A]
- 2 Republican [Ask NJ11B]
- 3 Independent [If Independent, ask D1b]
- 4 Other [DON'T READ]
- 8 Don't Know [DON'T READ]
- 9 Ref [DON'T READ]

D1b Which way do you lean?

- 1 Democrat [Ask NJ11A]
- 2 Republican [Ask NJ11B]
- 3 Neither
- 8 DK (Vol)

Sample characteristics (weighted)

PID (with leaners)

Democrat	51%
Republican	32%
Independent	13%
Other/DK/Ref	4%

Race

White	73%
Black	13%
Hispanic	10%
Asian	2%
Other	3%

Gender

Male	48%
Female	52%

Age

18-34	9%
35-59	51%
60+	40%