

O'Donnell Winning Tea Party, Losing Delaware

Just days before the election, Republican Senate candidate Christine O'Donnell trails Democrat Chris Coons by a gaping 21 percentage points. According to the most recent poll by [Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind](#), Coons leads O'Donnell 57%-36% in Delaware's special election for U.S. Senate.

"It would be an historic comeback for her to win on Tuesday," said Dan Cassino, professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University and survey analyst for the university's PublicMind research group. "Democrats are preparing to lose some seats in the Senate, but they're drawing attention to Delaware because they think they have this one in the hole."

The Republican candidate has made advances among some groups. She now has the support of three of four Republicans, 76%, up from 68% in early October, though that compares to nearly nine of 10 Democrats (87%) who say they will vote for Coons.

Still, O'Donnell wins handily among the groups that, in other states, have made Tea Party candidates front-runners or contenders.

- Among those who, on the issue of abortion, describe themselves as "pro-life," O'Donnell runs ahead 56%-37%.
- Among those who describe themselves as pro-gun ownership rather than pro-gun control, she leads 55%-36%.
- Among those who disapprove of the president's job performance she wins handily 73%-18%.
- Among those who say the economy is on the wrong track she beats Coons by two-to-one, 60%-30%.
- Among those who have a favorable opinion of the Tea Party, she wins 82%-11%.

Yet, Delaware's likely voters approve of the president by 49%-44%, a figure almost exactly the reverse of the average of national polls.

"O'Donnell is behind because of the make-up of the Delaware electorate," Cassino said. "In many states, her support among pro-life, pro-gun and Tea Party supporters would be enough to put her over the top, but there just aren't enough in Delaware for her to win without expanding her base among moderates."

O'Donnell only runs even in the downstate counties (below New Castle County), 45%-47%. And just two of three voters (66%) who describe themselves as "conservative" say they will vote for her, unchanged from early October. One of four conservatives (26%) prefers Coons, as well as almost nine in 10 liberals (87%) and seven in 10 moderates (72%).

“The story would be almost the opposite for the Republicans had Castle been the nominee,” added Cassino. In a hypothetical match-up, Castle beats Coons by the margin of 54%-33%. “That 21-point gap between Castle and Coons is despite the fact that Coons is now better known, and has had the opportunity to present his case in ads and in debates.” Coons has favorable rating of 48% against 36% unfavorable. O’Donnell gets a favorable rating from 34% of voters, up four points from earlier in the month. But 10% have a “somewhat unfavorable” view of her, and 44% have a “very unfavorable” view of her, up 7 points, so that a majority of Delaware voters, 54%, have an unfavorable view of her.

“O’Donnell has made up some ground among her natural constituency – Republicans, pro-life and pro-gun voters,” said Cassino. “The next step would normally be to try and expand her support to moderates and independents – but there just doesn’t seem to be enough time or undecided voters left.”

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 797 randomly selected likely voters statewide in Delaware was conducted by telephone, using both landlines and cell phones, from Oct. 20 through Oct. 26, 2010 and has a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 973.443.8661*

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Background Memo and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from October 20, 2010, through October 26, 2010, using a randomly selected sample of 797 likely voters statewide in Delaware. The sampling error for 797 randomly selected respondents is +/- 3.5 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. Sample error for subgroups varies with the size of the subgroup. 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. All PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America, Inc. of Cedar Knolls, NJ. Professionally trained interviewers use a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection of land-line households is achieved through computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone-only-households, interviewed in the same time frame. The total sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age and gender.

Question: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	All	Men	Wom	Party			Race		Oct. 6
				Dem	Ind	Rep	white	AA	
Approve	49%	47	50	78	39	8	40	82	47%
Disapprove	44%	47	41	15	45	86	52	9	45%
Mixed/unsure	7%	6	9	6	16	6	7	9	8%

Question: In your opinion, do you believe that the economy is moving in the right direction or it off on the wrong track?

	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.	Oct. 6
Right direction	36%	35	36	56	23	9	38%
Wrong track	53%	54	51	30	64	84	53%
Unsure	11%	11	12	14	12	7	9%

Question: Now I'm going ask about some people. If you haven't heard of one of them, just say so. Have you heard of ... [ROTATE LIST]? Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ... [MATCH ROTATION]? Would that be very or somewhat?

	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Unsure/ no opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Chris Coons	2%	27%	21%	13%	13%	23%
Oct. 6	7	24	23	19	12	15
Christine O'Donnell	1%	18%	16%	12%	10%	44%
Oct. 6	3	16	14	18	11	37

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Question: In November DELAWARE will vote for a US Senator. If the election were held today, would you vote for ... or ...?

[rotate names]	All	Party ID			ideology			Region		Oct. 6
		Dem	Ind	Rep	liberal	mod	Conserve	New Castle	Kent & Sussex	
Chris Coons, the Democrat + lean Coons	56 1									52 1
Total	57%	87	46	17	87	72	26	64	47	53%
Christine O'Donnell, the Republican + lean O'Donnell	34 2									35 1
Total	36%	9	35	76	10	20	66	29	45	36%
Don't know (VOL)	5%	3	13	6	2	5	6	5	6	8%
Glenn Miller/ind. (VOL)	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	1	--	--
James Rash/Lib. (VOL)	--	--	2	--	--	1	--	1	--	--
Ref.	1%	1	4	1	--	2	2	1	1	3%

On the issues...

[rotate names]	All	Guns		Obama approval		Direction of Economy		Abortion		View of Tea Party	
		Pro-owners	Pro-control	App	Dis	Right	Wrong	Pro-life	Pro-choice	+	-
Chris Coons	57%	36	80	92	18	90	30	37	71	11	88
Christine O'Donnell	36%	55	16	3	73	6	60	56	22	82	7
don't know (VOL)	5%	6	3	3	7	2	7	5	6	5	3
Glenn Miller/ind. (VOL)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--
James Rash/Lib. (VOL)	--	1	--	1	--	--	1	--	1	1	1
Ref.	1%	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1

Question: And going back to the election for US Senator. If the election for US Senate were between... and ..., who would you vote for? [PROMPT AS NEEDED: This is just hypothetical. IF "don't know" ASK: "which way do you lean?"]

[rotate name]	All	Party ID			Gender		Region		Oct. 6
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	New Castle	Kent & Sussex	
Chris Coons, the Democrat +lean Coons	32 1								35 1
Total	33%	55	12	7	34	33	35	31	36%
Mike Castle, the Republican +lean Castle	52 2								49 1
Total	54%	39	61	74	53	55	54	53	50%
Unsure	9%	4	21	12	9	9	8	11	9%
Others	1%	--	5	1	1	1	1	1	1%
Ref.	3%	1	1	5	3	2	2	4	4%

Delaware's Senate and House Races by Comparison					
<i>Republicans</i>		<i>Democrats</i>		<i>Race/date</i>	<i>Dem advantage</i>
O'Donnell	36%	Coons	57%	2010 Senate (Oct. 28)	+21
Castle	54%	Coons	33%	2010 Senate (hypothetical, Oct. 28)	(-21)
Urquhart	36%	Carney	51%	2010 House (Oct. 29)	
O'Donnell	36%	Coons	53%	2010 Senate (Oct. 6)	+17
Castle	50%	Coons	36%	2010 Senate (hypothetical)	(-14)
Urquhart	36%	Carney	51%	2010 House	+15
O'Donnell	35%	Biden	65%	2008 Senate (Final)	+30
O'Donnell	26%	Biden	69%	2008 Senate (25 Sept.)	+43
Castle	61%	Hartley-Nagel	38%	2008 House (Final)	(-23)
Castle	62%	Hartley-Nagel	28%	2008 House (25 Sept.)	(-34)

Question: When it comes to the recent movement called the Tea Party, do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of Tea Party voters and candidates?

	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.	Oct. 6
Favorable	31%	36	26	11	30	62	34%
Unfavorable	52%	51	54	76	46	19	48%
Unsure/mixed	16%	13	20	13	24	18	18%

Question: On the issue of abortion, would you describe yourself as...or ...?

<i>[rotate]</i>	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.	Oct. 6
Pro life	37%	38	36	24	30	58	36%
Pro choice	54%	53	56	67	59	35	53%
DK (VOL)	6%	7	6	6	8	6	8%
Ref.	2%	3	2	3	3	2	3%

Question: On the issue of guns, would you describe yourself as...or ...?

<i>[rotate]</i>	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.
Pro gun ownership	48%	57	39	31	65	69
Pro gun control	42%	33	50	58	22	23
DK/mixed (VOL)	10%	9	11	11	13	6

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Question Wording and Order

[ASK HERE 1/3 AT RANDOM US1 AND 1/3 AT RANDOM US2 AND 1/3 AT RANDOM NEITHER: WHEN NOT ASKED HERE, US1 And US2 are asked after last DE series. TRACK PLACEMENT.]

US1. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

Approve
Disapprove
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]
Ref. [DON'T READ]

US2. In your opinion, do you believe that the economy is moving in the right direction or it off on the wrong track?

Right direction
Wrong track
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]
Ref. [DON'T READ]

DE1. [To be reported Oct. 29] Now, thinking about Delaware... In your opinion, do you think things in Delaware are moving in the right direction or have they gotten off on the wrong track?

Right direction
Wrong track
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]

DE2. Now I'm going ask about some people. If you haven't heard of one of them, just say so. Have you heard of ... [ROTATE LIST]? Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ... [MATCH ROTATION]? Would that be very or somewhat?

Chris Coons
Christine O'Donnell
John Carney
Glen Urquhart

Haven't heard of ... [SKIP TO NEXT NAME]
Very Favorable
Somewhat favorable (and favorable DK)
DK/Unsure [VOL]
Somewhat unfavorable (and unfavorable DK)
Very unfavorable

DE3. In November DELAWARE will vote for a US Senator. If the election were held today, would you vote for ... or ...?

[ROTATE NAMES]

Chris Coons, the Democrat
Christine O'Donnell, the Republican

Glenn Miller/independent. (VOL)
James Rash/Libertarian (VOL)
Don't know (VOL) [ASK: "which way do you lean?"]
Ref.

DE4 -DE7 to be released Oct. 29, 2010.

DE8. And going back to the election for US Senator. If the election for US Senate were between... and ..., who would you vote for?

[ROTATE NAMES]

Chris Coons, the Democrat
Mike Castle, the Republican
Glenn Miller/independent. (VOL)
James Rash/Libertarian (VOL)
Don't know (VOL) [ASK: "which way do you lean?"]
Ref.

DE9. [To be Released Oct. 29, 2010.]

[ASK HERE 1/3 AT RANDOM US1 AND 1/3 AT RANDOM US2 AND 1/3 AT RANDOM BOTH]

Finally, just some questions about yourself...

D1A. Regardless of who you might vote for, do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent?

Democrat
Republican
Independent [ASK: which way do you lean?"]
Other [DON'T READ]
Don't Know/Ref [DON'T READ]

D1B. When it comes to the recent movement called the Tea Party, do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of Tea Party voters and candidates?

Favorable
Unfavorable
Don't know

D2. In thinking about government and politics, do you consider yourself to be liberal, moderate, or conservative?

Liberal
Moderate
Conservative
DK/Ref [DON'T READ]

D3A. On the issue of abortion, would you describe yourself as...or ...?

ROTATE

Pro life
 Pro choice
 DK (VOL)

D3B. On the issue of guns, would you describe yourself as ... or... ?

ROTATE

Pro gun ownership
 Pro gun control
 DK/mixed/neither (VOL)

Sample Characteristics	
weighted %	
49	male
51	female
6	cell only
78	White
14	AA
2	Hisp
1	Asian
5	Other/ref.
9	18-29
20	30-39
33	40-59
36	60+
25	65+
40+13	Dem+ lean D
24+12	Rep + lean R
37-13-12=12	Ind/Other-leaners
16	KENT
25	Sussex
59	New Castle