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QuickTakes!

**STOCKTON POLLING INSTITUTE POLL:
VanDrew Leads Grossman by 23 Points in 2nd District Congressional
Race; in U.S. Senate Race, Hugin Leading Menendez by 10 Points in
South Jersey District**

September 19, 2018

Democrat Jeff VanDrew holds a 23-percentage-point lead over Republican Seth Grossman, 55 percent to 32 percent, in the battle for New Jersey's open 2nd Congressional District seat, according to a Stockton University poll released today.

Mr. Grossman has campaigned as an ally of President Donald Trump, who won the 2nd District by 5 percentage points in 2016. However, only 41 percent currently think Mr. Trump is doing a good or excellent job as president, with 49 percent grading him as poor and 10 percent as fair, according to the poll of 535 likely voters.

Sen. VanDrew, a state senator representing all or parts of three counties in the district, is viewed favorably by 49 percent and negatively by 11 percent. Forty percent are not familiar with him. Mr. Grossman at this point is largely unknown across the sprawling South Jersey district, with 60 percent unfamiliar with the former Atlantic City councilman and Atlantic City freeholder. Mr. Grossman is viewed favorably by 20 percent and unfavorably by 20 percent.

Four independent candidates in District 2, William Benfer, Steven Fenichel, John Ordille and Anthony Parisi Sanchez, each registered one percent support in the poll.

The Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton Universities interviewed 535 adult residents of the 2nd District who were screened as likely voters. Live interviews working from the Stockton campus called landline and cell telephones September 12-18, 2018. The poll's margin of error is +/- 4.2 percentage points.

Senator VanDrew is doing better among his Democratic base (88 percent) than his opponent is among Republicans (65 percent), according to the poll. The Democrat is attracting support from 17 percent of Republicans, compared to 2 percent of Democrats who support Mr. Grossman.

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Breakdown of partisan support by affiliation			
	Democrats	Republicans	Unaffiliated/Independent
VanDrew	88%	17%	49%
Grossman	2%	65%	24%

Meanwhile, GOP challenger Bob Hugin is leading incumbent Democratic U.S. Senator Bob Menendez in the 2nd District by 10 percentage points, 46 percent to 36 percent.

Sen. Menendez, who was tried last year on corruption charges that were eventually dropped, is viewed unfavorably by 56 percent. Mr. Hugin, a former pharmaceutical company CEO, is seen favorably by 37 percent and unfavorably by 19 percent, with 41 percent of district voters unfamiliar with him.

“This looks like bad news for Senator Menendez and good news for Bob Hugin, but keep in mind that the 2nd District is more rural and more moderate than most of New Jersey,” said Michael W. Klein, interim executive director of the Hughes Center.

“This is a district that sent Republican Frank LoBiondo to Congress for the last 24 years and voted for Donald Trump in 2016,” Dr. Klein said. Rep. LoBiondo is retiring from the House.

Asked to name their most important election issue, poll respondents identified taxes or income taxes (16 percent) as their top choice. Eleven percent says President Trump is the major issue, and nine percent identified control of Congress. Those wanting a Democratic blue wave outnumber respondents seeking to retain GOP control in Washington by more than a 3-1 margin.

Eight percent identified health care or the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as the top issue, and 75 percent say it is a significant or extremely important factor in deciding how to vote. Forty-six percent oppose the president’s moves to weaken Obamacare, while 30 percent support such moves. A strong 72 percent say the ACA rule requiring coverage of pre-existing conditions should remain in effect, while 13 percent want it eliminated and 11 percent say it doesn’t matter.

Sen. VanDrew was criticized by Democratic primary opponents for voting against gun control measures in 2013. Among the 78 percent of district likely voters who find gun policy to be a major factor in their vote, a majority of 66 percent favor making gun laws stricter, including 89 percent of Democrats. Fourteen percent (but 40 percent of Republicans) want to loosen gun control laws, and 18 percent want no change.

In June, Mr. Grossman was reported as criticizing diversity as “un-American.” In the Stockton Poll, 61 percent say racial and ethnic diversity has a positive effect on society. Nineteen percent say it has a negative effect and 14 percent say it does not affect society

either way. A complete breakdown of the results is posted on the Polling Institute page at Stockton.edu/hughescenter.

Methodology

The poll was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. Live interviewers on the Stockton University 535 adult residents of the 2nd Congressional District who were screened as likely voters. The poll's margin of error is +/- 4.2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for the 2nd District population.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. The center is named for William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service to the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished and Visiting Professor at Stockton. The Hughes Center can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/StocktonHughesCenter> and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter.