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NBC News/Marist Poll

MISSISSIPPI:

Republicans Outpace Democrats on Generic Congressional Ballot...

Wicker Overwhelms Baria in Senate Race...

Run-Off in Senate Special Election Likely

For Immediate Release

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This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

Against a political backdrop marked by heightened enthusiasm for the midterm elections and fraught with differences in opinions between men and women and young and old, Mississippi Republicans have a strong advantage on the question of which party should control Congress and the party's candidate they will support.

More than three in four Mississippi voters (77%), including 81% of Democrats, 79% of Republicans, and 71% of independents, declare this year's midterm elections are very important. And most voters say their vote will send a message. A majority (51%) of Mississippi voters say their ballot will signal more Republicans are needed in Congress to help pass Donald Trump's agenda. 39% say their vote will indicate more Democrats are needed to serve as a check and balance on Trump's power. While partisan allegiances are alive and well, a plurality of independent voters (47%) report more Democrats are needed to balance Trump's presidential power.

A 33-point gender gap exists on this question. While 60% of men say their vote will signal more Republicans are needed to advance Trump's policies, women divide. 46% of women think more Democrats are needed to be a check on the executive branch, and 43% say more Republicans are needed to pass the president's policies. Generational differences are also present. Voters under 45 years old (50%), especially those under 30 years of age (57%) say their vote will send

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a message more Democrats are needed to balance Trump’s power. 59% of voters age 45 or older say more Republicans need to be elected.

While neither Republicans nor Democrats have an enthusiasm advantage, a majority of registered voters in Mississippi (54%) say they prefer a Congress controlled by Republicans. 36% prefer a legislative branch controlled by Democrats, and 11% are unsure. While most Democrats (93%) and Republicans (94%) prefer their own party in congressional power, there is little consensus among independents. 39% prefer a Congress with the GOP at the helm, 32% favor a Democratic Congress, and a notable 28% are unsure.

“If you’re looking for a state where Republicans are in charge, Mississippi is the place,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Of the 15 states NBC News and Marist have polled this cycle, the Magnolia State is where you will find Republicans with majority support in the run up to the midterm elections.”

A similar picture emerges on the generic congressional ballot question where the Republicans (54%) have a 16-point lead over the Democrats (38%) among registered voters. Marking a 27-point gender gap, men (63%) are more likely to support the Republican than women 47%. 43% of women back the Democrat on the ballot in their district compared with only 32% of men. The Republican is the favorite of 63% of voters 45 or older. Nearly half of those under the age of 45 (48%) prefer the Democratic candidate. 43% say they support the Republican.

More than one in four Mississippi voters (26%) say the economy and jobs is the most important factor in deciding their vote for Congress. Health care follows with 21%. While the economy and jobs is the motivating issue for Republicans (24%), similar proportions of Democrats select health care (32%) and the economy and jobs (31%). Health care (27%) and the economy and jobs (26%) are also most cited by independents as motivating issues.

CNGVTISSIR. NBC News/Marist Poll Mississippi Tables October 13th through October 18th, 2018

Mississippi Registered Voters										
Now, let me list some issues that may factor into deciding your vote for Congress in November. Please tell me which one of these items you think will be the most important factor in deciding your vote.										
The economy and jobs	Health care	Federal taxes and spending	Abortion	Immigration	Guns	Foreign policy and terrorism	Vol. All equally	Vol. None	Other	Unsure
Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Mississippi Registered Voters	26%	21%	10%	8%	7%	7%	10%	1%	1%	2%

NBC News/Marist Poll Mississippi Registered Voters. Interviews conducted October 13th through October 18th, 2018, n=856 MOE +/- 4.7 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Nearly two in three voters (65%) consider the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court to be a voting issue. Of those with this view, a plurality (41%) say they are more likely to vote for a congressional candidate who supported the Kavanaugh nomination. 24% say they are more likely to back a candidate who opposed the appointment, and 32% report it makes no difference to their vote.

In the race for U.S. Senate in Mississippi, Republican incumbent Roger Wicker (57%) leads

Democrat David Baria (31%) by 26 points among likely voters statewide including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or have already voted. Libertarian Danny Bedwell has 2% while Reform Party candidate Shawn O'Hara has 1%. Nine percent are undecided. Among registered voters, Wicker is backed by 54% and Baria has the support of 30%. Libertarian candidate Bedwell receives 3%, and the Reform Party candidate O'Hara has 1%. Ten percent are undecided.

61% of likely voters with a candidate preference for U.S. Senate strongly support their choice of candidate. 64% of Wicker's supporters, compared with 56% of Baria's backers, say they are firmly committed to their candidate of choice. 19% of likely voters are persuadable in this contest, that is, they are either undecided or report they may vote differently.

In a head-to-head contest between Wicker (60%) and Baria (32%), Wicker has a 28-point lead among Mississippi likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Seven percent are undecided.

In the special election to fill the Senate seat of Thad Cochran, at this time no candidate clears 50% to avoid a run-off election in late November. 38% of Mississippi likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or have already voted support Cindy Hyde-Smith, the currently appointed senator, and 29% back Mike Espy. Chris McDaniel garners 15% of the vote while Tobey Bartee receives 2%. 15% are undecided. Among registered voters, Hyde-Smith leads with 36% followed by Espy with 28%, McDaniel with 14%, and Bartee with 3%. Seventeen percent are undecided.

"For poll watchers who like to explore different scenarios, Mississippi's special election is an attention grabber," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "If there ends up a run-off, which seems likely at this point, and the control of the Senate is at stake, national attention will turn to Mississippi."

Nearly three in ten Democrats (65%) back Espy while 68% of Republicans support Hyde-Smith. 36% of independents likely to vote are for Espy. 23% are for Hyde-Smith, and 19% support McDaniel. Notable proportions of Democrats (21%) and independents (18%) are undecided.

66% of likely voters with a candidate preference for the special election say they strongly support their choice of candidate. 71% of Hyde-Smith's supporters, compared with 68% of Espy's backers and 56% of McDaniel's supporters, are firmly committed to their candidate. 26% of likely voters are persuadable in this special election contest.

If the special election goes to a run-off election between Espy and Hyde-Smith, the most plausible match-up, 50% of Mississippi likely voters tell the NBC News/Marist Poll they would support Hyde-Smith while 36% report they would support Espy. 13% are undecided. Among

registered voters, 47% support Hyde-Smith, and 38% back Espy.

In a run-off between Espy and McDaniel, Espy (43%) leads McDaniel (36%) by 7 points among likely voters in Mississippi. A notable 19% are undecided. Espy (43%) leads McDaniel (35%) by a similar margin among registered voters in Mississippi.

One in three registered voters (33%) say they would prefer to learn the candidates' positions on the issues through debates, and 28% prefer to get information about candidates through media interviews. Advertisements and mailings (12%), town halls (11%), and rallies (3%) are less preferable.

A majority of registered voters (57%) report they would have a less favorable view of a candidate if that candidate did not participate in a televised debate. 14% would have a more favorable one, and 21% say it makes no difference to them. Eight percent are unsure.

55% of Mississippi adults approve of the job President Trump is doing in office including 39% who strongly do so. 35% disapprove including 23% who are strongly of this opinion. Among likely voters, 60% approve of the job President Trump is doing.