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Poll of Massachusetts Registered Voters & Likely Democratic Primary Voters
August 25-31, 2014

N=1624 Massachusetts Registered Voters with a subsample of a 685 Likely Democratic Primary Voters. The RV sample has an adjusted margin of error of +/-2.94%; the DEM LV sample has an adjusted margin of error of +/-4.55%

See <http://uml.edu/polls> for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Coakley leads Grossman by 32 in Democratic Primary

Massachusetts voters will go to the polls Tuesday, Sept. 9 to select candidates in primary elections for the major political parties; the Gubernatorial General Election will be held on Nov. 4, 2014. Attorney General Martha Coakley remains the favorite to succeed Deval Patrick as Governor of the Bay State. In the Democratic primary, she bests her nearest opponent, Steve Grossman, by a seemingly prohibitive 32 percentage point margin, 52% to 20%, among likely Democratic primary voters. Don Berwick comes in third, with 9% support. Grossman has seen a much-needed injection of money into his campaign in the last week, but it appears he may be too far behind to close the gap with media advertising. The candidates are set to debate this Wednesday. However, absent a major event, it appears as though Martha Coakley is headed towards an easy victory next Tuesday with a large double-digit lead well outside the 4.55% margin of error.

Coakley leads Baker by 9 in General Election Matchup

If the election were held today and the candidates were Martha Coakley and Charlie Baker, along with two independent candidates, Evan Falchuk and Jeff McCormick, Coakley would be the choice of Massachusetts Registered Voters. She leads with 41% of the vote to Baker's 32%, McCormick's 7% and Falchuk's 1% while 17% of the voters remain undecided. Coakley's lead over Baker is bolstered in part by a large gender gap; she leads by 22 points among women, 48% to Baker's 26%. Baker leads among men, 40% to 32%. While women typically support

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Democratic candidates at a higher rate than men, this larger gender gap could simply be based on the fact that gender represents an easy heuristic on which voters can make snap decisions in a poll. Currently, only 6% of Massachusetts Democrats and Unenrolled voters report paying very close attention to this race. However, it may also be part of a widening national gender gap given the perceived distance between the national political parties on a wide variety of issues.

Signs of Soft Support for Coakley

While much of this poll is good news for Coakley, there are some signs to suggest that a potential General Election race between Coakley and Baker would be a closely fought affair. In terms of party identification, the measure of an individual's attachment to the Democratic and Republican parties, key to any victory in Massachusetts for a Republican is to woo Independents and Democrats to their cause. In a longer questionnaire answered only by Likely Democratic Primary Voters, a group made up of 469 registered Democrats and 216 unenrolled registrants, there are clearly signs that Democrats in Massachusetts are somewhat disgruntled with their unified state government. Consider that:

- Fewer than 50% (48%) of likely Democratic primary voters believe that Coakley will be the next Governor; 20% choose Baker, while another 18% of voters are uncertain, with the remaining choosing one of the other candidates.
- Baker enjoys a net favorability among likely Democratic Primary Voters of +18; Coakley's own net favorability among likely Democratic primary voters is higher (+49), but the number of Democratic primary voters who rate her unfavorably (19%) is quite high, and within the margin of error of Baker's 'unfavorable' rating (24%)
- A plurality of likely Democratic primary voters believe that it's better when state government has divided control rather than unified control; 46% would prefer that the Governor and Legislature be controlled by different parties, while only 43% think that the government should be controlled by the same party.
- When asked how much trust they have for the state government on Beacon Hill, 39% said 'always' or 'most of the time,' while 60% said 'only some of the time' or 'never.'
- Finally, more than half of likely Democratic voters expect the next Governor to raise taxes, but 28% say that they would prefer to have lower taxes and fewer services, suggesting that nearly a third of Democratic primary voters feel over-taxed by the state.

This campaign is likely to see more outside money than any past Massachusetts Gubernatorial Elections, and Coakley will have to endure a negative campaign that is sure to mention her previous defeat to Scott Brown in the 2010 US Senate Special Election – an election that she was heavily favored to win.

Anti-Casino Double-Down is Down by Double-Digits

Critics of the casino gaming law passed in 2011 qualified an initiative for November's ballot that would repeal the law and ban casino gaming in the state. Things do not look promising for proponents of the repeal, as presently only 36% of registered voters say they would vote Yes and support the repeal, while 59% say they would vote No, leaving the present law as it stands and allowing casino development to continue. This is the state of affairs before the campaign season has begun, and the No side is certain to have considerably more money at their disposal.

Spoiler Candidates?

With three independent candidates slated to appear on the November ballot and with Jeff McCormick, in particular, polling at 7%, it is worth asking if he is pulling support from either the Democratic or Republican side. Interestingly, McCormick is getting the support of 6% of Democrats and 6% of Republicans when we examined the leaned party identification cross-tabulations. McCormick and Evan Falchuk, also running as an independent, collectively have the support of 14% of 18-29 year olds (13% for McCormick and 1% for Falchuk). While the two major political parties are quite entrenched within American politics and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, young voters continue to demonstrate that they yearn for more options in the political process.

Kerrigan leads Democratic field for Lieutenant Governor; Tolman with apparent lead over Healey in AG race

Steve Kerrigan leads Leland Cheung and Mike Lake in a race characterized by an exceedingly high number of undecided voters, with just a week to go before Democrats make their selection for Lieutenant Governor. Kerrigan is polling at 24% to Lake and Cheung's 10%, respectively; 57% of likely Democratic voters reported being undecided.

In the race for Attorney General, Warren Tolman leads Assistant Attorney General Maura Healey 39% to 34%, with 27% of likely voters undecided.