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IOWA: TIGHT RACE FOR SENATE

Monmouth University Poll indicates Gov. Branstad landslide

The **Monmouth University Poll** finds an extremely tight race in the Iowa U.S. Senate contest, with state legislator Joni Ernst holding a nominal one point lead over Rep. Bruce Braley. In the race for Governor, incumbent Terry Branstad holds a substantial 21 point lead over challenger Jack Hatch.

In the election for Iowa's open U.S. Senate seat, voters who are likely to cast a ballot next month divide their vote – 47% for Republican Joni Ernst and 46% for Democrat Bruce Braley. Another 5% say they will vote for a different candidate and 2% remain undecided.

In the race for Iowa Governor, 58% of likely voters support Republican incumbent Terry Branstad and 37% support Democratic challenger Jack Hatch. Another 3% say they will vote for a different candidate and 2% remain undecided.

All major party candidates have strong support among their partisan bases, although Hatch's base support is slightly lower than the others. Specifically, 96% of Republicans support Branstad for governor and 95% support Ernst for senator, while 84% of Democrats support Hatch and 94% support Braley. Independent voters in Iowa support Branstad over Hatch by a sizable 60% to 30% margin in the race for governor, but split their vote for senator 44% for Braley and 42% for Ernst. The poll also found that Ernst leads among male voters by 54% to 41% and Braley leads among women voters by 50% to 40%.

Early voting has begun in Iowa and 1-in-3 voters polled by Monmouth University report that they have already filled out their ballots. The Democrats do better among early voters than among those who have yet to cast their ballots. Among the votes already cast for Governor, Branstad has a 51% to 44% lead over Hatch, but a much larger 61% to 34% lead among likely Iowa voters who have yet to cast a ballot. In the U.S. Senate race, early voters support the Democrat Braley by a 54% to 41% margin over Ernst. However, Ernst has a 50% to 42% advantage among the two-thirds of the electorate who have yet to vote.

“Having votes in the bank helps Braley in this tight race. Ernst has to count on her voters coming out in the next week and a half,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

The poll finds that Iowa voters offer a divided assessment of the leading Senate candidates’ qualities. When asked which candidate understands the concerns of Iowa residents, 35% choose Ernst, 35% choose Braley, 6% choose both, and 19% say neither candidate does. When asked which candidate is honest and trustworthy, 34% say Ernst, 29% say Braley, 8% say both, and 24% say this describes neither candidate.

Iowa voters express a slight but insignificant preference for GOP control of the U.S. Senate – 39% would like to see the Republicans in charge, 35% prefer the Democrats, and 25% say it makes no difference. The *Monmouth University Poll* also found that likely voters in Iowa hold a negative opinion of Pres. Barack Obama. Just 40% approve of the job the president is doing and 53% disapprove.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from October 18 to 21, 2014 with 423 Iowa voters likely to vote in the November general election. This sample has a margin of error of ± 4.8 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. If the election for U.S. Senate was today, would you vote for Joni Ernst, the Republican, Bruce Braley, the Democrat, or some other candidate? [NAMES WERE ROTATED] [IF UNDECIDED: If you had to vote for one of the following at this moment, do you lean more toward Joni Ernst or more toward Bruce Braley?]

(with leaners)	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-49	50+
Joni Ernst	47%	5%	42%	95%	54%	40%	46%	47%
Bruce Braley	46%	94%	44%	3%	41%	50%	47%	46%
Other candidate	5%	1%	9%	1%	3%	6%	6%	4%
Undecided	2%	0%	4%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%

2. If the election for Governor was today, would you vote for Terry Branstad, the Republican, Jack Hatch, the Democrat, or some other candidate? [NAMES WERE ROTATED] [IF UNDECIDED: If you had to vote for one of the following at this moment, do you lean more toward Terry Branstad or more toward Jack Hatch?]

(with leaners)	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-49	50+
Terry Branstad	58%	14%	60%	96%	63%	53%	60%	57%
Jack Hatch	37%	84%	30%	3%	34%	40%	37%	38%
Other candidate	3%	2%	5%	0%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Undecided	2%	1%	5%	0%	1%	4%	1%	3%

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		SENATE VOTE CHOICE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-49	50+	Ernst	Braley	Undecided
Approve	40%	87%	33%	4%	36%	43%	36%	41%	5%	79%	27%
Disapprove	53%	8%	57%	91%	58%	49%	56%	53%	91%	13%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	5%	11%	4%	6%	8%	8%	6%	4%	8%	23%

4. Which party would you like to see control the U.S. Senate – the Republicans or the Democrats, or would it make no difference?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		SENATE VOTE CHOICE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-49	50+	Ernst	Braley	Undecided
Republicans	39%	3%	30%	86%	46%	32%	38%	40%	79%	3%	13%
Democrats	35%	90%	23%	0%	31%	38%	30%	38%	1%	79%	9%
No difference	25%	7%	45%	11%	21%	28%	33%	21%	17%	18%	73%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	0%	2%	3%	2%	2%	0%	2%	3%	0%	5%

[QUESTIONS 5 AND 6 WERE ROTATED]

5. Which candidate for Senate understands the concerns of people like you – Joni Ernst, Bruce Braley, both of them, or neither of them?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		SENATE VOTE CHOICE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-49	50+	Ernst	Braley	Undecided
Ernst	35%	3%	24%	84%	42%	29%	34%	37%	76%	1%	2%
Braley	35%	81%	28%	1%	32%	38%	31%	37%	0%	79%	10%
Both	6%	2%	10%	2%	4%	7%	9%	5%	6%	3%	16%
Neither	19%	11%	32%	9%	16%	22%	25%	17%	14%	14%	55%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	3%	6%	3%	5%	4%	1%	4%	3%	3%	18%

6. Which candidate for Senate is honest and trustworthy – Joni Ernst, Bruce Braley, both of them, or neither of them?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		SENATE VOTE CHOICE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-49	50+	Ernst	Braley	Undecided
Ernst	34%	3%	25%	76%	38%	30%	30%	36%	71%	2%	3%
Braley	29%	67%	23%	2%	24%	35%	23%	32%	1%	67%	6%
Both	8%	7%	10%	6%	10%	6%	7%	9%	6%	9%	15%
Neither	24%	19%	34%	13%	25%	23%	35%	19%	17%	21%	55%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	3%	8%	3%	3%	7%	4%	4%	5%	1%	21%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from October 18 to 21, 2014 with a statewide random sample of 423 likely Iowa voters drawn from a list of registered voters who voted in at least one of the last four general or primary elections and indicate they are likely to vote in the upcoming election. This includes 336 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 87 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, gender, and party registration based on state registration list information on the pool of voters who participated in recent midterm elections. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and L2 (voter list). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.8 percentage points. Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS			
Likely Voter Sample (weighted)			
Self-Reported Party ID	Party of Registration	Gender	Age
28% Democrat	35% Democrat	47% Male	9% 18-34
29% Republican	41% Republican	53% Female	21% 35-49
43% Independent	23% Independent		35% 50-64
			35% 65+

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			MARGIN OF ERROR		AGE	SENATE VOTE CHOICE			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	GENDER			Ernst	Braley	Undecided	
					Male	Female					
Unweighted N	423	142	154	125	189	234	83	336	183	195	38
moe	4.8%	8.2%	7.9%	8.8%	7.1%	6.4%	10.8%	5.4%	7.3%	7.0%	15.9%

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