

Contact:

PATRICK MURRAY

732-263-5858 (office)

732-979-6769 (cell)

pdmurray@monmouth.edu

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*For more information:
Monmouth University Polling Institute
West Long Branch, NJ 07764
www.monmouth.edu/polling*

NECK AND NECK IN NEW JERSEY'S 3rd DISTRICT

Myers leads Adler by 3, but many voters still undecided

The race to fill the open seat in New Jersey's 3rd Congressional district is extremely close, according to a *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* of voters living in that district. The poll finds 41% of registered voters prefer Republican Medford Mayor Chris Myers while 40% support Democratic State Senator John Adler. Among likely voters, Myers leads Adler by a slightly larger margin – 44% to 41%, with a sizable 15% who are undecided. However, this lead is well within the survey's margin of error.

Myers holds a 79% to 9% lead among his fellow Republicans, while Adler has a 79% to 4% advantage among Democratic voters. Independent voters split 40% for Myers and 37% for Adler, although 23% of this voter group are still undecided. The seat is among those districts targeted nationally by Democrats this year. It became open after GOP incumbent Jim Saxton announced his retirement after 24 years in Congress.

In Ocean County – considered the more Republican part of the district – Myers has a strong 45% to 33% lead. However, in the rest of the district – including parts of Burlington County and Adler's hometown of Cherry Hill in Camden County – the Democrat is favored by 45% to 38%.

“Despite being out-fundraised and outspent, Myers is holding his own in the district,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “This part of the state is traditionally Republican, but has been trending Democratic in recent years. Turning out the base will be the key to winning this seat.”

In the presidential race, Barack Obama currently holds a slight 46% to 43% lead over John McCain among likely voters in the 3rd. The district was also competitive four years ago when George Bush beat John Kerry by just 2 percentage points in the 3rd. However, many Kerry supporters also voted for the Republican Saxton, who was reelected with 63% of the vote. There appears to be less ticket-splitting this year than in 2004 – 76% of McCain’s supporters say they will vote for Myers and 10% prefer Adler, while 71% of Obama voters support Adler and 13% prefer Myers.

The number one concern for 3rd district voters is the economy, which is named by 54% as one of the top issues that will decide their vote for Congress. Issues farther down the list of voter priorities include Iraq (25%), health care (20%), state taxes (18%), and federal taxes (14%). Interestingly, despite the recent start of the high-profile court case involving an alleged Fort Dix bombing plot, terrorism and security is named as a top issue by just 6% of district residents.

Nearly half of the district voters say they don’t know which candidate would be better on any of eight issues asked about in the poll. Chris Myers has small advantages on the economy – 30% say the Republican would better handle this issue compared to 26% who give the edge to Adler – national security (31% to 24%), veteran’s issues (31% to 23%), Iraq (28% to 23%), and energy issues (27% to 25%). John Adler has a negligible edge on health care (28% to 25%) and the environment (27% to 25%), while the two are tied on handling social security (26% to 26%).

The candidates are basically even on who is seen as best able to help New Jersey families make ends meet – 32% for Adler and 30% for Myers. On the other hand, the Republican gets a small 30% to 23% edge on keeping taxes and spending under control. And despite the fact that one candidate is actually a state legislator and the other a mayor, neither seems to be tagged as more a “part of the problem in Trenton” – 30% say this describes Adler and 27% say this describes Myers.

The poll found that one negative is sticking to Myers – 49% see him as the candidate who will continue the policies of George Bush, while 7% say this is true of Adler. President Bush’s job performance rating among District 3 voters stands at just 24% approve to 69% disapprove. This is worse than Governor Jon Corzine’s 33% to 54% negative job approval in the district.

Both congressional candidates garner similar personal ratings from voters in the district. Myers is viewed favorably by 28% and unfavorably by 8%, while Adler is viewed favorably by 26% and unfavorably by 8%. However, this means that about two-thirds of voters say they don’t know enough about either candidate to form an opinion – 65% for Myers and 66% for Adler.

“This is supposed to be one of the hottest races in the country, but with four weeks to go, third district voters have almost no clue who is running. This race may be settled by the outcome at the top of the ticket more than anything else,” said Murray.

If party labels end up being the decisive cue for undecided voters, Adler could have an opening according to the poll. Among all registered voters in the district, 38% would like to see the Democrats in control of Congress, compared to 31% who prefer Republican control and 27% who say it doesn’t make a difference which party is in control. Among currently undecided voters, though, Democratic control of Congress is preferred by a larger 40% to 15% margin.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 500 registered voters in New Jersey’s 3rd Congressional District from September 30 through October 2, 2008. This sample has a margin of error of ± 4.4 percent. This report also includes analysis on a smaller group of 430 “likely voters” with a ± 4.7 percent margin of error. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Gannett New Jersey newspaper group (Asbury Park Press, Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune).

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 President was held today, would you vote for John McCain the Republican, Barack Obama the Democrat, or some other candidate? [IF UNDECIDED: At this moment do you lean more towards McCain or more towards Obama?] [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

(with leaners)	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Burlington/ Camden	Ocean
McCain	42%	43%	4%	41%	87%	37%	49%
Obama	46%	46%	86%	45%	6%	54%	34%
Other candidate	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%
(VOL) Undecided	11%	10%	8%	13%	7%	8%	15%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	281	219

2. If the election for U.S. Congress in your district was held today, would you vote for Chris Myers the Republican or John Adler the Democrat? [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

(with leaners)	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Burlington/ Camden	Ocean
Myers	41%	44%	4%	40%	79%	38%	45%
Adler	40%	41%	79%	37%	9%	45%	33%
(VOL) Other candidate	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
(VOL) Undecided	19%	15%	16%	23%	12%	17%	21%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	281	219

Composite Table: Strength of Vote Choice

2. If the election for U.S. Congress in your district was held today, would you vote for [ROTATE] Chris Myers the Republican or John Adler the Democrat?
3. At this moment do you lean more towards Myers or more towards Adler?
4. Are you very sure about voting for [Name]; or might you change your mind before Election Day?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Burlington/Camden	Ocean
Sure Myers	26%	30%	0%	23%	58%	25%	28%
Weak Myers	13%	12%	4%	12%	18%	11%	14%
Lean Myers	2%	2%	0%	4%	3%	2%	3%
Undecided- Other	19%	16%	16%	23%	12%	17%	22%
Lean Adler	4%	3%	5%	6%	1%	5%	2%
Weak Adler	12%	11%	18%	14%	3%	13%	10%
Sure Adler	24%	27%	56%	17%	5%	27%	21%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	281	219

[QUESTIONS 5, AND 6 WERE ROTATED]

5. Is your general impression of Chris Myers favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Burlington/Camden	Ocean
Favorable	28%	32%	5%	33%	48%	26%	30%
Unfavorable	8%	8%	16%	5%	3%	7%	8%
No opinion	65%	60%	80%	62%	48%	66%	62%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	281	219

6. Is your general impression of John Adler favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Burlington/Camden	Ocean
Favorable	26%	30%	36%	30%	13%	32%	18%
Unfavorable	8%	8%	0%	8%	17%	8%	8%
No opinion	66%	62%	64%	61%	70%	60%	74%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	281	219

7. What are the two or three most important issues in determining how you will vote for Congress? [Note: Results do not add to 100% because multiple responses were accepted]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Burlington/Camden	Ocean
Economy / creating jobs	54%	53%	58%	60%	47%	58%	49%
War in Iraq	25%	26%	33%	26%	18%	28%	21%
Health care, prescription drug costs	20%	19%	22%	21%	13%	20%	19%
State (Property) Taxes	18%	20%	14%	22%	19%	21%	13%
Federal / Income Tax	14%	16%	10%	15%	16%	18%	9%
Education / schools	8%	9%	9%	8%	6%	10%	5%
Gas prices / energy	7%	7%	11%	9%	3%	6%	8%
Party control of Congress	7%	7%	8%	4%	11%	4%	12%
Terrorism / Homeland security	6%	6%	2%	10%	7%	7%	6%
Ethics corruption / cleaning up	5%	5%	3%	4%	7%	3%	6%
Abortion / Gay marriage / social issues	4%	5%	3%	3%	4%	5%	4%
Budget deficit	4%	4%	1%	7%	3%	5%	3%
Environment / global warming	4%	3%	5%	5%	3%	6%	2%
Other foreign policy	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Wall Street / mortgage bailout	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%
Social security	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	2%
Cost of living	3%	2%	3%	5%	2%	2%	4%
Immigration	2%	3%	0%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Veterans issues	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Relations with Israel	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Other	7%	6%	7%	5%	9%	4%	9%
Don't Know	10%	10%	13%	7%	7%	9%	11%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	281	219

8. Regardless of which congressional candidate you support, please tell me tell me if you think Chris Myers or John Adler would better handle each of the following issues. [ITEMS WERE ROTATED] [NOTE: READ PERCENTAGES ACROSS ROWS FOR THIS TABLE]

	Myers	Adler	(VOL) Both	(VOL) Neither	(VOL) Don't know	N
The economy	30%	26%	3%	2%	39%	500
National security	31%	24%	3%	1%	41%	500
The situation in Iraq	28%	23%	2%	1%	45%	500
Energy issues	27%	25%	2%	1%	45%	500
Health care	25%	28%	2%	2%	43%	500
The environment	25%	27%	2%	2%	44%	500
Social security	26%	26%	2%	2%	44%	500
Veteran's issues	31%	23%	1%	1%	44%	500

9. Which candidate [READ ITEM] – Myers, Adler, both, or neither one? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED] [NOTE: READ PERCENTAGES ACROSS ROWS FOR THIS TABLE]

	Myers	Adler	Both	Neither	(VOL) Don't know	N
Will help New Jersey families make ends meet	23%	25%	7%	12%	33%	500
Has high ethical standards and integrity	20%	14%	17%	12%	37%	500
Is part of the problem in Trenton	10%	13%	17%	23%	38%	500
Is likely to continue the policies of George Bush	47%	5%	2%	19%	28%	500
Will keep taxes and spending under control	26%	19%	4%	20%	31%	500

10. Would you rather see the Democrats or Republicans in control of Congress next year, or doesn't it make a difference?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			CONGRESS VOTE			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Myers	Adler	Undecided	Burlington/Camden	Ocean
Democrats	38%	39%	82%	32%	4%	5%	71%	40%	43%	31%
Republicans	31%	32%	3%	23%	71%	66%	3%	15%	29%	33%
No difference	27%	24%	14%	36%	22%	24%	24%	35%	22%	32%
(VOL) Depends	3%	4%	1%	6%	3%	4%	1%	6%	4%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	1%	3%	0%	2%	1%	5%	2%	2%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	190	199	109	281	219

[QUESTIONS 11, AND 12 WERE ROTATED]

11. Do you approve or disapprove of the job George Bush is doing as president?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			CONGRESS VOTE			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Myers	Adler	Undecided	Burlington/Camden	Ocean
Approve	24%	26%	1%	21%	51%	43%	5%	20%	19%	30%
Disapprove	69%	67%	98%	73%	42%	46%	93%	68%	74%	62%
(VOL) No opinion	8%	7%	1%	6%	7%	10%	2%	12%	7%	9%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	190	199	109	281	219

12. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Jon Corzine is doing as governor?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			CONGRESS VOTE			COUNTY	
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Myers	Adler	Undecided	Burlington/Camden	Ocean
Approve	33%	35%	46%	32%	25%	21%	49%	29%	33%	33%
Disapprove	54%	54%	39%	56%	71%	70%	38%	52%	52%	56%
(VOL) No opinion	13%	11%	14%	12%	4%	9%	12%	19%	14%	11%
Unwtd N	500	430	150	200	140	190	199	109	281	219

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted and analyzed by the Monmouth University Polling Institute research staff. The telephone interviews were collected by Braun Research on September 30 through October 2, 2008 with a statewide random sample of 500 registered voters in New Jersey's 3rd congressional district. For results based on this voter sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. 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.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS</i>			
<i>Registered Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
<i>32% Dem</i>	<i>47% Male</i>	<i>21% 18-34</i>	<i>82% White</i>
<i>36% Ind</i>	<i>53% Female</i>	<i>39% 35-54</i>	<i>8% Black</i>
<i>32% Rep</i>		<i>40% 55+</i>	<i>7% Hispanic</i>
			<i>4% Asian/Other</i>
<i>Likely Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
<i>31% Dem</i>	<i>49% Male</i>	<i>18% 18-34</i>	<i>81% White</i>
<i>37% Ind</i>	<i>51% Female</i>	<i>40% 35-54</i>	<i>8% Black</i>
<i>32% Rep</i>		<i>42% 55+</i>	<i>8% Hispanic</i>
			<i>3% Asian/Other</i>

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