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NJ CD12: VERY TIGHT RACE IN DEM PRIMARY *Greenstein and Watson-Coleman lead the pack*

The *Monmouth University Poll* finds state Senator Linda Greenstein and Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman are running neck-and-neck for the Democratic nomination in New Jersey's 12th Congressional District. The race, which also includes Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula and Princeton scientist Andrew Zwicker, is characterized by wide disparities in regional strength for the candidates.

In the race to succeed Congressman Rush Holt, Greenstein has the support of 25% of likely Democratic primary voters and Watson-Coleman has 24%. Chivukula garners 11% of the vote and Zwicker has 6%. However, 1-in-3 voters (34%) remain undecided with just over two weeks to go before the primary election.

"Despite the very tight race, one thing does seem certain. New Jersey's Congressional delegation will include a woman for the first time in twelve years," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. The only Republican running for the seat is also a woman, Dr. Alieta Eck, although the district is considered to be safe Democratic territory.

The race for the Democratic nomination has been hotly contested from practically the moment Holt announced his retirement three months ago. The three state legislators carved out their party's organizational support in the portions of the district covered by their home counties, giving them preferential ballot treatment and the early lead in those areas. This includes:

Mercer County – Watson-Coleman leads here with 42% of the vote, followed by Greenstein, who also represents part of the county, at 19%. Zwicker, a Mercer resident, has 9% and Chivukula has 6%. Mercer has the smallest undecided vote at 25%.

Middlesex County – Greenstein has 43% of the vote here, followed by Chivukula, who also represents a couple of towns in the district, at 10%. Zwicker has 6% and Watson-Coleman has 4%. Another 36% are undecided.

Somerset County – Chivukula takes 35% of the vote here, with Watson-Coleman at 12%, Greenstein at 10%, and Zwicker at 1%. Another 41% are undecided.

The only portion of the district without a native son or daughter in the race is Union County, which is dominated by the city of Plainfield. This part of the district awarded its party line to Watson-Coleman, but the poll shows a very tight race here with Watson-Coleman at 21% and Greenstein at 18%, followed by Chivukula at 10% and Zwicker at 1%. Fully half (50%) of the Union County electorate, though, is undecided.

Pollster Murray commented, “Union County may be the lynchpin in this race. There is a hotly contested municipal election in Plainfield that should spur turnout. While both factions in the local contest have thrown their support to Watson-Coleman, a council slate of candidates supported by the Plainfield mayor appear in a separate column and Chivukula heads a column of off-the-line countywide candidates engaged in a battle with Elizabeth power-broker Sen. Ray Lesniak. Watson-Coleman’s ballot position should help her win over most of the undecided vote, but this may be undercut by the local elections’ cross-currents.”

[Note: an earlier version of this release erroneously stated that the council candidates supported by Mayor Adrian Mapp were bracketed in Chivukula’s column.]*

The poll also found that Watson-Coleman has solid support among African-American voters (46%) while Greenstein leads among white Democrats (33%) in the district. There are no significant gender differences in the primary vote.

Greenstein and Watson-Coleman garner similar personal ratings from District 12 Democrats. Greenstein holds a 40% favorable to 6% unfavorable rating and Watson-Coleman has a 37% favorable to 5% unfavorable rating. Just over half of likely Democratic voters have no opinion of either candidate – 54% for Greenstein and 57% for Watson-Coleman. Chivukula receives a 25% favorable to 3% unfavorable rating, with 72% having no opinion. Zwicker receives a 14% favorable to 4% unfavorable rating, with 82% having no opinion.

Voter commitment may also come into play. Among those who have selected a candidate, fully 79% of Watson-Coleman voters say they will not change their minds before primary day compared to 60% of Greenstein voters who are similarly committed to their candidate. Two-thirds (67%) of Chivukula voters say they won’t change their minds about their choice and 59% of Zwicker voters are similarly committed to their candidate.

Rep. Rush Holt is very popular among his fellow Democrats in the district – 54% strongly approve of his job performance and 32% somewhat approve, while only 7% disapprove – and his endorsement could carry some weight among less committed voters. More than 4-in-10 (42%) likely primary voters say that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who is endorsed by Holt.

Among undecided voters, about 1-in-4 specifically say that Holt’s endorsement would make them more likely to vote for any of the four candidates – including Watson-Coleman (28%), Greenstein (27%), Chivukula (26%) and Zwicker (26%). Among those who have initially chosen or are leaning toward a candidate, 23% of voters who are currently supporting a candidate other than Watson-Coleman say a Holt endorsement would make them more likely to change their vote to support her and a similar 24% of non-Greenstein voters say that a Holt endorsement would make them more likely to vote for her. About 1-in-5 (21%) non-Chivukula voters would consider voting for him if he garnered Holt’s endorsement and 16% of non-Zwicker voters say the same for a Holt endorsement of Zwicker.

Poll director Murray observed, “Watson-Coleman has the strongest base support going into the final two weeks of this campaign and has virtually locked up Mercer County, which is the biggest prize in this four-county district. Greenstein’s success will hinge on being able to turn out less enthusiastic voters, particularly in her home county of Middlesex where she already has a formidable lead. The wild card in this race is Union County. The voters there are largely uncommitted and are less familiar with any of the candidates. The extent to which local backers, especially in Plainfield, get out the vote for Watson-Coleman could be the key to victory.”

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from May 15 to 18, 2014 with 504 registered Democrats likely to vote in New Jersey’s 12th Congressional District primary in June. This sample has a margin of error of ± 4.4 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 the Democratic nomination for U.S. Congress was today, would you vote for Andrew Zwicker, Linda Greenstein, Upendra Chivukula, or Bonnie Watson-Coleman? [*IF UNDECIDED: At this moment, do you lean toward Andrew Zwicker, Linda Greenstein, Upendra Chivukula, or Bonnie Watson-Coleman?*] [*NAMES WERE ROTATED BASED ON COUNTY OF REGISTRATION*]

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE		
		Mercer	Middle-sex	Somer-set	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other
Zwicker	6%	9%	6%	1%	1%	4%	6%	7%	5%	6%	7%	2%	11%
Greenstein	25%	19%	43%	10%	18%	19%	25%	30%	23%	27%	33%	10%	15%
Chivukula	11%	6%	10%	35%	10%	11%	14%	9%	13%	10%	14%	7%	10%
Watson-Coleman	24%	42%	4%	12%	21%	23%	23%	24%	24%	23%	16%	46%	16%
Undecided	34%	25%	36%	41%	50%	43%	31%	30%	35%	33%	31%	35%	48%

[*QUESTIONS 2 THROUGH 5 WERE ROTATED*]

2. Is your general opinion of Andrew Zwicker favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE			VOTE INTENT				
		Mercer	Middle-sex	Somer-set	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Zwicker	Greenstein	Chivukula	Watson-Coleman	Undecided
Favorable	14%	17%	12%	10%	12%	13%	16%	13%	13%	15%	15%	8%	21%	97%	8%	11%	11%	10%
Unfavorable	4%	3%	4%	7%	1%	7%	4%	2%	6%	2%	4%	3%	9%	0%	3%	6%	2%	5%
No opinion	82%	80%	83%	83%	86%	79%	80%	85%	81%	83%	81%	89%	71%	3%	89%	84%	87%	85%

3. Is your general opinion of Linda Greenstein favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of her?

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE			VOTE INTENT				
		Mercer	Middle-sex	Somer-set	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Zwicker	Greenstein	Chivukula	Watson-Coleman	Undecided
Favorable	40%	40%	54%	19%	28%	41%	41%	41%	37%	42%	47%	24%	36%	35%	95%	19%	29%	22%
Unfavorable	6%	8%	3%	3%	8%	10%	6%	4%	7%	5%	8%	2%	9%	11%	0%	14%	7%	6%
No opinion	54%	52%	43%	78%	64%	49%	53%	56%	56%	53%	45%	73%	55%	54%	5%	67%	64%	72%

4. Is your general opinion of Upendra Chivukula favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE			VOTE INTENT				
		Mercer	Middle-sex	Somer-set	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Zwicker	Green-stein	Chiv-ukula	Watson-Coleman	Unde-cided
Favorable	25%	24%	23%	46%	20%	24%	34%	20%	24%	26%	29%	17%	27%	34%	19%	94%	17%	17%
Unfavorable	3%	1%	4%	3%	4%	1%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	0%	0%	6%	0%	3%	1%
No opinion	72%	75%	74%	51%	77%	74%	64%	77%	73%	71%	68%	80%	73%	66%	74%	6%	81%	82%

5. Is your general opinion of Bonnie Watson-Coleman favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of her?

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE			VOTE INTENT				
		Mercer	Middle-sex	Somer-set	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Zwicker	Green-stein	Chiv-ukula	Watson-Coleman	Unde-cided
Favorable	37%	60%	16%	22%	32%	37%	40%	36%	38%	37%	31%	55%	32%	31%	28%	21%	94%	17%
Unfavorable	5%	9%	1%	4%	6%	5%	7%	4%	7%	4%	8%	1%	2%	16%	6%	17%	0%	4%
No opinion	57%	32%	83%	74%	62%	58%	52%	61%	56%	58%	61%	44%	66%	53%	66%	62%	6%	79%

6. As you may know, Congressman Rush Holt is retiring this year. Do you approve or disapprove of the job he has done in Congress? [PROBE: Is that strongly or somewhat (approve/disapprove)?]

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE			VOTE INTENT				
		Mercer	Middle-sex	Somer-set	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Zwicker	Green-stein	Chiv-ukula	Watson-Coleman	Unde-cided
Strongly approve	54%	67%	51%	48%	27%	44%	56%	59%	54%	54%	60%	34%	56%	62%	63%	68%	62%	40%
Somewhat approve	32%	21%	36%	32%	53%	36%	30%	30%	35%	29%	30%	40%	33%	29%	29%	26%	27%	37%
Somewhat disapprove	5%	4%	5%	9%	3%	8%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	1%	5%	4%	6%	4%	5%
Strongly disapprove (VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	4%	1%	4%	1%	0%	0%	3%
	8%	6%	6%	8%	17%	10%	7%	6%	5%	10%	4%	17%	9%	0%	3%	0%	6%	14%

7. How important is it to you that the next Representative for your district carry on Rush Holt's legacy – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE			VOTE INTENT				
		Mercer	Middle-sex	Somer-set	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Zwicker	Green-stein	Chiv-ukula	Watson-Coleman	Unde-cided
Very important	49%	56%	47%	48%	35%	46%	49%	53%	43%	53%	56%	33%	54%	64%	57%	70%	51%	37%
Somewhat important	29%	26%	33%	31%	23%	32%	27%	28%	33%	25%	27%	33%	24%	27%	27%	19%	29%	31%
Not too important	8%	5%	8%	9%	15%	8%	10%	6%	9%	7%	7%	12%	8%	0%	6%	5%	10%	9%
Not at all important (VOL) Don't know	9%	8%	7%	8%	15%	9%	11%	7%	11%	7%	7%	13%	7%	6%	9%	6%	9%	10%
	6%	4%	5%	4%	13%	6%	3%	7%	4%	7%	3%	9%	9%	3%	0%	0%	2%	12%

8. If Rush Holt endorsed one of the candidates, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it have no impact on your vote?

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE			VOTE INTENT				
		Mercer	Middle-sex	Somer-set	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Zwicker	Green-stein	Chiv-ukula	Watson-Coleman	Unde-cided
More likely	42%	47%	41%	38%	28%	43%	43%	42%	45%	40%	49%	26%	33%	59%	47%	50%	34%	39%
Less likely	4%	5%	3%	8%	1%	10%	2%	3%	5%	4%	5%	4%	5%	0%	4%	6%	0%	6%
No impact (VOL) Depends (VOL) Don't know	48%	40%	49%	48%	67%	44%	49%	48%	48%	48%	42%	63%	55%	34%	46%	41%	59%	46%
	4%	5%	4%	1%	1%	0%	5%	4%	0%	6%	3%	6%	2%	0%	2%	2%	4%	4%
	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	6%	7%	1%	1%	2%	5%

9. Would you definitely vote for, probably vote for, or not vote for [CANDIDATE NAME] if Rush Holt endorsed [him/her]? [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

	Definitely vote for	Probably vote for	Not vote for	(VOL) Don't know	No impact/less likely from Q8
Andrew Zwicker					
All voters	6%	17%	10%	12%	55%
Non-Zwicker voters	5%	11%	17%	12%	55%
Undecided	5%	21%	3%	14%	57%
Linda Greenstein					
All voters	13%	17%	7%	8%	55%
Non-Greenstein voters	7%	17%	14%	7%	55%
Undecided	7%	20%	5%	12%	57%
Upendra Chivukula					
All voters	8%	17%	8%	12%	55%
Non-Chivukula voters	6%	15%	13%	12%	55%
Undecided	7%	19%	3%	13%	57%
Bonnie Watson-Coleman					
All voters	13%	16%	8%	9%	55%
Non-Watson-Coleman voters	5%	18%	17%	12%	49%
Undecided	8%	20%	3%	12%	57%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from May 15 to 18, 2014 with a random sample of 504 likely voters in New Jersey's 12th Congressional District, including 412 via live interview on a landline telephone and 92 via live interview on a cell phone. The sample was drawn from a list of registered Democrat voters who cast ballots in at least one of the last four regular primary elections and further screened for those who report being either "certain" or "likely" to vote in this June's Democratic primary election. 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 4.4 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. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
42% Mercer	40% Male	24% 18-49	65% White
32% Middlesex	60% Female	34% 50-64	25% Black
12% Somerset		42% 65+	7% Hispanic
14% Union			4% Asian/Other

	LIKELY VOTERS	COUNTY				AGE			GENDER		RACE			VOTE INTENT				
		Mercer	Middlesex	Somerset	Union	18-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Zwicker	Greenstein	Chivukula	Watson-Coleman	Undecided
Unweighted N	504	152	151	102	99	94	128	269	202	302	302	124	45	22	110	59	96	217
moe	4.4%	8.0%	8.0%	9.7%	9.9%	10.1%	8.7%	6.0%	6.9%	5.6%	5.6%	8.8%	14.6%	20.9%	9.4%	12.8%	10.0%	6.7%

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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