

04/29/2008

Atlantic City Press

Pleasantville, N.J.
Daily 75951
Sunday 97845

GARDEN STATE

PRESS CLIPPING

Phone: 732-842-1616



Andrews' strong support fades as pollsters travel north

By **DEREK HARPER**

Statehouse Bureau, 609-292-4935

TRENTON — Democrats in southern New Jersey support their homegrown candidate for U.S. Senate, a poll showed Monday.

While U.S. Rep. Rob Andrews' support fades as one moves away from his district, the poll found either he or incumbent Sen. Frank Lautenberg would mop of the floor

with any of the announced Republican candidates.

Andrews, D-1st, gets the nod by a 37.1 percent to 28 percent margin over Lautenberg, D-N.J.

Four percent backed the third candidate, Morristown Mayor Donald Cresitello, while 4.5 percent preferred someone else and 26.4 percent made no selection. Voters will make their selection in the June 3 primary election, five weeks



LAUTENBERG ANDREWS

from now.

The Lautenberg campaign

latched onto poll numbers that show Andrews' strong support in Gloucester and Camden counties — where he has represented the 1st District in Congress since 1990 — falls abruptly in other counties.

Andrews thumps Lautenberg in Gloucester and Camden, where 57.5 percent of 426 polled voters chose Andrews and only 14.8 percent chose Lautenberg. Cresitello had 2.1

percent backing him, 4.2 percent chose "someone else" and 21.4 made no selection.

But outside his district is another story.

The 340 voters polled in The Press of Atlantic City's Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Ocean counties coverage area favored Lautenberg 39.4 percent to 14.1 percent. Five per-

See Andrews, Page A7

Andrews

(Continued from Page A1)

cent backed Cresitello, 5.8 percent chose "someone else" and 35.6 percent made no selection.

"This poll is bad news for Rob Andrews and great news for Sen. Lautenberg," Lautenberg spokeswoman Julie Roginsky wrote in an e-mail. "People in Andrews' own backyard still rate Lautenberg more highly. Lautenberg is ahead in Congressional Districts 2, 3 and 4 and also is ahead in Ocean County by a margin of 4 to 1. Andrews is less than a regional candidate: He is barely a hometown candidate."

But Michael Murphy, Andrews' general chairman, said fewer voters in those counties know the congressman. Murphy said that would change following Andrews' exhaustive schedule and again called for debates.

"Let's put both Sen. Lautenberg and Congressman Andrews behind podiums on the same stage," Murphy said. "Turn the lights on, turn the cameras on, and let the voters decide who is better suited to represent New Jersey over the next six years."

Murphy also cited figures that said 37 percent of those polled think Lautenberg should be re-elected into office, while 49 percent think it's time for someone else to represent New

Jersey. The number of those seeking change climbs to 54 percent when those polled are told the senator will take office at age 85.

Zogby International conducted the poll between April 22 and 24 on behalf of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Richard Stockton College. It sought voters in the state's first four congressional districts, essentially territory around and south of the I-195 corridor between Trenton and southern Monmouth County.

The poll of 1,005 likely Democratic voters had a 3.2 percent margin of error.

"This really comes as no surprise," Hughes Center Director Sharon Schulman said in a release. "After all, Congressman Andrews is a South Jersey guy from Camden County."

The poll also underscored the importance of June's primary, saying that no matter who wins, either Democrat would wallop any of the three Republican candidates if the general election were held now.

Polled voters chose Andrews over Republican candidates former Congressman Dick Zimmer 74 percent to 7 percent, state Sen. Joseph Pennacchio, R-Morris, Passaic, 77 percent to 3 percent; and Ramapo College of New Jersey professor Murray Sabrin 75 percent to 5 percent. The balance of voters were either unsure or said they would choose someone else.

Lautenberg also bested the Republicans by similar mar-

gins. Those polled preferred Lautenberg to Zimmer 73 percent to 8 percent; Pennacchio 74 percent to 7 percent; and Sabrin 73 percent to 8 percent, the poll found.

The poll also showed that while voters are dissatisfied with the direction of the country, they are pretty content with the local representatives who make the national decisions.

While 62 percent of voters give Lautenberg favorable marks, 55 percent thought similarly well of Andrews.

Andrews does the best with the wealthiest voters as well as middle-aged and somewhat younger voters.

Voters earning more than \$100,000 pick him over Lautenberg by a 42.3 percent to 28.8 percent margin.

Although Andrews did somewhat better than Lautenberg with the lowest-income voters, those with incomes of less than \$25,000, middle-income voters, those earning between \$25,000 and \$35,000, supported the Senate incumbent by a margin of 38.4 percent to 24.1 percent.

Additionally, voters ages 30 to 65 favored Andrews 42.7 percent to 29.1 percent.

The race is essentially a toss-up for young adults, but people polled over age 65 liked Lautenberg slightly better, 39.9 percent to 34.1 percent.

To e-mail Derek Harper at The Press:

DHarper@pressofac.com