

THAT TIME AGAIN



Daylight saving time ends at 2 a.m.
(Set your clock back one hour)

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 1, 2008

The Press

OF ATLANTIC CITY

50 CENTS
Toms River and north,
west of Williamstown: 75 cents daily

Press poll: Obama increases N.J. lead

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Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama has increased his lead over Republican John McCain in southern New Jersey to 13 points, in part by gaining ground in the state's southernmost counties, according to a poll released today by The Press of Atlantic City and The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg holds a 9.5 percent lead over Republican Dick Zimmer, although some of the incumbent's earlier support has shifted to undecided.

Republican Rep. Frank LoBiondo leads Democratic challenger Dave Kurkowski by a 2-to-1 margin in the 2nd Congressional District.

But the contentious 3rd Congressional District remains a dead heat, with more than 16 per-

Inside

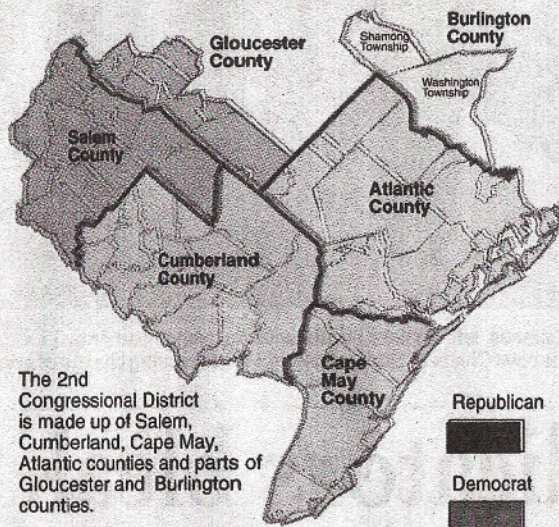
■ The Press of Atlantic City and The Richard Stockton College poll provided a political snapshot of southern New Jersey.

A4

☐ See Poll, A4

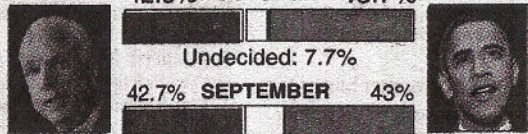
Poll takes political snapshot of southern New Jersey

The Press of Atlantic City and The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey jointly sponsored a political opinion poll concerning the presidential, U.S. Senate and congressional elections in southern New Jersey. The poll was conducted by Zogby International Oct. 27-29. Results are compared with an earlier poll, taken Sept. 18-20. Where figures do not add up to 100 percent, respondents expressed a different preference.



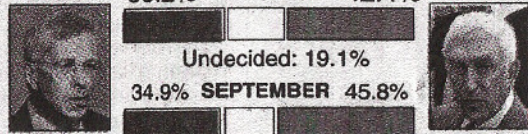
2nd District

President 42.3% OCTOBER 48.7%

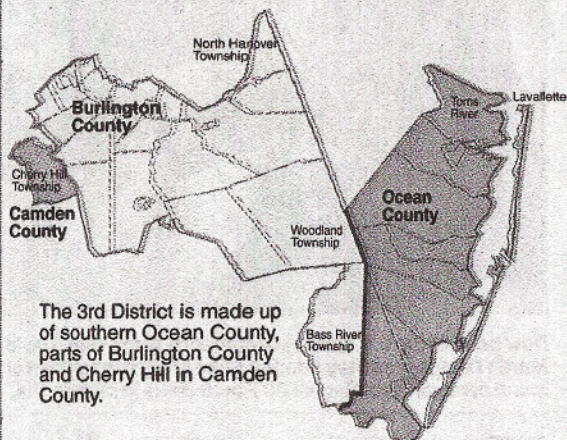


McCain Undecided: 13% Obama

Senate 36.2% OCTOBER 42.4%

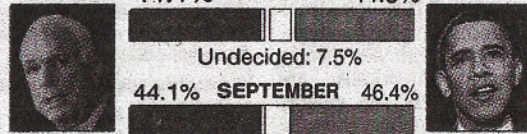


Zimmer Undecided: 16.6% Lautenberg



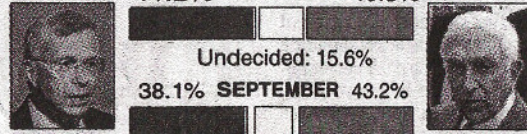
3rd District

President 44.1% OCTOBER 44.8%

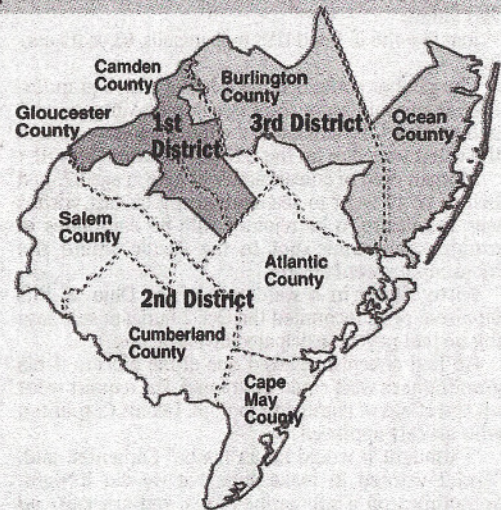


McCain Undecided: 8.9% Obama

Senate 41.2% OCTOBER 40.5%



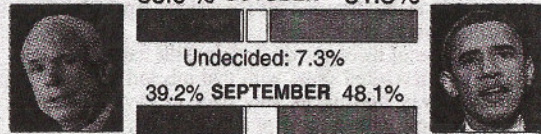
Zimmer Undecided: 13.2% Lautenberg



Southern New Jersey

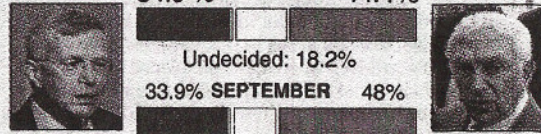
1st, 2nd and 3rd districts combined

President 38.6% OCTOBER 51.5%



McCain Undecided: 11.5% Obama

Senate 34.9% OCTOBER 44.4%



Zimmer Undecided: 14.9% Lautenberg

Congress**LoBiondo**

58.8% OCTOBER 28.8%



Undecided: 12.1%

62% SEPTEMBER 26%



Undecided: 11.9%

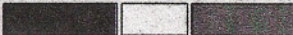
**Kurkowski****Congress****Myers**

39.4% OCTOBER 39.7%



Undecided: 16.5%

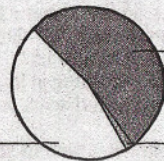
38.5% SEPTEMBER 37.1%



Undecided: 21.7%

**Adler**

Did the vice-presidential pick affect your decision?



Yes: 45.9 %

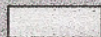
Not sure: 1.7 %

Top issues

Percent of respondents in all three districts who identified these topics as one of their top two issues:

Jobs and economy

77.5%

War, Iraq, foreign policy

32.6%

Health care and insurance

23.8%

Would support for the financial bailout make you more or less likely to vote for a candidate?

Much more likely

9.4%

Somewhat more likely

10.3%

Somewhat less likely

8.4%

Much less likely

5.7%

No difference

61.7%

Not sure

4.5%

Poll: Jobs and economy of highest concern for voters across the region

(Continued from A1)

cent undecided only days before Tuesday's election. If anything, the race between Republican Chris Myers and Democrat John Adler has tightened since the newspaper and college conducted a poll in late September.

Myers led by a mere 1.4 percent in a survey conducted Sept. 18-20. Adler now holds a 0.4-point edge in the poll conducted Oct. 27-29 by Zogby International pollsters.

It's not just the congressional race that's close in the 3rd District. Voters there are evenly divided between the presidential and U.S. Senate candidates.

The poll of 1,200 southern New Jersey voters found a strong gender gap, with men often supporting Republicans and women breaking by large margins for Democrats.

Zogby polled the 2nd and 3rd districts for The Press and Stockton. The college also polled in the 1st Congressional District, where incumbent Democratic Rep. Rob Andrews leads Republican Dale Glading 69 percent to 18 percent. The combined results for the three districts, in which 400 likely voters in each were interviewed, make up the southern New Jersey results.

The margin of error for the region was 2.9 percent, and between 4.5 and 5 percent in individual districts.

Jobs and the economy dominated voter concerns across the region. It was named a top issue by 77.5 percent of voters, a 5 percent increase since the September poll. The Iraq War and foreign policy was a distant second concern. Health care and insurance came in third.

"We asked a couple of probing questions to see if they had an effect on the choices people are making," said Sharon Schulman, director of the Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton.

Nearly half of respondents across the region — 46 percent — said the nomination of Democrat Joe Biden or Republican Sarah Palin for vice president influenced their pick for president. Fifty-two percent said it had no effect.

In a question about the federal bailout package recently enacted by Congress and President Bush, a strong majority — 62 percent across southern New Jersey — said it made no difference to them whether a candidate supported or opposed the bailout. About 20 percent said voting for the package would make them more likely to support a candidate, and 14 percent said it would motivate them not to vote for a candidate.

The presidential race

McCain's support has re-

mained relatively steady throughout the southern region, dropping only half a point from 39.2 percent six weeks ago. But Obama has gained four points to lead McCain 51.5 percent to 38.6 percent. Obama increased his lead in the heavily Democratic 1st District, which includes most of Camden County, from 24 points to 32 points.

Obama lost a little ground in the 3rd District, dropping 1.6 percent to 44.8 percent since September, while McCain held at 44.1 percent.

But undecided voters seem to be moving to Obama in the 2nd District, which includes Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Salem and parts of Gloucester and Burlington counties. While the presidential race was even in the district in September, Obama now leads 48.7 percent to 42.3 percent. Obama gained as the percentage of undecided voters dropped.

Across the region, Obama is winning double the percentage of Republicans, at 16 percent, as McCain is winning Democrats, 8 percent.

There is a clear difference in gender preference at the regional and district levels. Throughout southern New Jersey, men support McCain by a 48 to 42.5 percent margin. But women, who in recent years have voted in larger numbers than men, support Obama 60

percent to 30 percent.

Men in the 2nd District prefer McCain 53.6 percent to 40 percent, but women support Obama by a 57 percent to 32 percent spread. The gap is evident in similar ratios in the 3rd District.

Stockton professor Alan Arcuri attributed the gender gap to the presidential candidates' positions on the Iraq War.

"Men relate better to McCain on the issue," he said.

There are a few bright spots for McCain in the 2nd, however. He is winning among white voters 50 percent to 41 percent and is close among Hispanics, trailing 48.4 percent to 51.6 percent.

U.S. Senate

Incumbent Democrat Lautenberg still leads Zimmer in the 1st and 2nd districts. However, he has lost his slim lead in the 3rd District, with Zimmer squeaking past at 44.8 percent to 44.1 percent. Across the region and in the 2nd District, Lautenberg has lost about 3.5 points. But that support has mostly shifted to undecided.

The well-known incumbent only barely tops 50 percent in the Democratic 1st District. Regionwide, about 18 percent remain undecided, with 20 percent of Democrats still sitting on the fence.

Lautenberg leads by more than 9 percent across the region and is beating Zimmer by 6 per-

cent in the 2nd District.

Again, men and women split their allegiances. Men support Zimmer 44 percent to 40 percent across the three congressional districts. Women support Lautenberg by a margin of 48 percent to 26 percent.

2nd Congressional District

Incumbent Republican LoBiondo still dominates lesser-known challenger Kurkowski, a Cape May city councilman. LoBiondo leads by 30 points, 59 percent to 29 percent, similar to what the Press-Stockton poll found six weeks ago.

LoBiondo is winning 31 percent of the Democratic vote and 70 percent of independents. Kurkowski's only significant leads come among the 18 to 29 age group, at 42 percent to 20 percent; and black voters, at 75 percent to 16 percent. Both groups traditionally do not vote in large numbers, but their registration numbers have swelled because of excitement over Obama's campaign.

3rd Congressional District

It appears one of the nation's highest-profile open congressional races will remain agonizingly close until the end.

Six weeks ago, Republican Myers led Adler by 1.4 percent.

Adler gained slightly, and the candidates now are tied, with Adler at 39.7 percent and Myers at 39.4 percent. A large chunk of voters in this traditionally Republican district — 16.5 percent — have not made up their minds. Among independents, 23 percent are undecided.

Schulman attributed the tightness of the race to the fact that more Democrats are moving into the district, and most voters are unhappy with where the country is headed.

The gender gap in the 3rd is stark. Men prefer Myers, a military veteran, by a 50 percent to 30 percent margin. Women prefer Adler 49 percent to 29.4 percent.

Each candidate has demographic pockets of support. Adler leads among independents, 36 percent to 31 percent; young voters, 63 percent to 15 percent; black voters, 74 percent to 26 percent; and among people earning less than \$50,000 per year by a 2-to-1 margin. Myers leads among voters ages 30-49, 49 percent to 30 percent; white voters, 41 percent to 36.5 percent; Catholics, 46 percent to 32.5 percent; and among those earning more than \$50,000 per year, a lead of six to 10 points depending on the income bracket.

They are essentially tied among senior citizens, 41 percent to 40 percent for Myers.