

# THE WMUR POLL

University of New Hampshire Survey Center

## SUNUNU HOLDS COMFORTABLE LEAD

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DURHAM, NH -- Congressman John Sununu has a significant lead over incumbent Senator Bob Smith entering the final week of the campaign for U.S. Senate from New Hampshire.

These findings are based on the latest **WMUR Poll**, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center for WMUR-TV, Manchester, NH. Five hundred ninety-one (591) likely primary voters were interviewed between August 26 and September 3, 2002 (margin of sampling error, +/-4 percent). Included in this sample were 344 likely GOP primary voters (margin of sampling error, +/-5 percent) and 247 likely Democratic primary voters (margin of sampling error, +/-6 percent).

### U.S. SENATE

Entering the final week of the race for New Hampshire's U.S. Senate seat, two-term incumbent Republican Bob Smith of Tuftonboro trails his challenger, Republican John Sununu of Bedford, a three-term Representative from New Hampshire's 1<sup>st</sup> District. In the most recent WMUR Poll, 56 percent of likely GOP primary voters saying they plan to vote for Sununu, 34 percent plan to vote for Smith, 1 percent favor Ken Stremsky, and 9 percent are undecided. Sununu has held a lead over Smith throughout the campaign. In a June 2002 UNH poll, Sununu led Smith 52 percent to 40 percent.

Although Sununu enjoys a lead in the polls, Smith has more cash on hand to devote to final advertising and get out the vote efforts. Also, Smith can rely on his tested grass roots team to make sure his voters get to the polls on election day. And the Smith campaign had been narrowing the gap, but Sununu's lead widened over the Labor Day weekend following the candidates televised debate.

A further indication of the difficulties faced by Smith is that a majority of likely Republican primary voters believe that Sununu will win the election, regardless of who they plan to vote for - 54 percent believe Sununu will win, 26 percent believe Smith will win, and 19 percent are unsure.

### WHY VOTE FOR SMITH / SUNUNU?

When asked why they planned to vote for Sununu, likely primary voters said they simply like Sununu more than Smith (36%), agree with his positions on issues (19%), believe he is experienced (12%), dislike Bob Smith (7%), and cite Smith's briefly leaving the Republican Party in 1999 (6%).

The most frequently mentioned reasons why voters say they plan to vote for Smith are that they like him more than Sununu (32%), that he is experienced (24%), and that they agree with positions on the issues (19%). Smith has been unable to convince voters that his seniority in the Senate is a reason he should be elected. Only 2 percent of Smith voters cited seniority as the reason they plan to vote for Smith.

**SUB-GROUP ANALYSIS**

Sununu continues to hold his own against Smith among the Republican party base while attracting moderates and independent (undeclared) voters. Among conservative Republicans, Sununu leads Smith by 53 percent to 40 percent while he leads 55 percent to 33 percent among moderate Republicans and 67 percent to 23 percent among swing voters who plan to vote in the Republican primary.

While Sununu leads among all political and demographic subgroups examined in the poll, his strongest support comes from residents of central New Hampshire (Merrimack and Belknap counties), and among voters with college degrees and advanced degrees.

Smith’s strongest support comes from residents of voters with high school degree or less, those who have lived in New Hampshire for more than 20 years, and conservative Republicans.

**U.S. Senate Primary Election - Likely GOP Primary Voters**

	<u>Oct. '01</u>	<u>Feb. '02</u>	<u>April '02</u>	<u>June '02</u>	<u>Sept. '02</u>
Sununu	53%	51%	59%	52%	56%
Smith	35	37	30	40	34
Stremsky	-	-	-	2	1
Other/Neither	4	4	2	0	0
Undecided	8	8	10	6	9
	(N=202)	(N=230)	(N=237)	(N=230)	(N=335)

**Who Think Will Win U.S. Senate Primary Election - Likely GOP Primary Voters**

Sununu	54%
Smith	26
Undecided	19
	(N=337)

**Why Favor Smith?  
(Likely GOP Primary Voters)**

	<u>June '02</u>	<u>Sept. '02</u>
No reason, I like him better	30%	32%
His experience, has done a good job	16	24
Agree with him on the issues (in general)	18	19
Best chance to beat Shaheen	7	3
Work done for Veterans	4	3
Dislike Sununu	0	3
More conservative	0	3
Honest, Independent	0	3
Seniority	4	2
Agree with environmental positions	8	0
Other	6	4
Don't know	7	4
	(N=94)	(N=113)

**Why Favor Sununu?  
(Likely GOP Primary Voters)**

	<u>June '02</u>	<u>Sept. '02</u>
No reason, I like him better	35%	36%
Agree with him on the issues (in general)	28	19
His experience, done a good job	13	12
Smith left GOP	4	6
Don't like Smith	3	7
Time for a change	7	5
Best chance to beat Shaheen	3	5
Other	3	5
Don't know	4	5

(N=118) (N=188)

**WMUR Poll Methodology**

These findings are based on the most recent WMUR Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center from August 26 to September 3, 2002. A random sample of 591 likely September primary voters was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to +/- 4 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population. The margin of sampling error for likely GOP primary voters (N=344) is +/-5 percent and the margin of sampling error for likely Democratic primary voters (N=247) is +/-6 percent.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of adults and telephone lines within households, sex of the respondent, region of the state, and likelihood of voting in the September 10 NH Primary Election. In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.

Respondents to the Granite State Poll were asked:

- "I am going to read the names of the candidates who are expected to be on the Republican primary ballot for U.S. Senator. If you were voting in the Republican primary for U.S. Senate today, would you vote for ... Bob Smith ... John Sununu ... or Ken Stremsky?" (ROTATE CANDIDATES) IF OTHER, UNDECIDED, NEITHER, DK: "As of today, which of these candidates are you leaning towards?"
- "What is the MOST important reason why you plan to vote for (CANDIDATE)?"
- "Regardless of who you plan to vote for ... which candidate do you think will win the Republican Senate primary ... Bob Smith ... John Sununu ... or Ken Stremsky?"

**U.S. Senate, GOP Primary - Smith vs. Sununu vs. Stremsky  
(Likely GOP Primary Voters)**

<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b><u>Smith</u> 34%</b>	<b><u>Sununu</u> 56%</b>	<b><u>Stremsky</u> 1%</b>	<b><u>Other</u> 0%</b>	<b><u>Undecided</u> 9%</b>	<b><u>(N=)</u> 335</b>
Undeclared	34	52	0	0	14	105
Registered Republican	34	58	1	1	6	230
Conservative GOP	40	53	0	0	7	154
Moderate GOP	33	55	1	1	10	112
Swing Voter	23	67	5	0	5	47
Moderate DEM	28	68	2	2	0	14
Extremely int. in Primary	35	59	0	0	6	80
Very interested	27	68	0	1	4	155
Somewhat interested	46	33	3	0	18	94
Not very interested	6	60	5	2	27	5
Will vote unless emergency	33	54	0	0	13	57
Will definitely vote	34	57	1	0	8	275
1st District	31	58	2	0	9	154
2nd District	36	54	0	1	8	181
Northern NH	26	63	0	0	11	54
Western NH	33	63	0	0	4	32
Central/Lakes	30	66	0	2	2	66
Hillsborough County	38	45	2	0	14	94
Seacoast	36	54	1	0	8	89
18 to 29	35	57	0	0	8	71
30 to 45	33	62	3	0	3	102
46 to 64	34	61	0	0	5	55
65 and over	36	50	0	2	12	92
5 years or less in NH	36	53	0	1	10	27
6 to 10 years	14	84	2	0	0	32
11 to 20 years	30	58	0	2	10	72
More than 20 years	40	52	1	0	7	193
Male	36	55	0	1	7	194
Female	31	57	2	0	10	141
High school or less	41	42	0	2	15	77
Some college	38	57	0	0	5	89
College graduate	28	66	3	0	3	116
Post-graduate	32	59	0	0	10	47