

THE WMUR POLL

University of New Hampshire Survey Center

BENSON, FERNALD OPEN LEADS FOR NH GOVERNOR

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DURHAM, NH -- Craig Benson has maintained his lead in the race for the Republican gubernatorial nomination while Bruce Keough has passed Gordon Humphrey for second place. In the Democratic primary, Mark Fernald has opened a significant lead over Bev Hollingworth.

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).

GOP PRIMARY

The race for Governor of New Hampshire is promising to be one of the most expensive in U.S history. And the man who has spent the most money, Cabletron co-founder Craig Benson, is poised to win the Republican nomination.

In the latest WMUR poll, Benson is favored by 44 percent of likely Republican primary voters, 23 percent favor former State Senator Bruce Keough, 21 percent support former U.S. Senator Gordon Humphrey and 13 percent are still undecided. Support for Benson has been in the low 40 percent range throughout the summer, according to polls conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center.

The most interesting finding of the WMUR poll is that support for Gordon Humphrey, the early favorite in this race, continues to decline. Despite a large, and often negative advertising campaign, Humphrey is now in third place behind Bruce Keough.

Benson is also seen by Republican primary voters as the likely winner in the race. When asked who they thought would win, 46 percent of likely GOP primary voters named Benson, 25 percent named Humphrey, only 6 percent named Keough, and 23 percent are not sure.

When asked why they favor their choice for Governor, Benson supporters most frequently mention his business background (25%), that they like him better (24%), that they agree with him on the issues (19%), and that he has the best chance of winning in November (8%). Keough supporters cite his position on education funding (30%), that they agree with him on the issues (21%), that they just like him better than the other candidates (13%), and negative ads by other candidates (10%) as the reasons they plan to vote for him. Humphrey supporters mention that they agree with him on the issues (32%), that they like him better than the other candidates (26%), and his previous experience in politics (10%) as reasons they plan to vote for him

Democratic Primary

Among Democrats, State Senator Mark Fernald of Sharon has pulled away from State Senator Bev Hollingworth of Hampton. Currently, 50 percent of likely Democratic primary voters say they plan to vote for Fernald, 27 percent plan to vote for Hollingworth, 5 percent favor some other candidate, and 19 percent remain undecided. Support for Fernald has increased substantially over the summer. In the June Granite State Poll, Fernald and Hollingworth were essentially tied with 32 percent favoring Fernald and 31 percent favoring Hollingworth.

Likely Democratic primary voters also believe that Fernald is going to win the race. Currently, 46 percent think Fernald will win, 23 percent think Hollingworth will win, and 31 percent are undecided.

When asked why they plan to vote for Fernald, his supporters say they just like him better (22%), his position on education funding (21%), that they agree with him on the issues (17%), and that they agree with his position in support of an income tax (16%). Hollingworth supporters say they like her better than Fernald (24%), that they agree with her on the issues (23%), they agree with her position on education funding (15%), and that they don't like Fernald (14%) as reasons they plan to vote for her.

SUB-GROUP ANALYSIS

Mark Fernald gets his strongest support among liberal Democrats, people who are extremely interested in the primary, and voters who favor an income tax to fund schools.

Bev Hollingworth gets her strongest support from undeclared voters who plan to vote in the Democratic primary and women.

Craig Benson does well among most subgroups of Republican primary voters, but his strongest supporters are residents of the 1st Congressional District.

Bruce Keough's strongest supporters are voters with post-graduate educations, residents of western New Hampshire, voters who favor an income tax to fund education, and swing voters.

Gordon Humphrey's strongest support comes from conservative Republicans, supporters of a state wide property tax to fund education, and voters who have lived in New Hampshire for 5 years or less.

NH Gubernatorial 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> |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Benson | 13% | 20% | 37% | 43% | 44% |
| Keough | 4 | 6 | 8 | 15 | 23 |
| Humphrey | 37 | 37 | 27 | 23 | 21 |
| Corbin | 2 | 2 | - | - | - |
| Other/Neither | 8 | 9 | 10 | 6 | * |
| Undecided | 35 | 26 | 18 | 13 | 13 |
| | (N=200) | (N=226) | (N=236) | (N=229) | (N=335) |

Corbin has dropped out of the GOP race.

* Less than 1 percent.

Who Think Will Win NH Gubernatorial Primary Election - Likely GOP Primary Voters

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Benson | 46% |
| Humphrey | 25 |
| Keough | 6 |
| Undecided | 23 |
| | (N=336) |

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

| | <u>Sept. '02</u> |
|---|------------------|
| Business background | 25% |
| No reason, I like him better | 24 |
| Agree with him on the issues (in general) | 19 |
| Best chance to win in November | 8 |
| Negative ads by other candidates | 5 |
| Time for a change | 4 |
| Position on funding education | 4 |
| Dislike other candidates | 2 |
| Other | 4 |
| Don't know | 5 |
| | (N=146) |

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

| | <u>Sept. '02</u> |
|---|-------------------------|
| Agree with him on the issues (in general) | 32% |
| No reason, I like him better | 26 |
| Previous political experience | 10 |
| Don't trust Benson | 9 |
| More conservative | 7 |
| Dislike other candidates | 6 |
| Position on funding education | 5 |
| Other | 1 |
| Don't know | 4 |

(N=69)

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

| | <u>Sept. '02</u> |
|---|-------------------------|
| Position on funding education | 30% |
| Agree with him on the issues (in general) | 21 |
| No reason, I like him better | 13 |
| Negative ads by other candidates | 10 |
| Dislike other candidates | 7 |
| Best chance to win in November | 5 |
| Don't trust Benson | 3 |
| More conservative | 3 |
| Time for a change | 3 |
| Other | 1 |
| Don't know | 4 |

(N=75)

NH Gubernatorial Election - Likely DEM Primary Voters *

| | <u>Oct. '01</u> | <u>Feb. '02</u> | <u>April '02</u> | <u>June '02</u> | <u>Sept. '02</u> |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Fernald | 22% | 19% | 16% | 32% | 50% |
| Hollingworth | 24 | 18 | 23 | 31 | 27 |
| Normand | - | 7 | 8 | - | - |
| Other/Neither | 11 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 5 |
| Undecided | 41 | 44 | 44 | 25 | 19 |
| | (N=172) | (N=196) | (N=172) | (N=179) | (N=242) |

Normand has dropped out of the race.

Who Think Will Win NH Gubernatorial Primary Election - Likely DEM Primary Voters

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| Fernald | 46% |
| Hollingworth | 23 |
| Undecided | 31 |
| | (N=243) |

**Why Favor Fernald?
(Likely DEM Primary Voters)**

| | <u>Sept. '02</u> |
|---|------------------|
| Position on funding education | 21% |
| No reason, I like him better | 22 |
| Agree with him on the issues (in general) | 17 |
| Position on Income Tax | 16 |
| Dislike Hollingworth | 4 |
| Experience in NH Senate | 4 |
| Best chance to win in November | 2 |
| Don't know | 14 |
| | (N=120) |

**Why Favor Hollingworth?
(Likely DEM Primary Voters)**

| | <u>Sept. '02</u> |
|---|------------------|
| No reason, I like her better | 24% |
| Agree with him on the issues (in general) | 23 |
| Position on funding education | 15 |
| Dislike Fernald | 14 |
| Experience in NH Senate | 8 |
| She's a woman | 4 |
| Position on Income Tax | 3 |
| Other | 2 |
| Don't know | 8 |
| | (N=63) |

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:

- "Now, I am going to read the names of the candidates who are on the Republican primary ballot for Governor. If you were voting in the Republican primary for Governor today, would you vote for ... Craig Benson ... Gordon Humphrey ... or Bruce Keough?" ROTATE CANDIDATES IF DK/UNDECIDED: "Do you lean toward Keough, Humphrey or Benson?"
- "What is the MOST important reason why you plan to vote for BENSON/HUMPHREY/KEOUGH?"
- "Regardless of who you plan to vote for ... which candidate do you think will win the Republican primary for Governor ... Craig Benson ... Gordon Humphrey ... or Bruce Keough?"
- "I am going to read the names of the candidates who are on the Democratic primary ballot for Governor. If you were voting in the Democratic primary for Governor today, would you vote for ... Bev Hollingworth or Mark Fernald?" ROTATE CANDIDATES IF DK/UNDECIDED: "Do you lean toward Fernald or Hollingworth?"
- "What is the MOST important reason why you plan to vote for FERNALD/HOLLINGWORTH?"
- "Regardless of who you plan to vote for ... which candidate do you think will win the Democratic primary for Governor ... Mark Fernald or Bev Hollingworth?"

Republican Primary - N.H. Governor

| STATEWIDE | <u>Benson</u> 44% | <u>Humphrey</u> 21% | <u>Keough</u> 23% | <u>Other</u> 0% | <u>Undecided</u> 13% | <u>(N=)</u> 335 |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Undeclared | 49 | 18 | 22 | 0 | 10 | 102 |
| Registered Republican | 41 | 22 | 23 | 1 | 14 | 233 |
| Conservative GOP | 43 | 29 | 21 | 0 | 7 | 156 |
| Moderate GOP | 49 | 17 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 112 |
| Swing Voter | 34 | 10 | 34 | 3 | 20 | 47 |
| Moderate DEM | 43 | 0 | 36 | 2 | 19 | 14 |
| Extremely interested in Primary | 41 | 23 | 24 | 0 | 11 | 80 |
| Very interested | 47 | 19 | 27 | 0 | 7 | 155 |
| Somewhat interested | 39 | 21 | 16 | 1 | 23 | 94 |
| Not very interested | 60 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 35 | 5 |
| Will vote unless emergency | 32 | 21 | 24 | 2 | 21 | 56 |
| Will definitely vote | 46 | 20 | 22 | 0 | 11 | 275 |
| 1st District | 53 | 18 | 16 | 0 | 12 | 151 |
| 2nd District | 35 | 22 | 28 | 1 | 13 | 184 |
| Northern NH | 47 | 16 | 23 | 0 | 14 | 51 |
| Western NH | 36 | 7 | 45 | 0 | 13 | 32 |
| Central/Lakes | 48 | 19 | 24 | 0 | 9 | 66 |
| Hillsborough County | 37 | 24 | 17 | 1 | 21 | 96 |
| Seacoast | 48 | 26 | 20 | 0 | 7 | 89 |
| Favor Income tax for schools | 31 | 11 | 41 | 3 | 14 | 42 |
| Favor Sales tax | 51 | 20 | 18 | 0 | 11 | 73 |
| Favor Property tax | 34 | 32 | 26 | 0 | 8 | 20 |
| Favor Legalized gambling | 44 | 10 | 24 | 0 | 23 | 57 |
| Favor Const. Amendment | 42 | 26 | 21 | 0 | 10 | 123 |
| 18 to 29 | 45 | 23 | 19 | 0 | 13 | 71 |
| 30 to 45 | 37 | 21 | 29 | 1 | 12 | 102 |
| 46 to 64 | 55 | 18 | 20 | 0 | 6 | 55 |
| 65 and over | 42 | 22 | 21 | 0 | 15 | 94 |
| 5 years or less in NH | 32 | 35 | 19 | 1 | 14 | 27 |
| 6 to 10 years | 39 | 19 | 27 | 0 | 15 | 32 |
| 11 to 20 years | 45 | 17 | 24 | 0 | 15 | 72 |
| More than 20 years | 45 | 21 | 22 | 1 | 11 | 195 |
| Male | 47 | 23 | 23 | 0 | 8 | 194 |
| Female | 39 | 18 | 22 | 1 | 19 | 141 |
| High school or less | 60 | 16 | 17 | 0 | 7 | 77 |
| Some college | 40 | 22 | 20 | 0 | 18 | 91 |
| College graduate | 40 | 27 | 20 | 1 | 12 | 116 |
| Post-graduate | 31 | 12 | 47 | 0 | 10 | 47 |

Democratic Primary - N.H. Governor

| | <u>Hollingworth</u> 27% | <u>Fernald</u> 50% | <u>Other</u> 5% | <u>Undecided</u> 19% | <u>(N=)</u> 242 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| STATEWIDE | | | | | |
| Registered Democrat | 22 | 55 | 7 | 17 | 165 |
| Undeclared | 38 | 38 | 1 | 23 | 77 |
| Moderate GOP | 31 | 46 | 2 | 21 | 12 |
| Swing Voter | 17 | 50 | 7 | 27 | 49 |
| Moderate DEM | 34 | 42 | 5 | 20 | 85 |
| Liberal DEM | 25 | 58 | 5 | 12 | 94 |
| Extremely interested in Primary | 28 | 58 | 9 | 5 | 54 |
| Very interested | 27 | 50 | 6 | 18 | 107 |
| Somewhat interested | 25 | 44 | 2 | 29 | 70 |
| Not very interested | 28 | 40 | 3 | 29 | 9 |
| Will vote unless emergency | 34 | 42 | 6 | 19 | 33 |
| Will definitely vote | 26 | 51 | 5 | 18 | 204 |
| 1st District | 29 | 48 | 4 | 19 | 112 |
| 2nd District | 25 | 51 | 6 | 18 | 129 |
| Northern NH | 19 | 52 | 10 | 19 | 31 |
| Western NH | 19 | 43 | 15 | 23 | 27 |
| Central/Lakes | 26 | 60 | 0 | 14 | 42 |
| Hillsborough County | 33 | 43 | 4 | 20 | 72 |
| Seacoast | 27 | 52 | 4 | 17 | 69 |
| Favor Income tax for schools | 24 | 62 | 0 | 14 | 94 |
| Favor Sales tax | 31 | 44 | 2 | 23 | 36 |
| Favor Property tax | 53 | 41 | 1 | 5 | 11 |
| Favor Legalized gambling | 29 | 24 | 16 | 30 | 53 |
| Favor Const. Amendment | 22 | 62 | 8 | 8 | 20 |
| 18 to 29 | 22 | 52 | 7 | 20 | 36 |
| 30 to 45 | 31 | 47 | 8 | 14 | 107 |
| 46 to 64 | 37 | 45 | 0 | 18 | 41 |
| 65 and over | 13 | 54 | 3 | 31 | 49 |
| 5 years or less in NH | 34 | 55 | 3 | 9 | 33 |
| 6 to 10 years | 9 | 42 | 3 | 47 | 27 |
| 11 to 20 years | 29 | 60 | 6 | 5 | 41 |
| More than 20 years | 27 | 47 | 6 | 19 | 137 |
| Male | 17 | 54 | 11 | 18 | 110 |
| Female | 34 | 46 | 0 | 19 | 131 |
| High school or less | 18 | 50 | 4 | 28 | 54 |
| Some college | 29 | 47 | 9 | 15 | 45 |
| College graduate | 33 | 49 | 0 | 18 | 69 |
| Post-graduate | 25 | 52 | 9 | 13 | 73 |