



LYCOMING COLLEGE

POLLING INSTITUTE

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THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF COMMUNITY AND THE ECONOMY

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Sherwood Still Trails Carney, New Lycoming College Poll Finds

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. - Representative Don Sherwood, the Republican incumbent in the 10th congressional district, has gained no ground on Democratic challenger Christopher Carney over the last month. A new poll released today by Lycoming College shows Sherwood trailing Carney 38 to 47 percent, a deficit statistically indistinguishable from the findings of the College's September poll. Fifteen percent of respondents remain undecided in the latest survey.

"Both campaigns and both national party organizations have poured money into this race over the last few weeks," said Dr. Jonathan Williamson, chair of the Department of Political Science at Lycoming and director of the College's Center for the Study of Community and the Economy (CSCE). "But the overall poll results haven't moved an inch. Sherwood's chances appear to be slipping away."

Political science students under the direction of Dr. Williamson surveyed 643 likely voters from October 22-26. The 10th district extends from Williamsport in the west to sections of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, excluding the cities of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.9 percent.

Sherwood received support from 65 percent of Republicans, 26 percent of Independents and 11 percent of Democrats. Carney received the support of 78 percent of Democrats, 61 percent of Independents and 20 percent of Republicans. 15 percent of Republicans, 13 percent of independents and 12 percent of Democrats remain undecided.

“Republican Party efforts to rally the base and their argument that saving a congressional majority is more important than punishing Sherwood have resulted in somewhat stronger support for Sherwood among Republican voters, but that support is still fairly tepid by traditional standards,” said Williamson. “In addition, the gains among Republicans by Sherwood have been offset by gains among Independents by Carney.”

Respondents were also asked what they saw as the most important problem facing the country. While a wide range of responses was given, the most common response—offered by 37 percent of respondents—was Iraq. Amongst those respondents, Carney was favored 55 to 29 percent over Sherwood, while respondents offering any other issue as the most important problem facing the country put the candidates in a statistical tie; amongst the remaining respondents, Carney is favored 44 to 42 percent.

“The race in the 10th district appears to be primarily about two issues: Iraq and scandal,” said Williamson. “Unfortunately for Sherwood, neither issue helps him.”

Respondents were asked if they were aware of news reports of a personal scandal involving Sherwood. Those who responded they had heard the reports were asked if those reports had altered their decision on who to support. 37 percent of Carney’s supporters and 22 percent of the undecided respondents indicated that the scandal had played a role in their decision. Among Republicans supporting Carney, 61 percent indicated that news of the scandal had affected their choice.

Question: If the election for United States House of Representatives were held today, would you vote for Don Sherwood, the Republican incumbent or Christopher Carney, the Democratic challenger to represent the 10th congressional district of Pennsylvania?

	Sherwood	Carney	Undecided
All Respondents	38.4%	47.0%	14.6%
Republicans (Self identified)	65.3	19.5	15.2
Independents	26.0	61.4	12.6
Democrats	11.0	77.5	11.5
Most Important Problem : Iraq (36.9% of respondents)	28.8	55.4	15.8
All other Respondents	41.7	44.3	14.0
Amongst those indicating Sherwood scandal reports have altered vote			
Republicans (20.4% indicated reports altered vote)	20.0	62.0	18.0
Independents (28.9%)	11.4	80.0	8.6
Democrats (25.3%)	4.8	88.1	7.1

Background

Center for the Study of Community and the Economy

This survey was conducted by the Lycoming College Polling Institute, a part of the College's Center for the Study of Community and the Economy (CSCE). In operation since 2003, CSCE is a public service, applied research organization with a mission to conduct research and provide data analysis and planning on issues related to community and economic development and public policy. In addition to serving the broader needs of the center, the Polling Institute provides periodic polling information on political issues of importance to the broader community. The interdisciplinary nature of faculty and staff involved in the Center provides an unbiased and complementary approach to the study of the region the Center serves. The Center also provides students with special opportunities to work with faculty in producing original, applied research. As future leaders, students involved in the Center's activities work in a real world laboratory, honing their understanding of the challenges and opportunities they and their communities face.

Polling Methodology

The findings summarized in this release are based on a telephone survey of 643 likely voters living in the 10th Congressional District of Pennsylvania conducted between October 22 and 26, 2006. The survey's margin of error for the complete sample is +/- 3.9 percent; the margin of error is larger among subgroups of respondents. Respondents were randomly selected based on voter registration lists. The final sample included 54.0 percent registered Republicans, 38.0 percent registered Democrats and 8.0 percent registered as Independents or with another party. Additional questions were asked of respondents than those released here. For information about those results, please arrange for an interview.