

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Please attribute this information to: **Monmouth University Poll**

For more information: www.monmouth.edu/polling

Follow on Twitter: **@MonmouthPoll**

Contact:

PATRICK MURRAY, 732-263-5858 (office), 732-979-6769 (cell)

pdmurray@monmouth.edu

Follow on Twitter: **@PollsterPatrick**

EMBARGOED to: **Wednesday, October 31, 2018, 11:00 am ET**

Live link at 11 am: https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/reports/monmouthpoll_NJ_103118/

NEW JERSEY: NOT MUCH CHANGE IN CD07

Higher Dem enthusiasm helps challenger maintain edge

West Long Branch, NJ – Democrat Tom Malinowski maintains a narrow lead over Republican Leonard Lance in the race for New Jersey’s 7th Congressional District, according to the **Monmouth University Poll**. The incumbent’s rating has taken a hit but many voters still don’t know much about the challenger. Malinowski’s lead is largely due to a higher level of enthusiasm among Democratic voters, particularly when it comes to sending President Donald Trump a message. New Jersey’s 7th is home to Trump National Golf Club Bedminster, also known as the “Summer White House.”

Malinowski currently holds a statistically insignificant 47% to 44% edge over Lance among likely voters using Monmouth’s standard midterm turnout model. Another 2% support an independent candidate and 6% are undecided. The race stands at 48% for Malinowski and 43% for Lance using a model that incorporates a turnout surge in Democratic precincts similar to the turnout dynamic seen in some special elections held over the past year. A model projecting lower overall turnout shows the race tied at 46% for each candidate. These results are basically unchanged from Monmouth’s September poll. Malinowski then held a 46% to 43% lead in the standard model and a 47% to 41% lead in the Democratic surge model, while the low turnout model produced a result of 45% for Lance and 44% for Malinowski. Leads in all the current likely voter models are within the poll’s margin of error.

A majority of the NJ-07 electorate holds a college degree, making it one of the most highly educated districts in the country. Malinowski holds a large 57% to 37% lead among white voters with a college degree. Lance holds a 53% to 36% lead among the smaller group of white voters who have not graduated college. Lance's advantage among non-college white voters is similar to his September standing with that group (53% to 34%), but Malinowski has increased his lead among college educated white voters from his 50% to 42% edge last month.

Overall, 78% of likely voters have a lot of interest in the House race, but Democrats (88%) are much more likely than Republicans (70%) to feel this way. In September, 73% of NJ-07 voters had a lot of interest and the gap between Democrats (81%) and Republicans (71%) was smaller.

"This is a rare district in Monmouth's polling where we actually see the enthusiasm gap between Democrats and Republicans getting larger rather than smaller," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Donald Trump's job rating of 46% approve and 51% disapprove is somewhat better than his 42% approve and 53% disapprove rating in September. However, those who *strongly disapprove* (45%) continue to outnumber those who *strongly approve* (33%) by double digits. Moreover, 76% of NJ-07 voters say that the president is a very important factor in their House vote – with Trump opponents (86%) being more likely than Trump supporters (75%) to feel this way. In September, slightly fewer likely voters (68%) said that Trump was a very important factor in their vote and the difference between opponents (76%) and supporters (73%) who felt this way was very small.

"The choice for voters in this district seems to fall along the lines of whether they like their congressman more or dislike the president more," said Murray. He added, "Lance's reputation has taken a hit over the past month, but many voters have not formed a strong opinion of Malinowski."

The poll finds that Lance earns a divided 37% favorable and 34% unfavorable rating, with 29% expressing no opinion. His current standing among NJ-07 likely voters is not as positive as the 40% favorable and 24% unfavorable rating he received last month, with 37% who had no opinion. Malinowski earns a relatively more positive 36% favorable and 23% unfavorable rating, which is a similar net positive rating to September's 29% favorable and 16% unfavorable result. The Democrat is better known than he was a month ago but 41% have still not formed an opinion of him. No opinion was 55% in the prior poll.

One-third (33%) of voters say that Lance's political views are generally in line with most district residents while 19% say they are out of step. Another 48% are not sure. NJ-07 voters are split on Malinowski's political views – 19% say they are in line with the district and 23% say they are out of step. Most voters (58%), though, say they are not sure if Malinowski's views align with the district.

The top voter concern among six policy areas asked about in the poll is health care (30%). This is followed by immigration (19%), taxes (18%), jobs (13%), gun control (10%), and abortion (7%). These

results are in line with the issue concerns in Monmouth's September poll, but Malinowski has widened his advantage on NJ-07 voters' top issue. Currently, 40% say they trust the Democratic challenger more to work to keep health care affordable compared with 29% who trust the Republican incumbent more. Another 14% say they trust both equally and 8% volunteer that they trust neither one. Last month, Malinowski had a smaller 32% to 25% edge over Lance on handling health care, with 19% trusting both equally and 9% volunteering that they trust neither.

Voters are divided on who they trust more to handle tax policy – 36% choose Malinowski and 35% choose Lance. Another 13% say they trust both candidates equally on this issue and 7% volunteer that they do not trust either candidate. A majority (54%) of NJ-07 likely voters disapprove of the tax reform plan passed by Congress last year, while 38% approve of it. Last month, the tax plan earned a 49% disapprove to 37% approve rating.

“Tax policy is usually a slam dunk issue for Republican candidates. But Lance can't escape voter discontent with this GOP plan, even though he voted against it,” said Murray.

NJ07 voters express a slight preference for having Democrats (45%) rather than Republicans (42%) in control of Congress. This is somewhat narrower than their 45% Democrat to 38% Republican preference last month.

New Jersey's 7th district voted for Mitt Romney for president by 6 points in 2012, but swung to Hillary Clinton by one point in 2016. Lance ran more than 10 points ahead of the top of the GOP ticket in both years, winning his House seat by 17 points in 2012 and 11 points in 2016.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from October 25 to 29, 2018 with 356 likely voters in New Jersey's 7th Congressional District. The question results in this release have a margin of error of +/- 5.2 percentage points. The error of the difference between the two candidates' vote share (i.e. the “lead”) is +/-7.3 percentage points. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1/2. If the election for U.S. House of Representatives in your district was today, would you vote for Leonard Lance the Republican or Tom Malinowski the Democrat, or some other candidate?

[IF UNDECIDED: If you had to vote for one of the following at this moment, do you lean more toward Leonard Lance or more toward Tom Malinowski?] [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

Likely Voters with leaners	Oct. 2018			Sept. 2018		
	Standard Midterm	Democratic "Surge"	Low Turnout	Standard Midterm	Democratic "Surge"	Low Turnout
Leonard Lance	44%	43%	46%	43%	41%	45%
Tom Malinowski	47%	48%	46%	46%	47%	44%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
(VOL) Undecided	6%	6%	5%	9%	10%	9%
(n)	(356)	(356)	(356)	(365)	(365)	(365)

[QUESTIONS 3 & 4 WERE ROTATED]

3. Is your general impression of Leonard Lance favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

Likely Voter Standard	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Favorable	37%	40%
Unfavorable	34%	24%
No opinion	29%	37%
(n)	(356)	(365)

4. Is your general impression of Tom Malinowski favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

Likely Voter Standard	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Favorable	36%	29%
Unfavorable	23%	16%
No opinion	41%	55%
(n)	(356)	(365)

5. How much interest do you have in the upcoming election for House of Representatives – a lot of interest, a little interest, or not much interest at all?

Likely Voter Standard	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
A lot	78%	73%
A little	17%	23%
Not much at all	4%	5%
(VOL) Don't Know	0%	0%
(n)	(356)	(365)

6. Have you been following the campaign in your congressional district very closely, somewhat closely, or not too closely?

Likely Voter Standard	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Very closely	29%	17%
Somewhat closely	50%	49%
Not too closely	21%	33%
(VOL) Don't Know	0%	0%
(n)	(356)	(365)

7. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as president? [Do you (approve/disapprove) strongly or somewhat?]

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Strongly approve	33%	29%
Somewhat approve	13%	13%
Somewhat disapprove	6%	5%
Strongly disapprove	45%	48%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	5%
(n)	(356)	(365)

8. On most issues would you say you support or oppose what President Trump is doing?

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Support	45%	40%
Oppose	48%	51%
(VOL) Depends/both	4%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%
(n)	(356)	(365)

9. How important is it for you to cast a vote for Congress that shows your [support of/opposition to] President Trump – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Very important	76%	68%
Somewhat important	13%	16%
Not too important	4%	4%
Not at all important	2%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	10%
(n)	(356)	(365)

10. Would you rather see the Republicans or the Democrats in control of Congress, or doesn't this matter to you?

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Republicans	42%	38%
Democrats	45%	45%
Does not matter	11%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%
(n)	(356)	(365)

[QUESTIONS 11 & 12 WERE ROTATED]

11. Are Leonard Lance's political views generally in line or out of step with most residents in this district, or are you not sure?

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018
In line	33%
Out of step	19%
Not sure	48%
(n)	(356)

12. Are Tom Malinowski's political views generally in line or out of step with most residents in this district, or are you not sure?

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018
In line	19%
Out of step	23%
Not sure	58%
(n)	(356)

13. Please tell me which one of the following policy issues is most important to you in your vote choice for Congress? *[ITEMS WERE ROTATED]*

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Immigration policy	19%	18%
Health care policy	30%	27%
Gun control policy	10%	13%
Abortion policy	7%	6%
Tax policy	18%	14%
Job creation policy	13%	10%
(VOL) Other	1%	9%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%
(n)	(356)	(365)

[QUESTIONS 14 & 15 WERE ROTATED]

14. Who do you trust more to work to keep health care affordable – Leonard Lance or Tom Malinowski, or do you trust both equally? *[NAMES WERE ROTATED]*

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Leonard Lance	29%	25%
Tom Malinowski	40%	32%
Both equally	14%	19%
(VOL) Neither one	8%	9%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	16%
(n)	(356)	(365)

15. Who do you trust more to handle tax policy – Leonard Lance or Tom Malinowski, or do you trust both equally? *[NAMES WERE ROTATED]*

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018
Leonard Lance	35%
Tom Malinowski	36%
Both equally	13%
(VOL) Neither one	7%
(VOL) Don't know	10%
(n)	(356)

16. Do you approve or disapprove of the tax reform plan passed by Congress last year? [Do you (approve/disapprove) strongly or somewhat?]

<i>Likely Voter Standard</i>	Oct. 2018	Sept. 2018
Strongly approve	21%	22%
Somewhat approve	17%	15%
Somewhat disapprove	18%	14%
Strongly disapprove	36%	35%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	14%
(n)	(356)	(365)

METHODOLOGY

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from October 25 to 29, 2018 with a random sample of 356 likely voters in New Jersey's 7th Congressional District, drawn from a list of registered voters who voted in at least one of the last four general or primary elections or have registered to vote since January 2016. This includes 195 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 161 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, party registration, age, gender, education and race based on state voter registration list and U.S. Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and L2 (voter sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 5.2 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

<i>DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>	
<i>Party Registration</i>	
39%	<i>Republican</i>
35%	<i>Democrat</i>
26%	<i>Neither</i>
 <i>Self-Reported Party ID</i>	
34%	<i>Republican</i>
34%	<i>Independent</i>
31%	<i>Democrat</i>
 <i>47% Male</i>	
<i>53% Female</i>	
 <i>10% 18-34</i>	
<i>21% 35-49</i>	
<i>38% 50-64</i>	
<i>31% 65+</i>	
 <i>86% White, non-Hispanic</i>	
<i>14% Other</i>	
 <i>40% No college degree</i>	
<i>60% 4-year college degree</i>	
 <i>20% Hunterdon County</i>	
<i>31% Somerset County</i>	
<i>21% Morris/Warren Counties</i>	
<i>28% Union/Essex Counties</i>	

<i>MARGIN OF ERROR</i>			
		<i>unweighted sample</i>	<i>mpe (+/-)</i>
<i>ALL VOTERS</i>		356	5.2%
<i>SELF-REPORTED PARTY ID</i>	<i>Republican</i>	113	9.2%
	<i>Independent</i>	129	8.6%
	<i>Democrat</i>	110	9.4%
<i>IDEOLOGY</i>	<i>Conservative</i>	97	10.0%
	<i>Moderate</i>	165	7.6%
	<i>Liberal</i>	83	10.8%
<i>GENDER</i>	<i>Male</i>	163	7.7%
	<i>Female</i>	193	7.1%
<i>AGE</i>	<i>18-49</i>	125	8.8%
	<i>50-64</i>	127	8.7%
	<i>65+</i>	100	9.8%
	<i>White, No degree</i>	89	10.4%

COLLEGE by	White, 4 year degree	199	7.0%
RACE	Other race, Latino	52	13.6%
COUNTY	Hunterdon	72	11.6%
	Somerset	113	9.2%
	Morris/Warren	75	11.3%
	Union/Essex	96	10.0%
VOTE CHOICE	Lance	148	8.1%
	Malinowski	160	7.8%
	Other, undecided	48	14.2%

###