

## **Stockton Poll: MacArthur Edging Out Kim 47%-45% in Tight 3<sup>rd</sup> District House Race**

**For immediate release: video available**

October 15, 2018

**Galloway, N.J.** \_ Republican incumbent U.S. Rep. Tom MacArthur is barely edging out Democratic challenger Andy Kim in an extremely close 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District race in New Jersey, according to a Stockton University poll released today.

Health care and opposition to President Donald Trump and the Republican Congress appear to be the issues propelling Kim to a statistical tie in a district that MacArthur won by 20 percentage points in 2016. The poll of 546 adult likely voters finds MacArthur ahead with 47 percent to 45 percent for Kim, including voters who lean toward one candidate or the other. Eight percent are undecided or not selecting the two main candidates.

The Stockton Poll finds a gender gap in the results, with men favoring MacArthur by 16 percentage points over Kim, and women favoring Kim by 13 points. Both candidates have the support of their party bases, with 90 percent of Republicans for MacArthur and 87 percent of Democrats for Kim. But independent voters are evenly split with about 40 percent for each of the major candidates.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> District comprises parts of two counties that favor different candidates: Kim leads by 15 percentage points in Burlington County, where Democrats outnumber Republicans 1.5 to 1 countywide, and MacArthur leads in Ocean County by 20 points, where Republicans outnumber Democrats 1.6 to 1 countywide.

“While the most recent voter registration numbers show over 12,000 more Democrats than Republicans in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, MacArthur and Kim have bases of support within the district broken down by county boundaries,” said Michael W. Klein, interim executive director of the Hughes Center. “In a race this close, whoever does a better job of turning out their voters will have a big advantage.”

John Froonjian, senior research associate for the Hughes Center, noted that the poll is a snapshot of the race at this time and that there are still more than three weeks until the election.

In the U.S. Senate race in New Jersey, the poll indicated that within the traditionally Republican 3<sup>rd</sup> District, Republican challenger Bob Hugin leads Democratic U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez 49 percent to 40 percent, with 4 percent for Libertarian Murray Sabrin. Eight percent are undecided or say they will vote for someone else.

Hugin is doing better among his partisan base (91 percent support from Republicans) than is Menendez (78 percent of Democrats). Recent Stockton Polls statewide and in South Jersey found double-digit percentages of Democrats not ready to commit to Menendez. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, 15 percent of Democrats are undecided or say they will vote for someone other than the major party candidates. However, a few other recent statewide polls have found more New Jersey Democrats supporting their party's nominee.

Live interviewers who are mostly Stockton University students called cell phones and landlines from the Stockton campus Oct. 3-10, 2018. The margin of error for the poll is +/- 4.2 percentage points and higher for data subsets. The Stockton Polling Institute is part of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton.

MacArthur, running for his third House term, is viewed favorably by 37 percent and unfavorably by 40 percent, with 23 percent not familiar with him. Kim is viewed favorably by 40 percent and unfavorably by 31 percent, with 28 percent unfamiliar with the former National Security Council staffer.

The issue named by the largest percentage of respondents as their top issue in the election is health care, identified by 15 percent. When asked specifically about health care – an issue on which Kim and Democrats nationwide have campaigned – 74 percent say it is an extremely important factor (39 percent) or a significant factor (35 percent) in deciding how they will vote. Seventeen percent call health care a minor factor and 8 percent say it is not a factor at all.

Asked about the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, a plurality of 42 percent support trying to make the law stronger, while 35 percent support outright repeal. Ten percent support moves to weaken and law and 10 percent want to keep Obamacare just as it is. There is a strong partisan divide on the issue, with 76 percent of Democrats wanting a stronger law and 69 percent of Republicans favoring repeal.

However, 76 percent overall in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District want to keep in effect the rule prohibiting insurance companies from denying coverage or charging more because of pre-existing conditions.

Respondents were asked to assess how MacArthur's actions regarding Obamacare may or may not affect their vote, but they were not given any specific information about his leading role in trying to repeal the law. Likely voters say those efforts make them less likely to vote for MacArthur by a 2-1 margin over those more likely to vote for him. Seventeen percent say his Obamacare efforts will make no difference in their vote, and 34 percent do not know enough about his role to have an opinion.

President Trump's job performance rating of 44 percent either good or excellent is better than the 36 percent approval rating found in the statewide New Jersey Stockton Poll released Oct. 1. However, 55 percent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District rate his performance as fair (10 percent) or poor (45 percent), a reversal of 2016 election results in which Trump won the district by six points with 51 percent of the vote. In an open-ended question asking for the most important issue to the respondent in this year's elections, 7 percent in the poll say Trump, and 7 percent say putting Democrats in control of Congress. These were the fourth and fifth top issues, behind health care (15 percent), taxes (9 percent), and the economy (8.4 percent).

**Complete poll results are available at [stockton.edu/hughes-center](http://stockton.edu/hughes-center). Video will also be available.**

### **Methodology**

The poll was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. Live interviewers who are mostly Stockton University students polled 708 adult registered voters in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, and 546 were screened as likely voters based on criteria including self-professed intention to vote on a scale of 1 to 10, having voted in New Jersey's 2017 election, how closely voters are following the election, identification of their local polling place or having applied for or received a mail or absentee ballot. Interviewers working on the Stockton University campus called cell phones (65 percent of interviews) and landlines (35 percent) from Oct. 3-10, 2018. Both cell and landline sample included a mix of voter list supplemented by random digit dialing (RDD) sample. Data are weighted based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year data for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District on variables of sex, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education level and county. The poll's margin of error is +/- 4.2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. The Stockton Polling Institute is a member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research.

### **About the Hughes Center**

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy ([www.stockton.edu/hughescenter](http://www.stockton.edu/hughescenter)) at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and

cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. The center is named for William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton. The Hughes Center can be found on [YouTube](#), and can be followed on Facebook [@StocktonHughesCenter](#), Twitter [@hughescenter](#) and Instagram [@stockton\\_hughes\\_center](#) .

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