



MEMO: NJ SENATE PRESIDENT HAS SHRINKING LEAD, GOP CHALLENGER CLOSING QUICKLY

DATE: Monday, October 15, 2017
TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Matt Hubbard, VP Research & Analytics
RE: Survey of General Election Voters in NJLD03

Senate Republican Majority conducted a telephone survey last week in New Jersey's 3rd Legislative District to examine the General Election for state senate. The survey was executed by national research and communication firm [Cynnal](#). The pollster also conducted a previous survey from September 19th - September 20th.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Steve Sweeney only leads Fran Grenier by 6 points overall (42%-36%), a major shift from his 18 point lead (48%-30%) in the September survey.
- Grenier's favorability increased by 6 points from the previous survey, while Sweeney's fell by 9 points.
- In the same period of time, Grenier's name ID rose by 7 points.
- The generic ballot test show Democrats lead Republicans (41%-33%) in this district.
- Grenier is now outperforming the generic ballot test, a 9 point turnaround.
- Independent voters are breaking for Grenier (38%-36%) with 26% undecided.
- 21% of Democratic respondents said they would vote for Grenier if the election were held today.
- Although Sweeney has nearly 95% name recognition, he is only earning 42% on the ballot test.

FAVORABLE RATINGS

<u>Survey Date</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Overall Fav</u>	<u>Very Fav</u>	<u>Fav / Unfav Ratio</u>	<u>Never Heard Of</u>
9/19-9/20	Grenier	31.6%	11.5%	0.89:1	14.0%
10/9-10/11	Grenier	37.6%	15.7%	1.2:1	17.8%
9/19-9/20	Sweeney	54.6%	32.1%	1.7:1	3.7%
10/9-10/11	Sweeney	45.8%	26.5%	1.1:1	5.3%

SUMMARY

New Jersey Senate President Steve Sweeney may be in trouble in his bid for reelection. Despite having held a comfortable 18-point lead in September, Sweeney now faces a different race.

In the last three weeks, Republican challenger Fran Grenier has cut the incumbent's lead to a mere 6 points while boosting his name ID and favorability among voters. Independent voters breaking for Grenier, with 22% of voters still undecided.

When presented with a generic ballot (party vs. party), voters preferred Democratic candidates strongly (41%-33%). However, when presented with a choice of the NJ Senate candidates, the Republican challenger outperformed the generic ballot by 3 points. This could indicate Sweeney's image is trending down among voters.

With three weeks until the General Election, the 4-term senator could be in trouble if Grenier maintains his momentum and swings undecided voters. Look for this race to come down to the wire. We may soon be referring to Sweeney as the “former Senate President” in a few weeks.

METHODOLOGY

This telephone survey was conducted October 9-11, 2017, with participation by 402 general election voters. It has a margin of error of $\pm 4.87\%$. Interviews were conducted using IVR technology to landlines and live operators to cell phones. The survey was weighted to a projected general election voter universe for New Jersey’s 3rd Legislative District. The weighting average across all groups was 1.2 - much lower than the accepted industry average of 2.0.

ABOUT CYGNAL

Cygnal is a research and communication firm serving center-right committees, organizations, and consultants. They have worked with ~150 clients group and conducted more than 360 highly accurate polls in nearly every state. www.cygnal.com