

INTERVIEWS: Tom Jensen 919-744-6312

**IF YOU HAVE BASIC METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE E-MAIL [information@publicpolicypolling.com](mailto:information@publicpolicypolling.com), OR CONSULT THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF THE PRESS RELEASE**

## **Ben Nelson down only 4 points to Jon Bruning**

**Raleigh, N.C.** – Ben Nelson may not be in as much trouble as previously thought. The embattled Nebraska Democrat had been almost an assumed casualty on the way to a Republican takeover of the Senate, but with recent stumbles by likely opponent Jon Bruning, Nelson’s chances are revived—and with them, the Democrats’ chances of retaining the Senate. That is even more true if Bruning manages to lose the primary.

PPP has not polled the state since January. Then, Bruning led, 50-39. That is now only 46-42. This movement comes from incremental improvements with Democrats, Republicans, and independents alike. While Bruning wins 13% of Democrats, Nelson poaches 19% of the GOP, and he has a 49-29 lead with independents.

The funny thing is that Nelson has only gotten less popular in the last eight months. He had an already miserable 39-50 approval-disapproval margin then, and that has declined to 36-55 now, tying him with John McCain for the least popular of 87 sitting senators on which PPP has polled. Democrats approve only 51-38, down from a still bad 58-33. A quarter of Republicans do like the work he is doing, and they are over half of voters.

But Nelson has drawn closer because Bruning’s personal popularity has taken a 22-point nosedive, from 42-26 in January to 32-38 now. Voters have also soured on Stenberg by 11 points on the margin, from 38-25 to 34-32. Despite their personal unpopularity, these less likely nominees have actually maintained or improved their leads, unlike Bruning. Stenberg leads 44-41, down just a hair from 45-41 in January. Fischer trails, 41-39 (42-35); and Flynn, 43-36 (42-33).

“Ben Nelson still has a very difficult fight for reelection on his hands but it looks like he might at least have a chance,” said Dean Debnam, President of Public Policy Polling. “The other time we polled this race it looked like he was pretty much finished but the good news for him is that Jon Bruning is not proving to be a very strong foe.”

PPP surveyed 739 Nebraska voters from September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The margin of error for the survey is +/-3.6%. This poll was not paid for or authorized by any campaign or political organization. PPP surveys are conducted through automated telephone interviews. PPP is a Democratic polling company, but polling expert Nate Silver of the *New York Times* found that its surveys in 2010 actually exhibited a slight bias toward Republican candidates.



## Nebraska Survey Results

**Q1** Do you approve or disapprove of Senator Ben Nelson's job performance?

*Approve* ..... 36%  
*Disapprove*..... 55%  
*Not sure* ..... 9%

**Q2** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Jon Bruning?

*Favorable*..... 32%  
*Unfavorable* ..... 38%  
*Not sure* ..... 30%

**Q3** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Deb Fischer?

*Favorable*..... 14%  
*Unfavorable* ..... 22%  
*Not sure* ..... 64%

**Q4** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Pat Flynn?

*Favorable*..... 7%  
*Unfavorable* ..... 21%  
*Not sure* ..... 73%

**Q5** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Don Stenberg?

*Favorable*..... 34%  
*Unfavorable* ..... 32%  
*Not sure* ..... 34%

**Q6** If the candidates for US Senate next year were Democrat Ben Nelson and Republican Jon Bruning, who would you vote for?

*Ben Nelson* ..... 42%  
*Jon Bruning*..... 46%  
*Undecided*..... 12%

**Q7** If the candidates for US Senate next year were Democrat Ben Nelson and Republican Deb Fischer, who would you vote for?

*Ben Nelson* ..... 41%  
*Deb Fischer* ..... 39%  
*Undecided*..... 20%

**Q8** If the candidates for US Senate next year were Democrat Ben Nelson and Republican Pat Flynn, who would you vote for?

*Ben Nelson* ..... 43%  
*Pat Flynn*..... 36%  
*Undecided*..... 21%

**Q9** If the candidates for US Senate next year were Democrat Ben Nelson and Republican Don Stenberg, who would you vote for?

*Ben Nelson* ..... 41%  
*Don Stenberg*..... 44%  
*Undecided*..... 15%

**Q10** Who did you vote for President in 2008?

*John McCain*..... 53%  
*Barack Obama*..... 38%  
*Someone else/Don't remember* ..... 8%

**Q11** Would you describe yourself as very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

*Very liberal* ..... 11%  
*Somewhat liberal* ..... 15%  
*Moderate*..... 27%  
*Somewhat conservative*..... 23%  
*Very conservative* ..... 24%

**Q12** If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

*Woman* ..... 52%  
*Man*..... 48%





**Q13** If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

<i>Democrat</i> .....	32%
<i>Republican</i> .....	51%
<i>Independent/Other</i> .....	17%

**Q14** If you are white, press 1. If other, press 2.

<i>White</i> .....	93%
<i>Other</i> .....	7%

**Q15** If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

<i>18 to 29</i> .....	8%
<i>30 to 45</i> .....	27%
<i>46 to 65</i> .....	45%
<i>Older than 65</i> .....	20%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Nelson Approval</b>				
<b>Approve</b>	36%	21%	56%	40%
<b>Disapprove</b>	55%	72%	34%	44%
<b>Not sure</b>	9%	7%	9%	16%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Bruning Favorability</b>				
<b>Favorable</b>	32%	49%	13%	15%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	38%	20%	63%	43%
<b>Not sure</b>	30%	31%	25%	42%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Fischer Favorability</b>				
<b>Favorable</b>	14%	15%	13%	16%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	22%	17%	27%	27%
<b>Not sure</b>	64%	68%	59%	56%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Flynn Favorability</b>				
<b>Favorable</b>	7%	7%	5%	15%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	21%	16%	28%	18%
<b>Not sure</b>	73%	77%	67%	67%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Stenberg Favorability</b>				
Favorable	35%	47%	19%	28%
Unfavorable	32%	21%	46%	35%
Not sure	34%	33%	35%	37%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Nelson/Bruning</b>				
Ben Nelson	42%	16%	77%	45%
Jon Bruning	46%	74%	11%	29%
Undecided	12%	9%	12%	26%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Nelson/Fischer</b>				
Ben Nelson	41%	18%	74%	41%
Deb Fischer	39%	62%	11%	21%
Undecided	20%	20%	15%	38%

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Nelson/Flynn</b>				
Ben Nelson	43%	18%	80%	38%
Pat Flynn	36%	58%	7%	22%
Undecided	21%	24%	12%	41%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	2008 Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone else/Don't remember
<b>Nelson/Stenberg</b>				
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	41%	15%	77%	39%
<b>Don Stenberg</b>	44%	72%	9%	35%
<b>Undecided</b>	15%	14%	14%	27%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Nelson Approval</b>						
<b>Approve</b>	36%	48%	54%	46%	31%	13%
<b>Disapprove</b>	55%	41%	32%	46%	61%	81%
<b>Not sure</b>	9%	11%	15%	8%	8%	6%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Bruning Favorability</b>						
<b>Favorable</b>	32%	4%	14%	21%	41%	60%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	38%	65%	59%	49%	27%	12%
<b>Not sure</b>	30%	31%	27%	30%	32%	28%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Fischer Favorability</b>						
<b>Favorable</b>	14%	9%	10%	17%	17%	14%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	22%	34%	32%	21%	18%	15%
<b>Not sure</b>	64%	57%	58%	61%	65%	72%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Flynn Favorability</b>						
<b>Favorable</b>	7%	5%	4%	8%	6%	9%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	21%	26%	28%	23%	16%	15%
<b>Not sure</b>	73%	68%	68%	70%	77%	76%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Stenberg Favorability</b>						
<b>Favorable</b>	35%	9%	20%	29%	45%	50%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	32%	49%	44%	39%	24%	16%
<b>Not sure</b>	34%	41%	36%	32%	31%	34%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Nelson/Bruning</b>						
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	42%	80%	72%	58%	22%	8%
<b>Jon Bruning</b>	46%	13%	13%	27%	65%	86%
<b>Undecided</b>	12%	7%	14%	16%	13%	6%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Nelson/Fischer</b>						
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	41%	76%	72%	53%	22%	11%
<b>Deb Fischer</b>	39%	14%	10%	24%	53%	74%
<b>Undecided</b>	20%	9%	18%	23%	25%	15%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Nelson/Flynn</b>						
Ben Nelson	43%	74%	80%	55%	27%	10%
Pat Flynn	36%	15%	9%	18%	46%	72%
Undecided	21%	11%	12%	27%	27%	18%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
<b>Nelson/Stenberg</b>						
Ben Nelson	41%	76%	73%	54%	23%	8%
Don Stenberg	44%	10%	9%	29%	63%	81%
Undecided	15%	14%	18%	18%	15%	10%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Nelson Approval</b>			
Approve	36%	39%	33%
Disapprove	55%	50%	61%
Not sure	9%	11%	6%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Bruning Favorability</b>			
Favorable	32%	33%	31%
Unfavorable	38%	33%	44%
Not sure	30%	34%	25%







**Crosstabs**

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Fischer Favorability</b>			
<b>Favorable</b>	14%	11%	19%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	22%	17%	27%
<b>Not sure</b>	64%	72%	55%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Flynn Favorability</b>			
<b>Favorable</b>	7%	5%	9%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	21%	13%	29%
<b>Not sure</b>	73%	82%	62%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Stenberg Favorability</b>			
<b>Favorable</b>	35%	33%	36%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	32%	28%	36%
<b>Not sure</b>	34%	39%	28%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Nelson/Bruning</b>			
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	42%	43%	41%
<b>Jon Bruning</b>	46%	44%	49%
<b>Undecided</b>	12%	13%	10%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Nelson/Fischer</b>			
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	41%	44%	38%
<b>Deb Fischer</b>	39%	31%	48%
<b>Undecided</b>	20%	25%	14%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Nelson/Flynn</b>			
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	43%	46%	41%
<b>Pat Flynn</b>	36%	29%	43%
<b>Undecided</b>	21%	25%	16%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Nelson/Stenberg</b>			
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	41%	42%	39%
<b>Don Stenberg</b>	44%	40%	49%
<b>Undecided</b>	15%	18%	12%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Nelson Approval</b>				
<b>Approve</b>	36%	51%	25%	41%
<b>Disapprove</b>	55%	38%	68%	50%
<b>Not sure</b>	9%	12%	7%	9%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Bruning Favorability</b>				
<b>Favorable</b>	32%	14%	48%	19%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	38%	56%	23%	50%
<b>Not sure</b>	30%	30%	29%	31%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Fischer Favorability</b>				
<b>Favorable</b>	14%	13%	16%	13%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	22%	27%	18%	23%
<b>Not sure</b>	64%	59%	66%	65%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Flynn Favorability</b>				
<b>Favorable</b>	7%	4%	9%	7%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	21%	26%	16%	23%
<b>Not sure</b>	73%	70%	75%	70%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Stenberg Favorability</b>				
<b>Favorable</b>	35%	17%	47%	31%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	32%	44%	23%	33%
<b>Not sure</b>	34%	39%	30%	36%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Nelson/Bruning</b>				
Ben Nelson	42%	75%	19%	49%
Jon Bruning	46%	13%	73%	29%
Undecided	12%	12%	8%	23%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Nelson/Fischer</b>				
Ben Nelson	41%	71%	20%	47%
Deb Fischer	39%	11%	61%	29%
Undecided	20%	18%	19%	24%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Nelson/Flynn</b>				
Ben Nelson	43%	76%	22%	46%
Pat Flynn	36%	9%	57%	24%
Undecided	21%	16%	21%	29%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Nelson/Stenberg</b>				
Ben Nelson	41%	72%	19%	46%
Don Stenberg	44%	13%	68%	34%
Undecided	15%	15%	13%	20%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Nelson Approval</b>			
<b>Approve</b>	36%	35%	47%
<b>Disapprove</b>	55%	56%	48%
<b>Not sure</b>	9%	9%	5%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Bruning Favorability</b>			
<b>Favorable</b>	32%	34%	7%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	38%	37%	57%
<b>Not sure</b>	30%	29%	36%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Fischer Favorability</b>			
<b>Favorable</b>	14%	14%	18%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	22%	22%	21%
<b>Not sure</b>	64%	64%	61%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Flynn Favorability</b>			
<b>Favorable</b>	7%	6%	13%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	21%	21%	20%
<b>Not sure</b>	73%	73%	67%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Stenberg Favorability</b>			
<b>Favorable</b>	35%	36%	18%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	32%	31%	35%
<b>Not sure</b>	34%	33%	47%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Nelson/Bruning</b>			
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	42%	40%	70%
<b>Jon Bruning</b>	46%	48%	22%
<b>Undecided</b>	12%	12%	8%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Nelson/Fischer</b>			
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	41%	39%	64%
<b>Deb Fischer</b>	39%	41%	20%
<b>Undecided</b>	20%	20%	17%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Nelson/Flynn</b>			
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	43%	41%	76%
<b>Pat Flynn</b>	36%	37%	17%
<b>Undecided</b>	21%	22%	7%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
<b>Nelson/Stenberg</b>			
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	41%	39%	68%
<b>Don Stenberg</b>	44%	46%	19%
<b>Undecided</b>	15%	15%	14%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Nelson Approval</b>					
<b>Approve</b>	36%	40%	39%	33%	38%
<b>Disapprove</b>	55%	55%	48%	60%	53%
<b>Not sure</b>	9%	5%	13%	7%	8%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Bruning Favorability</b>					
<b>Favorable</b>	32%	25%	31%	33%	36%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	38%	40%	40%	40%	32%
<b>Not sure</b>	30%	35%	30%	28%	32%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Fischer Favorability</b>					
<b>Favorable</b>	14%	5%	12%	17%	16%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	22%	35%	21%	21%	19%
<b>Not sure</b>	64%	60%	67%	62%	65%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Flynn Favorability</b>					
Favorable	7%	15%	3%	7%	8%
Unfavorable	21%	20%	20%	21%	20%
Not sure	73%	65%	77%	72%	72%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Stenberg Favorability</b>					
Favorable	35%	5%	30%	40%	39%
Unfavorable	32%	40%	28%	33%	29%
Not sure	34%	55%	42%	26%	32%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Nelson/Bruning</b>					
Ben Nelson	42%	50%	46%	39%	40%
Jon Bruning	46%	35%	37%	52%	51%
Undecided	12%	15%	17%	9%	9%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Nelson/Fischer</b>					
Ben Nelson	41%	50%	45%	39%	37%
Deb Fischer	39%	30%	35%	41%	43%
Undecided	20%	20%	19%	20%	19%







**Crosstabs**

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Nelson/Flynn</b>					
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	<b>43%</b>	55%	50%	39%	40%
<b>Pat Flynn</b>	<b>36%</b>	35%	28%	40%	36%
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>21%</b>	10%	22%	21%	24%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Nelson/Stenberg</b>					
<b>Ben Nelson</b>	<b>41%</b>	55%	44%	37%	38%
<b>Don Stenberg</b>	<b>44%</b>	20%	36%	51%	51%
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>15%</b>	25%	19%	12%	10%

