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Close GOP race in Nebraska

Raleigh, N.C. – We did a short unplanned poll in Nebraska last night because of the sudden shift in the Republican Senate primary that some other surveys had shown. We found a very close race with Deb Fischer at 37%, Jon Bruning at 33%, and Don Stenberg at 17%. With the poll's margin of error at +/-5.9% Fischer's lead is very much within the margin of error and the race could go either way tonight.

Bruning's image has taken a huge hit in the month and a half since our last poll of the race. His favorability rating is a net +13 at 49/36. That's a 27 point decline from late March when he was at +40 (57/17.) Stenberg's seen a large- although not quite as dramatic- drop in his numbers as well from +29 (49/20) to +12 (46/34).

Fischer meanwhile has seen an incredible improvement in how voters view her. On our last poll she had only 44% name recognition and Republicans were split on her 22/22. Now she's by far and away the most popular candidate in the race with a +45 favorability rating at 62/17.

If Fischer wins there will be inevitable attempts to spin it as a Tea Party triumph but her rise doesn't really appear to be about ideology. Bruning is actually winning the Tea Party vote 39-36 and among voters describing themselves as 'very conservative' Fischer is only up 38-37. The shift in this race has a lot more to do with the candidates' images than it does with issues or philosophy.

A couple other interesting things from the crosstabs: Fischer is winning men 39-31, while Bruning is winning women 37-35. Not necessarily what you would expect. There's also a significant divide along generational lines with Fischer up 41-31 among seniors, but Bruning leading 36-31 with voters under 45.

This one could go either way but whatever the final outcome it's another lesson in the weird dynamics of 3 way races- and the incredible power of negative advertising.

PPP surveyed 272 likely Republican primary voters on May 14th. The margin of error for the survey is +/-5.9%. This poll was not paid for or authorized by any campaign or political organization. PPP surveys are conducted through automated telephone interviews.



Nebraska Survey Results

Q1 Do you plan to vote in the Republican or Democratic primary tomorrow, or are you not sure?

Republican primary.....100%
Democratic primary..... 0%
Not sure 0%

Q2 The Republican candidates for Senate are Jon Bruning, Sharyn Elander, Deb Fischer, Pat Flynn, Don Stenberg, and Spencer Zimmerman. If the primary was today, who would you vote for?

Jon Bruning..... 33%
Sharyn Elander..... 1%
Deb Fischer 37%
Pat Flynn..... 2%
Don Stenberg..... 17%
Spencer Zimmerman 1%
Not sure 7%

Q3 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Jon Bruning?

Favorable..... 49%
Unfavorable 36%
Not sure 16%

Q4 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Deb Fischer?

Favorable..... 62%
Unfavorable 17%
Not sure 21%

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

Favorable..... 46%
Unfavorable 34%
Not sure 20%

Q6 If you are very liberal, press 1. If somewhat liberal, press 2. If moderate, press 3. If somewhat conservative, press 4. If very conservative, press 5.

Very liberal..... 5%
Somewhat liberal 5%
Moderate..... 14%
Somewhat conservative..... 33%
Very conservative 44%

Q7 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 44%
Man..... 56%

Q8 If you are 18 to 45 years old, press 1. If 46 to 65, press 2. If you are 65 or older, press 3.

18-45 26%
46-65 45%
Older than 65..... 29%

Q9 Do you consider yourself to be a member of the Tea Party?

Yes..... 32%
No..... 59%
Not sure 9%

Q10 Are you an Evangelical Christian, or not?

Yes..... 52%
No..... 48%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Senate candidates						
Jon Bruning	33%	39%	19%	34%	29%	37%
Sharyn Elander	1%	-	9%	5%	-	-
Deb Fischer	37%	5%	39%	38%	41%	38%
Pat Flynn	2%	8%	-	4%	2%	2%
Don Stenberg	17%	15%	16%	6%	19%	19%
Spencer Zimmerman	1%	-	-	-	2%	1%
Not sure	7%	34%	17%	13%	6%	3%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Bruning Favorability						
Favorable	49%	39%	33%	46%	50%	51%
Unfavorable	36%	37%	47%	38%	36%	33%
Not sure	16%	24%	19%	16%	13%	17%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Fischer Favorability						
Favorable	62%	19%	72%	69%	61%	64%
Unfavorable	17%	42%	14%	14%	21%	12%
Not sure	21%	39%	14%	17%	18%	23%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Stenberg Favorability						
Favorable	46%	22%	25%	38%	50%	51%
Unfavorable	34%	44%	51%	39%	32%	31%
Not sure	20%	34%	25%	23%	18%	18%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Senate candidates			
Jon Bruning	33%	37%	31%
Sharyn Elander	1%	-	2%
Deb Fischer	37%	35%	39%
Pat Flynn	2%	1%	3%
Don Stenberg	17%	16%	19%
Spencer Zimmerman	1%	-	2%
Not sure	7%	11%	4%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Bruning Favorability			
Favorable	49%	49%	48%
Unfavorable	36%	28%	41%
Not sure	16%	23%	10%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Fischer Favorability			
Favorable	62%	56%	67%
Unfavorable	17%	17%	17%
Not sure	21%	28%	16%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Stenberg Favorability			
Favorable	46%	42%	50%
Unfavorable	34%	32%	35%
Not sure	20%	26%	15%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age		
		18-45	46-65	Older than 65
Senate candidates				
Jon Bruning	33%	36%	33%	31%
Sharyn Elander	1%	3%	1%	-
Deb Fischer	37%	31%	39%	41%
Pat Flynn	2%	-	3%	4%
Don Stenberg	17%	17%	18%	17%
Spencer Zimmerman	1%	3%	1%	-
Not sure	7%	11%	6%	6%

	Base	Age		
		18-45	46-65	Older than 65
Bruning Favorability				
Favorable	49%	50%	48%	48%
Unfavorable	36%	39%	40%	25%
Not sure	16%	11%	12%	26%

	Base	Age		
		18-45	46-65	Older than 65
Fischer Favorability				
Favorable	62%	58%	65%	60%
Unfavorable	17%	25%	12%	17%
Not sure	21%	17%	23%	23%

	Base	Age		
		18-45	46-65	Older than 65
Stenberg Favorability				
Favorable	46%	40%	52%	43%
Unfavorable	34%	43%	32%	28%
Not sure	20%	17%	16%	29%





Crosstabs

	Base	Tea Party ID		
		Yes	No	Not sure
Senate candidates				
Jon Bruning	33%	39%	31%	28%
Sharyn Elander	1%	-	2%	-
Deb Fischer	37%	36%	39%	32%
Pat Flynn	2%	2%	2%	7%
Don Stenberg	17%	18%	16%	25%
Spencer Zimmerman	1%	1%	1%	-
Not sure	7%	3%	10%	7%

	Base	Tea Party ID		
		Yes	No	Not sure
Bruning Favorability				
Favorable	49%	54%	47%	41%
Unfavorable	36%	31%	40%	19%
Not sure	16%	15%	13%	40%

	Base	Tea Party ID		
		Yes	No	Not sure
Fischer Favorability				
Favorable	62%	65%	63%	44%
Unfavorable	17%	15%	18%	18%
Not sure	21%	21%	19%	37%

	Base	Tea Party ID		
		Yes	No	Not sure
Stenberg Favorability				
Favorable	46%	48%	46%	43%
Unfavorable	34%	35%	34%	27%
Not sure	20%	18%	20%	29%





Crosstabs

	Base	Evangelical	
		Yes	No
Senate candidates			
Jon Bruning	33%	33%	35%
Sharyn Elander	1%	-	2%
Deb Fischer	37%	38%	36%
Pat Flynn	2%	3%	2%
Don Stenberg	17%	19%	16%
Spencer Zimmerman	1%	1%	2%
Not sure	7%	7%	8%

	Base	Evangelical	
		Yes	No
Bruning Favorability			
Favorable	49%	48%	49%
Unfavorable	36%	33%	38%
Not sure	16%	19%	13%

	Base	Evangelical	
		Yes	No
Fischer Favorability			
Favorable	62%	60%	63%
Unfavorable	17%	15%	20%
Not sure	21%	25%	17%

	Base	Evangelical	
		Yes	No
Stenberg Favorability			
Favorable	46%	52%	40%
Unfavorable	34%	25%	44%
Not sure	20%	23%	16%

