

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ensign Leading in Early Primary Matchups, but Heller Close

Raleigh, N.C. – Despite personal scandal and a throw-out-the-bums mood in his party base, Senator John Ensign remains relatively popular with Nevada Republicans, and even against two potential, well-liked 2012 primary opponents, he currently prevails.

Ensign has a 64-23 job approval rating with the likely 2010 voters who say they usually vote in Republican primaries in the Silver State. That's even stronger among the two-thirds who call themselves conservative—71-16—a sign he may buck the trend that swept Robert Bennett, Mike Castle, and Lisa Murkowski off the GOP ballot line in 2010.

If pitted head-to-head in less than two years against Congressman Dean Heller, Ensign would come out on top, but only by a 45-37 margin.

Lieutenant Governor Brian Krolicki would have a much tougher road to climb if Heller declined a challenge to Ensign, however. He trails 27-55 to the incumbent senator.

That Heller does 20 points better than Krolicki in the primary matchups corresponds with Heller's 10-points-higher name recognition. Both men are popular, and neither as well-known as Ensign, but Heller posts a 56-8 personal favorability mark to Krolicki's 45-9. The difference comes almost entirely among conservatives, who give Krolicki a 47-7 grade, similar to his overall figure. But they like Heller by a 62-5 margin.

Heller is better liked than Ensign overall because of the 30% who claim to be moderate driving up Ensign's disapproval level. They give Heller a 44-13, but while 49% approve of Ensign's job performance, 40% disapprove.

“There's good news and bad news for John Ensign in these numbers,” said Dean Debnam, President of Public Policy Polling. “The good news is that his approval numbers with Republicans are relatively strong and he leads a couple well liked opponents. The bad news is that he's under 50% against Heller- the big question for Heller then becomes whether it's worth giving up a safe House seat for a Senate bid that's far from a sure thing.”

PPP surveyed 400 Nevada Republican primary voters from October 7th to 9th. The margin of error for the survey is +/-4.9%. Other factors, such as refusal to be interviewed and weighting, may introduce additional error that is more difficult to quantify.



Nevada Survey Results

- Q1** Do you approve or disapprove of Senator John Ensign's job performance?
- Approve* 64%
 - Disapprove*..... 23%
 - Not sure* 13%
- Q2** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Dean Heller?
- Favorable*..... 56%
 - Unfavorable* 8%
 - Not sure* 35%
- Q3** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Brian Krolicki?
- Favorable*..... 45%
 - Unfavorable* 9%
 - Not sure* 47%
- Q4** If the Republican candidates for Senate in 2012 were John Ensign and Dean Heller, who would you vote for?
- John Ensign*..... 45%
 - Dean Heller*..... 37%
 - Undecided*..... 18%
- Q5** If the Republican candidates for Senate in 2012 were John Ensign and Brian Krolicki, who would you vote for?
- John Ensign*..... 55%
 - Brian Krolicki*..... 27%
 - Undecided*..... 18%
- Q6** If you are a liberal, press 1. If a moderate, press 2. If a conservative, press 3.
- Liberal*..... 4%
 - Moderate*..... 30%
 - Conservative*..... 66%
- Q7** If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.
- Woman* 47%
 - Man*..... 53%
- Q8** If you are Hispanic, press 1. If white, press 2. If African-American, press 3. If other, press 4.
- Hispanic*..... 9%
 - White* 80%
 - African-American* 3%
 - Other*..... 7%
- Q9** 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.
- 18 to 29*..... 8%
 - 30 to 45*..... 24%
 - 46 to 65*..... 39%
 - Older than 65*..... 29%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Ensign Approval				
Approve	64%	76%	49%	71%
Disapprove	23%	14%	40%	16%
Not sure	13%	11%	12%	13%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Heller Favorability				
Favorable	56%	48%	44%	62%
Unfavorable	8%	18%	13%	5%
Not sure	35%	33%	42%	32%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Krolicki Favorability				
Favorable	45%	30%	42%	47%
Unfavorable	9%	18%	11%	7%
Not sure	47%	52%	47%	46%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Ensign/Heller				
John Ensign	45%	33%	44%	46%
Dean Heller	37%	60%	36%	37%
Undecided	18%	7%	20%	17%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Ensign/Krolicki				
John Ensign	55%	71%	49%	57%
Brian Krolicki	27%	22%	31%	26%
Undecided	18%	7%	21%	17%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Ensign Approval			
Approve	64%	68%	61%
Disapprove	23%	19%	26%
Not sure	13%	13%	13%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Heller Favorability			
Favorable	56%	53%	59%
Unfavorable	8%	5%	11%
Not sure	35%	42%	30%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Krolicki Favorability			
Favorable	45%	43%	46%
Unfavorable	9%	6%	11%
Not sure	47%	51%	43%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Ensign/Heller			
John Ensign	45%	46%	44%
Dean Heller	37%	37%	38%
Undecided	18%	17%	18%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Ensign/Krolicki			
John Ensign	55%	54%	56%
Brian Krolicki	27%	26%	28%
Undecided	18%	21%	16%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
Ensign Approval					
Approve	64%	61%	65%	40%	76%
Disapprove	23%	28%	23%	32%	12%
Not sure	13%	11%	12%	29%	12%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
Heller Favorability					
Favorable	56%	68%	55%	30%	64%
Unfavorable	8%	-	9%	32%	3%
Not sure	35%	32%	36%	38%	32%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
Krolicki Favorability					
Favorable	45%	62%	43%	66%	35%
Unfavorable	9%	8%	9%	15%	5%
Not sure	47%	30%	49%	19%	60%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
Ensign/Heller					
John Ensign	45%	44%	46%	25%	45%
Dean Heller	37%	46%	37%	32%	35%
Undecided	18%	10%	17%	44%	20%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
Ensign/Krolicki					
John Ensign	55%	28%	58%	25%	66%
Brian Krolicki	27%	50%	25%	47%	13%
Undecided	18%	22%	17%	29%	21%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Ensign Approval					
Approve	64%	57%	55%	66%	72%
Disapprove	23%	29%	36%	21%	13%
Not sure	13%	14%	9%	13%	15%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Heller Favorability					
Favorable	56%	57%	62%	53%	57%
Unfavorable	8%	21%	11%	8%	3%
Not sure	35%	21%	28%	40%	40%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Krolicki Favorability					
Favorable	45%	71%	43%	40%	45%
Unfavorable	9%	7%	13%	8%	6%
Not sure	47%	21%	45%	51%	49%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Ensign/Heller					
John Ensign	45%	36%	40%	43%	53%
Dean Heller	37%	50%	43%	37%	31%
Undecided	18%	14%	17%	20%	16%

	Base	Age			
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Ensign/Krolicki					
John Ensign	55%	29%	60%	53%	61%
Brian Krolicki	27%	57%	28%	25%	20%
Undecided	18%	14%	13%	22%	19%

