



604 North Third Street, 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: (717) 233-8850
Fax: (717) 233-8842
Cell Phone: (717) 215-1122
Email: james@susquehannapolling.com
www.susquehannapolling.com
James Lee, President

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jim Lee (717) 233-8850

**DEAD HEAT IN 12TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT POLL TO REPLACE MURTHA
SHOWS SPECIAL ELECTION COULD BE NEXT MASSACHUSETTS UPSET; SUPPORT FOR
OBAMA/HEALTH CARE BILL COULD SINK DEMOCRAT'S CHANCES**

(March 18, Harrisburg, PA) - A new poll sponsored by the Pittsburgh Tribune Review in conjunction with Pennsylvania-based Susquehanna Polling and Research shows the upcoming special election to replace the late Congressman John Murtha is a near dead heat, with Democrat special election nominee Mark Critz holding a tenuous 36/31 lead over Republican nominee Tim Burns; 31% of likely voters remain undecided. This race, which will have national implications, could be next in a string of Republican upsets after GOP gains in gubernatorial races in New Jersey and Virginia last year and more recently a special election for a vacant U.S. Senate seat in Massachusetts earlier this year. The telephone poll was conducted March 14-15 with 400 likely voters and has a margin of error of +/-4.9%. Calls were made from our Harrisburg call center using our professionally-trained team of survey takers. Top line survey results are included with this release.

The poll shows campaigning on the issues will be tough terrain for the Democratic nominee Mark Critz with not a lot of wiggle room to spare. For instance, Obama's job approval in the district is 41% (while 50% disapprove) and by a 54/33 margin most voters in this strongly Democratic district oppose the health care reform bill being pushed by President Obama and the national Democrats in Washington, including 43% who are "*strongly*" opposed. "Of all questions in the poll, these are the most ominous warning signs for the Democratic nominee because they show what a strong headwind he is facing in what has become an increasingly hostile political environment for Democrats this year", said Jim Lee, SP&R President. More surprisingly perhaps, by a 49/44 margin a plurality of voters reject a candidate for congress who "pledges to carry on the tradition of John Murtha" with strong support for federal funding and bringing earmarks back to the district, and instead are more likely to support someone who will make fiscal discipline and bringing down the federal deficit a top priority even if it means the local area will lose out on local earmarks. "This suggests

A proven winner in survey research and public opinion polling

voters may be ready to make a break with the past because they view reigning in federal spending and the national deficit as paramount,” Lee added.

The poll also shows the rising popularity of the Tea Party as a formidable force working in Burns’ favor. This is because 2 in 3 voters (or 67%) say they are familiar with the movement and 50% say they are more likely to support a candidate for congress who embodies the principles of the Tea Party based on a definition read to respondents which included things like strong support for Constitutional rights, lower taxes and less federal spending as well as opposition to federal bailouts and takeover of the health care system. Only 20% said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who opposes these principles.

However, the race does show opportunities for the Democratic nominee. For instance, 29% of respondents said healthcare reform is the single most important problem facing the country today (second only to the economy/jobs at 33%) and by and large these are people who support the president’s bill to overhaul the system. So if support for the president’s health care plan grows in the weeks leading up to the May 18th election this could help Critz. Plus, approximately two thirds of all undecided voters (or 67%) in the special election are Democrats and this suggests that Critz may have more room to grow. Many of these are also voters who voted both for McCain in the 2008 presidential election but also split their tickets for John Murtha in past elections so these are the true “swing voters” that Critz will need to appeal to in order to win. In the 2008 presidential race McCain narrowly carried the 12th district.

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Final Top Line Survey Results
PA Congressional District 12 – Brushfire Poll
Sample Size: 400 Registered Likely Voters
Conducted: March 14-15, 2010

INTRODUCTION: We are conducting a brief survey of attitudes and opinions concerning some important issues facing Southwestern Pennsylvania today. Would you have a few minutes to complete the survey?

Great, thank you...

F1: As you may know, a special election for United States Congress has been scheduled in conjunction with the May 18 Primary Election due to the untimely death of former Congressman John Murtha. How would you rank your chances of voting in this upcoming special election: Would you say you are definitely voting, very likely to vote, somewhat likely to vote, not likely to vote, or definitely not voting?

1. Definitely voting	273	68%
2. Very likely to vote	85	21%
3. Somewhat likely to vote	42	10%
4. Not likely to vote (TERMINETE)		
5. Definitely not voting (TERMINATE)		

Q1. Generally speaking, do you think things in the country are going in the right direction, or do you think things have gotten on the wrong track?

1. Right direction	86	22%
2. Wrong track	272	68%
3. Undecided	42	10%

Q2. What is the single most important problem facing the **United States** today? That is, the one you would like to see resolved by your federal elected officials in Washington. (DO NOT READ CHOICES – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

1. Taxes	5	01%
2. Economy / jobs / unemployment	133	33 %
3. National deficit/debt/spending	38	10%
4. War in Afghanistan	10	02%
5. International threats	0	00%
6. Politicians/government	34	08%
7. Energy policy/gas prices	3	01%
8. Healthcare (reform)/Medicare	115	29%
9. Social Security	3	01%
10. Education/schools	5	01%
11. Morality/family values	8	02%
12. Terrorism/national security	5	01%
13. Immigration/illegal aliens	0	00%
14. Global warming/climate change	0	00%
15. Mortgage/housing issues	0	00%
16. Stock market concerns	0	00%
17. Undecided	16	04%
18. Other	25	06%

Q3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Barack Obama is doing? (TEST INTENSITY)

1. Strongly approve	70	18%	Total Approve: 41 %
2. Somewhat approve	95	24%	
3. Strongly disapprove	157	39%	Total Disapprove: 50 %
4. Somewhat disapprove	45	11%	
5. Undecided	32	08%	

Q4. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the United States Congress is doing? (TEST INTENSITY)

1. Strongly approve	11	03%	Total Approve: 16 %
2. Somewhat approve	55	14%	
3. Strongly disapprove	207	52%	Total Disapprove: 76 %
4. Somewhat disapprove	97	24%	
5. Undecided	30	08%	

Q5. Thinking ahead to the May 18 special election for United States Congress, if the election were held today would you vote Republican or Democrat? (Rotate Parties)

1. Republican	134	34%
2. Democrat	175	44%
3. Independent/Other	6	02%
4. Undecided	85	21%

Turning again to the special election for Congress on Tuesday, May 18...

Q6. If the special election were being held today, would you vote for Mark Critz, the Democrat, or Tim Burns, the Republican? (TEST INTENSITY-ROTATE NAMES)

1. Definitely Critz	96	24%	Total Critz: 36 %
2. Probably Critz	48	12%	Total Burns: 31 %
3. Definitely Burns	86	22%	
4. Probably Burns	38	10%	
5. None/other	8	02%	
6. Undecided	123	31%	

Q7. Are you registered to vote as a Republican, Democrat, Independent or something else?

1. Republican	119	30%
2. Democrat	261	65%
3. Independent/other	16	04%
4. Refuse	4	01%

[IF REPUBLICAN ASK Q8A; IF DEMOCRATIC ASK Q8B; IF INDEPENDENT SKIP TO Q9]

Q8a. If the Republican primary election for Congress was being held today and the candidates were Tim Burns and William Russell, for whom would you vote? (ROTATE NAMES)

[N = 119]

1. Burns	36	30%
2. Russell	38	32%
3. None/other	1	01%
4. Undecided	44	37%

Q8b. If the Democratic primary election for Congress was being held today and the four candidates were Mark Critz, Ryan Bucchianeri (Bucc-ian-airy), Ron Mackell, Jr., and Ed Cernic, Jr., for whom would you vote? (ROTATE NAMES)

1. Critz	77	30%
2. Bucchianeri	4	02%
3. Mackell	6	02%
4. Cernic	11	04%
5. None/other	10	04%
6. Undecided	153	59%

Q9. Would you be more likely to vote for a candidate for US Congress who... (ROTATE STATEMENTS-TEST INTENSITY)

(A) Pledges to carry on the tradition of John Murtha with strong support for federal programs and policies including bringing federal funding and earmarks back to the district for economic development projects?

[Or a candidate who...]

(B) Pledges to be a strong proponent of fiscal discipline and cutting federal spending in Washington as a way to bring down the federal deficit even if it means bringing less federal earmarks back to the district for local projects?

1. Much more likely A	117	29%	Total More Likely A: 44 %
2. Somewhat more likely A	59	15%	Total More Likely B: 49 %
3. Much more likely B	139	35%	
4. Somewhat more likely B	56	14%	
5. Undecided	28	07%	

Q10. Would you be more likely to vote for a candidate for U.S. Congress who... (ROTATE STATEMENTS-TEST INTENSITY)

(A) Has years of experience working in politics and government-related jobs in Washington and if elected will hit the ground running?

[Or a candidate who...]

(B) Has a background primarily as a successful businessman and if elected will be considered more of a political outsider and fresh face in Washington?

1. Much more likely A	70	18%	Total More Likely A: 27 %
2. Somewhat more likely A	37	09%	Total More Likely B: 56 %
3. Much more likely B	159	40%	
4. Somewhat more likely B	65	16%	
5. Undecided	67	17%	

Q11. Do you support or oppose the health care reform bill supported by President Obama and the national Democrats in Washington? (Test Intensity...)

1. Strongly support	72	18%	Total Support: 33 %
2. Somewhat support	60	15%	Total Oppose: 54 %
3. Strongly oppose	172	43%	
4. Somewhat oppose	43	11%	
5. Undecided	51	13%	

Q12. Generally speaking, would you say you are familiar or unfamiliar with the so-called Tea Party movement in the country?

1. Familiar	269	67%
2. Unfamiliar	117	29%
3. Undecided	13	03%

Q13. Would you say you generally support or oppose the principles of the Tea Party movement? (TEST INTENSITY)

1. Strongly support	58	14%	Total Support: 38 % Total Oppose: 20 %
2. Somewhat support	96	24%	
3. Strongly oppose	50	12%	
4. Somewhat oppose	30	08%	
5. Undecided	163	41%	
6. Refuse	3	01%	

Q14. As you may know, Tea Party members favor the principles of strong support for Constitutional rights, lower taxes and less federal spending and oppose things like a bigger role for the federal government including bailouts of banks and businesses and government takeover of the healthcare system. Based on this definition would you say you would be more likely or less likely to support a candidate for U.S. Congress who supports the principles of the Tea Party movement, or does this have no impact on your vote? (TEST INTENSITY)

1. Much more likely	136	34%	Total More Likely: 50 % Total Less Likely: 20 %
2. Somewhat more likely	65	16%	
3. Much less likely	54	14%	
4. Somewhat less likely	27	07%	
5. No Impact	93	23%	
6. Undecided	22	06%	
7. Refuse	3	01%	

Now, I just have a few more questions for demographic purposes...

Q15. What is your approximate age according to the following brackets: 18 - 29, 30 - 44, 45 - 59 or 60 and over?

1. 18-29	16	04%
2. 30-44	55	14%
3. 45-59	158	40%
4. 60+	165	41%
5. Refuse	6	02%

Q16. In the 2008 presidential election did you vote for Barack Obama, John McCain, someone else, or did you not vote?

1. Obama	187	47%
2. McCain	171	43%
3. Other	16	04%
4. Didn't vote	8	02%
5. Refuse	16	04%

Q17. In the 2008 election for US Congress, did you vote for John Murtha (the Democrat), William Russell (the Republican), someone else, or did you not vote?

1. Murtha	236	59%
2. Russell	107	27%
3. Other	10	02%
4. Didn't vote	19	05%
5. Undecided	13	03%
6. Refuse	15	04%

Q18. Can the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review have permission to contact you as a follow-up to this poll?

1. Yes	254	64%
2. No	146	36%

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE SURVEY. HAVE A GOOD NIGHT

Gender:

1. Male	191	48%
2. Female	209	52%

Areas (by county):

1. Allegheny	2	00%
2. Armstrong	22	06%
3. Cambria	87	22%
4. Fayette	62	16%
5. Greene	25	06%
6. Indiana	13	03%
7. Somerset	23	06%
8. Washington	69	17%
9. Westmoreland	97	24%

Times voted last four general elections (from record):

1X	38	10%
2X	89	22%
3X	84	21%
4X	189	47%

Times voted last four primary elections (from record):

0X	60	15%
1X	85	21%
2X	67	17%
3X	80	20%
4X	108	27%

The margin of error for a sample size of 400 is +/-4.90%
