

The Social Research Laboratory

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BASHA MAINTAINS LEAD IN GOVERNOR'S RACE

Eddie Basha remains ahead of Fife Symington in the race to be Arizona's next Governor. Fife Symington's reelection efforts are hampered by negative ratings and defections of Republican voters, according to the latest Arizona Poll results. The poll was conducted by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University. Survey results are accurate at a +/- 5 percent margin of error.

BASHA IS IN FRONT OF SYMINGTON

According to a survey of 401 registered voters conducted from October 3 to 6, Eddie Basha leads Fife Symington by a 10 percent margin in Arizona (49 percent to 39 percent). Three percent say they will vote for John Buttrick, the Libertarian candidate for Governor, and 9 percent of registered voters remain undecided.

The race between Basha and Symington is slightly narrower among people most likely to vote in the upcoming election. Forty-six percent of most likely voters support Basha and 40 percent support Symington. There is also an 8 point gap between support for Basha and Symington among people firmly committed to supporting one candidate over the other (32 percent firmly support Basha and 24 percent firmly support Symington).

According to Fred Solop, Director of the Arizona Poll, "Basha is ahead at this time, but the race isn't over yet. Symington still has a chance to catch up, although this will not be an easy task to accomplish."

Fife Symington is having a difficult time holding on to Republican voters in Arizona. Sixty-six percent of Republicans say they will vote for Symington in the November election, but one-quarter of Republicans (25 percent) say they support Basha. Basha, in contrast, is supported by 85 percent of Democrats. Only 10 percent of Democrats are crossing party lines to support the Republican candidate for Governor. Basha, furthermore, is supported by 27 percent of people who voted for Symington in the 1990 Governor's race.

Symington is also having trouble holding on to other important blocks of voters in Arizona. A serious gender gap is emerging in the Governor's race, for example. While larger percentages of both men and women support Basha over Symington, the difference in levels of support is noticeable. Women favor Basha by a margin of 16 percent (52 percent support Basha versus 36 percent supporting Symington). Among men, Basha is favored only by a margin of 3 percent. Forty-five percent of men support Basha compared to 42 percent supporting Symington.

Basha is even favored among people living in Maricopa County which is typically thought of as a stronghold of support for Fife Symington. Fifty-one percent of registered voters in Maricopa county support Basha and 37 percent support Symington.

"Symington has to do a better job of appealing to members of his own party, women, and Maricopa country residents if he wants to win. The problem here is that the interests of these three groups are not necessarily the same. Symington is going to have to perform a great juggling act to bring the election around his way," said Solop.

PEOPLE LIKE BASHA

Both Eddie Basha and Fife Symington enjoy high name recognition throughout Arizona. Seventy-six percent of registered voters are able to identify Eddie Basha as the Democratic candidate for Governor, while 80 percent are able to name Fife Symington as the Republican candidate for Governor. Only 6 percent of registered voters can name John Buttrick as the Libertarian candidate.

When it comes to their impressions of the candidates, however, registered voters look upon Basha more positively than they do Symington. Almost two-thirds of respondents (63 percent) hold a favorable impression of Eddie Basha. About half of registered voters (48 percent) have a favorable impression of Symington and 8 percent hold a favorable opinion of Buttrick.

"People see Eddie Basha as a nice guy. He's the kind of guy you could have over to your house for dinner," said Solop. "But, fewer people would think about extending a similar invitation to Fife Symington."

A large portion of registered voters (38 percent) hold an unfavorable view of Symington. More than one-in-five (21 percent) say they have a very unfavorable impression of Symington. Nineteen percent of registered voters have an unfavorable impression of Basha and 8 percent hold a very unfavorable opinion of Basha.

When asked of their impression of John Buttrick, the Libertarian candidate, more than three quarters of survey respondents (79 percent) were unable to express an opinion.

VOTERS IDENTIFY CANDIDATES WITH DIFFERENT ISSUES

The Arizona Poll asked people to indicate which candidate would do a better job of handling a variety of contemporary issues. Registered voters in Arizona said Basha would do a better job providing social services such as day care and aid to the needy (64 percent), handling public school education (58 percent), and protecting the environment (43 percent). Fife Symington, on the other hand is identified as being better able to provide strong leadership to the state (44 percent), manage the economy (44 percent), hold down taxes (43 percent), and handle the crime problem (42 percent).

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