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PRESS RELEASE

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EMERSON COLLEGE POLL: MCAULIFFE LEADS BY JUST TWO POINTS AHEAD OF CUCCINELLI; VA VOTERS UNABLE TO SIGN UP AT HEALTHCARE.GOV

BOSTON (11/1/2013) - According to a new poll, Democrat Terry McAuliffe's lead over Republican Ken Cuccinelli has shrunk to 2 points in the Virginia gubernatorial race (42% to 40%, with Libertarian Robert Sarvis at 13%). At the beginning of the month, McAuliffe was up five points (43% to 38%), suggesting Cuccinelli is gaining momentum going into the last weekend of the election. The survey was conducted October 25 to October 30, with 874 likely voters at a 3.24% margin of error.

Despite his slim lead in the poll, 55 percent of Virginia likely voters believe that McAuliffe will be elected, with only 28 percent predicting that Cuccinelli will be their next governor. Twenty percent of self-identified independents are in support of Sarvis, who is leeching votes from Cuccinelli with 11 percent of Republicans supporting his candidacy versus only 6 percent of Democrats who said they would vote for him.

All the candidates continue to have higher unfavorable than favorable ratings, with McAuliffe's at 37 percent favorable to 52 percent unfavorable and Cuccinelli at 38 percent to 56 percent. Third party candidate Sarvis is also disliked with a 22 percent unfavorable rating and a 19 percent favorable rating.

McAuliffe's strongest area of support are in the north within Congressional district 8 (75%-13%), district 11 (58%-32) and district 10 (52%-37%). Cuccinelli is winning all the other districts with his strongest support in district 7 at (49% to 27%). Sarvis is pulling support in Cuccinelli areas of district 1 at 13%, district 2 at 16%, district 4 at 20%, district 5 at 16%, district 6 at 18%, and district 7 at 14%.

Virginians were also asked to weigh in on the Affordable Care Act. Despite media coverage suggesting that Americans cannot distinguish the ACA from its nickname, Obamacare, the favorability and unfavorability ratings for the two were very similar (47% favorable and 51% unfavorable for the ACA compared to 47% favorable and 50% unfavorable for Obamacare).

Twenty-two percent of respondents attempted to sign up for healthcare using the new website, or knew someone who did. Out of that group, 63 percent were not successful, and 37% were.

When asked who they blamed for the debt crisis, 40 percent said both parties were responsible, with 27 percent blaming only Democrats and 33 percent blaming Republicans. Thirty-nine percent of voters feel confident that Congress will be able to reach a debt ceiling agreement by January 1st, while 57 percent felt unconfident.

Other findings:

- Sixty-eight percent of voters feel the national budget should be Congress' top priority, followed by immigration (10%), gun policy (7%), and the Farm Bill (4%)
- Forty-five percent of voters believe Virginia is headed in the right direction, compared to only 27 percent that feel the same way about the nation as a whole
- Sixty-three percent of voters believe the country is headed in the wrong direction compared to only 22 percent said the country was headed in the right direction.
- Representative Eric Cantor (R) has a 47 percent unfavorable rating, and President Barack Obama has a 51 percent unfavorability rating

Data was collected on October 25-30 using an automated data collections system. The Virginia sample consisted of 874 registered, likely voters with a margin of error of +/- 3.24% at a 95% confident level. The full survey and results are available at the ECPS's website. _

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About Emerson College Polling Society

Emerson College Polling Society is a student organization at Emerson College dedicated to formulating, administering, and analyzing public opinion polls. The results and analysis of this release are the sole views of Emerson College Polling Society and do not reflect the views of Emerson College as a whole.

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