

Louisiana Statewide Survey October 27-28, 2015

Verne Kennedy Analysis and Conclusions

Market Research Insight completed a survey of 600 Louisiana voters who participated in the October 24th Primary Election. Voters interviewed responded yes when asked if they plan to vote in the run-off election. The survey has an error factor of 4.1% at .95 level of confidence. All interviews were completed on October 27th and 28th.

Question 5 asked participants which candidate they favored in the Primary Election. Survey results are within one percent of the vote received for each candidate. Demographics are exact or within one or two percent of available voting records for the 2011 and 2015 Primary Elections including dominant media areas, age, and gender. In addition, the sample included 26% African-Americans, exactly the portion of African-Americans casting ballots in the Primary Election.

Market Research Insight did its final survey of 800 voters Tuesday and Wednesday before the Saturday Primary Election. Actual survey results were Angelle 18%, Dardenne 16%, Edwards 33%, Vitter 21%, others 2% and undecided 10%. Survey results when adjusted for undecided voter opinions of the candidates were: Angelle 20%, Dardenne 17%, Vitter 23%, Edwards 37% and other candidates 3%. Election results were Angelle 19%, Dardenne 15%, Edwards 40%, Vitter 23% and others 3%. The greatest difference was 3% for Edwards because white turnout was lower than expected raising African-American percent of voters. In July MRI conducted a survey with Vitter at 23%, exactly what he got in the election. Following that survey Vitter launched an email attack on Kennedy that was 100% distortions and outright lies. Following the analysis of the October 27-28 survey is an explanation of what Vitter did in his attack on Kennedy.

In the October 27-28 survey both candidates have very high name recognition, 99% for David Vitter and 98% for John Bel Edwards. Vitter received 47% favorable and 40% unfavorable opinion for a ratio of 1.2:1, much improved from voter opinion just weeks preceding the Primary Election. Edwards received 54% favorable and 24% unfavorable for a ratio of 2.3:1. Although both candidates have universal name recognition, only 13% of voters have a neutral opinion of Vitter compared to 20% for Edwards. In the

ballot question, Edwards does better among voters with name recognition and opinion for both candidates than the vote he received in the survey from all participants. This means that votes for Edwards should increase naturally more than Vitter because 20% of Edwards' recognition voters do not hold an opinion compared to 13% of Vitter recognition voters.

Crosstabulation tables were created for white voters since it is highly likely that Edwards will receive 95% of African-American vote. The run-off winner will of course be decided by white voters. Among the 51% of white voters having a favorable opinion of Vitter, 41% have a favorable and 40% an unfavorable opinion of Edwards. As expected, Edwards has very higher favorable opinions among Democrats and Independent Democrats, but he also has 56% favorable and only 20% unfavorable opinion among completely Independent voters. Self-identified Republicans have 28% favorable and 45% unfavorable opinion of Edwards. Evangelical voters have 42% favorable and 35% unfavorable opinion of Edwards. Edwards has at least 20% higher favorable than unfavorable among voters 45 years and older who makeup 80% of likely white voters. Men were 50% favorable and 30% unfavorable for Edwards compared to women 49% favorable and 28% unfavorable. White voters holding opinions of both candidates were 62% favorable and 38% unfavorable of Edwards.

David Vitter received 49% favorable and 40% unfavorable opinion from all white voters. Among voters holding a favorable opinion of Edwards, 42% hold a favorable and 51% unfavorable opinion of Edwards. Voters favoring Vitter in the ballot question were 79% favorable but 9% were unfavorable and 11% had no opinion indicating high likelihood that 20% of whites voted for Vitter even though they did not hold a favorable opinion of Vitter. Voters favoring Edwards responded 23% favorable and 68% unfavorable for Vitter. The 10% of white voters who were undecided replied 41% favorable and 51% unfavorable for Vitter. This compares with undecided voters holding 25% favorable and 40% unfavorable opinion of Edwards. This means undecided voters held 10% higher unfavorable than favorable for Vitter and 15% more unfavorable than favorable for Edwards. Of course, among white voters 49% favor Vitter, 40% Edwards, and 10% undecided.

Vitter does best with favorable opinion among self-identified Republicans 68% but 21% responded unfavorable. Moving from self-identified Republicans to self-identified

Democrats Vitter's favorable declines down from 68% to 27% and his unfavorable increases from 21% to 60%. Among Evangelicals Vitter had 53% favorable and 35% unfavorable opinion. Vitter continues to maintain good favorable opinion among voters 65 years and older with 58% favorable and 33% unfavorable even though their vote in the Primary Election did not reflect as strong support for Vitter as these figures suggest or than expected. White men responded 55% favorable and 32% unfavorable compared to women 47% favorable and 44% unfavorable. Results suggest that some voters responding no opinion for Vitter may actually have an unfavorable opinion.

As indicated in the topline, unadjusted responses to the ballot question were Edwards 49%, Vitter 41%, and 10% undecided. The most significant unknown factor concerning the outcome of the run-off election is the percent of African-Americans voting. Topline results show adjusted vote for both 20% and 25% African-American participation. With 25% black voters results, 1% lower than Primary participation, were Edwards 54%, Vitter 38% and 8% undecided. If blacks makeup only 20% of those voting, results are Edwards 51%, Vitter 40% and 9% undecided. Of course in adjusted results, undecided voters are all white. Edwards is currently in a better position to win the run-off than Vitter, but it is unknown how effective Vitter's attacks on Edwards will be.

Among favorable voters, Edwards receives 71% vote, and among favorable voters Vitter receives 74%. Although unusual, Vitter receives 12% vote among those having an unfavorable opinion of him compared to Edwards' 5% vote from his unfavorable voters. Some Republicans face a dilemma in deciding whether they vote their political party or for the candidate they consider most favorable. Examples of this can be seen in how Primary voters for Angelle and Dardenne respond to the run-off ballot question. Angelle voters replied 48% Vitter and 34% Edwards. Dardenne voters responded 43% Vitter and 37% Edwards. Even though self-identified Republicans responded 68% favorable and 21% unfavorable for Vitter, they responded to the ballot question 72% Vitter and 13% Edwards but 15% were undecided.

This survey indicates voting party line is having more impact among some Republicans than candidate they hold more favorable. One option Edwards may consider would be to get a few well-known Republicans to endorse him. It would be beneficial to the Edwards' campaign because it gives permission in a matter of speaking for Republicans

to vote for a Democrat. Edwards' campaign might also consider creating an organization "Republicans for Edwards."

The 21% of white voters saying they are completely Independent not leaning towards one party or the other responded Edwards 49% and Vitter 43%. Independent voters will play a major role in deciding the outcome of the run-off election. Although 46% of all voters say they are Republican or leaning more towards being Republican and 35% say Democrat or leaning more being Democrat, the Independent voters, 19% of all voters and 21% of white voters, are one of the most two critical factors determining the election outcome. The first, of course, is the percent of African-Americans participating in the run-off and the second is how white Independent voters cast ballots. Both Vitter and Edwards are likely to identify precincts with high makeup of Independent voters which someone like Greg Rigamer can easily do. It is also interesting that Republicans are almost twice as high in undecided voters compared to Democrats or Independents.

Active Evangelical Christians can also make a significant difference in the run-off outcome. Although the 26% of white Evangelicals were 53% favorable and 35% unfavorable for Vitter giving him 18% higher favorable, they responded 42% favorable and 35% unfavorable for Edwards giving him 7% higher favorable. Evangelicals responded to the ballot question 54% Vitter, 38% Edwards, and 7% uncertain. Jindal, a Catholic, was able to capture a strong majority of these voters. Edwards may try to do the same because on social issues he is in agreement with Evangelicals. Vitter will likely try to reinforce and hold his support among Evangelicals.

White women were 49% favorable and 28% unfavorable for Edwards giving him a 21% favorable advantage. Vitter received 47% favorable and 44% unfavorable from women giving him a 3% favorable advantage. White women voted 48% Vitter, 40% Edwards, and 13% undecided in the survey. Again, it is apparent that many voters are voting party rather than candidate more favorable. An option the Edwards campaign may consider is to form a group of women to advance the concept of "women of principle" who cannot support someone like Vitter, someone who committed adultery and routinely used prostitutes. A key messages for such a group could be Vitter as Governor says that adultery is acceptable and Vitter using prostitutes demeans the status of women.

Another important gender factor discovered in the survey is the voting difference between women who are employed or those not employed outside of the home. They makeup almost identical segments of likely white voters but employed women responded Vitter 44% and Edwards 41%. Those not employed said Vitter 50% and Edwards 41%. Of course, age is somewhat of a factor in that women not employed are older than those employed. However, drive time radio ads targeting employed women would help both campaigns.

Vitter continues to do well among seniors, those 65 years and old, receiving 50% survey votes compared to 42% for Edwards. Vitter will certainly maintain communication with this group and show why they should consider Edwards as unacceptable based upon many of his issue positions. Edwards could decide to appeal to seniors reminding them that they set the example for their children and grandchildren and should not vote for Vitter because it condones his behavior.

As discussed earlier, all whites favored Vitter 49% and Edwards 40%. Whites holding opinions of both candidates making up 75% of all whites favored Edwards 47% and Vitter 44%. Since 87% of white voters hold an opinion of Vitter and 78% hold an opinion of Edwards, as the run-off campaign proceeds and Edwards should have an increase among voters holding an opinion toward him, he is likely to gain white support. White voters not holding opinions for both candidates were 61% Republicans and 15% Democrats which helps explain the advantage Vitter has with all whites compared to those holding opinions for both candidates.

Based upon survey results, Edwards holds an advantage based both on current voter choice and on strategic positioning. Of course he can expect direct attacks from Vitter throughout the run-off campaign. Edwards should not underestimate Vitter attacks on what many would call anti-business positions held by Edwards and any past votes in the Legislature by Edwards for higher taxes. The low turnout of all voters, both white and black in the Primary Election, was almost certainly due to the volume of negative campaign ads. A low turnout helps Vitter; whereas, a high turnout helps Edwards.

Although it was known from early voting that African-Americans would have a low turnout, the equally low turnout of whites was unexpected. To ensure a high turnout of African-Americans, Edwards may decide to portray Vitter as a racist. Vitter's recent ad

concerning crime claiming that Edwards would release many criminals in an ad that depicted most criminals as black would be one way for Edwards to accomplish this. Another would be the selective use of Vitter's attack on Mayor Landrieu removing Confederate monuments and renaming streets bearing the names of individuals active in the Confederacy which supported slavery. One option Edwards could consider is an ad showing both David Vitter and David Duke in a direct mail piece to African-Americans pointing out any similarities between the two. African-American voters are more likely to turn out in protest to Vitter than to support Edwards.

Since the survey identified how white respondents voted in the Primary Election, it provides an interesting analysis of which voter groups supported Vitter or Edwards. Self-identified Republicans voted overwhelmingly for Vitter 44% and 8% for Edwards; however, Independent voters favored Edwards 28% over Vitter 20%. Active Evangelicals voted 33% Vitter and 28% Edwards. Whereas employed women favored Edwards 28% and Vitter 24%, those not employed outside of the home were 36% Vitter and 24% Edwards. Vitter did not do as well as expected among senior citizens 65 years and over receiving 32% compared to 30% for Edwards. All white women favored Vitter 31% and 26% for Edwards. Only small differences occurred in vote for each candidate in dominant media areas. Although post election surveys are sometimes skewed by voters who want to say they favored a winning candidate, Vitter received higher vote from all whites than Edwards, but among those holding opinions for both candidates Edwards led by 6%. Edwards received 6% higher vote among white Independents than Vitter. Vitter received 3% higher portion of his votes from active Evangelicals than did Edwards. Vitter did much better among unemployed women than did Edwards, but Edwards had a small lead among employed women. Looking at each candidates' white vote in the Primary Election, Vitter did only slightly better than Edwards among voters 65 years and older. It appears that many Republican white women did not vote in the Primary Election. This can later be determined by Secretary of State voting records.

With a 25% participation in the run-off by African-Americans Edwards leads Vitter 54% to 38% based on the survey conducted October 27 and 28. Even with only 20% of African-Americans participating Edwards leads Vitter 51% to 40%. Vitter was very successful in driving Angelle's vote from a high of 24% to 19% in the Primary Election while Vitter stayed at the same 23% he had when Angelle had 24%. Vitter now faces

the task of driving Edwards' vote down as much as 16% rather than the 5% he reduced Angelle's vote. There is little doubt that Edwards holds the advantage and well over a 50% probability of winning the run-off.

It is the opinion of Verne Kennedy that Vitter's frequent use of attack ads against Angelle and Dardenne probably reduced his credibility using such ads in the runoff.

An independent survey conducted by Verne Kennedy in late July led to an incredible attack by Vitter on Kennedy because the survey showed that Vitter and Angelle were in a statistical tie. The fact that Vitter had 22% in the survey which would be 23% when undecided voters are adjusted proportionally is interesting because he received 23% in the Primary Election. Wanting everyone to believe that Vitter was well ahead of the other Republicans, the Vitter Campaign launched a massive email blast attacking Kennedy's credibility. Specifically, the campaign pointed to surveys where it claimed Kennedy had conducted surveys in three previous elections claiming results were wrong by 30% to 40%. As seen in results from the actual polls they attacked, all claims were untrue.

The first attack, related to Vitter's re-election as U.S. Senator in 2010. Using a Kennedy survey conducted months before the election, the email blast said Kennedy's survey had Vitter at 46% and Chet Traylor at 34%. The numbers Vitter's campaign used is referred to in survey research as a post-issue ballot question which measures voter reaction to a number of statements about the candidates. The actual question that measures candidate support is the initial ballot which is asked before any issues involving candidates are discussed had Vitter 66% and Traylor 14% with 20% undecided. When undecided voters are proportionately redistributed Vitter had 83% in a survey conducted months before the election where he received 88%. The email attack claimed Kennedy was wrong by more than 40%, an incredible deception because Kennedy's survey was very accurate.

In 2010 Kennedy did a survey concerning the election for Congress in Louisiana's 2nd District. The email attack quoted Kennedy's survey as giving Joseph Cao 51% and Cedric Richmond 26%. The email did not mention that the survey was conducted weeks before Cedric Richmond announced his candidacy for Congress and months

before the actual election. The email attack accused Kennedy of being wrong by 40%, an incredibly unfair accusation.

The third attack on Kennedy involved the 2010 election for Mayor in New Orleans. The email said that Kennedy's early December survey showed Mitch Landrieu being vulnerable in Kennedy's opinion, which in fact was not Kennedy's opinion, with only 37% and ended up winning with 66%. The 37% is what Landrieu received in the initial ballot question with 10 candidates including 33% undecided voters. When undecided voters are proportionately redistributed Landrieu had 55%. Kennedy did another survey immediately before the election which gave Landrieu 52% and contained 31% undecided. If undecided voters are distributed proportionately to what each candidate received, Landrieu would have 75%. The email attack claimed that Kennedy was more than 30% wrong, when Kennedy's surveys were actually very accurate.

Kennedy sent actual survey results for all surveys discussed in the email attack to the Vitter campaign pointing out the misleading and false claims designed to damage Kennedy's reputation. Kennedy received a response from Kyle Ruckert, Vitter's Campaign Manager, asking if Kennedy intended to take legal action. The email included: "David (Vitter) would really appreciate your letting us know if you are planning to pursue legal action. He really wants to send the same email out under his name to another significant list, including your subscriber/clients, so he can be sure to be named in your suit."

Despite the attack, Kennedy professionally conducted all surveys accurately determining Vitter's support as demonstrated earlier. Kennedy's last survey of 800 voters was completed Thursday before Saturday's election. Kennedy predicted that Vitter would make the run-off. The survey had Vitter 21% with 10% of undecided voters. Redistributing undecided voters proportionately for each candidate gives Vitter 23%, exactly what he received in the Primary Election. Using the same methodology, Vitter's own tracking survey sent immediately before the Primary Election put him at 30%, 7% higher than he received.

In conclusion, Kennedy's surveys were professionally conducted and very accurate throughout the primary campaigns determined by primary outcomes and several published articles examining polling in the primary. The Vitter attack drew conclusions

that were wrong, deceptive, and full of lies. Kennedy's latest survey, conducted exactly like those in the Primary, points to a win by Edwards based on current voter opinion.