

Subject: [Fwd: SCIndex - July 2004]
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US Senate Race – Still Too Close to Call

With a little over 100 days before the November General Election, the US Senate race in South Carolina is still too close to call. In a head-to-head match-up, Republican Jim DeMint edges out Democrat Inez Tenenbaum by only 5 points, splitting the electorate 47%-42%, with 11% undecided. Both candidates had high favorability among all voters – DeMint with 49%; Tenenbaum with 46% - but a closer look reveals each candidate may need to work on boosting their image with their traditional bases. DeMint only has 59% of white males, while Tenenbaum captures 79% of the African American vote; both will need to be stronger among these respective groups in November. The candidates split the Independents, each garnering 39%.

South Carolina – Still Bush Country

South Carolina is still very much a “Red State,” but not nearly as much as one would think from the media and political talking heads. If the Election were held today, George W. Bush and Dick Cheney would defeat John Kerry and John Edwards by a 50%-39% margin, with 11% undecided. The Bush-Cheney ticket does well among Republicans (95%), Independents (45%), and white voters (64%), while Kerry-Edwards is strong among Democrats (89%) and African Americans (81%).

It also looks as though the Independent candidacy of Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo has not gained much traction in South Carolina. With the Nader-Camejo (1%) ticket thrown in, Bush-Cheney still hold strong with 50%, while Kerry-Edwards only drops one point to 38%.

National Numbers Trending South

Of course, the head-to-head numbers will change many times before November, but a disturbing trend for Republicans seems to be appearing. Despite the fact that 47% of South Carolinians feel South Carolina is headed in the right direction, a strong undercurrent of resentment has manifested itself in how South Carolinians feel about national issues. 32% of South Carolinians strongly disapprove of the way President Bush is handling the situation in Iraq, the largest number since the SCIndex’s inception one year ago. There are also strong feelings concerning the economy, with only 50% of South Carolinians approving the way Bush is handling the economy, also the lowest number we’ve seen in a year. The disapproval ratings on both questions are highest among women and African Americans.

Does Sanford Miss the Legislature?

Since the state Legislature has left Columbia to commit themselves to constituent service (or lick the wounds from the June primaries), Mark Sanford's job approval rating has taken a nose dive. Only 51% of South Carolinians think Sanford is doing a good job as Governor, down from 64% in May. Sanford still enjoys high favorability (61%), but, without the swarms of Legislators and lobbyists around, he seems to be taking lots of hits on the state of the state.

Yet another Political Fault Line

It seems South Carolinians are just as partisan when it comes to soda as when it comes to voting (or barbecue, or ice cream). Republicans in this state prefer Coke over Pepsi (54%-36%), while Democrats prefer Pepsi (51%-40%). Race seemed to be the largest factor in determining preference, with whites following the Republican trend (51%-37%, Coke over Pepsi, while African Americans enjoy Pepsi by a two-to-one margin (59%-31%).

Independents split on this controversial issue, preferring Coke by a slim majority (41%-38%).

SCIndex - Tell your friends!

Remember, you can share all the juicy info in the SCIndex with your friends and neighbors. Just have them send a blank email with "SCIndex" in the subject line to scindex@bellsouth.net and they'll automatically receive the SCIndex.

REMEMBER - If you'd like to know how South Carolinians feel about a specific issue, you can tag a question onto the SCIndex without having to do an expensive poll. Call Wil Brown at 803-206-0901 for more information.

The SCIndex is a private publication not intended for public use. The SCIndex is a joint production of Campaign Systems, Crantford & Associates, and the Southern Political Information Network (SPIN). Any questions or comments should be directed to Wil Brown and emailed to scindex@bellsouth.net.

Information contained in the SCIndex was compiled from a poll of likely General Election voters conducted on July 16 and has an error of +/- 4 percentage points.