

March 03, 2010

To: Interested Parties

Fr: John Anzalone

Re: Summary of Statewide General Election Polling Results in Louisiana

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David Vitter began the 2010 cycle as the most vulnerable Republican incumbent in the U.S. Senate, and his re-election remains in serious jeopardy despite a more favorable national climate for Republicans since the campaign polled in May 2009. More voters prefer “someone new” than want to re-elect Vitter, and his support remains under 50% against Democratic challenger Charlie Melancon. In fact, Vitter’s popularity has actually contracted since May 2009. Voters perceive Vitter as too partisan, part of the problem in Washington, and someone whose values are inconsistent with their own. The declining or static nature of Vitter’s support, in the face of an improved Republican climate elsewhere, demonstrates the damage done to the Vitter brand is permanent and will not simply be erased or overlooked by broader political environment improvement for Republicans.

**While some Republicans’ fortunes have improved since last May; David Vitter’s have not. A plurality of voters prefer someone new to re-electing Vitter, and he remains under the critical 50% mark against Democratic challenger Charlie Melancon.**

- A plurality of Louisiana voters prefer “someone new” (47%) than say they will definitely or probably re-elect David Vitter (43%) – an extremely ominous sign for any incumbent.
- Similar to the May polling, David Vitter receives less than 50% of the vote against Charlie Melancon. Vitter currently leads Melancon 48% to 38% – an almost identical margin to May’s 47% Vitter / 37% Melancon. Exit polling from 2008 shows Mary Landrieu won 96% of the African American vote against former Democrat John Kennedy. Assuming Melancon solidifies 90% of the African American vote on Election Day, the vote would move to 44% Melancon / 46% Vitter.
- Vitter’s lead is largely built on his higher name-ID as a statewide official (92% Vitter / 59% Melancon). Once voters hear equal amounts of positive information about each candidate, Melancon takes a 4-point lead (46% Melancon / 42% Vitter).

Anzalone Liszt Research conducted N=800 live telephone interviews with likely 2010 general election voters in Louisiana. Interviews were conducted between February 18-24, 2010. Respondents were selected at random, with interviews apportioned geographically based on past voter turnout. Expected margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.5\%$  with a 95% confidence level.

**Voters also give David Vitter higher unfavorables than in May. Vitter's standing has eroded, despite significant free media exposure over the past several months.**

- David Vitter's popularity has declined in the past nine months. His personal popularity (54% Favorable / 38% Unfavorable) shows higher unfavorables than in May (54% Favorable / 33% Unfavorable). Like his popularity, Vitter's job rating (54% Positive / 38% Negative) is under the 2:1 positive-to-negative ratio expected of a politically healthy incumbent.
- Charlie Melancon's popularity and job rating both show healthier positive-to-negative ratios than do David Vitter's.

**Louisiana voters see David Vitter as too partisan and part of the problem in Washington, and his personal baggage has rendered him unable to take advantage of the national environment.**

- A majority of Louisiana voters agree "David Vitter votes too often with the Republicans in Congress" (**55% Agree** / 32% Disagree). And pluralities agree that Vitter "has been in Washington too long" (**47% Agree** / 41% Disagree) and is "part of the problem in Washington" (**47% Agree** / 44% Disagree).
- Vitter's personal problems have obviously taken a toll, as a plurality of voters disagree that he "shares their values" (44% Agree / **46% Disagree**). And 84% of Louisiana voters are bothered by his involvement in the D.C. madam's prostitution ring.