



MAY 5, 2010

Murray Leads All Challengers in Senate Race

■ Republicans hoping to pull off a Scott Brown style “Massachusetts Miracle” in Washington face an imposing task. Incumbent US Senator Patty Murray has a double digit lead over all potential challengers in the new *Elway Poll*.

The survey, conducted by live interviewers from the list of registered voters, found Murray at or above 50% in head-to-head match-ups with 4 Republican challengers: Dino Rossi, Don Benton, Paul Akers and Clint Didier. Only Rossi, who has yet to declare whether he is in the race, broke 30%.

The declared Republican candidates are virtually tied. Former Republican State Chairman Don Benton fared slightly better than his Republican opponents in head-to-head match-ups with Murray. But Bellingham businessman Paul Akers was slightly ahead in the open primary question, which included 3 declared candidates. None of these differences are statistically significant.

The real question this week, of course, is whether or not Dino Rossi, two time-Republican candidate for Governor, will enter the race. These results indicate that his challenge would be only slightly less daunting than that of his lesser-known Republican colleagues.

Combining the results of the potential match-ups indicates the strength of Murray’s position. Survey respondents were asked 5 times whom they would be inclined to vote for as things stand today—once in the “open primary” question and 4 times against potential challengers.

46% of respondents said “Murray” all 5 times; an additional 5% said “Murray” more times than not. Only 10% said they would vote for a Republican all 5 times and 21% said a Republican more times than not.

Considering just the 4 potential General Election match-ups:

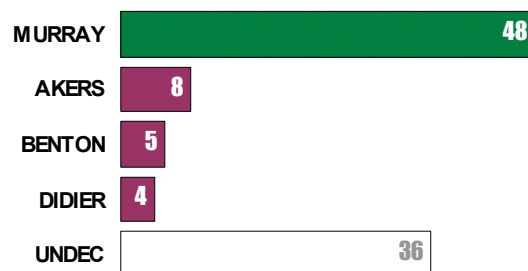
- 49% were inclined to vote for Murray all 4 times;
- 3% said Murray more times than not;
- 20% would vote for each of the 4 Republicans against Murray;
- 15% would vote Republican more times than not;
- 13% were either undecided or evenly divided between Murray and Republican “votes.”

By this calculus, any Republican challenger would have to capture all the Republican voters, all the Republican “leaners,” all of the undecided and 2/3 of the Murray “leaners” just to get to 50%.

HEAD-TO-HEAD MATCH-UPS WITH GOP CHALLENGERS

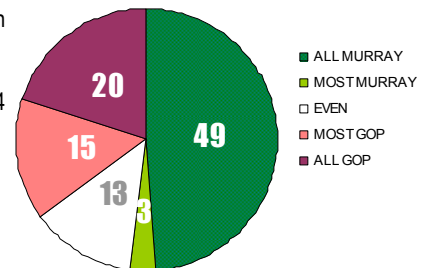
MURRAY	UNDEC		
51	15	34	ROSSI
51	22	27	BENTON
50	24	26	AKERS
50	26	24	DIDIER

OPEN PRIMARY



COMBINED “VOTE” INDEX: MURRAY vs 4 REPUBLICANS

This index combines the total number of “votes” in the 4 head-to-head match-ups. “All Murray” means 4 of 4 “votes” for Murray. “All GOP” means 4 of 4 “votes” for the Republicans.



Continued ►

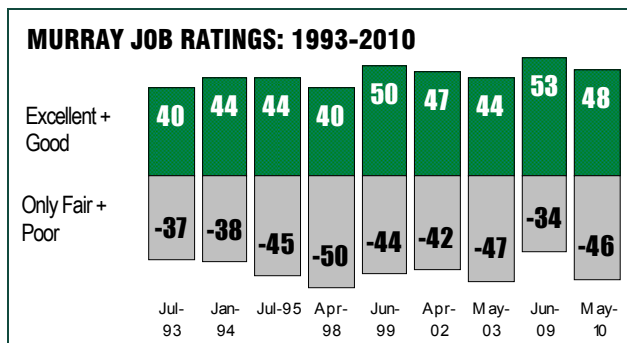
Of course, a survey is just a “snapshot in time.” What voters tell a pollster in May merely indicates where the campaign is now, as voters are just starting to think about it. That said, the results do indicate the challenge ahead for Republicans.

How would a Republican challenger mount the challenge?

Beyond the horse race, these results indicated a solid, if not overwhelming, base and basis of support for Patty Murray.

JOB PERFORMANCE

Murray certainly is getting the most out of her job performance ratings. Pundits and pols like to look at job performance ratings as an indicator of potential electoral strength or weakness. Murray’s ratings historically have been mediocre, which is tempting to potential challengers. In this survey, only 48% gave her positive ratings compared to 46% who rated her overall job performance as “only fair” or “poor.” That is a decline from a year ago—her high water mark—but only slightly lower than her 17-year average in *The Elway Poll* (46% positive; 42% negative).



Comparing the job performance ratings to the vote index, Murray has electoral support from 89% of those who gave her positive ratings (78% “certain” to vote for her and 11% likely); and 16% of those who gave her negative ratings (13% “certain”; 3% likely).

Among those who rated her as “only fair” - counted here as a negative rating:

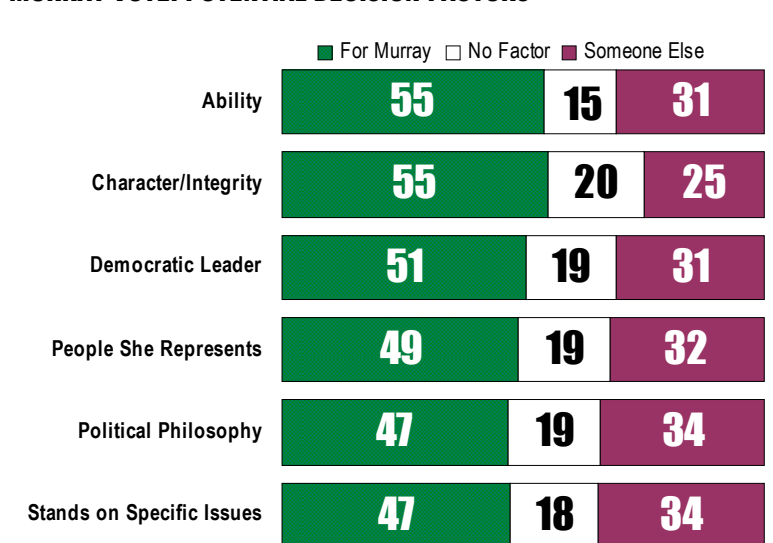
27% would vote for Murray against all 4 Republicans, while only 23% would vote for any of the Republicans against her.

The voters interviewed for this survey were read a list of attributes that could factor into their vote decision. For each, respondents were asked if that was “a reason to vote for Murray, a reason to vote for somebody else, or not a factor one way or the other.”

For each of the factors, more said it was a reason to vote for her than vote for someone else. In sum: 33% said all 6 factors were reasons to vote for Murray and another 11% said at least 5 of the 6 were reasons to vote for her, while 17% said all 6 were reasons to vote for someone else and another 8% said at least 5 of the 6 were reasons to vote against her.

Leading the list was her ability to get things done, her character and integrity and the fact that she is one of the Democrat leaders in the Senate—a fact that would work against her in an anti-incumbent atmosphere.

MURRAY VOTE: POTENTIAL DECISION FACTORS



As you probably know, Patty Murray will be up for re-election this year. I am going to read some things about Patty Murray. As I read each one, tell me whether you think this is: A reason to vote for her. A reason to vote for somebody else, or Not a factor one way or the other

- Her ability to get things done for Washington State
- Her personal character and integrity
- The fact that she is one of the Democrat leaders in the US Senate
- The people she represents
- Her general political philosophy

Continued ►

More than half of those who said specific issues were important reasons to vote for Murray named jobs and the economy as the issue they were most concerned about. This was followed by health care, taxes and spending, education and the Iraq and Afghan wars.

Those who thought that Murray’s stands on specific issues were a reason to vote against her named a similar list, but in a different order. Taxes and spending were #1, followed by jobs and the economy, health care, immigration and the wars.

Murray’s strongest support—as measured by the proportion who would vote for her against all 4 Republicans—came from:

- Democrats (92% would vote for her vs. all 4 Republicans);
- King County voters (74% in Seattle; 53% in the rest of King County);
- Voters with household incomes over \$75,000 (57%);
- Baby boomers (56%);
- Women (53%).

There was no category of voter in which a majority would vote against Murray most of the time, except for Republicans,

- Among Independents, 41% were more likely to vote for a Republican than for Murray, but 31% would vote for Murray against all 4 Republicans.
- In Eastern Washington, 33% were more likely to vote for a Republican, but 41% would vote for Murray against all 4 Republicans;
- In Western Washington outside King County, 41% were more likely to vote for a Republican, but 44% would vote for Murray against all 4 Republicans.

LIKELY VOTERS

Voter turnout is always a key factor in elections, of course. This being an off-year election, turnout will attract more attention than it does in a presidential year. Turnout is historically lower and thought to be more conservative in off year elections. Older, more established voters are more likely to vote, and thus make up a disproportionate share of the electorate.

Sampling from the voter list enables estimates of likely voters based on past voting behavior rather than on stated intention. The table at right presents a model of these findings, based on likely voters. Some 39% of this sample had voted in all 4 of the previous 4 elections. They will almost certainly vote this time. Thus, if turnout is 40%, the electorate will be comprised almost entirely of these “perfect voters.” An additional 20% of this sample voted in 3 of the last 4 elections. They are likely to vote this time. The total of “perfect” and “likely” voters—59% — is close to the typical voter turnout for a mid-term election in Washington state. We can therefore use these vote histories to model the 2010 electorate.

If we imagine that this survey is the vote, and this sample is the electorate (a risky notion, to be sure) how would the US Senate race look? The table models the outcome of the race assuming three levels of voter turnout, represented by likelihood to vote.

The race is tighter among likely voters than among the electorate as a whole, but Murray holds a double digit lead in all but one scenario—where her lead is 9 points over Rossi among “perfect voters.”

ISSUE STANDS REASON TO VOTE FOR...	
MURRAY	SOMEONE ELSE
JOB/ ECONOMY53%	TAXES/SPENDING . 53%
HEALTH CARE41%	JOB/ ECON 52%
TAXES/ SPENDING..23%	HEALTH CARE..... 28%
EDUCATION23%	IMMIGRATION..... 20%
WARS21%	WARS 18%

	Voter Turnout*		
	100%	60%	40%
MURRAY ROSSI	51% 34%	49% 39%	49% 40%
MURRAY BENTON	51% 27%	49% 32%	49% 31%
MURRAY AKERS	50% 26%	47% 32%	47% 30%
MURRAY DIDIER	50% 24%	47% 30%	47% 28%

*Voter turnout approximated by vote history. 40% of sample had voted in 4 of last 4 elections. 60% voted in at least 3 of last 4 elections.

Continued ►

Sample Profile

Live telephone interviews were conducted with 405 registered voters in Washington state between April 29 – May 2, 2010. The margin of sampling error is ±5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, the results would be within ±5% of the results reported here at least 95 times.

REGION

King County	30%
Pierce + Kitsap	16%
North Puget Sound (Snohomish to Whatcom)	16%
Western WA (Clallam to Clark)	17%
Eastern WA	20%

GENDER

Male	48%
Female	52%

AGE

18-35	12%
36-50	20%
51-64	36%
65+	29%

PARTY ID

Democrat	41%
Republican	27%
Independent	31%

VOTE HISTORY

0-1 Votes in last 4 Elections	22%
2 Votes	19%
3 Votes	20%
4 Votes in last 4 elections	39%

INCOME

\$25,000 or less	15%
\$25 to \$50,000	20%
\$50 to \$75,000	20%
Over \$75,000	23%
No Answer	22%

The Elway Poll

The Elway Poll is an independent, non-partisan analysis of public opinion in Washington and the Northwest available exclusively to subscribers.

SUBSCRIPTION: An annual subscription is \$250.

PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS: Each month, space is reserved in the questionnaire to allow subscribers to ask proprietary questions. The fee for proprietary questions is \$500 per question. You will receive the results of your question(s) with full crosstabulations within three days after the interviews are completed.

CROSSTABS: A full set of cross-tabulation tables for any month's survey is available for \$100.

The Elway Poll
 7107 Greenwood N.
 Seattle, WA 98103
 206/264-1500 FAX: 264-0301
 elway@elwayresearch.com

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Finally, there is the matter of party identification—an elusive variable in Washington. This sample contains a higher proportion of Democrats than last month's sample. That is no particular surprise—party identification fluctuates from month to month.

For now, the pertinent question is whether this sample somehow over-represents Democrats and thereby skews the results.

To examine that possibility, we looked at the four head-to-head match-ups with the data statistically weighted to bring the party identification numbers into line with recent survey data. To smooth out the fluctuations, we took a 3-month average of party identification in *The Elway Poll*, which is:

35% Democrat (6 pts lower than this month);
 25% Republican (2 pts lower than this month);
 40% Independent (9 pts higher than this month).

Given the typical fluctuations in party identification, there is no particular reason to weight these data except to take the most cautious look at the findings.

With the data statistically weighted to reflect the 3-month averages, the Republican candidates each gain a net of 4-5 points and Murray's vote dips below 50%. Yet she maintains a double-digit lead against each challenger. Overall:

45% would vote for Murray vs. all 4 Republicans;
 21% would vote against her all 4 times.

The world is going to turn a few times before voters actually cast ballots, and campaigns make a difference. But no matter how these findings are sliced, Patty Murray appears to be in a formidable position.



MURRAY vs GOP CHALLENGERS: WEIGHTED BY PARTY ID

	un-weighed	weighted
MURRAY	51%	48%
ROSSI	34%	36%
MURRAY	51%	48%
BENTON	27%	28%
MURRAY	50%	47%
AKERS	26%	27%
MURRAY	50%	47%
DIDIER	24%	25%