

February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010

## Alexi Giannoulias Continues to Hold Advantage Over Mark Kirk in Race for U.S. Senate

To: Interested Parties

From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

Illinois Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias heads into the general election campaign with a 49 – 45 percent lead over Republican Congressman Mark Kirk in a head-to-head match-up. Giannoulias' advantage is virtually unchanged from last summer and fall, before the hard-fought Democratic primary battle.

Despite the fact that Kirk didn't face a competitive primary and the Republican Party's decision to begin their attacks on Giannoulias the moment the polls closed on February 2<sup>nd</sup>—Giannoulias continues to lead Kirk in a head-to-head matchup. In addition, 53 percent of voters approve of the job Giannoulias is doing as State Treasurer, while less than 30 percent disapprove.

This will likely remain a close contest through the campaign season, but there is no doubt that Giannoulias is in a stronger position than Kirk to win the race.



**Table 1:** “Thinking about the general election for US Senate in November of 2010, if the general election for US Senate were held today and the candidates were: Democrat Alexi Giannoulias and Republican Mark Kirk—for whom would you vote, Democrat Alexi Giannoulias or Republican Mark Kirk?”  
(Percent responding)

	<b>Giannoulias – Kirk</b>
February 9-14, 2010	49 – 45
October 25-28, 2009	46 – 43
July 28-August 2, 2009	45 – 40

- **Giannoulias leads among voters who know both candidates.** Among voters who can identify both Giannoulias and Kirk, Democrat Giannoulias holds a 51 – 45 percent lead. Clearly, Giannoulias' lead is not built on a name identification advantage.

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- **Giannoulias expands lead with moderates.** Giannoulias now leads Kirk by 24 points among moderates, an improvement from October when he led by 14 points among this key electoral bloc.
- **Democrats remain more popular than Republicans in Illinois.** Despite what we are seeing elsewhere, Democrats are still significantly more popular than Republicans in Illinois. Just 34 percent of Illinois voters have a favorable impression of the GOP, while 46 percent have unfavorable impressions. By comparison, views of Democrats are evenly split (41 – 42 percent favorable-unfavorable).
- **President Obama remains very popular in Illinois.** President Obama continues to have very solid standing in Illinois. The President's 59 – 31 percent favorable/unfavorable rating is as high as in any state we've seen recently. Even among Independents, Obama has a positive, 51 – 35 percent favorable/unfavorable rating. Sixty-four percent of Illinoisans approve of the job Obama is doing as President.

The general election findings are based on a sample of 600 likely general election voters conducted February 9-14, 2010 conducted for the Giannoulias campaign. A sample of this size is subject to a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.