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Democrat Wexton leads Republican incumbent Comstock by 7 points in 10th District congressional race, 51%-44%; among most committed voters, Wexton's lead grows to 11%

Summary of Key Findings

1. In our likely voter model, Democrat Jennifer Wexton leads Republican incumbent Barbara Comstock 51% to 44%.
2. In our second model, restricted to the most committed voters, Wexton's lead expands to 11 points, 53%-42%.
3. Democrats benefit from a 16-point "enthusiasm gap" in the 10th Congressional District.
4. 51% of voters in the district strongly disapprove of the job President Trump is doing, while 25% strongly approve.
5. In the U.S. Senate contest, Democratic incumbent Tim Kaine holds a 21-point advantage over Republican Corey Stewart among 10th Congressional District voters, 55%-34%.

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Analysis

Among registered voters who have voted in at least two of the last four elections in Virginia, or who were new voters to Virginia in 2017 (n=794), Democrat Jennifer Wexton currently holds a 7-point advantage over incumbent Republican Congresswoman Barbara Comstock. Wexton leads Comstock 51% to 44% with 5% undecided in Virginia's 10th congressional district (*see Model 1*).

If that model is restricted to only those voters who also said they were definitely going to vote and were very enthusiastic about the coming election (n=711), Wexton's lead over Comstock grows to 11-points, 53% to 42%, with 5% undecided (*see Model 2*).

In both models, partisans are firmly entrenched in their camps, with both Comstock and Wexton taking over 90% of their partisans' support. Independents overall break for Wexton by 18%, but that lead among Independents grows to 23% in the more restrictive turnout model. Wexton holds a lead among women of 11%, and that lead grows to 19% in the more restrictive model. Wexton holds a strong lead among voters under age 45, but voters 45 and older split their vote nearly evenly between the two.

“Like many of her peers around the country, Wexton is benefiting from a midterm atmosphere that significantly favors Democrats,” said Dr. Rachel Bitecofer, assistant director of the Wason Center. “Democrats have maintained a generic ballot advantage of around 7-points over the past few months and that is giving Democrats a Trump bump.”

Despite reelecting Comstock by 6-points in 2016, the 10th District broke for Democrat Ralph Northam by 9-points in the 2017 governor's race on a surge of turnout by Democratic voters. Although incumbency is a powerful advantage, in some circumstances the benefits of incumbency are outweighed by the national context of the race. If the electorate in the 10th Congressional District is similar to the electorate in 2017, Wexton may actually overperform our more restrictive 2nd model. In this analysis, Republicans and Democrats are divided fairly equally. But in 2017, Democrats outperformed Republicans as a share of the electorate by 9 points.

In what might be a sign that such a difference in turnout will repeat this Election Day, Democrats outnumber Republicans 75%-59% among 10th District voters who say they are “very enthusiastic” about going to the polls in this election.

Although the Wason Center is not polling Virginia's U.S. Senate race statewide, we wanted to get a sense of how the race between incumbent Democratic Senator Tim Kaine and Republican Corey Stewart stood in one of the most competitive congressional races in the state. Among voters in the 10th District, Kaine holds a commanding 21-point lead over Stewart, 55% to 34%. Libertarian candidate Matt Waters is receiving 5% of the vote, and 6% say they are undecided.

The difficult election cycle facing both Comstock and Stewart is demonstrated by President Donald Trump's low job approval among likely voters in the 10th Congressional District. Voters disapprove of the job Trump is doing by 59% to 38%.

HOUSE: If the election for House or Representatives were being held today and the candidates were ...for whom would you vote?

1. Barbara Comstock, the Republican
2. Jennifer Wexton, the Democrat
3. Undecided (vol)
9. Dk/ref (vol)

Likely Voter Model

(n=794)	All	Rep	Ind	Dem	Males	Females	White	Black	18-44	45 +	Conservative	Liberal
Comstock	44	90	37	8	47	42	50	18	37	48	78	9
Wexton	51	6	55	91	48	53	45	77	60	47	16	89
Undecided	4	3	6	1	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	2
Dk/Ref (vol)	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	0

Committed Voter Model

(n=711)	All	Rep	Ind	Dem	Males	Females	White	Black	18-44	45 +	Conservative	Liberal
Comstock	42	91	34	5	46	39	48	17	34	46	77	7
Wexton	53	7	57	94	49	58	47	79	64	49	16	91
Undecided	4	2	7	1	4	3	4	4	2	4	6	2
Dk/Ref (vol)	1	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0

Other Findings

ENTH: How enthusiastic would you say you are about voting in this election? Would you say you are...

1. Very Enthusiastic
2. Somewhat Enthusiastic
3. Not Enthusiastic
9. Dk/ref (vol)

(n=794)	All	Rep	Ind	Dem
Very Enthusiastic	63	59	57	75
Somewhat Enthusiastic	27	33	27	21
Not Enthusiastic	10	8	16	4
Dk/Ref (vol)	0	0	<1	0

SENATE: If the election for Senate were being held today and the candidates were ...for whom would you vote?

1. Corey Stewart, the Republican	34
2. Tim Kaine, the Democrat	55
3. Matt Waters, the Libertarian	5
4. Undecided	6
9. Dk/ref	

TRUMP: Thinking about the job President Trump is doing as president, do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as president?

1. Strongly Approve	25
2. Somewhat Approve	13
3. Somewhat Disapprove	8
4. Strongly Disapprove	51
9. Dk/ref	3

Demographics**[IF OTHER THAN REP OR DEM ABOVE]****EDUC:**

High school or less	5
Some college	10
Vocational or technical training	2
College graduate	44
Graduate study or more	40

HISPANIC:

Yes	9
No	91

RACE:

White	75
Black or African American	8
Other	17

AGE:

18-24	7
25-34	13
35-44	25
45-54	25
55 & older	30

PARTYID:

Republican	32
Democrat	33
Independent	32
No preference (vol)	2
Other party (vol)	<1
Dk/ref (vol)	<1

PARTLEAN:

Republican	30
Democratic	41
Independent	25

RELIG:

Christian	64
Jewish	2
Muslim	7
Other	13
No Preference	11
Dk/ref (vol)	3

IDEOL:

Strong liberal	9
Liberal	11
Moderate, leaning liberal	25
Moderate, leaning conservative	22
Conservative	18
Strong Conservative	11
Dk/ref (vol)	6

INCOME:

Under \$25,000	1
\$25-\$49,999	3
\$50-\$74,999	7
\$75-\$99,999	10
\$100,000-\$149,999	18
Over \$150,000	46
Dk/ref (vol)	14

SEX (interviewer coded):

Male	48
Female	52

How the survey was conducted:

The results of this poll are based on 794 interviews of registered voters in Virginia's 10 congressional district who have voted in at least two of the last four elections or who were new voters to Virginia in 2017, including 561 on landline and 233 on cell phone, conducted September 23-October 2, 2018. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. The margin of error for the whole survey (Model 1, n=794) is +/- 4.1 % at the 95% level of confidence. **This means that if 50% of respondents indicate a topline view on an issue, we can be 95% confident that the population's view on that issue is somewhere between 45.9% and 54.1%.** The margin of error for the more restrictive model (Model 2, n=711) is +/- 4.3 at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups within cross-tabs. All error margins have been adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, which is 1.3 in this survey. The design effect is a factor representing the survey's deviation from a simple random sample, and takes into account decreases in precision due to sample design and weighting procedures. Sub samples have a higher margin of error. In addition to sampling error, the other potential sources of error include non-response, question wording, and interviewer error. The response rate (AAPOR RRI Standard Definition) for the survey was 18%. Five callbacks were employed in the fielding process. Live calling was conducted by trained interviewers at the Wason Center for Public Policy Survey Research Lab at Christopher Newport University. The data reported here are weighted using an iterative weighting process on sex, age, and race to reflect as closely as possible the population of likely voters in the 10th congressional district of Virginia.