
CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va., Nov. 2, 2012 — With less than a week remaining before Election Day, the University of Virginia’s Jefferson Area Community Survey shows Democrats Barack Obama and Tim Kaine holding substantial leads among registered voters in the greater Charlottesville area.

In a survey conducted Oct. 2 through 31, 49 percent of registered voters said they planned to vote for Obama for president, compared to 33 percent for the Republican challenger, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. Another 8 percent were undecided, and most of the remaining 10 percent declined to state a preference. Fewer than 1 percent of voters supported other candidates and 1 percent of registered voters said that they had decided not to vote.

Similarly, 51 percent of respondents said they favored Kaine in the U.S. Senate race, compared to 32 percent for Republican George Allen and 9 percent undecided. Most of the remaining 8 percent declined to state a preference.

The Center for Survey Research conducts the Jefferson Area Community Survey, a regional omnibus survey, twice a year. The survey interviewed 520 registered voters in Virginia, reached on both landline and cellular telephones. These results have a margin of error of plus or minus 4.3 percentage points.

The survey found significant partisan gaps between residents of the city of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, who lean Democratic, and those in the four outlying counties in the “Jefferson Area” – Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson – who lean Republican.

In the presidential race, Obama led Romney 69 percent to 13 percent in Charlottesville and 56 percent to 27 percent in Albemarle. In the four outlying counties, in contrast, Romney led Obama 49 percent to 31 percent.

“These findings shed light on why both presidential campaigns have recently held major events in our region,” said Thomas M. Guterbock, director of U.Va.’s Center for Survey Research, which conducted the survey. “Democrats have a lot of support here, and it makes sense for the Obama campaign to host two big events at the Charlottesville Pavilion. But Republicans have supporters in the area, too, particularly in the outlying counties. Perhaps that’s why you saw Paul Ryan hosting the event at Crutchfield two weeks ago.”

There is a wide gender gap among voters in the region – wider than has been seen in recent statewide voting surveys. Among men in the region, Obama has a slight lead (44 percent versus 41 percent for Romney), but among women, Obama leads 52 percent to 26 percent.
In the race for U.S. Senate, Kaine led Allen 67 percent to 18 percent in Charlottesville and a smaller of 59 percent to 26 percent margin in Albemarle County. In the four outlying counties, on the other hand, Allen led Kaine, 47 percent to 34 percent.

“With Tim Kaine polling ahead of Barack Obama in our region and across Virginia, the pattern in split-ballot voting is interesting,” said Pete Furia, lecturer in politics in the U.Va.’s College of Arts & Sciences. “Six percent of Romney voters in our region intend to vote for Kaine for Senate, compared to only 2 percent of Obama voters who intend to vote for Allen.”

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