

Landrieu up, Jindal down

Written by Lou Gehrig Burnett
Wednesday, 10 October 2012 07:12 -

Sen. Mary Landrieu most popular statewide elected official



Believe it or not, Democratic U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu is now the most popular statewide elected official in Louisiana with a positive job rating of 62 percent, while Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal's approval rating has plummeted to 51 percent.

Those developments were revealed in a statewide poll conducted recently by Southern Media and Opinion Research (SMOR) of Baton Rouge.

Political analysts say this is good news for Landrieu, who has said she will seek a fourth six-year term in the U.S. Senate in 2014. Her negative rating was only 28 percent.

Jindal's popularity, some political analysts conclude, is in free fall, down 13 points. Last spring he had a 64 percent positive job rating, which fell to 61 percent in the last poll, and to 51 percent in this latest poll. His negative rating was 31 percent.

Bernie Pinsonat of SMOR gave Bayoubuzz.com this explanation for the decline in Jindal's approval rating:

"They don't like the way he has handled the Obama Medicaid program. They don't like his travels. They don't like his control over the Legislature and want legislative independence. They like his education reform, but are not crazy about its most important element, the vouchers."

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The poll also revealed that reductions for the LSU-operated healthcare system was very unpopular, with 79 percent saying the charity system would not be able to provide the same quality of health care, and 80 percent said Louisiana residents would lose access to health care as a result.

Jindal's reaction? He and his minions basically dismissed the poll, saying it was skewed. Funny thing, though. They didn't say that it was skewed when his positive rating was 64 percent.

Pinsonat went on to say that those surveyed even prefer, by a narrow margin, that Congress be controlled by Democrats which flies in the face of Jindal's national ambitions.

Here's how other statewide elected officials fared in the poll:

*U.S. Sen. David Vitter (R) – 52 percent positive job rating, 31 percent negative.

*Commissioner of Agriculture Mike Strain (R) – 49 percent positive, 10 percent negative.

*State Treasurer John Kennedy (R) – 48 percent positive, 13 percent negative.

*State Attorney General Buddy Caldwell – 41 percent positive, 15 percent negative.

SMOR also asked about Republican U.S. Rep. Bill Cassidy, who is expected to run against Landrieu. His positive job rating was 25 percent; his negative, 12 percent.

Other poll results:

*On the issue of school vouchers, 54 percent were opposed.

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*On salaries above \$175,000 for state executives and political appointees, 86 percent consider them excessive or not justified.

*47 percent favor eliminating tax exemptions to increase state revenue, while 35 percent are opposed.

*69 percent said the Legislature should be more independent from the governor.

*On conditions in Louisiana, 23 percent say they are getting better, 38 percent say they are about the same, and 35 percent say they are getting worse.

*46 percent disapprove of Gov. Jindal being involved in national politics; 41 percent say it's okay.

SMOR's poll was taken September 11-20 with 600 voters statewide. Margin of error is + or - 4 percent.

How about Obama?

The SMOR poll shows Republican Mitt Romney leading Democratic President Barack Obama by a 45-39 percent margin in the state. That is much closer than most politicians thought.

That news gave some Democratic operatives hope that President Obama might be able to win Louisiana's eight electoral votes if there is a big turnout among white and African-American Democrats.

However, 17 percent of Democrats said they were undecided, as did nearly 30 percent of "Other" and "No Party" registrants, and the thinking is that most of these undecideds will vote for Romney.

The conclusion: There is no way that President Obama will win in Louisiana.

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Are we next?

Speaking of the unpopularity of Gov. Bobby Jindal's budget cuts, the hatchet has already sliced a large part of the LSU Health System that serves the most vulnerable and needy populations in south Louisiana.

That begs the question: Is Shreveport next on the chopping block?

Without input from state legislators, the Jinal plan calls for the layoff of 1,500 healthcare workers in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Houma, Independence, Bogalusa, and Lake Charles.

The cuts, being made to deal with a \$152 million budget reduction, will dramatically decrease inpatient bed capacities at all of the facilities.

Lawmakers were not happy campers after learning of the proposed cuts, complaining that they were not kept informed and had to get the news from TV and newspapers. That, they said, was unacceptable.

The question is, of course, what are they going to do about it. Senate president John Alario, D-Westwego, said, "The worst thing we can do in a democracy is to keep secrets. House Speaker Chuck Kleckley, R-Lake Charles, voiced agreement with Alario's statement.

Though the three LSU facilities in the northern part of the state – LSUMC in Shreveport, E.A. Conway in Monroe, and Huey P. Long in Alexandria – are not included in the same LSU system, lawmakers from those areas expressed concerns about what was in the cards for them.

The LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport employs 6,295 people, giving it the fourth most employees for a single institution or business in northwest Louisiana. Stay tuned.

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