**October WAND Newsletter**

**New Poll Good for Walker**

On Wednesday, October 10, Marquette University Law School released the results of a poll it conducted from October 3 to October 7. The new poll numbers gave voters and candidates a snapshot of preferences four weeks before the November 6 election.

Republican Governor Scott Walker made up significant ground since the last poll. In the September MU Law Poll, Democratic candidate Tony Evers led Walker by five points. According to the new October poll results, Walker now leads Evers 47% - 46%. In September, Evers led Walker among independent voters by twenty points. Today’s numbers show that has been cut to just a six point lead for Evers. Additionally, Walker’s unfavorability number outpaced his favorability by seven points in September. The October poll shows that number cut to just one point. The Walker campaign is likely encouraged by the new numbers.

It is important to note that Walker’s lead is in the margin of error, which is +/- 3.6%. Additionally, there is a three point Republican advantage among the sample size, which could skew results in favor of Republican candidates.

In the race for the U.S. Senate, Democratic incumbent Tammy Baldwin leads her Republican challenger Leah Vukmir by ten points. While Baldwin led Vukmir by eleven points in the September poll, a ten point lead is still a significant advantage. Baldwin’s campaign will likely continue to push their message given the consistency of her lead.

Other notable numbers:

Attorney General’s Race

* Republican Brad Schimel: 47%
* Democrat Josh Kaul: 43%

Wisconsin is headed in the:

* Right direction: 54%
* Wrong direction: 40%

On Education:

* The state should spend more on public schools: 57%
* The state should reduce property taxes: 37%

On Taxation:

* The state should raise taxes to provide more services: 51%
* The state should lower taxes and provide fewer services: 42%

On Transportation:

* Maintain current gas tax and vehicle registration fees: 61%
* Increase gas tax and vehicle registration fees: 32%

Marquette University Law School will release another poll before the election. That poll may provide the final best guess predictions before voters head to the polls on November 6.

**WAND Lobbying Team Attends Shilling Event**

On Wednesday, September 26, Senate Minority Leader Jennifer Shilling held a fundraising event over lunch in Madison. All three lobbyists from WAND’s government affairs team at Hoven Consulting attended the event.

Senator Shilling, who represents La Crosse and some surrounding communities, is not up for re-election this year. Senate terms are four years long and every two years half of the senate seats are up for election. However, in her role as Senate Minority Leader, she leads and coordinates efforts to gain Democratic seats. As such, it was important for WAND lobbyists to be in attendance.

Senator Shilling addressed the group, which consisted of fifty or more lobbyists representing various industries, on how the Democratic candidates around the states were performing. She seemed cautiously optimistic while acknowledging this year is poised to be a good one for Democrats.

Republicans currently control the State Senate eighteen seats to fifteen. Shilling’s Democrats need to pick up two seats in order to flip the majority. Earlier this year, Senate Democrats won two seats: one in the Hudson area and another in Door County. Those victories were considered a major success for Democrats and a wake-up call for Republicans.

Hoping to build on those successes, Shilling highlighted a few candidates who have a chance to flip Republican districts. She specifically mentioned Kriss Marion in the 17th District in southwestern Wisconsin, Lee Snodgrass in the Fox Valley region, and Julie Henszey in southeast Wisconsin. Those three districts will be ones to watch on election night.

As down-ballot races, State Senate and State Assembly elections can be helped or hindered by voter excitement for the top of the ticket races. If Tammy Baldwin and Tony Evers can drive turnout, it could be a good election for legislative Democrats. If Scott Walker or Leah Vukmir can compel solid Republican turnout, legislative Republicans may retain their seats.

Following the event, WAND’s government affairs team had the opportunity to meet with Senator Shilling’s policy staff to discuss the possibility of WAND pursuing dietitian licensure. The senator’s staff was open to the idea and did not bring up any immediate concerns or reservations. They mentioned the senator believes it’s important for Wisconsin’s medical professionals to be properly trained and registered with the state to ensure best practices and patient safety. Her staff also appreciated being notified of the possible initiative during the early stages and asked to be kept in the loop as efforts progress.

In summary, WAND’s government affairs team made meaningful contact with Senator Shilling and her office. Building relationships with influential policymakers is essential for any organization’s success. WAND will continue to work with Senator Shilling and other legislative leaders throughout next legislative session.