

THE TARRANCE GROUP

Re: Key Findings from a Survey of Likely Voters in Nevada CD 04

Date: July 5, 2012

METHODOLOGY

The Tarrance Group is pleased to present these key findings from a survey of likely voters in the new CD 04 in Nevada. All respondents interviewed in this study were part of a fully representative sample of N=400 registered likely voters. Responses to this survey were gathered June 26-28, 2012. The confidence interval associated with a sample of this type is $\pm 5.0\%$ in 19 of 20 cases.

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Five questions assess the current political environment – interest in the upcoming elections, job approval of President Obama, most important issue for Congress, and view on the economic policies of Obama.

Interest in the upcoming elections – Voters are already highly engaged in the upcoming elections driven by Republican voters. Republicans enjoy a ten point intensity advantage over Democrats consistent with what we are seeing at the national level. It is clear that Republicans are already highly engaged and interested in this election.

Job approval of President Obama – The President is at near parity on his job approval rating – forty-nine percent (49%) of voters approve of his job performance and forty-seven percent (47%) of voters disapprove of his performance. However, the President's approval rating is propped by the overwhelming approval rating he receives from Democrats. While eighty-five percent (85%) of Democrats approve of his job performance, a majority of Republicans (87%) and a plurality of Independents (49%) disapprove of his job performance. This is a strong indicator that the President will not be able to provide assistance to Horsford beyond fundraising and base mobilization. Too many Republicans and Independents disapprove of the President's job performance for him to be of assistance in a major way.

Most important issue – Voters are read a list of seven (7) issues and asked to select the issue that is most important to them for Congress to focus on. Responses are summarized in the chart below.

Issue	Selecting Most Important
Creating jobs and protecting existing jobs	25%
Reducing government spending and the national debt	21%
Strengthening Nevada's economy	15%
Protecting Social Security and Medicare	13%
Making Congress more accountable and transparent	7%
Dealing with illegal immigration	5%
Reducing the tax burden on working families	3%

As seen above, fiscal issues are the dominant concern of voters in the 4th Congressional District. Fully sixty-four percent (64%) of voters select a fiscal issue as their top concern, including one-quarter (25%) of the electorate who select jobs. Most voters are viewing public policies through the impact it will have on their personal financial situation. We should always be mindful of this fact.

In addition, there is a notable partisan nuance to these fiscal issues. For Republicans, the dominant concern is government spending and debt (33%). For Democrats, the dominant concern is jobs (32%). For Independents, the top concern is the economy (21%). With this in mind, we should focus on reducing wasteful spending and turning the economy around as our key themes. These are the fiscal issues that resonate with the voters that we need to win.

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Presidential ballot – President Obama may also be unable to provide much assistance to Horsford because Obama will need to be running hard here for his re-election campaign. Obama leads by just four points over Romney (50%-46%) even though Democrats enjoy a nine point registration advantage in this district. In addition to Romney getting more support from Republicans (88%) than Obama is getting from Democrats (87%), Romney also enjoys a five point advantage (48%-43%) among Independents. Most importantly, Romney is leading among those extremely interested in the election (52%-46%). This illustrates that Obama has an intensity problem here and will need to focus on his own campaign.

Economic policies of President Obama – Voters were asked if they believe that President Obama's economic policies have helped make the country better, had little to no impact on the economy, or made the economy worse. Voters are closely divided on this question – forty percent (40%) think they made the economy worse; thirty-nine percent (39%) think they made the economy better; and eighteen percent of voters (18%) think they had no impact. This question is also highly predictive on the Congressional ballot. Tarkanian is getting eighty-five percent (85%) support from those who believe these policies have made the economy worse. Horsford is getting seventy-five percent (75%) support from those who believe these policies have made the economy better.

NAME IDENTIFICATIONS

Voters are asked their impression of Danny Tarkanian and Steven Horsford. Tarkanian enjoys a significant advantage over Horsford in awareness and in favorability – Danny Tarkanian 43% Favorable/26% unfavorable and Steve Horsford 19% favorable/12% unfavorable. In fact, forty-three percent (43%) of voters have an image of only Tarkanian.

Danny Tarkanian has clearly recovered from the highly competitive primary. He has a strongly favorable rating among key GOP base voting blocs like Republicans (62%) and conservatives (54%). In addition, Tarkanian has favorable rating of thirty-five percent (35%) with Independents and has considerable room to grow with these voters as thirty-seven percent (37%) of them have no image of him.

For Horsford, a majority (55%) of voters indicate they have never heard of him. In fact, he has no image with a majority of every major demographic group, including expected key supporters like African Americans, Democrats, and liberals.

CONGRESSIONAL BALLOTS

Two Congressional ballots were tested – a generic Congressional ballot, and an aided ballot.

Generic ballot – Although the Democrats enjoy a nine point registration advantage in this district, the Democrats hold just a four point advantage (45%-41%) on the generic Congressional ballot. Among those making a definite choice, this advantage shrinks to just two points (41%-39%).

While the Democrats (85%) are selecting Democrat on this ballot at higher rate than Republicans (80%) are selecting Republican on this ballot, it is the GOP that has a sixteen point advantage (43%-27%) among Independents on this ballot.

Congressional ballot – The 2012 Congressional ballot finds Tarkanian with six point advantage (47%-41%) over Horsford. Much as we saw with Mitt Romney at the national level, Tarkanian emerges from the primary with the GOP base solidified. He has strong majority support from Republicans (81%), very conservative voters (71%), those selecting Republican on the generic Congressional ballot (87%), voters who disapprove of President Obama's job performance (82%), and Romney voters (85%). In addition, Tarkanian is getting at least plurality support from key high propensity voting blocs like seniors (45%), college graduates (46%), veterans (51%), and those extremely interested in the election (50%).

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Among potential swing voters, Tarkanian has a twenty-six point advantage with Independents (56%-30%) and a twenty-two point advantage with those undecided on the generic Congressional ballot (43%-21%). Among Hispanics, Tarkanian has a six point advantage (46%-40%).

Horsford has his strongest performance with Democratic partisans like African Americans (73%), Democrats (73%), liberals (71%), 2008 Obama voters (72%), and 2012 Obama supporters (77%).

Overall, Tarkanian begins the general election phase of this campaign in a very strong position. He has solidified his base and has a strong standing with a notable segment of persuadable voters.

CONCLUSIONS

This is a race that can be won. Tarkanian is better known and better liked than his opponent. Despite the registration advantage, Obama is a polarizing figure here and will not be able to provide substantial assistance. Voters are overwhelmingly concerned about fiscal issues, especially jobs. Tarkanian has a compelling story to tell about creating jobs and being supportive of job creating economic policies. A disciplined, aggressive, and well-funded campaign by Tarkanian will turn this seat into a likely Republican win in November.