



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

For Immediate Release:

Thursday, October 1, 2009

Contact:

Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858

PDF version; crosstabs; website:

www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY

**Siena New York 23rd Congressional District Poll:
Scozzafava Has Early 7-Point Lead in Tight 3-Way Race
Voters Closely Divided Between Owens & Scozzafava on Issues
*Owens Strongest in South; Scozzafava Strongest in West***

Loudonville, NY. With less than five weeks to go until the special election in the 23rd Congressional District, Republican Assembly Member Dede Scozzafava has an early 35-28 percent lead over Democrat Bill Owens, with Conservative candidate Doug Hoffman garnering 16 percent of the vote, according to a new Siena (College) Research Institute poll of likely voters. On a series of six issues, voters rank Owens and Scozzafava as virtually even on who would do a better job representing them in Congress.

“Republican Dede Scozzafava has a seven-point lead over Democrat Bill Owens in a district with a 12-point Republican enrollment edge,” said Siena New York pollster Steven Greenberg. “Clearly, the presence of a third candidate – Conservative Doug Hoffman – who is attracting the support of 16 percent of voters points to the fact that the winner of the race will likely not win with a majority of the votes cast, but rather a plurality.

“This is a wide open race. One in five voters is currently undecided. Add to that the fact that one-third of Scozzafava’s current supporters and one-quarter of Owens’s current supporters say they are not very certain of their choice and that they very well may change their minds between now and Election Day,” Greenberg said.

Scozzafava leads Owens 53-23 percent, with 10 percent for Hoffman in the western North Country counties (Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence). Owens’s largest lead is in the Central New York counties of Madison, Oneida and Oswego, 30 percent to 20 percent each for Scozzafava and Hoffman. The Democrat and Republican are virtually tied in the five counties of the eastern North Country (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, and Hamilton), 32 percent for Owens, 31 percent for Scozzafava and 18 percent for Hoffman.

Scozzafava is viewed favorably by 33 percent of voters and unfavorably by 20 percent, with 47 percent not having an opinion. Owens has a 23-12 percent favorable rating, with 64 percent of voters undecided, while Hoffman has a 16-13 percent favorable rating, with 71 percent of voters undecided.

The two most important issues voters want their Member of Congress working on in Washington are the economy (34 percent) and health care (30 percent). Addressing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is next at 13 percent, followed by education (nine percent), homeland security (eight percent), and bringing more Federal money into the district (three percent).

Voters give Scozzafava a slight edge on the economy, and Owens a small edge on health care, addressing the wars and homeland security, while voters ranked the two candidates identically on education and bringing Federal money into the district.

“The economy and health care are the two dominant issues for voters in the 23rd C.D.

Which Candidate Would do a Better Job Representing You in the U.S. Congress on . . .			
Issue	Dede Scozzafava	Bill Owens	Doug Hoffman
The economy	25%	23%	14%
Health care	22%	25%	11%
Addressing foreign wars like Iraq and Afghanistan	20%	24%	12%
Education	24%	24%	9%
Homeland security	21%	23%	11%
Bringing more federal money into our district	24%	24%	9%

and they don’t give a clear advantage to either Scozzafava or Owens on either of those issues. In fact, on all six issues, between 40 and 50 percent of voters are undecided as to which of the three candidates they think would be best. Between Owens and Scozzafava, voters see it as a toss-up on all six issues,” Greenberg said.

Does an endorsement from ___ make you more or less likely to support a candidate, or have no impact on who you support?			
Person/Organization	More Likely	Less Likely	No Impact
John McHugh	40%	7%	48%
Barack Obama	32%	24%	43%
Your local newspaper	23%	12%	63%
Organized Labor	23%	18%	56%

Army Secretary and former Representative John McHugh, who has a 68-14 percent favorability rating, is the endorsement that more voters say matters to them.

“An endorsement from Secretary McHugh would clearly be a prize for any candidate. Labor endorsements help most in union households,” Greenberg said. “Newspaper endorsements are very positive across the district, except

in the northwestern portion of the district where they turn off nearly as many voters as they attract. President Obama’s endorsement helps with Democrats, is neutral with independent voters and turns off Republicans.

“A month of campaigning will give the candidates more time to become known to voters and for voters to learn the positions of all the candidates. To date, most voters have not seen or heard commercials for any of the candidates. That will certainly change over the next four weeks. There are many dynamics yet to play out in this race, which is being watched by political insiders across the nation,” Greenberg said.

###

This SRI 23rd C.D. survey was conducted September 27-29, 2009 by telephone calls to 622 likely voters. It has a margin of error of ± 3.9 percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, gender and party to ensure representativeness. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing weighted to reflect known population patterns. For more information, please call Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858. Survey cross-tabulations and frequencies can be found at: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.