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Emerson College Poll: Louisiana Senate Runoff Looking Like a Blowout for Republican John Kennedy

BOSTON, MA – In the nation’s final election of 2016, Republican John Neely Kennedy leads 51% to 33% over Democrat Foster Campbell with 16% undecided according to the Emerson poll which has a margin of error of 4.9 percentage points. The state of Louisiana holds a “jungle” primary on election-day in which all candidates compete; if no candidate wins a majority of the vote, the top two vote-getters compete in a runoff election a month later. This year, the race was flooded with candidates to replace retiring Sen. David Vitter, and Kennedy and Campbell came out in first and second, respectively.

Kennedy benefits from strong favorability among the electorate, he has a favorable/unfavorable ratio of 51%/35% for a net favorability of +16%. Campbell, on the other hand, is underwater in favorability, holding a favorable/unfavorable ratio of 37%/42% for a net favorability of -5%. Both candidates are well known among the electorate. Only 3% are unfamiliar with Campbell, while only 1% have never heard of Kennedy.

Kennedy is benefiting strongly from Democratic voters crossing party lines. The poll shows that only 62% of Democrats are supporting Campbell, while a whopping 24% plan to vote for Kennedy. Republicans, meanwhile, are staying line. 80% plan to vote for Kennedy while only 4% are defecting to Campbell. Independent voters are also breaking for Kennedy, 57% to 23%.

Despite this, most Louisiana voters are remaining loyal to the party of their choice for President. Trump supporters back Kennedy 80%/4% (the same ratio by which overall Republicans support Kennedy) while Clinton voters are breaking for Campbell 81%/9%. Trump carried the state of Louisiana with 58% of the vote, Clinton won 38%.

There appears to be a minimal gender gap in this race. Kennedy is leading with both men and women, though he leads men by a much larger margin than he leads with women (56%/23% with men, versus 47%/41% with women). The racial divide, on the other hand, is clearly present. White voters support Kennedy by 45 percentage points (65% to 20%), while Campbell leads with Black voters by almost the exact same amount (65% to 22%). Kennedy leads among all age groups as well.

Campbell’s base of support is Louisiana’s second congressional district where he leads 62% to 32%. The second district contains the greater New Orleans area, and is Louisiana’s only congressional district currently represented by a Democrat. Kennedy leads in all of Louisiana’s remaining five congressional districts.

The runoff election will close out the 2016 election cycle, and is likely to leave the Senate with a partisan balance of 52-48 in favor of the Republicans.

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The Emerson College poll for Louisiana was conducted November 29-30, 2016 under the Supervision of Professor Spencer Kimball. The sample consisted of only likely general election voters, n=400, with a margin of error (MOE) of +/- 4.9 percentage points. The Louisiana data was weighted by party affiliation, age and 2016 election results. It

is important to remember that subsets based on gender, age and party breakdowns carry with them higher margins of error, as the sample size is reduced. Data was collected using an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system of landlines only. The full methodology and results can be found at www.theecps.com.