

THE WMUR / UNH POLL

University of New Hampshire Survey Center

BENSON HOLDS COMFORTABLE LEAD IN RACE FOR NH GOVERNOR

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DURHAM, NH -- Republican Craig Benson holds a comfortable lead over Democrat Mark Fernald heading into the final weekend of the campaign for Governor of New Hampshire.

These findings are based on the latest **WMUR / UNH Poll**, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. The WMUR / UNH Poll is sponsored by WMUR-TV of Manchester, New Hampshire. Six hundred eighty (680) New Hampshire likely voters were interviewed between October 23 and October 29, 2002 (margin of sampling error, +/-3.8 percent). (For more detailed results, visit the Survey Center web site at www.unh.edu/survey-center and click on Press Releases.)

After winning a bruising 3-way battle for the Republican nomination, Craig Benson, Cabletron co-founder, appears headed for a solid win over his Democratic challenger, State Senator Mark Fernald. In the most recent WMUR / UNH Poll, Benson is supported by 49 percent of likely voters, 37 percent favor Fernald, 2 percent favor Libertarian John Babiarez, 2 percent favor some other candidate, and 10 percent are undecided. Benson's lead has narrowed over the past two weeks. He led 49 percent to 33 percent in a WMUR / UNH Poll earlier this month. However, Fernald still trails Benson by more than the polls margin of sampling error.

Benson holds this significant lead, in part, because swing voters support him over Fernald by 53 percent to 27 percent. Benson gets his strongest support from Republicans, residents of the 1st Congressional District, and abortion opponents. Fernald's strongest support comes from Democrats, voters who favor legal abortions, and residents of the 2nd Congressional District.

NH Gubernatorial Election

Likely Voters

	<u>June '02</u>	<u>Oct. 3-8</u>	<u>Oct. 23-29</u>
Benson (R)	48%	49%	49%
Fernald (D)	35	33	37
Babiarz	--	2	2
Other	2	4	2
Don't Know	15	11	10
	(N=518)	(N=612)	(N=651)

WMUR / UNH Poll Methodology

These findings are based on the most recent WMUR / UNH Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center from October 23 to October 29, 2002. A random sample of 680 likely voters in New Hampshire was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 3.8 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of adults and telephone lines within households, likelihood of voting in the November election, respondent sex, and region of the state. In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.

Respondents to the WMUR / UNH Poll were asked:

- “Suppose the election for New Hampshire Governor was being held TODAY. Would you vote for Craig Benson, the Republican ... Mark Fernald, the Democrat ... or John Babiarz, the Libertarian?”

NH Governor - Likely Voters

STATEWIDE	<u>Benson</u> 49%	<u>Fernald</u> 37%	<u>Babiarz</u> 2%	<u>Other</u> 2%	<u>Undecided</u> 10%	<u>(N)</u> 651
Registered Democrat	20	72	0	3	5	171
Undeclared	48	33	5	1	12	245
Registered Republican	72	15	1	1	10	235
Core Republican	82	7	3	2	7	233
Swing Voter	53	27	4	1	15	192
Core Democrat	13	78	0	1	8	222
Democrat	20	70	0	1	9	261
Independent	52	24	7	2	15	97
Republican	76	12	3	2	8	281
Will vote unless emergency	53	33	0	2	12	115
Will definitely vote	49	38	3	2	9	528
Extremely interested in election	51	39	4	2	5	176
Very interested	48	39	2	2	10	317
Somewhat interested	50	34	2	1	13	143
Not very interested	53	10	0	12	24	15
1st District	56	30	2	2	10	327
2nd District	42	44	3	1	10	325
Northern NH	45	39	6	1	10	98
Western NH	40	55	0	0	5	63
Central/Lakes	45	41	1	5	8	119
Hillsborough County	56	29	3	3	10	177
Seacoast	52	35	2	0	11	194
18 to 29	55	28	4	0	13	176
30 to 45	44	42	2	2	11	251
46 to 64	58	34	1	2	4	109
65 and over	45	45	2	2	7	100
5 years or less in NH	57	28	4	0	11	78
6 to 10 years	43	43	4	0	10	63
11 to 20 years	45	39	2	3	12	123
More than 20 years	51	38	2	2	9	378
Male	50	34	5	3	9	311
Female	49	39	0	1	11	340
Abortion always legal	37	50	2	1	9	325
Legal in some cases	59	26	2	2	11	239
Always illegal	69	17	6	0	7	51
Gun owning household	54	32	3	1	9	248
No guns in household	47	41	2	2	9	382