

THE WMUR / UNH POLL

University of New Hampshire Survey Center

SHAHEEN & SUNUNU, NECK AND NECK

By: Andrew E. Smith, Ph.D. 603/862-2226
UNH Survey Center
www.unh.edu/survey-center

October 10, 2002

DURHAM, NH -- New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen has a slight lead over her Republican rival, Congressman John Sununu, in the race for U.S. Senate.

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 fifty-one (651) New Hampshire likely voters were interviewed between October 3 and October 10, 2002 (margin of sampling error, +/-4 percent). (For more detailed results, visit the Survey Center web site at www.unh.edu/survey-center and click on Press Releases.)

U.S. SENATE

The race for U.S. Senate in New Hampshire continues to be one of the most interesting in the nation. In the September Republican primary, Congressman John E. Sununu defeated incumbent Senator Bob Smith for the Republican nomination. Democratic Governor Jeanne Shaheen was unopposed. A major reason that Sununu entered the race was a sense among political experts that he had a better chance of defeating Shaheen than did Smith and polling conducted up to now has supported this theory.

However, the most recent WMUR / UNH Poll has found that Shaheen has actually pulled into the lead over Sununu. Currently, 47 percent of likely November election voters favor Shaheen, 44 percent favor Sununu, 3 percent favor some other candidate, and 6 percent are undecided. Sununu had been leading Shaheen by 9 percentage points in a June 2002 UNH Survey Center poll.

FAVORABILITY RATINGS

John Sununu has seen his lead over Jeanne Shaheen decline, in part, because of a sharp decline in his favorability rating. In the most recent WMUR / UNH Poll, 50 percent of likely voters say they have a favorable opinion of John Sununu, 39 percent have an unfavorable opinion, 7 percent are neutral, and 4 percent don't know enough about him to say. Sununu's net favorability rating, the percentage who have an unfavorable opinion of him subtracted from the percentage who have a favorable opinion, is +11 percent. This is a steep drop from the +29 percent net favorability rating he enjoyed in June.

Jeanne Shaheen's favorability ratings have remained steady over the same time period. Currently, 55 percent of likely voters have a favorable opinion of Shaheen, 36 percent have an unfavorable opinion, 7 percent are neutral, and 2 percent don't know enough about her to say. Shaheen's net favorability rating is +19 percent. It was +20 percent in June.

THE BOB SMITH FACTOR

The primary battle with Bob Smith has hurt the Sununu campaign. Many former supporters of Smith have not accepted Smith's defeat and have mounted a write in campaign for Smith. While the write-in campaign is not showing a direct impact in the race, disgruntled Smith supporters are even throwing their support to Shaheen. Voters who voted in the New Hampshire Republican Senate primary in September were asked if they had voted for Smith or Sununu. Among those who said they had voted for Smith, 37 percent currently support Shaheen and 51 percent support Sununu. Looking more deeply, among self-identified Republicans who voted for Smith in the primary, 26 percent say they plan to vote for Shaheen in November.

ISSUES

Because both Sununu and Shaheen are so well known to New Hampshire voters, the race is one of party identification and personality rather than specific issue positions. When asked why they plan to vote for her, Shaheen voters cite that they like her better (28%), her experience and record as governor (24%), general agreement with her on issues (19%), and that she is a Democrat (10%). The main reasons Sununu voters say they are voting for him include that they like him better (22%), that he is a Republican (21%), that they generally agree with him on the issues (20%), they dislike Shaheen (16%), and his experience and record in Congress (12%).

SUB-GROUP ANALYSIS

Shaheen gets her strongest support from Democrats, voters with advanced degrees, and supporters of legal abortions. Sununu's strongest support comes from Republicans, abortion opponents, and gun owners.

Sununu is leading Shaheen 48 percent to 41 percent in the 1st Congressional District, which he represented for 6 years, while Shaheen leads in the second district by 54 percent to 38 percent.

There is also a gender gap in this race. Shaheen holds a 53 percent to 38 percent advantage among women while Sununu holds a 50 percent to 41 percent advantage among men.

U.S. Senate Election - Sununu vs. Shaheen

	Registered Voters		Likely Voters		
	<u>Oct. '01</u>	<u>Feb. '02</u>	<u>April '02</u>	<u>June '02</u>	<u>Oct. '02</u>
Shaheen (D)	38%	42%	42%	42%	47%
Sununu (R)	50	49	50	51	44
Other/Neither	3	4	2	3	3
Undecided	9	6	6	4	6
	(N=505)	(N=554)	(N=526)	(N=529)	(N=590)

**Why Favor Sununu?
(Likely Sununu Voters)**

	<u>Oct. '02</u>
I like him better	22%
I'm/He's a Republican	21
Agree with him on the issues (in general)	20
Dislike Shaheen	16
His experience, past record	12
Want GOP to control the Senate	4
Shaheen did not fix education funding	2
Other	3
Don't know	1

(N=252)

**Why Favor Shaheen?
(Likely Shaheen Voters)**

	<u>Oct. '02</u>
I like her better	28%
Her experience, past record	24
Agree with her on the issues (in general)	19
I'm/She's a Democrat	10
Dislike Sununu	6
Want Democrats to control the Senate	3
Environmental position	2
Other	5
Don't know	3

(N=275)

Favorability Ratings (Likely November Election Voters)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Enough</u>	<u>Net</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Shaheen	55	36	7	2	+19	(637)	
Sununu	50	39	7	4	+11	(639)	

Net Favorability Ratings

	<u>Registered Voters</u>			<u>Likely Nov. Voters</u>	
	<u>Oct. '01</u>	<u>Feb. '02</u>	<u>April '02</u>	<u>June '02</u>	<u>Oct. '02</u>
Shaheen	+28	+20	+25	+20	+19
Sununu	+47	+33	+27	+29	+11

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 3 to October 8, 2002. A random sample of 651 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, 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:

- “Next, I’d like to get your overall opinion of some people running for office in November. As I read each name, please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of this person - or if you have never heard of him or her. Charlie Bass.”
- “Craig Benson.”
- “Jeb Bradley.”
- “Martha Fuller Clark.”
- “Mark Fernald.”
- “Jeanne Shaheen.”
- “John Sununu.”
- “Katrina Swett.”
- “I’d like you to think about the election for your representative to the U.S. Senate. As of today, do you plan to vote for John Sununu, the Republican candidate ... Jeanne Shaheen, the Democratic candidate ... Ken Blevins, the Libertarian ... or do you plan to skip the election for U.S. Senate at this time?”
- "Why do you plan to vote for (Jeanne Shaheen/John Sununu)?"

U.S. Senate

STATEWIDE	<u>Sununu</u> 44%	<u>Shaheen</u> 47%	<u>Other</u> 3%	<u>Undecided</u> 6%	<u>(N)</u> 590
Registered Democrat	9	84	2	5	157
Undeclared	35	51	4	10	238
Registered Republican	81	12	4	3	196
Conservative GOP	85	8	6	2	163
Swing Voter	36	51	3	10	308
Liberal DEM	1	95	3	2	113
Democrat	9	86	2	3	218
Independent	34	49	2	15	92
Republican	75	15	5	4	258
Smith Primary Voter	51	37	8	4	87
Sununu Primary Voter	83	12	4	1	109
May vote	30	57	1	12	54
Will vote unless emergency	43	47	2	7	185
Will definitely vote	46	45	4	5	351
1st District	48	41	4	6	311
2nd District	38	54	2	6	279
Northern NH	39	54	1	6	77
Western NH	32	58	2	9	58
Central/Lakes	43	45	8	4	92
Hillsborough County	47	41	3	8	182
Seacoast	46	47	3	4	181
18 to 29	45	44	4	6	152
30 to 45	43	50	1	6	223
46 to 64	41	45	7	7	96
65 and over	43	48	5	4	95
5 years or less in NH	44	48	4	4	78
6 to 10 years	50	46	0	4	47
11 to 20 years	41	54	2	3	116
More than 20 years	43	45	4	7	336
Male	50	41	4	5	284
Female	38	53	3	7	306
High school or less	49	42	2	8	133
Some college	44	46	6	5	144
College graduate	43	48	4	5	182
Post-graduate	36	56	2	6	123
Abortion always legal	31	60	4	4	287
Legal in some cases	53	37	3	6	209
Always illegal	68	20	1	10	52
Gun owning household	51	41	2	6	198
No guns in household	40	51	3	6	371

Favorability Rating - Jeanne Shaheen

STATEWIDE	<u>Favorable</u> 55%	<u>Neutral</u> 7%	<u>Unfavorable</u> 36%	<u>DK</u> 2%	<u>(N)</u> 637
Registered Democrat	81	6	10	4	164
Undeclared	61	7	30	2	261
Registered Republican	28	8	62	1	212
Conservative GOP	22	10	67	1	173
Swing Voter	60	6	32	2	336
Liberal DEM	88	5	3	4	122
Democrat	82	6	9	4	234
Independent	61	4	35	0	99
Republican	32	8	58	2	277
Smith Primary Voter	39	3	58	1	95
Sununu Primary Voter	32	8	59	1	115
May vote	61	15	21	3	69
Will vote unless emergency	60	6	29	4	197
Will definitely vote	51	6	42	1	370
1st District	52	3	42	3	336
2nd District	58	12	28	2	300
Northern NH	52	11	32	5	82
Western NH	60	13	23	4	59
Central/Lakes	50	10	39	1	99
Hillsborough County	58	5	35	1	194
Seacoast	54	4	40	2	203
18 to 29	55	9	35	1	163
30 to 45	54	6	36	3	244
46 to 64	59	3	35	2	97
65 and over	55	6	36	2	100
5 years or less in NH	56	4	33	7	89
6 to 10 years	60	6	33	1	48
11 to 20 years	56	9	33	1	123
More than 20 years	54	7	38	1	359
Male	48	7	43	2	304
Female	62	7	29	3	333
High school or less	47	7	45	2	147
Some college	59	6	33	2	155
College graduate	56	7	34	3	196
Post-graduate	59	7	32	2	127
Abortion always legal	64	7	26	3	303
Legal in some cases	48	7	43	1	223
Always illegal	37	4	58	1	60
Gun owning household	50	8	40	2	208
No guns in household	58	6	33	2	399

Favorability Rating - John Sununu

STATEWIDE	<u>Favorable</u> 50%	<u>Neutral</u> 7%	<u>Unfavorable</u> 39%	<u>DK</u> 4%	<u>(N)</u> 639
Registered Democrat	24	6	65	5	166
Undeclared	45	9	42	3	261
Registered Republican	76	6	14	4	212
Conservative GOP	78	6	13	2	173
Swing Voter	50	6	40	4	336
Liberal DEM	11	9	75	5	122
Democrat	23	8	65	4	234
Independent	46	3	46	5	100
Republican	75	7	16	3	276
Smith Primary Voter	50	8	40	3	95
Sununu Primary Voter	91	5	4	0	115
May vote	40	16	43	1	69
Will vote unless emergency	48	10	35	7	198
Will definitely vote	53	4	40	3	372
1st District	53	7	37	3	339
2nd District	47	8	41	5	300
Northern NH	47	9	36	8	83
Western NH	40	11	40	9	59
Central/Lakes	52	6	39	4	100
Hillsborough County	53	6	40	1	195
Seacoast	50	8	39	3	202
18 to 29	55	6	34	5	163
30 to 45	49	9	41	2	244
46 to 64	46	7	42	4	97
65 and over	53	4	36	7	100
5 years or less in NH	53	6	33	7	89
6 to 10 years	58	5	31	5	48
11 to 20 years	42	9	47	3	123
More than 20 years	51	7	39	3	360
Male	55	5	35	5	305
Female	45	9	43	3	334
High school or less	56	7	33	4	147
Some college	45	11	39	6	155
College graduate	54	6	37	3	197
Post-graduate	42	4	50	3	127
Abortion always legal	40	7	50	4	303
Legal in some cases	61	10	26	3	223
Always illegal	66	0	28	6	60
Gun owning household	58	7	31	5	208
No guns in household	47	7	43	4	399