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David Straz for Mayor

Major Findings from Late September Polling

The Kitchens Group conducted a poll for David Straz for Mayor in late September. The major findings are presented here for your consideration. We interviewed 500+ highly likely mayoral voters. The poll has a margin of error of 4.3 % with a 95% confidence level.

A Two Person Race

The mayor's race is now a two-person race between David Straz and former police chief Jane Castor. When presented with an informed test ballot of Straz vs. Castor, the candidates are in a dead heat in the mid-thirties with 25% undecided. This is especially impressive given that Jane Castor has 80 percent name recognition while David's name recognition is now at 65% (up from 41% in our first poll in March.)

None of the other candidates for mayor are in double digits with Ed Turanchik at 6%, Harry Cohen at 5%, Mike Suarez at 4% and other candidates at 2% or less. Turanchik, Cohen and Suarez all have name recognition of just above 60%, which means Straz now enjoys name recognition equal to or higher than all those candidates.

Interestingly, Castor seems stuck in the mid-thirties even though she has name recognition of 80%, meaning that more than half the people who recognize her name do not support her for mayor. Castor got the same percentage of vote in our first poll in March, in the first test ballot on this poll and in the informed test ballot verses David Straz. This reveals that Castor will have a very difficult time increasing her share of the vote. Voter resistance to her candidacy could be the result of controversies during Castor's time as police chief.

When we tested just Straz vs. Castor, the votes of the other mayoral candidates flow almost exclusively to Straz. This is especially encouraging since Castor has a 15-point advantage on Straz in name recognition, a distinction that will be erased and the Straz campaign continues to communicate with voters to increase his name recognition.

Voters Attracted to Straz Profile and Issue Positions

Voters in Tampa are especially attracted to a candidate with David Straz' profile, a successful businessman and job creator with a history of being deeply involved in community affairs. When respondents to the poll were asked to choose between "a candidate who has been active in party

politics” and “a candidate who has been involved in community affairs, but not political party politics” voters preferred the later by 67% to 15%.

When told, “David Straz started by sweeping floors in a bank and made his money by taking risks and being a good businessman. It was not inherited, it was earned. He understands what it means to work hard”, 61% of voters say they would be more likely to vote for him.

David’s plan to re-organize city government by creating a Quality of Life Cabinet to focus on public safety, improving neighborhoods and job creation was extremely well received by voters with 59% more likely to vote for him because of his plan.

Likewise, when voters were asked to choose between “a candidate who feels the minimum wage should be gradually increased to \$15 per hour” and “a candidate who has been in office for years but has never said or done anything about increasing the minimum wage,” voters supported Straz’ position by 68% to 14%.

Other key issues championed by Straz are also extremely well received by voters. His strong advocacy for public education is supported by 66% of voters. David’s statement that he will join a lawsuit started by other Florida cities to allow Tampa to have tougher gun safety and control laws than the state of Florida is supported by 62% of voters. David’s strong belief that the City of Tampa needs to build up city reserves now during good economic times so the city is prepared if there is another economic downturn is supported by 65% of voters.

Pending Referenda and Governor’s Race

Within the City of Tampa, Andrew Gillum is leading Ron DeSantis 60-29%. The transportation and education referenda are supported by 65% of voters and opposed by 28%. We did not test the U.S. Senate race.

Conclusion

The Straz campaign has taken a great first step toward getting in position to win. The decision to do early media to introduce David Straz to the electorate has leveled the playing field with better-known, longtime political figures in Tampa. Any name recognition advantage other candidates had at the beginning of the contest has now been erased. In fact, there is a clear bias against career politicians among mayoral voters.

The widely expected endorsement of Jane Castor by incumbent mayor Bob Buckhorn will have little impact on the race, even though Buckhorn remains popular with the electorate. When we tested the endorsement, Castor’s share of the vote did not increase.

Further, our research reveals that voters are looking for a mayor with the profile of David Straz, a successful businessman and job creator with a focus on improving the quality of life of every neighborhood in Tampa.

This polling data indicates the campaign should move forward with confidence to increase David Straz’ name recognition and demonstrate he has a clear vision for the future of Tampa.