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Stockton College/Zogby poll shows Whelan, Polistina tied in race for state Senate seat



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By DEREK HARPER Staff Writer |

State Sen. Jim Whelan and Assemblyman Vince Polistina remain essentially tied in the race

But the 2.8 percentage point lead remains within the 4.1 percentage point margin of error in the poll of 601 people.

remained unsure of their picks, a figure that Daniel J. Douglas, Hughes Center director, said

Assemblyman Vince Polistina, left, is opposing state Sen. Jim Whelan, right, for the 2nd District state Senate seat.

ment to both sides,” he said. “It’s still a tight race, and anyone could still win this.”

Campaigning hard during the summer, Polistina, 40, of Egg Harbor Township, overcame Whelan’s 9.5-point lead in May to pull slightly ahead in a September poll, 40.6 to 40 percent. That poll had a 5 percentage point margin of error.

The poll also suggested that the relentless style of negative campaigning seen by both parties in the district during the last several months may have hurt Polistina more than Whelan.

Overall, 45.3 percent of people polled said Whelan had done an “excellent” or “good” job in office, a 1 percentage point decline since September.

Only 34.6 percent said the same of Polistina, an 11.6 percentage point drop.

When asked what they thought of the candidates, 59.9 percent of people polled had a “very favorable” or “somewhat favorable” opinion of Whelan, a 1.4 percentage point increase since September.

At the same time, only 46.3 percent said the same for Polistina, an 8.9 percentage point decline.

Polistina also saw a higher percentage of people with somewhat or very unfavorable opinions of him, compared with Whelan.

Justin Myers, Whelan’s campaign manager, said these figures showed that Republican attacks are not effective because people in the district know Whelan. “Jim Whelan is not your average politician. He is a man of high integrity, which is why Democrats, Republicans, and people who are not affiliated with political parties are volunteering for the campaign because they are fans of his.”

Polistina’s campaign manager, Chris Russell, said the most relevant numbers are the overall poll results. Those are remarkable for a person taking on a nearly three-decade incumbent, he said.

