

Stockton poll shows incumbent legislators from both parties leading races in 2nd District

By DEREK HARPER Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, September 11, 2013 6:05 pm

Atlantic County voters apparently like the legislators of their split district enough that they want to keep them in office, according to the first poll of the season, released Wednesday.

Incumbent state Sen. Jim Whelan, D-Atlantic and Assemblymen John Amodeo and Chris Brown, both R-Atlantic, all hold healthy leads on their challengers, according to the poll of the 2nd Legislative District by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Richard Stockton College. The 2nd District includes most of Atlantic County.

Daniel J. Douglas, Hughes Center director, said the polls should not be treated as gospel. Early polls typically favor incumbents.

"Whelan survived the onslaught of negative campaigning last time, and he has a rising challenger this year who has won countywide twice," Douglas said. "I think there's still a race ahead of them."

In Whelan's case, the poll found nearly 51 percent of the district would vote him into the four-

In the Assembly, about 48 percent thought well of Amodeo and 42 percent thought well of Brown. But 40 and 45 percent, respectively, also had no opinion on Amodeo and Brown.

Among the Democrats, a little more than half of those polled had no opinion on Mazzeo and Russo, although about a third of those polled thought favorably of them both.

The poll also found Republican Gov. Chris Christie had a 56 to 34 percentage point lead over his Democratic challenger, state Sen. Barbara Buono. Only 6 percent were undecided.

Newark's mayor, Democrat Cory Booker, held a 49 to 38 percent lead over the Republican candidate, former Bogota Mayor Steve Lonegan, in the Oct. 16 special U.S. Senate election.

The Hughes Center's Stockton Polling Institute conducted the poll of 596 likely voters Sept. 7 to 9. It has a four percentage point margin of error. The institute plans future polls on the 1st, 2nd and 9th Legislative District this election season as well as on statewide races.

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