



The Morning Call
Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion

The 2010 Pennsylvania 15th Congressional
District Poll

KEY FINDINGS REPORT

Release Date April 29, 2010

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Republican incumbent Charlie Dent holds an early advantage over Democratic challenger John Callahan in a likely match up in the race for the seat in Congress from Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District.
2. Toomey also holds a lead against both Callahan and independent Jake Towne in a three way match-up in the 15th Congressional District race.
3. Both Dent and Callahan maintain good favorable to unfavorable ratios among likely voters in the 15th Congressional Districts, and Dent receives fairly high job approval ratings among voters in his district.
4. Callahan maintains large leads over Republican Matt Benol and Jake Towne in a hypothetical match-up of candidates in the 15th Congressional district.
5. A majority of voters in the 15th Congressional District approve of the job President Barack Obama is doing, but Democratic Senator Arlen Specter has significantly higher disapproval ratings in relation to approval ratings among area voters

METHODOLOGY: The following key findings report summarizes data collected in a telephone survey of 303 likely voters in the 15th Congressional District of Pennsylvania between April 19th and April 27th, 2010. Individual households (land lines) and cell phone numbers from area codes throughout the state were selected randomly for inclusion in the study. The sample of phone numbers used in the survey was generated by Genesys Sampling Systems of Ft. Washington, PA. Interviewing was conducted by the staff of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Allentown, Pennsylvania. This number of completions results in a margin of error of +/- 6% at the 95% confidence interval. However the margin of errors for sub groups (i.e. women, Republicans) is larger due to smaller sample size. Percentages throughout the survey have been rounded to the nearest percentage, thus many totals in the results will not equal 100. A maximum of 5 attempts were made to conduct a survey with households selected. The completion rate for this survey based upon the formula established by the American Association of Public Opinion Research was 34%. The data has been weighted to more accurately reflect the demographic makeup of voters in the district. The survey questionnaire was designed by Christopher Borick, Ph.D. of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in consultation with staff members of the *Morning Call*. Analysis and report writing were completed by the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion under the direction of Dr. Borick.

Overview: With the midterm elections of 2010 about 6 months away Republican incumbent Charlie Dent has a lead over Democratic challenger and Bethlehem Mayor John Callahan in the race for the seat from Pennsylvania’s 15th Congressional District. These are among the findings of the latest Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion/*Morning Call* survey of voters in the local congressional district.

In a match-up of Dent versus Callahan the three-term Republican incumbent maintains a 45% to 33% lead. While the current congressman trails Callahan among both Democrat and Incumbent voters in the district, his overwhelming lead over Callahan among Republican voters appears to be bolstering his overall standing in the poll.

TABLE ONE

15th Congressional District Race
Dent v. Callahan
(n = 302)

	<u>Dent</u>	<u>Callahan</u>	<u>Other/Undecided</u>	<u>Margin</u>
Overall	45%	33%	21%	Dent +12%
Democrats	33%	48%	18%	Callahan + 15%
Republicans	69%	11%	20%	Dent + 58%
Independents	30%	42%	28%	Callahan +12%

When independent candidate Jake Towne is added into the choices given to voters Congressman Dent maintains a similar lead over Callahan. In the three way match-up Dent receives 38% of votes, Callahan 27% and Towne 4%. With Towne included in the race the percentage of undecided voters increases from 21% to 29%.

TABLE TWO

15th Congressional District Race
Dent /Callahan/Towne
(n = 300)

	<u>Dent</u>	<u>Callahan</u>	<u>Towne</u>	<u>Other/Undecided</u>
Overall	38%	27%	4%	29%
Democrats	29%	37%	2%	33%
Republicans	59%	11%	2%	28%
Independents	18%	32%	17%	33%

Both Congressman Dent and Mayor Callahan maintain strong favorability ratings among voters in the 15th Congressional District. The incumbent Dent is viewed favorably by 54% of likely voters in his district, compared to only 28% who maintain an unfavorable view of the congressman. Meanwhile Callahan is viewed favorably by 43% of voters in the district compared to only 13% that view him negatively. Not surprisingly both Callahan and Towne have lower name recognition than the incumbent Dent, with about 1 out of three voters unaware of the Bethlehem mayor and 3 out of 4 never hearing about the independent Towne.

TABLE THREE

Favorability Ratings for Congressional Candidates
(n = 302)

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Neutral/Not Sure	Never Heard of
Charlie Dent (R)	54%	28%	10%	7%
John Callahan (D)	43%	13%	14%	29%
Jake Towne (D)	12%	3%	10%	75%

Charlie Dent’s early lead in the race for the congressional seat he now occupies appears to be buoyed by strong job approval ratings among voters in his district. A majority (53%) of voters surveyed said that they approve of the job that Representative Dent is doing compared to only 29% that disapprove of his work in Congress. The ratio of approval to disapproval is quite positive for Dent and better than other political figures that represent voters from the 15th Congressional District.

TABLE FOUR

Approval Ratings for Elected Officials

	Approve	Disapprove	Neutral/Not Sure
President Obama	54%	43%	3%
Governor Rendell	46%	45%	9%
Senator Specter	37%	54%	9%
Congressman Dent	53%	29%	17%

Finally, John Callahan outperforms both Jake Towne and Dent's primary challenger Matt Benol in a potential match-up in the November General election. In a race between these three candidates Callahan receives 36% of the votes compared to 5% for Towne and 2% for Benol, with over half of likely voters undecided on how they would vote if they were given this slate of candidates..

Muhlenberg College/Morning Call

Pennsylvania 15th Congressional District Poll

APRIL 28, 2010

Frequency Report

Number of Interviews: 303 Likely Voters in the 15th Congressional District of Pennsylvania

Margin of Error: +/- 6% at a 95% level of confidence.

Fielding Dates – April 19 – April 27, 2010

Method Of Interviewing: Telephone

Method of Sampling: Random Digit Dialing (RDD)

Likely Voter Screens: (1) Currently Registered; (2) Expressed Likelihood

Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

Q28. Next, I would like for you to rate the performance of a few political officials. For each name that I read, please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the way he is doing his job.

First, President Barack Obama?

1. Approve 55%
2. Disapprove 43%
3. No opinion (Volunteered) 3%

Q29. Governor Ed Rendell?

1. Approve 46%
2. Disapprove 45%
3. No opinion (Volunteered) 9%

Q30. Senator Arlen Specter?

1. Approve 37%

2. Disapprove 54%
3. No opinion (Volunteered)9%

Q31. How about Congressman Charlie Dent?

1. Approve 53%
2. Disapprove 29%
3. No opinion (Volunteered)17%

Q32. Now, I would like to ask your overall impression of a few political figures. For each name I read, please tell me if your impression of him is favorable or unfavorable. First, Jake Towne

1. Favorable 12%
2. Unfavorable 3%
3. Neutral/Not Sure 10%
4. Haven't heard of him 75%

Q33. Next, John Callahan

1. Favorable 43%
2. Unfavorable 13%
3. Neutral/Not Sure 14%
4. Haven't Heard of Him 29%

Q34. and Charlie Dent

1. Favorable 54%
2. Unfavorable 28%
3. Neutral/Not Sure 10%
4. Haven't Heard of Him 7%

Q35.

Now, if the 2010 U.S. congressional election was being held today and the race was between Charlie Dent and John Callahan who would you vote for?

1. Charlie Dent 43%
2. John Callahan 31%
3. Neither/Other 1%
4. Not Sure (Volunteered) 24%

Q36. (ASKED ONLY OF THOSE NOT SURE IN Q35) (N=72)

Are you leaning more toward voting for Charlie Dent or John Callahan?

1. Charlie Dent 11%
2. John Callahan 11%
3. Not Sure (Volunteered) 78%

QUESTIONS 35 and 36 COMBINED (Leaners Included)

1. Charlie Dent 45%
2. John Callahan 33%
3. Neither/Other 1%
4. Not Sure (Volunteered) 20%

Q37.

Now, if the 2010 U.S. congressional election was being held today and the race was between Charlie Dent, John Callahan, AND Jake Towne, who would you vote for?

1. Charlie Dent 38%
2. John Callahan 27%
3. Jake Towne 4%
4. Not Sure (Volunteered) 30%

Q38.

Now, if the 2010 U.S. congressional election was being held today and the race was between John Callahan and Matt Benol who would you vote for?

1. John Callahan 37%
2. Matt Benol 3%
3. Other (Volunteered) 4%
4. Not Sure (Volunteered) 56%

Q39.

Now, if the 2010 U.S. congressional election was being held today and the race was between Matt Benol, John Callahan, AND Jake Towne, who would you vote for?

1. Matt Benol 2%
2. John Callahan 36%

3. Jake Towne 5%
4. Other (Volunteered) 4%
5. Not Sure (Volunteered) 52%