

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FEBRUARY 18, 2010

2010 Poll of Republican Likely Voters
Students in Political Research Skills, Government 300, NMSU
February 9-13

Background:

In this poll 444 Republicans who voted in one or both of the last two Republican primary elections in New Mexico, randomly selected, were interviewed by telephone call. A quota of completed calls, based on population, was reached for each of 33 counties to assure geographic representation. The poll was taken by 28 students in Government 300, Political Research Skills, at New Mexico State University. Dr. Jose Z. Garcia, the instructor in the class, made 17 calls. Calls were made between Tuesday February 9 and Saturday morning February 13. The overall results should be accurate within 5 percentage points, at a confidence level of .95. The random list of Republicans, and other technical assistance, was kindly supplied to us by Research and Polling, Inc., the firm that polls for the *Albuquerque Journal*.

Findings:

1. No Surprise: **Republicans are dissatisfied with Democratic Rule:** Among likely Republican voters, only 11% approve of the job Bill Richardson is doing as governor and only 10% approve of the job Obama is doing as President.
Asked to rate the job the New Mexico legislature is doing, on a scale of 1-10, the mean answer was only 4.58. The legislature is controlled by the Democratic Party in both chambers.
2. **Republicans at the moment are more concerned about cutting out un-necessary spending in state government than they are in holding down taxes.** Asked to rate how important it is to cut un-necessary spending, on a scale of 1-10, the average answer was 9.32
Asked to rate how important it is to cut taxes the average answer was 8.68
Asked to rate how serious corruption is in state government the average answer was 8.15
Asked to rate how important it is to hold teachers and schools accountable for student performance the average answer was 7.76.
3. **The Governor's Race:**
Since it is relatively early in the primary election season and only four weeks since Pete Domenici, Jr. announced he would run for governor, we decided to test name recognition by asking each respondent, without any prompting, if they knew the names of any of the Republican candidates for governor. The results are as follows:

Name Recognition

Domenici:	36.3% of the respondents named him as a candidate without prompting
Weh:	21.6% of the respondents named him as a candidate without prompting
Martinez:	18.2% of the respondents named her as a candidate without prompting
Turner:	16.7% of the respondents named him as a candidate without prompting
Arnold-Jones	7.9% of the respondents named her as a candidate without prompting

Unable to identify a single candidate: 46% (203 out of 444)

Preferences for Candidates

After determining voter recognition, we then read the names of each of the gubernatorial candidates, rotating their names sequentially each time, and asking, “is there a candidate you intend to vote for, or that you are leaning toward?” Results are as follows:

Not Sure or Refuse to Answer:	42.6%
Pete Domenici, Jr.	29.3% either leaning toward or intend to vote for
Susana Martinez	11.5% either leaning toward or intend to vote for
Allen Weh	7.4% either leaning toward or intend to vote for
Doug Turner	6.8% either leaning toward or intend to vote for
Janice Arnold-Jones	2.5% either leaning toward or intend to vote for

Analysis

In comparing the results of the name recognition question with the preference question, we wondered how much of the lead Domenici has over his second place opponent in the preference question, might be due simply to the higher name recognition he enjoys. So we identified those respondents who had been able to identify BOTH Domenici and Martinez, and then compared their preferences between the two candidates. There were 52 such respondents, and their preferences were distributed as follows:

Not Sure	Domenici	Martinez	Turner	Weh	Arnold	Total
12 (23%)	13 (25%)	21 (40%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	52 (100%)

While the sample size is not large enough to permit definitive conclusions, the dramatic shift in voter preference toward Martinez among those who are in a position to compare both Domenici and Martinez, in contrast to the preference toward Domenici among those who are not, suggests Martinez’s appeal, should her name recognition improve significantly, might be higher than that suggested by the results of the preference question alone.

It should also be noted that the undecided vote among those who are able to identify both Martinez and Domenici declined to 23% compared to the 42.6% in the preference question. Again, the low sample size does not permit definitive conclusions, but this reduction, when combined with the relatively low performance of Weh in the preference question despite his relatively high name recognition (higher than Martinez’s) and the relatively low performance of Turner and Arnold, suggests—other things being equal—this is likely to become a two-person race in the next few weeks between Domenici and Martinez. Other things may not be equal however, and the relatively high overall number of undecided voters still offers a great deal of room for any one of the candidates to surge ahead.

Ethnicity

There is a Hispanic woman on the list of candidates, so even though only about 14% of the likely voters in the Republican primary in New Mexico are Hispanic, we thought it would be interesting to see if the strong ethnic patterns that exist within the Democratic Party are in evidence in the Republican Party. In order to have an adequate sample size we over-pollled Hispanic Republicans, and 24% of our total sample was Hispanic. The results *among Hispanic respondents* are as follows:

Not Sure	Domenici	Martinez	Turner	Weh	Arnold	Total
37 (36%)	40 (37%)	19 (18%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	107 (100%)

Surprisingly, Domenici, who is not Hispanic, received roughly twice as many votes from Hispanics as Susana Martinez. Some of this may be due simply to the higher name recognition Domenici enjoys among Hispanics, as discussed in the previous section. Fully 49 of the 107 Hispanics could identify Domenici while only 26 of the 107 were able to identify Martinez. Among those Hispanics who could identify both Domenici and Martinez, only 13 (8-5 in favor of Domenici) expressed a preference for one or the other, too small a sample to be meaningful. Some of the support from Hispanics may also reflect the relatively warm and consistent support Hispanics of both parties provided to Domenici's father. It is too early to tell whether Domenici's support among Hispanics (and, indeed, non-Hispanics as well) will continue as voters react to what they learn about him, rather than to his father's strong image. And while 24% of the sample was Hispanic, only 12.5% of those expressing a preference for Weh or Turner were Hispanic, suggesting a relatively low level of appeal for them among Republican Hispanics.

Gender

Since there are two men and two women running for governor, we wondered if a gender preference would show up in the interviews. As the data below show, however, this does not appear to be the case. Overall, 15% of the women voted for either Martinez or Arnold, while 14% of the men voted for Martinez or Arnold. The one percent difference is well within the margin of error. And the difference between men and women in choosing individual candidates is well within the margin of error, given the relatively small sample sizes. The gender breakdown per candidate is as follows:

	Not Sure	Domenici	Martinez	Turner	Weh	Arnold	Total
Fem:	92 (40%)	72 (31%)	27 (12%)	15 (6%)	20 (9%)	7 (3%)	233
Male:	89 (45%)	54 (27%)	23 (12%)	14 (7%)	13 (7%)	4 (2%)	197

Bottom Line

As might be expected, given the initial advantage of his father's name, Domenici appears to have gotten off to a strong start. However, among voters who are familiar with both Domenici and Martinez, Martinez appears to be highly competitive and quite possibly ahead, but in order to close the gap she must raise the level of familiarity between herself and Republican voters. And unless the other three candidates can significantly improve their appeal, the Republican gubernatorial primary election is likely to end up a two-person race between Domenici and Martinez.