

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: David Metz  
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

RE: Results of Recent New Mexico Voter Survey

DATE: July 9, 2012

---

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a statewide poll of New Mexico voters to assess their attitudes toward the candidates for United States Senate.<sup>i</sup> While Crossroads GPS and other groups were running positive spots touting Heather Wilson's supposed independence, environmental organizations were airing spots highlighting her ties to oil companies and votes to absolve them for polluting New Mexico's drinking water. The survey results show that **the net effect of this advertising has been for voters to adopt more negative perceptions of GOP nominee Heather Wilson.** This occurred despite the fact that between June 5<sup>th</sup>-July 2<sup>nd</sup>, Wilson and allied independent expenditure committees outspent committees supporting Heinrich by a margin of \$650,000 to \$450,000.

Democrat Martin Heinrich currently leads the race by a 49 percent to 45 percent margin, and given voters' growing reservations about Wilson it will become difficult for her to change that dynamic. A drop in favorability ratings – and corresponding growth in negative perceptions of a candidate – is almost always a precursor to a drop in a candidate's support among voters.

Among the key specific findings of the survey are the following:

- **Voters have adopted a clearly more unfavorable view of Heather Wilson.** As shown on the following page in **Figure 1**, at the beginning of the month – shortly after the primary election – voters viewed Wilson favorably by a 50 percent to 36 percent margin, a gap of a full 14 points. Today, those who view Wilson favorably (45%) outnumber those who view her unfavorably (42%) by only three points.

**FIGURE 1:  
Heather Wilson Favorability**

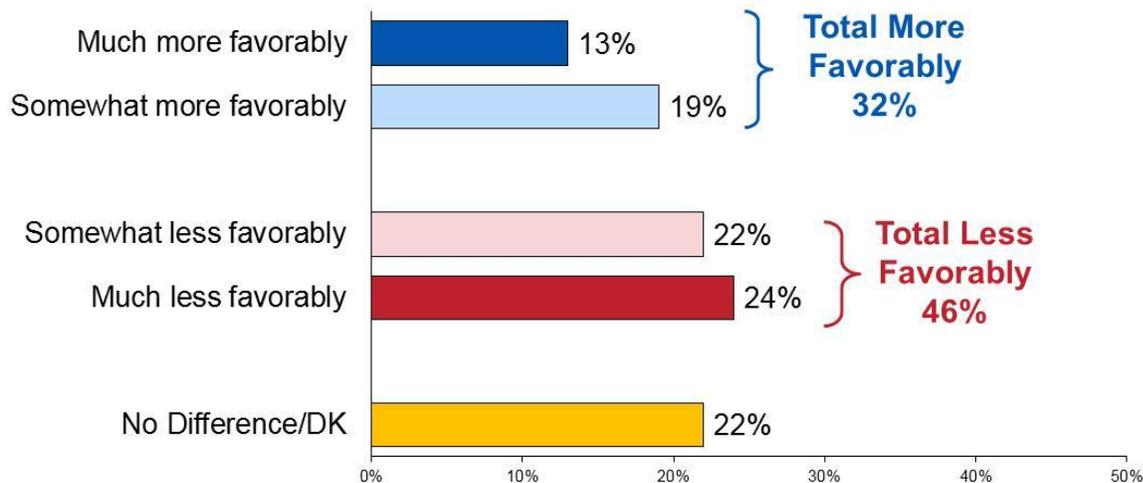
View	June 7-10	June 28 – July 1
<b>Total favorable</b>	50%	45%
<b>Total unfavorable</b>	36%	42%
<b>Never heard of / DK</b>	14%	13%
<b>Margin</b>	+14%	+3%

Tellingly, the increase in negative perceptions of Wilson is strongly felt. The proportion of New Mexico voters with a “very unfavorable” view of Wilson has increased by a margin of seven points over that same period of time.

And tellingly, perceptions of Wilson are now negative among many key groups of swing voters that will likely be critical to the outcome of the election. In particular, independent voters now have a net negative view of Wilson (35 percent favorable to 39 percent unfavorable) as do self-identified moderates (38 percent to 49 percent).

- **The net effect of recent communications about Wilson – both positive and negative – has worked to Wilson’s disadvantage.** Two-thirds of New Mexico voters (67%) say they have seen, heard or read information about Wilson in the past few weeks. Among that group, a plurality (46%) says it have taken a “less favorable” view of Wilson as a result, as illustrated in **Figure 2**. Though both pro and anti-Wilson ads have run during that period of time, the net effect has been for voters to take a more negative view of her.

**FIGURE 2:  
Impact of Recent Information on Views of Heather Wilson  
(Among the 67% Who Have Seen, Heard, or Read Something About Her)**



**Voters increasingly perceive Wilson as being on the side of oil companies – and not New Mexicans.** As detailed in **Figure 3**, recognition that Wilson “has taken large contributions from oil companies” (a major theme of the advertising) has grown, at the same time that New Mexico voters have become steadily less inclined to believe that Wilson is on their side.

**FIGURE 3:  
Perceptions of Heather Wilson**

Date	Describes Wilson Well	Does NOT Describe Wilson Well	Difference
<b>“Has Taken Big Contributions From Oil Companies”</b>			
June 7-10	36%	19%	+17%
June 28 – July 1	47%	17%	+30%
<b>“Is On Our Side”</b>			
June 7-10	54%	33%	+21%
June 28 – July 1	49%	39%	+10%

- **Voters are more likely to see Heather Wilson as prioritizing Washington, DC over New Mexico than they are Martin Heinrich.** Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether a number of words and phrases best described Heather Wilson or Martin Heinrich. And, as shown below in **Figure 4**, voters’ initial perceptions that Wilson is more of a “Washington DC insider” and more likely to put her “political party ahead of the people of New Mexico” have grown over time.

**FIGURE 4:  
Perceptions of the US Senate Candidates**

Date	Best Describes Heinrich	Best Describes Wilson	Difference
<b>“Is a Washington, DC Insider”</b>			
May 16-21	19%	36%	+17%
June 28 – July 1	21%	44%	+23%
<b>“Puts Their Political Party Ahead of the People of New Mexico”</b>			
May 16-21	28%	37%	+9%
June 28 – July 1	28%	45%	+17%

Taken together, the survey results show that **as voters learn more about Wilson’s voting record in Congress and her connections to special interests, their doubts about her are steadily growing.**

<sup>i</sup> **Methodology:** From June 28-July 1, FM3 completed telephone interviews with 503 New Mexico voters likely to cast ballots in the November 2012 elections. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish and on both

---

landline and wireless telephones. The results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 4.4 percent; margins of sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be greater.