

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: David Metz  
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RE: Results of Recent New Mexico Voter Survey

DATE: August 14, 2012

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Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a poll of New Mexico voters to assess the race for United States Senate.<sup>1</sup> The results show that **Democrat Martin Heinrich has opened up a wider lead in the race for U.S. Senate – now leading Republican opponent Heather Wilson by nine points.** Heinrich's lead has grown over the last several months, despite the fact that Heather Wilson and independent committees supporting her have spent \$1.7 million on TV since May in trying to boost Wilson's image and attacking Heinrich. These efforts have proven less effective than a sustained effort by environmental and conservation organizations which has helped bolster Heinrich's position in the race.

The increase in support for Heinrich comes as New Mexico voters have adopted significantly more negative perceptions of Wilson. Compared to our May baseline survey, voters are much more likely to view Wilson unfavorably. Of particular note is the shift of sentiments among several key groups of swing voters – most notably independents and women – against Wilson.

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

- **Heinrich has expanded his lead over Wilson in the race for U.S. Senate.** Since the time of our baseline survey in May, Martin Heinrich has expanded his lead over Heather Wilson from three points (48% to 45%) to nine points (50% to 41%).

**FIGURE 1:  
Vote Preferences in the Race for U.S. Senate**

Candidate	May 16-21	August 5-7
<b>Martin Heinrich</b>	48%	50%
<b>Heather Wilson</b>	45%	41%
<b>Undecided</b>	7%	9%

Much of the improvement in Heinrich’s vote has come from two key subgroups of the electorate that will be critical to the outcome in November: independents and women.

- ✓ Among registered *independents*, Heinrich has gone from a four-point deficit to Wilson in May (with 44% of the independent vote to her 48%) to a nineteen-point lead (55% to 36%).
- ✓ Among *women*, Heinrich has expanded his lead from eight points in May (50% to 42%) to twenty points today (55% to 35%).
- **Voters have adopted a clearly more unfavorable view of Heather Wilson.** The drop in support for Wilson has followed a steady deterioration in voters’ attitudes toward her. As shown below in **Figure 2**, at the beginning of June – shortly after the primary election – voters viewed Wilson quite favorably, by a 50 percent to 36 percent margin. Attitudes toward her have steadily deteriorated, to the point where today nearly as many voters view her unfavorably (42%) as favorably (45%).

**FIGURE 2:**  
**Heather Wilson Favorability**

View	June 7-10	August 5-7
<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%

In addition, more than one-quarter of New Mexico voters (28%) have a “*very unfavorable*” view of Heather Wilson – an increase of eight points in those with strongly negative attitudes toward her since our May baseline survey. And both independents (38% favorable to 41% unfavorable) and women (41% to 45%) now have net-negative perceptions of Wilson, two groups that viewed her favorably by sizable margins as recently as two months ago.

- **Voters clearly perceive Wilson as more of a creature of Washington DC, and more captive to its special interests, than they do Heinrich.** As shown in **Figure 3**, by wide margins voters believe that she is too close to oil companies and other wealthy special interests; is a Washington DC insider; and puts her political party ahead of the people of New Mexico. Heinrich, in contrast, is credited by voters with being on their side; sharing their values; and likely to do more to protect land, air and water. Most of these sentiments have grown over the past few months that advertising about Wilson’s record has been on the air.

**FIGURE 3:  
Perception of the Degree to Which Traits Better Describe Wilson or Heinrich**

Trait	Best Describes Wilson	Best Describes Heinrich	Advantage
Too close to big oil companies	51%	13%	Wilson +38%
Let oil companies of the hook for polluting our water with MTBE	46%	11%	Wilson +35%
Is too close to the wealthy and big business	48%	19%	Wilson +29%
Is a Washington, DC insider	41%	20%	Wilson +21%
Puts their political party ahead of the people of New Mexico	38%	31%	Wilson +7%
Shares my values	36%	43%	Heinrich +7%
Is on our side	33%	44%	Heinrich +11%
Will do more to protect land, air and water	25%	54%	Heinrich +29%

- **The data show that advertising by a coalition of environmental and conservation organizations has played a key role in driving more negative perceptions of Wilson.** Over the last few weeks, one-third of New Mexico voters (32%) say the information they have seen about Wilson has made them view her less favorably – while only 19 percent have seen information that has made them view her more favorably. Among those who have come to view Wilson less favorably, the clear majority cite issues (environmental and conservation issues broadly, water quality specifically, her closeness to oil companies, etc.) that have been a focus of the campaign by environmental and conservation organizations.

Taken together, the survey results show that **as voters have learned more about Wilson, their views of her have grown more negative and their willingness to support her in November has declined – leaving Martin Heinrich in a strong position heading into the fall campaign.**

<sup>i</sup> **Methodology:** From August 5-7, FM3 completed telephone interviews with 502 New Mexico voters likely to cast ballots in the November 2012 election. 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.