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Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "BBER pre-election poll shows Williams, Burns in lead" (1994). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 13405.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/13405>

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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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This release is available electronically on INN (News Net).

Sept. 30, 1994

BBER PRE-ELECTION POLL SHOWS WILLIAMS, BURNS IN LEAD

MISSOULA --

Pre-election polls on Montana's congressional races give the edge to the incumbents, with U.S. Rep. Pat Williams (D) holding a two-to-one margin over his closest challenger and Republican Conrad Burns leading the U.S. Senate race by about 12 points, according to the latest Montana Poll conducted by The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

For this edition of the Montana Poll, the Bureau interviewed 411 adult Montanans Sept. 9-13, 1994. Of these, 327 respondents (80 percent) said they were likely to vote in the November election, said Susan Selig Wallwork, the bureau's director of survey research.

In the three-way race for Montana's one U.S. House seat, voters gave a clear lead to incumbent Democrat Pat Williams in this poll, Wallwork said. Fifty-one percent said they would vote for Williams, giving him more than a two-to-one margin over his Republican opponent, Cy Jamison (23 percent). Only 6 percent endorsed Independent Steve Kelly. Twenty percent were undecided.

Williams' support was relatively consistent and widespread, both geographically and demographically, Wallwork said. Montana's youngest voters -- under age 25 -- were among his most enthusiastic backers (77 percent), surpassed only by Democrats (86 percent). Williams' support was strong among those who labeled themselves liberals (77 percent) or moderates (60 percent). Not unexpectedly, conservatives were more likely to endorse Jamison (50 percent), but

-more-

almost three in ten supported Williams, she said.

Household income had no apparent bearing on preferences, except among the few Montanans over the \$100,000 level, Wallwork said. These high-income voters clearly preferred Jamison by two to one. Expectedly, he was also the preference of Republicans. Likewise, Kelly, the Independent, drew his strongest support from other Independents.

Kelly's anticipated impact on the race did not appear to be materializing at the time of the poll, Wallwork said. He did not draw enough "votes" in the poll to seriously threaten Williams' lead.

In the U. S. Senate race, Burns held about a 12-point lead over Jack Mudd, the Democrat challenger, at the time of the poll. And in this two-way race, the undecideds could play a significant role in the outcome, Wallwork said.

Among the likely voters, five in ten (50 percent) said they would vote for Burns, while roughly four in ten (38 percent) would vote for Mudd. Twelve percent were undecided.

Voter preferences did not vary significantly by education, but did by age. Younger voters, under age 35, strongly supported the incumbent Burns (64 percent), while older Montanans were relatively divided between the two candidates. Similarly, men were more likely to endorse Burns, while women were evenly divided, Wallwork said. Voters from lower-income households (under \$20,000 per year) were also evenly divided, but Burns held an edge in the higher-income households, especially those above the \$35,000 level.

In the more populous and urban areas of the state, likely voters as a whole were almost evenly divided between the two candidates, while Burns held the edge in the more rural areas of

the state, Wallwork said.

Burns' staunchest supporters were Republicans (86 percent) and conservatives (74 percent). Likewise, Mudd's strongest backers were Democrats (67 percent) and liberals (64 percent). The moderate voters, however, were relatively divided, leaning only slightly to Mudd (46 percent to 40 percent for Burns). But political philosophy is no guarantee -- almost three liberals in ten supported Burns, and roughly two conservatives in ten supported Mudd, Wallwork said.

The Montana Poll's statewide sample was drawn using the Bureau's two-stage random sampling process. Its random digit telephone sampling program generates a statewide sample of telephone numbers, proportionate with the distribution of households in the state. A second random sampling procedure is then used to select one adult respondent in each household, taking into account the number and gender of adults in the household. The procedure generates a representative cross-section of Montana's adult population.

The subgroup of likely voters has a maximum overall error margin of plus or minus 5.5 percentage points; for the total sample (all respondents), the error margin is 5 percentage points. The error margin for any other subgroups would be larger depending on the size of each group.

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State and weeklies
Congpoll.rl

MONTANA POLL

Bureau of Business and Economic Research, The University of Montana (Missoula, Montana).

Sample: Adult Montanans, statewide
Dates: September 9-13, 1994
Topic: Montana Congressional races

	Likely Voters <u>(n=327)</u>	All Respondents <u>(n=411)</u>
U.S. House of Representatives:		
Pat Williams (D)	51%	47%
Cy Jamison (R)	23%	20%
Steve Kelly (I)	6%	7%
Undecided	20%	27%
U.S. Senate:		
Conrad Burns (R)	50%	47%
Jack Mudd (D)	38%	35%
Undecided	12%	19%

Notes: Maximum error margins are 5.5 percentage points for likely voters, 5 percentage points for total sample (all respondents). Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

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