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RESEARCH GROUP

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group

DATE: August 12, 2020

RE: New poll shows competitive Mississippi Senate Race

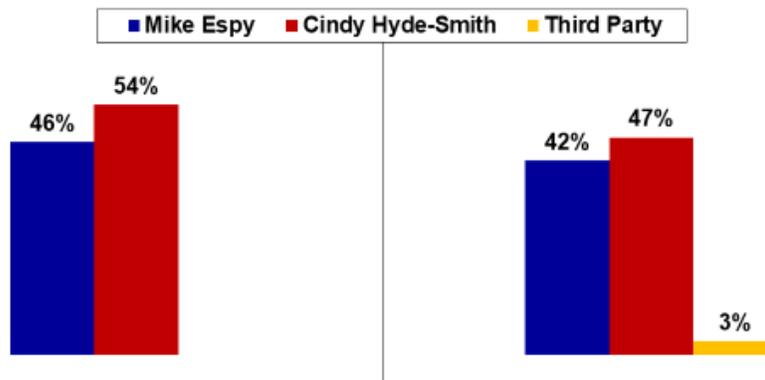
On behalf of the Mike Espy for Senate campaign, Garin-Hart-Yang conducted a survey among 600 likely Mississippi voters between July 30 and August 9. The survey, which was conducted on landlines and cell phones, has a margin of error of $\pm 4.1\%$, and it is fully representative of Mississippi's electoral dynamics. For example, the black proportion in our sample is 35%, and in the self-reported 2016 vote, our sample voted for Donald Trump by 54%-39%.

The following are the key findings:

#1. Mike Espy starts this race in a very competitive position (trailing just outside the survey's margin of error) without having started his paid media campaign. As the following chart shows, Mike Espy trails Cindy Hyde-Smith by five points, which is slightly better than the 2018 election results (a non-presidential year):

November 2018

August 2020



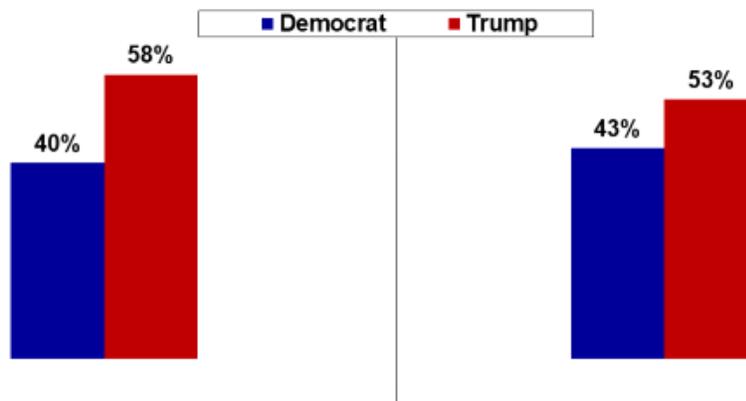
Additionally, the current trial heat results represent an improvement from the May 27th-28th PPP survey sponsored by the Mississippi Democratic Party that showed Hyde-Smith with a 49%-to-41% advantage. As a reminder, the PPP survey was conducted before the George Floyd protests across the country AND the subsequent, historic decision by Mississippi to remove the Confederate Battle Flag from its State Flag.

#2. Espy leads by 8 points with independents, tied with young white voters. First, Espy is ahead of the incumbent by 48%-to-40% among Independents (whereas Joe Biden trails by 16 points with this key group). Second, Espy is garnering 20% of the white vote, with room to grow especially among younger whites. In fact, the Senate race is TIED among white voters ages 18 to 34, an important factor in a presidential turnout year. And finally, Mike Espy receives a robust 85% share of the black vote, with the likelihood that he will grow this vote once he begins his paid media and GOTV campaign.

#3. Donald Trump is weaker in Mississippi than he was in 2016.

November 2016

August 2020

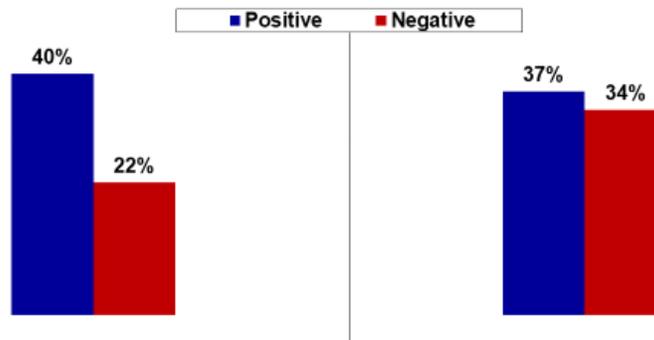


President Trump’s approval rating for his handling of the coronavirus is barely above a majority (51% excellent or good), with 48% giving him a negative rating; interestingly, while 78% of Democrats rate Trump’s performance in strongly negative terms of “poor,” just 55% of both Republicans and Hyde-Smith voters say the President is doing an “excellent” job on the coronavirus.

#4. Finally, voters are considerably more positive towards Espy than Cindy Hyde Smith.

Mike Espy

Cindy Hyde-Smith



It is extraordinary that a Republican incumbent has a polarizing image in a Republican state; in fact, Hyde-Smith already has net-negative ratings with Independents (26% positive, 36% negative), while she is lukewarm with groups

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that should be MUCH more enthusiastic about her: just 51% of white voters say they are positive toward her. More importantly, among Soft Hyde-Smith, voters she only has a 26% positive rating meaning three-fourths of a group that she MUST retain to win reelection either feels negative or neutral toward her, which is an extraordinarily low level of commitment.

By contrast, Mike Espy elicits a respectable 31% positive and 18% negative feeling thermometer score among Independents, and he has a NET positive rating with younger white voters that are so important to his vote growth among white voters.