



PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

Turning Questions into Answers

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

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RE: WASHINGTON STATEWIDE SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

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Summary

Rob McKenna starts this election year in very solid shape to win re-election. A well-known, well-regarded Attorney General, voters are poised to reward McKenna's service with a second term.

McKenna's solid level of name identification across the state gives him a considerable advantage over potential little-known opponent, John Ladenburg. Voters like McKenna, they appreciate his record, and agree with his vision for a second term as Attorney General. As McKenna begins to mount his re-election campaign, a potential opponent like Ladenburg will have an exceedingly difficult time reaching the same playing field.

Key Findings

1. Rob McKenna has unusually high name ID for an Attorney General.

Nearly two-thirds of the electorate (64%) have heard of Rob McKenna. McKenna's image is 32% favorable/4% unfavorable. In our experience polling in AG and down-ballot races, it is fairly unusual to see an Attorney General with this high level of name ID at this early stage. The general tendency is for Attorneys General to fade from public view and then be compelled to re-introduce themselves to voters. This is not the case with McKenna.

- ▶ Impressively, McKenna's name ID is essentially the same among Republicans (67%) as it is among the state's all-important Independent voters (66%). McKenna's name recognition drops off just modestly to 59% among Democratic voters.
- ▶ Of particular note is McKenna's relative strength in the more challenging GOP terrain of King County and the Seattle DMA. In King County, McKenna boasts 70% name ID, with an impressive image rating of 43% favorable and 4% unfavorable. Similarly, in the entire Seattle DMA, McKenna's name recognition is 68%, with a solid 37% favorable/5% unfavorable image rating.

2. *John Ladenburg is starting from scratch, and cannot even count on his home terrain to provide a stable base.*

With just 21% name ID statewide, Ladenburg's image is an anemic 5% favorable and 2% unfavorable.

- ▶ Even in the Pierce/Southwest region, Ladenburg musters just 29% name ID. In other regions, his name ID reaches just 15% in the East, 15% in the Northwest/Snohomish, and 21% in King County.
- ▶ Ladenburg would have to spend considerable time and energy even reaching his core voters – just one in five Democrats recognize his name and his image is very underdeveloped at 6% favorable and 3% unfavorable.

3. *McKenna's 18-point advantage in this race makes him very formidable.*

McKenna boasts a 45%-27% lead over Ladenburg on an initial ballot test, putting him in solid position at the beginning of this election year.

- ▶ Importantly, McKenna's lead is built on a 45%-13% advantage among Independents. And, McKenna pulls one out of four soft Dems (24%) and 20% of base Dems across the aisle to support his re-election.
- ▶ McKenna leads 45%-30% on Ladenburg's home turf in the Pierce/Southwest region. McKenna also capitalizes on his well-regarded status in King County, leading by a double digit margin.

4. *McKenna's experience as AG and focus for the future easily trumps Ladenburg's background and record.*

Taken from their own websites, the two candidates were described in the following way:

Republican Rob McKenna is currently the state's Attorney General, and was previously a member of the Metropolitan King County Council. For his work as Attorney General, McKenna has received numerous awards from domestic violence organizations, good government groups, and from the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. If re-elected, McKenna says his priorities will be cracking down on identity theft, keeping communities safe by fighting meth, sexual predators, and domestic violence, and promoting integrity in government.

... WHILE ...

Democrat John Ladenburg is currently a Pierce County Executive. He also has had a successful record as a prosecuting attorney in several high-profile cases, including Salmonscam and the Pierce County Racketeering trials. If elected, Ladenburg will bring his expertise to crack down on drug dealers, put repeat violent criminals behind bars, and protect our environment.

Based on this description alone, McKenna adds ten points to his support, and leads Ladenburg 55%-28% on this descriptive ballot test.

Methodology

On behalf of the Republican State Leadership Committee, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a telephone survey of 500 likely voters in the State of Washington. The survey was conducted January 7-8, 2008 and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.38\%$.