



[paulsimoninstitute.org](http://paulsimoninstitute.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 23, 2016

Contact:  
John Jackson  
618-303-1240  
Charlie Leonard  
618-303-9099

### **Illinois U.S. Senate: Kirk, Duckworth Lead Primary Contests**

Republican Senator Mark Kirk and Democratic U.S. Representative Tammy Duckworth are the clear early leaders in Illinois' upcoming March 15 primary to be their party's nominee for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Kirk, according to a poll by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Both Republicans and Democrats feature contested primaries for their nominations, and the November Illinois contest is widely regarded to be one of the most competitive and pivotal contests in the fierce national battle for majority control of the U.S. Senate.

#### REPUBLICANS

- In the GOP race, Kirk is being challenged for re-nomination by Oswego business owner and conservative, James Marter. The poll found that 53 percent of likely Republican primary voters said they would vote for Kirk, compared to 14 percent who said they were for Marter. This left one-third, or 33 percent, who were still undecided.

The sample of 306 Republicans was part of a statewide poll of 1,000 registered voters taken Feb. 15-20. The Republican sample has a margin of error of 5.6 percent.

#### DEMOCRATS

- U.S. Rep. Tammy Duckworth from suburban Chicago is the leader, with 52 percent of self-identified Democratic primary voters, compared with 6 percent who said they would vote for Andrea Zopp, head of the Chicago Urban League, and 4 percent who said they would vote for Illinois State Sen. Napoleon Harris of Harvey. The remaining 37 percent said they were still undecided in this race.

The sample of 1,000 Illinois registered voters contained 422 who said they would vote in the Democratic primary and those findings have a margin of error of 4.7 percent.

“These results provide just a snapshot of public opinion in Illinois at this juncture, but it is a good indicator of where the races stand with three weeks to go before the vote,” said John S. Jackson, a visiting professor at the Institute and one of the designers of the poll. “Sen. Kirk and Rep. Duckworth were widely considered to be their parties’ leading candidates for the nomination, and so far they are living up to those expectations.”

### U.S. SENATOR JOB APPROVALS

The poll asked all respondents how they felt about the state’s two U.S. Senators, Republican Mark Kirk and Democrat Dick Durbin.

There were 39 percent of the total sample of 1,000 who approved of the job Kirk is doing, while 31 percent disapproved. There were 25 percent who said they did not know and 5 percent who said they neither approved nor disapproved.

Durbin won approval from 51 percent for the job he is doing. There were 34 percent who disapproved. Only 12 percent said they did not know what kind of job Durbin was doing, and 4 percent neither approved nor disapproved.

Jackson said “these results indicate that Sen. Kirk does have his critics, and that there is an unusually large number who say they do not know what kind of job he is doing. This is probably indicative of why he is being challenged in his own party.”

---

Note: On Tuesday, March 8, 2016 the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute will present results and analysis, of these and other survey questions from the latest Simon Poll of Illinois voters. Topics include the Illinois presidential primary; public opinion on the direction of the nation and state; the state budget and taxes; government reform; treatment of veterans; and other social issues. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the program begins at 7 p.m. at the Varsity Center for the Arts, 418 S. Illinois Ave., Carbondale, IL. The event is free and open to the public, but registration is required by noon on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> to Leslie Brock at 618-536-7751.

.....

The sample of 422 Democrats has a margin of error of 4.7 percent. The sample of 306 Republicans has a margin of error of 5.6 percent. Each is reported at the 95 percent confidence level. The margin of error for the entire sample of 1,000 voters is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. This means that if we conducted the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances, the result would be within plus or minus the reported margin for error for each subsample.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas. Cell phone interviews accounted for 40 percent of the sample. A Spanish language version of the questionnaire and a Spanish-speaking interviewer were made available. Field work was conducted from February 15-20. No auto-dial or “robo” polling is included. Customer Research International reports no Illinois political clients. The survey was paid for with non-tax

dollars from the Institute's endowment fund. Crosstabs for the referenced questions will be on the Institute's polling web site, [simonpoll.org](http://simonpoll.org).

Simon Institute polling data are also archived by three academic institutions for use by scholars and the public. The three open source data repositories are: the University of Michigan's Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<http://openicpsr.org/repoEntity/list>), the University of North Carolina's Odum Institute Dataverse Network (<http://arc.irss.unc.edu/dvn/dv/PSPPI>), and the Simon Institute Collection at OpenSIUC (<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ppi/>).

*Note: The "Paul Simon Public Policy Institute Poll," the "Simon Poll" and the "Southern Illinois Poll" are the copyrighted trademarks of the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University. Use and publication of these polls is encouraged- but only with credit to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIU Carbondale.*

## Frequency Tables

### **Job Approval, Senator Mark Kirk**

*Now, I'd like for you to tell me how well Senator Mark Kirk is doing his job? Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Senator Kirk is doing?*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent (n=1000)</b>
Approve	39%
Neither	5%
Disapprove	31%
Other/Don't Know	25%

Note: values are rounded.

### **Job Approval, Senator Dick Durbin**

*Next, I'd like for you to tell me how well Senator Dick Durbin is doing his job? Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Senator Durbin is doing?*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent (n=1000)</b>
Approve	51%
Neither	4%
Disapprove	34%
Other/Don't Know	12%

Note: values are rounded.

## Frequency Tables

### **U.S. Senate Primary, Democratic**

*If the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate were held today, would you vote for Tammy Duckworth, Andrea Zopp, or Napoleon Harris?*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent (n=422)</b>
Tammy Duckworth	52%
Andrea Zopp	6%
Napoleon Harris	4%
Someone else (not read)	0%
Other/Don't know (not read)	37%

Note: the order that names were read was rotated. The question was only asked of those who said they planned to vote Democratic. Values are rounded so do not sum to 100%.

### **U.S. Senate Primary, Republican**

*If the Republican primary for U.S. Senator were held today, would you vote for Mark Kirk or James Marter?*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent (n=306)</b>
Mark Kirk	53%
James Marter	14%
Someone else (not read)	0%
Other/Don't know (not read)	33%

Note: the order that names were read was rotated. The question was only asked of those who said they planned to vote Republican.