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Contact:

Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858

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SIENA College 20th Congressional District Poll:

Scott Murphy Has Early 17-Point Lead Over Chris Gibson

Voters Rate Murphy Stronger on 6 Issues & Representing District in DC *Support for Obama Stimulus Plan & Eliminating Tax Cuts for Wealthy*

Loudonville, NY. With less than seven weeks until Election Day, Scott Murphy has a 17-point lead over his Republican challenger, Chris Gibson, as he seeks his first re-election. Murphy is better known, with a stronger favorability rating than Gibson, and voters say Murphy will represent them better on the issues, according to a Siena (College) Research Institute poll of likely voters released today. Voters strongly support President Obama’s stimulus proposal. A majority also supports the President’s proposal to eliminate tax cuts for the wealthy, and prefers to implement rather than repeal the recently passed federal health care reform legislation.

“As the campaign season begins in earnest, Scott Murphy, trying to retain the seat he won in a special election a year-and-a-half ago, enjoys a 54-37 percent lead over Chris Gibson. Murphy has a bigger lead bigger among Democrats than Gibson has among Republicans, in this district where Republicans have a sizable enrollment edge over the Democrats. Murphy also has a sizable two-to-one lead among independent voters,” said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg.

If the election was tomorrow, who would you vote for?			
	Chris Gibson	Scott Murphy	Don't Know/ No Opinion
20th CD	37%	54%	10%
<i>Democrats</i>	11%	82%	7%
<i>Republicans</i>	59%	32%	9%
<i>Independents</i>	30%	58%	13%
Essex/Warren/Washington	31%	59%	11%
Rensselaer/Saratoga	36%	58%	6%
Columbia/Delaware/Dutchess/ Greene/Otsego	41%	46%	13%

“Murphy’s lead is largest in the northern part of the district and the race is tightest in the southern and western part of the district. While Murphy leads by five points with men, he enjoys a 26-point lead with women. On the generic ‘re-elect’ question, 48 percent of votes say they are prepared to re-elect Murphy while 34 percent, including a majority of Republicans, would prefer ‘someone else.’ Men are nearly evenly divided on that question and women are prepared to re-elect Murphy by a nearly two-to-one margin,” Greenberg said.

“Murphy is well known and well liked throughout the district, while Gibson, making his first run for public office, is unknown to nearly two-thirds of the voters in the 20th C.D.,” Greenberg said.

“Senator Kirsten Gillibrand remains popular in the district she once represented. Obama, who was strongly favorable in the district when Murphy won the special election, now has a slightly favorable rating. Congress, Sarah Palin, Nancy Pelosi, and the Tea Party movement are all viewed unfavorably by voters,” Greenberg said.

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ...			
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't Know/No Opinion
Scott Murphy	56%	27%	17%
Chris Gibson	22%	13%	65%
Kirsten Gillibrand	62%	32%	6%
Barack Obama	51%	44%	5%
Tea Party Movement	37%	48%	15%
Nancy Pelosi	35%	53%	12%
Sarah Palin	31%	61%	7%
US Congress	23%	71%	7%

Voters rank jobs (41 percent) as the most important issue for their Member of Congress. The federal deficit (19 percent) is next, followed by health care (12 percent), the Afghanistan war (10 percent), education (eight percent), and taxes (seven percent).

“Jobs, jobs, and more jobs. It is far and away the most important issue for voters, and by a 48-31 percent

Which Candidate Would do a Better Job Representing You in the US Congress on . . .		
Issue	Gibson	Murphy
Jobs	31%	48%
Education	27%	48%
Health Care	32%	47%
Taxes	34%	44%
Federal budget deficit	34%	43%
War in Afghanistan	31%	39%
Representing the interests of our community in Washington	30%	50%

margin, they say Murphy will do a better job than Gibson,” Greenberg said. “Voters give Murphy the edge on every issue, by margins ranging from eight to 21 points. And by a margin of 50-30 percent, voters say Murphy will do a better job representing their community in Washington. While two-thirds to three-quarters of Democrats say Murphy is better on every issue, only about half of Republicans say Gibson is better on each of the issues. Independent voters give Murphy the edge on every issue.

“By a 57-39 percent margin, voters support Obama’s stimulus proposal. A majority supports his proposal to eliminate tax cuts for the wealthy, and half the voters would prefer to implement the recent health care reform legislation, compared to 44 percent who would like to see it repealed. Democrats and independent voters support the President on all three proposals, while Republicans strongly oppose his positions,” Greenberg said.

“This campaign has a long way to go,” Greenberg said. “The vast majority of voters have seen or heard Murphy commercials. That is not yet true for Gibson, although it is likely to change as the campaign heats up. As voters learn more about Gibson, will their views about who would better serve them in Congress change? Will they change enough to close the gap or put Gibson in front? It’s going to be fun to watch.”

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