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For Immediate Release:

Sunday, August 19, 2012

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Buffalo News/WGRZ-TV/Siena College 27th Congressional District Poll: 11 Weeks Out, Collins & Hochul Locked in Tight Race Jobs & Federal Budget Deficit Are Voters' Two Biggest Issues *Voters Favor Obamacare Repeal; Divided on Tax Cuts for Wealthy*

Loudonville, NY. With 79 days until Election Day, Republican challenger Chris Collins and Democratic incumbent Representative Kathy Hochul are separated by a razor-thin margin, with 47 percent of voters saying they plan to vote for Collins and 45 percent backing Hochul, according to a Buffalo News/WGRZ-TV/Siena College Research Institute poll of likely 27th C.D. voters released today.

Four in ten voters identified jobs as the most important issue for their representative to work on and 25 percent said the federal budget deficit is their top issue. Thirteen percent of voters said health care is the most important issue, seven percent said education and six percent each said taxes and the war in Afghanistan.

By a 56-40 percent margin, voters in the 27th C.D. favor repealing the federal health care reform legislation over seeing it fully implemented as soon as possible. While 50 percent of voters want Bush-era tax cuts for those earning more than \$250,000 eliminated, as the President has proposed, nearly as many, 47 percent, would like to see those tax cuts kept in place.

Among voters in this district with an eight-point Republican enrollment edge, Mitt Romney has a 12-point 53-41 percent lead over Barack Obama. In the race for United States Senator, Kirsten Gillibrand, the Democratic incumbent, has a 49-40 percent lead over Republican challenger Wendy Long.

“As Hochul faces her first re-election, in a newly drawn district, against Collins, the former Erie County Executive, she finds herself in a race that couldn’t get much tighter now and looks like it will remain a barnburner over the course of the next 11 weeks,” said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. “It’s dead even – 47 percent for each – in the Erie County portion of the district and Collins has a narrow 46-44 percent edge in the remainder of the district. Hochul has the support of eight in ten Democrats, while nearly three-quarters of Republicans are backing Collins, as are independent voters by a 47-41 percent margin. Collins leads among men by 16 points and Hochul has a 12-point lead among women.”

Hochul is viewed favorably by 52 percent of voters and unfavorably by 33 percent, with 15 percent not knowing enough about her to have an opinion. Collins favorability rating is very similar at 48-33 percent, with 19 percent not having an opinion about him.

“Both candidates are fairly well known, and both are viewed favorably by more voters than view them unfavorably,” Greenberg said. “Hochul is viewed a little more favorably among Democrats than is Collins among Republicans, and she’s viewed less unfavorably by Republicans than is Collins among Democrats. Independent voters give a slightly better favorability rating to Collins than to Hochul.”

By margins of between seven and 17 points, voters think Collins will do a better job than Hochul on jobs, taxes and the deficit. Voters give Hochul a 10-point edge on education and a five-point edge on Afghanistan.

Jobs and the Federal Deficit Are Key Issues for Voters

“Nearly two-thirds of voters – and nearly three-quarters of voters supporting Collins – say that jobs and the federal budget deficit are the two most important issues they want their Member of Congress to be working on in Washington,” Greenberg said. “Jobs is the number one issue for voters from every demographic breakdown and the deficit comes in a close second for Republicans, independents and men. For Democrats, health care is the second most important issue, behind jobs and ahead of the deficit.”

Voters: Thumbs Down to Obamacare; Closely Divided on Extending Tax Cuts for the Wealthy

“More than three-quarters of Republicans and a strong majority of 61 percent of independents favor repealing the federal health care reform legislation widely known as Obamacare. By a three-to-one margin, Democrats disagree, wanting to see Obamacare fully implemented as quickly as possible,” Greenberg said. “When it comes to Obama’s proposal to eliminate the Bush-era tax cuts for those earning more than \$250,000, the partisan divide is just as strong. Nearly three-quarters of Democrats want those tax cuts eliminated and nearly two-thirds of Republicans want them maintained. Independent voters are nearly evenly divided.”

Romney Has Double Digit Lead Over Obama

“Romney currently has a 12-point lead over Obama, including a 13-point edge among independent voters,” Greenberg said. “Nearly nine in ten Collins voters are with Romney, while three-quarters of Hochul voters are supporting Obama. However, nearly one in five Hochul voters currently supports Romney for President.

“The majority of voters has yet to see or hear Collins or Hochul commercials or be contacted by either campaign. As this campaign heats up in the coming weeks, Siena, along with our partners at the Buffalo News and WGRZ-TV, will continue to monitor this race, which is being watched nationally,” Greenberg said.

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