

MEMORANDUM

TO: Hatteras Island Residents, Dare County Commissioners, State Board of Transportation Members, Governor Roy Cooper

FROM: Rick Shaftan, Atlantic Media & Research

RE: Survey, Hatteras Island 2/27-3/2/19

DATE: 3/4/19

Atlantic Media & Research completed 221 surveys of Hatteras Island registered voters on the nights of February 27 and 28 and during the day on March 1 and 2. The theoretical margin of error is +/- 6.2 percent at a 95 percent confidence level on a 50 percent response.

In reality, however, the margin of error is much lower than that. With only 1325 available phone numbers, responses from literally one out of six households called is virtually unheard of in public opinion polling anywhere in America today. We will not make any conclusions as to the reasons the response rate was so high.

HATTERAS ISLAND VOTERS WANT BONNER OVER BASNIGHT BY 10-1

Q. Right now the State Transportation Board is deciding whether to keep the Bonner Bridge name for the new structure over Oregon Inlet, or to name it after former State Senator Marc Basnight (BASS-night). Should the bridge remain the Bonner Bridge or do you support the Basnight Bridge name?

Bonner Bridge	71.8%
Basnight Bridge	7.2%
Undecided/Other	20.9%

When asked why they supported keeping the Bonner Bridge name, 58 percent of supporters said that it's always been that way and that it needs to stay the same, 8 percent said it's about history, 8 percent said Basnight did nothing for Hatteras, 7 percent said the replacement bridge is the same thing as the old one, 6 percent said Bonner was the one who got the bridge built the first time, 3 percent said changing the name was a waste of time, 3 percent don't want it named after Basnight, 3 percent said Basnight already has the highway named after him.

Other answers among Bonner supporters: current name is fine (2), part of our culture (2), what the locals want (2), will cost money to update maps (2), against naming things after politicians, county doesn't care what we think here.

Among the tiny group of fourteen Basnight Bridge supporters, 29 percent said it was a new bridge and needed a new name, 21 percent said Basnight was pro-Dare County. Other answers: supported Hatteras, helped get money for the bridge, a relative of mine, personal friend, Bonner's been dead too long and it should be named after someone more recent.

Support for the Bonner Bridge name was solid across the board, including 64-10 with men and 79-4 with women.

Those under 35 support Bonner by 69-8 and by 70-6 among all those under 50. Voters over 65 backed the Bonner name by 69-7.

The 37 percent of island voters who earn most of their income from tourism supported Bonner by 67-4 while those who do not backed it by 75-8.

14 percent of respondents said they were born on Hatteras Island and they backed Bonner by 74-3. 25 percent said they lived most of their lives here and supported the Bonner name by 66-9. The 61 percent who moved to Hatteras "later in life" were for Bonner over Basnight by 74-6.

53 percent of voters surveyed said they work on Hatteras Island and backed Bonner by 70-7. The 11 percent who work off the island and use the bridge most often were 79-4 for Bonner while the 36 percent retired or not working supported the Bonner name by 72-6.

The issue unites those across the political spectrum with registered Republicans favoring Bonner by 74-6 and registered Democrats by 72-6. Unaffiliated voters backed Bonner by 68-7.

Self-described liberals make up 20 percent of those responding and these voters felt most strongly about keeping the Bonner name (82-2). Moderates were 30 percent of respondents and were 63-5 for Bonner, with a much higher undecided. Conservatives made up 41 percent of those answering and backed Bonner by 75-8. 10 percent of respondents were unable to define their political

ideology in the liberal/conservative spectrum and they were for Bonner by a closer 63-14 number.

Support for the Basnight name was strongest on the far ends of the island, with Bonner leading by 53-10 in Chicamacomico and 66-11 in Hatteras versus 77-3 in Avon, 76-6 in Buxton and 77-8 in Frisco.

Social media drives much of the support for keeping the Bonner name. 42 percent of Islanders are on Facebook daily and they back Bonner 78-6 while the 26 percent "occasionally" on Facebook back it by 76-2. On the other hand, the 32 percent not on Facebook ever are more evenly divided with 58 percent supporting Bonner and 12 percent for Basnight.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

- 1) Hatteras Island voters solidly support keeping the Bonner Bridge name for the new structure over Oregon Inlet.
- 2) Support for the Bonner Bridge name cuts across all demographics but is stronger with women and those on either end of the political spectrum (motivated voters).
- 3) There is no difference in support between people who have lived their entire lives on the island and those who moved here later in life.
- 4) Similarly, there is no difference in support between those who work in the tourist industry and those who do not, and the strongest support for keeping it Bonner is with those who work off the island and use the bridge daily.
- 5) There is a strong attachment to the Bonner Bridge name, and Hatteras Island residents dispute Basnight's contributions to the island.
- 6) In fact, 50 percent more respondents mentioned Basnight by name negatively in their open-ended answer than the total of all those who supported naming the bridge after the former Senator.
- 7) There is also a very strong undercurrent in the responses that county government doesn't care what people on the island think about this issue and they're going to do what

they want regardless of what the overwhelming majority of Hatteras Islanders think. People are really pissed about this.

#### METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFO

Calls were made to registered voters who live on Hatteras Island, regardless of past voter history, from live callers working at our phone center in Nags Head, North Carolina. 64 percent of all calls were completed on cellphones and 36 percent on landlines.

14 percent of completed surveys were from Chicamacomico Precinct, 14 percent from Avon, 33 percent from Buxton, 24 percent from Frisco and 16 percent from Hatteras. Response rates were slightly lower in Chicamacomico and Avon (28 percent of responses versus 34 percent of phone numbers called).

24 percent of households surveyed are female only, 17 percent male only and 59 percent mixed gender.

44 percent of respondents were Republicans and 23 percent Democrats. This is slightly more Republican than the overall electorate by about a point each way.

46 percent are married couples, 49 percent single and 5 percent in "non-traditional" relationships.

The most common last name among respondents was "Gray" which is also the most common last name on the island.

16 percent of respondents were 18-34, 14 percent 35-49, 35 percent 50-64, 23 percent 65-74, 9 percent 75 and up (2 percent refused to answer this question.) The average age of those answering the survey was 56.6, one year older than the 55.6 average on the voter file.

Respondents have lived on the island an average of 19.4 years with a median of 15 years. 25 percent of voters on the island have lived here four years or less, and another 25 percent for 30 years or more.

We will be releasing more data from this poll over the upcoming few weeks.

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