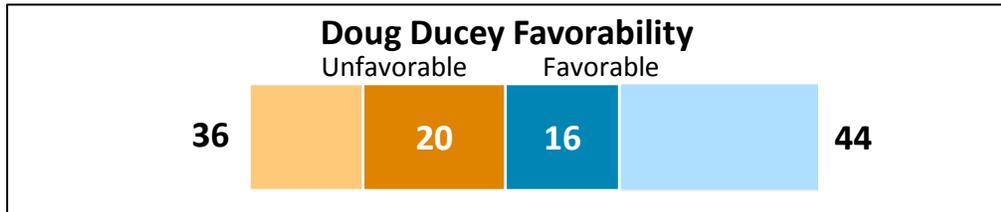


To: ProgressNow Arizona  
 From: Joshua Ulibarri and Caroline Bye, Lake Research Partners  
 Re: Progressive Opportunities in Arizona’s 2018 Gubernatorial Election<sup>i</sup>  
 Date: February 8, 2018

Lake Research Partners recently conducted a statewide survey among likely 2018 voters in Arizona focused on the gubernatorial election. The data reveals that Governor Doug Ducey is vulnerable, and that this election has the potential to be a pickup opportunity for Democrats. Ducey lacks any real definition among voters, is only +8 in his favorable ratings, is upside down (-16) in his job performance ratings and does not clear 40% in initial trial heats against a generic Democrat. For any incumbent governor, in any state in this country, this would be an unsettling reality. Under the right circumstances, with a well-maintained and funded effort, Ducey can be defeated.

Here are the key findings:

- 1. Governor Ducey is in a lot of potential trouble this early in the cycle.** As an incumbent governor in a 12-point Republican state, Ducey’s favorable ratings are decent, but unimimidating. Voters give Ducey only +8 favorable rating. Forty-four percent rate him favorably while 36% rate him unfavorably. An early warning sign for Ducey is voter intensity; slightly more voters (20%) rate him very unfavorable compared to those who rate him very favorable (16%).<sup>ii</sup>



- 2. Governor Ducey’s job performance rating is upside down.** While Ducey is able to hang on to a positive personal rating, his job performance rating is cratering. A majority of voters (53%) rate his job performance as just fair or poor compared to 37% who rate his job performance as excellent or good. Again, the intensity in voters’ feelings works against Ducey. More than twice as many voters rating his performance poor (20%) as rate it excellent (8%).



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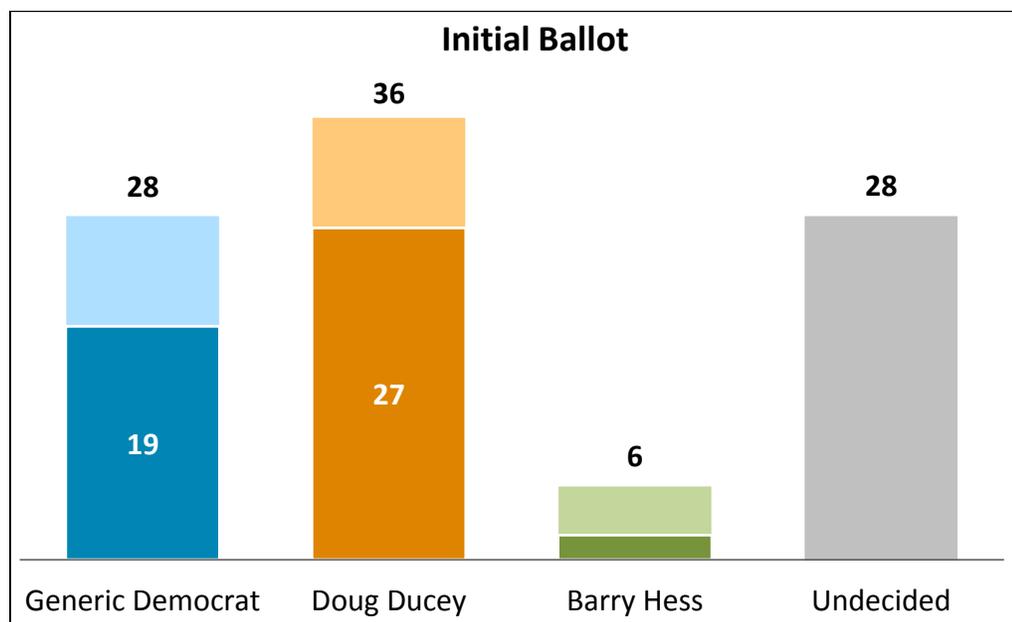
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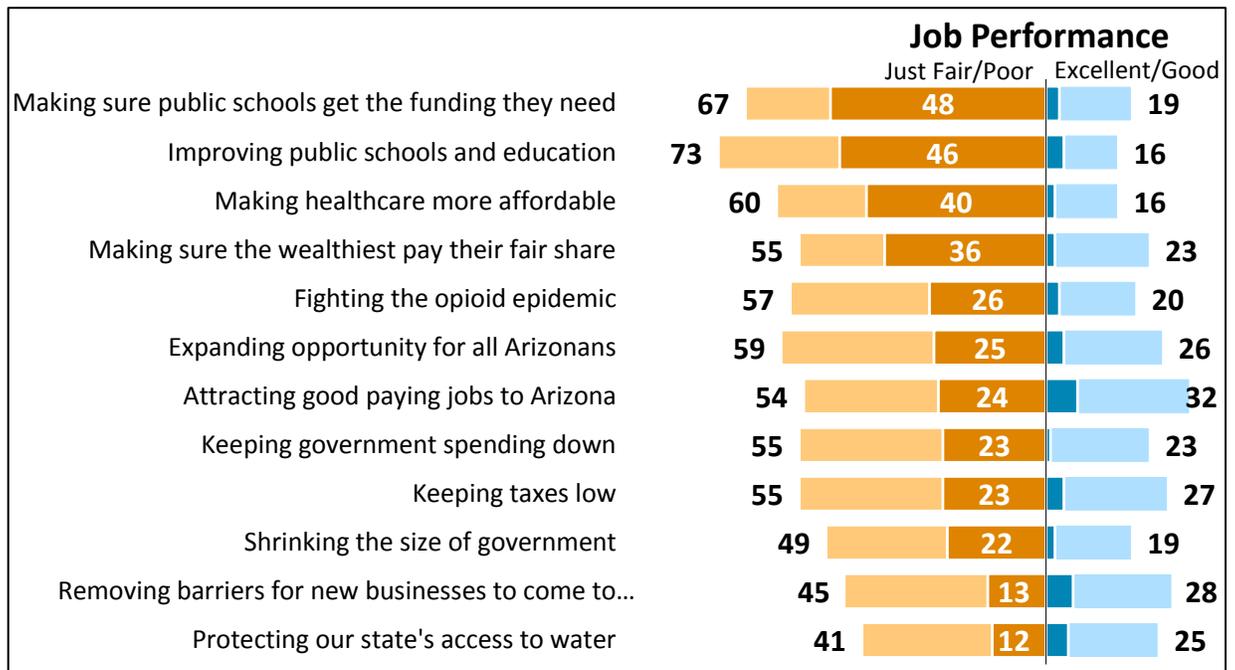
Democrats bolster these poor numbers against Ducey, of course, but in reality his weakness extends across the board.

- Among registered Republicans, only 49% rate his performance as excellent or good.
- Among registered independents, only 29% rate his performance as excellent or good.
- Among registered Democrats, only 25% rate his performance as excellent or good.
- Regionally, the excellent/good ratings are also upside down: Maricopa outside Phoenix (38% excellent/good), in Phoenix (40%), in Pima (30%), in rural/small town north (37%), and in rural small town south (38%).

**3. The worst data for Ducey come from the generic ballot where he is unable to break 40%.** Against a generic Democrat, Ducey takes only 36% of the vote, including only 27% who strongly support the incumbent. The Democrat takes 28%. Both candidates underperform their respective party registration numbers, indicating plenty of room to consolidate the vote, but this is particularly risky territory for an incumbent governor. It is rare for a majority of undecided voters to break for the incumbent, and that is what Ducey would need at this point in the cycle to secure a majority.



**4. Part of Ducey’s problem is that he is undefined, or defined negatively, on key issues and traits that voters will use to determine their vote.** Among the swing electorate and base Democrats, voters rate Ducey negatively on public schools, health care, and the economy and jobs, as well as several other important aspects of his job.<sup>iii</sup>



**Finally, context is important.** This is not a benign sample for progressive advocates. It is a sample that is still net-Republican by 12-points (44% of the sample is registered Republican compared to 32% registered Democrat). Additionally, 74% of voters in this sample participated in the 2014 elections.

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The key takeaway from this data is that Republican Governor Ducey is vulnerable. Voters just barely rate him positively, a majority are critical of his job performance, he lacks definition on key issues, and he cannot even break 40% in the initial trial heat. The circumstances exist for progressives to make this a competitive race if they keep applying pressure and define the frame for this election. That will take time, effort, and money. If not, partisan habits can set in and Ducey can secure re-election, but the opportunity is real.

Please contact Arizona-based pollster and Lake Research Partners’ Joshua Ulibarri with questions about these findings at (202) 776-9066.

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<sup>i</sup> **Survey:** Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey. It was conducted by telephone from January 13 – 21, 2018. The survey reached a base of 600 likely 2018 voters in Arizona.

Telephone numbers for the sample were generated from a file of registered voters in Arizona. The data were weighted slightly by gender, age, region, race, party registration, education, Catalyst Partisanship score, and cell phones. Both cell phones and landlines were called.

In interpreting survey results, all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error; that is, the results of a survey may differ from those which would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of respondents in the sample answered “Yes” to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage will fall within 4.0 points, or from 46.0% to 54.0%. Of course, the sampling error for subgroups is greater.

<sup>ii</sup> On the graphs displayed throughout, darker colors indicate intensity. For example, on the “Ducey Favorability” graph, the darker orange signifies “very unfavorable” and the darker blue signifies “very favorable.”

<sup>iii</sup> This question displayed in the graph below was asked of the 80.5% of the sample, with 19.5% of hardcore Republicans (registered Republicans who were also scored 0-20 on partisanship and 0-25 on ideology) not receiving this question.