

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

March 2, 2012

Recall Gov. Walker: Latest Polling Results

I was listening to Wis. Public Radio this past week when they featured a couple of guest speakers discussing the results of the latest poll in Wisconsin concerning the upcoming recall elections. What I heard was no surprise to me as it supports what I said last month.

Forty-nine percent of respondents either support Scott Walker or oppose him. These are the two groups of loyalists that already have their minds made up and no amount of campaign advertising is going to sway them. Where the recent changes have occurred are in the independents and unaffiliated moderates, a majority of whom currently oppose Walker.

The election will be won or lost based on who persuades these independents to support their candidate. That is why I stated last month that Kathleen Falk was making a terrible mistake by drawing a line in the sand over collective bargaining. Those 49% opposed to Gov. Walker are going to vote for whomever is the Democratic nominee no matter what. The Democratic party needs a moderate candidate who can woo the independents and win the election. Ms. Falk should recant her promise or withdraw from the election because that promise is all the ammunition Gov. Walker needs to win the recall election.

Other polling results showed that Walker's 2010 opponent, Tom Barrett, had a statistically insignificant edge over Walker in a rematch. The one person who could beat Walker hands down is ex-senator Russ Feingold, but he has repeatedly stated he is not interested in running for governor. I think Mr. Feingold is making a decision almost as foolhardy as Ms. Falk, albeit for a different reason.

Mr. Feingold is probably eyeing a presidential run some time in the future - or at least he should be. Stepping in now to serve the remainder of Walker's term would give him greater name recognition, valuable experience running a state government and allow him to pursue a 2016 presidential nomination as a winner rather than someone who lost his last election. Any teaching, book writing or whatever, can be put off for a couple of years while he saves Wisconsin. At least that is how it would appear to Democrats if he unseats Walker in the recall election.

Remember, if Gov. Walker wins the recall election he will be poised for a presidential run in 2016 with nationwide support from right-wing conservative ideologues. The wealthy will spend hundreds of millions through super pacs to get him elected and he will reward them by giving our country away to his wealthy supporters.

Surprise! An Ethical Republican Senator

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge Republican state senator Dale Schultz of Richland Center for his principled stand in opposing the mining bill the governor is trying to ram down the throats of Wisconsin citizens. With a 17 to 16 Republican majority in the senate, Walker needs every Republican senator on his side to pass the mining bill. Sen. Schultz broke from his party and had the courage to call the mining bill a bad bill and oppose it. It is refreshing to see someone take a principled, rather than ideological, stand on an issue.

Perhaps now the Republican-controlled assembly will reconsider its "no compromise" stance on its controversial mining bill and support the compromise bill put forth by two moderate senators (one from each party).