

SCHOEN CONSULTING

TO: EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY **FROM:** DOUGLAS E. SCHOEN
CARLY COOPERMAN

DATE: AUGUST 21, 2019

RE: **2019 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY POLLING BY REGION SUMMARY**

Schoen Consulting conducted 1,247 interviews with likely November 2019 Virginia General Assembly voters in swing districts across three regions of the Commonwealth between July 26 and August 2, 2019. The sample was drawn from registered voter files in each region.

We conducted the following number of interviews in each region. The margin of error in each region is listed below as well.

Table 1. Regions Polled		
Region	Number of Interviews	Margin of Error
Northern Virginia	n=359	+/- 5
Richmond Suburbs	n=409	+/- 5
Hampton Roads	n=479	+/- 4

The research sought to **analyze a series of statements made against the Republicans running for General Assembly across a wide range of topics, including gun violence prevention, and measure the impact of Republicans' positions and records on their support in the 2019 election.**

To note, all interviews were completed prior to the recent mass shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio, in which a total of 31 people were killed by 2 gunmen, as well as the recent non-fatal shooting of six police officers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Issue Testing Findings

- After testing a battery of statements on Virginia Republicans’ positions on healthcare, education, the environment, guns, and taxes among other issues, we found that **Republican opposition to Red Flag Laws is the most convincing reason across all three regions to vote against Virginia Republicans in the November 2019 General Assembly elections.**
- Put another way, the **issue of gun violence** and **policies to address gun violence** are **top-of-mind for likely November 2019 Virginia General Assembly voters in swing districts** throughout the state.

Table 2. Most Convincing Reason to Vote Against Virginia Republican Candidates for General Assembly			
Statement on Republican Position	% Convincing to Swing District Voters		
	Northern Virginia	Richmond Suburbs	Hampton Roads
Republican Opposition to Red Flag Laws	68%	62%	64%

- Additional Republican positions tested included healthcare, education, the environment, taxes, and President Trump. All of these position statements were secondary to concerns over Republican gun policies as reasons to vote against Republicans in November 2019.
- Notably, an additional gun policy statement on gun deaths in Virginia also tested among the strongest attacks on Republicans.

Table 3. Reasons to Vote Against Virginia Republican Candidates for General Assembly			
Statement on Republican Position	% Convincing to Swing District Voters		
	Northern Virginia	Richmond Suburbs	Hampton Roads
Republican Opposition to Red Flag Laws	68%	62%	64%
Republicans voted to hide chemicals being used by oil & gas companies in VA, while receiving campaign cash	66%	54%	62%
Republicans opposed expanding health coverage to 400,000 Virginians	62%	57%	54%
<u>Despite high annual gun deaths, Republicans opposed requiring background checks for all gun sales, voted to allow people to carry loaded guns into bars, and support making it easier to purchase military-style weapons and gun silencers</u>	57%	56%	63%
Republicans supported the ACA repeal	55%	58%	56%

Impact of GOP-Adjourned Special Session on Gun Laws

- We also tested the electoral impact of Republican majority leaders adjourning the May 2019 special legislative session on gun violence after just 90 minutes.
- The Republican majority leaders’ adjournment left no time for the more than 30 bills filed by lawmakers aimed at strengthening gun laws to be debated.
- This action by the Republican majority leaders makes voters across all regions more likely to vote Democratic:
 - 42% of swing district voters in Northern Virginia more likely to vote Democrat.
 - 48% of swing district voters in Richmond Suburbs more likely to vote Democrat.
 - 47% of swing district voters in Hampton Roads more likely to vote Democrat.

Table 4. Impact of Adjourning Special Session on Gun Laws

Position	% of Swing District Voters		
	Northern Virginia	Richmond Suburbs	Hampton Roads
More likely to vote Republican	14%	19%	21%
More likely to vote Democrat	42%	48%	47%
No impact	38%	28%	26%
Not sure	6%	5%	6%

Voter Enthusiasm

- We also measured how important a candidate’s position on guns is when likely voters decide who to vote for in the General Assembly election. We found that large majorities of likely voters in the Richmond Suburbs (87%), Hampton Roads (83%), and Northern Virginia (82%) all believe that a candidate’s position on guns is important to their voting decision.

Table 5. Importance of Gun Positions on Voting Decision			
Position	% Swing District Voters		
	Northern Virginia	Richmond Suburbs	Hampton Roads
Important	82%	87%	83%
Not Important	17%	12%	14%
Not sure	1%	1%	3%