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## Landrieu, McCain lead in poll

Many voters against pay-raise plan

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By Robert Travis Scott

Capital bureau

BATON ROUGE -- Incumbent Democratic Sen. Mary Landrieu holds an edge on Republican challenger John Kennedy as Louisiana heads toward the fall elections, according to a poll released Monday.

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Also, Sen. John McCain has a strong lead over Sen. Barack Obama among Louisiana voters in the presidential race, according to the survey by Southern Media & Opinion Research.

The telephone poll of 600 registered voters in Louisiana, conducted June 26-28, surveyed the popularity of several national and state elected officials, as well as the state Legislature.

Pollster Bernie Pinsonat said the Senate race is too close to call, but that the presidential survey results show McCain should win easily in Louisiana, which Obama should cross off as a campaign destination.

"Save your jet fuel," Pinsonat said of Obama.

Asked for whom they would vote if an election were held now, 45.8 percent chose Landrieu and 40.3 percent chose Kennedy, who is the state treasurer. Nearly 14 percent were undecided or had no opinion. No other candidate choices were offered. The two are widely expected to compete in the general election Nov. 4 after the party primaries run their

course.

In the presidential race results, McCain led with 52.2 percent versus Obama's 35.5 percent.

The numbers indicate Landrieu might be better off if Obama did not campaign in Louisiana, partly because Landrieu's overall favorability rating is 53 percent among white voters while Obama's is only 26 percent, Pinsonat said. Obama's "very unfavorable" rating with white voters is 55 percent.

The poll checked the popularity of President Bush, who got a 56 percent overall favorability rating, higher than in recent national surveys.

Republican Sen. David Vitter showed a 55 percent overall favorability score.

Only 5.6 percent of respondents rated the Legislature with a very favorable impression, and 27.1 percent gave lawmakers a somewhat favorable score. That was more than offset by an overall unfavorable impression of the Legislature by 58.4 percent of those in the survey.

Of the respondents, 93 percent said they were aware that legislators had voted to double their pay and nearly that number disagreed with the raise. Eighty percent said Gov. Bobby Jindal should veto the raise, which the governor did Monday.

More than two-thirds of respondents said they would not vote to re-elect their district legislators who voted for the pay raise.

In other survey questions, three-fourths of the respondents said state government does not spend tax money wisely. Seventy percent of respondents rated Louisiana as a good or excellent place to live.

The poll had a margin of error of 4 percentage points. It was financed by Southern Media subscribers, who include business people who are Democrats and Republicans. The subscribers had no input in the creation of the poll questions, Pinsonat said.

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