

RNC Research BRIEFING

Democrats' Dog Days Of Summer

*Across The Country, 2014 Democrat Gubernatorial Candidates
Stumble Into The Final Stretch Of Summer*

IN OHIO, ED FITZGERALD TRAILS IN POLLS WHILE HIS CAMPAIGN STRUGGLES TO ADDRESS CONTROVERSIES

According To A Quinnipiac Poll, County Executive Ed FitzGerald (D-OH) Trails Governor John Kasich (R-OH) By 12 Points. "Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, the Democratic challenger in the race for Ohio governor, remains largely unknown and is gaining little ground against Republican Gov. John Kasich who leads 48 - 36 percent, according to a Quinnipiac University poll released today." ("Kasich Tops Challenger By 12 Points In Ohio Gov Race, Quinnipiac University Poll Finds," [Quinnipiac University](#), 7/30/14)

- **The Same Poll Finds That "Almost Two-Thirds Of Registered Voters Don't Know Enough About FitzGerald To Have An Opinion Of Him."** "County Executive Ed FitzGerald is gaining little or no ground in his bid to unseat incumbent Gov. John Kasich. The Democratic nominee still has a long way to go with little more than three months until Election Day,' said Peter Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Poll. 'Almost two-thirds of registered voters don't know enough about FitzGerald to have an opinion of him. That's an awful lot of Ohioans who still have to be introduced to him. This survey was conducted during the period in which the Democrat had just begun his television advertising buy.'" ("Kasich Tops Challenger By 12 Points In Ohio Gov Race, Quinnipiac University Poll Finds," [Quinnipiac University](#), 7/30/14)

FitzGerald Drove Without A Regular Ohio Driver's License After "Westlake Police Found Him In A Car With A Woman Early One Morning Two Years Ago." "Democratic gubernatorial nominee Ed FitzGerald had not had a regular Ohio driver's license for at least five years when Westlake police found him in a car with a woman early one morning two years ago." (Joe Vardon, "FitzGerald Apparently Drove Illegally After Dropping Off Woman," [The Columbus Dispatch](#), 8/4/14)

- **"If He Drove His Car After Dropping Her Off At Her Hotel, As He Said He Did, He Would Have Violated Ohio Law..."** "If he drove his car after dropping her off at her hotel, as he said he did, he would have violated Ohio law requiring those with just the temporary permit that he had to drive only when accompanied by a licensed driver." (Joe Vardon, "FitzGerald Apparently Drove Illegally After Dropping Off Woman," [The Columbus Dispatch](#), 8/4/14)

IN FLORIDA, CHARLIE CRIST HAS "LOST THE SUMMER" AFTER HIS CAMPAIGN

STUMBLES CONTINUE TO GROW

Miami Herald Headline: “How Charlie Crist Lost The Summer” (Marc Caputo, “How Charlie Crist Lost The Summer,” [Miami Herald](#), 8/3/14)

Charlie Crist (D-FL) Has Had A Rough Summer And Now His Own Party Is Weighing In Calling His Campaign “Flat” and “Meh.” Charlie Crist lost the summer. The Democrat started his campaign in the fall with a bang, a double-digit lead in some polls. That margin has whimpered into a tie with Gov. Rick Scott, a result of the Republican’s mammoth ad campaign (\$20 million since spring!). But Democrats are privately grumbling that Crist, too, bears some blame. His campaign is buzzless to many Democrats. Flat. Meh. (Marc Caputo, “How Charlie Crist Lost The Summer,” [Miami Herald](#), 8/3/14)

- **“‘There’s Worry,’ Says A Top South Florida Democratic Fundraiser And Crist Supporter. ‘There’s Not Much Excitement Right Now With Charlie.’”** (Marc Caputo, “How Charlie Crist Lost The Summer,” [Miami Herald](#), 8/3/14)

Crist’s Campaign Used Property That Prohibits “Advertising Or Otherwise Promoting The Interests Of Any Commercial, Political, Or Other Nonschool Agency Or Individual Organization” On School Grounds. “The 30-second television ad, which began airing last week, shows Crist walking through the halls of the historic school, his alma mater, where he was class president and quarterback of the football team. There’s just one problem. The political advertisement never should have been filmed. The Pinellas County School District prohibits the use of school property for “advertising or otherwise promoting the interests of any commercial, political, or other nonschool agency or individual organization.” (Cara Fitzpatrick, “Crist Ad Violates Pinellas County School District’s Rules,” [Tampa Bay Times](#), 7/30/14)

According To A CBS News/New York Times/YouGov Poll, Governor Rick Scott Holds A Five Point Lead Over Crist. ([CBS News/NYT/YouGov Poll](#), 6873 RV, 7/5-24/14)

IN ARKANSAS, MIKE ROSS TRAILS ASA HUTCHINSON FOR THE FIFTH STRAIGHT POLL AS THE RACE MOVES TO “LEAN REPUBLICAN”

According To A Recent Talk Business & Politics-Hendrix College Survey, Republican Asa Hutchinson Holds A Five-Point Lead Over Former Rep. Mike Ross (D-AR) In The Arkansas Governor’s Race. “A new Talk Business & Politics-Hendrix College survey of 1,780 likely state voters shows Republican Asa Hutchinson with a 46-41% lead over Democrat Mike Ross in the Arkansas Governor’s race.” (“Arkansas Governor’s Poll: Asa Hutchinson 46, Mike Ross 41,” [Talk Business & Politics](#), 7/30/14)

Political Handicapper Larry Sabato Moved The Arkansas Governor’s Race From “Toss-Up” to “Leans Republican.” “Arkansas: In a battle of two former members of the U.S. House, Asa Hutchinson (R) has built a small lead in the polls against Mike Ross (D) in the Natural State’s open-seat contest. Should Hutchinson win, it would mark a turnover from the Democrats as incumbent Gov. Mike Beebe (D) is term-limited. Arkansas has moved very sharply toward Republicans in recent years at the federal level, though Sen. Mark Pryor (D) is trying to buck this trend in the state’s Senate race this cycle. But the GOP has also made significant gains at the state level, taking full control of the state legislature in 2012 for the first time since Reconstruction. With Hutchinson’s polling lead and the increasingly Republican proclivities of Arkansans, we’re moving it from Toss-up to Leans Republican.” (Larry J. Sabato, Kyle Kondik and Geoffrey Skelley, “What’s The Matter With Kansas — And Hawaii?,” [University Of Virginia Center For Politics](#), 7/31/14)

IN ILLINOIS, BRUCE RAUNER LEADS EMBATTLED PAT QUINN AS CONTROVERSIES CONTINUE TO ENVELOP QUINN’S CAMPAIGN

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According To A CBS News/*New York Times*/YouGov Poll, Republican Bruce Rauner Holds A Three-Point Lead Over Gov. Pat Quinn (D-IL). ([CBS News/ NYT/ YouGov Poll](#), 5298 RV, 7/5-24/14)

The Scandal Surrounding Quinn's Anti-Violence Program Recently Widened To Include A Quinn-Hired Organization, Which Made No Loans But Pocketed \$150,000. "Gov. Pat Quinn's aides sought to pump up an anti-violence program ahead of his November 2010 election bid, they decided to add to the pot \$3.76 million in federal disaster recovery funds from Hurricane Ike to make loans to small businesses. In the rush to get the program launched, the Quinn administration hired a financially troubled West Side business development group to dole out loans, despite concluding the organization had recently misspent state grant funds. The group, Chicago Community Ventures, did not make a single loan but was allowed to keep more than \$150,000 when the contract was nixed, the Tribune has found." (Monique Garcia and Ray Long, "Group Picked By Quinn Administration Made No Loans, But Kept \$150,000," [Chicago Tribune](#), 8/1/14)

Sabato Recently Moved The Illinois Governor's Race From "Toss-Up" to "Leans Republican."

"Illinois: Gov. Pat Quinn (D), barely elected to his first full term in 2010 and hampered by a poor state economy and budget problems, appears to be losing so far to a wealthy Republican, Bruce Rauner. ... While this race could well shift again this cycle, we're now moving it from Toss-up to Leans Republican. We've heard a lot of pessimism from Democrats about Quinn's odds, though they hold out hope that he can pull the rabbit out of a hat once again. He might, but he's down right now — and facing a better candidate, Rauner, than he did last time. According to Politico's Kyle Cheney, Quinn would be the first governor from the president's home state (and of the president's party) to lose reelection since 1892." (Larry J. Sabato, Kyle Kondik and Geoffrey Skelley, "What's The Matter With Kansas — And Hawaii?," [University Of Virginia Center For Politics](#), 7/31/14)

IN HAWAII, EVEN WITH OBAMA'S SUPPORT, NEIL ABERCROMBIE'S CAMPAIGN IS IN JEOPARDY

According To A *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* Poll, Gov. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) Trails His Democratic Primary Opponent, State Sen. David Ige (D-HI), By 18 Points With Less Than A Week Until The Primary. "Neil Abercrombie is in grave risk of losing to state Sen. David Ige in the Democratic primary, according to a new Hawaii Poll that shows the governor's job approval and favorability sinking among voters. Ige, chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, holds a 54 percent to 36 percent lead over Abercrombie with 11 percent undecided. No governor has lost re-election since William Quinn, a Republican, in 1962, so Ige could be on the cusp of a historic upset on Saturday. Forty-six percent of voters who said they were voting for Ige were doing so primarily because they do not like the governor, a sobering verdict for the incumbent." (Derrick DePledge, "Ige Surges Ahead Of Abercrombie," [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#), 8/3/14)

- **Even An Endorsement From President Obama Couldn't Close The Gap For Abercrombie.**

"Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie launched a radio ad Wednesday featuring President Barack Obama supporting the governor's bid for re-election. In the ad, Obama uses the Hawaiian word for family, saying Abercrombie is "like ohana to me." The president says Abercrombie knew his parents "before I was a twinkle in their eye." Obama says the governor has made gutsy decisions leading Hawaii, tackled a budget crisis, made smart investments in education and fought for middle class and working families." ("Obama Supports Hawaii's Governor In Radio Ad," [The Associated Press](#), 7/23/14)

Sabato Recently Moved The Hawaii Governor's Race From "Leans Democrat" to "Toss-Up." "Hawaii: Gov. Neil Abercrombie (D) is so personally unpopular that he will be lucky to survive the Democratic primary against state Sen. David Ige. In fact, Democratic pollster Public Policy Polling recently found Ige leading Abercrombie 49%-39%, though any survey in the notoriously-difficult-to-poll Aloha State must be treated with caution. That said, we're hearing that the public polls in Hawaii might not be far off the

mark, and that Abercrombie is in real trouble heading into the Saturday, Aug. 9 primary. Even if Abercrombie wins renomination, he may well falter in the general election matchup against his 2010 general election opponent, former Lt. Gov. Duke Aiona (R). Moreover, the independent candidacy of former Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann, an ex-Democrat, will further complicate things. This race shifts from Leans Democratic to Toss-up, and the primary is a Toss-up, too.” (Larry J. Sabato, Kyle Kondik and Geoffrey Skelley, “What’s The Matter With Kansas — And Hawaii?”, [University Of Virginia Center For Politics](#), 7/31/14)

The Rothenberg Political Report Has Upgraded Republicans Chances Of Winning Hawaii’s Gubernatorial Election Saying The Race Could Become A “Headache For Democrats.” “Neil Abercrombie’s days as governor of Hawaii may be numbered. The Democratic incumbent is at considerable risk of losing renomination Saturday to state Sen. David Ige. And the primary is throwing a considerable amount of uncertainty into the general election ... We’re changing The Rothenberg Political Report/Roll Call rating of the race from Democrat Favored to Leans Democratic for now, but this could get much more competitive and become a much bigger headache for Democrats.” (Nathan L. Gonzales, “Rating Change: Hawaii Governor,” [Roll Call’s Rothenblog](#), 8/4/14)

IN NEW YORK, INVESTIGATIONS ARE GROWING INTO ANDREW CUOMO’S HANDLING OF A CORRUPTION COMMISSION

Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s (D-NY) Administration Allegedly Interfered With The Investigation Of A Corruption Commission, Which He Created, Once It Began To Look Into An Entity Tied To The Governor. “Cuomo’s administration is facing questions about whether it meddled with the commission when a top aide, Larry Schwartz, urged commissioners not to investigate entities with links to Cuomo. Cuomo abruptly shut down the commission this spring. Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara criticized the panel’s demise as premature and has vowed to continue its work.” (David Klepper and Michael Virtanen, “US Prosecutor Warns Cuomo Over Corruption Probe,” [The Associated Press](#), 7/31/14)

- **In A Letter To The Cuomo Administration, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara’s Office Said The Actions “Could Represent Witness Tampering Or Obstruction Of Justice.”** “In a letter sent last week to Mr. Cuomo and an attorney for the administration, Elkan Abramowitz, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara’s office said contact with people on the Moreland Commission to Investigate Public Corruption could represent witness tampering or obstruction of justice, according to the person familiar with the matter.” (Christopher M. Matthews and Erica Orden, “Larry Schwartz, Top Cuomo Aide, To Meet With Prosecutors,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 8/3/14)

Cuomo’s Administration Retained A Criminal Defense Attorney As Federal Prosecutors Threaten To Widen The Investigation. “A criminal defense attorney said Thursday that he has been retained by the office of Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo as a federal prosecutor threatened to widen an investigation into the governor’s handling of an anti-corruption commission. Elkan Abramowitz said Thursday he was hired some time ago to represent the governor’s executive chamber as a whole and not Cuomo or another specific person.” (David Klepper and Michael Virtanen, “US Prosecutor Warns Cuomo Over Corruption Probe,” [The Associated Press](#), 7/31/14)

“Cuomo Last Week Said He’s Done Talking About The Moreland Commission While The Bharara Investigation Is Still Ongoing.” (Ken Lovett, “National Republican Committee Weighs In On Moreland Commission Scandal,” [Daily News](#), 8/4/14)

IN OREGON, OBAMACARE CONTINUES TO BE A DRAG ON JOHN KITZHABER’S CAMPAIGN

Five Former Employees Of Cover Oregon Who Were Fired, Will Receive Taxpayer Funded

Attorneys In Response To The FBI's Investigation Into The Failed Exchange. "Five former state officials have taken steps toward hiring criminal defense lawyers at state expense as federal investigators probe the Cover Oregon health insurance exchange fiasco. Triz delaRosa, Bruce Goldberg, Aaron Karjala, Rocky King and Carolyn Lawson have applied for legal coverage under a new state policy adopted as a result of the ongoing FBI investigation, according to documents obtained by The Oregonian. The policy pays up to \$35,000 for the legal defense of a current or former state employee accused of a crime." (Nick Budnick, "As Feds Probe Cover Oregon, State Has Approved Criminal Defense Costs For Five Former Employees," [The Oregonian](#), 7/30/14)

- **A Majority Of Voters Believe Kitzhaber Is "Personally To Blame" For The Failures Of Cover Oregon.** "Gov. John Kitzhaber has said the failure of Cover Oregon could harm his chances of re-election in November, and an exclusive KATU/SurveyUSA poll shows there might be some truth to that ... But here's something to watch. A majority of voters think Kitzhaber is personally to blame for Cover Oregon's failure. Twenty percent said he's to blame for all of Cover Oregon's problems, 19 percent said he's to blame for most of the problems and 37 percent said he's to blame for some of the health exchange's problems. Only 19 percent said he deserves none of the blame." (Hillary Lake, "Exclusive Poll: Majority Holds Kitzhaber Accountable For Cover Oregon Failure," [KATU](#), 6/11/14)

Cover Oregon Has Spent Nearly \$250 Million In Federal Grant Money To Produce A Failed Exchange. "Cover Oregon and its partner state agency, the Oregon Health Authority, spent upwards to \$250 million and never produced a fully functional website. The debacle led to intense media scrutiny and withering criticism." (Jeff Manning, "Cover Oregon: Retention Bonuses Offered To Employees Who Stick Around," [The Oregonian](#), 6/24/14)

Now, Gov. John Kitzhaber's (D-OR) Health Authority Will Pay A Consulting Firm Up To \$18.4 Million To Oversee Cover Oregon's Switch To The Federal Exchange. "Oregon has hired a tech firm to help transfer the botched Cover Oregon health insurance exchange to the federal exchange website and finish building the state's Medicaid system. The Oregon Health Authority will pay Deloitte Consulting, LLC up to \$18.4 million to be the systems integrator that oversees the transition." ("Cover Oregon Now In Hands Of Company That Botched California EDD Upgrade," [The Associated Press](#), 7/1/14)

- **Initial Estimates Suggested The Switch To The Federal Exchange Would Cost Oregon \$4 Million To \$6 Million.** "A consultant's analysis for Cover Oregon recently concluded that it would cost \$4 million to \$6 million to move into the federal insurance marketplace, a fraction of the expense of refurbishing the exchange's existing technology." (Amy Goldstein, "Obama Administration Prepares To Take Over Oregon's Broken Health Insurance Exchange," [The Washington Post](#), 4/24/14)

IN TEXAS, WENDY DAVIS'S STUMBLES CONTINUE TO CREATE NEW TROUBLES FOR HER CAMPAIGN

An Editorial By The *San Antonio Express-News* Has Asked State Sen. Wendy Davis (D-TX) To Be Transparent With The Voters And To Release All Of The Names Of Her Small Dollar Donors. "Even when not embedded in the law, transparency — and reasonable limits — should be the guiding principles in campaign financing. Disclosure is how voters know which interests are backing candidates — important in discerning which winds blowing from which direction will attempt to move candidates once they are elected. This is why Democratic gubernatorial nominee Wendy Davis should voluntarily disclose the names of the roughly 100,000 donors who have made small contributions to her campaign. They have donated \$3.25 million of her \$27 million total ... Transparency is about doing the work of democracy, lending it credibility because all cards on the table get shown. In other words, more effort means more credible democracy." (Editorial, "Davis Should Disclose Even Small Donors," [San Antonio Express-News](#), 7/28/14)

Davis's Campaign Was Caught Inflating Their Fundraising Numbers By Including In-Kind

Contributions Such As A Willie Nelson Concert. “As if things weren’t going badly enough for Wendy Davis, the Texas gubernatorial candidate got caught inflating her campaign’s finances this week by counting a Willie Nelson concert as a contribution ... Briefly though, Davis had a bit of a bright spot this week when she announced that she had outraised Abbott in the most recent fundraising period. Then, the Texas Tribune revealed her campaign had ‘juiced the numbers.’ The \$11.2 million that Davis had reported raising included \$500,000 in in-kind donations, where a donor offers services instead of money, including \$250,000 that was the cash value of a concert that country music legend Willie Nelson performed at a campaign fundraiser.” (Ben Jacobs, “Wendy Davis’s Fundraising Fiasco,” [The Daily Beast](#), 7/17/14)

IN CONNECTICUT, DAN MALLOY IS CALLING FOR REINFORCEMENTS AFTER A RECENT POLL SHOWS HIM TRAILING

According To A CBS News/New York Times/YouGov Poll, Republican Tom Foley Holds A Seven-Point Lead Over Gov. Dan Malloy (D-CT). ([CBS News/NYT/YouGov Poll](#), 1177 RV, 7/5-24/14)

The Democratic Governors Association Has Hired Members Of Obama’s Re-Election Team To Help Malloy As His Campaign Flounders. “The Democratic Governors Association has established its long-anticipated beachhead in Connecticut, hiring elements of President Obama’s re-election team through a week-old independent expenditure group, Connecticut Forward. IRS records show Connecticut Forward was created as an affiliate of the governors’ association, which spent \$1.78 million in 2010 to support the election of Dannel P. Malloy as the state’s first Democratic governor in a generation. Neither the Democratic association nor its GOP counterpart created a separate Connecticut affiliate four years ago, but the step may be a precaution against potential claims of illegal coordination with Malloy, a major fundraiser for the group.” (Mark Pazniokas, “DGA Creates CT Affiliate, Hires Obama Team To Help Malloy,” [The Connecticut Mirror](#), 8/1/14)