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Luria leads Taylor, 50%-43%, in 2nd District rematch; 2018 election fraud scandal haunts Taylor with voters; voters' top concerns are economy, Covid-19, health care

Summary of Key Findings

1. Rep. Elaine Luria's 7-point lead over former Rep. Scott Taylor is bolstered by support among women (+18), independents (+34), older voters (+9), and college-educated voters (+23).
2. With voters who say the 2018 Taylor campaign's election fraud scandal was important, Luria leads by 48 points (71%-23%).
3. Over 25% of voters have already cast their ballots, and early voters are tilting heavily Democratic, with Luria getting almost 3 votes to every 1 for Republican Taylor (70%-25%).
4. Luria enjoys a +38 favorable/unfavorable rating (60%-22%), while Taylor is weighed down by a -5 favorable/unfavorable rating (44%-49%).
5. 2nd District voters say their most important issues are the economy (24%), COVID-19 (19%), and health care (13%).
6. For president, Democrat Joe Biden leads Republican President Donald Trump among 2nd District voters, 49%-40%.

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Analysis

Democratic Rep. Elaine Luria holds a 7-point lead over former Republican Rep. Scott Taylor (50%-43%) among likely voters in a rematch to see who will represent Virginia's 2nd Congressional District. In a district that stretches from Virginia Beach to Williamsburg, Luria's lead is built on an 18-point lead among women (56%-38%), a 34-point lead among independents (55%-21%), a 23-point lead among college-educated voters (58%-35%), and a 9-point lead among voters 45 and older (52%-43%). Luria also has stronger support in her partisan base than Taylor has in his, with 94% of Democrats supporting Luria compared to 87% of Republicans supporting Taylor. (Q6)

The lingering election fraud scandal involving the 2018 Taylor campaign is weighing down Taylor's bid to regain the seat he held for one term (2017-2019). Among voters who say the scandal is very or somewhat important to their decision, Luria leads Taylor by 48 points (71%-23%). (Q8) Overall, Luria has a +38 favorability rating (60%-22%), while Taylor is underwater at a -5 favorability rating (44%-49%). (Q4A-B) Luria's vote to impeach President Donald Trump appears to be helping her. Among voters who say her vote on impeachment was very or somewhat important to their choice, Luria leads Taylor by 14 points (54%-40%). (Q9)

Consistent with trends seen across the nation, Democrats are far more likely to have voted early in the 2nd District race than Republicans. Slightly more than a quarter (27%) of the voters surveyed have already cast their ballots, and among them Luria has a 70%-25% lead. (Q1) Luria has a smaller but still significant enthusiasm advantage. Among voters who say they are/were very or somewhat enthusiastic about voting, Luria leads Taylor by 9 points (52%-43%). (Q2)

"The enthusiasm that seems to be animating Democrats nationally is evident in this 2nd District race," said Wason Center Research Director Rebecca Bromley-Trujillo. "But the election fraud scandal of 2018 appears to be weighing Taylor down even beyond that."

In the presidential election, Joe Biden leads President Trump among 2nd District voters by 9 points (49%-40%). Biden's margins against Trump closely track Luria's margins against Taylor. Biden leads among women by 22 points (57%-35%), among independents by 36 points (52%-16%), and among college-educated voters by 23 points (56%-33%). Among voters 45 and older, Biden leads by 11 points (51%-40%) and among non-college educated voters Biden trails Trump by only 4 points (42%-46%).

Nearly a quarter (24%) of 2nd District voters say the economy is the most pressing issue driving their choice, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic (19%) and health care (13%). No other issue reaches 10%, including gun policy (9%), racial justice (8%), national security (7%), Supreme Court appointments (6%), the environment (5%) and immigration (2%). (Q7)

"Considering the heavy military presence throughout the region and with both candidates emphasizing their Navy service, it's notable that only 7 percent of voters say national security is an issue that drives their vote," said Wason Center Academic Director Quentin Kidd.

Field Dates: October 8-18, 2020
 807 Likely Virginia 2nd Congressional District Voters (MOE = +/- 3.8%)

Q6: And thinking about the election for the 2nd Congressional District ... if the election were held TODAY would you vote for [RANDOMIZE: “Elaine Luria the Democrat” or “Scott Taylor the Republican”], or if you’ve already voted who did you vote for?

[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE (“DON’T KNOW”, “DEPENDS”, “NOT SURE”, ETC.)
 PROBE ONCE WITH: Which one are you leaning toward right now?]

	All	Rep	Ind	Dem	Males	Females	White	Black	18-44	45+	College	Non-College	College
Elaine Luria	50	7	55	94	44	56	46	80	44	52	43	58	
Scott Taylor	43	87	21	3	49	38	49	11	46	43	51	35	
Someone else (vol)	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	2	
Undecided (vol)	4	2	19	2	4	4	2	8	8	3	4	4	
Dk/Ref (vol)	2	3	4	1	2	1	2	-	2	1	2	1	

Among those who say they have already voted (Q1, n=215):

- 1. Elaine Luria, the Democrat 70
- 2. Scott Taylor, the Republican 25
- 3. Someone else (vol) 3
- 4. Undecided (vol) -
- 98. Dk/ref (vol) 2

Among those who say they are/were very or somewhat enthusiastic about voting (Q2, n=706):

- 1. Elaine Luria, the Democrat 52
- 2. Scott Taylor, the Republican 43
- 3. Someone else (vol) -
- 4. Undecided (vol) 3
- 98. Dk/ref (vol) 2

Among those who say the election fraud scandal involving the 2018 Taylor campaign is very or somewhat important to their decision about who to support in the 2nd district race (Q8, n=465)

- 1. Elaine Luria, the Democrat 71
- 2. Scott Taylor, the Republican 23
- 3. Someone else (vol) 1
- 4. Undecided (vol) 4
- 98. Dk/ref (vol) 1

Among those who say Luria’s vote to impeach President Trump is very or somewhat important to their decision about who to support in the 2nd district race (Q9, n=439)

- 1. Elaine Luria, the Democrat 54
- 2. Scott Taylor, the Republican 40
- 3. Someone else (vol) 1
- 4. Undecided (vol) 2
- 98. Dk/ref (vol) 3

Q4: I am going to read you the names of candidates running in the 2nd Congressional District for the U.S. House. Please tell me if your general impression of each is very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable. [RANDOMIZE A & B]

A. Elaine Luria

	All	Rep	Ind	Dem	Males	Females	White	Black	18-44	45 +	Non-College	College
Very favorable	25	2	25	59	27	32	26	50	17	32	25	34
Somewhat favorable	35	10	35	31	19	25	19	30	21	22	19	24
Somewhat unfavorable	17	28	17	3	18	15	19	10	25	15	17	16
Very unfavorable	5	53	5	1	28	22	29	3	17	27	30	20
Dk/Ref (vol)	18	7	18	7	8	6	7	7	20	4	9	6

B. Scott Taylor

	All	Rep	Ind	Dem	Males	Females	White	Black	18-44	45 +	Non-College	College
Very favorable	18	37	6	1	22	15	21	3	17	18	23	13
Somewhat favorable	26	43	23	10	27	25	26	19	39	24	25	27
Somewhat unfavorable	17	10	24	22	17	17	16	22	10	18	14	20
Very unfavorable	32	5	30	61	27	37	32	50	15	36	31	34
Dk/Ref (vol)	7	5	17	6	7	5	5	6	19	4	7	6

Q3: Thinking about the election for president... if the election were held TODAY would you vote for [RANDOMIZE: "Donald Trump the Republican" or "Joe Biden the Democrat"], or if you've already voted who did you vote for?

[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE ("DON'T KNOW", "DEPENDS", "NOT SURE", ETC.) PROBE ONCE WITH: Which one are you leaning toward right now?]

	All	Rep	Ind	Dem	Males	Females	White	Black	18-44	45 +	Non-College	College
Donald Trump	40	83	16	1	45	35	45	12	41	40	46	33
Joe Biden	49	5	52	94	40	57	43	83	40	51	42	56
Someone else (vol)	5	6	9	2	8	2	6	-	9	4	5	4
Undecided (vol)	3	2	11	2	4	2	2	4	4	2	3	3
Dk/Ref (vol)	1	4	12	1	3	4	4	1	6	3	4	4

Q7: Which of the following issues do you consider the most important in your vote choice for the 2nd Congressional District? [RANDOMIZE]

The Economy	24
Health Care	13
The COVID-19 Pandemic	19
Immigration	2
Racial Justice	8
National Security	7
The Environment	5
Gun Policy	9
Supreme Court Appointments	6
Other Issue (vol)	5
Dk/ref (vol)	2

Demographics Full Survey n=807

EDUC: Could you tell me the highest level of school or college you had the opportunity to complete:

High school or less	52
College or more	48

HISPANIC: Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic or Latino?

Yes	4
No	96
Dk/ref (vol)	

RACE: Do you consider yourself to be:

White	73
Black or African American	15
Other	12

RELIG: What is your religious preference, are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, another religion, or no religion?

Protestant	25
Christian (non-specific) (vol)	21
Catholic	13
Jewish	2
Other	10
None	25
Dk/ref (vol)	4

IDEOL: When it comes to your ideology, would you consider yourself to be a...

Strong liberal	7
Liberal	11
Moderate, leaning liberal	24
Moderate, leaning conservative	18
Conservative	16
Strong Conservative	11
Dk/ref (vol)	12

PARTY: In politics today, do you generally consider yourself to be a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?

Republican	31
Democrat	30
Independent	34
No Preference (vol)	2
Other Party (vol)	1
Dk/Ref (vol)	2

PARTYLN (of Independent, no preference, etc.)

Republican	38
Democrat	34
Independent	28

AGE: (Recorded as exact year of birth)

18-24	6
25-34	11
35-44	25
45-54	25
55 & older	33

INCOME: And, just for statistical purposes, in which of the following categories does your family income fall?

Under \$25,000	4
\$25-\$49,999	10
\$50-\$74,999	17
\$75-\$99,999	20
\$100,000-\$149,999	20
Over \$150,000	17
Dk/ref (vol)	12

CELL/LANDLINE

Cell	78
Landline	22

SEX: [INTERVIEWER CODE]

Male	48
Female	52

How the survey was conducted:

The results of this poll are based on 807 interviews of registered voters in Virginia's 2nd Congressional District, who have voted in at least two general elections in the last four years or are newly registered in the last 6 months, including 179 on landline and 628 on cell phone, conducted October 8-18, 2020. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. The margin of error for the whole survey is +/-3.8% at the 95% level of confidence. **This means that if 50% of respondents indicate a topline view on an issue, we can be 95% confident that the population's view on that issue is somewhere between 46.2% and 53.8%.** Sub-samples have a higher margin of error. All error margins have been adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, which is 1.2 in this survey. The design effect is a factor representing the survey's deviation from a simple random sample and takes into account decreases in precision due to sample design and weighting procedures. In addition to sampling error, the other potential sources of error include non-response, question wording, and interviewer error. The response rate (AAPOR RRI Standard Definition) for the survey was 8%. Five callbacks were employed in the fielding process. Live calling was conducted by trained interviewers at the Wason Center for Public Policy Survey Research Lab at Christopher Newport University. The data reported here are weighted using an iterative weighting process on city, age, race, sex, and education to reflect as closely as possible the population of Virginia's 2nd Congressional District 2020 electorate.