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**GILLESPIE LEADS GOP PACK IN VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S RACE,
QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY POLL FINDS;
DEMOCRAT NORTHAM HAS EARLY LEAD IN GENERAL ELECTION**

Former Republican National Committee Chair Ed Gillespie has an early lead in a field of largely unknown Republican contenders in the 2017 Virginia governor's race, according to a Quinnipiac University poll released today.

Virginia Democratic Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam edges Gillespie in a general election matchup and has wider leads over other Republicans, the independent Quinnipiac (KWIN-uh-pe-ack) University Poll finds.

Gillespie gets 24 percent of Republican votes in a hypothetical GOP primary for governor, followed by U.S. Rep. Rob Wittman with 10 percent, Prince William County Board of Supervisors Chair Corey Stewart with 4 percent and State Sen. Frank Wagner with 4 percent.

Most Republican voters, 57 percent, are undecided.

In general election matchups, Northam edges Gillespie 38 – 34 percent. The Democrat leads other Republicans:

- 38 – 29 percent over Stewart;
- 39 – 30 percent over Wittman;
- 39 – 30 percent over Wagner.

None of the contenders is well known at this early date, as the percentage of voters who don't know enough about the contenders to form an opinion ranges from 66 percent to 86 percent.

“Ever since Ed Gillespie came oh-so-close to upsetting U.S. Sen. Mark Warner two years ago, he has had his eye on the governor's mansion. He enters this campaign with a solid, but by no means overwhelming, lead for the Republican nomination. If there are four candidates for the Republican gubernatorial nomination come the June primary, that will work to Gillespie's advantage since that would prevent development of a stop-Gillespie coalition,” said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Poll.

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“In the general election match-up against Lt. Gov. Northam, the presumed Democratic nominee, Gillespie does the best of the GOP contenders,” Brown added. “But at least part of Northam's general election lead and Gillespie’s lead among Republicans is due to their better name recognition. This race for governor is just beginning and none of the candidates, including Northam and Gillespie, in either party has anything approaching widespread name recognition. The candidates who reach that level will become the early leaders.”

Virginia voters approve 52 – 30 percent of the job Gov. Terry McAuliffe is doing. Approval is 75 – 8 percent among Democrats and 52 – 32 percent among independent voters. Republicans disapprove 57 – 27 percent.

The State Legislature gets a 47 – 31 percent approval, with similar scores among Democrats, Republicans and independent voters.

Old Dominion voters support 48 – 38 percent legislation that would require 75 percent of state universities’ undergraduate enrollment be made up of students from Virginia.

There is a wide age gap as voters 18 to 34 years old oppose the bill 55 – 36 percent, while older voters support the measure. Support is 55 – 34 percent among Republicans and 49 – 41 percent among independent voters. Democrats are divided, with 44 percent supporting the measure and 40 percent opposed.

“Virginians have long taken pride in their higher education system. Now they want it for themselves,” Brown said.

A total of 67 percent of voters are “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the way things are going in Virginia today, while 32 percent are “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.”

In an open-ended question, allowing for any answer, 23 percent of Virginia voters say the economy is the most important problem facing the state today, followed by 12 percent who list education, 8 percent who cite mass transit and 6 percent who say “politicians” or political leadership.

From December 6 – 11, Quinnipiac University surveyed 1,098 Virginia voters with a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points. The survey includes 451 Republicans with a margin of error of +/- 4.6 percentage points. Live interviewers call landlines and cell phones.

The Quinnipiac University Poll, directed by Douglas Schwartz, Ph.D., conducts public opinion surveys in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Florida, Ohio, Virginia, Iowa, Colorado, North Carolina, Georgia and the nation as a public service and for research.

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1. (If Republican or Republican Leaner) If the Republican primary for Governor were being held today, and the candidates were Ed Gillespie, Corey Stewart, Rob Wittman, and Frank Wagner, for whom would you vote?

	REPUBLICANS/REPUBLICAN LEANERS.....								WHITE.....	
	Tot	Tea Party	Wht BrnAgn Evang	POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY CONSERVATIVE Very	Mod/ Smwht	Lib	Men	Wom	COLLEGE DEG Yes	No
Gillespie	24%	22%	24%	30%	22%	19%	31%	16%	26%	21%
Stewart	4	8	4	4	5	2	2	6	4	4
Wittman	10	6	12	10	10	9	11	9	9	13
Wagner	4	1	2	4	3	4	3	4	2	3
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1
DK/NA	57	59	57	51	58	64	50	64	56	58

2. If the election for Governor were being held today, and the candidates were Ralph Northam the Democrat and Ed Gillespie the Republican, for whom would you vote?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE.....	
							COLLEGE DEG Yes	No
Northam	38%	1%	79%	24%	31%	43%	38%	25%
Gillespie	34	83	3	26	37	31	36	49
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	2	-	1	3	2	2	2	1
DK/NA	26	14	16	45	29	23	23	24

	AGE IN 18-34	YRS..... 35-49	50-64	65+	WHITE.....		Non-	
					Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Northam	32%	41%	38%	38%	27%	36%	32%	51%
Gillespie	37	32	33	36	47	38	42	16
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	2	-	2	2	2	1	2	2
DK/NA	28	24	26	23	23	24	24	29

3. If the election for Governor were being held today, and the candidates were Ralph Northam the Democrat and Corey Stewart the Republican, for whom would you vote?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE.....	
							COLLEGE DEG Yes	No
Northam	38%	1%	80%	25%	32%	43%	39%	26%
Stewart	29	79	1	19	31	28	31	44
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	2	-	1	3	2	1	2	1
DK/NA	30	19	18	52	34	27	28	28

	AGE IN 18-34	YRS..... 35-49	50-64	65+	WHITE.....		Non-	
					Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Northam	37%	38%	40%	39%	28%	36%	33%	51%
Stewart	29	29	28	34	40	35	37	12
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	3	1	1	2	2	1	2	3
DK/NA	31	31	30	24	29	27	28	33

4. If the election for Governor were being held today, and the candidates were Ralph Northam the Democrat and Rob Wittman the Republican, for whom would you vote?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Northam	39%	2%	80%	24%	32%	44%	38%	25%
Wittman	30	79	1	22	33	28	32	47
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	2	-	1	3	2	2	2	1
DK/NA	29	19	18	50	32	26	27	27

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Non-	
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Northam	35%	42%	38%	39%	27%	35%	32%	54%
Wittman	32	31	29	34	43	37	40	11
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	1
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2
DK/NA	31	26	31	25	27	27	27	32

5. If the election for Governor were being held today, and the candidates were Ralph Northam the Democrat and Frank Wagner the Republican, for whom would you vote?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Northam	39%	4%	81%	24%	33%	45%	38%	27%
Wagner	30	75	2	22	33	27	31	42
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	2	1	2	3	3	2	2	2
DK/NA	28	20	14	49	31	26	28	28

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Non-	
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Northam	38%	43%	37%	40%	29%	36%	33%	54%
Wagner	31	27	29	34	41	33	37	15
SMONE ELSE (VOL)	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
WLDN'T VOTE (VOL)	5	1	2	2	3	1	2	3
DK/NA	26	27	32	23	27	30	28	26

6. Is your opinion of Ralph Northam favorable, unfavorable or haven't you heard enough about him?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Favorable	19%	4%	35%	14%	18%	19%	19%	10%
Unfavorable	5	10	1	5	7	4	5	7
Hvn't hrd enough	76	85	64	80	74	77	75	81
REFUSED	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	2

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Non-	
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Favorable	16%	15%	21%	23%	15%	14%	15%	27%
Unfavorable	4	4	7	4	9	4	6	3
Hvn't hrd enough	78	80	71	71	75	81	78	69
REFUSED	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1

7. Is your opinion of Ed Gillespie favorable, unfavorable or haven't you heard enough about him?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE.....	
							COLLEGE DEG	Yes
Favorable	19%	38%	5%	19%	27%	13%	22%	26%
Unfavorable	14	3	22	13	14	14	17	9
Hvn't hrd enough	66	58	71	67	59	72	59	64
REFUSED	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	AGE IN	YRS.....			WHITE.....			Non-
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Favorable	18%	18%	21%	20%	35%	15%	24%	9%
Unfavorable	8	18	16	15	15	12	13	15
Hvn't hrd enough	73	64	62	64	49	72	62	75
REFUSED	2	-	2	1	1	1	1	1

8. Is your opinion of Corey Stewart favorable, unfavorable or haven't you heard enough about him?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE.....	
							COLLEGE DEG	Yes
Favorable	8%	14%	4%	6%	9%	7%	6%	10%
Unfavorable	6	3	8	5	6	5	9	5
Hvn't hrd enough	86	83	86	89	84	88	85	84
REFUSED	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
	AGE IN	YRS.....			WHITE.....			Non-
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Favorable	8%	7%	6%	9%	9%	6%	8%	7%
Unfavorable	2	5	7	8	8	5	7	4
Hvn't hrd enough	89	88	86	82	81	88	85	89
REFUSED	1	-	1	1	2	-	1	-

9. Is your opinion of Rob Wittman favorable, unfavorable or haven't you heard enough about him?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE.....	
							COLLEGE DEG	Yes
Favorable	12%	24%	4%	9%	14%	10%	11%	15%
Unfavorable	7	2	11	10	7	8	6	5
Hvn't hrd enough	80	74	83	80	78	81	82	78
REFUSED	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
	AGE IN	YRS.....			WHITE.....			Non-
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Favorable	10%	11%	12%	14%	16%	11%	13%	8%
Unfavorable	9	7	8	5	5	6	6	12
Hvn't hrd enough	80	82	79	79	78	82	80	79
REFUSED	1	-	1	2	1	1	1	1

10. Is your opinion of Frank Wagner favorable, unfavorable or haven't you heard enough about him?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Favorable	9%	14%	5%	7%	10%	8%	6%	11%
Unfavorable	6	3	8	7	6	6	6	4
Hvn't hrd enough	84	82	86	85	82	86	87	83
REFUSED	1	1	1	-	2	1	1	2

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Non-	
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Favorable	13%	6%	8%	8%	10%	7%	8%	10%
Unfavorable	5	7	7	7	6	5	5	8
Hvn't hrd enough	82	86	84	84	83	87	85	81
REFUSED	1	-	2	2	1	1	1	1

12. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Terry McAuliffe is handling his job as Governor?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Approve	52%	27%	75%	52%	49%	53%	55%	39%
Disapprove	30	57	8	32	38	24	33	40
DK/NA	18	16	18	16	13	22	13	21

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Non-	
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Approve	55%	49%	55%	51%	43%	50%	47%	62%
Disapprove	23	31	32	34	44	30	36	17
DK/NA	23	20	12	15	13	20	17	21

13. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the state legislature is handling its job?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Approve	47%	48%	47%	46%	49%	45%	49%	45%
Disapprove	31	28	31	36	35	28	31	34
DK/NA	22	24	22	18	16	27	20	21

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Non-	
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Approve	54%	48%	48%	38%	48%	46%	47%	47%
Disapprove	27	33	31	36	36	29	33	29
DK/NA	19	20	21	27	16	24	20	24

18. In general, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Virginia today; are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Very satisfied	8%	4%	14%	7%	8%	9%	10%	5%
Smwht satisfied	59	49	65	62	58	60	63	56
Smwht dissatisfied	25	38	15	24	24	25	20	33
Very dissatisfied	7	8	5	7	9	5	7	6
DK/NA	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Non-	
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Very satisfied	9%	7%	8%	12%	7%	7%	7%	11%
Smwht satisfied	61	61	61	53	57	62	59	58
Smwht dissatisfied	24	25	24	24	26	26	26	22
Very dissatisfied	7	7	7	9	9	5	7	8
DK/NA	-	-	1	2	1	1	1	1

19. What do you think is the most important problem facing Virginia today?

	Tot
Economy Total	23%
Economy general	8
Unemployment/Jobs	13
Economy other	2
Education Total	12%
Education general	8
Funding education	2
Education other	2
Mass Transit Total	8%
Mass/public trans	4
Traffic/Congestion	2
Poor conditions roads/highways	1
Tolls	1
Transportation other	1
Politicians Total	6%
Governor/State Ldrshp/Legislature	1
Donald Trump	1
Election/Voting reform	1
Politicians other	3
Healthcare Total	5%
Healthcare/Costs/Ins/HMO's	4
Medicaid/Costs/Abuse	1
Taxes Total	5%
Taxes general	4
Taxes other	1
Budget Total	3%
Budget general	1
Budget other	2
Infrastructure	3%
Immigration	3%
Environment/Pollution	3%
Crime Total	2%
Crime/Violence general	1
Drugs	1
Gun control	2%
Racism/Race relations	1%
Women's issues	1%
Security/Safety	1%
Class inequality	1%
Marijuana	1%
Children's issues	1%
Police Total	1%
Other	9%
DK/NA	9%

20. Would you describe the state of Virginia's economy these days as excellent, good, not so good, or poor?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Excellent	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	6%	2%
Good	63	55	71	65	68	58	68	53
Not so good	26	36	16	25	20	31	23	35
Poor	4	4	4	3	5	4	2	6
DK/NA	3	-	5	2	2	3	1	4
	AGE IN	YRS.....			WHITE.....			Non-
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Excellent	4%	4%	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%
Good	70	62	61	57	65	57	61	68
Not so good	21	27	27	29	24	33	29	19
Poor	2	4	5	5	4	4	4	5
DK/NA	2	3	2	4	2	2	2	3

21. Do you think Virginia's economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Better	22%	17%	31%	19%	25%	20%	26%	17%
Worse	11	13	6	12	11	11	10	14
The same	64	69	58	67	63	65	62	66
DK/NA	3	2	5	2	2	4	3	3
	AGE IN	YRS.....			WHITE.....			Non-
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Better	23%	27%	20%	21%	23%	19%	21%	25%
Worse	8	11	14	7	11	12	12	8
The same	65	59	64	68	63	64	64	63
DK/NA	4	2	3	5	2	4	3	3

22. Would you say that you are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Better off	47%	39%	56%	47%	53%	42%	47%	38%
Worse off	25	32	17	24	21	28	22	36
SAME (VOL)	26	27	25	28	24	29	31	24
DK/NA	2	2	1	1	2	1	-	2
	AGE IN	YRS.....			WHITE.....			Non-
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Better off	68%	54%	40%	27%	49%	37%	42%	58%
Worse off	18	17	32	35	25	31	29	16
SAME (VOL)	12	28	28	35	24	31	28	24
DK/NA	2	1	-	3	1	1	1	2

23. There's a proposed bill in the Virginia state legislature that would require 75 percent of state universities' undergraduate student bodies to be made up of students from Virginia. Do you support or oppose this bill?

	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	WHITE..... COLLEGE DEG	
							Yes	No
Support	48%	55%	44%	49%	46%	50%	43%	57%
Oppose	38	34	40	41	42	34	45	27
DK/NA	14	10	16	10	13	15	12	16
	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Non-	
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Wht
Support	36%	48%	55%	53%	44%	55%	50%	44%
Oppose	55	39	31	27	43	31	36	41
DK/NA	8	13	14	20	13	14	14	14