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Poll: Blagojevich Winning (Sort Of) with Dems

By **DANIEL LIBIT**
June 14, 2010

The Democratic party may not want Rod Blagojevich, but that doesn't mean Democrats want the former governor to go to jail.

A Rasmussen poll released Sunday showed that party identity still does play a significant role in what Illinois voters think should happen to Blagojevich, currently on trial for corruption, including trying to sell President Barack Obama's former Senate seat. The poll found 68 percent of Republicans saying Blagojevich should be convicted and sent off to prison, compared to only 44 percent of Democrats. In a column on Sunday, the Chicago Tribune's John Kass **dismissed** the notion of political identity having any impact on a juror "in a Combine state when public money is on the dinner table."

The Rasmussen **report** showed only 57% of Illinois voters think the former governor should go to jail, compared to 79% who wanted to send him to the slammer in December 2008. Rasmussen's study was conducted on June 7, the third day of jury selection in Blagojevich's racketeering and fraud trial. This occurred before the damning and well-publicized testimony last week of former Blagojevich chief of staff, Lon Monk, which presumably might have moved the dial.

While 69 percent of respondents said they have an unfavorable view of Blagojevich, 26 percent said they were "not sure" when asked the question, "Should Blagojevich go to jail for his actions?" With the palpability of emotion over the ex-governor's arrest having ebbed over the last 19 months, it appears that a sizeable chunk of respondents are now confronting a predicament: They might think Blagojevich is a sleazy politician, but they're not sure if what he did constituted a crime.

Rasmussen found that both men and people under 40 are more likely to think that Blagojevich deserves jail time. There are 11 women and seven men who sit on the jury, and the first 12 consist of eight women. The Rasmussen survey shows that Illinois is keen to the developments of the trial, with 69 percent of respondents saying they are following it in the media, and 31 percent saying they are doing so "very closely."

Of course the poll, like every poll, should be taken with some sodium. Rasmussen has been under fire recently, particularly from liberals, for using flawed methodology. Pollster.com's Mark Blumenthal, a well-regarded pollster, told **POLITICO** in January: "Rasmussen produces a lot of data that appear to produce narratives conservatives are promoting, and that causes a reaction."

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