

TO: SMP

FROM: Geoff Garin and Corrie Hunt

DATE: August 6, 2026

RE: New Polling on the Maine Senate Race

This memorandum presents key findings from our just completed survey among a representative statewide cross section of 802 Mainers who are likely to vote in the November election for U.S. senator. The interviews were conducted July 27 through August 1 with respondents who were reached by telephone or received a text invitation to complete the survey online. The statistical margin of error associated with a sample of this size is +/- 3.5%.

The Bottom Line: Troy Jackson leads Susan Collins by 4 points in the Maine election for U.S. senator, and on multiple measurements Collins is in notably worse shape today than she was at a comparable moment in her previous reelection campaign. Moreover, Collins faces a much more hostile political environment than she did in 2020. The negatives that are likely to be litigated against each candidate in the coming months are more powerful against Collins than against Jackson, and Jackson's lead expands to 8 points at the end of the poll after the airing of the negatives on both sides.

1. Troy Jackson leads Susan Collins in the Maine election for U.S. senator by 49% to 45%, with 6% undecided. At a similar point in the 2020 election, Susan Collins and Sara Gideon were tied in our polling.
2. Susan Collins is underwater in her job performance rating: 46% approve of the job she is doing, while 52% disapprove. In our three summer polls in 2020, Collins' average rating was 48% approve and 48% disapprove.
3. While Collins is underwater in both her job rating and personal favorability rating, Troy Jackson has a net positive rating of 12 points in his favorability (47% favorable, 35% unfavorable). By contrast, Sara Gideon had a net negative rating of one point at a similar point in the 2020 race. Fifty-five percent of voters say that Jackson appeals to them a great deal or fair amount based on his background and the core messages of his campaign.
4. Donald Trump is a much bigger drag on Susan Collins' reelection prospects today than he was in 2020. Currently, 61% of Mainers disapprove of Trump as president – 6 points worse

than at this point in the 2020 race. By an 18-point margin, 54% to 36%, Mainers would prefer to see a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate to serve as a check and balance on Trump rather than a Republican majority to help Donald Trump pass his policies and programs.

5. In our test of the negatives that voters are likely to hear against each candidate in the coming weeks and months, voters consistently find the negatives against Collins to be more concerning than the negatives against Jackson. Over half of voters say that each of six negatives tested against Collins give them major concerns about her, while none of the negatives against Jackson reach that threshold. On average, the Collins negatives score 7 points higher than the Jackson negatives in terms of provoking major concerns. At the end of the survey, after respondents heard equal numbers of criticisms of each candidate, Jackson's lead over Collins expands to 52% to 44%.