To: Alison Lundergan Grimes For Kentucky
From: The Mellman Group, Inc.
Re: Grimes Leads McConnell In The Kentucky Senate Race
Date: July 31, 2013

This analysis represents the findings of a survey of 750 voters representing the likely 2014 Kentucky electorate who were interviewed by telephone July 20 through July 24, 2013. The study uses a registration-based sample and has a margin of error of +/-3.6% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.

Alison Lundergan Grimes has taken a 2-point lead over Republican Leader Mitch McConnell in the Kentucky senate race. Grimes’s strong showing is based, in part, on voters’ hostility toward McConnell whose overwhelmingly net-negative job ratings are in clear contrast to Grimes’s more favorable standing. Grimes’s strength is also evident in the fact that she enjoys advantages over McConnell on almost every single image dimension. McConnell’s primary challenge only serves to further undermine his standing. Thus Lundergan Grimes is very well positioned to become Kentucky’s next US Senator.

Grimes Leads The Senate Race

Grimes leads Mitch McConnell by 2 points in a head-to-head horserace (44% Grimes, 42% McConnell), despite McConnell’s advantages in name recognition, fund raising and incumbency. While the margin is narrow, this poll and a nearly simultaneous PPP poll represent, to our knowledge, one of the few times a challenger has led Mitch McConnell since he was elected to the Senate.

Grimes’s strength is grounded in a 7-point lead among independents (35% Grimes, 28% McConnell) and a 33-point lead among moderates (56%-23%).

What’s more, controlling for McConnell’s initial edge in name recognition by examining just those voters familiar with both candidates (a group comprising 53% of the likely electorate) reveals that Grimes holds an impressive 15-point lead (53% Grimes, 38% McConnell).
Kentuckians Have Strongly Negative Views About The Job McConnell Has Been Doing In The Senate, While Feeling More Positively About Grimes

Perhaps the most striking difference between McConnell and Grimes is the divergent views voters have about their performance in office. While the Commonwealth’s voters have net-positive views of Grimes’s performance as Secretary of State (33% positive, 29% negative), a large 58% majority give negative grades to McConnell for his performance in the US Senate. Just 38% offer positive evaluations of McConnell.

Dim views of McConnell’s tenure in the Senate extend far below the surface. McConnell’s obstruction and extreme partisanship have finally come back to haunt him. More specifically, by a 59-point margin, voters believe McConnell “puts the interest of the Republican party first,” by a 35-point margin voters believe McConnell is “too political,” by a 35-point margin they believe he “has been in Washington too long,” and voters say he “is too close to special interest lobbyists” by a 28-point margin.

Lundergan Grimes’s strength among those who know her, combined with McConnell’s very real weakness across the Commonwealth, leave her in a strong position to win this seat.