

Virginia AG Miyares gains ground in reelection push as GOP rallies against political violence: Poll



FILE - Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares speaks during an interview at the Office of the Attorney General in Richmond, Va., Tuesday, May 9, 2023. (AP Photo/Ryan M. Kelly, file) FILE - Virginia Attorney General Jason ... more >

By Seth McLaughlin
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Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares' reelection prospects are gaining momentum in the wake of conservative activist Charlie Kirk's assassination, which has galvanized the Republican base.

A new poll from the conservative firm OnMessage Inc. shows Mr. Miyares locked in a dead heat with Democratic challenger Jay Jones, with both candidates drawing 46% support. This marks a notable shift from earlier surveys that had Mr. Miyares trailing.

With early voting underway and Nov. 4's Election Day close, Mr. Miyares appears to be on steadier ground than GOP Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears, who faces a tougher contest.

Ms. Earle-Sears, a former Marine, trails Democrat Abigail Spanberger, a former congresswoman and ex-CIA officer, by a 50% to 45% margin in the race to succeed term-limited Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

Wes Anderson and Sam Kay, who conducted the poll, attribute Mr. Miyares' surge to a spike in GOP enthusiasm, fueled by backlash against what many conservatives view as insensitive reactions from liberals to Kirk's Sept. 10 murder.

"Republican enthusiasm has finally kicked in," they noted, citing their survey findings.

According to the polling memo, more than half of Republican respondents agreed with the statement: "Radical activists on the left are becoming dangerously extreme and their actions are making America more divided and less safe."

This sentiment appears to be energizing turnout and reshaping the electoral landscape.

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The data offers encouraging signs for Mr. Miyares — and potentially for Ms. Earle-Sears — as both navigate the traditional headwinds faced by candidates aligned with the sitting president's party during off-year elections.

Geographically, both Republicans are performing well in the Shenandoah Valley and southwest Virginia.

However, Mr. Miyares is showing more substantial traction in the Richmond area, a key battleground and Ms. Spanberger's home turf — giving him a strategic edge that Ms. Earle-Sears has yet to match.

Kirk's killing and the shooting of an ICE facility this week in Dallas have helped thrust concerns about political violence into the national spotlight.

President Trump and his allies have blamed the uptick in political violence on the radical left and blamed Democrats for making the situation worse with incendiary rhetoric.

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Conducted Sept. 15-18, the survey included 800 respondents and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

• *Seth McLaughlin can be reached at smclaughlin@washingtontimes.com.*