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## Poll suggests Spitzer runaway in gubernatorial race

Gannett News Service

First published: Thursday, October 5, 2006

ALBANY -- A new Quinnipiac University poll released Wednesday showed that Democratic gubernatorial candidate Eliot Spitzer has widened his lead over Republican John Faso to more than 50 percentage points, setting the stage for what could be an unprecedented runaway election.

Among registered voters, Spitzer leads 69 percent to 18 percent, compared with a 65-17 spread in the last Quinnipiac poll.

In the governor's race, Faso's battling an anonymity quotient, said Maurice Carroll, director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute. Seventy-three percent of those polled didn't know enough about him to form an opinion.

Faso is a former Assembly minority leader from rural Columbia County and hasn't held any high-profile state positions like Spitzer, the attorney general.

The poll of 1,627 registered voters, conducted Sept. 26-Oct. 1, has a margin of error of 2.4 percentage points, Quinnipiac said. The margin of error for the sample of 1,263 likely voters was 2.8 points.

Also Wednesday, mental health advocates asked the gubernatorial candidates to pledge they would expand the number of housing units for people with serious psychiatric disabilities.

It can cost more than \$300,000 per person each year for housing in what most people consider unfortunate circumstances, such as a hospital bed or a prison cell, said Barbara Bartoletti of the League of Women Voters, a member of the New York State Campaign for Mental Health Housing.

Faso's campaign met with members of the coalition Wednesday, spokeswoman Susan Del Percio said. She did not say specifically whether Faso would back all aspects of the coalition's plan but said Faso would talk with the groups about reform if elected. "They raised some very serious concerns and addressed the need for reform, which as governor John Faso would support," she said.

A spokeswoman for Spitzer did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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