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AT THE SENATE HOMESTRETCH: GO 6, IND. 2, TU 4

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Social Weather Stations

The PDI-SWS Election Survey of May 2-4 points to six senate seats going to the Genuine Opposition (GO), two going to Independents, and four going to Team Unity (TU). As in February, March, and April, the GO holds roughly the top half of the winning seats, going into the homestretch of the campaign.

10 safe into the homestretch

Ten candidates are “safe” in the sense of being statistically above 13th place (Table 1, under “Sure Voters”): 1. Loren Legarda (GO), 59%; 2. Manuel “Manny” Villar (GO), 46%; 3. Francis “Chiz” Escudero (GO), 44%; 4. Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan (Ind.), 42%; 5. Panfilo “Ping” Lacson (GO), 39%; 6. Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III (GO), 37%; 7. Ralph Recto (TU), 36%); 8. Alan Peter Cayetano (GO), 35%; and 9-10. Juan Miguel “Migz” Zubiri (TU) and Gregorio “Gringo” Honasan (Ind.), both 33%.

The last two seats are being statistically contended by: 11. Edgardo Angara (32%), 12. Joker Arroyo (31%), and 13. Vicente “Tito” Sotto III (28%), who are all with TU, thus making four the maximum number of seats for TU, regardless of who drops out of the tie.

Ticket-mixing

The survey’s outcome of 6 GO’s, 2 Indies and 4 TU’s is due to ticket-mixing.

Out of every ten registered voters, seven (69.8%) chose a mix of GO and TU candidates – with four (39.5%) of the seven going predominantly GO, two (20.5%) going predominantly TU, and one (9.8%) splitting their ticket evenly between GO and TU.

Only 13% of the survey respondents went ‘purely’ for GO, i.e., for at least some GO’s but without any TU’s. Only 7.6% went for ‘purely’ for TU, i.e., for some TU’s but without any GO’s. A balance of 9.6% either did not vote for any GO or TU or did not vote at all.

Even among the partisans who went ‘purely’ for either GO or TU, in most cases the ballots were for 4-0 at most; instances of 12-0 were very rare.

Trends over time

Table 1 also gives the May 2007 survey ranking by Registered Voters, in order to show changes from the three earlier surveys on the same basis.

Compared to mid-April, both Aquino and Zubiri rose by 5 ranks, and Honasan rose by 2 ranks. On the other hand, Angara fell by 4 ranks, and Arroyo and Sotto fell by 3 ranks.

The 92% of those interviewed who said they would surely vote comprise the “Sure Voters”.

Candidates statistically below No. 12

As seen in Table 1, based on registered voters, Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III (GO) has a significant 5-point deficit behind the final winning slot. Michael “Tol” Defensor (TU) and Antonio “Magdalo” Trillanes IV (GO) have 6-point deficits, and Prospero “Butch” Pichay (TU), Cesar “Buboy” Montano (TU) and Sonia “Inang Guro” Roco (GO) have 7-point deficits.

The gain of Trillanes by ten points between mid-April and early May, moving him from 21st to tied-15th in the process, is very noteworthy since it shows that it is not impossible to make up a large deficit within a short period of time.

The other relatively large gains were Noynoy Aquino’s 8 points and Zubiri’s 5 points.

Track record of SWS homestretch surveys

In fact, however, no senatorial candidate in the last three elections was able to overcome a survey deficit that was still statistically significant at the beginning of May.

All of the top 12 in the May 1-3, 2004 SWS survey won (the election was on May 10), although only the top 9 were called safe. Pia Cayetano had already moved from 15th in mid-April to 10th in early May; she made 6th in the official count. Roxas came in 1st as expected. Biazon maintained his 12th place over Barbers and Maceda (tied-13th in early May, 13th and 14th respectively in the official tally).

Ten of the top 12 in the May 4-7, 2001 SWS survey won (election day May 14), with Loi Estrada (tied-13th) and Lacson (tied-15th) ‘coming from behind’ to win. The two who eventually lost,

Enrile and Santiago (tied-11th–12th in the survey), were only 1 point over Loi and 2 points over Lacson in the May survey. Only the top 9 were statistically safe. Noli de Castro came in 1st as expected.

All of the top 12 in the May 2-4, 1998 SWS survey won (election day May 11), although only the top 10 were called statistically safe. Legarda was 2nd in the survey but eventually got 1st place, overtaking Sotto who dropped to 3rd. Guingona and Aquino-Oreta kept their 11th and 12th places.

The Joselito Cayetano factor

The list of candidates used in the May 2-4 survey included Joselito Cayetano (Kilusan Bagong Lipunan), who was on the official list at the time the survey was done, with a footnote that he is subject to a pending disqualification case. Our base analysis, which assumes that he will be disqualified, considers votes for Joselito Cayetano (3%) as stray votes, and assigns votes for ‘Cayetano-unspecified’ (7%) to Alan Cayetano.

As of May 8, 2007, Comelec has not yet rendered a final decision on the case of Joselito. This is a critical case, because if Joselito is declared qualified, the loss of the ‘Cayetano-unspecified’ votes would drop Alan Cayetano to a tie with Sotto for 12th place, and make possible a new scenario of 5 GOs, 2 Independents, and 5 TUs as winners.

SWS also included the name of Theodore Aquino (Independent), even though not on the official list at the time of the survey, because Comelec Chairman Benjamin Abalos had said in a speech to overseas Filipinos that his qualification might be restored in time for the election. Comelec’s final decision not to qualify Theodore Aquino was announced in media on May 8, 2007. Our base analysis considers votes for Theodore Aquino (2%) as stray votes, and assigns votes for ‘Aquino-unspecified’ (4%) to Noynoy Aquino. The loss of only 4% would not have been enough to drop Noynoy out of the winning circle.

The votes by area

Whereas the top 8 candidates in national ranking are in the magic circle in all of the four study areas of the survey, the next four have managed to enter by getting enough votes in some areas to offset a weak showing elsewhere [*Table 2*].

Thus Zubiri’s 2nd place in Mindanao and 5th place in the Visayas serve to offset his 15th place in Metro Manila and the Balance of Luzon. The weaknesses of Honasan in the Visayas, Angara in Metro Manila, Arroyo in Metro Manila and Mindanao, and Sotto in the Visayas and Mindanao are compensated by their strengths elsewhere.

Almost all of those scrambling from below are strong in at least one of the four areas -- Defensor is 9th place in the Visayas, Trillanes is 9th in Metro Manila, Pichay is 11th in the Visayas, Roco is tied-10th in Metro Manila, and Montano is tied for 4th in Mindanao. The exception is Koko Pimentel, whose national 14th place is due to his being at most in 13th place in any of the areas.

Survey background

The special Pre-Election Survey was fielded over May 2-4, 2007, using face-to-face interviews of 1,200 registered voters divided into random samples of 300 each in the four areas of Metro Manila, the Balance of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, for sampling error margins of at most $\pm 3\%$ for national percentages and $\pm 6\%$ for area percentages. By design, the sample included every city/municipality in Metro Manila, and at least one province in every region in the other three areas – 6 regions in the Balance of Luzon, 3 in Visayas, and 6 in Mindanao.

The Commission on Elections' latest counts of Registered Voters, by region and area, as of April 17, 2007, were used to weight regional estimates to obtain area estimates, and to weight area estimates to obtain national estimates.

The survey used the ballot box technique, with respondents having to write out their votes on 'ballots' and deposit them in a container, in order to be capable of assessing the stray vote problem.

The SWS survey items on choice of candidates were not commissioned. Names of candidates de-listed by the Comelec were excluded, except for Theodore Aquino.

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Table 1. SENATORIAL PREFERENCES: FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY 2007, PHILIPPINES (Base: Registered Voters)

	FEB 22-27 '07		MAR 15-18 '07		APR 14-17 '07		MAY 2-4 '07	
	(REG. VOTERS)		(REG. VOTERS)		(REG. VOTERS)		(REG. VOTERS)	(SURE VOTERS)
	RANK	RANK	RANK	RANK	RANK	RANK	RANK	RANK
	% (80 names)	% (37 names)	% (38 names)	% (38 names)	% (38 names)	% (38 names)	% (38 names)	% (38 names)
LEGARDA	54	2	58	1	58	1	58	1
VILLAR	52	3	57	2	45	2	46	2
ESCUADERO	36	7	40	5	41	3-4	43	3
PANGILINAN	57	1	48	3	39	5	41	4
LACSON	42	5	42	4	41	3-4	39	5
AQUINO, B.	30	9-10	28	10-11	28	11-13	36	6-7
RECTO	37	6	37	7	36	6	36	6-7
CAYETANO, A.	43	4	39	6	31	9	34	8
ZUBIRI	19	16-17	18	17	27	14	32	9-10
HONASAN	28	12	29	9	28	11-13	32	9-10
ANGARA	27	13-14	32	8	35	7	31	11-12
ARROYO	29	11	28	10-11	32	8	31	11-12
SOTTO	31	8	26	12-13	30	10	27	13
PIMENTEL	27	13-14	25	14	28	11-13	25	14
DEFENSOR	21	15	21	15	21	16-17	24	15-16
TRILLANES	12	23-24	13	21	14	21	24	15-16
PICHAY	13	22	16	20	20	18-19	23	17-19
MONTANO	16	18-19	17	18-19	21	16-17	23	17-19
ROCO	19	16-17	19	16	25	15	23	17-19
MAGSAYSAY	14	20	17	18-19	18	20	18	20-21
OSMEÑA	30	9-10	26	12-13	20	18-19	18	20-21
ORETA	12	23-24	10	22-23	10	24-25	13	22-23
COSETENG	13	21	9	24	11	22-23	13	22-23
GOMEZ	16	18-19	10	22-23	11	22-23	12	24
SINGSON	7	25	7	25	10	24-25	11	25
KIRAM	2	30-33	3	27-28	3	28-29	6	26
CAYETANO, J.	6	26	4	26	8	26	3	27-28
CHAVEZ	4	28	3	27-28	6	27	3	27-28
BAUTISTA	3	29	2	29-30	3	28-29	2	29-33
AQUINO, T.	2	30-33	--		2	30-33	2	29-33
WOOD	1	34-57	2	29-30	2	30-33	2	29-33
PAREDES	0.3	58-80	0.2	33-37	1	34-38	2	29-33
LOZANO	1	34-57	1	31-32	2	30-33	2	29-33
CANTAL	0.2	58-80	0.2	33-37	1	34-38	1	34-38
ESTRELLA	1	34-57	1	31-32	1	34-38	1	34-38
SISON	1	34-57	0.4	33-37	2	30-33	1	34-38
ENCISO	1	34-57	0.4	33-37	1	34-38	0.2	34-38
ORPILLA	1	34-57	0.2	33-37	0.2	34-38	0.1	34-38
STRAY/UND. ++	14		10		12		13	

Table 2. SENATORIAL PREFERENCES, BY AREA, MAY 2-4, 2007 (Base: Sure Voters)