

*Statewide  
Survey*  
OF  
LOUISIANA  
VOTERS

APRIL 2003

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## *About the Poll*

This statewide poll was a joint effort developed and conducted by Harris, DeVille & Associates, Inc., and Southern Media & Opinion Research, Inc. The poll was designed to address issues of concern to Louisiana voters and legislative issues likely to be brought up during the 2003 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature and on the upcoming election for Governor. This survey represents the fifteenth consecutive year of comparable data collection.

Interviews were conducted by telephone with 700 self-professed, registered voters statewide between Friday, March 14 and Saturday, March 22, 2003.

The overall margin of error for the statewide statistics obtained from the survey data is plus or minus 3.8% at the 95% level of confidence. In other words, there is a 95% certainty that the statistics presented from the results obtained on this survey of 700 voters statewide will be no more than 3.8% above or below the figure that would be obtained if all of the voters in the state would have been interviewed.

A random start, interval sample design was used to select telephone numbers from a sample frame of telephone numbers for registered likely voter households. A quota ensuring nominal male voter participation in the study was imposed. A statistical weighting procedure was employed to adjust the sample to the actual percentage of registered voters based upon voter race.

*NOTE: Previous polling data is referenced by data collection date and not by publication date. Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.*

This statewide survey covers a number of topics of importance to voters in Louisiana. This report presents what we consider to be the more significant findings of general interest from the poll. Substantial additional data were collected and analyzed. If you are interested in obtaining any additional data or a more detailed analysis, please contact us:

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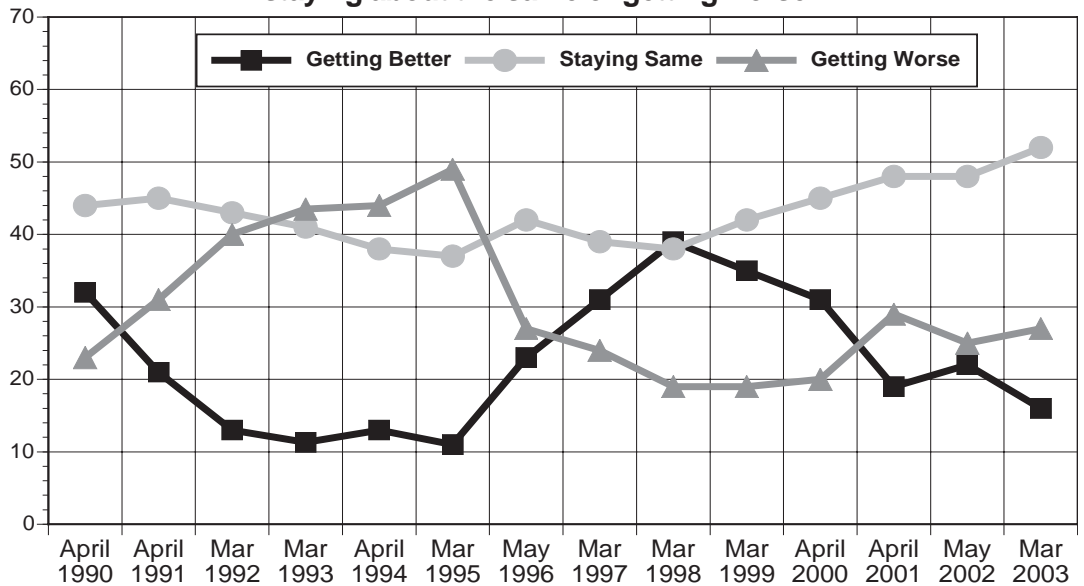
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## Conditions in Louisiana

When asked if they thought conditions in Louisiana are getting better, staying about the same or getting worse, about half of the respondents (52 percent) thought conditions were staying about the same, one in six (16 percent) thought they were getting better and nearly one in four (27 percent) thought conditions were getting worse. Voters in the New Orleans area and Acadiana were the most positive. Survey results showed that African American female respondents, North Louisiana respondents, and those with a less than high school education were more likely to think conditions were getting worse.

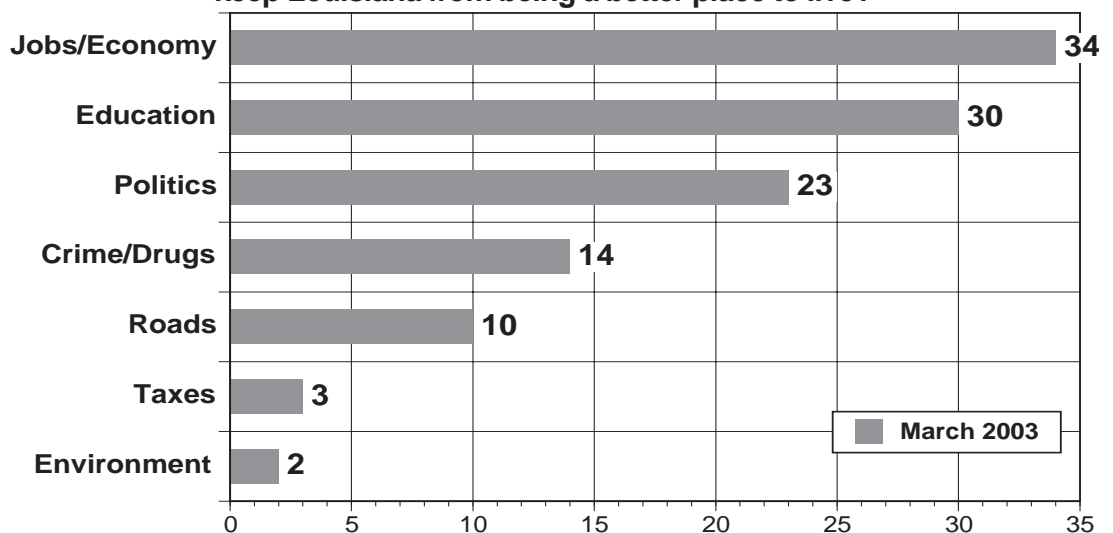
The responses reflect an increasingly negative attitude since 1998, reversing the gains made in the post-Edwards timeframe. For the past three years, more people say things are getting worse than better; while those that think that things are staying the same continues to increase.

### Overall, do you think conditions in Louisiana are getting better, staying about the same or getting worse?



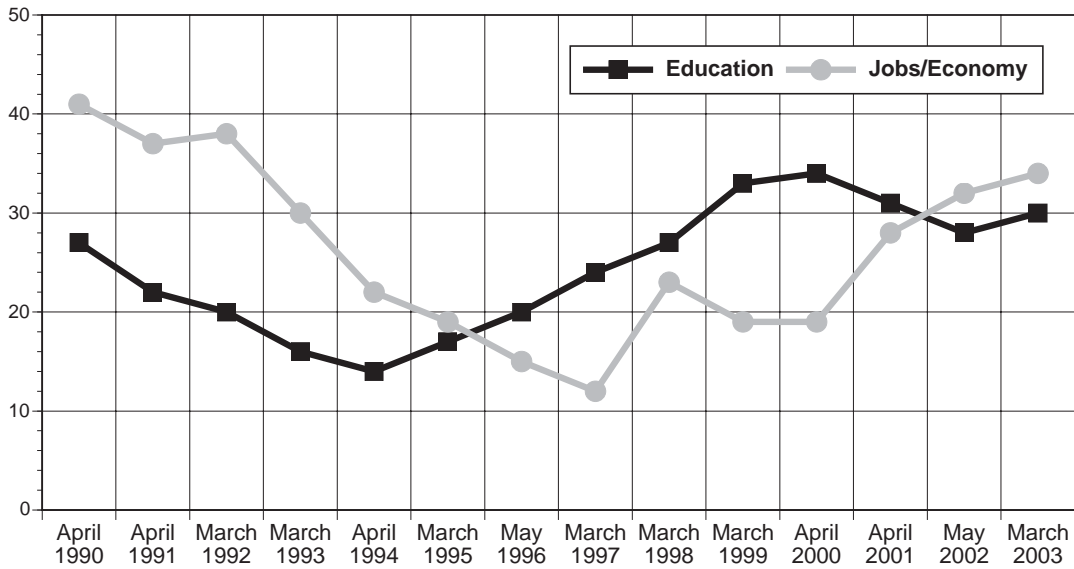
When asked what are the main problems which keep Louisiana from being a better place to live, jobs and the economy (34 percent), education (30 percent), and politics (23 percent) were the top three responses. Crime/drugs, roads, taxes and the environment were also mentioned as problems in Louisiana.

### What would you say are the main problems which keep Louisiana from being a better place to live?



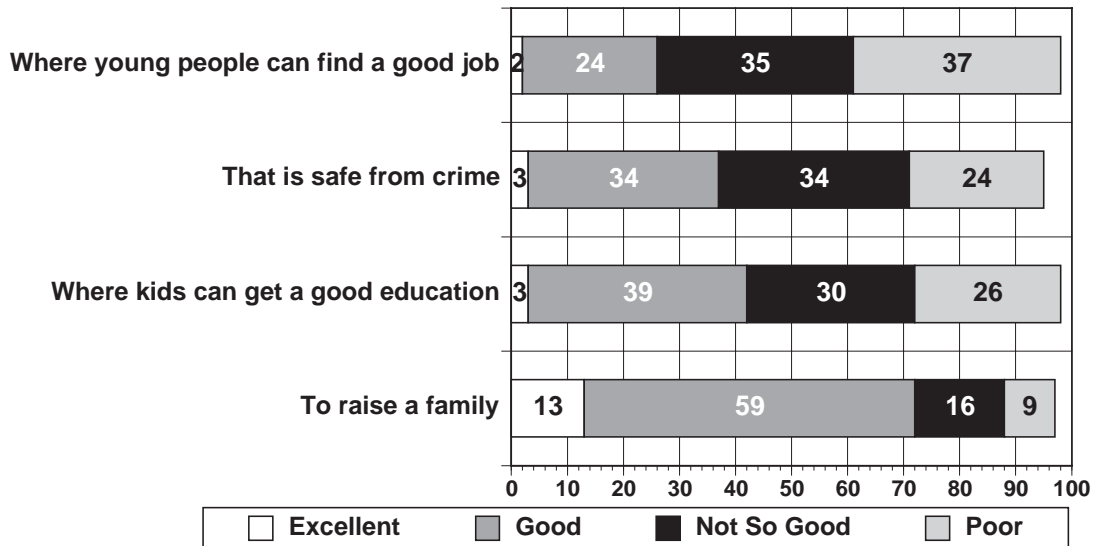
Historical data shows that concern over jobs and the economy and education have increased steadily.

**What would you say are the main problems which keep Louisiana from being a better place to live?**



Voters were asked a series of questions dealing with perceptions of the “quality of life” in the state. Respondents were generally negative on issues dealing with the future job opportunities for their children, feeling safe from crime and the ability for their children to get a good education. In spite of those negatives, the state received high marks as a place to raise a family.

**Would you rate Louisiana as being excellent, good, not so good or poor as a place:**



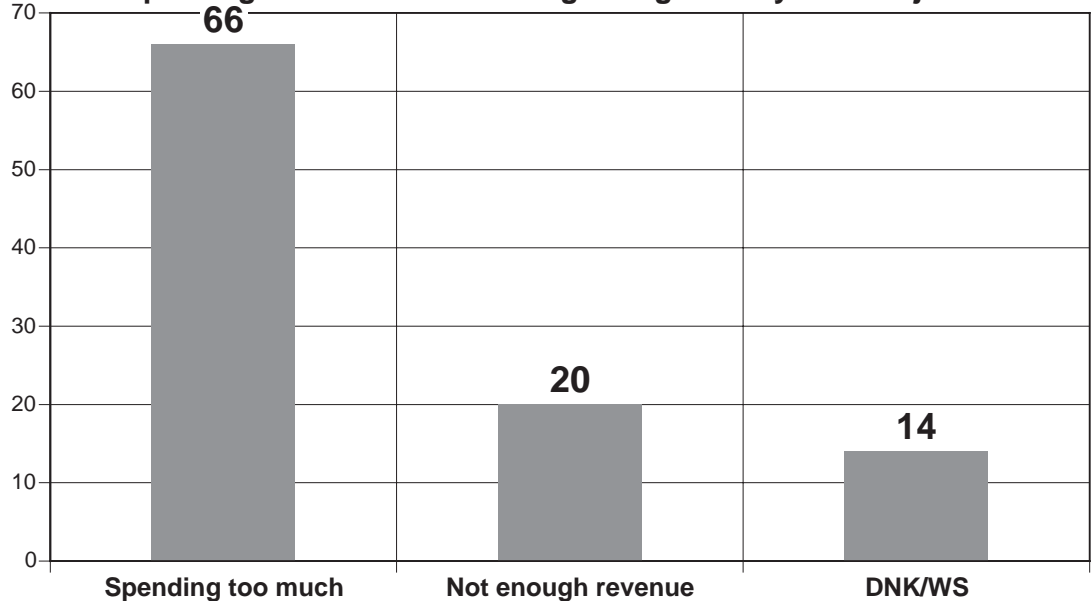
*It's about family – people define the “quality” in their life in Louisiana around their sense of family.*

## State Fiscal Situation

Voters were asked to give their views on the state's financial crisis. Two-thirds of the respondents (66 percent) felt that the problem was from spending too much, rather than the state having insufficient revenues.

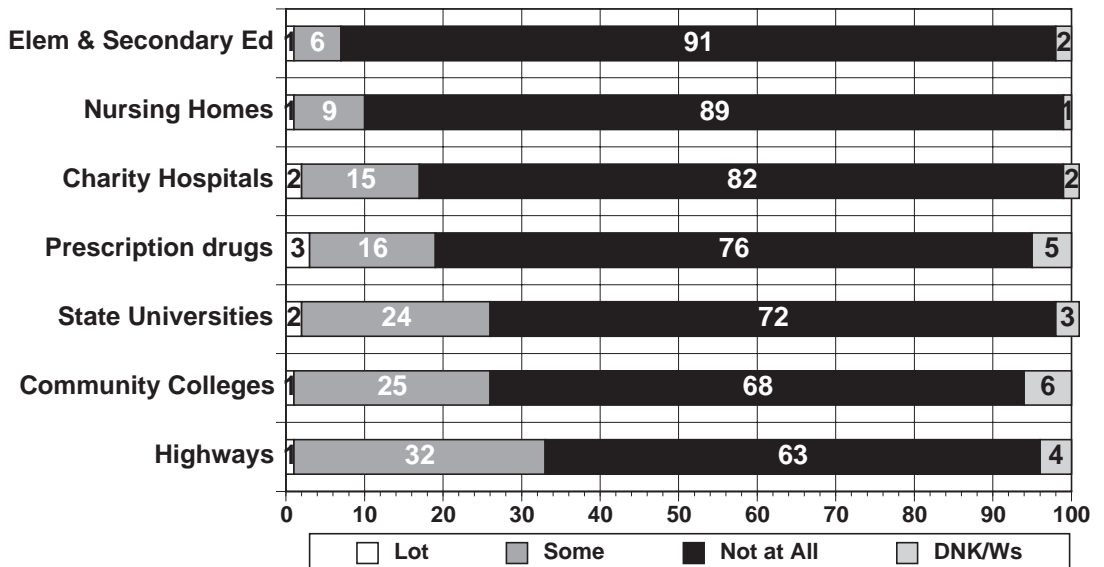
**Government leaders say the state is facing a financial crisis.  
Do you think the state government's financial problems are caused by spending too much or not having enough money to do its job?**

*The state may be in the midst of a financial crisis, but the vast majority of the public says "go on a diet!"*



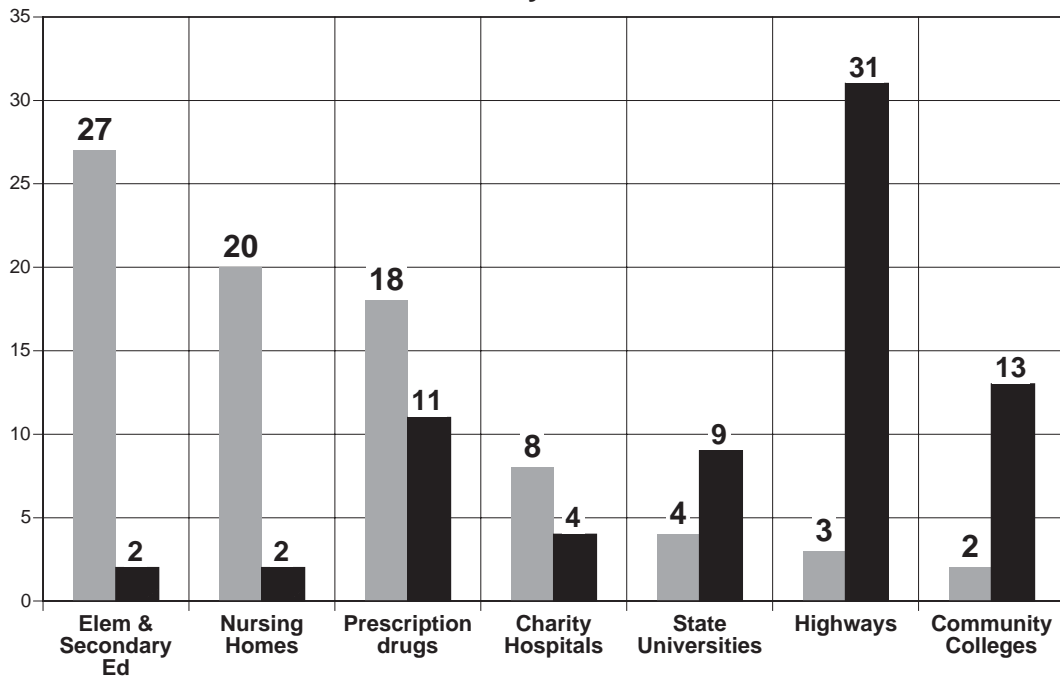
A series of hypothetical cuts were proposed attempting to measure the voters' public funding priorities. The first observation is that everything is important, with essentially no respondents suggesting that any of the provided areas be cut "a lot." Secondly, even the area with largest support for "some" cuts (highways) boasts nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of the Louisiana voters saying not to cut it at all. Finally, a very clear pattern emerged, effectively creating a blue print for state funding – take care of our kids' basic educational needs, our older people, and the infirm/ill.

**If the state has to reduce services because of budget shortfalls, do you think the following should be cut a lot, some, or not at all?**



When asked to name which area they would cut the most and least, the pattern stayed generally the same, with the exception of cutting state universities the most falling in rank order.

**Which of these would you cut the most/least?**

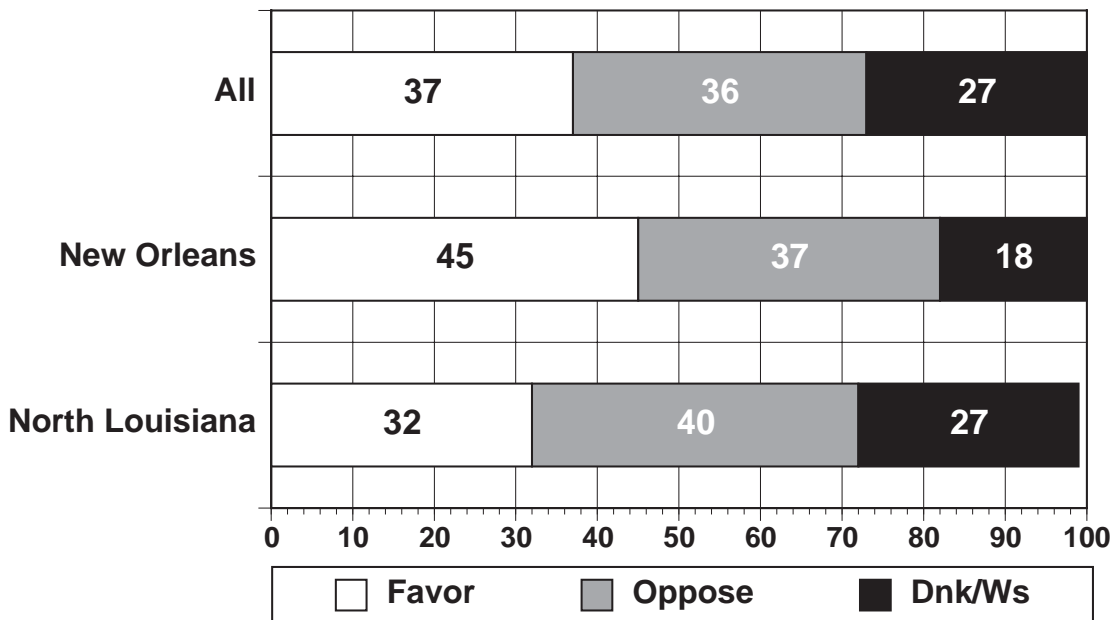


*Everything important!  
Don't cut anything!  
But make sure you don't  
raise taxes to pay for it!*

### *Voucher System*

The public is uncertain about a voucher system for Louisiana. Essentially the same numbers of voters support or oppose vouchers, with a large percentage (27 percent) being uncertain on the issue. Vouchers receive the highest support in the New Orleans area and the least in North Louisiana.

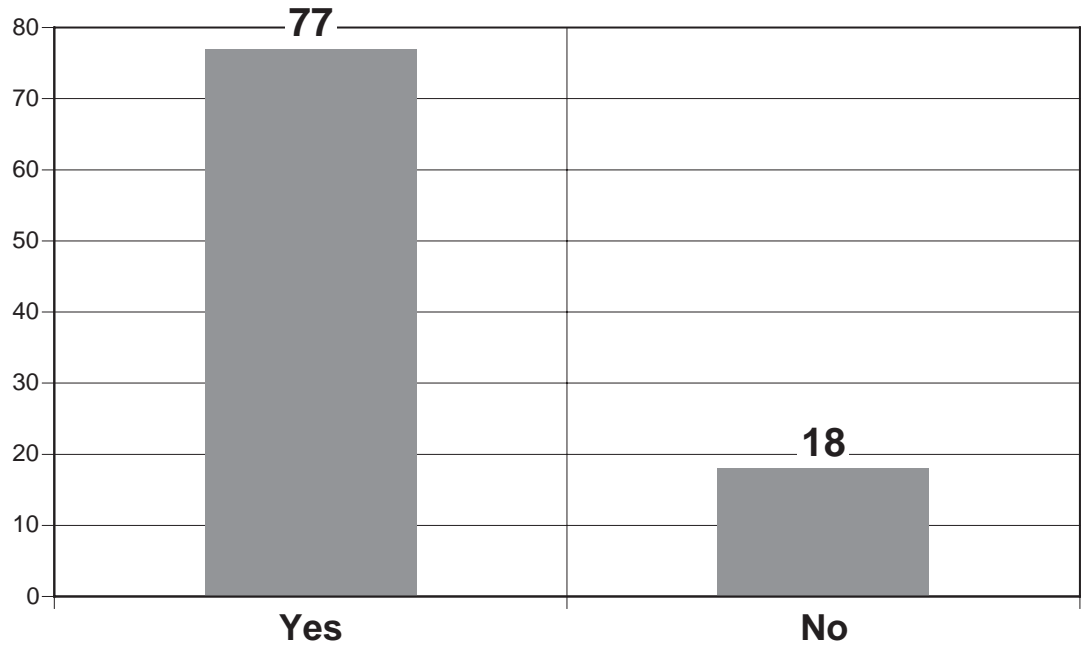
**Do you favor or oppose a voucher system for Louisiana public schools?**



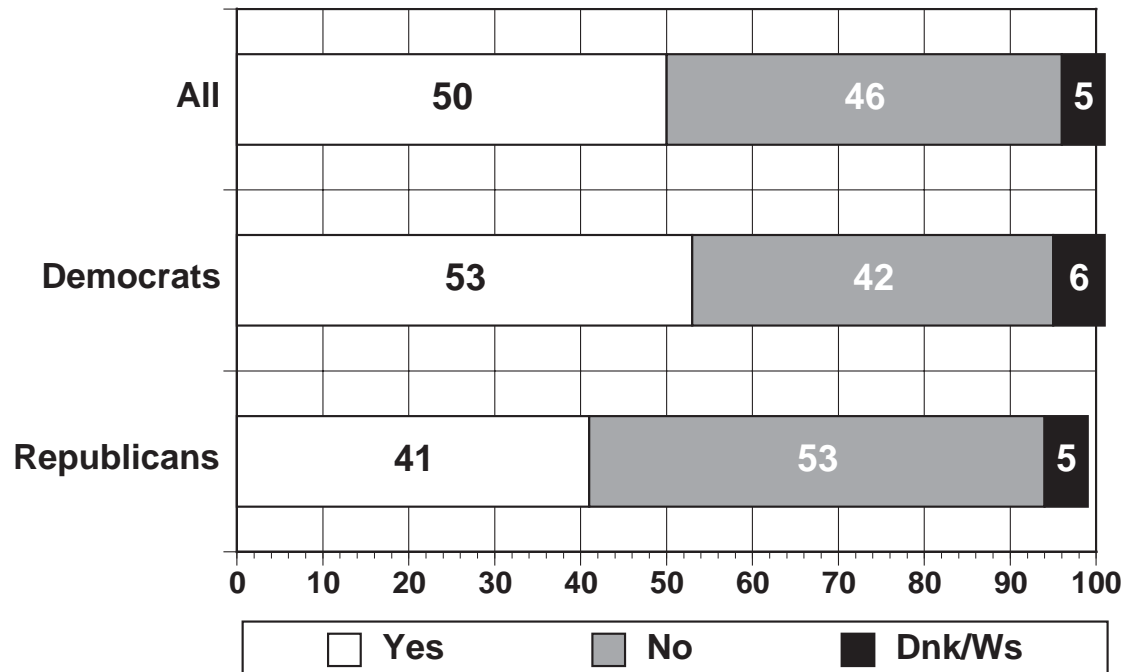
## Highways

A large majority of respondents (77 percent) think Louisiana needs to find a way to increase funding for state roads. Voters willingness to pay more in state taxes, even if dedicated to improving state highways and relieving traffic congestion, was essentially split equally statewide.

**Do you think Louisiana needs to find a way to increase funding for state roads?**



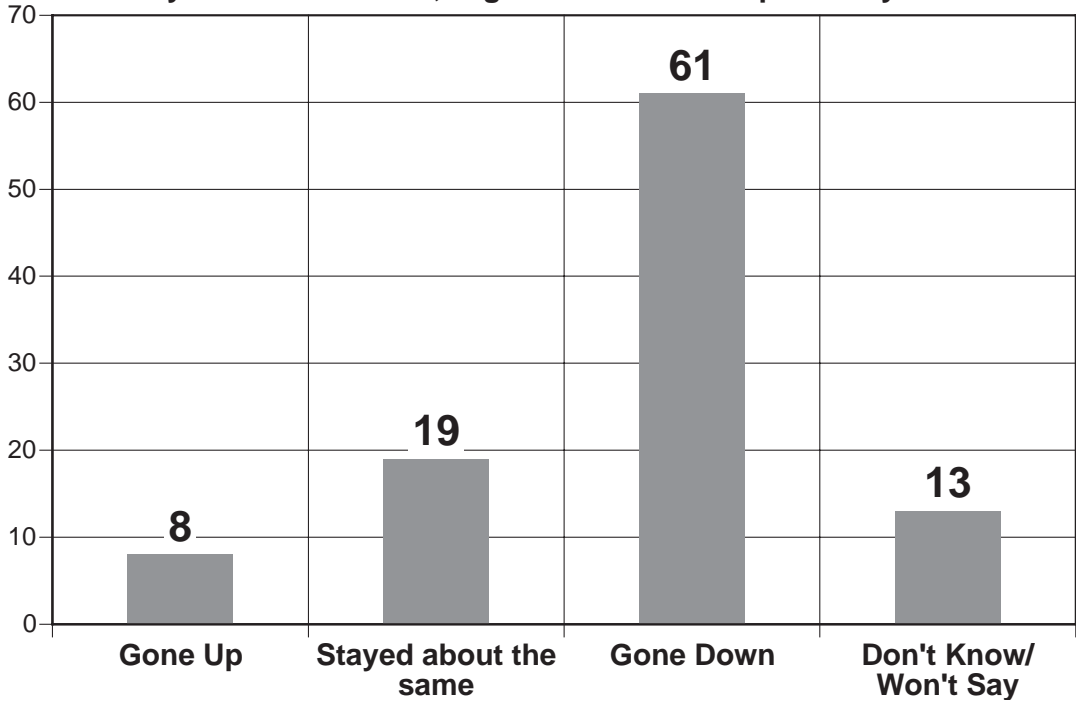
**Would you be willing to pay more in state taxes if the money was dedicated to improving state highways and relieving traffic congestion?**



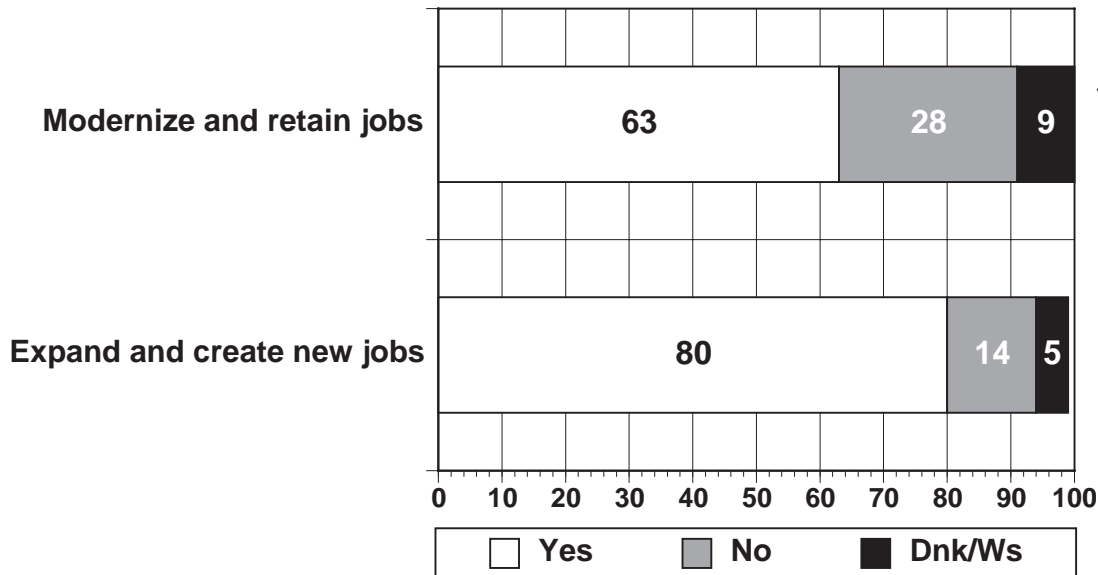
# Manufacturing Jobs

There is clear recognition among the voting public that the number of manufacturing jobs in the state have gone down in recent years (61 percent). There is also strong support for granting tax exemptions to manufacturing jobs that help preserve jobs in the state, as well as bring new jobs into the state.

**Do you think the number of manufacturing jobs in Louisiana has gone up, stayed about the same, or gone down over the past two years?**



**Should state government grant tax exemptions to manufacturing companies that:**



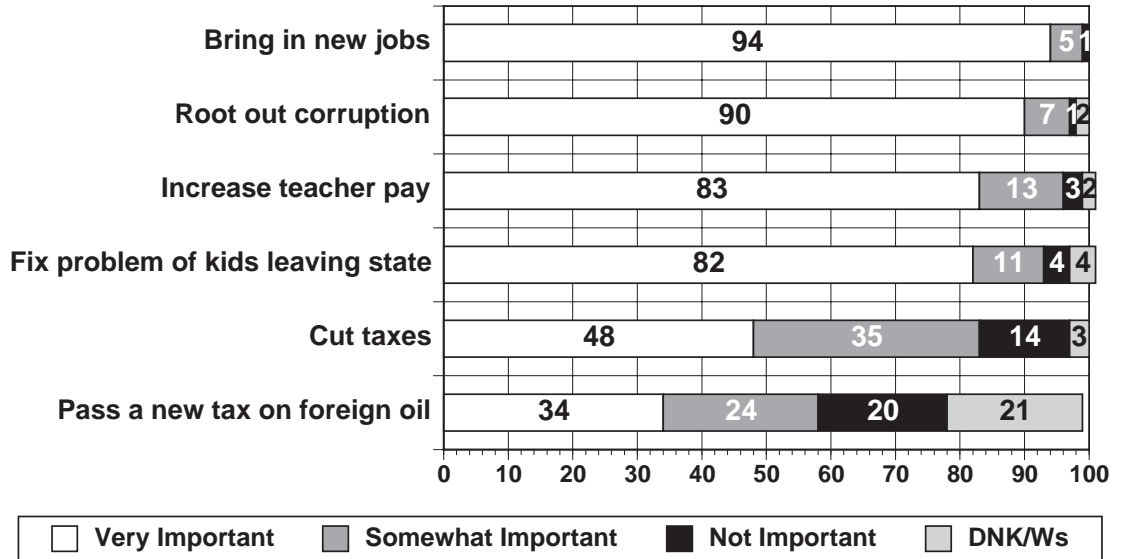
*It's about jobs – good jobs! Do what it takes to get and keep those good jobs in our state!*

## New Governor's Priorities

Voters were presented with a series of statements regarding issues facing the upcoming Governor's race. Once again, the voters demonstrated a clear set of priorities for the next Governor. Job growth was number one in importance, followed by "clean" government, increasing teacher pay, and doing something – anything – to address the out-migration of our young people. Although cutting taxes was viewed as important, it paled in comparison to the top four issues. A similar "second tier" priority was evident toward passing new taxes on foreign oil.

*Expect to hear the following this fall from the various candidates, "If elected, I will bring NEW JOBS to Louisiana. I will serve with HONESTY and INTEGRITY. I will IMPROVE to our EDUCATION system and INCREASE TEACHER PAY. With more JOBS and BETTER SCHOOLS, our KIDS WON'T LEAVE and we will once again keep the best and the brightest. I will do all of this WITHOUT RAISING TAXES."*

### How important is it to you for the next Governor to:

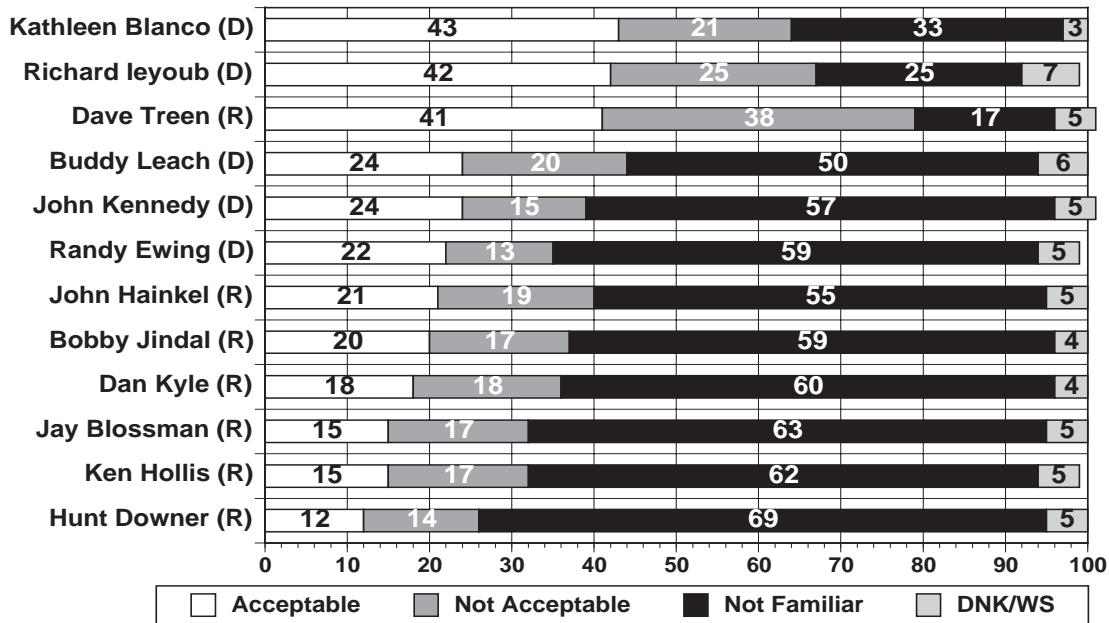


## Governor's Race

On October 4, 2003 Louisiana voters will put the state's open primary system to a full-scale test as a plethora of candidates vie for the state's top elected office. The top two vote gatherers will then compete in a "heads up" runoff on November 15th. Governor Foster leaves his second term with about 62 percent favorability – good, but down from his 82 percent favorability four years ago. In spite of the numerous problems facing the state, there are a host of candidates ready to succeed him.

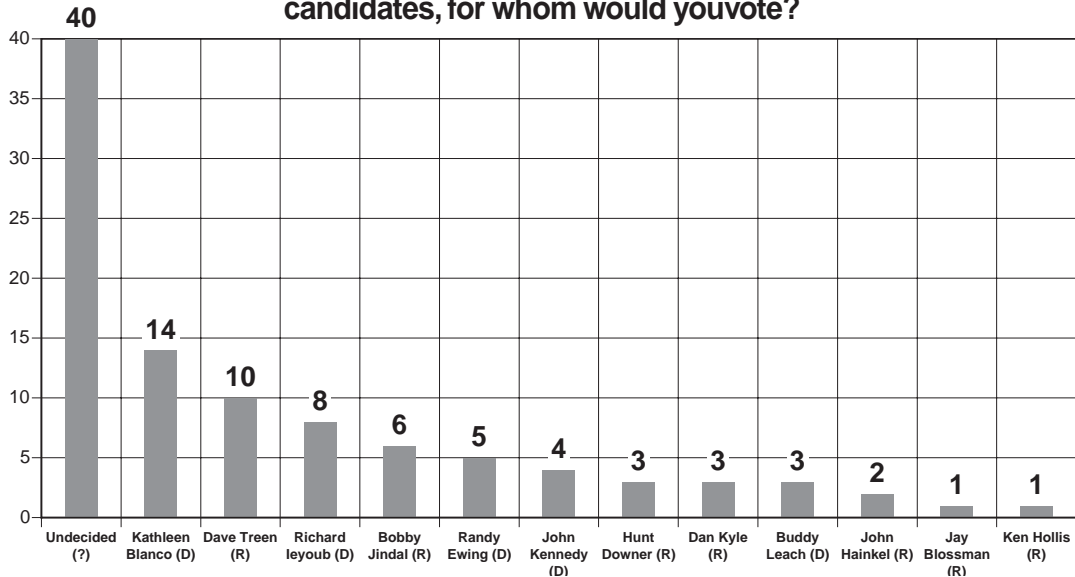
Voters were asked to respond to a two-tier approach to determining the level of support for the various candidates. First, voters were asked to assess the "acceptability" of the twelve announced candidates. Of the list, three candidates had the highest acceptable ratings – Blanco, Ieyoub, and Treen. These three also had the highest unacceptable ratings. Essentially all of the second tier candidates had unacceptable ratings to cancel out their positive ratings. Most significant, however, is the relatively obscurity that haunts most of the candidates. Most candidates are essentially unknown to the voting public, although the elections are only six months away and a lot of campaign funds already collected and expended.

**Mike Foster cannot run for re-election in the Governor's race next year. As I read the names of several people who may be candidates for Governor, please tell me if that person is acceptable or not acceptable to you for the position of Governor of Louisiana.**



Next, respondents were asked to “vote today for Governor” from the announced list. The results were clear – the combined votes of the top four candidates still fall short of the undecided vote! If it were technically possible, no one would win. The top three candidates are the same three that topped the name recognition/acceptability question.

**If the election for Governor were today and those were the candidates, for whom would you vote?**



*“It’s UNDECIDED by three lengths going into the first turn! The race is wide-open, so in true political fashion, watch where the contributions go to see who makes the runoff for Governor.”*