

*Statewide  
Survey*  
OF  
LOUISIANA  
VOTERS

APRIL 2001

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*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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# *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 2001 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

Interviews for the statewide poll were completed by telephone with 700 registered Louisiana voters between Wednesday, March 28 and Friday, April 6, 2001.

The overall margin of error for the statewide statistics obtained from the survey of 700 Louisiana voters is not greater than plus or minus 3.8 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence. In other words, there is a 95 percent certainty that the statistics presented from the results obtained on this survey of 700 voters statewide will not be more than 3.8 percent above or below the figure that would be obtained if all of the voters in the state would have been interviewed. The sample error is larger for subgroup responses, such as those based on respondents by area, age, party affiliation, and other demographic or geographic variables. There are other sources of potential error which cannot be calculated including question wording and order of question presentation.

Respondents were assigned to one of four geographic areas based on their parish of residence. The four geographic areas, along with the parishes comprising those areas, are:

Geographic area: **New Orleans metropolitan area**, (includes Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany and Washington parishes); **Florida-River Parishes**, (includes Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. James, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge and West Feliciana parishes); **Acadiana-southwest**, (includes Acadia, Allen, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne and Vermilion parishes); **North Louisiana**, (includes Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Sabine, Tensas, Union, Vernon, Webster, West Carroll and Winn parishes).

A random start, interval sample design was used to select telephone numbers from a sample frame of telephone numbers for registered voter households. A modified random digit dialing (RDD) technique was applied to the listing of voter household telephone numbers selected. The telephone numbers used in the survey were generated from the RDD technique. The number of interviews conducted within any given parish was in proportion to the voting strength of the parish to the total voting population of the state. 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 on voter race.

# Conditions in Louisiana

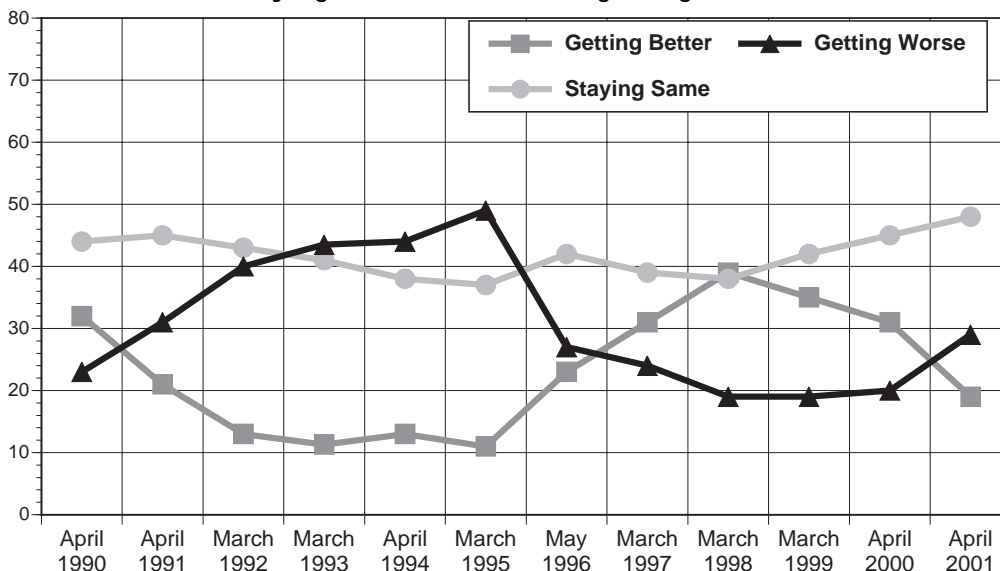
When asked if they thought conditions in Louisiana are getting better, staying about the same or getting worse, nearly half of the respondents (48 percent) thought conditions were staying about the same, one in four (19 percent) thought they were getting better and nearly one in three (29 percent) thought conditions were getting worse. Voters with positive opinions were consistent geographically across the state; however, negative respondents varied based upon geography, with New Orleans area voters expressing the highest negatives. Survey results showed that black female respondents, democrats, and those with a less than high school education were more likely to think conditions were getting worse.

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

	GETTING BETTER	STAYING SAME	GETTING WORSE	DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY
<b>ALL VOTERS</b>	19	48	29	3
<b>BY AREA</b>				
NEW ORLEANS AREA	16	49	34	1
ACADIANA & SOUTHWEST LA	22	44	31	4
FLORIDA/RIVER PARISHES	18	51	28	4
NORTH LOUISIANA	22	51	22	5
<b>BY RACE</b>				
WHITE	20	51	26	3
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	19	42	33	5

This year's responses demonstrate a significant shift in public opinion toward the negative. The responses reflect an increasingly negative attitude since 1998, reversing the gains made in the post-Edwards timeframe. For the first time since 1996, 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?

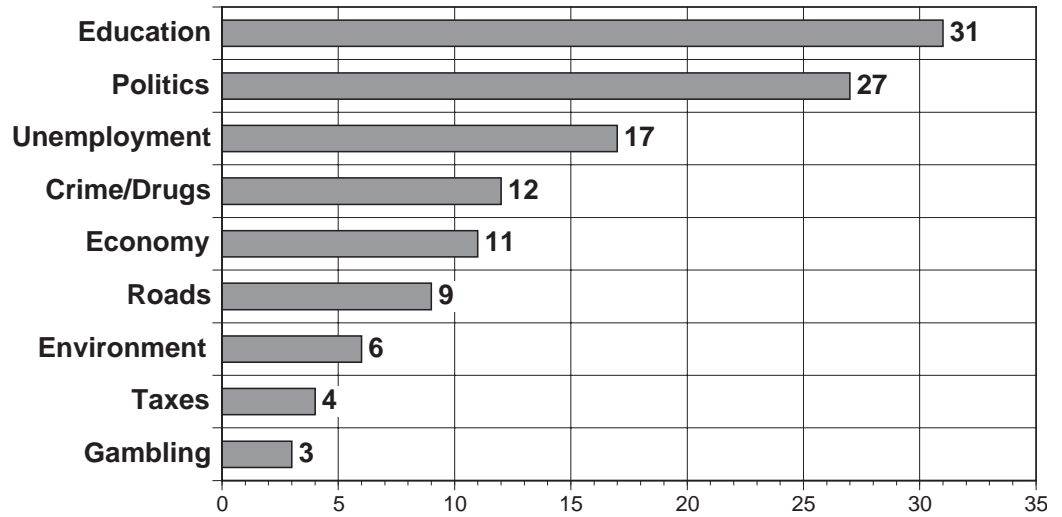


*Analysis:  
The honeymoon is over;  
Louisiana voters are once  
again unhappy with the  
direction the state is headed.*

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When asked what are the main problems which keep Louisiana from being a better place to live, education (31 percent), politics (27 percent) and unemployment (17 percent) were the top three responses. Crime/drugs, roads, economy, environment and taxes 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?



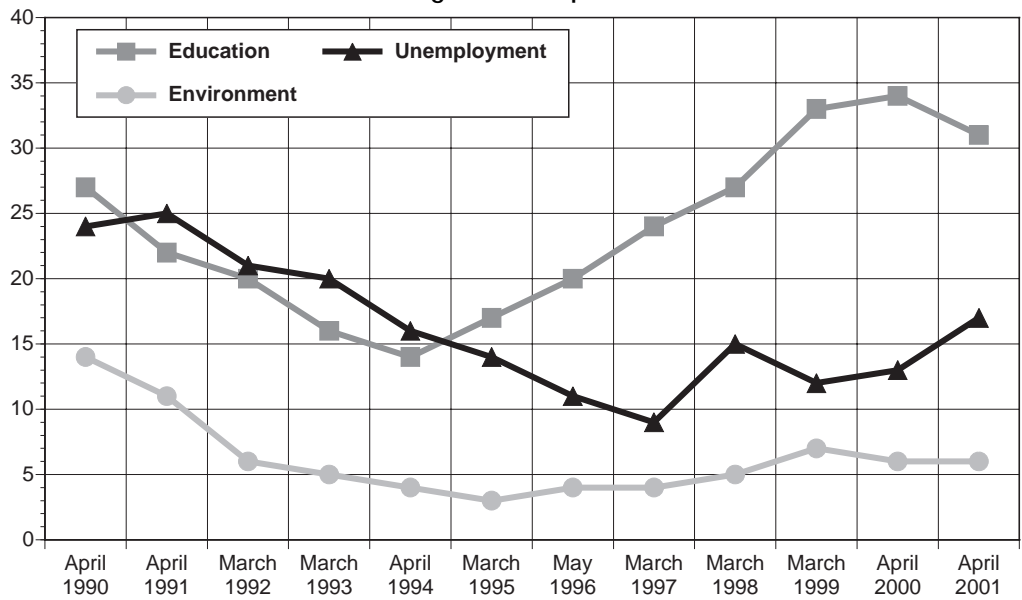
What would you say are the main problems which keep Louisiana from being a better place to live?

MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM	BY AREA				BY RACE		
	ALL VOTERS	NEW ORLEANS AREA	ACAD. & SW LA.	FLA. & RIVER PARIS.	NORTH LA.	WHITE	AFR. AMER.
EDUCATION	31	33	27	36	31	37	17
POLITICS	27	26	26	27	16	30	18
UNEMPLOYMENT	17	16	12	14	26	12	30
CRIME/DRUGS	12	14	9	12	11	8	20
ROADS	9	8	10	10	10	10	7
ECONOMY	11	14	11	8	12	12	9
ENVIRONMENT	6	3	5	11	4	6	3
TAXES	4	4	3	2	7	4	4



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

*Analysis:  
Trends post-1994 demonstrate  
an inverse relationship between  
education and unemployment,  
i.e., as concern for education  
increases, the concern for  
unemployment goes down.*



# Job Performance

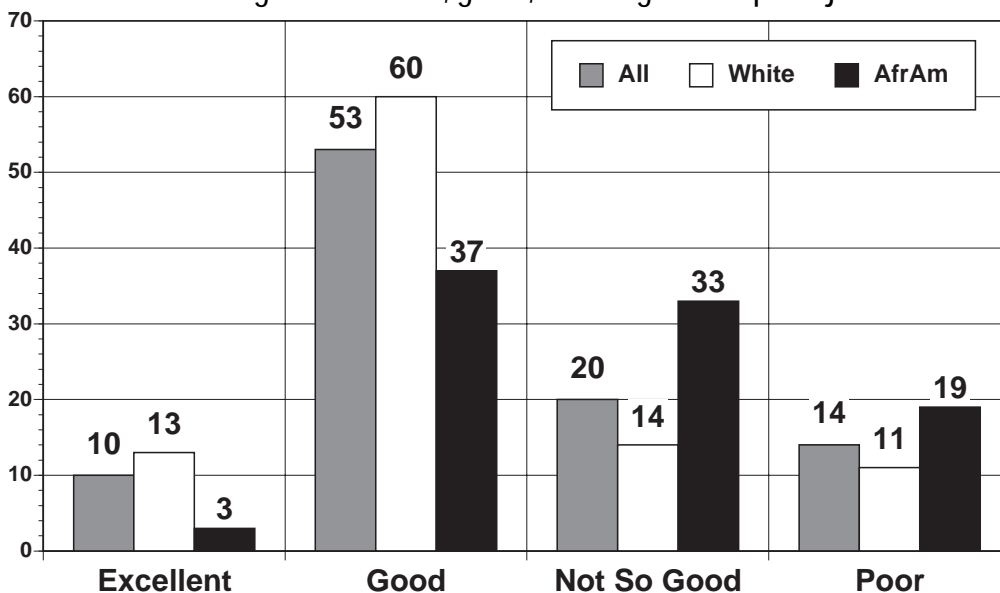
## Governor Murphy J. "Mike" Foster

Governor Foster continues to get positive job performance ratings from nearly two-thirds of the state's voters. When asked if Governor Foster is doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job, 63 percent of the respondents thought he was doing an "excellent or good" job, while 34 percent thought he was doing a "not so good or poor" job. Public support of Governor Foster falls heavily along racial lines — 63 percent of the white voters responded positively, while 41 percent of African American voters expressed a positive sentiment.

Please tell me if you think Governor Mike Foster is doing an excellent, good, not so good or poor job.

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	NOT SO GOOD	POOR	DON'T KNOW/ WON'T SAY
<b>ALL VOTERS</b>	10	53	20	14	4
<b>BY AREA</b>					
NEW ORLEANS AREA	6	54	23	14	4
ACADIANA & SW LA	10	52	22	13	3
FLORIDA/RIVER PARISHES	12	53	13	15	6
NORTH LOUISIANA	12	51	20	12	5
<b>BY RACE</b>					
WHITE	13	60	14	11	3
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	3	37	33	19	8

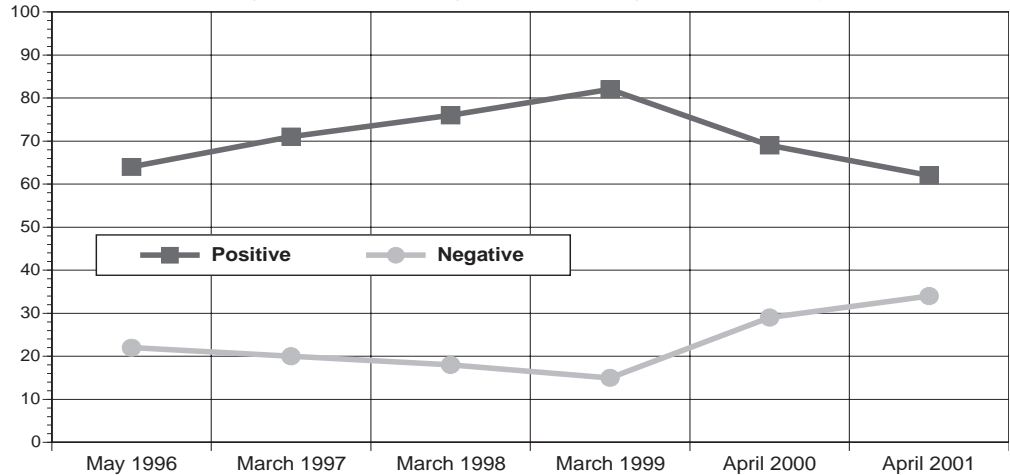
Please tell me if you think Governor Mike Foster is doing an excellent, good, not so good or poor job.



A historical review of Governor Foster's performance rating shows a tremendous decline in positive ratings since the start of his second term. He has dropped nearly 20 points since 1999 and is at his lowest positive performance rating since taking office in 1996. Additionally, one in three voters gives him a negative performance rating, the highest level ever in his tenure. Still, nearly two-thirds of statewide voters give him a positive rating.

Please tell me if you think Governor Mike Foster is doing an excellent, good, not so good or poor job.

*Analysis:  
"We still like Mike...  
just not as much!"*

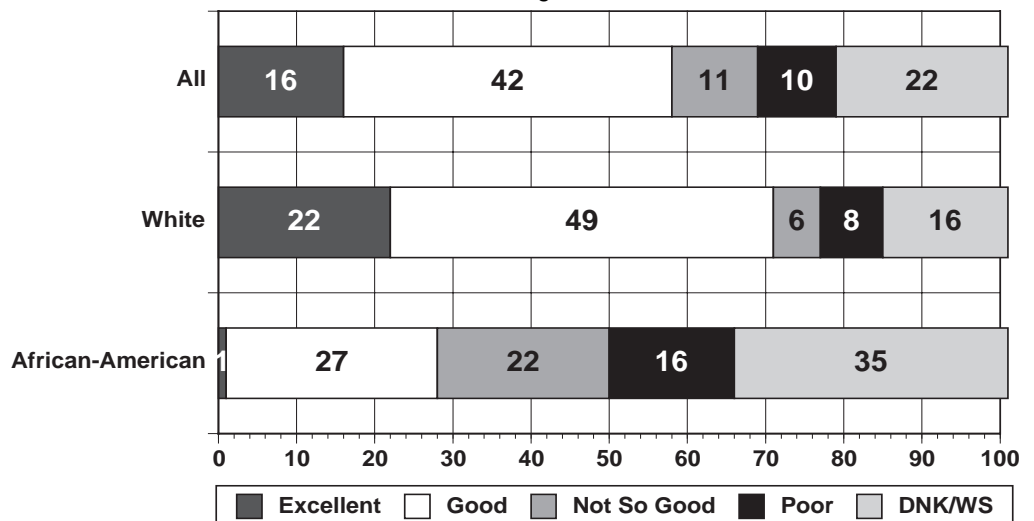


### President George W. Bush

Fifty-eight percent of the voters feel that President Bush is doing an "OK" job (excellent + good), and 21 percent responded negatively. Support for the President is strongly influenced by race, with 71 percent of the white voters saying his job performance is positive, while only 27 percent of the African American voters responded similarly. Many voters (22 percent) are taking a "wait and see" attitude, given the short tenure of the President's term in office.

Please tell me if you think President George W. Bush is doing an excellent, good, not so good or poor job?

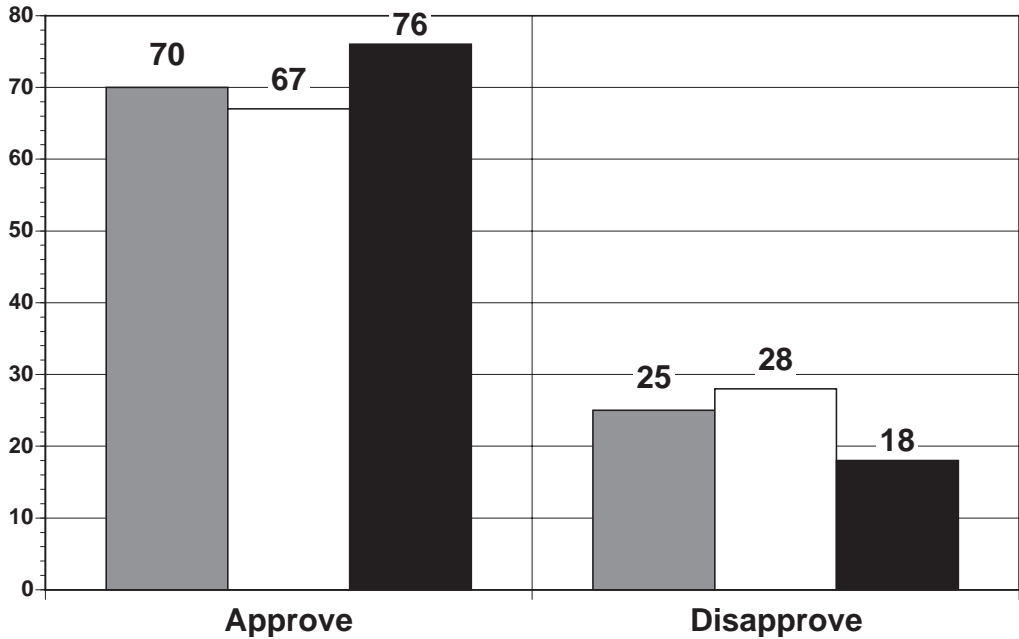
(Positive = Excellent + Good Negative = Not So Good + Poor)



# Funding Teacher Pay Raises

Respondents were asked if they approved of the Legislature's most recent action in the Special Session that resulted in a pay raise for teachers by renegotiating the contract with Harrah's New Orleans casino and increasing the tax on riverboat casinos. Seven on ten voters supported this action. Support crossed all geographic and demographic variables.

Do you approve or disapprove of the Legislature giving teachers a pay raise by renegotiating the contract with Harrah's New Orleans Casino and increasing the tax on riverboat casinos?

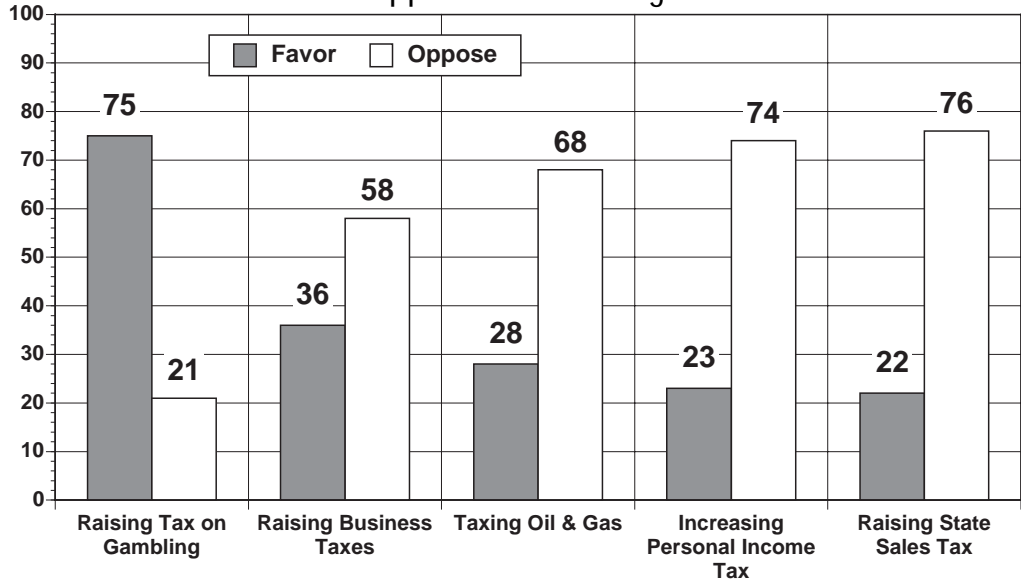


# Taxes

Survey data showed strong opposition to any new state taxes, with the exception of raising taxes on gambling. A strong majority opposed additional taxation on business and individuals. African Americans were more likely to support personal income or business taxes than white voters, but failed to garner a majority support for any form of additional taxation, except for gambling.

If more state government revenues were needed, would you favor or oppose the following:

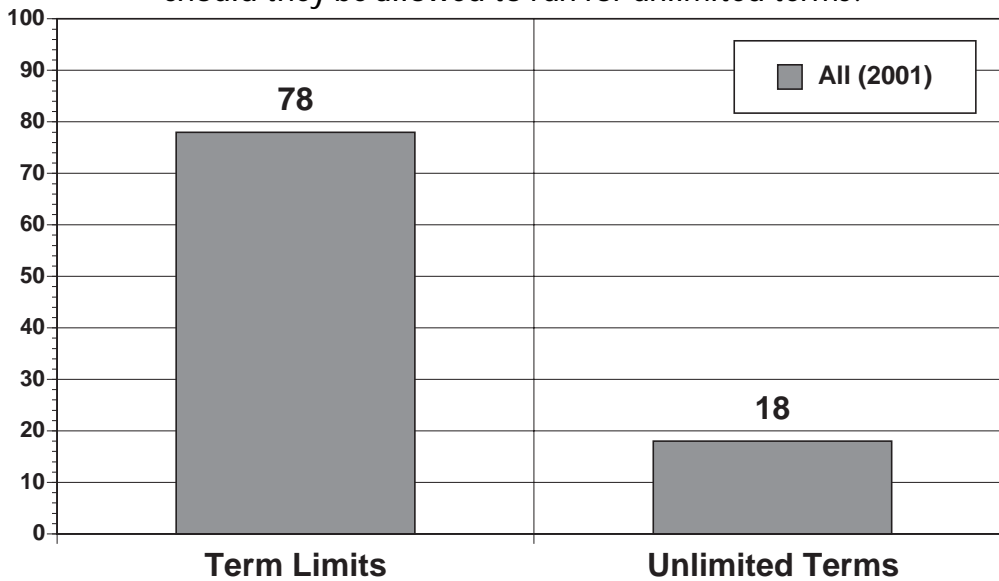
*Analysis:  
"Don't even think about taxing me," is the battle cry of the Louisiana populous. "And if you tax anyone, try raising gambling taxes first."*



# Term Limits

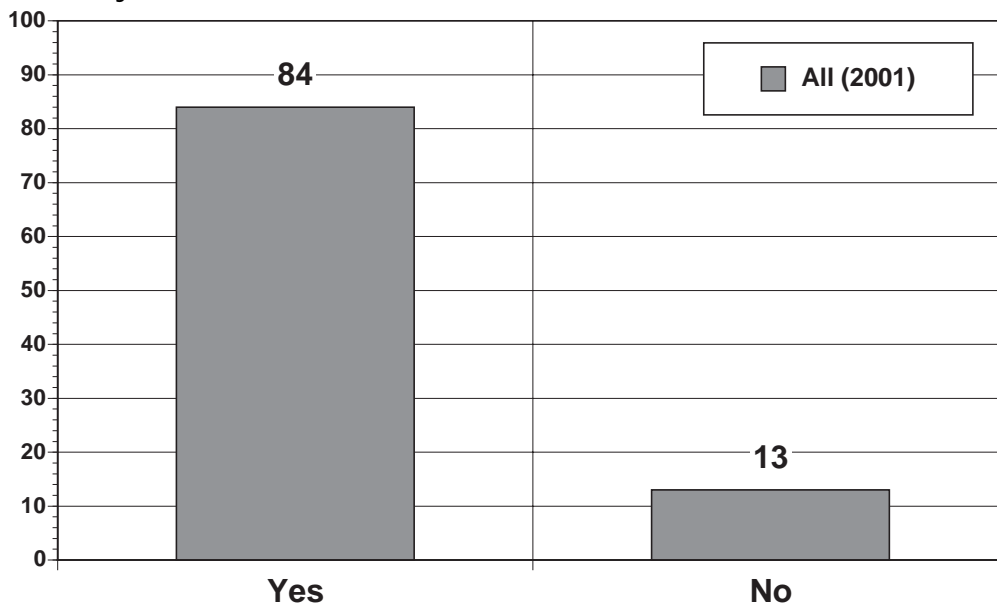
There is very little support for changing the current term limitations on legislators and statewide elected officials. More than three of four respondents (78 percent) felt legislators should be limited to three terms in office. Support for the term limitations crossed all geographic and demographic categories.

Do you think legislators should be limited to three terms in office or should they be allowed to run for unlimited terms?



Analysis:  
"Term limits are good. Term limits are good. Term limits are good."

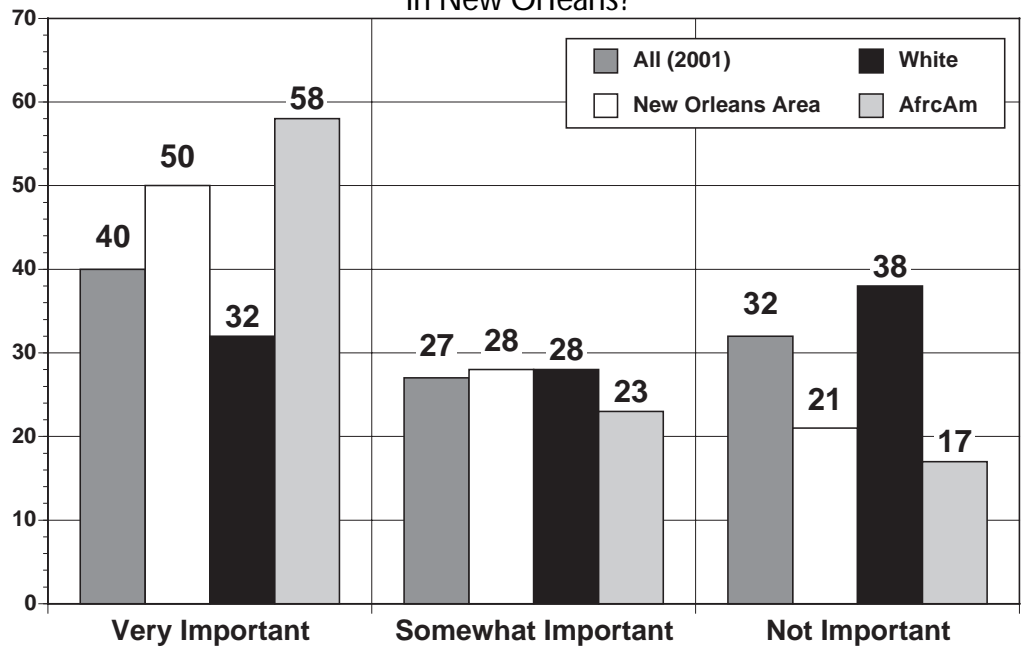
Do you think statewide elected officials should have term limits?



## Keeping the Saints

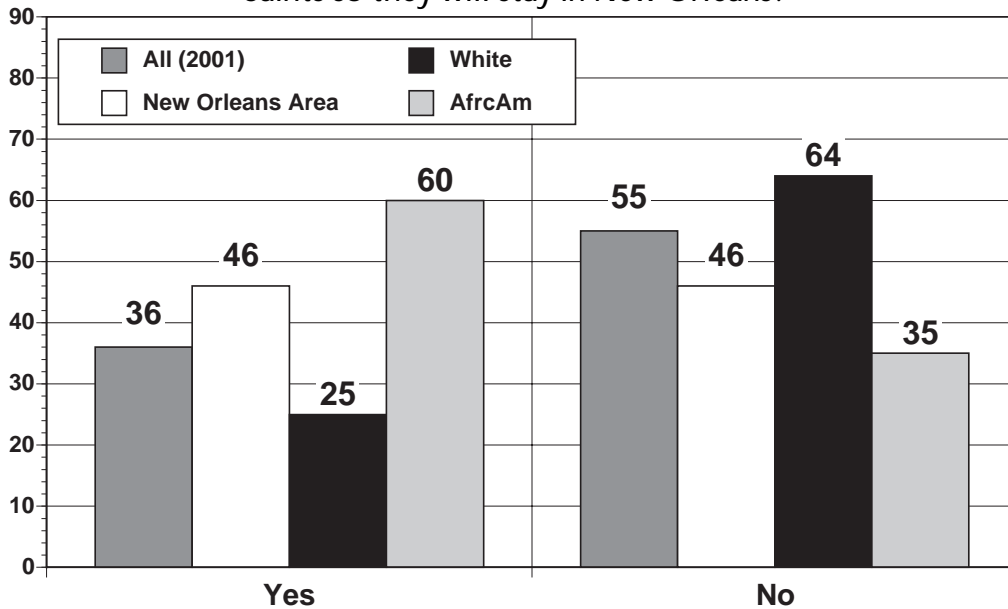
Respondents were asked a series of questions dealing with negotiations currently underway to keep the New Orleans Saints football team in the state. First, respondents were asked how important the issue was in their minds. About two of three responded (67 percent) that it was “very or somewhat important” to keep the Saints in New Orleans. Interest was highest in the New Orleans area (78 percent) and among African American voters (81 percent) and lowest among north Louisiana (59 percent) and white (60 percent) respondents.

How important is it to you to keep the Saints football team in New Orleans?



The voters, however, were not enthusiastic in their support for the state agreeing to a revenue package to satisfy the Saints so they will stay in New Orleans. In fact, a majority (55 percent) of voters disagreed with giving a package to satisfy the Saints. Opposition was strongest among white voters (64 percent) and those living in the Florida/River Parishes (67 percent). Support for a package was highest among African American voters (59 percent), those with less than high school education (51 percent) and those living in the New Orleans area (46 percent).

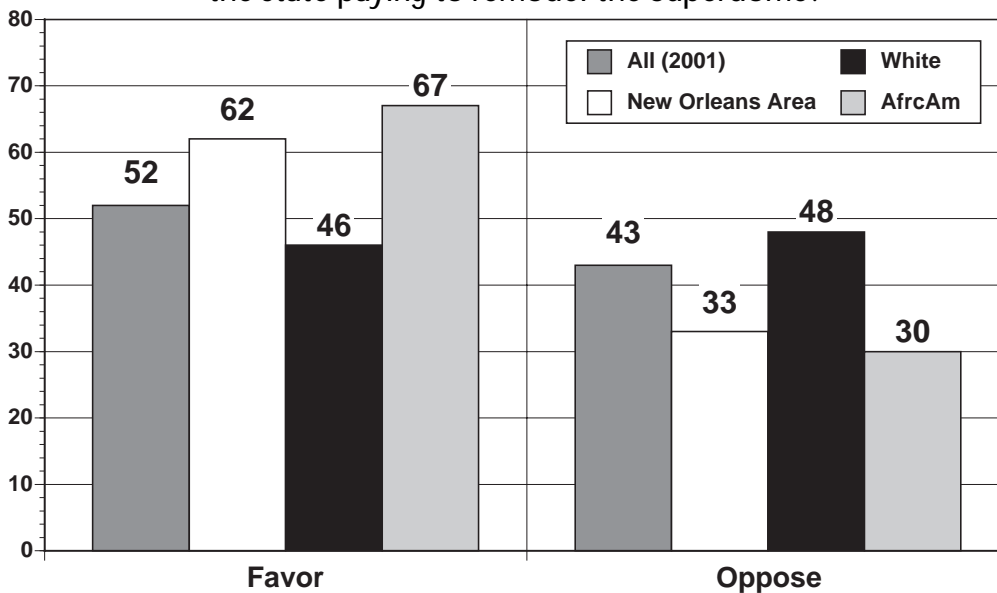
The Saints football team is demanding more money to stay in New Orleans. Should Gov. Foster agree to a revenue package to satisfy the Saints so they will stay in New Orleans?



*Analysis:*  
 "Who dat talking 'bout moving dem Saints? Who dat?" The majority of the public is not ready to write a blank check to keep the Saints, however.

Finally, respondents were provided two options for enhancements to the "home" of the Saints – the Louisiana Superdome. There is very strong and consistent opposition to building a new stadium (76 percent) and mixed support for the state paying to remodel the Superdome (52 percent). Support for the state paying for remodeling again was highest among African American voters (68 percent), those with less than high school education (65 percent) and those living in the New Orleans area (63 percent).

In order to keep the Saints in New Orleans, would you favor or oppose the state paying to remodel the Superdome?



## *Medicaid*

There is strong opposition (70 percent) to any requirements that doctors get prior approval from the state before issuing certain prescriptions to Medicaid patients. Opposition is consistent across all geographic and demographic categories.

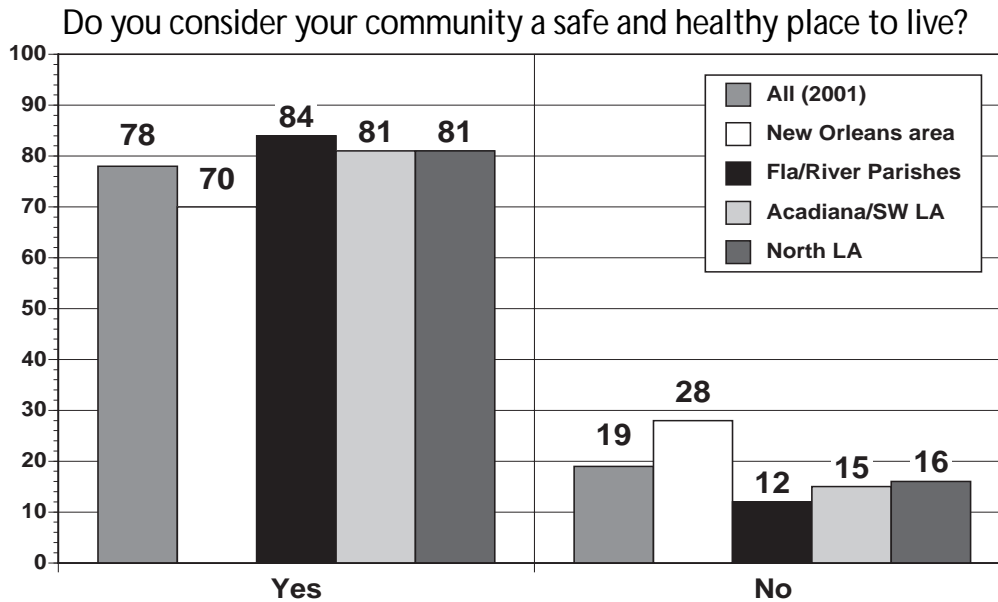
Do you favor or oppose requiring doctors to get prior approval from the state before issuing certain prescriptions to Medicaid patients?

There is similar opposition (72 percent) to imposing restrictions on the medicines Medicaid patients have access to in order to save money in the Medicaid program. Again, opposition crosses all geographic and demographic categories.

Do you favor or oppose restricting the medicines Medicaid patients have access to in order to save money in the Medicaid program?

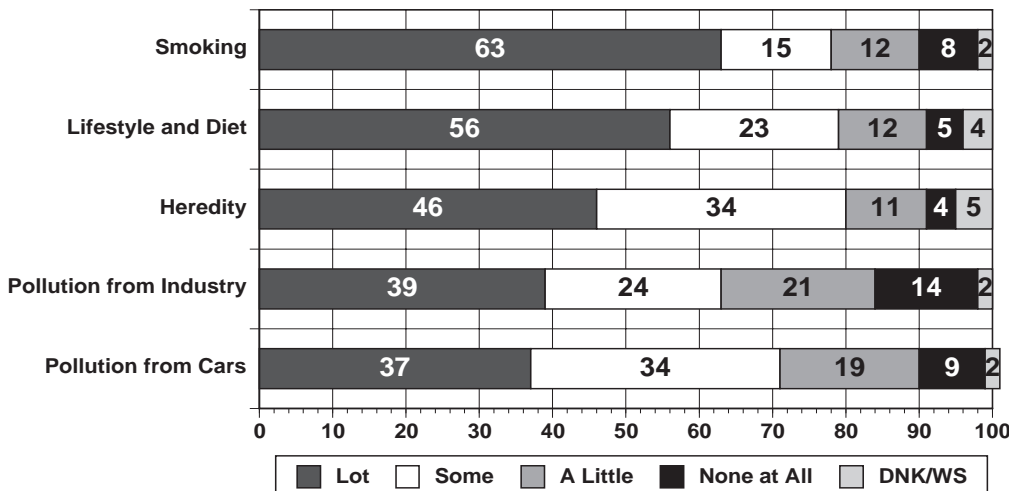
# Quality of Life

Voters generally consider their community a safe and healthy place to live (78 percent). Those in the New Orleans area expressed the least positive responses (70 percent) while those in the Florida/River Parishes (84 percent) expressed the most positive responses. New Orleans (28 percent) and African American (23 percent) voters were the most likely to respond negatively.



Respondents were asked how much they felt five specific actions – heredity, lifestyle and diet, smoking, pollution from cars and pollution from industry – contributed to health problems. Louisiana voters responded with a clear ranking of concerns based on those options provided. Smoking was viewed as contributing “a lot” by two of three respondents (63 percent), followed by lifestyle and diet (56 percent), heredity (46 percent), pollution from industry (39 percent) and pollution from cars (37 percent).

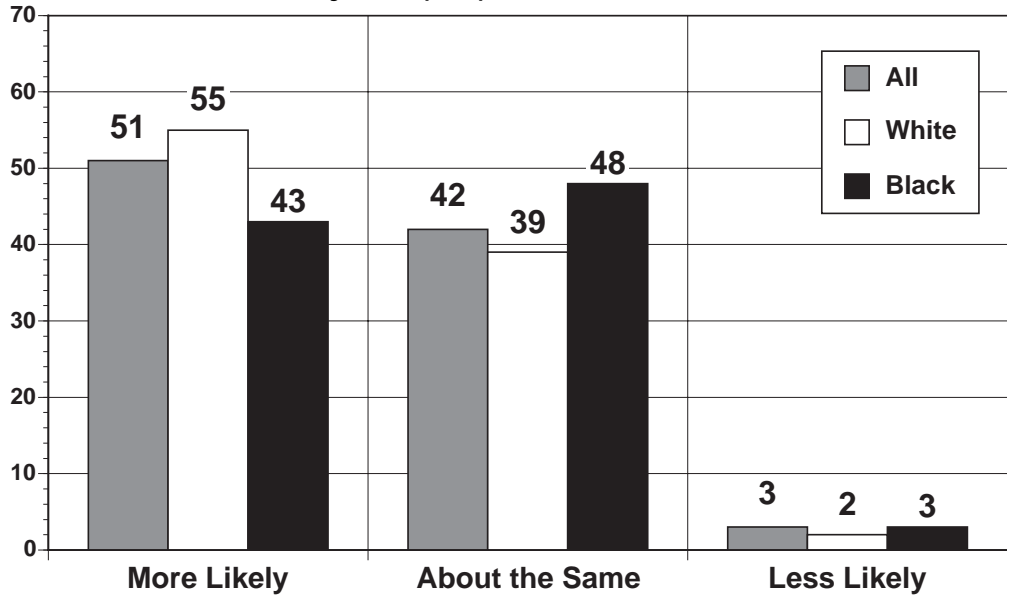
In thinking about the health of people in your community, how much do you think each of the following contributes to health problems: a lot, some, a little or none at all?



A slight majority (51 percent) of respondents felt people in Louisiana were more likely to get cancer than people in other states. About four in ten (42 percent) felt the rate was about the same as other states, while few (3 percent) felt Louisianians were less likely to get cancer than people in other states. Concern was highest among white respondents (55 percent) and college graduates (61 percent).

Do you think people in Louisiana are more likely to get cancer than people in other states, about the same as people in other states or less likely than people in other states?

*Analysis:  
The facts do not support the perception, but Louisiana voters believe they are at greater risk of getting cancer simply by living here. Given these misperceptions, there is a strong need to educate the public on cancer risk in the state.*



# Environment

Historical data shows that voters are generally neutral when rating the quality of Louisiana's environment. When asked if they thought the quality of the environment in Louisiana is getting better, staying the same or getting worse, about half of the voters (46 percent) thought the environment was staying the same, followed by 30 percent who thought it was getting worse and 23 percent who thought it was getting better. Males were generally twice as likely as females to think that the quality of the environment was getting better with 31 percent of male voters responding getting better, while only 18 percent of the female voters responded that way. Historically, perception on the quality of the environment has changed little over the past ten years.

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Do you think the quality of the environment in Louisiana is getting better, staying about the same or getting worse?

	GETTING BETTER	STAYING SAME	GETTING WORSE	DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY
<b>ALL VOTERS</b>	23	46	30	1
<b>BY AREA</b>				
NEW ORLEANS AREA	27	45	28	0
ACADIANA & SOUTHWEST LA	23	42	35	1
FLORIDA/RIVER PARISHES	22	47	30	2
NORTH LOUISIANA	20	52	28	0
<b>BY SEX</b>				
MALE	31	46	24	0
FEMALE	18	47	35	1

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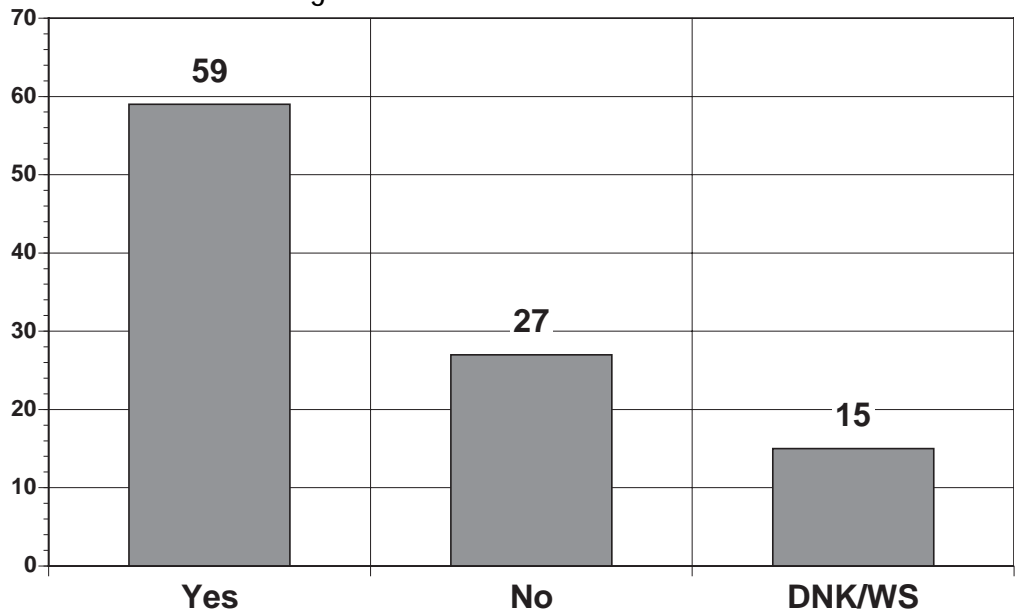
Do you think the quality of the environment in Louisiana is getting better, staying about the same or getting worse?

A slight majority (52 percent) of respondents agreed with the statement, “Environmental laws are difficult to comply with.” There was significant variation in response based upon race, with 58 percent of white respondents agreeing and only 38 percent of African American respondents agreeing.

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS ARE DIFFICULT TO COMPLY WITH

Nearly six of ten (59 percent) respondents felt that the state should regulate groundwater use in Louisiana. There was consistent response across the state as well as other demographic variables.

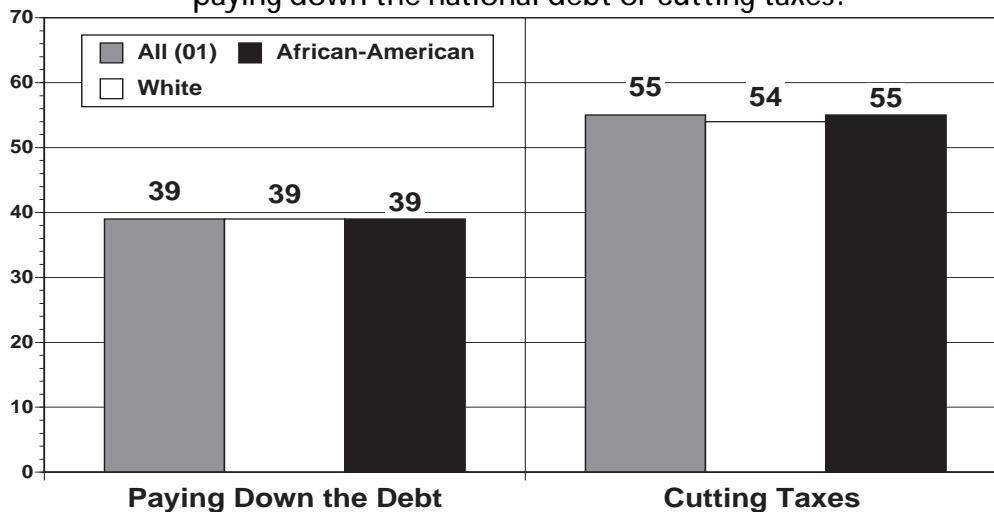
Do you think state government should regulate groundwater use in Louisiana?



# National Economy

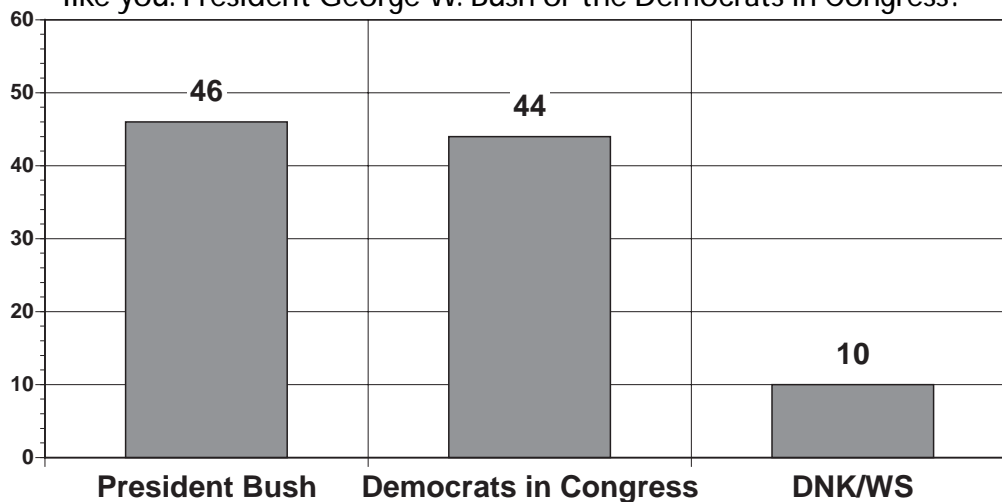
Voters were asked their opinion on tax cutting proposals currently facing Congress. When asked, “Which would be better for the nation’s economy, paying down the national debt or cutting taxes,” a majority responded “cutting taxes” would be the best thing to do at this time. While responses were consistent statewide and across other demographic variables, there was a significant variation in response based upon political party affiliation, with Republicans much more supportive of tax cuts (72 percent) than Democrats (50 percent).

Which do you think would be better for the nation's economy right now: paying down the national debt or cutting taxes?



Respondents were then asked who was most likely to have a tax plan that was fair – President Bush or Democrats in Congress? Voters were split on the fairness of the two plans – 46 percent responded President Bush and 44 percent responded Democrats in Congress. Support for either plan fell strongly along political and racial lines, with Republicans (86 percent) and white voters (60 percent) more likely to feel the President’s plan was fair and Democrats (59 percent) and African Americans (78 percent) more likely to believe Democrats in Congress would be most fair.

Who do you think is more likely to have a tax plan that is fair to people like you: President George W. Bush or the Democrats in Congress?

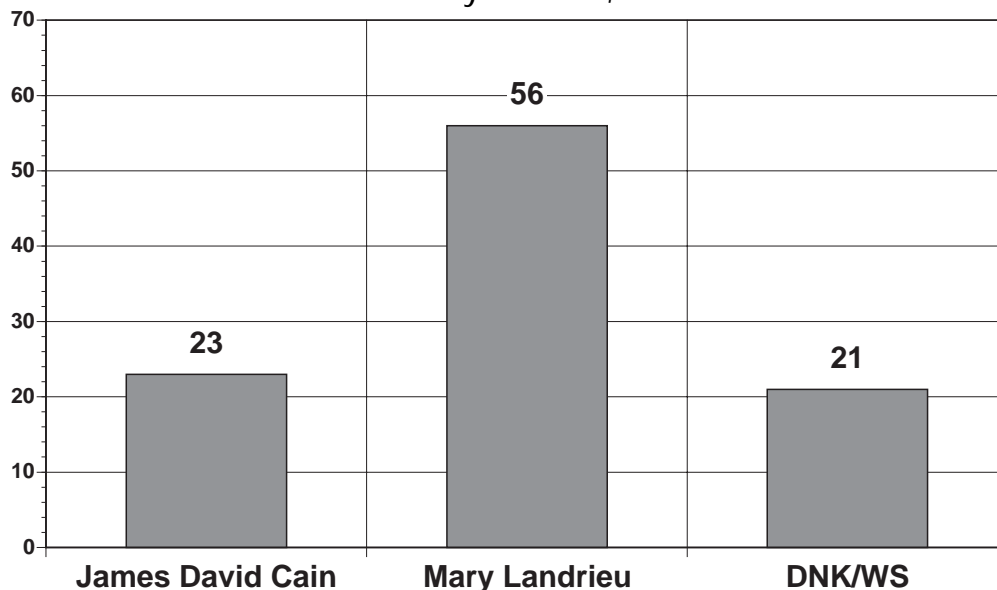


# U.S. Senate Race

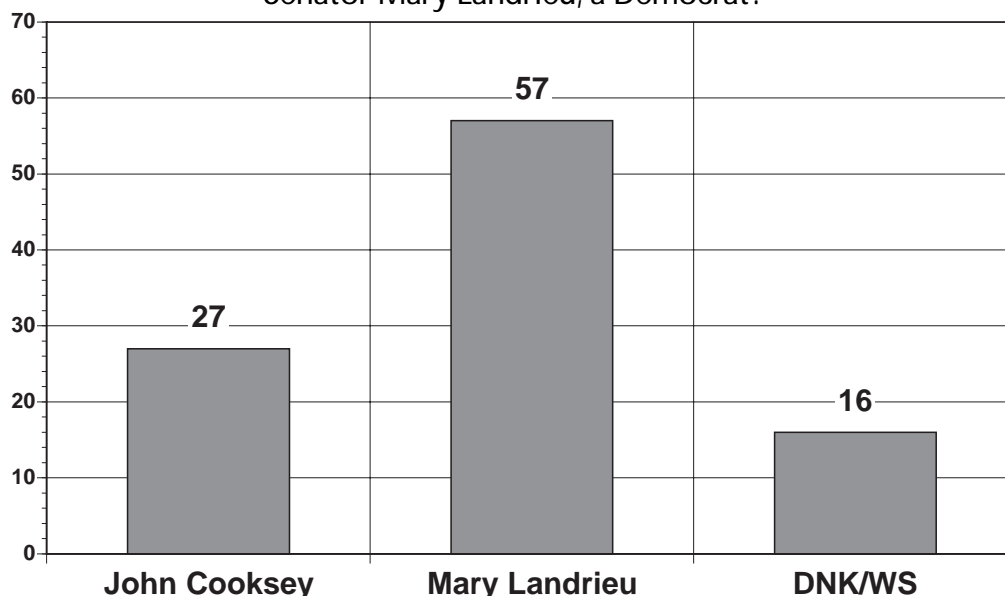
Respondents were asked to provide opinions on voting in three “heads up” races for U.S. Senate. First-term U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu is up for re-election in the fall of 2002. Senator Landrieu was pitted against three potential candidates: State Senator James David Cain, Congressman John Cooksey, and Commissioner of Elections Suzanne Haik Terrell.

Who would you vote for if the election of U.S. Senator were held today between: State Senator James David Cain, a Democrat, and incumbent U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu, a Democrat?

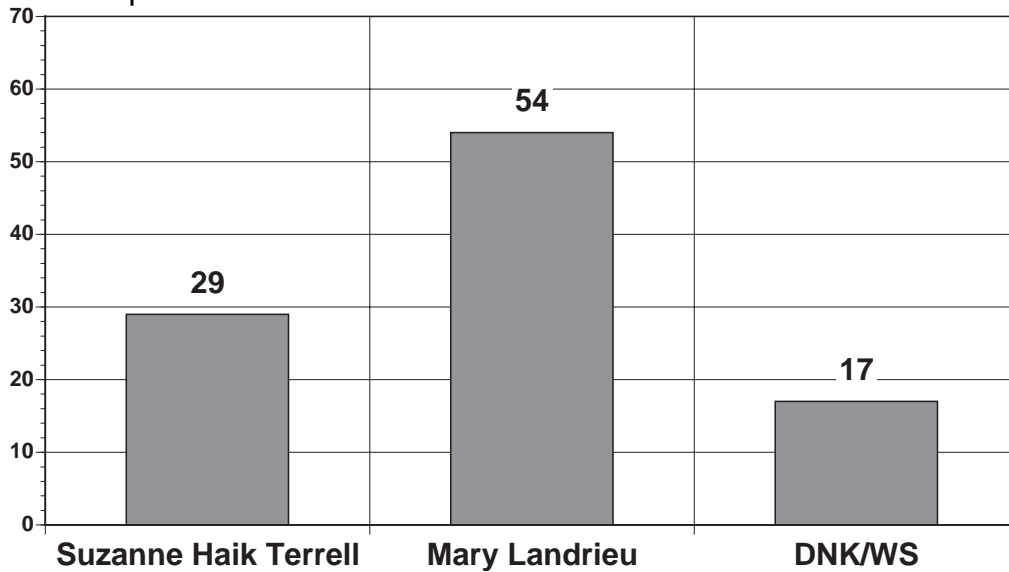
*Analysis:  
Incumbent U.S. Senator Landrieu holds a tenuous majority regardless of opponent. Factions are already forming against her, but the geographic and gender consistency of her base bodes well for her.*



Who would you vote for if the election of U.S. Senator were held today between: Republican Congressman John Cooksey and incumbent U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu, a Democrat?



Who would you vote for if the election of U.S. Senator were held today between: incumbent Democrat U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu and Republican Commissioner of Elections Suzanne Haik Terrell ?



Senator Landrieu garnered a majority of votes in all three scenarios. Support for Senator Landrieu was strongest among African American voters (75 percent – 80 percent) and Democrats (+70 percent) and weakest among white voters (+45 percent) and Republicans (+20 percent). Landrieu’s support, however, was consistent by geography and gender.

# Edwards and Jail . . . Maybe

Former Louisiana Governor Edwin W. Edwards, long the target of federal authorities for alleged political corruption, was convicted last year on several felony charges he extorted hundreds of thousands of dollars from businessmen applying for riverboat casino licenses during and after his final term in office. The Governor was sentenced to federal prison but remains free on appeal. Voters were asked if they thought the former Governor would ever serve a day in jail. A resounding 83 percent thought he would never serve a day of his sentence. This opinion crossed all geographic and demographic categories.

Do you think former Governor Edwin W. Edwards will ever spend a day in jail?

*Analysis:*  
As "Free Edwards" bumper stickers become the rage, there are few people in the state who actually believe the former Governor will ever go to jail.

