

# *The Simon Review*

The Movement of Opinion Toward Spending Cuts,  
Revenue Increases, and Political Reform in Illinois:

*Results and Analysis of  
The Fourth Annual Simon Poll*

By Charles W. Leonard

Ryan P. Burge

Emily S. Carroll

Paper #27

January, 2012

A Publication of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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## INTRODUCTION

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute conducted its inaugural statewide public opinion survey in the fall of 2008, with the hope of compiling a time series of Illinois voters' opinions on important public policy issues of the day. This issue of the *Simon Review* presents an analysis of the fourth annual Simon Poll®, conducted October 11 - 16, 2011.

Simon Institute poll reports are meant for an interested and engaged public, for public officials and legislators, for the media, and for those involved in debating and crafting better, fairer, more efficient public policy. For this audience, we think the time series so far is most valuable for those interested in the state budget and for those working toward governmental and electoral reform.

Our results show consistent support for electoral reform measures and for reforming the legislative redistricting process. We also demonstrate significant movement of public opinion toward acceptance of budget cuts and revenue increases in some areas that, four years ago, might have seemed highly unlikely.

This year's survey asked questions about immigration policy, in the wake of strict—some would say harsh—immigration enforcement laws in states such as Arizona and Alabama. Our results show that Illinoisans favor strong enforcement of existing laws, while at the same time favoring “path to citizenship” policies for undocumented immigrants already in the country.

Future students of public opinion in Illinois, however, will look back and see that fall 2011 was a time of a dark public mood in the state. Very few think the state or the nation is heading in the right direction. The president's approval rating is at barely half in his own, Democratic-leaning home state, and only a third approve of the job performance of their governor. Many told us they were worse off economically this year than they were last year, and fewer were optimistic about the future than what we measured in our 2010 survey.

The 2011 Simon Poll interviewed 1,000 registered voters, spread proportionally across Illinois. It has a margin for error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that if we were to conduct the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances the results would vary by no more than plus or minus 3 points from the results obtained here. The margin for error will be larger for demographic, geographic and response subgroups.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Issues + Answers Global Media Research of Virginia Beach, VA. Cell phone interviews were included as well as land-line interviews. Issues + Answers reports no Illinois political clients. The survey was paid for with non-tax dollars from the Institute's endowment fund.

Note: The “Paul Simon Public Policy Institute Poll,” the “Simon Poll” and the “Southern Illinois Poll” are the copyrighted trademarks of the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University. Use and publication of these polls is encouraged – but only with credit to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIUC.

## SECTION ONE: ISSUE ANALYSIS

### A. Direction of Nation, State, and Area

In October 2011, during a fourth consecutive calendar year in which the national economy had performed sluggishly, only one in five registered Illinois voters we polled (19.2 percent) thought things in the U.S. were going in the right direction. Our fourth annual statewide survey found seven in ten (71.4 percent) saying that things were off-track and headed in the wrong direction. This is a significant decline in confidence from the fall 2010 Simon Poll, in which 30.2 percent thought things in the country were going in the right direction and 60.1 percent said things were going in the wrong direction.

As the last several Simon Polls have found, voters were even more pessimistic about the direction of the State of Illinois than they are about the direction of the nation: Just 14.9 percent said they thought the state was going in the right direction, with almost three-fourths (74.5 percent) saying things were going in the wrong direction. As grim as this statistic is, it is slightly—though probably not significantly—better than the 12.2 percent who thought Illinois was headed in the right direction in 2010.

By contrast, more than half (52.0 percent) of Illinois voters thought things in their city or area of the state were going in the right direction; not quite four in ten (37.5 percent) thought things were going in the wrong direction. This was up somewhat from the 2010 survey, in which a 45.5 percent plurality said they thought things in their area were going in the right direction.

Voters in suburban Chicago were most likely to think things in their area were going in the right direction (58.3 percent), while those in southern Illinois were least likely to think so (43.0 percent). “Wrong direction” responses were most frequent in the City of Chicago (43.3 percent) and in northern and central Illinois (43.0 percent).

A look at our time series on the “Right Direction” responses at the national, state, and local levels is instructive (See Table 1). As pessimistic as the voters seem, the 19 percent who in 2011 thought the country was headed in the right direction is better than the 6 percent who said so in the fall of 2008, when the magnitude of the recession was just becoming apparent.

**Table 1**  
**‘Right Direction’ in USA, Illinois, ‘Your Area’**

Are things going in the right direction, or are they off track and going in the wrong direction?

<b>Right Direction in</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
The United States	6.3%	42.3%	30.2%	19.2%
State of Illinois	12.4%	21.8%	12.2%	14.9%
Your City or Area	40.4%	52.0%	45.5%	52.0%

With new leadership at the state and national levels in 2009, optimism about the direction of government showed an uptick, which reversed direction in 2010 as the national and state economies stayed stuck in neutral. The “right direction” responses regarding the country have further declined since 2010, while perhaps Illinois’ “right direction” responses have hit bottom in the 12 to 15 percent range.

**Table 2**  
**Illinois Reform Proposals 2010 - 2011**

<b>Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Limit how long state legislators could serve. It would limit state representatives to five consecutive two-year terms and state senators to three consecutive four-year terms:		
Strong Favor	57.3%	54.4%
Favor	22.7%	20.6%
Oppose	7.7%	8.5%
Strong Oppose	7.1%	10.9%
Other/Don't know	5.2%	5.6%
Limit the amount of money that party leaders can redistribute to other candidates:		
Strong Favor	43.6%	40.5%
Favor	21.4%	20.9%
Oppose	12.4%	11.2%
Strong Oppose	13.0%	17.1%
Other/Don't know	9.6%	10.3%
Place limits on the amount that people could contribute to judicial campaigns, such as those for the Illinois Supreme Court:		
Strong Favor	53.2%	52.0%
Favor	21.7%	19.4%
Oppose	8.9%	10.5%
Strong Oppose	9.9%	10.7%
Other/Don't know	6.3%	7.4%
Eliminate contributions to judicial races by providing public funding for all candidates who qualify for it:		
Strong Favor	30.2%	29.2%
Favor	23.3%	24.4%
Oppose	15.9%	14.3%
Strong Oppose	19.7%	20.1%
Other/Don't know	10.9%	12.0%
Change the primary-election process in Illinois so that voters do not have to publicly declare which party's ballot they have chosen:		
Strong Favor	62.2%	58.3%
Favor	13.2%	13.5%
Oppose	7.6%	6.8%
Strong Oppose	10.1%	13.1%
Other/Don't know	6.9%	8.3%



## B. Political and Electoral Reforms

Illinoisans continue to favor a wide variety of political and electoral reforms. This is not surprising, given the public grief our state has endured for its history of high-profile corruption trials and its “pay-to-play” political culture.

Half the voters in our poll favored term limits for state representatives and state senators, and six in ten favored limits on the amount of money political leaders can redistribute to other candidates. Given some recent negative, expensive Illinois Supreme Court elections, seven in ten favored limiting the amount of money people can contribute to state judicial campaigns.

In fact, for the second year in a row, just over half the registered voters in our sample approved of public financing for judicial elections. This suggests particular dissatisfaction with the current state of judicial elections, since public financing of elections is a reform measure that in most other surveys tends to be considerably less popular.

As Table 2 on the previous page illustrates, support for these reforms is strong and has remained stable for the last two years.

Voters in our survey also showed strong support for reforming the way the state legislature redraws political boundaries following the Census. In a question we have been asking since 2009, voters continue to favor adding a neutral person to the legislative redistricting commission in case of a partisan tie. (See Table 3). More than a third now “strongly favor” this proposal, a significant increase in intensity compared with the previous two statewide polls.

**Table 3:  
Redistricting Panel Reform**

One proposal for improving the state legislative redistricting process would have the Supreme Court add a neutral person to the redistricting panel in case of a partisan tie:

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Strongly Favor	19.3%	19.0%	35.8%
Favor	53.6%	48.3%	34.3%
Oppose	13.0%	12.6%	9.5%
Strongly Oppose	4.8%	7.3%	7.1%
Other/Don't know	9.4%	12.8%	13.3%

We added a question in 2010 that mirrors the so-called “Fair Map Amendment” proposal reformers were promoting that year. Essentially, it calls for legislative district maps to be created by an independent commission and then to receive an up-or-down vote by the legislature. Essentially two-thirds of voters in our poll favored this reform both years we asked the question. (See Table 4, next page.)

**Table 4**  
**Constitutional Amendment for Independent Remap Panel**

Would you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment that would have legislative district maps created and recommended by a commission that is independent of the elected representatives?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Strongly Favor	13.3%	31.8%
Favor	40.2%	33.2%
Oppose	19.5%	11.7%
Strongly Oppose	7.6%	7.4%
Other/Don't know	19.4%	15.9%

### C. Elected Officials and Electoral Politics

#### Job Approval

Not surprisingly, with the sustained poor performance of the national economy and the bleak budgetary picture in Illinois, both the president's and the governor's job approval ratings are below where either would want them to be.

In President Obama's home state of Illinois, his approval rating is barely above 50 percent (See Table 5). That number may have bottomed-out, since his 51.8 percent approval rating in 2011 is virtually identical to the 51.2 percent approval in 2010.

**Table 5**  
**Approval Rating of Pres. Obama and Gov. Quinn**

I'd like for you to tell me how President Barack Obama is doing his job. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job President Obama is doing?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Strongly Approve	20.3%	21.4%
Somewhat Approve	30.9%	30.4%
Somewhat Disapprove	17.0%	14.6%
Strongly Disapprove	29.1%	31.8%
Other/Don't know	2.7%	1.8%

Now I would like for you to tell me how Governor Pat Quinn is doing his job. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Governor Quinn is doing?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Strongly approve	NA	5.9%
Somewhat approve	NA	29.6%
Somewhat disapprove	NA	24.7%
Strongly disapprove	NA	31.7%
Other/Don't know	NA	8.1%

Governor Quinn’s job approval numbers make the president’s look good by comparison, with only about a third (35.5 percent) approving or strongly approving. We did not test the governor’s job approval in 2010.

### Tea Party Appeal

As in 2010, we asked Illinois voters whether and to what extent they agreed with the Tea Party movement, and whether a candidate with a Tea Party affiliation would be more or less likely to receive their vote. Our results show that in both years, about three in ten said they would be more likely to vote for a Tea Party candidate.

Other than a stable “vote for” number, other responses regarding the Tea Party trend in a negative direction. For example, in 2010, voters were about as likely to agree with the Tea Party (37.9 percent agree or strongly agree) as to disagree (35.5 percent disagree or strongly disagree). In 2011, voters we polled were significantly more likely to disagree (42.2 percent combined) than to agree (25.5 percent combined; see Table 6).

**Table 6**  
**Tea Party Agreement, 2010 and 2011**

From what you know, do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don’t you have an opinion either way?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Strongly agree	14.3%	7.7%
Agree	23.6%	18.8%
Disagree	16.1%	13.9%
Strongly disagree	19.4%	28.3%
No opinion	23.3%	28.5%
Other/Don’t know	3.3%	2.8%

While the percentage who said they’d be more likely to vote for a Tea Party candidate remained stable, the percentage who said they’d be less likely to do so increased significantly, from 46.0 percent in 2010 to about six in ten (59.9 percent) in 2011. (See Table 7, next page.) In other words, among Illinois voters as a whole, Tea Party affiliation is a negative factor twice as often as it is a positive factor.

Likelihood of voting for or against a Tea Party-affiliated candidate fell fairly predictably along party lines: 72.1 percent of Republicans said they would be more likely to vote for a Tea Party candidate, while 89.7 percent of Democrats said they would be *less* likely to do so. Interestingly, among Independents, only 30 percent said they would be more likely to vote for a Tea Party candidate, while a solid majority (57.7 percent) said they would be less likely.

The farther one gets from Chicago, the more a Tea Party affiliation helps a candidate: Only 10.7 percent in the City said they would be more likely to vote for a Tea Party candidate, compared with 33.2 percent in the Chicago suburbs, 39.2 percent in northern and central Illinois, and 38.9 percent in southern Illinois.

**Table 7**  
**Likelihood of Voting for Tea Party Candidate, 2010 and 2011**

Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate that was affiliated with the Tea Party movement?

	2010	2011*
Much more	NA	11.4%
Somewhat more	30.2%	19.8%
Somewhat Less	46.0%	9.8%
Much less	NA	50.1%
Neither	9.8%	4.4%
Other/Don't know	14.0%	4.7%
-----		
Total More	30.2%	31.1%
Total Less	46.0%	59.9%

### The 2012 Elections

We asked respondents how likely they were to vote in the March 2012 elections and, if likely to vote, in which party's primary. Three hundred-twenty of our 1,000 registered voters said they would be likely to vote in the Republican primary. We then asked these voters which candidate they would be likely to vote for among the eight Republican candidates active at the time: Michele Bachmann, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, Ron Paul, Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum, Herman Cain, or Jon Huntsman.

As national polls were showing at the time, Cain (23.4 percent) and Romney (20.6 percent) were virtually tied among those likely Republican primary voters who expressed an opinion. The actual "winner" was "don't know," at 25.9 percent. (See Table 8.)

**Table 8**  
**Likely Republican Primary Voters' Presidential Preference**

<b>GOP Candidate</b>	<b>% Prefer</b>
Herman Cain	23.4%
Mitt Romney	20.6%
Newt Gingrich	7.5%
Rick Perry	7.2%
Ron Paul	6.6%
Michele Bachmann	3.8%
Jon Huntsman	2.5%
Rick Santorum	2.2%
Someone else	0.3%
Don't Know	25.9%

*N=320*

We presented the entire 1,000-voter sample with four "head-to-head" matchups of President Obama versus each of four Republicans who seemed to be leading contenders

\* In 2010, asked "more or less likely" without the "much or somewhat" options.

at the time we wrote the questionnaire: Rick Perry, Herman Cain, Ron Paul, and Mitt Romney. (See Table 9.) Obama did best against Perry and least well against Romney. The GOP challenger with the highest percentage was Romney; the one with the lowest percentage was Paul.

**Table 9**  
**Presidential Preference: Pres. Obama vs. Four Republican Challengers**

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>GOP Vote</b>	<b>Obama Vote</b>
Mitt Romney	38.5%	46.1%
Herman Cain	34.0%	46.3%
Rick Perry	32.8%	50.8%
Ron Paul	30.3%	49.3%

### Compromise and Civility in Politics

Stories about the lack of civility and unwillingness to compromise in Washington are frequent in the political press. Retiring politicians often mention the lack of a civil tone in politics as a reason for getting out of the game. We asked respondents which party they blamed for the lack of civility in the Capitol. We also wanted to know if a willingness to compromise would help or hurt a candidate in the eyes of Illinois voters.

Respondents were twice as likely to blame the Republicans in Washington as to blame the Democrats (37.2 percent vs. 18.2 percent; see Table 10), not entirely surprising in a state that reliably votes Democratic in presidential elections. However, more than a third of those interviewed volunteered that both parties were to blame for the lack of a civil tone.

**Table 10**  
**Which Party to Blame for Lack of Civil Tone**

Some people have said that government in Washington does not work well because of a lack of a civil tone. Who do you blame more for the lack of civility in Washington – [ROTATE ORDER] The Democrats in Washington or the Republicans in Washington?

<b>Party to Blame</b>	<b>% Responding</b>
Democrats	18.2%
Republicans	37.2%
Both (VOL)	35.6%
Neither (VOL)	3.5%
Other/Don't know	5.5%

Illinois voters clearly say they want candidates who are willing to compromise in order to get things done. Eight in ten say they would be more willing to vote for such a candidate, and fully half the sample said they would be *much* more likely to do so. Only about one in ten said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate willing to compromise. (See Table 11, next page.)

**Table 11**  
**Vote for a Candidate Who Compromises to Get Things Done**

Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a political candidate who is willing to make compromises in order to get things done? (PROBE: Would you be much [more/less] likely or just somewhat [more/less] likely?)

<b>Willingness to Vote</b>	<b>% Responding</b>
Much more	51.4%
Somewhat more	28.2%
Somewhat less	4.9%
Much less	5.3%
Other/Don't know	10.2%

## **D. Addressing the State Budget Deficit**

### Budget Cuts and Revenue Increases

For three years in a row, the Simon Poll has asked Illinois registered voters what should be done to bring down the chronic, multibillion-dollar budget deficit the state has been facing for years: to raise taxes, to cut “waste and inefficiency in government,” or to both raise revenue and cut spending. And for three years in a row, an almost identical 57 percent have told us that cutting waste and inefficiency could do the job. (See Table 12, next page.)

Most serious analysts would agree that, while there is by definition waste and inefficiency in any organization as large as a state government, we wouldn't be able to find \$3.7 billion worth of it (the size of the state deficit at the time the 2011 survey was in the field).

At first blush it would seem surprising, given the relatively high media profile given to our budget problems, that the 57 percent figure hasn't significantly budged in three years. This tells us that essentially six in ten Illinoisans have a firmly entrenched belief that the state engages in wasteful spending and inefficient practices on a vast scale.

On the other hand, it appears that news about the dire condition of Illinois' finances has reached the public, and that, as a consequence, they are willing to tolerate cuts in some services and increases in some taxes. In the four years we have been asking these service-cut and revenue-hiking questions, we can see significant movement in public opinion, especially regarding cuts to public-employee pensions and an acceptance of broadening the sales tax to include services as well as goods.

**Table 12**  
**Solutions to Budget Problem**

The state of Illinois has a budget deficit of over 3.7\* billion dollars. I'm going to read three statements that people have made about how to fix the deficit, and ask you which one comes closest to your views, OK? If you haven't thought much about the issue, just tell me that.

	2009	2010	2011
Illinois' public programs and services have already been reduced significantly. We can only fix the problem by taking in more revenue, such as a tax increase.	9.5%	9.3%	6.9%
The state takes in plenty of money to pay for public services but wastes it on unnecessary programs. We can fix the problem by cutting waste and inefficiency in government.	56.5%	57.0%	57.7%
Illinois' budget problem is so large it can only be solved by a combination of budget cuts and revenue increases.	27.3%	26.6%	28.5%
Haven't thought much about it.	3.4%	3.4%	3.0%
Other/Don't know	3.4%	3.7%	3.9%

Table 13 (next page) shows the movement in opinion over time regarding cuts in state services. While voters remain strongly opposed to cuts in such areas as K-12 education and services for the disabled, there has been significant movement in favor of cuts in spending on state universities, natural resources, and state workers' retirement.

\* In 2009, "over 12 billion dollars"; in 2010, "over 13 billion dollars." A new tax increase as well as a gradually improving economy helped reduce the deficit by 2011.

**Table 13**  
**Budget Cut Proposals**

<b>Do you favor or oppose cuts in:</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Spending on kindergarten through high school education?				
Favor	10.7%	13.0%	14.0%	16.5%
Oppose	85.6%	84.4%	82.1%	80.0%
Other/Don't know	3.6%	2.7%	3.9%	3.5%
Spending on state universities?				
Favor	20.9%	31.9%	34.0%	38.2%
Oppose	72.0%	61.4%	57.4%	54.1%
Other/Don't know	7.2%	6.8%	8.6%	7.7%
State spending on public safety, such as state police and prison operations?				
Favor	16.8%	16.3%	21.0%	20.6%
Oppose	77.3%	79.8%	74.5%	73.8%
Other/Don't know	5.9%	4.1%	4.5%	5.6%
Spending on natural resources, such as state parks or environmental regulation?				
Favor	21.2%	32.0%	40.0%	36.7%
Oppose	73.3%	63.0%	53.1%	55.6%
Other/Don't know	5.5%	5.0%	6.9%	7.7%
Spending on programs for poor people*?				
Favor	20.6%	20.4%	24.9%	25.2%
Oppose	73.0%	72.4%	66.3%	64.7%
Other/Don't know	6.4%	7.3%	8.8%	10.1%
Spending on programs for people with mental or physical disabilities?				
Favor	NA	11.8%	12.4%	12.3%
Oppose	NA	85.3%	83.2%	83.5%
Other/Don't know	NA	3.0%	4.4%	4.2%
Spending on pension benefits for state worker's retirement? **				
Favor	24.1%	39.5%	45.5%	45.5%
Oppose	65.7%	53.4%	47.3%	48.0%
Other/Don't know	10.2%	7.2%	7.2%	6.5%

Further, despite loud anti-tax talk from many politicians and vocal elements in the electorate, there appears to be significant movement toward acceptance of some revenue-increasing measures, as Table 14 (next page) demonstrates. Majorities favor expansion of legalized gambling and a \$1-per-pack increase in cigarette taxes. Most dramatically, a bare majority of voters surveyed favor increasing the base of the sales tax to include services as well as goods, up from just three voters in ten in the inaugural 2008 Simon Poll.

\* In 2008, "programs for the needy."

\*\* In 2008, "state workers' retirement"



Voters remain opposed to increasing the sales tax rate, however. They also opposed, by a six-point margin, applying the state income tax to retirement income above \$50,000.

**Table 14**  
**Revenue Increases**

<b>Do you favor or oppose:</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
A proposal to add brackets to the state income tax structure so that higher-income residents pay higher taxes?				
Favor	65.9%	NA	NA	NA
Oppose	28.8%	NA	NA	NA
Other/Don't know	5.2%	NA	NA	NA
Raising the state income tax rate from 3 percent to 4 percent*?				
Favor	NA	32.1%	40.9%	NA
Oppose	NA	65.5%	56.2%	NA
Other/Don't know	NA	2.4%	2.9%	NA
Raising the state sales tax rate?				
Favor	17.0%	21.4%	24.5%	22.0%
Oppose	78.1%	75.5%	72.9%	74.1%
Other/Don't know	4.9%	2.9%	2.6%	3.8%
Expanding the sales tax to cover services like dry cleaning or haircuts, which are not currently taxed?				
Favor	28.4%	44.1%	45.2%	50.1%
Oppose	67.6%	53.3%	51.4%	45.9%
Other/Don't know	4.0%	2.7%	3.4%	4.0%
A proposal expanding legalized gambling in the state?				
Favor	46.6%	44.5%	49.9%	56.8%
Oppose	46.9%	51.4%	46.3%	38.8%
Other/Don't know	6.5%	4.1%	3.8%	4.4%
Selling state assets, such as the lottery and the Illinois toll road system, to private investors?				
Favor	37.8%	25.9%	30.4%	NA
Oppose	52.2%	63.5%	60.1%	NA
Other/Don't know	9.9%	10.6%	9.5%	NA
A proposal to increase the tax on cigarettes by \$1 per pack?				
Favor	NA	NA	NA	69.2%
Oppose	NA	NA	NA	28.5%
Other/Don't know	NA	NA	NA	2.3%
A proposal to apply the state income tax to the retirement income of those earning more than \$50,000 a year? **				
Favor	NA	NA	NA	42.9%
Oppose	NA	NA	NA	48.9%
Other/Don't know	NA	NA	NA	8.2%

\* In 2009, "3 percent to 4.5 percent."

\*\* Collapsed data from a two-part question

### Borrowing to pay late state bills

One tactic the state uses to manage its deficit is to delay payments to organizations that provide goods and services to Illinois. These late payments create hardships, for example, for health-care providers, vendors, mental health and juvenile facilities, even state universities. This issue was prominent in the news around the time our survey was in the field.

We explained the situation to our respondents and asked them to choose between two policy options: That the state should borrow money at a lower interest rate to pay the vendors what they were owed, or that the state should just pay as best it can without borrowing.

**Table 15**  
**Borrowing to Pay Late State Bills**

The State of Illinois is late paying its bills to organizations that perform services and provide goods to the State. By law, it has to pay those vendors a high rate of interest on those late bills. I'm going to read two statements some people are making about how the State should deal with this situation, then ask you which statement comes closer to your views. If you haven't thought much about the issue, just tell me that. [ROTATE CHOICES]

The State should borrow money at a lower interest rate to pay off those late bills, saving money on interest and getting money to businesses and organizations that need to be paid.	39.1%
The State should just pay its bills as well as it can with current funds and not borrow money to try to fix its problems.	50.3%
Haven't thought much about it	8.7%
Other/Don't know	1.9%

By a five-to-four margin, as Table 15 shows, Illinois voters in our survey opposed borrowing at the lower rate. Our respondents probably concluded that it would represent new borrowing and spending, rather than to pay debts already incurred. As proponents suggest, this measure is more akin to refinancing a credit-card debt from a higher to a lower interest rate.

### **E. Immigration Reform**

Illegal immigration is a hot policy topic in states such as Arizona and Alabama, which have implemented sweeping legislation requiring local law enforcement to check federal immigration status, among other restrictions and penalties. Since Chicago has a large immigrant community and agricultural interests in rural and small-town Illinois rely on immigrant labor, we included questions in the 2011 Simon Poll to gauge voter sentiment

on how to enforce existing laws. We also asked whether the government should provide undocumented immigrants already here with a path to citizenship.

**Table 16**  
**Support for Immigration Reforms**

The subject of immigration has been controversial in some areas. We are interested in what people think about ILLEGAL immigration in the U.S. Do you favor or oppose... [ROTATE]

Providing a way for illegal immigrants currently in the country to gain legal citizenship if they pass background checks, pay fines, and have jobs.

Favor	60.8%
Oppose	35.8%
Other/Don't know	3.4%

Stronger enforcement of immigration laws and border security.

Favor	86.0%
Oppose	11.6%
Other/Don't know	2.4%

Requiring local law enforcement in Illinois to arrest illegal immigrants.

Favor	63.7%
Oppose	29.7%
Other/Don't know	6.6%

Allowing illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to gain legal resident status if they join the military or go to college.

Favor	56.6%
Oppose	35.6%
Other/Don't know	7.8%

Charging illegal immigrants who graduate from Illinois high schools the same in-state tuition as state universities charge legal residents of Illinois.

Favor	63.3%
Oppose	30.7%
Other/Don't know	6.0%

Essentially, Illinois voters are moderate with regard to immigration policy. Six in ten favor allowing undocumented immigrants to attain legal status if they pass background checks and other requirements (See Table 16). They also appear to be open to improving the lives of young undocumented immigrants. Over half favor granting legal status to those whose parents brought them to this country illegally if they go to college or join the military. Six in ten favor the provisions of the so-called “Dream Act,” granting in-state tuition rates to undocumented children who graduate from Illinois high schools.

On the other hand, voters by a large margin favor stronger enforcement of immigration laws and border security—mostly an abstract notion here in the heartland, compared with states such as Texas, Arizona, and California. Almost two-thirds also support the Arizona-style policy of requiring local law enforcement to arrest undocumented immigrants.

## F. Women in Politics

The 2011-2012 academic year at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute featured a number of speakers and programs on the topic of Women in Politics, so we thought it was fitting to include a number of questions in the survey directed at that issue.

First we asked respondents if they thought men or women made better political leaders, or if there was no difference. Predictably, perhaps, three-quarters of respondents said it would make no difference. Interestingly, however, among those relative few who expressed a preference, more said women would make better leaders (12.5 percent) than said men would make better leaders (7.5 percent; see Table 17).

**Table 17**  
**Do Men or Women Make Better Political Leaders?**

Generally, do you think/believe/feel men make better political leaders, women make better political leaders, or is there no difference?

Men	7.5%
Women	12.5%
No difference	78.0%
Other/Don't know	2.0%

In a commonly used survey question format about voting for members of “out-groups” (such as minorities, communists, homosexuals, etc.), we asked respondents whether they would vote for a well-qualified female candidate if their party nominated her. Unsurprisingly, again, very few (2.3 percent) said they would not vote for a woman candidate. A little more than a quarter (27.0 percent) volunteered that it would make no difference, and about half (47.1 percent) said they would. What is interesting in this question (see Table 18) is the one-quarter of respondents who answered “don’t know,” whether for lack of information or to avoid the social undesirability of telling a telephone interviewer they would be unwilling to vote for a woman candidate.

**Table 18**  
**Vote for a Well-Qualified Female Candidate**

If your party nominated a generally well-qualified female candidate, do you think/believe/feel you would vote for her?

Yes	47.1%
No	2.3%
No difference	27.0%
Other/Don't know	23.6%

Finally, we asked respondents whether they thought there should be more or fewer women elected officials in Illinois, or if the number was about right. Virtually everyone surveyed (94.8 percent) said they thought there should be more women elected officials in the state. (See Table 19, next page.)

**Table 19**  
**More or Fewer Female Elected Officials in Illinois**

Generally, do you think there should be more women elected officials in Illinois, fewer, or is there about the right number of women elected officials in Illinois?

More	94.8%
Fewer	2.2%
About right	3.0%

## G. Economic Situation

In the 2010 poll we asked respondents whether their family's economic situation that year was better than, worse than, or about the same as it was the previous year; then we asked the prospective question about whether they thought their economic situation would improve in the coming year. We repeated those questions in the 2011 poll, adding a question about whether they thought the economic situation of those less fortunate would improve, worsen, or stay the same in the coming year.

**Table 20**  
**Better or Worse Economic Situation**

	2010	2011
Overall, and speaking generally, would you say your family's economic situation is better than it was a year ago, worse than it was a year ago, or about the same?		
Better	8.5%	9.2%
Worse	38.4%	41.7%
About the same	51.7%	47.8%
Other/Don't know	1.4%	1.3%

And what about in the coming year? Overall, and speaking generally, do you expect your family's economic situation next year to be better than it has been this year, worse than it has been this year, or about the same as this year?

Better	23.4%	18.8%
Worse	17.5%	24.7%
About the same	54.0%	51.8%
Other/Don't know	5.1%	4.7%

And what about people who are financially worse off than you? Overall, and speaking generally, do you expect their economic situation next year will be better than it has been this year, worse than it has been this year, or about the same as this year?

Better	NA	11.9%
Worse	NA	47.3%
About the same	NA	34.6%
Other/Don't know	NA	6.2%

Regarding the respondent family's economic situation in the current year, this year's numbers look a lot like last year's: Not quite one in ten said things have improved; about

four in ten said things have become worse, and about half said things have stayed the same. (See Table 20, previous page.)

Regarding the economic situation they expect in the coming year, Illinois voters appear to have become slightly less optimistic. Only 18.8 percent said in 2011 that they expect things to get better, compared with 23.4 percent in 2010. About a quarter (24.7 percent) in 2011 expected things to get worse, compared with 17.5 percent in 2010.

Nor were respondents particularly optimistic about the economic situation of the people “who are financially worse off than you.” Only about one in eight think things will get better for the less-well-off, compared with almost half who think things will get worse.

## Section Two: Item Analysis

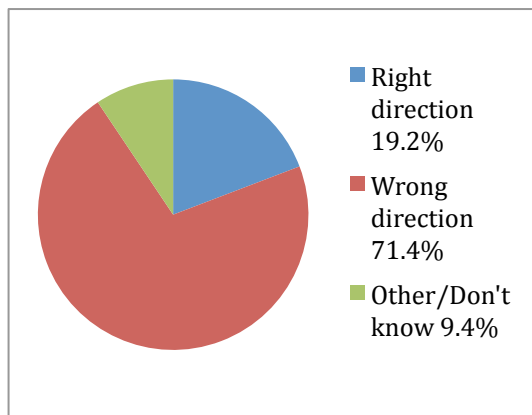
### A. STATE OF THE COUNTRY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The Simon Poll, like many political and policy-related surveys, begins with questions about the general direction of the nation, state, and locality. Starting the interview in this fashion gets the respondent accustomed to answering questions that are simple, require little thought, and set a mental stage for public policy questions.

The “direction” questions also serve a useful purpose when part of a time series, as well as taking the “temperature” of the electorate in a very broad and general way. For instance, the direction questions in the Simon Poll in 2011 found a pessimistic electorate, particularly on the general direction of things in the State of Illinois.

#### 1. Direction of the Country

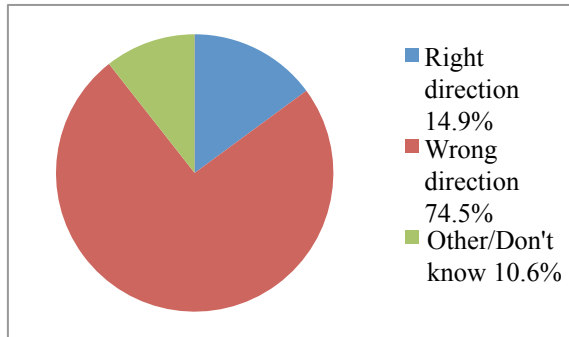
Only two in ten registered Illinois voters in our sample thought things in the country were headed in the right direction; over 70 percent of the sample thought things were “off track and headed in the wrong direction.” Right-direction answers were down over 11 percentage points from the 2010 poll, while wrong-direction answers were up more than ten points.



- *Democrats were much more likely to be optimistic about the direction of the country (31.7%) than were Republicans (6.1%).*
- *Similarly, City of Chicago respondents were most likely to give “right direction” responses (28.3%) while significantly fewer did so in the Chicago suburbs (19.3%), in northern and central Illinois (15.0%), and in southern Illinois (15.0%).*

## 2. Direction of the State of Illinois

Just 14.9 percent of respondents believe the state is moving in the right direction, a 2.7 percent increase from 2010. The vast majority thought the state was moving in the wrong direction (74.5 percent).



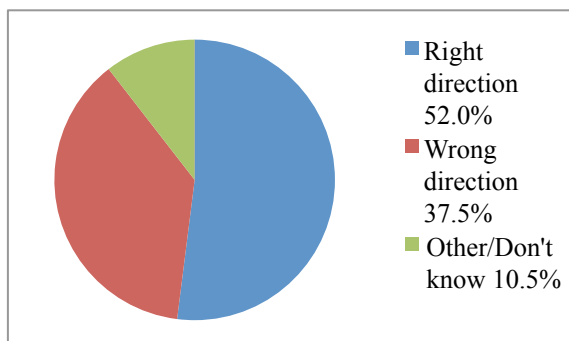
- *In no group did large percentages think the state was headed in the right direction. Democrats were much more likely to think things were going right (24.9%) than were*

*Republicans (4.5%).*

- *Similar to last year's poll results, there was little difference among education-level and income groups, though again there were regional differences. Interestingly, however, there was little difference in outlook among those households who had someone looking for a job (16.2% "right direction") than those who had not encountered unemployment (14.2%).*

## 3. Direction of "Your Area of the State"

Voters surveyed were much more likely to be optimistic about the direction of things in their city or area of the state—and these levels looked much like the results of the 2010 poll; just over half thought things in their area were headed in the right direction.



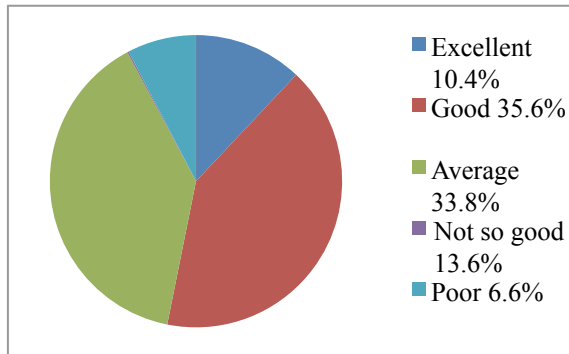
- *The level of overall approval by region follows a dissimilar pattern*

*than the two previous questions. Those in the City of Chicago express roughly the same amount of optimism as those living in central and northern Illinois (48.3% "right direction"), but those in the Chicago suburbs had a much more favorable view (58.3%). Those living in the southern part of the state were less optimistic (43.0%).*



#### 4. Quality of Life

We asked respondents to tell us about their perceptions of overall quality of life in their area—regardless of the direction in which they thought it was heading. These results look very similar to those found in the 2010 poll, with 46.0 percent indicating an excellent or good quality of life.

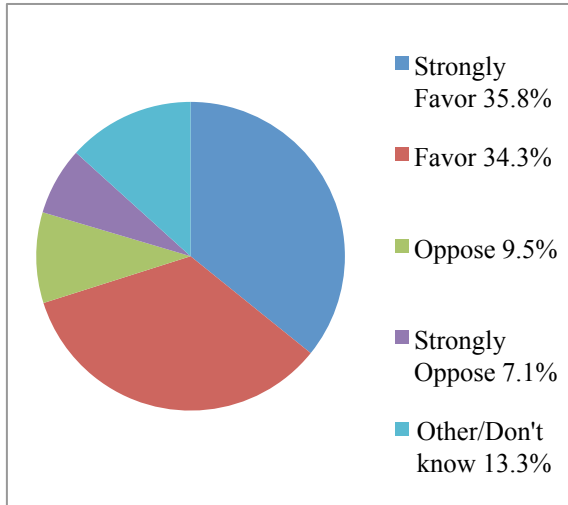


- *As in the previous question, there is a divide between the suburbs (56.7% “excellent/good”) and the City of Chicago (41.6%).*
- *Differences are even more stark downstate, with “excellent/good” responses of just 41.0% in northern and central Illinois, and 24.0% in southern Illinois*
- *There is a slight gender disparity in the results on quality of life, with 43.6% of women indicating excellent or good, while 49.5% of men indicating the same quality of life.*

## B. REDISTRICTING REFORMS

### 1. Approval of a Proposal to Add a Neutral Person to the Panel

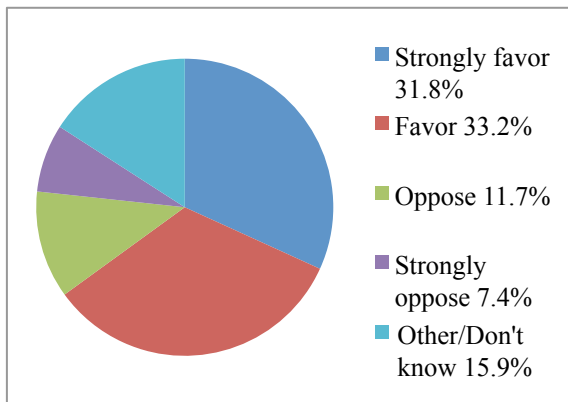
We told respondents about a current proposal, currently being advocated by the Simon Institute, that would add a neutral party to the state’s redistricting panel who would vote in the event of a partisan tie. We then asked them whether and to what extent they favored or opposed this proposal. Not surprisingly, and similar to other proposals asked about in previous polls, respondents were overwhelmingly in favor of such reform. In fact, over seven in ten either favored or strongly favored this tie-breaking mechanism.



- *There appears to be a small variation on this question based on party identification. Those who self-identify as Democrats show a slightly lower level of support (70.2%) for this proposal than do those who identify as Republican (74.0%). There is little variation on a number of other demographic variables, with all groups in strong support of the proposal.*

## 2. Proposal to Use an Independent Commission to Redistrict

Another redistricting reform was offered to respondents. In this scenario, the state legislature would pass a constitutional amendment that would create an independent commission to draw redistricting maps. The maps would then be voted on by elected representatives.



- *Support for this proposal is very similar to that seen in the*

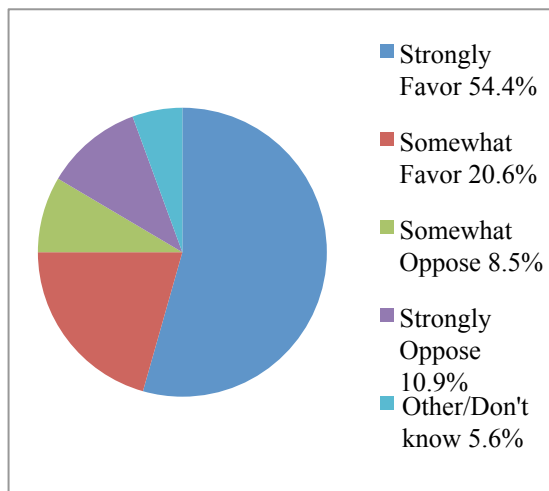
*previous redistricting question, with nearly two-thirds of those polled stating that they strongly favored or favored this independent commission being created.*

- *In terms of party affiliation there is little difference in level of support between partisans. Of Republicans, 71.1% favor this proposal, compared with 63.8% of Democrats*

## C. OTHER REFORM PROPOSALS

### 1. Term Limits

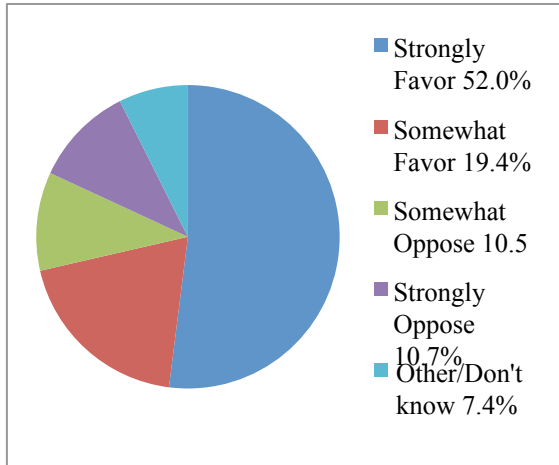
Those responding to the poll were asked to weigh in on a proposal to limit the length of time elected officials could serve in the Illinois legislature: State representatives would be limited to five consecutive two-year terms and state senators limited to three consecutive four-year terms. Overall, this measure enjoys strong support in the sample, with exactly three quarters of those asked being in favor.



- *Support for this proposal climbs as the distance from Chicago increases. Those in Chicago showed the least support, with 68.3% strongly or somewhat favoring this measure. Those in the Chicago suburbs show greater support at 75.0%, with those in northern and central Illinois and those living in southern Illinois being much more favorable to term limits (77.3% and 80.0% respectively).*

### 2. Limits on Judicial Contributions

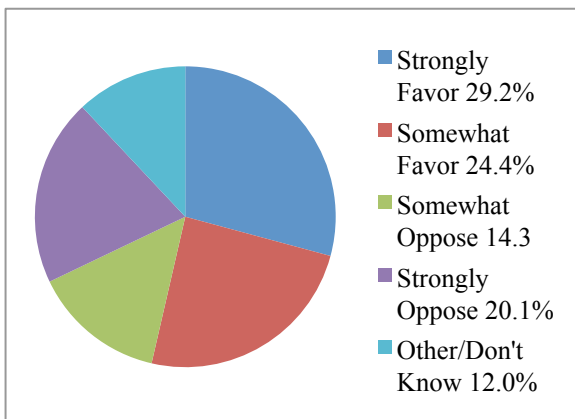
The reform proposal would limit the amount of financial donations that could be made to judicial campaigns, with the Illinois Supreme Court being named specifically. This proposal is also widely supported by the Illinois public, with 71.4 percent strongly or somewhat in favor.



- *Interestingly there is little difference in the support for this measure on different ends of the political spectrum. Those who indicate Democratic partisanship support this proposal (74.6%), while Republicans are also strongly in favor or somewhat in favor (70.6%) of a limit on campaign contributions.*

### 3. Public Financing of Judicial Elections

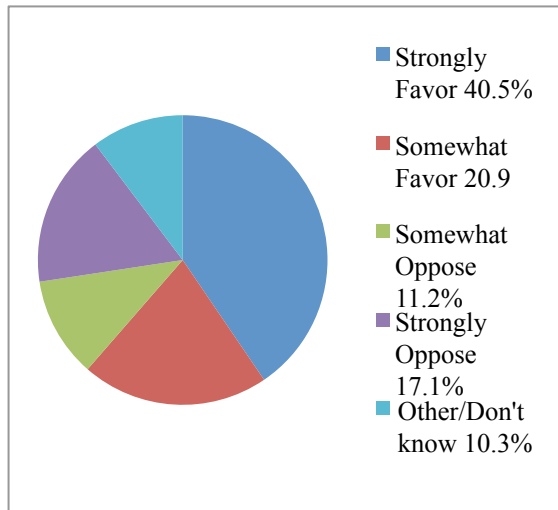
Another proposal tested would eliminate all private contributions to judicial campaigns in return for public funding. The support for this scenario was much more tepid than limitations on campaign contributions. While a majority of respondents still were in favor (53.6 percent), this number is much smaller than the 61.4 percent who were in favor of contribution limits.



- *Support for this proposal is strongly correlated with the partisan affiliation of those who responded to the question. While 60.5% of Democrats were in favor of this change, the support among Republicans is just 48.4%.*

#### 4. Limits on Party Leaders' Power to Distribute Campaign Money

We also asked respondents about a proposal to limit the amount of money that could be redistributed by party leaders to other political candidates during a general election. This change is largely supported by those in the sample, with 61.4 percent in favor of this reform.



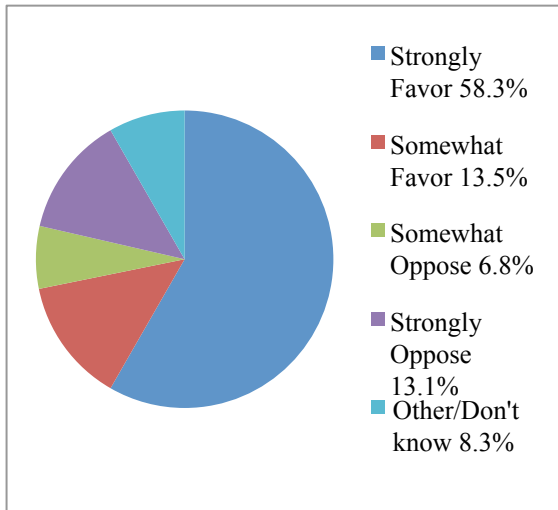
- Geographically there is little difference in the support this

*proposal gets. The region with the least support for this proposal is southern Illinois (52.0%), followed by the city of Chicago (58.9%), northern/central (61.7%), with the Chicago suburbs showing the highest level of support (64.5%).*

- Politically there is little difference in support between those who are affiliated with the Democratic Party (61.2%) and those who are affiliated with the Republican Party (61.9%).

#### 5. Proposal to Change Primary Balloting

The current primary system in Illinois forces voters to declare which party's primary ballot they want when arriving at their polling places. Respondents were asked if they would be in favor of changing the current system. Under this proposal, voters would no longer have to publicly declare which ballot they would like to vote on in a primary election. This measure has widespread support among this sample: 71.8 percent of those polled strongly or somewhat favor this initiative, which is generally referred to as an "open primary."



- *Only 44.4% of Chicagoans support changing the primary*

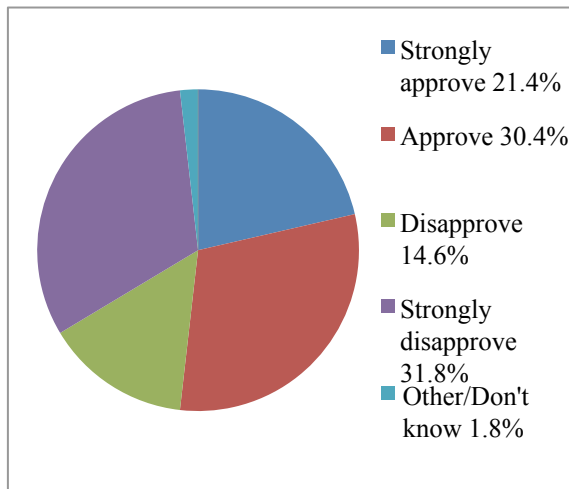
*system, while 59.0% in the suburbs, 64.7% in northern and central Illinois, and 61.0% of those in southern Illinois are in favor of this change.*

- *As expected, this change to the primary process is supported most strongly by independent voters. While 53.0% of Democrats and 58.0% of Republicans are in favor, 72.2% of independent voters believe that the primary process should change in the state of Illinois.*

## D. 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ITEMS

### 1. Presidential Approval Ratings

President Barack Obama's approval rating is virtually identical to the 2010 polling statistics: In 2010, 51.2 percent strongly approved or approved of the president's job performance; in the 2011 sample 51.8 percent of respondents had a positive view of the president's performance.



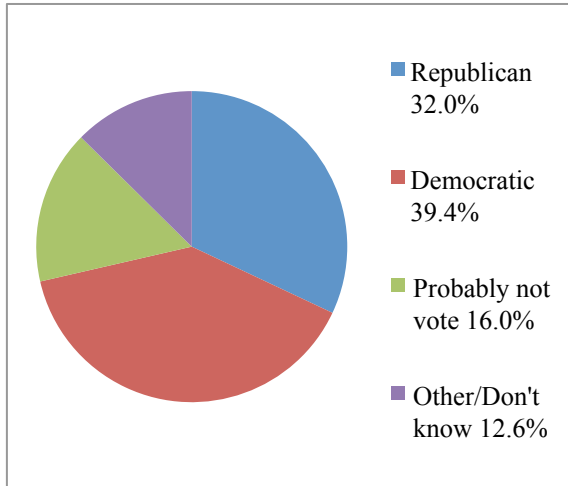
- *Partisan differences are quite stark on the question of President Obama's job performance: 83.4% of Democrats approved or*

*strongly approved, compared with 44.8% of Independents, and just 11.2% of Republicans.*

- *Women were more likely than men to approve or strongly approve of President Obama's performance (56.3% vs. 45.1%).*
- *The President's approval rating falls the farther away from Chicago we get: Three-fourths (75.5%) approve or strongly approve in the City, vs. 48.5% in the suburbs, 46.3% in northern and central Illinois, and just 39.0% in southern Illinois.*

### 2. Generic Ballot for March 2012 Presidential Primary

Respondents to the 2011 Simon poll were asked to think ahead to March 2012 and to the possibility of voting the primary election. They were queried whether they would vote in the Republican primary, the Democratic primary, or if they would probably not vote.

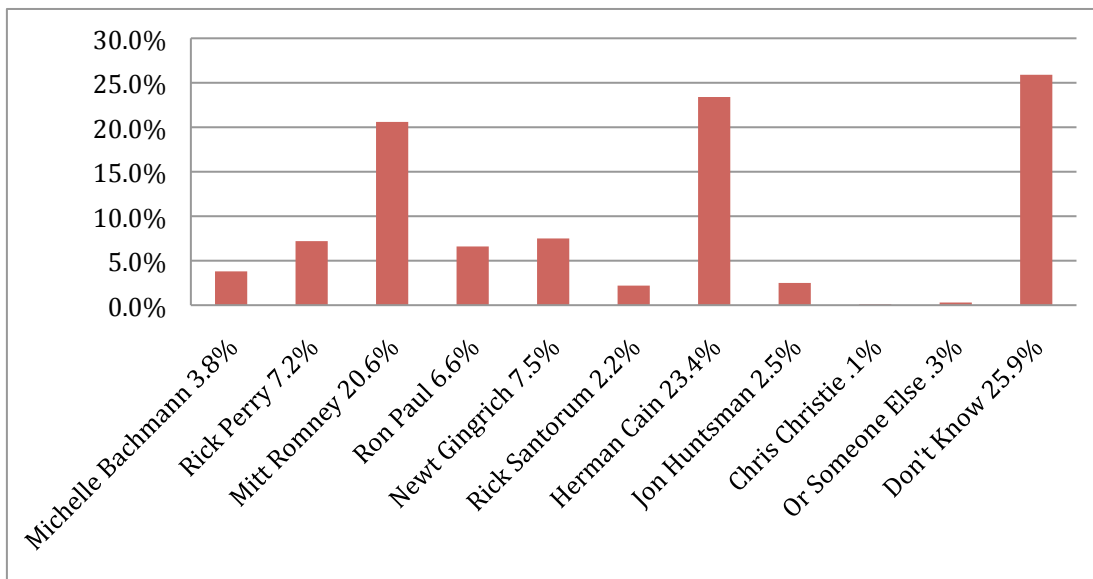


would choose the Democratic ballot in March. Interestingly, a significant number of those asked indicated that they either were not going to vote (16.0%) or that they did not know if they would vote or not (12.6%).

- Despite the strong possibility that President Obama will run unopposed in the 2012 Democrat primary, a plurality (39.4%) of those polled indicated that they would choose the Democratic ballot in March. Interestingly, a significant number of those asked indicated that they either were not going to vote (16.0%) or that they did not know if they would vote or not (12.6%).
- Education has a strong influence on respondents reported likelihood of voting. Over three quarters of those holding a graduate degree (76.4%) stated that they would vote in the primary election.

### 3. Republican Primary Candidate Preference

Respondents who indicated that they would vote in the Republican Primary in March 2012 were asked which candidate they preferred in the Republican race. Two frontrunners, Herman Cain and Mitt Romney, each received the support of more than 20 percent of Republican respondents. More than a quarter (25.9%) of likely Republican primary voters did not know who they would vote for.

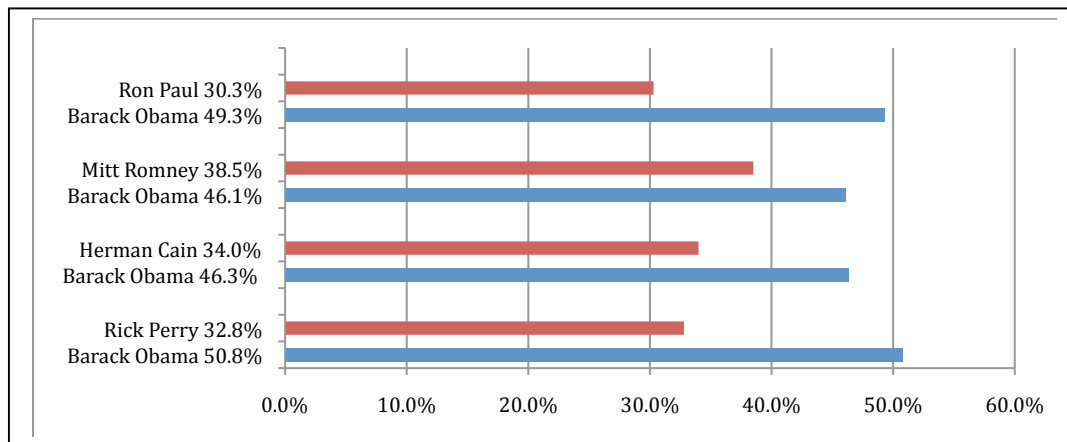




- *Herman Cain was the beneficiary of strong support from Tea Party loyalists. Of those who indicated that they would be much more likely or more likely to vote for a candidate who was affiliated with the Tea Party movement, 34.5% would vote for Herman Cain.*
- *Just 14.2% of this same group would vote for Mitt Romney.*
- *It's important to note, however, that the largest portion of the sample (25.9%) were unsure who they would cast their ballot for in March.*

#### 4. Presidential Election Head-to-Head Matchups

This year's poll followed up the previous question by asking the entire sample which candidate they would support in the 2012 presidential elections in a number of head-to-head matchups among likely candidates. Four Republican nominees were considered: Rick Perry, Herman Cain, Mitt Romney and Ron Paul.



While the president enjoys a comfortable lead in each of these contests against those voters who can make a clear choice, it is crucial to note that there is a significant contingent of voters who do not know enough to make a choice.

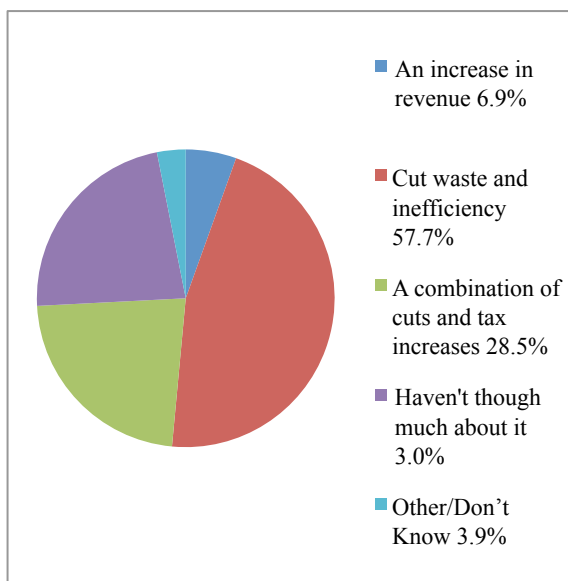
- *For Obama vs. Romney, 12.3% do not know enough, followed by Obama vs. Perry at 12.7%.*
- *There is even more uncertainty surrounding Herman Cain and Ron Paul (17.5% and 17.2% respectively).*

## E. ILLINOIS BUDGETARY ISSUES

The state of Illinois finds itself in a precarious financial position in terms of the state budget deficit and its ability to pay vendors in a timely manner. Both of these areas were addressed in the Paul Simon Poll.

### 1. A Solution to the Budget Crisis

Those who took part in the 2011 poll were told that the state of Illinois has a budget deficit of over \$3.7 billion and were asked which solution they would prefer to fix this disparity: an increase in revenue with a tax increase specifically named, a reduction in “waste and inefficiency,” or a combination of both of these measures.



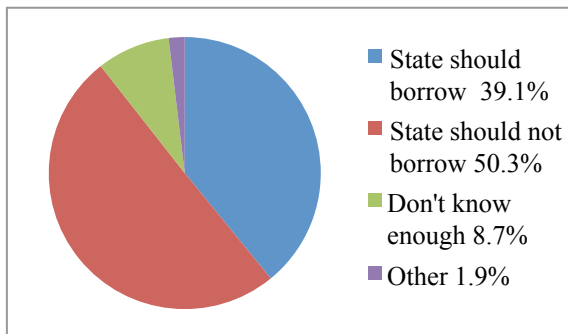
- *Just 6.9% of respondents agreed that the best solution to the state's budget woes would be an increase in revenue. Most believed reducing waste and inefficiency would be sufficient to narrow the deficit (57.7%). Just over a quarter (28.5%) chose the combination of budget cuts and revenue increases as the solution.*
- *There were few regional differences on this question,*

*especially for those living outside the city of Chicago. Chicagoans were the only group polled in which fewer than half (48.3%) chose the “cut waste and inefficiency” option.*

- *The differences in party identification, however, are much more pronounced. Democrats were six times more likely to favor increases in taxes (12.1%) than were Republicans (2.2%). In contrast, over three quarters of Republicans (75.3%) believe that the proper solution is to cut inefficiency and wasteful spending, compared to 41.6% of Democrats.*
- *It's important to note the opinions of Independents in this poll mirror the feelings of Republicans much more than Democrats. Just 3.1% of Independents chose revenue increases, but 68.0% chose the budget-cutting option.*

## 2. Should the State of Illinois Borrow Money to Pay Its Bills?

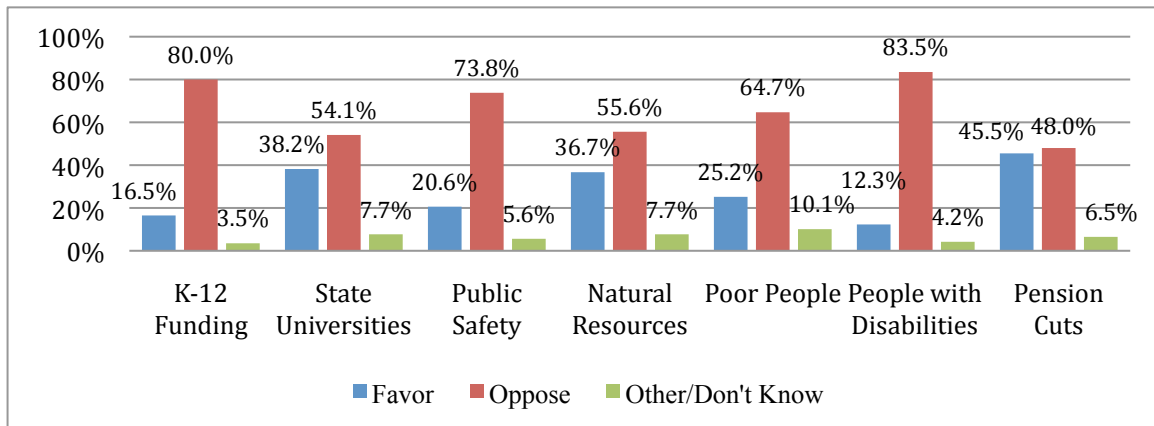
Respondents were read a paragraph that described the current backlog of bills facing the State of Illinois. It explained that the state was legally obligated to pay those vendors a high rate of interest on bills that are past due. Then, two statements were read, the first favored the state borrowing money to pay off its creditors and the second opposed the state borrowing money and instead suggested that the state should pay its bills as well as it can for the foreseeable future. A slight majority of those polled (50.3 percent) believe that the state should not seek to borrow money but instead pay creditors as well as it can. Nearly four in ten (39.1 percent) were in favor of taking out loans to pay those who are owed money by the state.



- Regionally, an interesting pattern emerged. Those living in the city of Chicago were the least supportive of a plan that would allow the state to borrow money (36.1%), while those living in northern and central Illinois, and southern Illinois were much more in favor (41.3% and 41.0% respectively).*
- Democrats (44.7%) were more in favor of a borrowing plan than were Republicans (34.0%). Independents were more closely aligned with Republicans, with 36.6% favoring borrowing.*
- There is also a significant difference in opinion based on education level. For those with a high school diploma or less, 31.6% supported a plan to borrow money, while 54.5% opposed this idea. For those with at least a college degree, 40.2% supported borrowing money, while 50.3% oppose.*

### 3. Possible Budget Cuts

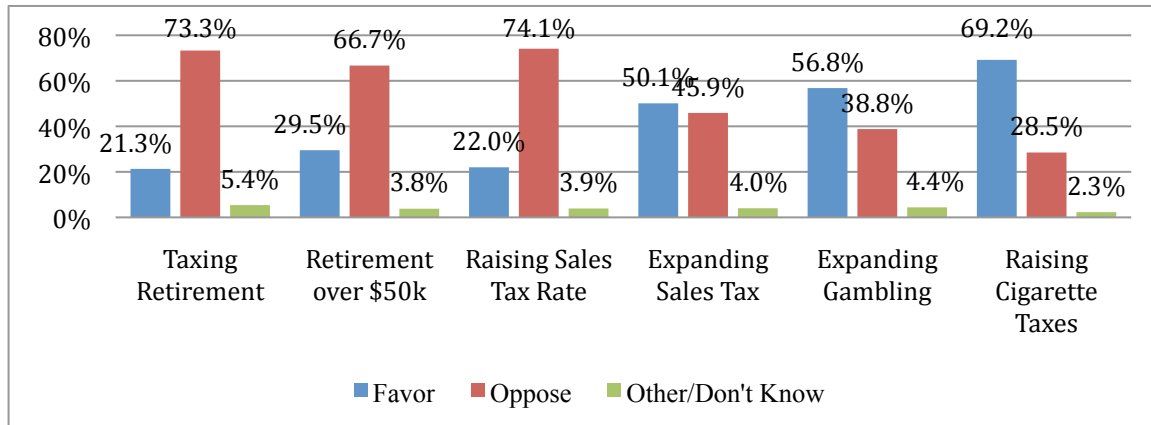
We asked respondents if they would favor or oppose budget cuts in seven areas that have been the subject of scrutiny by Illinois legislators.



- The ideological divide between Republicans and Democrats becomes apparent, as does the influence of the Tea Party, when looking at budget cuts. Over a third of those who support the Tea Party (34.1%) are in favor of cuts to K-12 education, while just 9.7% of those who do not support the Tea Party would like to see reductions in that area. 56.1% of Tea Party supporters favor cuts to state universities. Only 29.9% of those who are not affiliated*
- with the Tea Party are in favor of such a proposal.*
- In the area of cuts to state workers' pensions, there is noticeable divide among those on each side of the political spectrum. Republicans in the poll were twice as likely to favor reductions (64.1%) as Democrats (31.2%). Of Tea Party supporters 70.1% would like to see cuts to state workers' pensions, while only 36.3% of those who are not Tea Party supporters would welcome cuts.*

#### 4. Possible Sources of Revenue

Having asked respondents the areas in which they would support budget reductions, we then asked about the areas in which they could support possible increases in revenue. It becomes clear that Illinois voters are strongly opposed to half of the proposals they were asked to consider. However, they were supportive of three possibilities.



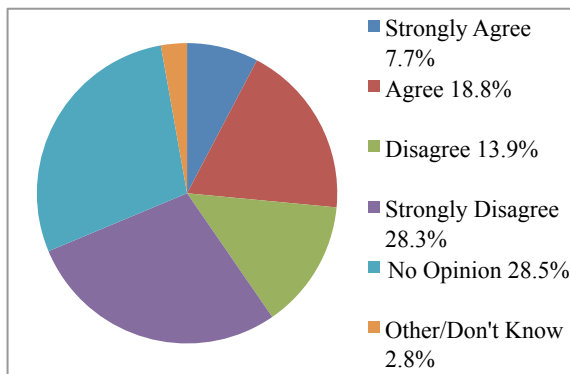
- On the subject of taxing retirement income, there is a small difference between those in lowest income bracket (under \$50,000 per year) and the highest bracket (over \$100,000 per year). Just 18.9% of those in the lower bracket favored a tax on retirement income, while 26.7% of those in the highest bracket were in favor.*
- The proposal to apply sales tax to services such as dry cleaning receives majority support by independents in this year's poll (53.6%), close to that found among Democrats in the sample (56.2%). Republicans were somewhat less supportive of this measure with 42.3% favoring*
- such change. Just 36.4% of Tea Party supporters would like to see taxes expanded in this way.*
- There was broad support for the proposal to expand gambling in the state of Illinois. A majority of respondents from each region were in favor with Chicagoans showing the highest level of support (58.9%), while southern Illinoisans showed the least support (52.0% favored).*
- The \$1 per pack increase in cigarette taxes also found favor with both political parties. Nearly three quarters of Democrats were in favor (73.5%), as were nearly two-thirds of Republicans (62.8%).*

## F. TEA PARTY AGREEMENT AND INFLUENCE

The importance of the Tea Party movement has grown since the Simon Poll was last conducted in October 2010. Again, respondents were asked two questions concerning their attitudes toward the Tea Party and candidates who align themselves with the movement.

### 1. Agreement with Tea Party Movement

The first question asked respondents whether they agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement.



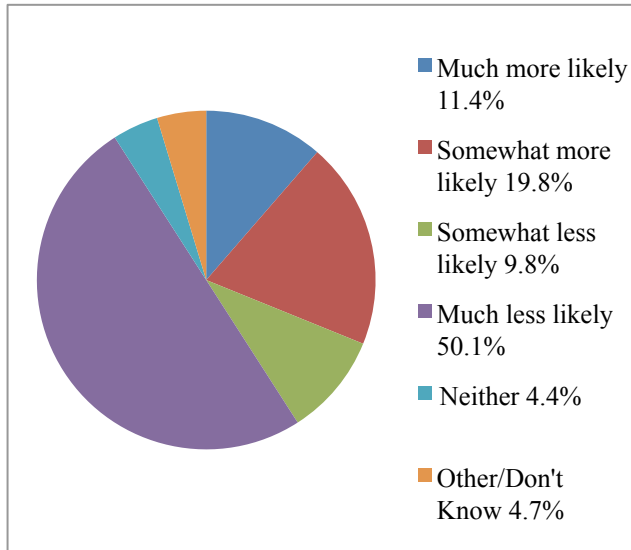
- *Just over a quarter of the sample (26.5%) agree with the Tea Party movement. This number however is tempered by the large number of those who disagree (42.2%) as well as the overall lack of salience in the sample, a large*

*number of those asked had no opinion about the group (28.5%).*

- *Overall, there is a significant gender gap in agreement with the Tea Party. More men agree with the Tea Party movement (32.0%), than do women (22.8%).*
- *The support is also largely outside the city of Chicago, where just 12.2% agree with the movement. This compares with 28.8% of those in suburbs, 31.3% of northern/central Illinoisans, and 28.0% of those living in southern Illinois.*

## 2. Likelihood of Voting for Tea Party-Affiliated Candidate

Interviewers next asked respondents how likely they were to vote for a candidate who was affiliated with the Tea Party.



- *Here, the results are straightforward. A majority of people (59.9%), say that a candidate affiliated with the Tea Party would be less likely to receive their vote. Interestingly, just over half the sample (50.1%) felt very strongly that they would not vote a Tea Party candidate.*
- *There is an interesting dynamic in the relationship between*

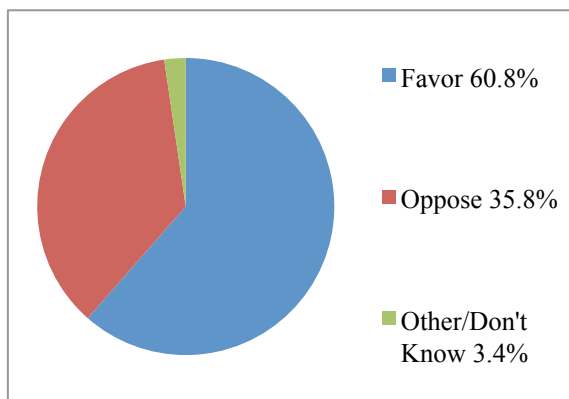
*income and Tea Party. Those in the lowest income bracket, overall have a low level of knowledge about the Tea Party (40.6%), but for those who do have an opinion there is clearly less support (37.7% vs. 27.7%). However, as one moves up the income scale, support begins to climb with a plurality of those making \$25,000-\$35,000 per year and those making \$35,000-\$50,000 per year being more likely to support a Tea Party candidate (41.9% and 39.1%, respectively). Above this income threshold Tea Party support drops significantly. In the highest income bracket, those making over \$150,000 per year, 59.2% are less likely to support, while just 28.6% are more likely to support a Tea Party candidate. This tends to indicate that in Illinois the Tea Party movement is mostly supported by middle-income voters.*

## G. IMMIGRATION POLICY

Immigration has become part of the national political conversation; even taking center stage in the 2012 Republican primary debates. Understanding the salience of this issue, the Simon Poll asked a number of questions concerning the perceived problem of illegal immigration and how respondents felt about some possible solutions.

### 1. A Pathway to Citizenship

We began by prompting respondents to think about the problem of illegal immigration. In using this word “illegal,” the goal was to ensure that those answering would not include their thoughts on those entering the country through legal means. After framing the question in this manner, respondents were asked if they favored providing a way for illegal immigrants currently in the country to gain legal citizenship if they met a number of requirements including paying fines, passing background checks, and having jobs.

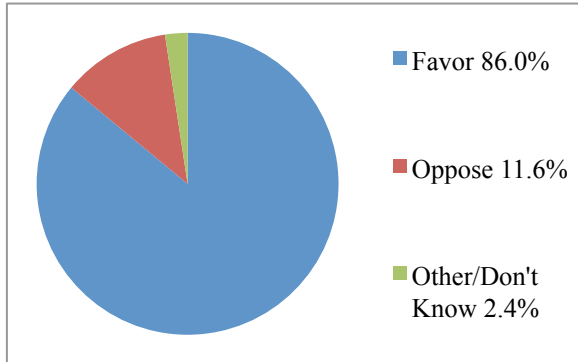


- The respondents were clearly in favor of a pathway to citizenship. Over six in ten of those who responded (60.8%), believed that this policy should be implemented, while just over a third (35.8%) were in opposition.*
- In the four regions that were polled, only one (southern Illinois) exhibited a plurality of opposition to this proposal (48.0%). Those living in the city of Chicago responded the most favorably (66.1% favor) to this possible change in immigration policy.*
- This question shows strong disagreement between the parties. Democrats strongly favored this proposal with 71.1% showing support. Just 48.7% of Republicans responded favorably.*



## 2. Strong Enforcement of Current Laws

We asked respondents, “Do you favor or oppose stronger enforcement of immigration laws and border security?” The vast majority of those taking part in our poll were in favor of increased enforcement (86.0 percent). It was also interesting that only 2.4 percent of those in the sample did not have an opinion on this question -- a strong indicator of how salient this issue is to the average voter in the state of Illinois.



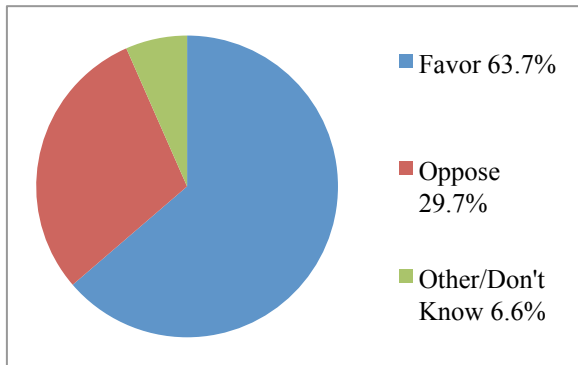
- *Those living in the City of Chicago were the least likely to support enforcement (78.3%),*

*while those living in northern/central Illinois were nearly unanimous in their support of it (89.3%).*

- *This question garners nearly unanimous support from Republicans. Of the 312 self-identified Republicans in our sample, 296 favor this proposal (94.9%).*

### 3. Requiring Law Enforcement to Make Arrests

Respondents were also asked if they would favor requiring local law enforcement to arrest illegal immigrants.



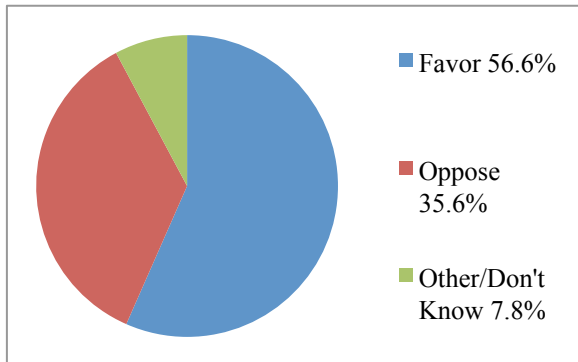
- *There is a stark geographic difference in response to this question. Of those living in Chicago, 47.2% are in favor of requiring this of the police. This number jumps dramatically in northern/central Illinois and*

*southern Illinois (71.3% and 76.0% respectively).*

- *An interesting pattern is also evident in the area of education. Of those respondents with a high school diploma or less, 68.4% favor this proposal, while 55.3% of those with at least a college degree are in support. Interestingly, 72.0% of those with some college believe that local law enforcement should be required to arrest illegal immigrants.*

#### 4. Military Service/ College as a Pathway to Citizenship

One possible reform proposal would allow a path to citizenship for children who were brought to this country by their parents illegally. If they voluntarily joined the military or completed a college degree they would be offered the possibility of becoming American citizens.



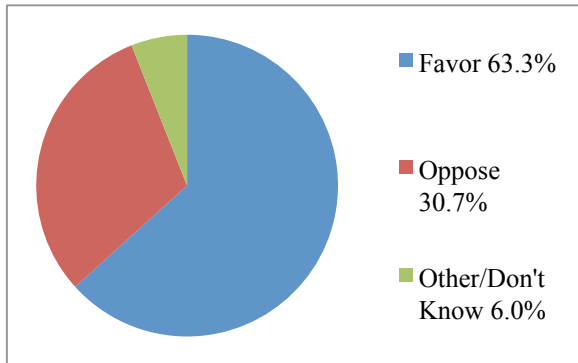
- *This proposal receives support from a majority of those in the sample (56.6%). Just over one in three (35.6%) polled, however, are opposed.*
- *As seen in other immigration questions, the greatest support*

*comes from those living in the City of Chicago (63.9%). As one moves further away from the city, the amount of support drops sharply, with only 47.0% of those living in southern Illinois in favor.*

- *Again, the difference in party affiliation is noticeable. The majority of self-identified Democrats are in favor (69.2%) of this pathway to citizenship. Interestingly, Republicans are split on this issue with 49.4% opposing and 42.9% favoring such proposal.*

## 5. DREAM Act Support

One issue that has arisen in the 2012 Republican primary is Texas Gov. Rick Perry's support of the so-called Dream Act. Under this proposal, individuals who were illegally brought into this country by their parents would be able to pay in-state tuition at universities and colleges if they graduated from an in-state high school. This issue was presented to respondents as a possibility in the state of Illinois. Nearly two thirds of those polled (63.3 percent) were in favor, while about three in ten (30.7 percent) were opposed.



- *This proposal received strong support from Democrats*

*(70.8%), while just 24.3% were opposed. A majority of Republicans were also in favor of this change (55.1%), while 38.1% are opposed.*

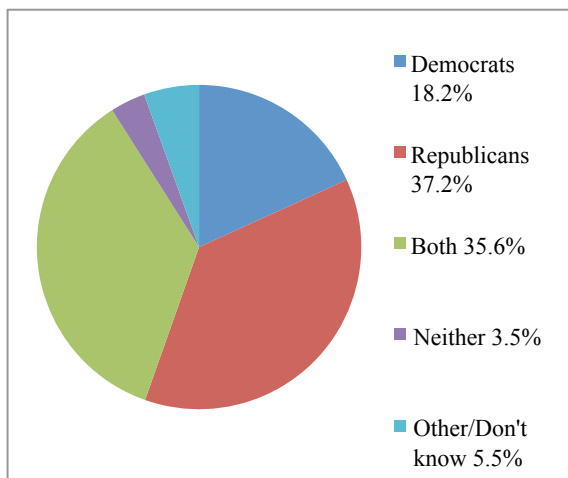
- *This issue seems to split Tea Party supporters. Interestingly, of those who self-identified as Tea Party supporters, 49.1% favored this proposal, while 45.3% were opposed.*

## H. LACK OF CIVILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE

With the fall 2011 failure of the U.S. Congressional “Super Committee” to come to a mutually agreed upon solution to the budget crisis facing the nation, the issue of compromise has never been more important. The Simon Poll asked respondents two separate questions concerning the issue of compromise.

### 1. Who is to Blame?

The poll asked, “Some people have said that government in Washington does not work well because of a lack of a civil tone. Who do you blame more for the lack of civility in Washington?” Those who took part in our poll were quick to place blame in this circumstance. More than 90 percent of respondents blamed either one or both of the major political parties. In fact, 37.2 percent believed the Republicans were to blame, while 18.2 percent believed Democrats were at fault. However, 35.6 percent volunteered that both parties were equally responsible for the lack of civility.



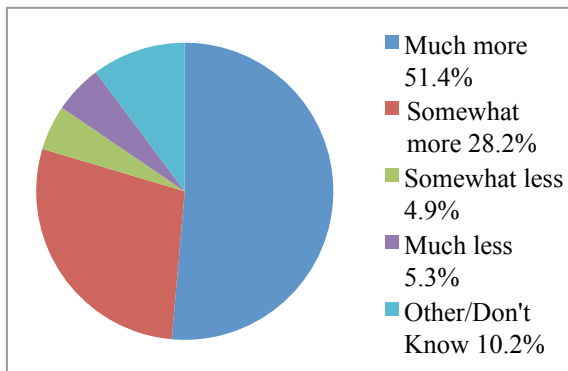
- *Pluralities blamed the Republicans over the Democrats in each of the four regional divisions in our sample. Republicans received the most blame from residents of the City*

*of Chicago (56.7%), while the Democrats received the highest share of the blame from those in suburban Chicago (20.2%).*

- *Democrats, unsurprisingly, overwhelmingly blamed Republicans (67.4%) for the lack of civility. Among Republicans, blame was evenly divided between Democrats (43.9%) and both parties (43.3%). Most Independents blamed both parties (51.5%), though among those who chose a party to blame, it went two-to-one against the Republicans (23.2%) over the Democrats (12.4%)*

## 2. Vote for Candidate Willing to Compromise

After asking respondents who is to blame for the lack of a civil tone, we followed up by asking if they would be more or less likely to vote for a candidate who was open to compromise in order to get things done. Nearly 8 in 10 (79.6 percent) believed that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who favors compromise. Just 10.2 percent of those polled said that willingness to compromise would make them less likely to support a candidate.



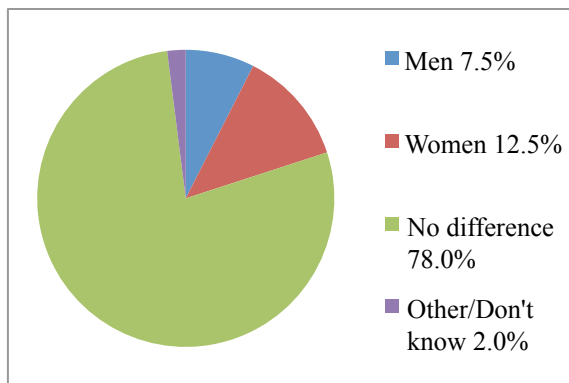
- While both parties are in favor of compromise, Democrats (86.5%) are more likely to say they would vote for a candidate who is willing to compromise, than are Republicans (73.4%).*
- Even among Tea Party supporters, we found widespread approval for candidates who are willing to compromise. Of those who said they would be more likely to support a Tea Party candidate, 71.5% said that they would be more likely to support a candidate who was willing to compromise. This number is just slightly lower than self-identified Republicans. Just 16.3% said that a compromising candidate would not receive their support.*

## I. WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

This year the Simon Poll contained a number of questions focusing on the perception of women in politics. With the rise of national candidates like Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann, and Hillary Clinton, it would appear that the ability of women to run for and win political office is on the rise.

### 1. Who Makes a Better Leader?

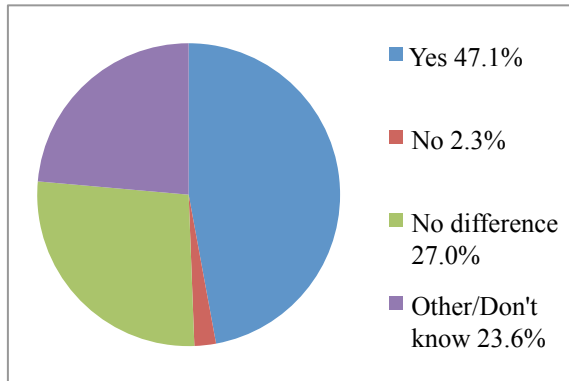
We began this section by asking respondents who they believed made a better political leader, men or women? What we found was equality. Over three quarters of those asked (78.0 percent) believe that there is no difference in the ability of men and women to lead. Of the sample, 12.5 percent believed that women made better leaders, while 7.5 percent believed men made better leaders.



- *There were gender differences in response to this question. Of the men polled, 6% believe that men make better leaders while 8.8% of men believe that women make better leaders. Interestingly, when women were asked the same question, 8.5% of them believe that men make better leaders, while 15% believe women make better leaders.*

## 2. Vote for a Woman?

Another question in this series asked respondents if they would be willing to vote for a well-qualified female candidate if their party nominated one. There is a lot of uncertainty surrounding the response to this question. While 47.1 percent of those asked had no issue with voting for a well-qualified woman, the majority of those in the poll either believed that it would make no difference (27.0 percent) or they didn't know enough to make a decision (23.6 percent).

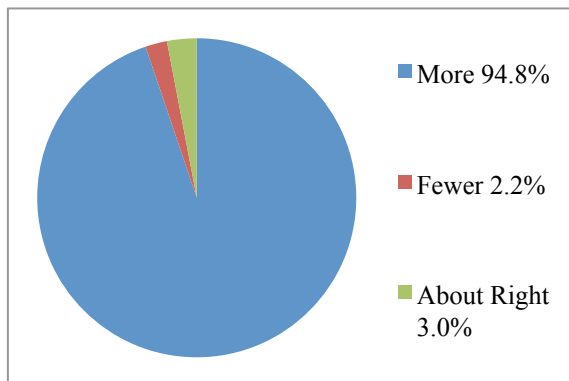


*defined as the possibility that respondents do not exhibit their true feelings but instead give the socially desirable answer to researchers. Here the assumption is that the socially acceptable choice is to have no issue with women running for office. However, the high number of those in the other/don't know category could be those who would in fact not vote for a female but are afraid to reveal this preference to the pollster.*

- *In questions such as this there is a high likelihood of what is known as "social desirability bias," which is*

## 3. More Women Elected Officials in Illinois

The final question in this series asked respondents, "Generally, do you believe there should be more women elected officials in Illinois, fewer, or is there about the right number of women elected officials in Illinois?" The belief that there needs to be more female elected officials in Illinois holds near unanimous support in our sample (94.8 percent).



- *This question has almost no variation in demographic factors such as gender, education, region, income, or political ideology. As stated, however, there is a real possibility of social desirability bias in a question on gender equality.*

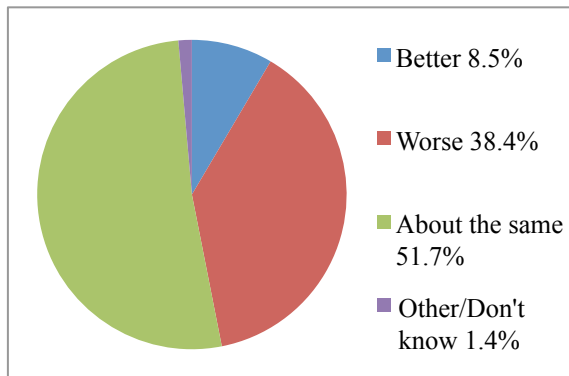


## J. ECONOMIC SITUATION ‘THIS YEAR’ AND ‘NEXT YEAR’

Finally, we asked respondents whether their family’s economic situation was better, worse, or about the same as it was the previous year. As a measure of their economic optimism, we asked them whether they expected their family’s economic situation next year to be better, worse, or about the same as this year’s. Furthermore, we included a question focused on the situation of those on the lower level of the economic spectrum.

### 1. Economic Situation This Year

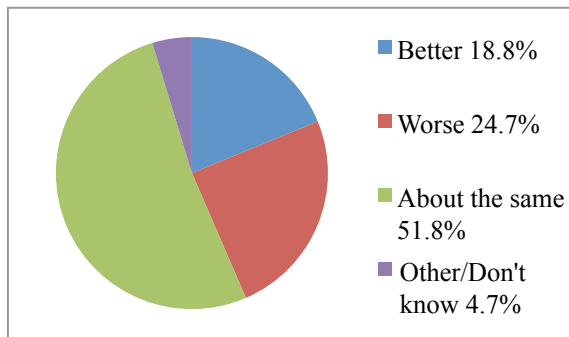
Like last year’s poll, approximately four in ten said their family’s economic situation in the present year was worse than it was in the previous year.



- Among education groups, those with at least some college were doing much better than those with just a high school diploma. Only 3.8% of those without college experience are doing better, while those with at least a college degree were seeing the most positive signs of change (11.3%).*
- The highest percentage of those who said that their situation was better this year came from the City of Chicago (13.3%), while those living downstate, especially in southern Illinois, were not faring better in this year’s survey (6.0%).*
- There were also stark differences when looking at income disparities. Of those who were making over \$100,000/yr, 20.0% were having a better year this year than last, while just 7.0% of those making under \$50,000/yr. said the same thing.*

## 2. Economic Situation Next Year

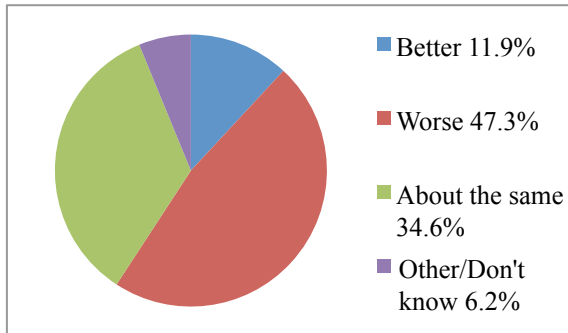
Next, we asked respondents to project how they thought their family's economic situation would be next year. Fewer than one in five respondents (18.8 percent) believed that next year would be better than this year. A slight majority said that they thought their situation would stay the same in the coming year (51.8 percent).



- There is a significant note of pessimism among Tea Party supporters. Just over one in three (33.6%) believe that next year will be worse than this year. This is fourteen percentage points higher than those who are not likely to vote for a Tea Party candidate (19.2%).*
- Those in the City of Chicago were the most optimistic about their economic situation with 26.7% believing that it will improve in the next 12 months. This optimism wanes as one moves away from the city, with those in northern/central Illinois feeling the most pessimistic (28.7% believe that things will get worse for them).*
- Those making between \$50,000-\$100,000 per year were the least optimistic. Just 16.5% of this group believes next year will be better than the previous one. Nearly 27.7% of those making over \$100,000/yr and 20.1% of those making under \$50,000/yr believe things will improve.*

### 3. Those Worse Off

This year we asked respondents, “And what about people who are financially worse off than you? Overall, and generally speaking, do you expect their economic situation next year will be better than it has been this year, worse than it has been this year, or about the same as this year?”



- Almost half in our poll (47.3%), believe that conditions will continue to deteriorate for those who are worse off financially.*
- Twice as many of those in Chicago (16.7%) think things will get better than those living in southern Illinois (8.0%).*
- Democrats are more optimistic than Republicans. Of self-identified Democrats, 18.0% believe the situation will improve in the next 12 months, while just 7.7% of Republicans have the same positive outlook.*

## CONCLUSION

### Opinion Movement on Illinois' Budget Deficit

As we have noted elsewhere in this paper, one of the most striking results of our 2011 poll is one figure recurrent in the 2009, 2010, and 2011 statewide surveys: 57 percent.

These are the 57 percent of Illinoisans who, year after year for three years in a row, believe that our state's multibillion-dollar budget deficit can be cured by cutting waste and inefficiency in government. Such a statistical recurrence does not happen randomly. It means that this belief is deeply ingrained in a majority of the population, and that it is reliably at this level among registered voters.

Most observers of Illinois government will acknowledge that, while stories about government waste and inefficiency appear seemingly daily, it is not present in such a grand scale. For example, Illinois has reduced the number of state employees by 4,000-plus over the past two years and has one of the lowest ratios of state employees per capita in the nation.

Why, then, are (exactly?) 57 percent of Illinoisans convinced that it is so—that 2011's \$3.7 billion deficit could be wiped away with better management?

Perhaps it is a matter of dissatisfaction with state government that convinces our neighbors of a massive scale of fraud and waste. Respondents to our 2011 poll were clearly dissatisfied. Only 14.9 percent thought things in Illinois were going in the right direction, down significantly from 2009's already-sad 21.8 percent. Only a third (35.5 percent) of voters in a blue state approved of the job being done by Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn.

Illinoisans in our 2011 poll saw things at the national level only slightly less grimly: Only one in five (19.2 percent) thought things in the country were going in the right direction, down more than ten points from the year before, and down by half from 2009. President Obama's positive approval rating barely hit half (51.8%) in his home state.

Underlying the dissatisfaction with government is ongoing dissatisfaction and pessimism regarding the economy. In 2010, 38.4 percent said their economic situation was worse than the year before. In the 2011 poll, a statistically similar 41.7 percent said the same. Worse, fewer respondents in the present survey (18.8 percent) thought things would be better in the coming year than thought so in 2010 (23.4 percent).

While this political and economic dissatisfaction may be conspiring to keep this one index—fixing the budget by cutting waste and inefficiency—frozen firmly at 57 percent, that does not mean that opinions on other budget-related items are similarly stuck.

Illinois voters are dramatically more willing to see cuts in some areas of the state budget than they have been in the past, and as a group they appear to be discerning in what they would cut. They continue to oppose cuts in K-12 education, spending on public safety,

and programs for poor people, by margins that look very similar across the four years we have been asking those questions. On the other hand, they appear to be more willing to favor cuts to state universities (almost doubled since 2008), state parks (up 15 percentage points since 2008), and pension benefits for state workers (up more than 20 points since 2008).

Perhaps even more surprisingly, Illinois voters have become more willing over four years to tolerate revenue increases—even some tax hikes. Again, their preferences are not random. They continue to oppose raising the state sales tax rate, but are more willing to see the sales tax collected on services (up more than 20 points since 2008 to a slim 50.1 percent majority). They are also more willing to see an increase in legalized gambling (up 10 percentage points since 2008) and, in a question new to our statewide poll, to favor a \$1 per pack increase in the state cigarette tax (69.2 percent).

By a five-to-four margin, respondents in the 2011 statewide poll disapproved of a measure to borrow money at a lower interest rate to pay past-due bills to vendors and service providers and favored the status quo: the state just paying off old bills as best it can.

### Political and Electoral Reforms

One area in which we do not see opinion movement over time is in political and electoral reforms; Illinoisans are firmly in favor of term limits for state legislators, limiting the amount of campaign cash legislative leaders can share with other candidates, moving to a primary balloting system without public declaration of party, placing campaign-contribution limits on judicial races, and even publicly financing judicial campaigns. For each of these reforms, the 2011 results were within the margin for error of the 2010 results.

Fundamental to reforming Illinois politics, we believe, is redistricting reform. In the redistricting process in 2011, following the 2010 Census, we observed yet another instance of legislators picking their voters rather than voters picking their legislators. The drawing of “safe” partisan districts further polarizes our politics. When politicians have no credible challenge from the opposing party, all they have to fear is a challenge from a more-extreme flank of their own party, whether right or left.

Illinoisans have essentially a decade to try to fix this critical political process, and reformers can take comfort that Illinois voters support their efforts.

Since 2009, large majorities have supported the redistricting reform that would add a nonpartisan member to the redistricting panel, in the likely case of a partisan tie. The current pick-a-party’s-name-from-a-hat procedure is archaic and an embarrassment.

More hopeful, perhaps, is that nearly two-thirds of voters surveyed favor the so-called “Fair Map” proposal, in which a nonpartisan commission draws new legislative districts after the Census, which is then presented to the legislature for an up-or-down vote. Support grew dramatically from 2010’s 53.5 percent to 65.0 percent in 2011.

## Immigration Policy

Past Simon Polls have examined Illinoisans' opinions of divisive social issues. We have found, for example, that Illinois voters are generally conservative on the death penalty (they favor reinstating it in the state). Other recent polls have found that Illinoisans are moderate on gays serving in the military and on same-sex civil unions, issues now made moot by policy changes.

We decided for the 2011 poll to test voter opinion on policies for dealing with undocumented immigration, which has become a divisive issue on the national campaign trail—particularly, at this writing, among Republican candidates for the 2012 presidential nomination.

Our respondents provided us with a mixed outcome on these issues. On enforcement matters they are conservative: Almost two-thirds were in favor of having local law enforcement officers arrest “illegal immigrants,” mirroring one of the restrictive components of the controversial laws in Arizona and Alabama. Almost everyone (86.0%) favored stronger enforcement of immigration policies at the border.

On the other hand, about six in ten Illinois voters in our sample presented us with a moderate view on path-to-citizenship and education issues. By almost two-to-one they favored granting citizenship to undocumented immigrants who are already here if they pay fines, have jobs, and pass background checks. Almost as many favor granting legal status to immigrants brought here illegally as children if they go to college or join the military.

More interesting is the more-or-less across-the-board majority support for the provisions of the so-called “Dream Act,” in which undocumented children can attend public universities and pay in-state tuition rates if they graduate from an Illinois high school. Almost two-thirds support this proposal overall, and majority support remains among normally conservative subgroups such as central and southern Illinoisans and Republicans. Even among voters who say they would be more likely to vote for Tea Party-affiliated candidates, support for the Dream Act proposal is essentially tied with opposition (49.1 percent favor, 45.3 percent oppose).

## Tea Party, Civility, and Compromise

Whatever the merits of its policy positions, the Tea Party movement has brought a combative style to politics in the United States over the past few years. Certainly the Tea Party has made itself felt in Illinois politics, most famously in the person of freshman Republican Congressman Joe Walsh of suburban Chicago.

The first time we asked the question, in 2010, about three in ten Illinois voters said they would be more likely to vote for Tea Party candidates and half-again as many (46 percent) said they would be less likely to do so. About a quarter didn't have an opinion one way or another.

By 2011, most of the opinion movement was heading away from the Tea Party. While three in ten still said a Tea Party affiliation would make them more likely to vote for a candidate, six in ten said they would be less likely to vote for a Tea Party-affiliated candidate. While in 2010 one in four (23.8 percent) wouldn't venture an opinion on Tea Party affiliation's affect on their vote, by 2011 that shrank to 9.1 percent; virtually all of that movement went to the position of being *less* likely to vote for a Tea Party candidate.

We asked in 2010 about agreement with the Tea Party and about voters' likelihood of voting for Tea Party-affiliated candidates. We found voters about as likely to agree with the Tea Party as to disagree. By 2011 voters were a lot more likely to disagree with the Tea Party (42.2 percent) than to agree (26.5 percent).

Perhaps related to the fading fortunes of the Tea Party among Illinois voters, the Republican Party receives more blame for the uncivil tone in Washington politics. Voters in our survey were twice as likely to blame Republicans as Democrats (37.2 percent vs. 18.2 percent). A third of our sample (35.6 percent) volunteered that both were to blame.

Even in areas and among groups that ought to be more favorable to Republicans, they were more likely to be blamed for the lack of civility than were Democrats: among residents of northern and central Illinois (29 percent blame Republicans, 19.3 percent blame Democrats), respondents with incomes above \$100,000 (36.4 percent vs. 23.6 percent), and the college-educated (39.7 percent vs. 18.3 percent).

One way out of this trap of negativity may be to compromise on politics and policy to get things done—which has been the way of the political world in America since the Constitutional Convention. Though there are cries for ideological purity from the fringes of the political spectrum, voters in Illinois vastly prefer candidates who are willing to compromise to get things done (79.6 percent).

The preference for compromise persists across geographic, demographic, and ideological categories, for example in suburban Chicago (80 percent), among Republicans (73.4 percent), among voters in households with six-figure incomes (83.6 percent), and even among Tea Party voters themselves (71.5 percent).

### Concluding Thoughts

We were encouraged to see voter opinion moving toward and coalescing around some policies that could keep our state budget on the path to balance, particularly public pension reform, broadening the base of items upon which the sales tax is levied, and increasing the excise tax on cigarettes. We hope such strong evidence gives our legislators and regulators courage to pursue such controversial issues, even in the face of loud criticism and resistance.

We also hope that reform groups take heart from Illinois voters' strong desire for governmental reform in campaign financing, in legislative redistricting, and in reform to the judicial election process. Reforming the judicial election process, in particular, may represent low-hanging fruit for reform, given continuing controversies around such

elections. We expect the voting public to find it unseemly that lawyers' groups should contribute to the campaigns of those before whom they must appear, and that big business groups should invest millions of dollars in judicial races in which they have pending cases before the courts, or expect to in the future.

That message must not be lost on lawmakers, either. Trust of and faith in governmental institutions is a fundamental tenet of a republican government, and in Illinois—of all places—governmental actors should work to restore some of that trust and faith. The present Simon Poll demonstrates that the voters are ready for it.



## Appendix: The Simon Poll Fall 2011 Questionnaire and Response Frequencies

1. First we would like to know what you think about the direction of the United States of America. Generally speaking, do you think things in our country are going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?

Right direction	19.2%
Wrong direction	71.4%
Other/Don't know	9.4%

2. And what about the direction of the State of Illinois? Generally speaking, are things in Illinois going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?

Right direction	14.9%
Wrong direction	74.5%
Other/Don't know	10.6%

3. And how are things going in your city or area of the state? In general, are things in your city or area going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?

Right direction	52.0%
Wrong direction	37.5%
Other/Don't know	10.5%

4. Regardless of what you think about the direction in your part of the state, tell us what you think about the overall quality of life in your area. Taking everything into account, would you say the overall quality of life in your area is...

Excellent	10.4%
Good	35.6%
Average	33.8%
Not so good	13.6%
Poor	6.6%

5. Now I would like you to tell me how President Barack Obama is doing his job. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job President Obama is doing?

Strongly approve	21.4%
Somewhat approve	30.4%
Somewhat disapprove	14.6%
Strongly disapprove	31.8%
Other/Don't know	1.8%

6. Now I would like for you to tell me how Governor Pat Quinn is doing his job. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Governor Quinn is doing?

Strongly approve	5.9%
Somewhat approve	29.6%
Somewhat disapprove	24.7%
Strongly disapprove	31.7%
Other/Don't know	8.1%

7. From what you know, do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement, or do you not have an opinion?

Strongly agree	7.7%
Agree	18.8%
Disagree	13.9%
Strongly disagree	28.3%
No opinion	28.5%
Other/Don't know	2.8%

8. Would you be much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for a candidate that was affiliated with the Tea Party movement?

Much more likely	11.4%
Somewhat more likely	19.8%
Somewhat less likely	9.8%
Much less likely	50.1%
Neither	4.4%
Other/Don't know	4.7%

Now we have a few questions about the upcoming elections.

9. As you may know, primary elections in Illinois will be held in March of 2012. Thinking ahead, are you likely to vote in the Republican or Democratic [ROTATE] primary or will you probably not vote in the primary elections?

Republican	32.0%
Democratic	39.4%
Probably not vote	16.0%
Other/Don't know	12.6%

10. And if the Republican primary were being held today, would you vote for...?  
[Randomize candidates]

Michele Bachmann	3.8%
Rick Perry	7.2%
Mitt Romney	20.6%
Ron Paul	6.6%
Newt Gingrich	7.5%
Rick Santorum	2.2%
Herman Cain	23.4%
Jon Huntsman	2.5%
Chris Christie	0.1%
Or someone else	0.3%
Don't know	25.9%

President Obama will be up for reelection in November 2012. We'd like to know how you might vote if different individuals were the Republican nominee. If you don't know enough about that person to say how you would vote just tell me that...

11. If the election were held today, and if Barack Obama was the Democratic candidate and Rick Perry was the Republican candidate, whom would you vote for – Obama or Perry? [ROTATE]

Obama	50.8%
Perry	32.8%
Don't know enough	12.7%
Other	3.7%

12. If the election were held today, and Barack Obama was the Democratic candidate and Herman Cain was the Republican candidate, whom would you vote for – Obama or Cain? [ROTATE]

Obama	46.3%
Cain	34.0%
Don't know enough	17.5%
Other	2.2%

13. If the election were held today, and if Barack Obama was the Democratic candidate and Mitt Romney was the Republican candidate, whom would you vote for – Obama or Romney? [ROTATE]

Obama	46.1%
Romney	38.5%
Don't know enough	12.3%
Other	3.1%

14. If the election were held today, and Barack Obama was the Democratic candidate and Ron Paul was the Republican candidate, whom would you vote for – Obama or Paul? [ROTATE]

Obama	49.3%
Paul	30.3%
Don't know enough	17.2%
Other	3.2%

We are also interested in your opinions on political reform in Illinois. I'm going to read you some proposals that some people have offered. For each, I'd like you to tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose that idea. First is... [ROTATE ORDER OF PROPOSALS]

15. A proposal to limit how long state legislators could serve. It would limit state representatives to five consecutive two-year terms and state senators to three consecutive four-year terms. Would you favor or oppose this proposal? [INTERVIEWER: IF FAVOR/OPPOSE ASK: DO YOU STRONGLY FAVOR/OPPOSE?]

Strongly favor	54.4%
Somewhat favor	20.6%
Somewhat oppose	8.5%
Strongly oppose	10.9%
Other/Don't know	5.6%

16. A proposal to place limits on the amount that people could contribute to judicial campaigns, such as those for the Illinois Supreme Court. Would you favor or oppose this proposal? [INTERVIEWER: IF FAVOR/OPPOSE ASK: DO YOU STRONGLY FAVOR/OPPOSE?]

Strongly favor	52.0%
Somewhat favor	19.4%
Somewhat oppose	10.5%
Strongly oppose	10.7%
Other/Don't know	7.4%

17. A proposal to eliminate contributions to judicial races by providing public funding for all candidates who qualify for it. Would you favor or oppose this proposal? [INTERVIEWER: IF FAVOR/OPPOSE ASK: DO YOU STRONGLY FAVOR/OPPOSE?]

Strongly favor	29.2%
Somewhat favor	24.4%
Somewhat oppose	14.3%
Strongly oppose	20.1%
Other/Don't know	12.0%

18. A proposal to limit the amount of campaign money that party leaders can redistribute to other candidates in the general election. Would you favor or oppose this proposal? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE ASK: DO YOU STRONGLY FAVOR/OPPOSE?]

Strongly favor	40.5%
Somewhat favor	20.9%
Somewhat oppose	11.2%
Strongly oppose	17.1%
Other/Don't know	10.3%

19. Currently in Illinois, when voting in a primary election, the voter has to ask for a specific party's ballot. Would you favor or oppose a proposal to change the primary-election process in Illinois so that voters do not have to publicly declare which party's ballot they have chosen. [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE ASK: DO YOU STRONGLY FAVOR/OPPOSE?]

Strongly favor	58.3%
Somewhat favor	13.5%
Somewhat oppose	6.8%
Strongly oppose	13.1%
Other/Don't know	8.3%

Next, we'd like to ask you two questions about the state legislative redistricting process in Illinois.

20. One proposal for improving the state legislative redistricting process would have the Illinois Supreme Court add a neutral person to the redistricting panel in case of a partisan tie. Would you favor or oppose this proposal? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE ASK: DO YOU STRONGLY FAVOR/OPPOSE]

Strongly favor	35.8%
Favor	34.3%
Oppose	9.5%
Strongly oppose	7.1%
Other/Don't know	13.3%

21. Other people have proposed a constitutional amendment that would have legislative district maps created and recommended by a commission that is independent of the elected representatives. Would you favor or oppose this proposal? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE ASK: DO YOU STRONGLY FAVOR/OPPOSE]

Strongly favor	31.8%
Favor	33.2%
Oppose	11.7%
Strongly oppose	7.4%
Other/Don't know	15.9%

Next, I'm going to ask you a few questions about the state of Illinois' budget:

22. The state of Illinois has a budget deficit of over 3.7 billion dollars. I'm going to read three statements that people have made about how to fix the deficit, and ask you which one comes closest to your views. If you haven't thought much about the issue, just tell me that. [ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS]

Illinois' public programs and services have already been reduced significantly.  
We can only fix the problem by taking in more revenue, such as a tax increase. 6.9%

The state takes in plenty of money to pay for public services but wastes it on unnecessary programs. We can fix the problem by cutting waste and inefficiency in government. 57.7%

Illinois' budget problem is so large it can only be solved by a combination of budget cuts and revenue increases. 28.5%

Haven't thought much about it 3.0%

Other/Don't know 3.9%

There have been a number of proposals to address the state's budget problems by making cuts in state programs and services. I'm going to read several areas where people have suggested that the state could make cuts. For each one that I read, I'd like you to tell me whether you favor or oppose budget cuts in that area. [INTERVIEWER: REPEAT IF NECESSARY]

23. Do you favor or oppose cuts in state spending on kindergarten through high school education?

Favor 16.5%  
Oppose 80.0%  
Other/Don't know 3.5%

24. Do you favor or oppose cuts in state spending on state universities?

Favor 38.2%  
Oppose 54.1%  
Other/Don't know 7.7%

25. Do you favor or oppose cuts in state spending on public safety, such as state police and prison operations?

Favor	20.6%
Oppose	73.8%
Other/Don't know	5.6%

26. Do you favor or oppose cuts in state spending on natural resources, such as state parks or environmental regulation?

Favor	36.7%
Oppose	55.6%
Other/Don't know	7.7%

27. Do you favor or oppose cuts in state spending on programs for poor people?

Favor	25.2%
Oppose	64.7%
Other/Don't know	10.1%

28. Do you favor or oppose cuts in state spending on programs for people with mental or physical disabilities?

Favor	12.3%
Oppose	83.5%
Other/Don't know	4.2%

29. Do you favor or oppose cuts in state spending on pension benefits for state workers' retirement?

Favor	45.5%
Oppose	48.0%
Other/Don't know	6.5%

There have been a number of proposals to address the state's budget problems by finding ways to raise more money to pay for programs and services. I'm going to read several areas where people have suggested that more money could be raised. For each one that I read, I'd like you to tell me whether you favor or oppose raising revenues in that way, OK? [REPEAT IF NECESSARY] (ROTATE CHOICES)

30. Do you favor or oppose applying the state income tax to retirement income, such as pensions and Social Security?

Favor	21.3%
Oppose	73.3%
Other/Don't know	5.4%

31. Would you favor or oppose applying the state income tax to the retirement income of those earning more than \$50,000 per year?

Favor	29.5%
Oppose	66.7%
Other/Don't know	3.8%

32. Do you favor or oppose raising the state sales tax rate?

Favor	22.0%
Oppose	74.1%
Other/Don't know	3.9%

33. Do you favor or oppose expanding the sales tax to cover services like dry cleaning or haircuts, which are not currently taxed?

Favor	50.1%
Oppose	45.9%
Other/Don't know	4.0%

34. Do you favor or oppose a proposal expanding legalized gambling in the state?

Favor	56.8%
Oppose	38.8%
Other/Don't know	4.4%

35. Do you favor or oppose a proposal to increase the tax on cigarettes by \$1 per pack?

Favor	69.2%
Oppose	28.5%
Other/Don't know	2.3%



36. The State of Illinois is late paying its bills to organizations that perform services and provide goods to the State. By law, it has to pay those vendors a high rate of interest on those late bills. I'm going to read you two statements some people are making about how the State should deal with this situation, then ask you which statement comes closer to your views. If you haven't thought much about the issue, just tell me that. [ROTATE STATEMENTS]

The State should borrow money at a lower interest rate to pay off those late bills, saving money on interest and getting money to businesses and organizations that need to be paid.	39.1%
The State should just pay its bills as well as it can with current funds and not borrow money to try to fix its problems.	50.3%
Don't know enough	8.7%
Other	1.9%

The subject of immigration has been controversial in some areas. We are interested in what people think about ILLEGAL immigration in the U.S. Do you favor or oppose...

37. Providing a way for illegal immigrants currently in the country to gain legal citizenship if they pass background checks, pay fines, and have jobs.

Favor	60.8%
Oppose	35.8%
Other/Don't know	3.4%

38. Stronger enforcement of immigration laws and border security.

Favor	86.0%
Oppose	11.6%
Other/Don't know	2.4%

39. Requiring local law enforcement in Illinois to arrest illegal immigrants.

Favor	63.7%
Oppose	29.7%
Other/Don't know	6.6%

40. Allowing illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to gain legal resident status if they join the military or go to college.

Favor	56.6%
Oppose	35.6%
Other/Don't know	7.8%

41. Charging illegal immigrants who graduate from Illinois high schools the same in-state tuition as state universities charge legal residents of Illinois.

Favor	63.3%
Oppose	30.7%
Other/Don't know	6.0%

Thinking about Government in Washington, now...

42. Some people have said that government in Washington does not work well because of a lack of a civil tone. Who do you blame more for the lack of civility in Washington – [ROTATE: REPUBLICANS/DEMOCRATS] the [INSERT PARTY] in Washington or the [INSERT PARTY] in Washington?

Democrats	18.2%
Republicans	37.2%
Both	35.6%
Neither	3.5%
Other/Don't know	5.5%

43. [IF BOTH, NEITHER OR DK] Well, on balance, whom do you blame more, [ROTATE] the Republicans or the Democrats?

Democrats	21.1%
Republicans	20.6%
Both	41.3%
Neither	6.5%
Other/Don't know	10.5%

44. Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a political candidate who is willing to make compromises in order to get things done? [IF MORE/LESS LIKELY ASK: IS THAT MUCH MORE/LESS LIKELY OR SOMEWHAT MORE/LESS LIKELY]

Much more	51.4%
Somewhat more	28.2%
Somewhat less	4.9%
Much less	5.3%
Other/Don't know	10.2%

Following are a few questions about what you think about women and politics.

45. Generally, do you think/believe/feel men make better political leaders, women make better political leaders, or is there no difference?

Men	7.5%
Women	12.5%
No difference	78.0%
Other/Don't know	2.0%

46. If your party nominated a generally well-qualified female candidate, do you think you would vote for her?

Yes	47.1%
No	2.3%
No difference	27.0%
Other/Don't know	23.6%

47. Generally, do you think there should be more women elected officials in Illinois, fewer, or is there about the right number of women elected officials in Illinois?

More	94.8%
Fewer	2.2%
About right	3.0%

Next we are in how people are doing financially in Illinois.

48. Overall, and speaking generally, would you say your family's economic situation is better than it was a year ago, worse than it was a year ago, or about the same?

Better	9.2%
Worse	41.7%
About the same	47.8%
Other/Don't know	1.3%

49. And what about in the coming year? Overall, and speaking generally, do you expect your family's economic situation next year to be better than it has been this year, worse than it has been this year, or about the same as this year?

Better	18.8%
Worse	24.7%
About the same	51.8%
Other/Don't know	4.7%

50. And what about people who are financially worse off than you? Overall, and speaking generally, do you expect their economic situation next year will be better than it has been this year, worse than it has been this year, or about the same as this year?

Better	11.9%
Worse	47.3%
About the same	34.6%
Other/Don't know	6.2%