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**Rockefeller Center Completes 3rd Annual New Hampshire State of the State Poll on
Politics, Economic Issues, and Social Policies.**

Sampled registered voters express concern over the national economy. Rep. Hodes still trails for U.S. Senate against Ayotte or Binnie. Lynch approval rating down from last year.

HANOVER, NH—The Rockefeller Center’s third annual State of the State surveyed a sample of New Hampshire registered voters (N=406) to get their opinions on policy issues, elected officials, and the state of the economy in New Hampshire and in the United States. Sample demographics and polling methodology are summarized at the end of this report.

In general, respondents indicate increasing dissatisfaction with current elected officials, particularly in regards to Democratic Governor John Lynch, whose approval ratings dropped 11.8 percent from 2009 to 2010. This dissatisfaction with current officials is also apparent in voters’ attitudes regarding to the upcoming Senate election in 2010. The presumptive Democratic candidate, 2nd District Representative Paul Hodes, polls lower among respondents than either potential Republican challenger (Kelly Ayotte or William ‘Bill’ Binnie), neither of whom currently holds elected office. In terms of New Hampshire policy, respondents show support for the expansion of gambling in the state, both generally as a policy issue (50.8 percent) and specifically as an option to help solve the state’s budget crisis (55.4 percent). Regarding recent national health care reform legislation, respondents were split in opinion, with 43.7 percent supporting and 44.4 percent opposing health care reform.

POLICY ISSUES

Registered voters answered survey questions about policy issues facing New Hampshire and the nation. Overall, respondents prioritize the state economy as the top policy concern. followed by

balancing the state budget, and property tax reduction. Opinions regarding the recent federal health care reform are more mixed. On the issue of same-sex marriage, respondents' opinions were closely divided, with 40.7 percent opposing and 40.0 percent supporting same-sex marriage in New Hampshire. Half of respondents (50.8 percent) said they supported expanding gambling in New Hampshire to include video slot machines and casinos, with 37.3 percent opposing and 11.9 percent "unsure."

National health care reform

In regards to the recent health care reform legislation passed by the federal government, respondents were split in opinion, with 43.7 percent supporting and 44.4 percent opposing health care reform. Respondents' outlook on their personal health care situation is cautiously optimistic, with a slight majority (53.5 percent) reporting that they think their health care situation will either be "better" or "about the same" in five years. A significant portion of respondents (33.6 percent) think that their health care situation will be "worse" in five years, and 12.9 percent are "unsure."

State policy priorities

Respondents were given a list of policy issues and asked to select the most important issue for New Hampshire policymakers to focus on. The state economy stood out as the top priority for the second year in a row while, strikingly, fewer citizens (9.4 percent less) selected health care needs compared to last year. This change could be the result of the recent national health care reform, perhaps indicating that respondents no longer see health care as a top state responsibility. Below is a list of policy issues and respondent choices from the 2010 and 2009 polls:

Option for most important policy issue in NH	Percent in 2009	Percent in 2010	Percent Change
Building and maintaining a strong economy	38.0	37.3	-0.7
Improving education across the state	16.4	11.8	-4.6
Balancing the NH state budget	n/a	18.0	n/a
Providing for the health care needs of NH citizens	15.1	5.7	-9.4
Relieving the property tax burdens on NH citizens	14.6	17.2	+2.6
Maintaining roads, highways, and bridges across the state	4.5	3.3	-1.2
Maintaining a sustainable and livable environment	3.3	2.1	-1.2
Other	7.8	4.6	-3.2

In assessing the relative importance of different levels of government in ensuring New Hampshire's future, 62.0 percent of respondents identify "the state government in Concord" as being the most important, up slightly from last year (56.5 percent). A slightly smaller proportion of respondents identify "the federal government in Washington" this year than in the 2009 poll (15.9 percent versus 21.8 percent) while 22.1 percent of respondents report that local government is most important in ensuring New Hampshire's future.

Budgetary policy

New Hampshire voters expressed concern about the state’s budget problems: 44.1 percent think the problems are “somewhat serious” and 42.9 percent think the problems are “very serious.” This represents a notable increase from 2009 when only 28.7 percent of respondents judged budget problems to be “very serious.” In general, respondents indicate that they would rather have reduced services than higher taxes. When asked about measures to help resolve local budget problems, respondents favored “maintaining taxes, decreasing services” (44.3 percent) over “increasing taxes, maintaining services” (26.2 percent). These proportions are also roughly similar to last year’s poll (47.9 percent and 30.4 percent, respectively).

Respondents provided opinions on various ways to balance the New Hampshire state budget, reporting approval or disapproval of the options listed in the table. Regarding two new options included in the poll this year, half of respondents approved the expansion of gambling as an option to help balance the budget, while less than a quarter of respondents expressed approval of the creation of a state income tax. Approval of raising the gas tax five cents/gallon as a solution dropped by 20 points, down from about half of respondents in 2009 to about a third in 2010. Similarly, approval for raising the annual motor vehicle tax dropped. Also of note, respondents express sustained approval for an increase in the cigarette tax as a policy option, even after the recent cigarette tax increase in 2008.

Funding Option	Percent approve in 2009	Percent approve in 2010	Percent Change
Raising the gas tax five cents/gallon	51.6	33.1	-18.5
A five percent increase in annual motor vehicle tax	51.8	38.1	-13.7
A two percent increase in the interest & dividends tax	34.2	34.9	+0.7
A one-percent sales tax	32.7	37.3	+4.6
An additional 25-cent increase in the cigarette tax	72.8	68.4	-4.4
The creation of a state income tax	n/a	22.7	n/a
The expansion of gambling in NH to include video slot machines and casinos	n/a	55.4	n/a

POLITICIANS

Respondents gave their assessments of elected officials in New Hampshire and at the national level. Governor Lynch suffered a drop in his approval ratings in this year’s poll, while respondents’ approval ratings of Senators Gregg and Shaheen remained relatively constant, compared to 2009. All three continue to garner more “favorable” than unfavorable opinions.

New Hampshire politicians

Respondents were polled about their opinions of statewide elected officials in New Hampshire, including Governor John Lynch, Senator Judd Gregg, and Senator Jeanne Shaheen. Their approval ratings from the 2010 and 2009 polls are as follows:

Statewide Official	Opinion	Percent	Percent	Percent
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		in 2009	in 2010	Change
Governor John Lynch	favorable	54.3	42.5	-11.8
	neutral	26.0	27.1	+1.1
	unfavorable	9.1	20.9	+11.8
	unsure	10.6	9.5	-1.1
Senator Judd Gregg	favorable	43.2	43.5	+0.3
	neutral	26.3	21.8	-4.5
	unfavorable	21.0	24.6	+3.6
	unsure	9.6	10.1	+0.5
Senator Jeanne Shaheen	favorable	33.1	35.0	+1.9
	neutral	24.0	21.2	-2.8
	unfavorable	30.1	35.2	+5.1
	unsure	12.9	8.6	-4.3

Despite a drop in the number of voters with a “favorable” opinion of Governor Lynch in 2010, 51.4 percent of respondents approve of his performance as Governor of New Hampshire. Many respondents were “unsure” of New Hampshire legislature’s job performance (45.8 percent), while 23.0 percent expressed approval, and 31.2 percent expressed disapproval. On the national scene, respondents who “approve” and “disapprove” of President Obama’s job performance are relatively matched (45.1 percent and 42.8, respectively), with 12.1 percent of voters “unsure.”

2010 U.S. Senate Race

Respondents were polled about their vote choice in two different candidate pairings in the 2010 U.S. Senate race if it were “held today.” In one pairing, U.S. House 2nd District Representative Democrat Paul Hodes was pitted against former New Hampshire Attorney General Republican Kelly Ayotte, in the other Republican businessman Bill Binnie. Respondents chose Ayotte (36.4 percent) over Hodes (21.9 percent) by a considerable amount, but a plurality was still “unsure” (41.7 percent). In the second match-up, respondents chose Binnie (31.7) over Hodes (24.0 percent), but slightly less than half of voters were unsure (44.3 percent).

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

In the second year of the economic crisis, New Hampshire citizens report being slightly better off financially compared to 2009, but still indicate general pessimism about the economic wellbeing of both the U.S. and New Hampshire. However, respondents are more optimistic about the state of the New Hampshire economy than the national economy, and also indicate general skepticism as to the effectiveness of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

State of the economy: New Hampshire

Respondents indicated general pessimism in regards to New Hampshire’s economic situation. When assessing the current state of the New Hampshire economy, 49.6 percent of respondents think the economy is “fair,” 29.1 percent think the economy is “poor,” and only 18.8 percent think the economy is “good” or “excellent.” Compared to a year ago, respondents’ assessment of state economy is slightly more optimistic.

State of the economy: United States

Respondents’ thoughts on the national economy were even more pessimistic than views on the

state economy: 49.1 percent of respondents rate the national economy as “poor,” 40.5 percent rate the national economy as “fair,” and only 6.7 percent of respondents rate the national economy as “good” or “excellent.” Respondents show limited support and little enthusiasm for the federal government’s reaction to the economic crisis. Regarding the effectiveness of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 (the economic stimulus package), only 3.9 percent of respondents find the stimulus package to be “very effective” at helping to move the U.S. toward economic recovery, 38.3 percent say it was “somewhat effective,” while the majority of respondents find it to be “not very effective,” (29.1 percent) or “not effective at all” (23.5 percent).

Respondents’ personal finances

Compared to results from 2009, respondents’ assessments of their current and future personal financial situations were relatively stable. Half of respondents (49.6 percent) believe that their personal economic situation is “about the same” as last year, which closely tracks the response of 48.5 percent for the same question in 2009. While respondents who believe they are “worse off” this year are slightly less numerous than last year (38.0 percent in 2010 compared to 44.0 percent in 2009). Nearly one third of respondents (31.7 percent) predict that their personal financial situation in one year will be “better,” which is similar to expectations respondents expressed last year (32.5 percent).

The number of respondents who report that they or a family member has been negatively affected by the mortgage crisis went down slightly (16.4 percent in the 2010 poll versus 19.4 percent in the 2009 poll). Responses from voters reveal relative stability in regards to concerns about credit card debt, with approximately 16.3 percent of this year’s respondents indicating that credit card debt is a “top personal financial concern,” compared to last year’s poll (18.0 percent).

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Approximately half of respondents were male (52.0 percent) and half were female (48.0 percent). More than half of respondents were in the 2nd Congressional District (59.9 percent) while the 1st Congressional District was less represented (40.1 percent). The mean and median ages of the respondents were 59.9 and 59, respectively. A third of respondents self-reported that they are registered to vote as Republican (34.6 percent) and slightly less than a third reported being registered to vote as Democrats (26.7 percent). The largest portion of respondents report being politically unaffiliated, with 38.7 percent reporting that they are registered to vote as Undeclared/Independents.

Respondents reported their 2009 household income as follows: 21.9 percent earn less than \$40,000, 44.3 percent earn between \$40,000 and \$100,000, and 16.0 percent earn more than \$100,000. Additionally, respondents reported their occupational status: less than half are employed full-time (42.2 percent), about a third are retired (35.4 percent), 11.9 percent are employed part-time, and 8.2 percent are unemployed.

POLL METHODS

During the week of April 26-30, 2010, students from The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College conducted a telephone survey of registered voters in New Hampshire. Survey respondents were asked a wide range of questions relating to political, economic, and social

matters in New Hampshire and, to a lesser extent, the nation as a whole.

Calls were made between the hours of 6:30pm and 9:30pm Monday through Thursday evenings. Additional callbacks were made during daytime hours on Friday. Over the course of the week, callers made at least three attempts to contact each of the registered voters drawn in the sample. Callers made four attempts in the case of a small number of sampled voters who had been contacted by the callers but were unable to complete the survey at the time of the initial contact. A total of 406 respondents participated in the survey interviews during the week, yielding an error rate of +/- 5.0 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

In addition to the questions presented above, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their media consumption and further demographics. Later reports will analyze these data, as well as provide greater depth of analysis on the data presented in this news release.