



The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College

The Center for Public Policy and the Social Sciences

Perspectives from New Hampshire on the Economy and Other Policy Issues

An Analysis of the Rockefeller Center's 2010 "State of the State" Poll

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Prepared by:

Alexandra Mahler-Haug, Editor

Ashley Afranie-Sakyi
Lindsay Brewer
Caroline Buck
Jae Hyuk Chang
Rick D'Amato
Mike Danaher
Troy Dildine
Marissa Greco
Grace Hart
Soo Jee Lee
Austin Major
Virginia Miller
Kali Montecalvo
Alexi Pappas
Alina Politzer
Galen M. Pospisil
Katie Schade
Michael Sanchez
Zachary Schwartz
Roanna Wang
Melanie Wilcox
Eric Yang

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Contact:

Nelson A. Rockefeller Center, 6082 Rockefeller Hall, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH 03755
<http://rockefeller.dartmouth.edu/shop/> • Email: Ronald.G.Shaiko@Dartmouth.edu

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report on the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center's third annual "State of the State" poll captures the opinions of New Hampshire residents in regards to economic, budgetary, environmental, and social policy issues and other questions. In addition to reporting the overall opinions on these subject areas as reflected directly in the poll results, this report also examines how different demographic variables such as age, education, income, party affiliation, and media consumption influenced respondents' answers. However, very few overall trends emerged from these examinations of demographics, as different variables correlated with answers to different types of questions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center's third annual "State of the State" poll surveyed a sample of registered voters in New Hampshire ($N=406$) to get their opinions on policy issues, elected officials, and the state of the economy in New Hampshire and in the United States. Overall, respondents prioritized the state economy as the top policy concern facing New Hampshire, followed by balancing the state budget, and property tax reduction. Respondents' opinions on other policy issues were 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." 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."

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. 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 2009's poll (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.

1.1 Survey Methods

During the week of April 26-30, 2010, students from 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.

1.2 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 slightly less represented (40.1 percent). The mean and median ages of the respondents were 59.9 and 59, respectively, with a range from 24 to 95 years of age. The reason a large portion of the respondents are older in age may be because elderly or retired individuals are more likely to be at home or have more time to answer a survey. Additionally, the methods by which the survey was conducted may also have had an effect on the age of the respondents: phone surveys use home phone numbers to reach individuals and many younger people no longer use home phones. Instead, they increasingly rely on their cell phones. However, whatever the reason for the specific age distribution yielded by the sample may be, it is important to keep in mind that the data may be slightly skewed by the large number of respondents in the older age brackets.

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.

A third of respondents reported that they were 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. In terms of reported political ideology, nearly half of respondents (46.1 percent) classified themselves as moderates, with 36.1 percent identifying themselves as conservatives and 17.8 percent classifying themselves as liberals. While there is not nearly as high of a correlation between self-reported political ideology and registered political party as one would expect, the relationship is still statistically significant ($p=0.000$). The weak but significant correlation between self-reported political ideology and political party identification may be due to the number of Independents and unaffiliated voters in New Hampshire. Ordinarily, one would expect liberals to be Democrats, conservatives to be primarily Republicans, and moderates to be divided between the two parties or registered as Independents. However, the data suggests that many New Hampshire residents who claim to be liberal or conservative are in fact registered as Independents or as Undeclared.

2. PUBLIC OFFICIALS

In general, respondents indicated dissatisfaction with current elected officials, particularly in regards to Democratic Governor John Lynch, whose approval ratings dropped 11.8 percent from 2009 to 2010. However, 42.5 percent of respondents still held a favorable opinion of Governor Lynch and despite a drop in the number of voters with a “favorable” opinion of Governor Lynch in 2010, 51.4 percent of respondents approved of his job 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.”

This section outlines the relationships between political party identification, political ideology, and approval and job approval ratings for elected officials.

2.1 Opinions on Governor John Lynch

The data suggests that job approval ratings for Governor Lynch are impacted by respondents’ self-reported party identification and political ideology, showing relationships that are statistically significant ($p=0.000$ and $p=0.000$, respectively). Respondents who identified themselves as “liberal” were more likely to approve of Governor Lynch’s job performance as Governor (68.2 percent of liberals indicated approval), whereas 41.4 percent of respondents who identified themselves as “conservative” disapproved of Governor Lynch’s job performance. Similarly, 71.0 percent of self-identified Democrats approved of Governor Lynch’s job performance and 38.5 percent of Republicans disapproved.

2.2 Opinions on the New Hampshire State Legislature

Despite many respondents indicating uncertainty regarding the job performance of the New Hampshire State Legislature, the data shows a significant relationship between their opinions of the State Legislature and self-reported political ideology and political party affiliation ($p=0.000$ and $p=0.000$, respectively). Nearly half of respondents who approve of the job performance of the State Legislature identified themselves as Democrats (46.6 percent) while nearly 40 percent of those who disapproved identified themselves as Republicans (39.2 percent). However, the largest groups of self-identified Liberals, Moderates, and Conservatives (42.4, 48.2, and 44.4 percent, respectively) were unsure as to their opinions on the job performance of the New Hampshire State Legislature.

2.3 Opinions on President Barack Obama

The relationships between respondents’ self-reported political ideology and party identification are statistically significant ($p=0.000$ and $p=0.000$). This is to be expected. Indeed, 78.8 percent of self-identified liberals approve of President Obama’s job performance while 76.5 percent of

conservatives disapprove. Similarly, 77.0 percent of Democrats approve of the President's job performance while 71.3 percent of Republicans disapprove. Undeclared respondents or Independents were more split, with 48.9 percent approving of President Obama's job performance and 36.2 percent disapproving, while self-described "moderates" were also roughly split between approving and disapproving of the president's job performance (56.8 and 29.6 percent, respectively).

3. ECONOMIC POLICY

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

This section analyzes New Hampshire residents' opinions on the economic state of affairs in New Hampshire and the U.S. more generally, and ascertains whether variables such as political party identification or occupational status have an impact on outlooks and opinions on economic issues and policies.

3.1 Opinions on the State of the New Hampshire Economy

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."

Opinions on the state economy did not appear to be strongly related to voters' ideology or party affiliation. Respondents' self-reported party identification did not have a significant relationship with their outlook on the state of the New Hampshire economy, and neither did respondents' political ideology. While the correlations between party identification or ideology and outlook on the state economy are positive, they are weak.

Rather than respondents' party identification or ideology, the data suggest that other factors had more of an impact on voters' opinions of the state of the state economy. The relationship between respondents' occupational status and view of the New Hampshire economy was significant ($p=0.000$). Respondents who were more vulnerable to changes in the economy, such as disabled or unemployed respondents, viewed the New Hampshire state economy as "poor" for the most part (50.0 and 51.6 percent, respectively). On the other hand, respondents with jobs (whether they be part-time or full-time) or respondents who were retired generally viewed the economy as "fair." Respondents who had full-time jobs returned the highest rate of "fair" responses (58.8 percent). Those with part-time jobs also thought favorably of the economy, with approximately 20 percent viewing the economy as "excellent" or "good."

3.2 Opinions on the State of the U.S. Economy

Respondents' thoughts on the national economy were even more pessimistic than views on the state economy: 49.1 percent of respondents rated the national economy as "poor," 40.5 percent rate the national economy as "fair," and only 6.7 percent of respondents rated the national economy as "good" or "excellent."

While the relationship between self-reported political party affiliation and opinion on the state of the U.S. economy is not statistically significant, 44.0 percent of respondents who said that the state of the U.S. economy was "good" identified themselves as Democrats, as compared to Republicans or Independents (who each made up 28.0 percent of respondents that indicated that the U.S. economy was "good"). Likewise, there were more self-identified Republicans and Independents/Undeclared respondents that described the state of the national economy as "poor" (39.5 and 37.3 percent, respectively). Still, it is critical to note that this data indicates that the correlation between respondents' self-reported political party affiliation and their outlook on the U.S. economy is not significant, demonstrating that some other variable must be in play. Similarly, respondents' political ideology also was not significantly related to their opinion on the national economy.

Contrary to respondents' outlooks on the state economy, occupational status did not have a significant relationship with opinions on the U.S. economy. With few exceptions, the highest percentage of respondents in each occupational status group described the state of the national economy as "fair" or "poor."

3.2.1 Perceptions of the Economic Stimulus

More specifically, 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).

The relationship between respondents' self-reported party identification and perceptions of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 (the economic stimulus package) is significant when tested with a chi square analysis ($p=0.000$), although the correlation is still relatively weak. The impact of party identification is evident: 56.4 of self-reported Democrats believe the stimulus package has been either extremely or somewhat effective, while only 0.00 percent of Republicans think that the stimulus has been "very effective" and 19.1 percent of Republicans believe that it was only somewhat effective.

Similar to the impact of political party identification, respondents' political ideology impacted their opinions of the stimulus package ($p=0.000$). Indeed, 62.1 percent of respondents who considered the stimulus to be "very effective" or "somewhat effective" also described themselves

as “liberal”, while 47.8 percent of respondents who thought that the stimulus was not effective at all also described themselves as “conservative.”

The results obtained from comparing current occupation status to opinions on the stimulus package were somewhat surprising: the relationship was not statistically significant. While the largest percentage of those who are unemployed thought that the stimulus package was “not effective at all,” the data show that respondents’ indicated general uncertainty and mixed opinions.

3.3 Outlooks on Personal Finances and Economic Security

Compared to results from 2009, respondents’ assessments of their current and future personal financial situations were relatively stable. Half of respondents (49.6 percent) reported 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 reported 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) predicted that their personal financial situation in one year would be “better,” which is similar to expectations respondents expressed last year (32.5 percent).

The relationship between respondents’ occupational status and their perception of their personal financial situation was not statistically significant. The relationship between respondents’ occupational status and their opinion of their future financial situation was also not significant.

Respondents’ self-reported political party identification did not have a significant relationship with perception of voters’ current personal financial situation or future financial situation. Respondents’ political ideology did not have a significant relationship with perceptions of personal financial situations, but ideology and respondents’ future financial outlook were statistically significant ($p=0.009$). Of the people who thought that their financial position in one year would be worse, 53.7 percent identified themselves as conservative.

4. STATE BUDGETARY POLICY

The poll contained a series of questions pertaining to the New Hampshire budget, one of the most pressing issues for the state government. Even though the state government has both increased tax rates and enacted new taxes over the past two decades, the budget deficit has continued to increase. When asked to rate the severity of New Hampshire’s budget problems, nearly 90 percent of respondents described the state’s budget problems as “very serious” (42.9 percent) or “somewhat serious” (44.1 percent). Residents’ concern about the budget has increased, with the number of respondents describing the state’s budget problems as “very serious” rising nearly 16 percent over the past two years, from 27.1 percent in 2008 to 42.9 percent in 2010.¹ 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). The New Hampshire budget was an important issue

for respondents: when asked to choose from a list of issues that policy makers in Concord should address, “balancing the state budget” was the second-most popular response, surpassed only by “building and maintaining a strong economy.”

4.1 Policy Solutions to help reduce the Budget Deficit

The State of the State Poll surveyed respondents about a variety of potential options to balance the state budget, including increasing taxes (such as the annual motor vehicles tax) or creating new taxes (such as a state income tax), or other options (such as expanding gambling).² In general, respondents were most amenable to the cigarette tax and expansion of gambling in New Hampshire, with 68.4 percent and 55.4 percent approving respectively, and least amenable to the creation of a state income tax, with 77.3 percent disapproving. Approval of raising the gas tax \$0.05/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.

Table 1. Percent approval and disapproval of policy options to help remedy the New Hampshire state budget deficit

Policy Solution	Approval (%)	Disapproval (%)
Gas Tax Increase (\$0.05/gal)	33.1	66.9
Motor Tax Increase (5%)	38.1	62.0
Interest and Dividends Tax Increase (2%)	34.9	65.1
Sales Tax (1%)	37.3	62.7
Cigarette Tax Increase (\$0.25)	68.4	31.6
Creation of a State Income Tax	22.7	77.3
Expansion of Gambling	55.4	44.6

To better explain how New Hampshire residents feel about these policy options to address the budget problem and to determine if there is a certain individual in the state of New Hampshire that prefers a particular policy option, a chi-squared analysis was used to examine the relationships between approval of the budget policy options and other demographic and political variables. A summary score of respondents’ opinions on all seven policy options was also created and analyzed in relation to other demographic and political variables to ascertain overall approval or disapproval of the budget policy options.³ Respondents’ opinions on the seven policy options was also analyzed in relation to a socioeconomic status index variable, “SES”, a compilation of data about the respondent’s income level and highest level of education attained, which ranged from one to five.⁴ An SES of one indicated low socioeconomic status, while an SES of five indicated high socioeconomic status.

4.1.1 Gas Tax Increase by Five Cents per Gallon

The first policy option to address the budget situation involved raising the gas tax five cents per gallon. Those with a higher SES index value were statistically more likely to approve of the gas tax ($p=0.000$). While only 16.2 percent of those with an SES value of one approved of the tax increase, those with an SES value of five had an approval rate of 56.3 percent. However, in terms of occupational status, respondents across the spectrum tended to disapprove of the tax increase, though those who were unemployed were slightly more likely than those who were employed full-time or part-time to disapprove of the gas tax increase.

There was also a significant relationship between approval of the gas tax and respondents' perception of their own personal economic situation compared to one year ago ($p=0.020$). Respondents who claimed to be better off compared to one year ago were more likely to approve of the gas tax than those who were worse off or about the same.

There was also a significant relationship between participants' self-reported political party identification and approval of the gas tax ($p=0.000$). While there was an even split between Democrats who approved and disapproved of the gas tax, the vast majority (79.4 percent) of Republicans expressed disapproval of the gas tax as a policy option to help remedy the state budget. Similarly, there was a significant relationship ($p=0.000$) between participants' ideological beliefs and their opinions regarding the gas tax. The majority (53.0 percent) of liberals and slightly more than 40 percent of moderates approved this tax, while only 17.2 percent of conservatives approved of the tax.

There was a significant relationship between the perception of Governor Lynch and approval of the gas tax ($p=0.000$). Those with a favorable opinion of Lynch were more likely to approve the tax than those with an unfavorable, neutral, or unsure opinion. Furthermore, respondents who approved of Lynch's job performance were more likely to approve the gas tax than those who disapproved or were unsure ($p=0.000$). There was no significant relationship, however, between perception of the New Hampshire legislature's job performance and approval of the gas tax.

4.1.2 Annual Motor Vehicle Tax Increase of Five Percent

Another policy option to address the budget situation is a five percent increase to the annual motor vehicles tax. Respondents with a higher SES value were statistically more likely to approve of the motor tax increase ($p=0.001$). Also, as in the case with the gas tax, those who were unemployed were slightly more likely than those who were employed full-time or part-time to disapprove of the motor tax increase.

There was a significant relationship between respondents' party identification and their approval of a five percent increase in the annual motor vehicle tax ($p=0.031$). While 70 percent of Republicans disapproved, 50.0 percent of Democrats and 61.7 percent of undeclared voters and independents disapproved. A strong correlation also exists between respondents' ideology and approval of the motor tax ($p=0.000$). Roughly 43 percent of liberal respondents approved of the tax, while 47.3 percent of moderates and 23.4 percent of conservatives approved of the tax.

Respondents with a favorable opinion of Lynch were more likely to approve of the motor tax than those with an unfavorable, neutral, or unsure opinion of Lynch ($p=0.000$); almost 55 percent of those with a favorable opinion of Lynch approved of the motor tax, compared to 16.3 percent

of those with an unfavorable opinion of the governor. Perception of Lynch's job performance correlated with approval of the motor tax ($p=0.000$). There was also a significant relationship between perception of the legislature's performance and approval of the tax ($p=0.000$).

4.1.3 Interest and Dividends Tax Increase by Two Percent

The third policy option to address the budget situation was a two percent increase in the Interest and Dividends tax. There was no significant relationship between the SES index value of the individuals and their approval or disapproval rating of the tax increase. Similarly, there was no significant relationship between the occupational status of individuals and their approval or disapproval of the tax increase.

There was a significant relationship between respondents' party identification and approval of the tax increase ($p=0.000$). A majority (54.6 percent) of Democratic respondents approved, while 78.4 percent of Republicans disapproved and 66.4 percent of undeclared and independent voters disapproved. A strong correlation also existed between respondents' ideology and approval of the tax increase ($p=0.000$); half of the liberal respondents approved of the tax, compared with 42.5 percent of moderates and 18.6 percent of conservatives.

There was also a significant relationship ($p=0.000$) between perception of Lynch and approval of the interest and dividends tax. Nearly half (49.7 percent) of respondents with a favorable opinion of Lynch approved of the tax, while only 10.3 percent of those with an unfavorable opinion approved of the tax. There was also a significant relationship between approval of the tax and perception of Lynch's job performance ($p=0.000$) and perception of the NH legislature's job performance ($p=0.008$). Respondents who disapproved of the governor's job performance and of the legislature's job performance overwhelmingly disapproved of the tax.

4.1.4 The Creation of a Sales Tax of One Percent

The fourth policy option to alleviate the budget was the creation of a one percent sales tax. There was no significant relationship between the SES index value or the occupational status of the individuals and their approval of the sales tax. There was no significant relationship between respondents' political party and approval of the sales tax.

There was, however, a strong correlation between respondents' ideology and approval of the sales tax ($p=0.013$). Nearly 37 percent of liberal respondents approved of the tax, while 44.9 percent of moderates and 28.4 percent of conservatives approved.

Respondents with a favorable opinion of Lynch were more likely to approve of the creation of a sales tax than those with an unfavorable opinion of Lynch ($p=0.050$). Only one-quarter of those with an unfavorable opinion of Lynch approved of the sales tax, while 41.3 percent of those with a favorable opinion of Lynch approved of the sales tax. There was also a significant relationship ($p=0.040$) between perception of Lynch's job performance and approval of the creation of a sales tax. There was no significant relationship, however, between perception of the NH legislature's job performance and approval of the creation of a sales tax.

4.1.5 Cigarette Tax Increase Of Twenty-Five Cents

The most popular proposal to address the budget situation was a \$0.25 increase in the cigarette tax. There was no significant relationship between the SES index value of the individuals and their approval of the tax increase and respondents tended to support the cigarette tax increase across different SES index values. There was also no significant relationship between the occupational status of the individuals and their approval of the tax increase.

There was a significant relationship between respondents' party affiliation and approval of the cigarette tax ($p=0.001$). The percentage of Democrats who approved the cigarette tax (79.2 percent) was higher than the percentage for any other policy option. There was also a strong correlation between respondents' ideology and opinion of a 25-cent cigarette tax ($p=0.000$). Roughly 83 percent of liberal respondents approved of the cigarette tax, while 76.5 percent of moderates and 53.0 percent of conservatives approved.

Respondents with a favorable opinion of Lynch were more likely to approve of the cigarette tax ($p=0.000$), and an overwhelming majority (79.0 percent) said they would approve of the tax. Nevertheless, the cigarette tax was approved by more respondents with unfavorable opinions of Lynch (47.5 percent) than any other tax option presented. Respondents who approved of Lynch's job performance and the NH legislature's job performance were more likely to approve of the cigarette tax ($p=0.000$ and $p=0.001$, respectively). As with respondents' opinion of Lynch, the cigarette tax was approved by more respondents who disapproved of Lynch's and the NH legislature's job performance (47.9 percent and 55.9 percent, respectively) than any other tax option presented.

4.1.6 Creation of a State Income Tax

The least popular option to alleviate the budget deficit was the creation of a state income tax. All respondents tended to disapprove of the income tax, across the spectra of the SES index value and occupation.

There was a significant relationship between respondents' political party and approval of the income tax ($p=0.000$). An overwhelming 89.2 percent of Republicans disapproved of the income tax, while 76.1 percent of undeclared and independent voters and 63.6 percent of Democrats disapproved. There was also a significant relationship between respondents' ideology and opinion of a state income tax ($p=0.000$). About 42 percent of liberal respondents approved of the tax, while 26.2 percent of moderates and 8.4 percent of conservatives approved of the tax.

There was a significant relationship between perception of Governor Lynch and approval of the income tax ($p=0.000$). The majority of respondents with both favorable and unfavorable opinions of Lynch disapproved of the income tax (65.0 percent and 90.0 percent, respectively). Most of the respondents who supported the income tax, however, had favorable opinions of Lynch (65.9 percent). There was also a significant relationship between perception of Lynch's job performance and approval of the income tax ($p=0.000$). The majority of respondents who approved, disapproved, and were unsure of Lynch's job performance disapproved of the income tax, but those who approved of the governor's job performance had the highest approval rating

(30.9 percent). There was no significant relationship between approval of the NH legislature's job performance and approval of the income tax.

4.1.7 Expansion of Gambling in New Hampshire

The final policy option to alleviate the budget situation was the expansion of gambling in New Hampshire. There was a relatively strong relationship ($p=0.022$) between the SES index value and approval of the expansion. A slight majority of every SES index value from one to four approved of the increase, but those with an SES index value of five had a low approval rating (34.0 percent). Furthermore, the majority of those who were employed full-time (61.6 percent), as well as those who were unemployed (66.7 percent) approved of the expansion of gambling in New Hampshire. The expansion of gambling was the only policy option of which a majority of voters in each political party approved.

There was no significant correlation, however, between voters' party identification and expansion of gambling. Furthermore, there was no significant relationship between respondents' ideology and approval of the expansion of gambling. There was also no significant relationship between opinion of Governor Lynch and approval of the expansion of gambling. Respondents who approved of Lynch's job performance, however, were less likely to approve of the expansion of gambling than those who disapproved or were unsure of Lynch's job performance ($p=0.021$). There was no significant relationship between approval of the New Hampshire legislature's job performance and approval of the income tax.

4.2 Total Number of Budget Policy Options Approved

There was a significant relationship ($p=0.030$) between the SES index value of the individuals and the total number of policy options approved. Overall, every SES index value group tended to have a slight majority or significant portion of the population who preferred two or three of the budgetary solutions, and as their SES index values increased, respondents tended to support a higher number of budgetary solutions.

There was also a strong correlation between respondents' political party and the number of policy options approved ($p=0.004$). While only 11.4 percent of Democrats disapproved of all seven policy options, 57.1 percent of Republicans and 31.0 percent of undeclared and undecided voters disapproved of all seven options. There was also a significant relationship between respondents' ideology and the number of policy options approved ($p=0.000$). While only 5.7 percent of liberals and 17.1 percent of moderates disapproved of all seven policy options, 77.1 percent of conservatives disapproved of all the policy options.

Respondents with a favorable opinion of Governor Lynch were more likely to approve of a higher number of options to address the budget situation than those with an unfavorable, neutral, or unsure opinion of Lynch ($p=0.000$). More than a quarter (28.7 percent) of those with favorable opinions of Lynch approved of five options or more, compared to only about seven percent of those with unfavorable opinions of Lynch. There was also a significant relationship between opinion of Governor Lynch's job performance and the total number of options respondents approved ($p=0.000$). Roughly a quarter (27.5 percent) of those who disapproved of Lynch's job

performance approved of three options or more, while nearly three-quarters (71.7 percent) of those who approved of Lynch's job performance approved of three options or more. Similarly, respondents who approved of the legislature's job performance were more likely to approve a higher number of options to address the budget situation ($p=0.002$).

4.3 Budget Policy Options and Conclusions

Overall, the socioeconomic status of the respondents had a small but significant impact on their approval or disapproval of the different policy solutions. In addition, there was a significant correlation between both respondents' self-reported ideology and party identification and their approval of policy solutions for balancing the state budget. Finally, individuals who supported the New Hampshire legislature and Governor Lynch were more amenable to the policy options proposed.

Those respondents of a higher socioeconomic status were more likely to support the gas tax increase and the motor tax increase than those of a lower socioeconomic status, while those who were unemployed were more likely than those who were employed to disapprove of the two policy solutions. Overall, those of a higher socioeconomic status were also slightly more likely to support more policy solutions than others. Respondents who had a favorable opinion of the state government, including both Governor Lynch and the legislature, tended to approve of more options to fix the state budget. However, people who disapproved of the state government were more amenable to the cigarette tax. On the other hand, the policies of instituting a sales tax and income tax tended to be universally unpopular across the board. In terms of party identification, Republicans generally disapproved of any new taxes, while the Democrats were divided in an almost fifty-fifty split on any new tax measures. There was a significant correlation between both respondents' self-reported ideology and party identification and their approval of policy solutions for balancing the state budget. Respondents across all parties, however, expressed widespread approval for the expansion of gambling and widespread disapproval for the imposition of a one percent sales tax.

5. SOCIAL POLICY

This section explores the relationships between New Hampshire residents' political ideology and party identification and their views on social policy, particularly government intervention in certain moral issues such as same sex marriage and the expansion of gambling in the state of New Hampshire.

5.1 Opinions on Same Sex Marriage

Roughly equal percentages of respondents reported that they supported or opposed same sex marriage (40.0 percent and 40.7 percent, respectively), while the remainder (19.3 percent) reported that they were unsure as to their opinion. There was a significant relationship between gender and opinions on same sex marriage ($p=0.002$), with 46.5 percent of women approving of same sex marriage and 33.7 percent of men approving.

5.1.1 Political ideology, party identification and same sex marriage

There is a positive correlation between respondents' political ideology and their opinion on same sex marriage and the relationship is significant ($p=0.000$). Of the respondents who said they supported same sex marriage, 31.8 percent identified themselves as liberals, 15.5 percent were conservatives, and 52.7 percent were moderates. Similarly, there is a weak, but positive correlation between respondents' self-reported political party identification and their opinion on same sex marriage. This relationship is also significant ($p=0.000$), with 39.3 percent of respondents who said they supported same sex marriage identifying themselves as Democrats, 16.0 percent identifying themselves as Republican, and 44.7 identifying themselves as Independent or unaffiliated with any political party. Overall, more Republicans oppose same sex marriage than support it (66.7 percent versus 19.1 percent), while more Democrats indicate support rather than opposition (59.0 percent versus 22.0 percent).

5.2 Opinions on Gambling

Respondents were asked about their opinions regarding the idea of expanding gambling in New Hampshire more generally than as a budget deficit reduction measure. 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 of respondents reporting that they were unsure as to their opinion on the issue.

5.2.1 Political ideology, party identification and gambling in New Hampshire

Opinions on gambling in New Hampshire appear to be relatively non-partisan and apolitical. Despite public opinion that is roughly split between supporting the expansion of gambling in New Hampshire and "oppose" or "unsure", there is not a significant relationship between respondents' political ideology and their opinion on gambling when tested with a chi square analysis. Similarly, the relationship between self-reported political party identification and opinions on expanding gambling in the state is not statistically significant; people of all ideologies and party affiliations are split fairly evenly on their opinions on this issue.

More Republicans oppose casinos compared to Democrats and Independents (40.0 percent compared to 34.0 and 35.7 percent, respectively), but more Democrats support casinos compared to Republicans and Independents (54 percent compared to 49.2 and 50.0 percent, respectively). Most of those who are unsure are Independents or reported themselves to be unaffiliated (37.3 percent).

This suggests several conclusions. First, gambling and the expansion of casinos are not "partisan" issues in New Hampshire; people on both sides have varying opinions on them. Secondly, while the government's condoning of gambling may be considered a moral issue to many people, it is clearly not a moral issue that fits into the moral system of a particular ideology or political party affiliation (for example, it might be expected that a large proportion of conservatives to oppose the expansion of gambling because of certain traditional moral and social values that are often associated with conservatism or the Republican party, but this is not the case in this survey).

5.3 Opinions on Same Sex Marriage and the Expansion of Gambling

Since same sex marriage and the expansion of gambling in the state of New Hampshire to include casinos and video slot machines are both central social issues, it is necessary to examine respondents' opinions to see if there is a correlation between people's views on both issues.

More than 50 percent of respondents who report supporting same sex marriage also report supporting the expansion of gambling in New Hampshire (54.7 percent). When examined in this manner, it appears that there must be a relationship between respondents' opinion on one issue and their opinion on the other. However, 45.2 percent of people who opposed same sex marriage also supported the expansion of gambling in the state, and many others remained unsure on one issue while providing an opinion on the other. The correlation between the two issues, while positive, is weak. Indeed, when analyzed with a chi square test, the relationship between people's opinions on same sex marriage and gambling is not significant.

5.4 Social Issue Opinions and Conclusions

First, while political ideology (liberal, moderate, or conservative) and self-reported political party affiliation (Democrat, Republican, or Independent) are not very highly correlated, the relationship between the two remains statistically significant ($p=0.000$). Secondly, while there is some correlation between political ideology or party identification and views on same sex marriage, the issue of expanding gambling does not seem to be as partisan of an issue, with relationships between party identification or political ideology and opinions on gambling not being significant. Indeed, party identification did not have any effect on opinions on the expansion of gambling, for support is split evenly between the parties as well as among Independents, showing that it is a nonpartisan issue. Political ideology is also not correlated with respondents' opinions on the expansion of gambling.

While there is a stronger correlation between party identification and support of same sex marriage, there are also a high number of respondents who were "unsure" as well as a broad range of opinions from Independents and people who self-reported to be unaffiliated with any political party. Similarly, while political ideology and support of same sex marriage are correlated in that more conservatives generally oppose it and more liberals support it, Independents hold a range of viewpoints and many people are unsure as to their feelings.

Moreover, while the relationship between respondents' views on both same sex marriage and the expansion of gambling is positively correlated, it is not significant, perhaps implying that voters think of these issues separately and do not think of them along the same moral or ideological lines.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

As energy efficiency and energy conservation becomes a more prevalent concern in the state of New Hampshire, survey respondents were asked what might sufficiently incentivize them to

increase their home energy efficiency, such as undertaking a weatherization project. The incentive options given were a state grant program, a state loan program, a property tax deduction, or community investment funds. Respondents could choose more than one option. Table 2 summarizes the responses.

Table 2. Incentive Options for Residents to Undertake a Home Energy Efficiency Project

Option	Would incentivize (%)	Would not incentivize (%)
State Grant Program	53.1	46.9
State Loan Program	17.5	82.5
Property Tax Deduction	81.1	18.9
Community Investment Funds	27.9	72.1

In sum, 8.0 percent of respondents would take advantage of any of the four incentive programs. Additionally, 18.7 percent would take advantage of three of the programs, 29.9 percent would take advantage of two, 30.5 percent would take advantage of only one, and 12.9 percent would take advantage of none of the incentive programs. Of the respondents who would undertake a weatherization project by using only one incentive program, 83.6 percent (97 people total) would do so by using a property tax deduction. This demonstrates the potential such an incentive like a property tax deduction might have on residents’ weatherization and increased energy efficiency habits.

This section examines correlations between demographic data and support for these state energy efficiency initiatives, focusing in particular on income, political ideology, party identification and level of education. Based upon the respondents’ opinions on energy efficiency incentives, a cumulative “energy rating” for each person that represents their overall support for any state policy encouraging energy efficiency was created. The “energy rating” scores of the respondents ranged between zero and four, and a score of zero indicates that respondents answered “no” to all four options whereas a score of four signifies that respondents answered “yes” to all four incentives.

6.1 Opinions on Energy Incentive Programs and Selected Demographics

The relationship between respondents’ cumulative energy efficiency incentive opinions rating and income was not statistically significant. Likewise, respondents’ levels of education did not have a significant impact on opinions regarding state energy efficiency incentive programs. However, the impact of self-reported political ideology on approval of state energy efficiency programs was found to be significant ($p=0.000$), as was the relationship between self-reported party identification and approval of state energy efficiency programs ($p=0.000$).

7. MEDIA CONSUMPTION

The survey data suggests daily newspapers and television news shows are the most widely consumed daily media in New Hampshire. A plurality of respondents reported spending one to

two hours every day on the Internet (33.3 percent), while 44.6 percent and 55.3 of respondents reported watching a television news show or reading a daily newspaper every day, respectively. Gender appeared to have an effect on the frequency of television news consumption ($p=0.025$), but had no significant effect on Internet usage or newspaper consumption.

7.1 Media Consumption and Political Inclinations

However, respondents' self-reported political party affiliation or political ideology was neither significantly related to the amount of television news watched nor to the frequency of reading daily newspapers. Respondents' party identification was also not significantly related to the hours spent on the Internet, but there was a significant relationship between respondents' reported political ideology and the amount of time they spent on the Internet ($p=0.004$).

7.2 Media Consumption and Occupational Status

The data on media consumption suggests that respondents' occupational status is related. The relationship between occupational status and the frequency of viewed television news programs is statistically significant ($p=0.043$). The same is true for frequency of reading daily newspapers ($p=0.034$) and the amount of time every day spent surfing the Internet ($p=0.000$).

7.3 Media Consumption and Level of Education

Respondents' level of education also had some impact on their media consumption. The relationship between education and amount of time spent on the Internet was significant ($p=0.003$), but level of education did not appear to have an effect on the frequency of television news show viewing or daily newspaper consumption.

8. CONCLUSION

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center's 2010 "State of the State" poll surveyed a sample of registered voters in New Hampshire to ascertain their opinions about the current state of the state and national economy, as well as to get their thoughts on politicians and specific policy issues. This report analyzed the responses to questions regarding matters of economic, budgetary, social, and environmental policy, and considered them in relation to demographic factors, as well as self-identified political ideology and political party affiliation. While this analysis uncovered significant trends of variables and related responses to single questions, no overarching patterns or trends can be confidently extrapolated, save for the impression that voters in New Hampshire remain fiercely independent, a unique population in their own right.

REFERENCES

¹2008 State of the State Poll. <http://rockefeller.dartmouth.edu/shop/PRS%20Policy%20Brief%200809-01.pdf>.

²Respondents were told, "Currently, Governor Lynch and the members of the New Hampshire legislature are trying to balance the state budget." They were then asked whether they approved of seven different options to alleviate the budget situation (Question 15): 1) raising the gas tax five cents a gallon, 2) a five percent increase in the annual motor vehicles tax, 3) a two percent increase in the Interest and Dividends tax, 4) creating a one cent sales tax, and 5) an additional 25-cent increase in the cigarette tax, 6) creation of a state income tax, and 7) expansion of gambling in New Hampshire to include video slot machines and casinos.

³The "total" variable ranged from zero to seven, with zero indicating disapproval of all seven options—"disapprove" for each question was assigned a value of zero—and seven indicating approval of all seven options—"approve" for each question was assigned a value of one.

⁴The "SES" variable was created by adding the values assigned to each respondent for Questions 32 (highest level of education attained) and 39 (income bracket), giving each respondent a final SES value that ranged from one to five.