



The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College
The Center for Public Policy and the Social Sciences

Policy Research Shop

6th Annual New Hampshire State of the State Poll on Politics, Economic Issues, and Social Policies

Disseminated Statewide and Nationally through Press Releases

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**NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER CENTER COMPLETES
6th ANNUAL
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE OF THE STATE POLL
ON POLITICS, ECONOMIC ISSUES, AND SOCIAL POLICIES**

Over three-quarters of voters support universal background checks for firearms sales.

Voters' views of New Hampshire economy and personal economic future improve.

Senator Ayotte unfavorable rating increases by seven percent.

NH voters prioritize building the economy and improving education.

In 2014 U.S. Senate match-ups, Jeanne Shaheen leads Jeb Bradley (47.9% to 25.2%) and Scott Brown (44.2% to 29.5%).

In 2016 presidential match-ups, Hillary Clinton leads Chris Christie (37.1% to 32.3%) and Marco Rubio (44.3% to 33.2%).

HANOVER, NH—The Rockefeller Center's sixth annual State of the State Poll surveyed a sample of New Hampshire registered voters (N=433) to ascertain their opinions on policy issues, elected officials, and the state of the economy in New Hampshire and in the United States. The sample error rate is +/- 4.7 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Sample demographics and polling methodology are summarized at the end of this report.

The poll indicates that voters have perceived an improvement in the national economy since last year. Respondents rating the economy as "excellent," "good," or "fair" have increased from 53.9 percent last year to 62.3 percent this year. Respondents expressing economic optimism has also increased over last year, although not as significantly as the increase from 2011 to 2012. Respondents who would prefer that state legislators focus primarily on building a strong economy or reducing the property tax burden on residents both fell slightly as the number who wanted the legislature to focus on balancing the state budget or improving education increased. Most respondents continued to believe that the federal deficit should be resolved with a combination of spending cuts and tax increases. President Obama's job approval rating has increased from 39.2 percent to 44.8 percent over the same period.

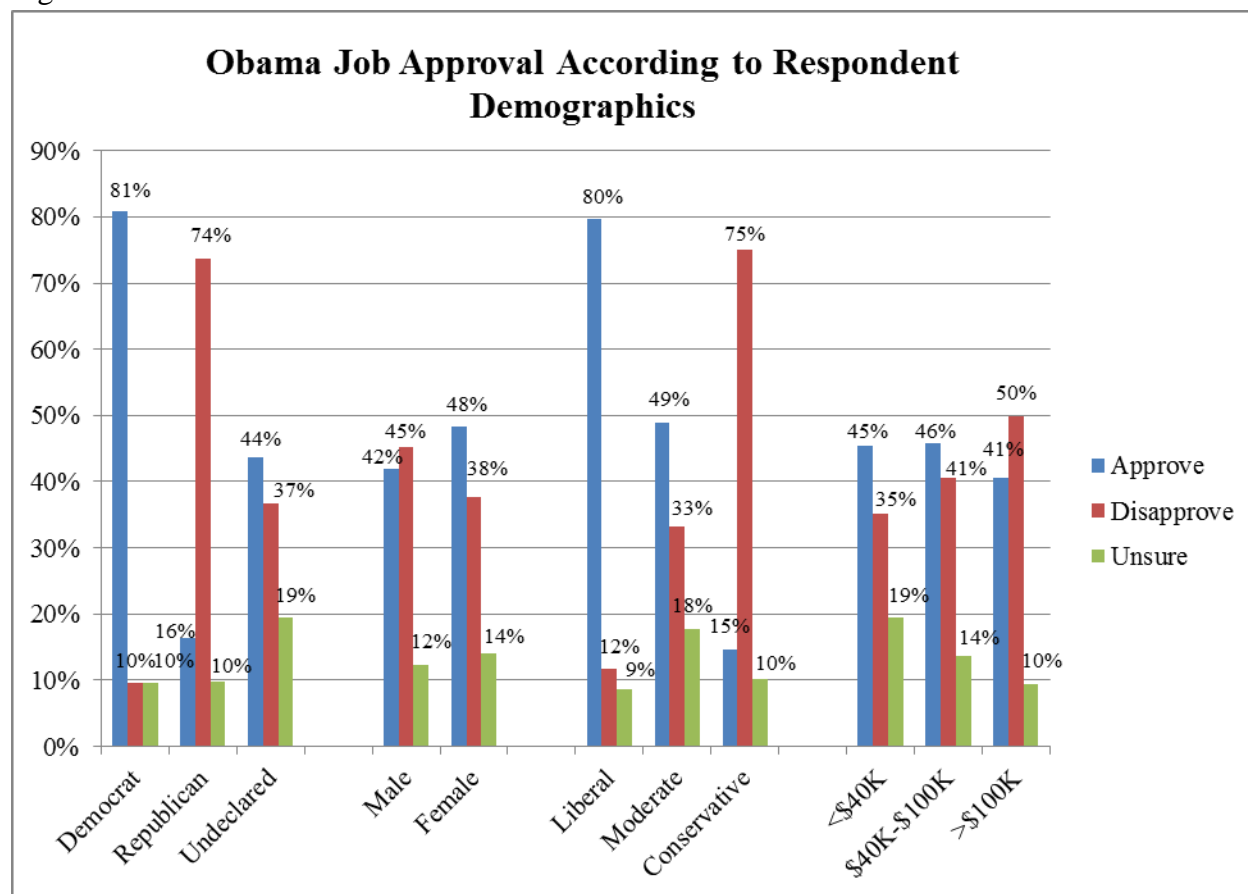
NATIONAL POLITICS AND POLICY ISSUES

New Hampshire voters have a marginally more favorable general opinion of President Barack Obama when compared to findings in last year's poll. Over 40 percent of respondents (41.1 percent) view President Obama favorably, up slightly from last year's figure of 40.4 percent. Unlike last year, President Obama's favorable rating now exceeds his unfavorable rating (39.1 percent), which has fallen by four percent from last year (43 percent).

President Obama Job Approval Rating

Respondents were also asked for their assessment of how President Obama is handling his job as President of the United States. President Obama's approval rating increased from 39.2 percent in 2012 to 44.8 percent as in this year's poll. His disapproval rating similarly decreased, falling six percent from 48.1 percent in 2012 to 42.1 percent over the same period. A more detailed analysis of President Obama's job approval is included below in Figure 1.

Figure 1.



The majority of respondents who are registered Democrats and who self-identify as “liberal” approve of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as President (81 percent and 80 percent, respectively), while the majority of respondents who are registered Republicans and who self-identify as “conservative” disapprove of President Obama’s job performance (74 percent and 75 percent, respectively). Respondents who self-identify as having a “moderate” political ideology are slightly more likely to approve of President Obama’s performance (49 percent approve and 33 percent disapprove). Undeclared voters are slightly more evenly split on the issue with 43 percent approving and 37 percent disapproving.

United States Economic Condition and Budgetary Policy

Respondents’ assessments of the national economy have improved since last year. Eleven percent of respondents rate the United States economy as “excellent” or “good,” compared to nine percent in 2012. Fifty-two percent of respondents believe that the national economy is in “fair” condition, up from 45 percent in 2012; whereas 37 percent believe that the U.S. economy is in a “poor” state—down from 44 percent in 2012.

When asked “if you were to advise policymakers in Washington” regarding the federal budget deficit situation in Washington, D.C., most respondents supported a combination of cutting programs and raising taxes (48.2 percent), up from last year (45.9 percent). Next respondents favored cutting taxes (33 percent) and only 7.4 percent of responded that they would advise policymakers to “raise taxes,” however both numbers fell in comparison to last year.

2016 Presidential Election

To gauge the current political landscape in the state of New Hampshire regarding the 2016 Presidential Election, respondents were asked, if the election were held today, whether they vote for Hillary Clinton, Chris Christie, or if they were unsure. They were also asked whether they would vote for Hillary Clinton, Marco Rubio, or if they were unsure. Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to volunteer the name of a fourth candidate who they preferred over Hilary Clinton, Chris Christie, and Marco Rubio.

With the choice between Hillary Clinton and Chris Christie, 37.1 percent of respondents said they would vote for Clinton, 32.3 percent of respondents would vote for Christie, and 30.6 percent were unsure. This outcome is within the margin of error for the sample. When asked to choose between Hillary Clinton and Marco Rubio, 44.3 percent said they would vote for Clinton, 33.2 percent of respondents would vote for Rubio, and 22.5 percent were unsure. The following chart illustrates how the Clinton-Christie and Clinton-Rubio election results break down according to demographic information, including political party identification, political ideology, sex, and income.

Figure 2.

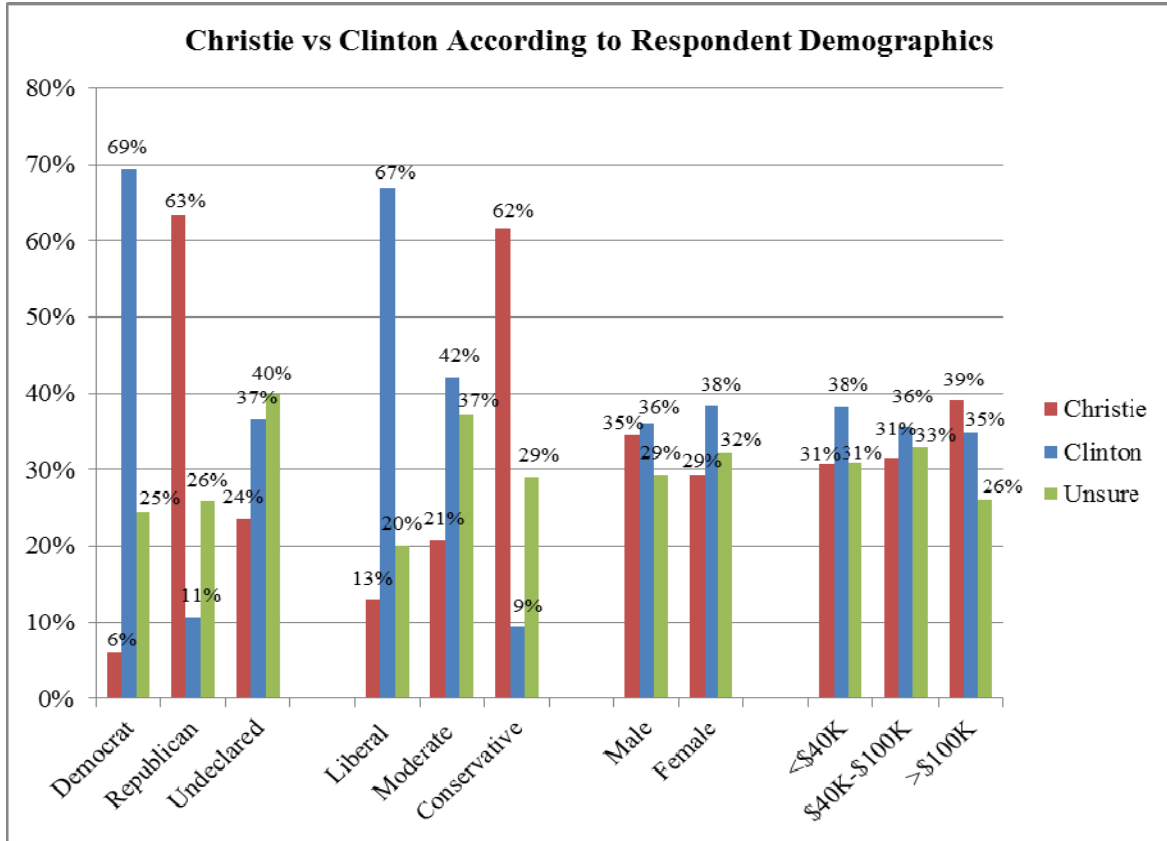
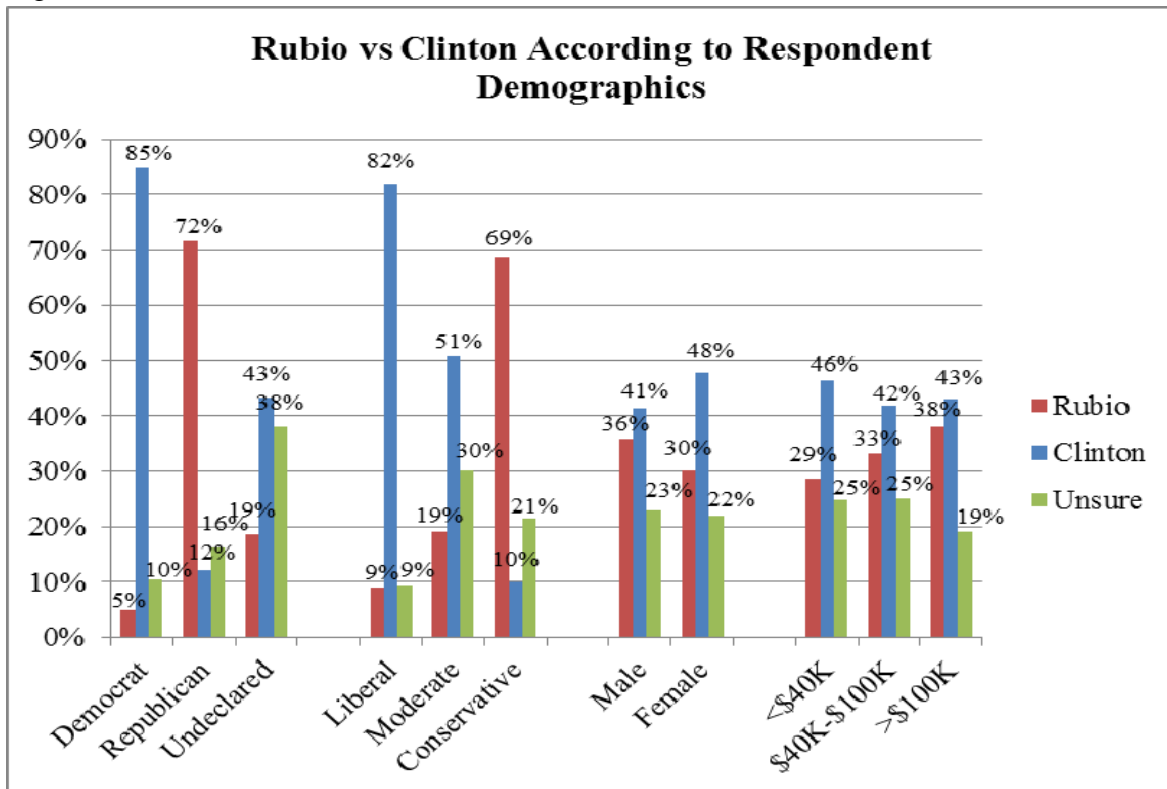
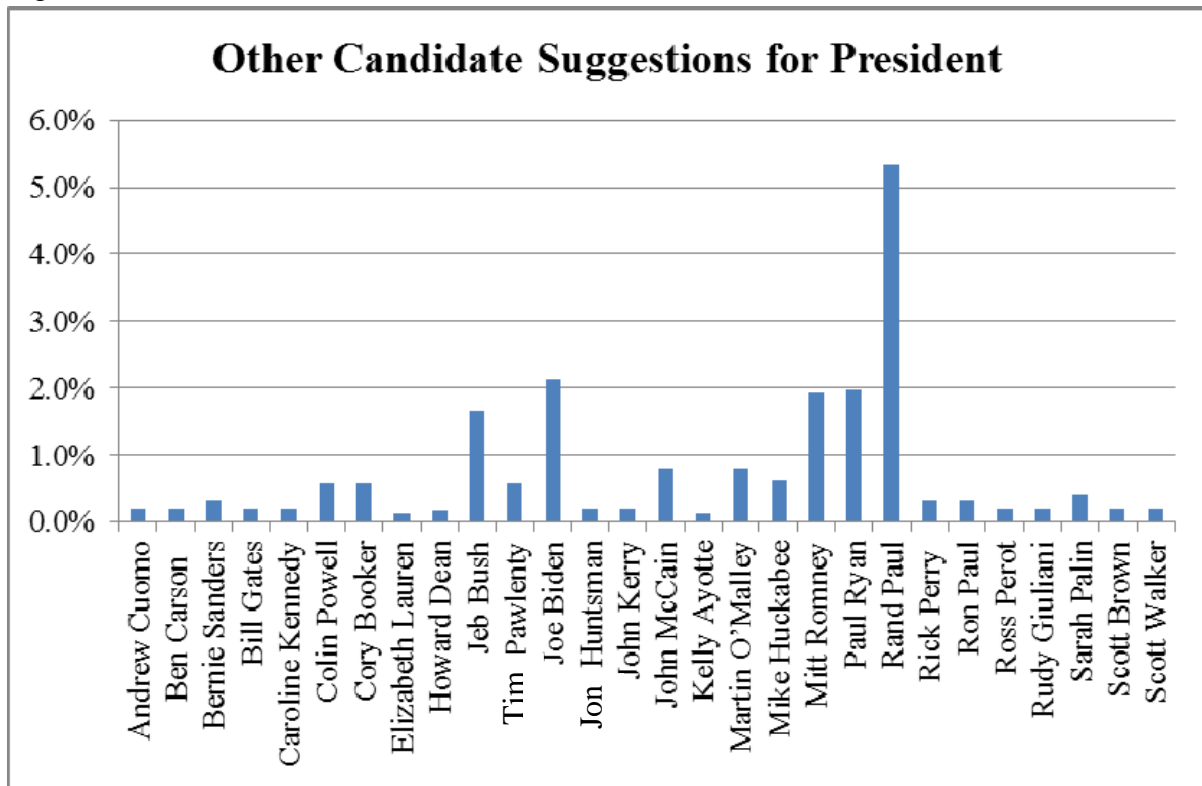


Figure 3.



When asked if there was another candidate for President that they would support, 79 percent of respondents did not have another candidate in mind at the time. The next most common responses were Rand Paul and Joe Biden, with 5.3 percent and 2.1 percent respectively. The following list represents the other candidates suggested and the proportion of responses they received.

Figure 4.



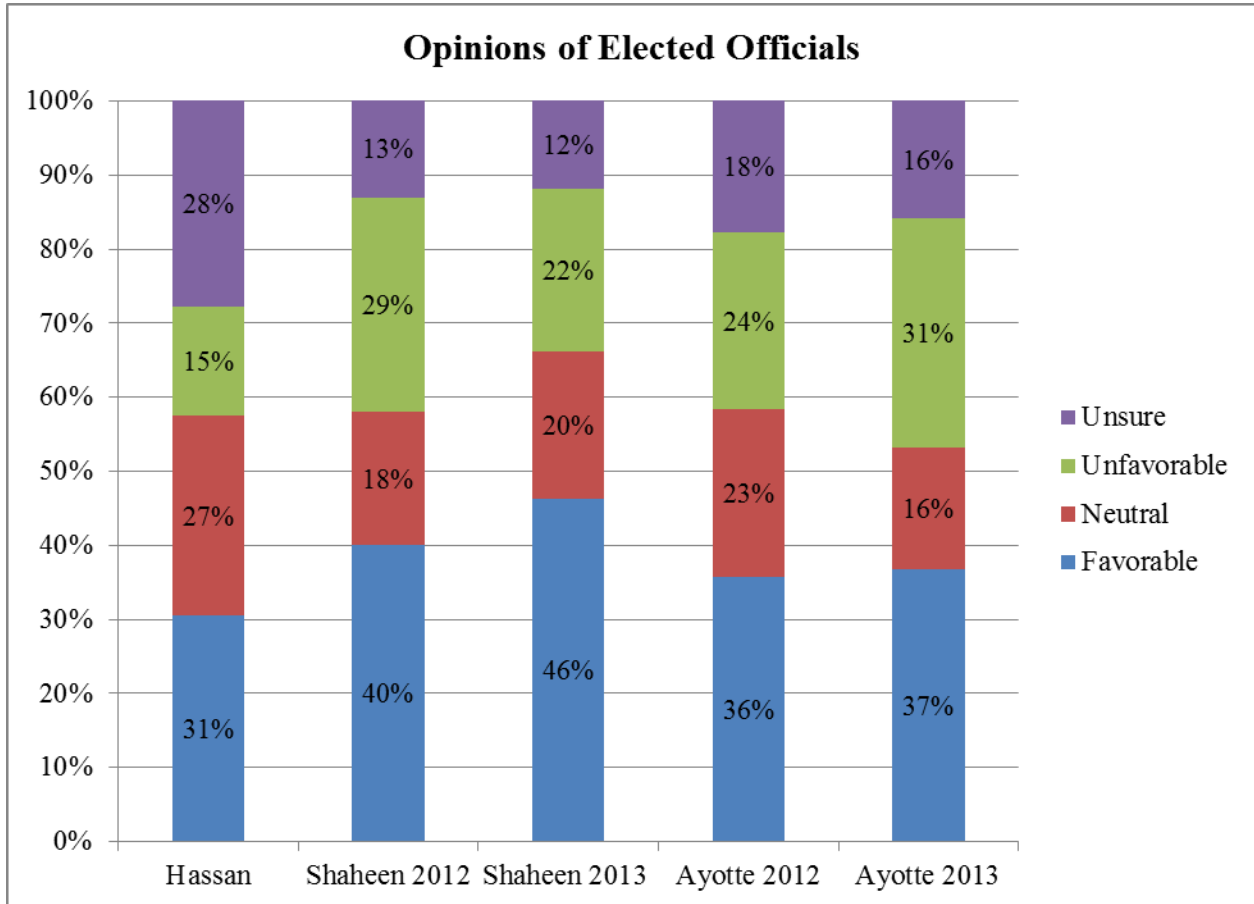
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE POLITICS AND POLICY ISSUES

New Hampshire Politicians

Respondents were asked for their assessments of elected officials in New Hampshire. Newly elected in November of 2012, Governor Hassan’s favorability rating demonstrates a large amount of uncertainty, with 27.6 percent of respondents “unsure” of their opinion toward the Governor and 53.9 percent “unsure” of Governor Hassan’s job performance so far. Still, Governor Hassan’s approval rating far exceeds disapproving opinions with 35.5 percent approving compared to 10.7 percent disapproving. Senator Shaheen once again enjoyed higher favorability ratings over last year, moving from 39.7 percent in 2012 to 46.2 percent this year.

Senator Ayotte's favorability rating remained steady (36.2 percent in 2012, 36.7 percent in 2013), but the Senator's unfavorable ratings rose more dramatically from 24 percent to 31 percent. The chart below summarizes the results in detail.

Figure 5.



On April 17, 2013, Senator Ayotte voted against a measure to expand firearm background checks in the US Congress. Poll respondents were asked if they supported or opposed universal background checks for the purchase of firearms in New Hampshire. A strong majority of respondents supported universal background checks (76 percent), while 17 percent opposed and 7 percent were unsure. To further analyze the relationship between opinions of Senator Ayotte and Senator Ayotte’s vote on the Senate bill, the following charts depict voters’ views of Senator Ayotte broken down by their opinion on background checks, and then the distribution of opinions on background checks according to favorability ratings of Senator Ayotte.

Figure 6.

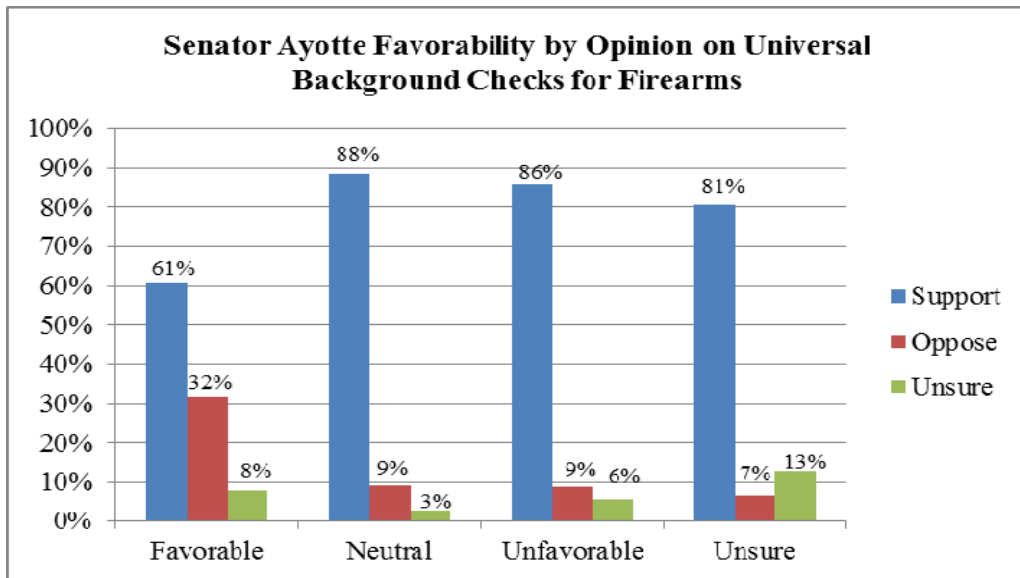
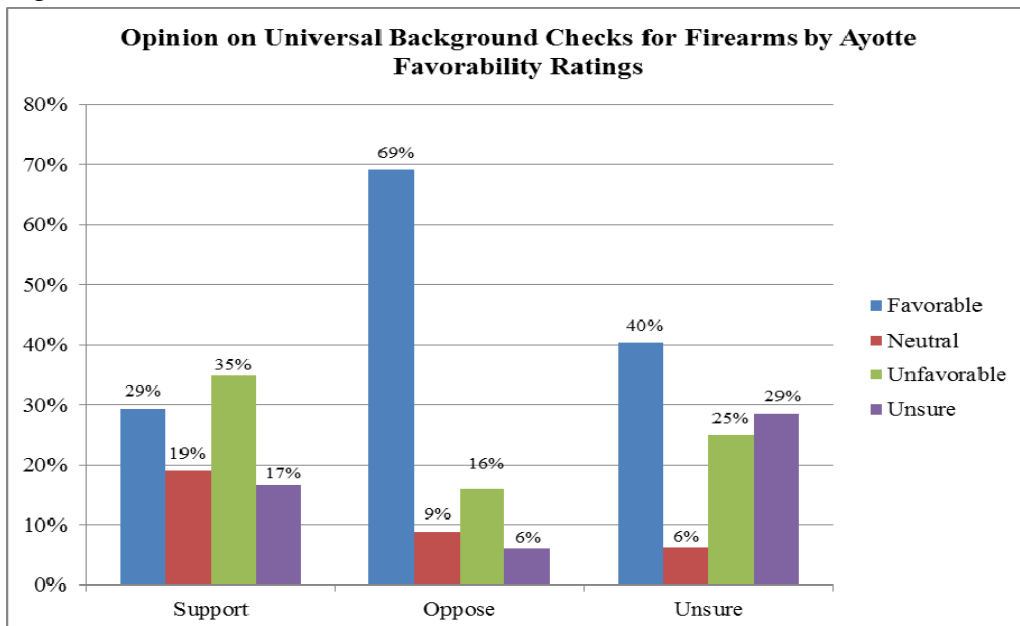


Figure 7.

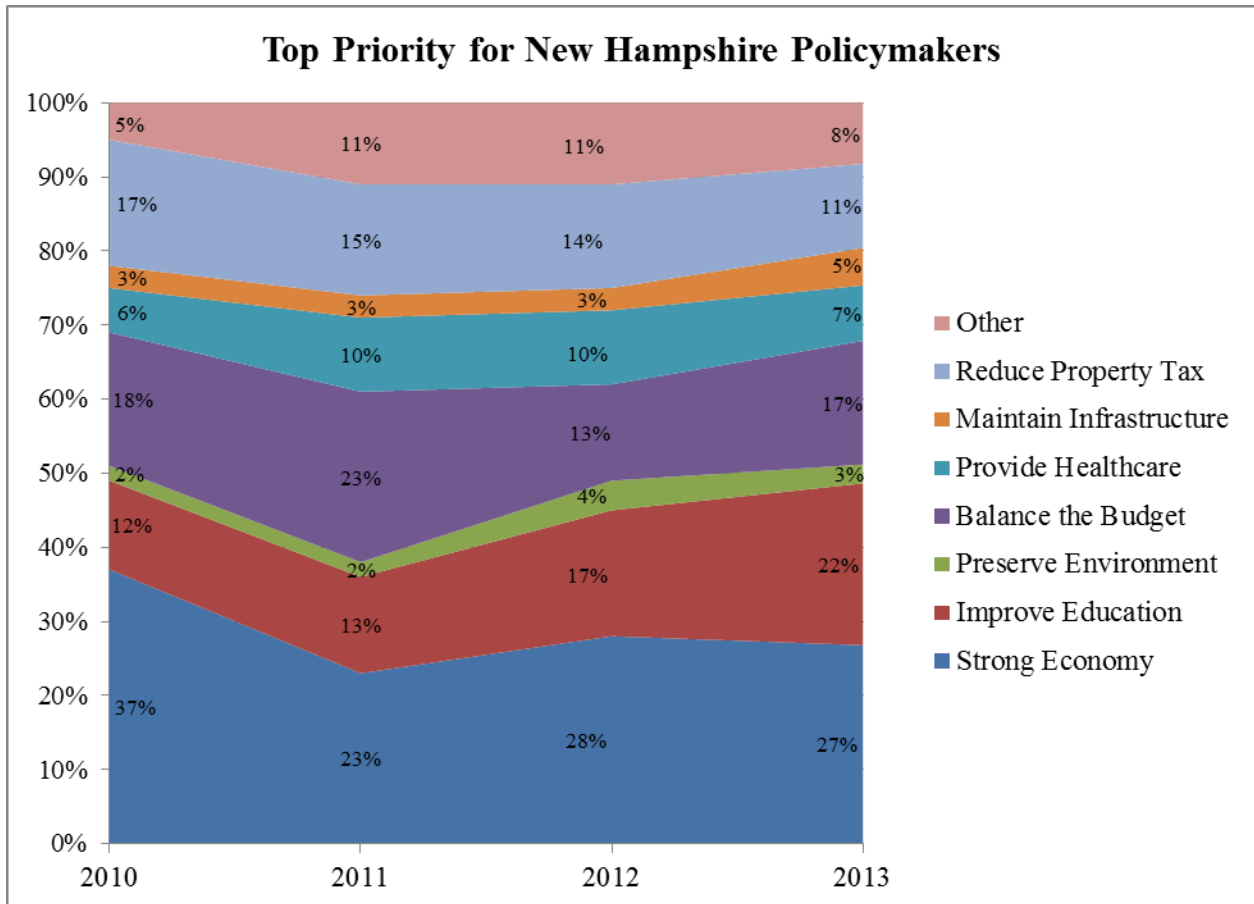


Less than one quarter of respondents (22.5 percent) approve of the New Hampshire Legislature’s job performance, around the same as last year’s approval rating of 21.9 percent. Respondents who disapprove of the State Legislature’s job performance is down from 36.1 percent in 2012 to 29.6 percent this year, while respondents expressing uncertainty regarding the Legislature’s performance rose to 47.9 percent from 42 percent last year.

State Policy Priorities and Social Issues

Registered voters answered a number of questions about policy issues facing the state of New Hampshire. This year, respondents once again identified “building a strong economy” as the top priority issue for state lawmakers, followed by “improving education.” Improving education has demonstrated the most significant increase in salience among voters over the past four years. The following chart depicts what respondents identified as the top policy priorities from the 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 State of the State polls conducted by the Rockefeller Center.

Figure 8.

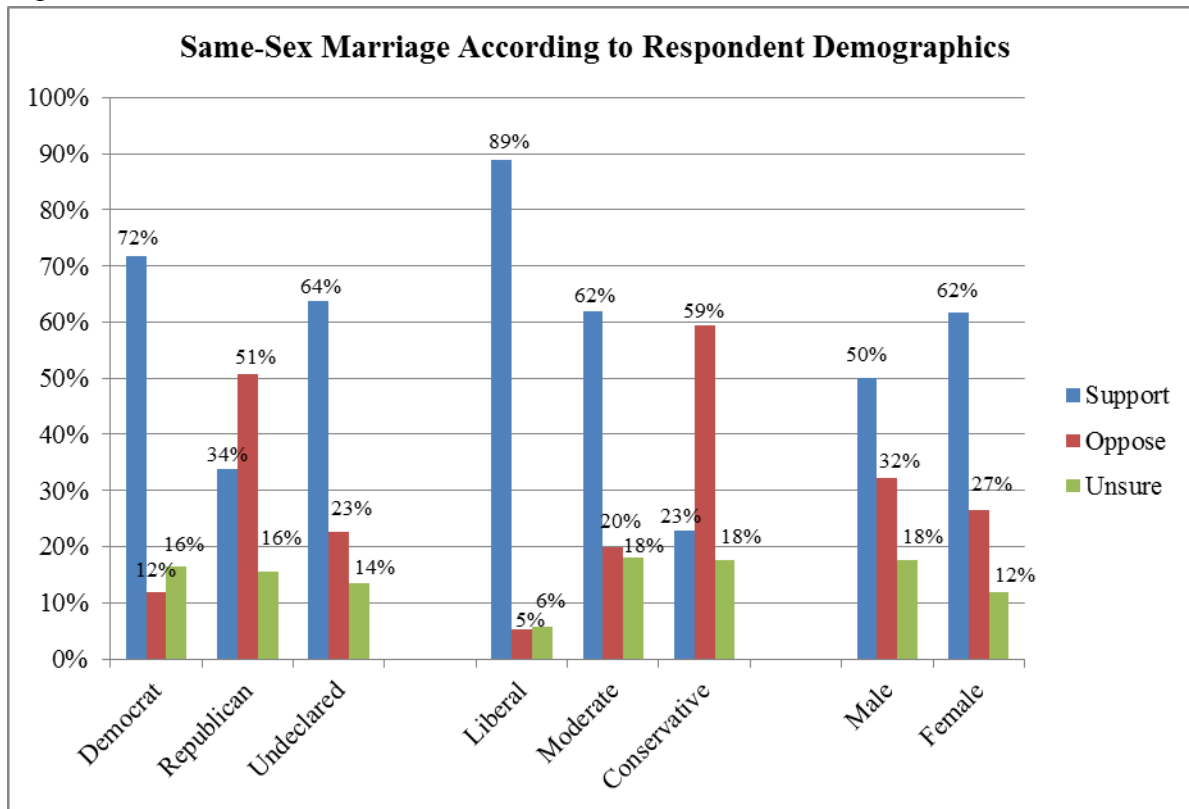


Respondents also answered questions regarding a number of social issues facing the state, including same-sex marriage, the expansion of gambling in the state, the quality of New Hampshire’s public education system, universal background checks for firearms sales, the

Northern Pass project, requiring photo identification for voting, and the decriminalization of marijuana.

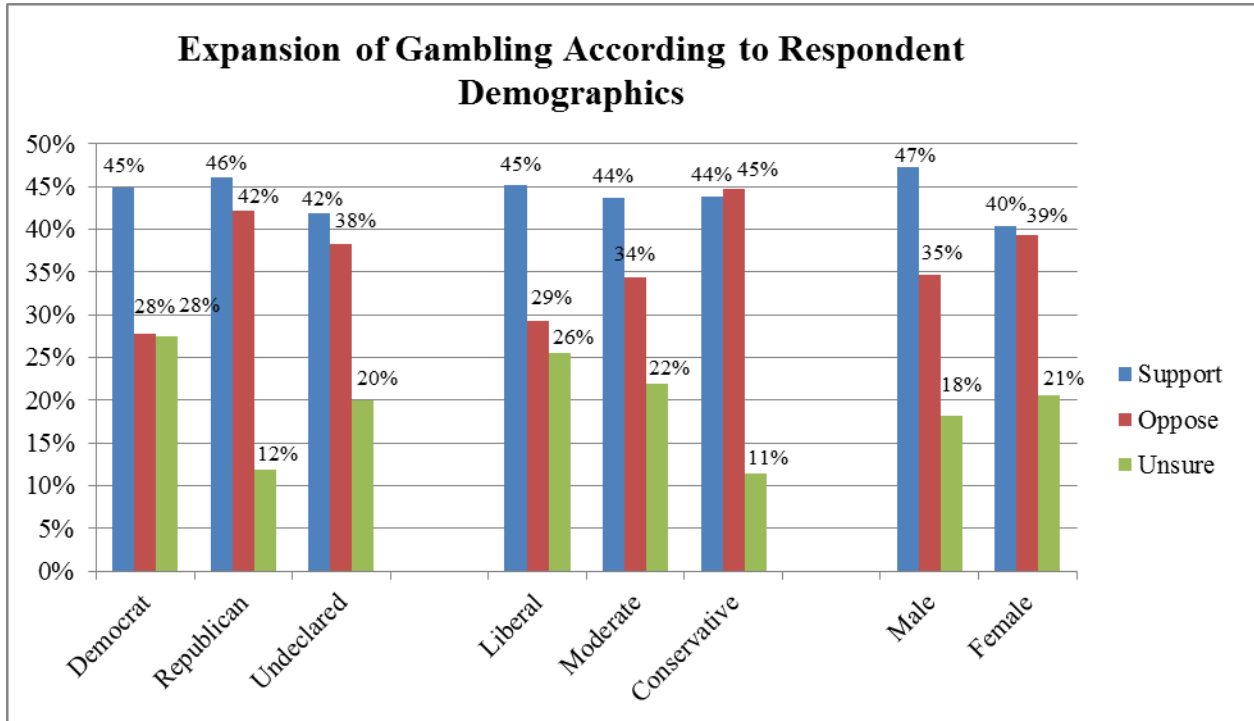
Respondents who support of same-sex marriage in the state of New Hampshire increased slightly from 55.1 percent in 2012 to 55.4 percent this year. Opposition decreased similarly from 30.9 percent last year to 29.6 in this year's survey. The majority of registered Democrats or undeclared voters are in support of same-sex marriage (72 percent and 64 percent, respectively). One-third (34 percent) of Republicans respondents support the measure. The majority of respondents who self-identified as "liberal" or "moderate" support same-sex marriage, while the majority of those who self-identified as "conservative" are in opposition. Figure 8 depicts support for and opposition to same-sex marriage according to respondent demographic information.

Figure 9.



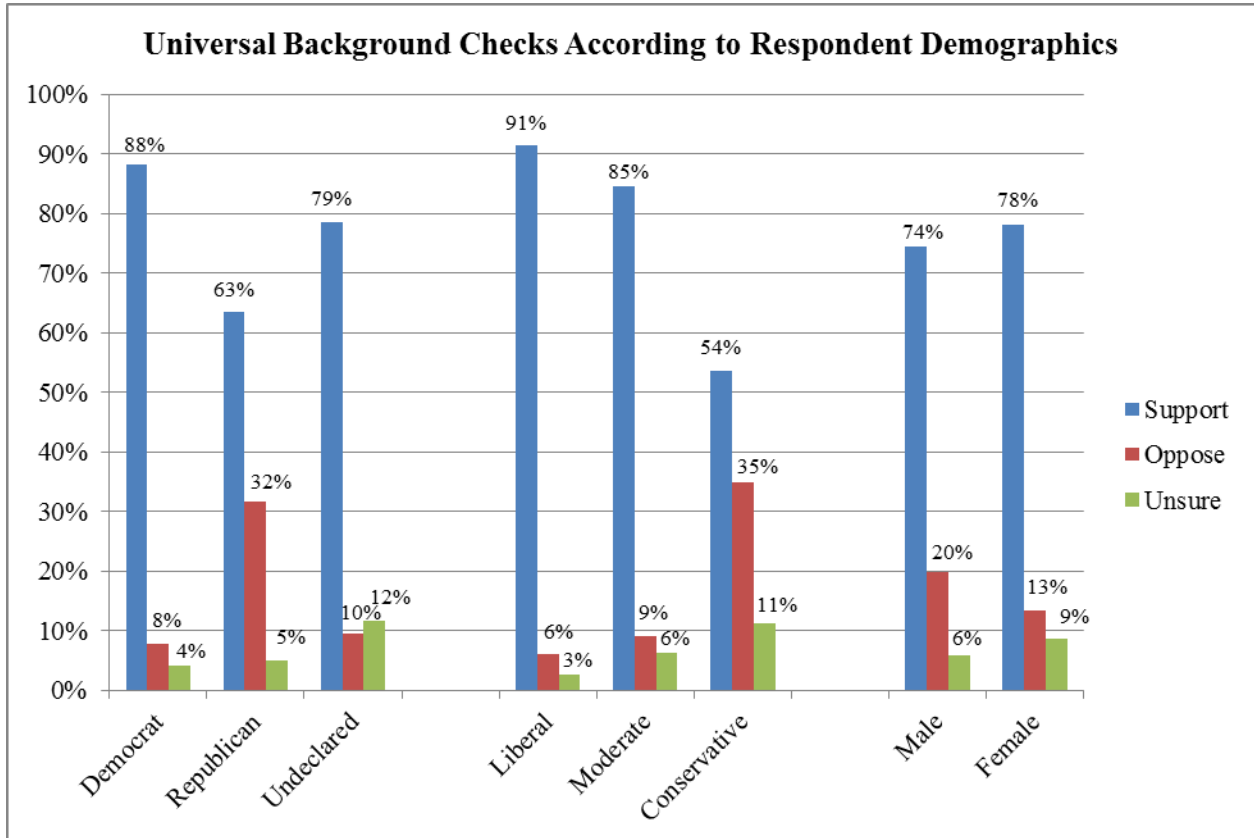
When respondents were asked if they supported or opposed the expansion of gambling to include casino gambling, 44.1 percent of respondents supported expansion, 36.7 percent opposed, and 19.2 percent were unsure. This year's results demonstrated a shift in support of gambling with 40.9 percent in support, 41.6 percent in opposition, and 17.5 percent unsure in 2012. Figure 9 illustrates the breakdown of support and opposition for expanding gambling according to the demographic factors of party identification, political ideology, and sex.

Figure 10.



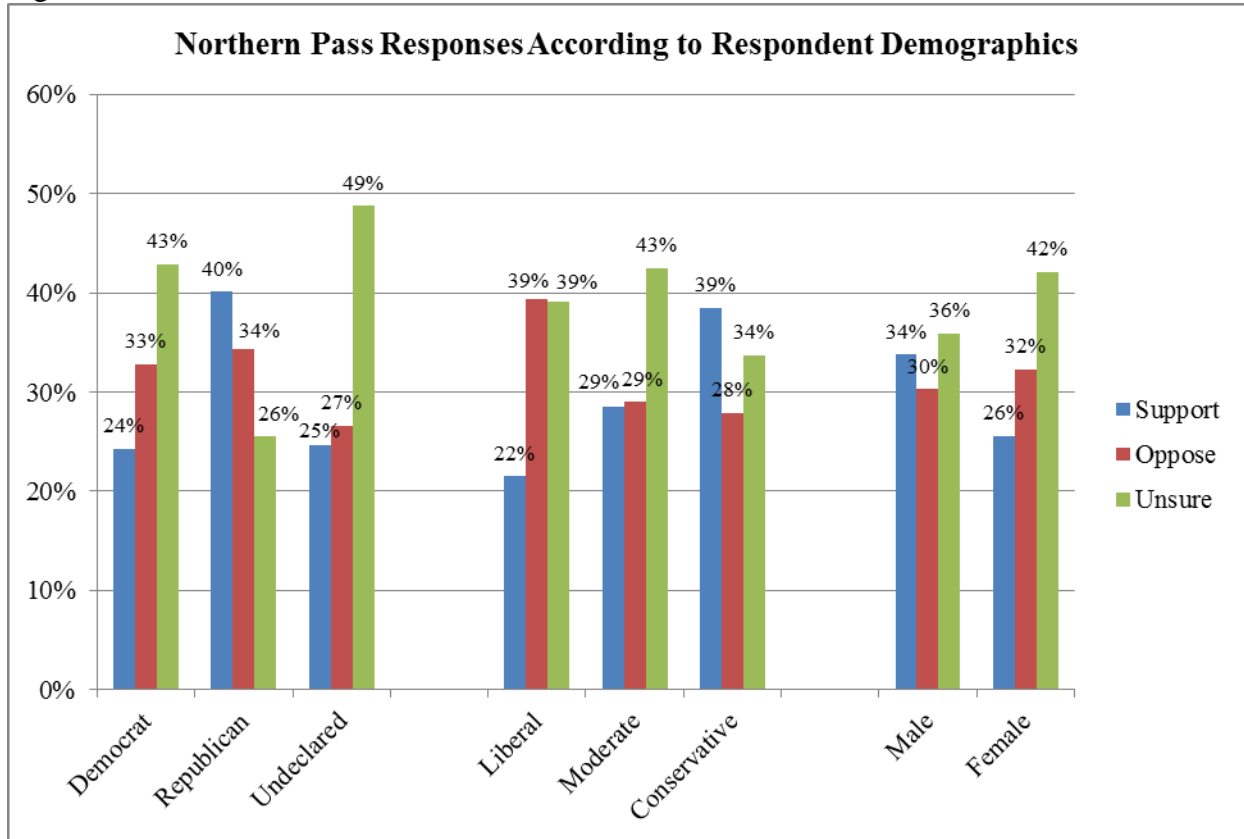
As discussed above, respondents were asked about their positions on universal background checks for the purchase of firearms in New Hampshire. A significant majority of respondents supported universal background checks (76 percent), a trend which held for all demographic breakdowns, but decreased in magnitude for Republican respondents and those who self-identified as “conservative”. Figure 10 details respondent support and opposition to the policy according to demographic factors.

Figure 11.



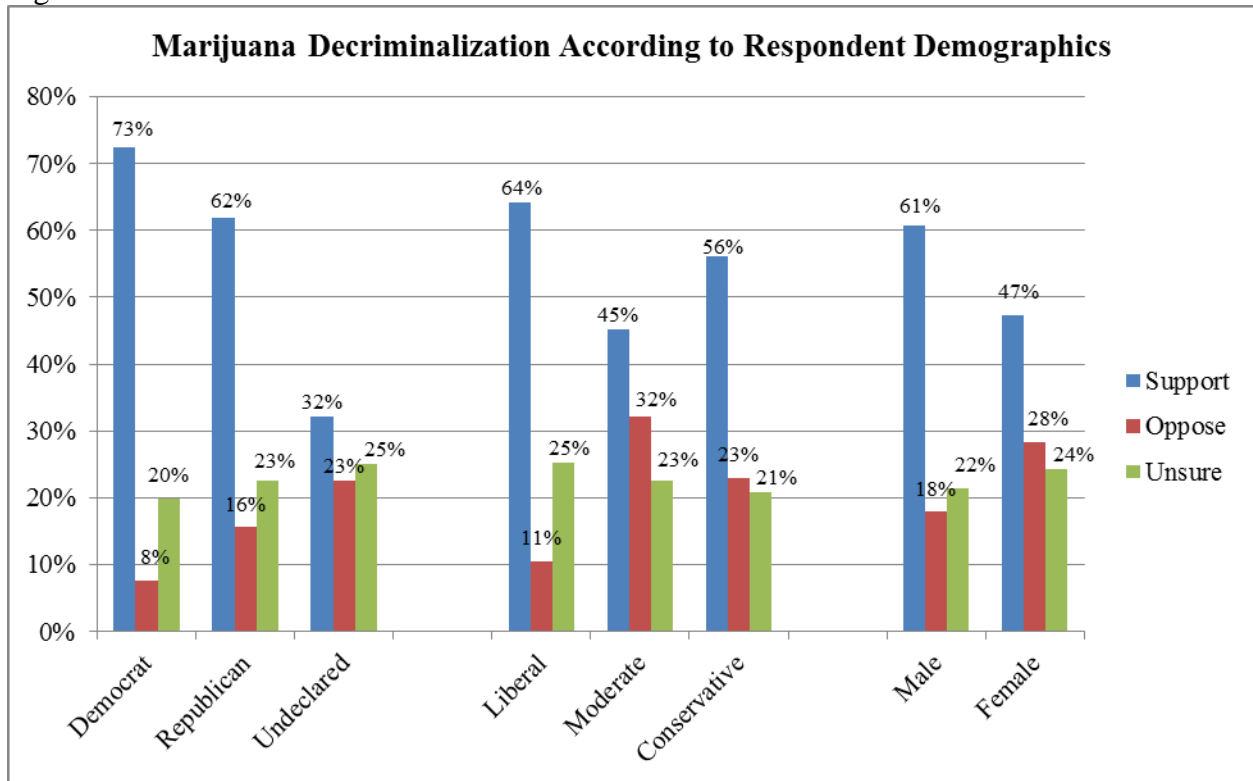
Respondents were also asked whether they supported or opposed the Northern Pass project power lines through New Hampshire. The largest plurality of respondents (38.7 percent) are unsure about the project, while support of and opposition to the project are evenly split (30.1 percent and 31.2 percent, respectively). The chart below demonstrates a high degree of uncertainty among all political parties, self-identified political ideologies, and genders.

Figure 12.



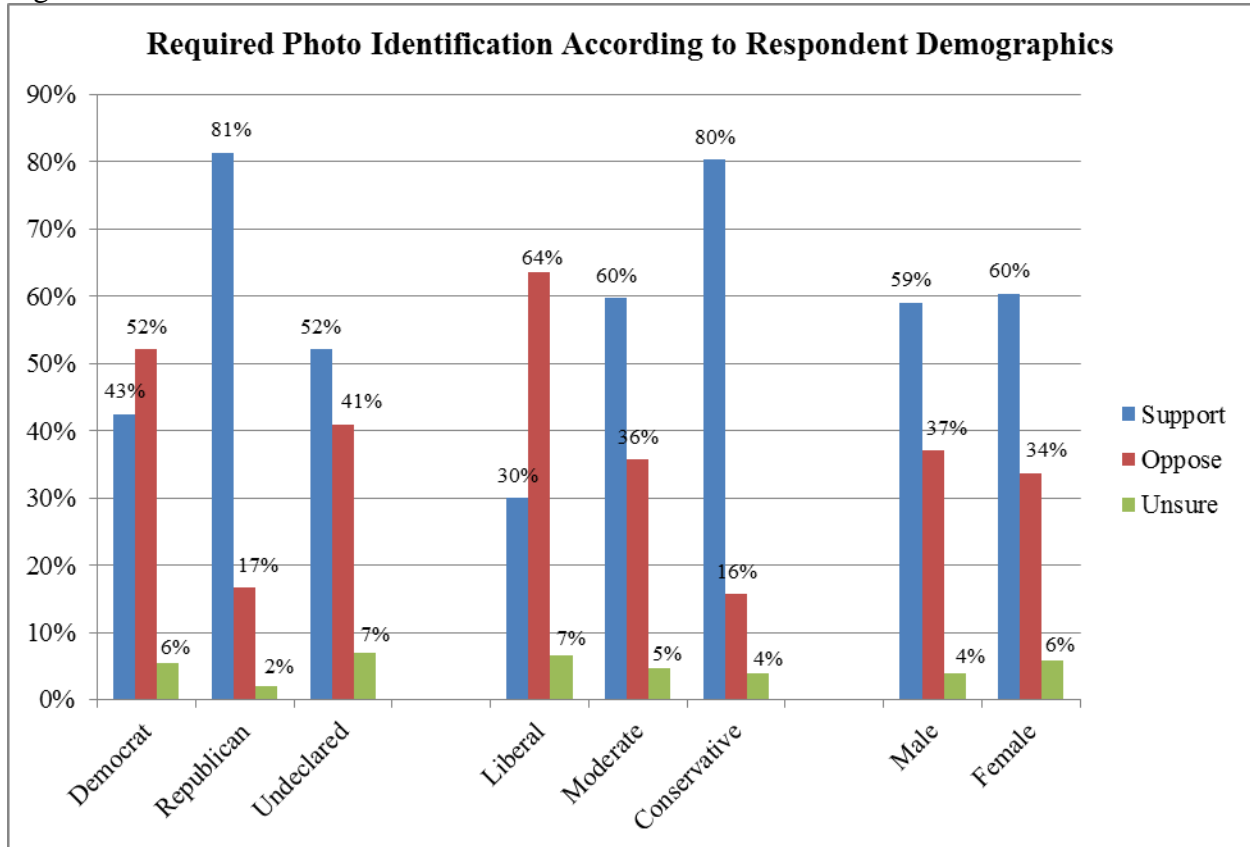
The survey asked respondents whether they “support or oppose a bill under consideration in Concord that would decriminalize possession of up to one quarter of an ounce of marijuana.” Over half of those surveyed (54.5 percent) support the measure, while 22.6 percent oppose it, and 22.8 percent are unsure as to whether they support or oppose it. Undeclared voters, those who self-identified as “moderate,” and women are the only demographic groups in which a majority does not support the measure. The following chart outlines the respective support and opposition of various demographic cohorts.

Figure 13.



Almost 60 percent of respondents support requiring a government-issued photo identification to vote in New Hampshire elections. The majority of respondents support the measure (59.8 percent), while 35.5 percent oppose it and only 4.8 percent report being unsure as to whether they support or oppose the policy. Voters registered as Democrats and those who self-identify as “liberal” are the only demographic groupings in which a majority opposes the measure. Eighty-one percent of Republicans and 80 percent of those who self-identify as “conservative” support required photo identification. The chart below outlines responses according to several demographic considerations.

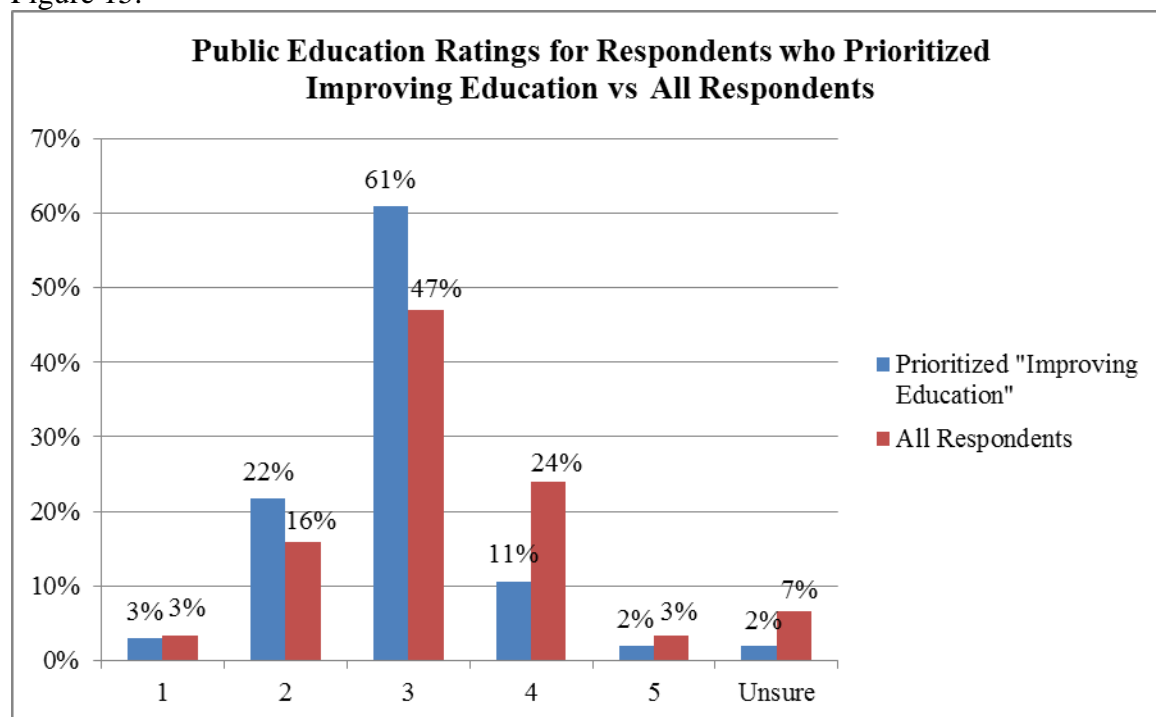
Figure 14.



New Hampshire Public Education

Respondents were asked to rate the state of the New Hampshire public education system on a scale from one to five with one representing “poor” and five representing “excellent.” The majority of respondents rate the public education system with a three (47 percent), while 19 percent give a grade above a three and 27 percent rate the system below a three. The following chart displays the distribution of education ratings by those who answered “improving education” as the most important focus of the New Hampshire legislature in comparison to the distribution of all respondents. The chart demonstrates that those who prioritized “improving education” are more likely to rate the public education system as a two or three (22 percent and 61 percent respectively, compared to 16 percent and 47 percent), less likely to rate the public education system as a four or five (11 percent and 2 percent versus 24 percent and 3 percent), and less likely to be unsure about the quality of the public education system (2 percent versus 7 percent).

Figure 15.



New Hampshire Economy and Budgetary Policy

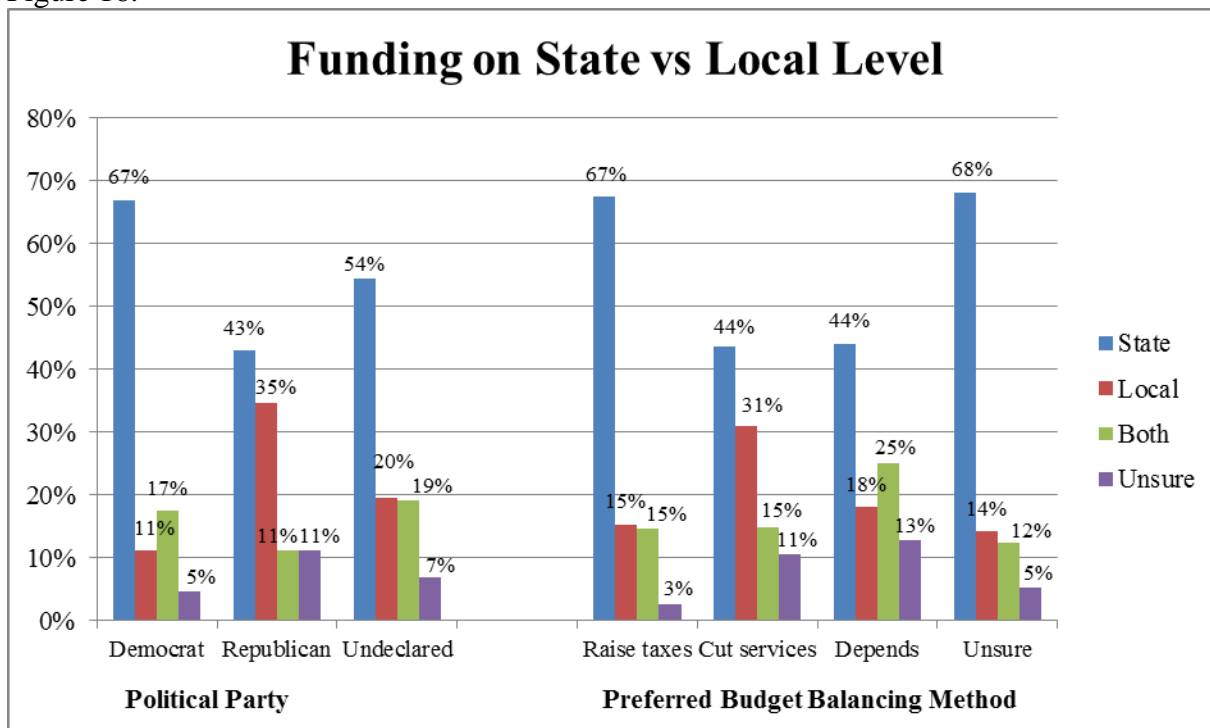
Respondents' impressions of New Hampshire's economic situation have improved from last year. Just over one third of respondents (34.8 percent) believe that the condition of New Hampshire's economy is “excellent” or “good,” compared to 27.1 percent last year. Almost half of respondents (51.1 percent) assess the state economy as being in “fair” shape, up slightly from 49.8 last year. The proportion of respondents who believe that the state economy is “poor” has fallen to 12.9 percent this year. This continues a trend from 2011 to 2012, when the proportion of respondents evaluating the economy as “poor” dropped from 29.3 percent to 20.7 percent.

New Hampshire voters are less concerned about the state of the budget this year than they were last year. The proportion of respondents who view New Hampshire's budget problems as “very

serious” is down from 19.1 percent in 2012 to 14.3 percent this year. There was a similar decrease in the proportion of respondents who believe the budget problems to be “somewhat serious,” from 54.8 percent last year to 50.4 percent in 2013. With nearly identical responses to last year’s poll, respondents indicate that they would rather have reduced services than higher taxes to balance the budget. When asked about measures to help resolve local budget problems, 44.9 percent favor “maintaining taxes, decreasing services;” 35.5 percent of respondents support “increasing taxes, maintaining services;” and 12.8 percent said that their answer “depends” on the taxes being levied and the services being cut.

Respondents were also asked whether they believed whether funding should come from the state or local level, or a combination of both. The majority of respondents (53.8 percent) prefer the state level, compared to 22.6 percent who would choose the local level and 15.9 percent who are unsure. The chart below deconstructs responses by both political party and responses to the previous question of how to best resolve local budget problems.

Figure 16.



Respondents' Personal Finances

Continuing a trend from 2012, 2011, and 2010, respondents’ assessments of their personal financial situations have improved. When asked to compare their current personal economic situation to one year ago, 15.4 percent believe that they are “better off” and 60.6 of respondents say they are “about the same.” The proportion of respondents who believe their personal economic situation is “about the same” as it was last year is up from 56.3 percent, 55.2 percent, and 49.6 percent in 2012, 2011, and 2010, respectively. Twenty-four percent of respondents believe they are “worse off” economically than they were one year ago, down from 29 percent in 2012, 34 percent in 2011 and 38 percent in 2010. Respondents are similarly more optimistic about their future economic well-being as they were last year. Thirty-two percent of those

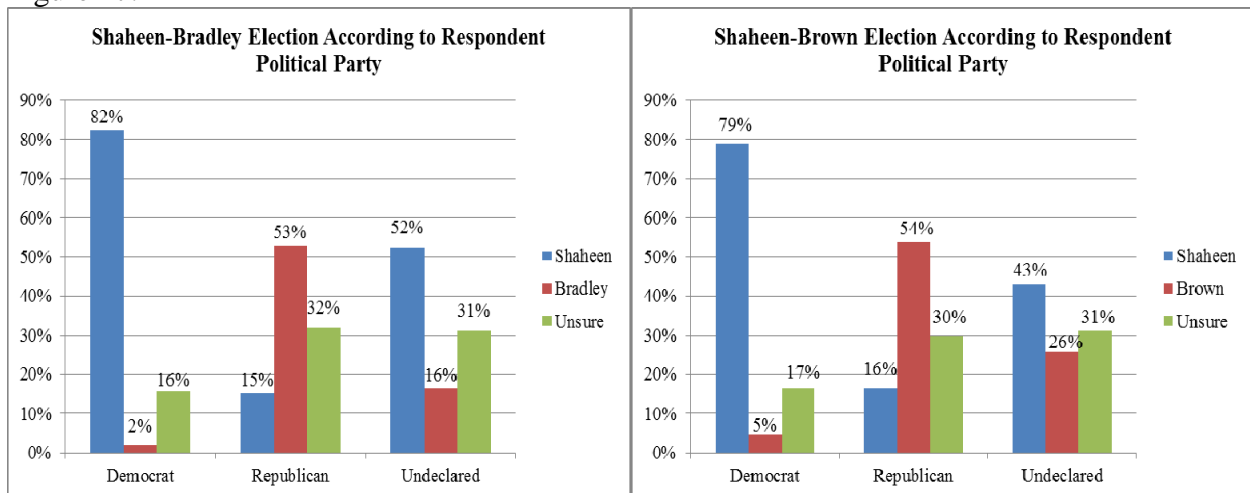
surveyed this year believe that their financial situation would be “better” in one year, compared to 31.2 percent of respondents last year.

When asked if credit card debit was a “top personal financial concern,” only 18.4 percent of respondents agreed that they were concerned about their credit card debt, a reduction from 20.6 percent last year.

2014 Senate Election

Lastly, respondents were asked about their views on the candidates for the upcoming Senate election in New Hampshire. Respondents were asked to choose between Senator Shaheen and New Hampshire Senate Majority Leader Bradley and then between Senator Shaheen and former Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown. The responses predicted Senator Shaheen winning both races by similar margins. In a race against Senator Bradley, 47.9 percent would vote for Senator Shaheen, 25.2 percent for Senator Bradley, and 26.9 percent are unsure. In a race against Scott Brown, a lower 44.2 percent would vote for Senator Shaheen, while 29.5 percent would vote for Scott Brown, and again 26.3 percent are unsure. The following chart displays responses to both questions according to voters’ registered political parties.

Figure 17.



SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2013 New Hampshire State of the State Poll respondents are representative of the registered voter population of the state. Respondents were 54.7 percent male and 45.3 percent female. On the partisan identification measure, the respondents closely mirror the voting population in New Hampshire with the largest plurality of respondents identifying as "undeclared" or independent (40.1 percent), with 26.5 percent identifying as Democrats and 32.0 percent identifying as Republicans. Geographically, respondents from the 2nd Congressional District are a bit over-represented in the sample (56.5 percent), with the remaining 43.5 percent drawn from the 1st Congressional District. Approximately three-quarters of the respondents are married (75.1 percent), while 7.0 percent are divorced, 4.3 percent are widowed, and 13.5 percent are single. Respondents reported their 2012 household income as follows: 17.6 percent earned less than

\$40,000, 43.3 percent earned between \$40,000 and \$100,000, and 28.8 percent earned more than \$100,000. Additionally, respondents reported their occupational status—54.0 percent of respondents are employed full time, 13.5 percent are employed part time, and 7.8 percent are unemployed. Just over one-fifth of the respondents are retired (21.1 percent). The sample respondents are more highly educated than the New Hampshire general population with more than 60 percent of the respondents having college degrees (61.9 percent), including 22.0 percent with masters degrees and 3.0 percent with doctoral degrees (e.g., M.D., J.D., Ph.D.). We have no comparable education level data for registered voters in the state, however.

SAMPLE WEIGHTING

The sample respondents are generally older than the voting population with 35.5 percent of the pre-weighted sample 65 or over, compared to 20.1 percent of registered voters according to the 2010 New Hampshire State Census. Conversely, only 14.2 percent of the pre-weighted sample was between the ages of 18 and 44, compared to 35.6 of the registered voters in New Hampshire as of 2010. To adjust for this discrepancy in representation, the results are weighted using population proportions based on age groups of 18-44, 45-64, 65-74, and over 75.

POLL METHODS

During the week of April 22-25, 2013, students from The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College conducted a telephone survey of registered voters in New Hampshire. Drawn from a statewide data base of New Hampshire registered voters, the sample survey respondents were asked a wide range of questions relating to the current political, economic, and social state of affairs in New Hampshire and the country as a whole. In addition, respondents were asked to select candidates for President in trial heats of the 2016 election and for Senate in trial heats of the 2014 election. The 41-question survey took between eight and ten minutes to complete. Calls were made between the hours of 6:30 pm and 9:30 pm on Monday through Thursday evenings. Additional call-backs were made during daytime hours on Thursday, April 25 when specified by poll participants. Over the course of the week, callers made three attempts to contact each of the registered voters drawn in the sample. A total of 433 survey interviews were completed during the four-day calling period, yielding an error rate of +/-4.7 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.