



The Louisiana Survey 2019

A report on public opinion about the direction of the state, taxes, teacher pay, Medicaid expansion, criminal justice reform, sports gambling, and more.



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Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

The Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs is partnership-driven, action-oriented, and dedicated to exploring contemporary issues at the intersection of mass communication and public life. Its interdisciplinary approach draws together experts from diverse fields to advance research and dialogue. The intent is to inspire our communities to think deeply, develop solutions, take action, and broaden knowledge. The Center's role, within the state's flagship university, is to respond quickly to the needs of state governance in addressing challenges facing Louisiana, particularly in times of crisis such as during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the 2016 historic floods. Underlying the Center's endeavors is to strengthen and advance the Manship School's national and state leadership in media and politics.

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About the Louisiana Survey

The *2019 Louisiana Survey* is the eighteenth in an annual series sponsored by the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication.

The mission of the *Louisiana Survey* is to establish benchmarks as well as to capture change in residents' assessments of state government services. The survey is further dedicated to tracking public opinion on the contemporary policy issues that face the state. Each iteration of the *Louisiana Survey* contains core items designed to serve as barometers of public sentiment, including assessments of whether the state is heading in the right direction or wrong direction, perceptions about the most important problems facing the state, as well as evaluations of public revenue sources and spending priorities.

In the *2019 Louisiana Survey*, this core is supplemented by measures of support for compromise; support for increases in teacher pay, the minimum wage, and the gasoline tax; approval of major recent policy developments such as criminal justice reform and Medicaid expansion; and attitudes toward a number of social issues such as gun policy, marijuana legalization, and sports gambling.

As part of an effort to ensure that the *Louisiana Survey* fulfills its public service mission, the research team solicited input about topics for the survey from members of the government and policy community across the political spectrum. Additionally, the research team drew upon expertise in public policy and polling from Louisiana State University faculty. These advisors provided invaluable insight into the design of the questionnaire and in identifying the contemporary policy questions that could most benefit from an understanding of the public's views. While we are indebted to them for their time and contributions, they bear no responsibility for final decisions on the questionnaire, analysis, and interpretation presented in this report or any mistakes therein.

We especially thank the Reilly Family Foundation for their generous support and vision in helping to create the Louisiana Survey.

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Summary

Key results from the *2019 Louisiana Survey*, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication, include

State of the State

- Forty seven percent of Louisiana residents say the state is heading in the right direction, up from 39 percent a year ago. The share saying the state is heading in the wrong direction fell from 50 percent in 2018 to 43 percent today.
- Education and transportation top the list of concerns among Louisiana residents. When asked to name what problems they would most like to see the state government work on in 2019, 34 percent mentioned education and 32 percent mentioned transportation infrastructure.
- The public's confidence in state government to tackle these problems remains low. Taken together, 41 percent of state residents say they are either very confident or somewhat confident in state government to address their most important problem effectively.
- Many state residents have a more positive view about their own financial situation than about the state's economy.
- The share of state residents who assign an A or B grade to the state's public schools has climbed modestly from 18 percent in 2015 to 25 percent in 2019. However, grades for economic development, transportation infrastructure, and overall quality of life in the state have fallen over the same period.
- Fifty-seven percent of state residents prefer to see the elected officials in state government who share their positions on important issues to work with other politicians they disagree with, even if it results in some disliked policies, rather than to stand up for their positions at the cost of getting little done. At the same time, 80 percent do not expect the parties to work together to solve the state's problems.

State Finance

- Substantial numbers of state residents *incorrectly* believe that Louisiana has increased its tax rates on individual and household incomes in recent years – 46 percent say these tax rates are higher than they were four years ago, and 32 percent say they are higher than one year ago.
- Sixty percent of Louisiana residents *correctly* say that the state sales tax rate is higher than four years ago. However, 40 percent *incorrectly* believe that the state sales tax rate is higher than one year ago.

- Today, 49 percent think the state’s sales tax is too high, up from 32 percent in early 2016. Likewise, the share of people who say the state’s income tax is too high is 15 percentage points higher than in 2016 (40 percent versus 25 percent).
- Approximately two-thirds (65 percent) prefer a mixed approach of increased spending and tax reductions if it looks like tax revenue will exceed the amount needed for the state to pay for current expenditures. Nearly one-fourth (23 percent) favor solely increasing spending. Just eight percent only want tax cuts. Taken together, 88 percent of state residents want some degree of spending increases and 73 percent want some degree of tax reduction if there are recurring revenues in excess of current expenditures.
- Two-thirds (67 percent) of Louisiana residents support a five cent per gallon increase to the state’s gasoline tax, but only 46 percent back a 20 cent per gallon increase.
- Louisianans split nearly evenly between those who believe the combined state and federal gasoline tax is less than it actually is (31 percent), those who believe the tax is more than it actually is (34 percent), and those who do not know enough to guess (35 percent). The average response among those who offered a guess was 79 cents per gallon, more than twice the actual rate of 38.5 cents per gallon.

Teacher Pay & K-12 Funding

- Support for raising public school teacher salaries is nearly unanimous among Louisiana residents, with 88 percent backing a pay raise. Raising teacher pay has broad consensus across political parties. More than 90 percent of Democrats and independents support boosting teacher salaries as do 80 percent of Republicans.
- There is less support – and more partisan division – on the question of raising taxes to fund the raise. Overall, framing the issue in terms of tax costs reduced support to 63 percent.
- Three-fourths of state residents (75 percent) underestimate average teacher pay in Louisiana; that is, they think teachers earn less than they actually earn.
- There is more support for uniform pay raises across-the board than for proposals to give larger raises to teachers who work in schools or subjects with teacher shortages. Only 25 percent of participants prefer giving larger salary increases to teachers who work in schools with teacher shortages and smaller increases to teachers in other schools. Just 26 percent prefer larger pay raises for teachers in subjects with teacher shortages and smaller raises for teachers in other subjects.
- Two-thirds (68 percent) of Louisiana residents have either a “good deal” of confidence or a “very great deal” of confidence in the state’s public school teachers.
- Thirty-nine percent of state residents grade their local public schools with an A (12 percent) or B (27 percent). In contrast, only 25 percent grade public schools across the state with an A (five percent) or B (20 percent). At the same time, 80 percent of residents want to increase state spending on public schools in Louisiana as a whole, but the share drops to 67

percent when asked about increasing state spending for public schools in their own local districts.

Minimum Wage

- Four in five Louisiana residents (81 percent) support a minimum wage of \$8.50 an hour. The proposal is popular among Democrats (94 percent), independents (78 percent), and Republicans (72 percent). Support for a minimum wage drops to 59 percent when it is set as \$15.00 an hour, and only Democrats maintain majority support (85 percent). Just 44 percent of Republicans and 46 percent of independents support a minimum wage of \$15.00 an hour.

Health Care

- If the courts toss out the federal protection for people with pre-existing health conditions, 74 percent of Louisiana residents want the state to establish its own protections even if doing so results in higher insurance costs for healthy people.
- Seventy-six percent of Louisiana residents approve of Medicaid expansion. Although Democrats express the highest levels of approval, majorities of Republicans (57 percent) and independents (73 percent) also express favorable opinions of the policy.
- Emphasizing potential costs of the state's Medicaid program doubles the size of the gap between Democratic and Republican approval for expansion.
- Most state residents (55 percent) indicated that they are unsure whether the state has expanded its Medicaid program or not. Only 35 percent of participants correctly believe that the state has expanded its Medicaid program. Ten percent incorrectly believe the state has not expanded the program.

Criminal Justice

- The percentage of Louisiana residents who approve of the state's criminal justice reforms is up from 61 percent in 2018 to 70 percent today. This growth is especially strong among Republicans (+14 percentage points) and independents (+12 percentage points).
- Despite the popularity of criminal justice reform, few Louisiana residents believe the system is fair or believe it is effective at keeping communities safe. Only about one-third (32 percent) agree with the statement that the current criminal justice system in Louisiana is fair. Most state residents (54 percent) disagree with this statement. Similarly, 32 percent agree that Louisiana's current criminal justice system is effective at keeping communities safe, and 55 percent disagree.

Sports Betting

- Fifty-nine percent of state residents support legalizing gambling on professional sporting events.

Recreational Marijuana

- Fifty-five percent of Louisiana residents support legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for recreational use.

Gun Policy

- Fifty-seven percent of Louisiana residents oppose banning the sale of assault weapons, and 61 percent oppose banning high capacity ammunition magazines. Of the three firearm restrictions included in the *2019 Louisiana Survey*, preventing people with mental illness from purchasing guns is the only one to receive majority support (69 percent). In fact, a majority of residents support at least one form of expanding gun rights. Fifty-nine percent of Louisiana residents want the state to allow the carry of concealed guns in more places.

State of the State

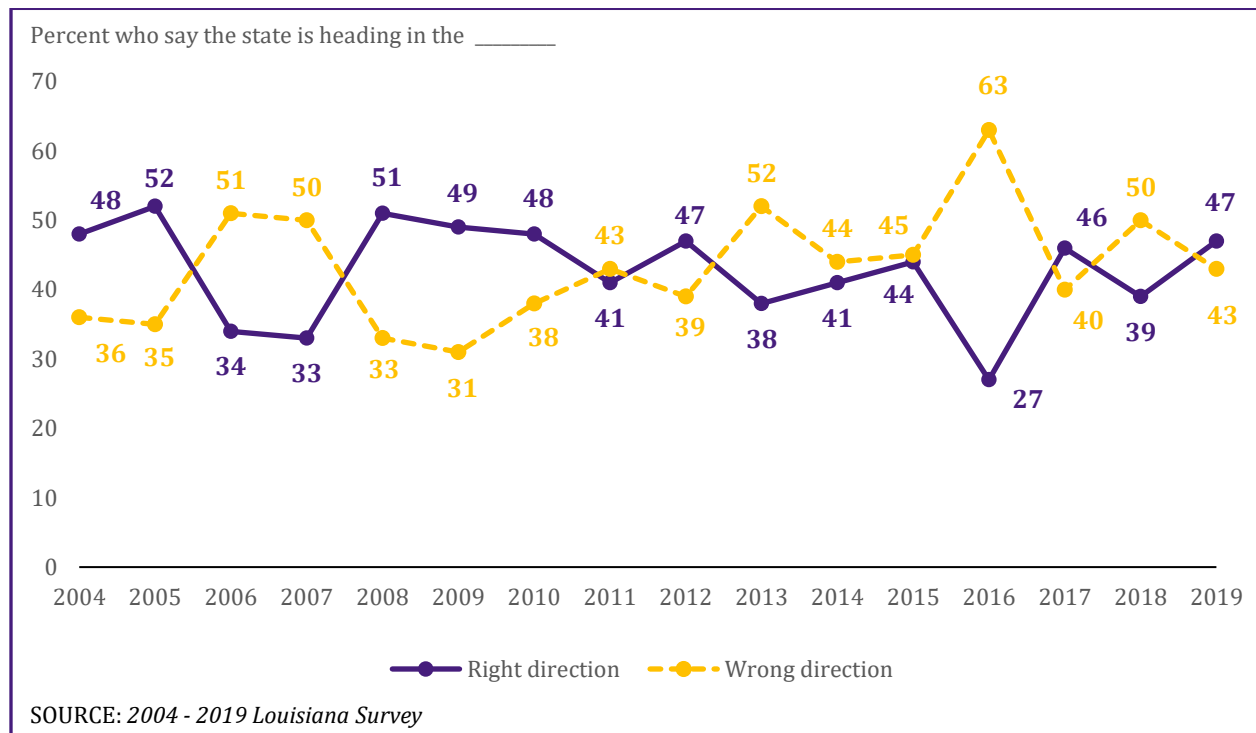
More say Louisiana is heading in the right direction

As Louisiana approaches elections this fall, more residents say the state is heading in the right direction. Forty seven percent of Louisiana residents say the state is heading in the right direction, up from 39 percent a year ago (see figure 1). The share saying the state is heading in the wrong direction fell from 50 percent in 2018 to 43 percent today.

Assessments of the state are often correlated with a person's partisan leaning. People who share the same party identification as the

governor tend to view the direction of the state more positively than people do in the opposing party. Unsurprisingly, Democrats are especially positive in their view: 55 percent say the state is heading in the right direction and 37 percent say it is heading in the wrong direction. Perhaps less expected, Republicans do not take an especially negative view of the state's direction under the administration of Democratic governor John Bel Edwards. They split evenly between those who say the state is heading in the right direction (46 percent) and those who say the state is heading in the wrong direction (45 percent).

Figure 1: Evaluating the direction of the state, 2004-2019



Education and transportation top list of priorities

The 2019 Louisiana Survey included a different approach to understanding the most important concerns of state residents. Rather than simply ask participants to name the single most important problem facing the state, we asked participants to name up to five problems they would most like state government to work on in 2019. We coded the verbatim responses to this open-ended question into issue categories. Table 1 shows the percentage of participants who mentioned each issue.

About one third of participants mentioned education. A similar percentage mentioned transportation infrastructure. The economy (including jobs, wages, business climate, and poverty) as well as the state budget (including comments about spending or

taxes) make up the second tier of public concerns at 25 percent and 21 percent, respectively. Health care and crime make up a third tier at 16 percent and 15 percent, respectively. No more than ten percent of participants mentioned each of the other issues.

Immediately following this question, we asked participants which of the problems they named is the single most important for state government to work on in 2019. We coded these verbatim responses in the same way as for the previous question. The results appear in the last column of table 1. Once again, education tops the list of most frequently mentioned issues. The economy, transportation infrastructure, and the state budget round out the top four most frequently mentioned issues, but in a slightly different order than when asked to name up to five problems.

Table 1: The percentage of participants who named each issue as most important

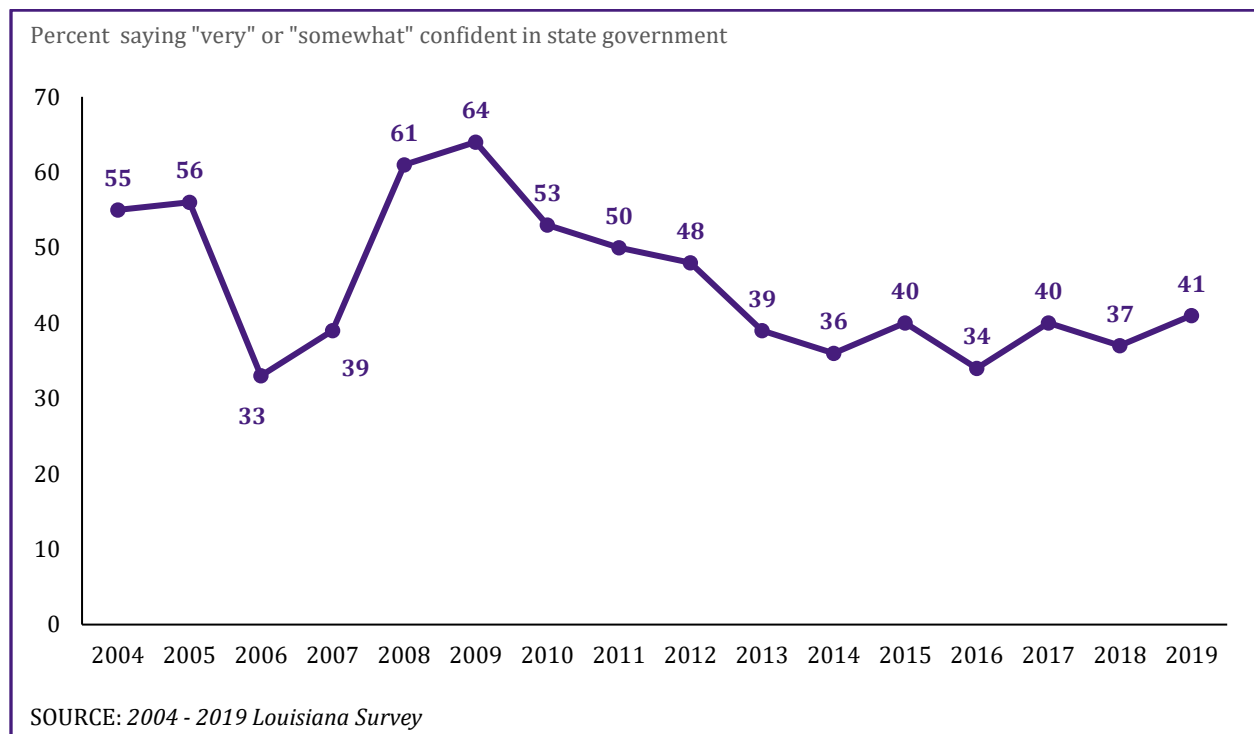
Issue	Mentioned Among Top Five Most Important	Mentioned as Single Most Important
Education	34	16
Transportation infrastructure	32	9
Economy	25	13
Budget	21	9
Health care	16	5
Crime	15	5
Welfare, public assistance, and other social services	10	3
Politics or government	9	3
Law enforcement and the criminal justice system	7	3
Environmental issues (other than coast or natural disasters)	7	2
Coastal protection and restoration	4	1
Flooding, drainage, or preparation for natural disasters	4	1
Housing	4	0
Insurance	3	1
Immigration	2	1
Abortion or reproductive rights	2	1
Gun issues	2	0
Racism or race issues	1	0
All other issues	15	4
Don't know / Refused	7	24

Confidence in state government to solve important problems remains low

The public's confidence in state government to tackle these problems remains low. Taken together, 41 percent of state residents say they are either very confident or somewhat confident in state government to address

their most important problem effectively. This share is on par with annual results from the *Louisiana Survey* since 2013. After declining from its peak at over 60 percent in 2009, confidence in state government has never substantially recovered. Today, 35 percent of state residents are not very confident in state government while another 22 percent are not at all confident.

Figure 2: Confidence that state government can solve important problems remains low



State residents have a dimmer view of the state's economy than of their own financial situation

We asked participants about their own personal financial situation, the economy in their local communities, and the economy in Louisiana as a whole. However, we randomly assigned participants to one of two versions for these questions. We asked one set to assess how their finances and the economy compare to a year ago and asked the other set to evaluate the state of their finances and the economy today.

When compared to a year ago, 51 percent of residents say their personal financial situation is the same. Another 26 percent say it is better than a year ago, and 23 percent say it is worse. When evaluating the local economy, the share saying it has grown worse than a year ago is higher at 27 percent. Forty-three percent say it is the same as a year ago, and 29 percent say it is better than in 2018. Evaluations of the state's economy dip slightly more. Twenty-nine percent say it is worse than a year ago. Forty-one percent say it is the same as a year ago, and 25 percent say it is better.

The pattern is starker among the participants who were asked to rate their financial situation and the economy without an explicit comparison to 2018. Half say their personal financial situation is excellent (10 percent) or good (40 percent). Thirty-three percent say it is only fair, and 17 percent say poor. When evaluating their local economy, however, the share saying excellent or poor drops to 36

percent, with 27 percent saying poor. Even fewer – just 20 percent – say the state's economy is excellent or good. Approximately one-third (32 percent) say the state's economy is poor.

Views of public schools improve, but hold steady or slip for other services

Periodically, the Louisiana Survey asks participants to grade the overall quality of life in Louisiana as well as the quality of various state activities or services such as public schools, transportation infrastructure, and economic development efforts. After declining from 33 percent in 2011 to 18 percent in 2015, the share of Louisiana residents who assign an A or B grade to the state's public schools has rebounded modestly to 25 percent in 2019 (see table 2).

The share of residents giving an A or B to the state's public colleges and universities has held steady in the low sixties since 2015 (that is, the slight difference across years are within the margins of error). Likewise, this share has held steady in the low thirties since 2015 for grades of the quality of health care in the state.

The share of A and B grades has dropped over the past four years for evaluations of Louisiana overall as a place to live (by six percentage points), the state's economic development efforts (by 11 percentage points), and the state's roads, bridges, and highways (by six percentage points).

Table 2: The percentage of state residents grading Louisiana and its public services with an A or B in each of the last four election years

Topic	2007	2011	2015	2019
Louisiana as a place to live	39	63	41	35
State economic development efforts to attract, recruit, and create jobs	<i>Not asked</i>	33	38	27
Louisiana roads, bridges, and highways	12	16	14	8
Overall quality of health care in Louisiana	27	34	31	32
The state's Coastal protection and restoration efforts	<i>Not asked</i>	36	<i>Not asked</i>	36
Louisiana's public colleges and universities	68	70	64	61
State government efforts to reduce crime and ensure public safety	<i>Not asked</i>	40	<i>Not asked</i>	25
Louisiana's public schools overall	22	33	18	25

Most want political compromise, but few expect to see it

A majority of Louisiana residents wants to see their elected officials compromise, but few expect to actually see it. Fifty-seven percent prefer elected officials in state government who share their positions on important issues to work with other elected officials they disagree with, even if it results in some disliked policies, rather than to stand up for their positions at the cost of getting little done.

However, only 18 percent of state residents expect that Democrats and Republicans in state government will find a way to work together and solve problems this year. Eighty percent expect partisan fighting instead.

State Finance

Many residents incorrectly believe state income tax rates have increased in recent years

Louisiana lawmakers raised the state's sales tax rate in 2016. Then, in 2019, lawmakers rolled back a portion of this increase, leaving the rate higher than it had been in 2015, but slightly lower than it was from 2016 to 2018. In contrast, lawmakers made no changes to the state's personal income tax rates during this period. Although the amount of state income tax people pay may fluctuate from one year to the next because of shifts in their income or changes to the federal income tax code, the state personal income tax rates have not changed in recent years. Yet, substantial numbers of state residents believe that Louisiana has increased its tax rates on individual and household incomes in recent years. We randomly assigned a portion of participants to a question asking whether these tax rates are higher, lower, or about the same as what they were four years ago. We asked the remaining participants a similar question about how these tax rates compare to one year ago.

Nearly half of participants (46 percent) *incorrectly* believe the state's individual and household income tax rates are higher than they were four years ago. In contrast, only 34 percent correctly answered that these tax rates are about the same as they were four years ago.

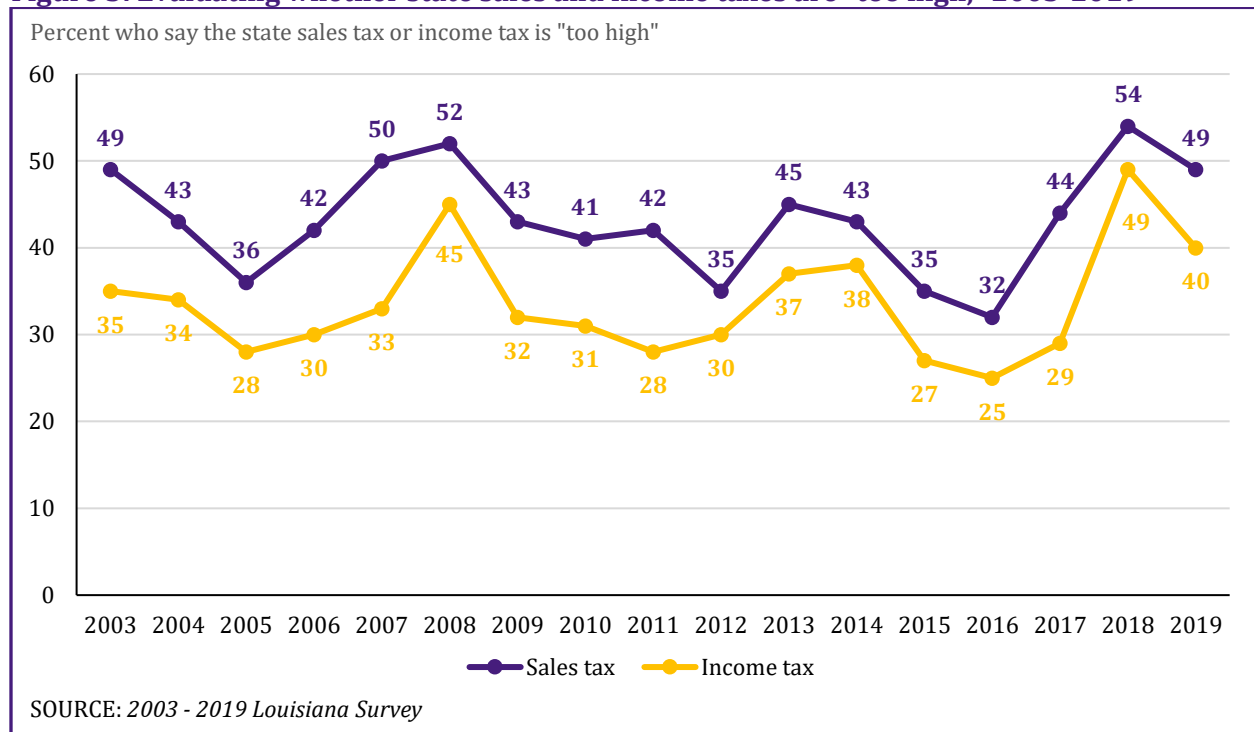
Fewer Louisiana residents are mistaken about how state tax rates on individual and household incomes compare to one year ago, but a noticeable portion (32 percent) still

believe they increased during this period. Louisianans' perceptions of state tax rates are most accurate when considering how the sales tax compares to four years ago. Sixty percent of Louisiana residents *correctly* say that the state sales tax is higher than four years ago. However, 40 percent *incorrectly* believe that the state sales tax rate is higher than one year ago.

These misperceptions may play a role in the recent spike in anti-tax attitudes in Louisiana. The percentage of Louisiana residents who say the state income tax is too high and the percentage who say the state sales tax is too high both rose steadily from 2016 to 2018 (figure 3). Both of these percentages fell in the past year, but they remain significantly higher than in 2016. Today, 49 percent think the state's sales tax is too high, up from 32 percent in early 2016. Likewise, the share of people who say the state's income tax is too high is 15 percentage points higher than in 2016 (40 percent versus 25 percent).

People who believe these tax rates have increased in recent years are more likely to say that taxes are too high. For example, 62 percent of participants who incorrectly believe state individual and household income tax rates are higher today than one year or four years ago also say that the tax is too high. This percentage drops to 27 percent among those who do not believe the state's individual and household income tax rates have increased. However, these data do not reveal whether opinions about tax policy are rooted in misperceptions about recent history or people simply mold their views of the facts to conform to their opinions.

Figure 3: Evaluating whether state sales and income taxes are “too high,” 2003-2019



Most support using recurring excess revenue for spending increases in combination with tax cuts

We asked participants what they think the state should do if it looks like taxes will bring in more money than the state needs to pay for current budgeted expenditures. Specifically, we asked whether the state should reduce taxes to only what is needed for current spending levels, increase spending, or do a combination of both.

Approximately two-thirds (65 percent) prefer a mixed approach of increased spending and tax reductions. Nearly one-fourth (23 percent) favor solely increasing spending. Just eight percent only want tax cuts. Taken

together, 88 percent of state residents want some degree of spending increases and 73 percent want some degree of tax reduction if there are recurring revenues in excess of current expenditures.

When prompted with a follow up, participants who want a combination of both spending increases and tax reductions tend to support focusing mostly on tax reductions. In fact, about half of state residents (48 percent) prefer a combined approach that focuses more on tax reduction than spending increases. Just 13 percent want a combined approach that focuses more on spending increases than tax reduction. In other words, 56 percent prefer focusing only or mostly on tax reduction, while 36 percent prefer focusing only or mostly on spending increases.

Support for gas tax increase depends on amount

We randomly assigned one group of participants to a question asking if respondents supported or opposed a five-cent per gallon increase to the state's gasoline tax and another group to a question asking about a 20 cent per gallon increase. Two-thirds (67 percent) of participants in the former group support a five cent per gallon increase, but only 46 percent of the latter group back a 20 cent per gallon increase.

Widespread misperceptions about gasoline tax, but correction does not boost support for hike

We also asked participants to name the current combined federal and state tax on gasoline. Participants split nearly evenly between those who believe the tax is less than it actually is (31 percent), those who believe the tax is more than it actually is (34 percent), and those who do not know enough to guess (35 percent). The average response among participants who offered a guess was 79 cents per gallon, more than twice the actual rate of 38.5 cents per gallon.

To determine if these misperceptions of the current state and federal gasoline tax contribute to respondent opinions regarding a tax increase, we randomly selected a group of participants to whom we told the existing tax rate. Specifically, we told these participants, "Currently, the combined state and federal tax on gasoline in Louisiana is about thirty-eight and a half cents per gallon," before asking them whether they support or oppose an increase to the state gas tax.

The effect of this information on opinions about raising the tax is mixed. Telling people the actual tax rate *decreases* support for a five cent per gallon tax increase, which drops from 67 percent to 61 percent. However,

there is no statistically significant effect on support for a 20 cent per gallon increase.

Furthermore, the effect of informing people about the current tax rate is asymmetric. On one hand, providing information about the actual gasoline tax rate to people who think it is higher than it is – in other words, telling them they are actually paying less than they think – does not change opinions about an increase. On the other hand, telling the actual gasoline tax rate to people who think it is lower than what it is – in other words, telling them they are currently paying more than they think – depresses support. Support drops 13 percentage points when these individuals learn the actual tax rate.

Teacher Pay

Strong bipartisan support for raising teacher pay, unless it requires taxes

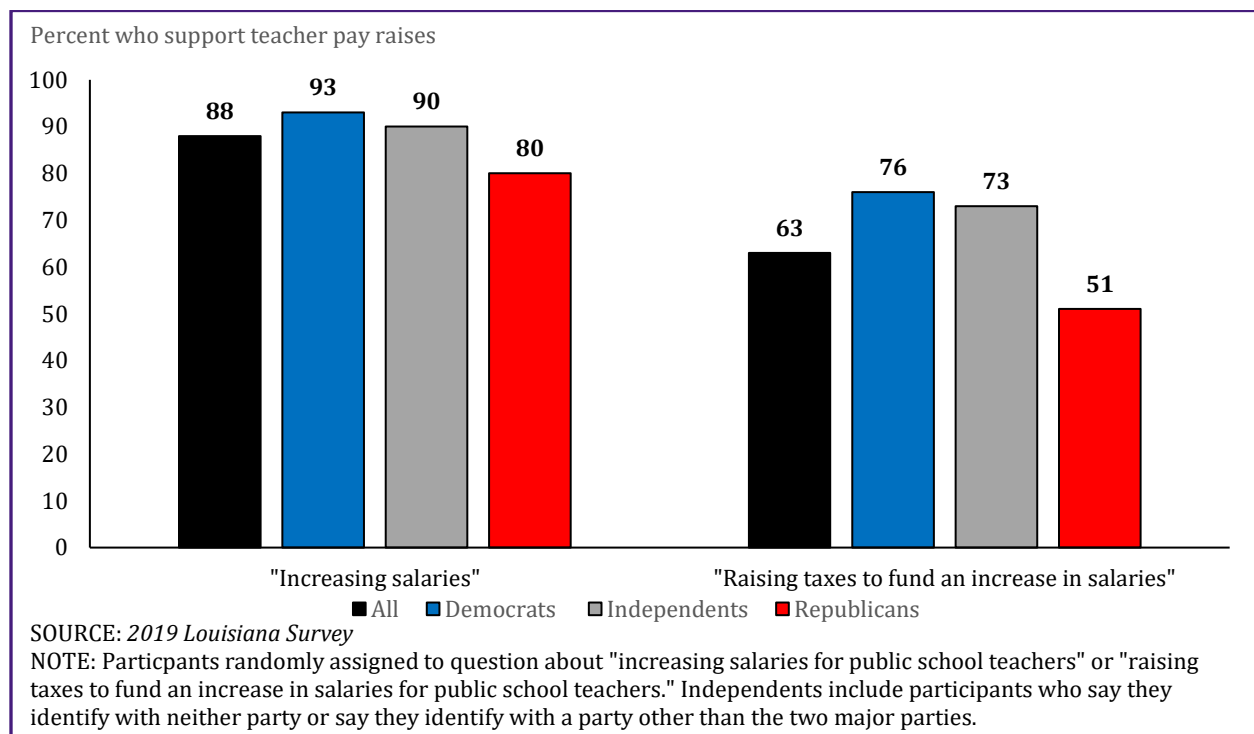
Support for raising public school teacher salaries is nearly unanimous among Louisiana residents, with 88 percent backing a pay raise. Raising teacher pay has broad consensus across political parties. More than 90 percent of Democrats and independents support boosting teacher salaries as do 80 percent of Republicans.

There is less support – and more partisan division – on the question of raising taxes to fund the raise. To distinguish between support for raising teacher pay and support for raising taxes to increase teacher salaries,

we randomly assigned one group of participants to a question asking about “increasing salaries for public school teachers” and another group to a question asking about “raising taxes to fund an increase in salaries for public school teachers.”

Overall, framing the issue in terms of tax costs lessens support to 63 percent (figure 4). Yet, even as most state residents continue to support boosting teacher pay if doing so requires raising taxes, important divisions open between political parties. Without referencing taxes, Republican support for pay raises is 13 percentage points less than Democratic support. When asked about raising taxes to fund a salary increase for teachers, this partisan gap nearly doubles to 25 percentage points.

Figure 4: High support for teacher pay raises, less support for raising taxes to fund them



Most underestimate average teacher pay, but correction does not affect opinions about raises

We asked participants to tell us what they think the average public school teacher in Louisiana earns and recorded their responses verbatim. The average response is \$37,602, significantly less than the average annual salary of public school teachers in Louisiana. According to the most recent data available, the average annual salary for public elementary and secondary school teachers in Louisiana is \$50,000.¹

Three-fourths of state residents (75 percent) *underestimate* average teacher pay in Louisiana; that is, they think teachers earn less than they actually earn. A far smaller share (four percent) has the opposite impression and believe teachers earn more than they actually earn. Just six percent know the actual average annual salary of public school teachers in the state. The remaining 14 percent did not guess.

To determine if these misperceptions – particularly the impression that teachers are earning less than they do – shapes attitudes about pay raises, we randomly split participants into two further groups. We told one group the average annual salary of public school teachers in the state before asking them whether they support or oppose raising teacher pay, but did not provide this information to the other group. The information has no impact on support for pay raises. Even when considering only participants who underestimate teacher salaries, telling them teachers actually earn more than they thought does not depress their support for raising pay.

¹ Reported for the 2016-2017 school year in the National Center for Education Statistics 2017

More support same raise to all teachers than larger raises to teachers in areas with shortages

We asked two questions to determine whether Louisianans support uniform, across-the-board raises versus a market-based approach that tailors the size of the raise to the locations or subjects in which teachers work. The first of these questions, asked to a randomly selected group of participants, is:

“If the state of Louisiana raises salaries for public school teachers, do you think it is better to give a larger salary increase to teachers who work in *schools where there are shortages*, such as schools in central cities or rural areas, even if it means other teachers get a smaller raise? Or, is it better to give the same salary increase to all teachers?”

Only 25 percent of participants prefer giving larger salary increases to teachers who work in schools with teacher shortages and smaller increases to teachers in other schools. Instead, a large majority (72 percent) prefer giving the same raise to all public school teachers.

The second question, asked to a different randomly selected group of participants, is:

“If the state of Louisiana raises salaries for public school teachers, do you think it is better to give a larger salary increase to teachers in *subject areas where there are shortages*, such as math and science, even if it means other teachers get a smaller raise? Or, is it better to give the same salary increase to all teachers?”

Digest of Education Statistics (table 211-60) and collected by the National Education Association.

Again, most prefer equal, across-the-board raises. Seventy percent prefer all public school teachers to receive the same raise. Just 26 percent prefer larger pay raises for teachers in subjects with teacher shortages and smaller raises for teachers in other subjects.

There is an interesting political dynamic at work as well. Democrats and Republicans are similar in their response to targeting pay raises to schools with teacher shortages: 25 percent and 22 percent support this approach, respectively. The parties move in opposite directions, however, when considering a proposal to target raises based on whether the teacher works in subjects with shortages. Fewer Democrats support this proposal than support the proposal to target raises to schools with teacher shortages (13 percent versus 25 percent). At the same time, more Republicans support subject-based targeting than support school-based targeting (35 percent versus 22 percent).

Louisiana residents have confidence in their public school teachers

When asked how much trust and confidence they have in the men and women who are teaching children in the public schools in Louisiana, 54 percent have a “good deal” of confidence and another 14 percent have a “very great deal” of confidence. Only about one-fourth of state residents say they do not have very much confidence (23 percent) or no confidence at all (four percent) in Louisiana’s public school teachers.

Local public schools seen more positively than public schools across state

Thirty-nine percent of state residents grade their local public schools with an A (12 percent) or B (27 percent). In contrast, only 25 percent grade public schools across the state with an A (five percent) or B (20 percent).

This pattern is especially strong among parents with children in public school. A majority of these parents grade their local schools with an A (17 percent) or B (35 percent). For adults who do not have children in public school, 36 percent grade their local public schools with an A (11 percent) or B (25 percent). When it comes to evaluating public schools across the state, public school parents and other adults grade them similarly. For public school parents, three percent grade them with an A and 22 percent grade them with a B. For participants without children in public school, five percent grade Louisiana’s public schools with an A and 20 percent grade them with a B.

At the same time, support for increasing state spending on public schools *in Louisiana as a whole* is higher than support for increasing state spending on public schools *in participants’ own school districts*. Eighty percent of residents want to increase state spending on public schools in Louisiana as a whole. The share drops to 67 percent when asked about increasing state spending for public schools in their own local districts. This pattern is the same for public school parents and adults who do not have children in public school.

Minimum Wage

Bipartisan support for \$8.50 minimum wage, not for \$15.00

Four in five Louisiana residents (81 percent) support a minimum wage of \$8.50 an hour. The proposal is popular among Democrats (94 percent), independents (78 percent), and Republicans (72 percent). The percentage of supporters is slightly higher than when we last asked about an \$8.50 minimum wage in 2016 (76 percent) and 2014 (74 percent). Republicans, in particular, have shown the most growth in support – from 55 percent in 2014 to 59 percent in 2016 to 72 percent in 2019.

In addition to asking a randomly selected group of participants about an \$8.50 minimum wage, we asked another randomly selected group about a \$15.00 minimum wage. Support for a minimum wage drops to 59 percent when it is set as \$15.00 an hour,

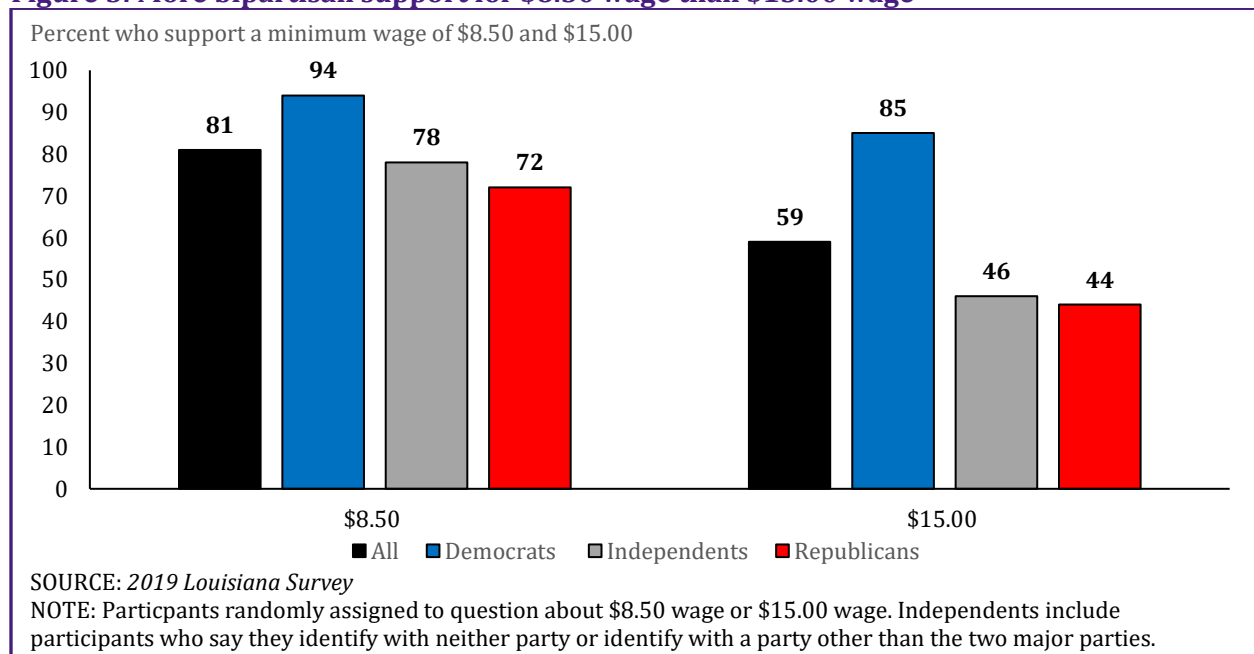
and only Democrats maintain majority support (85 percent). Just 44 percent of Republicans and 46 percent of independents support a minimum wage of \$15.00 an hour.

Potential costs of minimum wage dampens support, but only among Republicans

To determine whether the tradeoff between raising earnings for low-wage workers and potential increases in prices consumers must pay to cover employer costs affects opinions about a minimum wage, we asked a randomly selected group of participants if they support raising the minimum wage “even if it means higher prices when buying goods and services.”

Bringing the cost tradeoff to mind does bring down support by nine percentage points. However, this effect only happens for Republicans, whose support falls by 20 percentage points. Opinions among Democrats and independents remain unfazed.

Figure 5: More bipartisan support for \$8.50 wage than \$15.00 wage



Health care

Majority wants state to protect coverage of pre-existing conditions if federal protections dropped

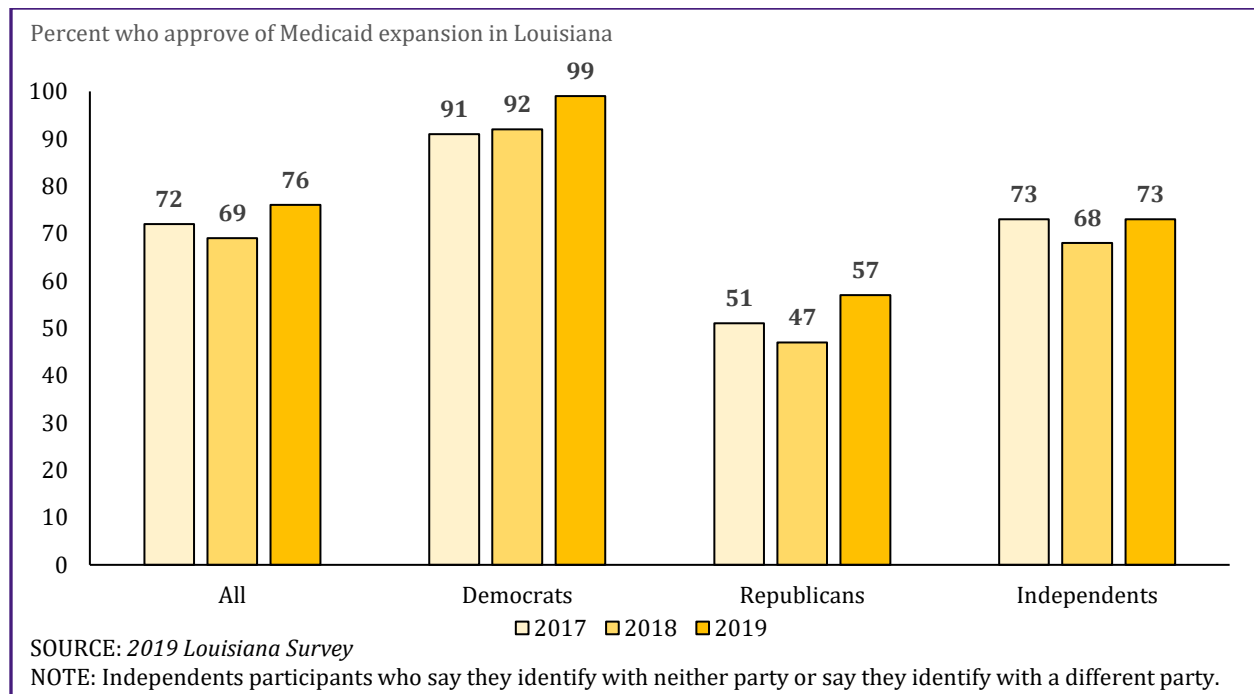
The federal Affordable Care Act prohibits insurance companies from denying coverage based on a person's medical history. A number of states, including Louisiana, have joined a case challenging the law in federal court. If the courts toss out the federal protection for people with pre-existing health conditions, 74 percent of Louisiana residents want the state to establish its own protections even if doing so results in higher insurance costs for healthy people.² These protections have broad support from

Democrats (83 percent), Republicans (66 percent), and independents (75 percent).

Approval of Medicaid expansion remains high

Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program in 2016 under the auspices of the federal Affordable Care Act. For the third straight year, the *Louisiana Survey* shows that a large majority of state residents approve of this move. Today, 76 percent of Louisiana residents approve of Medicaid expansion. This percentage of approval has remained steady since expansion (figure 6).

Figure 6: Medicaid expansion remains popular, approval increasing among Republicans



² We base the wording for this question on national polling from the Kaiser Family Foundation. Responses in Louisiana are similar to national results in which 70 percent of Americans

support their states establishing protections for people with pre-existing health conditions in the event that courts rule the federal protections unconstitutional.

Approval of Medicaid expansion is bipartisan. Although Democrats express the highest levels of approval, majorities of Republicans (57 percent) and independents (73 percent) also express favorable opinions of the policy. Of particular interest, Republican approval for Medicaid expansion has grown in the years since the state implemented the change.

Debate over the costs of expansion polarizes opinion

Supporters of Medicaid expansion often highlight its effect on health care coverage in the state, while opponents frequently point to the potential for rising costs. To determine how this debate over the program’s consequences can shape opinion of Medicaid expansion, we randomly divided participants into three groups. We asked the first group the same question used since 2017, described in the previous section. We asked the second group this question after providing the following claim about coverage:

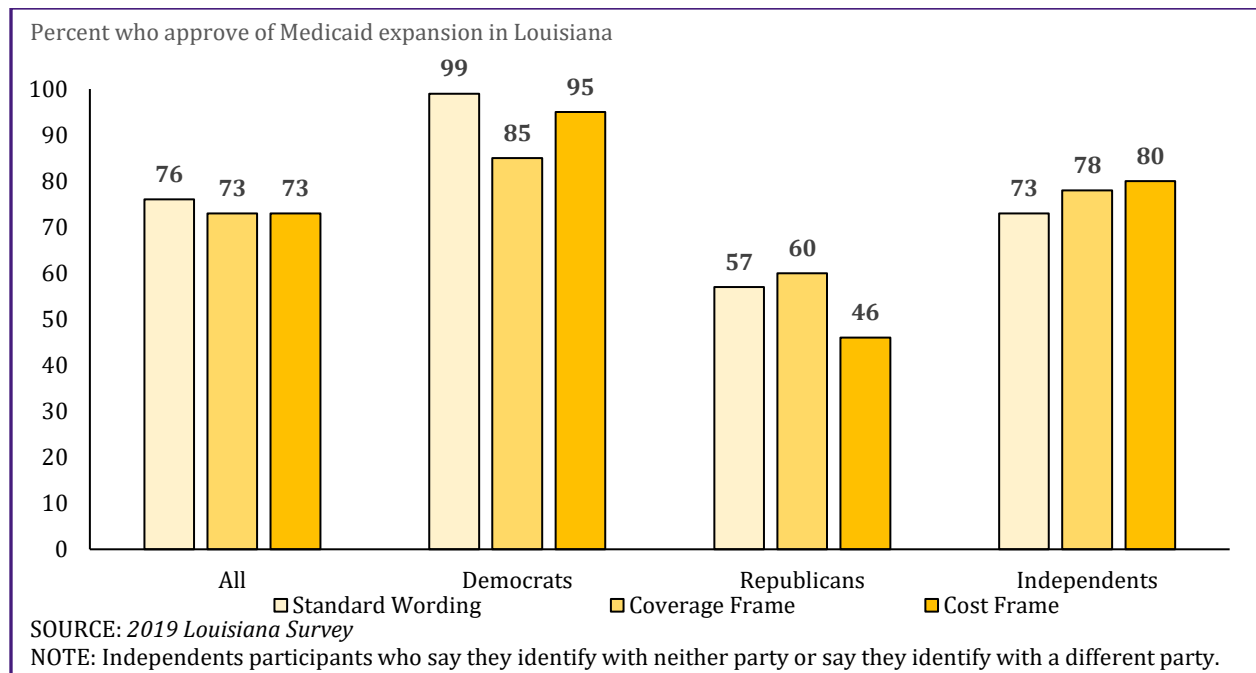
“Many state residents have enrolled in the program, and now fewer people in Louisiana go without health coverage.”

We asked the third group about their approval of expansion after providing the following claim about costs:

“The state must spend tax dollars to pay for part of the program, and this cost will increase in coming years.”

These coverage and cost frames do not affect the level of approval in the overall sample (figure 7). However, this similarity in topline approval masks important partisan shifts. The coverage frame has no impact on approval among Republicans and independents, but interestingly decreases approval among Democrats by 14 percentage points bringing them closer to Republicans on the issue.

Figure 7: Party gap widest when referencing cost



This drop among Democrats is a puzzle. Because a Democratic governor launched Medicaid expansion in Louisiana, a Democratic president's signature policy allowed for expansion, and both of these prominent Democrats emphasized increased health care coverage as a primary benefit of expansion, observers might expect Democrats to show strong approval of the policy especially when its impact on coverage is highlighted. One possible explanation is that Democrats expect a larger effect on coverage than the one we describe as "fewer people in Louisiana go without health care coverage." Unfortunately, the available data from this survey cannot resolve this puzzle.

The cost frame, on the other hand, has no substantial effect on Democrats and independents but drives down Republican approval of Medicaid expansion – pushing them even farther from the views of

Democrats. In other words, the cost frame further polarizes opinion between Democrats and Republicans. The party gap between Democrats and Republicans for our standard question is 25 percentage points and grows to 49 percentage points when Medicaid expansion is framed in terms of potential costs.

Most state residents unaware that Louisiana has expanded Medicaid

Prior to asking about opinions of Medicaid expansion, we queried participants about a factual question: Whether or not Louisiana has expanded Medicaid. Most state residents (55 percent) indicated that they are unsure whether the state has expanded its Medicaid program or not. Only 35 percent of participants correctly believe that the state has expanded its Medicaid program. Ten percent incorrectly believe the state has not expanded the program.

Knowledge of Medicaid expansion is particularly low among low-income households. Although the demographic data collected in the survey does not allow us to identify which participants are eligible for Medicaid coverage, it is likely that more individuals whose household incomes are below \$25,000 (roughly the bottom 30 percent of Louisiana households) are eligible for Medicaid than individuals whose household incomes are greater because it is a means-tested program. Yet, this is the income group with the lowest level of awareness of Medicaid expansion.

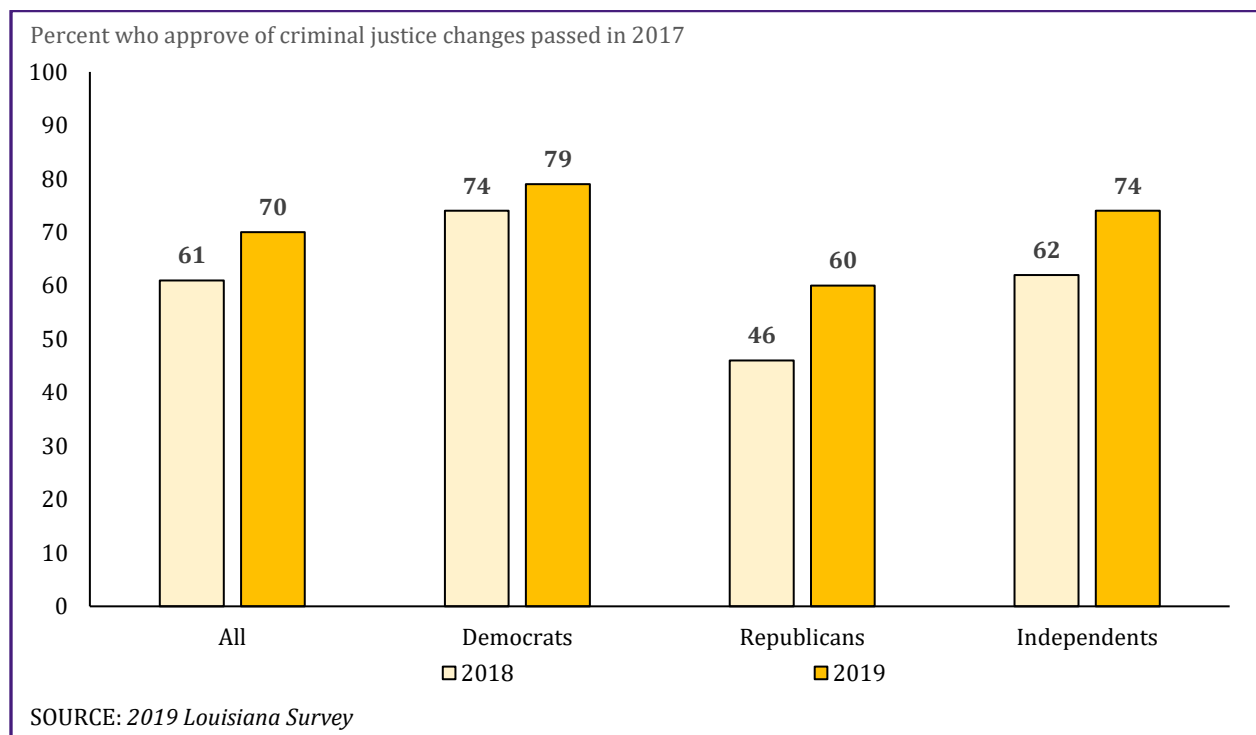
Criminal Justice

Most approve of criminal justice reforms

In 2017, Louisiana launched a number of reforms to its criminal justice system, such as shortening sentences for some crimes. Seventy percent of Louisiana residents approve of these changes to the state’s criminal justice system. This percentage is up from 61 percent in 2018 (figure 8). This growth is especially strong among Republicans (+14 percentage points) and independents (+12 percentage points).

The 2019 Louisiana Survey also includes two questions about specific criminal justice policies we previously asked in 2017, just prior to the legislative session in which the state adopted a criminal justice reform package. Comparing responses from the 2017 and 2019 surveys allows us to examine how opinions about criminal justice policy have changed since adoption of the reform package.

Figure 8: Bipartisan approval of state's criminal justice reforms



Today, 65 percent of state residents support judicial flexibility to determine appropriate criminal sentences rather than mandatory minimum sentences – stable since 2018, but a modest slip from 72 percent in 2017. Meanwhile, opinions about offering more alternatives to prison, such as drug treatment and rehabilitation programs, for people convicted of non-violent offenses has remained stable since 2017.

Few Louisiana residents think system is fair or effective at keeping communities safe

Despite the popularity of criminal justice reform, few Louisiana residents believe the system is fair or believe it is effective at keeping communities safe. Only about one-third (32 percent) agree with the statement that the current criminal justice system in Louisiana is fair. Most state residents (54 percent) disagree with this statement. Similarly, 32 percent agree that Louisiana's current criminal justice system is effective at keeping communities safe, and 55 percent disagree.

In general, more Republicans than Democrats (+20 percentage points) agree with the statement that the current criminal justice system is fair and more Democrats than Republicans (+22 percentage points) disagree with the statement. There is no difference

between Democrats and Republicans in their perceptions about how effective the system is at keeping communities safe.

Despite the remarkable similarity in topline response frequencies between these two questions, it is worth noting that the participants who agree (or disagree) with the statement about fairness are not the same participants who agree (or disagree) with the statement about safety. Overall, 18 percent of participants agree with both statements and 41 percent disagree with both statements. Nine percent agree that the system is fair but disagree that it is effective at keeping communities safe. Likewise, another nine percent disagree that the system is fair but agree that it is effective at keeping communities safe.

Republicans are more inclined (+7 percentage points) than Democrats are to agree that the system is fair but disagree that it keeps communities safe. In contrast, Democrats are more inclined (+15 percentage points) than Republicans are to agree that the system keeps communities safe but disagree that it is fair. The percentage of Republicans who agree with both statements is 11 points higher than the percentage of Democrats who agree with both. The percentage of Democrats who disagree with both statements is five points higher than the percentage of Republicans who disagree with both.

Social Issues

Majority support for legalizing betting on professional sports

Fifty-nine percent of state residents support legalizing gambling on professional sporting events. Only 35 percent oppose legalizing this form of gambling in the state. Unlike many other policy issues, there is virtually no difference between the opinions of Democrats and Republicans on sports betting. Instead, the chief divisions of opinion cut across age and region. Seventy-four percent of 18- to 29-year olds and 73 percent of 30- to 49-year olds support legalizing betting on sporting events. About half (53 percent) of 50- to 64-year olds and only 38 percent of those 65 years or older support the policy change.

Support is strongest in the metro New Orleans area where 68 percent support legalizing gambling on professional sporting events. Throughout the rest of south Louisiana, 58 percent support legalizing this form of gambling. In north Louisiana, 52 percent support legalizing this form of gambling.

Majority support for legalizing recreational use of marijuana

Fifty-five percent of Louisiana residents support legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for recreational use. As with sports betting, there are significant generational and regional divisions of opinion. Eighty percent of 18- to 29-year olds

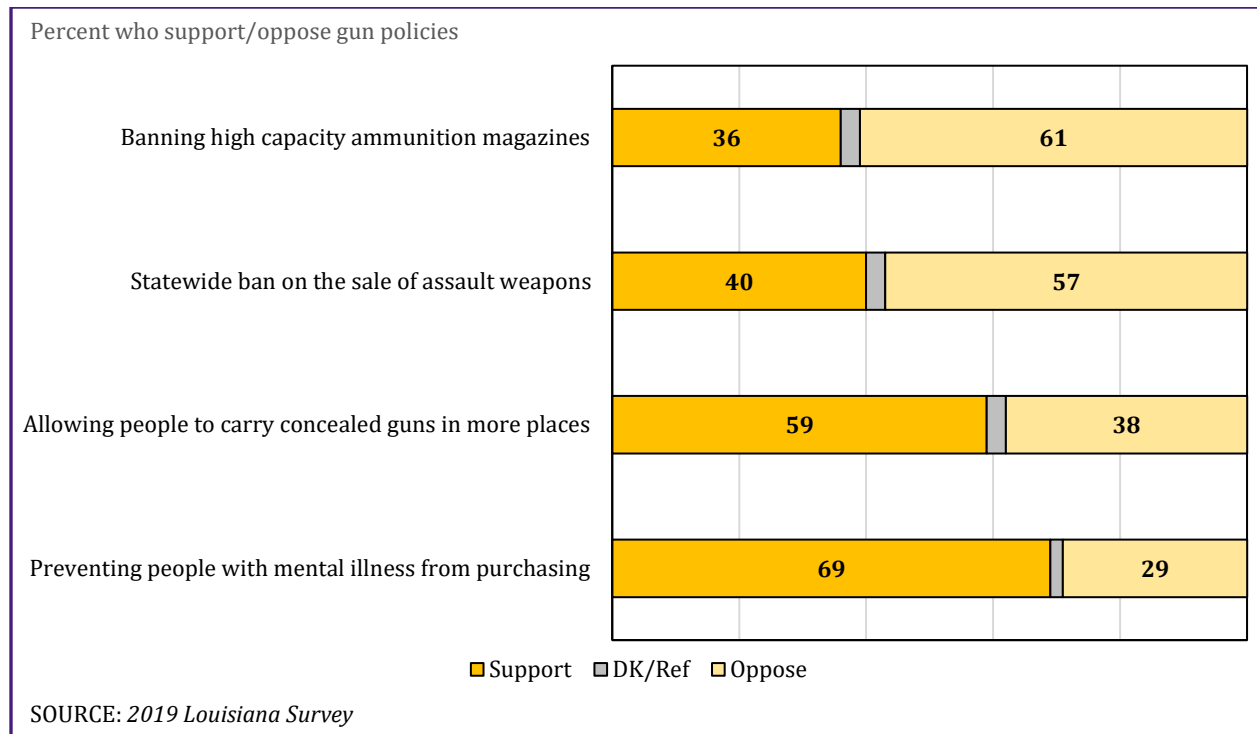
support legalizing recreational use of marijuana. Support remains substantial among 30- to 49-year olds at 67 percent. In contrast, 50- to 64-year olds split almost evenly between supporters (51 percent) and opponents (46 percent). A large majority (69 percent) of residents who are 65 years or older oppose legalizing marijuana for recreational use.

Most state residents oppose restrictions on sale of assault weapons or high capacity magazines

Fifty-seven percent of Louisiana residents oppose banning the sale of assault weapons, and 61 percent oppose banning high capacity ammunition magazines (figure 9). Of the three firearm restrictions included in the *2019 Louisiana Survey*, preventing people with mental illness from purchasing guns is the only one to receive majority support (69 percent).

In fact, a majority of residents support at least one form of expanding gun rights. Fifty-nine percent of Louisiana residents want the state to allow the carry of concealed guns in more places. Although Louisiana currently allows for concealed carry licenses, it restricts residents from carrying concealed guns in certain types of locations such as commercial establishments that sell alcohol or school “firearm free zones.”

Figure 9: Majority opposes bans on assault weapons or high capacity magazines



Survey Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted among a statewide sample of 917 adults (18 years of age or older) living in Louisiana. The survey was conducted by interviewers at Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab. The sample includes 385 respondents interviewed via landline telephone and 532 respondents interviewed on a cellphone, including 365 who do not have a landline telephone. Interviews for this survey were conducted from February 7 to March 15, 2019.

Approximately three-fourths of the sample (76 percent) was stratified across parishes proportional to their adult population to ensure geographic representation across the state. The remaining 24 percent of the sample was drawn statewide. For both the parish and statewide samples, the design of the landline samples ensures representation of both listed and unlisted numbers by use of random digit dialing. Similarly, the cell phone samples are randomly drawn from known, available phone number banks dedicated to wireless service. Both samples, landline and cellphone, were provided by Marketing Systems Group.

The combined landline and cell phone sample is weighted using an iterative procedure that matches race, education, household income, gender, and age to known profiles for the adult population of Louisiana found in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2017 one-year estimates. Weighting cannot eliminate every source of nonresponse bias. However, proper administration of random sampling combined with accepted weighting techniques has a strong record of yielding unbiased results.

The sample has an overall margin of error of +/- 4.6 percentage points. The margin of error includes adjustment due to the weighting procedure. The design effect due to weighting is 1.4 percentage points; that is, the margin of error is 1.4 percentage points larger than it would be for a simple random sample of this size without weighting.

In addition to sampling error, as accounted for through the margin of error, readers should recognize that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. As often as possible, the *Louisiana Survey* follows the wording of relevant questions repeatedly used by reputable public opinion research institutions and projects, such as the Pew Research Center, Gallup Inc., and the American National Election Studies.

The *2019 Louisiana Survey* has a response rate of six percent. This response rate is the percentage of eligible residential households or personal cell phones in the sample for which an interview is completed. The rate is calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's method for Response Rate 3 as published in their Standard Definitions. Response rates for telephones have been on decline for several decades and frequently fall in the single digits even among the very best survey research organizations.

Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab, a division of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, designed the survey questionnaire and sampling strategy, computed the survey weights, and conducted all statistical analysis.

Question Wording and Toplines

Unless otherwise indicated, results are for the total sample. Not all respondents were asked each question, and questions asked to a subset of respondents are labelled accordingly. For these questions, percentages are only for those respondents who were asked the particular question. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Q1.

To begin with, would you say things are generally going in the right direction, or do you think things are going in the wrong direction here in Louisiana?

Right direction 47
Wrong direction 43
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]..... 11

Q2. [OPEN-ENDED QUESTION]

Thinking about the problems facing Louisiana, which problems would you most like the state government to be working on in 2019? **[CALLERS RECORD UP TO FIVE RESPONSES. IF RESPONDENT PROVIDES LESS THAN FIVE, PROMPT WITH "Any others?" UNTIL RESPONDENT HAS NO MORE OR REACHES FIVE.]**

VERBATIM RESPONSES RECORDED AND CODED INTO CATEGORIES (SEE TABLE 1)

Q3.

Which of those problems is the SINGLE MOST important for state government to be working on in 2019?

VERBATIM RESPONSES RECORDED AND CODED INTO CATEGORIES (SEE TABLE 1)

Q4.

How much confidence would you say you have in state government to effectively address this problem? Would you say you are very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident..... 10
Somewhat confident..... 31
Not very confident..... 35
Not at all confident..... 22
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 2

Q5a. [FOR Q5 TO Q7, RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO BATTERY A OR TO BATTERY B.]

We are also interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you are better off financially, worse off, or about the same as you were a year ago?

Better	26
Same	51
Worse.....	23
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	0

Q6a. [FOR Q5 TO Q7, RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO BATTERY A OR TO BATTERY B.]

Now thinking about the economy in Louisiana as a whole, would you say that over the past year the state's economy has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?

Better	25
Same	41
Worse.....	29
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q7a. [FOR Q5 TO Q7, RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO BATTERY A OR TO BATTERY B.]

Now thinking about the community where you live, would you say that over the past year the economy in your community has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?

Better	29
Same	43
Worse.....	27
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q5b. [FOR Q5 TO Q7, RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO BATTERY A OR TO BATTERY B.]

Thinking about your personal finances, how would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape financially?

Excellent	10
Good	40
Only fair	33
Poor	17
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q6b. [FOR Q5 TO Q7, RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO BATTERY A OR TO BATTERY B.]

Thinking about the economy in Louisiana as a whole, how would you rate economic conditions in this state today - as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Excellent	2
Good	18
Only fair	47
Poor	32
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q7b. [FOR Q5 TO Q7, RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO BATTERY A OR TO BATTERY B.]

Now thinking about the community where you live, how would you rate economic conditions in your community today - as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Excellent	5
Good	30
Only fair	37
Poor	27
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	0

Q8.

As you know, students are often given a grade A through F to evaluate their performance. What grade would you give Louisiana as a place to live?

A	10
B	24
C	41
D	16
F	7
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q9.

What grade would you give to state economic development efforts to attract, recruit, and create jobs?

A	7
B	21
C	37
D	21
F	11
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q10.

What grade would you give to Louisiana's roads, bridges, and highways?

A.....	3
B.....	6
C.....	23
D.....	31
F.....	37
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q11.

What grade would you give to the overall quality of health care in Louisiana?

A.....	10
B.....	22
C.....	33
D.....	19
F.....	14
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q12.

What grade would you give to the state's coastal protection and restoration efforts?

A.....	9
B.....	28
C.....	33
D.....	15
F.....	6
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	10

Q13.

What grade would you give to Louisiana's public colleges and universities?

A.....	18
B.....	44
C.....	24
D.....	7
F.....	2
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q14.

What grade would you give to the state government efforts to reduce crime and ensure public safety?

A.....	6
B.....	19
C.....	38
D.....	21
F.....	14
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q15. [HALF OF PARTICPANTS RANDOMLY SELECTED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.]

What grade would you give to the public schools in your local school district?

A.....	12
B.....	27
C.....	38
D.....	10
F.....	7
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q16. [HALF OF PARTICPANTS RANDOMLY SELECTED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.]

Should state spending on public schools in your local school district be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

Increased.....	67
Decreased.....	2
Kept about the same.....	26
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q17.

What grade would you give to Louisiana's public schools overall?

A.....	12
B.....	27
C.....	38
D.....	10
F.....	7
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q18.

Should state spending on public schools in Louisiana as a whole be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

Increased.....	80
Decreased.....	1
Kept about the same.....	17
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q19.

Based on your best guess, what is the average annual salary of a public school teacher in Louisiana? **[IF RESPONDENT SAYS 'don't know,' PROBE ONCE: Just your best guess is fine.]?**

VERBATIM RESPONSE RECORDED

Q20a. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Do you support or oppose the state of Louisiana increasing salaries for public school teachers?

Support	88
Oppose.....	10
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q20b. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Do you support or oppose the state of Louisiana raising taxes to fund an increase in salaries for public school teachers?

Support	63
Oppose.....	31
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q20c. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

According to the most recent data available, the average annual salary for public school teachers in Louisiana is about fifty thousand dollars. Do you support or oppose the state of Louisiana increasing salaries for public school teachers?

Support	83
Oppose.....	14
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q20d. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

According to the most recent data available, the average annual salary for public school teachers in Louisiana is about fifty thousand dollars. Do you support or oppose the state of Louisiana increasing salaries for public school teachers?

Support	67
Oppose.....	32
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q21a. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A OR B.]

If the state of Louisiana raises salaries for public school teachers, do you think it is better to give a larger salary increase to teachers who work in schools where there are shortages, such as schools in central cities or rural areas, even if it means other teachers get a smaller raise? Or, is it better to give the same salary increase to all teachers?

Larger increase to teachers in schools with shortages 25
Same increase to all teachers..... 72
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 4

Q21b. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A OR B.]

If the state of Louisiana raises salaries for public school teachers, do you think it is better to give a larger salary increase to teachers in subject areas where there are shortages, such as math and science, even if it means other teachers get a smaller raise? Or, is it better to give the same salary to all teachers?

Larger increase to teachers in subjects with shortages..... 26
Same increase to all teachers..... 70
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 4

Q22.

How much trust and confidence do you have in the men and women who are teaching children in the public schools in Louisiana? A very great deal, a good deal, not very much, or none at all?

Very great deal..... 15
Good deal..... 54
Not very much..... 23
None at all 4
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 4

Q23.

On another topic, thinking about elected officials in state government who share your positions on the most important issues facing Louisiana. Should they work with elected officials they disagree with, even if it results in some policies you don't like, or should they stand up for their positions, even if that means little gets done in state government?

They should work with others they disagree with..... 57
They should stand up for their positions.... 38
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 5

Q24.

This year, do you think Republicans and Democrats in state government will work together to solve problems or do you think they will bicker and oppose one another even if it keeps them from solving problems?

- Work together 18
- Bicker and oppose one another 80
- Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 3

Q25a. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO VERSION A OR TO VERSION B.]

Thinking about state income taxes on individuals and households, would you say these income tax rates are higher, lower, or about the same as what they were four years ago?

- Higher 46
- Lower 13
- About the same 34
- Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 7

Q25b. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO VERSION A OR TO VERSION B.]

Thinking about state income taxes on individuals and households, would you say these income tax rates are higher, lower, or about the same as what they were one year ago?

- Higher 32
- Lower 10
- About the same 46
- Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 12

Q26.

Would you say that state income taxes on individuals and households are too high, too low, or just about right?

- Too high 40
- Too low 12
- Just about right 42
- Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 6

Q27a. [PARTICIPANTS ASKED VERSION A, IF ALSO ASKED Q25a.]

Thinking about the state sales tax, would you say the state sales tax rate is higher, lower, or about the same as what it was four years ago?

- Higher 60
- Lower 2
- About the same 35
- Don't know/Refused [VOL.] 2

Q27b. [PARTICIPANTS ASKED VERSION B, IF ALSO ASKED Q25b.]

Thinking about the state sales tax, would you say the state sales tax rate is higher, lower, or about the same as what it was one year ago?

Higher	40
Lower	3
About the same	50
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	7

Q28.

Would you say that the state sales tax is too high, too low, or just about right?

Too high	49
Too low	4
Just about right	45
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q29. [ORDER OF FIRST TWO OPTIONS RANDOMIZED.]

Looking ahead to the state budget for next year, what should state government do if it looks like taxes will bring in more money than the state needs to pay for the costs of the things it currently does? Should they reduce taxes to only what is needed for current spending levels? Or, should they increase spending on the things state government does, such as funding for education, health care, roads, and other services? Or, should they do a combination of both?

Reduce taxes	8
Increase spending.....	23
Combination of both.....	65
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q30. [ASK ONLY TO PARTICIPANTS WHO ANSWERED "Combination of both" TO Q29. ORDER OF OPTIONS RANDOMIZED.]

If both reducing taxes and increasing spending are being considered, should the focus be mostly on reducing taxes or mostly on increasing spending?

Mostly on reducing taxes.....	74
Mostly on increasing spending	20
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

DERIVED. Q29 & Q30 COMBINED.

Reduce taxes	8
Increase spending.....	23
Combination, mostly reducing taxes	48
Combination, mostly increasing spending. 13	
Combination, Q30 Don't know/Ref. [VOL.] 4	
Q29 Don't know/Refused [VOL.].....	3

Q31.

Based on your best guess, what is the combined federal and state tax on gasoline that people pay in Louisiana per gallon? [IF RESPONDENT SAYS 'don't know,' PROBE ONCE: Just your best guess is fine.]?

VERBATIM RESPONSE RECORDED

Q32a. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Do you support or oppose increasing the state tax on gasoline by 5 cents per gallon if the money is dedicated to improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure?

Support	67
Oppose.....	30
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q32b. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Do you support or oppose increasing the state tax on gasoline by 20 cents per gallon if the money is dedicated to improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure?

Support	46
Oppose.....	51
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q32c. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Currently, the combined state and federal tax on gasoline in Louisiana is about thirty-eight and a half cents per gallon. Do you support or oppose increasing the state tax on gasoline by 5 cents per gallon if the money is dedicated to improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure?

Support	61
Oppose.....	38
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q32d. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Currently, the combined state and federal tax on gasoline in Louisiana is about thirty-eight and a half cents per gallon. Do you support or oppose increasing the state tax on gasoline by 20 cents per gallon if the money is dedicated to improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure?

Support	48
Oppose.....	50
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q33a. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Do you support or oppose raising the minimum wage in Louisiana to \$8.50 an hour?

Support81
Oppose.....20
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]0

Q33b. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Do you support or oppose raising the minimum wage in Louisiana to \$15 an hour?

Support59
Oppose.....39
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]2

Q33c. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Do you support or oppose raising the minimum wage in Louisiana to \$8.50 an hour even if it means higher prices when buying goods and services?

Support71
Oppose.....27
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]3

Q33d. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, C, OR D.]

Do you support or oppose raising the minimum wage in Louisiana to \$15 an hour even if it means higher prices when buying goods and services?

Support50
Oppose.....49
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]1

Q34.

Now, we would like to ask you about criminal justice in Louisiana. Please tell me whether you agree, disagree, or neither agree nor disagree with each of the following statements. First - Louisiana's current criminal justice system is fair.

Agree.....32
Disagree.....54
Neither11
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]3

Q35.

Next - Louisiana's current criminal justice system is effective at keeping communities safe.

Agree.....	32
Disagree.....	55
Neither	12
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q36.

Do you support or oppose having more alternatives to prison - such as drug treatment or rehabilitation programs - for people convicted of non-violent offenses?

Support	88
Oppose.....	11
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q37.

Recently, Louisiana made several changes to its criminal justice system such as shortening prison sentences for some crimes. Do you approve or disapprove of these changes?

Approve	70
Disapprove	21
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

Q38.

As you may know, mandatory minimum sentences require those convicted of certain crimes to serve a certain length of time in prison. Some people say that instead of mandatory minimums, judges should have the flexibility to determine sentences based on the facts of each case. Do you support or oppose letting judges have the flexibility to set sentences?

Support	65
Oppose.....	31
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q39.

Turning to health care, as you may know, Medicaid is a program to provide health coverage mostly to low-income individuals. In recent years, several states throughout the country have expanded their Medicaid programs to provide health care coverage to more people. From what you may have heard, has Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program in recent years or not? Or, are you not sure?

Yes, has expanded.....	35
No, has not expanded	10
Unsure	55
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q40a. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, OR C.]

As it turns out, a few years ago, Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program to provide health care coverage to more people. Do you approve or disapprove of the state expanding its Medicaid program?

Approve76
Disapprove19
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]5

Q40b. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, OR C.]

As it turns out, a few years ago, Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program to provide health care coverage to more people. Many state residents have enrolled in the program, and now fewer people in Louisiana go without health coverage. Do you approve or disapprove of the state expanding its Medicaid program?

Approve73
Disapprove23
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]4

Q40c. [PARTICIPANTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO VERSION A, B, OR C.]

As it turns out, a few years ago, Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program to provide health care coverage to more people. The state must spend tax dollars to pay for part of the program, and this cost will increase in coming years. Do you approve or disapprove of the state expanding its Medicaid program?

Approve73
Disapprove25
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]1

Q41.

As you may know, a 2010 federal law established protections for people with pre-existing conditions that prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage because of a person's medical history. Some states have filed a lawsuit challenging this law. If the federal law's protections for people with pre-existing conditions are ruled unconstitutional, would you want the state of Louisiana to establish its own protections for people with pre-existing health conditions even if this means some healthy people may pay more for insurance coverage, or would you not want to see Louisiana establish such protections?

Establish protections for pre-existing conditions.....74
Do not establish protections19
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