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For Immediate Release

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New Louisiana Voter Survey Released

BATON ROUGE, La. – A new survey conducted by Southern Media & Opinion Research Inc. polled Louisiana voters on key issues at the state and federal level, as well as job approval ratings for several of the state's top elected officials.

The poll, developed and conducted by Southern Opinion & Media Research, included telephone interviews with 600 randomly selected Louisiana voters from April 19-23. The overall margin of error is 4 percentage points at a 95 percent level of confidence.

Among the findings:

- Gov. Jindal remains popular among Louisiana voters, though his popularity has fallen since spring 2009. In the latest survey, Jindal's positive job performance rating was 61.4 percent, while his negative rating was 37 percent. A year ago, those figures, respectively, were 67.6 percent and 30.4 percent.
- 77.5 percent said that Gov. Jindal's endorsement of their legislator would either not make a difference (64.5 percent) or make them less likely (13.0 percent) to vote for the candidate. Among Republicans, 35.5 percent said they were more likely to vote for legislative candidates with Jindal's endorsement.
- 74 percent opposed a legislative proposal to use various trust funds to cover budget shortfalls.
- 58.8 percent of respondents said state tax dollars were not being spent wisely; 56.5 percent said state officials are spending too much.



- 80.1 percent of respondents said they were less likely to vote for lawmakers who attempted to vote themselves a pay raise two years ago.
- 51.8 percent of respondents want the Legislature to make all state programs subject to budget cuts instead of higher education and health care only.
- Among white respondents, 63 percent rated U.S. Sen. David Vitter's job performance as positive. About half of black respondents – 49.2 percent – rated his performance as negative, while 34.2 percent rated it positive.
- U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon remains relatively unknown statewide. Nearly 41 percent of respondents didn't know enough about him to rate his job performance.
- In his reelection bid this fall, Vitter holds an 18-point lead over his challenger, Melancon – 49 percent to 31.4 percent.
- Sen. Landrieu's popularity has suffered from her support for President Obama's health-care reform legislation. Her positive job rating reached a record low this spring of 42.8 percent – nearly 20 points lower from a year ago with her negative rating now at 53.5 percent.

This survey was funded by Lane Grigsby in an effort to share the thoughts of the electorate with Louisiana elected officials. Grigsby has committed to underwriting a Louisiana voter survey biannually. For more information and to view the complete survey results, visit www.laplaintalk.com.

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Southern Media & Opinion Research Spring 2010 Survey Analysis

Gov. Jindal's popularity slipping

Gov. Bobby Jindal remains popular, though his popularity has fallen in the past year and the percentage of voters who rate his job performance as negative has increased, as indicated in the following table:

Gov. Jindal's Job Performance Ratings*		
Performance Rating	2009	2010
Excellent	26.4%	18%
Good	41.2%	43.4%
Not So Good	19.2%	17.8%
Poor	11.2%	19.2%
Positive**	67.6%	61.4%
Negative***	30.4%	37%

* "Not familiar"/ "Don't know"/ "Won't say" responses not shown.

** "Excellent" and "good" combined.

*** "Not so good" and "poor" combined.

The survey results also indicate Jindal's endorsement is not influential in political races. Thirteen percent of respondents said they would be less likely to vote for a state representative carrying Jindal's endorsement; 20.4 percent said his support would make a difference; and another 64.5 percent said his endorsement would make no difference. Among Republicans, 35.5 percent said they were more likely to vote for legislative candidates with Jindal's endorsement.

Louisiana budget crisis

A proposed rule change that would allow the Legislature to use various trust funds to cover budget shortfalls is very unpopular with 74 percent of



respondents opposed. If the legislation is approved, it would be a tough sell with voters who must approve in the form of a constitutional amendment.

Regarding state spending, 56.5 percent of respondents said state officials are spending too much, while 31.3 percent said a lack of revenue is the problem. As long as voters believe spending is the problem, they aren't likely to accept higher taxes and fees.

Meanwhile, 58.8 percent of respondents said they believe their state tax dollars are not being spent wisely. If budget deficits continue into the 2011 election cycle, state spending will join the pay raise issue a "hot button" for legislative challengers.

A majority of respondents – 51.8 percent – want the Legislature to enact laws that make all state programs subject to budget cuts, not just higher education and health care.

Anger over legislative pay raise attempt

Voters remain angry nearly two years after legislators attempted to vote themselves a pay raise. More than 80 percent of respondents said they were less likely to vote for state legislators who voted for the increase.

Lt. Governor's Race

If state Treasurer John Kennedy runs for the office, he would be the leading candidate at the start of the campaign with 21.2 percent. Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell (14.5%) and Secretary of State Jay Dardenne (15.4%) are in a virtual tie for second. St. Tammany Parish President Kevin Davis received support from 6 percent of respondents, while Roger Villere, chairman of the state Republican Party, got 2.4 percent. The better-known statewide elected officials hold a big advantage because of name recognition.

U.S. Sen. David Vitter

Sen. Vitter enters this fall's reelection bid with high approval ratings. Among white survey respondents, 63 percent gave him positive job-performance ratings – 62.4 percent of white females and 63.6 percent among white males. There is no so-called "female gap," according to the survey results. Historically, Vitter, a Republican, can expect support from



about 6 percent of black voters. Among black survey respondents, 49.2, or nearly half, rated his job performance as negative, while one third rated it as positive.

U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon

Rep. Melancon, the leading Democratic challenger to Vitter, remains relatively unknown statewide. Forty percent of respondents didn't know enough about him to rate his job performance.

Vitter vs. Melancon

Among respondents, Vitter holds a commanding 18-point lead over Melancon in the fall race – 49 percent to 31.4 percent. Across the state, white respondents were opposed to President Obama and the Democratic Party. Barring a dramatic change, Democrats are generally out of favor in any statewide election in Louisiana as long as Barack Obama is in the White House. Asked which party they prefer to control Congress, 36.4 percent said Democrats.

U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu

Sen. Landrieu's popularity has fallen sharply since voting for President Obama's health-care reform legislation. Her positive rating among respondents was 42.8 percent – a record low and nearly 20-point drop from one year ago. Meanwhile, her negative job rating stands at 53.5 percent. In the latest survey, 71.3 percent of white respondents rated her job performance as negative, including nearly 42 percent who rated her performance as poor.

President Obama

With 39.3 percent positive job-performance ratings for President Obama, Louisiana is likely among the states least satisfied with the chief executive. More than 58 percent of respondents gave him a negative job rating. Among black respondents, 90.8 percent gave the president positive rating. But that was offset by 79.6 percent of white respondents who gave him negative ratings.



Federal issues

President Obama's economic stimulus package remains very unpopular among Louisiana voters. More than two thirds of survey respondents – 67.4 percent – said the measure did nothing but increase the national debt.

Federal health-care reform was never popular in Louisiana and the latest survey shows those opinions haven't changed. Results showed 63.4 percent of respondents remained opposed to the measure's passage, while 57.7 percent favor the Legislature joining in the call for the U.S. Supreme Court to repeal health-care reform.

Survey respondents strongly support right-to-work laws and just as strongly oppose the proposed Employee Free Choice Act, the federal labor legislation sometimes referred to as card check, with 77.3 percent saying they prefer keeping labor-union ballots secret and 79.3 percent supporting right-to-work.

Results also showed 53.9 percent of respondents said they favor the Tea Party's views on major issues versus President Obama's.

For more information, contact Bernie Pinsonat, Southern Media & Opinion Research (225) 405-6797 or Ann Edelman, Zehnder Communications (225) 242-9000. To view the complete survey results, visit www.laplaintalk.com