



For Immediate Release

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New Louisiana Voter Survey Released

Southern Media & Opinion Research Inc. has released the results of its survey of Louisiana voters on a number of important political issues, including U.S. Sen. David Vitter's reelection bid, the job performance of U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, Gov. Bobby Jindal and President Barack Obama, as well as voters' perceptions on this year's state budget cuts.

Results show that Vitter remains ahead of U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon, his biggest rival in next year's race. Results also show Vitter has benefited from his opposition to a number of President Obama's proposals.

Job performance ratings have fallen since earlier this year for both Landrieu and Jindal, though Jindal's ratings remain high. Respondents also gave the governor positive ratings for progress on issues like business recruitment, roads and public education.

Cuts to health-care, however, could pose a challenge for the administration. According to the poll, more than two thirds of voters surveyed regard health-care cuts serious and worrisome.

The poll, developed and conducted by Southern Media & Opinion Research, included telephone interviews with 600 randomly selected, likely Louisiana voters from October 4 – October 7, 2009. The overall margin of error is not greater than plus or minus 4.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

Among the key findings of the survey:

Vitter leads Melancon in reelection bid

Republican incumbent Sen. David Vitter leads Democratic challenger Rep. Charlie Melancon 48 percent to 36 percent in a trial heat. Polling also shows Vitter is close to the 50.01 percent needed for reelection. Poll results also show that Vitter has benefitted from his opposition to President Obama's stimulus legislation and to health-care reform legislation making its way through Congress.

Landrieu's job performance slips

Sen. Mary Landrieu's job performance ratings have dropped since spring. Polling shows her positive rating at 54 percent compared to 61 percent in March. The trend also is due to President Obama's lower popularity and, in particular, her vote for the president's stimulus package. Polling shows Landrieu's job-performance figures are likely to continue falling if she votes for any Democratic health-care bill.



***Support for President Obama falling in La.***

President Obama's job performance ratings stand at 45 percent compared to 53 percent in the spring. Fifty-four percent of respondents gave the president a negative rating. His stimulus legislation remains unpopular with Louisiana voters as well as proposed legislation for union-card checks, cap-and-trade on carbon emissions and health care reform. Despite their political affiliation, only 34 percent of respondents said they agreed with Democrats. This figure tends to affirm national polling, which shows Louisiana continuing to move to the political right, as other states move to the center or left.

Jindal's approval numbers down slightly, still strong

Gov. Jindal's job performance has a positive rating of 64 percent positive and 33 percent negative. That compares to the spring, when the governor had a 67 percent positive rating and a 30 percent negative rating. The good news for the administration is that voters seem to approve of Jindal's performance on improving the systemic problems that have hurt Louisiana for generations. Voters see progress, for example, on attracting new industry to the state and improving state finances, roads and public education in grades K-12. Voters do not see progress, however, on improving health care for Louisiana residents. Avoiding a backlash will be challenging for the administration next year if cuts are made again to health-care services. Cuts in health-care spending affect more residents than any other area of the state budget.

Attitudes vary on state budget cuts

State government was dominated in 2009 by spending cuts. When asked about the causes behind the cuts, 57 percent of respondents said Louisiana has a spending problem, while 34 percent said the state lacks enough revenue. Half of voters surveyed said the budget cuts were too severe, while 35 percent said the cuts were about right. When elected officials warned that budget cuts would lead to closing health-care facilities and faculty layoffs at universities, more than 67 percent of respondents regarded the cuts as serious and said they were worried about the cuts. When voters most affected by the cuts were asked if they followed news media stories on the subject, 51 said they paid close attention, 41 percent said they paid little attention.

Union sponsored legislation

A little over 80% of respondents believe that workers have the right to choose whether to join a union. Seventy-five percent are opposed to union-sponsored legislation to do away with private union voting.

The 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 bi-annually. For more information and to view the survey, visit www.laplaintalk.com.

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