

SMOR Louisiana Report

December 2014

based on a survey of 600 likely Louisiana voters conducted December 9-11, 2014

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Job Performance

President Barack Obama

President Barack Obama's 81% negative job performance rating among white voters in Louisiana is also the approximate bench mark Democrats have a difficult time overcoming when seeking an elected office statewide. The 18% of white voters who support President Obama is also the same proportion who supported his stimulus package and his health care law. In a statewide election Democrats need about 32% of all white voters to win. This inability by Democrats to reach the 32% threshold accounts for Democrats not holding any statewide elective office.

Governor Bobby Jindal

Governor Bobby Jindal receives a 41% positive job rating and a 58% percent negative job rating from all voters surveyed. Governor Jindal continues to get positive job ratings from Republicans (70%) and a 75% negative from Democrats. Fifty-four percent of all white voters rate his job performance as positive. Governor Jindal's positive job performance is down from 47% he received in the SMOR Spring 2014 survey. The widespread news coverage Louisiana is facing another budget deficit and possible budget reductions are certainly a drag on Jindal's popularity.

Senator David Vitter

Senator David Vitter receives a very high job performance rating from Republican voters. As an announced candidate for governor in 2015, Senator Vitter's ability to capture the majority of Republican voters will determine his success in getting into the runoff. Vitter receives an 80% positive job performance from his Republican base. Vitter's 67% job approval rating from white voters contributes to his strong poll numbers projecting him as the early favorite to succeed as Louisiana's next governor.

Lieutenant Governor Jay Dardenne

Lieutenant Governor Jay Dardenne receives a solid 58% job approval rating from Louisiana voters. Dardenne continues to maintain a relatively low negative job performance from Democrats. This is good news for Jay Dardenne who is also candidate for governor in 2015. Dardenne has to attract Democrats in order to get into a runoff. Counting on a majority of Republicans to vote for you with David Vitter as an opponent is very unlikely occurrence as history has proven.

2015 Louisiana Governor's Race

Main issues

The voters are vocal. Over 90% of the Louisiana voters interviewed expressed an opinion on what they considered to be the main issues the new governor needs to address. Education topped the list (35%) followed by jobs and economic development (26%), health care (15%), and getting a grip on state spending and revenue (10%).

Over one-third of the voters identified education/schools/teachers as an issue needing the new governor's attention. An additional 7% specifically identified Common Core/state testing requirements and another 6% specifically identified higher education.

Education and jobs/economic development ranked first and second respectively in mention by Democrats, Independents and Republicans. Health care was third most frequently mentioned by Democrats and Independents but fifth in mention among Republicans. Republicans mentioned budget reform and Common Core ahead of health care.

Other frequently mentioned needs were: roads and highways, crime and drugs, minimum or living wage, health insurance, and coastal erosion.

Party preference

Picking a new governor is never an easy task, but when asked if they had to pick between the next Governor of Louisiana being a Democrat or being a Republican, more picked Republican (44%) than Democrat (33%); the remaining 23% were either undecided or wouldn't say.

Republican's had the strongest affinity to picking one of their own with 86% of them saying they would pick the Republican candidate. Only 56% of Democrats said they would pick the Democrat candidate. Independents were twice as likely to pick the Republican (45%) as they were a Democrat (20%), and over one-third (35%) of the Independents didn't chose either one.

Only 17% of white voters picked the Democrat candidate while only 9% of the black voters picked the Republican candidate.

The party divide

Those who said they would pick a Democrat to be the next governor were asked: "Why wouldn't you pick a Republican?"; the same question but in the context of Democrat was posed to those who would pick a Republican to be the next governor.

The top reasons given for not picking a Republican for Louisiana's next governor were:

- Lack of empathy (20%):
Republican's don't care about people; they are heartless and close-minded;
- Party loyalty (16%):
I'm a Democrat;

- Governor Jindal's performance (11%):
Because of Jindal;
- Performance perception (11%):
Republicans aren't/haven't done a good job;
- Bias (8%):
Republicans favor the wealthy;
- Fiscal policy (6%):
Republicans cut the budget; and
- Habit/tradition (6%):
Usually or always pick Democrats.

The top reasons given for not picking a Democrat for Louisiana's next governor were:

- Ideological differences (16%):
Don't agree with platform, policies and/or beliefs;
- Performance perception (13%):
Democrats aren't/haven't done a good job;
- Socialist leanings (12%):
Democrats take my money and give it to someone else/give-away programs;
- Political philosophy (8%):
Democrats are liberal and left-wing (9%), and
I'm a conservative and want conservatives in office (7%);
- Fiscal policy (6%):
Democrats deficit spend and tax and spend;
- Party loyalty (6%):
I'm a Republican; and
- President Obama (6%):
Don't like President Obama and/or Obamacare.

The party divide appears to be less about being in agreement on what are the major issues and to be more about how we should go about resolving them.

Candidate preference

The recent U.S. Senate race appears to have been the catalyst to get Louisiana voters thinking about how they will vote in the 2015 race for governor. And, it looks like it's going to be déjà vu all over again.

Democrat John Bel Edwards is the main beneficiary in the sense that Democrat-leaning voters acknowledge him (the sole Democrat in the field tested) as their candidate of choice. Like the 2014 U.S. Senate race, it will likely be enough to propel him into the runoff, but it won't be enough to win; that honor appears to be falling to U.S. Senator David Vitter. With multiple Republican candidates, Vitter probably won't win the race in the primary, but he is currently running a strong first place and garners more vote than the other Republican candidates combined. Over half (61%) of all Republican votes go to Senator Vitter; this is a big advantage in a crowded field. Vitter also leads the other candidates among Independents.

John Bel Edwards gets the bulk (44%) of the Democrats, but Edwards trails Vitter among white Democrats.

The undecided vote is down to 16% (9% among Republicans); which leaves precious little for "catch-up" candidates. It is basically shaping up as Vitter's race to lose.

Balancing the State Budget

Democrats and Republicans alike oppose spending the state savings to balance the state budget. Only 28% of all voters favor spending money from dedicated trust funds to balance the budget. When voters were asked if they favor or oppose a list of possible solutions to balance future budgets their choices point out the dilemma facing our state legislature as it grapples with declining revenue.

Voters do not want further cuts to higher education, yet they do not want to pay additional personal taxes to avoid cuts to state government. Voters are evenly split on across the board cuts to state services to balance the budget, but oppose increasing fees for state services. Voter's barley favored doing away with tax exemptions for specific types of businesses and raising corporate taxes. For the last six years a steady stream of negative news has detailed the loss of state revenue and budget reductions to essential state services. The outlook for 2015 is more of the same - there aren't any easy answers

Medicaid Expansion

A majority of Louisiana voters (53%) favor expansion of Medicaid. Medicaid expansion legislation remains unlikely to be enacted by Republicans who control both houses of the state legislature. The more meaningful political numbers for Republican legislators are the 57% of white voters and the 72% of Republican voters who oppose Medicaid expansion in Louisiana. The inability of Democrats to pass this important legislation for their constituents is a consequence for Democrats becoming literally irrelevant at the state capitol.

David Vitter and Common Core

Senator David Vitter's recent announcement he was now opposed to Common Core was a popular decision with Louisiana voters. Sixty-four percent of Louisiana voters agree with his decision to oppose Common Core and establish equally or more rigorous state standards. As a Republican candidate for governor in 2015, Senator Vitter's decision was popular with 82% of Republican voters. Supporting Common Core certainly had the potential to splinter Vitter's solid Republican base.

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SMOR Louisiana Poll

December 2014

ABOUT THE POLL

This statewide poll was developed and conducted by Southern Media & Opinion Research, Inc., and funded by private subscribers.

Interviews for this statewide poll were completed by telephone with 600 likely Louisiana voters from Tuesday, December 9, through Thursday, December 11, 2014.

The overall margin of error for the statewide statistics obtained from the survey data is not greater than plus or minus 4.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. In other words, there is a 95% certainty that the statistics presented from the results obtained on this survey of 600 likely voters statewide will not be more than 4.0 percentage points above or below the figure that would be obtained if all of the likely voters in the state would have been interviewed.

The sample error may be larger for subgroup responses based on attitudinal, demographic and geographic variables such as area, age, etc. There are other sources of potential error which cannot be calculated including question wording and order of question presentation.

Telephone numbers were selected at random from a sample frame of telephoned, likely Louisiana voter households. Both landline and cellular telephone numbers were included in the sample frame.

Respondents were assigned to one of four geographic areas based on their parish of residence. The four geographic areas along with the parishes comprising those areas are:

New Orleans metropolitan area, (includes Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany and Washington parishes); **Florida-River Parishes**, (includes Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. James, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge and West Feliciana parishes); **Acadiana-southwest**, (includes Acadia, Allen, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne and Vermilion parishes); **North Louisiana**, (includes Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Sabine, Tensas, Union, Vernon, Webster, West Carroll and Winn parishes).

A statistical weighting procedure was employed to normalize the sample to the likely voter population based on voter political party and age category.

The percentages shown in the tables are weighted. Counts within tables are unweighted counts. The count of cases used in computation of subset statistics (using the format $n=xxx$) presented under the relevant crosstabulation tables are unweighted counts of cases used to generate the statistics in those tables.

SMOR Louisiana Poll, December 2014

Frequency Responses—based on a survey of 600 likely Louisiana voters,
conducted December 9 - 11, 2014

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- In your opinion, are conditions in Louisiana getting better, staying about the same or getting worse?

GETTING BETTER 19.1
STAYING ABOUT THE SAME ..38.3
GETTING WORSE 38.8
(DNK/WS) 3.8

- Please tell me if you think the following officials are doing an excellent, good, not so good or poor job?

(Randomize)	EXCELLENT	GOOD	NOT SO GOOD	POOR	(NOT FAMIL /DNK/WS)
• President Barack Obama.....	15.6.....	23.3.....	15.6.....	44.2.....	1.3
• Governor Bobby Jindal.....	10.4.....	30.5.....	20.5.....	37.1.....	1.4
• U.S. Senator David Vitter.....	10.0.....	45.4.....	17.8.....	18.5.....	8.4
• Lieutenant Governor Jay Dardenne.....	8.5.....	49.1.....	12.4.....	6.8.....	23.3
• Secretary of State Tom Schedler.....	3.2.....	40.5.....	11.7.....	4.7.....	39.8
• State Attorney General Buddy Caldwell.....	5.2.....	48.0.....	13.4.....	7.3.....	26.1
• Commissioner of Agriculture Mike Strain.....	8.1.....	46.8.....	6.6.....	4.1.....	34.4
• Commissioner of Insurance Jim Donelon.....	2.9.....	44.8.....	15.9.....	8.5.....	27.9
• State Treasurer John Kennedy.....	10.1.....	54.1.....	10.1.....	5.5.....	20.3

- Governor Bobby Jindal is term-limited and cannot run for Governor in the next election.
What in your opinion are the main issues the new Governor needs to address?

(mentioned by more than 3.0%)

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS/TEACHERS 35.2
ECONOMY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/JOBS/UNEMPLOYMENT 26.2
HEALTH CARE/MENTAL HEALTH 15.3
BUDGET REFORM/SUSTAINABLE REVENUE.....10.1
DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY 9.0
COMMON CORE/STATE REQUIREMENTS/TESTING 6.7
HIGHER EDUCATION 5.8
ROADS/STREETS/HIGHWAYS 4.3
CRIME/DRUGS 4.0
MINIMUM WAGE/LIVING WAGE/HELP WORKING POOR 3.9
HEALTH INSURANCE/MEDICAID/MEDICARE.....3.8
COASTAL EROSION/COASTAL ISSUES/WETLANDS MANAGEMENT.....3.6
OIL & GAS/FRACKING/ENERGY 3.4
IMMIGRATION.....3.0

- If you had to pick between the next Governor of Louisiana being a Democrat or being a Republican, which would you pick?

DEMOCRAT	32.5
REPUBLICAN	44.2
(DNK/WS)	23.3

- Why wouldn't you pick a Republican for Louisiana's next Governor?

(n=183) (mentioned by more than 1.5%)

DON'T CARE ABOUT PEOPLE/HEARTLESS/CLOSED-MINDED	20.1
BECAUSE I'M A DEMOCRAT	15.7
BECAUSE OF JINDAL	11.2
DON'T/AREN'T DOING A GOOD JOB	10.5
THEY FAVOR THE WEALTHY	7.8
FISCAL ISSUES/CUT THE BUDGET	6.3
USUALLY ALWAYS PICK DEMOCRATS	5.7
VOTE FOR BEST CANDIDATE REGARDLESS OF PARTY	5.0
DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY	4.5
DON'T AGREE WITH THEIR BELIEFS/PLATFORM/POLICIES	3.5
THEY ARE NEGATIVE/OBSTRUCTIONISTS	3.2
THEY ARE TOO CONSERVATIVE/INFLEXIBLE	3.1
FAVOR INDUSTRY/BIG BUSINESS	3.0
OUT FOR THEMSELVES	2.5
DON'T LIKE THEM/HATE THEM/DEROGATORY REMARK	2.0
NO FAITH IN THEM/DON'T TRUST THEM	1.6

- Why wouldn't you pick a Democrat for Louisiana's next Governor?

(n=279) (mentioned by more than 1.5%)

DON'T AGREE WITH THEIR BELIEFS/PLATFORM/POLICIES	15.8
DON'T/AREN'T DOING A GOOD JOB	12.8
TAKE MY \$ AND GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE/SOCIALISTS/GIVE-A WAYS	12.4
THEY'RE LIBERAL/LEFT WING/NOT CONSERVATIVE	8.5
I'M CONSERVATIVE/WANT A CONSERVATIVE	6.6
THEY DEFICIT SPEND/NOT FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE/TAX & SPEND	6.3
BECAUSE I'M A REPUBLICAN	6.1
DON'T LIKE OBAMA/ANTI OBAMA/OBAMACARE	5.7
DON'T LIKE THEM/HATE THEM/DEROGATORY REMARK	4.7
NO FAITH IN THEM/DON'T TRUST THEM	4.1
USUALLY ALWAYS PICK REPUBLICANS	3.9
ABORTION/FAMILY VALUES/GAY MARRIAGE/MORAL ISSUES	3.4
VOTE FOR BEST CANDIDATE REGARDLESS OF PARTY	3.3
DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY	3.2
THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT THE COUNTY/RUNNING IT IN THE GROUND	2.7
I THINK A REPUBLICAN WOULD DO A BETTER JOB	2.2
DEMOCRATS WANT BIGGER GOVERNMENT	1.8

- As I mention several people who might be candidates for Governor, please tell me if your impression of that person is very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable:

(Randomize)	<u>VERY FAVOR</u>	<u>SOME FAVOR</u>	<u>SOME UNFAVOR</u>	<u>VERY UNFAVOR</u>	<u>(NOT FAMIL /DNK/WS)</u>
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- | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| • Scott Angelle, a Republican who is currently a member of the Louisiana Public Service Commission | 4.6 | 23.4 | 12.4 | 11.5 | 48.2 |
| • Jay Dardenne, a Republican who is currently the Lieutenant Governor | 18.2 | 39.9 | 14.1 | 10.3 | 17.5 |
| • John Bel Edwards, a Democrat who is currently a state representative | 9.5 | 22.9 | 12.7 | 14.9 | 39.9 |
| • David Vitter, a Republican who is currently a U.S. Senator | 22.8 | 29.4 | 14.9 | 25.5 | 7.4 |

- If the election for Governor were held today between Republican Scott Angelle, Republican Jay Dardenne, Democrat John Bel Edwards and Republican David Vitter, for whom would you vote?

SCOTT ANGELLE	3.1
JAY DARDENNE	18.6
JOHN BEL EDWARDS	25.7
DAVID VITTER	36.3
(UNDEC/DNK/WS)	16.3

- For the last several years, state government has spent more money than it has brought in. Money from dedicated trust funds was used to cover the deficit; basically, the state was using money in its savings accounts to cover the deficit. Do you favor or oppose spending the state's savings to balance the budget?

FAVOR	28.2
OPPOSE	62.6
(DNK/WS)	9.2

- In order to balance future state budgets, would you favor or oppose:

(RANDOMIZE)	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>(DNK/WS)</u>
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- | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|
| • cutting spending on higher education | 17.4 | 79.6 | 2.9 |
| • doing away with tax exemptions that only benefit a specific type of business | 48.5 | 38.1 | 13.5 |
| • increasing personal income taxes | 23.3 | 73.4 | 3.3 |
| • increasing corporate income taxes | 50.4 | 43.7 | 5.9 |
| • making across the board cuts to all state agencies | 46.6 | 46.7 | 6.7 |
| • increasing state fees for state services and facilities | 40.2 | 52.1 | 7.7 |

- The Affordable Care Act provides for an expansion of Medicaid which would help as many as 250,000 people, mainly working adults, in Louisiana to get health insurance coverage. The federal government will cover the full costs the first three years, after that the state cost share would gradually rise to a maximum of 10 percent. Do you favor or oppose the expansion of Medicaid in Louisiana?

FAVOR	52.6
OPPOSE.....	42.3
(DNK/WS)	5.1

- U.S. Senator David Vitter recently announced he is now opposed to the National Common Core Educational Testing Standards. Senator Vitter suggested Louisiana should get out of Common Core and establish an equally or more rigorous Louisiana system of standards and testing. Do you agree or disagree with Senator Vitter's position on Common Core?

AGREE	63.9
DISAGREE.....	28.5
(DNK/WS)	7.6

- Are registered to vote as a Democrat, Republican or some other way?

DEMOCRAT	50.6
REPUBLICAN	32.4
OTHER	17.0

- Regardless of how you are registered to vote, do you more often agree with the actions of Democrats or Republicans?

DEMOCRATS.....	36.4
REPUBLICANS	49.5
(NEITHER).....	8.0
(DNK/WS)	6.1

- What is your age? (Are you under 35, between 35 and 49, between 50 and 64; or 65 or over?)

UNDER 35.....	15.2
35 – 49.....	23.6
50 – 64.....	33.7
65 OR OVER	26.5
(DNK/WS)	1.0

- (Record sex by observation.)

MALE	42.5
FEMALE.....	57.5

- (Record race per voter record.)

WHITE/OTHER	69.7
BLACK	30.3

- Is the approximate annual income for all people in your household under \$40,000, over \$100,000 or somewhere in between?

UNDER \$40,000.....	28.1
SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN.....	40.9
OVER \$100,000.....	23.8
(DNK/WS)	7.2