

7-2019

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008 - 2019: Gridlock Broken?

John Jackson

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, jsjacson@siu.edu

Charles Leonard

c.leonard@mac.com

Shiloh Leah Deitz

shiloh.leah.deitz@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ppi_papers

This is Simon Review Paper #56

Recommended Citation

Jackson, John, Leonard, Charles and Deitz, Shiloh L. "The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008 - 2019: Gridlock Broken?" (Jul 2019).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Simon Review (Occasional Papers of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute) by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

**The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008 - 2019:
Gridlock Broken?**



By: John S. Jackson, Charles W. Leonard and Shiloh L. Deitz

Paper #56 - July 2019

THE SIMON REVIEW

The Simon Review papers are occasional papers of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. These papers examine and explore policy issues within the scope of the Institute's mission and in the tradition of the University.

Production and distribution of this paper is supported by the generosity of donors to the Friends of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute Fund. To learn more about this fund, please visit:
www.paulsimoninstitute.org/support

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute acts on significant and controversial issues impacting the region, the state, the nation, and the world. The Institute is committed to developing and working to implement approaches that could bring concrete, positive results in tackling some of the most difficult challenges in the public policy arena. The Institute focuses its efforts on fostering ethical conduct in government, opportunity and fair treatment for people in America and throughout the world, and promoting responsible citizenship for all Americans--but particularly for young Americans.

The Institute executes its mission by conducting nationally known public opinion polls (Simon Poll™ and The Southern Illinois Poll™) to inform decision makers and citizens, and analyzing public policy in this paper and other media. The Institute also provides and supervises paid internships and other learning opportunities for university students, hosts lectures and conferences with noted leaders in public policy, journalism and other fields, and provides leadership and civic education programs for high school students.

More information about the Institute can be found at www.paulsimoninstitute.org.

Feedback on this paper is welcome at our Facebook page at
www.facebook.com/paulsimoninstitute or by mail at our address below.

Please remember to 'like' us on Facebook.

This and other *The Simon Review* papers are also available online at www.thesimonreview.org or
www.paulsimoninstitute.org/thesimonreview.

Paul Simon Public Policy Institute
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Mail Code 4429
1231 Lincoln Drive
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

The Simon Review

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

By: John S. Jackson, Charles W. Leonard and Shiloh L. Deitz

July 2019

Paper # 56

A Publication of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute

Authors' note: Thanks to Benson Jones, Kenzie Krei and Bradley Marks for helping prepare the tables and to John Shaw for his review.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	4
List of Tables	5
1 Introduction.....	6
2 The Historical Context.....	7
3 The Illinois Experience: An Illustration of Party Trends in the U.S.....	10
4 Bruce Rauner: the Amateur Chief Executive and the Problems of Governing.....	12
5 The Data Analysis.....	17
5.1 Direction of the Nation, State, and Local Area.....	17
5.2 Ideological Self Identification and Party Identification	28
5.2.1 Ideology	28
5.2.2 Party Identification.....	30
5.3 Strategies for Handling the Budget Deficit.....	34
5.3.1 Potential Program Cuts	42
5.3.2 Other Revenue Alternatives	49
6 Governor J. B. Pritzker and the 101 st General Assembly.....	66
7 Conclusion	69
Appendix A: Data Notes.....	72
References.....	73

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. Direction of the United States
- Figure 2. Direction of Illinois
- Figure 3. Direction of the Local Area
- Figure 4. Ideology
- Figure 5. Party Identification
- Figure 6. Budget Cuts, Revenues, or Both
- Figure 7. Budget Deficit by Political Party
- Figure 8. Favor Proposed Cuts
- Figure 9. Favor Proposed Revenue Sources
- Figure 10. Expand Gambling by Political Party
- Figure 11. Graduated Income Tax by Political Party
- Figure 12. Millionaire's Tax by Political Party
- Figure 13. Raise Gas Tax by Political Party

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1. Direction of the United States
- Table 2. Direction of the United States by Political Party
- Table 3. Direction of Illinois
- Table 4. Direction of Illinois by Political Party
- Table 5. Direction of the Local Area
- Table 6. Direction of the Local Area by Political Party
- Table 7. Ideology
- Table 8. Party Identification
- Table 9. Budget Cuts, Revenues, or Both
- Table 10. Budget Deficit by Political Party
- Table 11. Favor Proposed Cuts
- Table 12. Cuts to Pension Benefits for State Workers' Retirement by Political Party
- Table 13. Cuts to Natural Resources by Political Party
- Table 14. Cuts to State Universities by Political Party
- Table 15. Cuts to Public Safety by Political Party
- Table 16. Cuts to Programs for Poor People by Political Party
- Table 17. Cuts to K-12 Education by Political Party
- Table 18. Cuts to Programs for People with Mental or Physical Disabilities by Political Party
- Table 19. Favor Proposed Revenue Sources
- Table 20. Expand Gambling by Political Party
- Table 21. Raise Sales Tax by Political Party
- Table 22. Tax Services by Political Party
- Table 23. Tax Retirement Income by Political Party
- Table 24. Tax Retirement Income over \$50k or \$100k by Political Party
- Table 25. Graduated Income Tax by Political Party
- Table 26. Millionaire's Tax by Political Party
- Table 27. Raise Gas Tax by Political Party

1 INTRODUCTION

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale conducts periodic statewide polls on a wide variety of important governmental, political, and public policy issues relevant to state and federal government agendas. These polls provide a detailed description and analysis of the issues that inform the public dialog from an academic and non-partisan perspective. The polls have come to be widely quoted and deeply trusted by public officials, opinion leaders, the media and the general public over the twelve years they have been in existence, and they have made valuable contributions to basic research being conducted by both faculty and students at SIU and other institutions.

Each poll is somewhat different in the specific issues and personalities covered, since the polls are geared toward current public opinion on relevant issues, and space is included on each poll for questions that support the specific academic objectives of faculty and student researchers. Every poll also includes a core group of repeated questions that reflect the constant and ongoing concerns of the people of Illinois and the research agenda of the Institute. This core group of questions provides an invaluable and unprecedented set of results -- a series of snapshots of public opinion in Illinois over time. These longitudinal data points combine to give us a reliable time series tracing both continuity and change in public opinion in Illinois.

The current paper reports on the results of fifteen statewide polls conducted between 2008 and 2019¹. Most of the polls sampled 1,000 respondents across Illinois; a sample that size has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent. A few of the earlier polls had smaller samples with larger margins of error (see Appendix A). To our knowledge, our archive is unmatched in Illinois in terms of both their depth and the provision of a time series although there several similar and well regarded statewide polls located in universities in other states (Parry, Kisida, and Langley, 2008).

The current report is an extension of the longitudinal data report we provided in an earlier *Simon Review* based on the 2008 through 2016 polls (Jackson, Leonard, and Deitz, 2016). In major respects the current report is a revision and update to that original paper, continuing and revising our analysis of the political narrative and history in Illinois. That paper was subtitled: *The Roots of Gridlock*. The 2016 paper reflected the deep polarization and gridlock that had made Illinois a dysfunctional state at that point in its history. The current report extends the analysis by an additional three years, and posits a new and possibly more hopeful direction with the subtitle *Gridlock Broken?* We tentatively offer this conclusion as we trace the opportunities and peril facing Illinois at this crucial time in the state's long, colorful, and sometimes checkered two hundred year history.

¹ Most of the polls have been conducted in the spring; if there is a second poll, it was done in the fall.

2 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

When we started *The Simon Poll* in the spring of 2008, Rod Blagojevich was governor, having been elected to his second term over Judy Barr Topinka in 2006 by a margin of 50 percent to 39 percent. Blagojevich did not know it then, but his term was about to be foreshortened abruptly on December 9, 2008 when he was arrested by federal agents in the early hours of the morning at his home in Chicago and charged with a series of federal crimes. His fellow Democrats in the General Assembly led the charge, and he was swiftly removed from office the next month (Sierachi, 2009).

Pat Quinn, a veteran of many previous elections and holder of a variety of lower public offices, was Blagojevich's Lieutenant Governor. As the Illinois Constitution provided, Quinn was promoted to the governor's office, a position he had long wanted, but which many observers would not have expected him to obtain. Quinn had always fashioned himself to be the consummate outsider, riding the populist wave for one cause or another. Yet, due to unforeseen events, he became governor and took charge of the executive branch. At the beginning of his term, he received credit for providing welcome stability in the wake of the dislocations and threatened chaos created by the haphazard way Blagojevich had tried to govern, exacerbated by the impeachment and removal of a sitting governor.

Quinn accomplished several important things in 2009 and 2010 with the cooperation and assistance of most of his fellow Democrats in the General Assembly -- many of whom he had often feuded with and criticized in the past. In particular, the Democrats coalesced and even gained some Republican support on a large \$31 billion capital (or infrastructure) bill dubbed "Illinois Jobs Now," enacted in 2009. It was funded by revenue from a new video gambling tax plus online lottery profits, additional sales taxes on candy and alcohol, and an increase to vehicle licenses fees. This was the first capital bill that Illinois had passed since George Ryan's \$12 billion "Illinois FIRST" plan, approved in 1999 (Pearson and Petrella, April 28, 2019).

Legislators and governors alike often favor capital bills because the new construction or repair money allows them to attend ribbon-cuttings on big and important projects -- exciting work that is widely supported in communities across the state. While new capital plans are usually popular at the grassroots and in the General Assembly, they always face the problem of finding a funding mechanism that will support a dedicated revenue stream. While no legislator will miss a ceremonial ribbon-cutting for a new highway or building project, ordinarily very few seem to want to show up and vote for a tax increase.

Thus, the question of where new revenue is to be found is always on the table for new capital bills or for dealing with the state's perennial general fund and pension system needs. This problem is especially compelling in Illinois since the state consistently has run a structural deficit in its budget. A "structural deficit" simply means that the state's rate of spending on public goods and services grows faster than its revenue growth.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

This problem has been persistent and evident in Illinois at least since the start of the Blagojevich Administration, although this structural deficit had roots back to the administrations of his three Republican predecessors, James Thompson, Jim Edgar and George Ryan. Two of the state's leading experts on Illinois budgeting, James D. Nowlan and J. Thomas Johnson, in their book, Fixing Illinois published in 2014 summarized the accumulated impact of the perennial structural deficit: "... between 2002 and 2011... State of Illinois net assets declined from -\$5.7 billion to -\$42.5 billion, or about \$4 billion per year, primarily because of spending and obligating more than the state was receiving in revenues. And during this period, the state also either borrowed to make annual pension payments or failed to make adequate payments" (Nowlan and Johnson, 2014, 25). The primary growth in the state budget and drivers of the annual deficit has come from increases in the state's spending on Medicaid, pensions and corrections (Nowlan, 2019, 6-7).

Upon Pat Quinn's election in his own right to the governor's chair in November of 2010, he decided to make a frontal attack on the Illinois deficit. Quinn and his fellow Democrats pushed through an increase in the income tax in early January of 2011, only a few days before the new General Assembly took office. The new tax took effect on January 1, 2011 (Long, October 16, 2014, 26-27). The bill increased the individual income tax from 3.0 to 5.0 percent and the corporate income tax from 4.8 to 7.0 percent.

The bill passed without a single Republican vote in the House or Senate, and the opposition party immediately decried it as "the largest tax increase in Illinois history" although that charge could be debated in view of the fact that Richard Ogilvie, a Republican, in 1969 had introduced and passed the original Illinois income tax plan, with a major boost from then Chicago Mayor, Richard J. Daley, and with both Republican and Democratic votes. The historic Ogilvie plan totally revamped the entire revenue system in Illinois and has been the foundation for the Illinois revenue system for the past fifty years. It originally provided a flat individual tax rate of 2.5 percent and a corporate rate of 4.0 percent.

The 2011 income tax increase was a major issue for two reasons. First, Republicans almost always oppose tax increases and this one was no different. Second, it provided approximately five billion dollars of new tax revenue, which immediately started to fill the state's coffers early in 2011. What to do with the new revenue became a major issue in Illinois politics in subsequent years.

From the beginning of 2011 until January 1 of 2015, the Illinois budget benefitted significantly from the new income tax revenue. At five billion dollars a year the tax increase added a constant source of new revenue that allowed the General Assembly and the governor to claim that the budget was "balanced," although that claim was a stretch that relied on some creative accounting. Nevertheless, it became clear to close observers of the budget that some of the backlog of accumulated bills was being paid down, and state bills were being paid much closer to on time than at any point in the recent past. This timelier payment saved interest penalties on late payments, which were fixed by law at 12 percent on most bills.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

The tax increases, and what the Democrats had or had not accomplished, was one of the central issues of the statewide elections of November 2014. The Republicans ran on the charge that Quinn was an incompetent manager of the government and that his tax increase had been entirely squandered on new programs and waste rather than genuinely balancing the budget or paying down the accumulated stack of bills. Pensions, and the constant deficit in that account, continued to be a major problem because of the long-term accumulated debt which, by then, came to well over \$100 billion. It is important to note, however, that during the period 2011 through 2015, the state had at least met its annual obligations to fund the pension system, and took no more “pension holidays,” although the accumulated debt had not been addressed. This progress was possible entirely because of the new revenue from the 2011 tax increase (Long, 2011 and 2016).

All this progress on addressing the structural deficit came to an abrupt halt on January 1, 2015, as a result of the November elections, when Bruce Rauner beat Quinn by a narrow margin of 31,000 votes (Jackson, January 2015). After Rauner beat Quinn, the Democrats in the General Assembly were in no mood to support the continuation of the temporary income tax increase. It expired on the first day of January 2015. The decision to make the income tax increase of 2011 a “temporary” one that expired on New Year’s Day of 2015 was one of the most consequential budget decisions made since Illinois shifted to the income tax originally (Stone, 2014). When the temporary tax increase expired, the rates contracted to 3.75 percent for individuals and 5.25 percent for corporations, jolting the Illinois budget (Long, October 16, 2014, 26-27; Rushton, 2014). The aphorism that “elections have consequences” certainly held true for the general election in Illinois in 2014.

Bruce Rauner, a newcomer to the political wars, effectively led the charge against Pat Quinn. He was a successful businessman who had amassed a fortune, variously estimated to range up to approximately half a billion dollars, and had never sought public office before (although he had been peripherally involved in Illinois and Chicago politics, mostly as a philanthropist and source of campaign funds for other candidates). It is plausible to believe that Rauner’s success in the business world, and especially the personal fortune he had amassed, gave him particular credibility when he talked about revenue and the budget, and his personal financial assets certainly gave him a boost in getting his name recognized and his message delivered across the state, even though he was unknown outside Chicago at the beginning of the campaign (Yaccion, 2014; Korecki, 2014).

Rauner used his personal fortune both to fund his own campaign and to help other Republicans running for the General Assembly and lower offices. He became the epitome of the new breed of business leaders who turn to politics in middle age as a new and challenging outlet for their considerable ambition and ego. There are now twelve mega-millionaire governors across the United States and various other extraordinarily rich men and women who became Senators or Congressmen after making or inheriting their fortunes. The most extraordinary and unprecedented example of such of billionaire businessman and celebrity starting at the top without any prior governmental or political experience is, of course, Donald J. Trump, the 45th president of the United States. Rauner was a forerunner of Trump by two years.

At the time, however, there had been several other previous candidates who were quite wealthy and turned to politics seeking either the Illinois governor's office or a seat in the United States Senate, but none of the previous mega millionaires won. For example, there was Blair Hull, Jack Ryan, and Al Hofeld, all of whom got beat either in the primary or the general election or dropped out because of personal scandals not previously uncovered because they had not been vetted in the fire of a high level campaign. The lack of success for rich newcomers was probably related Illinois' status as a competitive strong-party state, according to political scientists who study these patterns comparatively (Ranney, 1965). In the next section we explore how and why these fundamental changes have taken place in the political parties' basic recruitment patterns and how these have impacted the parties and the ability of the winners to govern.

3 THE ILLINOIS EXPERIENCE: AN ILLUSTRATION OF PARTY TRENDS IN THE U.S.

Outsider candidates are usually anathema to the traditional party organizations, which generally do not welcome newcomers from the outside who want to start at the top. However, the modern demands for money and/or celebrity have changed the parameters of American politics, and Illinois is no exception to those trends—despite the desires of the traditional party organizations. Parties have increasingly lost control of who will wear the party's identity, enjoy the party's imprimatur, and get the privilege of using the party's label on the general election ballot.

The established party infrastructure may influence the outcomes of primaries and general elections at the margins these days, but they certainly do not control them anywhere near the extent they did in the days of Richard J. Daley, the last of the old-time party bosses and most important Democrat in Illinois.

The demise of the Daley machine was illustrated by Lori Lightfoot's defeat of Toni Preckwinkle in the election for Mayor of the City of Chicago on April 2, 2019. Preckwinkle was not only the Chair of the Cook County Board, but she was also Chair of the Cook County Democratic Party (a position Richard J. Daley once held and which fed his political power base). This election was just the latest evidence that the highly organized and effective party organizations of the past are now but a pale shadow of their former glory in the city that epitomized the last successful strong-party "machine" in the nation (Pearson, April 7, 2019, A-1).

What we have now achieved in the United States is a peculiarly American version of what, in classic political science literature, is termed "The Responsible Parties" model. This model of the party was originally articulated most notably by E. E. Schattschneider and his associates in a report to the American Political Science Association in 1950 (APSA Committee Report; also: Schattschneider, 1942, 1960). The model advanced in that report was based on the European parties in Parliamentary democracies, which led to Party Governments in those nations

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

(Pomper, 2001; Rhode and Aldrich, 2010). Those European party types meet the following requirements:

1. The parties must stand for philosophies, policies and issues that are clearly articulated.
2. Candidates are recruited for public office who meet or agree with those requirements.
3. They then run on a party platform which clearly articulates those party platforms for which the party stands.
4. When elected, the partisans then seek to implement the programs and policies on which they ran.
5. The office holders are then evaluated in the next election and judged by whether their policies were carried out and how the programs and policies worked out.

From the founding of the republic, the major outline of the dominant two-party system has evolved over the last two hundred and thirty years to the extremely polarized party system we know today. Along the way the original party systems broke up, new coalitions were formed, and new names emerged. The Federalists became the core of the new Whigs, and the Democratic-Republican Party became the Democrats with the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828. Then the Whigs broke up and disappeared because of their inability to handle the looming conflicts that led to the Civil War. In 1854 in a meeting in Ripon, Wisconsin, a new party—the Republicans—was formed. In 1860, just six years later the Republicans elected their first president, Abraham Lincoln, who had previously been a Whig. Since then, these two major parties have dominated American politics, although major third-party challengers have come and gone in subsequent electoral battles.

While the two major parties, and their labels, have remained the same since the 1860s, new and different coalitions have formed and broken up, as new pressures created new alignments. The two parties also have effectively changed positions on the critical question of the power of the states as opposed to the power of the national government. They also have both been transformed in terms of the kinds of political parties we have in this country. Those changes also reflect the deeply polarized parties that have developed at both the leadership and voter levels we have in America today. That shift marks the change from the dominant Pragmatic Party of the first 150 years of our history to a new and uniquely American form of the party which constitutes a particularly American version of the classic “Responsible Party Model” adopted from the European models and adapted to the requirements of a presidential and separation of powers system (Jackson, 2015). This Responsible Party Model also produces what Rhode and Aldrich term the “Conditional Party Government,” which we have in both the federal government and in many state governments like Illinois today (Rhode and Aldrich, 2010).

4 BRUCE RAUNER: THE AMATEUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE PROBLEMS OF GOVERNING

In section two we examined the Blagojevich and Quinn eras in Illinois, two governors who came up through the more traditional routes to obtain the top office in the state. The governors before them were Republicans George Ryan, Jim Edgar and Jim Thompson, who also became governor through the usual professional party recruitment routes. That era came to an end with the nomination and election of Bruce Rauner. In November of 2014 Rauner represented and led the trend toward rich amateurs who refused to play by the ordinary recruitment and party rules and instead used their vast personal fortunes to start at the top. He achieved his statewide victory with his proud “outsider” mantle, compared to Pat Quinn, who had been in politics almost all his adult life. It was a closely contested race down to the end, but Rauner prevailed by a very narrow margin when the ballots were all counted (Jackson, January 2015).

In January of 2015 Bruce Rauner became the first Republican to be inaugurated since George Ryan in 1998. One of the major reasons for Rauner’s victory over Quinn was the 2011 income tax increase. As we noted earlier, Quinn stoutly maintained that it was a vital necessity to tackle the structural deficit. Rauner and the Republicans maintained that the money had been squandered and that no progress had been made on cleaning up Illinois’ chronic budget deficit. The voters endorsed the Rauner view by a narrow margin. This narrow margin, and Rauner’s lack of coattails that left the General Assembly firmly under the control of the Democrats, were important conditions of his ultimate inability to govern.

Rauner quickly established himself as a hard-driving CEO who had a grand plan and a burning ambition to control Illinois government and reform it or remake it across a number of dimensions. He called his plan “the Illinois Turnaround Agenda.” The platform consisted of a wide variety of changes and reforms, some of which had long been debated by “good government” advocates, and some of which would be typical of any Republican with the traditional commitments to lower taxes and smaller government (Leonard, 2017).

For the “good government” people, Rauner’s plan offered redistricting reforms, term limits for legislators, term limits for legislative leaders, a reduction in corruption, and open primaries. For the traditional Republicans, Rauner promised smaller government that would also be much more friendly to business, reform of the state’s worker’s compensation rules, and curbs on the power of labor unions. He attempted to accomplish those objectives by giving local governmental bodies the legal authority to avoid the state’s prevailing wage requirements, making right-to-work a local option, and fiercely opposing the unions’ rights to the “fair shares” requirements for paying union dues. In June of 2018 the Republicans won the “fair share” argument in the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Janus* decision, an Illinois case whose attorneys Rauner supported financially. All in all it was a platform that could and did attract support from a wide variety of Republican factions and conservative groups. It likewise stimulated spirited and even implacable opposition from groups on the other side, especially organized labor and the leadership of the Democratic Party in Illinois.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

As soon as it was introduced, the Turnaround Agenda hit a wall of resistance from the Democrats and sometimes only begrudging support from Rauner's Republican colleagues in the General Assembly. It also mobilized the labor unions, some of which had sat out the 2014 governor's race because of their unhappiness with Pat Quinn, or at best offered him only tepid support. The existential threat to the unions posed by the Rauner agenda was very similar to the larger political and policy agenda that had been advocated and funded by the conservative billionaire Koch Brothers for much of the previous decade (Mayer, 2016). The Kochs' national agenda found much success in a series of states in the south and in the midwest, such as Kansas and Wisconsin (Cramer, 2016). In fact, Rauner publicly endorsed the accomplishments of Governor Scott Walker in Wisconsin and held him up as a role model. In 2015, with Rauner's election, the movement was extended to Illinois, and the question was whether this model for state government could be successful in a big, industrial state like Illinois, which had been a union stronghold.

After his election Rauner constantly campaigned across the state on the merits of the plan, and had his allies in the legislature introduce a series of bills that would have implemented his agenda. The unyielding resistance of the Democrats, who controlled the majority in the General Assembly, and Rauner's inability to build coalitions, even within his own party, ensured that the plan's major components would remain unrealized by the time the race for his second term came around in 2018.

Prominent among the announced objectives of Rauner's plan was a balanced budget, although he never achieved one. His critics maintained that he never even introduced a truly balanced budget during his four years in office.

Rather, the budget wars between the Republican governor and the Democratic General Assembly led to a protracted gridlock. This lack of ability to compromise produced a political disagreement so deep and so profound the state was literally unable to perform one of its most fundamental functions: to adopt an annual budget and appropriate money for state agencies in support of basic services, as provided for in the state Constitution, which clearly expects and requires them to do so annually. That meant that for two consecutive fiscal years, FY2016 and FY2017, the state did not have an official budget and a great deal of money was spent that was not appropriated by the General Assembly. Instead, money was spent based on the requirements of receiving matching funds from the federal government, various court orders, and a series of "stopgap" temporary budget measures adopted to fill the most compelling current needs. This led to approximately 90 percent of the budget being doled out, piecemeal, with no overall plan.

All state agencies suffered dislocations, some of which were severe, especially with regards to personnel, which always consume about three-quarters of a public budget, and in terms of services, especially for the neediest elements of society. Illinois' personnel base shrank from approximately 70,000 to 49,000, a thirty percent reduction, during Pat Quinn's and Bruce Rauner's eras (Nowlan, 2019, 5).

The state's human services, and the non-profit agencies that get the major share of their budget from the state, suffered the most. K-12 education had to deal with severe dislocations

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

and uncertainty as well; however, the governor and General Assembly held them essentially harmless by agreeing to provide their base budgets on the FY2015 precedent level.

Higher education was the other major component of the state's budget that suffered most during the stalemate. This meant that the state's twelve public universities and 48 community colleges did not receive a regular appropriation from the state for two consecutive years. They did receive, usually belatedly and about halfway through the fiscal year, a "stopgap budget" that was designed to carry them through their immediate crisis. However those stopgap budgets were less than half of the original base budgets each year. When the two year drought finally ended at the start of Fiscal year 2018, higher education in Illinois had lost almost sixty percent of its base budget over those two years. These were reductions so deep that no large complex organization could sustain them without major and long-lasting damage, and it will take many years for Illinois higher education to recuperate (Stenhouse, September 6, 2017; Esch, June 17, 2018, 1).

One of the reasons the damage to Illinois higher education was so extensive was the failure of the governor and the General Assembly to fund the Illinois Monetary Awards Program, or MAP grants. MAP grants are the primary source of state support directed to students to help low and moderate-income students afford to pay tuition. This constituted a drastic loss to the universities and community colleges alike, since it is one of the major revenue streams for the income fund which is essentially the general revenue item in higher education budgets.

Most of the major universities and many of the community colleges decided to fund the MAP grants from internal fund sources for the first fiscal year. The money had been promised by the state to the students and their parents, and it would have been a breach of faith to do otherwise. However, by the second year, some of the institutions could no longer sustain that level of budgetary loss and could not fund the MAP grants, while others went deeper into debt for a second year. In a state that was already losing almost 50 percent of its high school graduates, who chose other states for their college homes, this was a self-inflicted wound that would be difficult to overcome. This story is told in more detail in our earlier paper: *The Roots of Gridlock* (Jackson, Leonard, and Deitz, 2016).

Finally, the budgetary crisis came to an end in July of 2017, when the legislature was able to override Governor Rauner's earlier veto and pass a budget for FY2018. That budget contained a permanent increase of the state income tax to 4.95 percent and the corporate income tax to 7.0 percent. Overall this increase was expected to yield approximately \$5 billion a year, comparable to what the original temporary increase had produced.

A total of ten Republicans in the House and one in the Senate voted with the Democrats to override the governor's veto, and for the first time in over two years, the state had a budget passed by the state legislature, although not signed by the governor (Bosman and Davey, July 2017).

The budget wars, not surprisingly, became one of the major issues in the fall 2018 statewide races. The Republicans, led by Governor Rauner, ran on a platform that advocated for a tax reduction, although reduced to what level was never entirely clear. The Democrats, led by another wealthy businessman, J. B. Pritzker, advocated for the current base budget with marginal

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

adjustments for the next two years. Pritzker's signature issue became his spirited advocacy for a graduated or progressive income tax system, which would radically shift the flat rate system in effect since the 1970 Constitution was adopted. If Pritzker were to succeed in transforming the income tax system from a flat tax to a progressive tax, it would constitute the most significant change in the Illinois tax system since Richard Ogilvie transformed the system to one based on the income tax in 1969.

Pritzker also advocated for, or at least considered, some new tax sources including the legalization of recreational marijuana, the expansion of gambling, a new tax on sports betting (and later a new tax on plastic bags) as a way to close the \$3.4 billion hole in the FY2020 budget. Those proposals, too, became the fodder for the campaign commercials and the political dialogue of the fall 2018 campaigns.

Pritzker for his part claimed that Rauner had failed to govern competently and he pointed to the budgetary impasse and the gridlock of Rauner's last two years as Exhibit A in his case against the governor. Most Democrats running for the General Assembly either joined Pritzker in his advocacy for a new tax system or tried to stay quiet and see what the outcome of the governor's race might bring. Most Republican candidates joined Rauner's narrative with the promise of lower taxes and smaller government as the cure for the state's ills. All of this is told in greater detail in an earlier paper we published (Jackson, January, 2019).

In the end the Democrats scored a decisive victory. Pritzker beat Rauner by 713,995 total popular votes, or by a 54.5 to 38.8 percent margin (Illinois State Board of Elections. <https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionResults>). The Democrats increased their advantage in both the House and the Senate and enjoyed supermajority status in both bodies. Pritzker's victory set off a statewide dialogue about the income tax system and the state's fundamental needs. The fight focused on Pritzker's signature plan for a progressive income tax.

Soon after the election ended and he was sworn in, Governor Pritzker unveiled the brackets he advocated. This was a necessary next step in the legislative process and basic agenda setting since he had received withering criticism from the Republicans and from much of the media for not unveiling his bracket recommendations before the election. Pritzker's response during the campaign was that these details had to be negotiated and worked out with the General Assembly in the particulars of legislation that would be introduced after he was elected.

Pritzker advocated a plan which, he claimed, would actually save 97 percent of Illinois taxpayers on their income tax bill. Critics quickly pointed out that the savings would be relatively small for most middle-class taxpayers. Pritzker also proposed that the top 1 percent, i.e. those making more than \$1 million per year, would pay for most of the increase with a 3 percent addition to their taxes (from 4.95 to 7.95 percent) and he signaled that those making \$250,000 per year and above would also pay more (in a range from 4.95 to 7.95 percent).

Pritzker's plan to shift from a flat tax to a progressive income tax would represent the most important change since Richard Ogilvie introduced the state flat-rate income tax system in 1969. This proposal be a watershed moment in Illinois history, if it could be enacted into law with an amendment to the state Constitution.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

The Republicans and other conservative critics charged that this was simply a way for the camel to get its nose under the tent, and predicted a significant middle class tax increase at the first opportunity that Pritzker and his allies saw for obtaining new revenue. The defenders of the Pritzker plan pointed out that the income tax levels can be decreased or increased now under the flat tax system if the legislature and the governor agree on new rates and that it would be no easier to increase taxes under the new system than it is now. As the clock ticked down toward the May 31, 2019 deadline for the budget to be adopted the state's political dialogue and conflict heated up as both Pritzker's plan for the graduated income tax increase and the need for new revenue in excess of three billion dollars was immediate and also highly contentious.

The research questions that follow in the empirical section of this report cover the voters' assessment of the leaders and political battles of Illinois since 2008, the midway point of Blagojevich's second term. While Blagojevich and two other governors have come and gone since then, most of the problems, especially those associated with the budget and the state pension systems, remain the same. Our polls have reflected those conflicts and have offered a constant assessment of where the voting public stands on these crucial issues that have dominated the political agenda from 2008 through the spring of 2019. This current paper summarizes and extends that narrative.

5 THE DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 DIRECTION OF THE NATION, STATE, AND LOCAL AREA

We have always started the surveys with generic questions regarding the direction of the nation, the state, and local areas of government. These questions provide an overall picture of the voters' assessments of how the governments at those three levels are performing and the quality of life in general. It is also a measure of whether the voters are generally happy with their own outlook or pessimistic regarding their prospects for the future. They are often regarded as something of a surrogate for respondents' views of the current president or the governor and how they are doing in office. This overall view gives us an ability to do comparisons among the three levels of government on how well the parties and their leaders are performing and governing.

Table 1. Direction of the United States

%.	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Right direction	6	42	30	19	42	42	30	32	33	29	33	31	27	31	30
Wrong direction	90	50	60	71	50	49	60	57	53	63	59	60	64	59	61
Other/DK	4	7	10	9	9	10	10	10	13	8	9	9	9	10	9

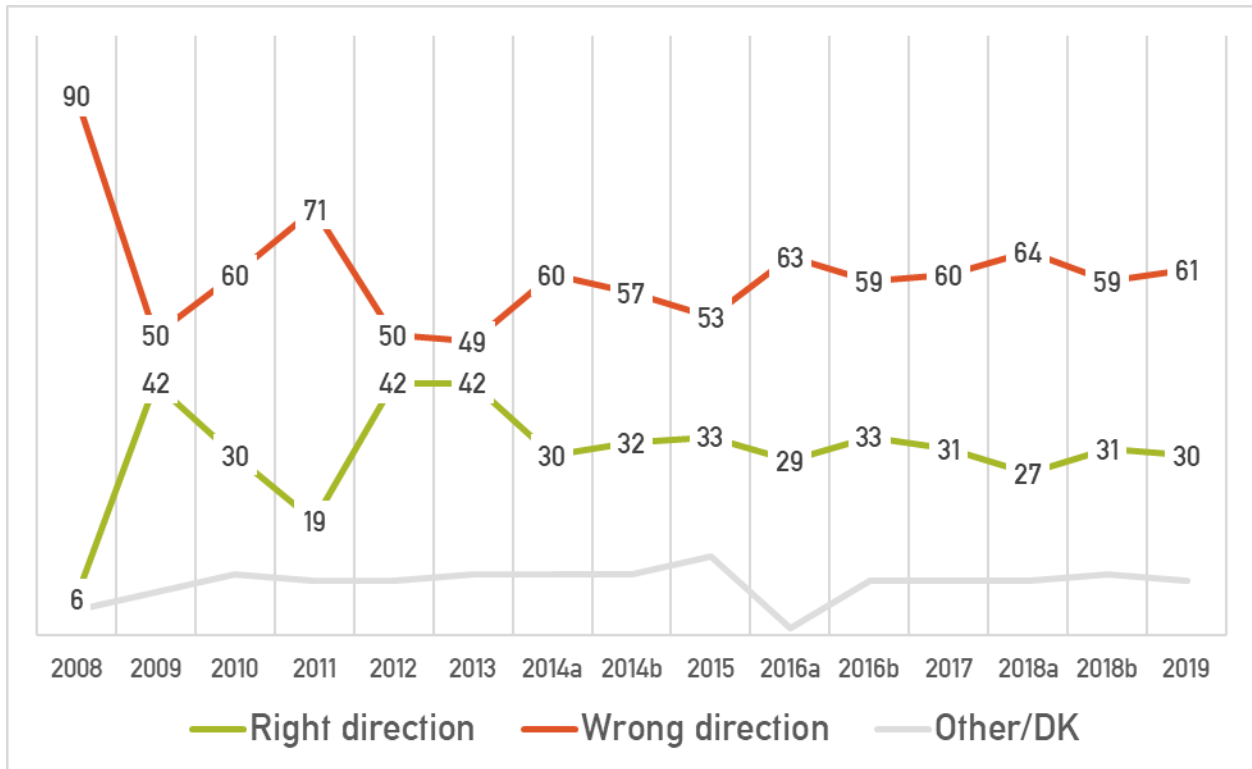


Figure 1. Direction of the United States

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

The first thing that stands out in Table 1 and Figure 1 is how negative the evaluations are across the entire time period. There is not a single year when the “right direction” was chosen by more voters than the “wrong direction” option. In most years the differences were marked, most recently on the order of two negative evaluations for every one positive. This negative evaluation by the voters of Illinois is not much different from views held by the rest of the nation in national polls. This negativity generally prevails regardless of who is president or which party is in power. Americans used to be known for their optimistic outlook, but in recent years this has not been the prevailing perspective. Illinois voters have not been any different in the twelve years the Simon Poll has been in the field.

The fact that the most extreme variation and widest shift in outlook occurred between 2008 and 2009 is notable. That shift should be placed in the context of what was happening in the nation at the time. In the spring of 2008, when the Simon Poll began, George W. Bush’s second term was drawing to a close. The Republicans had lost control of the Congress in the mid-term elections in the fall of 2006, and their loss was widely attributed to the American public’s general unhappiness with the war in Iraq, and the widespread disenchantment with the Bush Administration. The dark clouds of economic uncertainty were gathering, although it was September of that year when the financial crisis broke open clearly and the national and world economies teetered on the brink of disaster. Many banks and businesses collapsed, and millions lost their jobs. The unemployment rate ballooned to well above ten percent in a matter of months. Not surprisingly, then, Illinois voters shared the national sense of things not going in the right direction by a nine to one margin, which is the high-water mark for negative evaluations.

By the time we took our next poll in the spring of 2009, the nation had elected Barack Obama as president. At the end of his term, George W. Bush and his Treasury Secretary, Hank Paulson, frantically working with Ben Bernanke at the Federal Reserve, and with a bi-partisan coalition of Republicans and Democrats alike in Congress, had taken the first steps necessary to bail out the banks and put the economy on a path to recovery. They were aided in this plan by the Democrats as Barack Obama assembled the necessary coalition in congress, first as a candidate and then as president-elect. From November to January the transition from Bush to Obama took place smoothly, with professionalism and cooperation on both sides, as the Bush Administration gave way to the early days of the first Obama Administration.

In the spring of 2009 this transition provided the backdrop for the poll on right direction-wrong direction. Voters in Illinois were much more positive about the early days of Obama’s presidency. This carried over from the Democrats to Independents and even some Republicans as they showed hope and some confidence in a more positive direction for the nation: 42 percent right direction vs. 50 percent wrong direction, the most positive ratio attained in our polls. Later in 2009 the Tea Party movement was born out of a tirade by an MSNBC economics reporter from the floor of the Board of Trade in Chicago. His rant was against the “elites” of the Federal Reserve, the Congress, and the White House for their steps in bailing out the big banks, which had caused or materially abetted the subprime loan disaster. Bad subprime loans then infected

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

more legitimate loans, especially housing loans, and caused savings and loan companies and big banks to fail or be merged.

A narrative was born then and there, and a populist theme was adopted that said the economic and political elites of both parties had conspired to bail out the banks and the financial institutions, which had caused the economic meltdown in the first place. They then sent the bill to the average taxpayers. This narrative is an integral part of the “politics of resentment,” which has tended to dominate American politics since then (Cramer, 2016). The force of this narrative helped to power the Republican take-overs of the Congress in the mid-term elections in 2010 and 2014, and it ultimately proved to be the key explanation for the campaign that propelled Donald Trump to the White House in 2016. This narrative is also being captured in the “right track/wrong track” polling responses.

The polarization that had already marked American politics since the 1990s increased exponentially as every facet of American politics was marked by sharp partisanship, and the inability to compromise further fueled public disenchantment. Such alienation always makes it hard, and at times impossible, to govern in a separation of powers presidential system. If the two parties are so polarized at the top that those in office cannot compromise, and the partisans at the base on both sides consider the other party to be not just the loyal opposition but people who are downright disloyal, then our politics become so toxic that it is difficult for any administration to govern (Jackson, 2015).

Public opinion polls have consistently documented the polarization of American politics for both decades of the 21st Century and marked its impact on the capacity of the political system to function. Scholars who study political parties describe the baneful effects of excessive polarization on the ability to govern as follows:

“Politicians can appeal to feelings of contempt, anger, and fear to draw more citizens into the political arena. However, having repeatedly stoked those negative feelings among party supporters, it can be difficult for politicians to ride that tiger when governing requires negotiation and compromise. If partisans do not view the other side as legitimate, then they are less likely to support compromise with the opposition” (Kimball, Summary, and Vorst, 2014, 53).

David Kimball and his associates go on to assert that this mistrust and disdain toward the other party helps explain the governmental shutdown of 2013 when a fight between President Obama and House Republicans over the budget and the need to raise the debt ceiling reached an impasse. The Tea Party faction, now relabeled in the U. S. House as “The Freedom Caucus,” made it impossible for Speaker John Boehner to sell the compromise on the budget he had negotiated with Obama. Ultimately Obama decided to essentially stop seeking common ground with the Republicans and shift instead to Executive Orders and administrative rules as his major strategy for getting anything done during the remainder of his term (Mann and Dionne, 2012; Dionne, Ornstein, and Mann, 2017). Through the rest of Obama’s time in office, the crisis of polarization continued and deepened the gridlock that had been in place since the Republicans took over the House in the 2010 mid-term elections.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

This negative feeling toward the partisans of the other party is what Alan Abramowitz and Steven Webster call “Negative Partisanship,” which they maintain is the dominant feeling motivating the base of both parties. They say, “Conservatives and liberals don’t just disagree—they actually hate each other. And it’s getting uglier... Republicans might not love the president, but they absolutely loathe his Democratic adversaries. And it’s also true of Democrats who might be consumed by their internal feuds over foreign policy and the proper role of government were it not for Trump. Negative partisanship explains nearly everything in American politics today—from why Trump’s base is unlikely to abandon him even if, as he once said, he were to shoot someone on Fifth Avenue, to why it was so easy for vulnerable red-state Democrats to resist defecting on the health care bill.” (*Politico*, September 6, 2017).

The “direction of the United States” questions are an important component of our assessment of those negative trends and polarization in the nation’s politics. The direct tapping of trends in both party identification and political ideology, which are reported in the next section, are the other two components.

Table 2. Direction of the United States by Political Party

%		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Right Direction	Total	6	42	30	19	42	42	30	32	33	29	33	31	27	31	30
	Democrats	1	74	52	32	69	65	48	52	50	47	52	8	7	11	10
	Republicans	3	12	6	6	8	12	9	9	14	7	10	63	62	70	60
	Independents	4	39	26	13	25	25	19	22	24	22	22	25	30	27	28
Wrong Direction	Total	90	50	60	71	50	49	60	57	53	63	59	60	64	59	61
	Democrats	96	24	34	55	22	24	37	37	34	42	39	85	87	81	86
	Republicans	80	86	92	90	89	83	88	86	79	88	85	26	29	20	33
	Independents	90	57	37	79	61	68	71	66	59	69	66	61	61	60	56
Other/DK	Total	4	7	10	9	9	10	10	10	13	1	9	9	9	10	9
	Democrats	2	2	14	13	10	11	15	12	16	10	10	8	6	8	4
	Republicans	6	1	2	4	4	5	3	4	6	4	5	10	9	10	8
	Independents	6	4	11	8	13	7	10	12	17	9	9	9	13	12	18

From Table 2 it is evident that although the aggregate view of how things are going in the U. S. may be fairly stable, the internal dynamics of the poll results can vary significantly. That variation is also correlated closely with which party has just taken the White House or holds the presidency for a considerable period. There are dramatic shifts when the party controlling the White House changes hands. For example, only 1 percent of Democratic respondents said things

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

were going in the right direction in the spring of 2008, while an overwhelming 96 percent chose wrong direction. Then in spring of 2009, just three months after Barack Obama had moved into the White House, Illinois Democrats chose right direction at 74 percent compared to wrong direction at only 24 percent. By comparison, 86 percent of the Republicans said wrong direction compared to 12 percent who said right direction that year, with the Independents in between—although leaning in a more positive direction, closer to the Democrats’ views.

The next time the presidency switched parties is depicted on the right side of Table 2 when Obama gave way to Donald Trump between our 2016 and 2017 polls. There the shift was dramatically in the opposite direction. In 2016, 47 percent of the Democratic respondents chose right direction compared to 42 percent who chose wrong direction. In 2017, only 8 percent of Democrats thought the country was going in the right direction and fully 85 percent said wrong direction.

The Republicans displayed this same pattern in reverse in 2016 compared to 2017. In 2016 only 7 percent of Republicans said right direction and 88 percent said wrong direction. The Independents as usual fell between the two partisan groups with 22 percent right direction in 2016 and 69% percent wrong direction. Then in 2017, after the election of Donald Trump, Republicans chose right direction over wrong direction by a 63 to 26 percent margin. Democrats even more dramatically shifted with only 8 percent saying right direction and 85 percent wrong direction in 2017.

The partisan patterns established in 2017 continued almost undisturbed in both the 2018 and 2019 spring polls. This is vivid and tangible evidence of that extreme polarization. Political party identification has become an intrinsic part of the personal identities of tens of millions of Americans and it filters how we see the world and how we judge political figures and issues (Greene, et al. 2002). It has been a crucial and parsimonious psychological cue, since the voting behavior literature of six decades ago first identified it. Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes in their classic voting behavior book, *The American Voter*, put it this way: “Identification with a party raises a perceptual screen through which the individual tends to see what is favorable to his partisan orientation” (Campbell et al., 1960, 133).

Partisanship also helps formulate and drive more deeply held belief systems and ideological commitments. With the fall 2020 presidential election now looming, and the January, 2021 inauguration hard on its heels, we fully expect to see the 2008 to 2009 and the 2016 to 2017 transitions to take place if the Democrats win, and the 2012 to 2013 stability to stay in place if Donald Trump wins a second term. Either way, party identification is now deeply ingrained in the minds of most American voters and is used by journalists, political scientists, and other academics as one of the most powerful explanatory variables (and many analysts would maintain *the* most powerful) for how people evaluate candidates and issues and how they vote.

Table 3. Direction of Illinois

%.	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Right direction	10	22	12	15	20	16	15	23	22	9	10	9	9	12	22
Wrong direction	79	68	80	75	70	75	76	68	63	84	84	84	84	79	67
Other/don't know	11	11	8	11	10	9	9	8	15	7	6	7	7	9	11

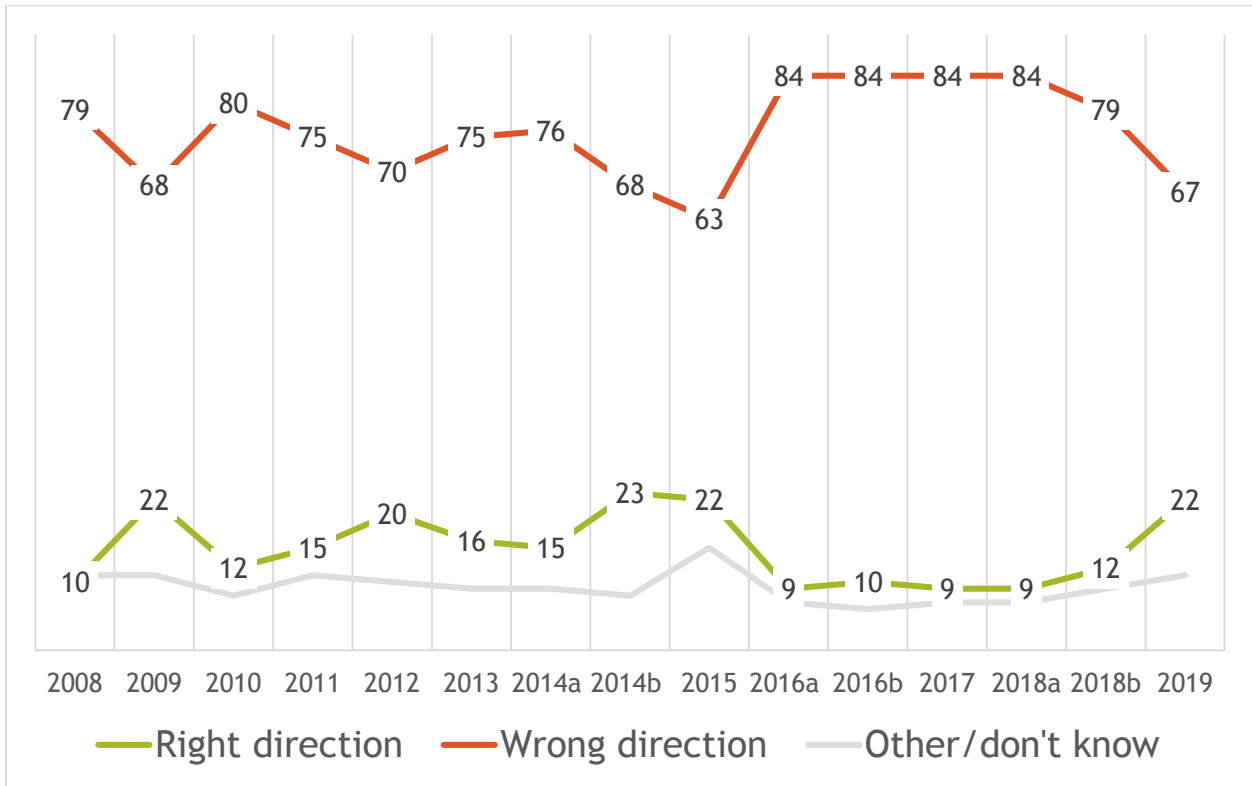


Figure 2. Direction of Illinois

Table 3 and Figure 2 present the results of the “right/wrong direction” question at the state level. The ordinary pattern found in other states is that the voters are most negative about the nation as a whole, then second most critical of the direction of the state, and then most sanguine about their own city or local area. That has not been the history of our findings for Illinois, as is evident from Table 3.

When our first soundings with the Simon Poll were made in 2008, the results were surprisingly negative even though for that year the direction for the national evaluations were even more negative than the state. As a reminder: 2008 was the last year of the George W. Bush presidency and the presidential campaign was well under way when our poll was taken. It was also the second year of Blagojevich’s second term, although he had not yet been indicted and

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

arrested by the federal government. So, for that one year Illinois resembled the more common national pattern.

However, 2008 was the last year in our series when the state's direction was evaluated more positively than that for the country at large. Starting in 2009, and in every year since, the right direction/wrong direction result for the state was negative by lopsided numbers. The negative numbers bottomed out in an extraordinary consistent run of three consecutive recent years, 2016, 2017, and 2018, when the voters chose wrong direction at 84 percent and right direction at 9 percent.

As the introduction to this paper recounted, 2016 and 2017 were the years of legislative gridlock, when Governor Rauner was so divided from the majority in the General Assembly, the normal order of managing the state broke down entirely and the state government simply failed to adopt a budget for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

Finally, in early July of 2018 the General Assembly passed a budget by overriding Governor Rauner's veto. The governor's race was already well under way and in the November election, Rauner was defeated by J. B. Pritzker by a record margin.

It should probably not be too surprising, then, to find that when our poll was taken in March of 2019, just two months into the Pritzker administration, the "right direction" figures had improved notably (22 percent) and the wrong direction had declined to "only" 67 percent. These results show a state with the right direction to wrong direction indicators still very much under water, but somewhat improved.

It should not come as a surprise to learn that the evaluation of the respondents' perception of the "right direction/wrong direction" health of the state is clearly dependent on partisanship. It varies systematically according to which party is in control of the executive branch via the governor's office. That is the basic lesson of Table 4.

In 2008, with Rod Blagojevich in office, an anemic 6 percent of Republican respondents said the state was going in the right direction and 90 percent said wrong direction. Democrats were only slightly more positive at 13 percent right direction and 77 percent wrong direction with Independents in between at 12 percent and 80 percent respectively. 2009 was only slightly more positive in the views of most partisans and the Independents.

In 2010 the overall right direction results dropped to 12 percent and the wrong direction soared to 80 percent. This was perhaps not surprising, since the Blagojevich impeachment and removal from office had occurred just two months before the poll was conducted. But, that generally dour mood of the Illinois electorate continued unabated from 2010 and through all of Pat Quinn's time in office through 2015, which was Bruce Rauner's first year in office. In general the Republicans were more negative by about a 25-30 percent margin each year - with the Independents looking much like the Republicans on this measure

Table 4. Direction of Illinois by Political Party

%		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
		Right direction	Total	10	22	12	15	20	16	15	23	22	9	10	9	9
	Democrats	13	33	21	25	31	25	25	37	23	8	11	7	9	12	36
	Republicans	6	18	0	4	7	5	5	6	24	13	10	12	10	15	10
	Independents	12	20	8	10	7	5	8	17	19	5	11	5	8	8	14
Wrong direction	Total	79	68	80	75	70	75	76	68	63	84	84	84	84	79	67
	Democrats	77	59	68	61	54	64	63	53	64	84	84	86	84	79	84
	Republicans	90	80	93	89	89	91	92	90	61	81	87	82	84	79	68
	Independents	80	76	81	82	85	93	75	78	67	91	83	85	83	82	76
Other/DK	Total	11	11	8	11	10	9	9	8	15	7	6	7	7	9	11
	Democrats	10	8	11	14	14	12	12	11	13	7	6	7	7	9	14
	Republicans	4	3	3	6	4	4	3	5	15	7	4	6	6	7	6
	Independents	8	4	11	7	8	2	17	4	14	4	7	9	9	10	12

That negative balance carried over into Bruce Rauner’s four years in office. But then it was propelled by the Democrats who abruptly shifted to being more negative than the Republicans, although the gap of negativity was not large, usually on the order of three to four percentage points. By 2018 both partisan groups were at 83 percent wrong direction with the Independents at 84 percent. In light of these bi-partisan findings, it is not surprising that Bruce Rauner lost the governor’s office in a landslide in November of 2018.

Nor is it surprising that in 2019 there was a notable shift again. The wrong direction aggregate results declined to 67 percent, and the right direction increased to 22 percent. This is not a phenomenally positive balance; however, it is a notable change in a positive direction. It can largely be attributed to shifts in a more positive direction by the Democrats and to a lesser extent, the Independents. The Republicans stayed steady at 84 percent wrong direction in 2019.

In the Press Release publicizing the 2019 poll’s results on March 21st Charlie Leonard wrote the following summary: “Thinking back to a year ago, what changed in Illinois to cause more than one in eight voters to change their minds about the direction of the state? ... While there has been good economic news here and there, we have to think that a change in state leadership—the decisive victory of Governor J. B. Pritzker over the unpopular former governor, Bruce Rauner—has a lot to do with it, even though Governor Pritzker’s lukewarm approval rating doesn’t look like he’s received much of a ‘honeymoon’ period.”

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

We still believe that to be an important lesson we can learn from the time series-based analysis afforded by our polls. **Put succinctly: Governors matter; the ability to govern matters; the record of the party in power matters. This is also one of the fundamental requirements of the “Responsible Parties” and “Conditional Party Government” models outlined in the conceptual and theoretical introduction of this paper.**

Table 5. Direction of the Local Area

%	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Right direction	43	52	46	52	54	54	53	53	58	50	50	53	54	51	56
Wrong direction	48	41	42	37	36	35	38	38	31	42	43	39	37	39	35
Other/DK	9	7	13	10	10	12	8	9	11	8	8	9	10	10	9

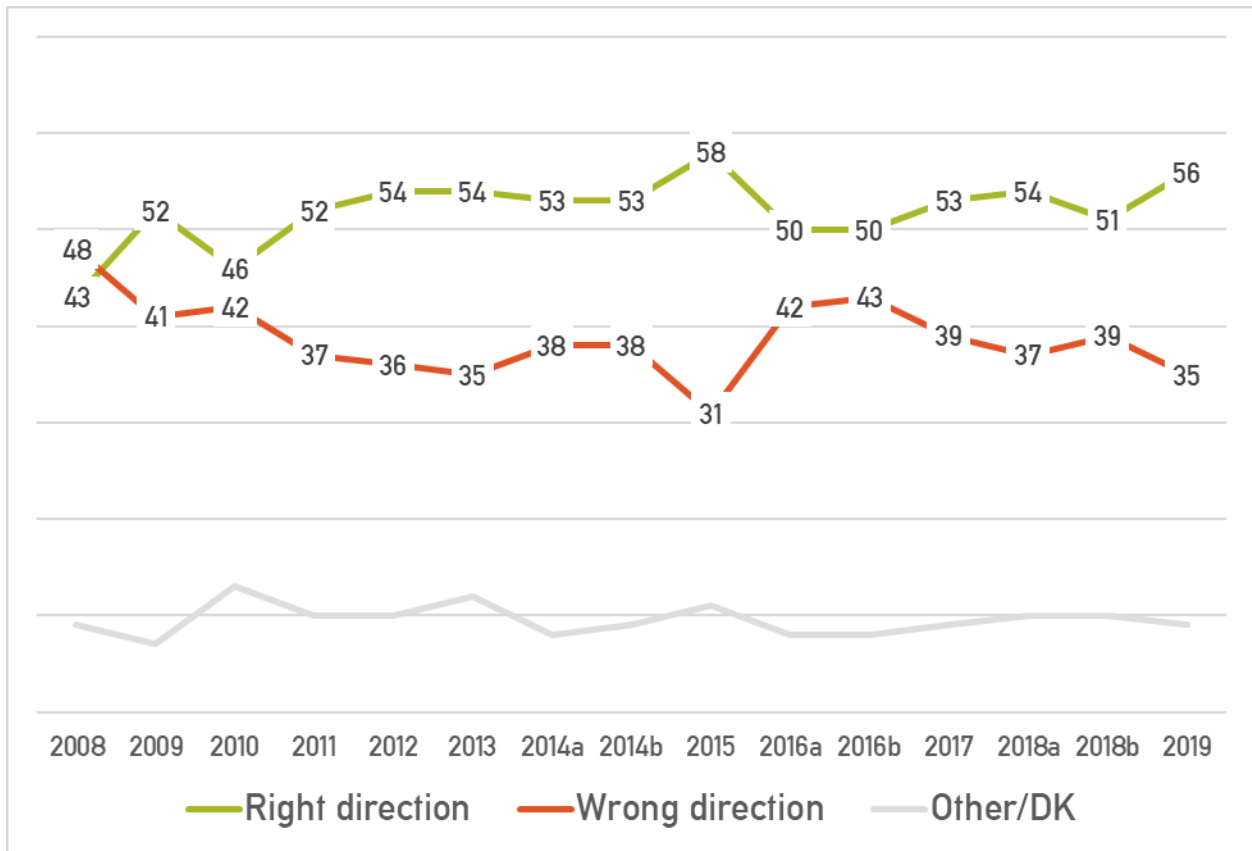


Figure 3. Direction of the Local Area

Typically, local areas receive the most positive evaluations from the voters in terms of the right track/wrong track question (see Table 5 and Figure 3). This probably goes back to

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

Thomas Jefferson, who strongly believed that the governments closest to the people would be the best government. It is also probably related to the sense that the voters can know their local officials personally and deal with them on a face-to-face basis, at least in theory.

Our results indicate that Jefferson’s faith in local governments still holds up with respect to this question. Only the first poll in 2008 showed a net negative evaluation with 48 percent saying that the local area was going in the wrong direction as opposed to 43 percent who claimed the right direction with 9 percent undecided. Illinois voters appeared to be in a foul mood, which carried over even to their local governments in 2008, Blagojevich’s last full year as governor and George W. Bush’s last year in the White House.

Starting in 2009 the net balance turned positive, with 52 percent claiming the right direction option and 41 percent saying that their local areas were going in the wrong direction. The right direction option dropped back to 46 percent in 2010 versus 42 percent who claimed the wrong direction, still producing a positive net of 4 percent.

Table 6. Direction of the Local Area by Political Party

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Right direction	Total	43	52	46	52	54	54	53	53	58	50	50	53	54	51	56
	Democrats	35	54	53	55	62	57	59	60	60	49	50	54	53	52	59
	Republicans	48	62	41	49	44	56	50	50	62	54	54	55	55	55	55
	Independents	43	52	41	52	48	42	49	43	50	46	46	50	57	44	55
Wrong direction	Total	48	41	42	37	36	35	38	38	31	42	43	39	37	39	35
	Democrats	54	43	37	34	29	32	33	33	30	43	43	39	38	39	30
	Republicans	43	33	44	41	46	34	44	39	29	39	40	37	36	39	39
	Independents	48	45	48	40	37	47	41	47	35	46	43	36	31	41	41
Other/DK	Total	9	7	13	10	10	12	8	9	11	8	8	9	10	10	9
	Democrats	11	3	10	11	9	11	8	7	11	8	7	8	9	10	11
	Republicans	9	5	16	11	9	9	6	10	10	7	6	7	9	6	6
	Independents	9	3	11	8	15	11	10	10	14	9	11	15	12	15	5

Starting in 2011 and in every year through 2019, the voters by a clear majority have given a thumbs-up on how their local areas are doing. In fact, our most recent poll in 2019

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

marked the high-water mark for the positive evaluation, with 56 percent saying right direction versus only 35 percent who said the wrong direction.

For all the negative news voters constantly hear about the state of Illinois and how badly it is doing, and how frequently its government and politics gets bashed, often by those in leadership positions themselves (including the last governor), this consistently positive outlook at the local level is always overlooked. **Local governments certainly have their problems and challenges in Illinois, often related to the economy, to their budgets and occasionally to scandals; however, those local officials laboring in relatively obscure and out of the way places and small offices should take some satisfaction from our consistent, twelve-year findings that a majority of Illinois voters believe their local cities and areas are moving in the right direction.**

Table 6 shows that the positive evaluations of the local cities and areas are somewhat dependent on partisanship, but not nearly as much as they are for the state and national evaluations. In 2008 Democrats in Illinois were much more critical than positive about their local areas' direction with only 35 percent saying right direction compared to 54 percent saying wrong direction. Somewhat unexpectedly, 48 percent of Republicans in 2008 chose right direction compared to 43 percent who said wrong direction, with 9 percent undecided. Perhaps this can be attributed to the Republican Party's general belief in the importance and the power of local governments as opposed to state and national governments and the Jeffersonian ideal of the government closest to the people being the best form. Independents again fell between the two major partisan groups in their evaluations.

In 2009 partisan differences were still evident, although Democrats had moved to a solid majority positive with 54 percent saying right direction and only 43 percent saying wrong direction. Perhaps this means our 2008 results for the Democrats were only an anomaly in the data. In 2009 Republicans were even more positive about their confidence in the direction of their local areas, with 62 percent choosing right direction and only 33 percent taking the wrong direction option.

Starting in 2010 and with each year thereafter, the partisan pattern has been stable with only minor variation. Democrats were in the right direction column at well above 50 percent in each year subsequent to then. They reached 60 percent in both 2014 and 2015 and 59 percent most recently in 2019. The Republicans were slightly lower, but still above 50 percent right direction for all the years since 2013. Independents tended to be the most critical group in all of those years through 2018.

Overall we think these results would have made Thomas Jefferson proud and tended to validate the thesis advanced by a notable political scientist, V. O. Key, that people would simply feel that they can have more confidence in the public officials closest to them and that "friends and neighbors government" is the level they can relate to best (Key, 1958). This is a positive finding that public officials in Illinois can learn from and use in their ambitions to govern effectively. Perhaps they might help restore some faith and confidence in the state government as it tries to take on the monumental challenges it faces, especially in dealing with the state's

structural deficit. After all, local governments are legally and constitutionally creatures of the state, and they can only prosper and be effective in the long run if the state does also. Their problems and prospects are inextricably tied together.

5.2 IDEOLOGICAL SELF IDENTIFICATION AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Scholars who study public opinion in general and voting behavior in particular, recognize that the two most useful and powerful direct explanations for both political opinions and behavior are ideological identification and party identification. Political scientists have been studying these phenomena for more than half a century, and they regard those two psychological attitudes and value commitments to be the most important independent variables captured by polls and other research methods (Campbell, et al., 1960).

In the modern era of political polarization, mass differences in party identification and political ideology have come to define that polarization at both the individual voter level and mass political level. When aggregated upward to the mass level of political and governmental jurisdictions they become the key explanations for why elections turn out as they do and then how and why governmental institutions, such as the Congress and state legislatures, behave as they do. Thus, when governmental gridlock occurs, as has been all too frequent at the national, and especially state level recently, the immediate explanations are deep divisions in both ideology and partisanship, and an unwillingness to compromise on those basic commitments (Jackson, Leonard, and Deitz, 2016, 39).

5.2.1 Ideology

Table 7. Ideology²

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
%. Very liberal	7	8	9	11	10	13	11	12	13	13	14	15	12
Somewhat liberal	20	17	23	24	20	23	21	21	22	22	23	20	20
Moderate	27	34	26	26	29	27	26	28	29	28	26	28	26
Somewhat conservative	25	24	25	23	24	22	24	22	22	24	21	20	21
Very conservative	15	11	13	10	14	10	12	11	12	10	12	12	16
Other/Don't know	6	5	4	7	4	5	6	6	4	4	4	4	5

² The question asked: “Generally speaking, in politics today, do you consider yourself very liberal...?”

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

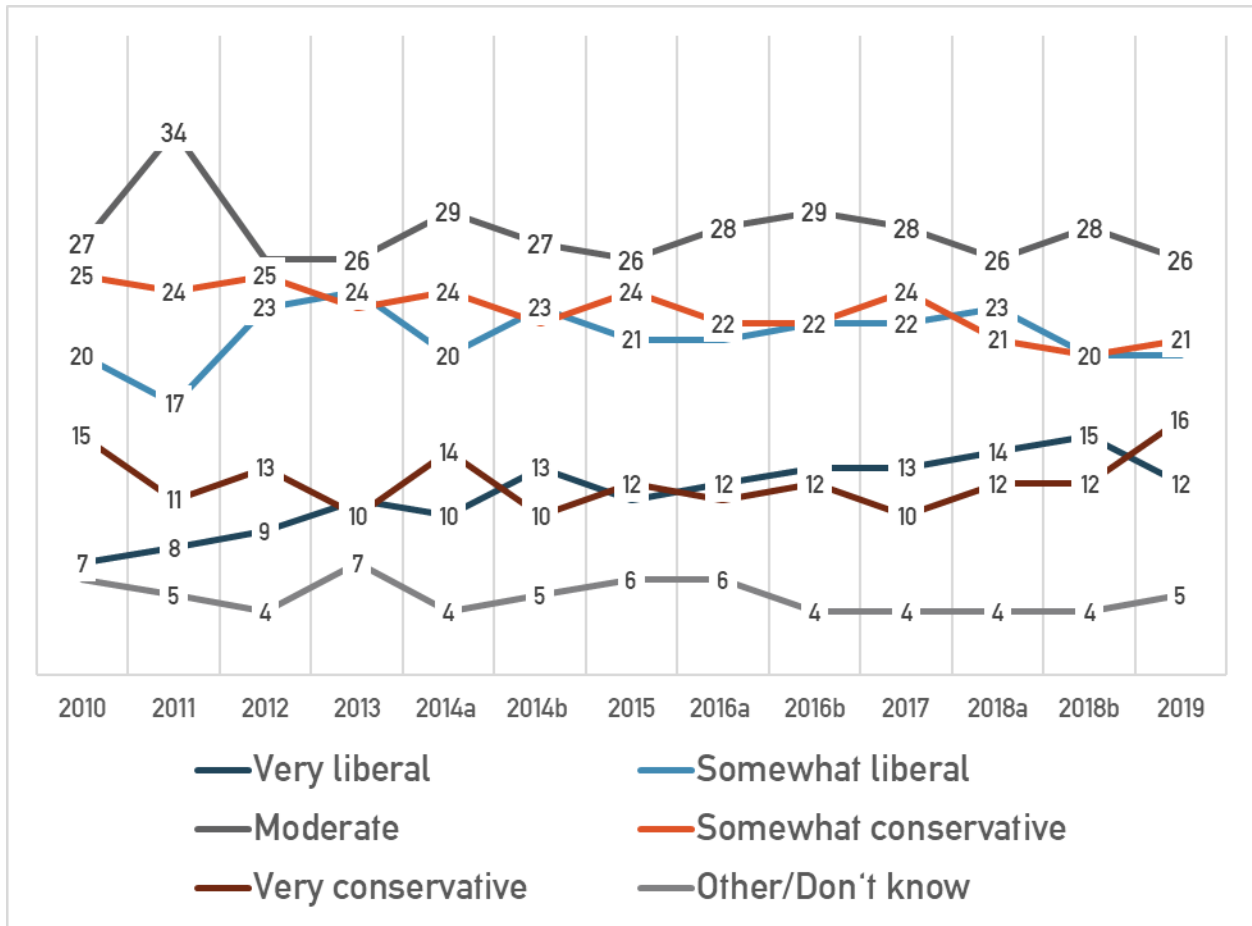


Figure 4. Ideology

In Table 7 and Figure 4 we provide the longitudinal data for thirteen surveys covering twelve years of statewide polls in Illinois. The reader should note that in this narrative we collapse the “very liberal” and “somewhat liberal” value labels into one liberal category and do the same with the conservative options to facilitate the discussion of these results. Starting with the 2010 baseline first, the result was a total of 27 percent in the two liberal categories and 40 percent in the two conservative categories. By 2016, at the time of the publication of our first paper on the longitudinal data, this had changed somewhat in a liberal direction with a total of 33 percent in the liberal categories (up by 5 percent) and 33 percent in the conservative categories (down by 7 percent). These Illinois results, with movement in a more liberal direction, were consonant with national polls which still showed a conservative advantage but one which was also declining.

These results were quite stable for both the 2017 and 2018 polls with the liberals at 35 percent and 37 percent for those two years while the conservatives were at 34 and 33 percent respectively. Over all these years the moderates remained remarkably stable in a narrow range of 27 percent to 29 percent, with the one exception of 34 percent in 2011. On the other hand, the

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

most recent poll for 2019 is somewhat an anomaly where we find the two liberal categories total 32 percent, while the two conservative categories combine for a 37 percent total.

Over the long term, national polls have demonstrated a marked advantage for conservatives over liberals in ideological identification. This advantage long stood at approximately 2 to 1 and in the range of about 40 percent conservative to 20 percent liberal. This advantage to the conservatives has caused many conservative Republican leaders, as well as some pundits, to claim that the United States is essentially a ‘center right’ nation.

In more recent years, however, the movement has been in the liberal direction with more recent national polls. In 2016 when our first paper on the longitudinal data was released national polls showed a continuing conservative advantage, but one which had declined to 37 percent conservative to 24 percent liberal or a 13% conservative advantage. In that same Gallup poll, 35 percent claimed the moderate mantle, making it the second largest ideological group in the U. S. (Saad, Gallup, January 11, 2016). At the beginning of 2019 the conservatives still enjoyed an advantage nationally, but it was only by 9% with 35% of the respondents identifying as conservative and 26% liberal. The moderates also tied the conservatives at 35%. These more recent polls show that the conservatives have retained some advantage overall, but the liberal categories have moved up steadily while in the long term the moderates have lost some ground which is to be expected in our polarized environment.(Saad, Gallup, January 8, 2019).

By comparison, our results for Illinois show that it is more liberal and less conservative than the nation as a whole, and Illinois has moved in a more liberal direction over this period, as has the nation. Future polls at both the national level and in Illinois will show whether our results caught a temporary movement or some permanent changes, either of which would be important for the functioning (or malfunctioning) of both the state and federal governments (Jackson, Leonard, and Deitz, 2016, 40).

5.2.2 Party Identification

Party identification is probably the single most utilized and analyzed concept of all in the great body of political science research over the past six decades. As was noted above, it has been shown repeatedly by a wide variety of studies to have systematic analytic power as an independent variable. Party identification has a *direct influence* on voting and other political behavior and it also has an *indirect influence*. Party identification is usually closely correlated with and undoubtedly directly influences a substantial part of the variance in voting. Increasingly so, as the nation has polarized, it has become a powerful explanation for mass voting behavior and it is even more important in political elite level behavior such as voting in the congress or state legislatures.

Party identification’s indirect influence is exerted through shaping what messages we pay attention to and causing us to exhibit a systematic bias in the ways we evaluate these messages. The most important of these attitudinal components are candidate images and our positions on the issues of the campaign. Extensive research has long demonstrated that party identification is a “master cue,” or the prism through which the voter evaluates the candidates and issues (Campbell, et al, 1960).

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

As one of the best-known examples, party identification is always correlated very closely with how the American public evaluates the job the president is doing or how well the governor of a state is doing. Research also shows that party identification systematically influences voters' positions on the issues.

This also means that party identification is systematically related to a variety of individual and institutional outcomes across all levels of government in the United States. As such it is one of the staple items included in almost all major public opinion studies. Table 8 and Figure 5 provide the results for the Simon Poll for 2008 through 2019.

Table 8. Party Identification³

%.	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016	2016	2017	2018	2018	2019
Strong Democrat	24	22	18	22	26	26	23	27	22	23	27	21	22	27	22
Mild Democrat	10	11	9	8	13	13	13	9	10	9	10	10	8	8	8
Democrat leaning Independent	11	11	13	14	13	13	12	12	15	15	11	15	20	14	14
Pure Independent	9	4	18	19	8	10	6	17	15	12	13	12	14	15	15
Republican leaning Independent	10	11	11	11	12	9	14	8	12	13	11	14	12	11	12
Mild Republican	11	10	8	9	10	10	8	8	7	7	8	8	6	4	7
Strong Republican	11	12	14	11	14	13	14	11	10	12	12	11	12	12	14
Other/Don't know	15	19	8	5	8	8	10	9	10	9	8	10	7	8	8

These results show that Democrats significantly outnumber Republicans in Illinois no matter whether one examines strong or weak partisans and/or Independents who lean toward one party or another. This is, of course, what one would expect in a traditionally blue state, and particularly one with a major city, like Chicago, where the Democratic Party tradition is historic and very strong (Jackson, Leonard, and Deitz, 2016, 40).

Starting with our first poll in 2008, a total of 45 percent of the respondents said that they were strong Democrats (24 percent), weak Democrats (10 percent) or Independents who lean Democrat (11 percent).

Looking at the Republican side, there were 11 percent who claimed to be strong Republicans and an identical 11 percent who claimed the weak Republican identification leaving

³ The question asked: "Generally speaking do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?"

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

another 10 percent who were Independents leaning Republican, for a total of 32 percent total in all Republican categories. This was a 13 percentage-point disadvantage for the Republicans compared to the Democrats in Illinois. Also this first poll taken in 2008 found that only 9 percent of Illinois voters were pure Independents, that is, did not lean either way and consistently split their tickets in voting and exhibited no real preference for either party.

On a longitudinal basis, by 2012 the Democratic identifiers had reached 52 percent and the Republican identifiers were at 36 percent. This is a 16 percentage-point advantage to the Democrats. This substantial Democratic advantage held steadily in all the polls up through 2019, when there were 44 percent in the three Democratic categories and 33 percent in the Republican categories. Essentially, the Republicans at 33 percent in 2019 ended where they started with 32 percent in our inaugural 2008 poll and 33 percent in the second year of 2009. This provides an 11-point head start for the Democrats which lets Democratic candidates begin each statewide campaign with a significant advantage. Since fall 2014, the pure Independents have been in the double digits ranging from 17 percent in (2014b) to 15 percent in 2019.

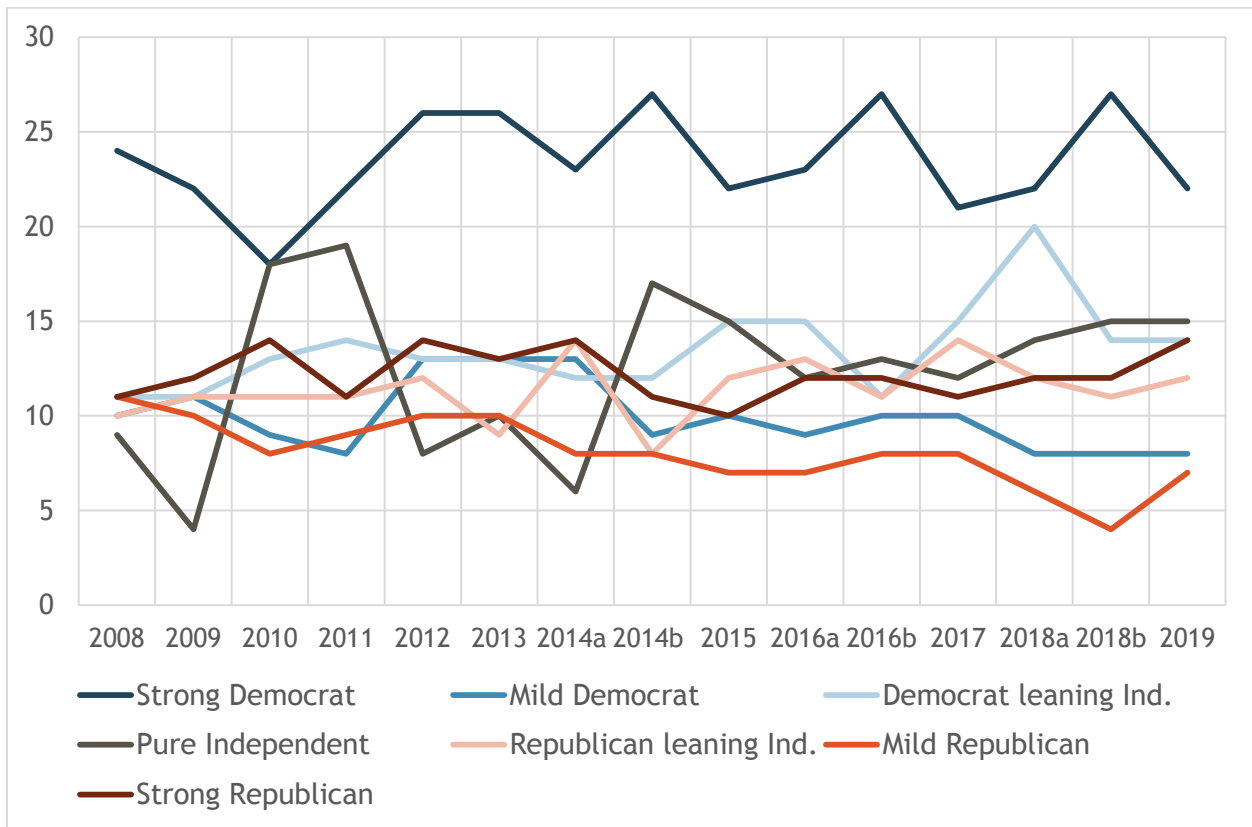


Figure 5. Party Identification

If one examines the national polls for comparable data, they indicate that 26 percent of the American public identifies as Republican if only the strong and weak categories of party

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

identification are included, compared to 30 percent for the Democrats and 42 percent as Independents. (Gallup, March, 2019).

In 2015 the Republicans started the four years of the Rauner Administration in the minority but Rauner proved that they can win statewide with the right candidate and the right circumstances. As was recounted earlier, Rauner was a very rich businessman and he was willing to spend whatever it took for him to mount a competitive campaign. In addition, the Democrats had to bear the burden of Rod Blagojevich's corrupt administration and the perception that Pat Quinn had been an ineffective governor with incompetent management skills. Quinn had the further burden of the income tax increase he had advocated and helped to steer through the General Assembly. In effect, this meant Rauner's major advantage in the fall of 2014 election was that he was not Pat Quinn (Jackson, 2015).

We have recounted elsewhere in this paper and earlier papers the details of the Rauner vs. Pritzker campaign (Jackson, 2019). Suffice it to say here that the Rauner Administration was not perceived to be an especially successful one, and the two-year governmental gridlock over the budget, coupled with the revenue losses and uncertainty it caused made him especially vulnerable in 2018, and J. B. Pritzker took maximum advantage of Rauner's weaknesses.

Voting behavior scholars have long known that if the "Independent-Leaners", those who typically vote regularly for the same party are excluded, the "Pure Independent" category shrinks dramatically. The low percentages in the pure Independent category are the reasonable by-product of this deeply polarized era (Keith, et al., 1992). Especially since the turn of the 21st century, more people have come to choose sides and to take on partisan identification -- similar to the way they identify with and root for their favorite sports team. There are also similarities with religious and racial identification. Partisanship has increasingly become an intrinsic part of the individual's social identity and increasing important to how they view the larger world (Green, et al, 2002; Heatherton, 2001; Kimball, et al., 2014).

As we become more ideological and more partisan in our individual identities, we also become more polarized nationally and societally. At the aggregate level, this phenomenon plays out in the now widely recognized 'red state' versus 'blue state' designations (Gelman, 2008). Indeed, political cultures and aggregate partisanship have now become so ingrained and so endemic that the result is a very high correlation between the state-level voting outcomes for most states from year to year and election to election. Modern presidential elections start with approximately forty states whose partisan leanings are so engrained that the likelihood of them changing their past patterns is extremely small. The Electoral College map, the blue state and red state distribution for the presidential elections is very similar every four years, and the best predictor of how the state will vote in a presidential election is how it voted four years previously.

This leaves only eight to ten "swing states" or "battleground states" each presidential election year. In 2016 the key battleground states were Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin, and when those all came in for Trump, albeit by only narrow margins of approximately 77,000 votes total, the race between Trump and Clinton was over, despite

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

Clinton's three-million-vote margin of victory in the popular vote. Nothing indicates the depth and consequences of this endemic polarization more clearly than the Electoral College -- 2016 having been the second of five presidential elections held in the 21st Century that produced a split decision between the Electoral College vote and the popular vote. Such a decision will remain a very possible outcome as long as the Electoral College remains in place and the nation continues to be so deeply polarized. A split decision could certainly happen again in 2020 or 2024. Partisanship and ideology remain at the base of these divisions.

Illinois is not likely to be a battleground state anytime soon. In presidential races Illinois has been a safely Democratic or 'blue state' since the 1988 election, when George H. W. Bush beat Michael Dukakis in Illinois. Illinois has been a reliable vote for the Democrats since Bill Clinton beat Bush in 1992. Thus, we are unlikely to see much direct evidence of the national campaigns aimed specifically toward the voters here in Illinois in the 2020 presidential election.

This does not mean, however, that the Republicans cannot expect to win some statewide offices. Although currently there are no statewide offices held by the Republicans, the last administration saw the Governor's Office, the Lieutenant Governor's Office, and for two years, the Comptroller's Office controlled by the Republicans. Though Illinois certainly leans Democratic, the right Republican candidate, riding a promising partisan wave, can win in Illinois. There also remain multiple counties and legislative districts where the Republicans have consistently won and controlled local politics since they came to prominence with the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

It is best to think of partisanship and ideology predominantly as stabilizing factors where immediate change from election to election is slow and unremarkable. However, over longer trends, as shown in our data from the Simon Polls, there is also some change evident—usually gradual, but sometimes abrupt. This means that the campaigns and the candidates themselves are also important, apart from their partisanship and ideology. The candidates nominated by the parties, the amounts of money they can raise, their treatment by the mass media, and their ability to organize a compelling campaign and articulate a cogent narrative for their campaigns all still count for something and can create movement and change in the next election (Jackson, Leonard, and Deitz, 2016, 43-44). One of the most likely sources of such change in Illinois is the question of the deficit, taxation, and how to manage the challenges they represent, which has probably been the most salient issue long term in state politics for two generations.

5.3 STRATEGIES FOR HANDLING THE BUDGET DEFICIT

The Historical Context section at the beginning of this paper provided an account of the dire straits of the Illinois budget and the current proposals from the new Pritzker Administration to deal with this recurring problem. In our earlier 2016 paper on these data, we also recounted in detail the long-time problems endemic to the Illinois budgetary process and how members of the General Assembly and a succession of Illinois governors had temporized with the challenge. They provided only one-year, band aid approaches to deal with a recurring structural deficit. This practice stretched well back into the 20th Century and had only gotten worse since the start of the 21st Century. This was a chronic problem that everyone recognized, but no one had the political

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

will and courage to fix. That is why we titled that earlier paper “The Roots of Gridlock” (Jackson, Leonard, and Deitz, 2016). We had no way of knowing then that the gridlock would go on for another full year after we released that paper in June of 2016. We do know now that the damage from that impasse will take many more years to heal. We are also cautiously optimistic that the serious dialogue over what to do began in the 2018 campaign for governor, and that a feasible plan has been advanced by the Pritzker Administration and was widely debated in the spring term of the Illinois General Assembly. This dialog and conflict will continue in 2020.

Our original paper was released and written at the beginning of the second year of the Rauner Administration. At the time, it was clear that the decision by the General Assembly and Governor Rauner to let the temporary income tax increase expire on January 1, 2015 had blown a five billion dollar hole in the tenuously balanced budget. Rauner recommended a FY2016 budget which would have included draconian cuts to many programs and services, and not surprisingly the General Assembly refused to adopt those cuts. The ensuing budgetary impasse meant that the state had no officially adopted budget for all of FY2016 and 2017. We were in the middle of that crisis when the first paper was released, but it continued for another year.

We devoted a major share of the questions and attention in our second poll, which was taken in 2009, to budgetary and revenue issues, which had already been on the state’s political agenda for a decade or more. Since the problem did not go away, but instead festered and subsequently metastasized, we have retained those same question for almost all the polls taken since then. Although this is a problem that we might wish would disappear, the decision of “who get- what, when and how”, *and who will pay* for it is always a central one in politics, so we continue to document the opinions of the voters of Illinois on this central challenge of governing.

The wording of our first budgetary question has been as follows:

“The state of Illinois has a budget deficit of over 3 billion dollars⁴. I am going to read three statements that people have made about how to fix the deficit and ask you which one comes closest to your views. If you haven’t thought much about this issue just tell me that.

- *Illinois’ public programs and services have already been reduced significantly. We can only fix the issue by taking in more revenue, such as a tax increase.*
- *The state takes in plenty of money to pay for public services but wastes it on unnecessary programs. We can fix the problem by cutting waste and inefficiency in government.*
- *Illinois’ budget problem is so large it can only be solved by a combination of budget cuts and revenue increases”*

⁴ The exact amount has been changed each year to reflect that year’s deficit.

Table 9. Budget Cuts, Revenues, or Both

%.	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Cuts	57	57	58	55	52	43	42	47	44	45	51	45	52
Both	27	27	29	29	29	32	34	33	33	35	28	26	28
Revenues	10	9	7	8	10	16	14	10	12	11	10	12	10
Haven't thought	3	3	3	5	5	5	3	4	5	4	6	6	4
Other/DK	2	4	4	5	4	4	6	6	6	6	5	11	6

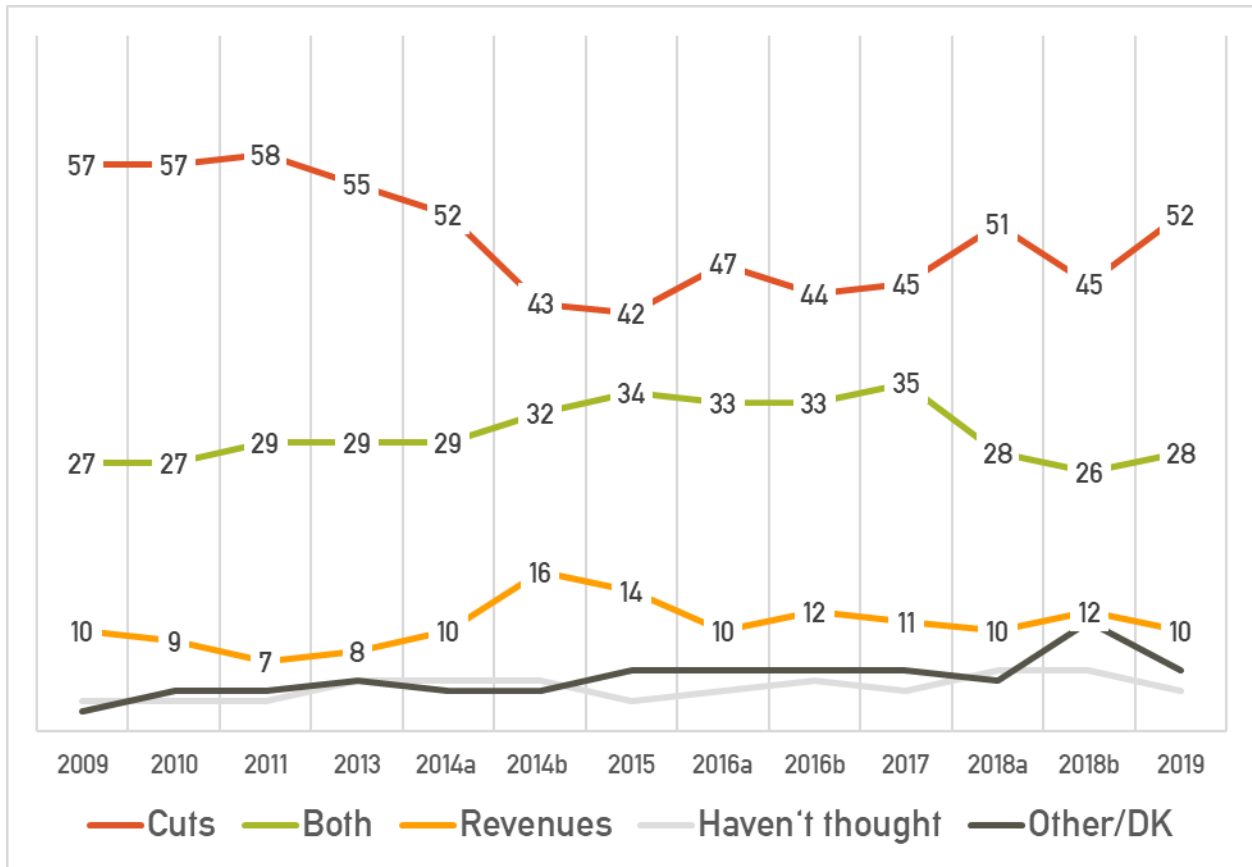


Figure 6. Budget Cuts, Revenues, or Both

Taking the top option first, it is evident that cutting “waste and fraud” is consistently the most popular answer given by a majority or near majority in every one of our polls taken over

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

the past decade (see Table 9 and Figure 6). To the extent that there is any variance, it is in the narrow range, from a low of 42 percent in 2015 up to 57 percent in 2009 and 2010.

The second most popular option recommends combining both new revenue with some cuts in programs and services. It ranges from a low of 27 percent in 2009 and 2010 up to highs of 34 percent in 2015 and up to 35 percent in 2017. At that point one might have concluded that the “both” option had gained ground and might even take over the lead given the gridlock and budgetary crisis that had taken over in 2016 and 2017. However, the deeply engrained “waste and fraud” solution was supported by majority levels in 2018 and 2019, and the “both” option sank to 28 percent.

Needless to say, the “revenue only” fix had only anemic support throughout the entire decade. The range was from a low of 9 percent in 2010 and 7 percent in 2011 and 2013 up to 11 percent in 2017 and 10 percent in both 2018 and 2019. This was the challenge facing Pritzker’s incoming administration as they tried to fashion a realistic and comprehensive plan to build the FY2020 budget and prepare for the development and selling of Pritzker’s aggressive plan for amending the Illinois Constitution and bringing a fundamental change to the revenue system by switching from a flat tax to a progressive income tax by 2021. Taken together, this was a very ambitious agenda to present the General Assembly at the start of the governor’s first term.

From the results of this table we can see that those public officials, interest groups and opinion leaders who repeatedly tell the voters that budgetary problems are not complicated, and are easy to solve have won the battle of public opinion. In seven of our polls more than a majority of Illinois voters indicated their belief that all we have to do is to cut “waste and fraud”. When that easy answer declines, it does so only marginally into the forty percent and above level in six of our thirteen polls.

The purveyors of this narrative probably have an inherent advantage in this argument since the distrust and even hatred of taxes is a bedrock component of the American political culture. After all, those patriots in the Boston Harbor, who rebelled against King George’s taxes, helped ignite the American Revolution. Their rallying cry was persuasive then and is such an intrinsic component of our heritage that even today the District of Columbia car tags all have the slogan emblazoned on them “No Taxation Without Representation” as a symbolic part of their appeal for statehood. In addition, the modern “Tea Party,” which has become one of the dominant parts of the Republican coalition adopted that name from the first Tea Party of revolutionary times.

Nevertheless, even knowing all this history, it is still somewhat surprising just how popular the “waste and fraud” opinion is and how persistent it has been across a full decade of Illinois history. Its popularity has held steady even in face of the recurring budgetary crisis and as the consequences of state’s refusal to pay its bills in a timely fashion played out. Virtually everyone who talks or writes about the Illinois budget starts with the underfunded pension system, which has reached well above \$100 billion in unfunded liabilities. Those on the right and the left both acknowledge the growing pension debt, but no political leader has been able to

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

assemble a working coalition to do something about it, and all the potential solutions founder on the shoals of public indifference and political gridlock.

It should not be surprising to learn that these views of the tax and revenue system and what to do about the state’s chronic deficit are systematically related to party identification as the results in Table 10 demonstrate. It is a bedrock tenet of Republican orthodoxy to advocate for low taxes. Every candidate who runs as a Republican seems to subscribe to this orthodoxy. It is no accident that President Trump’s most important legislative victory in his first term was the 2017 Republican federal tax cut. The reductions were supported by every member of their caucus.

Table 10. Budget deficit by Political Party

%. Cuts		2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2016b	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Cuts	Total	57	57	58	55	52	43	42	47	44	45	51	45	52
	Democrats	49	49	42	44	43	35	35	36	32	34	39	36	36
	Republicans	69	68	75	70	63	55	51	60	61	60	70	62	70
	Independents	56	53	68	58	57	46	47	50	44	45	53	42	54
Both	Total	27	27	29	29	29	32	34	33	33	35	28	26	28
	Democrats	30	30	37	36	33	35	37	36	38	38	31	29	35
	Republicans	24	23	19	22	25	28	35	32	27	29	22	20	22
	Independents	28	32	24	26	25	36	27	34	41	39	34	35	25
Revenues	Total	10	9	7	8	10	16	14	10	12	11	10	12	10
	Democrats	14	14	12	11	14	18	18	16	17	18	17	18	17
	Republicans	4	4	2	2	7	14	9	4	6	4	2	4	2
	Independents	10	9	3	7	6	12	14	9	4	7	5	5	10
Haven't thought	Total	3	3	3	5	5	5	3	4	5	4	6	6	4
	Democrats	4	4	4	5	7	6	4	5	6	4	8	6	5
	Republicans	2	2	2	3	3	1	3	3	2	4	3	6	3
	Independents	3	2	2	2	5	4	3	4	4	2	3	6	3
Other/DK	Total	2	4	4	5	4	4	6	6	6	6	5	11	6
	Democrats	2	3	5	1	3	6	6	7	6	6	5	11	6
	Republicans	1	3	2	3	4	1	3	2	4	4	3	8	3
	Independents	2	4	3	7	6	4	10	3	8	7	5	12	7

Trump’s advocacy for the tax cuts was welcomed by House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who had wanted tax cuts, particularly in the top

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

marginal rate and in capital gains for at least a decade. Trump's triumph was similar in direction and scope to the signature victory that George W. Bush achieved when he came into office in January of 2001 and achieved a major tax cut almost immediately. The campaign of 2000 had featured a debate between Bush who wanted to cut taxes to reduce the budgetary surplus, the first in modern history, which had been achieved in the last three years of Bill Clinton's presidency, versus Clinton's Vice President, Al Gore, who said he wanted to use the surplus to create a permanent solution for some of the long-term problems of the Social Security and Medicare systems and then use some of the rest on infrastructure improvements. Bush won, and Gore's revenue plan lost and Bush and the Congress quickly cut taxes. The federal deficit returned immediately, and it has been with us since then. In 2017 Trump's tax cuts increased that deficit to over one trillion dollars in the first fiscal year after it took effect.

So, when Bruce Rauner ran in 2014 against Pat Quinn and his 2011 income tax increase, he was on firm ground with the Republican base, as our results indicate so clearly. When he then ran against the newly re-enacted income tax increase in 2018, and promised to balance the budget with the necessary cuts and no tax increase, he was again appealing quite directly to his party's long-term commitment to lower taxes and to reducing taxes whenever they could assemble the legislative majority necessary to make those reductions.

The Republican voters in our survey consistently supported the idea that cuts in waste and fraud would be sufficient for addressing the chronic structural deficit that Illinois had faced since the start of the 21st century (see Table 10 and Figure 7). That support started well above two thirds in 2009 and 2010, and then increased to 75% in 2011, 70% in 2013 and 63% in 2014. It declined to 55% in 2015 and increased to 60% in 2016 and 2017 and then increased to 70% in our most recent poll. Obviously no Republican legislator was likely to suffer much backlash from the party base if the legislator took this rhetorical route out of being held responsible for his or her vote on the need to increase revenue to solve the state's very real budgetary problems.

Our data in Table 10 indicate that Democrats are also not immune to the siren call of cutting "waste and fraud" as the simple and easy solution to an intricate problem. They are just not as overwhelmingly convinced of the efficacy of that solution as the Republicans are. In Table 10 we see that Democrats who favor this solution were 49 percent, almost the majority, in 2009 and 2010. Then it dropped into the low forties during the interim between 2011 and 2014. Interestingly, the level of support for the "waste and fraud" argument then declined again to 35 percent in our second poll in the fall of 2014, and it has remained in the thirties for the Democrats in each poll since. So, approximately one-third of the Democratic voters in Illinois believe the simple and painless solution would somehow solve what has been an intractable problem for the first two decades of the 21st Century.

As usual, the Independents fall somewhere between the two partisan groups. They started at 56 percent in 2009, lower than the Republicans but higher than the Democrats, and then climbed to 68 percent in 2012, 58 percent in 2013 and 57 percent in the spring of 2014, only to decline to the upper forties in the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015 and 50 percent in 2016. Between 2017 and 2019 the Independents affinity for this option increased from 45 percent in 2017 to 54 percent in our most recent poll in the spring of 2019.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

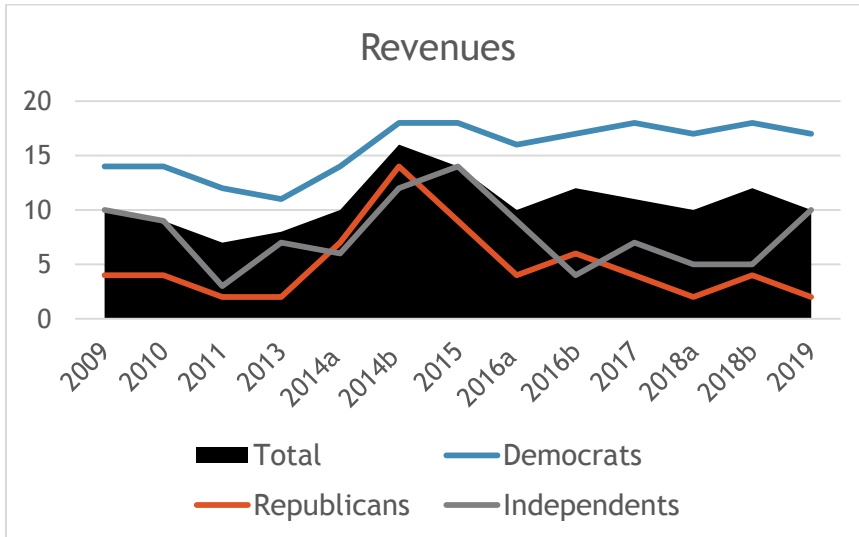
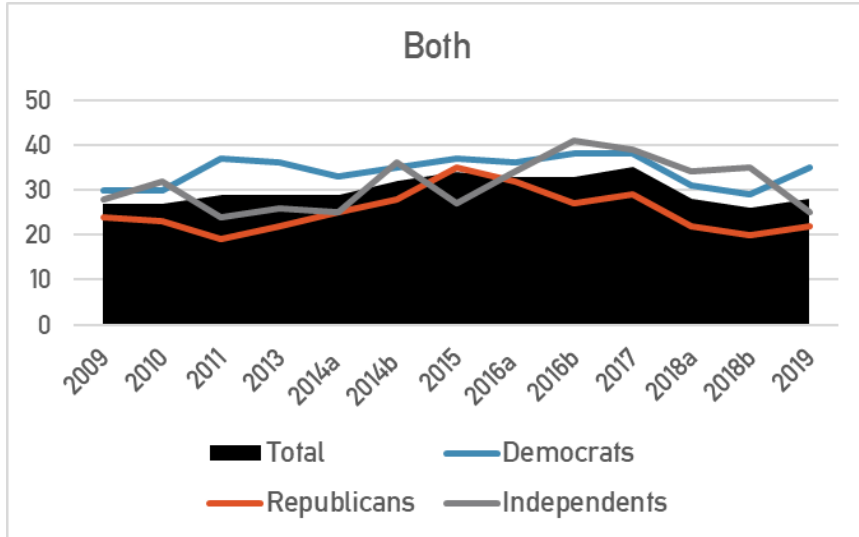
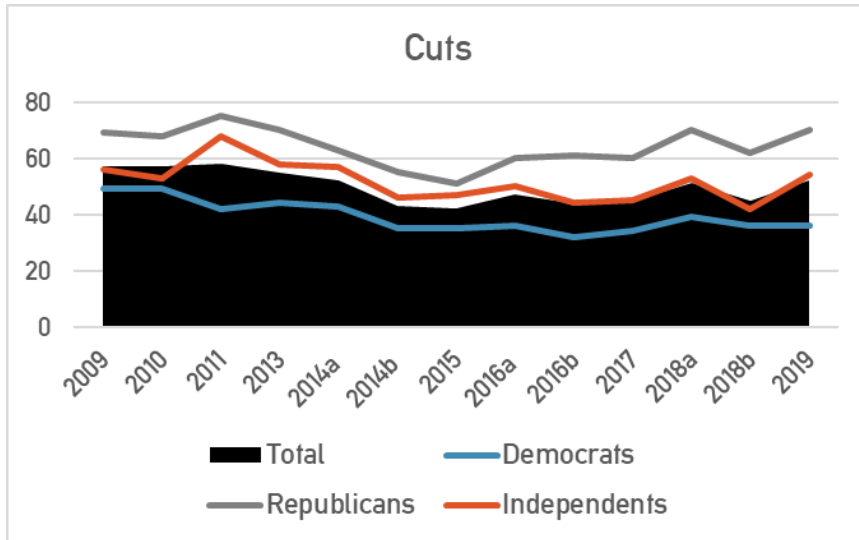


Figure 7. Budget Deficit by Political Party

This last measurement probably reflects the reaction of the majority of Independents to the fact that the Illinois individual income tax had been returned to a 4.95 percent flat rate in July of 2017. That also may partially account for the resurgence of the Republicans choice of that option in 2019 (70 percent).

The old aphorism holds that “death and taxes” are our inevitable lot in life. While that may be true, people can argue endlessly over what to do about them, how to prolong life and avoid as many taxes as possible. This is what Americans do, and the voters of Illinois are certainly no exception. The solution at the national level has been to run regular deficits in each year’s budget and embrace a total national debt that continues to grow and now reaches above 21 trillion dollars. The federal budget has not been balanced, or in the black, since Clinton’s second term, and the American public routinely endorses the endemic use of red ink and periodic cutting of taxes by their votes for president and congress.

The annual ritual of raising the debt ceiling, and the occasional shut down of the government over an impasse in recognizing the inevitable necessity of increasing that debt ceiling is just the symbolic disagreement of the two parties over the causes of the problem and most desired solutions. If tax cuts exacerbate the deficit problem, they are so desirable that the deficit and accumulated debt can be ignored in the interest of adding what President Trump called “rocket fuel” to an already healthy economy in order to increase income and ensure the decline of the unemployment rate, at least until the next election.

As Vanderbilt political scientist Larry Bartels’ definitive research shows, the management of taxes and the ignoring the deficit considerations have significant electoral benefits (Bartels, 2008). Politicians of both parties have learned the advantages of managing those benefits.

At the state level, it is not so simple, as both former governors Pat Quinn and Bruce Rauner discovered. This is because a state cannot run a deficit indefinitely, and if they cut taxes and the revenues available there are dire consequences, which are evident quickly. Among the most prominent are the rating agencies in New York which will continue to reduce the state’s bond ratings until they reach, or almost reach, the “junk bond” stage which happened to Illinois during both Quinn’s and Rauner’s administrations. Illinois ran that political and fiscal experiment in the 2015-2017 era, and the results and chain of causation were immediate and should have been clear for all to see. All of the thorny issues surrounding these budgetary cross-pressures and their inability to solve them is one of the major reasons both are *former* governors.

J. B. Pritzker is trying desperately to avoid that fate now, although the jury is still out on whether his ambitious revenue plans, especially the progressive income tax plan, will succeed. Our poll results indicate that the people of Illinois have not yet been completely convinced. That is what civic education and the public dialogue in a democracy are supposed to be all about, and our results indicate that we have failed in living up to that public education requirement. Consequently, our political systems, at both the national and state levels, have not been functioning effectively in this era of profound political polarization—especially in the realm of

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

taxation and budgeting. The results have been gridlock on the fundamental questions facing both the U. S. and the state of Illinois, a gridlock that has produced periodic governmental shut-downs and a toxic political environment at both levels. When it comes to the essential questions of how to pay for the basic requirements of “providing for the common defense and promoting the general welfare,” Illinois politicians have failed to deliver.

5.3.1 Potential Program Cuts

Exploring the opinions of the Illinois voters on budgeting and taxation has been a long-term commitment of the Simon Poll since its beginning. The issues surrounding budgets became even more insistent during the decade we have devoted to exploring this subject and documenting the views of the voters of Illinois. This period included the adoption of a temporary increase to the state’s income tax, which was followed by a reduction almost back to its earlier levels which then led to a budget crisis and the governmental stalemate that resulted in no budget being adopted by the General Assembly for two years.

As was recounted earlier, the stalemate was broken only when the legislature overrode the governor’s veto and adopted a budget for FY2018. The story continued as the budget and taxes became prominent issues in the 2018 campaign and the winner, J. B. Pritzker, ran on a platform of replacing the whole system with a graduated income tax - that issue will be on the ballot for 2020. Thus, these issues of revenues and expenditures are guaranteed to remain at the top of the state’s political agenda as we go into the 2020 election season.

The next set of questions asks respondents to consider some of the hard choices that would be presented if the state were to make the kinds of cuts necessary to balance the state budget without new revenue. We have already discovered that most voters most years insist that they favor cuts, and that the cuts can essentially be painless by just cutting “waste and fraud.” Believing in and wishing for painless cuts does not make it so. Those who understand the long-term structural deficits that Illinois has run for decades realize the serious delusion embedded in that pie-in-the-sky belief, which is all too often propagated by elected office holders in Illinois and the interest groups that help them win and stay in office.

During the spring of 2019 Governor Pritzker warned that if new revenue were not found, the state would have to take a 15 percent across the board cut in its programs, departments, and agencies, and that the reductions would be devastating to the fundamental programs the state supports. During the debate in the State Senate on May 1, 2019, Democrats warned that higher education in Illinois would again face serious and significant budget cuts if the Pritzker Administration’s plans for new revenue over the next two years, and later his graduated income tax were not adopted (Hancock, May 2, 2019, 1).

Our polls have consistently explored this very issue by asking voters’ opinions on programs that spend the biggest share of the state’s general fund. The items we included are some of the most expensive and most prominent services the state provides to its people on a routine and daily basis.

The question was phrased as follows:

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

“There have been a number of proposals to address the state’s budget problems by making cuts in state programs and services. I’m going to read several areas where people have suggested that the state could make cuts. For each one that I read, I’d like you to tell me whether you favor or oppose budget cuts in that area.”

From the results in Table 11 and Figure 8 it is pretty clear that, in general, program cuts are not a popular alternative in Illinois. There is not majority support for cutting any of the program alternatives we offered. The only options that garnered much support were cuts to the public pension systems, cuts to state spending on natural resources, such as state parks or environmental regulation, and cuts to the universities. On those the gap between support for and opposition to cuts was fairly close; however, even then more respondents opposed than supported such reductions.

Table 11. Favor Proposed Cuts

%. To state spending on pension benefits for state workers' retirement	2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2019
To state spending on pension benefits for state workers' retirement	22	42	46	46	41	44	49	45	44
To state spending on natural resources, such as state parks or environmental regulation	19	33	40	37	31	35	38	33	29
To state spending on state universities	21	34	34	38	37	36	35	30	38
To public safety, such as state police and prison operations	13	17	21	21	24	27	26	25	26
To state spending on programs for poor people	21	21	25	25	26	23	25	21	25
To state spending on K-12 education	12	13	14	17	18	16	17	15	18
To state spending on programs for people with mental or physical disabilities	N/A	12	12	12	15	13	15	11	13

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

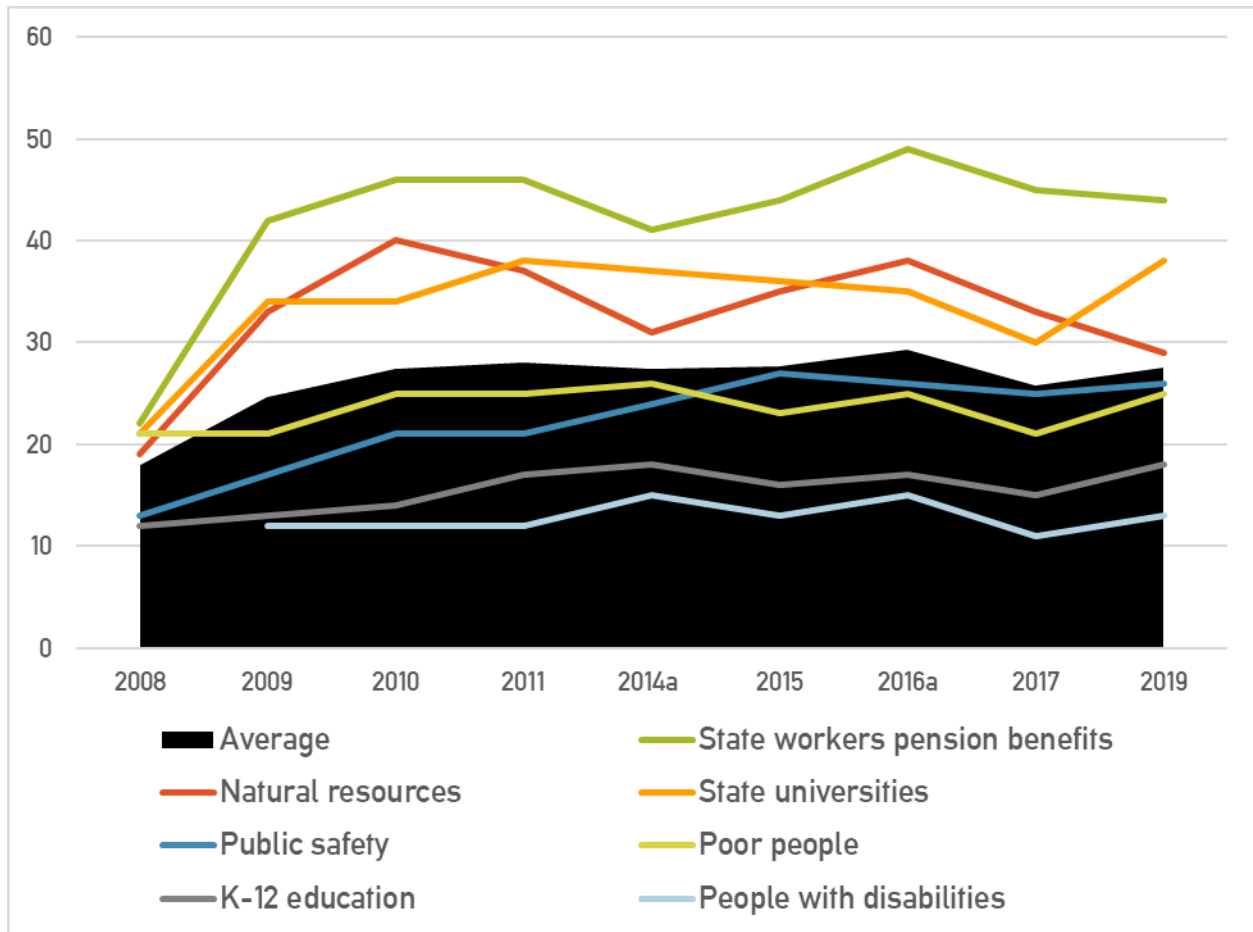


Figure 8. Favor Proposed Cuts

As members of university faculties who also have a stake in the State University Retirement System (SURS), two of the authors of this study are pained by these results; however, in both cases these results indicate that both the state's universities and its public employee retirement systems have some work to do in trying to increase public support and explaining persuasively why both universities and public pension systems are important to the future of the state.

The state pension plans, especially, have taken a beating in the past decade of budget wars as the state often failed to fully fund the annual costs which caused the deficit to increase each year the state failed to meet its obligations. For the universities the results of the budget wars were particularly painful, as they had already suffered from significant base budget decreases since 2000 and the cuts were especially deep in the two years without a state budget. Although Governor Pritzker proposed and the General Assembly approved a 5 percent increase to the base for FY2020, the result would still leave the universities at 96.4 percent of their 2015 base after the new funds were provided. However even for those two functions, most of the state's voters consistently opposed cutting them in all the years of our polling.

In the case of natural resources and state parks, the results also indicate that a significant share of the public, although not a majority, are willing to see cuts there. This should be

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

troublesome for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources; the record will show that IDNR has already suffered from continuous cuts over the past decade, which have led to significant reductions in programs and personnel. It is notable that the reduction to only 29 percent in those who would favor seeing their budget cut is the lowest since our initial poll when only 19 percent favored them being cut. It is likely that the well-publicized cases of the state parks being closed frequently, or subject to reduced hours and services, and all too evident examples of reduced maintenance have made an impact on the opinions of the general public regarding this generally popular service.

Overwhelming majorities of Illinois voters wanted, by a wide margin, to spare the other state programs we tested from future budget reductions. Illinois voters almost universally want elementary and secondary education, for example, protected against proposed budget cuts. Those who favor cuts in K-12 are in the teens in all our polls, and those who opposed them exceed 80 percent of our respondents in almost all the polls.

These results should be gratifying for those who work in elementary and secondary public education. Note that the 2008-2015 polls were conducted before the most recent budgetary crisis, which resulted in many state programs having their budgets reduced, jobs lost and programs closed or greatly reduced. That which was only a hypothetical exercise earlier became a stark reality in 2015, 2016, and 2017. Yet there was very little real movement in the public's opinion regarding which programs were the most and least supported and the levels of support they received. Starting in 2009 and extending to the latest poll in the spring of 2019 the level of consistency in the public's attitudes toward these programs and the option of cutting them was remarkably consistent.

Overall the results for this series of questions demonstrates very graphically the enduring consistency of public opinion in many issue areas. In fact, continuity is much more often the dominant quality of public opinion as opposed to change, particularly and especially dramatic change. Most of the time it takes a very high-profile event, or series of calamities, or a new and charismatic personality coming to the stage to make a lasting difference in the great tide of public opinion in this country or in Illinois, as our data predominantly indicate.

Other areas in which we asked about cuts could loosely be called social programs. We asked about reductions in programs for poor people and the disabled, and the results in Table 11 show that these programs are highly favored. In general only 20 to 25 percent of the respondents chose these programs for potential cuts in the decade covered by our polls.

We were surprised initially by these findings, since one could get the idea from much of today's political rhetoric that social programs are out of favor and opposed by many voters who think of them as coddling and corrupting people who are not working and who are undeserving of public assistance. The current movement, led by Arkansas and Kentucky, requiring recipients of basic Medicaid benefits to prove repeatedly that they are working, in school, or looking for work is just the most recent indicator of a major strand American political thought. These results, on the contrary, point to Illinois being a state with predominantly liberal, or at least non-judgmental, opinions on issues related to social welfare.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

Based on past research and the power of partisanship and ideology as explanatory variables, we would expect that conservatives and Republicans are more likely to favor budget cuts in specific areas, and liberals and Democrats are more likely to oppose them. Also, Independents and moderates should be found somewhere in-between.

Table 12. Cuts to Pension Benefits for State Workers' Retirement by Political Party.

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2019
	Total	22	42	46	46	41	44	49	45	44
	Democrats	20	30	33	31	34	35	41	34	33
	Republicans	24	56	58	64	55	58	62	59	61
	Independents	27	46	54	51	43	53	53	41	43
	Total	67	56	47	48	51	49	44	49	51
	Democrats	71	69	60	63	59	58	53	61	64
	Republicans	64	43	35	32	39	38	32	36	34
	Independents	65	52	38	40	46	41	37	44	52
	Total	11	1	7	7	7	7	7	6	5
	Democrats	10	1	7	6	7	8	7	5	3
	Republicans	13	1	6	4	6	4	6	5	5
	Independents	8	2	8	9	11	6	9	15	5

Table 13. Cuts to Natural Resources (Such as State Parks or Environmental Regulation) by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2019
	Total	19	33	40	37	31	35	38	33	29
	Democrats	15	21	33	27	24	28	29	22	19
	Republicans	25	51	49	51	45	46	51	47	42
	Independents	19	33	41	42	27	39	39	29	26
	Total	76	65	53	56	61	59	57	63	68
	Democrats	82	78	61	68	70	67	66	75	78
	Republicans	68	48	45	41	48	48	44	48	55
	Independents	79	65	50	51	65	53	58	62	67
	Total	5	2	7	8	7	6	5	5	3
	Democrats	3	1	6	6	6	5	5	4	3

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

Republicans	7	1	6	8	7	5	4	5	2
Independents	2	2	9	7	8	8	3	9	7

Table 14. Cuts to State Universities by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2019
	Total	21	34	34	38	37	36	35	30	38
	Democrats	19	21	25	26	28	24	23	15	26
	Republicans	27	45	46	54	50	37	51	47	55
	Independents	19	39	37	42	38	29	35	29	37
	Total	72	64	57	54	57	56	59	67	58
	Democrats	77	78	68	69	68	72	71	83	72
	Republicans	66	53	43	38	43	51	44	48	40
	Independents	69	61	54	49	51	60	58	65	58
	Total	7	1	9	8	7	8	6	3	4
	Democrats	5	1	7	6	4	7	6	2	3
	Republicans	7	2	11	8	7	7	5	4	5
	Independents	13	0	9	9	11	10	7	6	5

Table 15. Cuts to Public Safety (Such as State Police and Prisons) by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2019
	Total	13	17	21	21	24	27	26	25	26
	Democrats	14	16	21	20	24	30	28	28	30
	Republicans	13	15	23	23	23	22	23	19	22
	Independents	15	19	20	18	33	24	28	26	23
	Total	81	82	75	74	71	67	68	70	71
	Democrats	82	84	75	76	73	66	66	67	66
	Republicans	84	83	73	70	72	74	74	78	76
	Independents	79	80	74	78	59	63	66	62	71
	Total	5	1	5	6	7	7	6	5	4
	Democrats	4	0	4	4	3	4	6	5	5
	Republicans	3	2	4	7	5	5	3	2	2
	Independents	6	1	5	4	8	13	5	11	6

Table 16. Cuts to Programs for Poor People by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2019
	Total	21	21	25	25	26	23	25	21	25
	Democrats	13	10	14	14	15	14	17	13	13
	Republicans	33	39	40	41	42	39	38	34	43
	Independents	27	22	22	29	32	18	20	14	20
	Total	74	75	66	65	65	69	66	72	70
	Democrats	85	89	81	80	80	82	78	84	86
	Republicans	59	55	48	47	47	51	50	56	50
	Independents	63	74	68	57	56	69	68	78	73
	Total	5	4	9	10	9	8	9	6	5
	Democrats	2	1	5	5	5	4	4	3	1
	Republicans	8	6	12	12	11	10	12	9	7
	Independents	10	4	10	14	13	14	12	9	8

Table 17. Cuts to K-12 Education by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2019
	Total	12	13	14	17	18	16	17	15	18
	Democrats	6	8	7	9	10	11	12	8	10
	Republicans	20	17	22	26	29	22	22	22	31
	Independents	17	14	15	21	21	16	20	15	13
	Total	86	86	82	80	79	81	79	82	80
	Democrats	93	92	91	90	89	87	86	90	90
	Republicans	78	81	71	70	67	75	72	74	65
	Independents	85	86	81	76	73	80	77	79	82
	Total	2	1	4	4	3	3	4	3	2
	Democrats	1	0	1	2	1	2	2	2	1
	Republicans	3	2	7	4	5	3	6	4	4
	Independents	2	0	4	4	6	4	3	6	5

Table 18. Cuts to programs for people with Mental or Physical Disabilities by Political Party

%. Favor		2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2019
Favor	Total	12	12	12	15	13	15	11	13
	Democrats	8	9	10	10	10	13	10	9
	Republicans	14	17	15	21	16	17	12	17
	Independents	12	14	13	17	15	14	9	14
Oppose	Total	87	83	84	82	83	81	86	85
	Democrats	91	89	88	88	88	84	89	90
	Republicans	84	77	79	75	80	80	83	80
	Independents	86	81	83	79	80	80	86	82
Don't know	Total	1	4	4	3	4	4	3	2
	Democrats	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
	Republicans	2	6	6	4	4	3	5	3
	Independents	1	5	4	3	5	6	4	3

In general, those expectations were supported by the data. Conservatives and Republicans were especially more likely to support cuts to the public pension systems, universities and to natural resources programs, for example. In our two most recent polls, one taken during the budgetary crisis and the other taken after it had been addressed with a new budget, the differences between the more hawkish Republicans and the more cuts-averse Democrats was in the range of twenty points and seems to have increased. There is a partisan gap of 25 points on cuts to public pensions in 2017 and 28 points in 2019. The gap on the universities was 32 points in 2017, and 29 points in 2019. On natural resources, the gap was 25 and 23 points respectively in 2017 and 2019.

The partisan differences have been quite salient across the span of all our polls, and those differences seem to have increased in the most recent iteration. These results graphically depict the increasing depths of partisan polarization on important public policy matters. This polarization is making it increasingly difficult to make effective policy and to mount any kind of effective attack on the problems which confront us at the end of the second decade of the 21st Century.

5.3.2 Other Revenue Alternatives

The next section probes public opinion on alternative revenue sources to address the Illinois budget crisis. As noted above, at the beginning of FY2011 the income tax was raised on individuals and corporations. It was allowed to expire on January 1, 2015. The budget shortfall exploded, and many people immediately started talking about the real need for new revenue.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

In 2017 the income tax increase that had been allowed to expire was essentially restored to 4.95 on personal income and to 7.95 on corporations. This action was taken by the Democrats who controlled the General Assembly when they overrode Governor Rauner’s veto of the budget, and this override was accomplished with ten votes from the Republicans. This increase was hotly debated and became the fodder for Governor Rauner’s campaign in 2018 and for many other legislative races where most Republicans roundly denounced the increase and many Democrats tried to avoid the blame. Even though J. B. Pritzker won the governor’s race handily in November 2018 and the Democrats expanded their majorities in the House and Senate, the debate over taxes, and now Pritzker’s plan for a graduated income tax, reflect echoes of the earlier debate and will set the stage for the legislative races in 2020 and for the next governor’s race in 2022. Those 2020 legislative races are shaping up now.

Part of that debate over revenue and expenditures and the necessity of addressing the structural deficit has included the question of specific new sources of revenue. The budget shortfall is immediate and must be dealt with in the Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021 budgets, since the proposed constitutional amendment cannot take effect until 2021 at the earliest. We have continued to ask our series of questions about proposed new sources of revenue. Table 19 provides the views of the Illinois voters through the spring 2019 poll.

Table 19. Favor Proposed Revenue Sources⁵

%.	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016a	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Millionaire’s tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	68	76	75	78	76	74	71
Graduated income tax	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	66	66	72	72	67	67
Tax retirement income over \$50k	-	-	-	43	-	53	-	56	54	55	52	43	59
Expand gambling	42	47	50	57	50	53	-	53	50	55	49	51	57
Tax services	28	45	42	50	37	44	-	49	45	36	39	36	36
Raise gas tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	41	42	42	35	37
Tax retirement income	-	-	-	21	-	22	-	24	22	23	22	21	23
Raise sales tax	22	22	25	22	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

⁵ Note: the exact wording of the questions on services changed slightly in 2016; the wording on the taxing of retirement income changed from \$50k to \$100k after 2016; and the question on the millionaires tax in 2014b added “...to provide additional funds to public schools”, and the gas tax question in 2015 listed a specific amount of 10 cents. Otherwise the questions have remained consistent across the polls.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

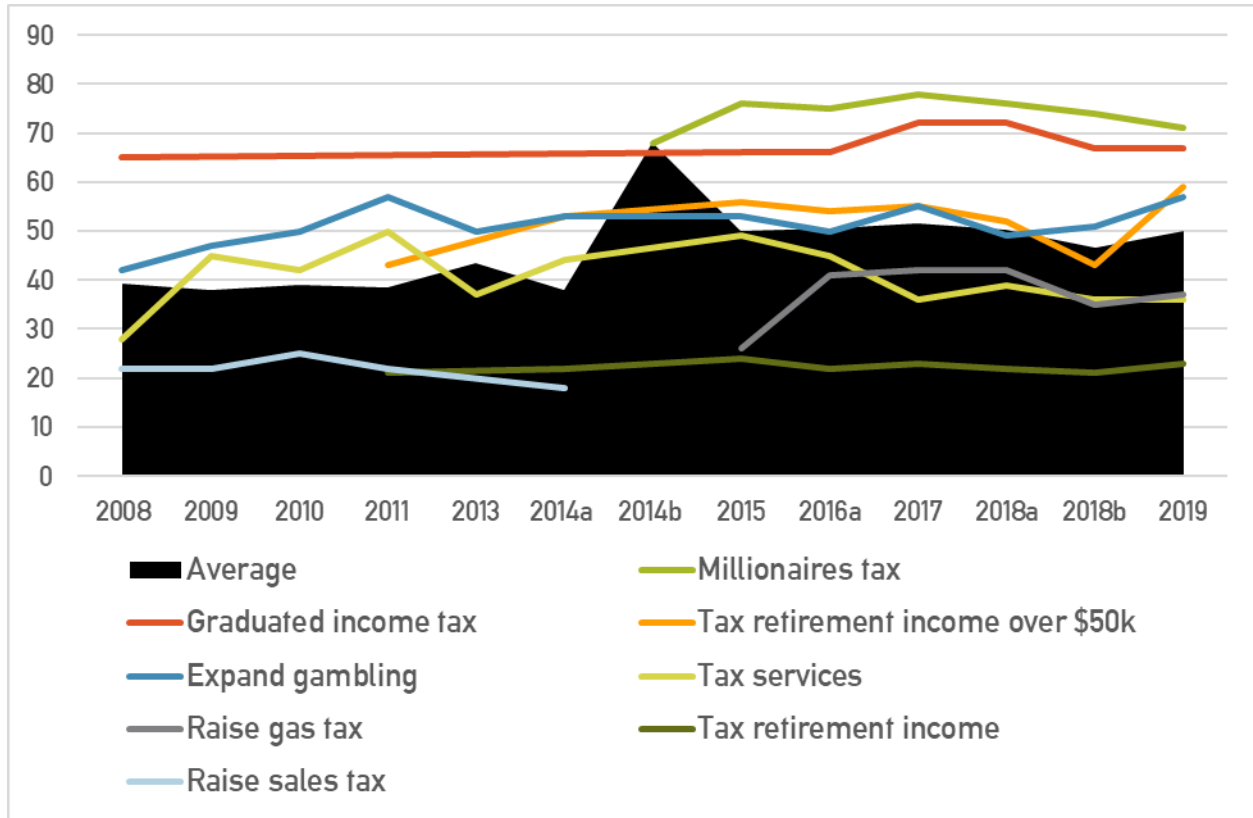


Figure 9. Favor Proposed Revenue Sources

5.3.2.1 Gambling

Support for expanded gambling in Illinois started at 42 percent and 47 percent respectively in our first two polls taken in 2008 and 2009. Then it increased to 50 percent and 57 percent in the next two years. In the nine years since 2010, support has been above a majority with the lone exception of 49 percent in 2018. In fact, the 57 percent in 2019 was the highest level this item has garnered since 2011.

It may be that at some level most Illinois voters have accepted the proposition that some new revenue is needed, or at the least, that if the revenue increases are virtually inevitable, then expanding gambling is one of the least objectionable sources. Gambling is all around us, almost no matter where one lives in the U. S. today, and it has been ubiquitous in neighboring states since they first introduced river boat gambling on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

Legislators across the nation are notorious for turning to so-called “sin taxes” on gambling, cigarettes and liquor to raise new revenue. No one has ever lost an election based on a vote for increasing the sin taxes.

Table 20. Expand Gambling by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Favor	Total	42	47	50	57	50	53	53	50	55	49	51	57
	Democrats	45	48	53	60	55	58	54	51	54	52	52	59
	Republicans	41	36	48	53	45	47	50	50	54	47	51	57
	Independents	44	51	51	59	42	56	54	47	55	48	48	54
Oppose	Total	52	53	46	39	44	44	43	46	41	46	42	40
	Democrats	51	51	43	36	40	40	42	44	42	44	39	38
	Republicans	52	64	50	43	50	50	46	47	43	49	46	41
	Independents	50	48	43	37	53	38	41	52	38	44	46	43
Don't know	Total	6	0	4	4	6	4	5	4	4	6	7	3
	Democrats	4	1	4	4	6	2	4	5	4	4	8	3
	Republicans	6	0	2	4	5	3	3	4	2	4	3	2
	Independents	6	0	6	4	5	6	4	1	8	8	6	3

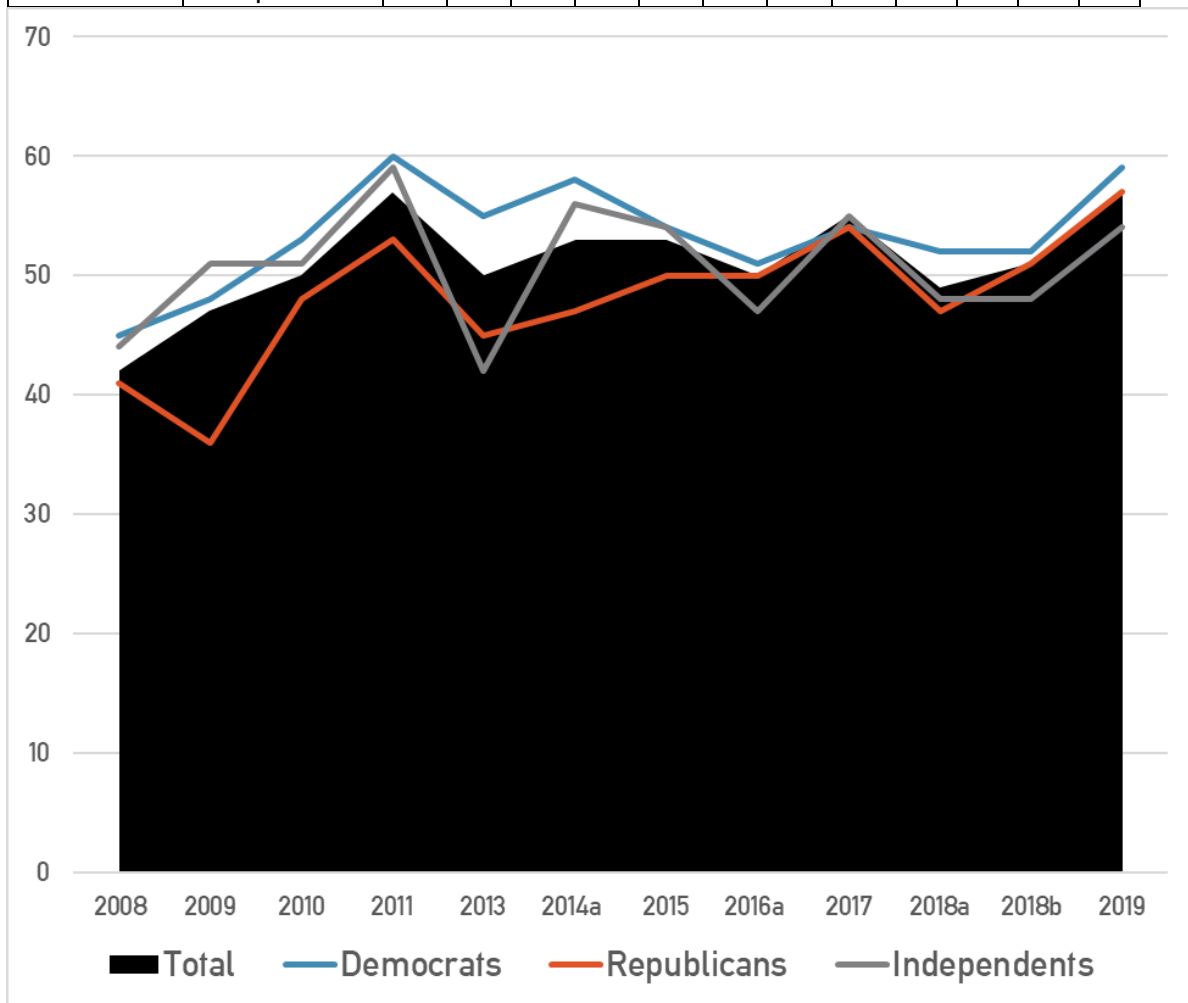


Figure 10. Expand Gambling by Political Party (Favor)

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

The City of Chicago has long wanted at least one casino. They point out with some logic that it seems unfair that the largest city in the state by far is denied a casino when a much smaller place like Metropolis, in the deep southern tip of the state, has had a casino for decades. Legislators from the Chicago area have took the lead in the most recent drive for expanding gambling and, with the assistance of Governor J. B. Pritzker, this became one of the most likely sources for new revenues. The General Assembly approved it at the end of the spring term.

Of course, gambling is not free. Numerous social costs are borne by those who are addicted, and by their families, employers, and the general public, but those costs are rarely felt directly by the public. Further, the direct costs to the individual gamblers tend to fall disproportionately on lower socio-economic groups and people who are not politically powerful.

Over the eleven years we have asked about gambling expansion, opinion on the subject has bounced up and down, but Democrats, on average, have been more likely to support the idea (see Table 20 and Figure 10). Since 2015, support from both partisan groups has been at 50 percent or above, with the one exception of 2018, when it was 47 percent among Republicans. Then, in our most recent poll in 2019, Democrats were at 59 percent and Republicans were at 57 percent, near the highest level ever for either group. Independents lagged, slightly, at 54 percent. Expanding gambling, and presumably the state revenues gained from it, appeared to be one of those proposals whose time had come in the revenue-starved Illinois early in J. B. Pritzker's new administration. The proposal passed in the final week of the session providing a very substantial expansion of gambling in Illinois and hopes for significant new state revenue.

5.3.2.2 Increasing the State Sales Tax

One plausible option discussed periodically is increasing the state sales tax. The sales tax at state and local levels is often turned to, and it can be a popular alternative for legislators when the state is in dire need of new revenues. It is placed on widely used goods and services, and the burdens are shared by all consumers. It has the further advantage of seeming to be fairly innocuous, almost invisible on the minor sales transactions of daily life. At the check-out counter consumers presumably just consider the total as the cost of the item and pay little attention to the added tax. Thus, when legislators are pushed into a corner and must increase revenues, they frequently turn to the sales tax.

However, simply increasing the state sales tax is not particularly popular in Illinois. The basic state sales tax is 5.0 percent plus 1.25 percent collected by the state and returned to local governments (1.0 percent to cities and 0.25 percent to the counties), making the base total 6.25 percent. In addition, local governments can add another increment to the 6.25 percent (under some fairly stringent limits). When the local overlay of sales tax is taken into account the overall sales tax rate can reach 8 to 11 percent range in some jurisdictions. This has not been, then, a popular option for state legislators and governors recently in Illinois.

Our polls also show limited overall support among voters. In fact, it was the least popular revenue-raising proposal from 2008 to 2010, when we first included it in our polls (see Table 21). Opposition stood near or above three-quarters across the time period we covered.

Table 21. Raise Sales Tax by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a
Favor	Total	22	22	25	22	18
	Democrats	25	19	27	25	23
	Republicans	16	19	20	20	12
	Independents	23	28	32	20	29
Oppose	Total	74	77	73	74	79
	Democrats	70	80	71	71	73
	Republicans	83	81	77	78	86
	Independents	69	72	66	77	70
Don't know	Total	4	1	3	4	3
	Democrats	5	1	2	4	3
	Republicans	1	1	3	2	3
	Independents	8	0	3	3	2

In addition, there was such opposition that the partisan differences were slight, although Democrats were somewhat more supportive of the idea than Republicans most years. While Democrats were somewhat more likely than Republicans to support the idea, their favorability toward increasing the sales tax never reached three in ten, peaking at 27 percent in 2010. Opposition from the Republicans was well above 70 percent two years and above 80 percent in three of the five years.

The Simon Poll results show that attitudes toward increasing the sales tax were relatively stable over time and support for raising it remained low. This is one of the reasons we did not include it in several of our subsequent polls and have not included it at all since 2014. If it becomes a feasible option and a part of the public dialogue in Illinois, we will consider adding it again.

5.3.2.3 Expanding the Categories of Services

Expanding the sales tax base to include a much wider array of services is an idea that comes and goes, and occasionally comes back again, among the civic groups, think-tanks, pundits, and opinion leaders who grapple with the hard questions of where Illinois can get more money to support the government services its citizens, by their votes and actions, agree the state needs. Experts on this matter frequently point out that our sales tax system was constructed in the era when manufacturing and agriculture dominated our economy (Civic Federation, February 13, 2019).

Table 22. Tax Services by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Favor	Total	28	45	42	50	37	44	49	45	36	39	36	36
	Democrats	32	52	43	56	48	51	50	52	45	45	40	47
	Republicans	22	41	34	42	24	37	51	38	28	32	29	30
	Independents	27	44	43	54	33	43	46	43	30	36	43	29
Oppose	Total	69	54	53	45	60	53	46	52	60	58	58	61
	Democrats	66	48	46	40	50	47	45	44	52	52	56	50
	Republicans	74	59	60	54	73	60	47	60	70	65	67	66
	Independents	71	56	52	44	47	54	51	52	64	59	51	67
Don't know	Total	3	0	1	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	6	3
	Democrats	2	0	5	3	2	2	5	4	3	3	4	2
	Republicans	3	0	6	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	4	4
	Independents	6	0	5	3	2	3	3	5	6	4	6	5

Today, services and technology dominate. There are only 17 basic categories of services taxed today in Illinois, even though there are 168 service categories taxed somewhere in the U.S. The average per state is 56, so Illinois clearly has a very narrow base to its service tax. We have changed the wording marginally some years to reflect various proposals being considered. Most recently we compared Illinois to our neighbor, Wisconsin, which taxes more services. Our polls have consistently shown some support for this idea. It started at only 28 percent in 2008, and then went to 45 percent and 42 percent in the next two years. It reached its high-water mark at 50 percent in 2011, then sank to 37 percent and the mid-forties for the years up until 2016. It then dropped down by a noticeable amount into the thirties starting in 2017 and extending through the most recent poll in 2019 at 36 percent. This most recent sag in public support may be a reaction to the re-established income tax increase which came in 2017.

The differences on expanding the range of services taxed materialize in predictable ways. That is, overall the Democrats are a good deal more in favor of this idea and the Republicans more opposed with the Independents in between but leaning a bit more toward the Democrats.

Governor Bruce Rauner discussed this alternative in his first run for the governor's office in 2014; however, he abandoned it after he got elected. J. B. Pritzker discussed the possibility in at least one campaign rally in 2018; however, he also abandoned the concept as soon as the next day, reportedly in the wake of his campaign staff persuading him it was a loser of a proposition. Our data tend to indicate that the idea has appeal to public policy specialists, but not to a majority of voters. There are simply no painless ways to increase taxes, even if they are the relatively innocuous taxes added to the retail bills we pay. Nevertheless, getting such increases through a legislative body, with its wide array of interest groups and lobbyists who dominate the American political process and who will weigh-in heavily in the public discourse if any

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

additional taxes threaten their business or industry even marginally, makes it very difficult to take the steps that budget technocrats believe to be rational, and even long over-due.

5.3.2.4 Taxing Retirement Income

Illinois is one of only three states that do not levy the state income tax on retirement income. This is a great benefit to retirees, many of whom retired on relatively low incomes and who had given up some of their current pay benefits in order to get this retirement income exemption. It also should make Illinois an attractive state for retirees to settle in, although the sometimes-harsh winters tend to mitigate that advantage somewhat. Not surprisingly, the exemption for retirement income has long been contentious, and the idea of applying the state income tax to it has been debated often. As we saw in Table 19, statewide support for this idea has been stable in a narrow range of 21 percent to 24 percent for the years we have asked the question.

Table 23 shows that this unpopularity extends across all partisan categories. The Democrats are somewhat higher in their level of support for taxing retirement income than Republicans and Independents. In our most recent poll, there was an eleven-point gap, with the Democrats at 29 percent and the Republicans and Independents both at only 18 percent; however, 67 percent of Democrats were opposed to this idea and well over three-quarters of Republicans and Independents opposed it most years. Not surprisingly, then, this proposal did not get on Governor Pritzker's list of possible revenue sources even though he was scouring the field for any potentially saleable idea of raising new revenue to attack Illinois' structural deficit (Petrella, February, 13, 2019; Civic Federation, February 13, 2019).

Table 23. Tax Retirement Income by Political Party

%. Favor		2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
	Total	21	22	24	22	23	22	21	23
	Democrats	23	25	28	26	24	24	24	29
	Republicans	19	16	22	18	24	20	19	18
	Independents	23	27	16	16	17	19	21	18
	Total	73	72	70	73	72	74	72	73
	Democrats	73	69	65	68	72	72	70	67
	Republicans	77	78	73	78	70	77	77	79
	Independents	72	71	82	79	74	76	71	77
	Total	5	7	6	6	6	4	7	4
	Democrats	4	6	7	6	4	4	5	4
	Republicans	4	6	6	4	5	2	4	3
	Independents	5	2	2	4	9	5	8	5

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

5.3.2.4.1 Tax Retirement Income only for Higher Income Earners

One way to make a retirement tax more progressive in Illinois would be to exempt the first \$50,000 or the first \$100,000 of retirement income. This would then give a tax break to low income retirees while forcing those with above-average retirement incomes to pay some level of income tax. We started by asking about a \$50,000 exemption up through 2016, and then after 2016 we changed to a \$100,000 level of exemption. Either way, the proposal has been popular with well over a majority of the voters with the notable exception of our fall poll of 2018 when only 43 percent favored it and 44 percent opposed.

Table 24 shows the results by party. From 2014 through the first poll in 2018, majorities of respondents statewide favored this plan although it was clearly more popular among Democrats and Independents than Republicans. It may be that the 2019 results are an aberration because this proposal was caught up in the larger debate over J. B Pritzker’s graduated income tax proposal, which is a separate but related proposal. It will require additional polls in the future to determine the fate of this concept. It will also be impacted by the 2020 referendum on the income tax plan advanced by Governor Pritzker.

Table 24. Tax Retirement Income over \$50k or \$100k by Political Party

%. Favor		2011	2014a	2015	2016a	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Favor	Total	43	53	56	54	55	52	43	59
	Democrats	50	58	61	58	63	58	50	68
	Republicans	34	46	36	50	46	44	36	51
	Independents	42	62	49	59	64	50	41	56
Oppose	Total	49	35	34	41	39	43	44	34
	Democrats	42	31	28	36	31	37	38	26
	Republicans	60	44	36	46	50	53	54	43
	Independents	50	29	44	37	33	46	46	37
Don't know	Total	8	12	11	6	5	5	13	7
	Democrats	8	11	11	6	6	4	12	7
	Republicans	6	10	10	4	4	4	10	6
	Independents	8	10	7	4	2	5	13	8

5.3.2.5 Graduated (or Progressive) Income Tax System

Well before Governor Pritzker came onto the scene with his proposal for a graduated or progressive income tax, there was real interest in the basic idea. This is why we included the question in our very first Simon Poll in 2008. We have included it annually since 2015. It has been supported by statewide majorities of well over 60 percent and most recently at or above three-quarters in both 2017 and 2018. In 2019, after the proposal became an integral part of

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

Pritzker’s platform 2018, and his plan took on a partisan implication, the 67 percent who supported it in our 2019 poll constitutes exactly two-thirds of Illinois voters.

Even with that level of public support, however, the plan faced an uncertain future in the Illinois General Assembly. After a fierce debate in the General Assembly with every Republican in the House and several in the Senate taking the floor to condemn the plan, it passed both houses with only Democratic votes and unanimous opposition from the GOP. It now faces an even more uncertain future when it will be placed on the 2020 general election ballot, since it will require a Constitutional Amendment to institute the progressive tax.

The 1970 Illinois Constitution spelled out a flat-rate income tax for individuals and corporations. In addition, it effectively capped the corporate tax rate by requiring a ratio of not more than 8 to 5 between the individual rate and the corporate rate (Article 9, Sec. 3 a). This was a compromise produced by the Constitutional Convention of 1969 and was meant to help gain popular support, most notably from business interests, in order to win the referendum on the new constitution. Since then, the flat rate and the 8 to 5 ratio have been jealously guarded by those who like the status quo and benefit from it. Governor Pritzker also included the 8 to 5 ratio implicitly in his new graduated income tax plan for the 2020 ballot. There are currently two major PAC’s taking the field of battle and already raising big money and taking out television and newspaper ads, one to support the proposal and one to oppose it in the 2020 general election. .

Table 25. Graduated Income Tax by Political Party

%. Favor		2008	2015	2016^a	2017	2018^a	2018^b	2019
	Total	65	66	66	72	72	67	67
	Democrats	79	80	83	87	86	87	88
	Republicans	49	50	44	55	51	42	43
	Independents	60	65	68	71	69	57	65
	Oppose	29	28	28	24	24	26	31
	Democrats	16	16	12	10	11	9	10
	Republicans	46	45	51	42	44	51	55
	Independents	31	28	27	26	27	34	31
	Don't know	5	6	6	4	4	7	2
	Democrats	4	4	4	3	3	5	1
	Republicans	5	5	5	3	4	7	2
	Independents	8	7	5	3	4	10	4

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

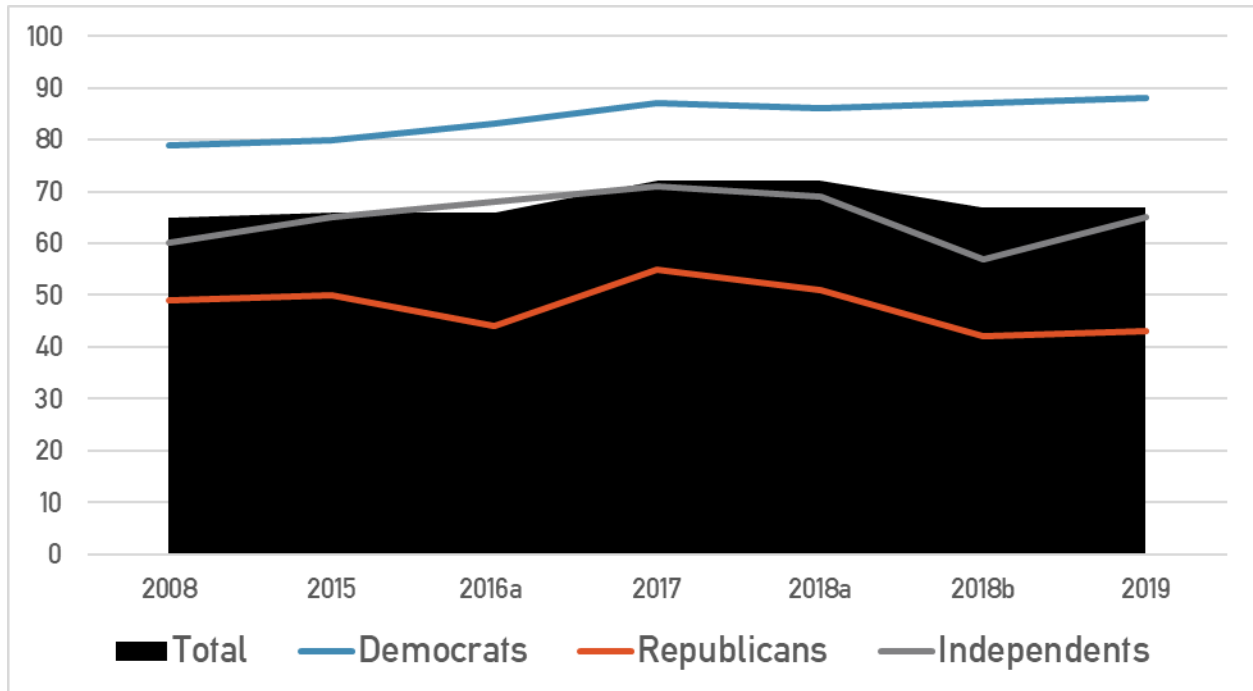


Figure 11. Graduated Income Tax by Political Party (Favor)

Forty-three states have an individual income tax system. Thirty-three of those states have a graduated or progressive system, and eight have a flat rate system including Illinois (Scarboro, 2018, 1). The federal system also uses the graduated system as well so this is not a new or particularly radical proposal. Nevertheless, the battle will be hard-fought, and the results of the referendum will likely be close.

To no one's surprise, Democrats have been significantly more likely than Republicans to favor imposing a graduated Illinois income tax rate in all the polls we have taken (see Table 25 and Figure 11). The gap in favorability between Democrats and Republicans in the 2016 survey was 39 percentage points. This gap then declined to 32 percent in 2017 and increased to 45 percent in both 2018 and 2019. Independents also favored the graduated tax by well over a majority, and often by levels very close to the Democrats.

It is notable, on the other hand, that in our 2017 poll, most (55 percent) Republicans favored the graduated income tax. This declined to 42 percent and 43 percent in 2018 and 2019. The intervening variable, of course, was the 2018 campaign for governor, during which J. B. Pritzker ran hard in support of this issue while former Governor Bruce Rauner opposed it. If, as the Responsible Parties model requires, the campaign for governor constituted a referendum on the candidates' platforms, Democrats should have continued to support it, and some Republicans would have opposed, it because of the campaign.

It is widely recognized in the political science literature that intense minorities can and often do win in the legislative arena. Add to this equation the importance and impact of motivated and mobilized intense minorities, the power of well financed interest groups, and their highly effective lobbyists in Washington or Springfield, and it is easy to see why a simple

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

majority, even one as large as two-thirds or three-fourths of the voting population often does not prevail in the legislative arena.

This case epitomizes the age-old discussion and discrepancy between those who emphasize that the United States is a democracy versus those who emphasize that it is a republic, where political leaders, and often political and economic elites rule (Dahl, 1961; Bartels, 2008.) In Illinois in 2019 and 2020 we are about to run a great natural social science experiment on the power of public opinion in the legislative process and the ability of a clear majority to prevail in a representative body and then in a referendum proposal. Pritzker's so-called "fair tax" will be voted on in the fall of 2020 only after tens of millions of dollars will have been spent on both sides to try to enshrine their preferences into the Illinois Constitution on one of the most important issues a state or nation can face: **who benefits and who pays, and at what levels, for the public goods and services in the portfolios of most modern American states.**

It is nice to have majority support in trying to build a legislative coalition to create a new law or pass a constitutional amendment, but that is certainly not a *sufficient condition*, as Governor Pritzker will discover. We will see whether clear majority support for a graduated income tax is enough to get final approval from both houses of the Illinois legislature in the face of almost universal opposition from Republican legislators and many powerful interest groups such as the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the Illinois Manufacturers Association (O'Connor, May 4, 2019).

5.3.2.6 A Tax on Million-Dollar Earners

A variation on the graduated income tax is a plan that has been advocated for some time by Speaker of the House, Mike Madigan, who proposed that the state increase the income tax an extra three percent on those who make more than \$1 million per year. In fact, he and the Democrats in the General Assembly placed this question on an advisory referendum on the November 2014 general election ballot. It passed handily with a 60 percent favorable vote. It is notable how closely the voting results resembled the 68 percent of our statewide poll respondents who favored the proposal that year. This was one instance in which majority opinion was turned into a voting majority, of somewhat smaller size—but it was only a non-binding referendum. A constitutional amendment will be a much more difficult proposition.

Since 2014, the popular majority in favor of "the millionaire's tax" has only grown. By 2015 it was 76 percent and it has stayed at three-quarters of the voters, or above, until our most recent poll, in which support dipped to 71 percent. This slight decline could be margin of error, or it could also reflect the prominence of J. B. Pritzker's advocacy for the progressive income tax, with this proposal constituting a variation on the theme. In our 2016 paper we wrote, "This option may come back into the mix if the state ever decides to get serious about raising additional revenue." This proved to be a good prediction as the proposal is clearly relevant to the current conflict over the basic Illinois tax system and the potential for fundamentally transforming it in 2020.

Table 26. Millionaire’s Tax by Political Party

%. Favor		2014b	2015	2016a	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Favor	Total	68	76	75	78	76	74	71
	Democrats	84	86	88	90	88	88	90
	Republicans	41	63	56	63	60	53	51
	Independents	66	72	77	83	72	74	69
Oppose	Total	28	21	23	19	21	21	27
	Democrats	13	11	10	8	11	9	9
	Republicans	55	34	42	33	36	41	47
	Independents	27	25	22	15	27	21	27
Don’t know	Total	5	3	2	3	3	5	2
	Democrats	3	2	2	2	1	3	1
	Republicans	5	3	1	3	4	6	2
	Independents	7	3	1	2	1	5	4

Further evidence of the partisan differences we noted in 2019 is provided in Table 26 and Figure 12 which disaggregate the statewide results by party identification. There the Republican identifiers are significantly less supportive of the millionaires’ tax than Democrats and Independent are. Since 2014 support for this idea has grown into the upper eighties among Democrats and reached the spectacular level of 90 percent in the 2019 poll. While noting that Republican support levels are much lower, at the same time it is evident from Table 26 that in 2015, over six in ten Republican respondents (63 percent) favored this surcharge on the million dollar per year earners, and it was the same in 2017. Then it declined to 60 percent in 2018 and declined to a bare majority of 51 percent in 2019, with 47 percent opposed.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

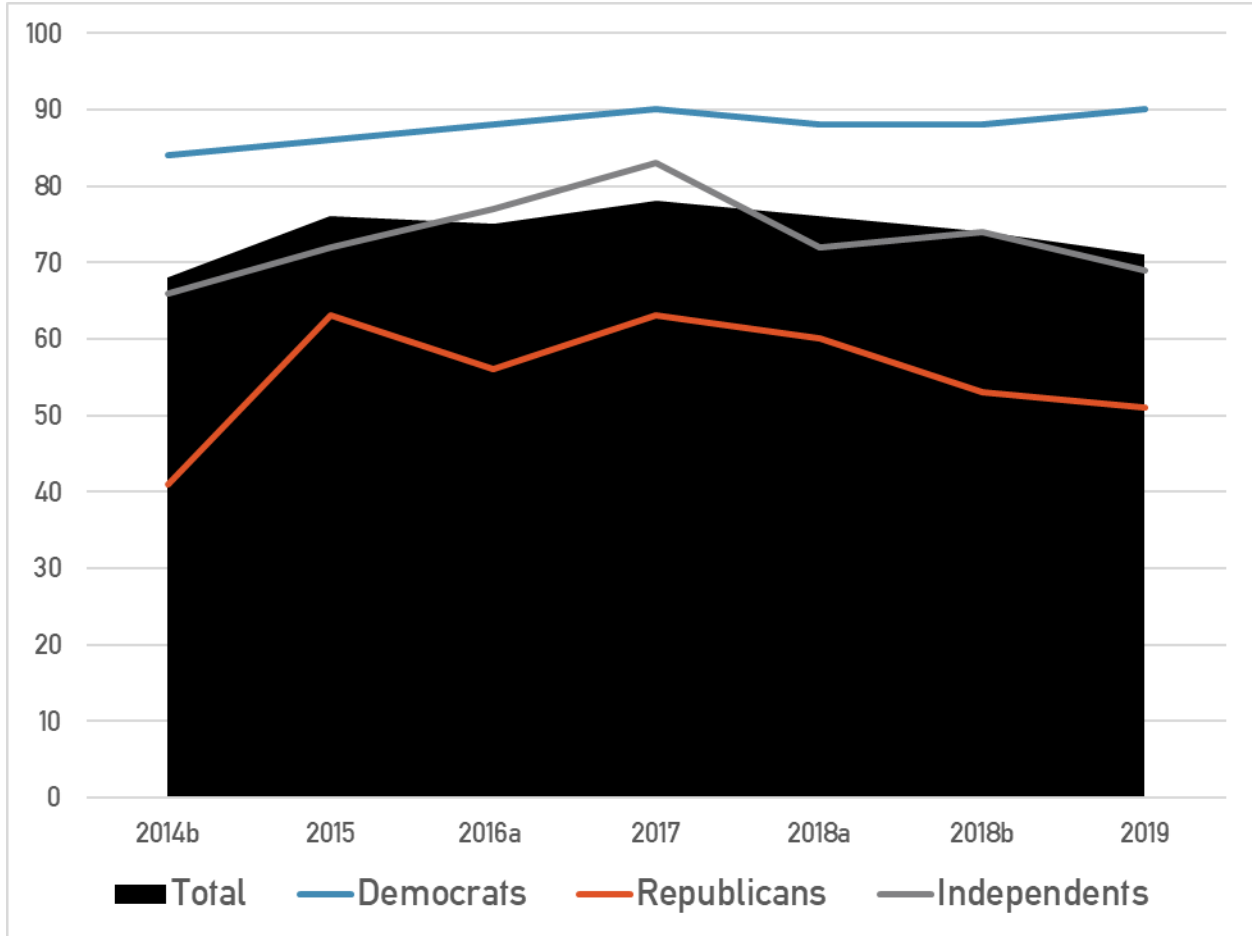


Figure 12. Millionaire's Tax by Political Party (Favor)

Again, we had an election for governor in November of 2018 and Pritzker and his allies began their campaign for the constitutional amendment in the spring of 2019. Included in the governor's graduated income tax campaign in the spring of 2019 was the specification of the brackets (O'Connor, May 4, 2019). Pritzker claimed that his plan would actually reduce taxes for 97 percent of Illinois taxpayers, or all those making less than \$250,000 per year. Then those between \$250,001 and \$500,000 would see increases (in a range from 4.95 to 7.75) and for those making from \$500,001 to one million the increase would be from 4.95 up to 7.85. Those making above one million dollars per year would experience a three percent increase from 4.95 to 7.95. Perhaps not coincidentally, this 3 percent increase for million-dollar earners closely mirrors the original Madigan plan, which, again, voters approved by a 60 percent majority

The corporate tax rate would go from 7.0% to 7.99%. In addition corporations have to pay a personal property replacement tax of 2.5%, a decade's old compromise reached when Illinois did away with the requirement that corporations had to pay the personal property taxes, a tax which a number of other states still have. There is some debate over whether this is simply the same thing as a corporate income tax by another name (Klemens, January, 2018, 10-14). Late in the spring session, there was added to Pritzker's original plan some property tax relief

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

which was designed to attract more votes in the General Assembly, and more voters when the 2020 referendum will be held. If passed, the graduated income tax is projected by the administration to add \$3.5 billion to the state's revenue starting in 2021.

5.3.2.7 A Capital Development Bill Funded by Gas Tax Increase

J. B. Pritzker and his administration also advanced a new capital development bill to fund infrastructure additions and improvements. As indicated in the introduction, this would become the first capital bill to pass the General Assembly since Pat Quinn's \$31 billion 2009 capital campaign, which he called the "Illinois Jobs Act." That bill was paid for by a variety of new taxes, including video gambling, online lottery profits, sales taxes on candy and alcohol (*note: all sin taxes*) and an increase in fees for car and truck tags. Before that, the last capital campaign had been in 1999 with George Ryan's "Illinois FIRST" program, with a \$12 billion price tag. It was funded by increases in vehicle license tags and increased taxes on alcohol (Pearson and Petrella, April 28, 2019, 1-A).

As the terminology goes, this bill provided new money for both "horizontal" projects (i.e. new and improved highways, streets, bridges, airports, mass transit, etc.) favored by the unions and the state's contractors, and "vertical" projects (i.e. new buildings, and renovation and repairs to existing buildings) favored by universities, community colleges, hospitals, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Natural Resources, Veterans' Affairs, etc.

Pritzker and his administration launched the debate at the start of the spring 2019 legislative session. While Democrats took the lead, many Republican legislators had projects they wanted for their districts, and they showed a keen interest in breaking the decade-long legislative logjam that had stopped new capital bills in the past. Hearings were held across the state with legislators from both parties in attendance, where they listened to a wide variety of groups and individuals who described their compelling needs for funding to repair buildings and highways suffering from years of deferred maintenance and plans for new buildings and facilities.

The devil, however, is in the details, in this case the omnipresent detail of how to pay for an ambitious capital bill which has many potential beneficiaries— but who will pay and how is always the key question. The most likely answer to this question for a capital bill was to increase the state's tax on motor fuel. This is the answer the federal government and most states use, and a number of other states have recently increased their gasoline taxes to pay for similar infrastructure improvements in their states.

The Illinois tax on gasoline is currently 19 cents per gallon. This is higher than some adjacent states and lower than others. The state also adds the state sales tax to the price of each gallon sold which is different from most other states. Initially, there were various proposals in the General Assembly, some to increase by relatively small increments and at least one to double it to 38 cents. One legislator even advocated an increase to 44 cents. Other legislators wanted different solutions to the how to pay for the ambitious plan, but no other option seemed to garner the early attention focused on the gas tax because of the amount of revenue it could raise and the long term stability of that revenue stream. Governor Pritzker did not reveal his preferences early

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

on in this debate, but when he did it was to endorse the 19 cent motor fuel tax increase (to 38 cents a gallon), tax electric vehicles for the first time as well as to increase car and truck license fees and other smaller items.

We started including this question in our 2015 and 2016 polls and included it in each subsequent year. As one can see, by 2016 there was a relatively solid level of support for this idea even if not a majority (see **Tables 19 and 27 and Figure 13**).

Table 27. Raise Gas Tax by Political Party⁶

%.		2015	2016a	2017	2018a	2018b	2019
Favor	Total	26	41	42	42	35	37
	Democrats	34	47	49	50	46	50
	Republicans	18	32	35	36	25	26
	Independents	25	44	41	34	29	32
Oppose	Total	72	56	56	57	60	61
	Democrats	64	49	48	49	49	48
	Republicans	81	66	63	63	74	72
	Independents	74	53	56	64	63	66
Don't know	Total	2	3	2	1	5	2
	Democrats	2	3	3	1	4	2
	Republicans	1	1	2	1	1	2
	Independents	1	3	3	1	8	2

Those who favored this proposal totaled 41 percent in 2016, 42 percent in 2018, and then dipped to 37 percent in 2019. In 2016 and 2017 there were 56 percent of the respondents opposed and in 2018 it was 57 percent opposed. In our most recent poll, opposition had grown to 61 percent. It is not at all clear what new revenue source would be appealing to those who oppose the gas tax increase, and generally this is also true of the state legislators who make up the opposition. Perhaps that is one reason the legislators, in a two-day overtime session on June 1 and 2, cobbled together a rather significant majority, composed by almost all the Democrats, but also supported by twenty Republicans, to pass this far reaching capital improvements bill. In order to get the necessary Republican votes, Pritzker, and the Democratic leaders of the General Assembly agreed to a number of business reform measures, most notably the repeal of the franchise tax, one which was particularly onerous to small businesses, and one which the Republicans had wanted to eliminate for many years. They also agreed to place all the sales tax

⁶ In 2015 the question asked “would you favor or oppose raising the state gasoline tax by 10 cents per gallon?” While in 2016 the question was just asked about a general gas tax increase.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

generated from motor fuel sales in a “lock box” to ensure that they would be used only for transportation projects (Miller, June 9, A11).

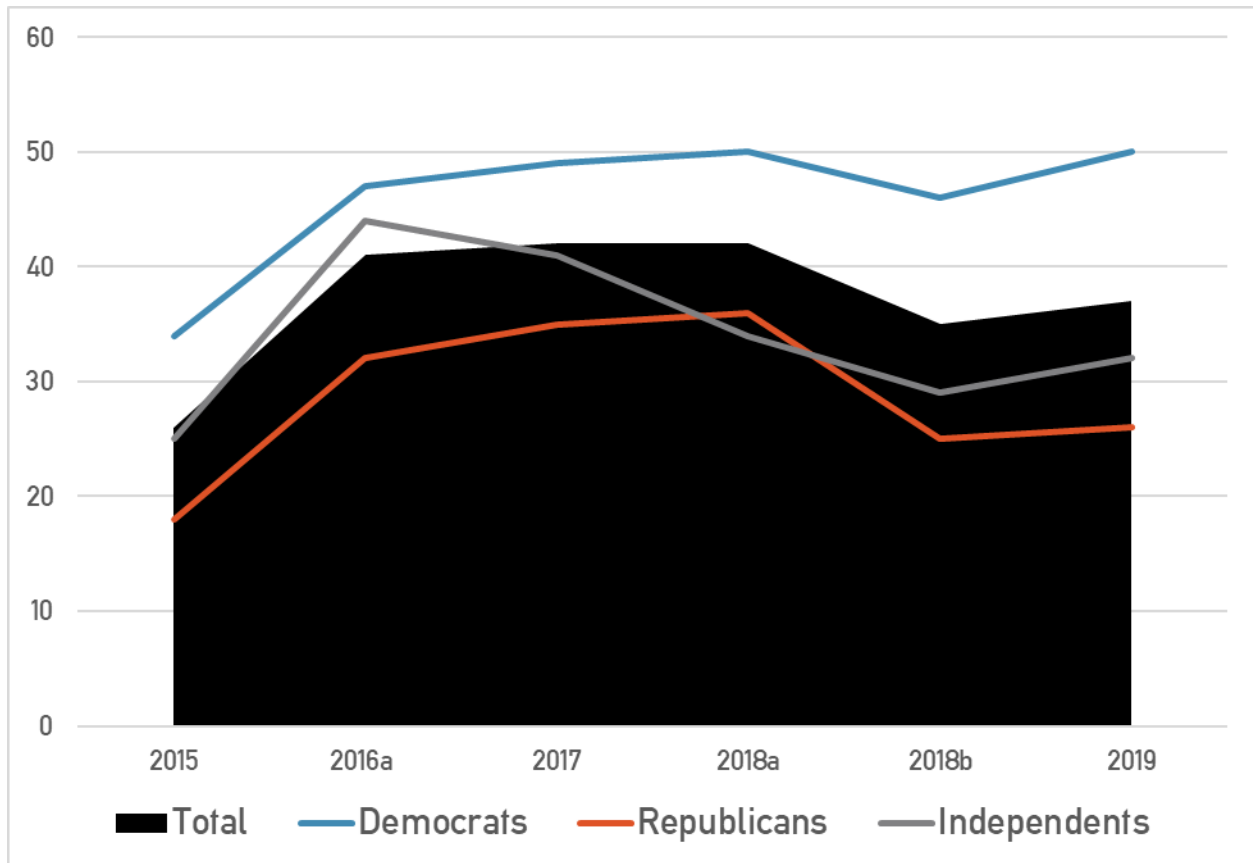


Figure 13. Raise Gas Tax by Political Party (Favor)

The partisan gap on a gasoline tax was 15 points between Democrats and Republicans in the 2016 poll, 14 points in 2017, 2018, and 24 points in 2019 with Democrats more favorable and Republicans more opposed. Independents were more favorable than Republicans in all cases except 2018, when the gap was only 2 points. This has been the pattern across all the revenue questions we included. Overall the consistency of these results indicate just how powerful party identification is as an influence on the views of the voters of Illinois. That pattern is also quite evident in the results of national polls across the past three decades as the nation has grown more partisan and more polarized at the mass voter level just as it has done even more starkly at the public official level.

This is the end of our list of revenue options that have been offered in Springfield since we started the Simon Poll in 2008. In some specific cases there is a plan for raising revenue that either has the support of a clear majority, and of a near majority, in others. The graduated income tax, “the millionaire’s tax,” and expanding gambling are the three top proposals supported by

marked majorities. When we go below those top three in our tables, support sags to the 40, 30, and 20 percentiles, and the opposition grows accordingly.

6 GOVERNOR J. B. PRITZKER AND THE 101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Given the constant pressure of paying off the backlog of bills and the Pritzker Administration looking for revenue to balance the budget, in 2019 we added the options of legalizing recreational marijuana and legalizing betting on sports. These proposals were supported by 66 percent and 63 percent respectively. These two options were important components of Governor Pritzker's plans for increasing revenue, and were keys to his potential for passing a balanced budget.

All of these proposals together constituted Pritzker's platform for his first year in office. He went around the state attempting to gin up support for his plan, and the General Assembly held numerous hearings in Springfield, Chicago, and across Illinois. All of this public build-up plus Pritzker's decision, ultimately backed by House Speaker Madigan and Senate President Cullerton, to compromise with House Minority Leader Jim Durkin and Senate Minority Leader Bill Brady over some business friendly proposals they advanced, were the keys to getting a final bi-partisan agreement, and significant Republican votes for both the budget bill and the capital bill at the end of the session.

With the close of the General Assembly, two days late, on Sunday, June 2, 2019, the State of Illinois, or at least its political class, exhaled a big sigh of relief. The session had produced and passed an almost unprecedented collection of significant bills. Some of these items, like the capital bill, had been backlogged for a decade. The budget itself was widely considered to be truly balanced, without much, if any, accounting legerdemain, and it was the first budget of this century in which that claim could be made with much creditability.

Governor Pritzker began the new year and the first months of his administration with an ambitious political agenda. It included as his top most important items:

- (a) An increase of the \$8.25 minimum wage in increments to \$15 per hour by 2025
- (b) A Reproductive Health Act, which contained a number of new safeguards to a woman's right to a safe and legal abortion and state protections of the Pro-Choice positions in Illinois if Roe v. Wade is ever overturned
- (c) A balanced budget for FY2020 of approximately \$40 billion
- (d) Legalization of recreational cannabis, with provisions for possible expungement of the criminal record for thousands of people who had previously been convicted of marijuana offenses, with an added investment fund targeted to minority communities disproportionately harmed by the war on drugs
- (e) New gaming legislation, which included new casinos in Chicago, Waukegan, Rockford, Danville, the South Suburbs, and in southern Illinois at the Walker's Bluff site

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

(f) A new capital bill with \$45 billion to be invested in highways, bridges, mass transit, airports, and new construction as well as deferred maintenance for universities and community colleges and other state agencies like the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Corrections, and Veterans Affairs.

Added to that laundry list of new projects and new programs as well as new taxes to pay for those was the Governor's signature proposal for a graduated income tax, on which he ran a very spirited 2018 campaign. This was the proposal to have the legislature approve his new graduated income tax referendum and then send it to the people via a constitutional referendum question to be put on the ballot in the fall of 2020 election. A separate bill also contained the recommended tax brackets for each income group, which was hugely controversial and attracted tons of media attention. That bill passed with only minor tweaking, with only Democratic votes in the House and Senate, as the Republicans were unanimously opposed.

All in all, this was an extraordinary legislative year. Veteran observers emphasized that any one or two these agenda items would have been considered major accomplishments by previous standards. The whole package, some passed with significant input from Republican legislators and their constituent groups, meant that some bi-partisanship, at least under the right circumstances, including considerable involvement in the negotiations by the governor and his staff, could at times overcome years of bad blood and legislative gridlock (Miller, June 2, June 3, and June 10, 2019, A-11; Nowicki, June 4, 2019, 5). The round-up of General Assembly action at the end of the session was summarized in the following words by the State Universities Annuity Association (SUAA) report:

“Love it or dislike it, the 101st General Assembly, with the assistance of Governor Pritzker, made significant changes in how business is done in the State of Illinois. If anyone had the fortitude to listen to the last several days of the session, you would have noted the change of attitudes at the end. Progress actually does materialize when people can negotiate, have the freedom to ask questions, and have the courtesy to listen to each other. Maybe it did help that there were over 50 new freshmen legislators who came with new ideas, convictions, and aspirations. And, the importance of a Governor who took charge by working with legislators to forge through issues that had been held up for years” (SUAA, June 3, 2019, 1).

Jim Durkin, the Republican leader in the House of Representatives issued a press release summarizing the just concluded legislative session as follows:

“The end of the legislative session was another historic moment for House Republicans. Not only did we pass a bipartisan, balanced budget without any tax increases, but we also achieved significant business reforms for our communities that will boost the economy across our state. As I've said before, we can get great things done for Illinois families as long as we respect the principles and priorities of each caucus. In doing so, we have passed historic education reform, two bipartisan, balanced budgets and now important reforms that will grow jobs. I am proud to have worked with the legislative leaders and the Governor to finally do what is right for Illinois families and business” (Miller, June 4, 2019).

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

The respected center-right British journal, The Economist, in an article titled, “Illinois’s Political System Seems to Work After All”, provided this summary of the just concluded session:

“The new governor, J. B. Pritzker, a Democrat, is enjoying balmy times. He has super-majorities in the legislature and also gets bipartisan support when Republicans like at least some measures. He has signed off on a \$40bn budget that sailed through the legislature. It is even balanced, something so rare that Mr. Pritzker’s Ukrainian ancestors might have likened it to a crayfish whistling on a mountain” (Economist, June 22, 2019, 22).

At the beginning of the year Pritzker was just coming off a personal victory in the governor’s race by a wide margin. As a result of those same fall elections the Democrats had a supermajority in both houses of the legislature and complete control of state government, and it was clear that the onus was on them to produce. The Democrats maintained that is exactly what they did as they accepted the challenge of trying to govern, whether one believed in the substance of their legislation and the overall direction they were taking the state or not.

Public opinion and the views of the electorate will play an important role in the future of the Pritzker administration’s plans and programs and the fate of the Democratic majorities in the House and Senate. Our polls have consistently shown that some of the major components of the Pritzker program are popular at this point—the progressive income tax, the “millionaire’s tax”, expanding gambling, and legalizing recreational marijuana, for example. Others, such as the increase in the motor fuel tax, are highly unpopular now and have been in all of our polls. We will soon see how that dichotomy and dialectic plays out in the reaction of the mass public, the political leaders, interest groups, the media, and opinion leaders, to Pritzker’s high-profile version of his first “one hundred days plus” in the governor’s office.

There are two possible scenarios for the next two to four years. One is that the extraordinary range and scope of new legislation passed, and the new sources of revenue tapped to pay for it all will create an immediate and harsh backlash. As explained earlier, nationally the advent and rise of the Tea Party in 2009 and 2010 gave voice to the populist backlash against the drastic steps taken by the Bush Administration first, and then the Obama Administration to manage and limit the damage to the 2008-2009 financial system breakdown. They accomplished this through an unprecedented federal government bail-out of major banks, insurance companies and the automobile industry, and they added a massive stimulus package to get the moribund economy running again and to pull the nation out of the Great Recession. The Tea Party has been especially influential in our national politics ever since and gained new clout when the Trump Administration came into office. They and their allies in the Congress, under the name of The Freedom Caucus, teamed up with the White House, have proved conclusively that **the American public likes tax cuts a lot more than they like tax increases. That truism could be seized upon at the state level in Illinois by a well-financed and highly motivated coalition of interest groups, partisan media, and conservative and Republican leaders if they want to make the recent tax increases a rallying cry for mobilizing a populist backlash in Illinois in the 2020 elections.**

Alternatively, Pritzker, his administration and his Democratic allies in the General Assembly may be able to make a positive case: that the programs and projects were sorely needed after a decade's worth of stringent budgets had left the state's public services and executive branch agencies hollowed out, and that the financial means for revitalizing Illinois government could only be provided by significant revenue increases. This narrative would require an articulate, persuasive, and well-funded public campaign for the kind of positive government that Pritzker clearly supports. The campaigns, for and against the progressive income tax, will probably be the driving vehicle for this dialogue to take place between now and November of 2020.

7 CONCLUSION

The moral of this story is that governing matters; getting results and producing the goods and services that the people expect and depend on matters. It matters to the lives of all the people of Illinois as they depend on all governments, but particularly state government for the myriad of services they require each day.

Many Americans do not even think about the multitude of governmental services and the complex web of governmental units and jurisdictions they must have just to get their children to school and get to work and then back home each day.

Routine pattern maintenance is necessary in our daily lives as we encounter ubiquitous government in ways that are usually unseen and thus out of mind. Our culture of "rugged individualism" leads us to believe that we do it all, or mostly, by and for ourselves. We alone created the company; we made a success of our education or our careers, and steered our children with good parental guidance. It is a deeply engrained part of the American political culture to believe that the government just gets in the way and curtails our liberties. Our civic educations have failed to include a sufficient grounding in the very real ways in which the government "provides for the common defense and promotes the general welfare" as well as "domestic tranquility," let alone protection from "all enemies domestic and foreign" in the words of the Constitution. Citizens ignore how much ensuring those public goods, these essential functions depends on constant governmental assistance and presence in our daily lives.

Public goods are the things that we the people, working together as a community, or collectively can provide more effectively, more efficiently, and more equitably than the private market can or will provide because they must make a profit. These basic functions constitute the roll call of public goods that living in a community requires in the 21st Century. We only notice them when they disappear in the midst of natural disasters such as floods, wild fires, hurricanes, and tornados, or in dangerous periods of civil unrest, mass shootings, domestic terrorism, or attacks by a hostile power. Then we want all levels of government to show up and to provide help, now.

State and local governments are the crucial cogs in that governmental machinery, especially in making and executing domestic policy and providing for the everyday functions of community life where we live. But the absence of government, particularly in the fairly frequent "governmental shut downs" of the federal government, most recently in December of 2018 and

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

January of 2019 for an unprecedented 35 days, showed graphically what many people had not realized before: that they depended on and had to have certain essential services, which were threatened or curtailed by the shut-down.

Illinois ran the same social and political experiment in 2016 and 2017 with its prolonged legislative gridlock, producing a record failure of its basic constitutional duty to adopt a budget. The dislocations were massive and lasting and the state will have enough recuperation to do to last at least the next decade. Whether we have started that recuperation is the question we pose in the “Gridlock Broken?” subtitle of this paper.

Our polls for over a decade have demonstrated that most people in general do not like taxes, and they certainly do not gladly contemplate increasing their own taxes. At the same time, our polls have also demonstrated consistently that, when presented with a specific list of major programs that state taxes are devoted to funding, Illinois voters do not support big budget cuts. It is all too easy and usually popular for candidates to run against the government in general and taxes in particular in their campaigns, and they often get elected partially by railing against taxes and “waste and fraud” in government. Then when they are in office they frequently want new projects and new spending in their districts, and the re-opening of old facilities or programs that have closed. Ribbon cutting ceremonies are popular and happy occasions for public officials at the state and local levels, and they like to show up when the capital budget supports new facilities or major renovations of older ones.

We the voters want to have our cake and eat it too, or in this case have our services and programs and let someone else, including our children and grandchildren, pay for them. This self-contradictory approach to public finance has dominated our political culture and discourse for generations. Our elected officials have often given the voters what they say they wanted by rewarding them with our votes. The Simon Polls, reported in the first edition of this paper and several earlier papers and press releases, have consistently documented the parameters of this paradoxical equation.

This case study succinctly illustrates a classic thesis about the nature of public opinion in the United States. More than fifty years ago, the scholars Lloyd Free and Hadley Cantril called the American people “symbolic conservatives” and “operational liberals,” to reflect the blatantly inconsistent impulses in the American political culture (Free and Cantril, 1967). That synopsis cogently captures the views of the voters of Illinois and their contradictory views opposing taxes while supporting a wide range of public services and programs as reflected in the Simon Polls for the last twelve years.

This is why it is so difficult to pay down the backlog of bills that Illinois has accumulated over the almost two decades since the start of the 21st century. Not surprisingly, then, it has been even more difficult for any recent Illinois governor to devise a realistic plan to address the unfunded liability embedded in the Illinois public pension system which is an even more abstract idea for most people. The last governor to even make a serious attempt to solve this problem was Jim Edgar in the 1990s. While he and his administration and the General Assembly of that era did make some progress, they also left Illinois’ pension system with the “ramp,” or “balloon

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

payment” to be paid in the then-distant future of the 21st Century. It was just easier and more politically prudent to pass the problems off to future governors and future General Assemblies.

Returning to the theoretical and conceptual setting established at the outset of this paper, the current conditions of unified government basically fulfill the requirements for the peculiarly American brand of Responsible Parties and Conditional Party Government we defined earlier: The legislature and the governor’s office are controlled by the same party, and the governor ran on a clear and well-articulated platform, which he and his allies in the General Assembly then proceeded to try to enact into policy. The gridlock of the previous governor, struggling under divided government, and the absence of a budget for two long years was the backdrop of our 2016 paper where we documented and analyzed “the Roots of Gridlock,” that paper’s subtitle. We will see if our somewhat more hopeful subtitle of “Gridlock Broken?” will be warranted by subsequent political events and will be evident in the voters’ opinions in our future polling.

It will now be up to the governor and the Democrats in the General Assembly, to explain and defend the advantages of the policies they have produced and to show that they are working for the benefit of a majority of the people. This is another key requirement of the Responsible Parties model. This explanation and defense of the laws passed and actions taken has already started. It will intensify early in 2020 when the mid-term legislative elections will start to take shape, especially with the Illinois Primary in March. Soon after that campaign ends on November 3, 2020, the 2022 election for governor and the other state constitutional offices will begin, and Pritzker’s leadership will be on the line as well as the jobs of a lot of Democratic office holders. This is a form of accountability that is required under the Responsible Parties model, and in a larger sense it is a key element of electoral democracy itself.

There will be plenty of opportunities for legislative gridlock to begin again or to deepen, particularly if the Republicans make major gains in the 2020 midterms (as for example, the GOP did in the Congress in the mid-terms of 2010 and 2014). If they do, then Pritzker and his allies in the General Assembly will bear the blame and will have to accept the judgment of the voters at the ballot box and in the legislative process. However, for now at least, it appears that the long siege of legislative gridlock has broken up amid the major accomplishments of the recently concluded General Assembly working with the governor and with some bipartisanship agreement.

At the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, our polls show that in some issue areas we are sometimes winning, or at least gaining ground, in the battle for rational, fact based and responsible decision-making. But they also sometimes show that reason is not prospering, and rational analysis is losing ground in other areas. That is why the longitudinal data in this paper, the results of twelve years of statewide polling, is an important stock-taking report on the climate of opinion for our state during the turbulent and historic times Illinois has faced as it has just passed its 200th birthday and entered into the third century of its storied history.

APPENDIX A: DATA NOTES

Year	Sample Size	Margin of Error
2008	561	+/-4.1
2009	800	+/-3.5
2010	1,000	+/-3.1
2011	1,000	+/-3.1
2012	1,261	+/-2.8
2013	600	+/-4.0
2014a	1,001	+/-3.1
2014b	1,006	+/-3.1
2015	1,000	+/-3.1
2016a	1,000	+/-3.1
2016b	1,000	+/-3.1
2017	1,000	+/-3.1
2018a	1,001	+/-3.1
2018b	1,000	+/-3.1
2019	1,000	+/-3.1

REFERENCES

- Aldrich, John H. 1995. Why Parties? University of Chicago Press.
- Bartels, Larry M. 2008. Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.
- Bosman, Julie and Monica Davey. July 6, 2017. "Illinois Lawmakers Override Budget Veto, Ending Two-Year Stalemate." <https://mobile.Nytimes.com/2017/07/06/us/illinois/budget-shutdown>.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald Stokes, 1960. The American Voter. New York: Wiley.
- Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. December, 2014. "Issue Brief: The Pending FY2016 Fiscal Cliff." <http://www.ctbaonline.org/reports/>.
- Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. May 20, 2015. "Issue Brief: Expanding the Base of Illinois' Sales Tax to Consumer Services." <http://www.crbaonline.org/reports/>.
- Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. August 12, 2015. "It is All about the Revenue: Why Both Current FY2016 General Fund Budget Proposals Fall Short." <http://www.ctbaonline.org/reports>.
- Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. February 16, 2016. "Illinois on Autopilot: the Reality of FY2016." <http://www.ctbaonline.org/reports/>.
- Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. May 24, 2018. "Governor Rauner's FY2019 General Fund Budget Proposal Neither Balances nor Addresses Long-Term Structural Fiscal Issues." <https://www.ctbaonline.org/reports/governor-rauner-fy2019-general-fund-budget>.
- Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. October 2, 2018. "More of the same: The FY2019 General Fund Budget Fails to Address Illinois' Long-Term structural Fiscal Issues." <https://www.ctbaonline.org/reports/more-same-fy2019-general-gund-budget>.
- Civic Federation. January 14, 2016. "Governor's Budget Projection Shows Growth in Unpaid Bills." <https://www.civicfed.org/iffs/blog>.
- Civic Federation. February 11, 2016. "Civic Federation Proposes Comprehensive Plan to Stabilize Illinois Finances by End of FY2019." <https://www.civicfed.org/presshttps://www.civicfed.org/press-room>.
- Civic Federation. May 3, 2016. "State of Illinois FY2017 Recommended Operating Budget: Analysis and Recommendations." https://www.civicfed.org/iifs/publications/FY17_ILRecommendedBudget.
- Civic Federation. February 13, 2019. The Institute for Illinois' Fiscal Sustainability at the Civic Federation. "State of Illinois FY2020 Budget Roadmap." <https://civicfederation.org/iifs/FY2020IllinoisRoadmap>.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

- Committee on Political Parties of the American Political Science Association. 1950. Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System. New York: Rinehart.
- Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. The Politics of Resentment. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1961. Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press.
- Dionne, E. J. Jr., Norman J. Ornstein, and Thomas E. Mann. 2017. One Nation After Trump. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Dye, Thomas R. and Susan MacManus. 2012. Politics in States and Communities. Boston: Pearson. 14th edition. 475.
- Economist. 2019. "Illinois's political system seems to work after all." June 22, 22.
- Esch, K. Janis. 2018. "SIUC 'playing catch up'". Southern Illinoisan. June 17, 1.
- Free, Lloyd, and Hadley Cantril. 1967. "The Political Beliefs of Americans". In David Apter, ed., Ideology and Discontent. New York: The Free Press. 206-261.
- Gelman, Andrew. 2008. Red State Blue State Rich State Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Shickler. 2002. Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hancock, Peter. 2019. "Dems warn of higher ed cuts". The Southern Illinoisan. May 2, 1.
- Hershey, Marjorie Random. 2017. Party Politics in America. 17th ed. New York: Routledge.
- Heatherton, Marc. J. 2001. "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization." American Political Science Review. 95. 619-631.
- Hoffman, Kevin. 2016. "State Income Tax Rates and Structures in 2016." Reboot Illinois. www.rebootillinois.com/2016/04/041. April 7.
- Jackson, John S. 2019. "The 2018 Race for Governor of Illinois: Rauner vs. Pritzker." The Simon Review. Paper #54, Carbondale, Illinois, Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. January.
- Jackson, John S. Charles W. Leonard and Shiloh L. Deitz, 2016. "The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008- 2016: The Roots of Gridlock." The Simon Review. Paper #47, Carbondale, Illinois, Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. June.
- Jackson, John S. 2015. "The 2014 Illinois Governor Race: Quinn vs. Rauner. The Simon Review. Paper #40. Carbondale, Illinois: The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. Southern Illinois University.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

- Jackson, John S. and Charles W. Leonard. 2014. "The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2010-2014: A Dilemma of Popular Democracy." The Simon Review. Paper #37. Carbondale, Illinois, Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. June.
- Jackson, John S. 2015. The American Political Party System: Continuity and Change Over Ten Presidential Elections. Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Key, V. O. Jr. 1958. Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups. 4th ed. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
- Key, V. O. Jr. 1967. Public Opinion and American Democracy. New York; Alfred A. Knopf.
- Keith, Bruce E. David B. Magleby, Candice J. Nelson, Elizabeth A. Orr, and Mark C. Westlye. 1992. The Myth of the Independent Voter. Berkeley: The University of California Press.
- Kimball, David C., Bryce Summary, and Eric C. Vorst, 2014. "Political Identity and Party Polarization in the American Electorate." In John C. Green, Daniel J. Coffey, and David B. Cohen, eds. The State of the Parties: The Changing Role of Contemporary American Parties. 7th edition. Lanham, Md. Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.
- Korecki, Natasha, October 13, 2014. "Poll: Voters Like Business Over Politics in Dead Heat Governor Race." Chicago Sun Times.
<http://politics.suntimes.com/article/springfield/poll-voters-business-over>".
- Lawrence, Mike. December, 1982. "Ogilvie Revisited." Illinois Issues. University of Illinois Springfield. 25-27.
- Levendusky, Matthew. 2009. The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservative Became Republicans. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Leonard, Charles W. 2011. "Results and Analysis of the Third Annual Simon Poll," The Simon Review. Paper #24, Carbondale, Illinois, Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. March.
- Leonard, Charles W., Ryan P. Burge, and Emily S. Carroll. 2012. "The Movement of Opinion Toward Spending Cuts, Revenue Increases, and Political Reform in Illinois: Results and Analysis of the Fourth Annual Simon Poll," The Simon Review. Paper #27, Carbondale, Illinois, Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. January.
- Leonard, Marne. 2017. "Governor Rauner's Turnaround Agenda from a Comparative State Party Context." The Simon Review. Paper #50. Carbondale, Illinois, Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. May.
- Long, Dan R., October 13, 2011. "John White Lecture for the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute" Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. Presentation at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. Carbondale, Illinois. Southern Illinois University.
- Long, Dan R., October 16, 2014. "Economic/Budget Update and Review of Illinois Business Climate," Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. Presentation at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. Carbondale, Illinois. Southern Illinois University.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

- Mann, Thomas E. and Norman J. Ornstein. 2012. It's Even Worse Than It Looks. How the American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism. New York: Basic Books.
- Marshall, Judith. 2019. "The Budget". In John S. Jackson, ed. Southern Illinois University at 150 Years. Carbondale, Illinois. Southern Illinois University Press. Chapter 13.
- Miller, Rich. 2019. "Governor Proves He Can Get Things Done. The Southern Illinoisan. June 2, 5.
- Miller, Rich. 2019. "A Bipartisan Achievement", Capitol Fax. RichMiller@capitolfax.com. June 3.
- Miller, Rich. 2019. "From House GOP Leader Jim Durkin" Capitol Fax. RichMiller@capitolfax.com. June 4.
- Miller, Rich. 2019. "Pritzker follows Big Jim", The Southern Illinoisan. June 9, A-11.
- Mayer, Jane. 2016. Dark Money. New York: Anchor Books.
- Newport, Frank. 2016. "Republican Conservative Base Shrinks." The Gallup Poll. June 3.
- Nowicki, Jerry and Peter Hancock. 2019. "Tax Bill moves to House". The Southern Illinoisan. May 2, 1.
- Nowicki, Jerry. 2019. "State legislative session closes with bipartisan support on key issues". The Southern Illinoisan, June 4, 5.
- Nowlan, James D. 2019. "Renewing Illinois: Ambitious Dreams and Practical Steps to Revive the Prairie State". Conference Reference Paper published by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, March 28-29.
- Nowlan, James D., Samuel K. Gove, and Richard J. Winkel, Jr. 2010. Illinois Politics: A Citizen's Guide. Urbana and Chicago. University of Illinois Press.
- Nowlan James C. and J. Thomas Johnson. 2014. Fixing Illinois: Politics and Policy in the Prairie State. Urbana, Chicago, Springfield. The University of Illinois Press.
- O'Connor, John. 2019. "Proposed graduated tax inches forward." The Southern Illinoisan, May 4, 1.
- Ohlemacher, Stephen. 2007. "Analysis Ranks Illinois Most Average State." Carbondale. The Southern Illinoisan. May 17, 1.
- Parry, Janine, Brian Kisida, and Ronald Langley, 2008. "The State of the State Polls: Old Challenges, New Opportunities." State Politics and Policy Quarterly. Summer. 8.2.
- Pearson, Rick. 2019. "Preckwinkle's status as Democratic Party Chair up in air." Chicago Tribune, April 7, A-4.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

- Pearson, Rick, and Dan Petrella. "Pritzker faces 1st major test: 1st budget". Chicago Tribune, April 28. Sec. 1, 1.
- Petrella, Dan. 2016. "Democrats Begin Election-Year Push for Graduated Income Tax." The Southern Illinoisan. April 19, 1.
- Petrella, Dan. 2019. "Budget watchdog says Illinois should tax retirement income and cap spending, but Pritzker unlikely to go along." Chicago Tribune. February 13. 1.
- Pomper, Gerald M. 2001. "Party Responsibility and the Future of American Democracy." In Jeffrey Cohen, Richard Fleisher, and Paul Kantor. Eds. American Political Parties: Decline or Resurgence? Washington, D. C.: CQ Press.
- Ranney, Austin. 1965. "Parties in State Politics," in Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines, eds., Politics in the American States. Boston: Little, Brown. 65.
- Rhode, David. And John Aldrich. 2010. "Consequences of Electoral and Institutional Change: The Evolution of Conditional Party Government in the U. S. House of Representatives." In Jeffrey Stonecash, Ed. New Directions in American Political Parties. New York: Routledge.
- Rushton, Bruce. 2014. "Broken System: Can Illinois' Antiquated Means of Generating Revenue be overhauled?" Illinois Issues, March. 21-23.
- Saad, Lydia. 2016. "Conservatives Hang On to Ideology Lead by a Thread." The Gallup Poll. January 11. www.gallup.com/poll/188129.
- Saad, Lydia. 2019. "U. S. Still Leans Conservative, but Liberals Keep Recent Gains." The Gallup Poll. January 8. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/245813/>
- Scarboro, Morgan. 2018. "State Individual Tax Rates and Brackets for 2018." The Tax Foundation. February 5. <https://tasfoundation.org/state-individual-income-tax-rates-brackets>.
- Schattschneider, E. E. 1942. Party Government. New York; Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Schattschneider, E. E. 1960. The Semi-Sovereign People. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Sierachi, Benard. 2009. The Impeachment and Removal of Governor Rod Blagojevich: A Just Cause. Carbondale, Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press.
- Simon, Paul. 1965, "Our Pension Dilemma". In John S. Jackson, Ed. The Essential Paul Simon: Timeless Lessons for Today's Politics. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press. 221-22.
- Stenhouse, Todd. 2017. "Illinois Public Universities Were Harmed by State Budget Impasse". The Illinois Update. September 6. <https://illinoissupdate.com/2017/09/06/illinois-public-universities-damaged>.

The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2019: Gridlock Broken?

- Stone, Lyman. 2014. "Illinois Considers Further Increases as Temporary Tax Nears Expiration." <http://taxfoundation.org/article/>
- SUAA, June 3, 2019. "General Assembly Goes Home for the Summer". Newsletter, Springfield, Illinois.
- Tax Foundation. 2019. "State Individual Income Tax Rates and Brackets for 2018." <https://taxfoundation.org/state-individual-income-tax-rates-brackets>.
- Yaccion, Steven. 2014. "Governor Wants to keep Tax Increase: Setting Terms for Re-Election in Illinois". New York Times. March 27, A 23.
- Zaller, John R. 1992. The Nature and Origin of Mass Opinion. Cambridge University Press.
- Zorn, Eric. 2019. "Alas, no, Illinois is not a high-tax, free-spending state." Chicago Tribune, May 31. Sec. 1, 20.

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

1231 Lincoln Drive - Mailcode 4429

Carbondale, IL 62901

www.paulsimoninstitute.org

facebook.com/paulsimoninstitute

twitter.com/psimoninstitute