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# The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2010-2014: A Dilemma of Popular Democracy

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## **The Simon Review**

**The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2010-2014:  
A Dilemma of Popular Democracy**

*By John S. Jackson and Charles W. Leonard*

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**Executive Summary**

Since 2008 the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale has conducted an annual statewide survey of Illinois voters. The purpose of these surveys has been to document and analyze the views and values of the people of the Prairie State. These surveys now have become an accumulated data collection that allows us to track public opinion in the state for several consecutive years. This is a report of that longitudinal perspective on public opinion in Illinois for the volatile and interesting half decade between 2010 and 2014.

The paper also sets these longitudinal findings into a larger conceptual context, exploring the role of public opinion in a mass democracy and the relationship between the leaders and the led in a modern republic.

In general we report here only the results of those questions we have asked over multiple years. Each annual poll consists of a combination of questions that have been asked previously and new questions added to address the issues that are current that particular year. The repeated questions provide the longitudinal database presented here—although not every question reported in this paper has been repeated across all five years. Most but not all of the individual year results have been published previously in the form of press releases from the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. An earlier *Simon Review* paper by Charles W. Leonard provided the overview for the 2008-2010 period (Leonard, 2011). The present paper provides a larger and a more long-term perspective on the results for the half decade now accumulated. (*See Appendix A for more technical details on the poll methodology. All releases can be downloaded at paulsimoninstitute.org*).

**Right Track/ Wrong Track**

Major national pollsters have been documenting the so-called Right Track/Wrong Track assessment of the general mood of the nation for years now. This question is often used as a predictor for what the voters may be feeling about the direction of the nation and as a surrogate for their feelings about how the incumbent administration in Washington is doing its job. The measure has also become a component of various statistical models used to predict voting behavior.

The unusual additional attraction the PSPPI data set provides is the ability to add an assessment of the voters' perceptions and evaluations of the general direction for the State of Illinois and for the respondents' local community or area of residence. Thus, we are able to assess both change over time as well as the voters' perceptions of three different and distinct levels of government. Table 1 provides the results. This tri-level

analysis provides a unique assessment of stability and change over time for Illinois voters for state, local and national governments.

**Table 1 - 2010-2014: Right Track/Wrong Track**

**Question: First, we'd like to know what you think about the direction of the United States of America. Generally speaking, do you think things in our country are going in the right direction, or they off track and heading in the wrong direction?**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Right direction	30.2%	19.2%	41.6%	41.7%	29.7%
Wrong direction	60.1%	71.4%	49.8%	48.5%	59.9%
Other/don't know	9.7%	9.4%	8.6%	9.8%	10.4%

Several generalizations can be gleaned from this table. The first thing to note is that these results drawn from Illinois are very similar to national results. For example, a contemporary national poll by Rasmussen had the “right track” ratings at 29 percent and the “wrong track” at 64 percent, which is only marginally more negative than these Illinois results of 29.7 percent “right track” and 59.9 percent “wrong track” (Rasmussen, March 3-9, 2014).

The second lesson is that at the national level those respondents who are negative in their evaluations exceed those who are positive by a considerable margin every year. Often the gap is in the 30 percent range. It was markedly closer to parity only in 2012 and 2013. We expect the “right track” versus “wrong track” feelings to be especially influenced by the public’s reaction to national economic indicators, and these polls were conducted during a period of economic stress, when the nation was trying to recover from the Great Recession of 2008-2009. The negative-to-positive gap was the widest in 2010, 2011, and 2014. In 2010 the nation was just emerging from the Great Recession of the two previous years, and economic threat and stress were endemic to the national narrative, so the negative evaluations for 2010 and 2011 should not be too surprising. The 2013 and 2014 results are a bit harder to explain.

While the official end of the recession was the second quarter of 2009, the talk of recession persisted, and the national unemployment rate, which had declined steadily and consistently since 2010, still remained well above 7 percent, where it stayed until the fall of 2012. The unemployment rate was the focus of the debate before the 2012 presidential election, and it dominated the national political conversation with a constant emphasis on the need to create more jobs. There were numerous other economic data points which were more positive, e.g., the stock market rose steadily to record levels and the American housing market which has suffered from an historic bubble, largely rebounded to pre-Recession values. Yet the major attention remained focused on the jobs data.

By 2014 the official unemployment rate had declined to 6.7 percent. The most negative factor in the economic picture was the number of people unemployed which remained steadily in the 10.5 million range. In spite of the 8 million jobs created after the employment trend turned from deeply negative in 2008 and 2009 to positive in 2010, where it has remained since, the tone of the narrative through 2013 and into 2014 remained focused on the jobs count and the millions of Americans who were out of work and who could not find employment.

We hypothesize that the framing of this story through the constant stress on the unsatisfactory rate of jobs growth by public officials, from the White House to the opposition party in Congress, consistently reinforced by

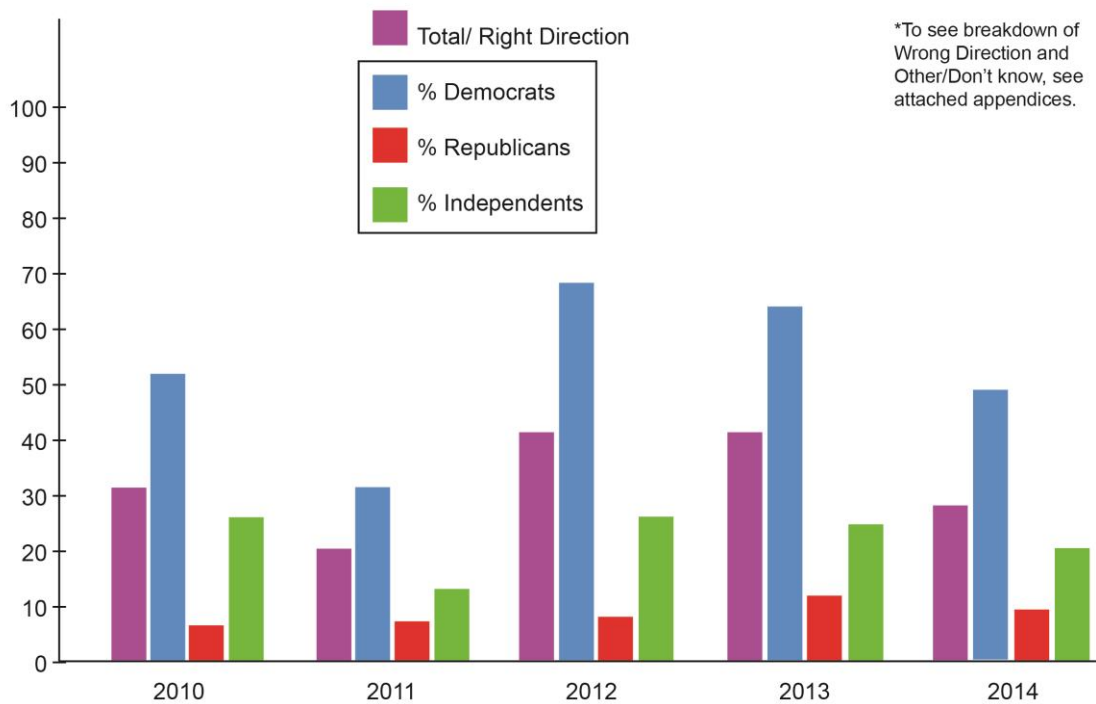
the mass media, helped keep this item at the top of the list of most important problems. The negative economic evaluations then drove the national narrative throughout this. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the right track/wrong track assessments remained negative throughout this period even after many objective economic indicators had turned more positive. These public opinion trends help produce political and electoral results.

Both 2010 and 2014 were mid-term election years, and in 2010 the party in the White House paid a major political price for the negative mood of the nation with the Democrats losing 63 seats in the U. S. House and four in the U. S. Senate. There is a real possibility that this negative evaluation of the overall direction of the nation will be repeated with further losses by the Democrats in the 2014 mid-terms. The party in the White House almost always loses seats in the House and Senate in the mid-terms; however, 2010 was an especially catastrophic year for the Democrats when the Republicans gained control of the House and almost regained the majority in the Senate. The “nation in economic stress” narrative has continued to drive the political discourse through 2013 and into 2014. Many analysts are predicting that this year will produce an equally harsh judgment on President Obama’s party, and certainly the right track/wrong track data from our polls from Illinois, the president’s home state, indicate that could be the case.

**Figure 1**

**Question 1 - Right Direction**

First, we’d like to know what you think about the direction of the United States of America. Generally speaking, do you think things in our country are going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?



As Figure 1 indicates, Democratic respondents have been much more likely than Republicans across the five-year period under study to say that things in the US are heading in the right direction, with a gap as wide as 60 percentage points in 2012 (68.7 percent “right direction” among Democrats vs. 7.9 percent among Republicans). This is not surprising, as President Obama is as hugely unpopular among Illinois Republicans as

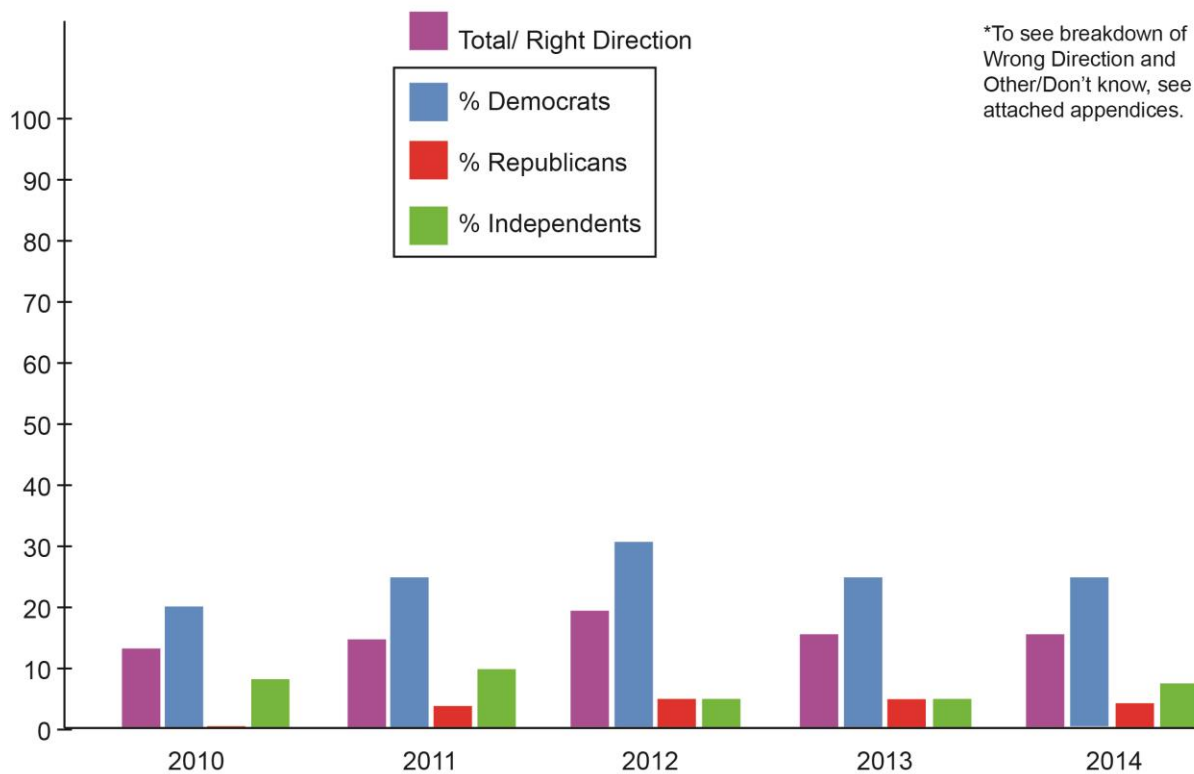
he is popular among Democrats here in his home state, and direction of the country may well stand as a proxy for party control in the minds of voters.

A second generalization based on Table 1 and Figure 2 is that the voters' assessment of the direction of the state of Illinois is markedly more negative than for the nation as whole. The gap between "right track" and "wrong track" is wider for the state each year, by a large margin, than it is for the United States as a whole. The "right track" respondents never exceed 20 percent in a single year, and the "wrong track" respondents are never under 70 percent. Thus, the gap is always in the range of 50 percent who are more negative than positive about the long-term prospects for the state of Illinois.

**Figure 2**

**Question 2 - Right Direction**

**And what about the direction of the State of Illinois? Generally speaking, are things in Illinois going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?**



This unusual finding may be limited to Illinois and a handful of other states that have experienced significant internal turmoil and political controversy. In most state surveys, the negative evaluations of the nation far outstrip those for the state. The general finding is that the closer you get to the governments closer to home, the more positive the evaluations become. This is clearly not the case in Illinois for the period covered here.

There are, of course, many reasons for the voters of Illinois to be giving their state government a bad report card. As with the nation, the economic narrative has been very negative in Illinois during this period. Generally the state's unemployment rate has exceeded the national rate. Importantly also, the 2010 survey was taken soon after former Governor Rod Blagojevich had been indicted by the federal government on a wide range of

counts, and the General Assembly of Illinois had removed him from office in December of 2009. Blagojevich later was convicted and was incarcerated in a federal prison in Colorado.

Blagojevich, a Democrat, followed in the footsteps of his Republican predecessor, George Ryan, who was also convicted of several crimes and who was serving time in a federal facility in Indiana when these polls were conducted. Two other Illinois Governors, Dan Walker and Otto Kerner, were convicted of crimes, and served time in federal prisons during the memory of many of the voters who responded to these surveys. The governors were just the most prominent of many other public officials convicted of a wide range of crimes done while holding public office. Thus, it was not surprising that the voters were in a “foul mood,” as we described it in the headline for an earlier PSPPI press release on one of these surveys.

These results could also indicate political trouble for the incumbent Democratic Governor, Pat Quinn, in his bid for re-election in November of 2014, and the polls have consistently shown him with negative job approval ratings. However, a spirited and divided Republican Primary on March 18<sup>th</sup> means that the Republican nominee, Bruce Rauner, also faces some challenges of his own, and this promises to be a competitive race in the fall.

As with evaluations of the direction of the country, Democrats have been much more likely to be positive about the direction of the state than have Republicans—even though Democrats’ views of the direction of Illinois have not been as positive as their views of the country’s direction. The gap was widest in 2012, when almost a third (31.3 percent) of Democrats said the state was headed in the right direction vs. just 6.5 percent of Republicans with a positive evaluation. We can posit that consistent Democratic control of the governor’s mansion and the state legislature during this period—topping out with veto-proof Democratic majorities in both houses following the 2012 elections—contributes to the Republicans’ more-jaundiced view of the direction of Illinois.

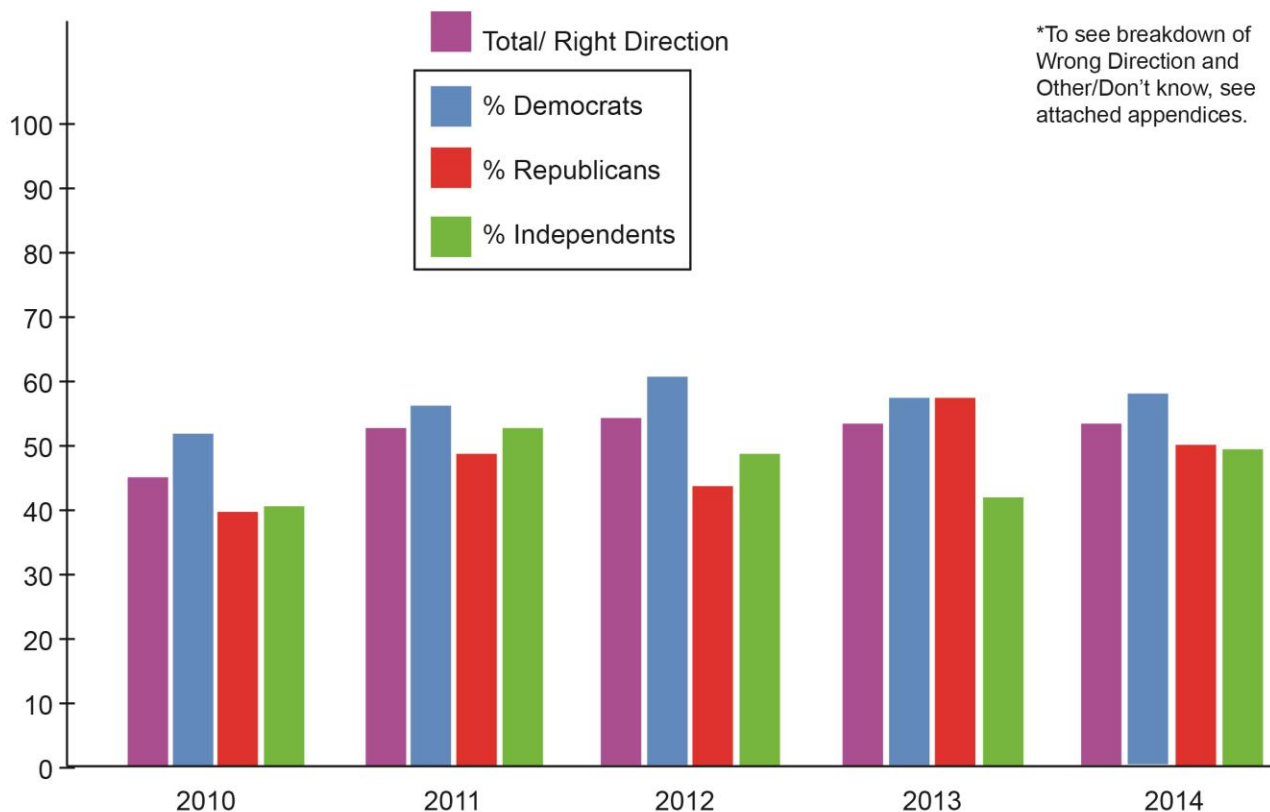
The one locale where the voters’ evaluations were positive is for their city or the area where they live. There, as the data in Figure 3 indicate, the positive-to-negative gap is consistently in the positive direction. For each year except 2010, the gap ranges from 15 to almost 20 percent. Clearly, the voters of Illinois give their local levels of government, which would be city and county governments primarily, a much more positive evaluation; they feel things are generally going in a more positive direction locally than in state or national evaluations. The Jeffersonian ideal of those governments closer to home inspiring more confidence in the people seems to be supported by these findings.



Figure 3

Question 3 - Right Direction

And how are things going in your city or area of the state? In general, are things in your city or area going in the right direction, or in the wrong direction?



And, while Republicans have been somewhat less likely than Democrats to say things in their city or area are on the right track, the differences have tended to be much less dramatic, and in 2012 they were about as likely to give a positive evaluation to their local governments (56.5 percent “right direction”) as Democrats were (56.8 percent).

In our view, these overall results indicate an important issue for popular democracy. For decades now, the American people have been disgruntled and dissatisfied about the direction of the country. The authors of this study became students of public opinion in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War of the 1960s and 1970s. The mood of the country turned foul in that era, and that negative mood was reinforced by Watergate and the forced resignation of Richard Nixon from the presidency in 1974. With some slight perturbations up and down since, the general trend has been toward the negative no matter which party controls the White House and the Congress and whether we have divided or unified government. That is not exactly a vote of confidence for mass democracy.

Such results indicate that the nation is facing a real question of whether “we the people” have the good sense to govern ourselves. In popular political discourse one often hears some variation on the theme of, “I’m a patriotic American and I love my country, but I hate and mistrust its government.” If this view persists over a long period, as poll results indicate it has, this constitutes a serious indictment of popular democracy. All of those governments have been elected by the people. None was installed by *coup d’etat* or by mob rule.

We must ask whether we the people can elect leaders who are capable of representing our views accurately and who can govern with an adequate level of competence without becoming corrupt.

Alternatively, we also must ask how realistic are our popular expectations of how much the system can produce in terms of goods and services at a price we are willing to pay in taxes. This is a topic to which we will return in the section on budgets and taxes, which we believe contains the heart of this dilemma of popular democracy. We will also return to these matters in the conclusion.

### **Illinois Reform Proposals**

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute long has had an interest in various reform proposals for making Illinois government more efficient, transparent, and honest. Our founder, Senator Paul Simon, was known throughout his career as a reformer and he was always in the vanguard of what is usually called the “Good Government” movement. Some of the reform proposals widely advocated today had their beginning when Paul Simon was a young, crusading newspaper editor—and later State Representative, State Senator and then Lieutenant Governor in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Thus, we have always included a range of reform questions in our statewide surveys.

Table 2 A presents our findings for the five-year period for a variety of the reform proposals we studied. These proposals include term limits, campaign finance, open primaries, and redistricting. Taken as a whole, these questions cover most of the practical reform proposals being advocated by those who want fundamental changes in Illinois government and politics.

### **Term Limits**

**Table 2 A - Illinois Reform Proposals 2010-2014**

**Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:**

**Limit how long state legislators could serve. It would limit state representatives to five consecutive two-year terms and state senators to three consecutive four-year terms:\***

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>
Strongly favor	57.3%	54.4%	54.1%	61.7%
Somewhat favor	22.7%	20.6%	24.6%	17.8%
Somewhat oppose	7.7%	8.5%	8.6%	8.5%
Strongly oppose	7.1%	10.9%	8.8%	8.6%
Other/don't know	5.2%	5.6%	3.9%	3.4%

\* In 2014, we asked whether voters favored or opposed limits of “eight years of service, whether in the House of Representatives, the State Senate, or a combination of the two.”

Term limits have always been popular in national polls, and the organized movement for term limits gained very significant political momentum in the 1990s. Their popularity is also a mark of the considerable, continued cynicism and distrust directed toward state and national governments. At its peak the movement had 21 states that had adopted some form of term limits. Mostly the limits had to do with service in the legislative body of

the state. Many states already had term limits for their governors and, of course, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, passed in 1951 provided that presidents could serve no more than two terms.

Most of the 1990s momentum centered on the state legislative bodies or the states imposing term limits on members of the Congress from their states. In 1995, in the case of *U. S. Term Limits vs. Thornton*, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the states could not impose term limits on members of Congress. In essence, the court said the U. S. Constitution spelled out the only acceptable limits on candidates for the Congress and those three requirements were age, residence, and citizenship. The court held that individual states did not have the constitutional authority to add to those criteria.

The original term limits movement was organized and led by a group entitled U. S. Term Limits, which is cited in the title of this Supreme Court case. It was largely led and supported by Republicans and conservatives, although there were some liberal and Democratic groups in some states that had earlier favored the term limits proposal. After the Republicans re-gained control of the U. S. House in the 1994 mid-term elections, their success caused some of the political steam to start to dissipate. This was particularly true for the Congress although interest in term limits for state legislators continued until well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in some states continues today. (*See Appendix B for more details on existing term limits in the states.*)

Currently there are only fifteen states with term limits, and the limits are focused on the state legislatures. While much of the momentum has gone out of the movement nationally, several states still experience significant interest in and momentum toward placing some kinds of limits on the state legislatures and occasionally on the state's governor or other constitutional offices.

That has been the especially the case in Illinois recently, where one of the four candidates for the Republican nomination for Governor, Bruce Rauner, staked a prominent part of his primary campaign on requiring term limits for legislators. He also funded a PAC whose purpose is to mount a citizen-based initiative that would impose term limits in Illinois via an amendment to the state constitution. On March 18, 2014, Mr. Rauner won the Illinois Primary and became the Republican nominee for Governor, and his victory was partially attributable to his aggressive stance appealing to the popularity of term limits.

At the PSPPI we had been asking the term limits question since 2010. However, in 2014 we changed the wording of the question marginally in order to incorporate the particular provisions of the Bruce Rauner campaign proposal.

As Table 2 A documents, term limits are overwhelmingly popular in Illinois. Perhaps given the checkered political history of the state, people are seeking any solution to the problem of corruption, and term limits have the appeal of seeming to be a direct attack on the problem. The measure is certainly a form of "no confidence" vote in the government. In all our polls, starting in 2010, the term limits proposal is favored or strongly favored by well over 70 percent of the respondents. The level of opposition is always below 20 percent.

Perhaps as a result of the Rauner campaign's efforts and the attendant publicity he has brought to this idea, our February 2014 poll showed even greater levels of support for the Rauner proposal, with the total of "strongly favor" and "somewhat favor" at 79.5 percent supporting the Rauner plan and only 17.1 percent either opposed or strongly opposed. It should be stressed also that the Rauner plan contains fairly stringent limits, i.e. a total of only eight years in the House or Senate or a combination of the two. This is more limited than the ten or twelve years usually imposed by such state laws and reflected in our 2010 through 2013 polls. Nevertheless, the 2014 proposal is overwhelmingly supported and will undoubtedly be an important component of Mr. Rauner's fall campaign for governor.

Term limits are popular with virtually every demographic, geographic, and ideological group in Simon Institute polls across these five years, and partisanship offers no exception; respondents of both parties support term limits by wide margins. While Republicans have tended to have higher levels of “strongly favor” responses, when added to the “somewhat favor” responses, which have higher levels of Democratic response, what we call the “total favor” numbers are similar for both parties in every poll.

**Table 2 B - Illinois Reform Proposals 2010-2014**

**Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:**

**Limit how long legislators could serve in leadership positions - such as Speaker of the House or President of the Senate - before they stepped down to let other legislators lead:**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>
Strongly favor	57.0%	53.8%	65.1%
Somewhat favor	24.3%	24.1%	17.6%
Somewhat oppose	6.8%	8.6%	8.3%
Strongly oppose	5.3%	7.4%	6.3%
Other/don't know	6.6%	6.1%	2.7%

A variation on the term limits theme is a proposal with unique traction in Illinois. Because our state legislative leaders, especially the Speaker of the House, have great staying power and long records of continuous service in the leadership positions, this next proposal has been much discussed in Illinois. Instead of term limits for all legislators, how about just placing limits on how long they can hold the key leadership positions such as Speaker of the House or President of the Senate? These are important and powerful offices in Illinois, and they have become the target for those who have complaints about how the state is run.

From Table 2 B, we can see that this proposal also has overwhelming support among the respondents to our polls. In fact, over 80 percent favored or strongly favored such limits on the legislative leaders in our most recent poll. Earlier levels of support were almost as high, and those strongly opposed or opposed stand at about fifteen percent.

While it is not surprising that more than eight in ten Republicans supported leadership term limits in each of the polls in which the question was included—given that legislative leaders have been Democrats for almost all of the past 30 years—it may be somewhat surprising that Democratic voters’ support for that reform is almost as high, between 75 and 80 percent.

So, term limits are strongly favored and are wildly popular whether they are applied to all state legislators or only to the leadership in the legislative bodies. Getting it done is a much greater challenge, however, since it requires a constitutional amendment—and the Illinois Constitution is not easily amended. It remains to be seen whether the Rauner campaign can use its money and organizational might to steer the term limits proposal to a permanent place in the Illinois Constitution.

## Money in Politics

**Table 2 C - Illinois Reform Proposals 2010-2014**

**Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:**

**Limit the amount of campaign money that party leaders can redistribute to other candidates:**

	2010	2011	2012
Strongly favor	43.6%	40.5%	42.8%
Somewhat favor	21.4%	20.9%	19.3%
Somewhat oppose	12.4%	11.2%	12.7%
Strongly oppose	13.0%	17.1%	16.7%
Other/don't know	9.6%	10.3%	8.4%

Another tool of legislative leadership clout is the practice in Illinois and other states of the party leaders raising very significant amounts of campaign funds. The leaders are able to raise large amounts of money statewide because of their considerable power in the legislative process, and this is true on both sides of the aisle, although often advantaging the majority party. The leaders then distribute the campaign funds strategically into local races for the House and Senate seats. They are particularly adept at identifying the marginal or most competitive seats and pouring very large sums into those races.

This planning is especially effective in primary elections, but is also often used to advantage in the general election races as well. Although the funding totals there have been capped recently, naturally the widespread supposition is that the leaders know who they can count on for crucial votes when the chips are down in the legislative arena. Not only the key first vote, which is to organize the House or Senate and elect the officers of each body, but other controversial votes can be impacted by such strategic alliances forged months or even years earlier in what was perhaps the last truly competitive race the legislator faced.

Table 2 C shows that a strong majority of the voters of Illinois see this practice as one that should be changed. In the three polls where we asked the question more than 60 percent of respondents either favored or strongly favored this measure, and fewer than twenty percent opposed or strongly opposed. This proposal would be a further step toward reducing the power of the legislative leaders and using constitutional or statutory measures to constrain the elected leaders of both legislative bodies. It, too, represents a vote of “no confidence” in the political leaders of the state.

## Open Primaries

**Table 2 D - Illinois Reform Proposals 2010-2014**

**Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:**

**Change the primary election process in Illinois so that voters do not have to publicly declare which party's ballot they have chosen:**

	2010	2011	2012
Strongly favor	62.2%	58.3%	56.0%
Somewhat favor	13.2%	13.5%	14.0%
Somewhat oppose	7.6%	6.8%	9.0%
Strongly oppose	10.1%	13.1%	13.6%
Other/don't know	6.9%	8.3%	7.4%

The question of open versus closed primary elections has long been another source of great disagreement in political circles in Illinois. The state uses what is popularly called a “closed primary” because voting does require a test of party affiliation. That is, in Illinois one has to request a particular party ballot to vote in that party’s primary. The request is made openly when one goes to vote in the primary. The voter can choose to take a ballot in the other party’s primary in the very next election cycle and, of course, there is no constraint on voting for the other party’s candidates or splitting the ticket in the general election. So it is a weak test of partisanship.

For this reason the Illinois system is better viewed as a “quasi closed” or hybrid system since it is a combination of closed and open primary. A truly closed primary requires partisan registration and limiting the vote to those registered with the party in the primary. In spite of this technicality, however, the Illinois system has been a source of conflict for many years and reformers, including Governor Pat Quinn, have long advocated a switch to a truly open primary which would utilize a unified ballot and require no test of partisanship at all.

Both major party organizations have consistently resisted this change since they fear the specter of “raiding” or partisans from the other party crossing over and voting in their party’s primary and saddling them with a candidate who is weak or not really a member of their party. In fact, Bruce Rauner’s opponents, especially the public employee unions, urged Democrats to do just that in the March primary since the unions thought they had a better chance of beating Rauner in the primary than in the general election. That case was a variation on the usual raiding theme. The organizations also use the primary voter lists to good advantage in managing internal party affairs, and making appointments as well as in get out the vote campaigns. So far the strong organizations in both parties have prevailed in this contest over Illinois electoral law.

Table 2 D indicates that the open primary plan is favored or strongly favored by from 60 to 75 percent of the respondents to our polls. It is opposed or strongly opposed by a range of 17 to 21 percent of the voters. In fact, these results are so clear and so strong we did not repeat the question in our most recent polls. A very substantial majority of Illinois voters favor an open primary, even though political leaders and officials in both parties apparently do not.

## Redistricting

**Table 2 E - Illinois Reform Proposals 2010-2014**

**Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:**

**Currently, when the political parties can’t agree on a legislative redistricting plan, they end the stalemate by pulling a party’s name out of a hat... Do you approve or disapprove of this tie-breaking process?**

	2010	2012	2013
Strongly favor	1.8%	4.4%	4.2%
Somewhat favor	9.9%	14.8%	11.3%
Somewhat oppose	40.5%	18.9%	19.8%
Strongly oppose	34.7%	54.6%	55.5%
Other/don’t know	13.1%	7.3%	9.2%

Legislative redistricting also is a reform area in which the Paul Simon Institute has been invested for many years. The popular phrase here is that since they draw the district lines, “the legislators select their voters rather

than the voters selecting their legislators.” This gives major advantages to the incumbents and to the dominant party in any geographic area.

We are convinced that redistricting, and the need to change how it is done, is one of the crucial reforms necessary to address some of the state’s most fundamental problems. We also believe that the problem is key to solving some of the nation’s problems associated with partisan polarization and political gridlock in Washington as well. Put simply, there are far too many Congressional districts and state legislative districts that are safe for one party, and far too few competitive or marginal districts, because of the current way most states do redistricting.

Our first redistricting question described the provisions of the 1970 Illinois Constitution that control the process in Illinois. The Constitution provides that the legislature has the first right and responsibility to do redistricting at the state and federal level. The question read, “Currently when the political parties can’t agree on a legislative redistricting plan, they end the stalemate by pulling a party’s name out of a hat. Do you approve or disapprove of this tie-breaking process?”

It should be noted that the Illinois tie-breaker, relying as it does literally on the luck of the draw, is the only plan of its kind in the nation. The random settlement of the map has been used in three of the five redistricting battles that have developed in the interim since the new constitution was adopted in 1970 (Curtis, McMillan, and Racheter, 2013).

As the results in Table 2 E indicate, when this plan is described, an overwhelming majority of almost three-fourths of the respondents consistently either disapprove or strongly disapprove of the current plan, and only 10 to 18 percent approve or strongly approve. It is this plan that the Paul Simon Institute has worked to change for most of a decade now, and clearly the voters of Illinois are not avid supporters of the current system.

**Table 2 F - Illinois Reform Proposals 2010-2014**  
**Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:**

**One proposal for improving the state legislative redistricting process would have the Illinois Supreme Court add a neutral person to the redistricting panel in case of a partisan tie.**

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Strongly favor	19.0%	35.8%	42.0%	36.0%
Favor	48.3%	34.3%	32.8%	34.7%
Oppose	12.6%	9.5%	8.4%	8.8%
Strongly oppose	7.3%	7.1%	8.7%	11.2%
Other/don't know	12.8%	13.3%	8.0%	9.3%

The subsequent questions about redistricting provided some alternatives that might improve the way the process is carried out in Illinois. The next question covered a plan that the PSPPI has advocated, which would require the Illinois Supreme Court adding a neutral person to the redistricting panel in case of a partisan tie. This neutral person, a “Special Master” in legal terms, would be selected jointly by the Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court and the most senior member of the other party on the court. The Special Master would be selected based on technical and legal expertise in redistricting rather than party affiliation. This is an attempt to remove some of the most blatant partisanship in a process that is by nature very political and often deeply politicized and polarized in Illinois. (See Table 2 F)

The results show that the voters of Illinois are in favor of trying something to improve the current system and this alternative draws support in a range from above 60 percent to 75 percent of the respondents and the opposition is in the 20 percent range or less. The statewide grassroots movement, “Yes for Independent Maps,” which is attempting to get an initiative to change redistricting incorporated this proposal into their larger constitutional amendment plan (Duncan, March 23, 2014).

In the 2010 through 2013 Simon Polls, Illinoisans of both major parties heavily support the measure, with no pattern of partisan differences.

A more extensive change would require that the current system used in Illinois, which starts with the General Assembly taking the lead and having the first opportunity to draw the map, would be totally scrapped. It would be replaced with a plan that would assign the redistricting duties exclusively to an independent commission. The commission plan would be a much more stringent attempt to take partisan politics out of the process altogether—or at least hold such politics at arm’s length. The independent-commission approach is being advocated by the supporters of the current petition drive, who advocate a politically independent group of 11 members to draw the map (ibid).

A number of states use some sort of commission plan and the number of such states is growing. For example, for the 2010-2011 election cycle, both California and Arizona used new independent commission based plans which seem to have worked well. Iowa has used such a commission for decades and has become a model of a neutral plan. For all these reasons, the Paul Simon Institute has been a proponent of examining the best of the commission based plans and devising a uniquely Illinois based solution to this politically challenging problem (Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, 2013).

**Table 2 G - Illinois Reform Proposals 2010-2014**

**Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:**

**Other people have proposed a constitutional amendment that would have legislative district maps created by a commission that is independent of the elected representatives. The legislature would then vote up or down on the independent commission’s redistricting plan.**

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Strongly favor	13.6%	31.8%	38.1%	34.2%
Favor	40.2%	33.2%	32.1%	32.2%
Oppose	19.5%	11.7%	9.9%	10.7%
Strongly oppose	7.6%	7.4%	9.3%	12.2%
Other/don’t know	19.4%	15.9%	10.5%	10.8%

Table 2 G shows that the voters of Illinois overwhelmingly approve of the independent commission-based approach. Those who approve or strongly approve range from 53 to 70 percent of respondents, and the opponents range from 16 to 20 percent. We think results like these provide ample support for the political leaders of the state to take some action to change the way redistricting is done in Illinois and to attempt to produce a somewhat more neutral and less polarizing system. These polls show that the voters of Illinois will support almost any steps that seem to address the redistricting problem.



Though in recent years Republicans have been somewhat more likely to favor the independent-commission reform than have Democrats, Democratic support still approaches or exceeds 60 percent. It is fair to say there would be a strong bipartisan positive result if the Yes for Independent Maps proposal gets on the ballot.

## **Social Issues**

We have been interested in questions related to social issues, some of the most divisive matters facing the people of Illinois and the nation as a whole. Indeed, some of the highly charged social issues have been the source of the deep partisan and ideological polarization that has plagued the nation for the past two decades. We have consistently documented the views of the voters of Illinois on two of the most contentious such issues, i.e., abortion and the legal rights to marriage for gays and lesbians. Table 3 provides the results for abortion and Table 4 provides the results for gay marriage rights.

### **Abortion**

**Table 3 - Views on Abortion**

**Question: Do you think abortions should be legal under all circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Always legal	31.5%	37.0%	37.0%	35.8%
Certain circumstances	45.0%	44.3%	42.3%	43.9%
Always illegal	19.1%	15.9%	16.7%	15.5%
Other/don't know	4.4%	2.9%	4.0%	4.9%

As is evident from Table 3, Illinois voters are substantially in favor of the pro-choice position. The pure pro-choice position is consistently supported by between 30 and 40 percent of respondents across all our surveys. The more in-between position, of abortions being legal under certain circumstances, attracts well over 40 percent of the respondents, and that level has been remarkably consistent. Taken together the two essentially pro-choice positions combined are supported by about three-fourths of the voters of Illinois.

The pure pro-life position of making abortions illegal under all circumstances is supported by something under 20 percent of Illinois voters, and that support also has been very steady. In this state the fight over abortion rights seems to be less prominent than in many other states, and the debate seems to have been won by some variation of the pro-choice position. Making abortions legal at least under some circumstances is the law of the land nationally and is generally supported by a large majority of the voters in Illinois, although it is certainly a very deeply polarizing issue in many other states, and in a much more limited sense also in Illinois.

On the abortion question, partisanship performs as expected all four times we have asked the question between 2010 and 2014, with between 40 and 50 percent of Democrats saying it should be legal in all circumstances, and Republicans in the mid-twenty percent range saying it should be illegal in all circumstances. Half of Republicans in the last three surveys have said it should be legal in some circumstances. This is a higher level of support for abortion rights, at least the middle option, than one might expect given the fact that the Republican Party's leaders in Congress and presidential candidates and their national platform have consistently favored the pure pro-life position.

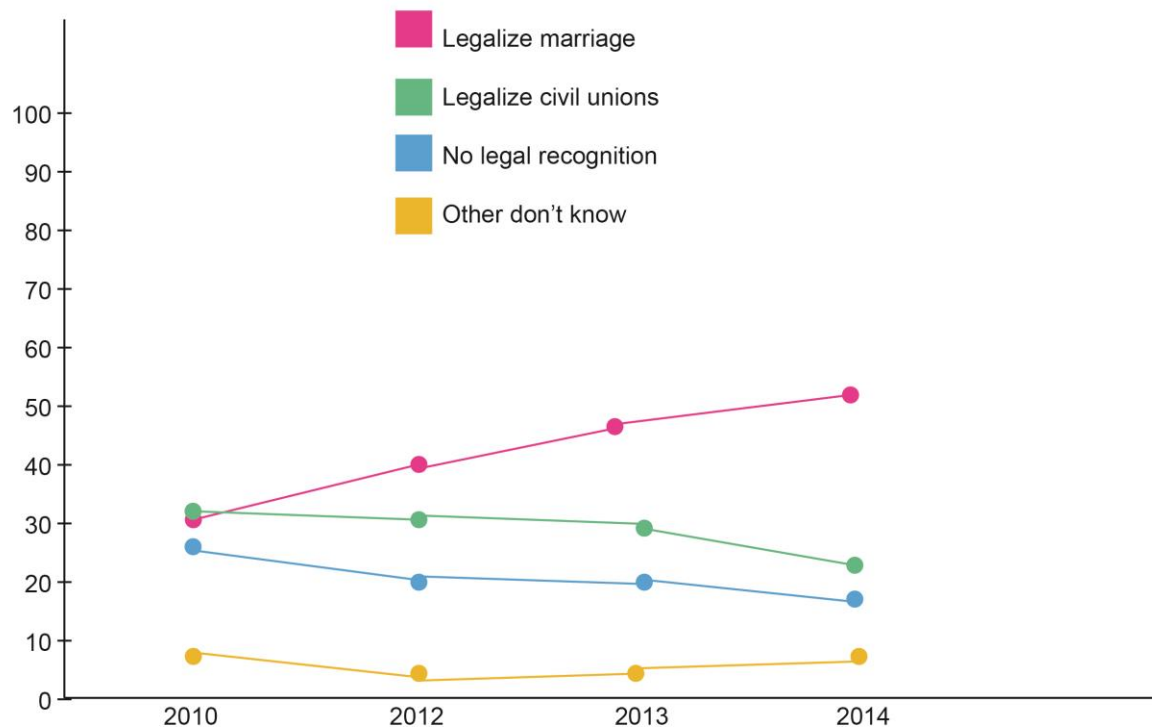
## Gay Marriage

**Table 4 - Legal Rights for Gays and Lesbians**

**Question: Which of the following three statements comes closest to your position on the legal rights of gay and lesbian couples in Illinois?**

	2010	2012	2013	2014
Legalize marriage	33.6%	43.6%	45.5%	53.4%
Legalize civil unions	33.9%	31.8%	29.7%	23.1%
No legal recognition	26.5%	20.2%	20.0%	17.2%
Other/don't know	6.0%	4.4%	4.8%	6.4%

**Figure 4 A**  
**Legal Rights for Gays and Lesbians**



In Table 4 and Figure 4 A we can see the results of our question on the rights of gay and lesbian people to marry. The results on this question illustrate a dramatic instance of public opinion changing rapidly over a fairly short period of time. In fact, this evolution of the public's view on gay rights has been an extraordinary case of rapid social change on a highly salient issue.

As can be seen from Table 4, there has been a net increase of 20 percent in those who support the right to marry, and that group now constitutes over a majority. There has been a 10 percent decline in those opposed to

providing any legal recognition. The civil union and right-to-marry groups together now constitute more than three quarters of the Illinois voters. What forces have provided the impetus for such a marked change in mass opinion?

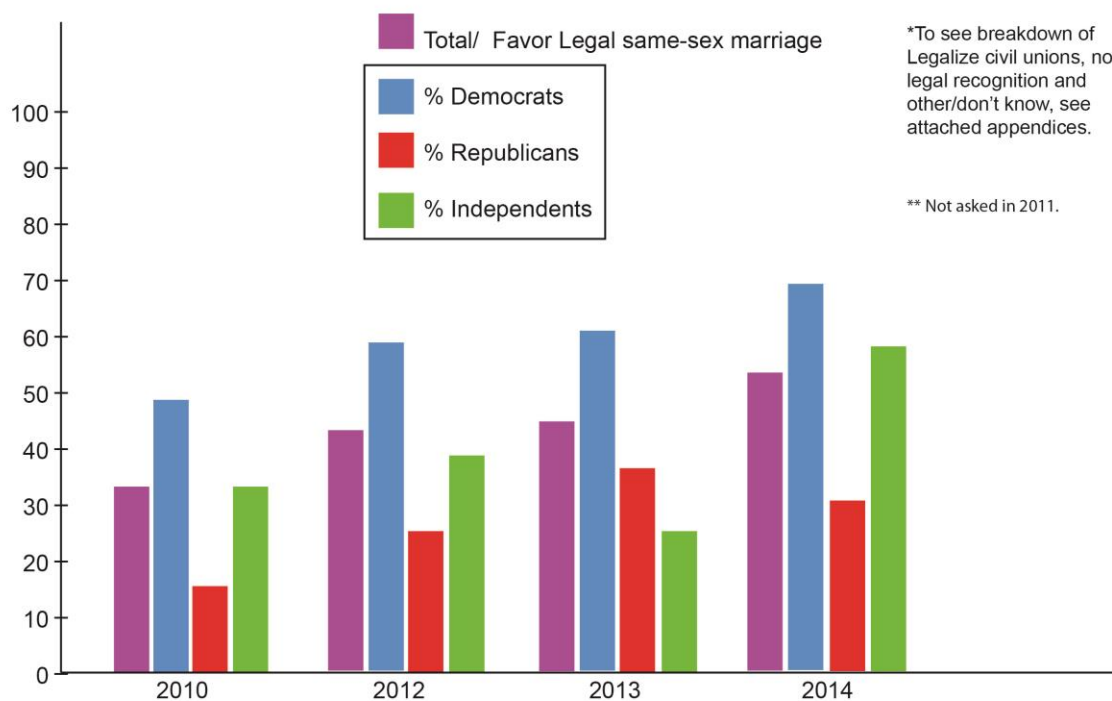
Political activists on the side of expanding rights for gays and lesbians have been key to this movement. The political activists and their supporters in the legislature started with the more moderate civil union plan, which they got passed in the General Assembly in 2010. The pro-civil union plan was supported by about one in three voters, and the pro-marriage position was supported by over 40 percent of the voters in this year. The civil union position was the law in the state between 2011 and 2013.

Then the pro-marriage position was advanced by the gay rights activists and their supporters in the General Assembly, and a law to legalize gay marriage was passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Quinn in 2013. Our data indicate that the changed law was fairly quickly accepted by most Illinois voters. It was undoubtedly a case in which mobilized activists, some office holders and the mass media led the charge and a majority of the public then followed. This has been one of the most marked and rapid changes in public opinion regarding a controversial public policy issue we have seen in many years of closely studying public opinion in the U. S. and in Illinois.

**Figure 4 B**

**Question 1 - Legal Rights for Gays and Lesbians**

**Which of the following three statements comes closest to your position on the legal rights of gay and lesbian couples in Illinois?**



In the partisan breakdown on the marriage question in Figure 4 B we see a dramatic transformation of Republican opinion. In 2010, just 16 percent of Republicans said gays and lesbians should have the right to legally marry; by 2014 that had essentially doubled to 31.7%. When added to the 38.5 percent who favored civil unions for same-sex couples, that gets us 7 in 10 Illinois Republicans favoring some legal recognition of gay marriage. By the same token, Democratic voters' support for full gay marriage rose from 48.8 percent in 2010 to 69 percent in 2014.

## **Ideological Self-Identification and Party Identification**

Table 5 provides the data on ideological self-identification and Figure 5 provides the distribution on party identification. These are two of the most powerful attitudinal explanations for how people see the world and how they behave politically. Party identification has been probably the most studied and utilized single variable in the whole political behavior movement that swept American political science in the 1950s. Since then, it has been used in an enormous range of studies as the single most powerful explanation for voting and other forms of political behavior (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960; Hetherington, 2001; Levendusky, 2009). At the aggregate level entire states are now characterized in short-hand as “blue states” and “red states,” and much of our national politics is analyzed from that perspective (Gelman, 2008).

### **Ideology**

Ideology is now almost as important and powerful an explanation as party identification. It requires people to characterize their own political beliefs on the ideological spectrum from left to right, and most voters now readily do so. In a previous era when there was much confusion about the meaning of the words and a lack of what Phillip Converse called “constraint” in the voters’ belief systems, this was not so important an indicator (Converse, 1964). But in an era of ideological and partisan polarization, where the important social and political cleavages are coterminous rather than cross-cutting, the two indicators are well worth studying, and the correlations between the two are higher than they were in a non-polarized era. We use these two major variables in crosstabs as independent variables for several of the policy oriented indicators presented in this study. Table 5 provides the results for Ideology.

**Table 5**

**Question: Generally speaking, in politics today, do you consider yourself:**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Very Liberal	7.0%	8.3%	10.5%	10.5%	9.6%
Somewhat Liberal	20.1%	17.3%	24.3%	23.3%	19.9%
Moderate	26.8%	34.0%	25.5%	25.5%	28.6%
Somewhat Conservative	25.2%	24.3%	23.0%	23.0%	23.7%
Very Conservative	15.3%	10.9%	9.7%	9.7%	13.7%
Other/Don't know	5.6%	5.2%	7.0%	7.0%	4.5%

This table presents a picture of more stability than significant change between 2010 and 2014. If one takes the data from the 2010 survey and combines both the variations on “liberal” i.e. “very liberal” and “somewhat liberal”, the total is 27.1 percent who claimed that label in 2010. The same two categories combined in 2014 produced a total of 29.5 percent, potentially representing a slight change in the liberal direction of 2.4 percent. On the conservative side, the total in 2010 was 40.5 percent compared to 37.4 percent four years later. This is a slight decrease on the conservative side. The moderate category also grew from 26.8 percent to 28.6 percent. All of these changes are small—and could very well be explained by chance or by normal statistical variation—and it remains to be seen whether future polls will indicate further and more significant change.

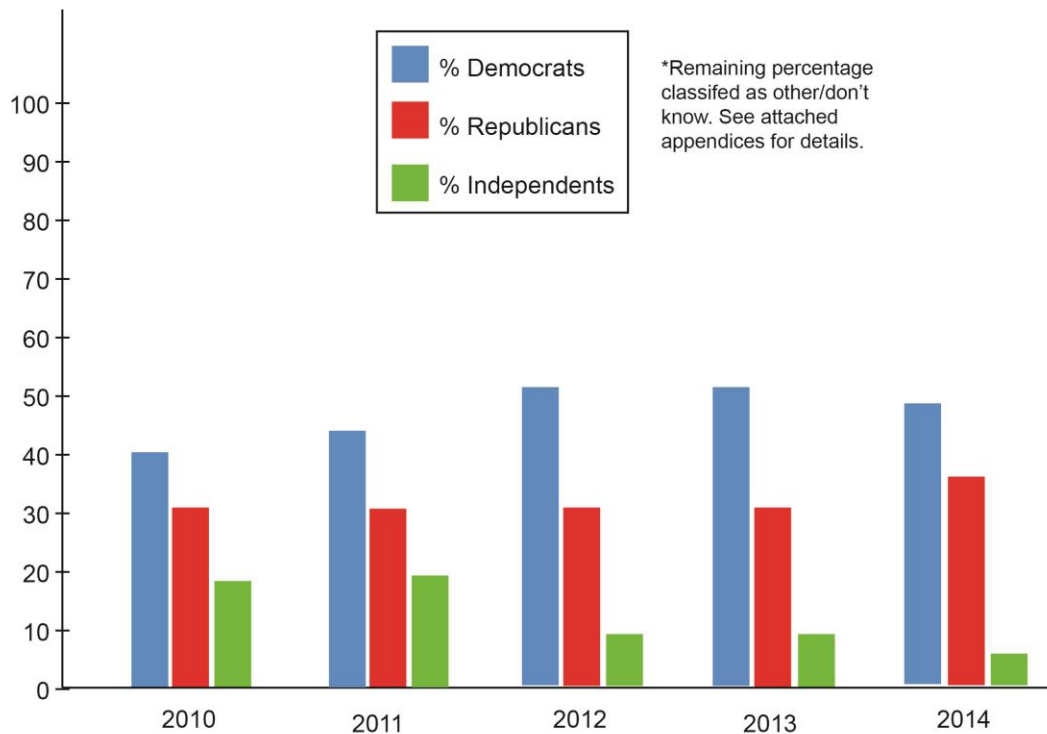
It is notable, however, that the gap between liberal and conservative in the Illinois data was 13.4 percent in 2010 and is 7.9 percent in 2014, so perhaps that gap has closed marginally. More importantly, the national polls usually show that there are about two self-identified conservatives for every one liberal in national samples

although the national percentage of liberals, now standing at 23 percent, has inched up lately (Jones, Gallup, January 10, 2014). So, liberals are thus more numerous and more evenly matched with conservatives in Illinois than they are in the nation as a whole.

## Party Identification

Figure 5

Question: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?



\* "Strong Democrat," "Weak Democrat," and Independent Leans Democrat have all been combined for Democrat category.  
 \*\* "Strong Republican," "Weak Republican," and Independent Leans Republican have all been combined for Republican category.

On party identification, the major finding is that counting the strong and weak identifiers and those who are partisan leaners the Democrats outnumbered the Republicans in Illinois by a substantial margin in 2010, and that margin has grown somewhat in 2014. The other years are arrayed incrementally between, with the years 2012 and 2013 showing slightly more than a majority of Illinois voters claiming to be either strong or mild Democrats or leaning toward the Democrats. This is marginally higher than the 47 percent nationally who count themselves as Democrats or leaning toward the Democrats (Jones, Gallup, January 10, 2014).

On the Republican side, the strong and mild Republicans and the leaners combined for a 32.0 total in 2010 and ended at 35.3 percent in 2014. The Republican partisan category also seems to have experienced at least marginal growth in those five years. National poll results show that 41 percent of American voters considered themselves to be Republicans or leaning toward the Republican Party in 2013 (Jones, Gallup, January 10, 2014). So, the comparisons show that the Republicans are somewhat weaker at the party base in Illinois than nationally, but the differences are not great.

On the other hand, the pure Independent category demonstrates fairly clear decline in Illinois during this five-year period. The independents started at 18.3 percent in 2010 and 19.4 percent in 2011. They then declined to

9.5 percent in both 2012 and 2013 and declined again to only 6.3 percent in our most recent poll. This is significantly fewer pure independents in Illinois than national polls usually find (Jones, Gallup, January 8, 2014). Perhaps in a deeply polarized era this drift toward the partisan ends of the continuum is what we should expect. Illinois began this period as a state that already leans Democratic; this is clearly evident in these longitudinal results. However, given the relative closeness of the two parties in the allegiance of the voters, and the results of recent statewide races for the constitutional offices and for the U. S. Senate, where the Republicans have scored some significant victories, we think that it is more accurate to characterize Illinois as a state which is competitive, but leans Democratic, for any particular election. Partisanship and ideology are important and stabilizing factors in explaining the vote in any particular race; however, the candidates, the kind of races they run, their access to financial support and the context, the evaluation of the conditions in the state and nation prevailing at the time of the vote are also important explanations and are more likely to lead to change rather than continuity.

### **Budget and Tax Issues**

Nothing provides a greater challenge to modern democracies than tax and revenue issues. In his classic work *Public Opinion* in 1922, Walter Lippmann advanced the theory that the greatest challenge to Twentieth Century western democracies was facing the growth of authoritarian and fascist regimes and meeting the existential challenges to democracy they posed (Lippmann, 1922). He was not at all confident that the public would support the kinds of rational and hard-headed foreign policies which would entail the sacrifices necessary to stand up to such regimes. Not long afterward that answer was provided in the affirmative by the events of World War II.

Late in the Twentieth Century and certainly continuing into the Twenty-first Century we would contend that Lippmann's question should be re-focused on the deep-seated fiscal and programmatic conflicts that are now endemic to democracies everywhere. This tension is especially apparent in the United States. Put in macro terms, the American people like and support a wide array of public programs and a strong national defense, while at the same time being very averse to raising revenues adequate to pay for what they collectively want their governments to do. This is what we have termed *the dilemma of mass democracy*.

At the national level, this dilemma has resulted in five decades of fiscal imbalance and budget deficits—the only exceptions being three fiscal years at the end of the Clinton Administration when the budget was in the black. Twice lately there has been a serious debate in Washington over whether to extend the nation's debt ceiling, which was in effect a debate over whether to pay the bills already accrued from laws passed by the Congress and signed by the President. In October 2013 this debate resulted in the closure of the federal government, at least “non-essential services,” for more than two weeks while the Congress carried out a bitter partisan fight over whether to raise the debt ceiling or to default on the national debt.

Budget deficits are also endemic to states like Illinois, which has not balanced its budget in more than a decade. Political leaders and the people alike say they want a balanced budget, but they are consistently opposed to raising the revenue necessary to support the programs passed by the Congress or the General Assembly. This ambivalence is a classic case of the American people embracing what Free and Cantril once termed “ideological conservatism” versus “operational liberalism” (Free and Cantril, 1967). This dialectic dilemma for policy makers is also a modern-day equivalent to Lippmann's existential challenge to western democracies first advanced almost one hundred years ago.

### **Strategies for Handling the Budget Deficit**

One constant during this period has been the looming budget deficit faced by the State of Illinois. Even though the state constitution requires a balanced budget every fiscal year, and virtually all the elected political leaders profess their fidelity to that objective, Illinois has consistently faced a sea of red ink for well over a decade now. A series of short-term accounting slight-of-hand devices such as overestimating the revenue side, as well as borrowing from obligated funds like the state pension system, has allowed state lawmakers to avoid the pain and political conflict associated with honestly balancing the budget. While the specific estimates of the deficit each year have varied; the total is clearly in the multiple billion dollars. A recent report from Illinois Auditor General Bill Holland places the current deficit at \$7.3 billion, down from \$9.1 billion in the previous fiscal year (Erickson, March 13, 2014; Holland, 2014).

The situation has become so dire that the New York-based bond houses have consistently downgraded the state’s credit rating, thus causing Illinois to spend tens of millions of dollars more on their bonds than other states with a better credit rating would have to if they borrowed the same amount of money. In addition, Illinois is regularly paying interest to the many individuals and vendors to whom the state owes money, and the longer those bills go unpaid the higher the interest payment required. Auditor General Holland placed that interest expenditure at \$318 million in fiscal year 2013, much higher than the \$136 million paid out in extra interest in 2012 and \$91 million in 2011 (Ibid). Clearly these excess interest costs are growing and crowding out programmatic needs for the same scarce resources.

There is a near consensus now among political elites that something has to be done about the Illinois budget. Questions about extending the current income tax and potential budget cuts will dominate the upcoming governor’s race. There is certainly no consensus among the voters on what specifically that budgetary fix might be, as the tables below demonstrate.

**Table 6 - How to Handle the Budget Deficit**

**Question: The state of Illinois has a budget deficit of over 6 billion dollars. I’m 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 the 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.”**

	2010	2011	2013	2014
More revenue	9.3%	6.9%	7.5%	9.7%
Cut waste	57.0%	57.7%	54.7%	52.3%
Combination	26.6%	28.5%	28.8%	28.9%
Haven’t thought	3.4%	3.0%	4.5%	5.0%
Don’t know	3.7%	3.9%	4.5%	4.1%

Table 6 reports the results of the question we used to present the major realistic alternatives for actually dealing with the Illinois budget deficit, i.e., raise revenue, cut spending and programs or a combination of both. We have asked this question repeatedly and the trend over the past five years, when there has been intense discussion of the Illinois deficit in the media and among political leaders and the general public, is striking.

That is, not much has changed. Less than 10 percent were willing to consider new revenue alone in 2010, and that is still true in 2014. Also, those who advocated the ubiquitous “cut waste and inefficiency” constituted well over a majority of 57 percent in 2010 and 2011, declined marginally to 54.7 percent in 2013 and were at 52 percent in our 2014 poll. This trend line is down, but only modestly over the five years surveyed, and the overall total is still a majority.

In addition, the respondents’ views are clearly correlated with their partisan and ideological identification. Conservatives and Republicans are significantly more likely to choose the “cut waste” option (61.2 percent for the conservatives and 62.6 percent for the Republicans in the 2014 poll) than were liberals and Democrats (38.5 percent for the liberals and 42.9 percent for Democrats) with the moderates and Independents falling between the two partisan groups (52.1 percent for moderates and 57.1 percent for Independents in 2014). This pattern of partisan differences has repeated itself across the time series in the Simon Poll.

There have been multiple cuts to the budgets of local school districts, almost all state agencies, universities and community colleges, state parks, state police, and a wide range of state installations and offices, such as prisons, mental health facilities, historic sites, and Illinois Department of Employment Security offices, all accompanied by loud outcries from the local population and their representatives in Springfield protesting those cuts as measures which hurt real people with serious needs. Community leaders always rally and point out that the cuts will have a large negative impact on the economy and a direct effect in lost jobs in their cities and counties. Nevertheless, it is clear that none of these recent reductions in the state’s financial obligations has made much of a dent in the conviction held by most that there is billions of dollars of waste and fraud out there just waiting to be discovered by an astute Governor or State Legislator wearing his green eye shade and wielding a sharp pencil over every line item in the thirty five billion dollar state budget.

Those who want to split the baby and take some of both alternatives constitute just over a quarter of the respondents, and this level has hardly budged since we have been doing the polls. In our view this is the most realistic and promising alternative, but it is one which would require a lot of creative thinking, hard bargaining and political acumen—and most notably it would require compromise from all sides. In this polarized era, realism, honest political bargaining and sensible compromise have been hard to achieve.

### **The Income Tax Increase**

We continue our search for solutions to the Illinois budget dilemma in Table 7. In 2011 Illinois increased its tax on both personal and corporate income from 3.0 to 5.0% on personal income and from 4.8 to 7.0% on the corporate side. There is also a 2.5% property replacement tax on corporations which makes the total corporate rate 9.5% currently (Stone, January 15, 2014). The 2011 tax increase was explicitly promised to be devoted to the backlog of bills the state had accumulated and touted as an effort to put the state’s budget situation in order. It was also promised to be “temporary” and set to end on December 31, 2014, halfway through the 2015 fiscal year. Those who had observed Illinois politics for a while were skeptical that it would prove to be temporary since the last income tax increase the state experienced had elided from temporary to permanent during the transition from the Jim Thompson to the Jim Edgar Administrations.

As the target date for the sun-setting of the temporary income tax increase drew closer, the attention to its demise, and the debate about what could be done about the considerable hole of approximately \$3-4 billion annually that its loss would blow in the Illinois budget, intensified. This dilemma also became a part of the public discourse focused on the Governor’s race and many House and Senate races leading up to the election in November of 2014, which was less than two months before the tax increase was set to expire. In his budget



address of March 26, Governor Quinn stood four square for keeping the income tax increase and his opponent, Bruce Rauner, strongly reiterated his previously announced opposition to the making the increase permanent.

At the end of May, 2014 the Illinois General Assembly, led by the House, passed another budget where the projected revenue did not meet the current and projected level of spending for the next fiscal year. The gap was to be filled by borrowing approximately \$650 million from various special funds which had temporary balances, money which would have to be paid back. The new budget did not allow for any cost increases, and would significantly slow the rate of pay down on the already accumulated state debt. The legislature chose to temporize again with the imbalance between revenue and services and left it up to a future General Assembly and governor to sort it all out, perhaps after the November elections, but perhaps not.

**Table 7 - Make Income Tax Increase Permanent?**

**Question: Do you favor or oppose a proposal to make permanent the temporary state tax increase passed in 2011?\***

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Strongly favor	11.8%	9.6%
Favor	16.8%	16.9%
Oppose	19.0%	22.2%
Strongly Oppose	44.3%	38.1%
Don't know	8.0%	13.2%

\*In 2013, the options were "Strongly approve" to "Strongly disapprove."

As can be seen from Table 7, those Illinois voters who wanted to get rid of the increase outnumbered those who thought the state should keep it by roughly two to one. In 2014 those who favored or strongly favored keeping the tax increase constituted 26.5 percent of the respondents and the pro tax group had been 28.6 percent in 2013. On the other side in 2014 were the 60.3 percent of respondents who wanted to get rid of the income tax increase. This was only slightly smaller than the 63.3 percent who favored or strongly favored this tax reduction in 2013. Decreasing taxes is always popular with a large majority of the American people, and our Illinois respondents are no exception.

Again, partisanship and ideology are important factors coloring the respondents' views on this issue. Liberals were far more likely to support making the tax increase permanent, although their support clearly did not reach a majority level. Also, Republicans were far more likely to oppose making the tax increase permanent than were Democrats, with the Independents located between the two partisan groups.

### **Potential Programmatic Cuts**

If the state is going to have less revenue next fiscal year, and is constitutionally obligated to balance its budget, where specifically will the money come from? Making programmatic cuts would seem to be one of the only realistic answers, and such cuts have already been very much in evidence throughout the state in the current and earlier fiscal years. Most of the money is tied up in real programs, delivered by the mainline state agencies by flesh-and-blood state employees. Studies show that Illinois already ranks near the bottom with nearly the smallest number of state employees per capita of all the fifty states (Maciag, March 20, 2014). Therefore easy reductions in the personnel lines, where most of the money is, do not readily present themselves as an obvious alternative.

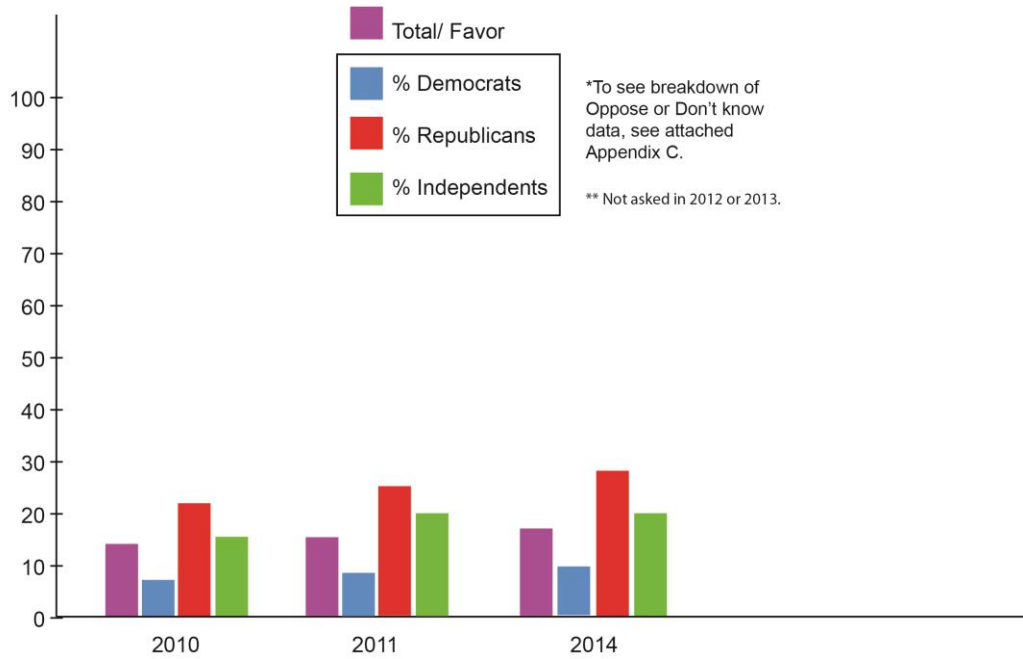
In our surveys in 2010 and 2014, we picked out some of the most prominent state programs and offered them up for potential budget cuts for the respondents to approve or disapprove. (See Table 8)

**Table 8**  
**Where to Cut Spending\***

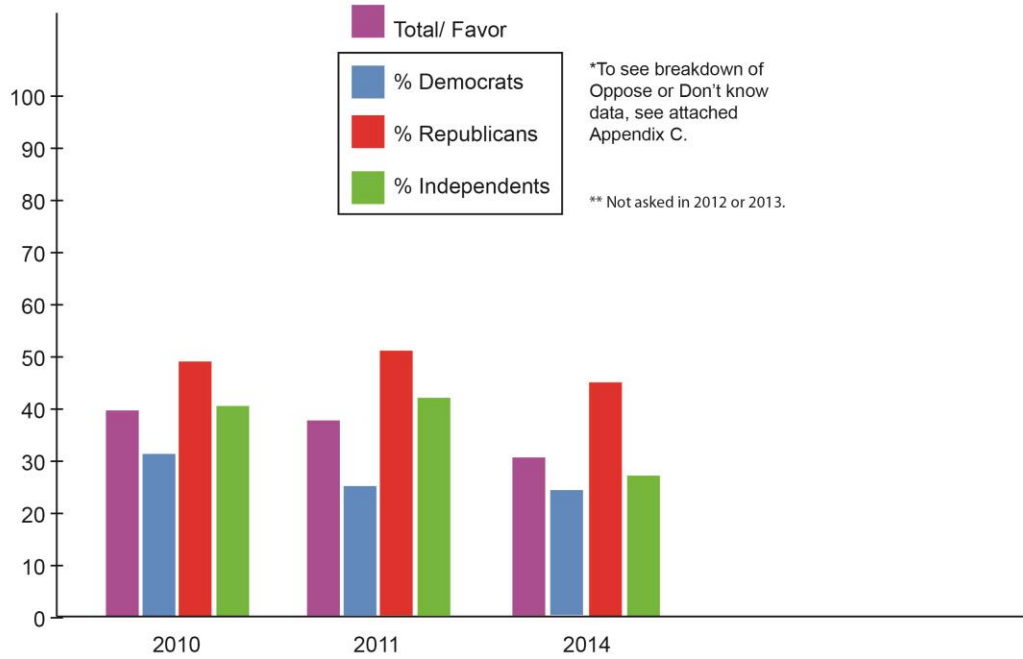
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>K-12</b>		
Favor	14.0%	17.7%
Oppose	82.1%	78.8%
Don't know	3.9%	3.5%
<b>Universities</b>		
Favor	34.0%	36.7%
Oppose	57.4%	56.6%
Don't know	8.6%	6.7%
<b>Public Safety</b>		
Favor	21.0%	24.1%
Oppose	74.5%	56.6%
Don't know	4.5%	6.7%
<b>Natural Resources (State Parks)</b>		
Favor	40.0%	31.4%
Oppose	53.1%	61.1%
Don't know	6.9%	7.5%
<b>Poor People</b>		
Favor	24.9%	26.2%
Oppose	66.3%	64.8%
Don't know	8.8%	8.9%
<b>Disabled</b>		
Favor	12.4%	14.8%
Oppose	83.2%	82.1%
Don't know	4.4%	3.2%
<b>Pensions</b>		
Favor	45.5%	41.5%
Oppose	47.3%	51.1%
Don't know	7.2%	7.5%

\*Note: The size of the budget deficit varied from year to year

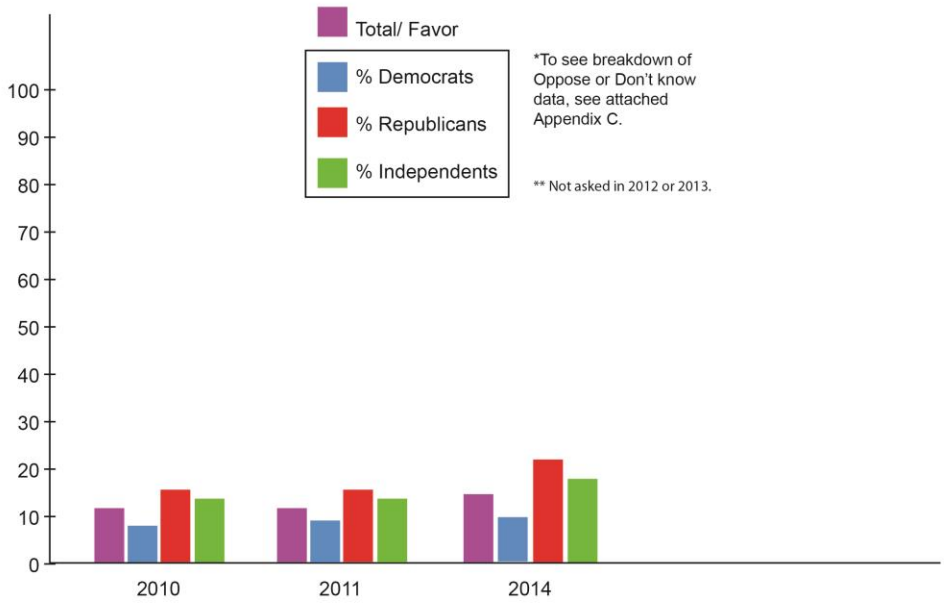
**Figure 6**  
**Where to Cut Spending: K-12 Education**



**Figure 7**  
**Where to Cut Spending: Natural Resources (State Parks)**

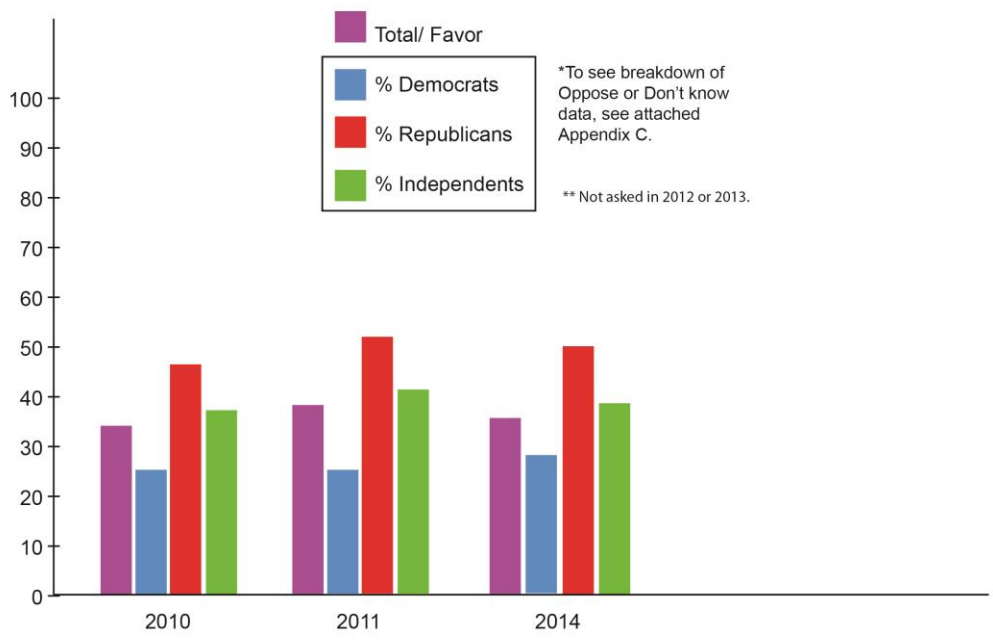


**Figure 8**  
Where to Cut Spending: Disabled

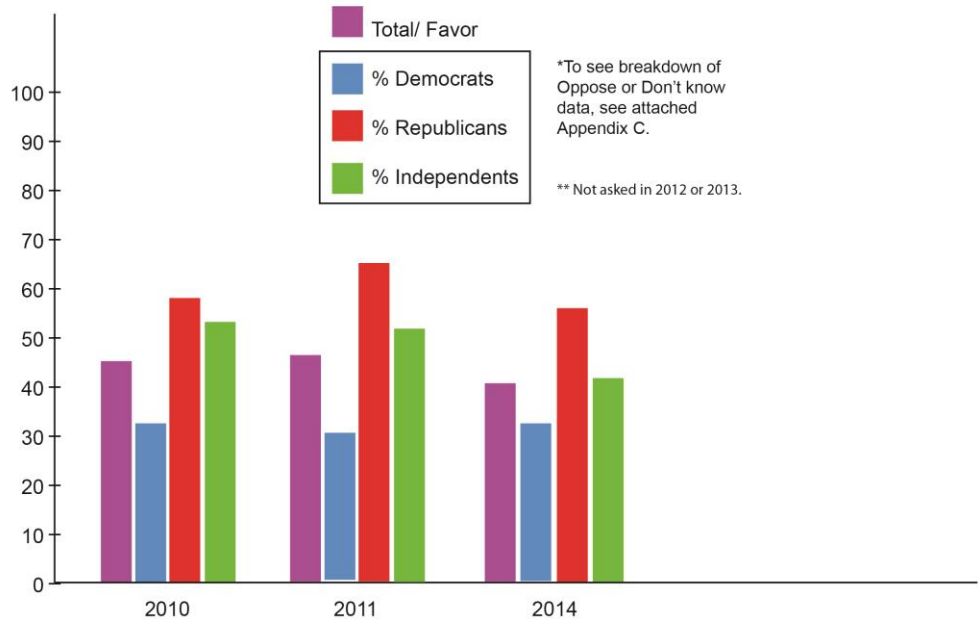


It is quite evident from Figures 8-12 that a reduction in these programs was not a widely popular alternative in 2010 and is still not popular in 2014. Little has changed over this five year period. All of the programs or services are supported by a majority of the respondents, in the sense that cuts in them are opposed. The only two where the gap between advocates for cuts versus those who are opposed to budget reductions are proposed cuts to universities and to the pensions of state employees. *(Full Disclosure Note: both authors work for a state university and have a tangible interest in its budget and in the state pension system.)*

**Figure 9**  
Where to Cut Spending: Universities

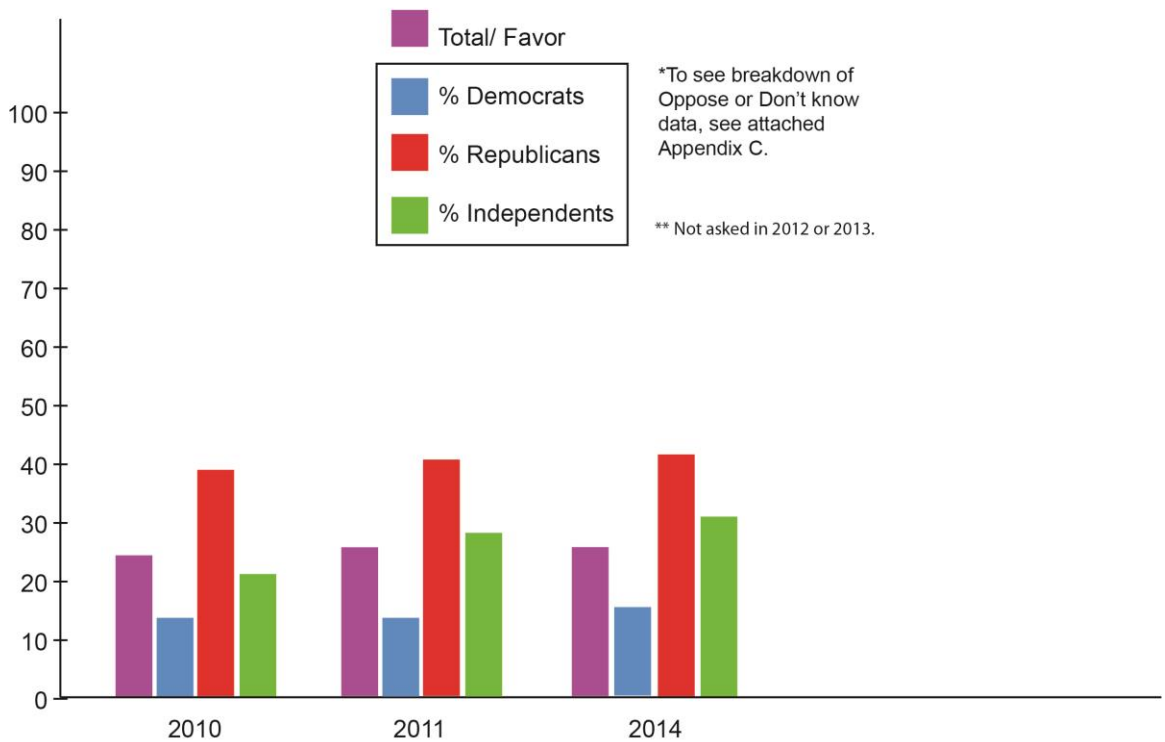


**Figure 10**  
**Where to Cut Spending: Pensions**



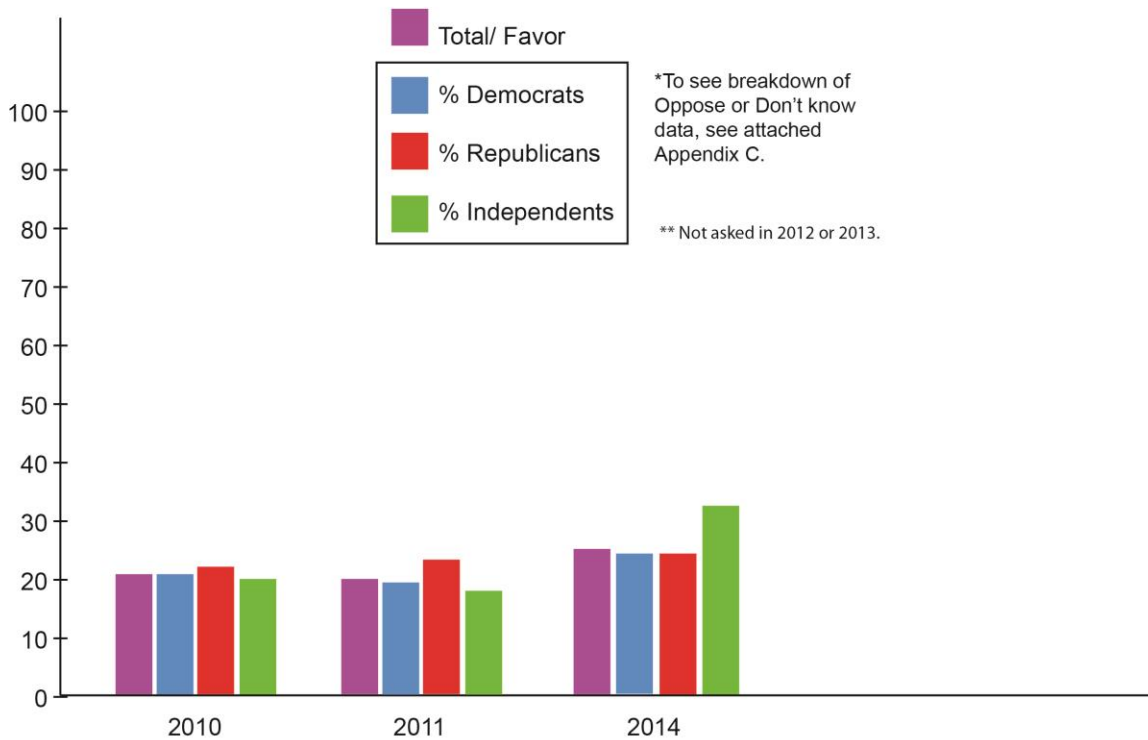
These results show that schools, public safety, state parks, programs for the poor and programs for the disabled all enjoy widespread, majority support, and in some cases over 80 percent of Illinois voters, whether the surveys were taken in 2010 or 2014.

**Figure 11**  
**Where to Cut Spending: Poor People**



Republicans and conservatives were more likely to favor cuts to university budgets and state pensions than Democrats and Independents were. Independents were more likely to support and less likely to oppose cuts to Public Safety than either Democrats or Republicans.

**Figure 12**  
**Where to Cut Spending: Public Safety**



### Potential Sources of New Revenue

We have already established that most Illinois voters do not like the state income tax increase, and we have asserted the axiom that almost nobody likes taxes. In fact, resistance toward and hatred of taxes is a deeply engrained tenet of the American political culture. Nevertheless, we are looking for budget deficit solutions, and we believe that some increased revenue sources must be on that list. Accordingly, we offered several realistic alternatives to the state's income tax in our quest to find places where the public might support tax reforms or revisions that could produce increased revenues.

The only majority-support, revenue-raising option in Table 9 was the increased gambling alternative, favored by 52.7 percent and opposed by 43.7 percent in 2014. This nine-point gap between supporters and opponents was close and offered state policy makers one alternative where supporters outstripped opponents.

Gambling expansion tended to be supported by Democrats, Republicans and Independents at about the same levels (see Figure 13). However, Democrats and Independents usually supported expansion at rates slightly higher than Republicans.

**Table 9**  
**Proposals for Possible Sources of New Revenue**

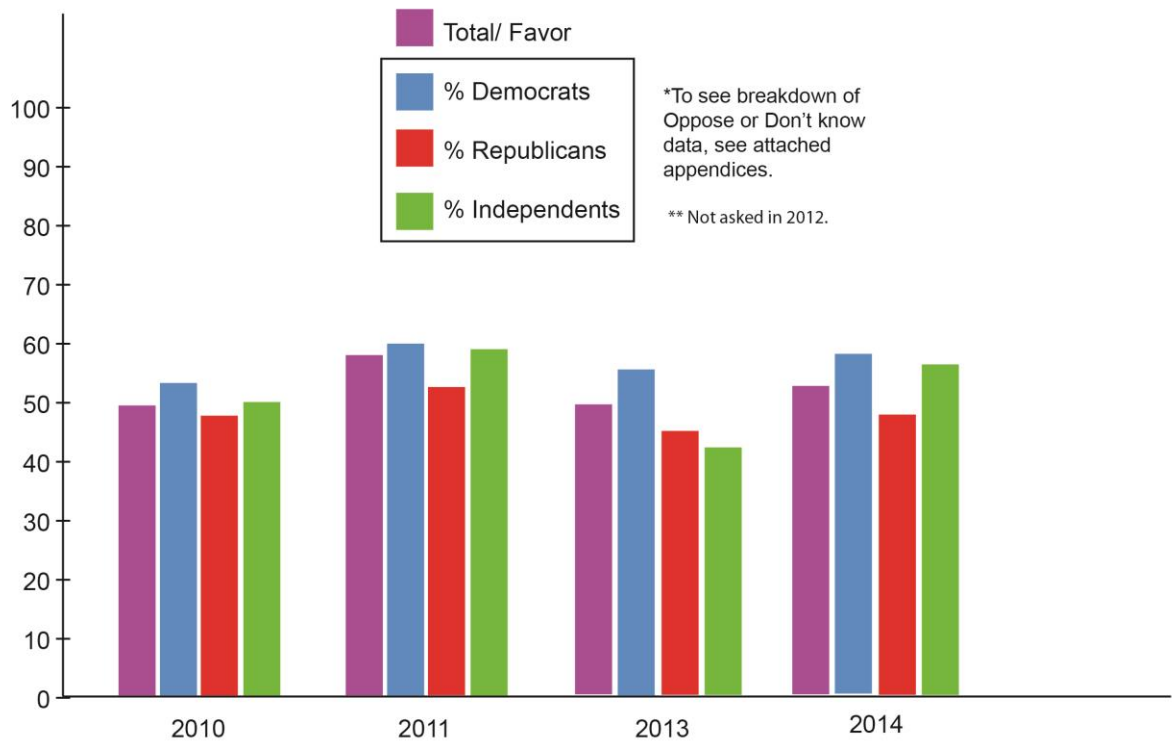
Question: Do you favor or oppose (a) raising the state sales tax? (b) expanding the sales tax to cover services? (c) expanding legalized gambling? (d) taxing retirement income? (e) applying the state income tax to retirement income if it is exempted from the first \$50,000 earned?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Raising the Sales Tax</b>		
Favor	24.5%	18.2%
Oppose	72.9%	78.7%
Don't know	2.6%	3.1%
<b>Broaden Sales Tax*</b>		
Favor	45.2%	43.9%
Oppose	51.4%	53.3%
Don't know	3.4%	2.9%
<b>Expand Gambling*</b>		
Favor	49.9%	52.7%
Oppose	46.3%	43.7%
Don't know	2.8%	2.7%
<b>Tax Retirement Income</b>		
Favor	N/A	21.8%
Oppose	N/A	71.6%
Don't know	N/A	6.6%
<b>Tax Retirement Above \$50,000</b>		
Favor	N/A	42.9%
Oppose	N/A	49.9%
Don't know	N/A	7.8%

\*Note: In 2014 the options were "Strongly approve" to "Strongly disapprove"

Figure 13

Question: Do you favor or oppose: Expand Gambling



There were no other such positive alternatives, and increased gambling has its own limitations. For years legislators throughout the nation have found the so-called “sin taxes” on gambling, smoking, and alcohol the most promising targets when it came to tax increases, so this result is not particularly surprising. The problem is that such small incremental steps rarely generate enough revenue to address serious budget shortfalls, and the sin taxes are limited by competition from neighboring states. Almost every state has casinos now. Furthermore, gambling certainly has its own social costs, which society and families must bear. So, sin taxes, like those on gambling, are at best likely to generate only enough income to plug up a few of the holes in the Illinois budget.

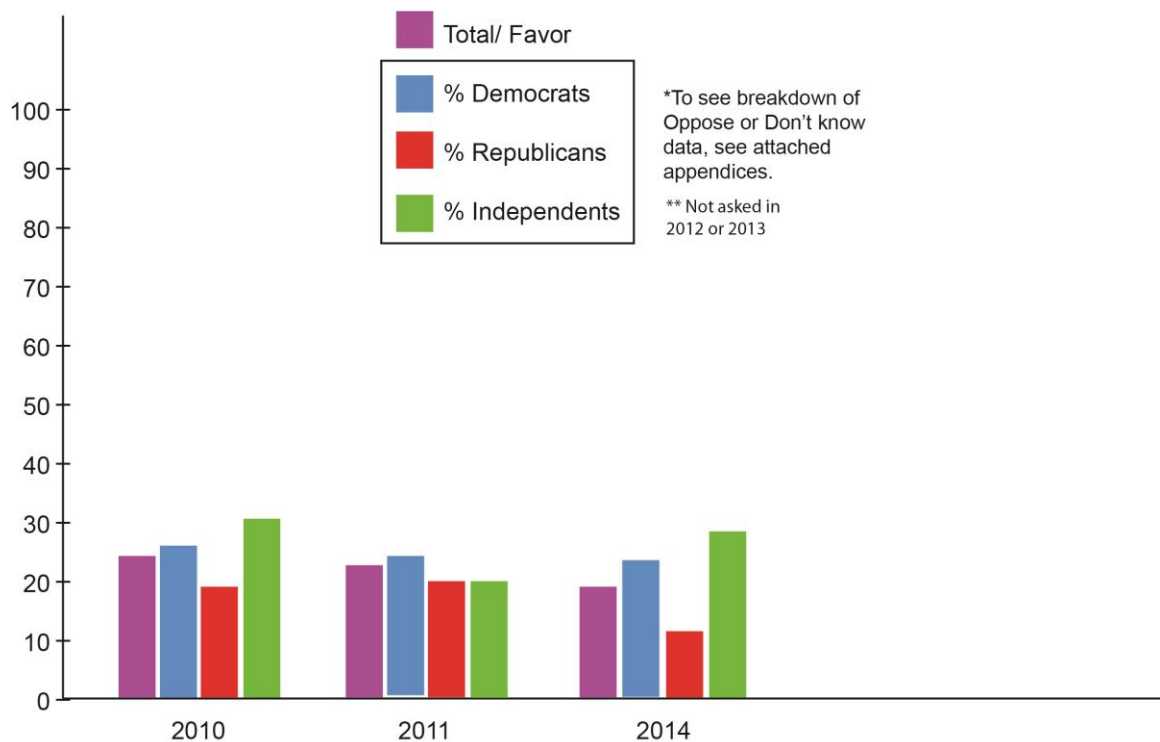
A much more promising alternative, which could generate more significant amounts of revenue, would be an increase in the state sales tax. This alternative was favored by only 18.2 percent and opposed by 78.2 percent in the 2014 survey. So, while it would generate serious money, the proposal is not widely popular.

As can be seen from Figure 14, Democrats and Independents are somewhat more receptive to increasing sales tax than Republicans are (see Figure 14).



Figure 14

Question: Do you favor or oppose: Raising the Sales Tax

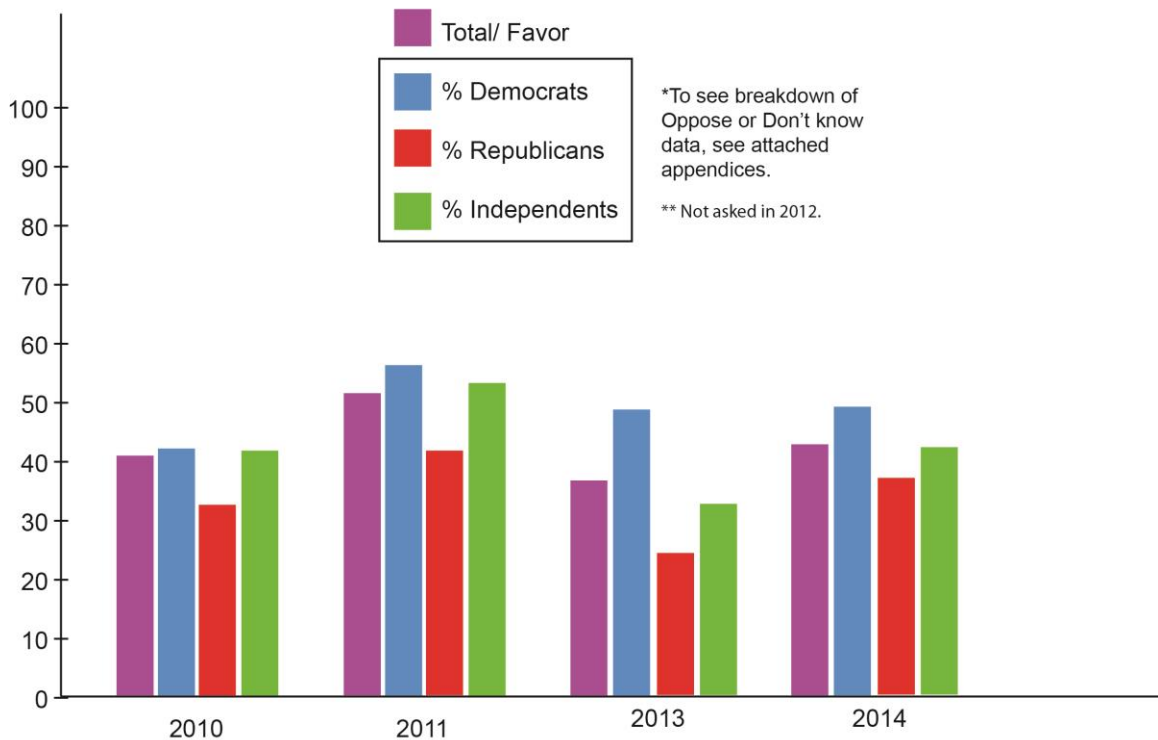


A more nuanced proposal is to expand the range of goods and services on which the sales tax is levied, and in our view it is a much better option from a public policy standpoint. It is a proposal which is gaining some traction among various tax reform groups in Illinois. Broadening the base would reflect the widely touted fact that the nation has changed from a manufacturing to a service economy, and this state's economy certainly reflects that change. Illinois only taxes 17 categories of services whereas there are 168 different categories of services taxed in some states, and the average state taxes 56 different services (Rushton, 2014). So broadening the base appears to be a more promising alternative with 43.9 percent favoring and 53.3 percent opposing in our most recent poll (see Figure 15).

Again, Democrats and Independents are more receptive to this proposal to broaden the sales tax base than Republicans are. This opposition by Republicans is probably a part of the party's generally reflexive stance against any kind of tax increase.

Figure 15

Question: Do you favor or oppose: Broaden the Sales Tax

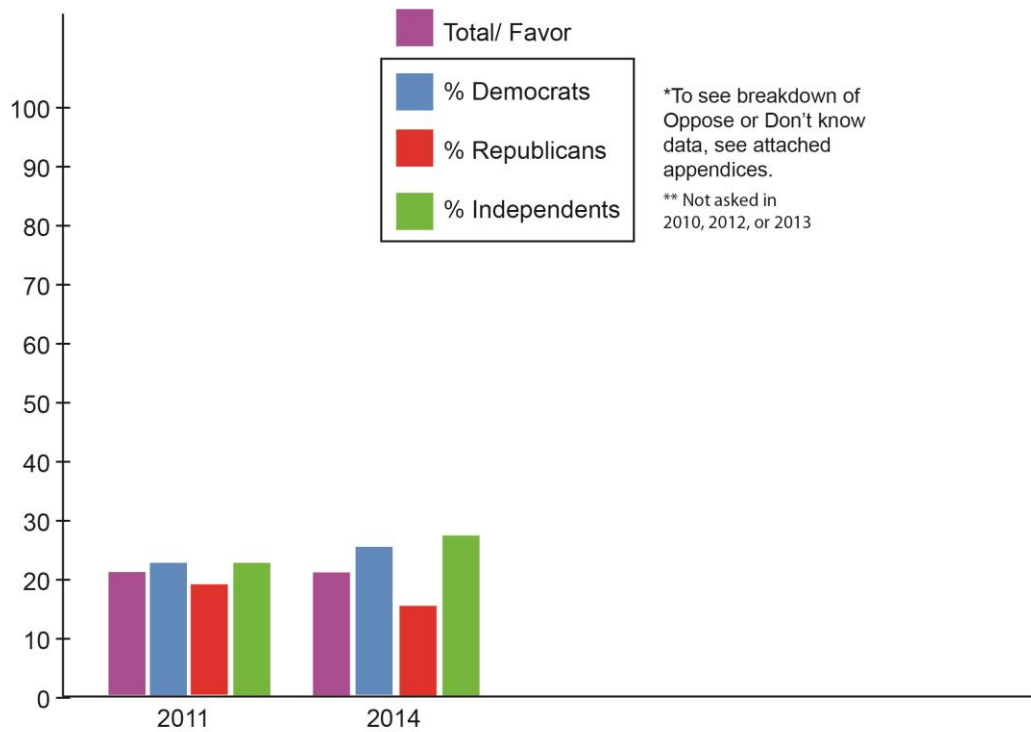


While a small majority overall still oppose broadening the sales tax base, the gap between those who favor and those who oppose is slightly less than ten percent. When the constituents are somewhat close to evenly divided, this split frees the legislators to do what they think is best for the state rather than being cowed by monolithic public opinion. This is one place where the legislators would find some freedom to take decisive action if they chose to do so.

Taxing retirement income is also a proposal that has been widely discussed, since Illinois is one of only four states that currently does not tax such income. This proposal gained only 21.8 percent in favor, with 71.6 percent opposed. Given the power of senior citizens groups in the state and nation, it may be unrealistic to expect lawmakers to accept the onus of such a controversial change in current law.

Figure 16

Question: Do you favor or oppose: Tax Retirement Income

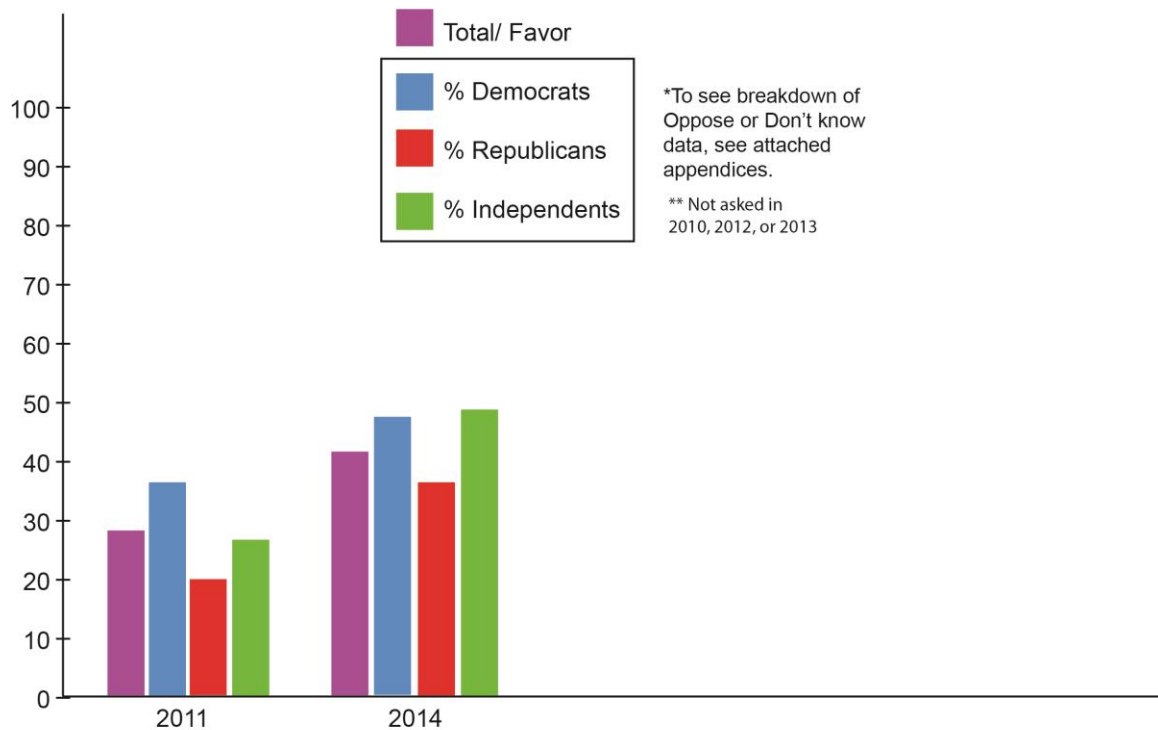


A somewhat more feasible alternative would be to make that tax increase more progressive, by only charging tax on annual income above \$50,000. This proposal was favored by 42.9 percent and opposed by 49.9 percent in our 2014 survey. This might be a realistic alternative for policy makers to consider in the future—and again Illinois public opinion is divided rather than monolithic on this option. Our axiom here is that the more closely divided public opinion is on an issue, the more freedom the legislators have to make policy decisions (see Figure 17).

Again Democrats and Independents are much more amenable to the potential for taxing retirement incomes above \$50,000 annually. Since this is a form of making the state taxing system more progressive in a state where the constitution provides for only a flat rate income tax, perhaps it is not surprising that the Democrats are more receptive to this idea since they are traditionally more supportive of a progressive income tax. While Republicans tend to support a flat rate. The sympathetic support of the Independents for this proposal, particularly in 2014, is surprising and newsworthy however.

Figure 17

Question: Do you favor or oppose: Tax Retirement Income Above \$50,000



### Summary on Strategies for Handling the Budget Deficit

These results indicate that there is a basic incongruity in public opinion, which is endemic to the Illinois as well as the nation. Most people want and support a wide range of public programs and services. There are clients and interest groups dependent on all of these services, and each agency has a constituency. The constituencies are often mobilized. When a serious proposal emerges to reduce or eliminate a specific program, installation or agency the clients and interest groups associated with it mount a vigorous defense and point out the program's usefulness, and the public generally agrees. This is what Free and Cantril termed Americans being "operational liberals." In spite of being ideological or symbolic conservatives, they always endorse tax cuts and, in the abstract at least, strong efforts to reduce governmental deficits.

Only the ubiquitous "waste, inefficiencies and fraud" option lacks a constituency. Auditor General William Holland issues periodic reports detailing programs where waste and fraud are found and sometimes the money wasted is significant (Holland, 2014). This reality fuels people's perceptions that reductions in fraud and abuse could eliminate the overall budget problem. The problem is that finding and eliminating enough waste and fraud to truly make a difference in any state budget is extraordinarily difficult, and always controversial. One person's waste and fraud is another group's essential program. One area's vital governmental installation or office that provides local jobs and essential services can be seen as a wasteful political boondoggle when viewed from a distant lens.

Political leaders are reluctant to talk candidly with their constituents about the realities of budgeting, and the public is generally not at all well informed about the realities of tax and revenue and spending issues (Kettl, 2003). The things the polls show the public wants cut, for example foreign aid at the national level, or salaries, staff, travel and office support for legislators and governors at the state level, are always minuscule percentages of the total budget. The services where there is real money involved, like defense, Social Security and Medicare at the national level, or education, public safety and infrastructure at the state level, are widely supported. The budget is a place where widespread public ignorance really is a major obstacle to the functioning of a successful and effective mass democracy, and it often leads to gridlock and paralysis on the big issues.

Thus, we continue to live with the incongruities identified in this survey. The budget continues to go unbalanced and the goods and services list changes only incrementally, if at all, because that is what the people want. The campaigns conducted by their elected leaders consistently fail to face forthrightly and try to overcome the constraints imposed by such incompatible expectations.

Public opinion and the will of the people count in a mass democracy. Ultimately the majority of the public is likely to prevail and get what they want in the long run. In the last several decades this has meant large public deficits at both national and state levels, coupled with significant spending on a wide array of programs and services. That is what the public wanted and their leaders gave it to them. Most incumbents then got re-elected in return.

Political leaders, the mass media and those in public education likewise have an obligation to try to inform the public about the realities of budgets and the costs of programs and connect the direct linkage between the two. The officials have an obligation to tell the truth and to be candid with their constituency when they are running for office. Very few of them do this when it comes to budget and tax issues or to the true costs of delivering programs and keeping open state installations like prisons, mental health facilities, and state offices in the local communities. Thus, we get cynicism, mistrust of the government, and abysmal “right track/wrong track” numbers when polls are conducted.

### **Conclusion**

The authors are veteran students of public opinion, and we have studied polls in a variety of circumstances for a long time. There was not a lot surprising to us in these polls of the voters of Illinois taken over this five-year period. We were impressed with the remarkable stability shown on many of the items. For example, the voters’ preferences for cutting waste and inefficiencies as a way to solve the state’s budget deficit problem have hardly changed at all over this period, despite frequent media coverage of deficit and spending issues in Springfield. Their aversion to taxes and opposition to tax increases is quite deep. The public’s preference for sin taxes like marginal gambling revenue expansion rather than affinity for more comprehensive and structural tax system changes is solidly implanted. All of these indicators are also consonant with polls of other states and taken from the national scene.

Most of public opinion is fairly stable and moves only slowly. There are large areas of public opinion where the people have a sort of “standing decision” in favor of or opposed to various subjects that reflect deeply held and widely shared cultural norms. Usually it takes a crisis or cataclysmic events to move public opinion significantly. Most of our results show more continuity than change during this volatile five-year period in Illinois government.

Occasionally there are exceptions to that rule of glacial change. Illinois voters’ views on gay rights and gay marriage is one such exception documented in these polls. This movement toward a more tolerant or more

liberal position is notable in our data for how rare it is and remarkable for how swiftly it took place. It is also remarkable that the political system in Illinois responded with policy changes that reflected, and in real respects led, the opinion changes. In a short space of three years, Illinois went from having no law protecting the rights of gay people to marry to a new law authorizing civil unions to a still newer law authorizing gay marriages. Most of the time the policy making process is much slower and less responsive than that. But in some rare occasions, public policy follows the shifts in public opinion fairly quickly. It is also true that public opinion follows policy changes when political leaders take the initiative in some cases, which can be an interpretation taken from these longitudinal data.

Whether other such examples of governmental responsiveness would address the larger problems of mass democracy endemic to the nation and to the state of Illinois is less clear. Mass democracy rests on a mass base, ultimately dependent on the views and values of its citizens. Those views and values are manifest every two and every four years in the popular elections we routinely hold in order to form state and national governments. At those electoral junctures the political leaders, the political elites, are accountable to those they govern. If they get rascals in office, the elections provide ample opportunity for the people to throw the rascals out.

This form of electoral democracy is all that is guaranteed by the federal constitution and by the constitutions of the various states. It is a representative democracy uniquely based on popular elections rather than any more demanding and committed form of mass participation. It is also a system uniquely dependent on a need for ongoing civic education, which requires a constant conversation and an honest political discourse between the leaders and the followers.

Ultimately, then, the people rule, however indirectly, and are responsible for their own fates and for their own governments, which they formed by their votes. A rational democracy requires that the voters learn about the issues and about the candidates seeking office. It also requires the political elites to spend time and political capital educating the public, dealing in facts, as well as rhetoric and making sure that the voters are informed about the issues faced by their government. It demands a high level of political discourse, which is not always evident in our campaigns; however, there are millions of Americans who are at least willing and some who are eager to learn more about the issues and their candidates and who are ambitious to cast a rational vote.

The challenge for the political leadership class is to find the courage to tell the truth, deal in facts rather than hyperbole and to elevate the discourse. The mass media and public education from K-12 through the community colleges and the universities also must play a key role in that civic education. Political opinion polling is an important part of that conversation. Public opinion polls, along with elections, are major instruments designed to keep the relationship between the rulers and the ruled in a healthy balance.

Near the end of his magisterial book on public opinion V. O. Key, Jr. made the following observation:

That at times mass opinion may handicap desirable action cannot be denied. Yet as one puzzles over the nature of interactions between government and mass opinion and ponders such empirical data as can be assembled on the matter, he can arrive only at the conclusion that a wide range of discretion exists for whatever wisdom leadership echelons can muster in the public service (Key, 1967, 555).

We agree, and Key's guardedly optimistic quote succinctly summarizes the very real challenge faced by political leaders and the voters alike in today's Illinois.

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## Appendix A

The surveys were all done via telephone. Each one constituted a random sample of publicly available telephone numbers throughout the state. The phone numbers included both land lines and cell phones. For most years the basic number of calls completed was 1,000 producing a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. In 2013, we had a total of 600 respondents producing a margin of error of 4.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

In all cases the respondents were asked if they were registered voters and if they were not, the interview was terminated. In short, this is a random sample of registered voters for the state for each of these years.

Most of the surveys were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas. Cell phone interviews accounted for 30 percent of the sample. A Spanish language version of the questionnaire and a Spanish-speaking interviewer were made available. Customer Research International reports no Illinois political clients. The surveys were paid for with non-tax dollars from the Institute's endowment fund.

In 2011, the surveys were conducted by Issues and Answers of Virginia Beach Virginia. The specifications were the same for this company as for Customer Research International.

Each year the PSPPI produced multiple press releases in order to publicize our findings and those releases were amply covered by area and statewide media. Some of the findings reported here closely reflect and follow those earlier press releases. Charles Leonard also wrote an earlier analysis of the data which was published as Simon Review Paper number 24 which is available on the Institute's website and the website of Morris Library.



**Appendix B  
States with Term Limits**

Derived from the National Conference of State Legislatures (2013)

State	Voted Yes	Year Enacted	House		Senate		Consecutive (C) or Lifetime Ban (LB)
			Limit (years)	Year of Impact	Limit (years)	Year of Impact	
Arizona	74.2%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C
Arkansas	59.9%	1992	6	1998	8	2000	LB
California*	52.2%	1990	12*	1996	12*	1998	LB*
Colorado	71%	1990	8	1998	8	1998	C
Florida	76.8%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C
Louisiana	76%	1995	12	2007	12	2007	C
Maine	67.6%	1993	8	1996	8	1996	C
Michigan	58.8%	1992	6	1998	8	2002	LB
Missouri**	75%	1992	8	2002	8	2002	LB
Montana	67%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C
Nebraska	56%	2000	n/a	n/a	8	2006	C
Nevada***	70.4%	1996	12	2010	12	2010	LB
Ohio	68.4%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C
Oklahoma*	67.3%	1990	12*	2004	12*	2004	LB*
South Dakota	63.5%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C

\*Legislators may serve a total of 12 years in the legislature during their lifetime. They may split the 12 years between the house chamber and the senate chamber, or spend the total time in just one chamber.

\*\*Term limits were effective for eight current members of the House in 2000 and one senator in 1998 due to special elections.

\*\*\*Although term limits were enacted in 1996, The Nevada Legislative Council and Attorney General ruled that term limits could not be applied to legislators elected in the term limits were passed. They were therefore applied to legislators elected in the 1998 election.

\*\*\*\*Appendix B assembled by 2013-2014 Howard Fellow, Lindsay Knaus of the Paul Simon Institute Staff

## Appendix C

### Table 1

#### 2010-2014: Right Track/Wrong Track

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Question: First, we'd like to know what you think about the direction of the United States of America. Generally speaking, do you think things in our country are going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?						
Right direction		<u>30.2%</u>	<u>19.2%</u>	<u>41.6%</u>	<u>41.7%</u>	<u>29.7%</u>
	Democrat	51.7%	31.7%	68.7%	64.5%	48.5%
	Republican	5.5%	6.1%	7.9%	12.4%	8.8%
	Independent	25.7%	12.9%	25.5%	24.6%	19.1%
Wrong direction		<u>60.1%</u>	<u>71.4%</u>	<u>49.8%</u>	<u>48.5%</u>	<u>59.9%</u>
	Democrat	34.2%	54.8%	21.6%	24.2%	36.8%
	Republican	92.3%	90.4%	88.6%	82.8%	88.1%
	Independent	37.1%	78.9%	61.3%	68.4%	71.4%
Other/Don't know		<u>9.7%</u>	<u>9.4%</u>	<u>8.6%</u>	<u>9.8%</u>	<u>10.4%</u>
	Democrat	14.1%	13.5%	9.7%	11.3%	14.8%
	Republican	2.2%	3.5%	3.5%	4.8%	3.1%
	Independent	11.5%	8.2%	13.2%	7.0%	9.5%

Question: And what about the direction of the State of Illinois? Generally speaking, are things in Illinois going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?

Right direction		<u>12.2%</u>	<u>14.9%</u>	<u>19.6%</u>	<u>15.8%</u>	<u>15.1%</u>
	Democrat	20.8%	24.9%	31.1%	24.5%	24.6%
	Republican	0.4%	4.5%	6.5%	5.4%	4.8%
	Independent	8.2%	10.3%	6.6%	5.3%	7.9%
Wrong direction		<u>79.5%</u>	<u>74.5%</u>	<u>69.9%</u>	<u>75.0%</u>	<u>75.6%</u>
	Democrat	68.2%	61.1%	54.5%	63.5%	63.0%
	Republican	92.9%	89.1%	89.3%	90.9%	91.8%
	Independent	80.9%	82.5%	84.9%	93.0%	74.6%
Other/Don't know		<u>8.3%</u>	<u>10.6%</u>	<u>10.5%</u>	<u>9.2%</u>	<u>9.3%</u>
	Democrat	10.9%	13.9%	14.4%	11.9%	12.3%
	Republican	3.1%	6.4%	4.2%	3.8%	3.4%
	Independent	10.9%	7.2%	8.5%	1.8%	17.5%

Question: And how are things going in your city or area of the state? In general, are things in your city or area going in the right direction, or in the wrong direction?

Right direction		<u>45.5%</u>	<u>52.0%</u>	<u>54.2%</u>	<u>53.7%</u>	<u>53.4%</u>
	Democrat	52.9%	55.3%	61.8%	56.8%	58.5%
	Republican	40.7%	48.7%	44.4%	56.5%	49.9%
	Independent	41.0%	52.1%	48.1%	42.1%	49.2%
Wrong direction		<u>41.9%</u>	<u>37.5%</u>	<u>35.8%</u>	<u>34.8%</u>	<u>38.5%</u>
	Democrat	37.1%	33.9%	29.0%	32.3%	33.5%
	Republican	43.5%	40.7%	46.5%	34.4%	44.2%
	Independent	47.5%	40.2%	36.8%	47.4%	41.3%
Other/Don't know		<u>12.6%</u>	<u>10.5%</u>	<u>10.1%</u>	<u>11.5%</u>	<u>8.2%</u>
	Democrat	7.5%	10.8%	9.2%	11.0%	8.0%
	Republican	15.7%	10.6%	9.1%	9.1%	6.0%
	Independent	11.5%	7.7%	15.1%	10.5%	9.5%

**Table 2**  
**Illinois Reform Proposals 2010-2014**  
**Would you favor or oppose a proposal to:**

		<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Limit how long state legislators could serve. It would limit state representatives to five consecutive two-year terms and state senators to three consecutive four-year terms:*						
Strongly favor		<u>57.3%</u>	<u>54.4%</u>	<u>54.1%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>61.7%</u>
	Democrat	49.3%	49.7%	48.5%	N/A	51.6%
	Republican	65.1%	61.5%	63.5%	N/A	73.4%
	Independent	61.7%	55.2%	57.6%	N/A	68.3%
Somewhat favor		<u>22.7%</u>	<u>20.6%</u>	<u>24.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>17.8%</u>
	Democrat	26.5%	22.9%	28.0%	N/A	21.6%
	Republican	18.8%	19.2%	19.9%	N/A	14.5%
	Independent	22.4%	17.5%	22.6%	N/A	9.5%
Somewhat oppose		<u>7.7%</u>	<u>8.5%</u>	<u>8.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>8.5%</u>
	Democrat	9.7%	9.7%	10.3%	N/A	10.1%
	Republican	7.1%	6.7%	7.0%	N/A	4.8%
	Independent	6.0%	9.3%	3.8%	N/A	11.1%
Strongly oppose		<u>7.1%</u>	<u>10.9%</u>	<u>8.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>8.6%</u>
	Democrat	9.0%	12.4%	10.5%	N/A	12.1%
	Republican	5.2%	7.4%	7.5%	N/A	4.0%
	Independent	4.9%	12.9%	8.5%	N/A	11.1%
Other/Don't know		<u>5.2%</u>	<u>5.6%</u>	<u>3.9%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>3.4%</u>
	Democrat	5.6%	5.4%	2.7%	N/A	4.5%
	Republican	3.7%	5.1%	2.3%	N/A	1.4%
	Independent	4.9%	5.2%	7.6%	N/A	0.0%

Limit how long legislators could serve in leadership positions – such as Speaker of the House or President of the Senate – before they stepped down to let other legislators lead:

Strongly favor		<u>57.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>53.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>65.1%</u>
	Democrat	50.0%	N/A	49.9%	N/A	59.8%
	Republican	62.3%	N/A	60.1%	N/A	74.2%
	Independent	63.4%	N/A	59.4%	N/A	61.9%
Somewhat favor		<u>24.3%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>24.1%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>17.6%</u>
	Democrat	28.4%	N/A	25.5%	N/A	19.7%
	Republican	23.5%	N/A	21.3%	N/A	14.2%
	Independent	18.6%	N/A	20.8%	N/A	17.5%
Somewhat oppose		<u>6.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>8.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>8.3%</u>
	Democrat	5.8%	N/A	10.5%	N/A	10.3%
	Republican	6.2%	N/A	7.0%	N/A	6.5%
	Independent	9.8%	N/A	4.7%	N/A	6.4%
Strongly oppose		<u>5.3%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>7.4%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>6.3%</u>
	Democrat	7.5%	N/A	8.9%	N/A	7.8%
	Republican	2.8%	N/A	6.5%	N/A	3.1%
	Independent	2.7%	N/A	5.7%	N/A	14.3%
Other/Don't know		<u>6.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>6.1%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>2.7%</u>
	Democrat	7.8%	N/A	5.2%	N/A	2.5%
	Republican	5.2%	N/A	5.1%	N/A	2.0%
	Independent	5.5%	N/A	9.4%	N/A	0.0%

Change the primary election process in Illinois so that voters do not have to publicly declare which party's ballot they have chosen:

Strongly favor		<u>62.2%</u>	<u>58.3%</u>	<u>56.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	60.2%	53.0%	51.0%	N/A	N/A
	Republican	58.0%	58.0%	57.7%	N/A	N/A
	Independent	72.1%	72.2%	70.8%	N/A	N/A
Somewhat favor		<u>13.2%</u>	<u>13.5%</u>	<u>14.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	13.1%	13.7%	17.2%	N/A	N/A
	Republican	13.6%	13.8%	11.0%	N/A	N/A
	Independent	14.2%	12.4%	6.6%	N/A	N/A
Somewhat oppose		<u>7.6%</u>	<u>6.8%</u>	<u>9.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	8.3%	8.8%	8.9%	N/A	N/A
	Republican	8.6%	6.4%	10.8%	N/A	N/A
	Independent	4.9%	3.1%	5.7%	N/A	N/A
Strongly oppose		<u>10.1%</u>	<u>13.1%</u>	<u>13.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	10.7%	15.3%	16.3%	N/A	N/A
	Republican	12.7%	13.5%	12.9%	N/A	N/A
	Independent	4.9%	8.2%	8.5%	N/A	N/A
Other/Don't know		<u>6.9%</u>	<u>8.3%</u>	<u>7.4%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	7.8%	9.2%	6.6%	N/A	N/A
	Republican	7.1%	8.3%	7.7%	N/A	N/A
	Independent	3.8%	4.1%	8.5%	N/A	N/A

Currently, when the political parties can't agree on a legislative redistricting plan, they end the stalemate by pulling a party's name out of a hat... Do you approve or disapprove of this tie-breaking process?

Strongly approve		<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>4.4%</u>	<u>4.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	N/A	N/A	5.6%	4.5%	N/A
	Republican	N/A	N/A	3.5%	3.2%	N/A
	Independent	N/A	N/A	4.7%	7.0%	N/A
Somewhat approve		<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>14.8%</u>	<u>11.3%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	N/A	N/A	15.5%	13.9%	N/A
	Republican	N/A	N/A	13.8%	9.1%	N/A
	Independent	N/A	N/A	17.0%	7.0%	N/A
Somewhat disapprove		<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>18.9%</u>	<u>19.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	N/A	N/A	18.0%	22.3%	N/A
	Republican	N/A	N/A	18.9%	18.3%	N/A
	Independent	N/A	N/A	17.9%	19.3%	N/A
Strongly disapprove		<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>54.6%</u>	<u>55.5%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	N/A	N/A	53.8%	50.6%	N/A
	Republican	N/A	N/A	57.5%	61.8%	N/A
	Independent	N/A	N/A	53.8%	56.1%	N/A
Other/Don't know		<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>7.3%</u>	<u>9.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	N/A	N/A	7.0%	8.7%	N/A
	Republican	N/A	N/A	6.3%	7.5%	N/A
	Independent	N/A	N/A	6.6%	10.5%	N/A

\*In 2014 the question wording changed somewhat because of the debate which was current regarding a specific proposal. It read: A proposal to limit state legislators to a total of eight years of service, whether in the House of Representatives, the State Senate, or a combination of the two. The answers ranged from strongly favor to strongly oppose.

One proposal for improving the state legislative redistricting process would have the Illinois Supreme Court add a neutral person to the redistricting panel in case of a partisan tie.

Strongly favor		<u>19.0%</u>	<u>35.8%</u>	<u>42.0%</u>	<u>36.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	21.8%	36.9%	41.6%	39.4%	N/A
	Republican	15.7%	37.5%	45.3%	32.8%	N/A
	Independent	17.5%	32.5%	43.4%	28.1%	N/A
Favor		<u>48.3%</u>	<u>34.3%</u>	<u>32.8%</u>	<u>34.7%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	51.5%	33.3%	32.9%	33.2%	N/A
	Republican	46.3%	36.5%	32.9%	43.0%	N/A
	Independent	47.5%	37.6%	30.2%	28.1%	N/A
Oppose		<u>12.6%</u>	<u>9.5%</u>	<u>8.4%</u>	<u>8.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	9.7%	10.1%	8.8%	8.7%	N/A
	Republican	13.6%	8.3%	7.2%	7.5%	N/A
	Independent	18.6%	9.3%	10.4%	12.3%	N/A
Strongly oppose		<u>7.3%</u>	<u>7.1%</u>	<u>8.7%</u>	<u>11.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	6.1%	7.4%	9.2%	10.0%	N/A
	Republican	9.9%	6.1%	7.9%	9.1%	N/A
	Independent	4.9%	7.7%	9.4%	19.3%	N/A
Other/Don't know		<u>12.8%</u>	<u>13.3%</u>	<u>8.0%</u>	<u>9.3%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	10.9%	12.4%	7.5%	8.7%	N/A
	Republican	14.5%	11.5%	6.5%	7.5%	N/A
	Independent	11.5%	12.9%	6.6%	12.3%	N/A

Other people have proposed a constitutional amendment that would have legislative district maps created by a commission that is independent of the elected representatives. The legislature would then vote up or down on the independent commission's redistricting plan.

Strongly favor		<u>13.3%</u>	<u>31.8%</u>	<u>38.1%</u>	<u>34.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	15.8%	29.0%	37.6%	32.3%	N/A
	Republican	10.5%	39.7%	41.4%	37.6%	N/A
	Independent	14.8%	27.8%	35.9%	38.6%	N/A
Favor		<u>40.2%</u>	<u>33.2%</u>	<u>32.1%</u>	<u>32.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	42.0%	34.8%	34.1%	29.4%	N/A
	Republican	39.2%	31.4%	31.8%	36.0%	N/A
	Independent	39.2%	35.1%	29.3%	35.1%	N/A
Oppose		<u>19.5%</u>	<u>11.7%</u>	<u>9.9%</u>	<u>10.7%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	19.2%	12.8%	10.3%	11.6%	N/A
	Republican	21.9%	9.0%	8.6%	9.1%	N/A
	Independent	18.6%	13.9%	16.0%	8.8%	N/A
Strongly oppose		<u>7.6%</u>	<u>7.4%</u>	<u>9.3%</u>	<u>12.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	7.0%	7.6%	9.6%	13.9%	N/A
	Republican	7.4%	7.4%	9.1%	6.1%	N/A
	Independent	8.2%	6.2%	6.6%	10.5%	N/A
Other/Don't know		<u>19.4%</u>	<u>15.9%</u>	<u>10.5%</u>	<u>10.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	Democrat	16.0%	15.7%	8.5%	12.9%	N/A
	Republican	21.0%	12.5%	9.1%	7.0%	N/A

Independent	19.1%	17.0%	12.3%	7.0%	N/A
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**Table 3**  
**Views on Abortion**

Question: Do you think abortions should be legal under all circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?

		<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Always legal		<u>31.5%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>37.0%</u>	<u>37.0%</u>	<u>35.8%</u>
	Democrat	41.5%	N/A	47.6%	50.0%	50.9%
	Republican	20.1%	N/A	22.7%	20.4%	14.7%
	Independent	33.9%	N/A	38.7%	26.3%	42.9%
Certain circumstances		<u>45.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>44.3%</u>	<u>42.3%</u>	<u>43.9%</u>
	Democrat	42.5%	N/A	40.1%	37.4%	37.0%
	Republican	47.2%	N/A	51.6%	50.5%	56.4%
	Independent	45.9%	N/A	39.6%	52.6%	39.7%
Always illegal		<u>19.1%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>15.9%</u>	<u>16.7%</u>	<u>15.5%</u>
	Democrat	11.9%	N/A	11.0%	10.0%	7.4%
	Republican	29.9%	N/A	23.1%	26.9%	26.6%
	Independent	14.2%	N/A	15.1%	12.3%	15.9%
Other/Don't know		<u>4.4%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>2.9%</u>	<u>4.0%</u>	<u>4.9%</u>
	Democrat	4.1%	N/A	1.4%	2.6%	4.7%
	Republican	2.8%	N/A	2.6%	2.2%	2.3%
	Independent	6.0%	N/A	6.6%	8.8%	1.6%

**Table 4**  
**Legal Rights for Gays and Lesbians**

Question: Which of the following three statements comes closest to your position on the legal rights of gay and lesbian couples in Illinois?

		<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Legalize marriage		<u>33.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>43.6%</u>	<u>45.5%</u>	<u>53.4%</u>
	Democrat	48.8%	N/A	57.6%	61.0%	69.0%
	Republican	16.0%	N/A	25.7%	36.8%	31.7%
	Independent	33.3%	N/A	39.6%	24.7%	58.7%
Legalize civil unions		<u>33.9%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>31.8%</u>	<u>29.7%</u>	<u>23.1%</u>
	Democrat	27.9%	N/A	24.4%	20.3%	15.0%
	Republican	39.8%	N/A	41.8%	39.8%	38.5%
	Independent	40.4%	N/A	34.0%	45.6%	14.3%
No legal recognition		<u>26.5%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>20.2%</u>	<u>20.0%</u>	<u>17.2%</u>
	Democrat	17.7%	N/A	14.1%	14.5%	11.9%
	Republican	39.2%	N/A	29.0%	30.6%	24.4%
	Independent	21.3%	N/A	21.7%	14.0%	11.1%
Other/Don't know		<u>6.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>4.4%</u>	<u>4.8%</u>	<u>6.4%</u>
	Democrat	5.6%	N/A	3.9%	4.2%	4.1%
	Republican	4.9%	N/A	3.5%	4.8%	5.4%
	Independent	4.9%	N/A	4.7%	3.5%	15.9%



**Table 5**

Question: Generally speaking, in politics today, do you consider yourself:

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Very Liberal	7.0%	8.3%	10.5%	10.5%	9.6%
Somewhat Liberal	20.1%	17.3%	24.3%	23.3%	19.9%
Moderate	26.8%	34.0%	25.5%	25.5%	28.6%
Somewhat Conservative	25.2%	24.3%	23.0%	23.0%	23.7%
Very Conservative	15.3%	10.9%	9.7%	9.7%	13.7%
Other/Don't know	5.6%	5.2%	7.0%	7.0%	4.5%

**Table 6**

Question: Generally speaking do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Strong Democrat	18.4%	22.1%	25.8%	25.8%	23.5%
Mild Democrat	9.4%	8.3%	13.0%	13.0%	13.2%
Ind, leans Dem	13.4%	14.1%	12.8%	12.8%	12.0%
Pure Independent	18.3%	19.4%	9.5%	9.5%	6.3%
Ind, leans Rep	11.3%	11.3%	8.5%	8.5%	13.8%
Mild Republican	7.5%	9.4%	10.0%	10.0%	7.8%
Strong Republican	13.6%	10.5%	12.5%	12.5%	13.7%
Other/Don't know	8.1%	4.9%	7.8%	7.8%	9.8%

**Table 7**  
**How to Handle the Budget Deficit**

Question: The state of Illinois has a budget deficit of over 6 billion dollars. I'm 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 the 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."

		<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
More revenue		<u>9.3%</u>	<u>6.9%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>7.5%</u>	<u>9.7%</u>
	Democrat	13.8%	12.1%	N/A	11.0%	13.6%
	Republican	4.0%	2.2%	N/A	2.2%	6.5%
	Independent	8.7%	3.1%	N/A	7.0%	6.4%
Cut waste		<u>57.0%</u>	<u>57.7%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>54.7%</u>	<u>52.3%</u>
	Democrat	49.0%	41.6%	N/A	43.9%	42.9%
	Republican	67.9%	75.3%	N/A	70.4%	62.6%
	Independent	53.0%	68.0%	N/A	57.9%	57.1%
Combination		<u>26.6%</u>	<u>28.5%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>28.8%</u>	<u>28.9%</u>
	Democrat	30.1%	37.3%	N/A	35.8%	33.5%
	Republican	22.8%	18.9%	N/A	21.5%	24.7%
	Independent	31.7%	24.2%	N/A	26.3%	25.4%
Haven't thought		<u>3.4%</u>	<u>3.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>4.5%</u>	<u>5.0%</u>
	Democrat	3.6%	3.6%	N/A	5.2%	6.8%
	Republican	2.2%	1.6%	N/A	3.2%	2.6%
	Independent	2.2%	2.1%	N/A	1.8%	4.8%
Don't know		<u>3.7%</u>	<u>3.9%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>4.5%</u>	<u>4.1%</u>
	Democrat	3.4%	5.4%	N/A	1.3%	3.3%
	Republican	3.1%	1.9%	N/A	2.7%	3.7%
	Independent	4.4%	2.6%	N/A	7.0%	6.4%

**Table 8**  
**Make Income Tax Increase Permanent?**

Question: Do you favor or oppose a proposal to make permanent the temporary state tax increase passed in 2011?\*

		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Strongly favor		<u>N/A</u>	<u>11.8%</u>	<u>9.6%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	16.5%	14.2%
	Republican	N/A	4.8%	3.1%
	Independent	N/A	14.0%	14.3%
Favor		<u>N/A</u>	<u>16.8%</u>	<u>16.9%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	22.3%	23.8%
	Republican	N/A	6.1%	10.2%
	Independent	N/A	17.5%	14.3%
Oppose		<u>N/A</u>	<u>19.0%</u>	<u>22.2%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	19.4%	23.6%
	Republican	N/A	17.7%	23.2%
	Independent	N/A	21.1%	17.5%
Strongly oppose		<u>N/A</u>	<u>44.3%</u>	<u>38.1%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	34.2%	25.1%
	Republican	N/A	60.8%	53.5%
	Independent	N/A	40.4%	42.9%
Don't know		<u>N/A</u>	<u>8.0%</u>	<u>13.2%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	7.7%	13.4%
	Republican	N/A	6.5%	9.9%
	Independent	N/A	7.0%	11.1%

\*In 2013 the options were "Strongly approve" to "Strongly disapprove"

**Table 9  
Where to Cut Spending\***

		<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	
K-12	Favor	<u>14.0%</u>	<u>16.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>17.7%</u>	
		Democrat	7.3%	8.8%	N/A	N/A	10.3%
		Republican	22.2%	26.0%	N/A	N/A	28.9%
	Oppose	Independent	15.3%	20.6%	N/A	N/A	20.6%
		<u>82.1%</u>	<u>80.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>78.8%</u>	
		Democrat	91.5%	89.2%	N/A	N/A	88.5%
	Don't know	Republican	70.7%	69.6%	N/A	N/A	66.6%
		Independent	80.3%	75.8%	N/A	N/A	73.0%
		<u>3.9%</u>	<u>3.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>3.5%</u>	
	Universities	Favor	Democrat	1.5%	2.0%	N/A	N/A
Republican			7.1%	4.5%	N/A	N/A	4.5%
Independent			4.1%	3.6%	N/A	N/A	6.4%
Oppose		<u>34.0%</u>	<u>38.1%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>36.7%</u>	
		Democrat	24.5%	25.6%	N/A	N/A	27.5%
		Republican	45.7%	53.5%	N/A	N/A	50.4%
Don't know	Independent	37.2%	42.8%	N/A	N/A	38.1%	
	<u>57.4%</u>	<u>54.7%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>56.6%</u>		
	Democrat	68.4%	68.5%	N/A	N/A	68.2%	
Public Safety	Favor	Republican	43.2%	38.1%	N/A	N/A	43.1%
		Independent	54.1%	49.5%	N/A	N/A	50.8%
		<u>8.6%</u>	<u>7.3%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>6.7%</u>	
	Oppose	Democrat	7.0%	5.8%	N/A	N/A	4.3%
		Republican	11.1%	8.3%	N/A	N/A	6.5%
		Independent	8.7%	8.8%	N/A	N/A	11.1%
Public Safety	Favor	<u>21.0%</u>	<u>20.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>24.1%</u>	
		Democrat	21.1%	19.8%	N/A	N/A	23.6%
		Republican	22.8%	23.4%	N/A	N/A	23.2%
	Oppose	Independent	20.2%	18.0%	N/A	N/A	33.3%
		<u>74.5%</u>	<u>74.4%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>56.6%</u>	
		Democrat	75.0%	76.4%	N/A	N/A	73.3%
	Don't know	Republican	72.8%	69.6%	N/A	N/A	72.2%
		Independent	74.3%	77.8%	N/A	N/A	58.7%
		<u>4.5%</u>	<u>4.9%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>6.7%</u>	
Public Safety	Democrat	3.9%	3.8%	N/A	N/A	3.1%	
	Republican	4.3%	7.1%	N/A	N/A	4.5%	
	Independent	5.5%	4.1%	N/A	N/A	7.9%	

Natural Resources (State Parks)

Favor		<u>40.0%</u>	<u>37.7%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>31.4%</u>
	Democrat	32.8%	26.5%	N/A	N/A	24.0%
	Republican	48.8%	51.0%	N/A	N/A	45.0%
	Independent	41.0%	42.3%	N/A	N/A	27.0%
Oppose		<u>53.1%</u>	<u>55.5%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>61.1%</u>
	Democrat	60.9%	67.6%	N/A	N/A	69.6%
	Republican	45.1%	41.0%	N/A	N/A	48.4%
	Independent	50.3%	51.0%	N/A	N/A	65.1%
Don't know		<u>6.9%</u>	<u>6.7%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>7.5%</u>
	Democrat	6.3%	5.8%	N/A	N/A	6.4%
	Republican	6.2%	8.0%	N/A	N/A	6.5%
	Independent	8.7%	6.7%	N/A	N/A	7.9%
Poor People						
Favor		<u>24.9%</u>	<u>26.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>26.2%</u>
	Democrat	14.3%	14.2%	N/A	N/A	15.0%
	Republican	39.8%	41.0%	N/A	N/A	41.9%
	Independent	21.9%	28.9%	N/A	N/A	31.6%
Oppose		<u>66.3%</u>	<u>64.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>64.8%</u>
	Democrat	80.6%	80.4%	N/A	N/A	79.7%
	Republican	48.1%	47.1%	N/A	N/A	46.7%
	Independent	67.8%	57.2%	N/A	N/A	55.6%
Don't know		<u>8.8%</u>	<u>9.3%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>8.9%</u>
	Democrat	5.1%	5.4%	N/A	N/A	5.3%
	Republican	12.0%	11.9%	N/A	N/A	11.3%
	Independent	10.4%	13.9%	N/A	N/A	12.7%
Disabled						
Favor		<u>12.4%</u>	<u>12.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>14.8%</u>
	Democrat	8.7%	9.9%	N/A	N/A	10.1%
	Republican	16.7%	14.7%	N/A	N/A	21.3%
	Independent	13.7%	13.4%	N/A	N/A	17.5%
Oppose		<u>83.2%</u>	<u>84.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>82.1%</u>
	Democrat	89.3%	87.6%	N/A	N/A	88.1%
	Republican	76.9%	79.5%	N/A	N/A	74.8%
	Independent	81.4%	83.0%	N/A	N/A	79.4%
Don't know		<u>4.4%</u>	<u>3.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>3.2%</u>
	Democrat	1.9%	2.5%	N/A	N/A	1.9%
	Republican	6.5%	5.8%	N/A	N/A	4.0%
	Independent	4.9%	3.6%	N/A	N/A	3.2%

Pensions						
Favor		<u>45.5%</u>	<u>46.1%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>41.5%</u>
	Democrat	33.5%	31.2%	N/A	N/A	33.9%
	Republican	58.3%	64.1%	N/A	N/A	55.2%
	Independent	53.6%	51.0%	N/A	N/A	42.9%
Oppose		<u>47.3%</u>	<u>47.9%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>51.1%</u>
	Democrat	60.0%	62.7%	N/A	N/A	58.9%
	Republican	35.5%	31.7%	N/A	N/A	38.8%
	Independent	38.3%	40.2%	N/A	N/A	46.0%
Don't know		<u>7.2%</u>	<u>6.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>7.5%</u>
	Democrat	6.6%	6.1%	N/A	N/A	7.2%
	Republican	6.2%	4.2%	N/A	N/A	6.0%
	Independent	8.2%	8.8%	N/A	N/A	11.1%

\*Note: The size of the budget deficit varied from year to year

**Table 10**  
**Proposals for Possible Sources of New Revenue**

Question: Do you favor or oppose (a) raising the state sales tax? (b) expanding the sales tax to cover services? (c) expanding legalized gambling? (d) taxing retirement income? (e) applying the state income tax to retirement income if it is exempted from the first \$50,000 earned?

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Raising the Sales Tax</b>						
Favor		<u>24.5%</u>	<u>22.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>18.2%</u>
	Democrat	26.9%	24.9%	N/A	N/A	23.4%
	Republican	19.8%	19.9%	N/A	N/A	11.6%
	Independent	31.7%	19.6%	N/A	N/A	28.6%
Oppose		<u>72.9%</u>	<u>74.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>78.7%</u>
	Democrat	70.6%	71.5%	N/A	N/A	73.1%
	Republican	77.2%	77.9%	N/A	N/A	85.8%
	Independent	65.6%	77.3%	N/A	N/A	69.8%
Don't know		<u>2.6%</u>	<u>3.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>3.1%</u>
	Democrat	2.4%	3.6%	N/A	N/A	3.2%
	Republican	3.1%	2.2%	N/A	N/A	2.6%
	Independent	2.7%	3.1%	N/A	N/A	1.6%
<b>Broaden Sales Tax*</b>						
Favor		<u>41.7%</u>	<u>51.1%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>37.3%</u>	<u>43.9%</u>
	Democrat	42.9%	56.2%	N/A	48.1%	50.7%
	Republican	33.6%	42.3%	N/A	24.2%	36.8%
	Independent	42.6%	53.6%	N/A	33.3%	42.9%
Oppose		<u>52.5%</u>	<u>45.4%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>59.5%</u>	<u>53.3%</u>
	Democrat	45.9%	40.4%	N/A	50.0%	47.2%
	Republican	60.4%	53.5%	N/A	72.6%	60.3%
	Independent	51.9%	43.8%	N/A	47.4%	54.0%
Don't know		<u>5.8%</u>	<u>3.5%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>3.2%</u>	<u>2.9%</u>
	Democrat	2.0%	3.4%	N/A	1.9%	2.1%
	Republican	1.9%	4.2%	N/A	3.2%	2.8%
	Independent	1.0%	2.6%	N/A	1.8%	3.2%
<b>Expand Gambling*</b>						
Favor		<u>49.9%</u>	<u>57.5%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>49.8%</u>	<u>52.7%</u>
	Democrat	53.4%	60.2%	N/A	54.5%	57.7%
	Republican	47.5%	52.6%	N/A	45.2%	47.0%
	Independent	50.8%	59.3%	N/A	42.1%	55.6%
Oppose		<u>46.3%</u>	<u>38.5%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>44.1%</u>	<u>43.7%</u>
	Democrat	43.0%	36.0%	N/A	39.7%	39.8%
	Republican	50.0%	42.9%	N/A	50.0%	49.6%
	Independent	43.2%	37.1%	N/A	52.6%	38.1%
Don't know		<u>2.8%</u>	<u>4.0%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>6.1%</u>	<u>2.7%</u>
	Democrat	3.6%	3.8%	N/A	5.8%	2.5%
	Republican	2.5%	4.5%	N/A	4.8%	3.4%
	Independent	6.0%	3.6%	N/A	5.3%	6.4%



Tax Retirement Income

Favor		<u>N/A</u>	<u>21.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>21.8%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	22.9%	N/A	N/A	25.1%
	Republican	N/A	18.9%	N/A	N/A	16.4%
	Independent	N/A	22.7%	N/A	N/A	27.0%
Oppose		<u>N/A</u>	<u>73.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>71.6%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	72.6%	N/A	N/A	69.4%
	Republican	N/A	76.6%	N/A	N/A	77.6%
	Independent	N/A	72.2%	N/A	N/A	71.4%
Don't know		<u>N/A</u>	<u>4.6%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>6.6%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	4.5%	N/A	N/A	5.5%
	Republican	N/A	4.5%	N/A	N/A	6.0%
	Independent	N/A	5.2%	N/A	N/A	1.6%

Tax Retirement Above \$50,000

Favor		<u>N/A</u>	<u>28.9%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>42.9%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	36.8%	N/A	N/A	47.3%
	Republican	N/A	19.7%	N/A	N/A	37.6%
	Independent	N/A	26.4%	N/A	N/A	48.9%
Oppose		<u>N/A</u>	<u>67.2%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>49.9%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	58.2%	N/A	N/A	44.1%
	Republican	N/A	78.2%	N/A	N/A	56.6%
	Independent	N/A	69.3%	N/A	N/A	40.0%
Don't know		<u>N/A</u>	<u>3.8%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>7.8%</u>
	Democrat	N/A	5.0%	N/A	N/A	8.6%
	Republican	N/A	2.1%	N/A	N/A	5.8%
	Independent	N/A	4.3%	N/A	N/A	11.1%

\*Note: In 2013 the options were "Strongly approve" to "Strongly disapprove"