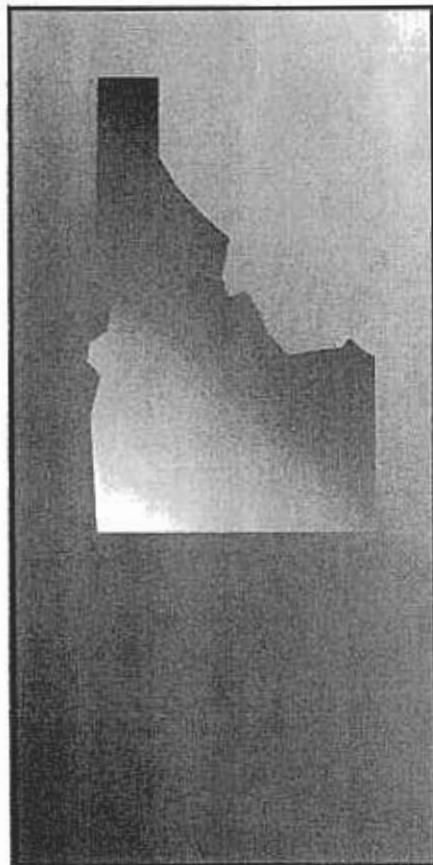

IDAHO
POLICY
SURVEY



The Survey Research Center
College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs
Boise State University

#4

March 1993

IDAHO

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Gregory A. Raymond

Survey Research Center
College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs
Boise State University

Thomas E. Mayes, Director

INTRODUCTION

The Idaho State Board of Education has designated public affairs as a primary emphasis area for Boise State University. One of the ways that Boise State is meeting this responsibility is by operating a Survey Research Center. The Center's mission is to conduct timely, high-quality research that will assist Idaho's citizens and policymakers in their efforts to solve state and local problems.

The *Idaho Policy Survey* is a continuing program in the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs at Boise State University. Its primary purpose is to examine public opinion on issues that are currently the subject of debate or that civic leaders have identified as potentially important on the state's agenda.

Polling has become commonplace in contemporary American life. When designed and administered properly, polls are an effective way to gauge beliefs, attitudes, and opinions on a range of prominent issues. Although the *Idaho Policy Survey* provides an overview of citizens concerns and preferences, it does not make policy recommendations. We recognize that surveys are only one way of gathering information about public opinion, and that public opinion is just one consideration that goes into policymaking.

This report presents the results from the fourth annual omnibus survey of the opinions held by Idahoans on public affairs issues. It builds upon its predecessors by asking many of the same questions that were posed to respondents during the past three years. Our intent is to build a longitudinal data-base so that trends in public opinion can be traced over time. In addition to the questions that we repeat from year to year, each volume of the *Idaho Policy Survey* contains findings that are derived from asking questions that bear upon topics that may be of special interest only during a particular year. Thus the reader is given information that allows over-time comparisons of enduring issues, as well as focused case studies of hot topics.

Volume 4 of the *Idaho Policy Survey* contains four sections. As in the three previous survey reports, the first section examines citizens' opinions on the quality of life in Idaho, and what problems facing the state are seen as the most important. The next section focuses on attitudes toward the federal, state, and local levels of government, as well as on the perceived fairness of different types of taxes and the degree of support for state spending increases in eleven broad service areas. The third section moves on to consider a variety of health and welfare issues. Finally, the last section explores how residents of the Gem State feel about potential environmental problems in Idaho. The report concludes with a methodological appendix that summarizes the procedure used to draw the sample and conduct the interviews.

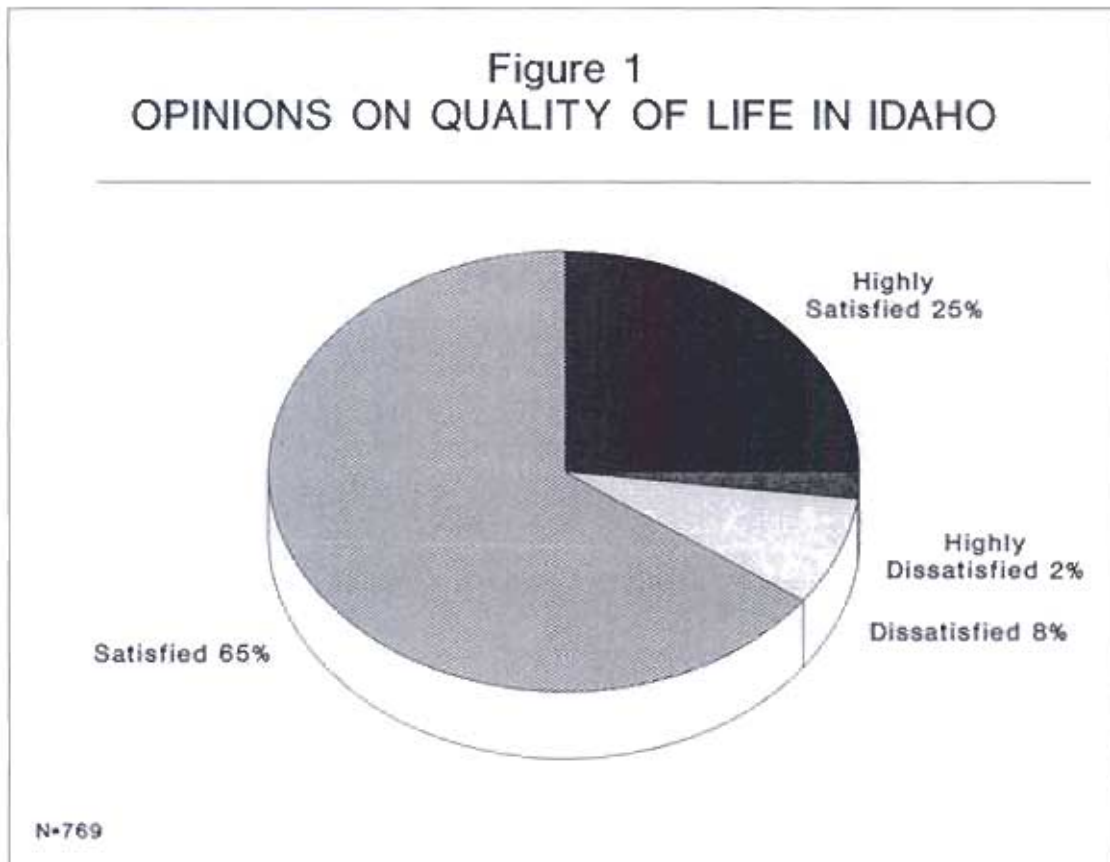
The research for this report was conducted under the direction of Dr. Gregory A. Raymond, with the assistance of Thomas E. Mayes. Faculty from the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs who helped construct the survey questionnaire included Professors Les Alm (Graduate Program in Public Affairs), John C. Freemuth (Political Science), Gary F. Moncrief (Political Science), David Patton (Graduate Program in Public Affairs), and Stephanie Witt (Political Science). Additional contributions to the project were made by Robert Sims (Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs), Patricia L. Trofast (Political Science Department), and the office assistants of the Survey Research Center, including Patsy Boyer, Sheri Carver, and Amanda Gallegos.

The Survey Research Center gratefully acknowledges the dedication and enthusiasm of the following individuals who spent many long hours in the Public Opinion Laboratory conducting telephone interviews: Jeri Allgood, Colette Baker, Erika Beveridge, Barbara Biedrzycki, Shawn Collins, Richard Fannon, Branwyn Fitschen, Sheri Gallagher, Camille Gossett, Sasha Haarhoff, Nicholas Hall, Alexander Hauer, Steven Horner, Darron Husky, Mitch Ison, Jennifer Johnson, Aimee Jost, Stephanie Jost, Jeri Jo Keene, Renae Knapp, Troy Long, Kelly Moore, Michael Sanchez, Evan Smith, Shannon Smith, Shawn Soden, Carrie Valerio, and Joel Wallace.

THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN IDAHO

Once again, the *Idaho Policy Survey* began by asking the respondents how they felt about the overall quality of life in Idaho. As Figure 1 and Table 1 show, the vast majority of the people in our sample who expressed an opinion gave a positive response to this question. The greatest satisfaction was voiced by respondents with high levels of income and education, a finding that converged with the results from our earlier surveys. In addition, those respondents from counties in the Northcentral area of the state (Region II) tended to be the most satisfied, while respondents from the North (Region I) and Southwest (Region III) were the most dissatisfied (see Map 1).

While Idahoans generally were pleased with their quality of life, most believed that various problems needed to be addressed. To learn what concerned Gem State residents, the survey respondents were asked what they consid-



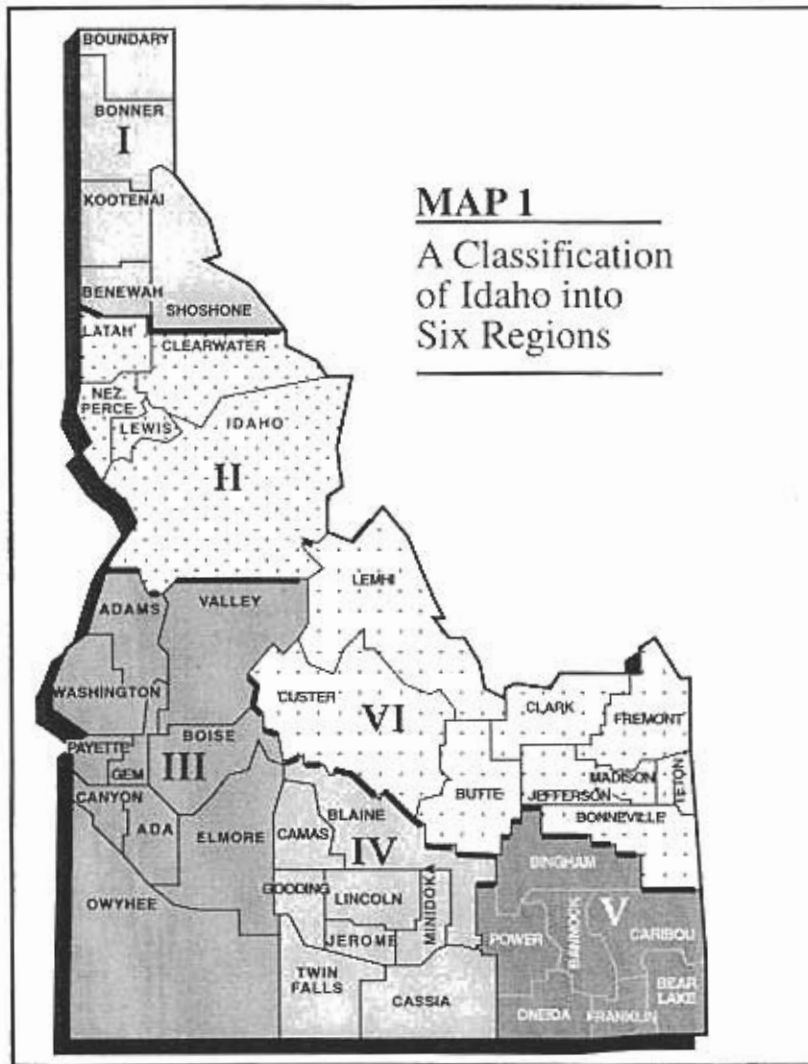


TABLE 1
A COMPARISON OF OPINIONS ON THE QUALITY
OF LIFE IN IDAHO, BY REGION*

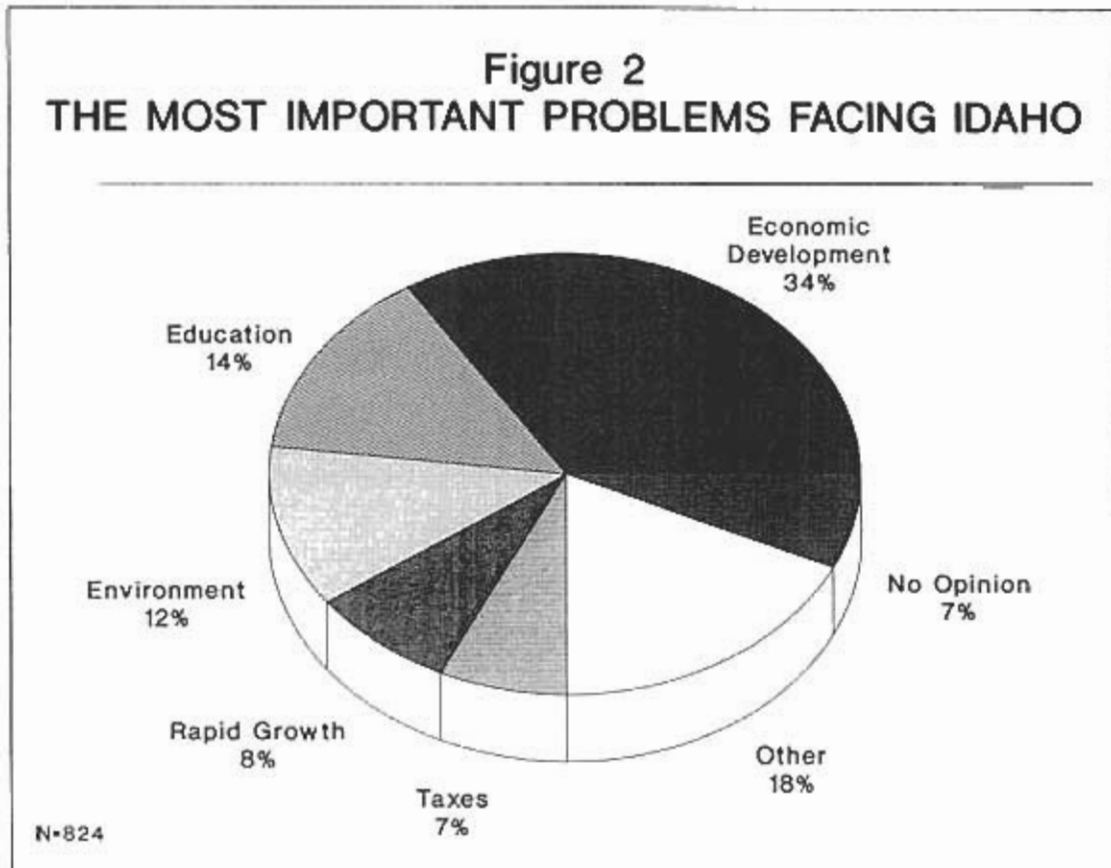
	STATE PLANNING REGION					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Highly Satisfied	20%	25%	22%	32%	22%	24%
Satisfied	63	68	59	53	62	64
Dissatisfied	11	3	11	6	7	4
Highly Dissatisfied	1	0	2	1	2	2
(Number of Cases)	(105)	(68)	(294)	(120)	(122)	(115)

*Column percentages many not total 100% due to omission of "Don't Know" responses

ered the most important problem facing the state of Idaho. The question was open-ended to prevent any influence from suggested choices and asked early in the interview before other questions in the survey could bias responses. The problems that were identified, therefore, can be interpreted as being highly salient to Idahoans.

Ninety-three percent of the respondents in our sample identified a major problem, and, as in every previous survey we have conducted, three specific issues received particular attention — economic development, education, and the environment. As portrayed in Figure 2:

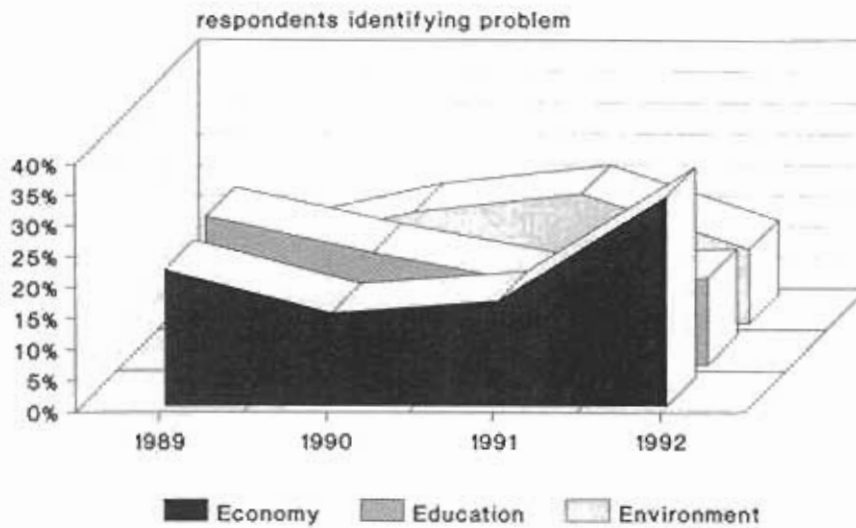
- 34 percent of the respondents pointed to some aspect of economic development as the major problem confronting the state.
- Education was perceived as the single most important problem by 14 percent of the citizens in the survey.
- Environmental issues were selected by 12 percent of the respondents.
- Rapid growth (8 percent) and taxes (7 percent) were the only other perceived problems that were named as the most important facing the state by at least five percent of the individuals who were interviewed.



Some differences exist in the kinds of people who perceive problems in each of these areas. Those respondents with annual household incomes of \$30,000 or less, for example, were more likely to name economic development as the state's primary problem (39 percent) than were respondents with higher household incomes (29 percent). Idahoans with a bachelor's degree or more were more likely to name education or the environment as the state's primary problem (19 percent each) than were respondents with a high school degree or less (10 percent each). Finally, apprehension over rapid growth was expressed largely by residents in Regions I (12 percent) and III (14 percent), the two regions where we found the greatest levels of dissatisfaction in the quality of life.

Figure 3 describes the changes in relative concern over the economy, education, and the environment since 1989. Whereas the percentage of respondents citing education as Idaho's primary problem has gradually declined, and the percentage citing the environment declined this year after rising for two years, the percentage of Idahoans who pointed to the economy as the state's main problem doubled from 17 percent in 1991 to 34 percent during the past year.

Figure 3
CHANGES IN PERCEIVED PROBLEMS

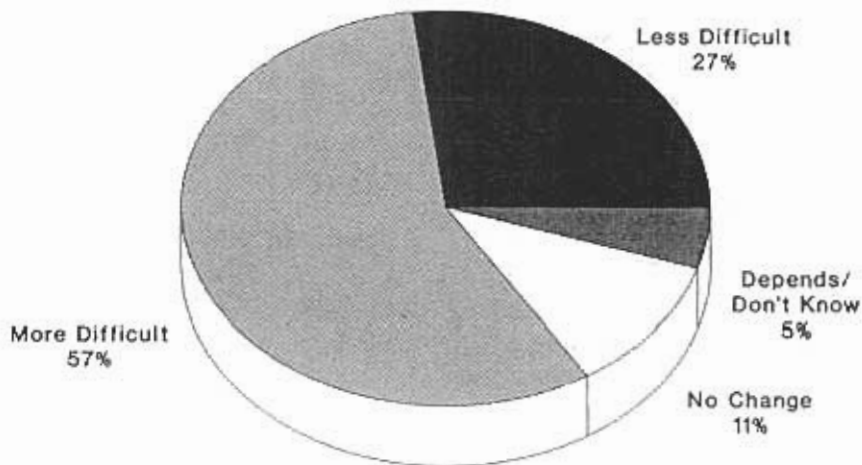


Source: Idaho Policy Survey, vols. 1-4

Figure 4 shows the expectations of Idahoans for the next decade.

- 57 percent of those individuals in the sample who responded to the question of whether they expected their personal life in the 1990s to get easier or more difficult answered that they felt it would get more difficult.

Figure 4
EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE



N=824

Table 2 compares the expectations for the future held by different demographic groups. In general, the younger the respondent, the lower his or her level of education, and the less the household income, the greater the propensity to believe that life will become more difficult in the future. Two out of every three of the respondents in Region V held the view that their personal lives would become more difficult during the current decade.

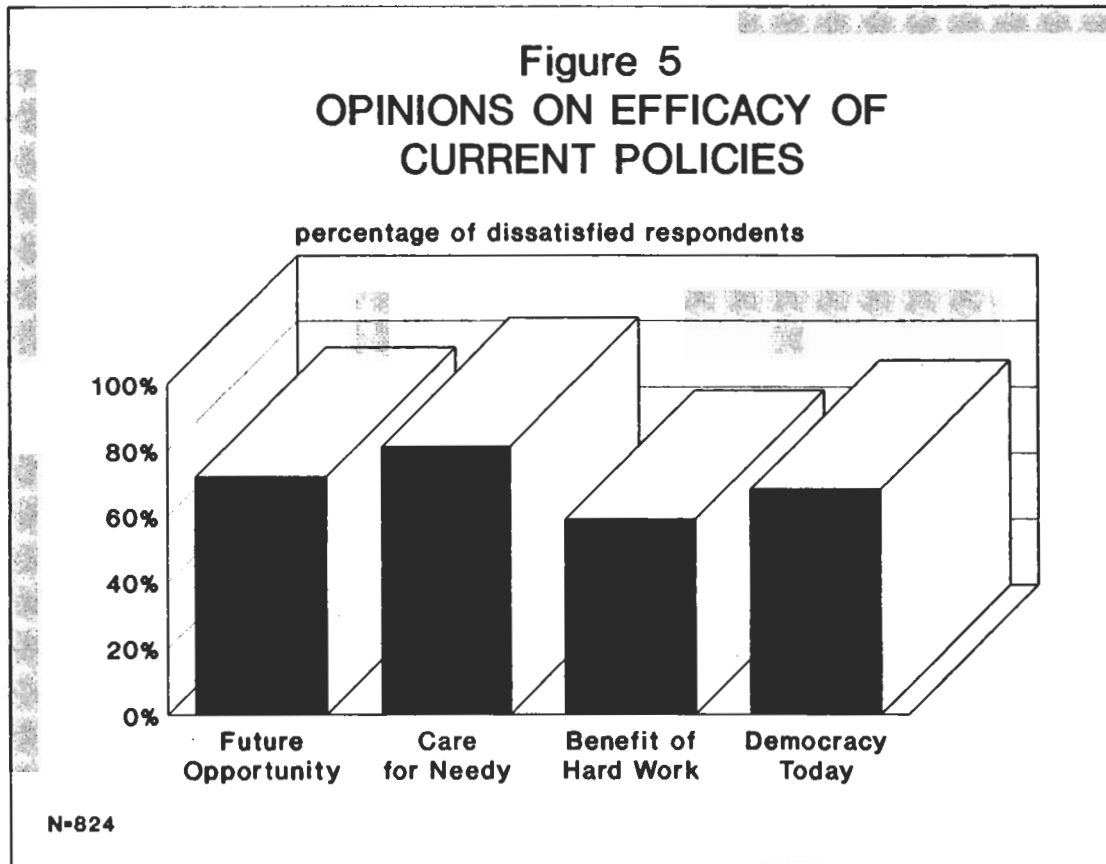
TABLE 2
A COMPARISON OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EXPECTATIONS
FOR LIFE IN THE 1990s, BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP*

Demographic Group	Citizens' Expectations			(n)
	Easier	More Difficult	No Change	
Total Sample	27%	57%	11%	(824)
Gender				
Male	29	56	11	(398)
Female	26	57	11	(425)
Age				
18-34	30	61	6	(238)
35-60	31	56	8	(381)
61+	17	52	25	(199)
Education				
HS or less	23	59	12	(337)
Some college/tech.	29	58	9	(287)
BA or more	33	51	13	(194)
Household Income				
Under \$30,000	23	61	11	(448)
\$30,000 +	35	50	12	(312)
Length of Residence				
Under 20 years	36	56	9	(298)
20 years +	25	57	12	(523)
State Planning Region				
I	30	53	11	(105)
II	25	57	13	(68)
III	33	52	11	(294)
IV	23	57	13	(120)
V	23	66	10	(122)
VI	22	61	10	(115)

*Row percentages may not total 100% due to omission of "Don't Know" responses. Number of cases in certain groups is less than 824 due to refusal of some respondents to report demographic information.

One of the reasons why so many Idahoans were pessimistic about the future was dissatisfaction with a range of current policies. As Figure 5 indicates:

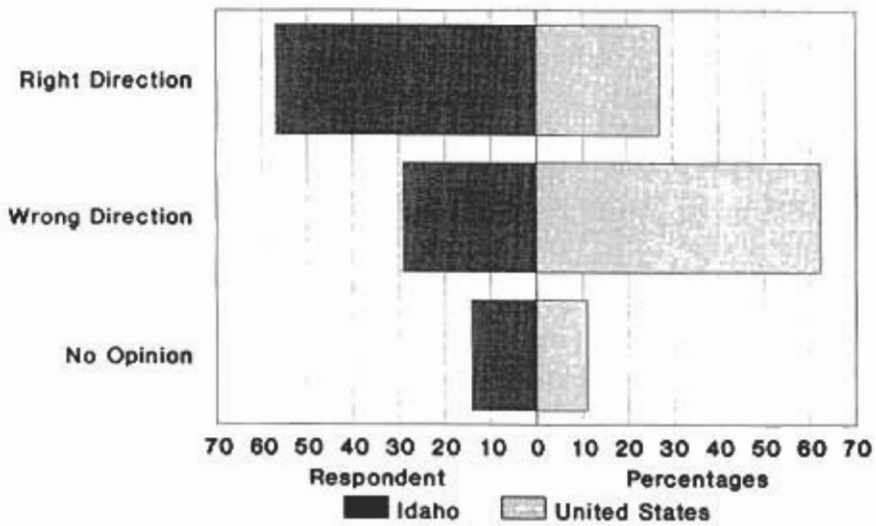
- Two-thirds of those polled were not satisfied with the opportunity of the next generation of Americans to be better off financially than their parents.
- 81 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied with the ability of their country to take care of its poor and needy.
- Roughly 6 of every 10 Idahoans that were interviewed expressed dissatisfied with the chances for a poor person to get ahead by working hard.
- 68 percent were dissatisfied with the way democracy was working in the United States.



All things considered, Idahoans appear disillusioned with the direction of current policies. From their prospective, something has gone awry. The prospects for upward mobility seem remote. According to the findings reported in Figure 6:

- 63 percent of the respondents maintained that the country was generally headed in the wrong direction, a figure roughly equivalent to those reported in nation-wide surveys conducted throughout 1992.
- In contrast to the belief that America has fallen off track, 58 percent of the respondents insisted that things in Idaho were generally headed in the right direction.

Figure 6
OPINIONS ON THE DIRECTION OF POLICY



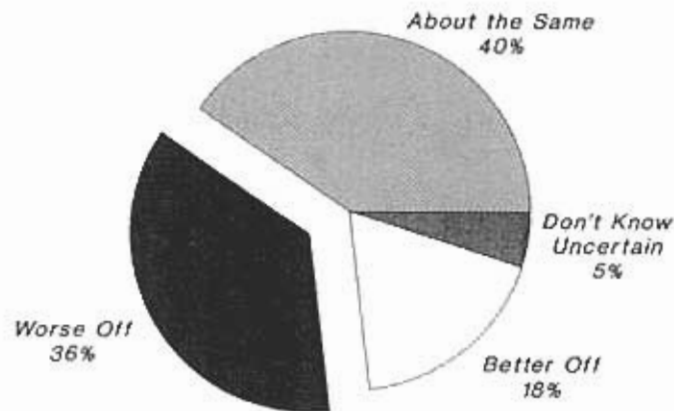
N=824

Still, as revealed in Figure 7:

- 36 percent of those interviewed asserted that they were worse off financially today than they were four years ago.

Those who felt that they had lost economic ground tended to have lower household incomes (42 percent), less education (40 percent), and were over 60 years in age (46 percent).

Figure 7
FINANCIAL SITUATION



Comparison With Four Years Ago

N=824 Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding error.

POLITICAL CONFIDENCE AND GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

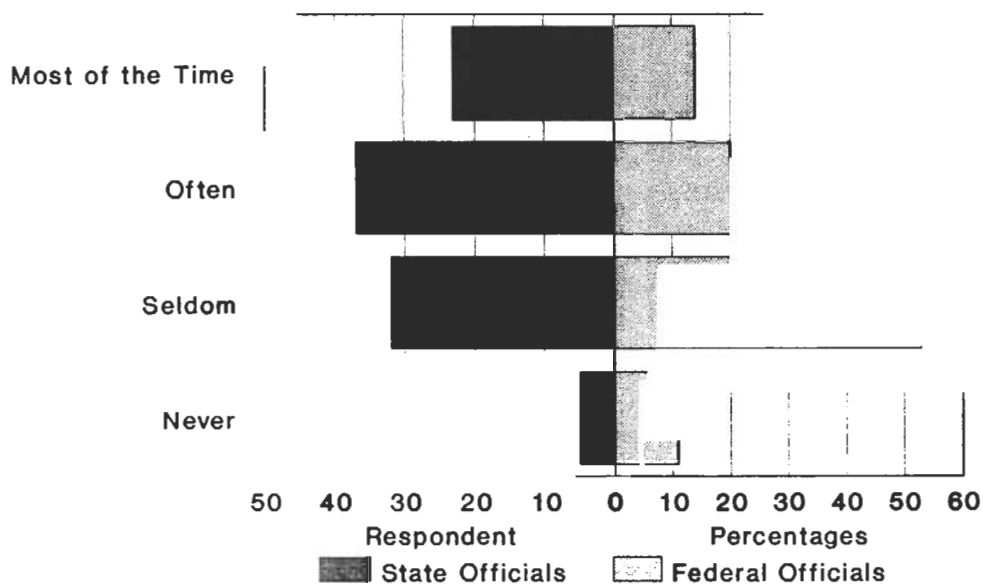
Idahoans interact with various levels of government, and they frequently hold different opinions about each level. Paralleling the tendency of Idahoans to see the nation headed in the wrong direction is a belief that federal officials lack adequate knowledge about citizen opinions and preferences. Figure 8 compares federal and state officials in terms of the extent to which they are assumed to be aware of how citizens think about public policy issues.

- 14 percent of the survey respondents believed that elected federal officials knew how citizens thought "most of the time," another 20 percent said these officials "often" had such knowledge, 53 percent claimed that they "seldom" were aware of citizen opinion, and 11 percent maintained that they "never" understood how citizens felt about policy issues.
- On the other hand, 23 percent of the respondents believed that elected officials in Idaho knew how citizens thought "most of the time," 37 percent said that they "often" had such knowledge, 32 percent averred that they "seldom" understood citizen opinion, and only 5 percent submitted that they "never" appreciated citizen views of the issues.

One of the factors that erodes trust in government and affects opinions about how well government responds to citizen needs is the perception that government wastes tax dollars.

- 46 percent of those interviewed said they received the most for their tax money from local government, 30 percent named state government, and 11 percent selected the federal government.

Figure 8
GOVERNMENT KNOWLEDGE OF CITIZEN OPINION



N=824

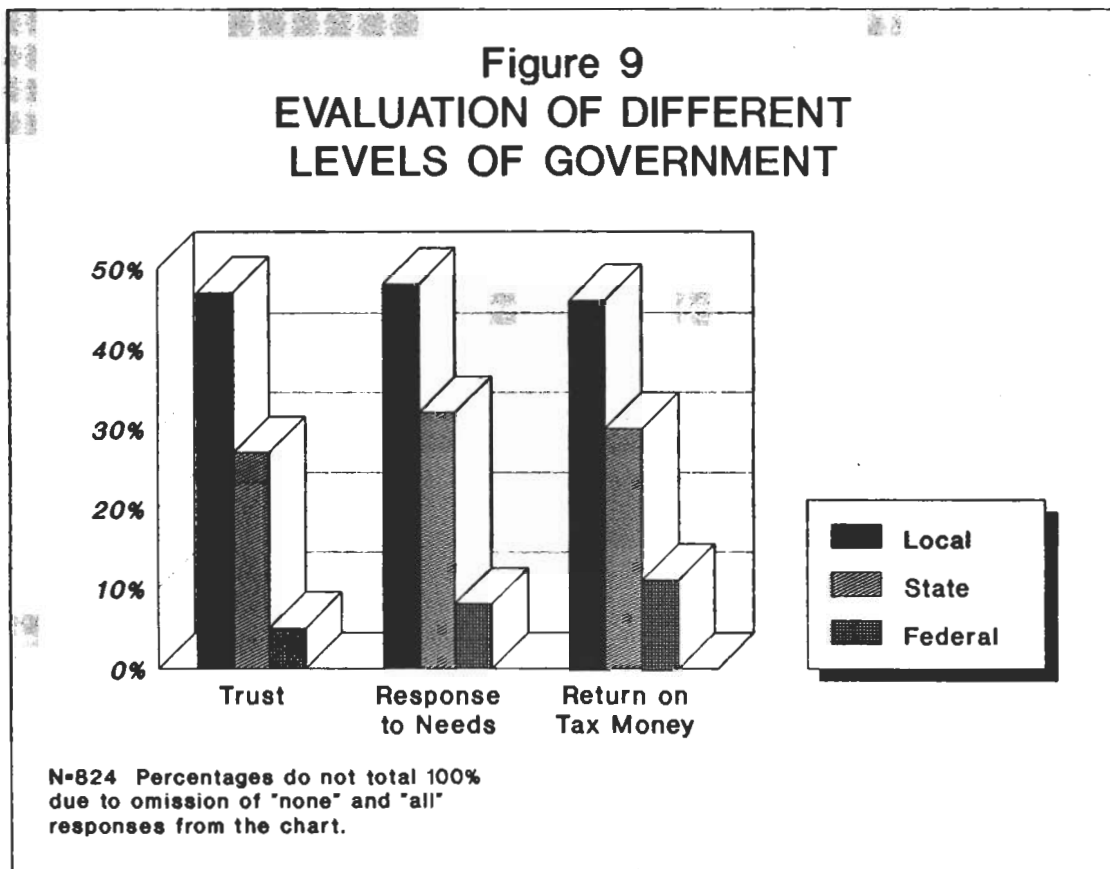
The high ranking given to local government on trust, responding to needs, and providing a good return on the tax dollar conforms with the nation-wide pattern found by surveys conducted under the auspices of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. But it marks a departure from the results of our previous annual policy surveys. Whereas in the three earlier surveys the state and local levels of government were ranked roughly equal by respondents on trust, response to needs, and return on tax money, this year the positive evaluations of local government increased while the performance evaluation of state government declined. Consistent with the results from the previous surveys, the federal government remained at the bottom of the rankings of the three levels of government.

The degree of confidence that citizens have in any given level of government is often thought of as a barometer of their opinion about the capacity of that level to solve current problems. As Figure 9 indicates:

- 43 percent of the individuals in our sample claimed that they had the most trust and confidence in local government, another 29 percent said the same for state government, and only 5 percent held that view of the federal government.
- 14 percent of the respondents volunteered that they had no confidence in any level of government.

A similar pattern emerged when those interviewed were asked to name the level of government that best responded to their needs.

- 48 percent of those polled asserted that local government responded best, 32 percent selected state government, and 8 percent picked the federal government.

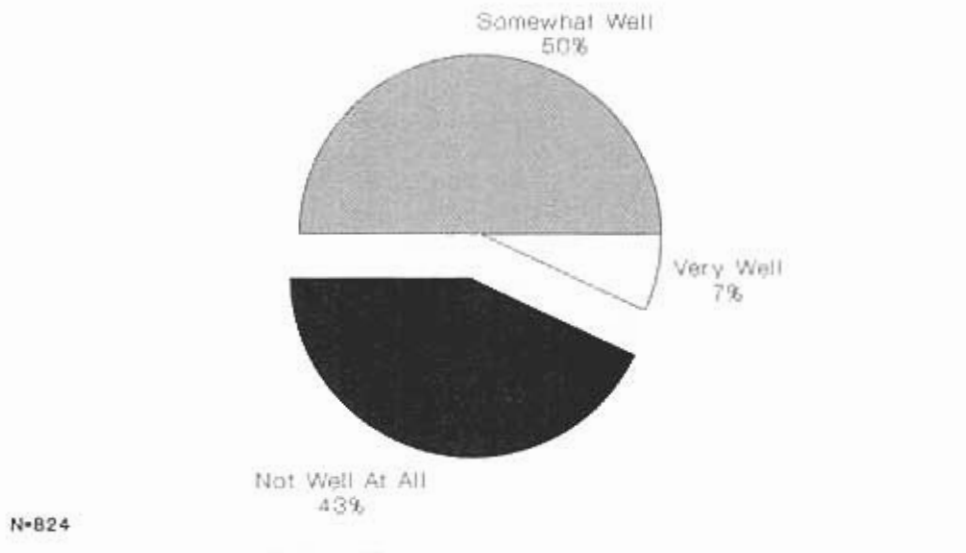


Although Idahoans have a more favorable view of state and local government than they do of the federal government, Figure 10 reveals a troubling statistic:

- 43 percent of the respondents to our survey believed that they were not represented well by the political system.

While half of the individuals in the sample said that they were represented somewhat well, only 7 percent stated that they were very well represented by elected officials.

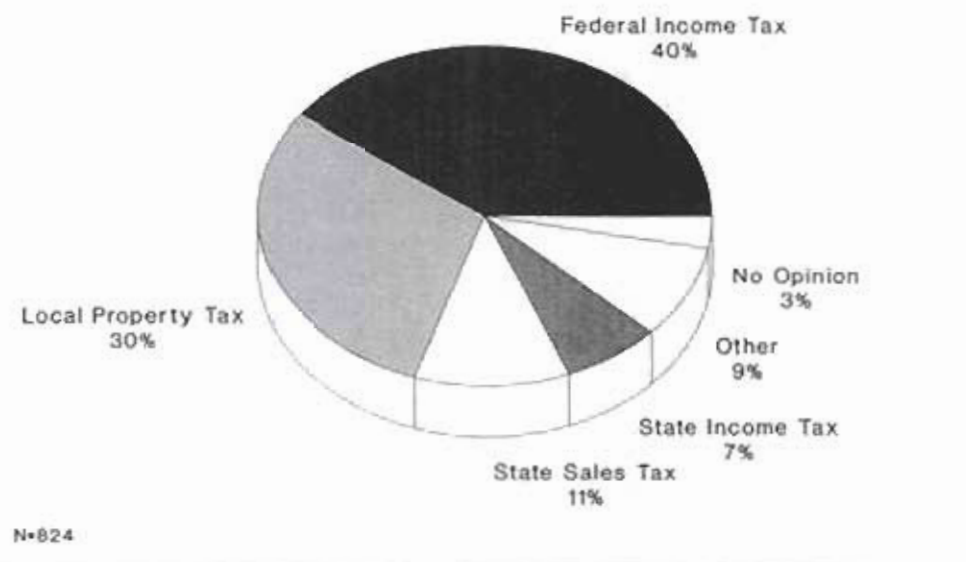
Figure 10
 OPINIONS ON HOW WELL RESPONDENTS
 BELIEVE THEY ARE REPRESENTED



Among the many sources of discontent with the political system is an assumption that taxes are unfair and too burdensome. Figure 11 shows that Idahoans differentiate types of taxes based on their perceived fairness.

- 40 percent of the respondents claimed that the federal income tax was the least fair tax that they paid, 30 percent designated local property tax, 11 percent singled out the state sales tax, and 7 percent asserted that it was the state income tax.

Figure 11
 DESIGNATIONS OF THE LEAST FAIR TAX



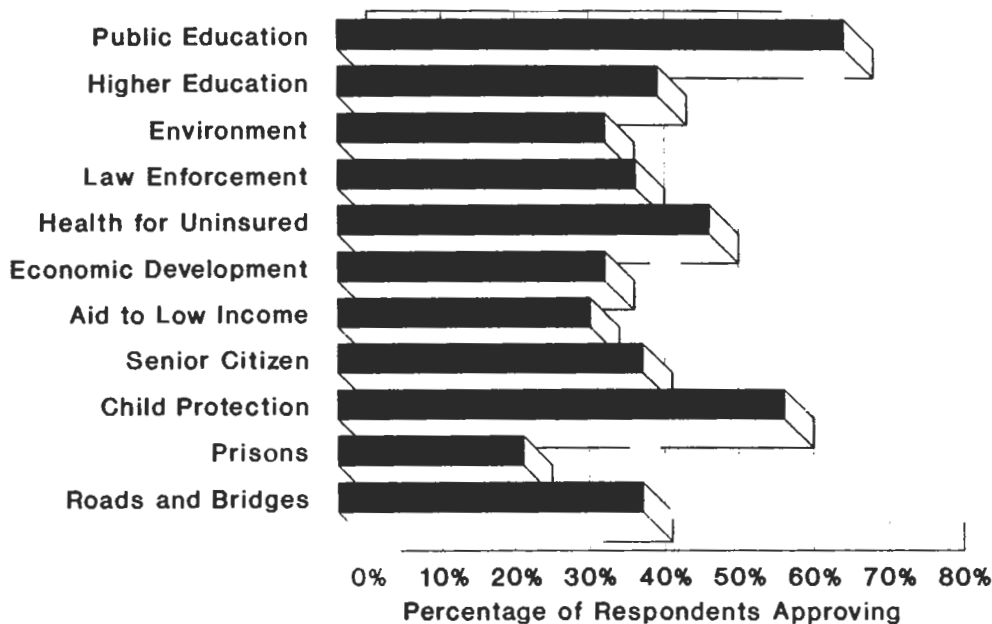
Putting these results together with the assessments of each of the three levels of government reported above, it appears that Idahoans find federal income taxes the most loathsome and the performance of the federal government the least satisfactory of any level of government within the American political system. Many Idahoans also contend that local property taxes are unfair, but they submit that the performance of local government exceeds both the state and federal levels of government. Those who point to the lack of fairness in the federal income tax tend to have annual household incomes above \$30,000 (46 percent). Respondents most critical of the fairness of local property taxes are among the state's eldest citizens, aged 61 and above.

Although most Idahoans probably do not know the exact funding levels for specific state programs, they generally have opinions on the spending priorities for broad categories of state services. To ascertain citizen spending preferences, survey respondents were first reminded that government spending comes principally from tax revenues, and then asked whether the amount now being spent by the state government should be increased, maintained at the present level, or decreased in each of eleven broad service areas. These areas included public education (kindergarten through high school), higher education, environmental protection, law enforcement, health services for the uninsured, economic development, aid to low income families, senior citizen programs, child protective services, prisons, and roads and bridges.

Except in the cases of prisons (21 percent) and environmental protection (19 percent), few people called for decreases in state spending within these eleven specific service areas. There were, however, clear differences of opinion over which areas needed funding increases. As summarized by Figure 12:

- Over two-thirds of the respondents supported an increase in state funding for public education (68 percent).
- 60 percent of the survey respondents favored a funding increase for child protective services.
- Half of those polled backed funding increases for health services for the uninsured.
- At least 40 percent of those interviewed supported an increase in state funding for higher education (43 percent), roads and bridges (41 percent), senior citizen programs (41 percent), and law enforcement (40 percent).
- Roughly one in three respondents supported funding increases in environmental protection (36 percent), economic development (36 percent), and for aid to low income families (34 percent).
- One-fourth of the sample supported a funding increase for prisons (25 percent).

Figure 12
SUPPORT FOR STATE SPENDING INCREASES



N=824

Table 3 gives the demographic differences in the degree of support for those programs that received backing for funding increases by at least half of the total sample of respondents.

- The strongest sources of support for an increase in state spending on public education were among respondents between 18 and 34 years of age (81 percent) and among people who have lived in Idaho for less than 20 years (77 percent).
- Women (67 percent) were more likely than men (53 percent) to support an increase in state spending on child protective services.
- The strongest sources of support for funding increases in health services for the uninsured were among residents of Region I (59 percent) and citizens with household incomes below \$30,000 (55 percent).

TABLE 3
SUPPORT FOR STATE SPENDING INCREASE IN SELECTED SERVICE AREAS,
BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP*

<u>Demographic Group</u>	Public Education	Child Protection	Health for Uninsured	(n)
Total Sample	68%	60%	50%	(824)
Gender				
Male	66	53	48	(398)
Female	69	67	52	(425)
Age				
18-34	81	64	52	(238)
35-60	69	58	48	(381)
61+	52	60	50	(199)
Education				
HS or less	67	64	54	(337)
Some college/tech.	69	60	46	(287)
BA or more	68	54	48	(194)
Household Income				
Under \$30,000	68	60	55	(448)
\$30,000 +	70	60	43	(312)
Length of Residence				
Under 20 years	77	61	54	(298)
20 years +	63	59	47	(523)
State Planning Region				
I	73	71	59	(105)
II	74	65	43	(68)
III	63	60	51	(294)
IV	68	64	43	(120)
V	67	49	53	(122)
VI	74	57	45	(115)

* Number of cases in certain groups is less than 824 due to refusal of some respondents to report demographic information.

CURRENT HEALTH AND WELFARE ISSUES

Health care reform stands at the top of the domestic policy agenda as Bill Clinton begins his presidency. National health care expenditures have risen from a total of \$25.5 billion in 1960 to \$643.4 billion in 1990. Whereas thirty years ago government expenditures constituted just over 20 percent of that total, now they have climbed to more than 40 percent of the national health expenditures (see U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1992*, pp. 97-100). As Figure 13 indicates, soaring costs are perceived by many Idahoans as the state's primary health care problem.

- 27 percent of the respondents cited high health care costs as the most urgent health care problem in Idaho, and another 25 percent pointed to a lack of insurance as the foremost problem.
- Among the other problems named by survey respondents were senior citizen access to health care (8 percent), AIDS (7 percent), and providing health care to rural areas (4 percent).

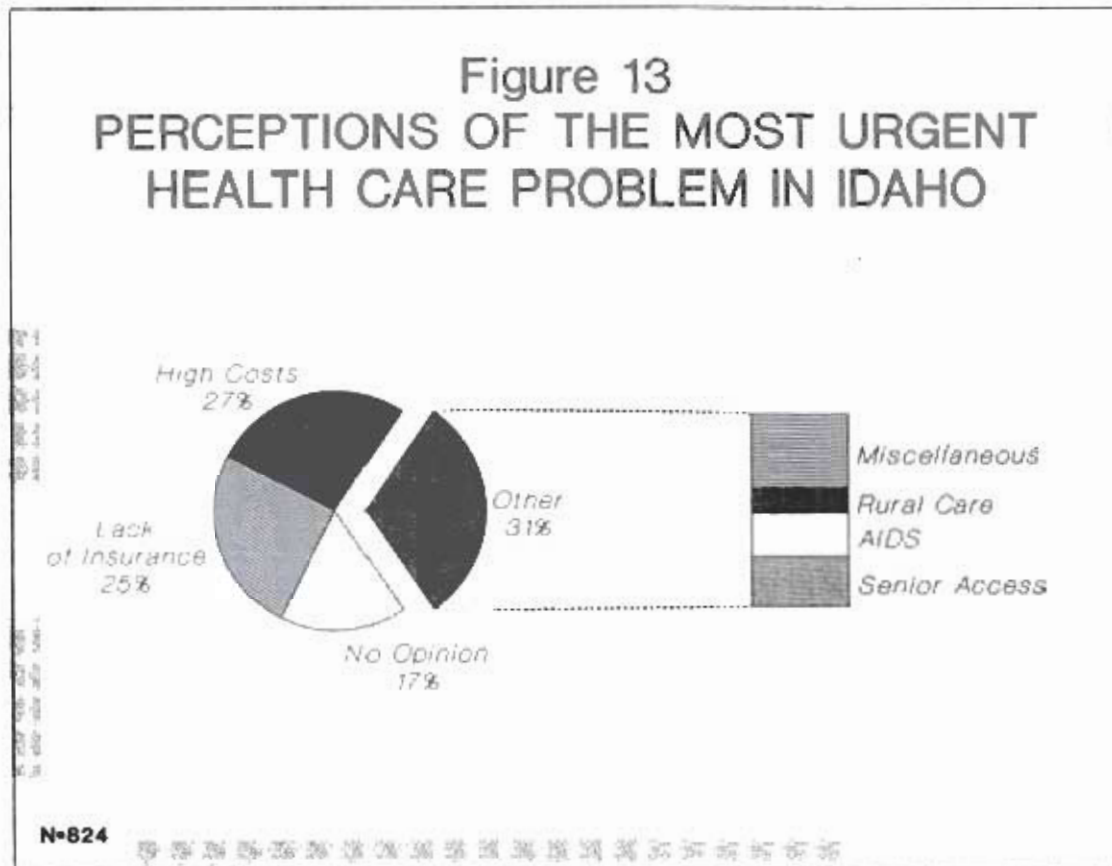
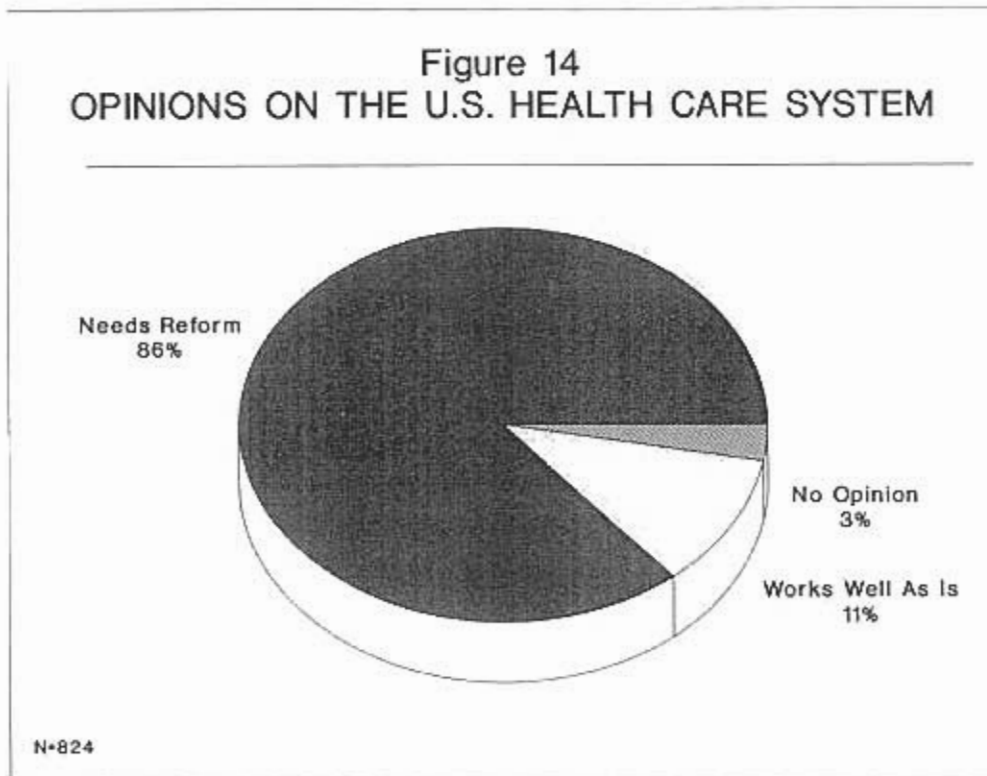


Figure 14 shows that these problems are serious enough in the eyes of most Idahoans that major health-care changes are thought to be in order.

- 86 percent of the people interviewed said that the health-care system in the United States needed reform.



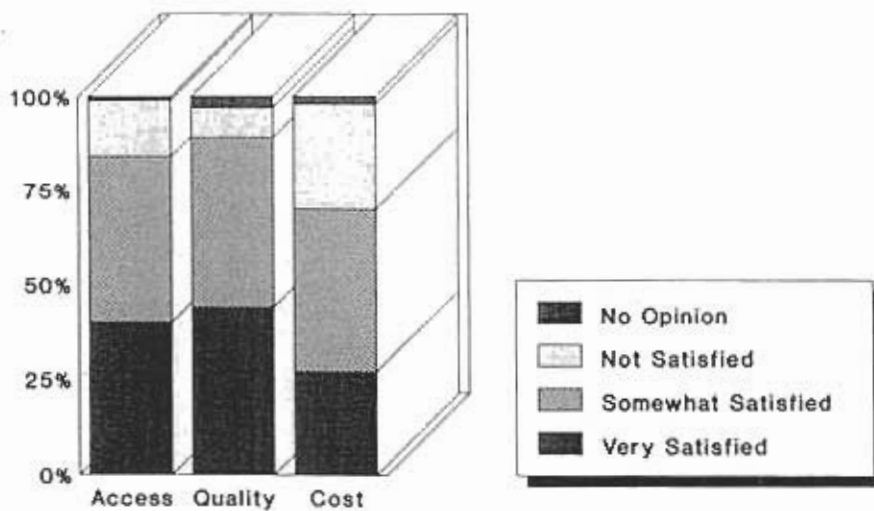
Despite the strong support for reforming the health-care system, Figure 15 reveals a high degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of the medical care that Idahoans receive.

- 40 percent of the respondents to our survey said that they were very satisfied with the availability of appropriate medical care when it was needed, another 44 percent were somewhat satisfied, and 15 percent insisted that they were not at all satisfied.
- 44 percent of the respondents indicated that they were very satisfied with the quality of the medical care they received, another 45 percent were somewhat satisfied, and 8 percent said they were not satisfied.
- 28 percent of those polled were very satisfied with the cost of health care, 43 percent were somewhat satisfied, and 28 percent were not satisfied with health-care costs.

In sum, the people in our sample of Idahoans give rather good marks to the health-care system for both access and quality of care. Cost containment, however, is a key concern that has prompted many citizens to call for reform.

Health-care costs are especially troubling to low income Idahoans who have not completed much formal education. Respondents with annual household incomes of \$30,000 or less are more prone to be dissatisfied (35 percent) with medical costs than respondents with higher incomes (16 percent). Similarly, respondents with a high school education or less are more likely to express dissatisfaction (34 percent) than are college graduates (18 percent).

Figure 15
DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH
MEDICAL CARE RECEIVED



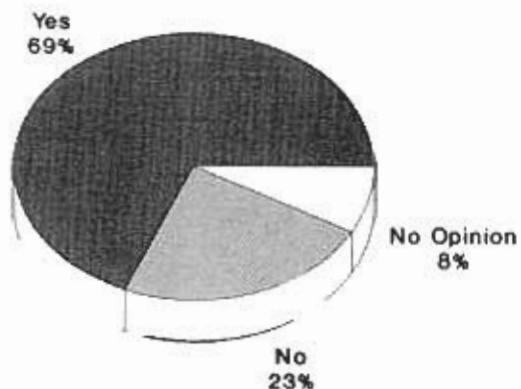
N=824

One proposed solution to the high cost of health care is to give federal, state, and local governments the responsibility for providing care for low income and uninsured citizens. As Figure 16 shows:

- 69 percent of the respondents believed that government should be responsible for providing medical care for people who could not afford to pay for it themselves.

The greatest support for this proposal can be found among low income respondents (75 percent), and among residents of counties located in Regions I (77 percent) and II (75 percent).

Figure 16
PROVIDING HEALTH CARE FOR
LOW INCOME AND UNINSURED CITIZENS

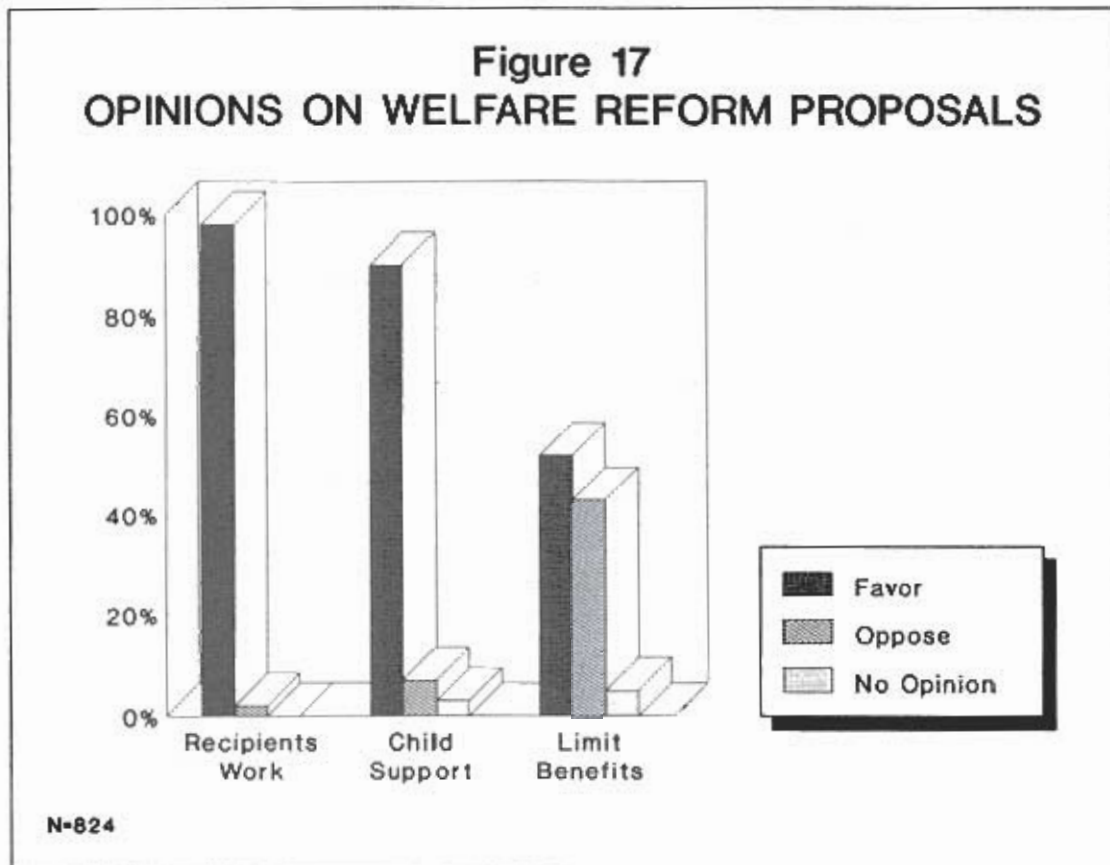


Should the Government be Responsible?

N=824

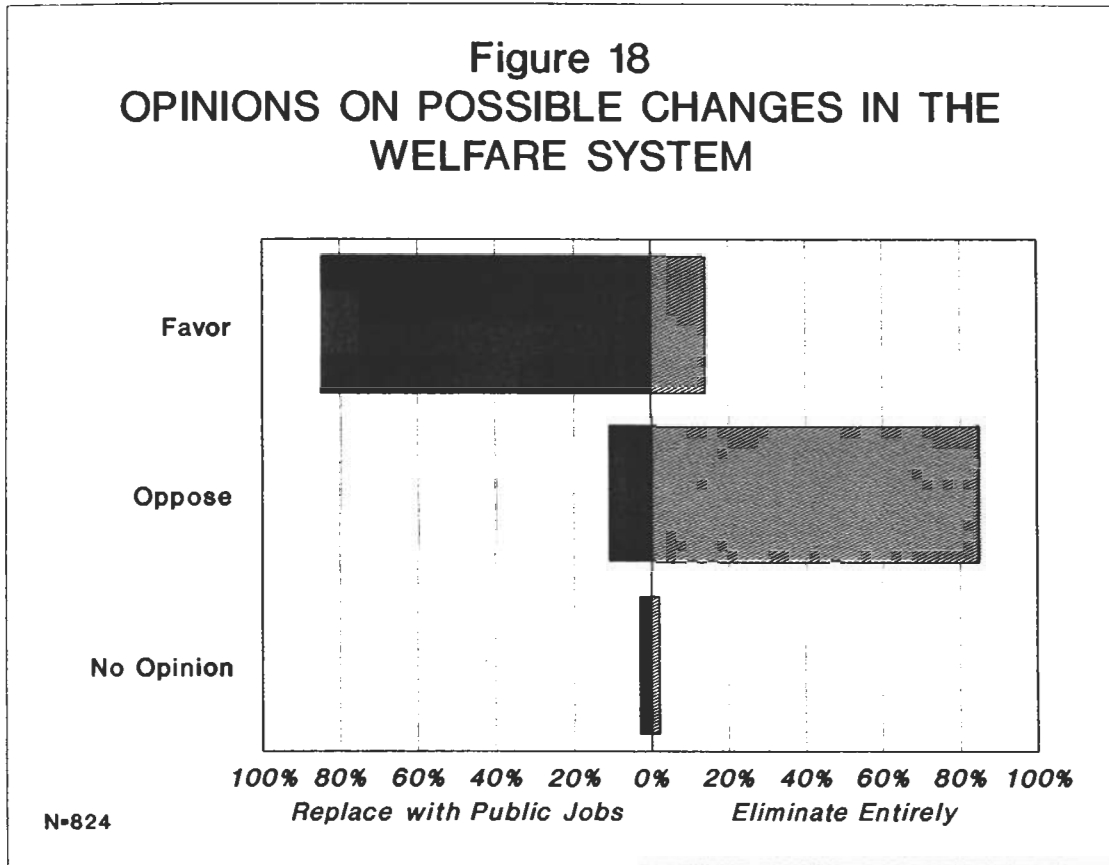
A second issue high on President Clinton's domestic agenda is welfare reform. Figure 17 displays the reactions of the respondents in our study to three prominent welfare reform proposals.

- 98 percent of those Idahoans polled favored requiring all able-bodied people on welfare to work or learn a job skill, compared to 87 percent reported in a nation-wide TIME/CNN survey taken during May, 1992.
- 90 percent of the Idaho respondents favored taking child-support money out of the paychecks and tax refunds of non-paying fathers, compared to 93 percent in the nation-wide TIME/CNN poll.
- 52 percent of the Idaho respondents favored ending benefit increases to women who have more children while on welfare, compared to 39 percent in the nation-wide TIME/CNN poll.



Strong support for welfare reform does not imply that Idahoans wish to eliminate welfare entirely. As Figure 18 indicates:

- Only 14 percent of the people in our sample favored the elimination of welfare.
- 85 percent supported replacing welfare with guaranteed public jobs.



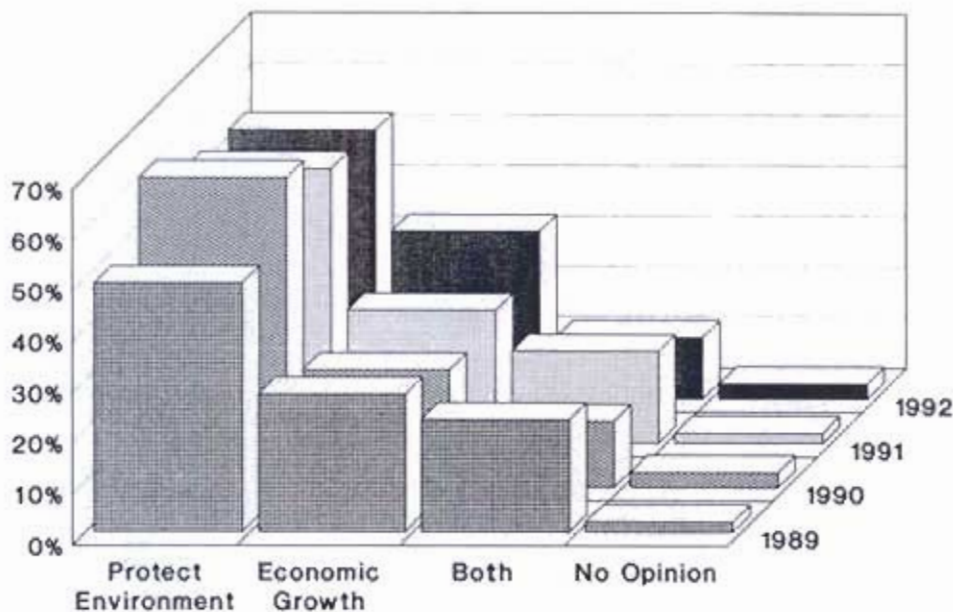
ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Each year we ask respondents to the *Idaho Policy Survey* how they would develop and manage Idaho's natural resources if they had to make a choice between emphasizing economic growth or protecting the environment. The question is based on one asked in a 1975 state-wide survey conducted as part of the "Idaho Tomorrow" program. In that original survey, 65 percent of the respondents voiced their willingness to back efforts at protecting the environment, even if they came at the expense of economic growth.

Figure 19 displays the results that were obtained in each *Idaho Policy Survey* since 1989. The most recent (1992) findings reveal:

- 53 percent of the respondents supported protecting the environment, a figure that is approximately equal to the results from last year (54 percent) but less than the total recorded two years ago (61 percent).
- 33 percent favored making the economy grow, an increase over the results from the previous three years.
- 12 percent advocated an attempt to do both.

Figure 19
PRIORITY ON DEVELOPING IDAHO'S RESOURCES



Source: Idaho Policy Survey, vols. 1-4

As Table 4 shows, age, education, and length and location of residence in Idaho are associated with variations in respondent opinion. Whereas only 39 percent of those above the age of 60 would choose protecting the environment instead of making the economy grow, 64 percent of the respondents between the ages of 18 and 34 selected the latter option. Roughly equivalent levels of support for environmental protection were registered among college graduates (61 percent), people who have lived in Idaho for under 20 years (65 percent), and residents of Region IV (61 percent).

TABLE 4
PRIORITY FOR NATURAL RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT IN IDAHO, BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP*

Demographic Group	Make Economy Grow	Protect Environment	Both	(n)
Total Sample	32%	53%	12%	(824)
Gender				
Male	32	52	14	(398)
Female	33	54	9	(425)
Age				
18-34	29	64	7	(238)
35-60	32	54	11	(381)
61+	36	39	19	(199)
Education				
HS or less	36	49	12	(337)
Some college/tech.	31	53	13	(287)
BA or more	27	61	10	(194)
Household Income				
Under \$30,000	34	50	13	(448)
\$30,000 +	30	58	10	(312)
Length of Residence				
Under 20 years	24	65	8	(298)
20 years +	37	46	14	(523)
State Planning Region				
I	35	51	12	(105)
II	34	53	4	(68)
III	30	55	12	(294)
IV	25	61	12	(120)
V	33	51	14	(122)
VI	45	43	11	(115)

**Row percentages may not total 100% due to omission of "Don't Know" responses. Number of cases in certain groups is less than 824 due to refusal of some respondents to report demographic information.*

Figure 17 and Table 5 present data on the degree of support for making additions to the U.S. national park system.

- 55 percent of those polled favored making the Craters of the Moon area a national park, 39 percent favored park status for Hell's Canyon, 36 percent supported the inclusion of the Sawtooth/White Cloud region, and 28 percent backed the addition of the Owyhee Canyonlands.
- A majority of respondents in every region of the state except Region I supported the inclusion of the Craters of the Moon area as a national park within the U.S. national park system.
- A majority of residents of northern Idaho (Regions I and II) supported the inclusion of Hell's Canyon as a national park.

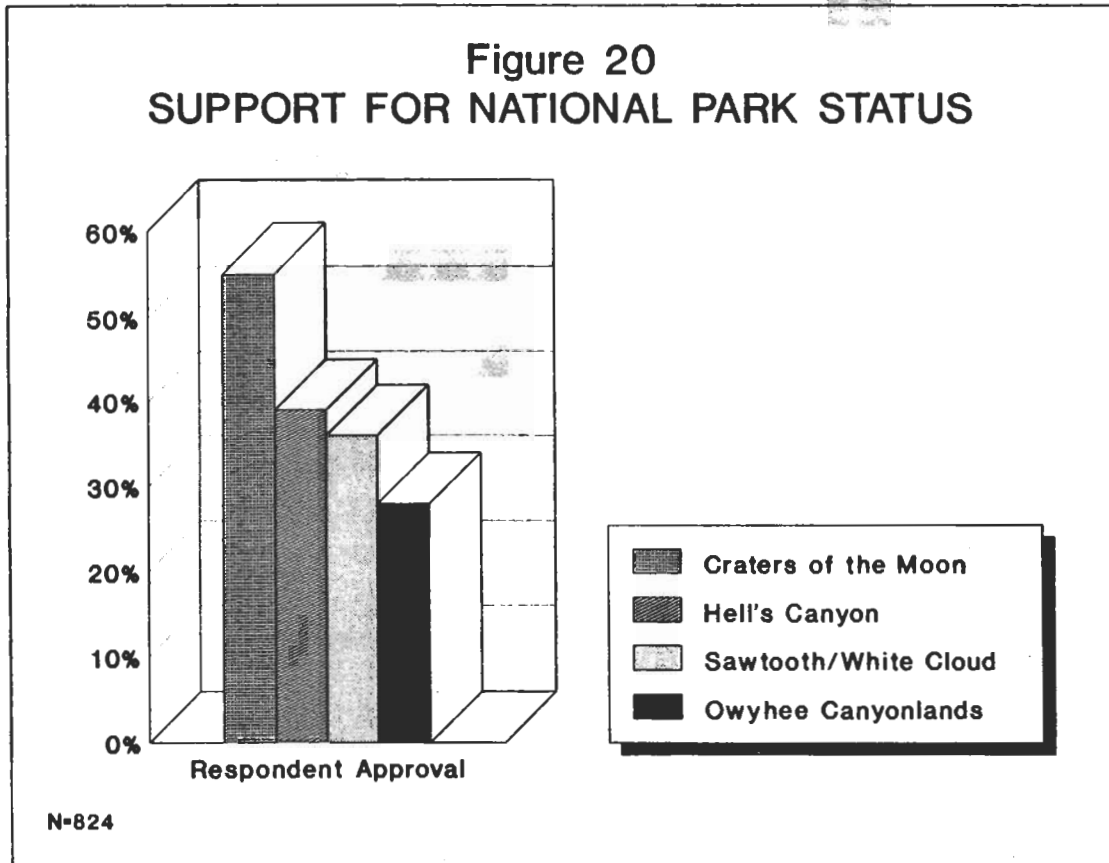


TABLE 5

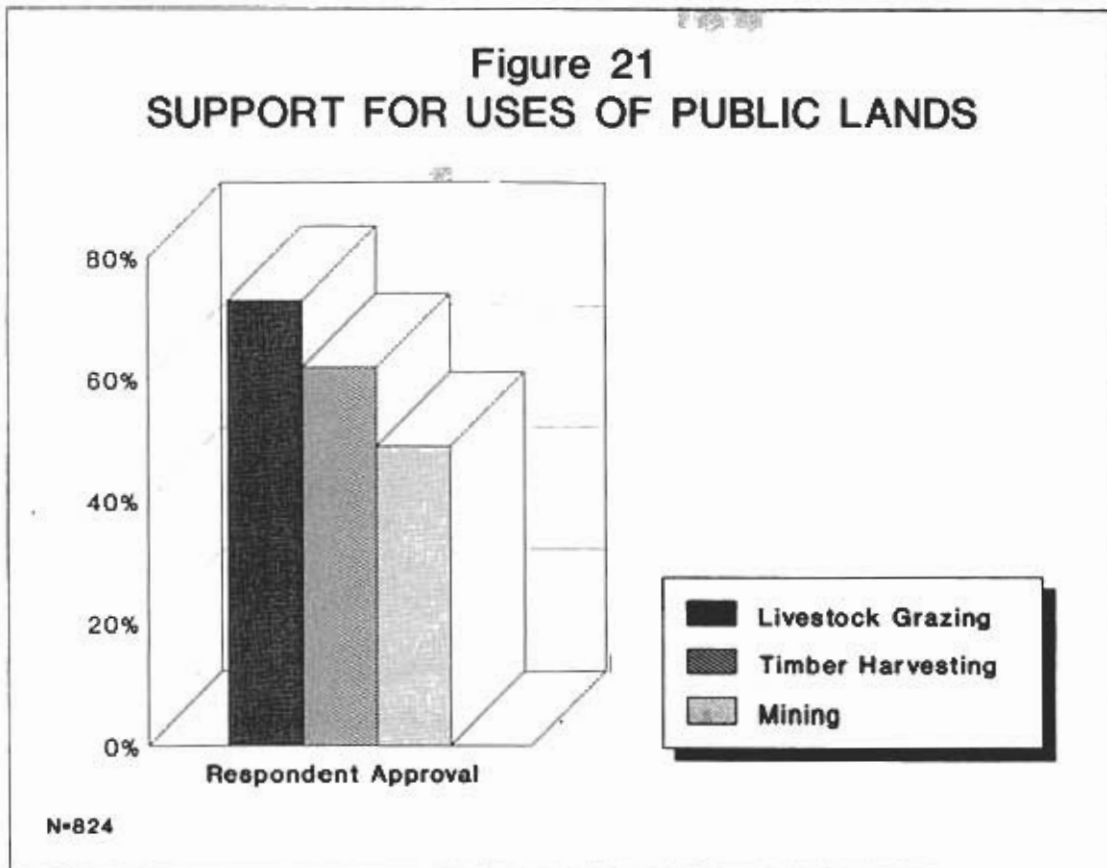
**A COMPARISON OF OPINIONS ON INCLUDING NEW AREAS IN THE
U.S. NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, BY REGION***

	STATE PLANNING REGION					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Craters of the Moon	49%	57%	56%	54%	52%	61%
Hell's Canyon	53	59	38	33	31	30
Sawtooth/White Cloud	34	34	35	37	34	43
Owyhee Canyonlands	32	31	29	26	21	29
(Number of Cases)	(105)	(68)	(294)	(120)	(122)	(115)

* Column percentages do total 100% due to opportunity of respondents to support more than one area for inclusion in the park system.

Figure 21 compares the relative public support for several different uses of public lands.

- 73 percent of the respondents approved of livestock grazing on public lands.
- 62 percent of those interviewed approved of timber harvesting on public lands.
- 49 percent approved of mining on public lands.



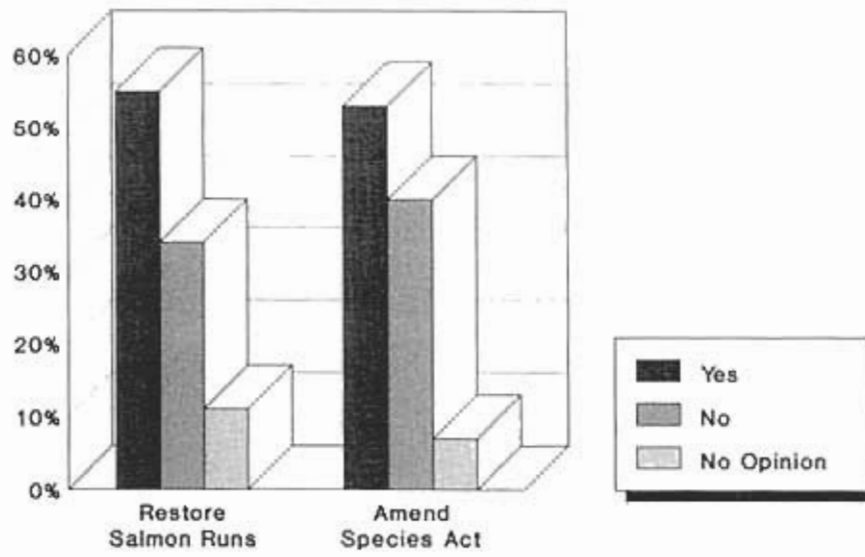
Given the perceived trade-offs between protecting the environment and promoting economic growth, respondents were asked about the net value of two policy proposals. As shown in Figure 22:

- 55 percent of the people in our sample agreed that the benefits of restoring Idaho's salmon runs were worth the potential economic costs.
- 53 percent favored amending the Endangered Species Act to take into account economic factors when deciding to list an animal species as endangered.

The final set of questions on environmental affairs pertained to issues related to energy. As summarized by Figure 23:

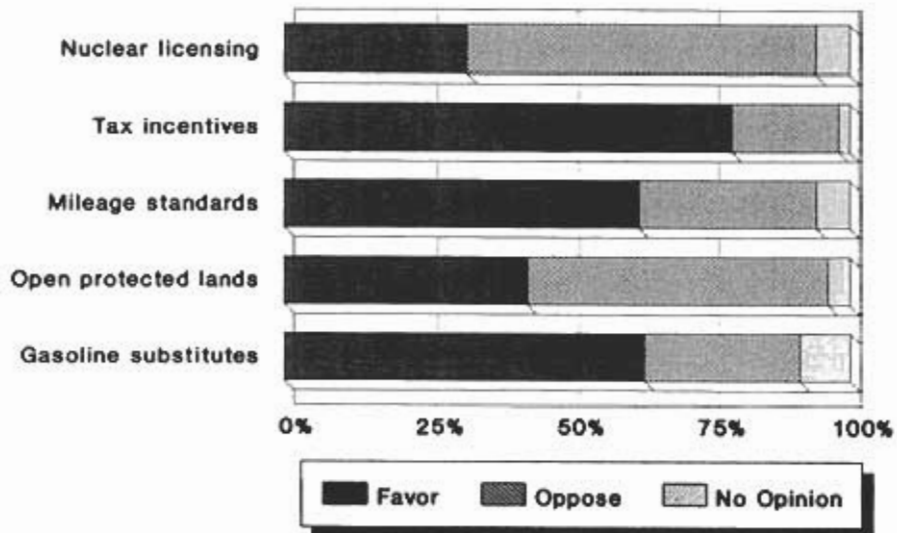
- 62 percent of the survey respondents opposed streamlining the licensing of nuclear power plants to make it easier for them to be constructed.
- 79 percent of the respondents favored tax incentives to encourage energy conservation.
- 63 percent favored increasing auto mileage standards to 40 miles per gallon even if this increased the cost of new automobiles.
- 54 percent opposed opening up protected lands to encourage exploration for new domestic sources of oil and natural gas.
- 64 percent of those polled favored requiring operators of motor vehicle fleets to operate cars and trucks that run on non-gasoline substitutes.

Figure 22
 OPINIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROPOSALS



N-824

Figure 23
 OPINIONS ON ENERGY PROPOSALS



N-824

(Pg. 30 Blank)

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

The findings reported above were derived from an analysis of data collected in a survey of 824 respondents who were interviewed by telephone during October 1-15, 1992. Interviews were conducted from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to each respondent.

Sample Selection

The survey questionnaire was administered to individuals 18 years of age or older in a random probability sample of private households in Idaho. In order to draw the sample, the state was divided into the six regions shown in Map 1, and then separate sub-samples were selected from these regions. Each regional sub-sample size was made proportional to the regional population size. The primary benefits of this procedure are an increase in geographic representativeness and a reduction in sampling error.

A sampling frame of all working telephone exchanges within each region was constructed based on the Waksberg method. All of the central office codes within a region were organized into banks of 100 numbers each, with the banks being defined by suffixes of 0000-0099, 0100-0199, 0200-0299, ..., 9900-9999. These banks were sampled with equal mathematical probability by means of computer generated random numbers. If a number turned out to be a working household number, an interview was attempted and the bank was retained for additional calls. If it was not a residential phone number, the bank was eliminated from further sampling consideration. By using this version of random-digit dialing, we obtained complete coverage of all residential numbers, including both listed and unlisted exchanges.

Once a given household was identified, we used the "last birthday" technique to randomly select a respondent within the household. This procedure was employed because it lowers refusal rates, is easy for interviewers to use, and yields a far more representative sample than uncontrolled selection.

In sum, our sampling design avoids selection bias by giving each element in the sampling frame a known and nonzero probability of being selected. Of course, no survey is a perfect barometer of public opinion. By using the above procedures, however, we can estimate with a certain degree of confidence how discrepant the sample results are from the true population values. Since we have adopted the most stringent statistical assumptions about the variability of the population under investigation, we are 95 percent confident that our results are accurate within plus or minus 3.4 percentage points for findings based on the entire sample. This is to say, the chances are 95 out of 100 that if the entire adult population of Idaho living in private households with access to a telephone had been polled, the results would not deviate from our sample findings by more than 3.4 percentage points. Whereas this is the maximum sampling error of the state-wide sample, the sampling error associated with estimates based on subsets of the overall sample can be higher, particularly for numerically small groups within the sample.

Interviewing Procedures

Methods of interviewing can affect the accuracy of survey results. Consequently, the questionnaire was given developmental and polishing pretests, and all interviews were conducted with the Survey Research Center's computer-assisted telephone interviewing system (CATI). The final version of the questionnaire was programmed into the computer, read by the interviewer from the computer screen, and responses directly entered from the keyboard into the computer. Because the CATI system allows for extensive branching and nesting of questions, as well as the inclusion of logical checks and the randomization of response categories, the program makes sure that the questions are asked in the correct sequence and the responses are consistent with the questions being asked. Thus the procedures we used improved our quality control over the interview by eliminating possible data entry errors and allowing the interviewer to focus on one question at a time without worrying about whether the next question in the survey was appropriate for the type of individual being interviewed.

To further enhance the accuracy of the survey, the nonresponse problem was dealt with by making callbacks to interview respondents who initially could not be contacted (busy signal, not at home, etc.) or were momentarily unavailable. In addition, the interviewers were carefully trained in ways to reduce the number of refusals.

Caveats and Qualifications

By using the procedures described above, we preserved the anonymity of those individuals who were interviewed. Moreover, following standard professional practice, their names were not asked and if they were volunteered, they were not recorded.

Although the sample reflects the state-wide population about which we want to generalize, it would be well to sound a note of caution about the inferences that may be drawn from the findings. First, the problem of nonattitudes is one of the most pervasive and complex problems in public opinion polling. If the topic of a poll is so remote from the respondent's concerns that they do not hold genuine views on it, then the poll will give a misleading portrait of public opinion. One factor that mitigates the problem of nonattitudes in this survey is the use of screening and filter questions to separate likely attitude holders from nonattitude respondents. Another factor that minimized the possibility of receiving superficial responses to the interview was the use of careful probing by interviewers to be sure that those respondents with a nonexistent opinion were not forced into a choice, and those respondents with a genuine opinion did not opt for a neutral position on a controversial question.

A second caveat that must be borne in mind when interpreting the results is the problem of refusals. A bias can be introduced into the data if for some reason the refusals were concentrated among certain group within the population. Fortunately refusals did not appear to be concentrated within any specific region of the state. Nevertheless, care should still be exercised so as not to attribute greater precision to the results than is justified.

The last warning that should be raised pertains to the nature of telephone surveys. Despite widespread ownership of telephones throughout the target population, low-income households and those households in which the head is nonwhite and under the age of 35 tend to have a lower percentage of phones than other households. This sampling bias may result in an under-representation of some types of potential respondents within certain minority groups. Given the homogeneity of Idaho's population, this is not as severe a problem as it might be in more ethnically diverse states. Nonetheless it is a limitation that is inherent to some degree in any telephone survey.

For Information

about the 1993/94 *Idaho Policy Survey*

Contact:

The Survey Research Center
College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs
Boise State University
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725
(208) 385-3776

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