

THE LOUISIANA SURVEY 2018

LSU

Manship School of
Mass Communication
Reilly Center For
Media & Public Affairs



Full Report



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Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

The Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, an integral part of Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication, uses the intellectual muscle of the school's faculty to help solve practical problems and advance good government initiatives. The Reilly Center's mission is to generate thoughtful programs, dialogue, and research about social, economic, and political affairs, as well as the developing role of the media in American society. The Center is committed to advancing the Manship School's national leadership in media and politics.

The Center's agenda is diverse and fluid – from the annual John Breaux Symposium, which brings in national experts to discuss a topic that has received little or no attention, to conducting the annual *Louisiana Survey*, a vital resource for policymakers, which tracks advancements and regressions of citizen attitudes about state services. The Center's role, within the state's flagship university, is to respond quickly to the needs of state governance in addressing challenges facing Louisiana, particularly in times of crisis such as during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Its action-oriented and partnership-driven philosophy underscores the Reilly Center's dedication to tackling ideas and issues that explore the relationship of media and the public in democratic society.

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About the Louisiana Survey

The *2018 Louisiana Survey* is the seventeenth in an annual series sponsored by the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication.

The mission of the *Louisiana Survey* is to establish benchmarks as well as to capture change in residents' assessments of state government services. The survey is further dedicated to tracking public opinion on the contemporary policy issues that face the state. Each iteration of the *Louisiana Survey* contains core items designed to serve as barometers of public sentiment, including assessments of whether the state is heading in the right direction or wrong direction, perceptions about the most important problems facing the state, as well as evaluations of public revenue sources and spending priorities.

In the *2018 Louisiana Survey*, this core is supplemented by measures of perceptions of political polarization in the state and support for compromise; trust in government and media; opinion on proposals to address the state's "fiscal cliff;" beliefs about the role of government in business and the economy; approval of major recent policy developments such as criminal justice reform and Medicaid expansion; and beliefs about gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

As part of an effort to ensure that the *Louisiana Survey* fulfills its public service mission, the research team solicited input about topics for the survey from members of the government and policy community across the political spectrum. Additionally, the research team drew upon expertise in public policy and polling from Louisiana State University faculty. These advisors provided invaluable insight into the design of the questionnaire and in identifying the contemporary policy questions that could most benefit from an understanding of the public's views. While we are indebted to them for their time and contributions, they bear no responsibility for any mistakes in the questionnaire, analysis, or interpretation presented in this report.

We especially thank the Reilly Family Foundation for their generous support and vision in helping to create the Louisiana Survey.

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Overview

The *2018 Louisiana Survey* was administered over the telephone from January 26 to March 3, 2018, to both landline and cell phone respondents. The project includes a representative sample of 852 adult Louisiana residents. The total sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points.

Key findings include:

State of the State

- The call for elected leaders to compromise with those they disagree with is on the rise, but few state residents believe their leaders will actually work together. Sixty percent prefer elected officials in state government who share their positions on important issues to work with other elected officials they disagree with – even if it results in some disliked policies. This is an increase of more than ten percentage points since 2016. However, only 18 percent think Republicans and Democrats in state government will actually work together on solutions for Louisiana’s challenges.
- Pessimism about the state is on the rise as the share of residents saying the state is heading in the wrong direction increased by ten percentage points since last year.
- State residents see a growing divide between the political parties. Overall, 73 percent say the state is more politically divided these days than in the past.
- Few state residents trust state government or the political wisdom of their fellow Louisianans. Only 22 percent trust state government to do what is right always or most of the time. Sixty-six percent say they do not have very much confidence or have no confidence in the wisdom of the people of Louisiana when it comes to making political decisions.
- Many state residents question their impact on state government. Just 51 percent say “ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government of Louisiana if they are willing to make the effort,” and 70 percent say “most elected officials in Louisiana don’t care what people like me think.”
- Concerns about the economy top the public’s list of priorities, with 22 percent naming topics such as the economy, jobs, or wages when asked about the most important problem facing the state. Additionally, 66 percent say good jobs are difficult to find in their communities. At the same time, few have experienced an economic downturn, with 59 percent saying they are getting along financially about as well as a year ago.
- Public confidence in state government to effectively deal with the most important problems remains low with 37 percent saying they are “very” or “somewhat” confident, near where it has lingered since 2014.

State Finance

- News of the state's "fiscal cliff" has reached most Louisiana residents: 87 percent recognize that the state currently faces budget problems, and 59 percent say these problems are "very serious."
- A bipartisan majority of Louisiana residents (56 percent) support lowering state income tax rates in exchange for eliminating some deductions as a means to deal with the "fiscal cliff." The income tax proposal is more popular than proposals to reduce the state sales tax rate in exchange for applying it to more purchases or to renew the temporary sales tax increase from 2016. However, a majority also support dealing with the "fiscal cliff" only through spending cuts.
- The public is split over a proposal to rewrite the state's constitution with 46 percent supporting and 44 percent opposing. However, even among supporters of a convention to rewrite the constitution, most prefer to keep current dedications.
- State residents are more familiar with how sales tax in Louisiana has changed in recent years and how it compares to most other states than they are with the state's income taxes on individuals and households. Most correctly believe that the state sales tax is *higher* today than in January 2016. Similarly, most recognize that the combined state and local sales taxes in Louisiana are *higher* than in most other states. However, only 27 percent know that Louisiana's income taxes on individuals and households are *lower* than in most other states, and many residents believe income taxes have *increased* since January 2016.
- There has been a sharp increase in the shares of Louisiana residents who say that the state sales tax and state income tax are "too high and should be reduced," yet most Louisiana residents nevertheless prefer to raise taxes to pay for elementary and secondary education, higher education, and transportation than to cut spending for these areas.
- On average, Louisiana residents believe the state could reduce its budget by 14 percent without having to reduce services.

Scope of Government

- Close to two-thirds (62 percent) of Louisiana residents believe state government is almost always wasteful and inefficient. Just 34 percent say state government often does a better job than people give it credit for. Only 20 percent say state government does an "excellent job" or "good job" in running its programs – matched by the share who say Louisiana government does a "poor job" (21 percent). Most (57 percent) say it does "only a fair job."
- Despite believing that state government is often wasteful and does only a fair job of running its programs, most Louisiana residents would like to see it active in more areas. When asked which statement comes closer to their views, "Government in Louisiana is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals," or "Government in Louisiana should do more to solve problems," a majority (57 percent) chose the latter.

- Opinion splits more evenly on state government regulation of business – 51 percent say that state government regulation of business usually does more harm than good, but 45 percent say these regulations are necessary to protect the public interest.
- Opinion also splits evenly between the view that state government cannot afford to do much more to help people in need in Louisiana (47 percent) and the view that state government should do more to help these people even if it means spending more money (50 percent).

Gender Discrimination

- Seventy percent of state residents say women face “a lot” or “some” discrimination in our society today, up from 63 percent a year ago. These views hardly budged for Democrats, nearly all of whom already believed women face discrimination, but the share rose by ten points from 42 percent to 52 percent for Republicans. The shift was even larger among Republican women (+16) than Republican men (+11).
- Three fourths of Louisiana residents believe the country needs to make further changes, comparable to 71 percent who said so a year ago. There was significant growth in the shares of Democratic men (+7) and Republican men (+11) who believe further change is necessary. Opinion did not shift among Democratic women, 95 percent of whom say further change is necessary, but they had already reached near unanimity a year ago. Among Republican women, the share who say further changes are necessary *declined* by seven points since 2017.
- Overall, 61 percent of Louisiana residents say women still face significant obstacles that make it harder for them to get ahead than men. A year ago, the share was 58 percent. Any increase in the belief that women face these obstacles was largely concentrated among Democratic women, among whom the share rose from 80 percent to 88 percent.
- Two-thirds of state residents say that recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault against prominent men in entertainment, politics, and the media mainly reflect widespread problems in society rather than isolated incidents of individual misconduct. There is a larger difference between Democrats and Republicans than between men and women on this question.
- Nearly three-fourths of Louisiana residents (72 percent) say elected officials who are accused of sexual harassment or assault by multiple people should resign rather than stay in office. The share is moderately higher among women (76 percent) than men (68 percent) and much higher among Democrats (90 percent) than Republicans (62 percent).

Criminal Justice Reform

- Criminal justice reform remains popular in Louisiana. Today, 61 percent of state residents approve of the changes made in 2017, while just 30 percent disapprove. Democrats are the most approving of the policy changes, but approval is high among independents as well. Republicans, on the other hand, are divided nearly evenly.

- Even as Louisiana residents continue to approve of the state's changes to its criminal justice system, there is at least one sign that support may be waning. In 2017, 72 percent of state residents supported judicial discretion in sentencing over mandatory minimum sentences. Today, that share has slipped somewhat to 64 percent.
- The changes to the state's criminal justice system have not increased perceptions of the system's fairness. Today, 54 percent do not think the system is fair. These perceptions are more prevalent among Democrats and non-white residents of the state than they were a year ago.
- Public perceptions of crime remain stable. In 2017, 65 percent of state residents said crime in Louisiana had increased over the previous five years. Today, 68 percent say so.
- Most Louisiana residents (58 percent) favor the death penalty.

Medicaid Expansion

- Most Louisiana residents continue to approve of the state's expansion of the Medicaid program: 69 percent approve and 24 percent disapprove. Democrats overwhelmingly approve of the expansion (92 percent), as do a majority of independents (68 percent). Republicans remain divided with 47 percent approval and 46 percent disapproval. However, relatively few state residents (35 percent) even know the state has expanded its Medicaid program.
- Proposal to add work requirements and copayments to Medicaid receive majority, bipartisan support.

Trust in Media

- About three-fourths of Louisiana residents say that *local* news organizations keep them very well informed (25 percent) or fairly well informed (49 percent) about state politics.
- When it comes to trusting information from news organizations, more Louisiana residents trust local media than national media. Overall, 78 percent trust the information they get from local news organizations a lot or some, but only 57 percent trust the information they get from national news organizations.
- Many Louisiana residents see a bias in local news. Sixty percent say local news organizations tend to favor one side, while only 36 percent say they deal fairly with all sides.
- Most Louisiana residents (56 percent) think that local news organizations are accurate in their reporting, which is much higher than the share who think national news organizations generally get the facts straight (32 percent).

1. State of the State

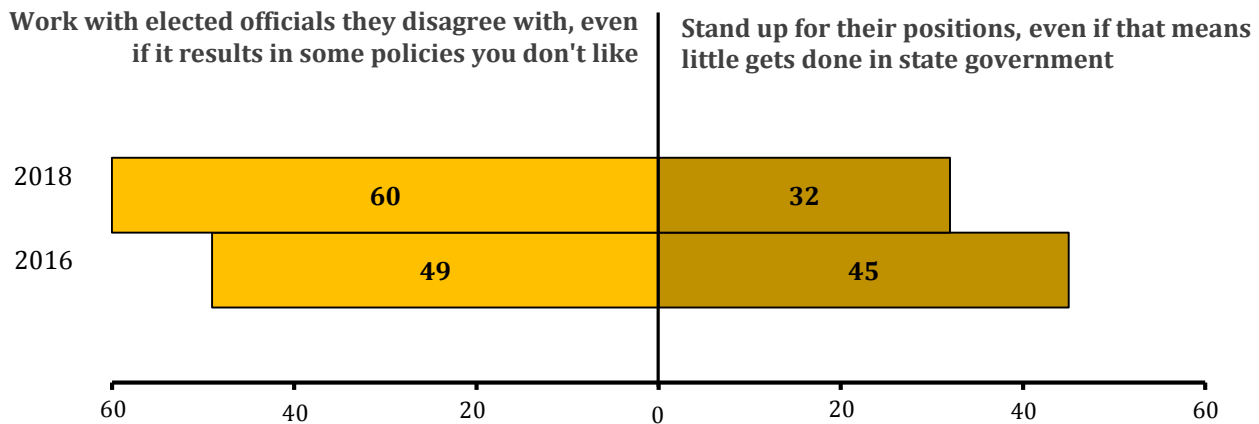
Most want leaders to compromise, but few expect it

Louisiana residents increasingly want to see their elected officials compromise, but few expect to see them work together. Six in ten Louisiana residents prefer elected officials in state government who share their positions on important issues to work with other elected officials they disagree with, even if it results in some disliked policies, rather than to stand up for their positions at the cost of getting little done. When the *Louisiana Survey* last asked this question two years ago, state residents split nearly evenly between compromise and standing up for positions (Figure 1.1).¹

Even as more state residents are calling for greater compromise, only 18 percent think Republicans and Democrats in state government actually will work together on solutions for Louisiana’s challenges. A large majority (79 percent), instead, expect the parties to bicker and oppose each other even at the expense of solving problems.

Figure 1.1: Support for compromise gains ground

Percent saying elected officials in state government who share their positions on important issues should _____



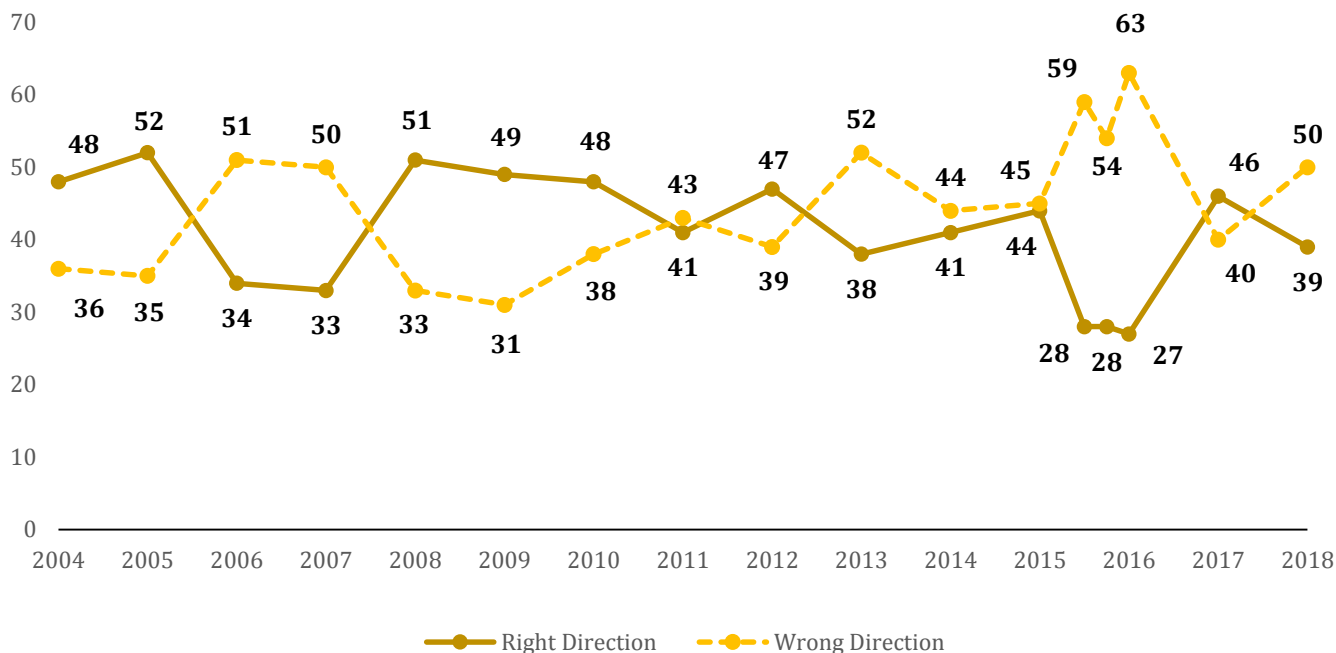
SOURCE: 2016 & 2018 Louisiana Survey

¹ Respondents were randomly assigned either to this question or to a similar question that replaces the clause, “even if that means little gets done in state government,” with the clause “even if that keeps government from solving the problems facing the state.” The purpose of the randomization is to test whether the former version measures a predisposition

to prefer less government activity rather than support for compromise. Differences between the two versions are negligible. When using the latter wording, 62 percent prefer elected officials working with those they disagree with and 32 percent prefer elected officials to stand up for their positions.

Figure 1.2: "Wrong direction" once again outpaces "Right direction"

Percent who say the state is heading in the _____



SOURCE: 2004 - 2018 Louisiana Survey, Summer 2015 Election Survey, and Fall 2015 Election Survey

More pessimism about direction of Louisiana

More Louisiana residents think the state is heading in the wrong direction than think it is heading in the right direction, a return to a familiar pattern from recent years (Figure 1.2). Since 2013, public mood about the direction of the state has generally tilted negatively. Opinion reversed course last year for the first time in several years. This year, however, half of the state's residents now say Louisiana is heading in the wrong direction.

Democrats are driving the shift in public mood. A year ago, Democrats leaned in a positive direction by seven points: 47 percent right direction and 40 percent wrong direction. Now, Democratic opinion heavily tilts in a negative direction by 17 points: 36 percent right direction and 53 percent wrong direction.

The shift among Republicans and independents is more muted. The balance of opinion among Republicans went from ten points in a positive direction in 2017 (48 percent right direction and 38 percent wrong direction) to nearly even in 2018 (43 percent right direction and 44 percent negative direction). Today, more Republicans than Democrats now think the state is heading in the right direction.

Independents are similar to Democrats with 38 percent saying the state is heading in the right direction and 51 percent saying it is heading in the wrong direction.

Public sees widening partisan divide

The people of Louisiana see partisan polarization growing in the state. Overall, 73 percent say the state is more politically divided these days than in the past. Similar shares of Democrats (76 percent), Republicans (73 percent), and independents (71 percent) see this growing political divide.

The survey also asked respondents to identify the ideology of the “Republican Party in Louisiana” and the “Democratic Party in Louisiana,” as well as their own ideology. Respondents answered using a seven point scale: “very liberal” (1), “liberal” (2), “somewhat liberal” (3), “moderate” (4), “somewhat conservative” (5), “conservative” (6), or “very conservative” (7).

Generally, partisans see their own party as more moderate than the opposing party. Additionally, Democrats see themselves as more moderate than Republicans see themselves (Figure 1.3).

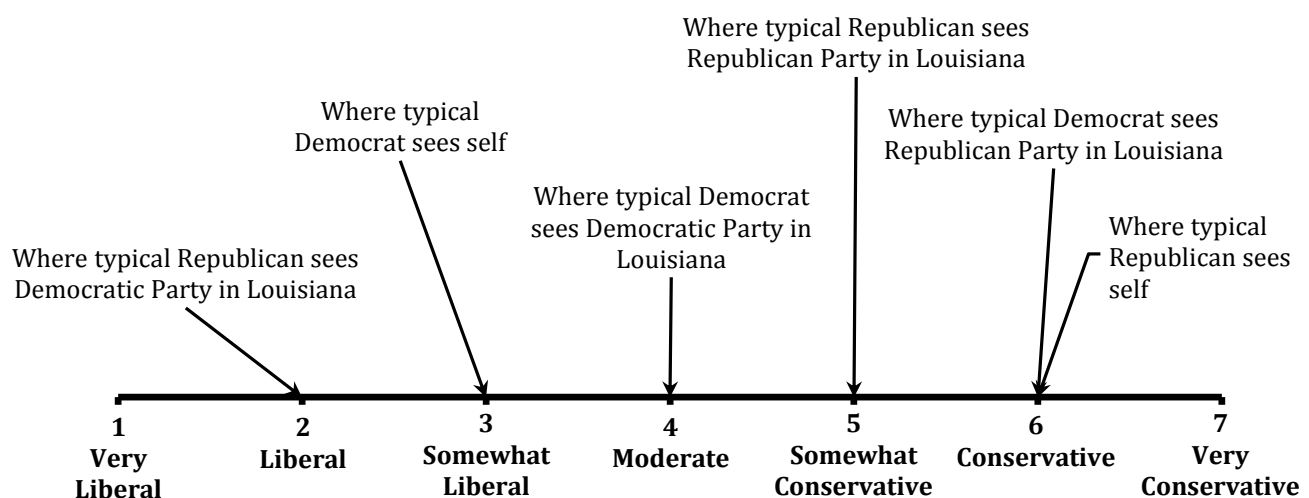
For example, the typical Democrat sees the Democratic Party in Louisiana as “moderate” on this scale, but sees the Republican Party in Louisiana as “conservative,” which is *two* points away from the moderate position. The typical Republican, meanwhile, sees his own party as “somewhat conservative,” *one* point to the right of the moderate position, but sees the Democratic Party as *two* points from the moderate position on the other side.

The typical Democrat also sees herself as “somewhat liberal,” which is *one* point from the moderate position, while the typical Republican sees himself as “conservative,” which is *two* points from the moderate position.

Taken together, these responses reveal that Republicans see a larger gap between themselves and the Democratic Party, than Democrats see between themselves and the Republican Party. Further, this perceived gap is even larger than the actual gap between where Democrats and Republicans see themselves.

Figure 1.3: Partisans see opposing party as more extreme than own party

Median placement of self and political parties in Louisiana on seven point ideology scale



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Trust in state government low

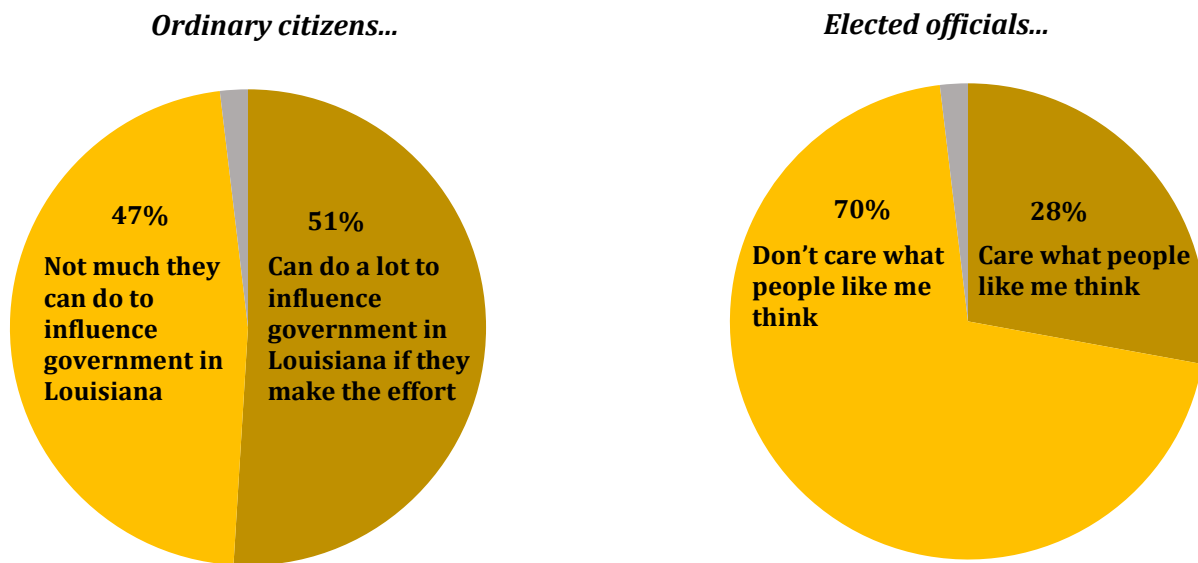
Very few Louisiana residents think they can trust the state government of Louisiana to do what is right “just about always” (3 percent) or “most of the time” (19 percent). Instead, most say they trust state government only “some of the time” (64 percent) or “never” (14 percent).

Both Democrats and Republicans express low levels of trust in state government. Fifty-nine percent of Democrats trust state government only some of the time, and 15 percent say they never trust state government. Republicans are a bit more likely than Democrats to say they can only trust state government some of the time (70 percent), but they are also less likely to say they can never trust state government (8 percent).

Trust in political wisdom of people of Louisiana also low

Fewer than one in three state residents have a “very great deal” or “good deal” of trust and confidence in the wisdom of the people of Louisiana when it comes to making political decisions. A majority (51 percent) say they have “not very much” trust and confidence in the political wisdom of their fellow state residents, and another 15 percent say they have “none at all.”

Figure 1.4: Public divided on ability to influence government in the state, and most doubt elected officials care what they think



NOTE: Gray sections represent shares of respondents who refused to answer the question or volunteered a response of "don't know." For both questions, these shares are two percent of respondents.

SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Many question ability to influence government in the state

Louisiana residents are divided over whether they can influence government in the state. When asked which statement comes closer to their own views, 51 percent say “ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government of Louisiana if they are willing to make the effort,” and 47 percent say “there’s not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Louisiana” (Figure 1.4).

Although there is a modest difference across parties over capacity to influence government – 56 percent of Democrats and 50 percent of Republicans say ordinary citizens can influence government in Louisiana – much larger differences cut across socio-economic status. Among the college-educated, 60 percent say ordinary citizens can influence government, but this share drops to 40 percent among those with only a high school diploma or less education.

Louisiana residents are more skeptical about whether elected officials care what they think. When asked which statement comes closer to their own views, 70 percent say “most elected officials in Louisiana don’t care what people like me think,” and just 28 percent say “most elected officials in Louisiana care what people like me think.”

Democrats (70 percent) are somewhat more skeptical than Republicans (62 percent) about whether elected officials are listening to them, and independents (76 percent) are even more so. However, majorities across all major party groups do not think elected officials care much about what they think. There is also a significant racial divide with more blacks (75 percent) than whites (66 percent) saying elected officials don’t care about what they think.

Economic issues top list of concerns

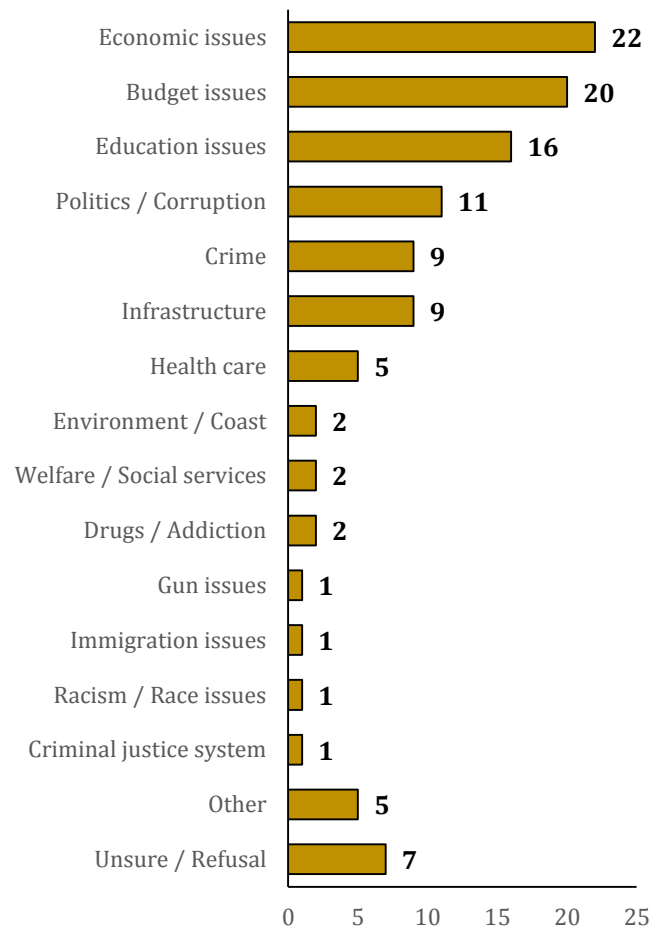
Concerns about the economy top the public's list of priorities, with 22 percent naming topics such as the economy, jobs, wages, the cost of living, poverty, or economic inequality when asked to name the most important problem facing the state in an open-ended format (Figure 1.5). The most common responses of this type are general references to the economy or to jobs, which collectively make up three-fourths of responses in the economic issues category. Approximately 15 percent of responses in this category refer to topics related to poverty or economic inequality, and another 9 percent refer to wages or income.

Budget issues are nearly as prominent, with about one in five Louisiana residents naming topics such as the budget, taxes, or spending. Among all responses in this category, about 19 percent specifically refer to taxes or revenue with four percent specifically saying that taxes are too high and five percent specifically saying that tax revenue is too low. The remaining ten percent of budget responses that refer to taxes do not indicate sentiment about whether taxes are too high or too low. Among all responses referencing budget issues, 26 percent specifically mention spending – including 13 percent saying spending is too high and six percent saying spending is too low. The remaining seven percent of budget responses that explicitly refer to spending do not indicate sentiment about whether spending is too high or too low.

Education rounds out the top three most important problems. Sixteen percent of respondents named education issues, including references to K-12 education and higher education.

Figure 1.5: Economy, budget top priorities

Percent saying __ is state's most important problem



NOTE: Verbatim responses to open-ended question ("In your opinion, what do you think is the single most important problem facing the state of Louisiana?") are coded into categories. Percentages do not sum to 100 because up to four responses are coded for respondents who mentioned multiple issues. All topics with more than one percent of sample are displayed. Topics named by fewer than one percent of sample are combined into "other" category.
SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Worry about availability of jobs, but few say they are worse off financially than a year ago

Respondents were randomly assigned to two groups, one of which was asked about the availability of “jobs” in their community while the other was asked about the availability of “good jobs.” Most state residents see a scarcity of employment opportunities: 60 percent say “jobs” are difficult to find in their community and 66 percent say “good jobs” are difficult to find.

Women, blacks, those without a college degree, and those with household income below the state median are more likely to say that “jobs” and “good jobs” are difficult to find.

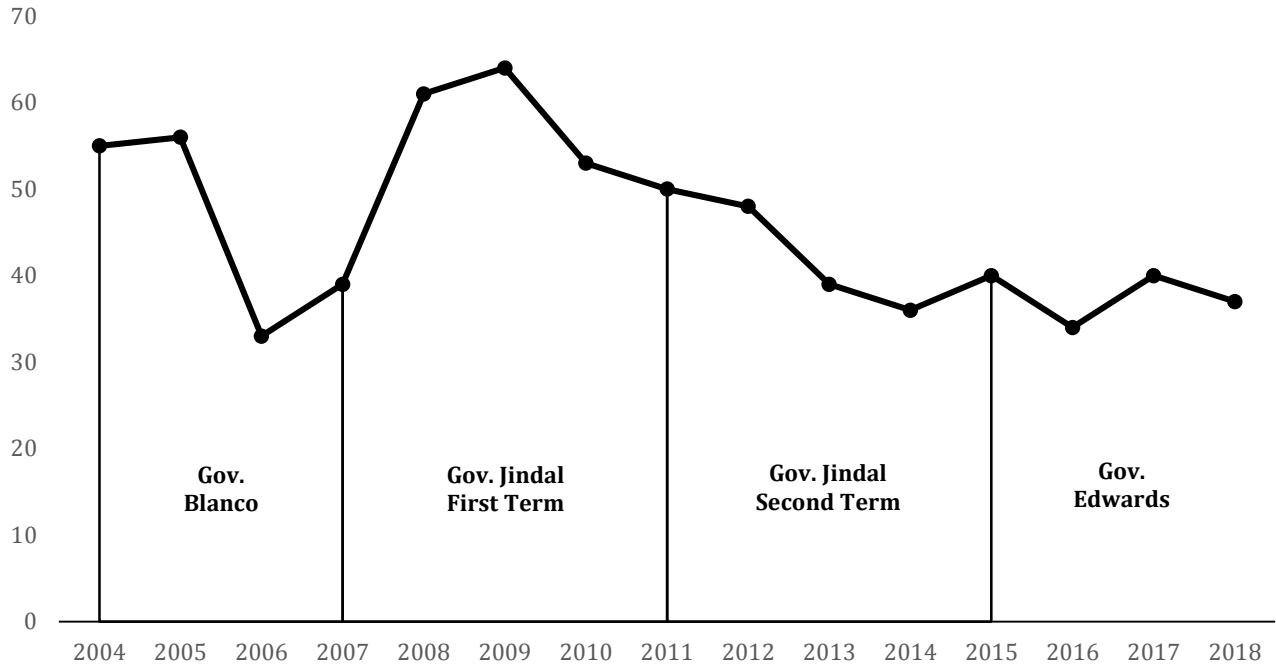
There is also a significant partisan gap in perceptions about the availability of employment opportunities. A majority of Democrats (69 percent) say “jobs” are difficult to find, but only 44 percent of Republicans believe “jobs” are hard to find. This 25 point gap across the political parties in these beliefs, however, shrinks to just eight points when it comes to the availability of “good jobs.” Majorities of both Democrats (75 percent) and Republicans (67 percent) think these kinds of jobs are difficult to find in their communities.

Despite a general skepticism about the availability of jobs, evaluations of personal finances have improved slightly from 2017. When asked “Would you say that you are better off financially, worse off, or about the same as you were a year ago?”, only 17 percent say they are worse off now than a year ago – a smaller share than said so when asked the same question in 2017 (23 percent). On the other hand, less than one in four residents (22 percent) say their financial situation has improved. A majority says they are getting along about the same as they were a year ago (59 percent).

Asked a similar question about the economy in Louisiana as a whole, 38 percent believe it has worsened. Another 37 percent think the economy has remained the same, and 20 percent believe it has improved. Although there are no significant partisan differences in perceptions of the state economy, there are significant demographic gaps. Women, blacks, those without a college degree, and those with household income below the state median are generally more likely to say the state’s economy is getting worse.

Figure 1.6: Confidence that state can solve important problems remains low

Percent saying "very" or "somewhat" confident in state government to address state's most important problem effectively



SOURCE: 2003 - 2018 Louisiana Survey

Confidence in state's ability to solve important problems remains low

Public confidence in state government to deal effectively with the most important problems

remains about where it has been since 2014. Just over a third (37 percent) say they are "very" or "somewhat" confident (Figure 1.6).² Confidence remains well below the heights seen in the early years of the Blanco and Jindal administrations.

² The question specifically asks respondents about their confidence in state government to effectively address the problem they named in the previous question about the single most important problem facing the state. Generally, confidence does not vary by the problem named. The exceptions are that individuals whose responses fall in the

politics/corruption or racism/race issues categories tend to have slightly less confidence, and individuals whose responses fall into the drugs/addiction category or indicated that they did not know a problem tend to have slightly more confidence, on average.

2. State Finance

Nearly all aware of state's budget problems

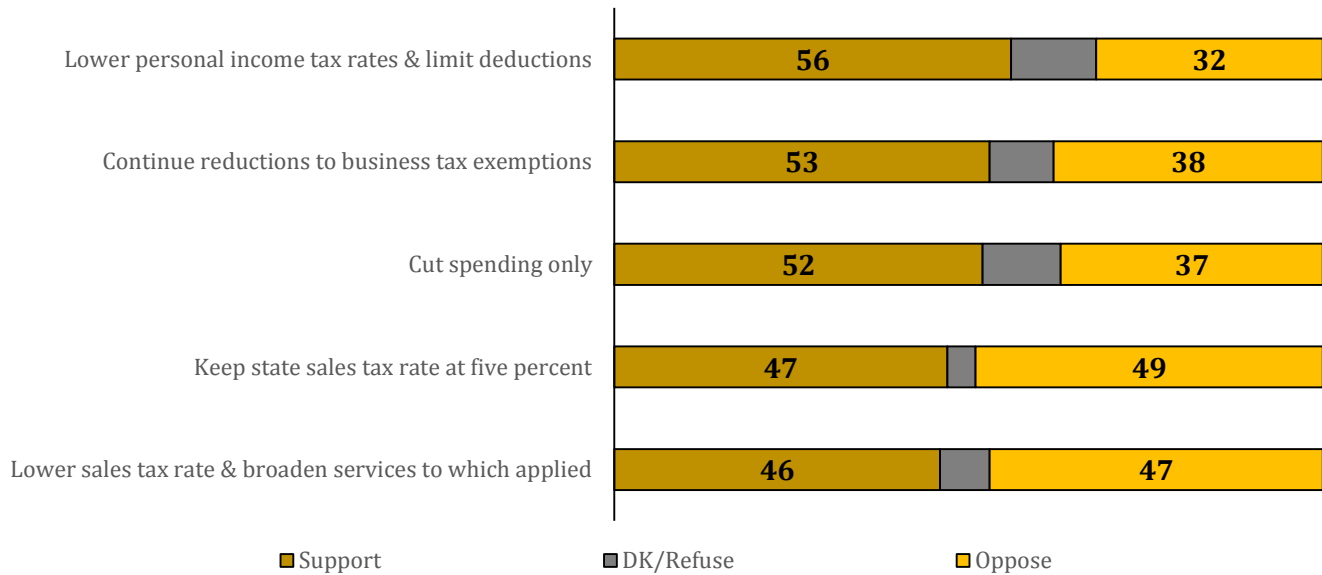
News of the state's "fiscal cliff" has reached most Louisiana residents. In all, 87 percent recognize the state currently faces budget problems, and awareness remains high across a variety of demographic and other background characteristics. Whether comparing Democrats and Republicans, whites and blacks, younger and older residents, or higher and lower income residents, similar shares of these groups recognize the "fiscal cliff." Awareness of the issue slips somewhat for a few groups – individuals who did not attend college, individuals who pay little attention to political news, and men – but majorities are aware of the state's fiscal challenge even among these groups.

The survey went on to ask those respondents who said the state is facing budget problems whether those problems are "very serious," "fairly serious," or "not too serious." In the total sample, 59 percent said the state is currently facing budget problems and that those problems are "very serious." As with awareness of the state's fiscal challenges, concern about the seriousness of this issue remains high across demographic and partisan groups. One exception is that only 41 percent of younger residents (age 18 to 29 years) think the state is facing a "very serious" budget problem.

Very few individuals think the state is not facing budget problems (8 percent) or think the state is facing fiscal problems but the problems are not too serious (4 percent).

Figure 2.1: Public split on sales tax proposals for "fiscal cliff," supports income tax proposal

Percent saying support or oppose



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

More support for income tax proposal for addressing "fiscal cliff" than sales tax proposals

The survey asked respondents whether they support or oppose five proposals to deal with the state's "fiscal cliff." Before hearing the proposals respondents were first told: "As you may know, two years ago, Louisiana temporarily increased its state sales tax from four percent to five percent and temporarily raised taxes on some businesses by lowering certain exemptions. State government faces a billion dollar shortfall in its budget when those temporary tax increases expire later this year. We would like to ask you about various proposals that have been made to deal with Louisiana's budget shortfall." The proposals include:

1. "Lowering the state personal income tax rates in exchange for limiting some of the deductions a taxpayer can claim on their state income taxes, which would increase the total amount of state revenue coming from the state income tax."
2. "Lowering the state sales tax rate back down to four percent but broaden the tax to apply to certain kinds of purchases that are not currently charged a state sales tax, such as cable television, haircuts, and lawn care."
3. "Continuing the state sales tax increase, which would keep the rate at five percent instead of letting it drop back down to four percent."
4. "Continuing the reductions to certain business tax exemptions."
5. "Letting the temporary tax increases expire and handle the billion dollar budget shortfall by cutting spending only."

The proposal to lower income tax rates but limit deductions proved the most popular, supported by 56 percent of the public and opposed by just 32 percent (Figure 2.1).

Two other proposals also received more support than opposition: Continuing the reductions to business tax exemptions (53 percent support / 38 percent oppose) and addressing the “fiscal cliff” only with spending cuts (52 percent support / 37 percent oppose).

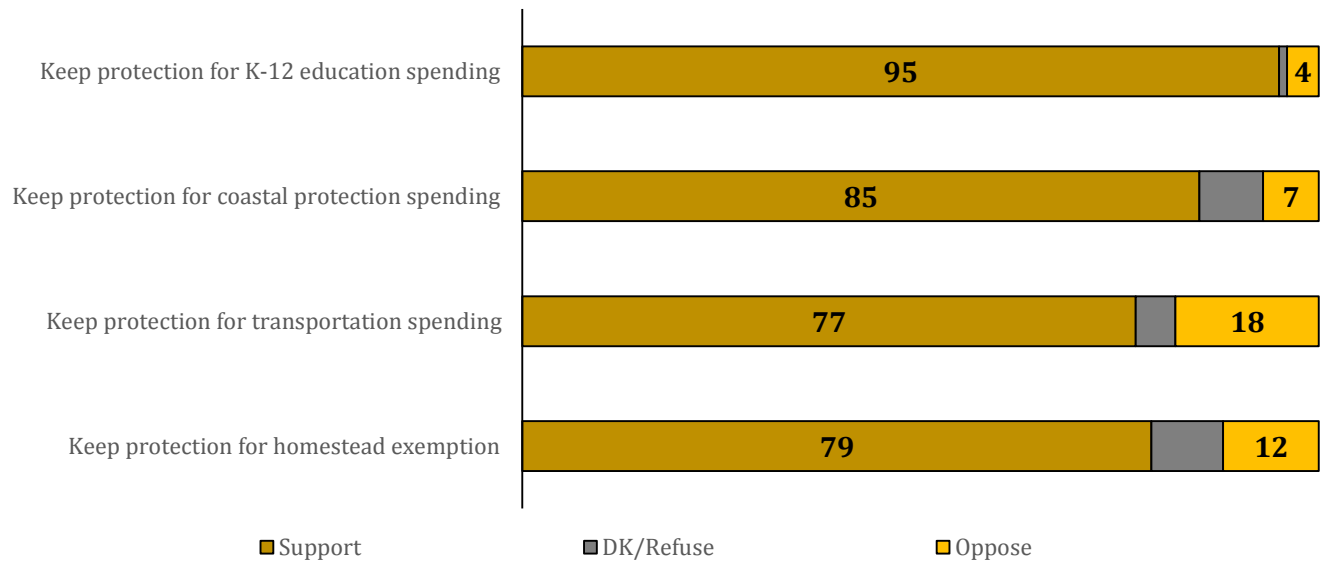
Of the three proposals supported by a majority of Louisiana residents, only two receive bipartisan support. Majorities of Republicans (61 percent), Democrats (54 percent), and independents (55 percent) support the proposal to change the state personal income tax. Likewise, most Republicans (52 percent), Democrats (51 percent), and independents (55 percent) support continuing the temporary reductions to certain business tax exemptions passed in 2016.

Despite support among the majority of the total adult population of Louisiana, the proposal to deal with the “fiscal cliff” only through spending cuts splits along partisan lines. Sixty percent of Republicans and 55 percent of independents back this proposal, but only 42 percent of Democrats do. Instead, half of Democrats oppose a cuts only approach to the state’s budget problems.

Finally, the public splits nearly evenly over two sales tax proposals: Renewing the temporary state sales tax increase from 2016 (47 percent support / 49 percent oppose) and lowering the sales tax rate back down to four percent but broadening the tax’s application to more services (46 percent support / 47 percent oppose).

Democrats are the most opposed to reducing sales tax rates in exchange for broadening the tax’s base (42 percent support / 52 percent oppose). Republicans (50 percent support / 47 percent oppose) and independents (48 percent support / 45 percent oppose) split more evenly on this proposal. In contrast, Republicans are the most opposed to retaining the fifth penny of the state’s sales tax (45 percent support / 52 percent oppose). Democrats (50 percent support / 47 percent oppose) and independents (48 percent support / 48 percent oppose) split more evenly.

Figure 2.2: Supporters of constitutional convention not interested in eliminating specific protections



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Supporters of constitutional convention balk at eliminating specific protections

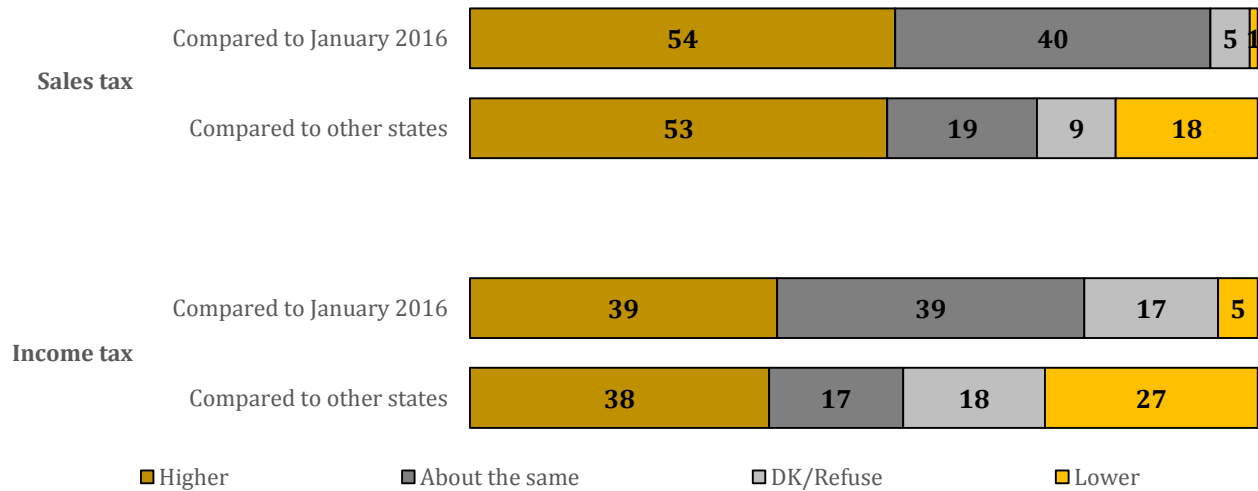
State constitutional dedications make it difficult for elected officials to reduce certain kinds of spending. Supporters of these dedications argue that these rules protect important kinds of spending and other policies from interference by lawmakers. However, others argue that too many rules in the constitution control government spending and tax policy making it harder for lawmakers to deal with budget shortfalls. Some of these critics have proposed calling a convention to rewrite the state’s constitution.

The public splits over the proposal to rewrite the state’s constitution (46 percent support / 44 percent oppose). The proposal is more popular among Democrats (52 percent support / 38 percent oppose) than Republicans (39 percent support / 49 percent oppose) or independents (45 percent support / 45 percent oppose).

However, the proposal may prove less hopeful than its prominent advocates hope. Individuals who support the call for a constitutional convention nevertheless tend to oppose eliminating specific dedications from the current constitution. Respondents who support a convention were randomly assigned to one of four follow up questions asking about opinions of specific changes to the constitution. Three of these questions gauge support for retaining specific spending protections – for elementary and secondary education spending, for coastal protection spending, and for transportation spending. The fourth question measures support for keeping the state’s homestead exemption for local property taxes. In each case, large majorities of convention supporters want to retain existing protections (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.3: Most recognize sales tax has increased and is higher than other states, but many are unfamiliar with how income tax compares to past or other states

Percent saying taxes are _____ compared to January 2016 or compared to other states



NOTE: Respondents were randomly assigned to answer questions about state sales tax or about state personal and household income tax. For comparisons to other states, the question asks about "combined state and local sales taxes." All other questions ask about state taxes only. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Public is better informed about sales tax than income tax

Before answering questions about proposals to deal with the state’s budget, survey respondents answered a battery of questions measuring their perceptions of facts about sales and income taxes in Louisiana. Specifically, respondents were asked how these taxes compare to January 2016 and how they compare to other states.

Most Louisiana residents (54 percent) correctly recognize that the state’s sales tax is *higher* today than in January 2016 (Figure 2.3). Similarly, most (53 percent) recognize that the combined state and local sales taxes in Louisiana are *higher* than in most other states.³

In contrast, state residents are less familiar with Louisiana’s income taxes on households and individuals. Unlike the state sales tax rate, individual and household income tax *rates and brackets* in Louisiana have not changed since January 2016. However, 39 percent say these taxes are *higher* today than they were in January 2016, five percent say they are lower, and 17 percent admit they do not know how the state’s income taxes compare to January 2016. One possible explanation for this pattern is that individuals are responding based upon what they personally pay in state income taxes, which may have changed since January 2016 if their earnings, eligibility for deductions, or other circumstances that shape income tax bills have changed in that time. Another explanation, although a less optimistic one, is that Louisianans are poorly informed about income taxes in the state.⁴

³ According to the Tax Foundation, an independent tax policy research organization, Louisiana has the highest average combined state and local sales tax among all fifty states. For more information:

<https://files.taxfoundation.org/20180313143458/Tax-Foundation-FF572.pdf>

⁴ A third potential explanation is that individuals are responding to increases in withholding from

This interpretation is borne out when looking at responses to another factual question about the state's income taxes on individuals and households: How do these taxes compare to most other states.

Income taxes are difficult to compare across states because they involve a number of dimensions – for example, the number of brackets, the income ranges associated with each bracket, the tax rates applied to each range, and the availability of deductions and exemptions all vary across states. Nevertheless, two summary metrics are easily compared: Individual and household income tax payments per-capita and the share of state revenue coming from these taxes.

On both of these dimensions, Louisiana income taxes are lower than most other states. Louisiana ranks 39th on per-capita income tax payments, with an average tax of \$592 or just over half of the average across all states.⁵ For share of state revenue coming from individual and household income taxes, Louisiana ranks 40th with 15 percent.⁶

Whichever of these two summary measures is used, most Louisiana residents do not appear to know that the state's income taxes are lower than in most other states. Thirty-eight percent of Louisianans think the state's income taxes on individuals and households are higher than in most other states – a perception of state taxes that is difficult to square with the facts. Another 18 percent simply say they do not know how income taxes compare across states. Just 27 percent say these taxes are lower in Louisiana than in most other states, and 17 percent say they are about the same.

paychecks for state individual and household income taxes as a consequence of changes in the federal income tax. The new withholding amounts went into effect beginning February 16, 2018, midway through the field period for this survey's data collection. However, a comparison of responses before and after this date reveal no differences, indicating responses to

this question were not moved by the change in withholding.

⁵ For more information:

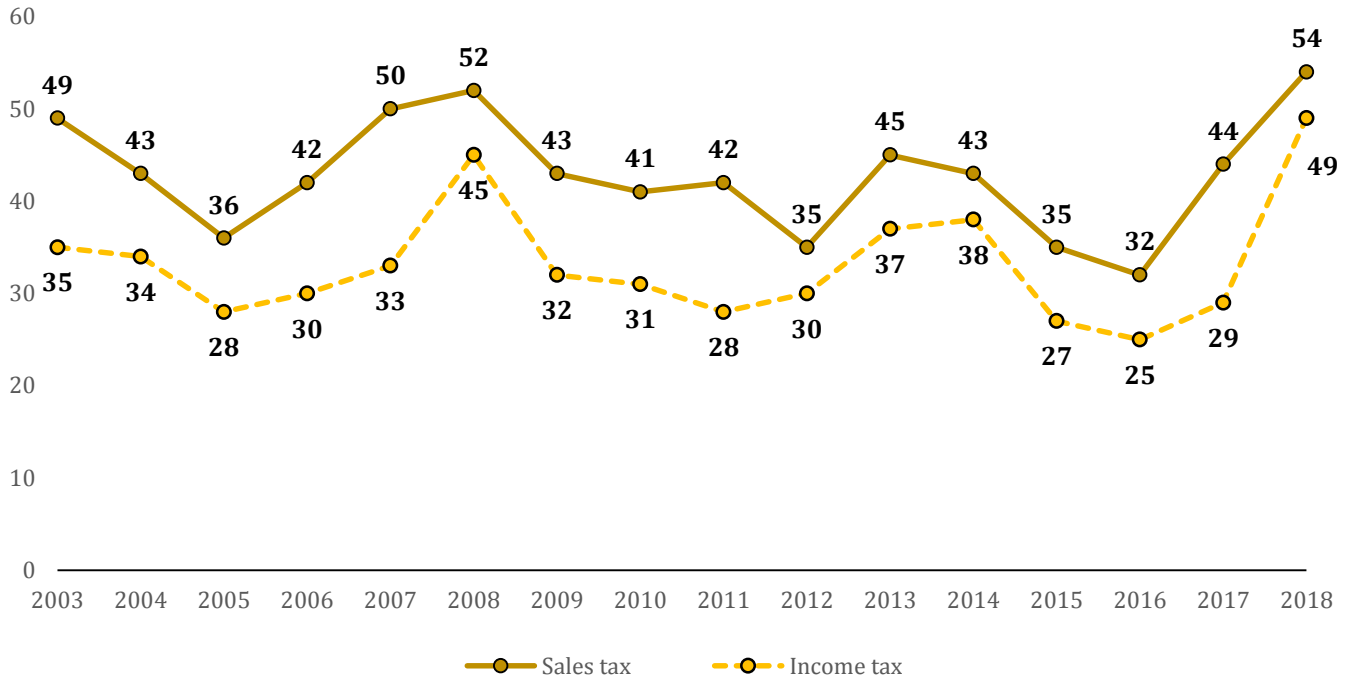
<https://taxfoundation.org/individual-income-tax-collections-per-capita/>

⁶ For more information:

<https://taxfoundation.org/income-taxes-percent-collections/>

Figure 2.4: Belief that state sales and income taxes are "too high" on the rise

Percent who say the state _____ is "too high and should be reduced"



SOURCE: 2003 - 2018 Louisiana Survey

More residents say sales and income taxes are too high and should be reduced...

There has been a sharp increase in the shares of Louisiana residents who say that the state sales tax and state income tax are "too high and should be reduced" (Figure 2.4). For the sales tax, the increase has unfolded over two years since Louisiana raised the state rate from four percent to five percent. Today, most residents (54 percent) say the tax is "too high." Democrats (54 percent) and Republicans (60 percent) share this view.

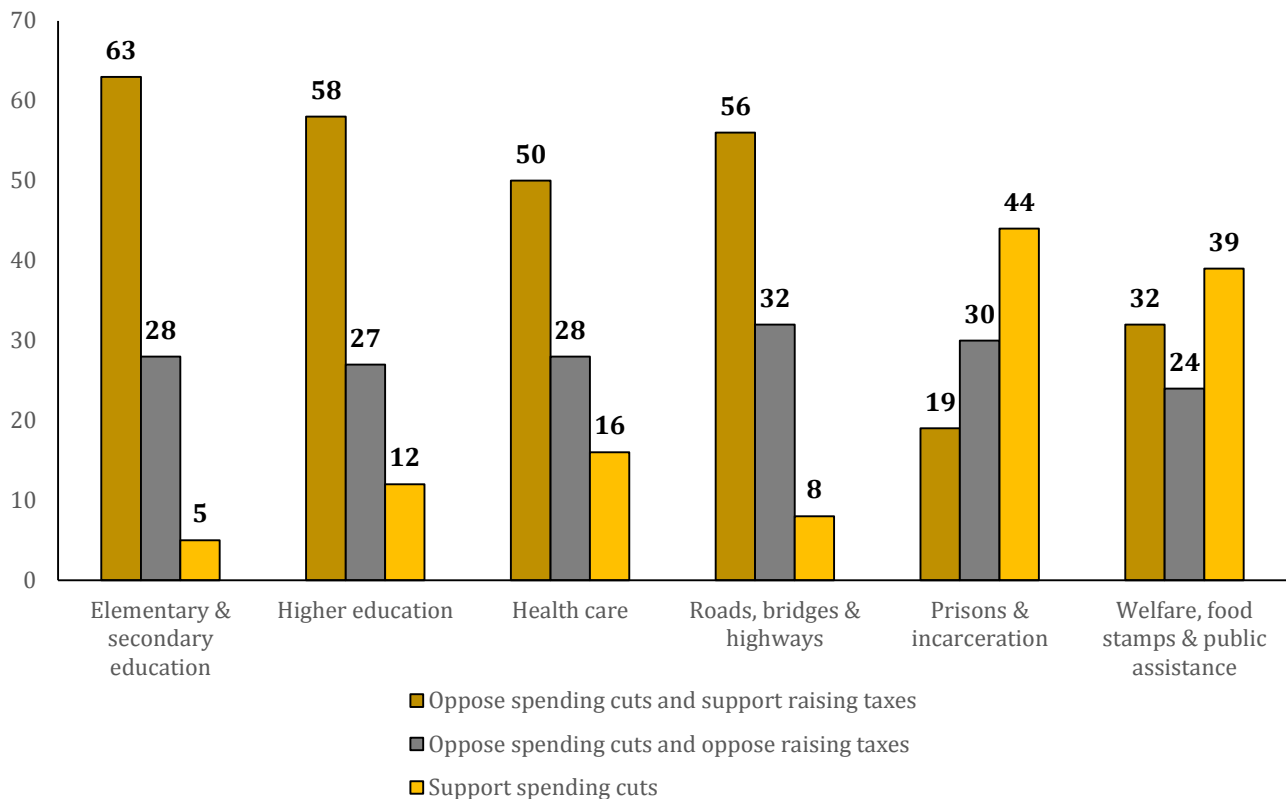
The trend in responses about the state's income tax are even starker – shifting 20 points over a single year. Today, approximately half of Louisiana residents say the state income tax is "too high and should be reduced." Although it is unlikely this spike in opinion that the income tax is "too high" is a consequence of actual changes in the state's tax code since 2017 (the rates and brackets of which have remained constant over this period), it may reflect persuasion as the state continues to debate issues of government spending and revenue.⁷

⁷ As with perceptions about the trend in the tax, there is no evidence that belief that the state's income taxes are "too high" were moved by changes in withholding following implementation of changes to federal tax policy. Another potential explanation for the rise in the share saying the income tax is "too high" is that, unlike

in previous years, the 2018 question was preceded by a question asking whether the tax had increased in recent years. A large share of individuals believe this tax has increased. Perhaps asking about this increase just before asking whether the tax is "too high," primes

Figure 2.5: Most willing to personally pay higher taxes to fund education and transportation

Percent who have specified combinations of spending and tax preferences for each policy area.



NOTE: Percentages are the share holding the specified combination of spending and tax preferences *out of all respondents*. The shares of respondents who volunteered that they do not know or who refused to answer the questions are not shown in this figure.

SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

... But most support raising taxes rather than cutting spending to key areas

Despite a general antipathy toward taxes when asked about those topics on their own, most Louisiana residents nevertheless prefer to raise taxes than to cut spending for education and transportation.

Importantly, the survey measures opinions about policy-specific spending in the context of tradeoffs between expenditures and the need for tax revenue to fund them. Because the state requires a balanced budget and faces potential revenue shortfalls, increasing spending or even maintaining current levels of spending requires a revenue source.

Asking about spending in isolation from revenue – as is customary in many surveys – masks the fiscal tradeoff state lawmakers face and allows respondents to express preferences on one side of the balance sheet while ignoring the

respondents to answer the latter in a way that corresponds with their answer to the former.

consequences on the other side. What is key, then, is not whether Louisiana residents want more or less spending for specific services, but whether they are willing to fund current or new spending with higher taxes.

To better capture this tradeoff, the survey first asks whether respondents want to increase spending, cut spending, or keep it about the same and then asks respondents who said they want to increase spending or who said they want to keep spending at current levels whether they support or oppose raising taxes to fund that spending.

When faced with the tradeoff between spending and taxes, most respondents opt *to avoid cuts* in the first question and *to raise taxes* in the second question for the areas of elementary and secondary education, higher education, and transportation. In fact, when it comes to education and transportation, a majority of Louisianans want to raise taxes to fund these services (Figure 2.5). For example, 63 percent of residents are willing to pay higher taxes for funding elementary and secondary education, while only five percent prefer to cut spending in this area.⁸

Similarly, half of state residents prefer raising taxes for health care to cutting spending for health care.

Support for spending cuts surpasses support for taxes in only two of the six policy areas covered in the survey. Forty-four percent want to cut spending for prisons and incarceration, and 39 percent want to cut spending for welfare, food stamps, and public assistance.

Perhaps more important, in all six policy areas, a majority of individuals elect either *to raise taxes* or *to cut spending* when faced with the tradeoff between the two choices. In short, the public has the capacity to navigate the fiscal tradeoffs the

state faces. Relatively few individuals (between 24 and 32 percent depending on the policy area) choose neither to cut spending for a particular policy area nor to raise taxes to pay for that spending. It is this smaller group of individuals, rather than the state's population as a whole, who best fit the cliché that voters want "something for nothing."

Most think state can cut spending without reducing services

The public believes it is possible to reduce government spending without cutting specific services by reducing waste and inefficiency. In all, 69 percent believe the state government can spend less and continue to provide the same level of services. Majorities of both Republicans (83 percent) and Democrats (52 percent) believe the government can cut spending without cutting services.

On average, Louisiana residents believe the state could reduce its budget by 14 percent without having to reduce services.

⁸ The percentages for those willing to pay higher taxes are the share of all respondents who did two things: 1) chose either to increase spending or to keep it about the same, and 2) supported raising taxes to pay for spending in this area. For separate breakdowns of

support for taxes just among those who support increasing spending or just among those who wish to keep spending the same (rather than among all respondents), see the topline at the end of this report.

3. Scope of Government

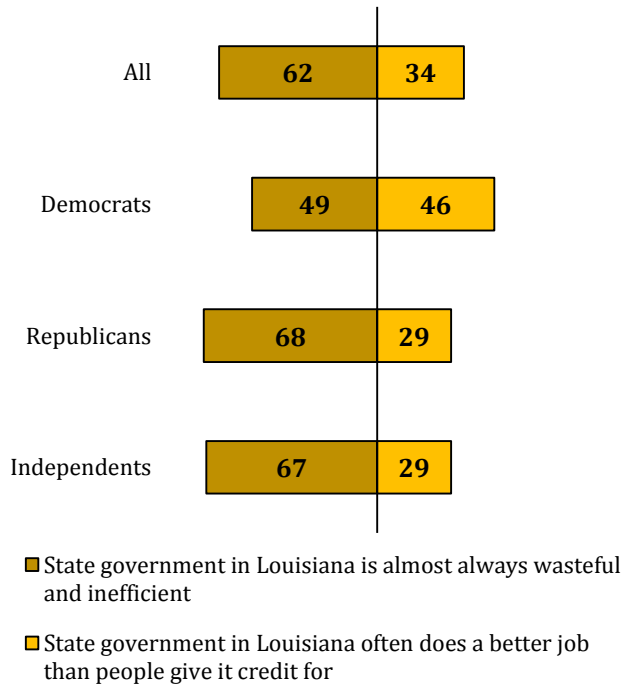
Most think state government is wasteful and does only a fair job running its programs...

Close to two-thirds (62 percent) of Louisiana residents believe state government in Louisiana is almost always wasteful and inefficient. Just 34 percent say state government often does a better job than people give it credit for. Most Republicans and independents share this view (Figure 3.1). Even among Democrats, opinion splits nearly evenly.

Similar views are reflected in responses about the effectiveness of state government in running its programs. Only 20 percent say state government does an “excellent job” or “good job” in running its programs – matched by the share who says Louisiana government does a “poor job” (21 percent). Most (57 percent) say it does “only a fair job.”

Figure 3.1: Most view state government as wasteful and inefficient

Percent who say _____



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

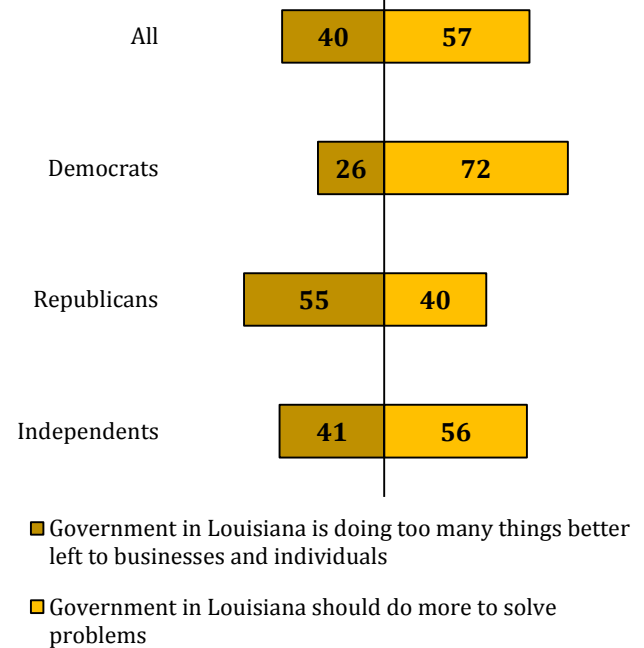
...but most also want state government to be active in solving more problems

Despite believing that state government is often wasteful and does only a fair job of running its programs, most Louisiana residents would like to see it active in more areas. When asked which statement comes closer to their views, “Government in Louisiana is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals,” or “Government in Louisiana should do more to solve problems,” a majority (57 percent) chose the latter (Figure 3.2).

Most Democrats (72 percent) and independents (56 percent) want a more active state government. Most Republicans (55 percent), however, think state government is already doing too many things that should be left to businesses and individuals.

Figure 3.2: Most say they want state government to be active in solving problems

Percent who say _____



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

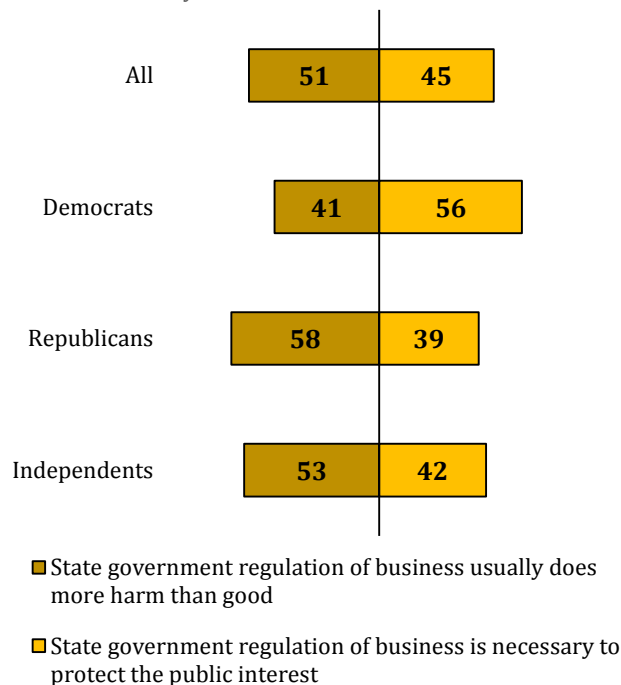
Opinion split more evenly over state role in regulating business

Louisianans' mixed views on the role of government are even more apparent when looking at regulation of business, where opinion is much more closely split about the role of state government. Overall, 51 percent say that state government regulation of business usually does more harm than good, but 45 percent say these regulations are necessary to protect the public interest (Figure 3.3).

The parties are near mirror images of each other. Most Republicans (58 percent) think regulation does more harm than good. Most Democrats (56 percent) think state government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest. Views among independents on this question generally resemble those of Republicans.

Figure 3.3: Mixed views of state government regulation of business

Percent who say _____



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

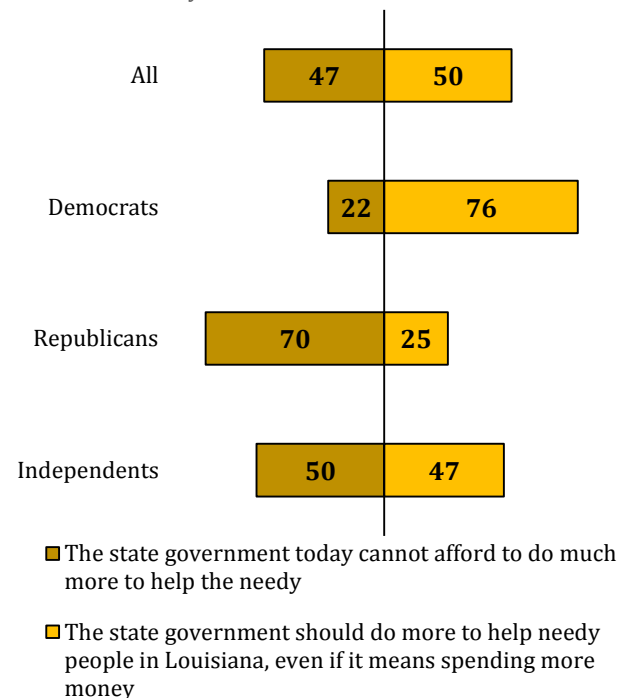
Large gap between parties over role of state government in helping people in need

Opinion also splits nearly evenly between the view that state government cannot afford to do much more to help people in need in Louisiana (47 percent) and the view that state government should do more to help needy people even if it means spending more money (50 percent).

Once again the close divide in overall opinion reflects, in part, a large gap between Democrats and Republicans (Figure 3.4). A large majority of Republicans (70 percent) believe that state government cannot afford to do more to help people in need. An even larger majority of Democrats (76 percent) take the opposite view, saying that state government needs to do more even if it requires additional spending.

Figure 3.4: Parties split over state government's role in helping the needy

Percent who say _____



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

4. Gender Discrimination

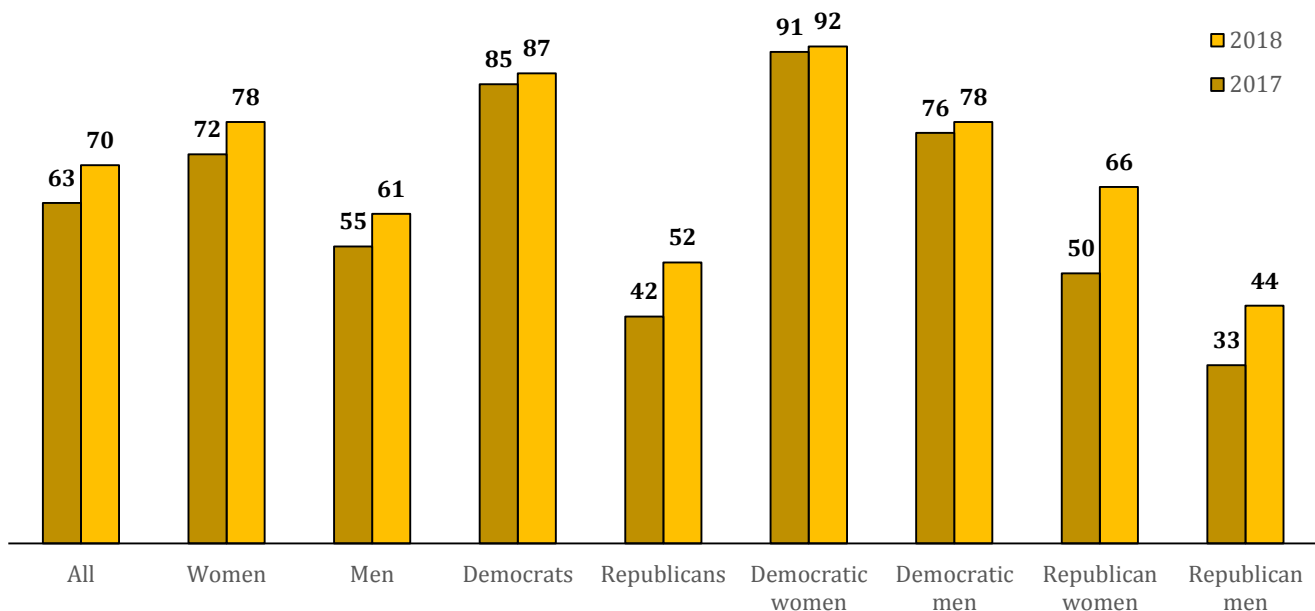
More Louisiana residents say women face discrimination than a year ago

Seventy percent of state residents say women face “a lot” or “some” discrimination, up from 63 percent a year ago (Figure 4.1). Men and women show similar trends in their perceptions of discrimination since 2017, and the gap between Democrats and Republicans narrowed. These views hardly budged for Democrats, nearly all of whom already believed women face “some” or “a lot” of discrimination. Among Republicans, the share saying women face discrimination rose by ten points from 42 percent to 52 percent. The shift was even larger among Republican women (+16) than Republican men (+11). There was less change in the share of Louisiana residents who say, “The country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace.” Three fourths of Louisiana residents believe the country needs to make further

changes, comparable to 71 percent who said so a year ago (Figure 4.2). This modest trend for the total sample masks uneven shifts across gender and political party. There was significant growth in the shares of Democratic men (+7) and Republican men (+11) who believe further change is necessary. Opinion did not shift among Democratic women, 95 percent of whom say further change is necessary, but they had already reached near unanimity a year ago. Among Republican women, the share who say further changes are necessary *declined* by seven points since 2017. Overall, 61 percent of Louisiana residents say women still face significant obstacles that make it harder for them to get ahead than men (Figure 4.3). A year ago, the share was 58 percent. Any increase in the belief that women face these obstacles was largely concentrated among Democratic women, among whom the share rose from 80 percent to 88 percent. Among Democratic men, the share slipped by six points. Republican men showed no change, and Republican women showed modest, if any, change on this question.

Figure 4.1: More say women face discrimination than a year ago

Percent who say there is “a lot” or “some” discrimination against women in our society today

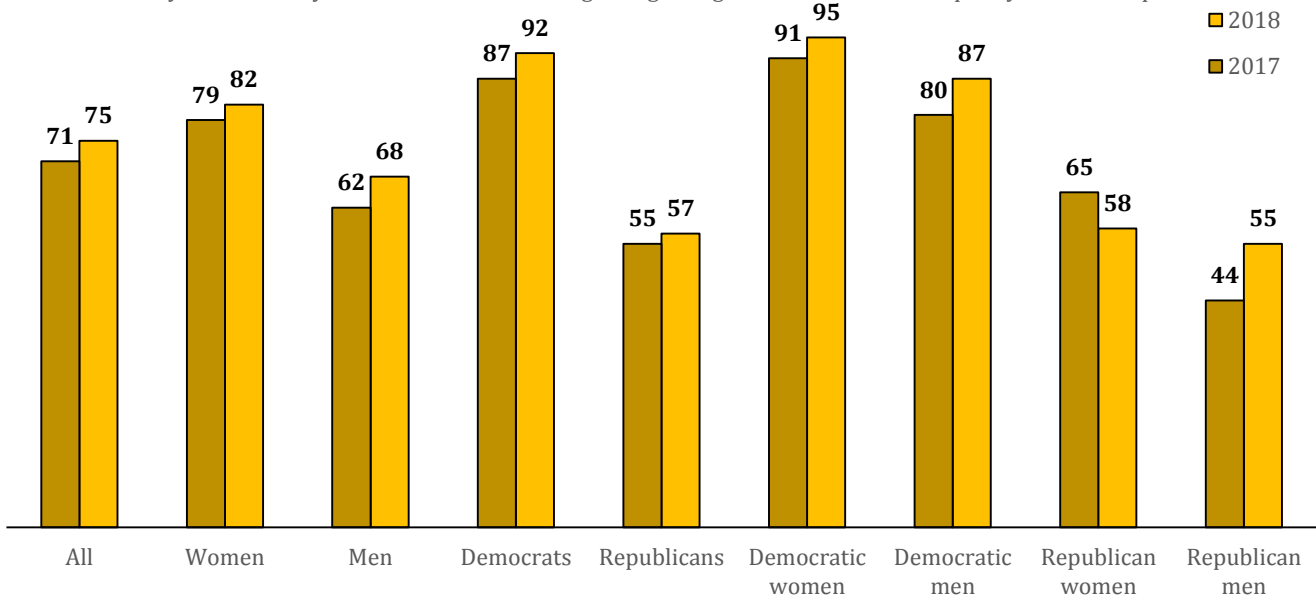


NOTE: Response options not shown include “only a little” and “none at all.” Additionally, respondents who volunteered that they did not know or who refused to answer the question are not shown.

SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Figure 4.2: More say country needs to continue making changes for workplace equality than in 2017, except among Republican women

Percent who say "This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace."

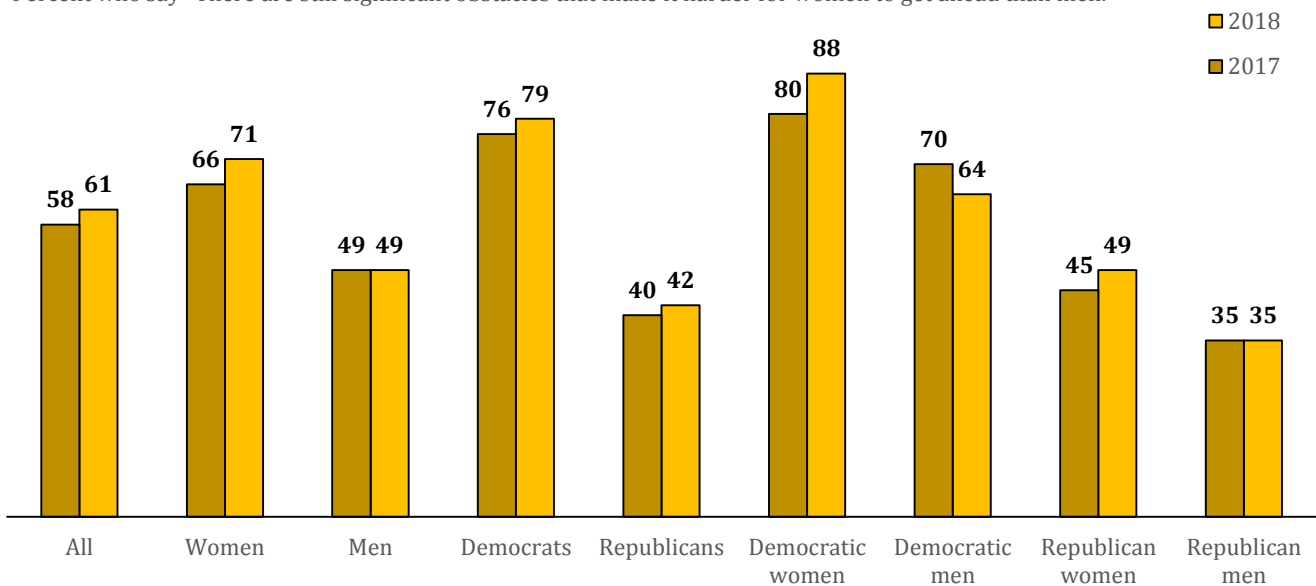


NOTE: Respondents were asked to choose the statement that comes closer to their own view even if neither is exactly right, selecting either, "This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace," or "This country has made the changes needed to give men and women equality in the workplace."

SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Figure 4.3: View that significant obstacles to gender equality remain in place on the rise among women, but not men

Percent who say "There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men."



NOTE: Respondents were asked to choose the statement that comes closer to their own view even if neither is exactly right, selecting either, "The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone," or "There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men."

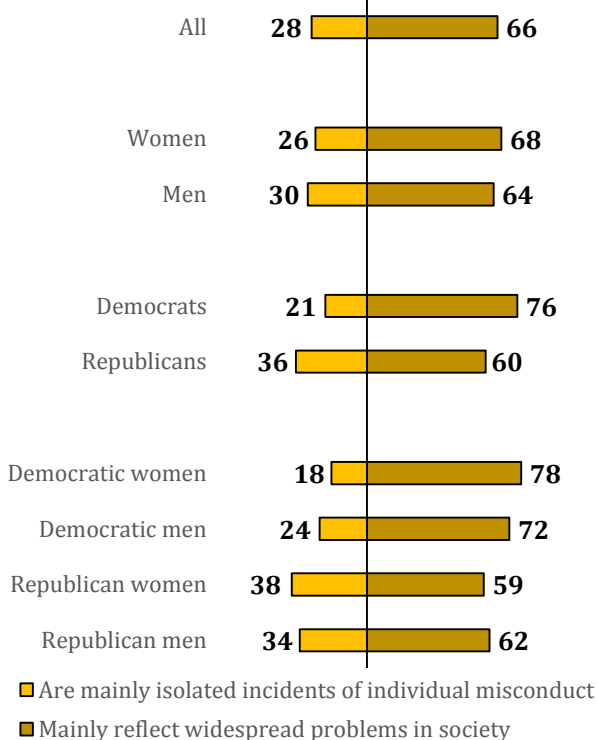
SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Most say sexual harassment is a systemic problem

Two-thirds of state residents say that recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault made against prominent men in entertainment, politics, and the media mainly reflect widespread problems in society rather than isolated incidents of individual misconduct (Figure 4.4). There is a larger difference between Democrats and Republicans than between men and women on this question. Sixty percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Democrats say these allegations mainly reflect societal problems. Even when looking within political parties, men and women largely agree.

Figure 4.4: Most see sexual harassment and assault as systemic problems

Percent who say recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault made against prominent men in entertainment, politics and the media _____



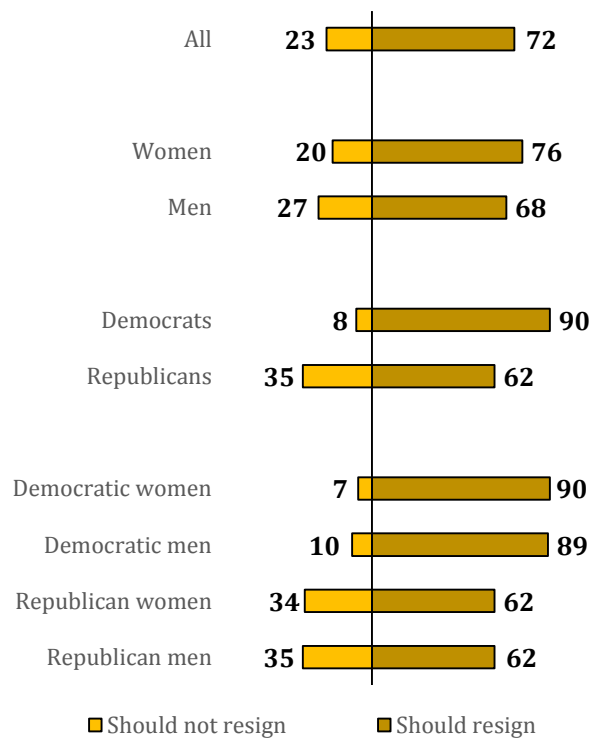
SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Most say elected officials should resign when facing multiple allegations

Nearly three-fourths of Louisiana residents (72 percent) say elected officials who are accused of sexual harassment or assault by multiple people should resign rather than stay in office. The share is moderately higher among women (76 percent) than men (68 percent) and much higher among Democrats (90 percent) than Republicans (62 percent). Within the parties, however, men and women show little differences. For example, Republican women are no more likely to say these elected officials should resign than Republican men (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Most think elected officials accused of sexual harassment or sexual assault should resign

Percent saying _____



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

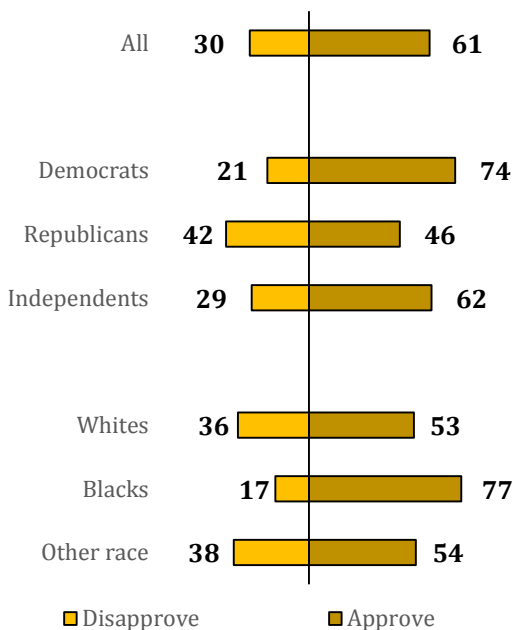
5. Criminal Justice Reform

Majority of state residents approve of 2017 criminal justice reforms

Criminal justice reform remains popular in Louisiana. In 2017, the state made several changes to its criminal justice system, such as shortening prison sentences for certain crimes. Today, 61 percent of state residents approve of those changes, while just 30 percent disapprove (Figure 5.1). Democrats are the most approving of the policy changes: 74 percent approve and 21 percent disapprove, for a net approval of +53. Approval is high among independents as well: 62 percent approval and 29 percent disapproval, for a net approval of +33. Republicans, on the other hand, are divided on recent criminal justice reforms, splitting almost evenly between approval (46 percent) and disapproval (42 percent).

Figure 5.1: Majority approves of criminal justice reforms

Percent saying they _____ of changes Louisiana made to its criminal justice system



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Support declines for move from mandatory minimum sentences

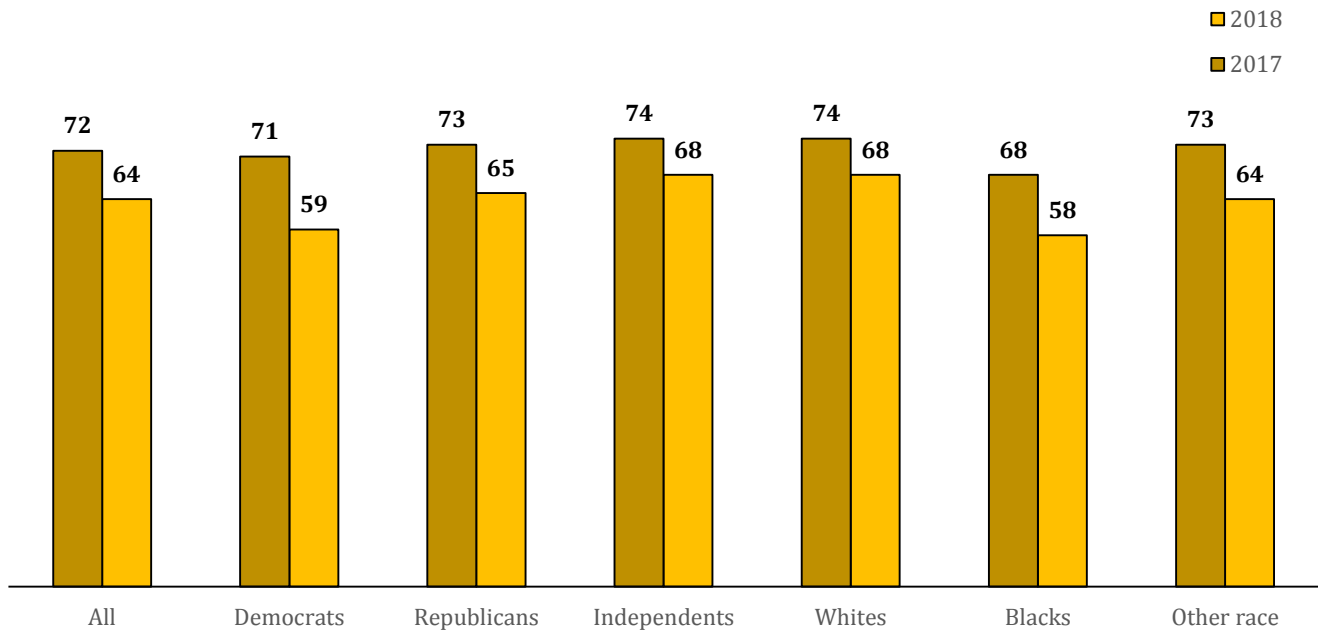
Even though Louisiana residents approve of the state's recent changes to its criminal justice system, there is at least one sign that support may be waning from 2017. This year's survey repeats a question from the [2017 Louisiana Survey](#) that measures support for a particular approach to criminal justice reform: "As you may know, mandatory minimum sentences require those convicted of certain crimes to serve a certain length of time in prison. Some people say that instead of mandatory minimums, judges should have the flexibility to determine sentences based on the facts of each case. Do you support or oppose letting judges have the flexibility to set sentences?" In 2017, 72 percent of state residents supported judicial discretion in sentencing over mandatory minimums. Today, the share is 64 percent (Figure 5.2). Net favorability has slipped from +47 to +33. Support has dropped across demographic and political groups. In 2017, net support for judicial discretion rather than mandatory minimums was +50 among whites and +41 among blacks. Today, net favorability is +39 and +23 for these groups, respectively. There was no difference across partisan affiliation in 2017, but today Republicans and independents are more supportive of judicial discretion in sentencing than Democrats, whose net favorability for this policy fell by half from +46 to +22.

Racial disparities in perceptions of criminal justice system's fairness continue

The changes to the state's criminal justice system have not increased perceptions of the system's fairness. A year ago, 51 percent of state residents disagreed with the statement, "Louisiana's current criminal justice system is fair." Today, 54 percent disagree that the system is fair (Figure 5.3). In fact, non-white residents of the state and Democrats are more likely to disagree with the statement than a year ago.

Figure 5.2: Declining support for eliminating mandatory minimum sentences

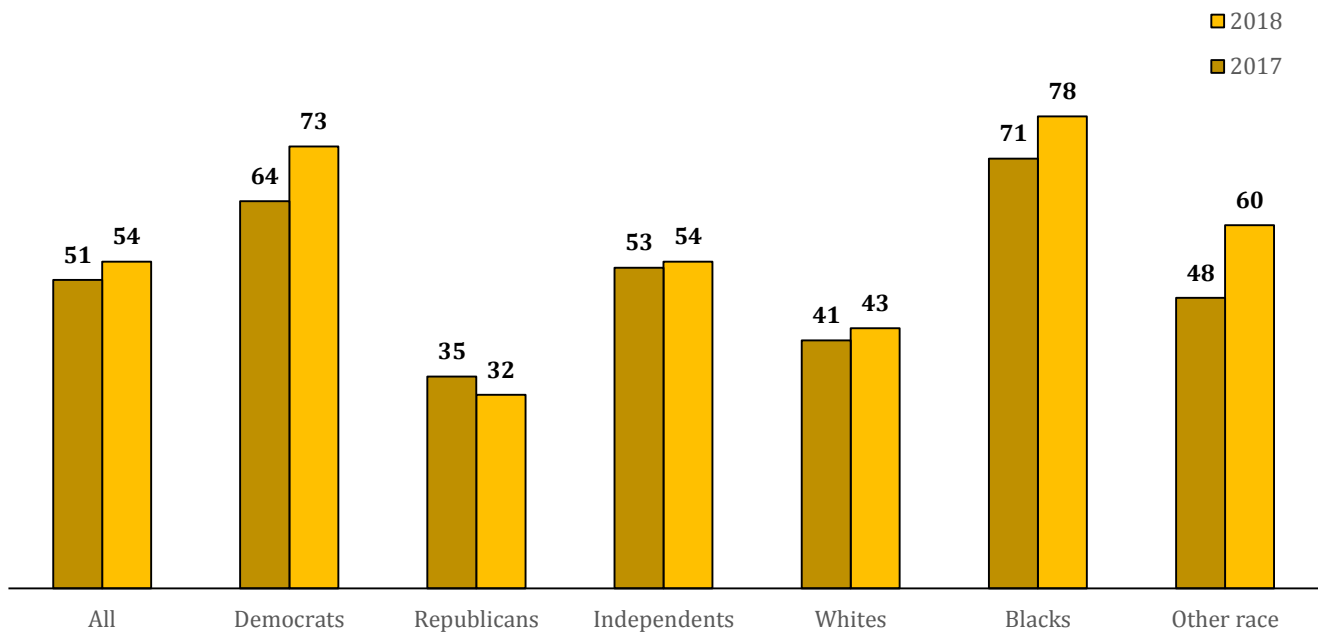
Percent who support letting judges have the flexibility to set sentences instead of requiring mandatory minimums



SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Figure 5.3: Rising share of non-whites do not think state's criminal justice system is fair

Percent who disagree with statement "Louisiana's current criminal justice system is fair."



SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Little change in perceptions about amount of crime in state

Public perceptions of crime remain stable. In 2017, 65 percent of state residents said crime in Louisiana had increased over the previous five years. Today, 68 percent say so. These perceptions have held steady across racial and partisan groups (Figure 5.4).

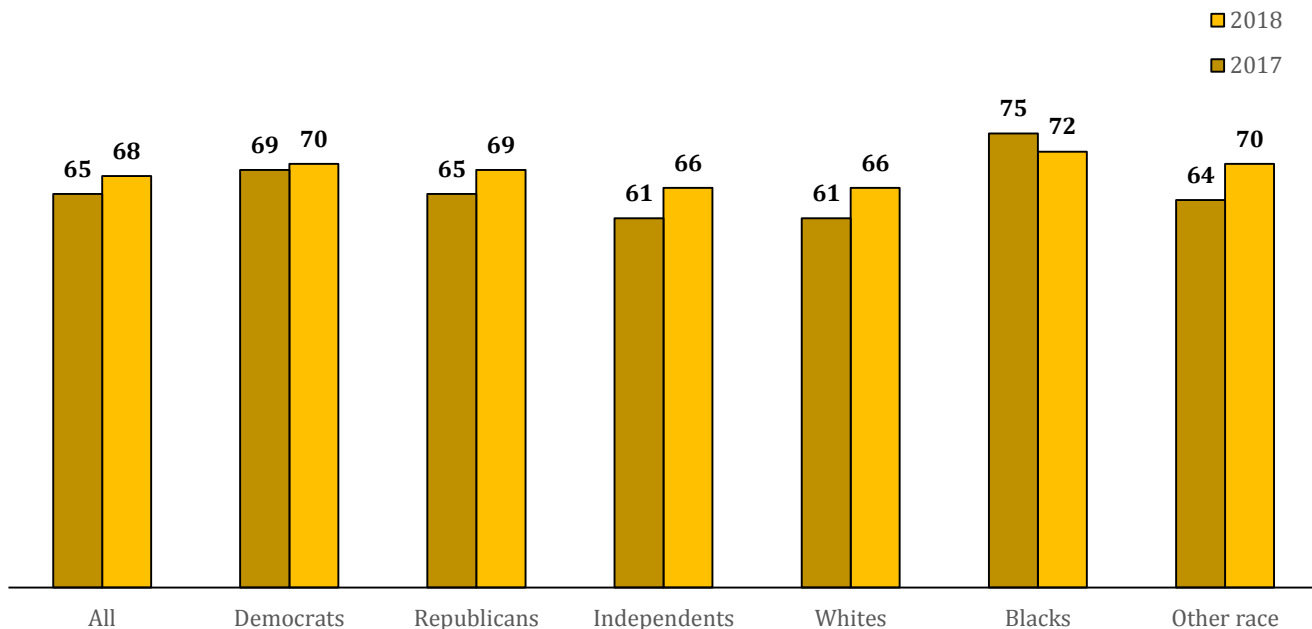
Majority of Louisiana residents favor death penalty

The death penalty has a net favorability rating of +24 among Louisiana residents (58 percent favor / 34 percent oppose), which is much higher than in the most recent national polling data available. In order to make this comparison, the *2018 Louisiana Survey* includes the same question about the death penalty used by the Pew Research Center and Gallup: “Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?” In the most recent polling data about

the death penalty from the Pew Research Center, from mid-2016, 49 percent of Americans favor the death penalty and 42 percent oppose (net favorability of +7). In the 2017 Gallup data, 55 percent of Americans favor the death penalty and 41 percent oppose (net favorability of +14). Democrats in Louisiana tend to oppose the death penalty (42 percent favor / 53 percent oppose), while Republicans (74 percent favor / 19 percent oppose) and independents (61 percent favor / 31 percent oppose) tend to favor it.

Figure 5.4: Perceptions of crime largely hold steady

Percent who say amount of crime in Louisiana has increased in past five years



SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

6. Medicaid Expansion

Medicaid expansion remains popular, but few aware of it

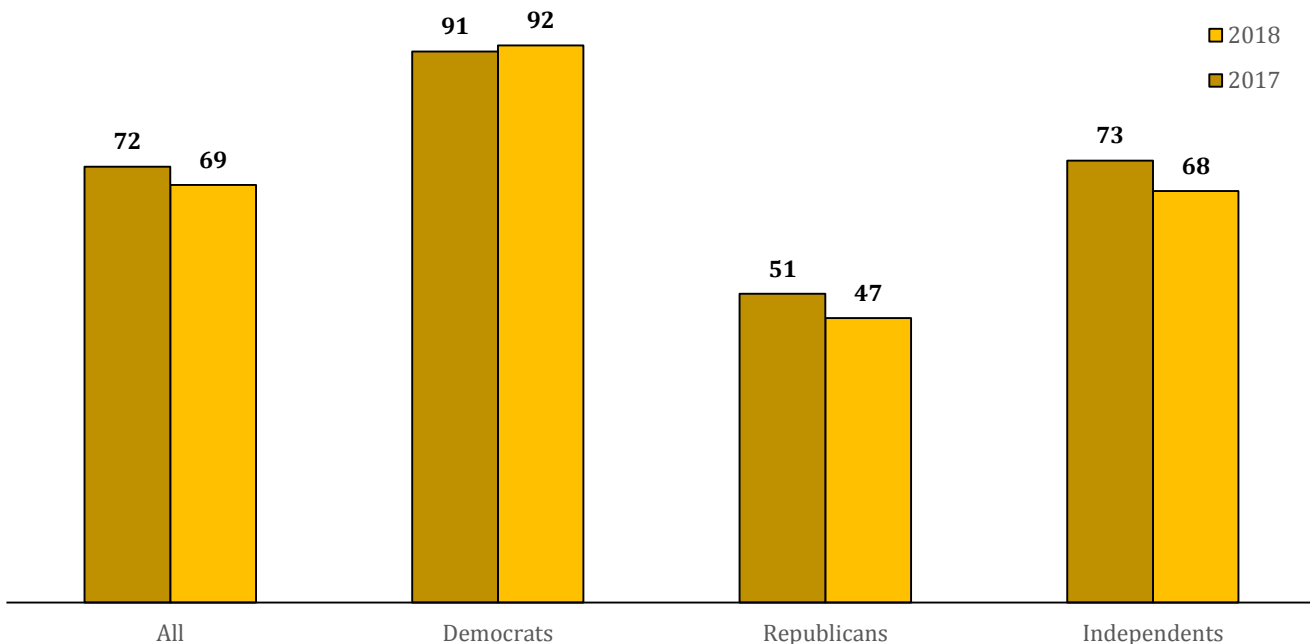
Most Louisiana residents continue to approve of the state's expansion of the Medicaid program: 69 percent approve of the expansion and 24 percent disapprove (Figure 6.1). Approval among the public as a whole as well as among partisans remain about where it was in 2017. Democrats overwhelmingly approve of the expansion (92 percent), as do a majority of independents (68 percent). Republicans remain divided over Medicaid expansion with 47 percent approval and 46 percent disapproval.

Despite the popularity of Medicaid expansion, the policy impact of the expansion for health care coverage and the political payoff for its supporters may be truncated by a lack of public awareness. Relatively few Louisiana residents (35 percent) even know the state has expanded

its Medicaid program. While two-thirds of survey respondents were asked about their approval of the Medicaid expansion, the other third was instead asked a factual question about whether the state had expanded its program: "As you may know, Medicaid is a program to provide health coverage mostly to low-income individuals. In recent years, several states throughout the country have expanded their Medicaid programs to provide health care coverage to more people. From what you may have heard, has Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program in recent years or are you not sure?" A majority (56 percent) said they were unsure, and another eight percent incorrectly believe the state has not expanded its Medicaid program. This lack of awareness is relatively constant across household income, indicating that even those individuals who are most likely to be eligible for the program are not aware of it. Among those in the bottom half of the distribution of household income in the state, only about one-third of individuals know Louisiana has expanded its Medicaid program.

Figure 6.1: Medicaid expansion remains popular in Louisiana, but not among Republicans

Percent who say they approve of state expanding its Medicaid program



SOURCE: 2017 & 2018 Louisiana Surveys

Bipartisan support for work requirements and copayments

Most Louisiana residents support adding work requirements and copays to the state's Medicaid program. Among the total sample, 79 percent support work requirements and just 17 percent oppose them. Work requirements are popular among Democrats (57 percent support) and especially so among Republicans (90 percent).

For copays, 69 percent support changing the program to require people covered by the state's Medicaid program to pay a share of the costs for some of the health services they receive. As with work requirements, this proposal also has bipartisan support with 56 percent of Democrats and 84 percent Republicans supporting the change.

7. Trust in Media

Most state residents say local news organizations keep them informed about state politics

About three-fourths of Louisiana residents say that *local* news organizations keep them very well informed (25 percent) or fairly well informed (49 percent) about state politics (Figure 7.1). This is somewhat higher than the share saying *national* media keep them very well informed (25 percent) or fairly well informed (41 percent) about national politics.

More Democrats than Republicans say that local and national media keep them informed about politics. Eighty-five percent of Democrats say local media keep them very well or fairly well informed about state politics, and 83 percent say national news organizations keep them informed about national politics. Among Republicans, 67 percent say local news organizations keep them informed about state politics, and 69 percent say national media keep them informed about national politics.

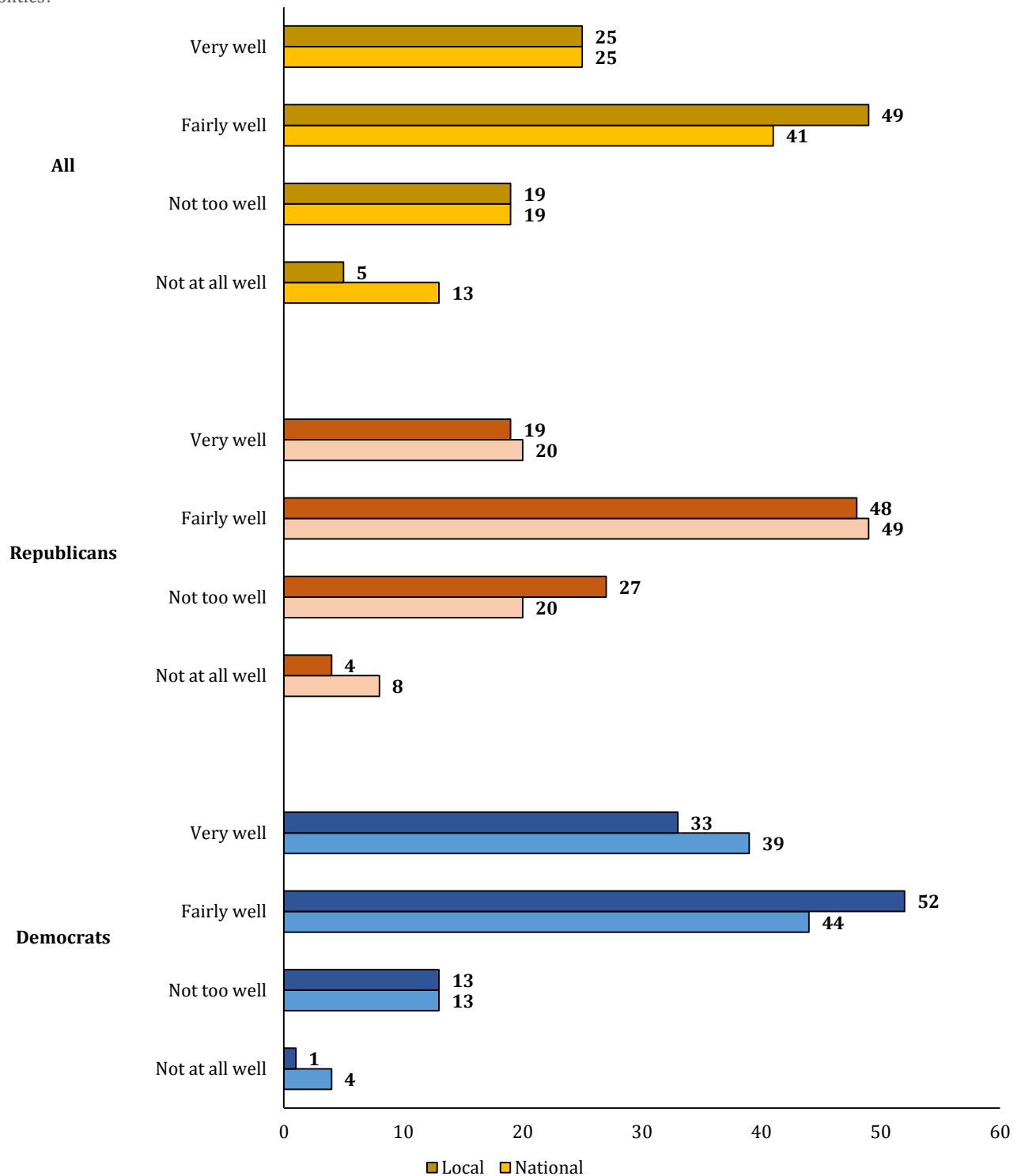
Local news is trusted more than national news

When it comes to trusting information from news organizations, more Louisiana residents trust local media than national media. Overall, 78 percent trust the information they get from local news organizations a lot or some, but only 57 percent trust the information they get from national news organizations (Figure 7.2).

The trust gap between local and national media is especially large among Republicans: 76 percent have a lot of trust or some trust in the information they get from local news organizations, but only 47 percent trust the information they get from national news organizations. The local versus national media trust gap is smaller for Democrats, but even among this group local media is seen as more trustworthy: 89 percent have at least some trust in the information they get from local media and 78 percent have at least some trust in the information they get from national media.

Figure 7.1: Most think media keep them very well or fairly well informed

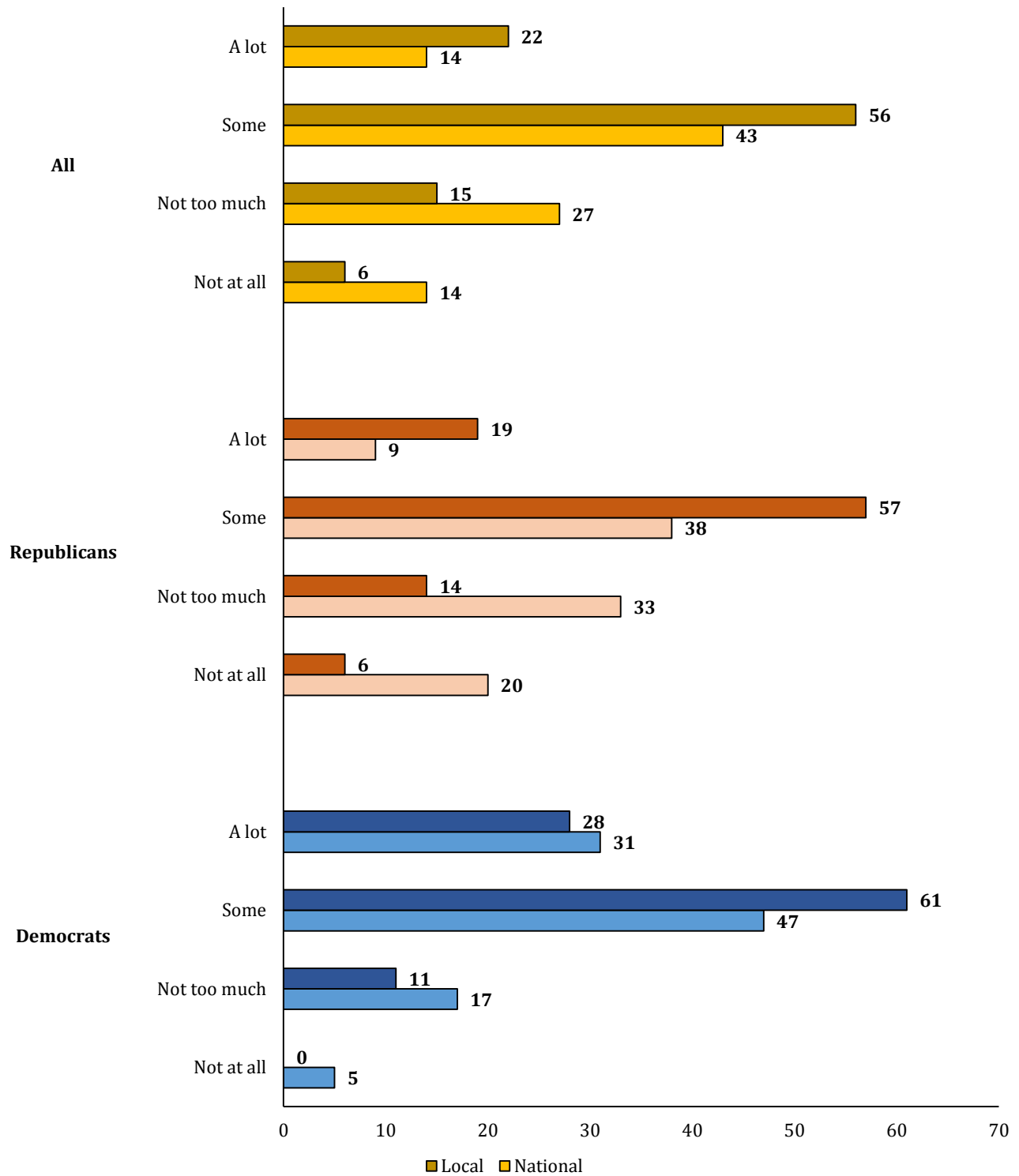
How well do [local/national] news media keep you informed of the most important stories of the day about [state/national] politics?



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Figure 7.2: Local media trusted more than national media

How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from [local/national] news organizations?



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Most think local news organizations tend to favor one side

Despite trusting the information they get from local media more than the information they get from national media, many Louisiana residents believe there is a bias in local news. Sixty percent say local media tend to favor one side, and 36 percent say local media deal fairly with all sides (Figure 7.3). Even so, the share who believe local media report the news in a biased way is much smaller than the share who believe the national media is biased (79 percent).

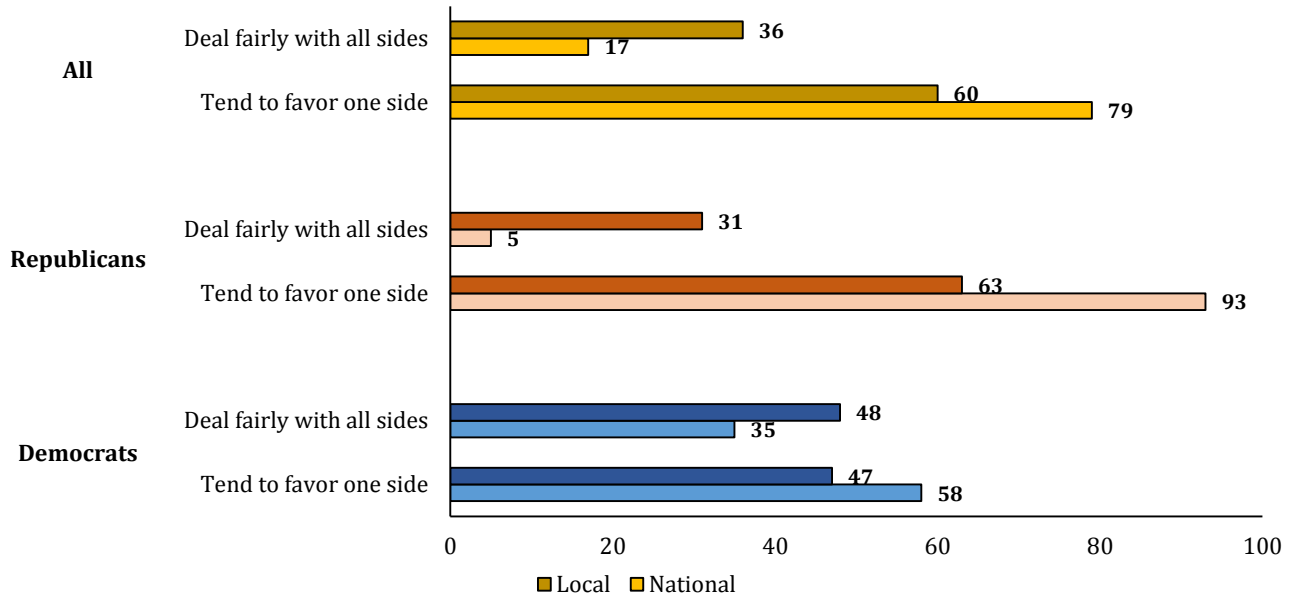
A larger share of Republicans (63 percent) than Democrats (47 percent) believe there is a bias in local news. Both parties think there is bias in national news, but Republicans are especially likely (93 percent) to say national news organizations tend to favor one side.

Local media seen as more accurate than national media

Most Louisiana residents (56 percent) think that local news organizations in general get the facts straight (Figure 7.4). This share is much higher than the share who think national news organizations generally get the facts straight (32 percent). Among Democrats, the perceived accuracy of news is about the same for local media and national media – with 64 percent and 62 percent, respectively, saying they generally get the facts straight. Republicans, however, see a big difference in the accuracy of local reporting versus national reporting. A majority of Republicans (59 percent) say local news organizations get the facts straight, but 81 percent say that national news organizations are often inaccurate.

Figure 7.3: Most see bias in local media, but not as much as for national media

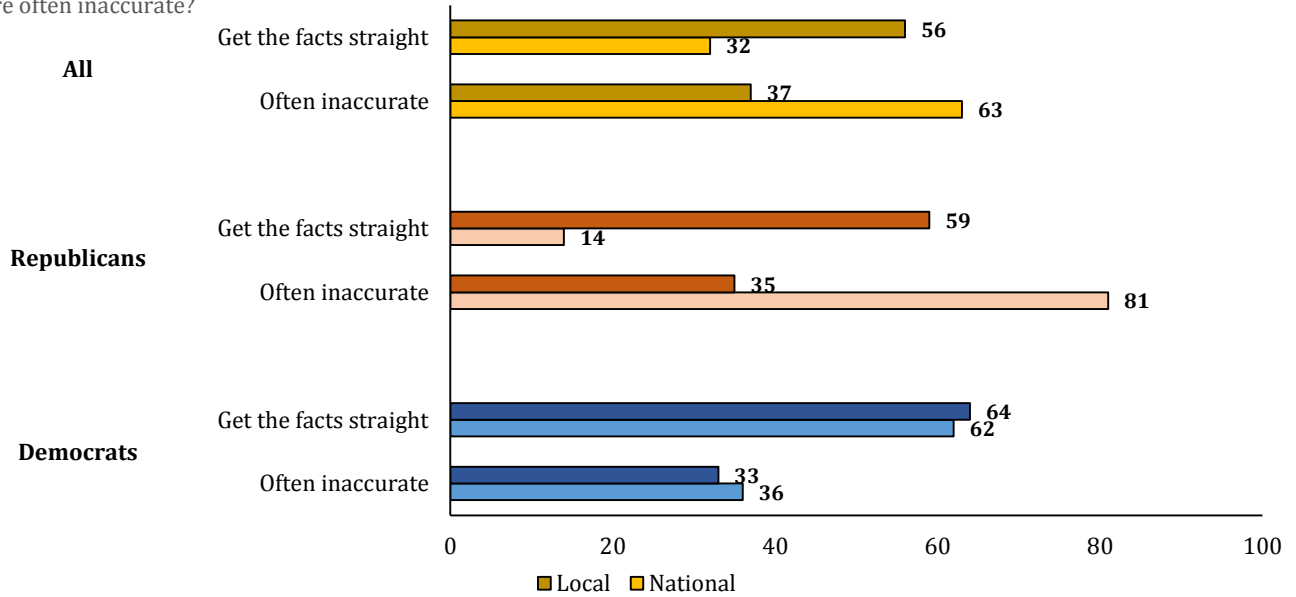
Do you think [local/national] news organizations deal fairly with all sides, or do they tend to favor one side?



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Figure 7.4: Most say local media get the facts straight but national media often inaccurate

In general, do you think [local/national] news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?



SOURCE: 2018 Louisiana Survey

Survey Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted among a statewide sample of 852 adults (18 years of age or older) living in Louisiana. The survey was conducted by interviewers at Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab. The sample includes 326 respondents interviewed via landline telephone and 526 respondents interviewed on a cellphone, including 344 who do not have a landline telephone. The design of the landline sample ensures representation of both listed and unlisted numbers by use of random digit dialing. The cell phone sample is randomly drawn from known, available phone number banks dedicated to wireless service. Both samples, landline and cellphone, were provided by Marketing Systems Group.

The combined landline and cell phone sample is weighted using an iterative procedure that matches race, education, household income, gender, and age to known profiles for the adult population of Louisiana found in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2016 one-year estimates. The sample is also weighted for population density by parish. Weighting cannot eliminate every source of nonresponse bias. However, proper administration of random sampling combined with accepted weighting techniques has a strong record of yielding unbiased results.

The sample has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, as accounted for through the margin of error, readers should recognize that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. As often as possible, the *Louisiana Survey* follows the wording of relevant questions repeatedly used by reputable public opinion research institutions and projects, such as the Pew Research Center, Gallup Inc., and the American National Election Studies.

Interviews for this survey were conducted from January 26 to March 3, 2018. Because data collection overlaps with a special session of the Louisiana Legislature from February 19 to March 3, 2018, responses to questions included in this report were analyzed for any differences between the pre-session interviews and interviews conducted during the session, controlling for mode of interview. With one exception, there is no evidence for differences by date of interview. The exceptions include: Democrats interviewed after the start of the special session rate the Democratic Party in Louisiana as slightly more liberal on average by about half a point on the ideology scale (there is no similar difference among Republicans or independents); belief that the state sales tax is "too high" drops 17 points during the special session, support for taxes to fund health care increase seven points, and support for taxes to fund prisons and incarceration increase eight points; during the special legislative session, the share saying government should do more to solve problems rose by ten percentage points while the share saying it is already doing too many things fell by nine percentage points; and the belief that recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault made against prominent men in entertainment, politics, and the media mainly reflect widespread problems in society rather than isolated incidents of individual misconduct fell by 13 points among men and 17 points among Democrats during this period.

The *2018 Louisiana Survey* has a response rate of 11 percent. This response rate is the percentage of eligible residential households or personal cell phones in the sample for which an interview is completed. The rate is calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's method for Response Rate 3 as published in their Standard Definitions. Response rates for telephones have been on decline for several decades and frequently fall in the single digits even among the very best survey research

organizations. The response rate for this survey is within the typical range for reputable live-interviewer telephone survey firms.

Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab, a division of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs, designed the survey questionnaire and sampling strategy, computed the survey weights, and conducted all statistical analysis.

Question Wording & Toplines

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, results are for the total sample. Not all respondents were asked each question, and questions asked to a subset of respondents are labelled accordingly. For these questions, percentages are only for those respondents who were asked the particular question. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Q1.

To begin with, would you say things are generally going in the right direction, or do you think things are going in the wrong direction here in Louisiana?

Right direction	39
Wrong direction	50
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	12

Q2. [OPEN-ENDED QUESTION]

In your opinion, what do you think is the single most important problem facing the state of Louisiana?

VERBATIM RESPONSES RECORDED AND CODED INTO CATEGORIES (SEE FIGURE 1.5)

Q3.

How much confidence would you say you have in state government to effectively address this problem? Would you say you are very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident	6
Somewhat confident	31
Not very confident	34
Not at all confident	27
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q4.

We are also interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you are better off financially, worse off, or about the same as you were a year ago?

Better	22
Same	59
Worse	17
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q5.

Now thinking about the economy in Louisiana as a whole, would you say that over the past year the state's economy has gotten better, stayed the same or gotten worse?

Better	20
Same	37
Worse	38
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q6A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q6A OR Q6B]

Thinking now about job opportunities where you live, would you say there are plenty of jobs available in your community or are jobs difficult to find?

Plenty available	31
Difficult to find	60
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

Q6B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q6A OR Q6B]

Thinking now about good job opportunities where you live, would you say there are plenty of good jobs available in your community or are jobs difficult to find?

Plenty available	28
Difficult to find	67
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q7A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q7A-Q9A OR TO Q7B-Q9B]

Thinking about the state sales tax, would you say the state sales tax in Louisiana is higher, lower, or about the same as what it was back in January 2016 about two years ago?

Higher	54
Lower	1
About the same	40
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	5

Q8A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q7A-Q9A OR TO Q7B-Q9B]

Now, thinking about combined state and local sales taxes in Louisiana compared to other states, do you think the combined state and local sales taxes in Louisiana are higher than in most other states, lower than in most other states, or about the same as in most other states?

Higher	53
Lower	18
About the same	19
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

Q9A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q7A-Q9A OR TO Q7B-Q9B]

Would you say that the state sales tax is too high and should be reduced, too low and should be increased, or just about right?

Too high and should be reduced	54
Too low and should be increased	9
Just about right	34
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q7B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q7A-Q9A OR TO Q7B-Q9B]

Thinking about state income taxes on individuals and households, would you say state income taxes on individuals and households in Louisiana are higher, lower, or about the same as what they were back in January 2016 about two years ago?

Higher	39
Lower	5
About the same	39
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	17

Q8B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q7A-Q9A OR TO Q7B-Q9B]

Now, thinking about state income taxes on individuals and households in Louisiana compared to other states, do you think state income taxes on individuals and households in Louisiana are higher than in most other states, lower than in most other states, or about the same as in most other states?

Higher	38
Lower	27
About the same	17
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	18

Q9B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q7A-Q9A OR TO Q7B-Q9B]

Would you say that state income taxes on individuals and households are too high and should be reduced, too low and should be increased, or just about right?

Too high and should be reduced	49
Too low and should be increased	14
Just about right	30
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q10.

As you may know, some state governments are facing budget problems that have forced them to raise taxes or reduce spending. What about in Louisiana? From what you have heard, is Louisiana's state government currently facing budget problems or not? **[IF RESPONDENT SAYS "It depends," PROBE ONCE: Just your impression, is Louisiana's state government facing budget problems or not?]**

Yes	87
No	8
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q11. [ASK IF Q10 IS 'Yes']

Are these budget problems very serious, fairly serious, or not too serious?

Very serious	68
Fairly serious	26
Not too serious	5
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Yes & very serious	59
Yes & fairly serious	23
Yes & not too serious	4
No	8
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

INTRO FOR Q12-Q16.

As you may know, two years ago, Louisiana temporarily increased its state sales tax from four percent to five percent and temporarily raised taxes on some businesses by lowering certain exemptions. State government faces a billion dollar shortfall in its budget when those temporary tax increases expire later this year. We would like to ask you about various proposals that have been made to deal with Louisiana's budget shortfall. First...

Q12. [ORDER OF Q12-Q15 RANDOMIZED]

Would you support or oppose lowering state personal income tax rates in exchange for limiting some of the deductions a taxpayer can claim on their state income taxes, which would increase the total amount of state revenue coming from the state income tax?

Support	56
Oppose	32
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	12

Q13. [ORDER OF Q12-Q15 RANDOMIZED]

Would you support or oppose lowering the state sales tax rate back down to four percent but broaden the tax to apply to certain kinds of purchases that are not currently charged a state sales tax, such as cable television, haircuts, and lawn care?

Support	46
Oppose	47
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q14. [ORDER OF Q12-Q15 RANDOMIZED]

Would you support or oppose continuing the state sales tax increase, which would keep the rate at five percent instead of letting it drop back down to four percent?

Support	47
Oppose	49
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q15. [ORDER OF Q12-Q15 RANDOMIZED]

In order to raise state tax revenue, would you support or oppose continuing the reductions to certain business tax exemptions?

Support	53
Oppose	38
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

Q16.

Finally, would you support or oppose letting the temporary tax increases expire and handle the billion dollar budget shortfall by cutting spending only?

Support	52
Oppose	37
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	11

INTRO FOR Q17-Q28.

Now I'm going to read you some different areas where Louisiana spends tax dollars. As I read each one, tell me if you would like to see state spending in this area increased, decreased, or kept the same.

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF AREAS.]

Q17.

What about spending for primary and secondary education? Should this be increased, decreased, or kept the same?

Increased	61
Decreased	5
Kept the same	33
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q18A. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Increased" FOR Q17]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, increasing spending above current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for primary and secondary education?

Support	81
Oppose	17
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q18B. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Kept the same" FOR Q17]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, keeping spending at current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep spending for primary and secondary education at this level?

Support	41
Oppose	54
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	49
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	10
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Decrease spending	5
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	14
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	18
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	2
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q19.

What about spending for higher education? Should this be increased, decreased, or kept the same?

Increased	59
Decreased	12
Kept the same	28
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q20A. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Increased" FOR Q19]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, increasing spending above current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for higher education?

Support	80
Oppose	18
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q20B. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Kept the same" FOR Q19]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, keeping spending at current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep spending for higher education at this level?

Support	39
Oppose	60
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	47
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	11
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Decrease spending	12
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	11
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	17
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	0
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q21.

What about spending for health care? Should this be increased, decreased, or kept the same?

Increased	45
Decreased	16
Kept the same	35
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q22A. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Increased" FOR Q21]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, increasing spending above current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for health care?

Support	77
Oppose	21
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q22B. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Kept the same" FOR Q21]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, keeping spending at current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep spending for health care at this level?

Support	43
Oppose	53
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	35
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	9
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Decrease spending	16
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	15
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	19
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q23.

What about spending for roads, bridges and highways? Should this be increased, decreased, or kept the same?

Increased	59
Decreased	8
Kept the same	32
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q24A. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Increased" FOR Q23]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, increasing spending above current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for roads, bridges and highways?

Support	76
Oppose	23
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q24B. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Kept the same" FOR Q23]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, keeping spending at current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep spending for roads, bridges and highways at this level?

Support	36
Oppose	60
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	45
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	13
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Decrease spending	8
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	12
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	19
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q25.

What about spending for prisons and incarceration? Should this be increased, decreased, or kept the same?

Increased	10
Decreased	44
Kept the same	41
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q26A. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Increased" FOR Q25]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, increasing spending above current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for prisons and incarceration?

Support	63
Oppose	30
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q26B. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Kept the same" FOR Q25]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, keeping spending at current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep spending for prisons and incarceration at this level?

Support	30
Oppose	66
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	6
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	3
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Decrease spending	44
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	12
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	27
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	2
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q27.

What about spending for welfare, food stamps and other public assistance programs? Should this be increased, decreased, or kept the same?

Increased	18
Decreased	39
Kept the same	39
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q28A. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Increased" FOR Q27]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, increasing spending above current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for welfare, food stamps and other public assistance programs?

Support	78
Oppose	20
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q28B. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Kept the same" FOR Q27]

Keeping in mind that, because the state faces a budget shortfall, keeping spending at current levels could require higher taxes, would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep spending for welfare, food stamps and other public assistance programs at this level?

Support	46
Oppose	51
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	14
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	4
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	0
Decrease spending	39
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	18
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	20
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q29.

Now, thinking about the taxes you and your household pay to the state of Louisiana, do you think you're paying more than your fair share, less than your fair share, or about the right amount?

More than your fair share	36
Less than your fair share	3
About the right amount	56
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q30.

Now, we'd like your opinions on how efficiently state government uses tax money. Could state government spend less and still provide the same level of services?

Yes, could spend less	69
No, could not spend less	25
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q31. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Yes" FOR Q30]

Approximately how much - as a percentage of the state budget - would you estimate that state government could cut its spending without having to reduce services? Your best guess is fine.

Mean response:	20%
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	20

TOTAL SAMPLE [COUNTING "No" RESPONSE TO Q30 AS ZERO PERCENT]:

Mean response:	14%
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	20

Q32.

Next, we would like to know what you think about a proposal to rewrite the state's constitution. Supporters of the proposal say that too many rules that control government spending and tax policy are locked into the current constitution, making it harder for lawmakers to deal with budget shortfalls. Opponents say these rules protect important kinds of spending and other policies from interference by lawmakers. What about you? Would you support or oppose calling a convention to rewrite the state's constitution?

Support	46
Oppose	44
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	10

Q33. [RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Support" FOR Q32 ARE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q33, Q34, Q35 OR Q36]

Would you support or oppose keeping the protection for elementary and secondary education spending in the state constitution?

Support	95
Oppose	4
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q34. [RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Support" FOR Q32 ARE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q33, Q34, Q35 OR Q36]

Would you support or oppose keeping the protection for coastal protection spending in the state constitution?

Support	85
Oppose	7
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	8

Q35. [RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Support" FOR Q32 ARE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q33, Q34, Q35 OR Q36]

Would you support or oppose keeping the protection for transportation infrastructure spending in the state constitution?

Support	77
Oppose	18
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q36. [RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Support" FOR Q32 ARE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q33, Q34, Q35 OR Q36]

Would you support or oppose keeping the protection for the homestead exemption, which reduces the property taxes homeowners pay, in the state constitution?

Support	79
Oppose	12
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

Q37A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q37A OR Q37B]

On another topic, thinking about elected officials in state government who share your positions on the most important issues facing Louisiana. Should they work with elected officials they disagree with, even if it results in some policies you don't like, or should they stand up for their positions, even if that means little gets done in state government?

They should work with elected officials they disagree with	60
They should stand up for their positions	32
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	8

Q37B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q37A OR Q37B]

On another topic, thinking about elected officials in state government who share your positions on the most important issues facing Louisiana. Should they work with elected officials they disagree with, even if it results in some policies you don't like, or should they stand up for their positions, even if that keeps government from solving the problems facing the state?

They should work with elected officials they disagree with	61
They should stand up for their positions	32
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q38.

Do you think the state is more politically divided these days than in the past, or not?

Yes, it is more politically divided	73
No, it is not more divided	22
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q39.

This year, do you think Republicans and Democrats in state government will work together to solve problems or do you think they will bicker and oppose one another even if it keeps them from solving problems?

Work together	18
Bicker and oppose one another	79
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q40. [ORDER OF Q40 AND Q41 RANDOMIZED]

Would you say that the Democratic Party in Louisiana is very liberal, liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, conservative, or very conservative?

Very liberal	16
Liberal	20
Somewhat liberal	15
Moderate	21
Somewhat conservative	6
Conservative	8
Very conservative	4
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

Q41. [ORDER OF Q40 AND Q41 RANDOMIZED]

Would you say that the Republican Party in Louisiana is very liberal, liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, conservative, or very conservative?

Very liberal	4
Liberal	6
Somewhat liberal	6
Moderate	14
Somewhat conservative	17
Conservative	21
Very conservative	23
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

Q42.

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the wisdom of the people of Louisiana when it comes to making political decisions? A very great deal, a good deal, not very much, or none at all?

Very great deal	8
Good deal	23
Not very much	51
None at all	15
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q43.

How much of the time do you think you can trust the government of Louisiana to do what is right? Just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or never?

Just about always	3
Most of the time	19
Only some of the time	64
Never	14
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q44.

All in all, how good a job does the state government do running its programs? An excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job?

Excellent job	2
Good job	18
Only a fair job	57
Poor job	21
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	2

INTRO FOR Q45-Q50.

I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to your own views - even if neither is exactly right.

Q45. [ORDER OF Q45-Q50 RANDOMIZED]

What about... **[IF NECESSARY: "Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?"]**

State government in Louisiana is almost always wasteful and inefficient	62
State government in Louisiana often does a better job than people give it credit for	34
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q46. [ORDER OF Q45-Q50 RANDOMIZED]

What about... **[IF NECESSARY: "Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?"]**

State government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest	44
State government regulation of business usually does more harm than good	51
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q47. [ORDER OF Q45-Q50 RANDOMIZED]

What about... **[IF NECESSARY: "Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?"]**

The state government should do more to help needy people in Louisiana, even if it means spending more money	50
The state government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy	47
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q48. [ORDER OF Q45-Q50 RANDOMIZED]

What about... **[IF NECESSARY: "Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?"]**

Ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Louisiana if they are willing to make the effort	51
There's not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Louisiana	47
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q49. [ORDER OF Q45-Q50 RANDOMIZED]

What about... [IF NECESSARY: "Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?"]

Most elected officials in Louisiana care what people like me think	28
Most elected officials in Louisiana don't care what people like me think	70
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q50. [ORDER OF Q45-Q50 RANDOMIZED]

What about... [IF NECESSARY: "Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?"]

Government in Louisiana should do more to solve problems	57
Government in Louisiana is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals	40
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q51.

How much discrimination would you say there is in our society today against women?

A lot	30
Some	40
Only a little	22
None at all	7
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	1

Q52.

Which of these two statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

This country has made the changes needed to give men and women equality in the workplace	22
This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace	75
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q53.

Which of these two statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone	37
There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men	61
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q54.

Which comes closer to your view about recent allegations of sexual harassment and assault against prominent men in entertainment, politics and the media?

They are mainly isolated incidents of individual misconduct	28
They mainly reflect widespread problems in society	66
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q55.

If an elected official has been accused of sexual harassment or sexual assault by multiple people, do you think that elected official should resign, or not?

Yes, should resign	72
No, should not resign	23
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

[RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO THE LOCAL MEDIA BATTERY (VERSIONS A) OR TO THE NATIONAL MEDIA BATTERY (VERSIONS B)]

Q56A.

Regardless of how closely you follow news, how well do local news media keep you informed of the most important stories of the day about state politics?

Very well	25
Fairly well	49
Not too well	19
Not at all well	5
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	2

Q56B.

Regardless of how closely you follow news, how well do national news media keep you informed of the most important stories of the day about national politics?

Very well	25
Fairly well	41
Not too well	19
Not at all well	13
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q57A.

How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from local news organizations?

A lot	22
Some	56
Not too much	15
Not at all	6
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q57B.

How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from national news organizations?

A lot	14
Some	43
Not too much	27
Not at all	14
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q58A.

In presenting the news dealing with political and social issues, do you think that local news organizations deal fairly with all sides, or do they tend to favor one side?

Deal fairly with all sides	36
Tend to favor one side	60
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q58B.

In presenting the news dealing with political and social issues, do you think that national news organizations deal fairly with all sides, or do they tend to favor one side?

Deal fairly with all sides	17
Tend to favor one side	79
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q59A.

In general, do you think local news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?

Get the facts straight	56
Often inaccurate	37
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	7

Q59B.

In general, do you think national news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?

Get the facts straight	32
Often inaccurate	63
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q60.

Would you say that the amount of crime in Louisiana has increased in the past five years, decreased, or stayed about the same?

Increased	68
Decreased	6
Stayed about the same	24
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	2

Q61.

Now we would like to ask you about criminal justice in Louisiana. Please tell me whether you agree, disagree, or neither agree nor disagree with the following statement: "Louisiana's current criminal justice system is fair"?

Agree	32
Disagree	54
Neither	10
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q62.

Last year, Louisiana made several changes to its criminal justice system such as shortening prison sentences for some crimes. Do you approve or disapprove of these changes?

Approve	61
Disapprove	30
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

Q63.

As you may know, mandatory minimum sentences require those convicted of certain crimes to serve a certain length of time in prison. Some people say that instead of mandatory minimums, judges should have the flexibility to determine sentences based on the facts of each case. Do you support or oppose letting judges having the flexibility to set sentences?

Support	64
Oppose	31
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q64.

Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

Favor	58
Oppose	34
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	7

Q65. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q65 OR Q66]

Now I have a few questions about health care. As you may know, Medicaid is a program to provide health coverage mostly to low-income individuals. Two years ago, Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program to provide health care coverage to more people. Do you approve or disapprove of the state expanding its Medicaid program?

Approve	69
Disapprove	26
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q66. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q65 OR Q66]

Now I have a question about health care. As you may know, Medicaid is a program to provide health coverage mostly to low-income individuals. In recent years, several states throughout the country have expanded their Medicaid programs to provide health care coverage to more people. From what you may have heard, has Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program in recent years or are you not sure?

Yes, has expanded	35
No, has not expanded	8
Unsure	56
Refused [VOL.]	0

Q67. [RESPONDENTS ASSIGNED TO Q65 ARE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q67 OR Q68]

Do you support or oppose requiring adults without disabilities to work, or be looking for work, in order to get health coverage through Medicaid?

Support	79
Oppose	17
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q68. [RESPONDENTS ASSIGNED TO Q65 ARE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q67 OR Q68]

Do you support or oppose requiring people covered by the state's Medicaid program to pay a share of the costs for some of the health services they receive?

Support	69
Oppose	25
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q69. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO ANSWER Q69-Q71 BEFORE Q72-Q73 OR Q72-Q73 BEFORE Q69-71]

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, independent, or what? [IF Q72-Q73 ASKED BEFORE Q69, THE FOLLOWING WORDING USED INSTEAD: Generally speaking, regardless of how you are registered, do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, independent, or what?]

Democrat	29
Republican	25
Independent	34
Something else	8
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q70. [ASK IF Q69 IS 'Democrat' OR 'Republican']

Would you consider yourself a strong or a not so strong [INSERT RESPONSE TO Q69]?

Strong	74
Not so strong	25
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q71. [ASK IF Q69 IS NEITHER 'Democrat' NOR 'Republican']

Would you say, you lean to the Democratic Party or Republican Party, or would you say you don't lean to either party?

Democratic Party	16
Republican Party	25
Don't lean to either party	56
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q72.

Which of these statements best describes you: Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote at your current address; are you probably registered, but there is a chance your registration has lapsed; or are you not registered to vote at your current address?

Absolutely certain registered	81
Probably registered	4
Not registered	15
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	0

Q73.

Regardless how you generally consider yourself, what is the political party currently listed on your voter registration: The Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or neither party? **[IF Q72-Q73 ASKED BEFORE Q69, THE FOLLOWING WORDING USED INSTEAD: What is the political party currently listed on your voter registration: The Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or neither party?]**

Democratic Party	37
Republican Party	31
Neither party	26
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q74.

When it comes to politics, would you say you are very liberal, liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, conservative, or very conservative?

Very liberal	6
Liberal	10
Somewhat liberal	10
Moderate	24
Somewhat conservative	15
Conservative	21
Very conservative	11
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2