

THE LOUISIANA SURVEY 2017

LSU

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



Full Report



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

Dr. Michael Henderson
225-578-5149
mbhende1@lsu.edu

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.

For Further Information on the Reilly Center:

Jenee Slocum, Director
225-578-
jenee@lsu.edu

About the Louisiana Survey

The *2017 Louisiana Survey* is the sixteenth 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 *2017 Louisiana Survey*, this core is supplemented by measures of support for current fiscal reform proposals as well as potential changes to the state's gasoline tax; support for changing the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS); public opinion on criminal justice reform proposals; beliefs about gender discrimination and equal pay; attitudes toward Medicaid expansion and the federal Affordable Care Act; and opinions on a variety of social issues such as "religious-freedom" laws and rights of transgender individuals.

As part of an effort to ensure that the *Louisiana Survey* fulfills its public service mission, the research team drew upon expertise in public policy and polling from Louisiana State University faculty in the Public Administration Institute, the Department of Political Science, and the Manship School of Mass Communication. These faculty members 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.

Principal Authors

Michael Henderson
Assistant Professor, Manship School of Mass Communication
Research Director, Public Policy Research Lab

Belinda Davis
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
Associate Director, Public Policy Research Lab

Overview

State of the State

- For the first time since 2012, the share of Louisiana residents who think the state is heading in the right direction (46 percent) exceeds the share who think it is heading in the wrong direction (40 percent). The latter marks a 23 percentage point shift from a historically high pessimism about the direction of the state last year.
- For the second year in a row, the state government's budget challenges top the list of residents' concerns about the state. Nearly a quarter (23 percent) named budgetary issues as the most important problem facing Louisiana. The economy was named about as often (21 percent) as the budget. Education was named third most often (15 percent).
- The share saying they are "very" or "somewhat" confident in state government to effectively address important problems rose six points from 34 percent in 2016 to 40 percent in 2017. This marks only the second time since 2009 that confidence has risen from one year to the next.
- The public has a somewhat dim view of the state's economic health: 40 percent say the state's economy is worse off today than a year ago. A share of nearly the same size (39 percent) say the economy is about the same as it was a year ago, while just 16 percent say the state's economy has improved.
- Residents give the highest grades to the state's colleges and universities (58 percent A or B grades) and to the overall quality of life in Louisiana (55 percent A or B grades). The public assigns the lowest grades to public schools (39 percent D or F grades) and roads, bridges and highways (63 percent D or F grades).

State Finance

- The share of Louisiana residents who support *raising taxes* to fund elementary and secondary education (62 percent), higher education (59 percent), health care (53 percent), and transportation infrastructure (57 percent) far exceeds the share who favor cuts in these areas. The opposite is true for spending on prisons and incarceration as well as on welfare, food stamps and other public assistance programs.
- When it comes to dealing with budget shortfalls in general terms, 71 percent want lawmakers to take a combined approach of tax increases along with spending cuts. When pressed, however, these individuals tend to emphasize spending cuts more than tax increases – a result that stands in contrast to their fiscal preferences when asked about specific areas of spending.
- Most residents (54 percent) think the state's personal income tax is about right and nearly half (47 percent) think the state's sales tax is about right. The share who believe the sales tax is too high and needs to be reduced rose 12 percentage points from a year ago to 44 percent.

- Just 20 percent of residents know that Louisiana has a lower overall state and local tax burden than most other states. When informed of the relative tax burden, opinions that the state’s personal income tax and sales tax are too high drops by seven and nine points, respectively.
- Fifty percent of residents support a proposal to lower the state’s personal income tax rates while expanding the tax base by limiting deductions. In contrast, 57 percent oppose a proposal to lower the state’s sales tax rate while expanding the base by applying it to certain purchases not currently subject to the tax.
- There is strong, bipartisan support for raising the state’s tax on gasoline up to an additional 15 cents per gallon to fund transportation infrastructure. Most residents also support raising the tax by 20 cents per gallon, but Democrats and Republicans split over that proposal.
- Most residents oppose reducing the amount of a TOPS award, but they support other cost reductions such as raising academic requirements or imposing income caps.

Criminal Justice Reform

- Sixty-five percent of Louisiana residents believe that the amount of crime in the state has increased over the past five years. Perceptions that crime is on the rise have grown by ten percentage points since 2015, the last time this question was included in the *Louisiana Survey*.
- About half (51 percent) of Louisiana residents disagree with the statement, “Louisiana’s current criminal justice system is fair,” and 34 percent agree. There is a substantial difference between the responses of black and white residents of the state on the fairness of the criminal justice system.
- Large majorities favor three criminal justice reform proposals included in the *2017 Louisiana Survey*: Shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes (75 percent); more alternatives to prison – such as drug treatment or rehabilitation programs – for people convicted of non-violent offenses (86 percent); and abandoning mandatory minimum sentences in favor of more flexibility for judges to determine sentences (72 percent).
- Support for shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent offenses varies by the specific type of crime. Whereas 75 percent support shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes when no specific crime is named, support drops to 69 percent when asked about “non-violent crimes such as fraud or using illegal drugs” and 54 percent when asked about “non-violent crimes such as burglary or selling illegal drugs.”

Equal Pay

- There is very little opposition to the concept of equal pay among Louisiana residents. Approximately nine in ten (91 percent) of Louisiana residents support the *state requiring*

employers to pay men and women the same amount for the same work. This support is broadly shared across a number of demographic and political characteristics.

- About one of third (32 percent) of state residents say there is a lot of discrimination against women in our society today. A similar share say there is some discrimination, while 24 percent say there is only a little and 11 percent say there is none at all.
- Most Louisiana residents (71 percent) think the country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace. A majority (58 percent) think there are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men.
- Generally, gaps between Democrats and Republicans exceed gaps between men and women on views of discrimination and obstacles women face in society or the workplace. For example, majorities of both Republican women (54 percent) and Republican men (63 percent) think the obstacles that made it harder for women to get ahead are largely gone. Democratic women and Democratic men stand together on the other side – believing that significant obstacles remain – at 80 percent and 70 percent, respectively.

Health Care

- About three fourths of residents (72 percent) approve of expansion. Approval of the move extends across a number of demographic and political groups. Democrats (91 percent) and independents (73 percent) approve of Medicaid expansion. While Republicans are less enthusiastic about the policy, they lean toward approval (51 percent approval versus 45 percent disapproval).
- Overall, just 42 percent of state residents have a favorable opinion of the ACA. About half of the state (51 percent) has an unfavorable opinion of the federal health care law. There are large cleavages by race, household income and partisanship. Indeed, 76 percent of Democrats have a favorable opinion of the law, while 80 percent of Republicans have an unfavorable opinion.
- Opinion of the ACA is moving in a more favorable direction. The share of respondents with an unfavorable opinion of the ACA in 2017 is seven percentage points lower than it was in 2014 (58 percent), and the share with a favorable opinion is eleven percentage points higher than it was three years ago (31 percent). The shift in opinion has been especially pronounced among Democrats and independents.
- Being told that the ACA allows for Medicaid expansion in Louisiana does not, on average, improve opinion of the federal health care law. In contrast, describing the law as “Obamacare” does increase the share of unfavorable opinions of the ACA when the provision for Medicaid expansion is also mentioned.

Social Issues

- Like the United States as a whole, Louisianans are split about evenly between those who think businesses should be allowed to refuse services to same-sex couples on religious

grounds (47 percent) and those who believe these businesses should be required to provide their services (49 percent).

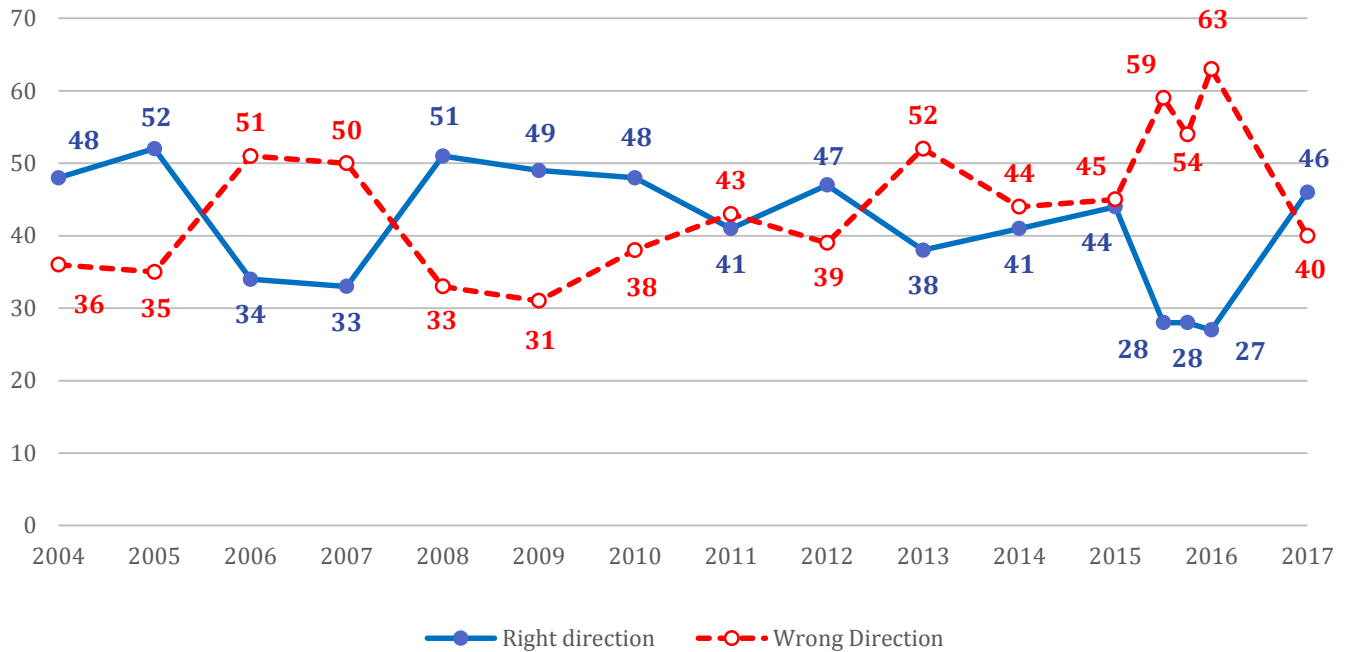
- A majority (56 percent) think transgender people should be required to use the bathroom of the gender they were born into, while only about a third think they should be allowed to use the restroom of the gender with which they currently identify.
- Approximately three-fourth (76 percent) support legal protection from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation. A similar share (70 percent) support protection from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of gender identity. In each case, Democrats are more supportive than Republicans, but majorities of both parties endorse these protections.

The *2017 Louisiana Survey* was administered over the telephone from February 23 to March 23, 2017, to both landline and cell phone respondents. The project includes a representative sample of 1,012 adult Louisiana residents. The total sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

1. State of the State

Figure 1.1: Rising Optimism about Direction of the State

Percent who say the state is heading in the _____



SOURCE: 2004 - 2017 Louisiana Survey, Summer 2015 Election Survey, and Fall 2015 Election Survey

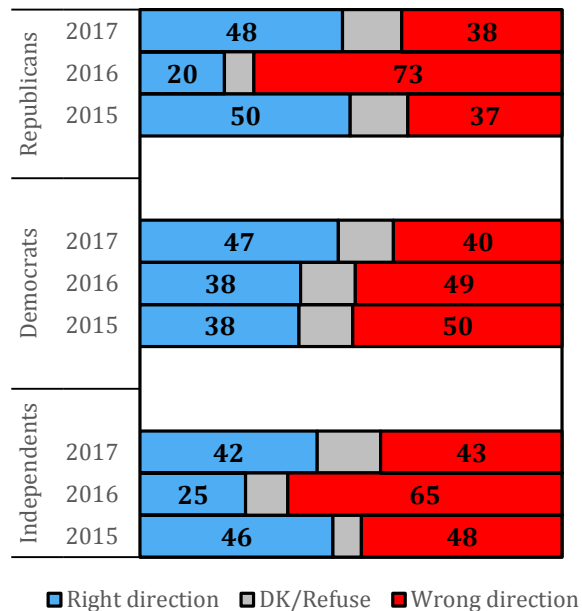
Optimism about Direction of the State is on the Rise

More residents think Louisiana is heading in the right direction than think it is heading in the wrong direction. The pattern marks a reversal in mood. From 2013 through 2016, the share who believed the state was heading in the wrong direction outnumbered those thinking it was heading in the right direction (figure 1.1). Indeed, this share hit a record high last year when 63 percent said the state was heading in the wrong direction. That share has fallen to 40 percent this year, while the share saying the state is heading in the right direction rose by nearly 20 points from 27 to 46 percent.

Republicans, in particular, are driving the mood change. Last year, just 20 percent of Republicans said the state was heading in the right direction and 73 percent said it was heading in the wrong direction. Now, 48 percent feel the state is

Figure 1.2: Republicans Show Most Change

Percent who say the state is heading in the _____



SOURCE: 2015 - 2017 Louisiana Survey

heading in the right direction and 38 percent say it is heading in the wrong direction (figure 1.2). Looking back over a three year period, the results stand out for last year – just three months after a Democrat was elected to the state’s top office. In contrast, the mood of Republicans in 2017 is strikingly similar to 2015.

Democrats show a more modest bump in optimism since last year – with a nine percentage point increase in the share saying the state is heading in the right direction, this is only about a third of the size of the Republican shift. Together, these shifts have erased the partisan gap in mood.

Independents have shifted in the same direction but to a smaller degree than Republicans. As a result, about equal shares of Independents say the state is heading in the wrong direction versus heading in the right direction.

Budget Remains Top Concern

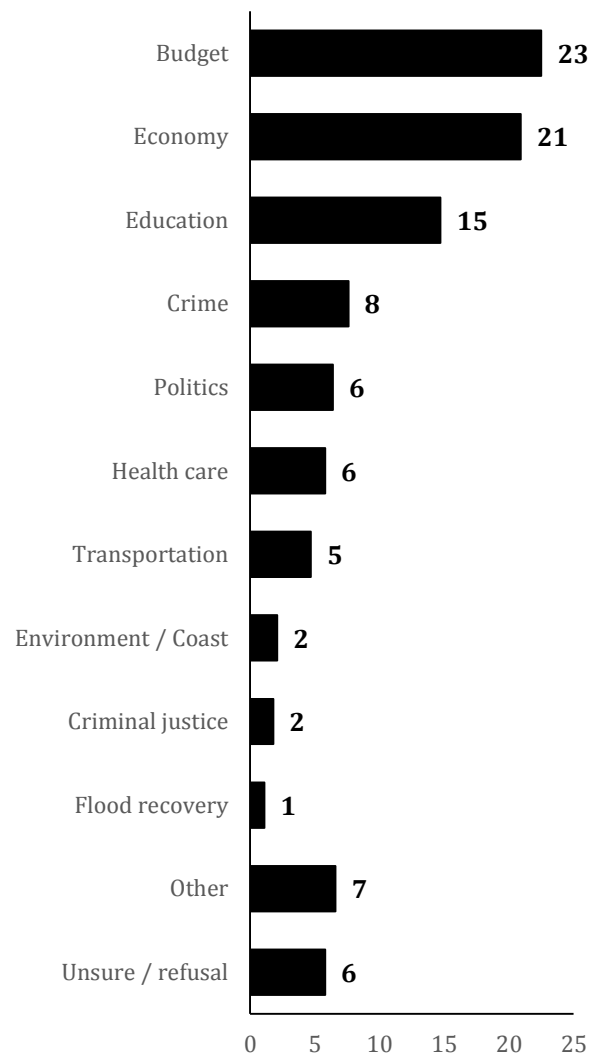
For the second year in a row, the state government’s budget challenges top the list of residents’ concerns about the state. Nearly a quarter (23 percent) named budgetary issues as the most important problem facing Louisiana (figure 1.3). The economy (including mentions of jobs, prices and income) was named about as often (21 percent). Education was the third most often named problem (15 percent).

Public confidence in state government to effectively deal with these challenges has crept up slightly. The share saying they are “very” or “somewhat” confident rose six points from 34 percent in 2016 to 40 percent in 2017 (figure 1.4).¹ This marks only the second time since 2009 that confidence has increased from one year to the next. Yet, despite the uptick, confidence remains well below the heights seen in the first

¹ The question specifically asks respondents about their confidence in state government to effectively address the problem they named in the previous question as the single most important problem facing the state. There is no evidence that confidence varies by whether respondents named the budget or the

Figure 1.3: Budget, Economy Top Priorities

Percent saying ____ is state's most important problem



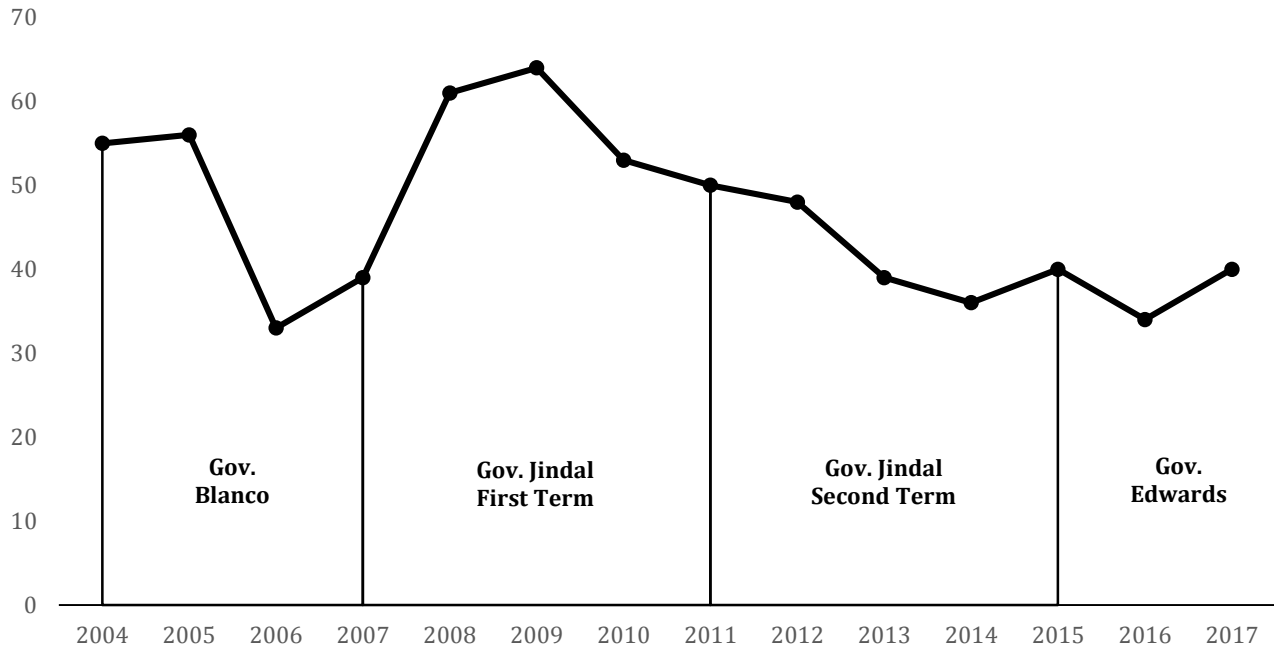
NOTE: Verbatim responses to open-ended question ("In your opinion, what do you think is the single most important problem facing the state of Louisiana?") coded into categories with more than one percent of sample.

SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

economy. There is modest evidence that confidence is slightly lower for those who named education as the most important problem. There are too few respondents in the remaining categories of problems to estimate difference in confidence with meaningful precision.

Figure 1.4: Slight Uptick in Confidence That State Can Solve Important Problems

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



SOURCE: 2003 - 2017 Louisiana Survey

two years of the Blanco and Jindal administrations.

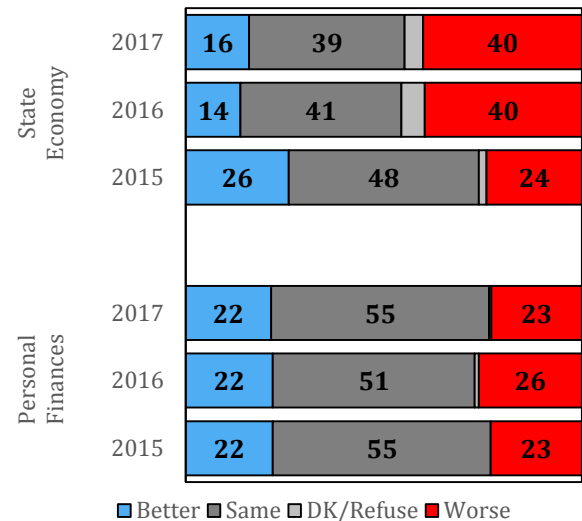
No Improvement in Economic Assessments

The cause driving the boost in public optimism about the direction of the state remains unclear in the survey results. However, one hypothesis can probably be rejected. There is no evidence that the public's perceptions of economic wellbeing are boosting overall assessments of the state.

Compared to 2016, there has been no change in how the public sees their personal financial situation. Most (55 percent) feel their financial situation is the same as a year ago (figure 1.5). Just under one quarter (22 percent) say they are financially better off than a year ago, and about the same share (23 percent) say they are worse off. This response pattern has been consistent during the past three iterations of the *Louisiana Survey*.

Figure 1.5: No Change in Economic Assessments from 2016 to 2017

Percent saying ___ better off, worse off, or about the same as a year ago



NOTE: Prior to 2017 the question about the state's economy used the phrase "business conditions in the state of Louisiana" rather than "the economy in Louisiana as a whole."

SOURCE: 2015 - 2017 Louisiana Surveys

The public has a more negative view of the state’s economic health. Nearly twice as many (40 percent) say the state’s economy is worse off today than it was a year ago than say they are personally worse off. A share of about the same size (39 percent) say the economy is about the same as it was a year ago, while just 16 percent say the state’s economy has improved.

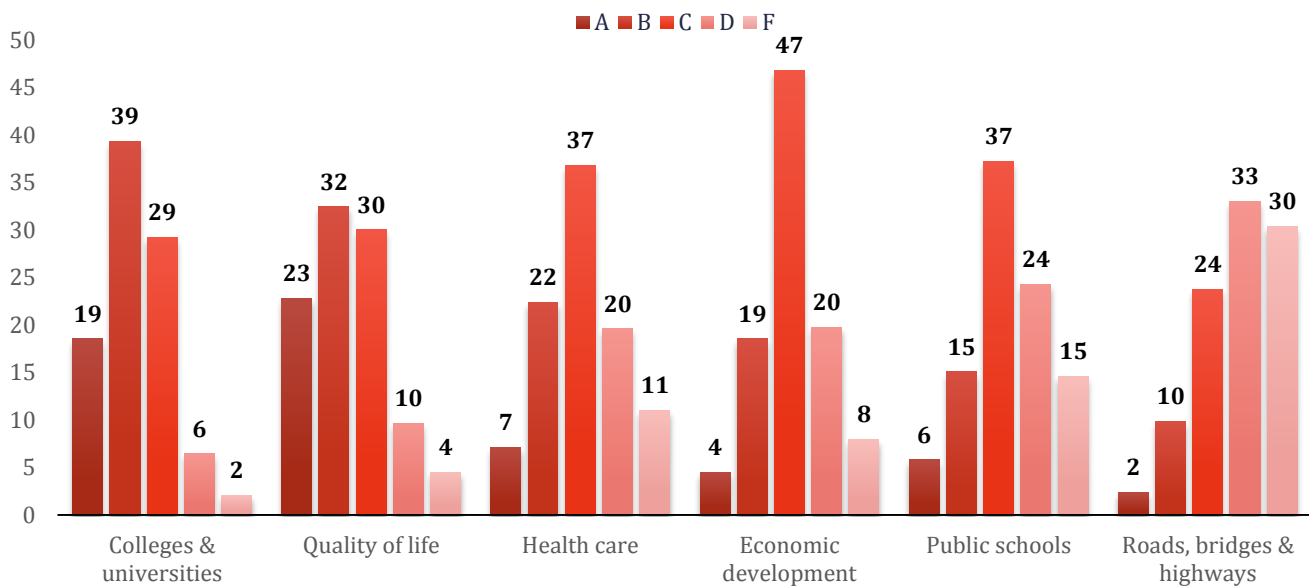
Top Grades for Higher Education and Quality of Life

For more than a decade the *Louisiana Survey* has asked respondents to grade various aspects of life

in the state, including a number of government services. As has been typical in recent years, respondents give the highest marks (that is, the most A or B grades) to the state’s colleges and universities and to Louisiana as a place to live overall (figure 1.6). In fact, assessments of the state overall as a place to live show strong signs of improvement. A year ago, 39 percent gave overall quality of life in the state a grade of A or B; today, 55 percent do so. The remaining topics for evaluation are comparable to past years. As is typical, the public assigns the lowest marks to public schools (39 percent D or F grades) and roads, bridges and highways (63 percent D or F grades).

Figure 1.6: Higher Education and Overall Quality of Life Receive Most A and B Grades

Percent assigning each grade to each feature of the state



NOTE: Darker columns represent higher grades on A to F scale. Items sorted left to right by combined percent A & B grades.

SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

2. State Finance

Public Supports Higher Taxes over Spending Cuts for Specific Policy Areas

Even as lawmakers continue to debate the merits of spending cuts or tax increases to deal with the state’s structural budget deficit, large majorities of Louisiana residents actually support more spending on key programs. When thinking about increasing, decreasing or maintaining current levels of state spending in six policy areas, most prefer additional expenditures for elementary and secondary education (61 percent), higher education (61 percent), health care (50 percent) and roads, bridges and highways (68 percent). Very few residents support cutting these four areas – just 12 percent for health care and fewer than seven percent for the remaining areas (figure 2.1).

Support for spending cuts is higher – yet still short of a majority – for prisons and incarceration

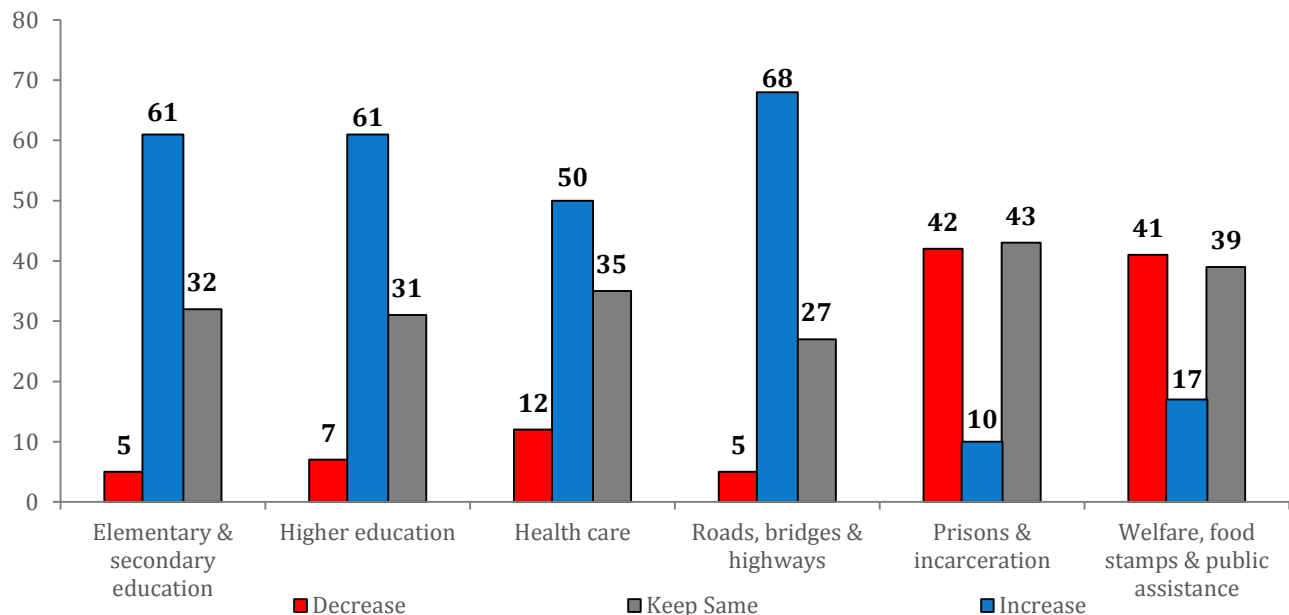
(43 percent) and welfare, food stamps and other public assistance programs (41 percent).

Support for greater government spending in specific policy areas is widespread. Overall, 93 percent of state residents favor more spending in at least one of these six areas, 79 percent support increased spending in at least two areas, and 56 percent in at least three areas. These shares are higher among Democrats (96 percent, 88 percent, and 72 percent respectively), but remain substantial among Republicans as well (93 percent, 71 percent, and 38 percent respectively).

One limitation to the type of question used for figure 2.1 is that it asks about spending in isolation from sources of revenue necessary to cover that spending. Because the state requires a balanced budget and faces potential revenue shortfalls, even maintaining current levels of spending – as well as increasing spending – requires a revenue source such as additional tax dollars. Asking about spending in isolation from

Figure 2.1: Few Support Cutting Spending for Most Specific Policy Areas

Percent saying state spending for ___ should be increased, decreased, or kept the same.



NOTE: The percentages of respondents who said they did not know or who refused to answer the question are not shown.

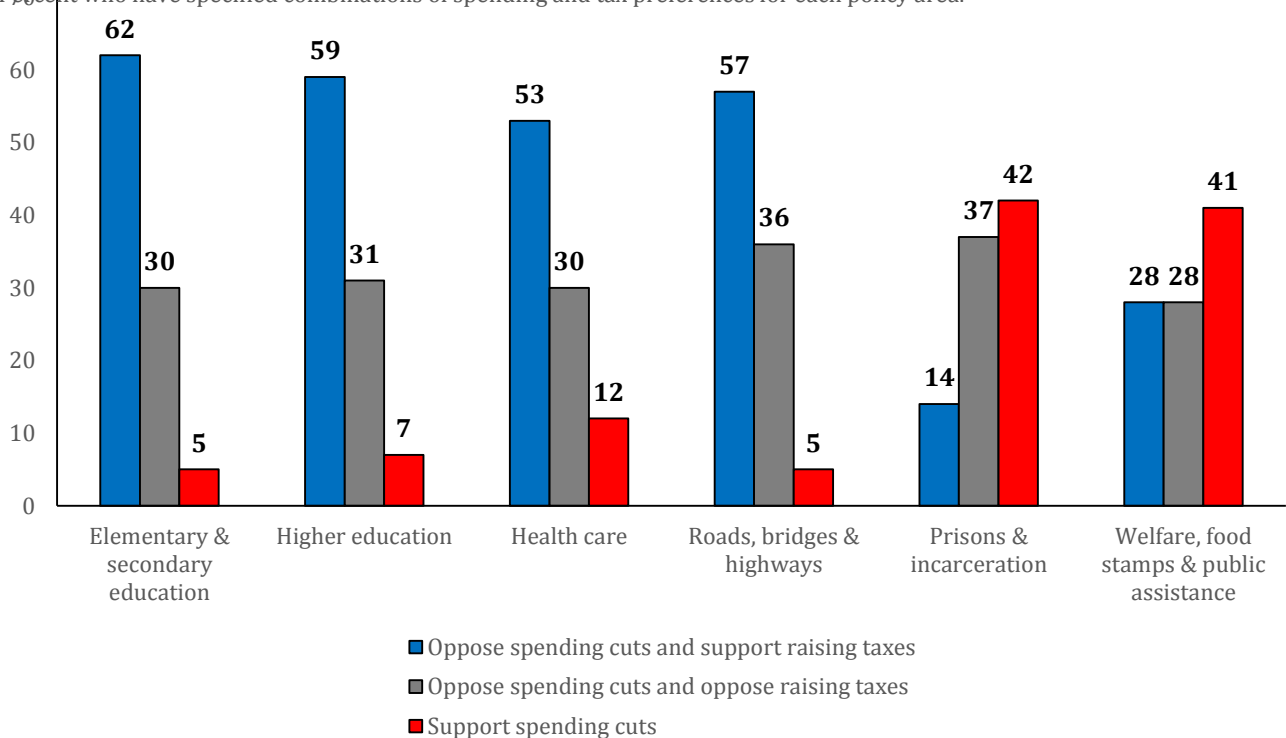
SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

revenue masks the fiscal challenges state lawmakers face and allows respondents to express preferences on one side of the balance sheet while ignoring the consequences for 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 measure support for raising taxes to fund spending in specific areas, respondents who said they want to increase spending or keep it at current levels in a particular policy area were asked whether they supported or opposed raising taxes to fund that area.

When faced with the tradeoff between spending and taxes, most respondents opted 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, health care and transportation. In these four areas, the share willing to pay higher taxes is not only greater than the share who want to cut spending but also greater than a simple majority of all respondents (figure 2.2). For example, 62 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.²

Figure 2.2: Most Willing to Pay Higher Taxes to Fund Education, Health Care 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.

SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

² 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.

However, for each of the policy areas examined in this survey, there is another group of respondents – shown in figure 2.2 – who hold a more challenging combination of spending and tax preferences. These individuals, who typically comprise about one third of respondents for any policy area, choose neither to cut spending nor to raise revenue to pay for it.

Most Want Tax Increases Along With Spending Cuts to Deal with Budget Shortfalls

Generally, Louisiana residents favor a mix of tax increases and spending cuts to address budget shortfalls: 71 percent want lawmakers to use a combination of both. Relatively few want *only* spending cuts (24 percent) or *only* tax increases (two percent).

The political divide among the public is rather muted on this point. Majorities in both parties want a combination of spending cuts and additional tax revenue. Among Democrats, 84 percent favor a combined approach. While the share is lower among Republicans, a majority (59 percent) nevertheless support this approach.

Even so, most who want a combined approach tend to emphasize spending cuts more than tax increases. Respondents who prefer a combination answered a follow up question about which of the two approaches should get most of the focus. About half of all respondents (47 percent) want a combined approach that emphasizes spending cuts more than tax increases. In all, nearly three fourths (72 percent) want a solution that focuses either only or mostly on spending cuts.

Support for spending cuts is significantly higher when respondents are asked in general, abstract terms than when asked in terms of specific policy areas. Indeed, there is a tension in budgetary preferences between when people are thinking in generalities and when they are thinking in terms of specific expenditures. On one hand, there is widespread acclaim for spending cuts as a

general solution to budget shortfalls. On the other hand, as noted above, there is equally widespread support for increasing spending for specific areas.

Even among those who say they want lawmakers to focus *only* on spending cuts when dealing with budget shortfalls, 85 percent nevertheless favor boosting spending in at least one of the six policy areas examined in this survey and 61 percent favor spending hikes in at least two.

Growing Share of Residents Say State Sales Tax Too High

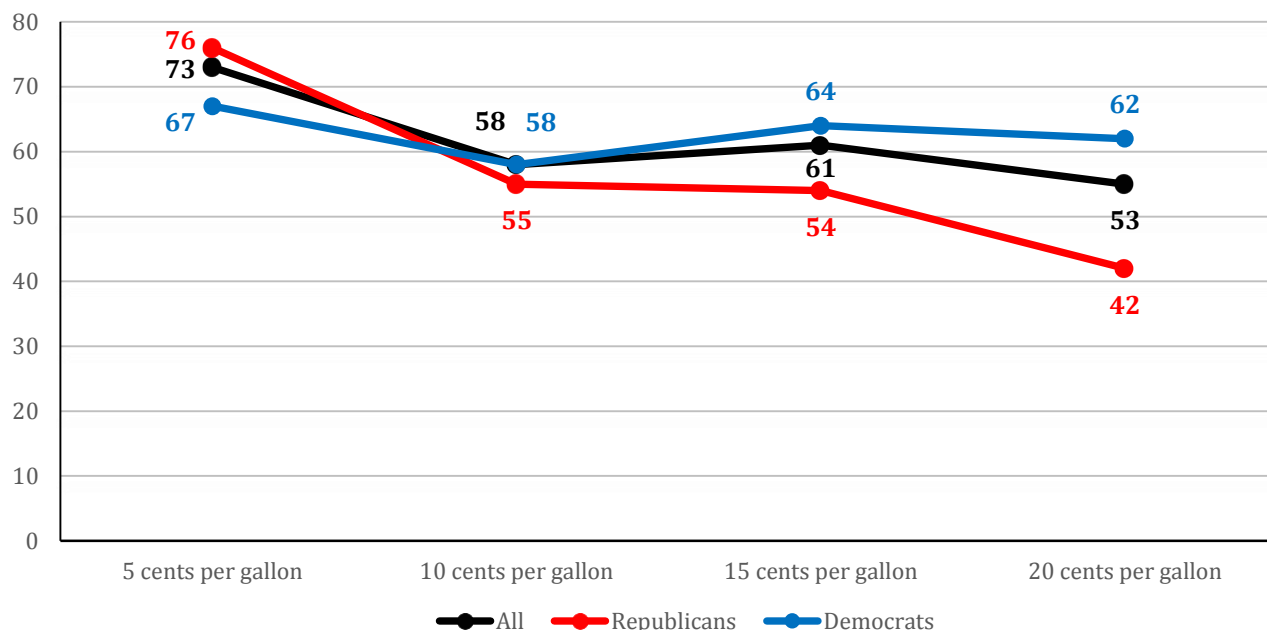
If most Louisiana residents support raising taxes to fund specific areas and back a general budget strategy that incorporates tax hikes alongside spending cuts, then which taxes do they want to raise? Unfortunately, the public does not offer a clear answer – at least not when considering the state’s personal income tax or sales tax.

Louisianans generally do not think the personal income tax needs to be raised. Just 12 percent say this tax is too low. Most (54 percent) say the personal income tax is about right, and another 29 percent say it is too high and needs to be reduced.

There is greater discontent over the state’s sales tax. Only eight percent of state residents think it is too low and needs to be increased. Opinion splits nearly evenly between those who say it is about right as it is and those that say it is too high and should be reduced, 47 percent and 44 percent, respectively. This marks a 12 percentage point increase from a year ago in the share who say the sales tax is too high. In fact, opinion that this tax is too high had been on a three year decline from 45 percent in 2013 to 32 percent just before a one cent per dollar increase went into effect in 2016. It appears the recent increase in the sales tax reversed that trend.

Figure 2.3: Robust Support for Raising State Gasoline Tax

Percent support raising state gasoline tax by _____



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

More Support for Expanding Base and Lowering Rates on Income Tax than on Sales Tax

Although few residents think the personal income tax needs to be increased, there is modest support for expanding the tax's bases in exchange for lowering the rates. Just under a majority (50 percent) support a proposal to lower rates and limit some of the deductions a taxpayer can claim. Although short of a majority, the amount of support for the proposal exceeds the 41 percent who oppose it.

The pattern is similar across the two political parties: 46 percent of Democrats and 50 percent of Republicans favor the change, while 46 percent and 39 percent oppose it, respectively.

Opinion leans in the opposite direction on the state's sales tax. A majority (57 percent) oppose a proposal to lower the sales tax rate in exchange for applying the tax to certain kinds of purchases that are not currently charged a sales tax. Only 38 percent of respondents support this proposal.

There is also a larger partisan gap on this proposal, though majorities in both political parties oppose it. Among Democrats, 40 percent support and 55 percent oppose the proposal. Among Republicans, 32 percent support and 65 percent oppose the proposal.

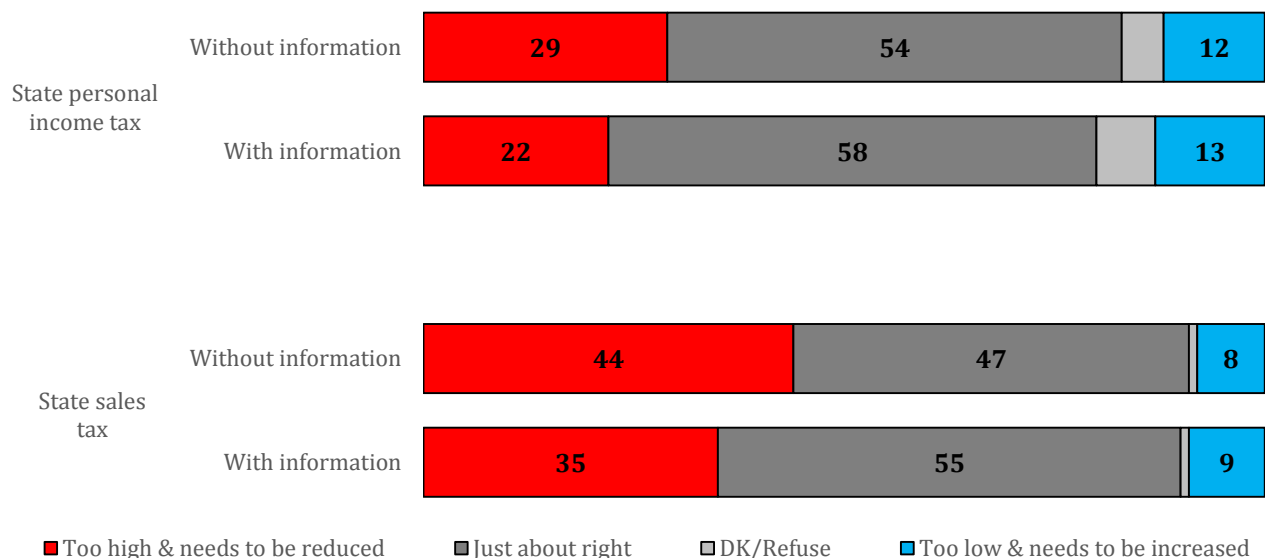
Strong Support for Raising Gasoline Tax

One area where there is more clarity about what specific type of tax Louisiana residents are willing to raise is in transportation. A majority of respondents favor raising the state's tax on gasoline for improving highways, bridges and other infrastructure. To assess the prospects of public support across a range of potential amounts for an increase, respondents were randomly assigned to one of four variations of the question – each including a different amount for a per-gallon increase: Five cents, 10 cents, 15 cents, or 20 cents.

Support declines as the size of the increase rises but remains above the fifty percent threshold at

Figure 2.4: Information on State's Relative Tax Burden Reduces Perception That Taxes Too High

Percent saying each response option for personal income/sales taxes



NOTE: Respondents randomly assigned to one of two groups. One group was provided information about how Louisiana's overall state and local tax burden compares to other states, while the other group was provided no additional information.
 SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

all values: 73, 58, 61 and 53 percent (figure 2.3). In fact, there is strong, bipartisan support for raising the state's tax on gasoline up to an additional 15 cents per gallon.

Most residents also support raising the tax by 20 cents per gallon, but Democrats and Republicans split over that proposal. Interestingly, the partisan gap flips with higher amounts. Republicans are 11 percentage points more supportive of raising the gasoline tax by five cents than Democrats. However, Democrats are 20 percentage points more supportive of raising the tax by 20 cents than Republicans.

Few Know How the Tax Burden in Louisiana Compares to Other States

Opinions about whether state taxes are too high or too low are at least partly a reflection of what people know (or do not know) about the overall

tax burden in Louisiana. According to a study by the Tax Foundation, a national non-profit organization that researches tax policy, the overall burden of state and local taxes in Louisiana is relatively low compared to most states.³ As a percent of gross income, Louisianans' state and local tax burden is about three-fourths the size of the national average and ranks 45th among all states. Only Texas, Tennessee, Wyoming, South Dakota, and Alaska have lower overall state and local tax burdens.

Yet, few Louisiana residents are aware of these facts. Only twenty percent correctly perceive the overall state and local tax burden in Louisiana as being lower than in most other states. Indeed, 39 percent believe the overall tax burden in the state is *higher* than in most other states. This misperception is widely shared by both Democrats (41 percent) and Republicans (38 percent).

before the 2016 increase in the Louisiana state sales tax.

³ Tax Foundation data on tax burdens is available at <https://taxfoundation.org/publications/state-local-tax-burden-rankings/>. These calculations were made

To identify the impact of this knowledge deficit, the survey included an experiment in which a randomly selected subset of respondents were first presented with data on Louisiana’s overall state and local tax burden before answering questions about the state’s income and sales taxes. Specifically, these individuals were told, “As it turns out, according to a recent national report that compared the overall state and local tax burdens - that is, the amount paid in all local and state taxes – across all the states, the average burden in Louisiana is lower than in most states. The average amount a Louisiana resident pays for all state and local taxes is about 3,000 dollars, but the average amount residents of all the states in the country pay for all state and local taxes is about 4,500 dollars.”⁴ Comparing responses from those who received no information to responses from those who received this information reveals how much knowledge of the relative tax burden informs opinions on tax issues.

The share saying the state’s personal income tax is too high and needs to be reduced fell by seven percentage points among those who received this information (figure 2.4). The effect is also strong for opinions on the state sales tax where the share saying the tax is too high and needs to be reduced fell by nine percentage points. The share saying the sales tax is about the right amount increased by a similar margin. In neither case, however, was there an appreciable impact on the share who feel the taxes are too low and need to be increased.⁵

⁴ The information in this information treatment is based on data in the Tax Foundation’s rankings.

⁵ The information also appears to affect attitudes toward the proposal to reduce the state sales tax while expanding its application. Estimates presented above in the discussion of this proposal and the analogous proposal to lower rates and expand the base of the state’s personal income tax are for the respondents in the “control condition” of the experiment who were not provided with information from the Tax Foundation. Among respondents in the “treatment condition” who received this information, support for the sales tax proposal was eight percentage points

Most Feel They Pay Their Fair Share of Taxes

A majority (55 percent) of Louisiana residents think they pay about the right amount in taxes, but another 37 percent feel they are paying more than their fair share (figure 2.5). Very few (four percent) feel they are paying less than their fair share in taxes.⁶

Respondents also evaluated the tax burden of lower-income, middle-income and upper-income earners as well as corporations and businesses. Twenty-seven percent think lower-income individuals pay more than their fair share; 21 percent say these individuals pay less than their fair share; and a plurality of 44 percent think they pay about the right amount. A plurality of respondents (46 percent) say middle-income earners pay the right amount; 43 percent say they pay more than their fair share; and just six percent say they pay less than their fair share. Opinion is more critical of upper-income individuals: A majority (55 percent) say these individuals pay less than their fair share, and just 26 percent say they pay the right amount.

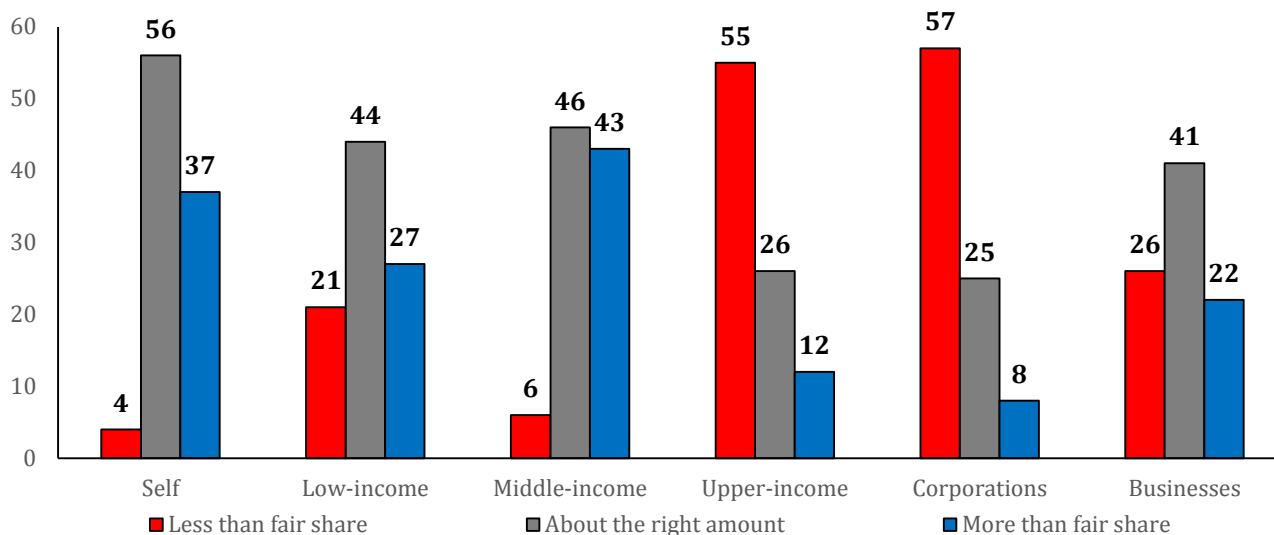
Respondents are similarly critical of “corporations,” but not “businesses.” Most (57 percent) say corporations pay less than their fair share. However, question wording matters quite a bit when assessing these opinions. While some respondents were asked about the tax burden of “corporations,” others were asked about the tax

higher. There was no statistically identifiable effect for the income tax proposal.

⁶ The estimates in this paragraph are based on the subset of respondents in the “control condition” who did not receive the Tax Foundation information in the experiment described above. Among those in the “treatment condition,” the share of respondents who say they pay more than their fair share of taxes was eight percentage points lower and the share who say they pay about the right amount was nine percentage points higher. There was no statistically identifiable effect on the share who believe they pay less than their fair share of taxes. There was also no further differences in responses to any of the remaining

Figure 2.5: Most Say Upper-income and Corporations Do Not Pay Fair Share

Percent saying ___ pay more than fair share, less than fair share, or about the right amount in state taxes



NOTE: Percentages of respondents who volunteered that they did not know or who refused to answer the question are not shown in the figure.

SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

burden of “businesses.” Only 26 percent say businesses are paying less than their fair share and 41 percent say they are paying the right amount.

Few Think of Themselves as Upper-Income

The widespread belief that upper-income earners pay less than their fair share of taxes raises the question: Who exactly do Louisiana residents think are “upper-income?” The survey uses two approaches to answer this question. Both approaches reveal that there is widespread disagreement over who exactly counts as “upper-income.”

First, respondents were asked to classify a series of nine household incomes presented in

questions included in this report; therefore, estimates in the rest of this report represent responses among the total sample.

⁷ Percentiles through 95th are based on the most recent American Community Survey. The 99th

ascending order as “upper-income,” “middle-income” or “lower-income.” The series was selected to represent specific percentiles in the distribution of household income in Louisiana: \$10,000 (approximately the 10th percentile); \$25,000 (approximately the 30th percentile); \$35,000 (approximately the 40th percentile); \$45,000 (approximately the 50th percentile or median household income); \$75,000 (approximately the 70th percentile); \$100,000 (approximately the 80th percentile); \$150,000 (approximately the 90th percentile); \$200,000 (approximately the 95th percentile); and \$325,000 (approximately the 99th percentile).⁷

In the total sample, a majority classify a household income of \$100,000 as “upper-income.” None of the presented incomes below this value are classified as upper income by a

percentile is found in the Economic Policy Institute estimates of the top one percent of household earnings by state.

majority of respondents. On average, therefore, Louisiana residents think of the top twenty percent of households in the state as upper-income.

This average masks significant variation by respondents' own household incomes. Generally, respondents – even respondents in relatively higher earning households – think of “upper-income” as a household with income greater than their own. For example, a majority of respondents with a household income of less than \$10,000 think of households with earnings of \$45,000 or more (approximately the top 50 percent of households in the state) as “upper-income,” but respondents with household incomes between \$10,000 and \$49,999 tend to classify only households with incomes of \$75,000 or more (approximately the top 30 percent of households) as “upper-income.” Further up the income distribution, a majority of respondents with household incomes from \$50,000 to \$99,999 say “upper-income” begins at household earnings of \$100,000 (approximately the top 20 percent of households). Notice this group of respondents includes people whom other respondents in lower-earning households classify as “upper-income.” Even individuals with household earnings between \$100,000 and \$149,999 (roughly the 80th to 90th percentile of household incomes in Louisiana) do not identify themselves as “upper-income.” Instead, a majority of these respondents say \$150,000 (approximately the top ten percent of households) is the threshold for “upper-income.”

Only among respondents who are themselves at the 90th percentile of households or higher (i.e., those with household income of \$150,000 or more) do a majority of respondents identify incomes close to their own as “upper-income.” In other words, only the top ten percent of households think of themselves as “upper income.”

Second, the survey includes a question that directly asks respondents to classify their own households as “lower-income,” “middle-income” or “upper-income.” Only 12 percent identify

themselves as “upper-income.” Again, responses vary significantly by household income. A majority of respondents with household incomes less than \$35,000 identify themselves as “lower-income.” A majority of respondents with household incomes between \$35,000 and \$199,999 – roughly the 40th to 95th percentiles of household income in the state – identify themselves as “middle-income.” Only among respondents with household incomes of \$200,000 or more – the top five percent of households in the state – does a majority identify themselves as “upper-income.”

Sixty Percent Think State Can Cut Spending without Reducing Services

There is common belief among Louisiana residents that state government spends significantly more than it needs to for the level of services it provides. About two-thirds (64 percent) of respondents say state government could spend less money and still provide the same level of services.

Eleven percent peg the amount by which state government could cut spending without having to reduce services at five percent or less. Another 24 percent believe that the amount of inefficient government spending is between six and ten percent. Fifteen percent estimate inefficiencies between 11 and 20 percent of total spending, while five percent estimate between 21 and 30 percent and another five percent estimate greater than 30 percent.

These perceptions may play a role in explaining the apparent discrepancy among the roughly one third of Louisiana residents who want neither to cut spending for specific policy areas nor to raise taxes to cover the costs. On average, these individuals believe that 11 to 20 percent of state spending could be reduced without reducing services. Perhaps they also believe that cutting these perceived inefficiencies would free enough funding to pay for their favored programs without requiring an increase in taxes.

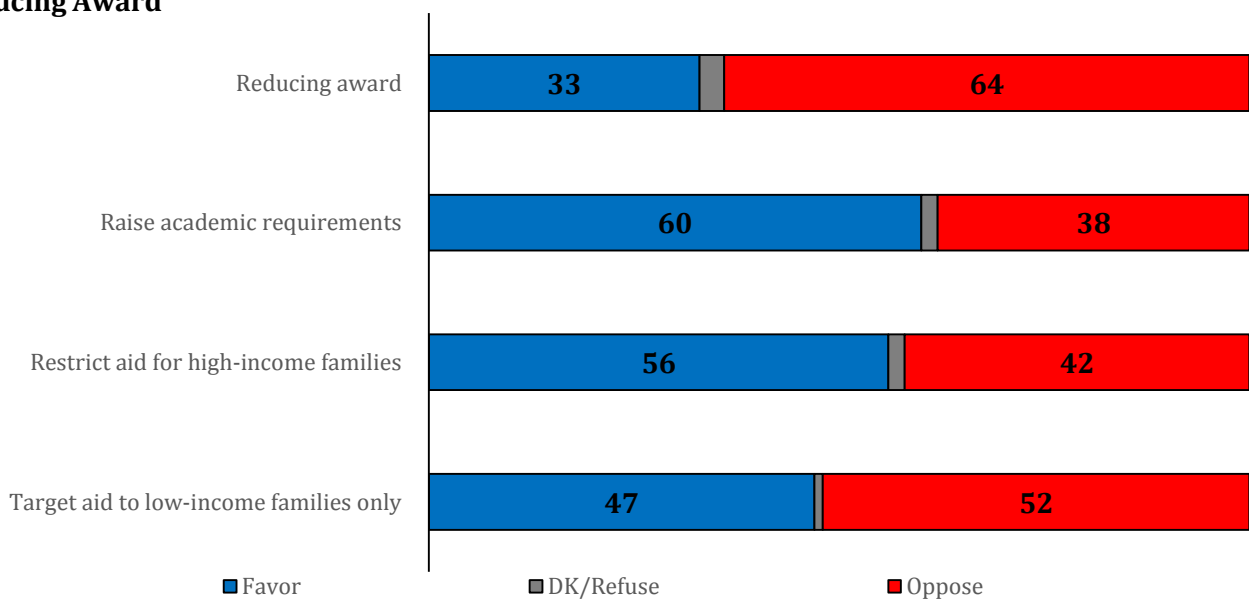
Public Supports Stronger Academic Requirements and Income Caps for TOPS Eligibility

The Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) is the state’s main tuition assistance program for higher education. Through the TOPS program, the state pays tuition and certain fees at Louisiana colleges and universities for resident citizens who take a specified set of classes in high school, earn a high school grade point average of 2.5, and score at or above the state average on the ACT or SAT. The cost of the program has ballooned since its inception in the late 1990s. A series of state budget shortfalls in recent years

has provoked debate over how to address the program’s rising costs.

The survey asked respondents about four different proposals to control costs. A majority of respondents (64 percent) oppose reducing the award qualified students receive to something less than the cost of tuition (figure 2.6). However, the public is open to other cost control measures. Sixty percent support increasing academic requirements. A similarly sized majority (56 percent) support restricting TOPS so that students from higher income families who can afford to pay for college are no longer eligible. Yet, most (52 percent) oppose restricting income eligibility such that only children from low income families are eligible.

Figure 2.6: Support for Raising Academic Requirements and Imposing Income Caps, But Not for Reducing Award



NOTE: One half of respondents was asked about TOPS for low-income families, while the other half was asked about TOPS for high-income families.

SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

3. Criminal Justice Reform

More Believe Crime on the Rise

Approximately two-thirds (65 percent) of Louisiana residents believe that the amount of crime in the state has increased over the past five years. This is nearly 11 times as many as those who say crime has decreased (six percent). Another 13 percent say crime has stayed about the same. Perceptions that crime is on the rise have grown by ten percentage points since 2015, the last time this question was included in the *Louisiana Survey* (figure 3.1).

There are noticeable demographic and political differences in how people perceive the trend in crime. For example, the belief that crime has increased is significantly more common among blacks (75 percent) than whites (61 percent). Louisiana residents without a four-year college degree are also more likely to believe crime has increased (69 percent) than those with a college degree (56 percent), although this pattern holds more strongly among whites than among blacks. There is no significant difference between Democrats (69 percent) and Republicans (65 percent) on this question. However, there is a strong difference between *white* Democrats (48

percent) and *white* Republicans (66 percent) in their perceptions that crime has increased.

More Blacks than Whites Question Fairness of Criminal Justice System

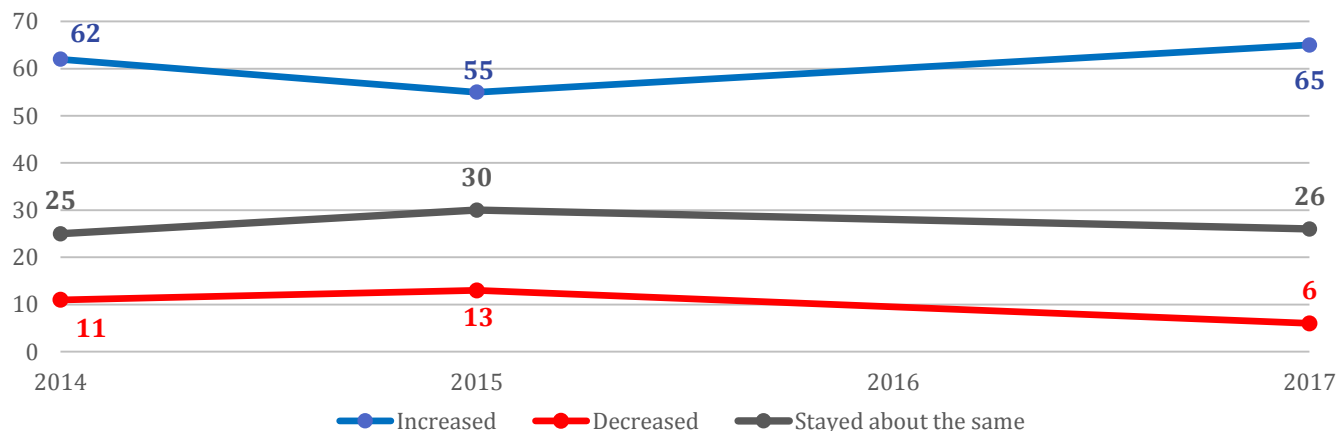
About half (51 percent) of Louisiana residents disagree with the statement, “Louisiana’s current criminal justice system is fair,” while 34 percent agree (figure 3.2). There is a substantial difference between black and white residents of the state. Whereas a large majority of blacks (71 percent) disagree with this statement, whites are split almost evenly – 41 percent disagree and 44 percent agree.

Large, Broad Majorities Support Criminal Justice Reforms

Large majorities favor three criminal justice reform proposals included in the *2017 Louisiana Survey*. Three in four Louisiana residents support shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes; just 18 percent oppose this proposal (figure 3.3). An even larger share (86 percent) supports having more alternatives to prison – such as drug treatment or rehabilitation programs – for people convicted of non-violent

Figure 3.1: More Say Crime on the Rise Today Than in 2015

Percent who say that the amount of crime in Louisiana has _____ in the past five years

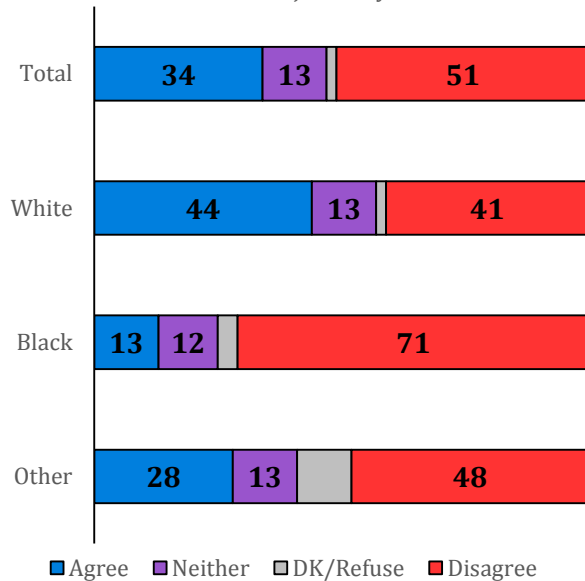


NOTE: Question not asked in 2016.

SOURCE: 2014, 2015 and 2017 Louisiana Survey

Figure 3.2: Perceptions of Fairness in Criminal Justice System Vary by Race

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



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

offenses. Finally, 72 percent support abandoning mandatory minimum sentences in favor of more flexibility for judges to determine sentences.

The support for these reforms cuts across a number of demographic and attitudinal lines. For example, on the question about shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes,

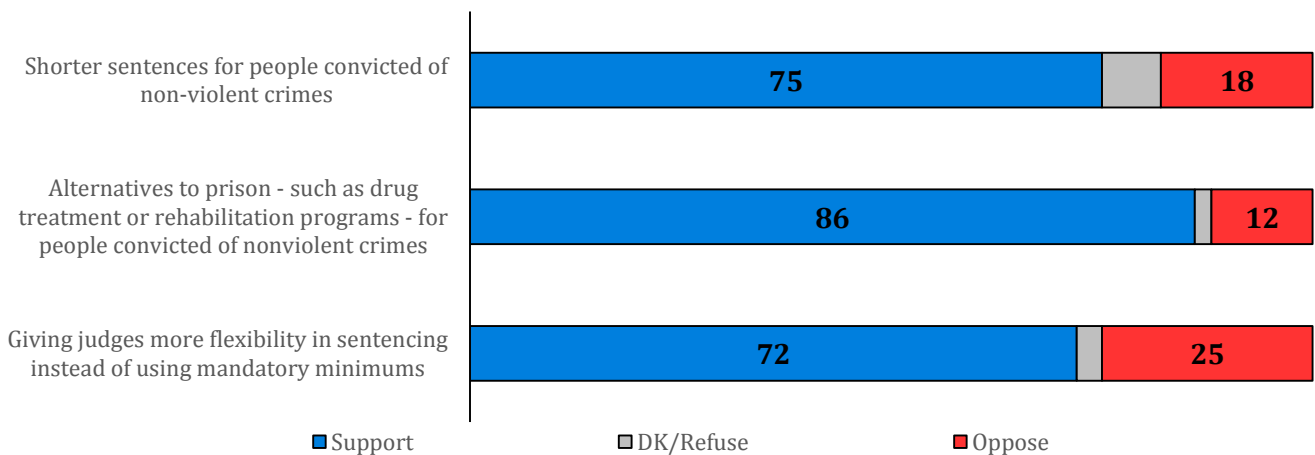
support among blacks is nine percentage points higher than among whites, but both groups overwhelmingly favor the proposal – 81 percent and 72 percent, respectively (figure 3.4). There are no differences between blacks and whites on the other two proposals. Likewise, Democrats express more support for offering alternatives to prison than Republicans by ten percentage points, but both parties strongly favor the idea – 89 percent and 79 percent, respectively. There are no differences between the parties on the remaining two proposals.

Support of Reforms Drops for Certain Types of Crimes

Two of the three criminal justice reform proposals included in the 2017 Louisiana Survey are aimed specifically at non-violent crimes. Responses, therefore, depend on what exactly people think are non-violent crimes. To explore how conceptions of non-violent crime might shape support for criminal justice reform – particularly by severity of the offense – respondents were randomly assigned to one of three versions of the question about shorter sentences. The first version, analyzed above, makes no reference to a specific crime: “Do you support or oppose shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes?” The second version differs only by including two specific

Figure 3.3: Majority Support for Proposals to Reduce Prison Time

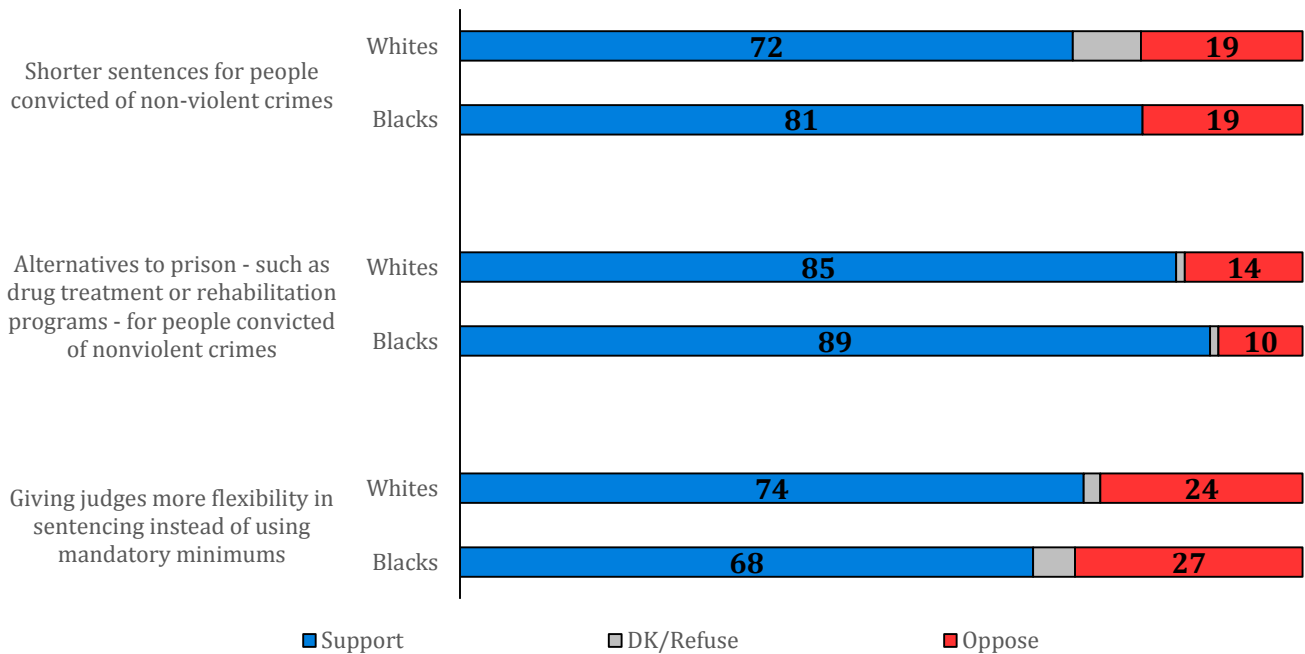
Percent who support/oppose criminal justice reform proposals



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

Figure 3.4: Few Differences by Race on Proposals for Reform

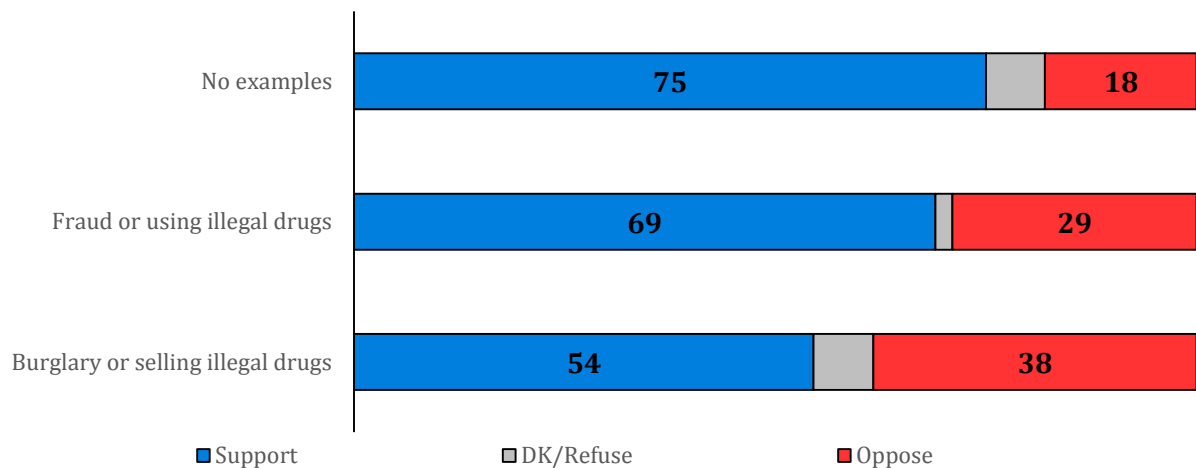
Percent who support/oppose criminal justice reform proposals



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

Figure 3.5: Support for Shorter Sentences for Non-violent Crimes Depends on Type of Crime

Percent who support/oppose shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes



NOTE: Respondents randomly assigned to one of three versions of the question with different examples of crimes classified as non-violent offenses. One version did not provide any specific examples of non-violent crimes. The second version included "fraud or using illegal drugs" as examples of non-violent crime. The third version included "burglary or selling illegal drugs" as examples of non-violent crimes.

SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

examples of non-violent crimes: “Do you support or oppose shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes, such as fraud or using illegal drugs?” A third version cites a different pair of examples of non-violent crime: “Do you support or oppose shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes, such as burglary or selling illegal drugs?”⁸

Support for reform declines for non-violent crimes that may be thought of as more serious (figure 3.5). Whereas 75 percent support shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes without reference to a specific crime, 69 percent do so when asked about “non-violent crimes such as fraud or using illegal drugs.” Support slips further to 54 percent when asking respondents about “non-violent crimes such as burglary or selling illegal drugs.”

⁸ Technically, the latter two versions of the question are “double barreled” in that they each ask about two examples of crimes simultaneously. However, the advantage in this case is that the examples allow a test of differences by seriousness of non-violent crimes in

a general way without the risk of constraining respondents to think solely in terms of a single domain like theft or drug crimes. It should be noted that this test does not reveal how support for criminal justice reforms might differ in reference to violent crimes.

4. Equal Pay

Most Think State Government Should Require Equal Pay

There is very little opposition to the concept of equal pay among Louisiana residents. Approximately nine in ten (91 percent) of Louisiana residents support the *state requiring* employers to pay men and women the same amount for the same job (figure 4.1). The wording of this question specifically focuses on language for a government mandate to employers. This wording is used so respondents will consider the role of government in employers' compensation of their employees, rather than focusing solely on beliefs about what employers should do voluntarily.

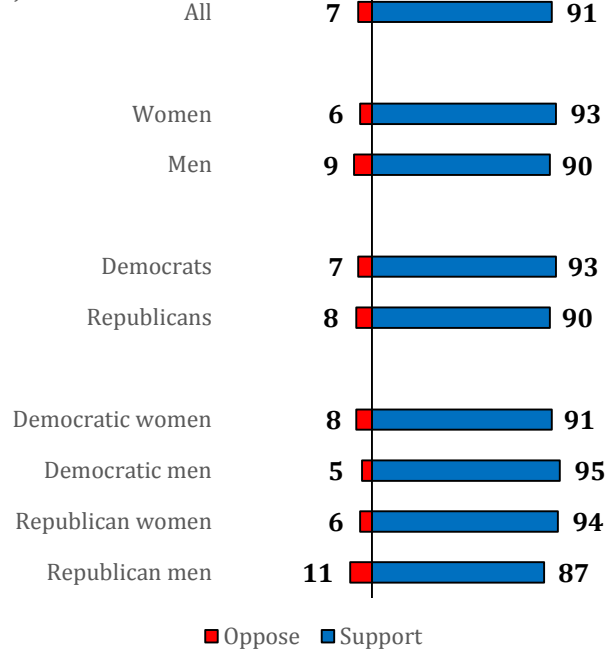
This support is broadly shared across a number of demographic and political characteristics. For example, there is no significant difference between women and men on this issue. Similarly, Democrats and Republicans agree on requiring equal pay for the same job.

Partisan Gaps Often Exceed Gender Differences in views of Discrimination

About one third (32 percent) of state residents say there is a lot of discrimination against women

Figure 4.1: Broad Support Across Gender and Parties for Equal Pay Requirement

Percent who support/oppose state requiring employers to pay men and women the same amount for the same job

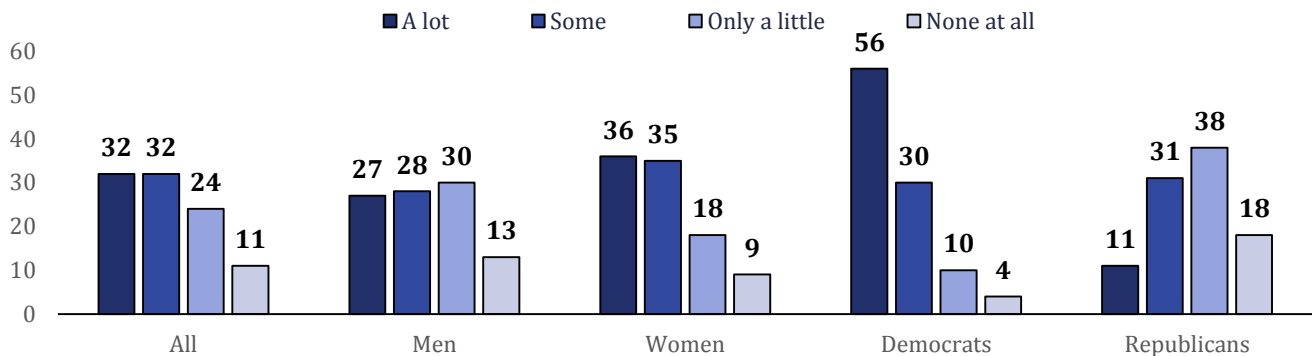


SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

in our society today (figure 4.2). A similar share say there is some discrimination, while 24 percent say there is only a little and 11 percent say there is none at all. More women than men say there is a lot or some discrimination – 36

Figure 4.2: Partisan Gap Exceeds Gender Gap in Perceptions of Discrimination Against Women

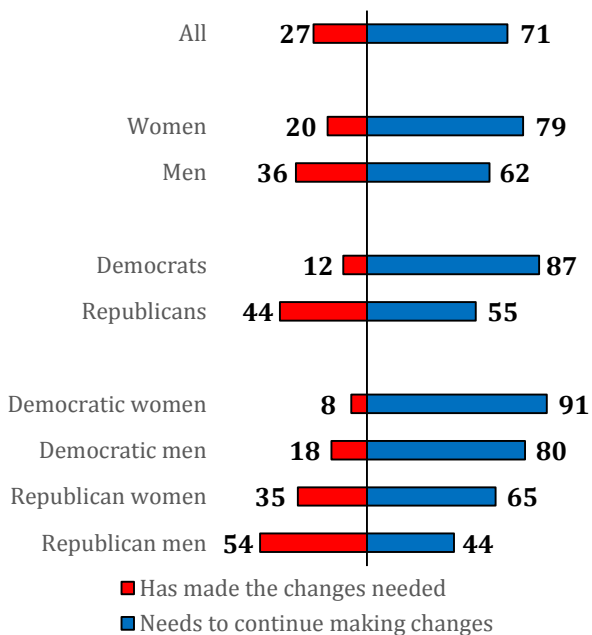
Percent who say _____ when asked how much discrimination there is against women in our society today



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

Figure 4.3: Gender and Partisan Differences in Views of Equality in Workplace

Percent who say the country _____ to give men and women equality in workplace



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

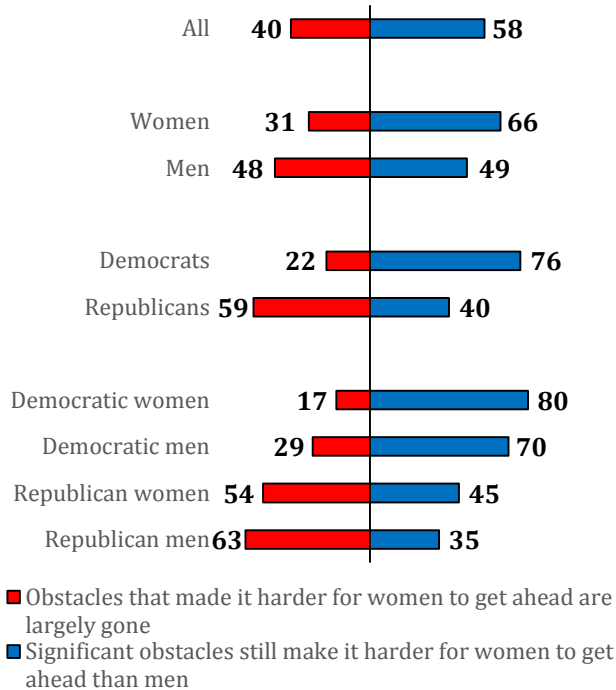
percent and 25 percent versus 27 percent and 28 percent, respectively. The gap between Democrats and Republicans is even larger. A majority of Democrats (56 percent) say women face a lot of discrimination, while just 11 percent of Republicans think so.

A similar pattern appears in views of equality in the workplace. The survey asked respondents to choose the statement that comes closest to their views from this pair: “This country has made the changes needed to give men and women equality in the workplace,” or “This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace.”

Overall, most Louisiana residents (71 percent) think the country needs to continue making changes. While majorities of both women and men think further changes are needed for workplace equality, there is a 17 percentage point gender gap in these views (figure 4.3). The

Figure 4.4: Large Partisan Differences in Views of Obstacles Women Face

Percent who say _____



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

gap is nearly twice as big (32 percent) between Democrats and Republicans.

The gender difference shows up within both parties, but is larger among Republicans than Democrats. The share of Democratic women who think more changes are necessary is 11 percentage points higher than the share of Democratic men. The share of Republican women is 21 percentage points greater than the share of Republican men. In fact, a majority of Republican men (54 percent) think the country has already made the changes necessary for workplace gender equality.

The difference is smaller between Republican women and Republican men in their views of the obstacles women face. The survey included a second question forcing respondents to choose between the following statements: “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.” Majorities of both Republican women (54 percent) and Republican men (63 percent) think the obstacles that made it harder for women to get ahead are largely gone

(figure 4.4). Democratic women and Democratic men stand together on the other side – believing that significant obstacles remain – at 80 percent and 70 percent, respectively.

5. Health Care

Widespread Approval of Medicaid Expansion in Louisiana

In 2016, Louisiana expanded its Medicaid program to provide health care coverage to more individuals as allowed under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). State residents strongly approve of this move. About three fourths of residents (72 percent) approve of expansion (figure 5.1). Approval of the move extends across a number of demographic and political groups. For example, majorities of whites and blacks approve of Medicaid expansion as do majorities in upper and lower income households.

Democrats (91 percent) and independents (73 percent) approve of Medicaid expansion. Republicans are less enthusiastic about the policy change but lean toward approval over disapproval (51 percent to 45 percent).

Divisions over Affordable Care Act

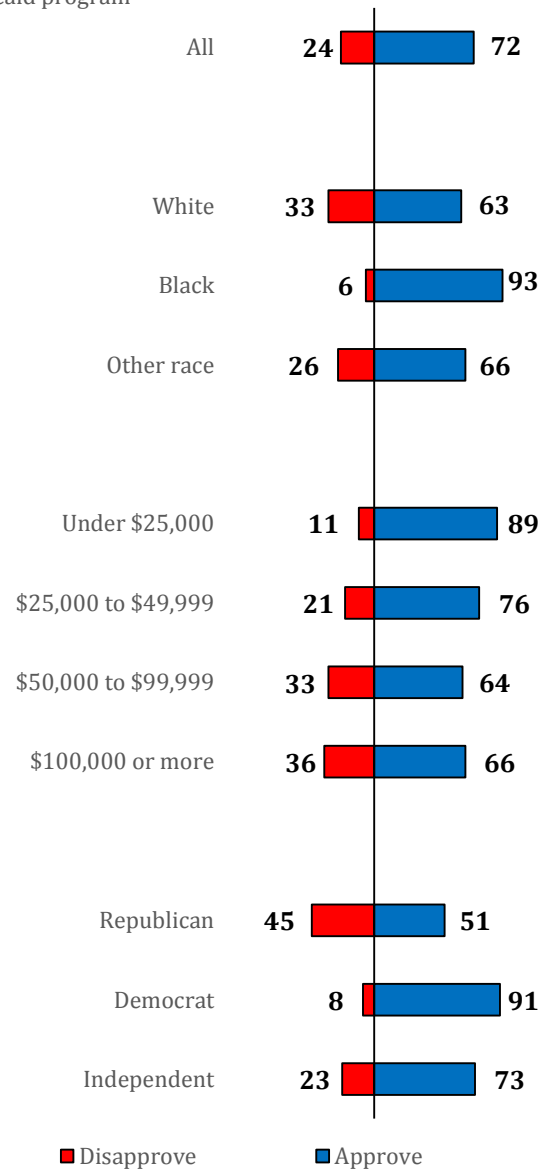
Despite robust support for Medicaid expansion in the state, Louisiana residents have a less favorable view of the ACA itself. Overall, just 42 percent of state residents have a favorable opinion of the ACA. This share is 30 percentage points less than the share who approves of Medicaid expansion. About half of the state (51 percent) has an unfavorable opinion of the federal health care law.

Opinion of the ACA is also far more divided than opinion of Medicaid expansion (figure 5.2). There are large cleavages by race, household income and partisanship. Most whites have an unfavorable opinion of the ACA, but most blacks and most residents of other races have a favorable opinion of the law. Slightly more than half of state residents with household incomes below \$50,000 have a favorable opinion of the ACA, but an even larger share – about 60 percent – of residents with household incomes of \$50,000 or more have an unfavorable opinion. Unlike in

the case of Medicaid expansion, majorities of Republicans and Democrats stand on opposite sides of the ACA: The share of the latter who have a favorable opinion of the law (76 percent) is roughly as large as the share of the former who have an unfavorable opinion (80 percent).

Figure 5.1: Widespread Approval of Medicaid Expansion in Louisiana

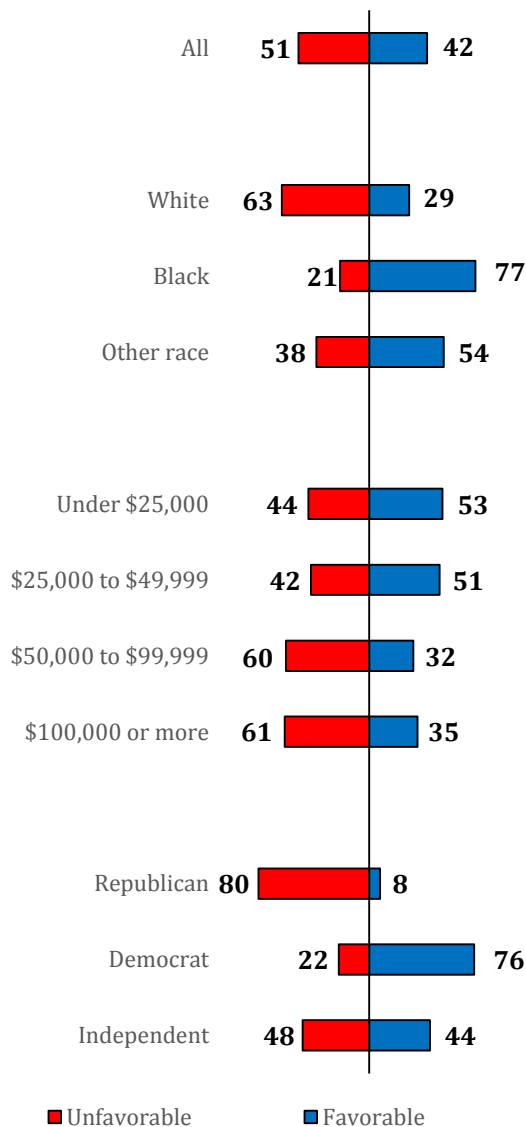
Percent who say they _____ of the state expanding its Medicaid program



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

Figure 5.2: Louisiana Divided Over ACA

Percent who say they have generally _____ opinion of the Affordable Care Act



SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

Opinion of Affordable Care Act Moving in More Favorable Direction

This partisan gap – which is nearly twice as large over the ACA as over Medicaid expansion – is largely a consequence of uneven changes by political party (figure 5.3). Across the state as a whole, opinion toward the ACA has moved in a favorable direction since 2014 when the *Louisiana Survey* last included this question about the ACA.⁹ The share of respondents with an unfavorable opinion of the ACA in 2017 is seven percentage points lower than it was in 2014 (58 percent), and the share with a favorable opinion is eleven percentage points higher than it was three years ago (31 percent). Net favorability toward the ACA in Louisiana (the percent with a favorable opinion minus the percent with an unfavorable opinion) went from -27 to -9.

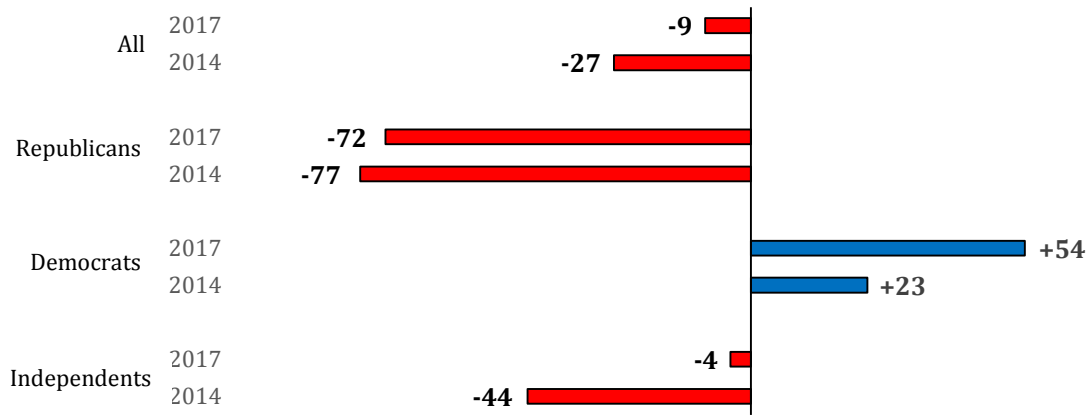
The shift in opinion has been especially pronounced among Democrats and independents. The ACA had a net favorability rating of +23 among Democrats in 2014 (54 percent favorable and 31 percent unfavorable). Today, the law has a net favorability of +54 among Democrats (76 percent favorable and 22 percent unfavorable). Independents also saw a strong shift in a more favorable direction, from a net favorability of -44 in 2014 (22 percent favorable and 66 percent unfavorable) to a net favorability of -4 in 2017 (44 percent favorable and 48 percent unfavorable). In contrast, the balance of opinion among Republicans remained relatively stable. In 2014 it was -77 (10 percent favorable and 87 percent unfavorable) and in 2017 it is -72 (eight percent favorable and 80 percent unfavorable).

⁹ The wording of the question itself is identical in the 2014 and 2017 surveys: “As you may know, the Affordable Care Act was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the Affordable Care Act, do you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of it?” However, the 2014 survey also included instructions for callers to clarify that the ACA is sometimes known as “Obamacare” *only if* the respondent asks if the ACA is Obamacare. Callers were instructed not to independently introduce the term “Obamacare” into the question. Unlike 2014, the

version of the 2017 question discussed in this paragraph did not allow callers to use the term “Obamacare” if a respondent introduced the term. This was done because the 2017 survey also included a different version of the question that inserted the phrase “sometimes called Obamacare” into the wording. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the different versions of the question in order to test the impact of the term “Obamacare” on responses. The results of this experimental design are discussed more fully below.

Figure 5.3: Opinion on ACA Moving in Favorable Direction

Net favorability toward the Affordable Care Act in 2014 and 2017 by party identification



NOTE: Net favorability is the percent favorable minus the percent unfavorable.
SOURCE: 2014 and 2017 Louisiana Surveys

Knowledge of Medicaid Expansion Provision Has No Impact on Opinion of Affordable Care Act

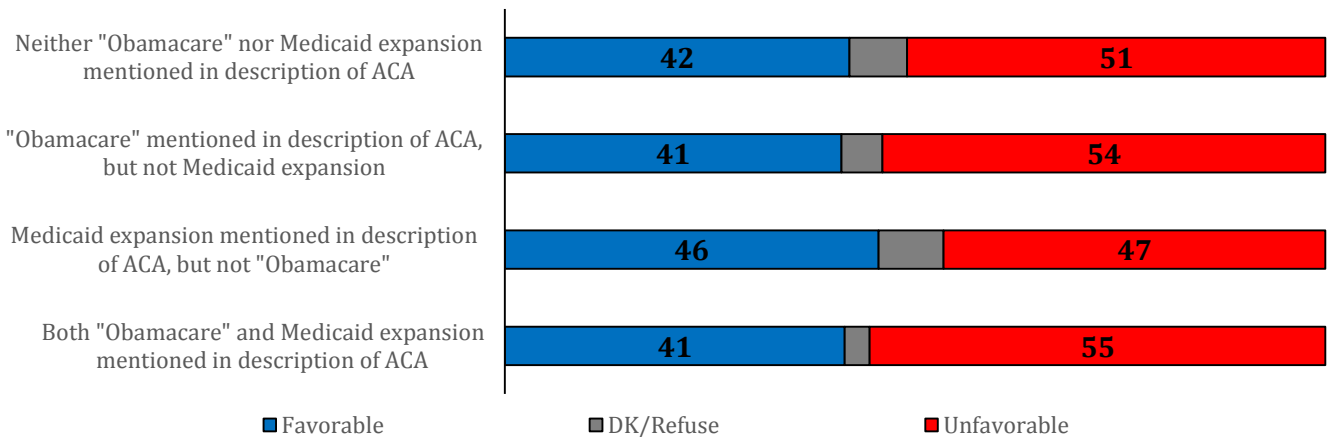
Unfavorable opinions of the ACA in Louisiana are *not* driven by a failure to understand that the law allows for the popular policy of expanding Medicaid. To test for this possibility in the 2017 Louisiana Survey, respondents were randomly assigned either to the question measuring favorability of the ACA described above or to

another version of the question that also included the statement: “One of the provisions of the Affordable Care Act allows states like Louisiana to expand their Medicaid programs to cover more people who did not have health insurance.”

Additionally, respondents were further split randomly across two other versions of these questions that also included the phrase “sometimes called Obamacare” after first referring to the health care law as the Affordable Care Act. The purpose of this variation is to

Figure 5.4: Connecting Medicaid Expansion to ACA Does Little to Change Opinions of ACA

Percent saying they have a generally _____ opinion of the Affordable Care Act



NOTE: Each respondent was randomly assigned to one of four versions of the question. The versions differed in the inclusion of the phrase "Obamacare" and reference to Medicaid expansion in the description of the Affordable Care Act.
SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

determine the effect of a potentially more familiar (and more polarizing) title on respondents' opinions of the ACA. Thus, there are four versions of the question about favorability toward the ACA: One that mentions neither the term "Obamacare" nor Medicaid expansion; a second that mentions the term "Obamacare" but not Medicaid expansion; a third that mentions Medicaid expansion but not "Obamacare;" and a fourth mentioning both "Obamacare" and Medicaid expansion.

Being told that the ACA allows for Medicaid expansion in Louisiana does not, on average, improve opinion of the federal health care law (figure 5.4). This is true whether or not the law is also described as "Obamacare." In contrast, describing the law as "Obamacare" does increase the share of unfavorable opinions *when the provision for Medicaid expansion is also mentioned*.¹⁰ In other words, even potentially favorable information about a popular provision of the ACA is undercut by the implications of using the term "Obamacare."

¹⁰ When the Medicaid expansion provision is not also mentioned, the term "Obamacare" has no particular impact on opinions of the ACA.

6. Social Issues

Opinion in Louisiana on “Religious Freedom” Laws Follows National Polarization

Like the nation as a whole in recent years, the state of Louisiana has seen factious debates over issues that touch on both the civil rights of LGBT individuals and concerns over religious freedoms and traditional values. One example is the debate over laws that would allow businesses or other organizations to refuse services to individuals whose behaviors do not comport with the religious beliefs of the organization or business operator.

Supporters, who often refer to these policies as “religious-freedom” laws, argue that they protect the liberty of the organizations and business operators to practice their religion by allowing

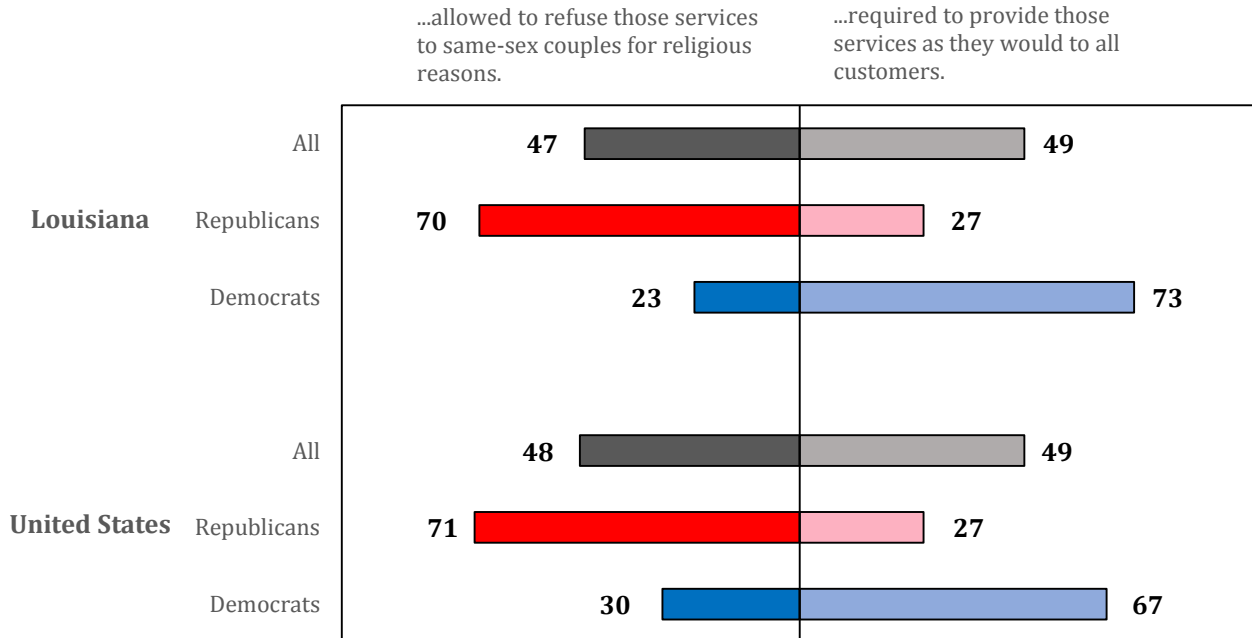
them to conduct their activities in keeping with their faith. The most widely cited examples of this practice involve individuals or businesses that provide wedding services but object to providing these services to same-sex couples. Opponents contend these laws would permit discrimination against LGBT individuals.

To measure public opinion in the state regarding this type of law, the *Louisiana Survey* included questions asking respondents whether a business providing wedding services, such as catering or flowers, should be allowed to refuse services to same-sex couples for religious reasons, or whether the business should be required to provide those services as it would to all customers. The wording replicates a [question posed by the Pew Research Center](#) to a national sample in the late summer of 2016.

Opinion in Louisiana is remarkably similar to opinion across the country (figure 6.1). Like the United States as a whole, Louisianans are split

Figure 6.1: Partisan Divides Over Same Sex Wedding Services Follow National Pattern

Percent saying that businesses that provide wedding services should be...

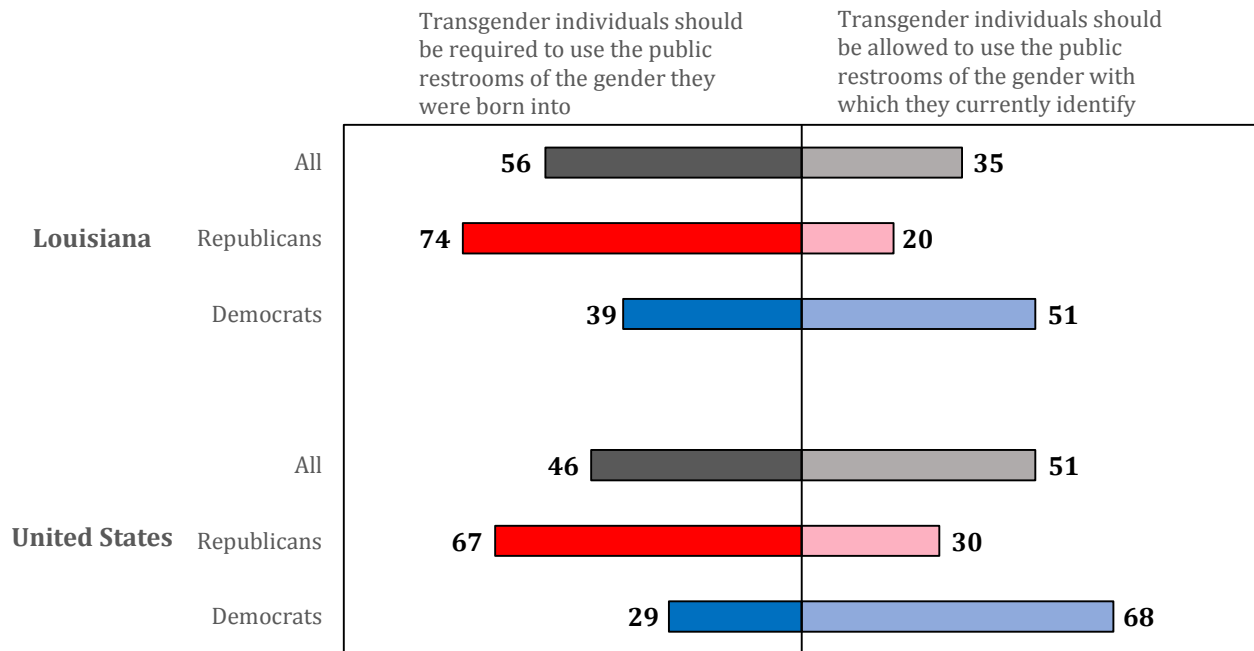


NOTE: Partisans include those who 'lean' toward the party.

SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey and Pew Research Center's "Where the Public Stands on Religious Liberty vs. Nondiscrimination" (2016).

Figure 6.2: More Louisiana Residents Say Transgender Individuals Should Be Required to Use Public Restrooms of Gender They Were Born Into

Percent saying, if you had to choose, which comes closer to your own view...



NOTE: Partisans include those who 'lean' toward the party.

SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey and Pew Research Center's "Where the Public Stands on Religious Liberty vs. Nondiscrimination" (2016).

about evenly between those who think businesses should be allowed to refuse services to same-sex couples on religious grounds (47 percent) and those who believe these businesses should be required to provide their services (49 percent).

Furthermore, the opinions of Republicans and Democrats in Louisiana are polarized on this issue in the same way as the parties are nationally. Seventy percent of Republicans in Louisiana think businesses should be allowed to refuse services to same-sex couples for religious reasons, and only about one-fourth (27 percent) think businesses should be required to provide services to same-sex couples as they would to others. This is the mirror opposite of opinion among Democrats, 73 percent of whom think business should be required to serve same-sex couples as they would others and only 23 percent of whom think businesses should be allowed to refuse service on the basis of religion.

Louisiana More Conservative on Use of Public Restrooms by Transgender Individuals

Another recent example, nationally, of a political fight between those advocating for civil rights of LGBT individuals and those advocating for traditional values is the debate over the use of public restrooms by transgender individuals. To measure attitudes on this issue in the state, the Louisiana Survey replicated another question from the Pew Research Center's 2016 survey.

Specifically, the question asks, "If you had to choose, which comes closer to your view: Transgender people should be required to use the public restrooms of the gender they were born into, or transgender people should be allowed to use the public restrooms of the gender with which they currently identify?"

National opinion on this issue splits in a very similar manner as opinion on “religious-freedom” laws – 46 percent say transgender individuals should be required to use the restroom of the gender into which they were born, and 51 percent say they should be allowed to use the restroom of the gender with which they currently identify. Once again, the parties are mirror reflections of each other (figure 6.2).

In Louisiana, however, opinion leans in a more conservative direction. A majority (56 percent) think transgender people should be required to use the bathroom of the gender they were born into, while only about a third think they should be allowed to use the restroom of the gender with which they currently identify. Even within each party, opinion in Louisiana leans in a more conservative direction. This is particularly true among Democrats. Nationally, a clear majority of Democrats (68 percent) think transgender people should be allowed to use the restroom of the gender with which they currently identify, but in

Louisiana only about half of Democrats (51 percent) think so.

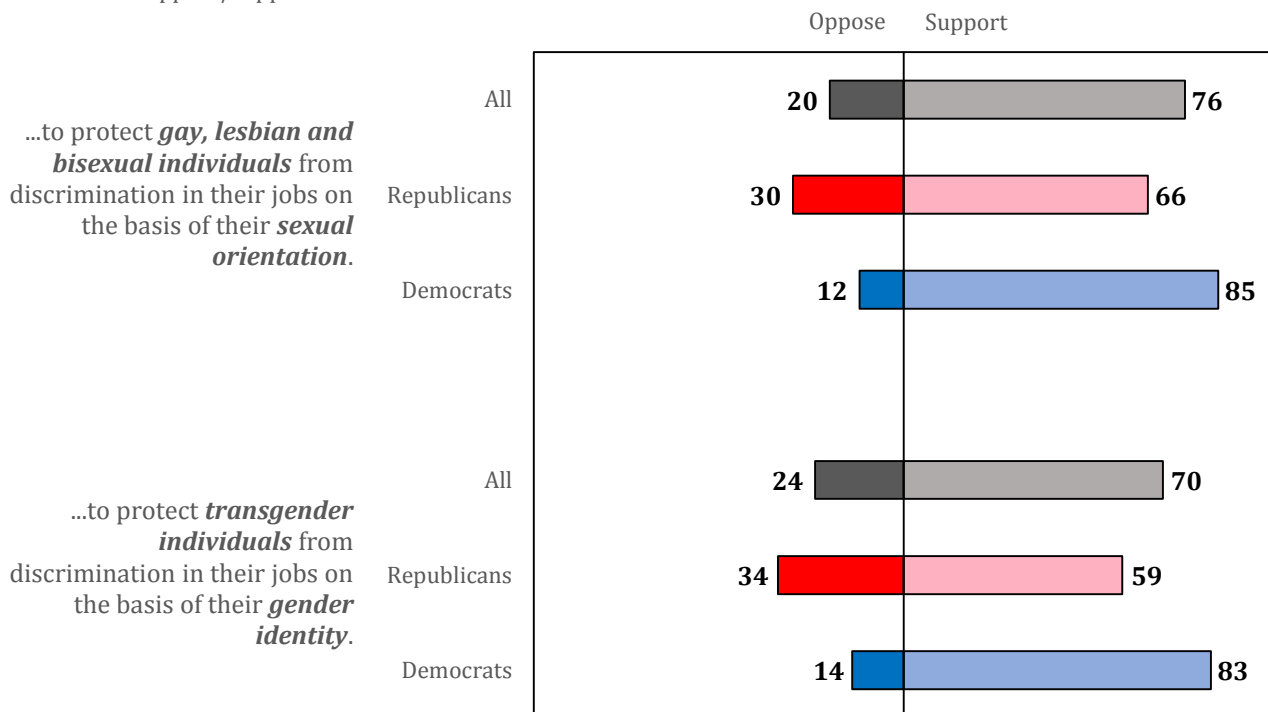
Most Support Legal Protection against Discrimination in the Workplace on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

Despite a conservative tilt on the issue of public restroom use by transgender individuals, a large majority of Louisianans support state laws to protect LGBT individuals from discrimination in their jobs on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity (figure 6.3).

Among the Louisiana public as a whole, 76 percent support legal protection from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation. A similar share (70 percent) support protection from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of gender identity. In each case, Democrats are more supportive than

Figure 6.3: Smaller Divisions On Workplace Protections Against Discrimination

Percent who oppose/support a state law...



NOTE: Partisans include those who 'lean' toward the party.
SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

Republicans, but majorities of both parties endorse these protections.

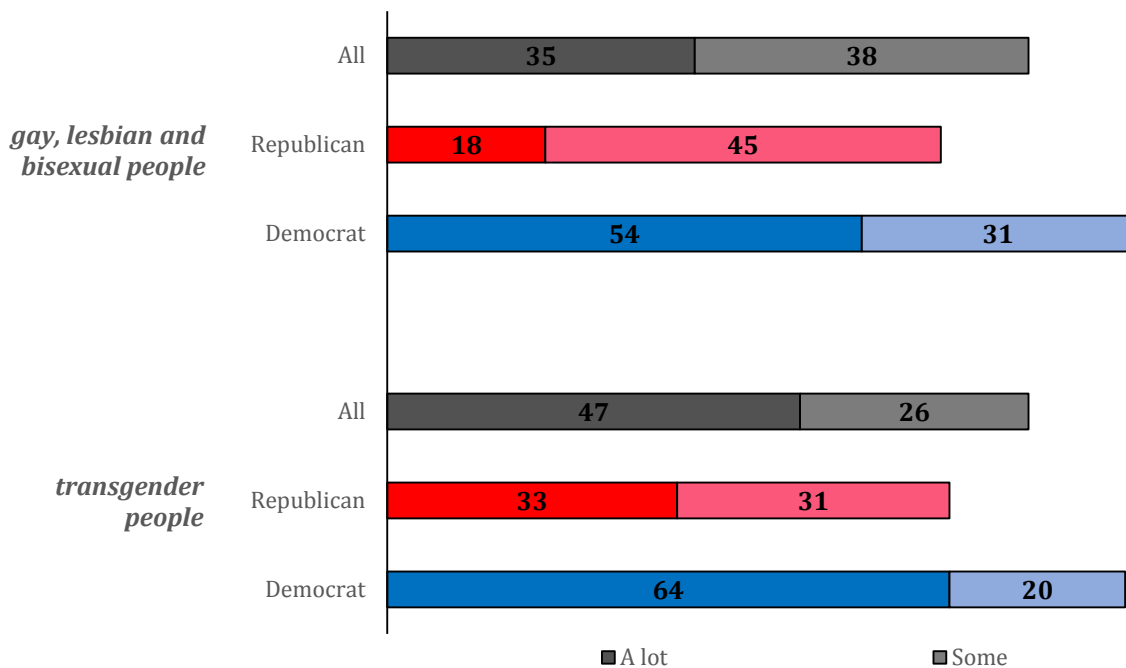
Parties Have Different Views of How Much Discrimination There Is against LGBT Individuals

One potential explanation for partisan differences on issues involving the civil rights of LGBT individuals may be gaps in how much actual discrimination Democrats and Republicans think

LGBT individuals face in society today. Both in the case of gay, lesbian and bisexual people as well as the case of transgender people, the share of Democrats who say these groups face “a lot” or “some” discrimination is about 20 percentage points higher than the share among Republicans (figure 6.4). Furthermore, the share of Democrats who say these groups face “a lot” of discrimination is far higher than the share of Republicans.

Figure 6.4: Partisan Gaps in Perceptions of Discrimination Against LGBT Individuals

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



NOTE: Percentages for “only a little” and “none at all” are not shown. Partisans include those who ‘lean’ toward the party.
SOURCE: 2017 Louisiana Survey

Survey Methodology

The data in this report were collected from a randomly selected sample of adult (18 years or older) residents of Louisiana via telephone interviews conducted from February 23 through March 23, 2017. The project includes live-interviewer surveys of 414 respondents contacted via landline telephone and 598 respondents contacted via cell phone, for a total sample of 1,012 respondents. 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.

The response rate is ten 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 telephone surveys have declined 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.

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 2015 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 +/- 3.1 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.

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, conducted telephone interviews, 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 for only those respondents who were asked the particular question. Additionally, questions where responses are affected by the information experiment on taxes used in this survey are further broken out between those in the “control condition” who received no additional information about how the overall state and local tax burden in Louisiana compares to other states and those in the “treatment condition” who received this information. 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	46
Wrong direction	40
Don't know/Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	15

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 1.3)

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	5
Somewhat confident	35
Not very confident	36
Not at all confident	20
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

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	55
Worse	23
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	16
Same	39
Worse	40
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

[THERE IS NO Q6]

Q7.

As you may know, students are often given a grade A through F to evaluate their performance. We would like you to give grades to various aspects of life in Louisiana. First, what grade would you give to Louisiana as a place to live?

A	23
B	32
C	30
D	10
F	4
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q8.

What grade would you give to state economic development efforts?

A	4
B	19
C	47
D	20
F	8
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q9.

What grade would you give to Louisiana's roads, bridges, and highways?

A	2
B	10
C	24
D	33
F	30
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	0

Q10.

What grade would you give to the overall quality of health care in Louisiana?

A	7
B	22
C	37
D	20
F	11
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

[THERE IS NO Q11]

Q12.

What grade would you give to state colleges and universities?

A	19
B	39
C	29
D	6
F	2
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q13.

What grade would you give to public schools in Louisiana?

A	6
B	15
C	37
D	24
F	15
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q14A. [ASKED TO ONLY 216 RESPONDENTS, RANDOMLY SELECTED]

What grade would you give to public schools in your local school district overall?

A	13
B	30
C	21
D	20
F	11
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

[THERE IS NO Q15]

[Q16 ASKED FOLLOWING Q66]

Q17.

As you may know, the state of Louisiana is facing a budget shortfall. Budget shortfalls happen when the government does not have enough money coming in to pay for the cost of the things it does. In your view, when the legislature and the governor discuss steps to address shortfalls in the state budget, should they focus [RANDOMIZE ORDER: only on spending cuts, only on tax increases] or should they do a combination of both?

Only on spending cuts	24
Only on tax increases	2
Combination of both	71
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q18.

If both spending cuts and tax increases are being considered should the focus be [ORDER OF RESPONSES RANDOMIZED AND READ]:

Mostly on spending cuts	67
Mostly on tax increases	25
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	7

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Only on spending cuts	24
Only on tax increases	2
Combination of both, mostly spending cuts	48
Combination of both, mostly tax increases	18
Combination of both, don't know/refused [VOL.]	5
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

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.]

Q19.

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

Increased	61
Decreased	5
Kept the same	32
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for primary and secondary education?

Support	84
Oppose	16
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep the current level of spending for primary and secondary education?

Support	33
Oppose	65
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	51
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	10
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	0
Decrease spending	5
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	10
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	21
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q21.

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

Increased	61
Decreased	7
Kept the same	31
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for higher education?

Support	81
Oppose	17
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep the current level of spending for higher education?

Support	32
Oppose	66
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	49
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	11
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Decrease spending	7
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	10
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	21
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q23.

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

Increased	50
Decreased	12
Kept the same	35
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for health care?

Support	79
Oppose	19
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep the current level of spending for health care?

Support	37
Oppose	60
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	40
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	9
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Decrease spending	12
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	13
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	21
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q25.

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

Increased	68
Decreased	5
Kept the same	27
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for roads, bridges and highways?

Support	70
Oppose	29
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep the current level of spending for roads, bridges and highways?

Support	34
Oppose	64
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	48
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	19
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Decrease spending	5
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	9
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	17
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	0
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q27.

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

Increased	10
Decreased	42
Kept the same	43
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for prisons and incarceration?

Support	67
Oppose	32
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	0

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

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep the current level of spending for prisons and incarceration?

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

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	7
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	3
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	0
Decrease spending	42
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	8
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	34
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q29.

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

Increased	17
Decreased	41
Kept the same	39
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q30A. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Increased" FOR Q29]

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to increase spending for welfare, food stamps and other public assistance programs?

Support	78
Oppose	22
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q30B. [ASKED ONLY TO RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "Kept the same" FOR Q29]

Would you support or oppose raising taxes in order to keep the current level of spending for welfare, food stamps and other public assistance programs?

Support	37
Oppose	61
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Increase spending & support raising taxes	13
Increase spending & oppose raising taxes	4
Increase spending & don't know/refused [VOL.]	0
Decrease spending	41
Keep spending same & support raising taxes	14
Keep spending same & oppose raising taxes	24
Keep spending same & don't know/refused [VOL.]	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

[THERE IS NO Q31 THROUGH Q35]

Q36

Thinking about the overall tax burden in Louisiana - that is, how much Louisiana residents pay in all state and local taxes - do you think it is higher than in most other states, lower than most other states, or about the same?

Higher	39
Lower	20
About the same	31
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	11

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

Next, we'd like to know your opinions about taxes in the state. First, thinking about state income taxes on individuals and households, would you say that state income taxes are too high and should be reduced, too low and should be increased, or just about right?

Too high and need to be reduced	29
Too low and need to be increased	12
Just about right	54
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

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

As it turns out, according to a recent national report that compared the overall state and local tax burdens - that is, the amount paid in all local and state taxes - across all the states, the average burden in Louisiana is lower than in most states. The average amount a Louisiana resident pays for all state and local taxes is about 3,000 dollars, but the average amount residents of all the states in the country pay for all state and local taxes is about 4,500 dollars.

Next, we'd like to know your opinions about various taxes in the state. First, thinking about state income taxes on individuals and households, would you say that state income taxes are too high and should be reduced, too low and should be increased, or just about right?

Too high and need to be reduced	22
Too low and need to be increased	14
Just about right	58
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

[Q38 ASKED FOLLOWING Q39]

Q39.

What about the state sales tax, 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?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
Too high and need to be reduced	44	35	39
Too low and need to be increased	8	9	8
Just about right	47	55	51
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2	2	2

Q38.

Now, we'd like to ask you about various proposals that have been made to change taxes in Louisiana. First, would you support or oppose lowering state income tax rates in exchange for limiting some of the deductions a taxpayer can claim on their state income taxes, such as deducting the amount you pay in federal income taxes from your state income taxes?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
Support	50	46	48
Oppose	41	40	40
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	10	14	12

Q40.

Do you support or oppose lowering the state sales tax rate in exchange for extending the states sales tax to apply to certain kinds of purchases that are not currently charged a sales tax, such as cable television, haircuts, lawn care, and veterinary services?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
Support	38	46	42
Oppose	57	49	53
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4	5	5

[THERE IS NO Q41]

Q42.

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?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
More than your fair share	37	30	34
Less than your fair share	4	3	3
About the right amount	56	65	60
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3	2	3

Q43.

As I read off some different groups, please tell me if you think they are paying more than their fair share of state taxes, less than their fair share, or about the right amount. First, how about lower-income people, are they paying more than their fair share of state taxes, less than their fair share, or about the right amount?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
More than their fair share	29	26	27
Less than their fair share	22	19	21
About the right amount	40	47	44
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	8	8	8

Q44.

Next, how about middle-income people, are they paying more than their fair share of state taxes, less than their fair share or about the right amount?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
More than their fair share	43	44	43
Less than their fair share	6	7	7
About the right amount	47	45	46
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4	4	4

Q45.

How about upper-income people, are they paying more than their fair share of state taxes, less than their fair share, or about the right amount?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
More than their fair share	13	12	12
Less than their fair share	55	56	55
About the right amount	26	27	27
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	7	5	6

Q46A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q46A OR TO Q46B]

How about corporations, are they paying more than their fair share of state taxes, less than their fair share, or about the right amount?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
More than their fair share	7	10	8
Less than their fair share	60	54	57
About the right amount	24	25	25
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9	11	10

Q46B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q46A OR TO Q46B]

How about businesses, are they paying more than their fair share of state taxes, less than their fair share, or about the right amount?

	<u>Q37A GROUP:</u>	<u>Q37B GROUP:</u>	<u>TOTAL SAMPLE:</u>
More than their fair share	24	20	22
Less than their fair share	22	30	26
About the right amount	42	40	41
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	12	11	12

Q47.

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	65
No, could not spend less	30
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q48. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED 'Yes, could spend less' FOR Q47]

How much do you think state government could cut its spending without having to reduce services?

Five percent or less	17
Between six percent and 10 percent	38
Between 11 percent and 20 percent	23
Between 21 percent and 30 percent	8
More than 30 percent	8
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Could not spend less	30
Five percent or less	11
Between six percent and 10 percent	24
Between 11 percent and 20 percent	15
Between 21 percent and 30 percent	5
More than 30 percent	5
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	10

Q49.

Next, I will ask you about different amounts of household income, and I would like you to tell me if you think a household with that income is lower-income, middle-income, or upper-income. First, a household with an income of \$10,000, would you say that household is lower-income, middle-income, or upper-income?

Lower income	95
Middle income	3
Upper income	1
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q50. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER 'Upper income' FOR Q49]

What about a household with an income of \$25,000?

Lower income	83
Middle income	14
Upper income	2
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Lower income	82
Middle income	14
Upper income	3
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q51. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER 'Upper income' FOR Q49 THROUGH Q50]

What about a household with an income of \$35,000?

Lower income	56
Middle income	39
Upper income	4
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Lower income	54
Middle income	37
Upper income	7
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q52. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER 'Upper income' FOR Q49 THROUGH Q51]
 What about a household with an income of \$45,000?

Lower income	26
Middle income	65
Upper income	8
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Lower income	24
Middle income	60
Upper income	15
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q53. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER 'Upper income' FOR Q49 THROUGH Q52]
 What about a household with an income of \$75,000?

Lower income	3
Middle income	60
Upper income	36
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Lower income	3
Middle income	51
Upper income	45
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q54. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER 'Upper income' FOR Q49 THROUGH Q53]
 What about a household with an income of \$100,000?

Lower income	0
Middle income	51
Upper income	47
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Lower income	0
Middle income	28
Upper income	71
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q55. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER 'Upper income' FOR Q49 THROUGH Q54]
What about a household with an income of \$150,000?

Lower income	1
Middle income	47
Upper income	50
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Lower income	0
Middle income	14
Upper income	86
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q56. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER 'Upper income' FOR Q49 THROUGH Q55]
What about a household with an income of \$200,000?

Lower income	1
Middle income	32
Upper income	62
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Lower income	0
Middle income	5
Upper income	94
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q57. [ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID NOT ANSWER 'Upper income' FOR Q49 THROUGH Q56]
What about a household with an income of \$325,000?

Lower income	1
Middle income	26
Upper income	64
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	9

TOTAL SAMPLE:

Lower income	0
Middle income	1
Upper income	98
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	0

Q58.

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

A lot	32
Some	32
Only a little	24
None at all	11
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q59.

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	27
This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace	71
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q60.

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	40
There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men	58
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q61.

Do you support or oppose the state requiring employers in Louisiana to pay men and women the same amount for the same job?

Support	91
Oppose	7
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q62.

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. Last year 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	72
Disapprove	24
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

[THERE IS NO Q63]

Q64A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO ONLY ONE OF Q64A, Q64B, Q64C OR Q64D]

As you may know, the Affordable Care Act was signed in to law in 2010. Given what you know about the Affordable Care Act, do you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of it?

Favorable	42
Unfavorable	51
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	7

Q64B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO ONLY ONE OF Q64A, Q64B, Q64C OR Q64D]

As you may know, the Affordable Care Act, sometimes called Obamacare, was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the Affordable Care Act, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?

Favorable	41
Unfavorable	54
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q64C. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO ONLY ONE OF Q64A, Q64B, Q64C OR Q64D]

As you may know, the Affordable Care Act was signed into law in 2010. One of the provisions of the Affordable Care Act allows states like Louisiana to expand their Medicaid programs to cover more people who did not have health insurance. Given what you know about the Affordable Care Act, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?

Favorable	46
Unfavorable	47
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	8

Q64D. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO ONLY ONE OF Q64A, Q64B, Q64C OR Q64D]

As you may know, the Affordable Care Act, sometimes called Obamacare, was signed into law in 2010. One of the provisions of the Affordable Care Act allows states like Louisiana to expand their Medicaid programs to cover more people who did not have health insurance. Given what you know about the Affordable Care Act, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?

Favorable	41
Unfavorable	55
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q65A.

As you may be aware, TOPS is a scholarship program funded by the state of Louisiana that provides financial support for Louisiana high school students to attend colleges and universities in Louisiana. As the state faces budget shortfalls, leaders are considering ways to reduce the cost of the program. We would like to know what you think about a few of these proposals. First, would you favor or oppose reducing the amount of the award to something less than the cost of tuition?

Favor	33
Oppose	64
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q65B.

What about increasing the academic requirements to qualify for an award - for example requiring a higher grade point average and/or ACT score? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

Favor	60
Oppose	38
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q65C. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q65C OR Q65D]

What about limiting the program so financial aid does not go to children of high-income families that can afford to pay for college? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

Favor	56
Oppose	42
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q65D. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q65C OR Q65D]

What about limiting the program so financial aid goes only to children of low-income families that cannot afford to pay for college? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

Favor	47
Oppose	52
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q66A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q66A, Q66B, Q66C OR Q66D]

Would you support or oppose increasing the state tax on gasoline by 5 cents per gallon if the money is dedicated to improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure?

Support	73
Oppose	26
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q66B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q66A, Q66B, Q66C OR Q66D]

Would you support or oppose increasing the state tax on gasoline by 10 cents per gallon if the money is dedicated to improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure?

Support	58
Oppose	41
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q66C. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q66A, Q66B, Q66C OR Q66D]

Would you support or oppose increasing the state tax on gasoline by 15 cents per gallon if the money is dedicated to improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure?

Support	61
Oppose	39
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	0

Q66D. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q66A, Q66B, Q66C OR Q66D]

Would you support or oppose increasing the state tax on gasoline by 20 cents per gallon if the money is dedicated to improving highways, bridges, and other infrastructure?

Support	53
Oppose	46
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1

Q16.

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

Increased	65
Decreased	6
Stayed about the same	26
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q67A.

We would like to ask you about race relations in the state. Do you think race relations in Louisiana are getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better	34
Getting worse	51
Staying about the same	13
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

Q67.

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	34
Disagree	51
Neither	13
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

[THERE IS NO Q68]

Q69A. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q69A, Q69B OR Q69C]

Do you support or oppose shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes?

Support	75
Oppose	19
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q69B. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q69A, Q69B OR Q69C]

Do you support or oppose shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes, such as fraud or using illegal drugs?

Support	69
Oppose	29
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q69C. [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO Q3A, Q3B, OR Q3C WITH EQUAL PROBABILITY.]

Do you support or oppose shorter sentences for people convicted of non-violent crimes, such as burglary or selling illegal drugs?

Support	54
Oppose	39
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	7

Q70.

Do you support or oppose having more alternatives to prison - such as drug treatment or rehabilitation programs - for people convicted of non-violent offenses?

Support	86
Oppose	12
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	2

Q71.

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

Support	72
Oppose	25
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	3

[THERE IS NO Q72]

Q73.

How much discrimination would you say there is in our society today against gay, lesbian and bisexual people?

A lot	35
Some	38
Only a little	19
None at all	4
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q74.

If a business provides wedding services, such as catering or flowers, should it be allowed to refuse those services to same-sex couples for religious reasons, or be required to provide those services as it would to all customers?

Allowed to refuse services to same sex couples	47
Required to provide services to same sex couples as it would others	49
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q75.

Do you support or oppose a state law to protect gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals from discrimination in their jobs on the basis of their sexual orientation?

Support	76
Oppose	20
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	4

Q76.

How much discrimination would you say there is in our society today against transgender people, such as people who were [RANDOMIZE: born female but now identify and live as males / born male but now identify and live as females]?

A lot	47
Some	26
Only a little	16
None at all	4
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	6

Q77. [ORDER OF RESPONSE OPTIONS MATCH RANDOMIZED ORDER APPEAR IN QUESTION TEXT]

As you may know, recent stories in the news have highlighted a debate over the use of public restrooms by transgender individuals. Some argue that transgender people [RANDOMIZE: should be allowed to use the public restrooms of the gender with which they currently identify / should be required to use the public restrooms of the gender they were born into]. Others argue that transgender people [should be required to use the public restrooms of the gender they were born into / should be allowed to use the public restrooms of the gender with which they currently identify]. We're interested in your views about this situation. If you had to choose, which comes closer to your view?

They should be allowed to use the public restrooms of the gender with which they currently identify	35
They should be required to use the public restrooms of the gender they were born into	56
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	10

Q78.

Do you support or oppose a state law to protect transgender individuals from discrimination in their jobs on the basis of their gender identity?

Support	70
Oppose	24
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	5

Q79.

Would you say your household is upper-income, middle-income or lower-income?

Lower income	35
Middle income	51
Upper income	12
Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	1