



## **Most state residents support legalization of gambling on professional sports**

Majority supports legalizing recreational marijuana use and opposes restrictions on assault weapons or high capacity magazines



*The sixth in a series of six reports from the 2019 Louisiana Survey, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs*

For further information on this report:  
Michael Henderson, PhD  
225-578-5149  
[mbhende1@lsu.edu](mailto:mbhende1@lsu.edu)

# Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

The Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs is partnership-driven, action-oriented, and dedicated to exploring contemporary issues at the intersection of mass communication and public life. Its interdisciplinary approach draws together experts from diverse fields to advance research and dialogue. The intent is to inspire our communities to think deeply, develop solutions, take action and broaden knowledge. 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, the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the 2016 historic floods. Underlying the Center's endeavors is to strengthen and advance the Manship School's national and state leadership in media and politics.

For further information on the Reilly Center:

Dr. Jenée Slocum, Director  
225-938-9333  
[jenee@lsu.edu](mailto:jenee@lsu.edu)

## About the Louisiana Survey

The *2019 Louisiana Survey* is the eighteenth 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 *2019 Louisiana Survey*, this core is supplemented by measures of support for compromise; support for increases in teacher pay, the minimum wage, and the gasoline tax; approval of major recent policy developments such as criminal justice reform and Medicaid expansion; and attitudes toward a number of social issues such as gun policy, marijuana legalization, and sports gambling.

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

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

### Principal Author

Michael Henderson, PhD  
Assistant Professor, Manship School of Mass Communication  
Director, Public Policy Research Lab  
[mbhende1@lsu.edu](mailto:mbhende1@lsu.edu)

## Summary

This is the sixth of six reports from the *2019 Louisiana Survey*, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication.

This report includes results for sports gambling, recreational marijuana, and gun policy.

Key results include:

- Fifty-nine percent of state residents support legalizing gambling on professional sporting events.
- Fifty-five percent of Louisiana residents support legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for recreational use.
- Fifty-seven percent of Louisiana residents oppose banning the sale of assault weapons, and 61 percent oppose banning high capacity ammunition magazines. Of the three firearm restrictions included in the *2019 Louisiana Survey*, preventing people with mental illness from purchasing guns is the only one to receive majority support (69 percent). In fact, a majority of residents support at least one form of expanding gun rights. Fifty-nine percent of Louisiana residents want the state to allow the carry of concealed guns in more places

## Social Issues

### Majority support for legalizing betting on professional sports

Fifty-nine percent of state residents support legalizing gambling on professional sporting events. Only 35 percent oppose legalizing this form of gambling in the state. Unlike many other policy issues, there is virtually no difference between the opinions of Democrats and Republicans on sports betting. Instead, the chief divisions of opinion cut across age and region. Seventy-four percent of 18 to 29 year olds and 73 percent of 30 to 49 year olds support legalizing betting on sporting events. About half (53 percent) of 50 to 64 year olds and only 38 percent of those 65 years or older support the policy change.

Support is strongest in the metro New Orleans area where 68 percent support legalizing gambling on professional sporting events. Throughout the rest of south Louisiana, 58 percent support legalizing this form of gambling. In north Louisiana 52 percent support legalizing this form of gambling.

### Majority support for legalizing recreational use of marijuana

Fifty-five percent of Louisiana residents support legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for recreational use. As with sports betting, there are significant generational and regional divisions of opinion. Eighty percent of 18 to 29 year olds

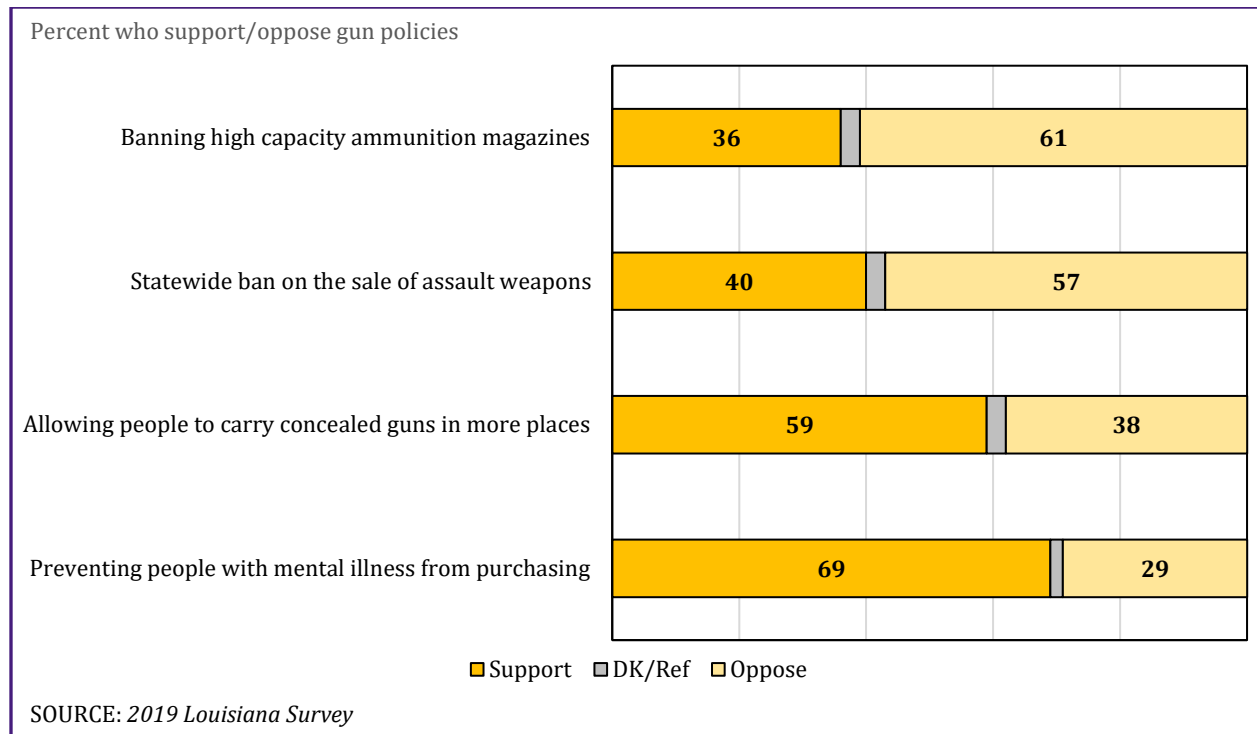
support legalizing recreational use of marijuana. Support remains substantial among 30 to 49 year olds at 67 percent. In contrast, 50 to 64 year olds split almost evenly between supporters (51 percent) and opponents (46 percent). A large majority (69 percent) of residents who are 65 years or older oppose legalizing marijuana for recreational use.

### Most state residents oppose restrictions on sale of assault weapons or high capacity magazines

Fifty-seven percent of Louisiana residents oppose banning the sale of assault weapons, and 61 percent oppose banning high capacity ammunition magazines (figure 1). Of the three firearm restrictions included in the 2019 Louisiana Survey, preventing people with mental illness from purchasing guns is the only one to receive majority support (69 percent).

In fact, a majority of residents support at least one form of expanding gun rights. Fifty-nine percent of Louisiana residents want the state to allow the carry of concealed guns in more places. Although Louisiana currently allows for concealed carry licenses, it restricts residents from carrying concealed guns in certain types of locations such as commercial establishments that sell alcohol or school “firearm free zones.”

**Figure 1: Majority opposes bans on assault weapons or high capacity magazines**



## Survey Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted among a statewide sample of 917 adults (18 years of age or older) living in Louisiana. The survey was conducted by interviewers at Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab. The sample includes 385 respondents interviewed via landline telephone and 532 respondents interviewed on a cellphone, including 365 who do not have a landline telephone. Interviews for this survey were conducted from February 7 to March 15, 2019.

Approximately three-fourths of the sample (76 percent) was stratified across parishes proportional to their adult population to ensure geographic representation across the state. The remaining 24 percent of the sample was drawn statewide. For both the parish and statewide samples, the design of the landline samples ensures representation of both listed and unlisted numbers by use of random digit dialing. Similarly, the cell phone samples are randomly drawn from known, available phone number banks dedicated to wireless service. Both samples, landline and cellphone, were provided by Marketing Systems Group.

The combined landline and cell phone sample is weighted using an iterative procedure that matches race, education, household income, gender, and age to known profiles for the adult population of Louisiana found in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2017 one-year estimates. 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 +/- 4.6 percentage points. The margin of error includes adjustment due to the weighting procedure. The design effect due to weighting is 1.4 percentage points; that is, the margin of error is 1.4 percentage points larger than it would be for a simple random sample of this size without weighting.

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

The *2019 Louisiana Survey* has a response rate of six percent. This response rate is the percentage of eligible residential households or personal cell phones in the sample for which an interview is completed. The rate is calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's method for Response Rate 3 as published in their Standard Definitions. Response rates for telephones have been on decline for several decades and frequently fall in the single digits even among the very best survey research organizations.

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



## Question Wording and Toplines

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

### Q1.

Do you support or oppose making betting on professional sporting events legal in Louisiana?

Support .....	59
Oppose.....	35
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] .....	6

### Q2.

Do you support or oppose legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for recreational use?

Support .....	55
Oppose.....	42
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] .....	3

### Q3.

Do you support or oppose a statewide ban on the sale of assault weapons?

Support .....	40
Oppose.....	57
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] .....	3

### Q4.

Do you support or oppose allowing people to carry concealed guns in more places?

Support .....	59
Oppose.....	38
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] .....	3

### Q5.

Do you support or oppose banning high capacity ammunition magazines that hold more than ten rounds?

Support .....	36
Oppose.....	61
Don't know/Refused [VOL.] .....	3

**Q6.**

Do you support or oppose preventing people with mental illness from purchasing guns?

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