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Statewide Survey on Budget Situation and Special Session

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Statewide Survey on Budget Situation and Special Session

The University of New Orleans' Survey Research Center conducted an interactive voice response (IVR) telephone survey on February 7th, 2017 on the topics of the state's budget situation and the governor's call for a special session. The sample size of 919 respondents yields a 3.2% margin of error with 95% confidence. Data for this survey were post-weighted by the race, gender, age and regional parameters for the population of active registered voters in Louisiana.

About IVR Surveys - IVR surveys, also known as "robo-polls", employ an automated, recorded voice to call respondents who are asked to answer questions by punching telephone keys. Advantages of IVR surveys include their low cost, the almost immediate collection of data, and the simple and convenient processing of data. They also reduce interviewer bias to zero by eliminating the live human interviewer. Every survey respondent hears the same question read the same way. Demographic categories of race, age, gender, and political party identification are self-reported by the respondent to ensure a valid and accurate analysis.

Post-Weighting

Ideally, the sample of respondents should reflect the population of interest. In other words, the sample from this survey should be representative of the population active registered voters in Louisiana. Unfortunately, this is usually not the case. One of the issues with telephone surveys today are low response rates since some people may screen their calls or hang-up when called. This may cause some groups to be over- or under-represented.

Additionally, IVR surveying is prohibited by FCC rules from calling cell phone numbers. Only voice-over-Internet protocol (VOIP) and land-line phone numbers can be called.¹ Residents who are cell phone only who would be eligible to participate are excluded from IVR polls. For this particular survey, 30 percent of our random sample contained cell phone or duplicate phone numbers that were excluded.²

Because of low response rates in telephone surveys and the inability to call cell phone numbers, no reliable conclusions can be drawn from the observed survey data unless the sample has been post-weighted to correct for the lack of representativeness.³ It is imperative that survey analysts accurately post weight the cases to reflect the demographics of the population of interest. In this instance the sample was post-weighted to reflect the age, race, gender, and regional parameters of the population active registered voters in Louisiana.

¹ Forty-four percent of households in Louisiana are wireless-only. National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless_state_201608.pdf

² We randomly selected 30,000 phone numbers for our sample and 9,203 numbers were removed because they were identified as either duplicate numbers or cell phone numbers.

³ Applied Survey Methods: A Statistical Perspective - <http://www.applied-survey-methods.com/weight.html>

John Bel Edwards Job Approval Rating

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	49	39	69	43	55	74	29	44
Disapprove	36	46	17	45	28	13	57	35
DK	15	15	14	12	17	13	14	20
(N)	919	578	284	416	503	344	378	198

	Under 50	Over 49	District One	District Two	District Three	District Four	District Five	District Six
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	46	52	42	71	44	49	39	51
Disapprove	41	31	40	19	43	40	41	34
DK	13	17	18	10	13	11	20	15
(N)	476	443	158	159	153	147	147	155

We first asked respondents whether they approve or disapprove of Governor John Bel Edwards' job performance. The governor enjoys an approval rating of 49 percent while 36 percent say they disapprove of him. Edwards receives strong support from African-Americans and Democrats. Whites and Republicans, however, are more likely to rate the governor negatively. Women are more likely to report they approve of the governor while men are basically split in their evaluation of his job performance.

The survey indicates that a plurality of younger respondents approve of the governor and a majority of older respondents give him positive marks.

There is variation in the governor's approval rating across the state's six congressional districts. Respondents in Districts One, Three and Five are basically split in their evaluations of the governor. A majority of respondents in District Six are happy with Edwards while respondents in District Two are extremely positive in their evaluation of the governor.

Louisiana Legislature Job Approval Rating

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	24	22	30	24	24	30	21	21
Disapprove	50	54	43	57	44	41	54	57
DK	26	25	28	19	32	29	25	22
(N)	919	578	284	416	503	344	378	198

	Under 50	Over 49	District One	District Two	District Three	District Four	District Five	District Six
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	23	25	20	33	18	24	22	26
Disapprove	53	47	57	42	50	56	47	47
DK	24	29	23	25	32	20	31	27
(N)	476	443	158	159	153	147	147	155

Respondents report by a 2 to 1 margin that that they disapprove of the legislature’s performance. A majority of whites, males, Republicans and Independents/Other Party rate the the legislature negatively. While men and women express equal rates of approval, a larger percentage of women do not express an opinion when asked to rate the legislature.

Interestingly, Democrats give the legislature higher approval ratings than do Republicans despite the fact that Republicans control both of Louisiana’s legislative chambers.

There are no significant differences across the two age groups when assessing the legislature’s job performance. There is some variation across congressional districts in the assessment of the state legislature. Respondents in District Two are more favorably disposed toward the legislature than are respondents in the other five congressional districts. In those districts, approval ratings for the legislature range from 18 percent to 26 percent.

Budget Crisis

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	75	77	73	75	75	75	73	79
No	15	14	18	18	13	15	18	13
DK	10	9	9	7	12	11	10	8
(N)	919	578	284	416	503	344	378	198

	Under 50	Over 49	District One	District Two	District Three	District Four	District Five	District Six
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	79	71	75	77	78	73	68	78
No	14	17	15	18	13	11	25	12
DK	8	12	10	4	9	16	8	10
(N)	476	443	158	159	153	147	147	155

We questioned respondents on whether they think Louisiana is facing a budget crisis. We found that that three-quarters of respondents believe that the state is experiencing financial difficulties. Moreover, there is widespread agreement on this issue across the demographic categories of race, gender and partisanship.

Younger respondents are slightly more likely than their older counterparts to express the viewpoint that the state is facing financial pressures. As for any regional differences, District Five is somewhat of an outlier. One-quarter of respondents from this district don't believe the state is facing a budget crisis. Nonetheless, they are still 2.5 times more likely than not to say the state's financial situation is dire.

Blame for Budget Crisis

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Jindal	60	49	87	55	65	87	35	62
Edwards	13	17	3	18	9	4	21	13
Legislature	23	29	8	23	23	8	37	21
DK	4	4	2	4	4	1	7	5
(N)	690	445	207	314	377	256	276	157

	Under 50	Over 49	District One	District Two	District Three	District Four	District Five	District Six
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Jindal	60	61	55	76	56	61	57	58
Edwards	15	10	13	5	13	19	12	17
Legislature	21	24	25	16	28	16	28	24
DK	4	4	8	2	4	4	3	2
(N)	374	316	118	123	119	108	100	120

Those respondents who replied that the state was facing a budget crisis were then asked who they thought was to blame for the crisis. It appears that former Governor Bobby Jindal continues to cast a shadow over the state's current budget situation with 60 percent of respondents in this survey answering that he is to blame. Approximately one-quarter of respondents attribute responsibility to the state legislature. Only 13 percent think that Governor Edwards is responsible for the budget crisis.

Forty-nine percent of whites and 87 percent of African-Americans blame the former governor for the current budget crisis. A majority of males and two-thirds of females also assign blame to Jindal, although men are twice as likely as women to credit Edwards for the budget crisis. Democrats overwhelmingly blame Jindal while Republicans equally fault the former governor and the current legislature. Sixty-two percent Independents/Other Party respondents also fault Jindal for the current budget crisis.

Younger respondents are as likely as their older counterparts to blame Jindal. A majority of respondents in every congressional district also charge that the former governor is to blame for the current budget difficulties, with three-fourths of District Two respondents holding this viewpoint.

Need for Special Session

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	68	64	79	67	70	78	59	70
No	18	23	9	24	14	8	28	19
DK	13	13	13	10	16	14	14	11
(N)	919	578	284	416	503	344	378	198

	Under 50	Over 49	District One	District Two	District Three	District Four	District Five	District Six
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	72	64	72	75	59	70	64	70
No	14	23	16	13	24	19	20	19
DK	13	13	12	12	18	11	16	11
(N)	476	443	158	159	153	147	147	155

We asked respondents if there was a need for a special session to address the state's budget situation. Two-thirds of respondents declared that there is, in fact, a need for the special session. Blacks and Democrats are particularly supportive of the governor's call for a special session. Republicans support the call for special session by a 2 to 1 margin and Independents/Other Party respondents back the effort by a 3.5 to 1 margin.

Younger respondents are more supportive of the special session than are older respondents. At least 7 in 10 respondents endorse the special session in 4 of the 6 congressional districts with 6 in 10 espousing the special session in the other 2 districts.

APPENDIX

Q1 – This is a 60 second confidential university survey of Louisiana voters. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Governor John Bel Edwards is doing? Press 1 for approve, press 2 for disapprove, press 3 for don't know.

Q2- Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Louisiana legislature is doing? Press 1 for approve, press 2 for disapprove, press 3 for don't know.

Q3- Do you think that the state of Louisiana is facing a budget crisis? Press 1 for yes, press 2 for no, press 3 for don't know.

Q4- Who do you blame for the state's budget crisis: former governor Bobby Jindal, Governor John Bel Edwards or the legislature? Press 1 for Bobby Jindal, press 2 for John Bel Edwards, press 3 for the legislature, press 4 for don't know.

Q5- Do you think there is a need for the special session called by the governor to address the state's budget situation? Press 1 for yes, press 2 for no, press 3 for don't know.

Q6-If you are male press 1, if you are female press 2.

Q7-If you are younger than 50 press 1, if you are older than 49 press 2

Q8-If you are black press 1, if you are white press 2, something else press 3.

Q9-If you consider yourself a Democrat press 1, Republican press 2, something else press 3

Demographic Profile of Sample

Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	416	45.3
Female	503	54.7
Total	919	100.0

Age

	Frequency	Percent
Under 50	476	51.8
Over 49	443	48.2
Total	919	100.0

Race

	Frequency	Percent
Black	284	30.9
White	578	62.8
Other	47	5.1
Total	909	98.8
Missing System	10	1.2
Total	919	100.0

Party Identification

	Frequency	Percent
Democrat	344	37.4
Republican	378	41.1
Other	198	21.5
Total	919	100.0

Congressional District

	Frequency	Percent
District 1	158	17.2
District 2	159	17.2
District 3	153	16.7
District 4	147	16.0
District 5	147	16.0
District 6	155	16.9
Total	919	100.0