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March 2018 Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Election Survey

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March 8, 2018

WDSU TV commissioned a survey of 767 randomly selected Jefferson Parish registered voters that was conducted March 4-5, 2018 by the University of New Orleans Survey Research Center on the topics of the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's race scheduled for March 24, 2018 and on the job approval of Jefferson Parish President Mike Yenni. Survey respondents were asked in an interactive voice response telephone survey (IVR)¹ who they preferred in the upcoming sheriff's race and whether they approved or disapproved of Yenni's job performance. This survey of 767 randomly selected respondents yields a margin of error of +/- 3.5% at a confidence level of 95%.

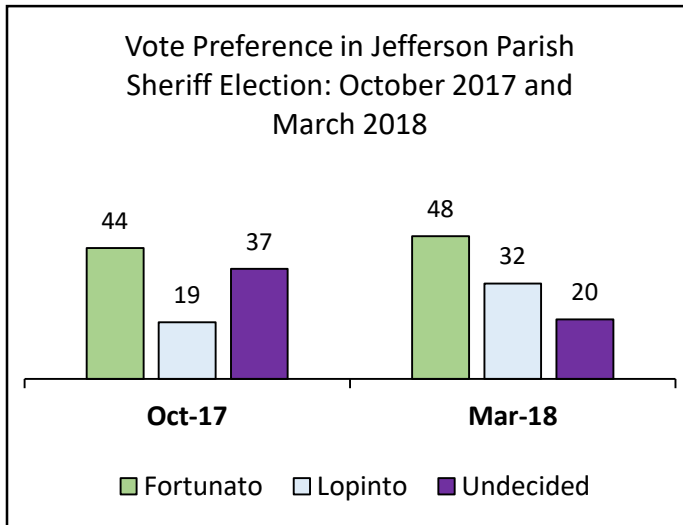
The findings from the current poll are compared with the results from an October 2017 poll of 426 randomly selected Jefferson Parish registered voters that inquired into who respondents supported in the sheriff's election and how they evaluated Mike Yenni's job performance. The sample size from the October study yields a margin of error of +/- 4.8% at a 95% confidence rate.

¹ 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.

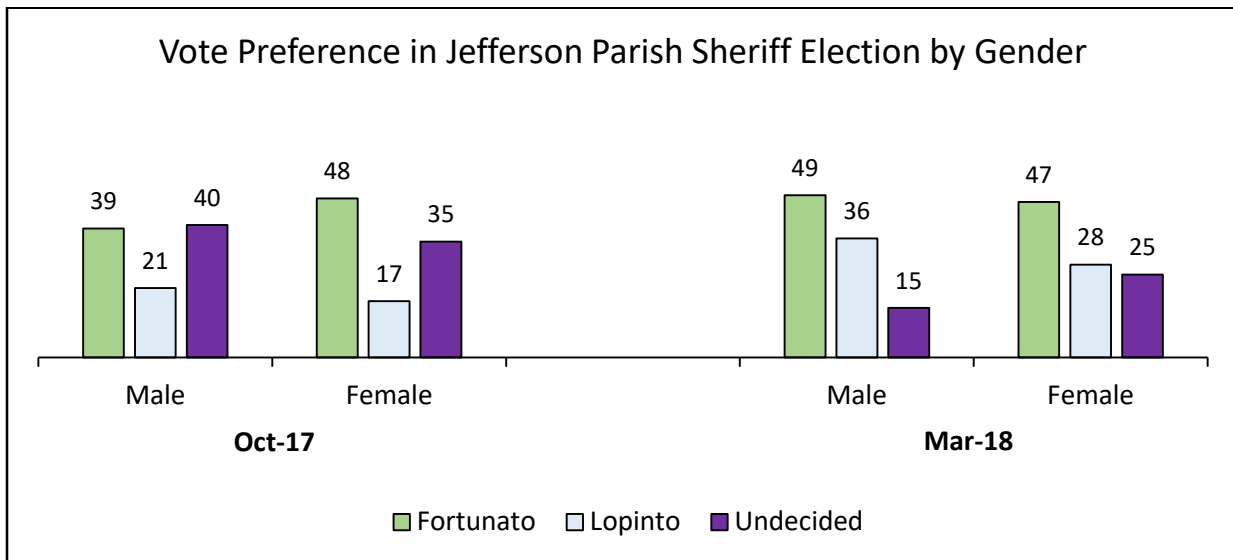
When conducting IVR surveys, pollsters must not rely on all details of a call list. They cannot assume that the details of the person in the file will match the individual who picks up the call. Demographic categories of race, age, gender, and political party identification must be self-reported by the respondent to ensure a valid and accurate analysis.

Ideally, the sample of respondents should reflect the population of interest. Unfortunately, this is usually not the case. One of the problems with telephone surveys is non-response since some people may screen their calls or hang-up when called. This may cause some groups to be over- or under-represented.

Because IVR surveying is prohibited by FCC rules from calling cell phone numbers, only VOIP and home phone numbers can be called. The growing trend of minority and younger households without land lines can result in a coverage error. Residents who are cell phone only who would be eligible to participate are excluded from IVR polls, unless they answer the survey from a home telephone in another home. As such, 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. It is imperative that survey analysts accurately post weight the cases to reflect the demographics of the population of interest. In this instance this sample was post-weighted to reflect gender, age, and race parameters of the population of registered voters in Jefferson Parish.

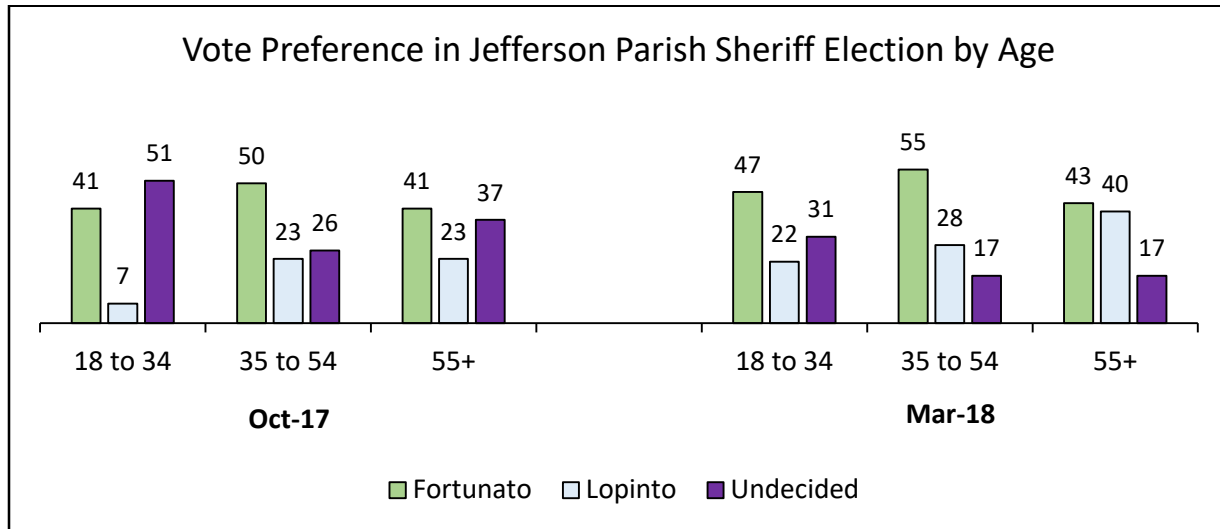


John Fortunato enjoys a double-digit lead over Joe Lopinto in both the October 2017 and the March 2018 IVR polls. The March survey indicates that Fortunato's numbers have risen slightly from what he received in the October poll. However, Lopinto has closed the gap to some extent. This is due to the fact that most of the people who were in the undecided category in the October survey have shifted towards Lopinto in the last several months.



Fortunato was more likely to be supported by males and females in both polls. His numbers are up among men in the March poll, but his support among women is unchanged from last fall. In the October IVR poll, men were equally split between voting for Fortunato and being undecided in their preference. Since then, Fortunato picked up 10 percent more males while Lopinto realized a 15 percentage point increase among men.

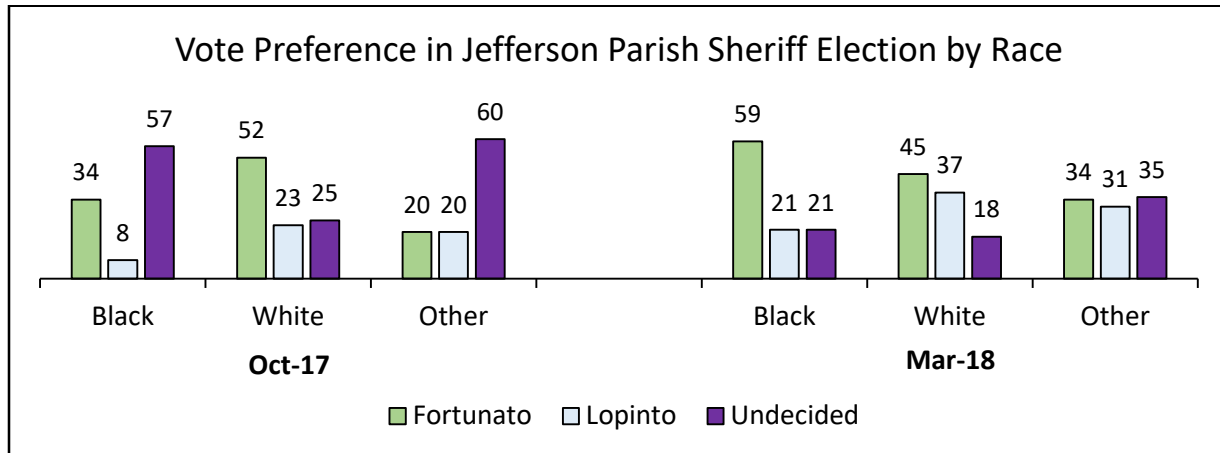
Women are more likely to back Lopinto today than they were last fall. His support among women has risen by 11 percentage points while the percentage of undecided women fell by 10 percentage points. One quarter of females remain undecided in who they would vote for sheriff.



Fortunato enjoys higher levels of support across all age categories in both polls. However, his margins have narrowed since the fall, particularly among older voters. A majority of younger respondents in October were unsure of who they would vote for. That number is down to 31 percent in the latest poll and the chart illustrates that the bulk of the undecided Millennials have moved into Lopinto's column.

Both Fortunato and Lopinto realized an increase of 5 percentage points among respondents age 35 to 54. Nonetheless, Fortunato continues to enjoy the majority of support from this age group.

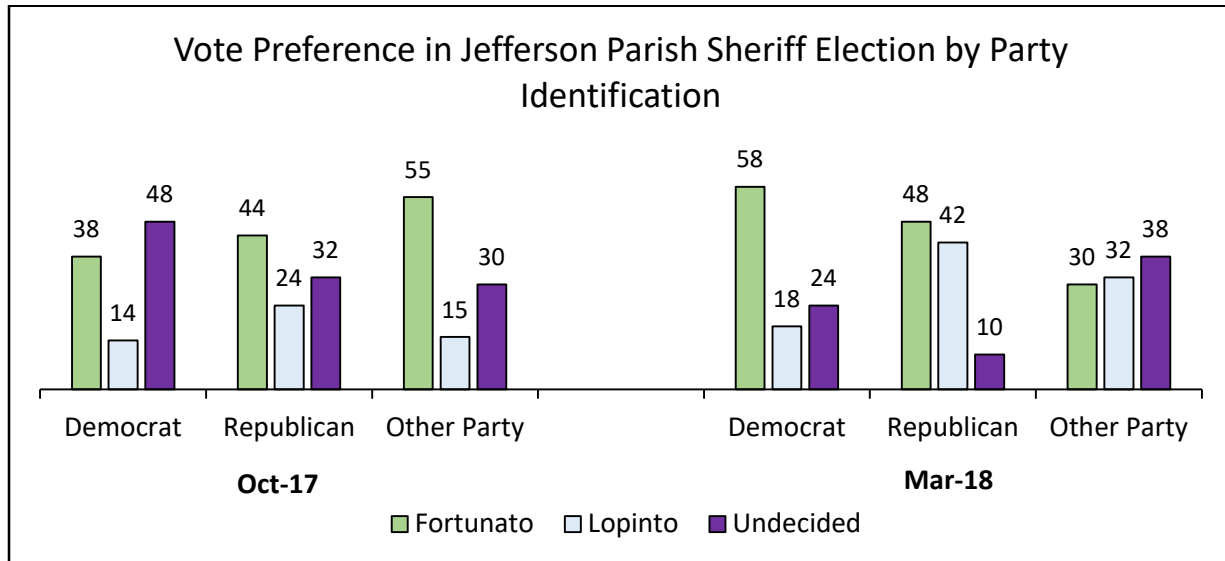
However, Lopinto is performing much better with the oldest age cohort in the March 2018 poll than he did in the fall. His support among respondents age 55 and older has risen from 23 percent to 40 percent while Fortunato's numbers are basically unchanged. Older registered voters are a key demographic when it comes to elections since they are more likely to be chronic voters who faithfully show up in low turnout elections.



A comparison of the two polls discloses there have been significant shifts in voter preference across all racial categories. Nearly six-in-ten blacks expressed no favorite in October, but that same percentage now prefers Fortunato. In fact, blacks favor Fortunato over Lopinto by a 3 to 1 margin. One fifth of blacks are still noncommittal.

A majority of whites in the October poll said they supported Fortunato, compared to less than one-quarter who preferred Lopinto. Those numbers have changed as Fortunato has lost support among white respondents while Lopinto has gained traction with them. Nearly one-in-five whites are still undecided.

Non-black minorities in the October poll were highly unsure of which candidate they preferred. As the chart illustrates, more of them expressed being undecided than said they supported a candidate. In the March poll, relatively equal percentages of non-black minorities favor both candidates and are not settled on a candidate.

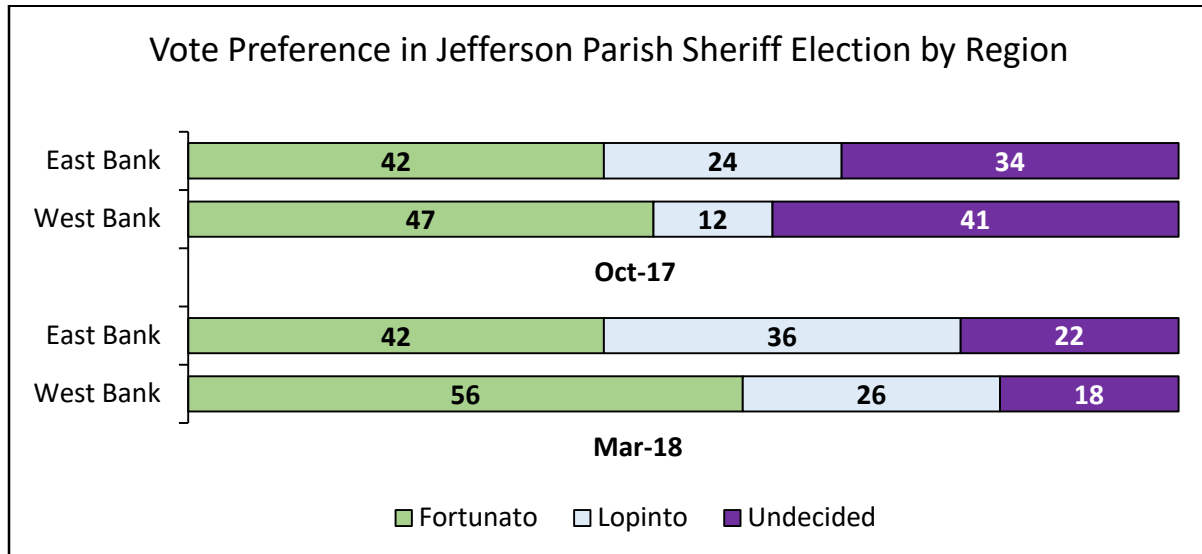


In the October poll, Fortunato enjoyed more support than Lopinto among Democrats, Republicans, and Other Party/Independents. Fortunato has increased his lead over Lopinto among Democrats, has lost much of his lead with Republicans, and is now behind Lopinto among Other Party/Independents.

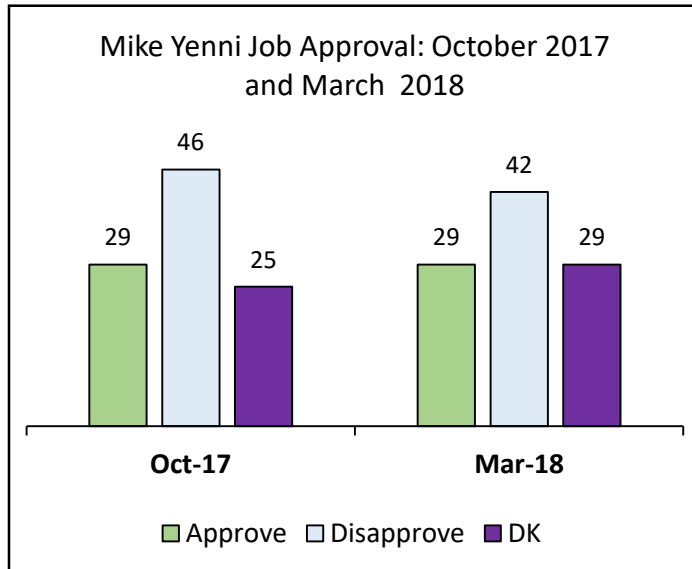
Nearly four-in-ten Democrats expressed support for Fortunato in the fall while nearly six-in-ten now say they favor him. Lopinto's support among Democrats only rose four percentage points. Democrats are one-half as likely to be undecided in the March poll as they were in the October poll.

Fortunato has seen a slight uptick in backing among Republicans, but Lopinto has enjoyed significant growth in Republican support. Fortunato was up by 20 percentage points over Lopinto with Republicans in the fall poll, but is now only six points ahead. It appears that many of the Republican undecided in the fall now favor Lopinto.

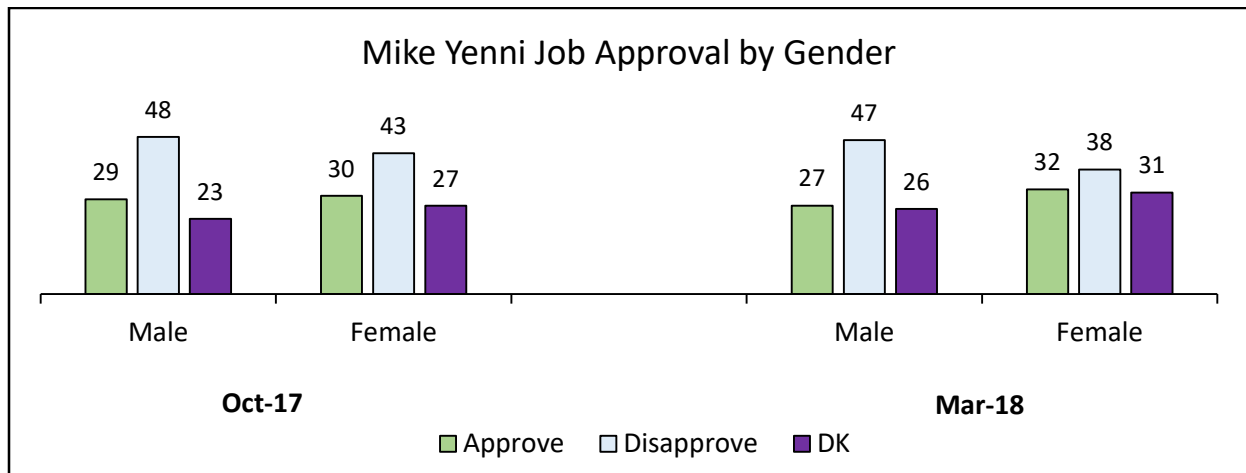
Lopinto is now the candidate of choice for Other Party/Independents. While Fortunato enjoyed the support of a majority of these folks in the October poll, it is down by almost half. At the same time, support for Lopinto has doubled over the last several months. Other Party/Independents are also more undecided now than when they were asked in October.



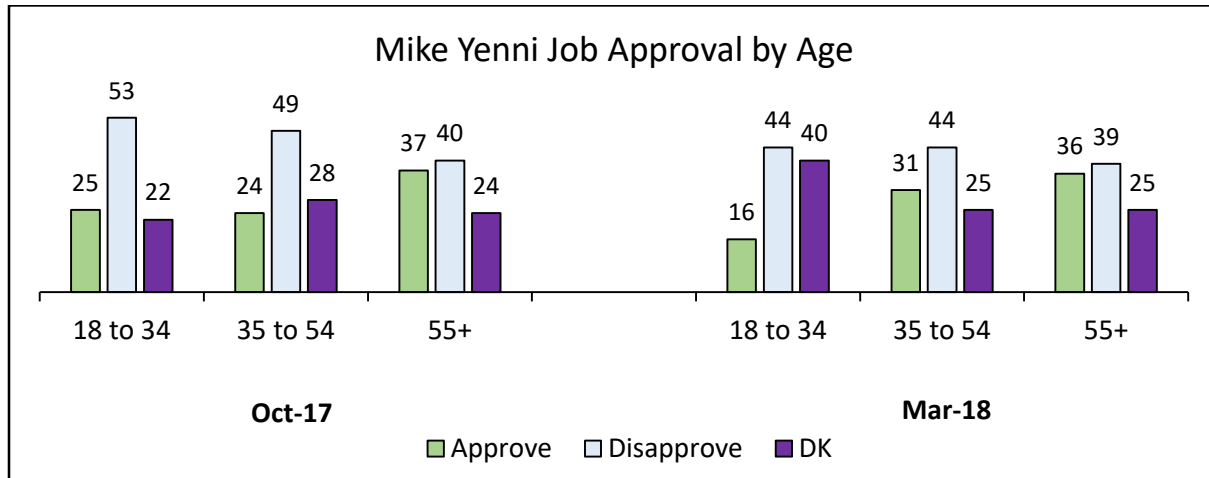
When respondents are broken along Eastbank and Westbank residency, both polls show Fortunato besting Lopinto on both sides of the river. Lopinto, however, has made significant gains in both areas of the parish. His support is up in the Eastbank by 50 percent (24 percent to 36 percent) and he doubled his support on the Westbank since the fall survey. Fortunato did not realize any growth in support on the Eastbank across the two surveys. However, he now enjoys the majority of support from Westbank residents.



Registered voters in Jefferson Parish continue to express their disapproval of Mike Yenni in his capacity as parish president. Only 29 percent of respondents in both polls gave him positive marks for his job performance. His disapproval numbers have dipped slightly since we last asked Jefferson Parish registered voters to evaluate his performance in office. There is a concurrent increase in the percentage of respondents not expressing an opinion on this question.



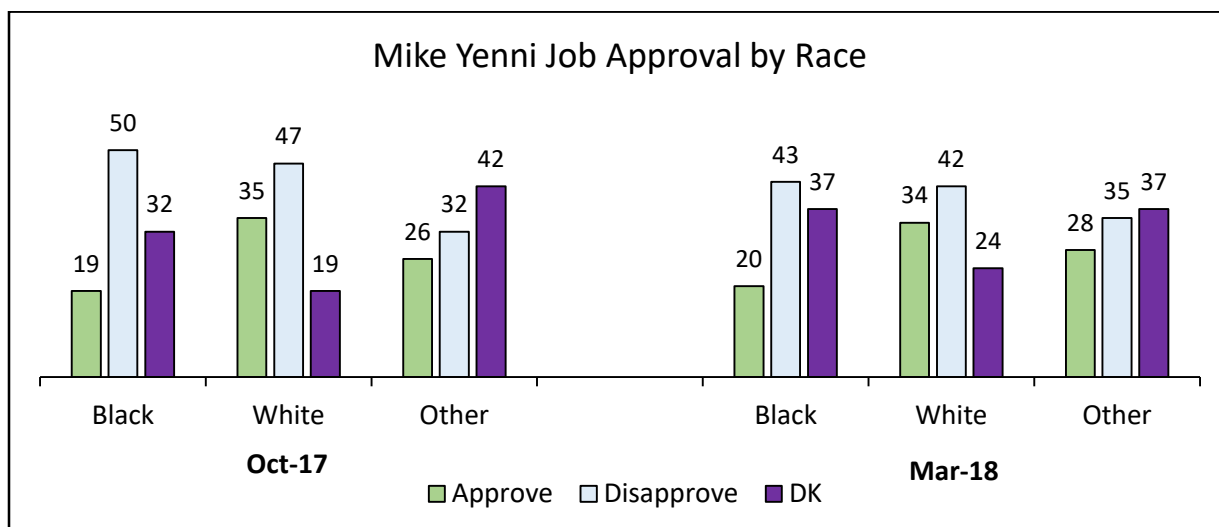
There is little change in attitudes toward Yenni by gender. Men are basically of the same mind about Yenni in the March poll as they were in October. However, females are a bit less disapproving in the current poll than they were in October.



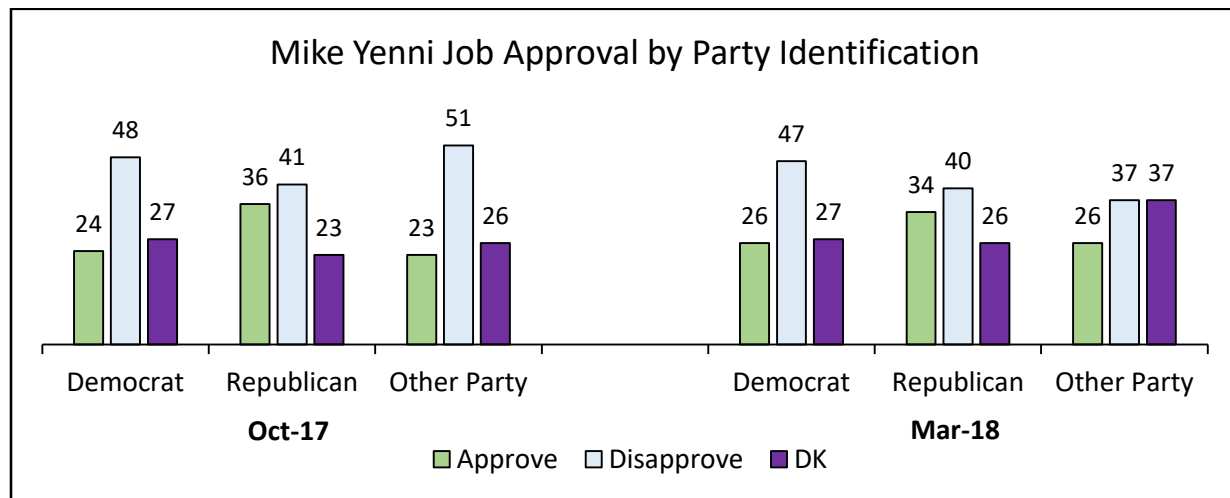
Jefferson Parish registered voters across all age groups disapprove of Yenni in both polls. A majority of Millennials in the October poll expressed their disapproval of the parish president, while one-quarter approved of him. Both numbers are down for the youngest age group, but the percentage of them expressing no opinion has almost doubled.

Middle aged respondents are slightly more approving of Yenni in the March poll than they were in the fall. They are also a little less disapproving than they were previously.

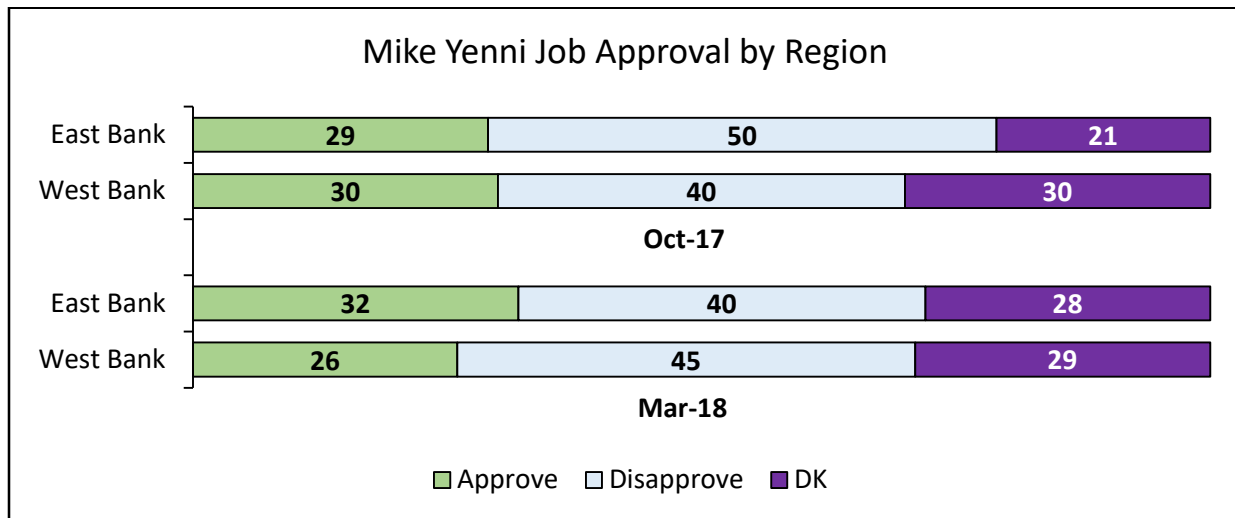
Attitudes toward Yenni by the parish's oldest registered voters have not changed over the two polls. Approximately one-third say they approve of Yenni, but older respondents are still more likely to report they disapprove.



Opinions of Yenni's job performance are relatively consistent across the two polls when controlling for race. Blacks, whites, and non-black minorities express the same level of approval in March as they did in October. However, both blacks and whites have a less negative view of Yenni in the current poll than they did in the fall. Their level of uncertainty about how they feel about Yenni is up from the October poll, but it is lower for non-black minorities.



There is very little change across polls in the outlook of Democrats toward Yenni. The same can be said for Republicans. There are changes in opinion for Other Party/Independents across the two polls. They not only express less disapproval in the current poll, but they also convey more ambivalence about Yenni's job performance.



In October 2017, thirty percent of respondents on both sides of the river rated Yenni positively in carrying out his duties in office. Conversely, one-half of Eastbank residents and 40 percent of Westbank inhabitants reported they disapproved of his job performance.

In the March 2018 poll, Yenni's approval rating is up 3 percentage points among registered voters living on the Eastbank, while his disapproval rating is down by 10 percentage points. Eastbankers were also more likely not reveal an opinion about Yenni in March than they were in October.

Registered voters residing on the Westbank, on the other hand, were less approving and more disapproving of the parish president in March than they were last fall.



Script for October 2017 and March 2018 IVR Surveys:

1. This is a sixty second confidential university survey of Jefferson Parish voters. If the election for sheriff was today, would you vote for Joseph Lopinto or John Fortunato?
Press 1 for John Fortunato, press 2 for Joseph Lopinto, press 3 for don't know.
2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of Parish President Mike Yenni?
Press 1 for approve, press 2 for disapprove, press 3 for don't know.
3. If you consider yourself to be a Democrat press 1, a Republican press 2, something else press 3.
4. If you are male press 1. If you are female press 2.
5. If you are younger than 35 press 1. If you are between 35 and 54 years old press 2. If you are older than 54 press 3.
6. If you are black press 1, white press 2, something else press 3.

Thank you for taking the survey.

Jefferson Parish Registered Voters	Oct-17	Mar-18
	%	%
Male	45	45
Female	55	55
Black	26	26
White	63	63
Non-black minority	11	11
Age 18-34	25	25
Age 35-54	32	32
Age 55+	43	43
East Bank residents	56	56
West Bank residents	44	44