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2017 Survey on Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Race and President Approval Rating

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An automated interactive voice response (IVR) survey of 426 randomly selected Jefferson Parish registered voters was conducted Tuesday October 17, 2017 on the topics of the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's race scheduled for March 24, 2018 and the job approval of Jefferson Parish President Mike Yenni. The survey was conducted by University of New Orleans political science doctoral candidate Tony Licciardi who is a research assistant at UNO's Survey Research Center under Dr. Edward Chervenak. Licciardi also teaches state and local government at UNO. The sample of 426 respondents yields a margin of error of 4.78% with 95% confidence.

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. Independent analyses from publications such as The Wall Street Journal and organizations such as the National Council on Public Polls have shown IVR surveys that are used to record candidate preferences have had an accuracy level comparable to live interviewer surveys.

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.

Post-Weighting

Ideally, the sample of respondents should reflect the population of interest. Unfortunately, this is usually not the case. One of the problems with IVR 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 Federal Communication Commission (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, race, and Westbank, or Eastbank residency of the population of Jefferson Parish registered voters.



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Survey Script

Q1-This is a 45 second confidential university survey of Jefferson Parish voters. If the sheriff's election was today, would you vote for Joseph Lopinto or John Fortunato? Press 1 for John Fortunato, press 2 for Joseph Lopinto, press 3 if you don't know.

Q2-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.

Q3-If you are younger than 35 press 1, if you are 35 to 54 years old press 2, if you are older than 54 press 3.

Q4-If you are male press 1, if you are female press 2.

Q5-If you are black press 1, white press 2, something else press 3.

Q6-If you consider yourself a Democrat press 1, Republican press 2, something else press 3.

-Thank you for taking the survey.



Cross-tabulations

Question 1 – *“If the sheriff’s election was today, would you vote for Joseph Lopinto or John Fortunato? Press 1 for John Fortunato, press 2 for Joseph Lopinto, press 3 if you don’t know.”*

Of all respondents, 44% say they would vote for Fotunato, 19% would vote for Lopinto and 37% did not know.

	Percent
Fortunato	44.0%
Lopinto	18.8%
Don't Know	37.1%
Total	100.0%

When respondents are broken down along Eastbank and Westbank residency, the results show a significant difference of support for Lopinto. Lopinto represented a portion of the Eastbank in the LA State House of Representatives from 2008-2016, which may account for doubled support he receives in this survey from Eastbank residents. Still in all, Fortunato bests Lopinto with 42% from Eastbankers and 47% from Westbankers.

Fortunato_or_Lopinto * Side_River Crosstabulation

% within Side_River

		Side_River		Total
		East Bank	West Bank	
Fortunato_or_Lopinto	Fortunato	41.7%	47.3%	44.1%
	Lopinto	24.2%	11.8%	18.8%
	Don't Know	34.2%	40.9%	37.1%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There is a gender gap in Fortunato’s support. Although he leads Lopinto with both men and women, Fortunato leads Lopinto 48% to 17% among women and 39% to 20% among men.

Fortunato_or_Lopinto * Gender Crosstabulation

% within Gender

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Fortunato_or_Lopinto	Fortunato	39.3%	48.0%	44.0%
	Lopinto	20.9%	17.0%	18.8%
	Don't Know	39.8%	34.9%	37.2%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



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Fortunato leads Lopinto in both black and white voters, but is split evenly among those who identify as “other”. The “other” race category constitutes 11% of registered voters in Jefferson Parish.

Fortunato_or_Lopinto * Race Crosstabulation

% within Race

		Race			
		Black	White	Other	Total
Fortunato_or_Lopinto	Fortunato	34.3%	52.0%	20.0%	43.8%
	Lopinto	8.3%	23.0%	20.0%	19.0%
	Don't Know	57.4%	24.9%	60.0%	37.2%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When cross tabulated with age categories, the chasm of support is largest among those voters 18-34 years old where Fortunato leads 41% to 7%. This age category makes up about 25% of the Jefferson Parish voter population and is least likely to vote. Voters aged 35 to 54 make up 32%, and those older than fifty-four (54) are 43% of Jefferson Parish voters.

Fortunato_or_Lopinto * Age Crosstabulation

% within Age

		Age			
		Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+	Total
Fortunato_or_Lopinto	Fortunato	41.3%	50.4%	40.9%	44.0%
	Lopinto	7.3%	23.4%	22.7%	19.0%
	Don't Know	51.4%	26.3%	36.5%	37.0%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



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Survey respondents were asked which political party they identified. Thirty-five percent (35%) identify as Democrats, 48% as Republicans, and 17% identify as something else. When asked who they would vote for if the election was that day, 38% of Democrats, 45% of Republicans, and 54% of “other party” said they would vote for Fortunato. Fourteen percent (14%) of Democrats, 24% of Republicans, and 15% of “other party” said they would vote for Lopinto.

Fortunato_or_Lopinto * Party Crosstabulation

% within Party

		Party			
		Democrat	Republican	Other Party	Total
Fortunato_or_Lopinto	Fortunato	37.7%	44.8%	54.8%	44.0%
	Lopinto	13.9%	23.6%	15.1%	18.7%
	Don't Know	48.3%	31.5%	30.1%	37.2%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Question2 – “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.”

Survey respondents were asked if they approved or disapproved of Parish President Mike Yenni. Of all respondents, only 29% approve of Yenni’s job performance.

While both Eastbankers (28.6%) and Westbankers (30.3%) give statistically the same job approval for Yenni, significantly more Eastbankers (50.2%) than Westbankers (39.5%) disapprove of his job performance. More Westbankers (30%) than Eastbankers (21%) say they don’t know about Yenni’s job performance.

There is a racial cleavage between the opinions of black voters and white voters about Yenni’s job performance. Only half as many black survey respondents (19%) as white respondents (35%) approve of the parish president’s performance.

There is an 11% difference of Yenni’s approval between Democrats (24.5%) and Republicans (35.5%). The “other” party category rates Yenni’s performance the lowest at 23%.

There is not much difference of opinion between respondents along gender lines. Men approve of Yenni at 28.9% and women approve at 29.7%

Yenni receives poor job performance ratings along all race, age, gender, and political party identification categories.

Yenni_Approval * Age Crosstabulation

% within Age

		Age			Total
		Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+	
Yenni_Approval	Approve	25.0%	23.5%	36.5%	29.4%
	Disapprove	52.8%	48.5%	39.8%	45.9%
	Don't Know	22.2%	27.9%	23.8%	24.7%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Yenni_Approval * Gender Crosstabulation

% within Gender

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Yenni_Approval	Approve	28.9%	29.7%	29.3%
	Disapprove	48.2%	43.2%	45.5%
	Don't Know	22.8%	27.1%	25.1%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



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Yenni_Approval * Side_River Crosstabulation

% within Side_River

		Side_River		Total
		East Bank	West Bank	
Yenni_Approval	Approve	28.6%	30.3%	29.3%
	Disapprove	50.2%	39.5%	45.5%
	Don't Know	21.2%	30.3%	25.1%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Yenni_Approval * Race Crosstabulation

% within Race

		Race			Total
		Black	White	Other	
Yenni_Approval	Approve	18.7%	34.6%	26.0%	29.6%
	Disapprove	49.5%	46.5%	32.0%	45.5%
	Don't Know	31.8%	19.0%	42.0%	24.9%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Yenni_Approval * Party Crosstabulation

% within Party

		Party			Total
		Democrat	Republican	Other Party	
Yenni_Approval	Approve	24.5%	35.5%	23.0%	29.4%
	Disapprove	48.3%	41.4%	51.4%	45.6%
	Don't Know	27.2%	23.2%	25.7%	25.0%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



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Conclusion

Long time Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department spokesman, Col. John Fortunato, currently enjoys a large lead over Acting Sheriff Joseph Lopinto in the Sheriff's race. The primary election is less than six months away. If other well-known candidates enter this race they will have a significant impact on these results. This survey did not ask about candidate name recognition. While Lopinto currently serves as Acting Sheriff, he likely does not have the same name recognition or familiarity as does Fortunato, the decades-long face and voice of the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department.

Parish President Mike Yenni appears to be locked into a low approval rut along all demographic categories. Electoral challengers in 2019 will find Yenni a vulnerable incumbent.



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Frequency Tables

Side_River

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	East Bank	240	56.4	56.4	56.4
	West Bank	186	43.6	43.6	100.0
	Total	426	100.0	100.0	

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	197	46.3	46.3	46.3
	Female	229	53.7	53.7	100.0
	Total	426	100.0	100.0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Age 18-34	108	25.5	25.5	25.5
	Age 35-54	136	32.0	32.0	57.4
	Age 55+	181	42.6	42.6	100.0
	Total	426	100.0	100.0	

Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black	108	25.3	25.3	25.3
	White	269	63.2	63.2	88.5
	Other	49	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	426	100.0	100.0	

Party Self ID

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Democrat	150	35.3	35.3	35.3
	Republican	203	47.6	47.6	82.9
	Other Party	73	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	426	100.0	100.0	



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Jefferson Parish Registered Voters	population
male	0.445
female	0.555
black	0.26
white	0.63
Other race	0.11
Age 18-34	0.247
Age 35-54	0.326
Age 55+	0.427
East Bank residents	.56
West Bank residents	.44