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2021 Mayoral Approval and Council at Large Election Survey: Orleans Parish

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**2021 MAYORAL APPROVAL AND COUNCIL AT LARGE ELECTION
SURVEY**

ORLEANS PARISH



October 2021

UNO Survey Research Center

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The University of New Orleans' Survey Research Center (SRC) conducted a live interviewer telephone survey of 605 likely voters in Orleans Parish. We asked respondents to rate Mayor LaToya Cantrell's job performance. We also inquired into which candidates likely voters would vote for in the two at-large city council elections. Lastly, we asked respondents to tell us what they thought was the biggest problem facing Orleans Parish. Their responses were recorded verbatim.

Only those registered voters who had voted at least six times in the past ten elections¹ were randomly selected for the sample from the Louisiana Secretary of State's voter file.² The live interviewer telephone survey was conducted from Monday, October 25th through Saturday, October 30th. The sample size yields a margin of error of +/- 4.0% with 95% confidence. The sample was post-weighted to reflect the gender, age, race, and council district parameters of the population of likely voters in Orleans Parish. The survey completion rate was 14%.³

Readers should be cautious in making narrow inferences about sub-categorical cross tabulations of survey results. While a poll of 605 random respondents yields a +/- 4.0% margin of error, sub-categorical group samples by race, age, and gender are smaller than the total sample size, thus, leading to wider margins of error when they are reported in cross tabulations.

- Mayor Cantrell enjoys a relatively high approval rating that is nearly double her disapproval rating.
- Helena Moreno enjoys a substantial lead over Kenneth Cutno in the Division 1 at-large City Council race.
- JP Morrell is leading Kristin Palmer in the Division 2 at-large City Council race, but a plurality of respondents say they are undecided on which candidate they support.
- Crime was mentioned as the biggest problem facing the parish by an overwhelming margin.

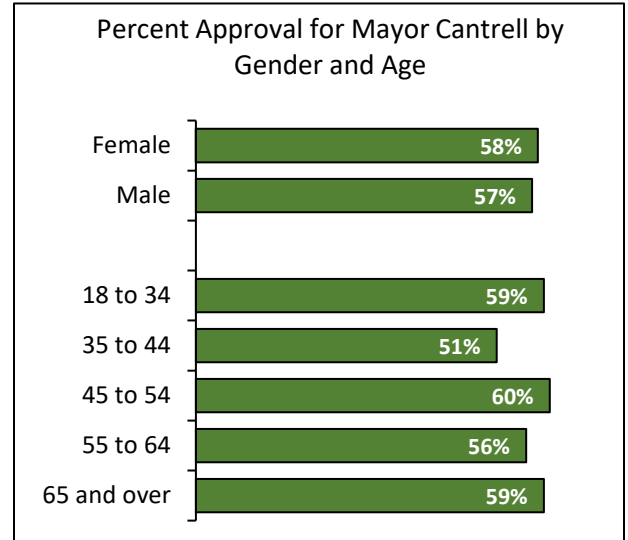
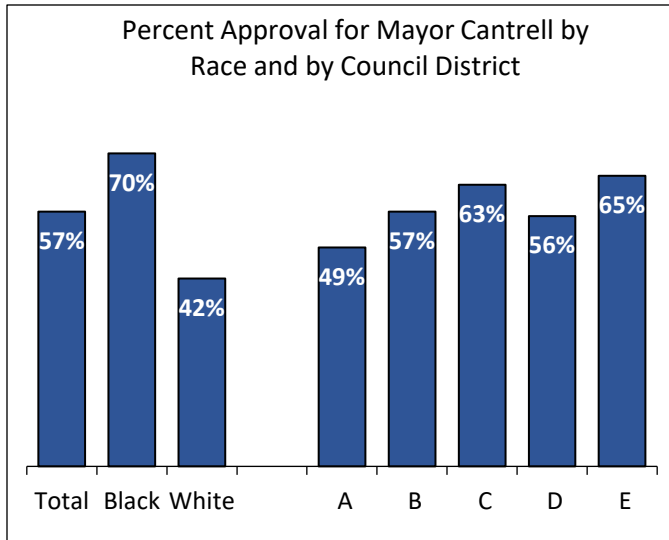
¹ The elections: December 2020 District Attorney, November 2020 Presidential election, November 2019 Governor runoff, October 2019 Governor Primary, December 2018 Secretary of State runoff, November 2018 Congressional election, March 2018 Judicial election, November 2017 Statewide runoff, October 2017 Statewide primary, and April 2017 Judicial election.

² Those registered voters who voted at six times in the past ten statewide elections comprise 26 percent of all registered voters in Orleans. Turnout in the 2017 mayoral primary election in Orleans was 32 percent. Turnout for the 2021 mayoral primary in Orleans is projected to be in the range of 25 to 30 percent.

³ Interviewers called 4,315 valid landlines and mobile phone numbers and collected 605 completed surveys.

NEW ORLEANS MAYOR JOB APPROVAL

New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell currently enjoys a 57% job approval rating while 30% disapprove of her job performance. Just over 12% did not offer an opinion. The mayor's approval rating from this poll was the same rating she received in the 2018 Quality of Life Survey conducted by the University of New Orleans Survey Research Center.⁴ Cantrell was elected to office with 60% of the vote in November 2017.



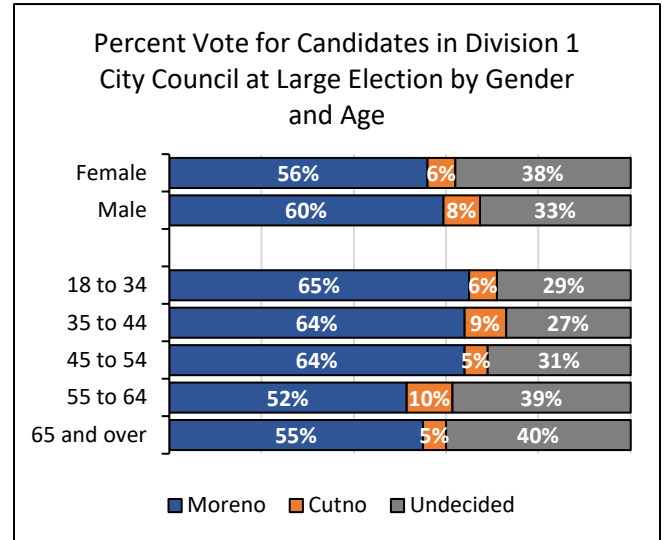
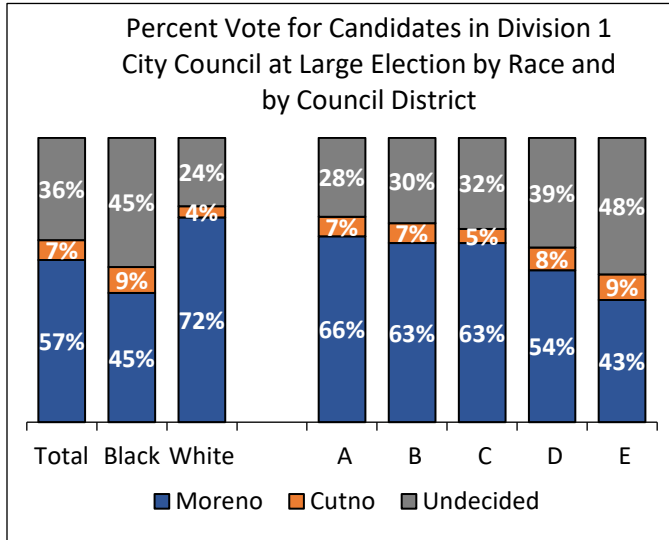
There was a 28-point racial gap in evaluations of Cantrell as the city's chief executive. That's nearly 3 times the size found in the 2018 survey. While a majority of whites gave the mayor a positive rating in 2018, this time around they were more likely to say they disapprove of her performance in office (46% to 42%).

The mayor's ratings differed slightly throughout the city. Her lowest approval rating was found in District A. However, she was perceived positively by majorities in the other four districts. Nearly two-thirds of likely voters in District C and District E approved of Mayor Cantrell. She was rated equally by men and women. The only variation in approval across age categories was found among likely voters age 35 to 44.

⁴ University of New Orleans Survey Research Center. *2018 Quality of Life Survey: Orleans and Jefferson Parish*. (November 2018)

COUNCIL AT LARGE, DIVISION ONE

Helena Moreno, the current incumbent in the at-large city council seat, enjoys a prodigious lead over the challenger, Kenneth Cutno. According to likely voters we surveyed, 57% reported they were voting for Moreno, while only 7% answered they were going with Cutno. Over one-third of respondents, 36% replied that they were undecided.



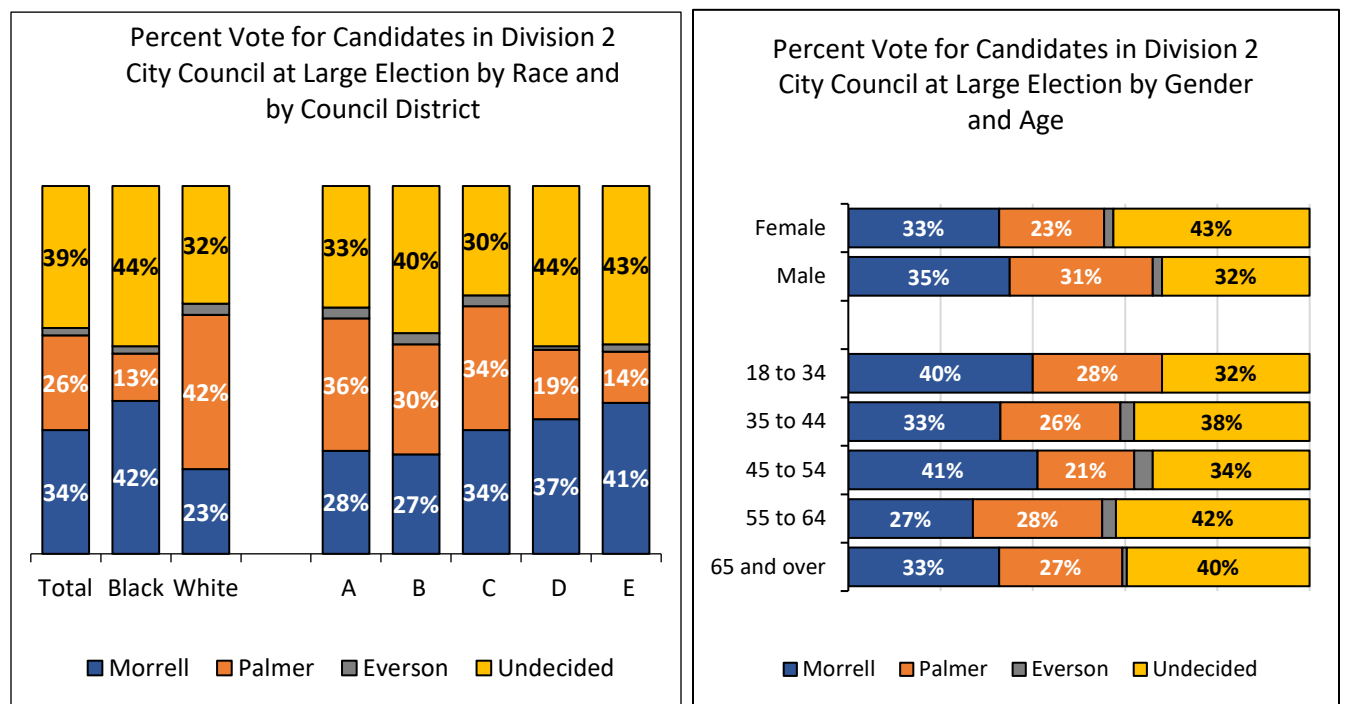
There was a significantly-sized racial gap in support for Moreno. Seven-in-ten whites planned on voting for Moreno compared to 45% of blacks. However, those numbers did not translate into support for Cutno, the African American challenger in this election. Only 9% of blacks responded they would vote for him while 45% of blacks remain undecided.

Moreno received strong support in four out of the five council districts. Likely voters in District E were slightly more likely to say they were undecided than to say they were voting for Moreno. That being said, four times as many voters in District E replied they will vote for Moreno than for Cutno.

There was only a small difference in support for Moreno between males and females. Nearly two-thirds of voters age 18 to 54 intend on voting for Moreno. However, her numbers were about 10 percentage points lower with voters age 55 and older. However, she still achieved a majority of support with that age cohort.

COUNCIL AT LARGE, DIVISION TWO

The results from our poll indicate that the contest for the Division 2 at-large council seat is competitive between JP Morrell and Kristin Palmer. Morrell led the pack with 34% of likely voters backing his candidacy, while 26% reported they were going with Palmer. Only 2% said they were voting for Bart Everson. The most striking result was the sizable percentage of people who were undecided. A plurality of respondents, 39 percent, remain undecided on who they support in this election.

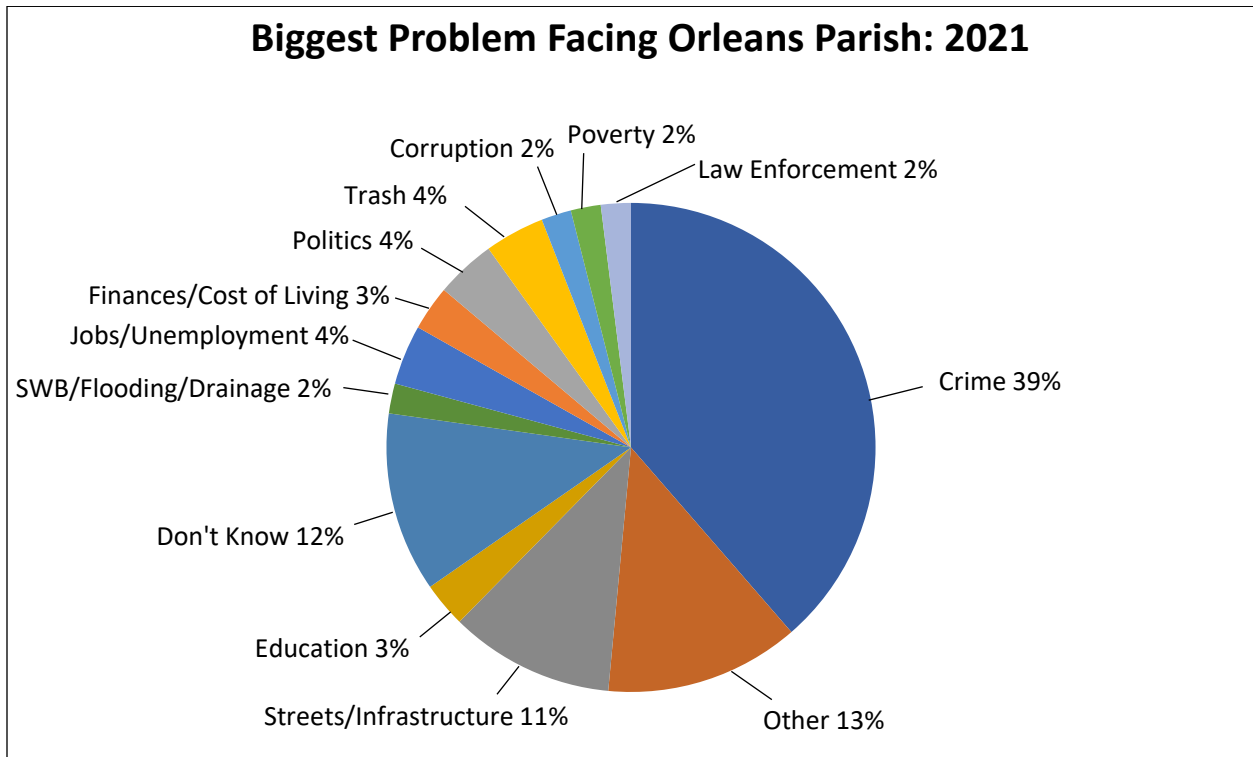


The vote support for Morrell and Palmer appears to be racially polarized. Forty-two percent of blacks responded they were voting for Morrell while an equal percentage of whites intended to vote for Palmer. Only 13% of blacks backed Palmer while Morrell did slightly better with whites at 23%.

There was a large degree of variation in support for these two candidates across the city's five council districts. Palmer outperformed Morrell in District A and District B. Both candidates received the same level of support in District C, while Morrell bested Palmer by significant margins in District D and District E.

Relatively equal percentages of males and females backed Morrell’s campaign while males were more receptive to Palmer than were females. Morrell appealed more to the youngest age cohort and he also enjoyed a slight advantage with voters age 35 to 44. He did especially well with voters age 45 to 54. Likely voters over the age of 55 were relatively split between the two candidates.

BIGGEST PROBLEM FACING NEW ORLEANS



When asked what they thought was the biggest problem facing the parish, 39% of the city’s voters told us it was crime. That’s slightly higher than the 35% who reported it as the top concern in the 2018 Quality of Life Survey. The poor condition of streets/infrastructure was the second most often cited problem in New Orleans in the recent poll. See the appendix for a complete listing of the problems communicated by respondents.

Appendix

Hi, this is _____, may I speak to _____ (Contact name)?

I'm calling from the University of New Orleans. We're interested in people's opinions on issues facing New Orleans.

1) In general, do you approve or disapprove of the job Mayor Latoya Cantrell is doing?

1 APPROVE
5 DISAPPROVE
9 DK/NOT FAMILIAR

2) As things stand today, which of the following candidates would you be most likely to vote for in the election for Division 1 council-at-large? (ROTATE)

1 HELENA MORENO
5 KENNETH CUTNO
9 DK/UNDECIDED

3) Which of the following candidates would you be most likely to vote for in the election for Division 2 council-at-large? (ROTATE)

1 JARED BROSSETT (DO NOT READ!!)
2 BART EVERSON
3 KRISTIN PALMER
4 JP MORRELL
9 DK/UNDECIDED

4) What do you think is the biggest problem facing Orleans Parish today?
(RECORD VERBATIM)

Frequency Tables

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	359	59.3	59.3	59.3
	Male	246	40.7	40.7	100.0
	Total	605	100.0	100.0	

		Race			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black	335	55.5	55.5	55.5
	White	239	39.5	39.5	94.9
	Other	31	5.1	5.1	100.0
	Total	605	100.0	100.0	

		Age Category			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 to 34	48	8.0	8.0	8.0
	35 to 44	88	14.5	14.5	22.5
	45 to 54	95	15.7	15.7	38.2
	55 to 64	135	22.4	22.4	60.6
	65+	238	39.4	39.4	100.0
	Total	605	100.0	100.0	

		Council District			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	District A	133	22.0	22.0	22.0
	District B	104	17.2	17.2	39.2
	District C	104	17.2	17.2	56.4
	District D	144	23.8	23.8	80.2
	District E	120	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	605	100.0	100.0	

Biggest Problem	Percent
Crime	39.1
Streets/Infrastructure	11.0
Unemployment/Jobs	3.6
Trash	3.5
Lack of leadership	3.0
Education/School Board	2.8
Economy Economics	2.4
General Negative	2.1
Health/Covid	2.1
Flooding/Drainage	1.7
Poverty The Poor	1.6
Lack of Services	1.5
Law Enforcement	1.3
Inflation Cost of Living	1.1
Corruption Crooked	1.1
Finances Revenue	1.1
Mayor	1.0
Utility Bills	0.8
Rebuilding/Recovery	0.8
Housing	0.8
Environment/Climate Change	0.7
Taxes to High	0.7
Govt in general	0.6
Inability to Get Things Done	0.6
Lethargy Apathy	0.5
Politics Politicians	0.5
Sewage	0.4
Too Much Development	0.4
Poor Tax Base	0.3
Moral Problems	0.2
Miscellaneous	0.2
Insurance Rates	0.2
Zoning	0.2
Racial Tension	0.1
Lack of Business	0.1
Don't Know	11.9
Total	100.0