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Statewide Survey of Louisiana Likely Voters on David Duke

The University of New Orleans' Survey Research Center (SRC) sponsored an automated interactive voice response (IVR) telephone survey of likely Louisiana voters on July 27-28, 2016. The sample for the survey was randomly selected from a list of likely voters from the voter file obtained from the Louisiana Secretary of State. A likely voter is defined as someone who has voted at least three times in the last five statewide elections.¹ The sample of 614 respondents yields a 3.95% margin of error at a 95% level of confidence. The sample matches the gender, age, race, and regional parameters of the population of likely voters in Louisiana.

This survey and analysis was produced by graduate research assistant Tony Licciardi and Dr. Edward Chervenak, director of the Survey Research Center. Our goal was learn about the public's perception of David Duke-R since he recently announced his candidacy for the open US Senate seat in Louisiana. The poll gauged Duke's favorability ratings among likely Louisiana voters. We then asked respondents whether they would vote for him in the primary. We also asked Louisiana voters if they would support him if he faced a Democrat in the runoff. Finally, the survey asked respondents whether they approve or disapprove of Governor John Bel Edwards' job performance. Demographic variables include race, gender, age, and education. Respondents were also asked to self-report their party identification.

This IVR survey is a departure from the SRC's traditional live telephone polling. The Center and its researchers desire to explore new and developing technology for data collection methods as they become available. The primary benefit of IVR surveys is that they reduce interviewer bias to zero by eliminating the live human interviewer. Every survey respondent hears the same question read the same way. One caveat to IVR polls, however, is that it does not call cell phones. One issue to be concerned with IVR is that while the survey assumes the person in the voter file will answer the phone to take the survey, a different person might answer. This is why it is important to ask qualifying demographic questions about the respondents' age, gender, race, and party identification. The education variable distinguished between those respondents who had graduated from college and those who had not. The congressional district where the respondent resided was obtained from the voter file.

¹ November 2012 Presidential election, November 2014 US Senate Primary, December 2014 US Senate Runoff, October 2015 Gubernatorial Primary, and November 2015 Gubernatorial Runoff. There were 1.1 million registered voters who qualified as a likely voter.

Public Perceptions of David Duke

Favorability Ratings of David Duke

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	14	14	16	13	15	13	16	13
No	82	82	81	84	80	84	80	82
DK	4	5	3	3	6	4	4	5
(N)	614	420	174	272	342	231	270	113

	Total	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over	Not College Graduate	College Graduate
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	14	18	18	15	9	19	12
No	82	78	75	84	86	75	85
DK	4	5	7	2	5	7	3
(N)	614	40	167	218	189	192	422

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	14	17	9	9	12	21	16
No	82	80	88	90	79	71	83
DK	4	4	3	1	10	8	1
(N)	614	103	98	108	104	90	110

Respondents were first asked whether they held a favorable or unfavorable view of David Duke. By a nearly 6 to 1 margin, people expressed an unfavorable opinion of Duke. He was viewed unfavorably by a large margin across every demographic group. Regardless of race, gender or party affiliation, no less than 80 percent of respondents said they had an unfavorable view of him.

It appears that age had some influence over how Duke was appraised. Younger respondents, while overwhelmingly communicating their distaste for Duke, were twice as likely as the oldest respondents to evaluate Duke favorably. Older voters, who remember Duke's divisive pursuit of political office in the 1980s and 90s, rated him unfavorably by nearly a 10 to 1 margin. There was also some variation in evaluating Duke based on whether the respondent was a college graduate or not. The data indicates that non-college educated respondents were slightly more likely to have a favorable attitude of Duke.

There were also regional differences in how Duke was assessed. He was least popular in Congressional Districts Two and Three where 9 in 10 voters rated him unfavorably. Conversely, 1 in 5 respondents in District Five gave Duke a favorable rating.

Vote for Duke in Senate Primary

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	13	12	14	11	14	10	15	12
No	84	84	84	86	82	87	80	85
DK	4	4	2	3	5	2	5	4
(N)	614	420	174	272	342	231	270	113

	Total	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over	Not College Graduate	College Graduate
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	13	21	18	12	7	16	11
No	84	79	75	86	89	77	87
DK	4	0	7	2	4	8	2
(N)	614	40	167	218	189	192	422

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	13	15	9	9	9	24	12
No	84	82	88	90	80	73	87
DK	4	4	3	1	11	3	1
(N)	614	103	98	108	104	90	110

We asked respondents whether they would vote for Duke for the US Senate in the upcoming primary. This question is qualified by the fact that it did not offer the respondents any other choice of candidates for the office. It was designed to elicit a response of whether the respondent was for David Duke or not. When given that binary choice, only 13 percent of likely voters answered they would cast a ballot for him. There was little difference in vote support across race, gender and partisanship. No less than 80 percent of likely voters across these demographic categories stated they would not vote for Duke.

There appears to be a relationship between the age of likely voters and electoral support for Duke. The table clearly illustrates that as the age of respondents increased, the vote support for Duke decreased. While the youngest group of likely voters went against Duke by a 4 to 1

margin, this age group was also three times more likely than the oldest respondents to express their support for Duke’s candidacy. Again, the difference across generations may be the result of younger voters lacking the memory of the controversy surrounding Duke when he ran for office. There was also a slight divergence across education levels as non-college educated voters were a bit more supportive of Duke than were the college educated respondents.

Duke polls extremely poorly in Districts Two, Three and Four with only 1 in 10 respondents indicating that they would vote for him in the primary election. His numbers are not much better in District Six. Duke enjoys the most vote support in District Five. Nonetheless, likely voters in that district lined up against him by a 3 to 1 margin.

Vote for Duke against Democrat in Runoff

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	16	17	13	15	16	10	23	11
No	74	69	86	74	74	89	59	80
DK	10	14	1	10	10	2	18	9
(N)	614	420	174	272	342	231	270	113

	Total	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over	Not College Graduate	College Graduate
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	16	15	19	16	13	20	14
No	74	83	70	75	75	66	78
DK	10	3	11	9	12	15	8
(N)	614	40	167	218	189	192	422

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	16	18	9	14	12	29	14
No	74	68	87	72	76	61	80
DK	10	14	4	14	13	10	6
(N)	614	103	98	108	104	90	110

We asked likely voters if they would vote for Duke if he were to face a Democratic challenger in the runoff. We found there was a 10 percentage point drop-off in opposition to Duke and a 3 percentage point increase in support for him, when compared to the primary vote. There were some slight increases of electoral support for Duke against a Democrat by whites and males. The biggest difference was found for Republicans. While 80 percent of Republican identifiers

answered they would not vote for Duke in the primary, that figure fell to 59 percent when offered the scenario of Duke versus a Democrat in the runoff. That being said, Republicans were still 2.5 times more likely to say they would not vote for Duke even if he squared off against a Democrat in the runoff.

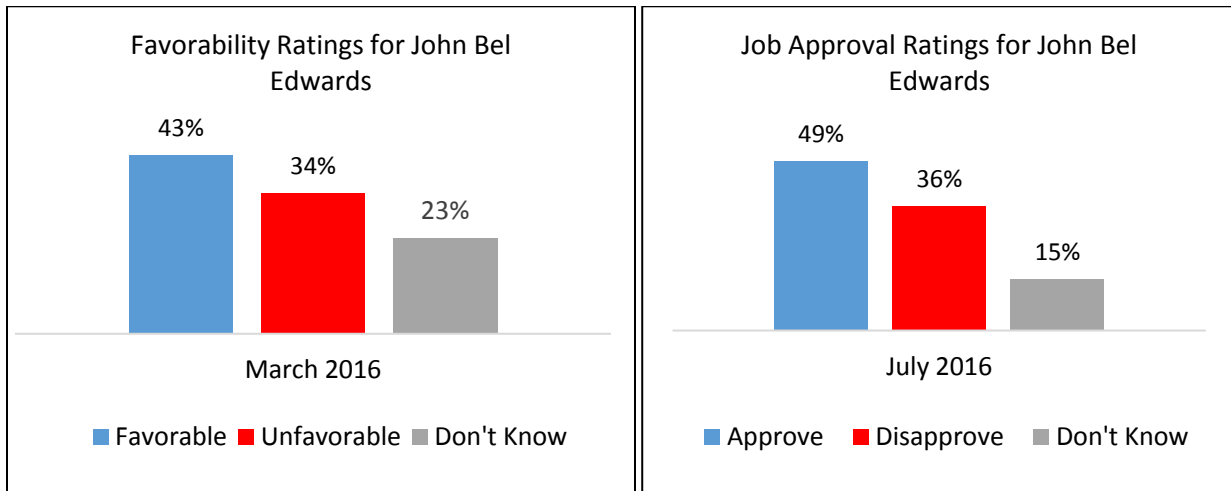
The youngest age category was less likely to support Duke if he faced a Democrat. Those respondents age 50 and older were less likely to oppose Duke if he ended up running against a Democrat. However, older voters were not necessarily more supportive of him. When presented with the scenario of Duke against a Democrat in the runoff, they exhibited a greater degree of ambivalence about whether or not they would vote for him.

There was also less opposition to Duke in both education categories in a hypothetical matchup between Duke and a Democrat in the runoff. For both groups, decreased opposition was found alongside an increase in uncertainty as to whether they would support the Republican candidate against a Democrat in the runoff.

Districts 2, 4, and 6 were the areas of the state that maintained its opposition to David Duke in a supposed matchup against a Democrat in the runoff. Districts 1 and 3 were less oppositional to Duke in the partisan matchup, but more ambivalent on how they would vote. District 5 saw an 8 percentage point increase in vote support for Duke that coincided with a 10 percentage point decrease in opposition to Duke versus a Democrat. Although Duke performs best in the 5th congressional district, it still shows voters there opposed to him by a 2 to 1 margin.

In sum, this survey reveals that David Duke is extremely unpopular with likely Louisiana voters. Moreover, his unpopularity is found across-the-board in the electorate as he is viewed unfavorably by a vast majority of men, women, whites, blacks, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, the college educated, and the non-college educated. The poll also indicates there is a wholesale rejection of Duke's candidacy by likely Louisiana voters. Eighty-four percent of respondents in our poll reported that they would not vote for David Duke in the primary and three-quarters of them declared they would not vote for him even if he ended up in the runoff against a Democrat.

John Bel Edwards' Job Approval Ratings



In a March 2016 survey we asked registered voters to rate the favorability of Governor John Bel Edwards. The chart on the left illustrates that Edwards was viewed favorably by 43% of registered voters. One third had an unfavorable view of him and approximately one-fourth of respondents in the March poll had no opinion one way or another when invited to rate the governor.

In the current survey we asked likely voters to rate the governor's job performance. We found that one-half of respondents gave the governor positive marks for his performance in office. Just over one-third judged his job performance negatively and 15 percent had no opinion.

One could argue there is a false equivalency in comparing these two charts. For one thing, we are comparing favorability with job approval. Favorability speaks to whether someone likes or dislikes the governor, while job approval is about an evaluation of how well the governor is doing his job. Moreover, we polled registered voters in the March survey, while the sample for the current survey is comprised of likely voters. While not a perfect fit, we believe an examination of the two charts can tell us something about the public's viewpoint of the governor.

John Bel Edwards' Job Approval Ratings

	Total	Whites	Blacks	Males	Females	Democrat	Republican	Independent Other Party
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	49	40	70	45	52	75	26	49
Disapprove	36	44	19	43	31	14	55	35
DK	15	17	12	13	17	10	19	16
(N)	614	420	174	272	342	231	270	113

	Total	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over	Not College Graduate	College Graduate
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	49	53	51	45	52	43	52
Disapprove	36	43	40	35	32	40	34
DK	15	5	10	20	16	17	14
(N)	614	40	167	218	189	192	422

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	49	39	68	41	48	37	61
Disapprove	36	41	14	46	41	46	27
DK	15	20	17	13	11	18	12
(N)	614	103	98	108	104	90	110

A breakdown of Edwards' approval ratings show him enjoying strong positive evaluations from African-Americans and Democrats. Conversely, whites and Republicans were more likely to disapprove of the governor's job performance. Women were more approving of Edwards than were men. Independents and Other Party members were also more positive than negative when evaluating the governor's performance in office.

Age had no real link to evaluations of the governor. Young people were the most supportive age group for Edwards, with those 65 and older right behind them. The only age group that expressed less than 50 percent approval for the governor were those respondents age 50 to 64. They were also the most likely to not provide an evaluation with 1 in 5 claiming they did not know what they thought about the governor's job performance. Those individuals with a college degree were more approving of the governor than were non-college educated respondents.

We did find some regional variation in evaluations of John Bel Edwards' job performance. Respondents in District 1 were basically split in their assessment of the governor, while voters in District 2 overwhelmingly approved of him. In District 6, voters approved of Edwards' job performance by a 2 to 1 margin. The only areas of the state where Edwards was underwater in his approval ratings was in District 3 and District 5.

Sample Parameters

Gender	%
Male	44
Female	56
Race	
Black	28
White	69
Something else	3
Age	
18 to 29	6
30 to 49	27
50 to 64	36
65 or older	31
Party Identification	
Democrat	38
Republican	44
Something else	18
Congressional District	
District One	17
District Two	16
District Three	18
District Four	17
District Five	15
District Six	18

Survey script

This is a confidential academic research survey of Louisiana voters' opinions of David Duke, candidate for US Senate. The survey takes less than 60 seconds. Here is the first question.

1. Do you view David Duke favorably or unfavorably?

Press 1 for Favorably. Press 2 for Unfavorably. Press 3 for don't know

2. Would you consider voting for David Duke for US Senate in the November 8th Election?

Press 1 for Yes. Press 2 for No. Press 3 for Don't Know.

3. Would you vote for David Duke if he were in a runoff election against a Democrat?

Press one for Yes. Press 2 for No. Press 3 for Don't Know

4. Do you approve or disapprove of Gov. John Bel Edwards' job performance?

Press 1 for approve. Press 2 for disapprove. Press 3 for don't know.

5. Are you Male or Female?

Press 1 for Male. Press 2 for Female.

6. Are you Black, White, or something else?

Press 1 for Black. Press 2 for White. Press 3 for Something else

7. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, Republican, or something else?

Press 1 for Democrat. Press 2 for Republican. Press 3 for Something Else

8. How old are you?

Press 1 for 18-29. Press 2 for 30- 49. Press 3 for 50-64. Press 4 for 65 or older

9. This is the last question. Are you a college graduate.

Press 1 for Yes. Press 2 for No.

Thank you for taking the survey.