

The Arkansas Poll, 2002

Summary Report

Supported by
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*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Most Important Problem

I would like to now ask you which of the following is the most important problem or issue facing people in Arkansas today. The issues are ¹ Which of these do you think is most important?	Percent
• The Economy	28
• Education	25
• Health Insurance	16
• Drugs	13
• Morality	12
• Terrorism	5
• Don't Know/Refused	2

Public Figure Approval Ratings

	Approve	Disapprove	DK/Refused
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mike Huckabee is handling his job as governor?			
1999	66%	13%	21%
2000	69%	14%	17%
2001	70%	17%	13%
2002	50%	35%	15%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Blanche Lincoln is handling her job as a U.S. Senator?			
1999	46%	17%	37%
2001	51%	13%	36%
2002	50%	16%	35%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Tim Hutchinson is handling his job as a U.S. Senator?			
1999	48%	22%	30%
2001	58%	14%	28%
2002	46%	29%	25%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George Bush is handling his job as president?			
2001	87%	9%	3%
2002	61%	32%	7%

¹ These issues are drawn from the most frequently-mentioned open-ended responses of our 2001 respondents.

Ballot Issues

Measure	Approve	Disapprove	DK/Refused
Amendment 1 revises the part of the Arkansas constitution that deals with the executive branch of government. Mainly, it spells out that the governor retains all normal powers and duties even if he or she is temporarily outside the state.	60%	31%	9%
Amendment 2 ensures the secrecy of individual votes in all Arkansas elections.	90%	6%	4%
Amendment 3 eliminates sales tax on food and medicine in Arkansas. It will result in a loss of revenue for state, county, and city governments, as well as school districts, which means that a reduction in services may be required.	39%	57%	4%
Initiated Act 1 increases the legal penalties for certain forms of animal cruelty. Primarily, it provides that when a person knowingly tortures an animal he or she may be charged with a felony. The measure provides exemptions for lawful hunting, fishing, veterinary, livestock and other practices.	65%	30%	4%

Current Issues

First, in general, would you say you favor stricter gun control, less strict gun control, or should no change be made to existing gun control laws? ²	Stricter	Less Strict	No Change	DK/Refused
1999	50%	31%	15%	4%
2000	39%	15%	42%	4%
2001	36%	17%	44%	4%
2002	36%	15%	45%	4%
Do you favor laws that would make it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion, favor laws that would make it easier to get an abortion or should no change be made to existing abortion laws?	More Difficult	Easier	No Change	DK/Refused
1999	45%	14%	32%	9%
2000	43%	11%	40%	6%
2001	46%	13%	35%	7%
2002	43%	13%	38%	6%
Suppose a candidate running for Congress, Senate or Governor favored tougher laws to limit immigration into the United States or into Arkansas, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?	More Likely	Less Likely		DK/Refused
2002	68%	23%		9%

² Please note that in 1999, respondents were not explicitly offered a “no change” response option. This is the primary reason for the striking difference in results for that year.

Economic Development

Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/ Refused
• I can have a significant effect in shaping local growth and economic development policy.	10%	49%	30%	4%	7%
• I favor spending a larger share of our public funds on roads and highways.	12%	53%	26%	3%	5%
• Continued growth and development in our area will hurt our quality of life.	4%	20%	57%	16%	3%
• Government regulation of growth and development usually does more harm than good.	10%	39%	37%	4%	11%
• Protecting the environment should be given the priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic growth.	16%	44%	29%	5%	6%
• Local governments should charge "impact fees" to developers to help pay for the public sewer, water, roads, and other services that will be needed for new private businesses or residential areas.	19%	52%	17%	4%	7%
And, how satisfied are you with ...?	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Un-satisfied	Very Un-satisfied	DK/ Refused
• Your neighborhood as a place to live.	48%	43%	6%	2%	0%
• And how about housing affordability.	21%	57%	15%	4%	3%
• Local job opportunities.	10%	37%	30%	15%	8%
• The overall quality of life in my your community.	28%	61%	8%	2%	1%

Public Education Reform

Do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the following ideas for improving K-12 education in Arkansas...?	Strongly Approve	Approve	Dis-approve	Strongly Dis-approve	DK/ Refused
• Increasing teachers' salaries.	41%	46%	10%	1%	2%
• Using merit pay to award bonuses to teachers whose students perform well on state exams	14%	46%	28%	5%	7%
• Expanding access to state-funded pre-school education programs	19%	57%	16%	2%	6%
• Establishing more charter schools	9%	40%	31%	3%	17%
• Requiring additional testing for a student to advance to the next grade	16%	52%	24%	4%	5%
• Establishing larger "regional" high schools with a curriculum that exceeds the minimum required of regular high schools	16%	44%	27%	6%	8%
• Improving school facilities	34%	55%	8%	0%	2%
• Increasing vocational or career-oriented education opportunities	32%	61%	5%	0%	2%

Please tell me if you strongly approve, approve, disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the following methods of funding reforms in Arkansas schools....	Strongly Approve	Approve	Dis-approve	Strongly Dis-approve	DK/Refused
• increasing property taxes	2%	26%	50%	21%	2%
• increasing sales taxes	3%	35%	48%	12%	2%
• increasing income taxes	3%	26%	54%	15%	3%
• adopting a state lottery	22%	36%	25%	14%	4%
• cutting back in other government services	9%	45%	30%	6%	10%
• consolidating small school districts into larger districts	9%	40%	35%	11%	6%

Life in Arkansas

Overall, do you feel that Arkansas is generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?	Right	Wrong		DK/Refused
1999	73%	15%		12%
2001	78%	14%		8%
2002	69%	22%		9%
On a more individual level, would you say you are better off financially, worse off, or about the same compared to a year ago?	Better	About the Same	Worse	DK/Refused
1999	37%	47%	16%	1%
2001	41%	39%	19%	1%
2002	33%	39%	27%	1%
And, looking ahead, do you think that a year from now, you will be better off financially, worse off, or about the same as now?	Better	About the Same	Worse	DK/Refused
1999	43%	46%	6%	1%
2001	41%	39%	19%	1%
2002	40%	45%	10%	5%

Political Party and Ideology

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Other	DK/Refused
1999	23%	35%	31%	4%	7%
2000	23%	36%	35%	0%	6%
2001	27%	33%	32%	5%	3%
2002	28%	33%	33%	3%	3%
For Independents: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?	Closer to Republican	Closer to Democrat	Just Independent		DK/Refused
1999	33%	29%	34%		4%
2000	35%	25%	35%		5%
2001	29%	36%	31%		4%
2002	30%	32%	33%		4%

How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as a liberal, moderate, or conservative?	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	DK/ Refused	
	1999	14%	38%	38%	10%
2000	16%	36%	39%	9%	
2001	17%	39%	38%	6%	
2002	15%	39%	41%	5%	

Likely Voters

Are you currently registered to vote or not?	Yes	No	Not a Citizen	DK/ Refused	
	85%	13%	1%	0%	
How likely are you to vote in the next elections?	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not very Likely	Not at all Likely	DK/ Refused
	89%	8%	2%	1%	1%

Sample Information and Statistics

Between October 9th and October 20th, the Survey Research Center at the University of Arkansas dialed 6,062 randomly selected Arkansas telephone numbers. These attempts yielded 768 completed surveys. The remainder of the surveys were not completed due to the resident's absence, a refusal to participate, a busy line, a "no longer in service" message, or the resident being under the age of 18 years. Employing guidelines established by the American Association for Public Opinion Research, the poll's cooperation rate was 26%. This figure reflects completed surveys as a percentage of all eligible individuals contacted. The survey's margin of error is +/- 3 percent.

To assess the representative ness of the sample drawn for the poll, the Arkansas Poll team opts to publish what many polling organizations do not: a comparison of the survey respondents' demographic characteristics to those of the state as a whole. The results are shown in the table below.

	2002 Arkansas Poll Data	State Data
Median Age	49 Years	36 Years (2000 Census)
Gender	42.6% Male	48.8% Male (2000 Census)
Education	93.0% High School Graduate 32.6% College Graduate	76.8% High School Graduate 16.2% College Graduate (1998 Nat'l Cntr for Ed. Stats)
Income (median)	\$35,001 to \$50,000	\$21,117 (1999 Estimate)
Race/Ethnicity	83.6% White 10.3% Black 0.9% Native American 0.3% Asian 2.0% Multi-Ethnic 1.6% Hispanic	80.0% White 15.7% Black 0.7% Native American 0.8% Asian 1.3% Multi-Ethnic 3.2% Hispanic Origin (any race) (2000 Census)