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The Arkansas Poll, 2008 Summary Report

10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Most Important Problem

What is the most important problem or issue facing people in Arkansas today? ¹	Percent
• the economy/jobs/wages	56
• healthcare (including insurance)	15
• education	10
• crime (including drugs and violence)	4
• government/taxes/politics	5
• immigration	7
• don't know/refused	3

Public Figure Approval Ratings

Do you approve or disapprove of the way _____ is handling his job as governor?	Approve	Disapprove	DK/Ref
Mike Huckabee 1999	66%	13%	21%
2001	70%	17%	13%
2003	47%	38%	16%
2005	58%	27%	15%
Mike Beebe 2007	70%	9%	21%
2008	74%	9%	18%
Do you ... Blanche Lincoln ... as a U.S. Senator?			
1999	46%	17%	37%
2001	51%	13%	36%
2003	55%	10%	35%
2005	55%	17%	28%
2007	50%	24%	26%
2008	54%	20%	27%
Do you ... Mark Pryor ... as a U.S. Senator?			
2003	52%	11%	37%
2005	56%	12%	32%
2007	53%	18%	29%
2008	56%	16%	28%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way _____ is handling his job as U.S. Representative? ²			
(first congressional district) Marion Berry 2008	50%	19%	31%
(second congressional district) Vic Snyder 2008	57%	19%	24%
(third congressional district) John Boozman 2008	52%	17%	31%
(fourth congressional district) Mike Ross 2008	62%	10%	28%
Do you ... George Bush ... as president?			
2001	87%	9%	3%
2002	61%	32%	7%
2003	47%	46%	7%
2004	50%	45%	5%
2005	38%	56%	7%
2006	36%	58%	6%
2007	30%	65%	6%
2008	27%	67%	7%

¹ In odd-numbered years, the Arkansas Poll records and codes the open-ended answers of respondents. In even-numbered years, respondents are asked to choose from the six most frequently mentioned issues of the previous year.

² Approval ratings for members of the U.S. House of Representatives were collected within their respective congressional districts only; the smaller sample means the margin of error increases to +/- 4.9 percentage points.

2008 Election

Suppose the election were held today. Who would you be more likely to vote for: John McCain, the Republican, or Barack Obama, the Democrat (name/party rotated)?	
• John McCain	49%
• Barack Obama	36%
• don't know/refused	15%
Suppose the election were held today. Who would you be more likely to vote for: John McCain, the Republican, or Barack Obama, the Democrat (name/party rotated)? registered voters only.	
• John McCain	51%
• Barack Obama	36%
• don't know/refused	14%
And, would you have voted for Hillary Clinton if she had been a nominee for president?	
• yes	54%
• no	41%
• don't know/refused	5%
(From 2007 ArkPoll) If the 2008 election for president were held today, would you vote for the Republican Party's candidate or the Democratic Party's candidate?	
• Republican Party's candidate	31%
• Democratic Party's candidate	49%
• other/None (volunteered)	7%
• don't know/refused	13%
(From 2007 ArkPoll) If the 2008 presidential election were held today, who would you vote for for president? Just tell me the name.	
• Hillary Clinton	35%
• Rudy Giuliani	8%
• Mike Huckabee	8%
• Fred Thompson	5%
• Barack Obama	5%
• Other	11%
• don't know/refused	28%
And, as far as you know, what is Barack Obama's religion? Is he a Christian, a Muslim, or something else?	
• Christian	44%
• Muslim	20%
• Something else	10%
• don't know/refused	26%

Proposed Amendment 3 permits the Arkansas legislature to establish a lottery to fund scholarships and grants to college students. Given this description, do you favor or oppose this measure?	
• favor	65%
• oppose	33%
• don't know/refused	3%
Proposed Initiated Act 1 would prevent anyone who is cohabitating outside of a valid marriage from adopting or fostering a child. Given this description, do you favor or oppose this measure?	
• favor	38%
• oppose	55%
• don't know/refused	7%

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?	Stricter	Less Strict	No Change	DK/Refused
2000	39%	15%	42%	4%
2002	36%	15%	45%	4%
2004	38%	12%	45%	5%
2006	37%	11%	47%	5%
2008	29%	13%	54%	4%

Which of the following approaches for providing health care in the United States would you prefer: replacing the current health care system with a new government run health care system, or maintaining the current system based mostly on private health insurance?	
• replace	35%
• maintain	50%
• don't know/refused	15%
Do you think it's a good idea or a bad idea for the president of the U.S. to meet with leaders of countries that are considered enemies of the U.S.?	
• good idea/support meeting	64%
• neutral	5%
• bad idea/do not support meeting	26%
• don't know/refused	5%
Would you rather see the next president keep the same number of troops in Iraq that are currently stationed there, or would you rather see the next president remove most US troops in Iraq within a few months of taking office?	
• keep the same number	32%
• remove most	56%
• don't know/refused	12%

Here's a series of statements about race relations in the U.S. For each one, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each one.	SA ³	A	N	D	SD	DK/Ref
• Irish, Italians, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors	15%	55%	8%	14%	2%	5%
• Over the past few years blacks have gotten less than they deserve. Do you	3%	18%	10%	46%	14%	8%
• It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites	10%	37%	13%	29%	6%	5%
• Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.	5%	27%	6%	45%	13%	4%
	too fast	not fast enough		about right		DK/Ref
• Finally, some say that black leaders have been trying to push too fast. Others feel that they haven't pushed fast enough. What do you think ... too fast, not fast enough, or moving at about the right speed?	13%	20%		49%		18%

³ SA=strongly agree; A=agree; N=neither; D=disagree; SD=strongly disagree; DK/ref=don't know/refused

And which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be regarding undocumented immigrants currently residing in the United States. Should the government: ⁴		
• allow undocumented immigrants to remain in the United States to work for a limited amount of time?		
	2007	9%
	2008	10%
• allow undocumented immigrants to become U.S. citizens if they meet certain criteria like learning English and paying their back-taxes?		
	2007	55%
	2008	59%
• deport all undocumented immigrants?		
	2007	27%
	2008	26%
• allow undocumented immigrants to become permanent residents with no requirements?		
	2007	2%
	2008	2%
• don't know/refused		
	2007	5%
	2008	4%
Do you think global warming is an urgent problem requiring immediate attention or a longer-term problem that requires more study before government action is taken? ⁵		
• Urgent problem		
	2006	44%
	2007	44%
	2008	44%
• Longer-term problem		
	2006	46%
	2007	44%
	2008	36%
• Not a problem (only if volunteered)		
	2006	3%
	2007	5%
	2008	10%
• Unsure (only if volunteered)		
	2006	3%
	2007	4%
	2008	7%
• Don't Know/Refused		
	2006	4%
	2007	3%
	2008	3%

⁴ In the interest of time/expense, several questions were asked of only 400 people statewide; the margin of error for these results is +/- 4.9 percentage points.

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Political Interest and Knowledge

Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or never?	
• most of the time	58%
• some of the time	27%
• only now and then	12%
• don't know/refused	2%
Who is the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives? I have a list of names here, is it (rotate response options): Harry Reid, Condoleezza Rice, Nancy Pelosi, or Newt Gingrich?	
• Harry Reid	3%
• Condoleezza Rice	7%
• Nancy Pelosi	64%
• Newt Gingrich	4%
• don't know/refused	22%
And what is the term of office of a U.S. senator? Is it ...?	
• two years	17%
• four years	30%
• six years	30%
• eight years	8%
• don't know/refused	15%
And who is responsible for nominating judges to federal courts? Is it...?	
• the president	50%
• congress	9%
• the supreme court	9%
• state governors	6%
• don't know/refused	26%

Congressional District Breakdowns – Key Questions

<i>Question</i>	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
What is the most important problem or issue facing people in Arkansas today? ⁶				
• the economy/jobs/wages	54%	57%	56%	57%
• healthcare (including insurance)	8%	12%	8%	10%
• education	19%	15%	13%	14%
• crime (including drugs and violence)	6%	3%	3%	6%
• government/taxes/politics	5%	5%	5%	5%
• immigration	6%	6%	13%	5%
• don't know/refused	4%	2%	3%	4%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mike Beebe is ... as governor?				
• approve	69%	78%	73%	73%
• disapprove	10%	7%	9%	9%
• don't know/refused	21%	15%	18%	18%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George Bush is... as president?				
• approve	27%	26%	27%	27%
• disapprove	67%	66%	66%	68%
• don't know/refused	6%	8%	7%	6%
Suppose the election were held today. Who would you be more likely to vote for: John McCain, the Republican, or Barack Obama, the Democrat (name/party rotated)?				
• John McCain	46%	48%	49%	53%
• Barack Obama	38%	37%	37%	35%
• don't know/refused	17%	16%	15%	13%
And, would you have voted for Hillary Clinton if she had been a nominee for president?				
• yes	58%	53%	52%	56%
• no	37%	41%	44%	40%
• don't know/refused	6%	6%	4%	4%
Proposed Amendment 3 permits the Arkansas legislature to establish a lottery to fund scholarships and grants to college students. Given this description, do you favor or oppose this measure?				
• favor	64%	65%	67%	65%
• oppose	35%	32%	30%	35%
• don't know/refused	3%	2%	5%	3%
Proposed Initiated Act 1 would prevent anyone who is cohabitating outside of a valid marriage from adopting or fostering a child. Given this description, do you favor or oppose this measure?				
• favor	37%	33%	40%	42%
• oppose	55%	60%	53%	52%
• don't know/refused	8%	8%	7%	7%
Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?				
• Republican	20%	23%	30%	21%
• Democrat	38%	35%	30%	36%
• independent	34%	33%	32%	32%
• other	6%	7%	6%	9%
• don't know/refused	3%	3%	2%	2%

⁶ In odd-numbered years, the Arkansas Poll records and codes the open-ended answers of respondents. In even-numbered years, respondents are asked to choose from the six most frequently mentioned issues of the previous year.

Political Party and Ideology

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?	Republican	Democrat	Indep't	Other	DK/ Refused
2001	27%	33%	32%	5%	3%
2003	24%	38%	31%	4%	3%
2005	23%	36%	33%	4%	4%
2007	24%	39%	30%	3%	2%
2008	24%	35%	33%	7%	2%
Independents only: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?	Closer to Republican	Closer to Democrat	Just Indep't		DK/ Refused
2001	29%	36%	31%		4%
2003	33%	34%	33%		2%
2005	30%	35%	32%		4%
2007	34%	37%	29%		1%
2008	35%	30%	33%		3%
How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as a liberal, moderate, or conservative?	Liberal	Moderate	Conserv'e		DK/ Refused
2001	17%	39%	38%		6%
2003	17%	36%	39%		7%
2005	13%	40%	39%		8%
2007	16%	37%	39%		6%
2008	14%	35%	43%		8%

Life in Arkansas

Overall, do you feel that Arkansas is generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?	Right	Wrong		DK/ Refused
2001	78%	14%		8%
2003	63%	26%		11%
2005	73%	18%		9%
2007	69%	21%		8%
2008	71%	19%		10%
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
2001	41%	39%	19%	1%
2003	27%	45%	28%	1%
2005	28%	49%	22%	1%
2007	30%	48%	20%	1%
2008	20%	38%	41%	1%
And, looking ahead, do you think a year from now, you will be ... as now?	Better	About the Same	Worse	DK/ Refused
2001	41%	39%	19%	1%
2003	35%	49%	12%	5%
2005	34%	46%	15%	5%
2007	38%	45%	12%	3%
2008	35%	39%	18%	8%

Methodology and Sample Information

Between October 1st and October 21st the Survey Research Center at the University of Arkansas completed 1,628 telephone surveys among a random sample of adult Arkansans; at least 400 interviews were completed in each of the state's four congressional districts.⁷ Eleven percent of all respondents spoke with SRC interviewers via cell phone.

The survey's margin of error statewide is +/- 2.5 percentage points, meaning that we are 95 percent confident that the actual result lies within 2.5 percentage points (in either direction) of the result our sample produced. At the congressional district level, the margin of error is 4.9 percentage points.

Employing guidelines established by the American Association for Public Opinion Research, the poll's overall cooperation rate was 43%. This figure reflects completed surveys as a percentage of all eligible individuals contacted.

To assess the representativeness of the sample drawn for the poll, the Arkansas Poll team publishes what most polling organizations do not: a comparison of survey respondents' key demographic characteristics to those of the state as a whole. This information is reported in the table below.

	2008 Arkansas Poll Sample	State of Arkansas
Average Age Category (for 18+ pop.)	45-54 years of age	35-44 years of age
Average # persons per household	3.0	2.5
Marital Status	62% married	58% married
Gender	41% male	49% male
Educational Attainment		
high school graduates	90.5%	89%
college graduates	34.3%	17%
Median household income	\$35,001-\$50,000	\$32,182
Race/Ethnicity		
White	81.6%	80.0%
Black or African American	9.2%	15.7%
Multi-Ethnic	2.8%	1.3%
Hispanic	2.3%	3.2% ⁸
Native American	1.4%	0.7%
Asian	0.2%	0.8%
Something Else, Don't Know, Refused	2.5%	0.0%

Source: All data from the Arkansas Poll, Current Population Survey, or the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000.

⁷ Twenty-three, or 1.4%, of the interviews were conducted in Spanish.

⁸ Hispanics may be of any race, so these identifiers also are included in applicable race categories.