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# The Arkansas Poll, 2009 Summary Report

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## Table of Contents

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Most Important Problem/Public Figure Approval</i> ..... | <i>p. 2</i>   |
| <i>2010 Election</i> .....                                 | <i>p. 3</i>   |
| <i>Current Issues</i> .....                                | <i>p. 3-5</i> |
| <i>Political Party and Ideology/Life in Arkansas</i> ..... | <i>p. 6</i>   |
| <i>Methodology and Sample Information</i> .....            | <i>p. 7</i>   |

\*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

### Most Important Problem

| What is the most important problem or issue facing people in Arkansas today? <sup>1</sup> | Percent |
|---|---------|
| • the economy/jobs/wages  | 39      |
| • healthcare (including insurance)  | 16      |
| • education   | 6       |
| • government/taxes/politics   | 5       |
| • crime (including drugs and violence)  | 3       |
| • immigration/illegal immigrants  | 1       |
| • other (single mentions or categories composing less than 1% of total responses)         | 30      |

### 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%    |
| 2009   | 70%     | 9%         | 20%    |
| 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%    |
| 2009   | 43%     | 34%        | 23%    |
| 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%    |
| 2009   | 51%     | 22%        | 27%    |
| Do you ... _____ ... as president?   |         |            |        |
| George W. Bush 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%     |
| Barak Obama 2009   | 42%     | 47%        | 10%    |

<sup>1</sup> 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 most frequently mentioned issues of the previous year.

### 2010 Election

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How closely have you followed news about the candidates who are running for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Blanche Lincoln? |     |
| • very closely  | 6%  |
| • fairly closely  | 17% |
| • not too closely   | 34% |
| • not at all closely  | 42% |
| • don't know/refused  | 1%  |

|   |                 |                          |                        |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| If that election were held today, would you be most likely to vote for the: |                 |                          |                        |
|   | all respondents | following "very closely" | registered voters only |
| • Republican Party's candidate  | 34%             | 40%                      | 36%                    |
| • Democratic Party's candidate  | 40%             | 42%                      | 41%                    |
| • other   | 11%             | 9%                       | 10%                    |
| • don't know/refused  | 16%             | 9%                       | 10%                    |

### 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?  |     | <b>Stricter</b>       | <b>Less Strict</b> | <b>No Change</b> | <b>DK/ Refused</b> |
| 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%               |                    |
| 2009   | 24% | 20%                   | 52%                | 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? |     | <b>More Difficult</b> | <b>Easier</b>      | <b>No Change</b> | <b>DK/ Refused</b> |
| 1999   | 45% | 14%                   | 32%                | 9%               |                    |
| 2001   | 46% | 13%                   | 35%                | 7%               |                    |
| 2003   | 47% | 13%                   | 33%                | 7%               |                    |
| 2005   | 44% | 9%                    | 39%                | 8%               |                    |
| 2007   | 41% | 13%                   | 36%                | 9%               |                    |
| 2009   | 43% | 11%                   | 38%                | 8%               |                    |

|   |     |             |         |
|---|-----|-------------|---------|
| Just your best guess, if the healthcare system is changed, do you think the quality of your health care will get better, get worse, or remain about the same? | all | not insured | insured |
| • better  | 15% | 27%         | 13%     |
| • worse   | 44% | 23%         | 48%     |
| • about the same  | 30% | 32%         | 29%     |
| • don't know/refused  | 11% | 18%         | 10%     |
| Would you support or oppose having the government create a new health insurance plan to compete with private health insurance plans?                          |     |             |         |
| • support   | 39% | 56%         | 36%     |
| • oppose  | 48% | 33%         | 51%     |
| • don't know/refused  | 13% | 11%         | 13%     |

| Which of the following policy positions most closely resembles your own view regarding relationships between two people of the same sex? |      |     |
|--|------|-----|
| • Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry   |      |     |
|  | 2005 | 15% |
|  | 2006 | 15% |
|  | 2007 | 16% |
|  | 2009 | 18% |
| • Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions or domestic partnerships, but not legally marry                                     |      |     |
|  | 2005 | 22% |
|  | 2006 | 26% |
|  | 2007 | 27% |
|  | 2009 | 22% |
| • There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship  |      |     |
|  | 2005 | 54% |
|  | 2006 | 54% |
|  | 2007 | 51% |
|  | 2009 | 54% |
| • don't know/refused   |      |     |
|  | 2005 | 9%  |
|  | 2006 | 5%  |
|  | 2007 | 6%  |
|  | 2009 | 6%  |

| 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: |      |     |
|---|------|-----|
| • allow undocumented immigrants to remain in the United States to work for a limited amount of time?  |      |     |
|   | 2007 | 9%  |
|   | 2008 | 10% |
|   | 2009 | 9%  |
| • 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% |
|   | 2009 | 57% |
| • deport all undocumented immigrants?   |      |     |
|   | 2007 | 27% |
|   | 2008 | 26% |
|   | 2009 | 27% |
| • allow undocumented immigrants to become permanent residents with no requirements?   |      |     |
|   | 2007 | 2%  |
|   | 2008 | 2%  |
|   | 2009 | 2%  |
| • don't know/refused  |      |     |
|   | 2007 | 5%  |
|   | 2008 | 4%  |
|   | 2009 | 5%  |

|   |      |     |
|---|------|-----|
| 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? |      |     |
| • Urgent problem  |      |     |
|   | 2006 | 44% |
|   | 2007 | 44% |
|   | 2008 | 44% |
|   | 2009 | 34% |
| • Longer-term problem   |      |     |
|   | 2006 | 46% |
|   | 2007 | 44% |
|   | 2008 | 36% |
|   | 2009 | 46% |
| • Not a problem (only if volunteered)   |      |     |
|   | 2006 | 3%  |
|   | 2007 | 5%  |
|   | 2008 | 10% |
|   | 2009 | 10% |
| • Unsure (only if volunteered)  |      |     |
|   | 2006 | 3%  |
|   | 2007 | 4%  |
|   | 2008 | 7%  |
|   | 2009 | 6%  |
| • Don't Know/Refused  |      |     |
|   | 2006 | 4%  |
|   | 2007 | 3%  |
|   | 2008 | 3%  |
|   | 2009 | 3%  |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Do you think teachers should or should not be permitted to spank children at school? |     |
| • should   | 60% |
| • should not   | 35% |
| • don't know/refused   | 5%  |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Do you believe the execution of a murderer provides a sense of closure to the family members of the murder victim?     |     |
| • yes  | 59% |
| • no   | 26% |
| • don't know/refused   | 15% |
| Do you believe the death penalty in Arkansas costs less than keeping those convicts in prison for life without parole? |     |
| • yes  | 69% |
| • no   | 16% |
| • don't know/refused   | 15% |
| Do you believe having a death penalty in Arkansas effectively discourages others from committing murder?               |     |
| • yes  | 50% |
| • no   | 42% |
| • don't know/refused   | 7%  |

### 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/<br>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%             |
| 2009  | 24%                  | 33%                | 34%          | 7%    | 3%             |
| 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/<br>Refused |
| 2001  | 29%                  | 36%                | 31%          |       | 4%             |
| 2003  | 33%                  | 34%                | 33%          |       | 2%             |
| 2005  | 30%                  | 35%                | 32%          |       | 4%             |
| 2007  | 34%                  | 37%                | 29%          |       | 1%             |
| 2009  | 39%                  | 32%                | 27%          |       | 2%             |
| 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/<br>Refused |
| 2001  | 17%                  | 39%                | 38%          |       | 6%             |
| 2003  | 17%                  | 36%                | 39%          |       | 7%             |
| 2005  | 13%                  | 40%                | 39%          |       | 8%             |
| 2007  | 16%                  | 37%                | 39%          |       | 6%             |
| 2009  | 14%                  | 37%                | 42%          |       | 7%             |

### Life in Arkansas

| Overall, do you feel that Arkansas is generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction? | Right  | Wrong          |       | DK/<br>Refused |
|---|--------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 2003  | 63%    | 26%            |       | 11%            |
| 2005  | 73%    | 18%            |       | 9%             |
| 2007  | 69%    | 21%            |       | 8%             |
| 2008  | 71%    | 19%            |       | 10%            |
| 2009  | 72%    | 16%            |       | 12%            |
| 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/<br>Refused |
| 2003  | 27%    | 45%            | 28%   | 1%             |
| 2005  | 28%    | 49%            | 22%   | 1%             |
| 2007  | 30%    | 48%            | 20%   | 1%             |
| 2008  | 20%    | 38%            | 41%   | 1%             |
| 2009  | 22%    | 46%            | 31%   | 2%             |
| And, looking ahead, do you think a year from now, you will be ... as now?                             | Better | About the Same | Worse | DK/<br>Refused |
| 2003  | 35%    | 49%            | 12%   | 5%             |
| 2005  | 34%    | 46%            | 15%   | 5%             |
| 2007  | 38%    | 45%            | 12%   | 3%             |
| 2008  | 35%    | 39%            | 18%   | 8%             |
| 2009  | 32%    | 48%            | 17%   | 4%             |

## Methodology and Sample Information

Between October 14<sup>th</sup> and October 28<sup>th</sup> the Survey Research Center at the University of Arkansas completed 754 telephone surveys among a random sample of adult Arkansans.<sup>2</sup> Eighteen percent of all respondents spoke with SRC interviewers via cell phone.

The survey's margin of error statewide is +/- 3.5 percentage points, meaning that we are 95 percent confident that the actual result lies within 3.5 percentage points (in either direction) of the result our sample produced.

Employing guidelines established by the American Association for Public Opinion Research, the poll's overall cooperation rate was 50%. 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.

|                                     | <b>2009 Arkansas Poll Sample</b> | <b>State of Arkansas</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Average Age Category (for 18+ pop.) | 55-64 years of age               | 35-44 years of age       |
| Average # persons per household     | 2.4                              | 2.5                      |
| Marital Status                      | 61% married                      | 58% married              |
| Gender                              | 46% male                         | 49% male                 |
| Educational Attainment              |                                  |                          |
| high school graduates               | 89.9%                            | 82.0%                    |
| college graduates                   | 32.3%                            | 18.8%                    |
| Median household income             | \$35,001-\$50,000                | \$38,239                 |
| Race/Ethnicity                      |                                  |                          |
| White                               | 84.4%                            | 80.8%                    |
| Black or African American           | 9.2%                             | 15.8                     |
| Multi-Ethnic                        | 2.7%                             | 1.4%                     |
| Hispanic                            | 0.9%                             | 5.6% <sup>3</sup>        |
| Native American                     | 1.5%                             | 0.9%                     |
| Asian                               | 0.3%                             | 1.1%                     |
| Something Else, Don't Know, Refused | 1.2%                             | na                       |

Source: All data from the Arkansas Poll, Current Population Survey, the American Community Survey 2008, the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000, or the U.S. Bureau of the Census State and County QuickFacts 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Six, or .08%, of the interviews were conducted in Spanish.

<sup>3</sup> Hispanics may be of any race, so these respondents also are included in applicable race categories.