
The Winthrop Poll Findings

Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election or not. Others aren't that interested. How often would you say that you follow what is going on in government and public affairs: Most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Most of the time | 60.8 |
| Some of the time | 25.3 |
| Only now and then | 9.1 |
| Hardly at all | 4.3 |
| Don't know/Refused | 0.4 |

Do you subscribe to a daily newspaper?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Yes | 50.7 |
| No | 49.2 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 0.1 |

What is your primary source for news about the state of South Carolina? Is it television news, newspapers, radio, the Internet, talking with friends or family, or something else?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Television news | 57.6 |
| Newspapers | 23.3 |
| Radio | 3.8 |
| Internet | 10.7 |
| Friends or family | 2.4 |
| Something else | 1.3 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 1.0 |

What is your primary source for news about your county, town or city? Is it television news, newspapers, radio, the Internet, talking with friends or family, or something else?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Television news | 35.0 |
| Newspapers | 44.2 |
| Radio | 2.5 |
| Internet | 6.5 |
| Friends or family | 8.0 |
| Something else | 2.1 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 1.7 |

Currently, the offices of governor and lieutenant governor are elected separately in South Carolina. Do you think the candidates for governor and lieutenant governor should run together on one ticket or continue to be elected separately?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Run together | 30.9 |
| Elected separately | 56.3 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 12.8 |

In South Carolina, we have several statewide elected offices. These include the Secretary of State, Superintendent of Education, Comptroller General, Commissioner of Agriculture, and others. Some people believe that it would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government if some of these positions were appointed by the governor, while others feel that they should continue to be elected and remain directly accountable to the voters. Which of these comes closer to your opinion?

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| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Appointed by governor | 18.2 |
| Continue to be elected | 75.6 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 6.2 |

Thinking about the current path that our nation is taking, do you think our country is on the right track or headed in the wrong direction?

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Right track | 27.6 |
| Wrong direction | 59.3 |
| Don't know / Refused | 13.1 |

Now, thinking about the current path that South Carolina is taking, do you think our state is on the right track or headed in the wrong direction?

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Right track | 51.5 |
| Wrong direction | 34.8 |
| Don't know / Refused | 13.8 |

How much of the time do you think you can trust the national government in Washington to do what is right: Just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or never.

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Just about always | 2.5 |
| Most of the time | 19.4 |
| Some of the time | 59.5 |
| Never | 17.2 |
| Don't know/Refused | 1.4 |

How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government in Columbia to do what is right: Just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or never.

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Just about always | 4.7 |
| Most of the time | 31.6 |
| Some of the time | 54.0 |
| Never | 7.6 |
| Don't know/Refused | 2.1 |

How much of the time do you think you can trust your local government to do what is right: Just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or never.

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Just about always | 5.5 |
| Most of the time | 33.8 |
| Some of the time | 46.6 |
| Never | 11.5 |
| Don't know/Refused | 2.5 |

Right now, do you think that economic conditions in the country as a whole are getting better or getting worse?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Getting better | 14.3 |
| Getting worse | 77.7 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 7.9 |

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How concerned are you about the possibility of losing your job in the next year? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned?

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Very concerned | 15.7 |
| Somewhat concerned | 11.7 |
| Not very concerned | 14.4 |
| Not at all concerned | 53.3 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 5.0 |

If you had to find a new job in the next year, do you believe that you would need additional education or job training?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Yes | 42.4 |
| No | 52.1 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 5.6 |

How would you rate your financial situation today: Excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Excellent | 12.5 |
| Good | 47.1 |
| Fair | 27.9 |
| Poor | 11.9 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 0.6 |

Right now do you think that your financial situation as a whole is getting better or getting worse?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Better | 50.4 |
| Worse | 34.6 |
| don't know/ refused | 15.0 |

Some people believe that providing school vouchers to parents so they can send their children to private schools would best help parents get their children out of failing public schools, while others feel that vouchers take desperately needed money away from the public school system.

From what you know, or have heard, do you favor or oppose school vouchers, or do you not know enough to say?

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Favor | 30.1 |
| Oppose | 44.9 |
| Don't know enough to say | 24.6 |
| Refused | 0.4 |

Some people believe that elected officials best serve their constituents when they remain strongly loyal to their party. Others believe that they best serve their constituents when they are willing to work together with members of the opposing party. How about you? Do you believe elected officials best serve their constituents through: [rotate answers]

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Remaining loyal to their party | 19.6 |
| Working with the opposition party | 69.5 |
| Not sure (volunteered) | 10.3 |
| Refused (volunteered) | 0.6 |

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Some have proposed that South Carolina increase the cigarette tax and use the money to either: [Rotate] Reduce income tax on the highest income bracket, or to offset increasing Medicaid costs.

Which of these proposals would you prefer, or would you rather the cigarette tax not be increased?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Reduce income tax on highest bracket | 11.4 |
| Offset Medicaid costs | 51.9 |
| Cigarette tax not increased | 26.6 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 10.0 |

Do you smoke cigarettes?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Yes | 21.4 |
| No | 78.6 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 0.0 |

Some have proposed a small increase in the gasoline tax for the purpose of improving South Carolina's roadways and repairing old bridges. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Favor | 34.5 |
| Oppose | 62.3 |
| Don't know/ Refused | 3.2 |

Do you believe that current criminal penalties for domestic abuse in South Carolina are too harsh, about right, or too lenient?

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Too harsh | 3.9 |
| About right | 18.1 |
| Too lenient | 59.2 |
| Not sure/ Don't know [volunteered] | 18.8 |
| Refused | 0.0 |

Do you believe that current criminal penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol in South Carolina are too harsh, about right, or too lenient?

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Too harsh | 3.1 |
| About right | 29.1 |
| Too lenient | 59.1 |
| Not sure/ Don't know [volunteered] | 8.8 |
| Refused | 0.0 |

Payday lenders allow people to borrow money when they write a postdated check. The check is written for the amount to be borrowed plus a fee and is cashed after the borrower receives their next paycheck unless they renew the loan. If you were to translate this fee into an Annual Percentage Rate, such as you might have on a credit card or home loan, what would you estimate the Annual Percentage Rate on a typical payday loan to be?

****The ACTUAL annual percentage rate on a typical payday loan in SC is 391%****

The mean guess by respondents was 82.48%. The modal guess was 20% and the median guess was less than 30%.

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Do you think that the state of South Carolina should further regulate the payday loan industry?

| | |
|----------|------|
| Yes | 76.2 |
| No | 13.5 |
| Not sure | 9.9 |
| Refused | 0.4 |

[Only asked of those who said "yes" or "not sure" when asked if the payday loan industry should be regulated] Other states have regulated the payday lending industry in both of the following ways. Which of the following would you prefer for South Carolina: [Rotate] Capping the amount of interest and fees that payday lenders may charge, or outlawing the business of payday lending?

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Capping the amount of interest | 51.1 |
| Outlawing | 40.5 |
| Not sure | 8.3 |
| Refused | 0.2 |

Some believe that money has too much influence in state elections while others feel that our current system works just fine. Would you support or oppose a proposal for South Carolina to have a system of public financing for candidates who agree to spending limits and pledge not to accept campaign contributions from special interests?

Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Strongly support | 35.4 |
| Somewhat support | 23.8 |
| Somewhat oppose | 13.0 |
| Strongly oppose | 18.0 |
| Not sure | 9.5 |
| Refused | 0.4 |

If this system would cost each taxpayer about three dollars and sixty cents a year and would reduce the impact that money has on elections would you support or oppose it?

Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Strongly support | 42.4 |
| Somewhat support | 21.6 |
| Somewhat oppose | 10.0 |
| Strongly oppose | 19.9 |
| Not sure | 6.0 |
| Refused | 0.0 |

We'd like to get your thoughts on Global Warming. Which of the following statements comes closest to your beliefs: [rotate]

| | |
|---|------|
| Global warming is real and is occurring now | 54.8 |
| Global warming is real but won't be a problem for a long time | 11.5 |
| The effects of global warming are being exaggerated | 21.1 |
| Global warming is not real | 6.7 |
| Not sure [volunteered] | 5.5 |
| Refused [volunteered] | 0.4 |

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[Not asked of those who do not believe global warming is real, those who weren't sure about global warming, or those who refused to answer the question on global warming] Which do you think explains most of the reason that global warming is occurring: [rotate]

| | |
|---|------|
| Global warming is mostly the result of human activity | 51.3 |
| Global warming is mostly the result of natural causes | 29.3 |
| Both equally [volunteered] | 17.0 |
| Not sure [volunteered] | 2.4 |
| Refused [volunteered] | 0.0 |

Which of the following comes closest to your preference regarding U.S. policy toward global warming?

| | |
|---|------|
| The U.S. government should take immediate action to combat global warming | 36.1 |
| The U.S. government should continue to try to understand global warming and adopt modest policy as needed | 47.1 |
| The U.S. government should take no action regarding global warming | 9.7 |
| Not sure [volunteered] | 6.4 |
| Refused [volunteered] | 0.7 |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is doing his job as president?

| | |
|------------|------|
| Approve | 41.6 |
| Disapprove | 51.0 |
| Not sure | 6.6 |
| Refused | 0.8 |

Do you believe that the war in Iraq has made America safer or created additional threats to our security?

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Safer | 42.3 |
| Additional threats | 47.8 |
| Not sure | 9.8 |
| Refused | 0.1 |

Do you approve or disapprove of George W. Bush's handling of the war in Iraq?

| | |
|------------|------|
| Approve | 38.0 |
| Disapprove | 55.8 |
| Not sure | 5.9 |
| Refused | 0.3 |

Some have argued that stability in Iraq will require stepped up efforts from the Iraqi government. Which of the following do you think would be most likely to spur or aid action by the Iraqi government: [rotate]

| | |
|---|------|
| Begin drawing down combat troops as an incentive to the Iraqi government to step up | 43.5 |
| Leave combat troops in place as a buffer to protect the Iraqi government while it works | 30.6 |
| Leave it to the military/ generals to decide [volunteered] | 14.6 |
| Not sure [volunteered] | 10.7 |
| Refused [volunteered] | 0.6 |

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What action do you think the next president of the United States should take with regard to the level of US troops in Iraq: [Rotate]

| | |
|---|------|
| Draw down the number of combat troops but leave a smaller defensive force | 13.1 |
| Gradually reduce all troop levels with the goal of completely withdrawing in time | 47.4 |
| Immediately withdraw all troops | 12.1 |
| Do not change current troop levels | 9.6 |
| Increase troop levels | 2.8 |
| Leave it to the military/generals to decide [volunteered] | 9.4 |
| Not sure [volunteered] | 5.5 |
| Refused [volunteered] | 0.1 |

Many people are debating about how to better control health care costs and increase the number of people covered. One idea would require those who can afford it to purchase private health insurance while the government provides coverage for those who can't afford it. Would you favor or oppose such a plan or haven't you thought much about this issue?

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Favor | 43.6 |
| Oppose | 31.4 |
| Haven't thought much | 23.3 |
| Refused | 1.8 |

Do you think abortion should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Legal under any | 18.6 |
| Legal only under certain | 53.3 |
| Illegal in all | 22.4 |
| Not sure | 4.3 |
| Refused | 1.4 |

In South Carolina, it is unconstitutional for gays and lesbians to marry. Assuming that this will not change, do you believe that long term same sex couples should have legal rights similar to those of married heterosexual couples even though they are not allowed to marry?

| | |
|----------|------|
| Yes | 35.0 |
| No | 58.9 |
| Not sure | 5.0 |
| Refused | 1.1 |

Would you say that crime committed by gangs in your local area is a major problem, a minor problem, or not much of a problem at all?

| | |
|----------|------|
| Major | 30.3 |
| Minor | 35.2 |
| Not much | 30.4 |
| Not sure | 4.1 |
| Refused | 0.0 |

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Would you say that gang violence in your local area has increased, decreased, or remained about the same over the past 3 years?

| | |
|---------------|------|
| Increased | 52.7 |
| Decreased | 4.1 |
| Remained same | 34.8 |
| Not sure | 8.2 |
| Refused | 0.1 |

How would you describe your political beliefs: Very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, very conservative?

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Very liberal | 6.4 |
| Somewhat liberal | 14.8 |
| Moderate | 25.0 |
| Somewhat conservative | 27.0 |
| Very conservative | 20.5 |
| Not sure | 5.6 |
| Refused | 0.7 |

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Republican | 38.9 |
| Democrat | 28.8 |
| Independent | 27.7 |
| Other | 2.7 |
| Don't know/Refused | 1.8 |