

North Carolina Survey

February 14, 2007

Introduction

Public Policy Polling surveyed likely general election voters in North Carolina on February 12, 2007. Our purpose was to measure public opinion about the health care system in this country, test a hypothetical U.S. Senate race between Senator Elizabeth Dole and a leading North Carolina Democrat, Congressman Bob Etheridge, and to take a quick look at the 2008 Presidential general election. We have cross-tabulated respondents' answers to the above three questions against five demographic attributes: gender, party affiliation, race, age and region (based on area codes).

Analysis

Health Care

Momentum for universal health care deteriorated after the failed attempt by the Clinton Administration in the 1990s, but it appears as if universal health care is making a comeback. Democratic presidential candidates are openly talking about universal health care as a serious goal, and inroads are being made at the state level.

Massachusetts recently passed a universal health care bill, Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed a universal health care program for California, and even in North Carolina, Governor Easley has recently asked for a universal health care study.

Public opinion appears to be coming around on the universal health care issue as well. It is clear that North Carolina voters are not happy with the current health care system in our country. Sixty-eight percent are dissatisfied with the cost of health care, while only 25% are satisfied.

A majority would prefer a universal health care system instead of the current system. Fifty-one percent say they would prefer "a universal health insurance program, where everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that is run by the government and financed by taxpayers."

Currently universal health care appears to be a partisan issue. A large majority of Democrats, 69%, favor universal health care, but a majority of Republicans, 56%, prefer the current system.

Dole Approval

Senator Elizabeth Dole's approval rating stands at 43%, while 31% disapprove. This is up from 36% approval last month. An association with President Bush's unpopular troop surge proposal may have hurt her approval last month. Nevertheless, a 43% percent approval rating is still relatively low for a Senator. For example, see Survey USA's tracking of approval ratings here: <http://surveyusa.com/50StateTracking.html>.

Dole versus Etheridge?

Last month PPP tested a hypothetical Senate race between Senator Dole and Governor Mike Easley. Easley led Dole 44% to 41%. This month we tested Congressman Bob Etheridge against Senator Dole.

Right now Dole holds a 45% to 30% lead over Congressman Etheridge. Etheridge clearly does not enjoy the same statewide recognition and popularity as Governor Easley. If he were to enter the Senate race he would start off as an underdog.

However, the numbers may not be as rosy for Dole as it may first appear. Conventional wisdom states that an incumbent whose numbers are below 50% is in danger. That is the reality for Senator Dole who is at 45%.

Time may also be on the Democrats' side. During the course of the campaign when the opposing candidate has time to introduce himself to voters across the state, the race will naturally narrow. Etheridge does lead Dole in the one area of the state in which he is well-known and is the base for his congressional district, the Triangle. In the 919 area code Etheridge leads 42% to 41%.

Etheridge can also count on more support from the black community. He outpaced Dole among blacks 47% to 12%, but 41% were undecided. If he were to jump in the race, by Election Day, Etheridge should count on a much higher percentage from this traditionally Democratic demographic.

Recent history also suggests that a 15% lead this far out from Election Day is not safe. Senator Jim Webb of Virginia trailed Senator George Allen by as much as 25 percentage points only 8 months out from Election Day in 2006 (see Rasmussen Reports monthly tracking poll). We are currently 20 months from Election Day 2008.

Of course there are historical trends that may boost Republican chances. Republican presidential coattails could be an advantage in a traditionally “red state.” No Democrat has won a U.S. Senate race in North Carolina during a Presidential election year since 1968.

Presidential Generic Ballot

The Democrats have a surprising lead in a Presidential generic ballot. As of today, 43% of North Carolina likely voters want the next President to be a Democrat, while 41% want the President to be a Republican. North Carolina has not voted for a Democratic Presidential candidate since 1976.

The intensity of feeling is slightly higher on the Democratic side as well. Sixty-four percent of those who said they want the next president to be a Democrat said that having a Democratic president is “extremely important” to them. Fifty-six percent who want a Republican president have similar extreme feelings.

Methodology

Public Policy Polling surveyed 448 likely general election voters on February 12. The samples were chosen by randomly selecting voters from the North Carolina voter file who had a history of voting in general elections during the last 5 years.

Our surveys are conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone technology. The same recorded voice is played to every respondent, who answer questions using their telephone keypad. The standardized voice dramatically reduces the effect of interviewer bias.

The surveys responses are weighted to accurately reflect the demographic breakdown of the desired population. The survey has a margin of error of $\pm 4.6\%$. Other factors, such as refusal to be interviewed and weighting, may introduce additional error that is more difficult to quantify. The exact wording of questions can be found on the respective survey results page.

Who We Are

Since 2001 Public Policy Polling (PPP) has provided poll data and expert analysis for the public, opinion leaders and public policy makers in the state of North Carolina. PPP continues to be dedicated to tracking issue trends, campaign match-ups, and approval



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ratings on key figures in the state. You can find more of our polling data and analysis at our website, www.publicpolicypolling.com.

In 2006, PPP correctly predicted the outcome of numerous elections in North Carolina including the victories of Democratic congressional candidate Heath Shuler and the Wake County School Bond up to six months before Election Day.





NC Survey Results

Q1 Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the cost of health care in this country? If satisfied, press 1 on your keypad now. If dissatisfied, press 2. If you don't know, press 3.

Satisfied25% *Don't know* 7%
Dissatisfied68%

Q2 Which would you prefer: the current health insurance system, where most people get their health insurance from their employers, but some people have no insurance; OR would you prefer a universal health insurance program, where everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that is run by the government and financed by taxpayers? If you would prefer the current system, press 1. If you would prefer a universal health insurance program, press 2. If you don't know, press 3.

Current system37% *Don't know*12%
Universal health care51%

Q3 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Senator Elizabeth Dole is handling her job as Senator? If you approve, press 1. If you disapprove, press 2. If you are undecided, press 3.

Approve43% *Undecided*26%
Disapprove31%

Q4 In 2008 Elizabeth Dole will be running for a second term as U.S. Senator. No Democrat has announced they will run against her. If Congressman Bob Etheridge were to challenge her, who would you vote for? If you would vote for Elizabeth Dole, press 1. If for Bob Etheridge, press 2. If you don't know, press 3.

Dole45% *Don't know*25%
Etheridge30%

Q5 As of today would you want our next president to be a Republican or a Democrat? If Democrat, press 1. If Republican, press 2. If no preference, press 3.

Democrat 43% *No preference* 16%
Republican 41%

Q6 [If Democrat in Q6] How important is it to you that the next president be a Democrat? If extremely important, press 1. If very important, press 2. If somewhat important, press 3. If not very important, press 4. If you don't know, press 5.

Extremely important 64% *Somewhat important* 10%
Very important 17% *Not very important*. 6%
Don't know 3%

Q7 [If Republican in Q6] How important is it to you that the next president be a Republican? If extremely important, press 1. If very important, press 2. If somewhat important, press 3. If not very important, press 4. If you don't know, press 5.

Extremely important 56% *Somewhat important* 15%
Very important 23% *Not very important*. 4%
Don't know 3%

Q8 If you are a woman, press 1, if a man, press 2.

Women52% *Men*48%

Q9 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If Republican, press 2. If other, press 3.

Democrat43% *Other*18%
Republican39%

Q10 If you are white, press 1. If African-American, press 2. If Hispanic, press 3. If other, press

White78% *Other* 7%
Black15%





Q11 If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If you are 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 60, press 3. If older than 60, press 4.

18-29.....	6%	46-60.....	39%
30-45.....	17%	Older than 60.....	38%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
Health care costs			
Satisfied	25%	24%	27%
Dissatisfied	68%	68%	68%
Don't know	6%	8%	5%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
Current system v. Universal			
Current system	37%	36%	39%
Universal health care	51%	48%	54%
Don't know	11%	16%	7%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
Dole Approval			
Approve	43%	42%	43%
Disapprove	31%	30%	31%
Undecided	26%	27%	25%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
Dole v Etheridge			
Dole	45%	47%	43%
Etheridge	30%	25%	34%
Don't know	25%	28%	22%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
Next President			
Democrat	43%	47%	39%
Republican	41%	38%	43%
No preference	16%	14%	17%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
How important for Democrat			
Extremely important	64%	66%	62%
Very important	17%	15%	19%
Somewhat important	10%	9%	10%
Not very important	6%	4%	8%
Don't know	3%	5%	1%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
How important for Republican			
Extremely important	56%	53%	59%
Very important	23%	23%	23%
Somewhat important	15%	16%	13%
Not very important	4%	5%	2%
Don't know	3%	3%	3%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Health care costs				
Satisfied	25%	18%	33%	25%
Dissatisfied	68%	76%	58%	72%
Don't know	7%	7%	8%	3%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Current system v. Universal				
Current system	37%	20%	56%	39%
Universal health care	51%	69%	33%	49%
Don't know	12%	11%	12%	12%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Dole Approval				
Approve	43%	25%	65%	39%
Disapprove	31%	48%	12%	30%
Undecided	26%	28%	23%	31%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Dole v Etheridge				
Dole	45%	19%	78%	38%
Etheridge	30%	52%	8%	23%
Don't know	25%	29%	14%	39%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Next President				
Democrat	43%	77%	9%	38%
Republican	41%	11%	80%	29%
No preference	16%	12%	12%	33%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
How important for Democrat				
Extremely important	64%	72%	43%	39%
Very important	17%	17%	19%	17%
Somewhat important	10%	6%	25%	21%
Not very important	6%	2%	13%	20%
Don't know	3%	4%	-	3%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
How important for Republican				
Extremely important	56%	40%	62%	35%
Very important	23%	14%	22%	33%
Somewhat important	15%	18%	13%	24%
Not very important	4%	19%	1%	4%
Don't know	3%	9%	2%	4%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
Health care costs				
Satisfied	25%	25%	21%	36%
Dissatisfied	68%	69%	74%	46%
Don't know	7%	6%	6%	18%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
Current system v. Universal				
Current system	37%	40%	21%	38%
Universal health care	51%	48%	71%	49%
Don't know	12%	12%	9%	13%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
Dole Approval				
Approve	43%	47%	18%	51%
Disapprove	31%	29%	44%	26%
Undecided	26%	25%	38%	23%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
Dole v Etheridge				
Dole	45%	51%	12%	51%
Etheridge	30%	27%	47%	21%
Don't know	25%	22%	41%	28%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
Next President				
Democrat	43%	38%	82%	18%
Republican	41%	48%	3%	44%
No preference	16%	14%	15%	38%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
How important for Democrat				
Extremely important	64%	59%	79%	57%
Very important	17%	16%	18%	29%
Somewhat important	10%	14%	-	-
Not very important	6%	8%	-	14%
Don't know	3%	3%	4%	-

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
How important for Republican				
Extremely important	56%	57%	-	53%
Very important	23%	22%	-	29%
Somewhat important	15%	15%	-	18%
Not very important	4%	3%	100%	-
Don't know	3%	3%	-	-

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-60	Older than 60
Health care costs					
Satisfied	25%	19%	28%	21%	30%
Dissatisfied	68%	74%	72%	72%	61%
Don't know	7%	7%	-	7%	9%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-60	Older than 60
Current system v. Universal					
Current system	37%	30%	44%	36%	36%
Universal health care	51%	56%	45%	56%	48%
Don't know	12%	15%	11%	7%	16%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-60	Older than 60
Dole Approval					
Approve	43%	33%	45%	40%	46%
Disapprove	31%	34%	21%	33%	32%
Undecided	26%	33%	33%	27%	22%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-60	Older than 60
Dole v Etheridge					
Dole	45%	29%	51%	41%	49%
Etheridge	30%	41%	17%	31%	32%
Don't know	25%	30%	32%	28%	18%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-60	Older than 60
Next President					
Democrat	43%	64%	29%	50%	41%
Republican	41%	29%	58%	33%	42%
No preference	16%	7%	14%	17%	17%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-60	Older than 60
How important for Democrat					
Extremely important	64%	46%	38%	70%	70%
Very important	17%	48%	33%	14%	8%
Somewhat important	10%	-	21%	10%	8%
Not very important	6%	6%	8%	5%	5%
Don't know	3%	-	-	1%	8%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-60	Older than 60
How important for Republican					
Extremely important	56%	50%	47%	59%	60%
Very important	23%	50%	28%	19%	19%
Somewhat important	15%	-	25%	14%	10%
Not very important	4%	-	-	3%	7%
Don't know	3%	-	-	5%	4%

	Base	Area Code					
		252	336	704	828	910	919
Health care costs							
Satisfied	25%	35%	20%	26%	19%	32%	23%
Dissatisfied	68%	62%	74%	66%	73%	64%	69%
Don't know	7%	3%	7%	9%	8%	4%	8%

	Base	Area Code					
		252	336	704	828	910	919
Current system v. Universal							
Current system	37%	34%	37%	47%	33%	35%	35%
Universal health care	51%	62%	45%	43%	60%	51%	51%
Don't know	12%	3%	19%	10%	7%	13%	14%

	Base	Area Code					
		252	336	704	828	910	919
Dole Approval							
Approve	43%	45%	47%	43%	39%	49%	34%
Disapprove	31%	30%	27%	27%	33%	27%	40%
Undecided	26%	24%	26%	29%	28%	24%	26%

	Base	Area Code					
		252	336	704	828	910	919
Dole v Etheridge							
Dole	45%	35%	51%	52%	43%	46%	41%
Etheridge	30%	35%	21%	23%	30%	29%	42%
Don't know	25%	29%	28%	25%	27%	25%	18%





Crosstabs

	Base	Area Code					
		252	336	704	828	910	919
Next President							
Democrat	43%	45%	37%	44%	49%	38%	49%
Republican	41%	38%	52%	42%	31%	41%	36%
No preference	16%	17%	11%	14%	20%	20%	15%

	Base	Area Code					
		252	336	704	828	910	919
How important for Democrat							
Extremely important	64%	78%	68%	71%	56%	55%	61%
Very important	17%	7%	6%	16%	25%	26%	20%
Somewhat important	10%	8%	17%	10%	8%	3%	10%
Not very important	6%	8%	3%	-	11%	9%	5%
Don't know	3%	-	6%	3%	-	7%	5%

	Base	Area Code					
		252	336	704	828	910	919
How important for Republican							
Extremely important	56%	66%	50%	44%	48%	62%	72%
Very important	23%	4%	23%	34%	22%	23%	21%
Somewhat important	15%	21%	19%	19%	26%	6%	-
Not very important	4%	4%	-	3%	-	9%	7%
Don't know	3%	4%	8%	-	4%	-	-

