



CRITICAL INSIGHTS

RESEARCH FOR PRECISE PRAGMATIC DIRECTION

Critical Insights on Maine[™] Tracking Survey

~ Spring 2008 ~

Residents' Views on Politics, the Economy
& Issues Facing the State of Maine

Focus Groups • Surveys • Public Opinion Polling

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Background & Purpose

- Each Spring and Fall, Critical Insights conducts the *Critical Insights on Maine™* Tracking Survey, a comprehensive, statewide public opinion survey of Maine residents which covers a variety of topics of interest to business, government and the general public.
 - In addition to general interest items (the results of which are released to the media as a public service), the survey also includes a number of proprietary items included on behalf of sponsoring entities, with results of those items released only to the sponsors.
- For the current wave of the study, Critical Insights completed a total of 602 telephone interviews across the state; data collection and analysis was conducted between June 1 and June 27, 2008.
 - With a sample of 602 interviews, results presented here have an associated margin of error of ± 3.4 percentage points at the 90% confidence level, or ± 4.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
 - All interviews were conducted by trained and professionally supervised interviewers at Critical Insights' Portland-based telephone data collection center.
 - On average, the entire survey instrument – including general interest items and all subscriber questions – was 31 minutes in administrative length.
 - Refusal rates for the study were approximately 3.8% overall, indicating that the sample was not tainted by non-response error.
- This document presents results of general interest questions which Critical Insights makes public to the media.
 - Where appropriate comparisons of current results are made with findings from past iterations of the *Critical Insights on Maine™* Tracking Survey.



*Issues Facing Maine &
Perceptions of the State's Economy*



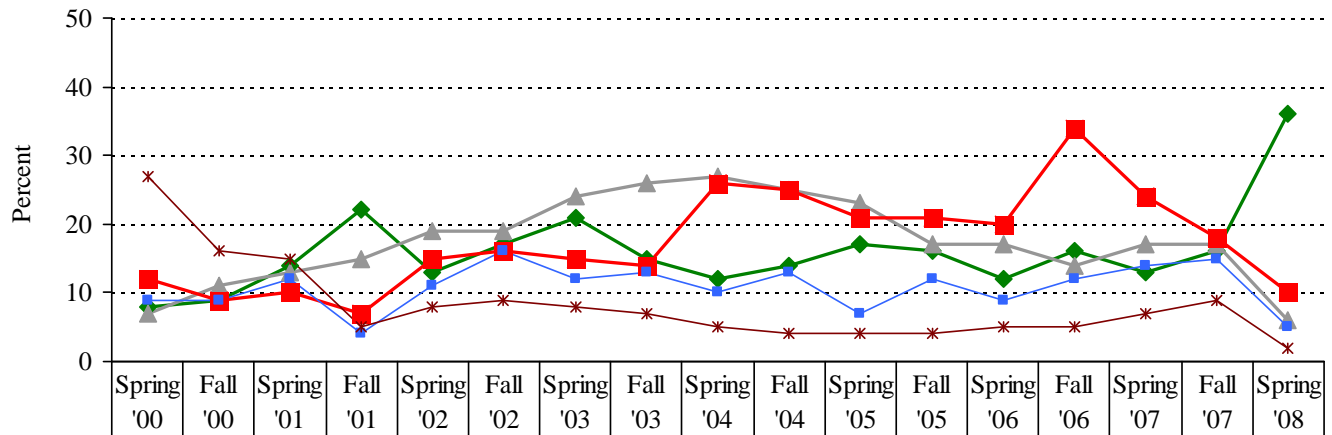
Issues Facing the State of Maine

- Many changes were noted in the current wave of the *Critical Insights on Maine™* Tracking Survey. For the first time, more Mainers surveyed cited the economy as the primary issue facing the State, with over one-third of those polled citing the economy.
 - This is the largest proportion for any issue in every iteration of the survey.
 - Though taxation has long been the primary issue cited by Mainers, over three times as many people cited the economy in the current survey.
- The price of gasoline and heating oil was the second most commonly cited issue, with more than one fourth of Mainers citing it as the most pressing issue facing the State.
- Among other issues tracked over time:
 - **Taxation** continues to decline in importance, with only 1-in-10 Mainers citing taxation as the primary issue facing Maine – a decline of 8% from the Fall of 2007. After a high of 34% noted in conjunction with the '06 TABOR initiative, mentions of taxes/taxation have decreased to their lowest level since 2001.
 - **Unemployment**, though the fifth most commonly cited issue, has declined to its lowest levels since the survey was first administered in 2000. Only 6% of those polled cited unemployment as the primary issue facing Maine today.
 - **Healthcare**, concern for which had been on the rise for two years, declined by 10% and is now cited as the primary issue by only 5%.
 - **Education** has dropped to the lowest levels of citation seen since the first iteration of the *Critical Insights on Maine™* Tracking Survey. Only 2% of Mainers cited education as the primary issue, with the same proportion citing the environment and funding.



Residents' Perceptions of Key Issues Facing Maine

What do you consider to be the primary issue facing Maine today?



◆ Economy	8	9	14	22	13	17	21	15	12	14	17	16	12	16	13	16	36
▲ Unemployment	7	11	13	15	19	19	24	26	27	25	23	17	17	14	17	17	6
■ Taxes	12	9	10	7	15	16	15	14	26	25	21	21	20	34	24	18	10
■ Health care	9	9	12	4	11	16	12	13	10	13	7	12	9	12	14	15	5
* Education	27	16	15	5	8	9	8	7	5	4	4	4	5	5	7	9	2



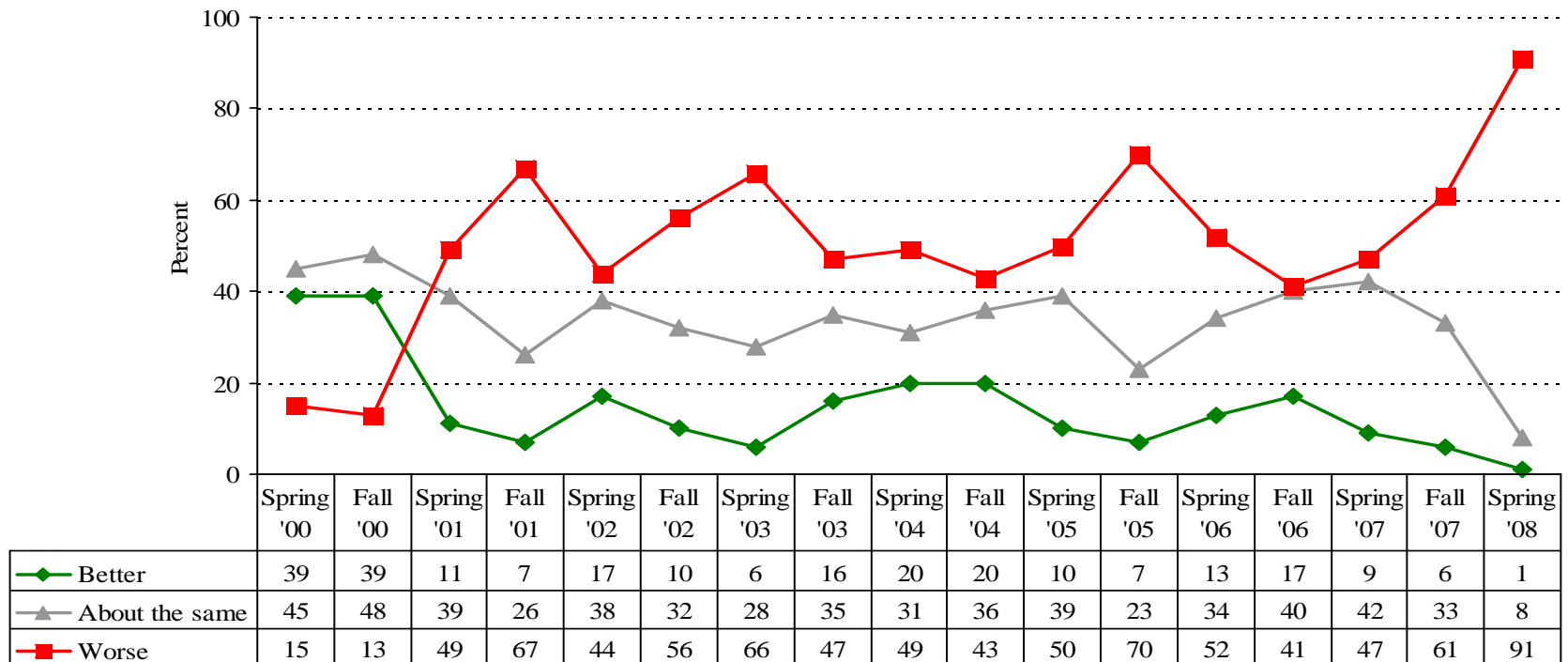
Maine Residents' Views on the Economy

- Fully 9-in-10 Mainers surveyed said their perceptions of the economy have become increasingly more negative over the past 12 months, and over half of those surveyed (56%) said the economy was “much worse.”
 - This figure is almost double what it was one year ago, when less than half of Mainers surveyed said they felt the economy was worse.
 - Only 1% of Mainers said that the economy is in better shape, and only 8% said it was about the same compared to 12 months ago.
- Further, Mainers continue to lack optimism for the future of the economy.
 - The proportion of Mainers who think the economy will decline over the next year is at an all time high of 55%.
- In a downward trend that has continued over the past eight years, fewer Mainers are able to put more money into their personal savings.
 - Indeed, in a measure which often serves as a barometer of personal economic stability and security, a mere 7% of Mainers claim they are putting more into their savings than they were a year ago. This is a dramatic decline from the all-time high of 26% in 2000.
 - Notably, an all time high of 6-in-10 Mainers polled indicate that they are putting less into their personal savings.



Residents' Perceptions of the Current State of the Economy

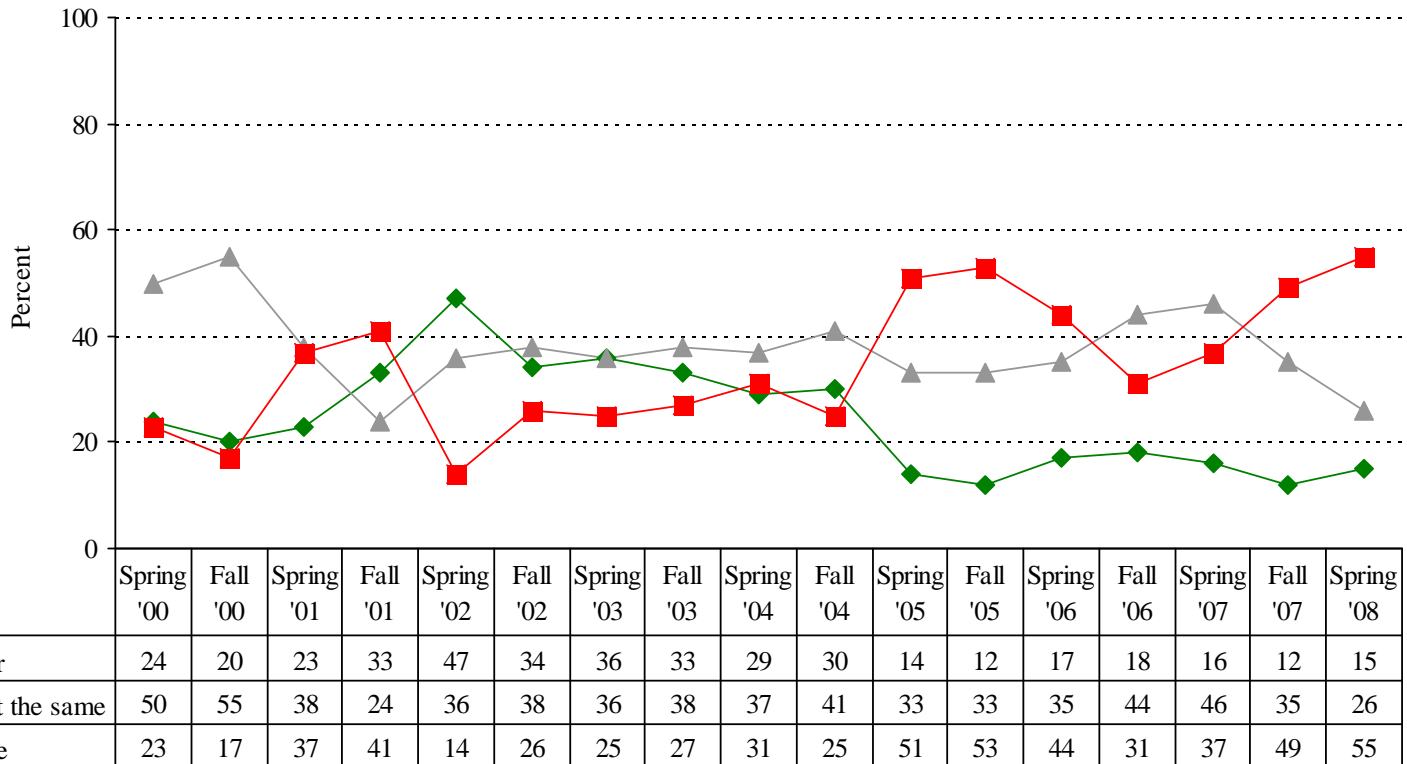
Compared with 12 months ago, how would you describe the overall status of the economy? Would you say it is...





Residents' Perceptions on the Future State of the Economy

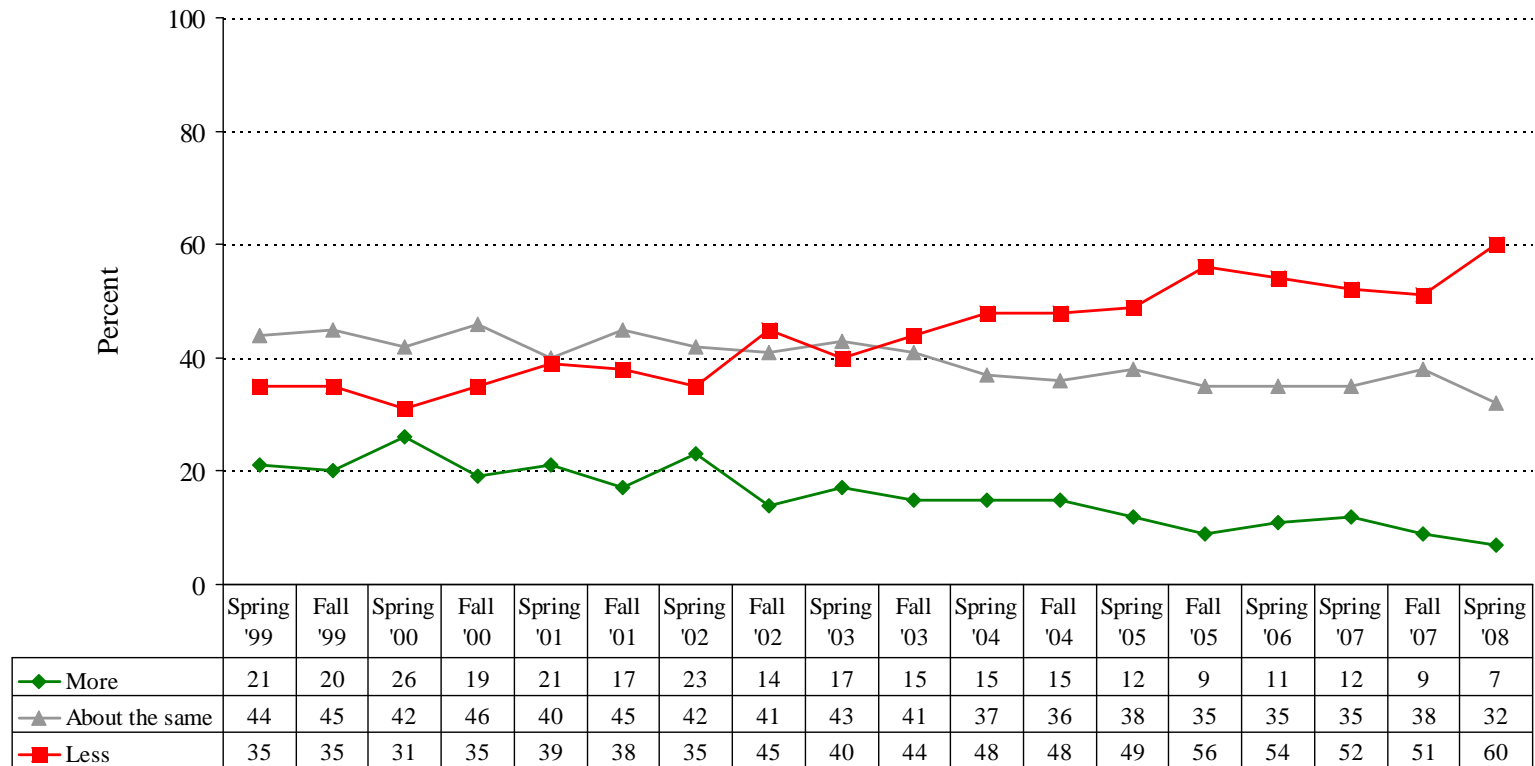
In the next 12 months, do you think the economy will be . . .





Household Economic Situation: Personal Savings

Compared to last year, would you say your household is putting more into personal savings, about the same amount, or saving less?





Observations on Maine Politics



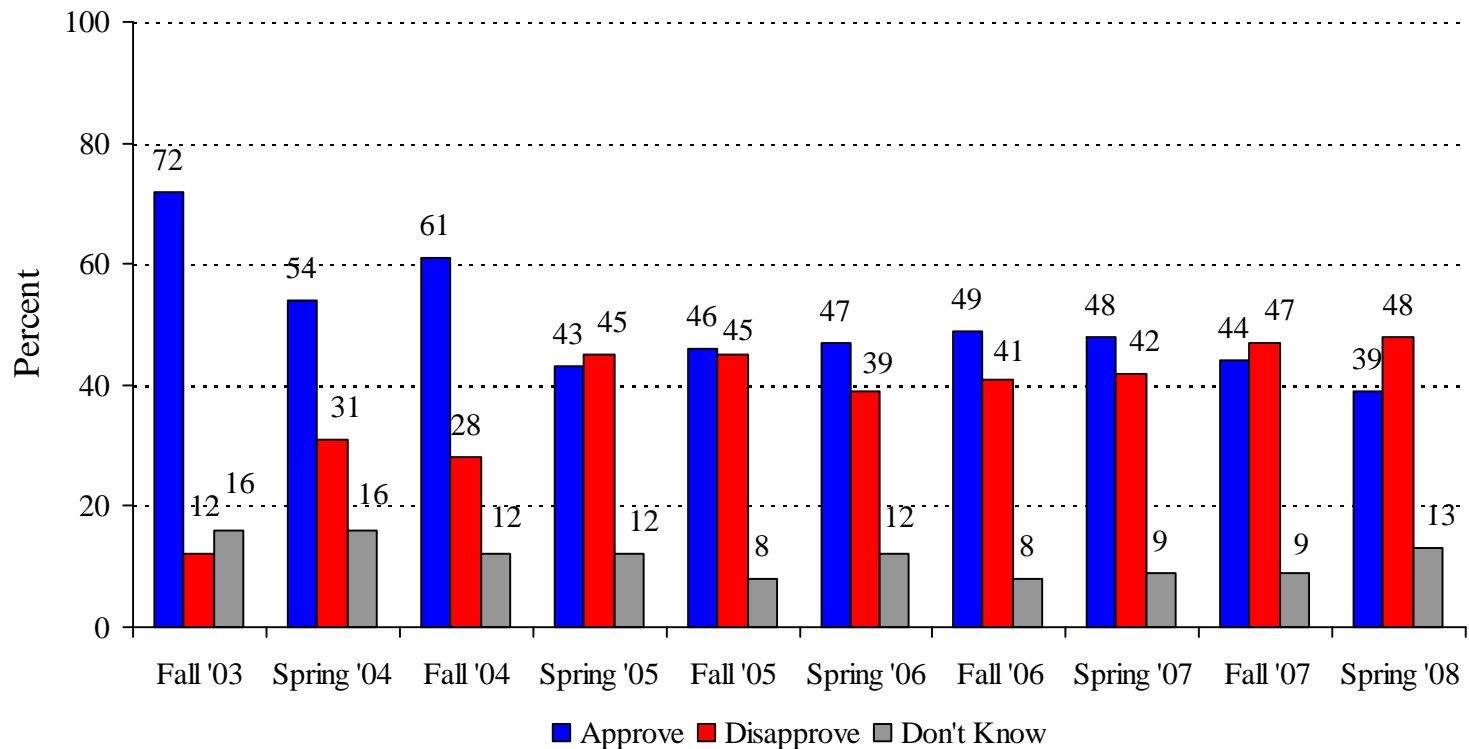
Mainers' Perspectives on Governor John Baldacci

- The Governor's approval rating has continued to decline and is now at the lowest level since he took office. Indeed, almost half of Mainers (48%) say they disapprove of the way the Governor is handling his job.
 - Not surprisingly, approval of the Governor's job performance continues to be highest among Maine's registered Democrats, with half saying they approve of the job the governor is doing.
 - Governor Baldacci's approval rating is highest in the Southern part of the State and in the First Congressional District.



Residents' Approval Rating of Governor John Baldacci

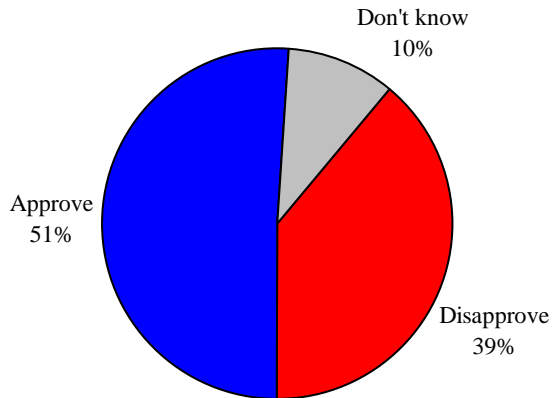
In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Governor Baldacci is handling his job as governor of Maine?



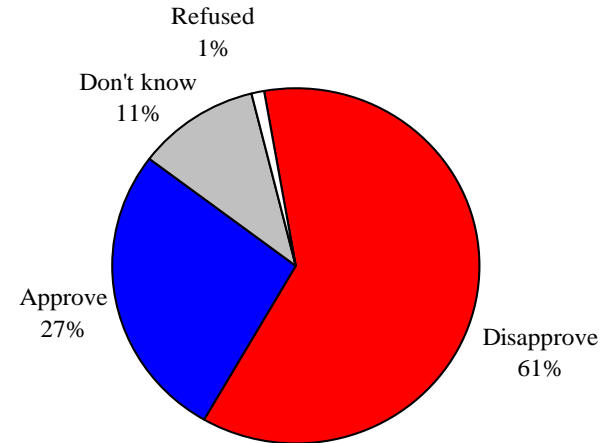


Governor Baldacci Approval Rating According to Political Party

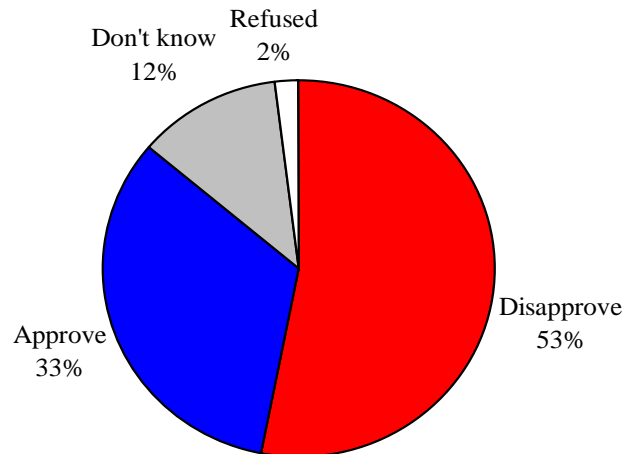
Democrats



Republicans



Independents

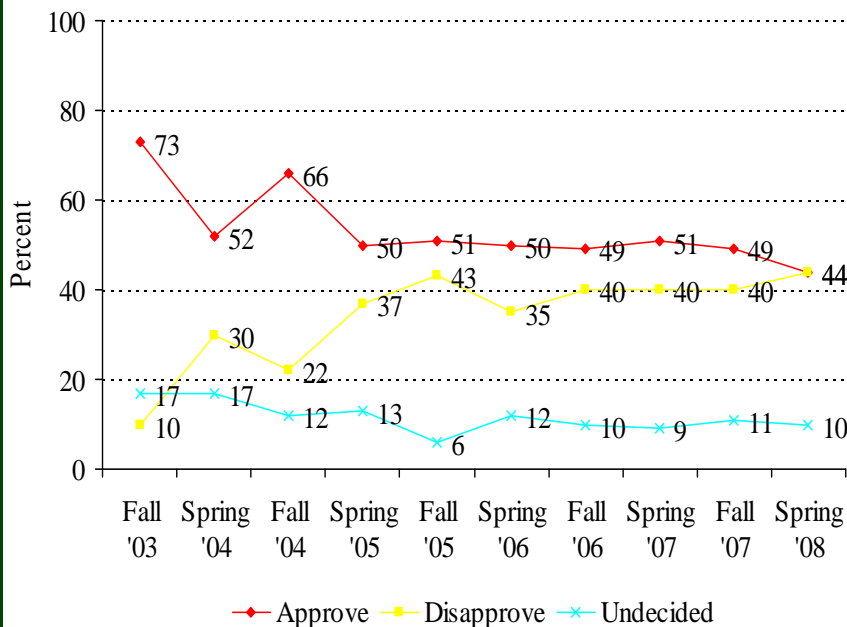




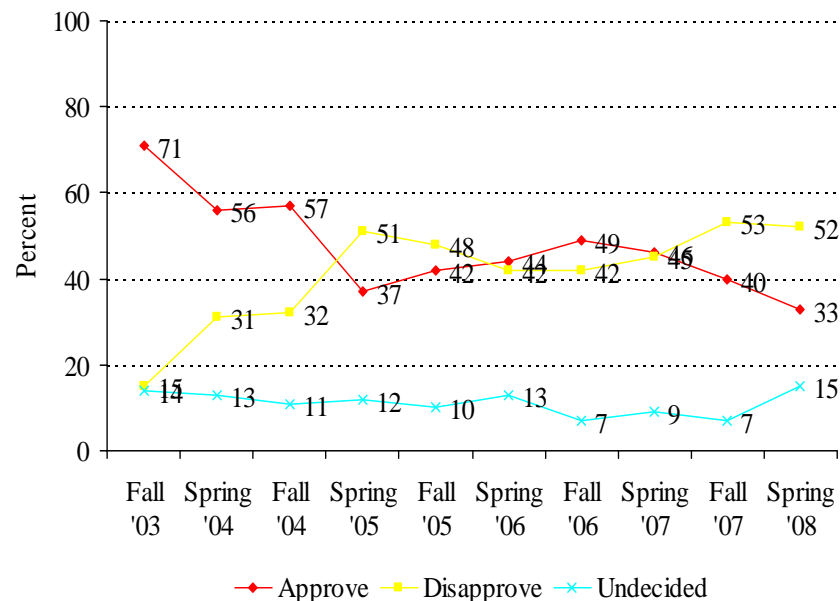
Governor Baldacci Approval Rating

According to Congressional District

Congressional District 1



Congressional District 2





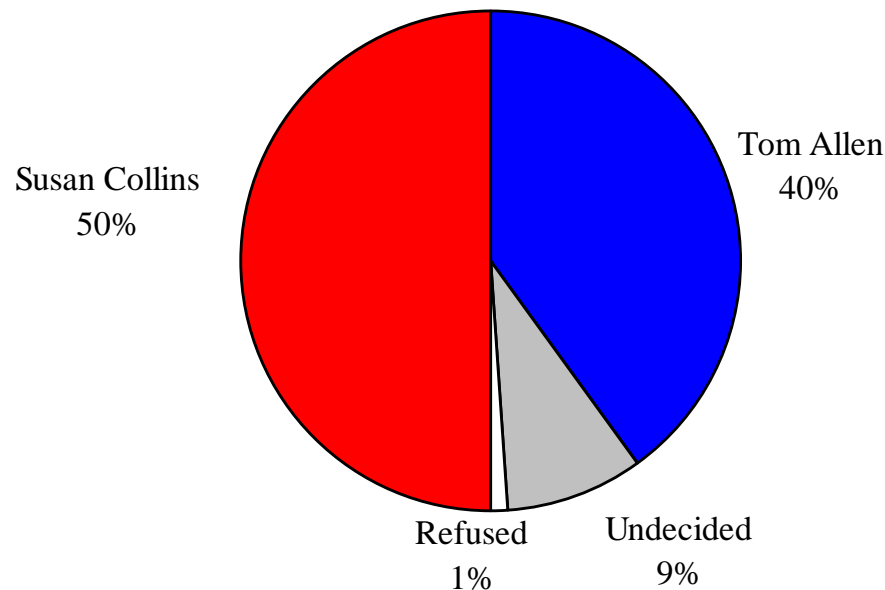
Mainers' Perspectives on U.S. Senate Race

- With the election less than six months away, Senator Susan Collins leads her challenger, Congressman Tom Allen.
 - Presently, 51% of those polled would vote for Collins, compared to 37% who would cast their vote for Allen.
 - One-in-ten Mainers say they are still undecided, with residents under the age of 35, and those earning less than \$50,000 annually being more likely to be undecided.
 - When the data are examined according to self-reported “likely voters,” Collins’ lead over Allen continues at 10%.
 - While it is noteworthy that Tom Allen garners support from a majority of the Democrats polled (65%), a majority of Republicans (83%) and Independents (61%) claim that they would support Senator Collins in the 2008 election.
 - Additionally, over one-quarter of registered Democrats polled say they are likely to vote for Senator Collins.



Residents' Preferences for the U.S. Senate Among Likely Voters

If the election were held today, for whom would you vote for the US Senate?

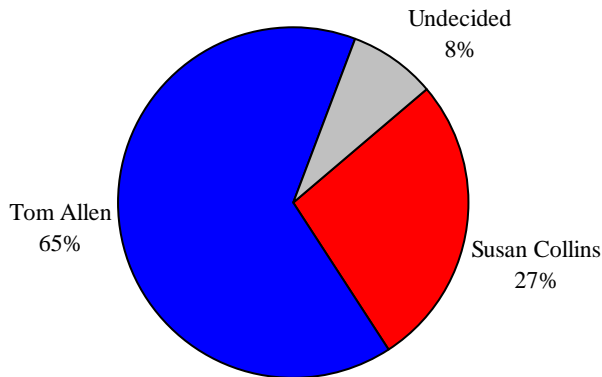




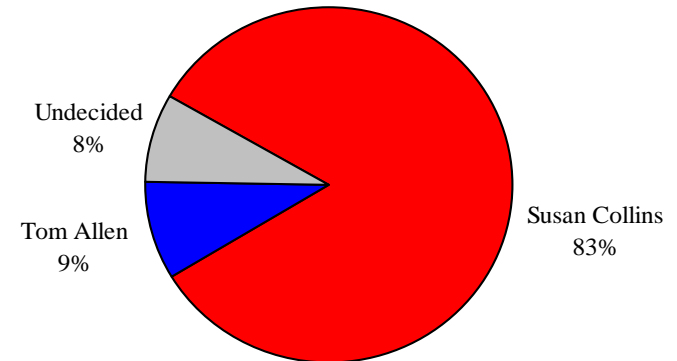
Residents' Preferences for the U.S. Senate

If the election were held today, for whom would you vote for the US Senate?

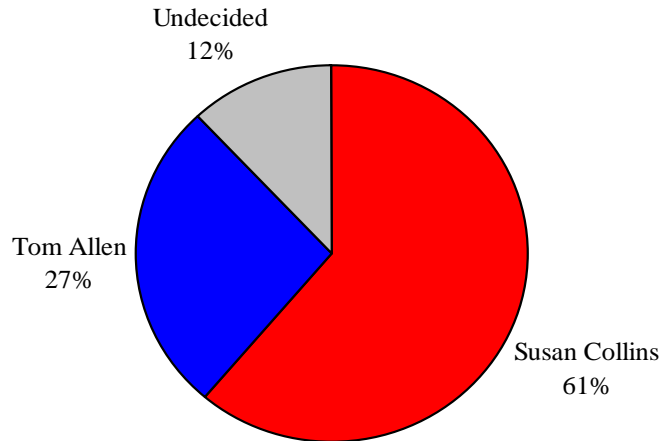
Democrats



Republicans



Independents

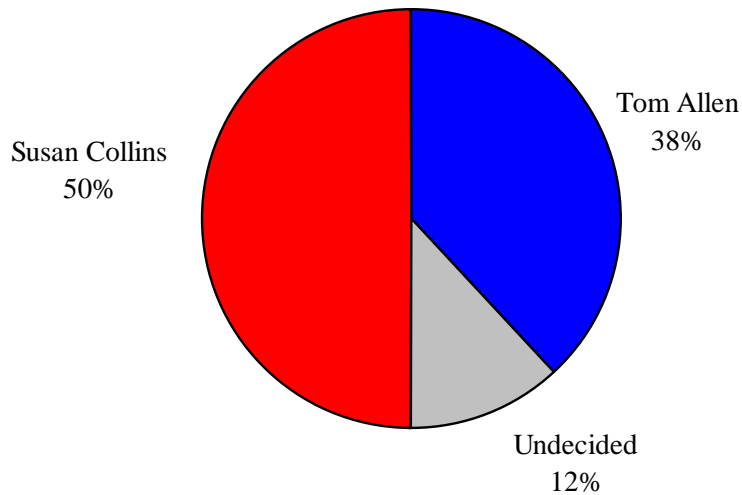




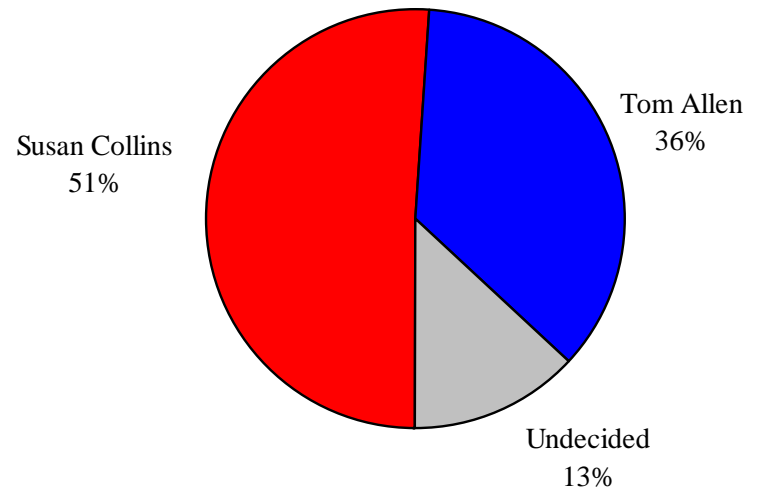
Residents' Preferences for the U.S. Senate

If the election were held today, for whom would you vote for the US Senate?

Congressional District 1



Congressional District 2





Observations on George W. Bush



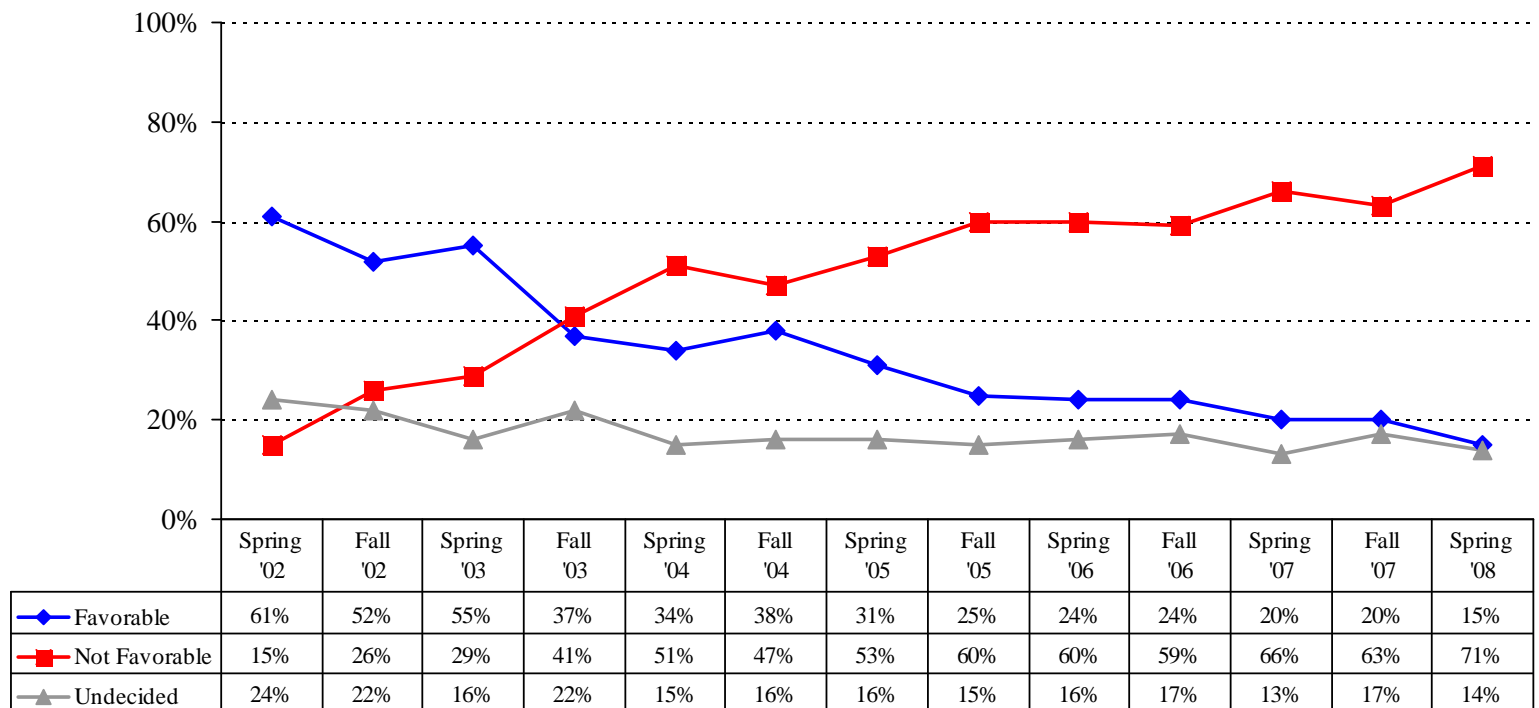
Mainers' Perspectives on President George W. Bush

- Maine's opinion of President Bush continues to be extremely poor, with only 15% of Mainers rating their opinion of George Bush as favorable.
 - The President's favorability rating among Mainers hit a historic low in the *Critical Insights on Maine*TM Tracking Survey, with 7-in-10 Mainers saying their opinion of George Bush is not favorable.
 - Consistent with prior comparisons, while the President's favorability ratings are low nationally (currently 28%, as recorded in a recent Gallup Poll), Mainers have an even less favorable opinion of the President.
 - While the President's favorability rating is extraordinarily low among both Democrats (5%) and Independents (9%), it is bolstered somewhat by the fact that close to 4-in-10 Republicans have a favorable opinion of him. However, another 4-in-10 Republicans say their opinion of Bush is not favorable.
 - President Bush's favorability rating is consistent across both of Maine's Congressional Districts.



Maine Residents' Favorability Ratings of President Bush

Is your opinion of President George W. Bush favorable, not favorable, or undecided?

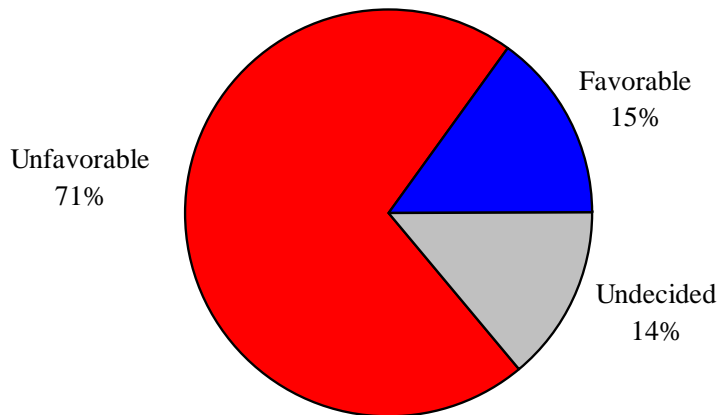




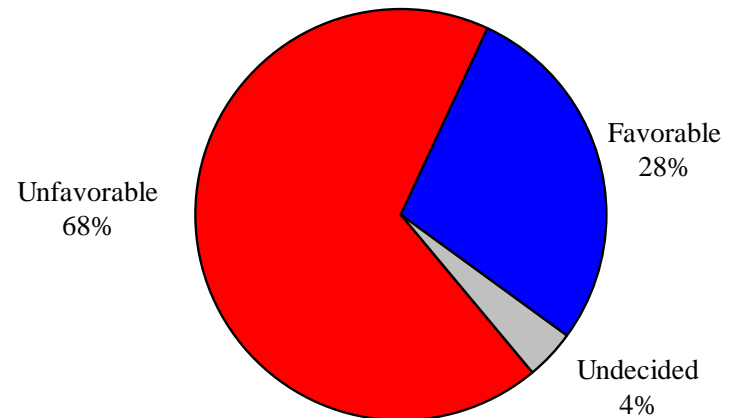
Favorability Ratings of President Bush

Is your opinion of President George W. Bush favorable, not favorable, or undecided?

Maine



National*



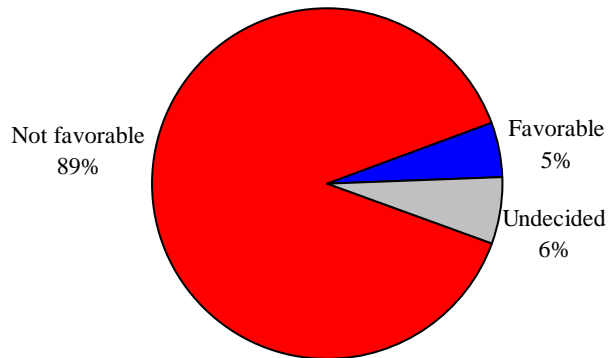
*USA Today/Gallup Poll conducted 6/15-19/08



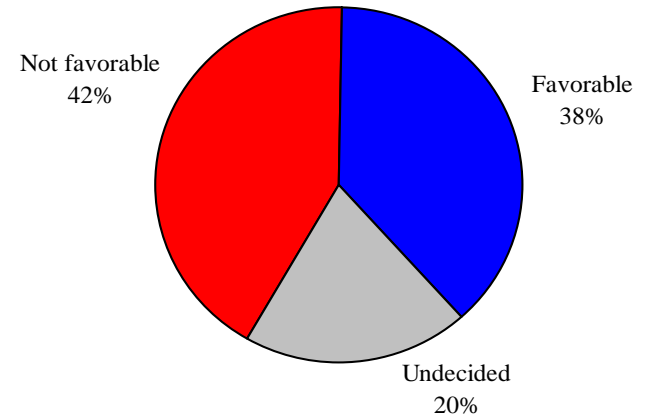
Maine Residents' Favorability Ratings of President Bush

Is your opinion of President George W. Bush favorable, not favorable, or undecided?

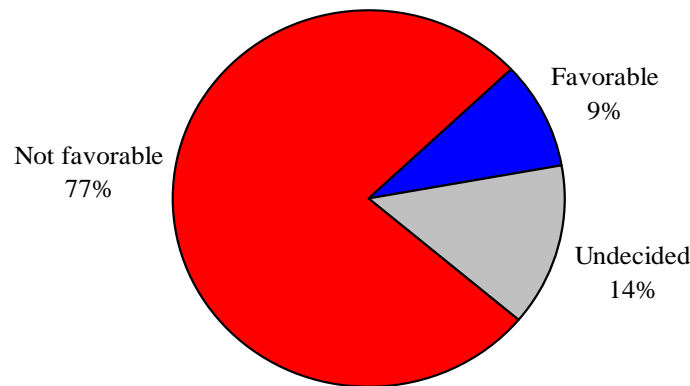
Democrats



Republicans



Independents

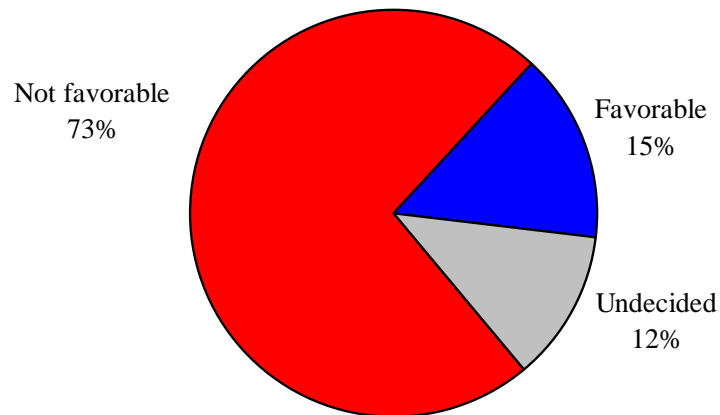




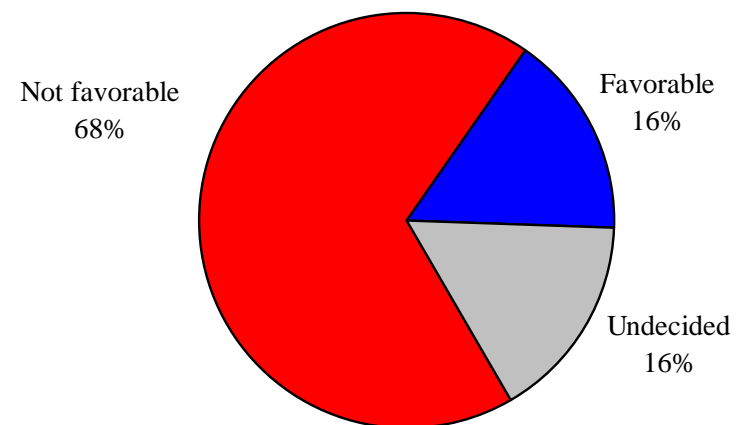
Favorability Ratings of President Bush

Is your opinion of President George W. Bush favorable, not favorable, or undecided?

Congressional District 1



Congressional District 2





Perceived Likelihood of Future US Terrorist Attack

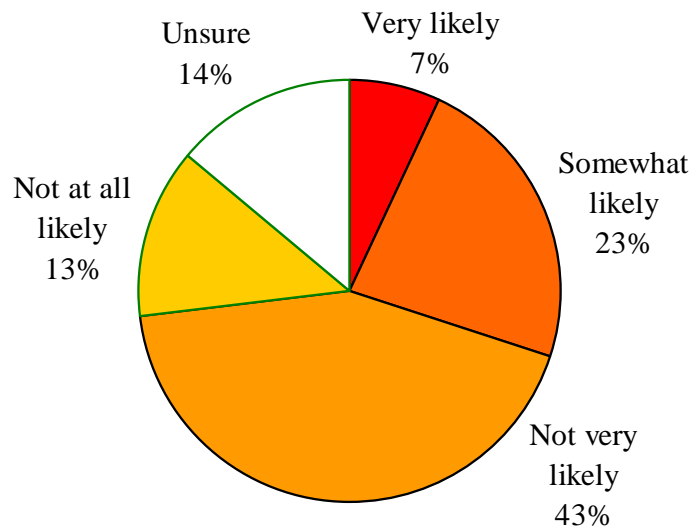
- When asked their perspectives on the likelihood of a future terrorist attack on U.S. soil in the next few months, only 3-in-10 Mainers said that they thought it was at least “somewhat likely” to occur.
 - Republicans and Independents were significantly more likely than Democrats to feel it is at least “somewhat likely” that a terrorist attack will occur in the United States in the next few months.



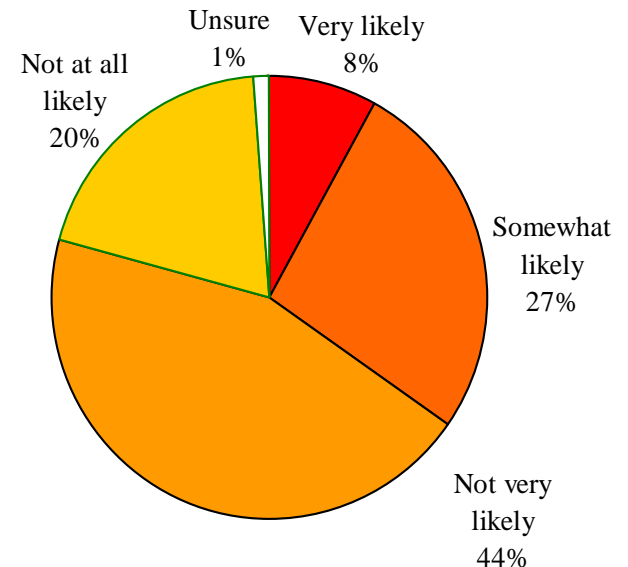
Perceived Likelihood of Future US Terrorist Attack

How likely do you think it is that there will be another terrorist attack in the United States within the next few months? Would you say...

Maine



National*



*CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll. June 26-29, 2008



*Observations on
2008 Presidential Candidates*



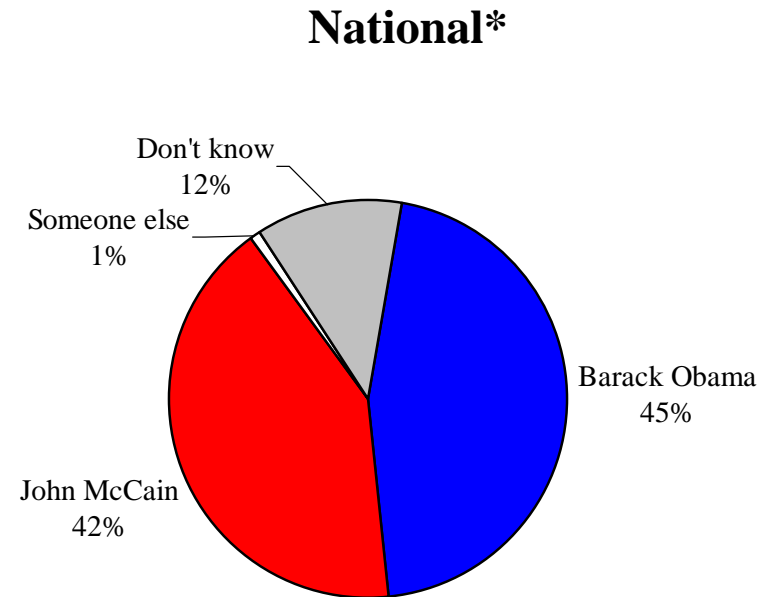
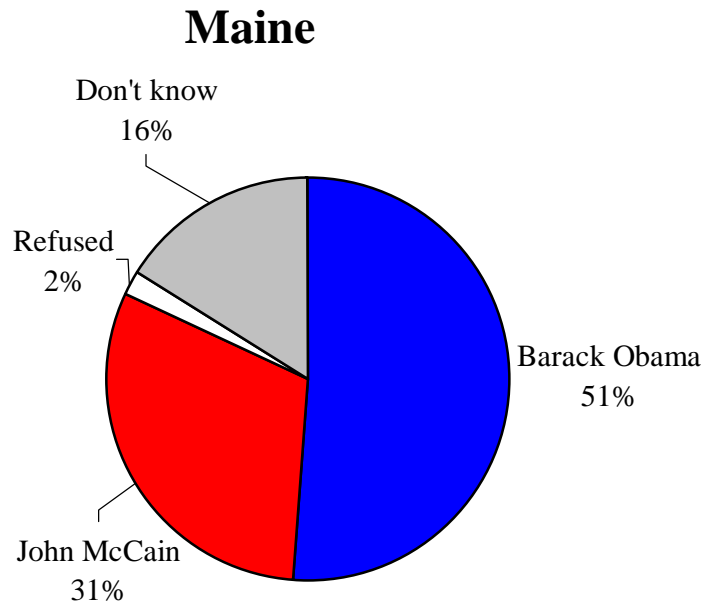
Mainers' Views on 2008 Presidential Candidates

- If the Presidential election were held today, half of Maine residents surveyed said they would vote for Barack Obama, while 3-in-10 Mainers said they would vote for John McCain.
 - Women and registered Democrats were significantly more likely to report that they would vote for Obama than were men and registered Republicans.
 - Indeed, fully three-quarters of registered Democrats said they would vote for Obama.
 - Notably, over one-quarter of registered Independents are still undecided.
- The proportion of Maine residents who said that they would vote for John McCain was 11% less than the national average during the dates of fielding for the current wave of the *Critical Insights on MaineTM* Tracking Survey.
- Residents of the Second Congressional District were significantly more likely to say they would vote for John McCain than residents of the First Congressional District.
 - Although the proportion is within the margin of error, Central Maine is the only region in the state where John McCain is leading Barack Obama (41% to 40%).



Residents' Candidate Preferences for the Presidential Election

*If the election for President were held today, for which of the following two potential candidates would you vote? **



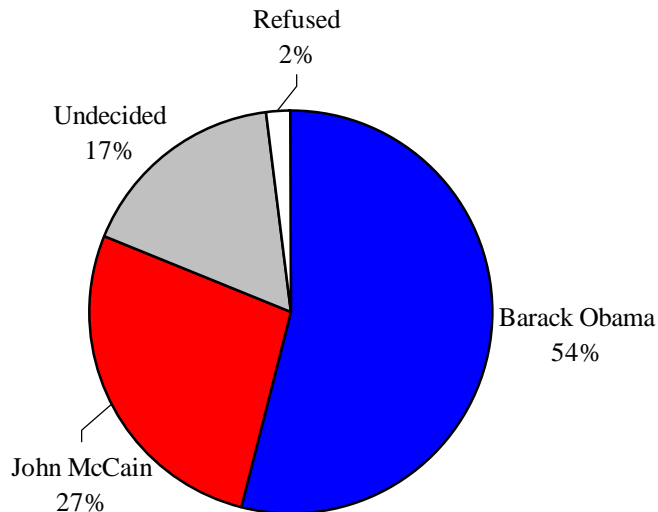
*Gallup Poll, 6/28/2008



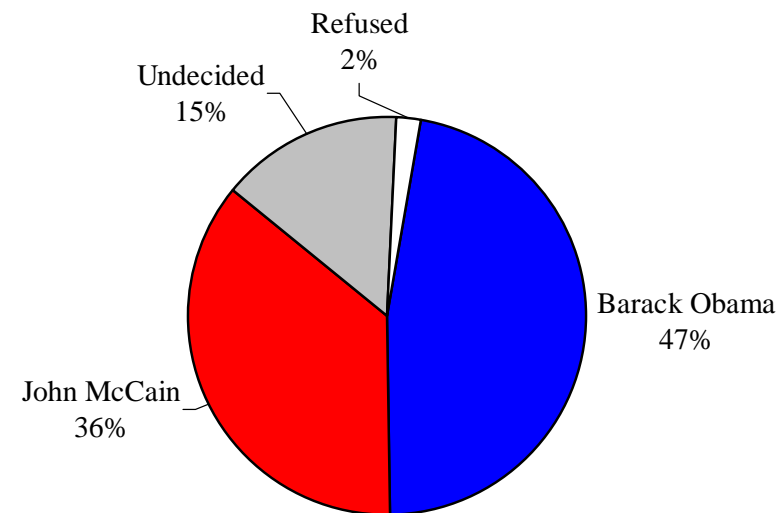
Maine Residents' Candidate Preferences by Congressional District

*If the election for President were held today, for which of the following two potential candidates would you vote? **

Congressional District I



Congressional District II





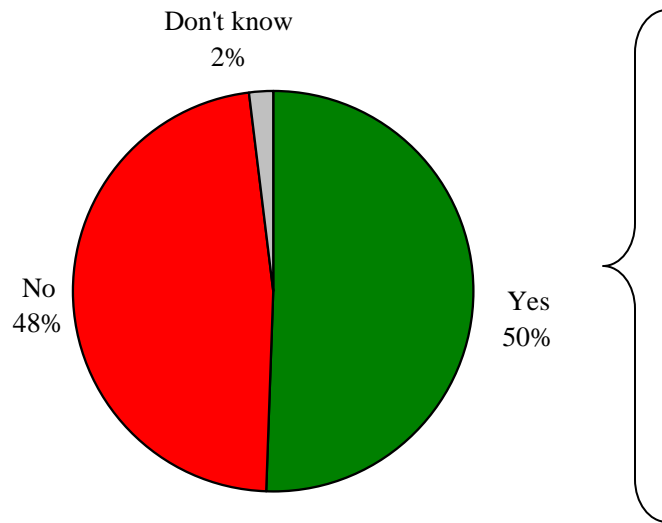
Registered Democrats' View of the Presidential Race

- Half of all registered Maine Democrats polled said they supported Hillary Clinton as the Democratic nominee for President.
 - Men and college graduates were significantly more likely to say they did not support Hillary Clinton's nomination.
- Of those who said they had supported Hillary, three-fifths said they would vote for Barack Obama.
 - Residents of the First Congressional District and self-described "likely voters" were significantly more likely to say that they would "definitely" vote for Barack Obama.

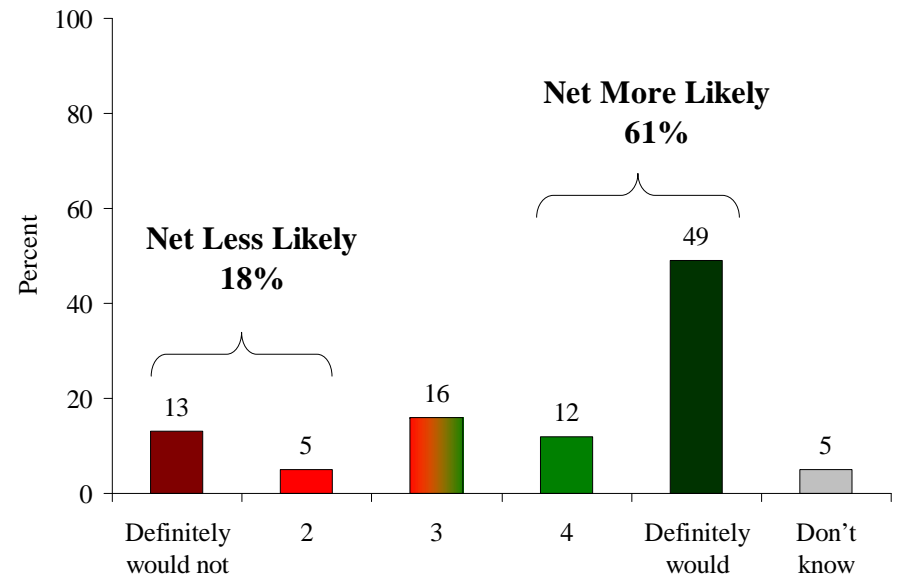


Registered Democrats' View of the Presidential Race

*Do you, or did you, support Hillary Clinton as the Democratic nominee for President? **



If Obama wins the Democratic nomination, will you vote for him? ^



* Based among registered Democrats.

^ Based among those who supported Hillary Clinton's nomination.



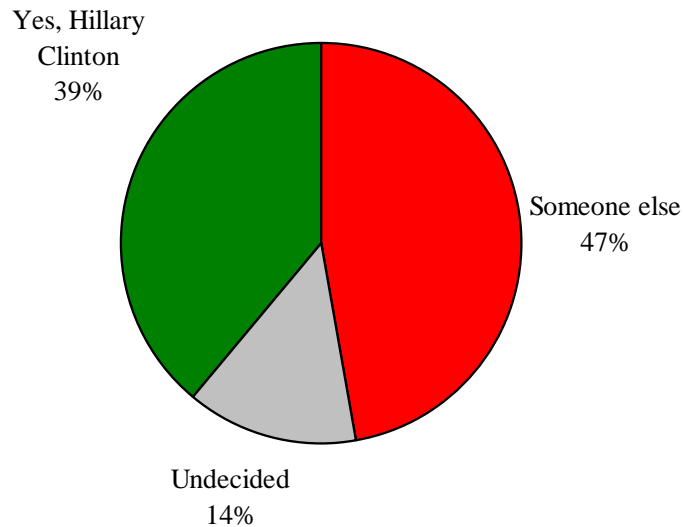
Registered Voters' Views of the Vice Presidential Nomination

- Two-fifths of Maine residents who said they are planning to vote for Barack Obama said they would like to see him choose Hillary Clinton as his running mate, while close to half said they would like to see him choose someone else.
 - Men and higher SES (education, income) residents were significantly more likely to say they would want Obama to choose someone else as his running mate.
- Of those residents who said they would like Obama to choose someone other than Hillary Clinton as his running mate, the majority (6-in-10) were unsure who he should select.
 - John Edwards was the most commonly cited choice, with close to one-fifth of residents naming Edwards as their favorite for the Vice-Presidency.
- Over half of Maine residents polled who said they planned to vote for John McCain did not know who they wanted him to choose as his running mate on the Republican ticket.
 - Of those who did express an opinion, Mitt Romney was the most popular choice, with one-fifth naming Romney as their preferred potential running mate for McCain.
 - Registered Republicans and Independents and higher SES residents were significantly more likely to choose Romney.

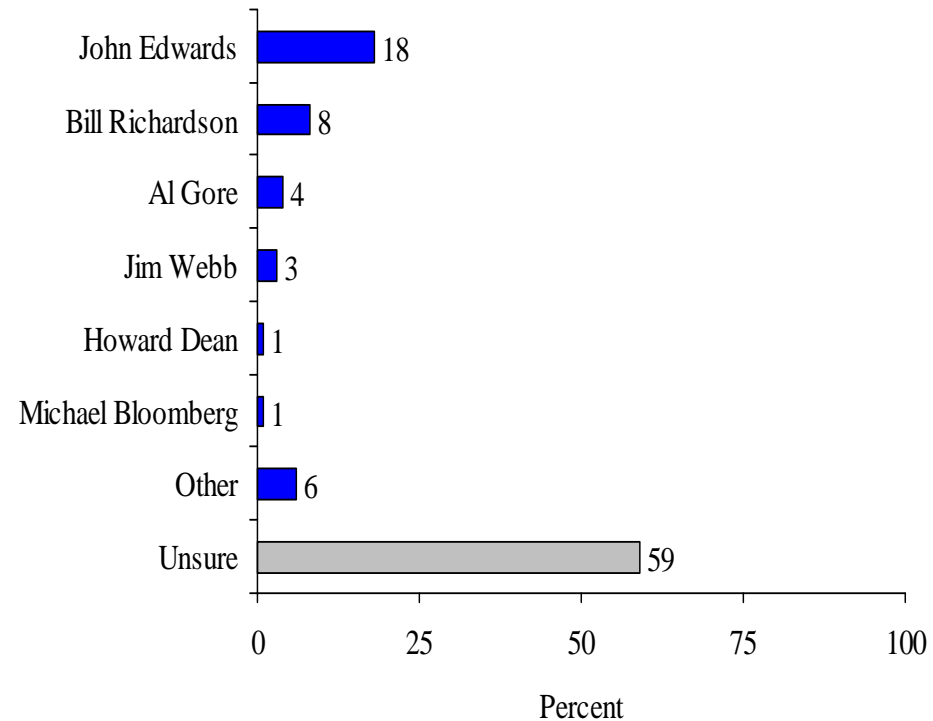


Registered Democrats' View of the Vice Presidential Nomination

Would you like to see Obama choose Hillary as his Running Mate?



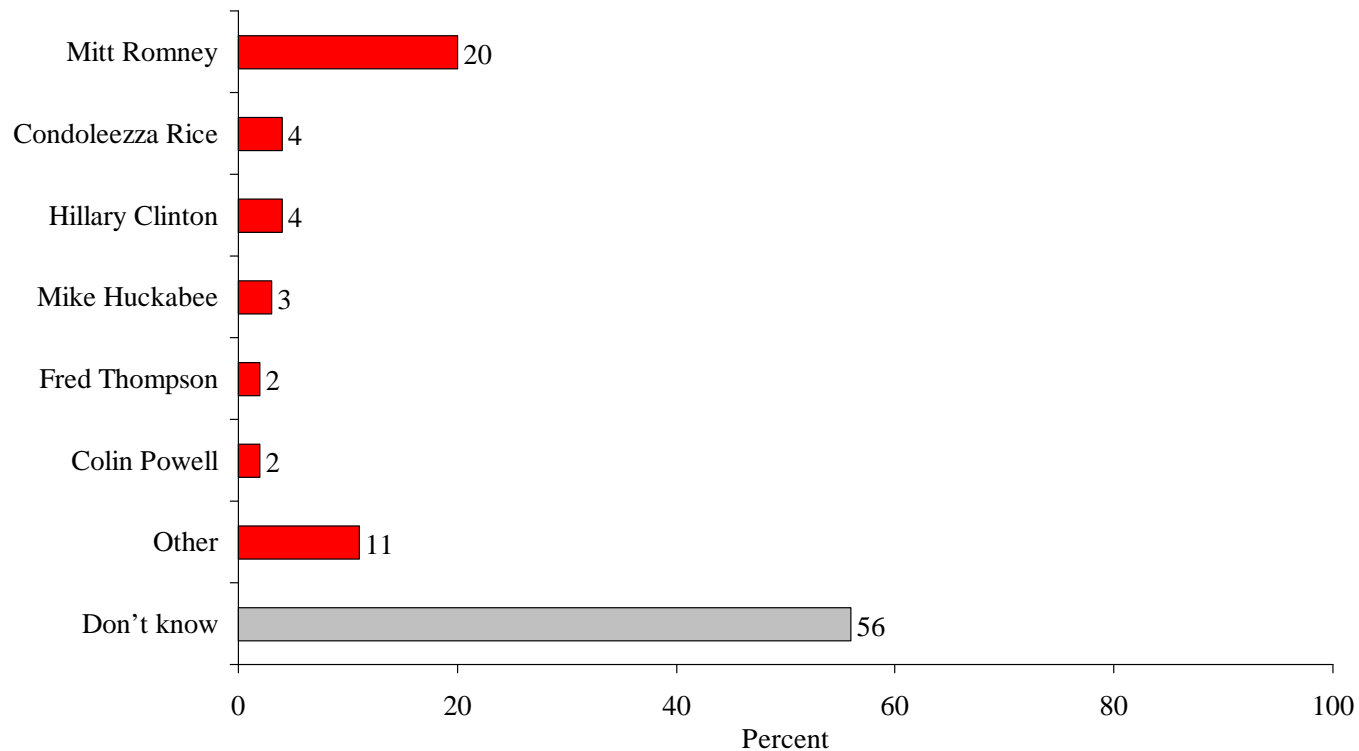
Whom would you like Obama to choose?





Registered Republicans' View of the Vice Presidential Nomination

Whom would you like John McCain to choose as his presidential running mate?





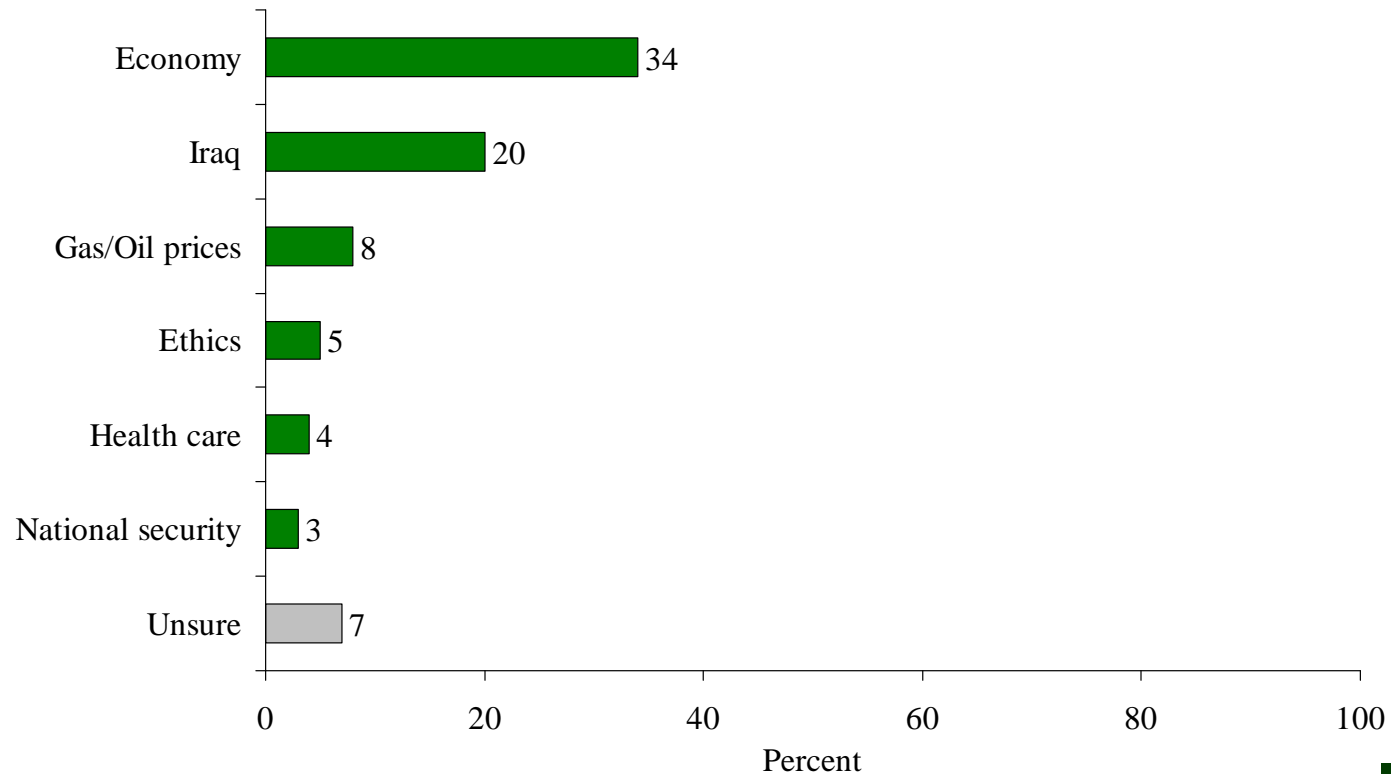
Most Important Issues in the 2008 Presidential Election

- More than one-third of Maine residents surveyed said that the economy would be the most important issue in their choice for President.
 - Registered Republicans, residents under the age of 55, individuals from the Northern region of Maine, and those with children in the home were significantly more likely to say that the economy is the most important issue when voting for President.
- The war in Iraq is the second most important issue, with one-fifth of residents saying that this would be most important when considering their choice for President.
 - Women, registered Democrats and Independents, residents aged 55 and older, and residents of Maine's Coastal region were significantly more likely to cite the war in Iraq as the top issue when voting for President.
- Surprisingly, the price of gasoline and heating oil, though it ranked third most important overall, was only cited by 8% of Maine residents as an important issue in their choice of candidate.



Most Important Issues in the 2008 Presidential Election

Thinking ahead to the November Presidential election, what is the single most important issue in your choice for President





General Interest Questions



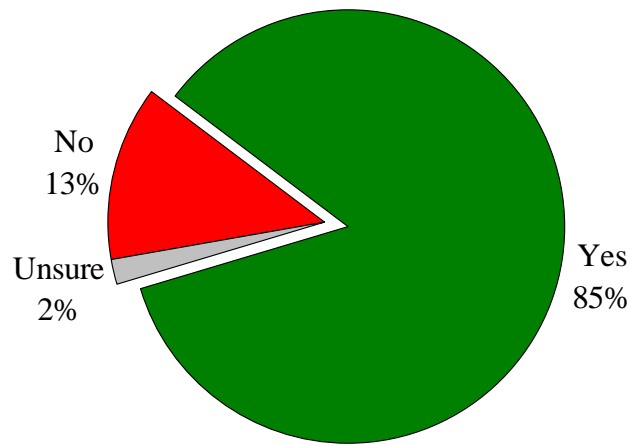
Maine Residents' Views on Current Economic Issues

- Eighty-five percent of Maine residents believe the United States is currently in an economic recession.
 - Fully 9-in-10 registered Democrats and Independents believe we are in a recession, while 7-in-10 registered Republicans agree with this perspective.
- More than three-fifths of residents said that recent price increases in food and groceries is causing them financial hardship.
 - The effects seem to be more hard felt in the Second Congressional District, where two-thirds of residents said that food prices were causing financial hardship for their family.
 - Higher SES residents were significantly more likely to say that recent price increases were not causing them financial hardship.
- Even more dramatic, 7-in-10 residents polled said that the recent price increases in gasoline are causing financial hardship for their household.
 - Lower SES residents, younger residents (18-54), those with children in the home, and individuals residing in the Second Congressional District were most likely to say that the price increases in gasoline are causing financial hardship.
- More than four-fifths of Maine residents surveyed said they have curtailed the amount of driving they are doing as a result of the recent increase in gas prices.

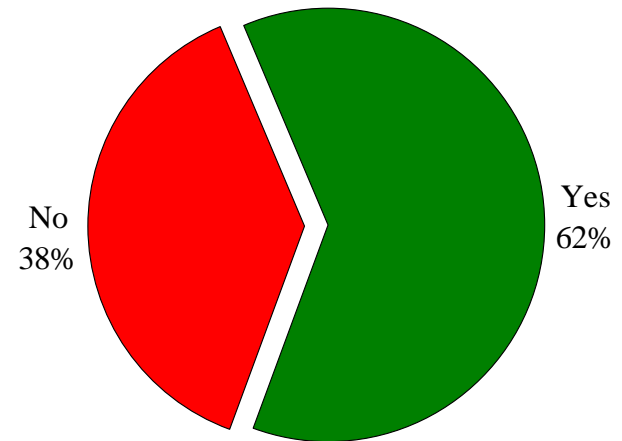


Maine Residents' Views on Current Economic Issues

Do you think we are in an economic recession?



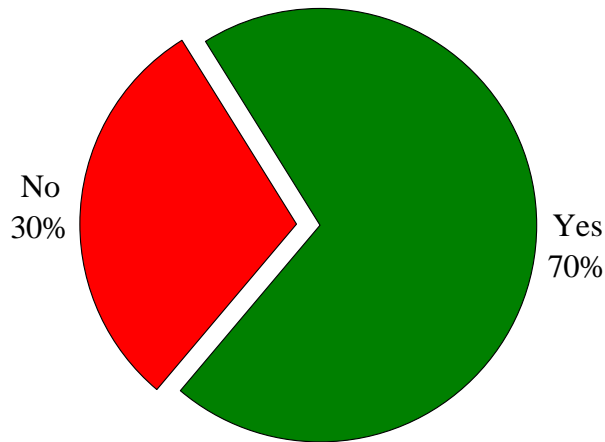
Have recent price increases in food and other groceries caused any financial hardship for you?



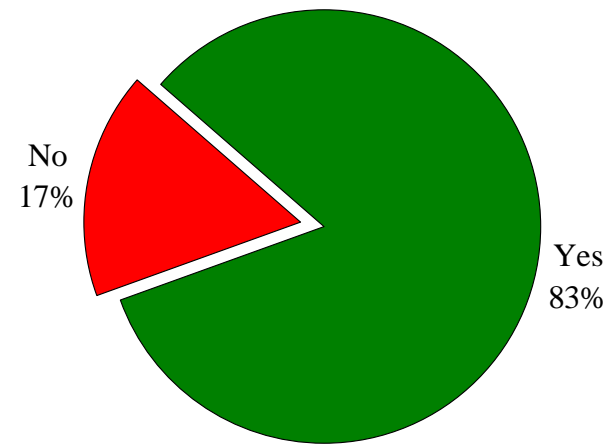


Maine Residents' Views on the Increase in Gasoline Prices

Have recent price increases in gasoline caused any financial hardship for you or your household?



As a result of recent increases in gas prices, have you cut down on the amount of driving you do?





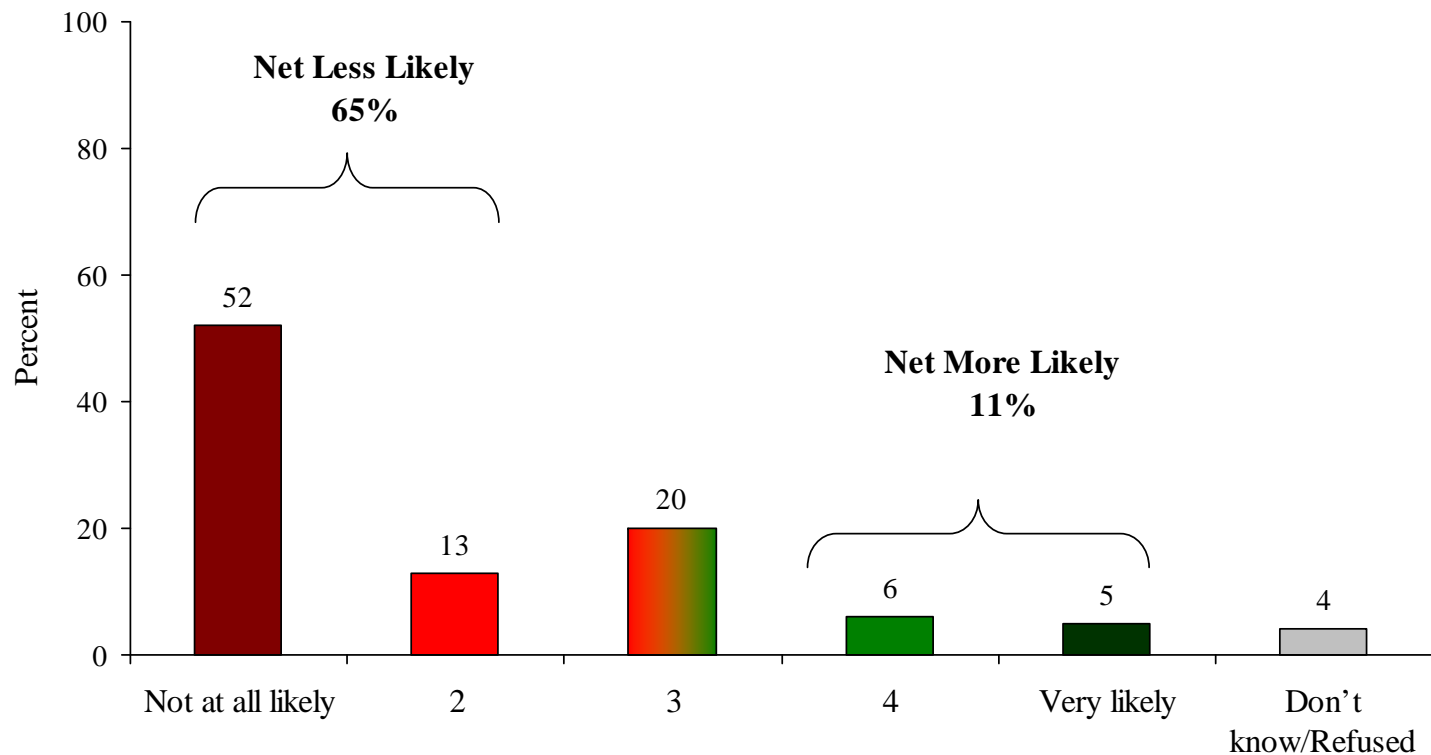
Likelihood of Voting for Legislators Who Voted to Increase State Taxes

- Fully two-thirds of Maine residents said they would be less likely to vote for legislators who voted to increase state taxes in the past. Indeed, over half of residents said they would be “not at all likely” to vote for such legislators.
 - This is particularly true of registered Republicans and Independents, with three quarters indicating that they would be less likely to vote for legislators who have voted in the past to increase state taxes.



Likelihood of Voting for Legislators Who Voted to Increase State Taxes

How likely would you be to vote for a legislator who voted to increase State Taxes?



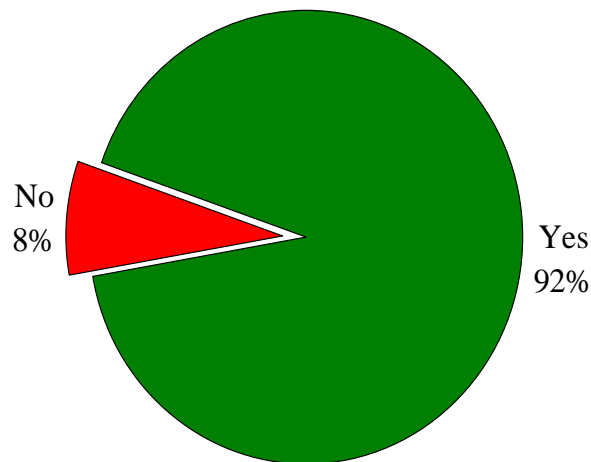


Sample Profile

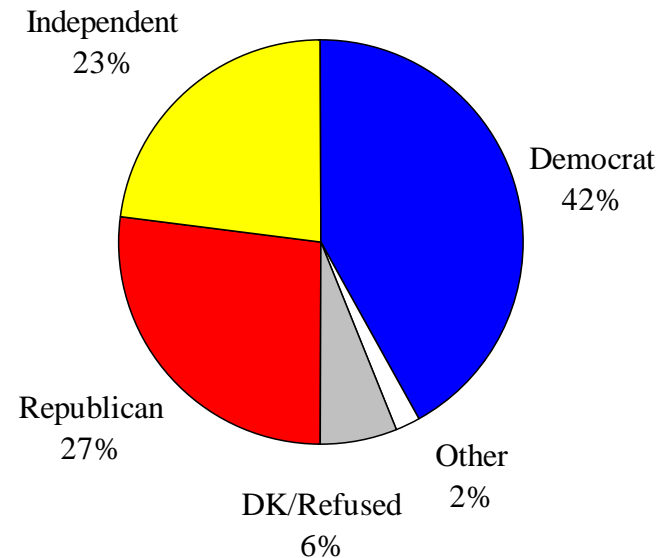


Voter Registration & Political Affiliation

Are you a registered voter in the State of Maine?

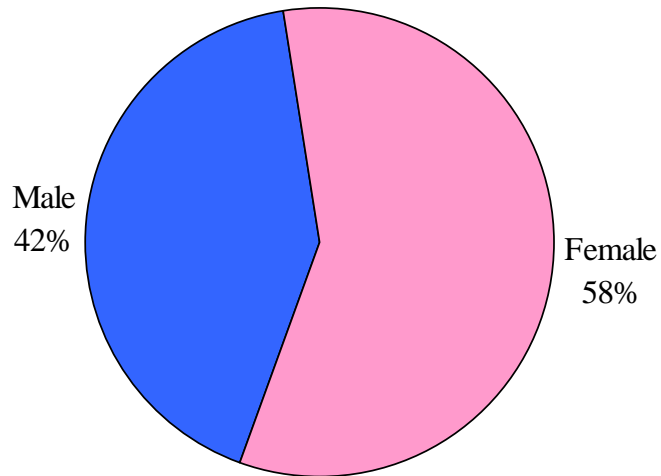


In what political party are you registered to vote?





Respondent Gender and Age

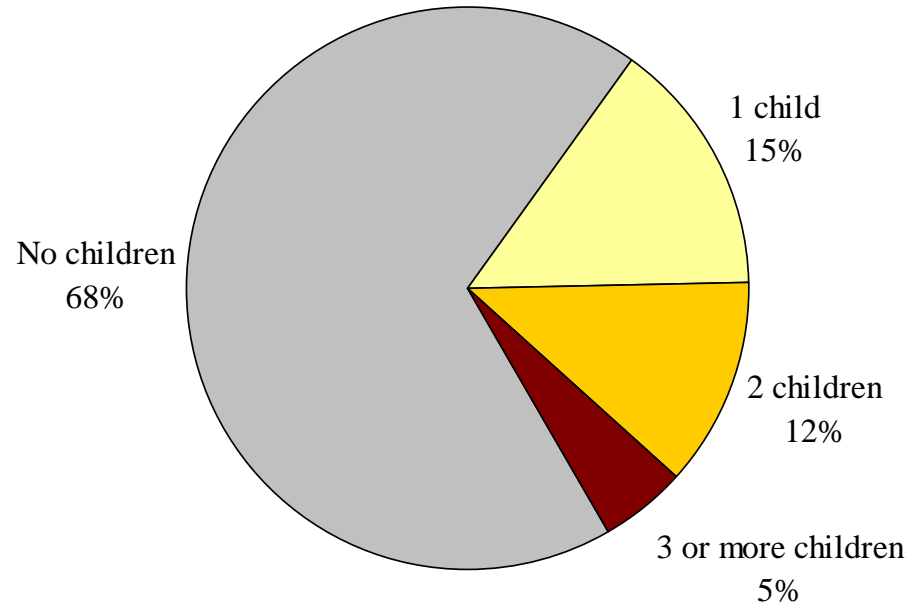


Which of the following categories does your age fall?	Percent
18 to 24	4%
25 to 34	9
35 to 44	15
45 to 54	26
55 to 64	22
65 to 74	15
75 and older	10



Children in the Household

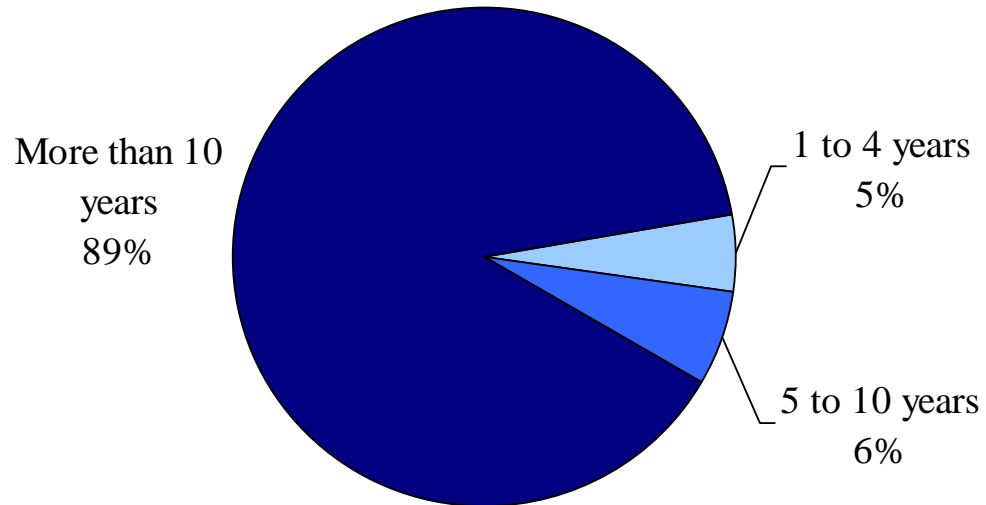
How many children, under the age of 18, live in your household?





Tenure of Residency in Maine

How long have you lived in the State of Maine?





Education

What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Percent
Some high school or less	4%
Graduated high school	22
Technical/Vocational/Community College	8
Some college	25
Graduated college	27
Graduate school	13



Household Income

Which of the following categories best describes your total household income before taxes last year?	Percent
Less than \$15,000	9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	11
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13
\$35,000 to \$49,999	17
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20
\$75,000 or more	24
Don't know/Refused	7