



# **THE MSU BILLINGS POLL**

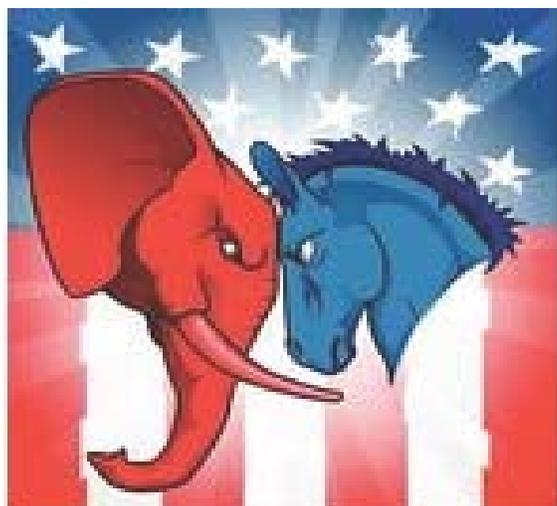
**NATIONAL, STATE,  
AND  
LOCAL ISSUES**

**OCTOBER 2012**

**DAY 2**

**26TH POLL**

**24th YEAR**



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AND MS. JENNIFER POPE, CO-DIRECTORS***

**The “MSU Billings Poll” is available on our website  
[www.msubillings.edu/urelations](http://www.msubillings.edu/urelations)**



**The following students participated in the survey project:**

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## INTRODUCTION

The “MSU Billings Poll” began in 1989. This is the twenty-fourth year the survey has been conducted and during this time twenty-six surveys have been completed. The Co-Directors of the Poll are Dr. Craig Wilson (Political Science), Dr. Scott Rickard (Director of the Center for Applied Economic Research) and Ms. Jennifer Pope (Sociology). We would like to thank Ms. Brenda Dockery for serving as the supervisor for this research project, Ms. Jessica Ridgway for also assisting us and Ms. Sandra Haley for coming out of retirement to again word process the survey results.

This report summarizes the results of a statewide random sample telephone survey of adult Montanans who said they were both registered and likely to vote. The poll was conducted September 27- 30. Students enrolled in the course Political Science 342, Media, Public Opinion, Polling completed 477 interviews for this survey. The survey was completed using random digit dial methodology, which selects both the phone numbers and members of a household to interview. Land line and cell phone numbers were included in the sample. 43.3% of the sample was reached through cell phone. The poll was conducted using MSU-Billings’ CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) software. Multiple attempts were made to reach selected households. The survey results have a +/- 4.6% margin of error at a confidence level of 95% (95% of the time the results will fall within the +/- 4.6% margin of error). Factors such as question order and wording can affect survey results. Statistical tests were employed to determine whether statistically significant relationships ( $p=.05$ ) existed between key variables.

### III. 2012 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

#### VOTE INTENT IN 2012 MONTANA U.S. SENATE RACE

The question regarding Montana’s U. S. Senate election this year was worded, “If this year’s U. S. Senate election in Montana were being held today, whom do you think you would vote for?” A plurality of the interviewees (42.6%) replied “Rehberg.” The results for this question fall within the margin of error for this poll.

#### VOTE INTENT IN 2012 MONTANA U. S. SENATE RACE

| <u>Democrat<br/>Jon Tester</u> | <u>Republican<br/>Denny Rehberg</u> | <u>Libertarian<br/>Dan Cox</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 39.7%                          | 42.6%                               | 5.8%                           | 11.9%            | 100%         |

#### Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Among Democrats 91.4% , said they "supported" Tester, 1.9% Rehberg, 2.9% Cox and 3.8% were undecided. In terms of Republicans, 77.9% backed Rehberg, 7% Tester, 4.1% Cox and 11% were undecided. Among independent voters 32.7% like Rehberg, 41.7% Tester, 10.1% Cox and 15.5% were undecided.
- 75% of Mitt Romney voters planned on supporting Rehberg. 91.4% of Obama backers supported Tester. A plurality (48.2%) of undecided voters in the presidential race said they planned on backing Rehberg, while 32.1% remained undecided and 28.3% backed Tester.
- In terms of being better or worse off than four years ago a majority (62.2%) of Rehberg’s voters said “worse off,” 28.1% “about the same” and 7.% were “better off.” A plurality (43.1%) of Tester’s voters were “better off,” 40.3% “about the same” and 16% “worse off.” The undecided voters included 50% who said they were “worse off,” 37% “about the same” and 11.1% “better off.”
- In terms of religiosity 49% of Rehberg voters were “very religious” and 38.8% “somewhat religious.” Among Tester voters a plurality (41.4%) were “somewhat religious” and 23.8% “very religious.”
- Income was not related to vote in the Senate race.
- Gender was not related to vote in the Senate race.
- Age was not related to vote in the Senate race.
- A majority (59.1%) of Jon Tester voters backed the Affordable Care Act, while a majority (83.5%) of Rehberg voters opposed it. A majority (51.8%) of undecided voters also opposed the act.

- Majorities of those intending to vote for Rehberg (83.2%), were undecided (68.5%) about their vote, or backed Tester (54.6%), all supported Referendum 120 which would restrict abortions.
- A majority (72.4%) of Rehberg voters and 50% of undecided and a plurality (49.2%) of Tester voters all also supported the more restrictive Referendum 124, the marijuana issue.
- The use of social media was not related to vote intent in the Senate contest.
- Majorities of Rehberg (88.3%), undecided (72.2%) and Tester (58.5%) voters all supported building the XL pipeline.
- Majorities of Rehberg (81.1%), undecided (61.1%) and Tester (59.6%) voters all backed allowing the trapping of wolves.

**BETWEEN TESTER AND REHBERG, WHICH CANDIDATE DO YOU FEEL HAS RUN THE MOST NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN**

A follow-up question on the U. S. Senate race was phrased, “between Tester and Rehberg, which candidate do you feel has run the most negative campaign?” A plurality (40.8%) of the interviewees replied Rehberg/Tester “the same.”

**MOST NEGATIVE SENATE CANDIDATE**

| <u>Democrat<br/>Jon Tester</u> | <u>Republican<br/>Denny Rehberg</u> | <u>Rehberg-Tester<br/>the Same</u> | <u>Neither</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| 22.2%                          | 24.5%                               | 40.8%                              | 2.3%           | 10.2%            | 100%         |

**Statistically Significant Relationships:**

- A majority (54.3%) of Democrats said Rehberg has been the most negative. Pluralities of Republicans (48.8%), independents (42.6%) and undecided (53.3%) voters replied “Rehberg/Tester the same.”
- Gender was not related to opinions about this issue.
- Age was not related to opinions about this issue.

## IV. JOB APPROVAL RATINGS

Next, the survey asked about the job approval ratings of two elected Montana officials not facing election in 2012. Governor Brian Schweitzer and U. S. Senator Max Baucus.

### 1. JOB APPROVAL RATING OF GOVERNOR BRIAN SCHWEITZER

The respondents were asked, “at this time do you approve or disapprove of Governor Brian Schweitzer’s overall performance in office.” A majority (60.7%) of those interviewed replied “approve.”

#### JOB APPROVAL RATING OF GOVERNOR BRIAN SCHWEITZER

| <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 60.7%          | 22.8%             | 16.5%            | 100%         |

#### Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority of Democrats (91.4%) and independents (63.9%) approved of the Governor's performance, as did a plurality of Republicans (41.3%).
- A majority (82.4%) of those supporting the Affordable Care Act approved of the job the Governor is doing, as did a plurality (47.1%) of those opposed to the measure.
- Majorities of every religious groupings from very religious (50.6%) to "not at all religious" (86.4%) approved of the job the Governor is doing.
- Majorities of those both approving (56.4%) and disapproving (74.5%) of trapping wolves backed Schweitzer’s performance.
- Income was not related to opinions about the Governor.
- Gender was not related to opinions about the Governor.
- Age was not related to opinions about the Governor.

### 2. JOB APPROVAL RATING OF U. S. SENATOR MAX BAUCUS

A plurality (42.5%) of those polled answered “approve” when asked, “at this point in time do you approve or disapprove of U. S. Senator Max Baucus’s overall performance in office? The results for this question fall within the margin of error for this poll.

**JOB APPROVAL RATING OF U. S. SENATOR MAX BAUCUS**

| <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>42.5%</b>   | <b>40.1%</b>      | <b>17.4%</b>     | <b>100%</b>  |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority (73.1%) of Democrats and plurality (45.6%) of independents approved of the job Senator Baucus is doing, a majority (58.1%) of Republicans disapproved.
- A majority (69.9%) of those supportive of the Affordable Care Act approved of Baucus’ job performance. A majority (61.2%) opposed to it did not approve of the job he is doing.
- A plurality (45.3%) of females approved of his job performance, a plurality (45.6%) of males disapproved.
- Economically compared to four years ago a plurality (32.3%) of individuals “better off” approved of him, while a majority (61.6%) who said disapprove felt "worse off".
- A plurality (45.3%) of the 36-49 cohort approved of his actions in office, a plurality (48.9%) aged 50-61 disapproved.

**V. 2012 STATE OF MONTANA ELECTION CONTESTS**

**2012 MONTANA GENERAL ELECTION RACE FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL**

The question asked regarding the Attorney General’s race was phrased, “if the election for Montana’s Attorney General were being held today, for whom do you think you would vote.” A plurality (38.9%) of those responding answered Fox. The results for this question fall within the margin of error for this poll.

**2012 MONTANA GENERAL ELECTION RACE FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL**

| <u>Republican<br/>Tim Fox</u> | <u>Democrat<br/>Pam Bucy</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>38.9%</b>                  | <b>25.4%</b>                 | <b>35.7%</b>     | <b>100%</b>  |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Among Democratic voters 63.8% backed Bucy, 4.8% Fox and 31.4% were undecided.
  1. In terms of Republican voters, 4.1% supported Bucy, 67.4% Fox and 28.5% were undecided.

2. The independent voters divided 24.9% for Bucy, 32.5% Fox and 42.6% undecided.
- A majority (80.7%) of Fox and (42.8%) independent voters opposed the Affordable Care Act legislation. A majority (65.3%) of Bucy backers supported it.
  - Majorities of Fox (89.4%), undecided (69.7%) and Bucy (64.7%) voters all supported a proposal which would require passage of a test for illicit drugs before someone could receive social service benefits.
  - Majorities of Fox (93.3%), independent (67.9%) and Bucy (54.3%) voters favored building the XL pipeline.
  - Majorities of Fox (81.7%), independent (61.8%) and Bucy (54.3%) voters supported trapping wolves.
  - In terms of gender, a plurality (45.6%) of males backed Fox, while a plurality (44.8%) of women were undecided about their vote.
  - Age was not related to vote intent.

### **MONTANA SUPREME COURT RACE**

When asked, “in a non-partisan race for a Montana court seat, Laurie McKinnon is opposing Ed Sheehy. If the election were held today, for whom do you think you would vote? A majority (61.1%) of those replying to this question said “undecided.”

### **MONTANA SUPREME COURT RACE**

| <b><u>Ed Sheehy</u></b> | <b><u>Laurie McKinnon</u></b> | <b><u>Undecided</u></b> | <b><u>Total</u></b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>21%</b>              | <b>17.9%</b>                  | <b>61.1%</b>            | <b>100%</b>         |

#### **Statistically Significant Relationships:**

- Majorities of Democrats (55.2%), Republicans (69.2%) and independent (54.4%) voters were undecided about their vote.
- Opinions on the vote of the abortion referendum were not related to vote choice in the Supreme Court race.
- Opinions on the vote of the marijuana referendum were not related to voting in the Supreme Court race.
- Income was not related to opinions about this race.
- Gender was not related to opinions about this race.
- A plurality (41.5%) of McKinnon voters were aged 50-61, a plurality (41.7%) in the 62+ cohort backed Sheehy.

**4. MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONTESTS**

The question about vote intent in the one hundred individual Montana House of Representatives elections was worded, “if the 2012 election were being held today, do you think you would vote for the Republican or the Democratic Montana State House of Representatives candidate in your district.” A majority (51%) of those polled said “Republican.”

**MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONTESTS**

| <u>Democrat</u> | <u>Republican</u> | <u>Other</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>30.8%</b>    | <b>51%</b>        | <b>1%</b>    | <b>17.2%</b>     | <b>100%</b>  |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Among Democrats, 84.8% planned on voting for Democrats, 1.9% Republicans, 1.9% other and 11.4% were undecided.
  1. Among Republicans, 1.7% would support Democrats, 91.9% Republicans, and 6.4% were undecided about their vote.
  2. Among independents, 28.4% supported Democratic candidates, 42% Republicans and 28.4% were undecided.
- A majority (76.6%) of Democratic voters for House candidates backed the Affordable Care legislation, a majority of Republicans (80.6%) opposed it.
- Majorities of those planning on voting for Republican (80.9%) or Democratic (51.1%) candidates or were undecided (73.8%) about their vote, backed Referendum 120 which would restrict some abortions.
- Majorities of those intending to vote for Republican (69.4%) candidates or were undecided (53.9%) about their vote, candidates backed Referendum 124 which would restrict marijuana use. A plurality (48.2%) of Democratic voters also supported the ballot issue.
- Majorities of Republicans (87.7%), undecided (67.5%) and Democratic voters (61.7%) backed testing for illicit drugs to receive social service benefits.
- A plurality (41%) of Democratic voters said they were economically “worse off” than four years ago.
- Majorities of Republicans (88.1%), undecided (70%) and Democratic (53.9%) voters backed the XL pipeline.
- Majorities of Republicans (77.9%), undecided (66.2%) and Democratic (51.8%) voters backed trapping wolves.
- Income was not related to vote intent.
- Gender was not related to vote intent.
- Age was not related to vote intent.

## VI. 2012 BALLOT ISSUES

Five ballot issues will be voted upon in the 2012 election. Questions were asked about two of these issues.

### 1. REFERENDUM 124 – MEDICAL MARIJUANA

The question on the medical marijuana referendum was worded: “Referendum 124 refers to the voters a decision on Senate Bill 423. A vote against the Senate Bill would reinstate the prior medical marijuana program. A vote for the initiative would enact a new more restrictive medical marijuana program. If voting today, would you support or oppose this measure?”

A majority (59.9%) of those interviewed answered “support” to this query.

#### REFERENDUM 124 – MEDICAL MARIJUANA

| <u>Support</u> | <u>Oppose</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| 59.9%          | 29.7%         | 10.4%            | 100%         |

#### Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority of Republicans (72.1%) and independents (56.8%) supported the issue, as did a plurality (48.6%) of Democrats.
- A majority (63.3%) who said they were “very religious” supported the measure, while a majority (56.8%) who were “not at all religious” opposed the issue.
- A majority (58.5%) of males opposed the measure, a majority of females (52%) backed it.
- Age was not related to opinions of this issue.

### 2. REFERENDUM 120 – LIMITATIONS ON ABORTION

The referendum on abortion was phrased, “Referendum-120 would require parental notification prior to a minor under 16 receiving an abortion, provide for circumstances for the judicial waiver of notification and provide penalties for carrying out an abortion on a minor with notification.” If voting today, would you support or oppose this referendum?

A majority (70.3%) of those polled answered “support.”

**REFERENDUM 120 – LIMITATIONS ON ABORTION**

| <u>Support</u> | <u>Oppose</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>70.3%</b>   | <b>21.5%</b>  | <b>8.2%</b>      | <b>100%</b>  |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of Republicans (78.5%), independent (71.6%) and Democratic (57.1%), voters.
- A majority (77.2%) of those backing drug testing to receive social services benefits supported the referendum. Among those opposed to the testing a plurality (44.1%) also backed the measure.
- In terms of religion those most supportive of the measure were “very religious” (80.4%), while those most opposed (52.3%) were “not at all religious.”
- Gender was not related to opinions on this issue.
- Age was not related to opinions on this issue.
- Income was not related to opinions on this issue.

**VII. OTHER QUESTIONS**

**1. SOCIAL SERVICES AND RANDOM DRUG TESTING**

In reply to the question, “do you believe that individuals receiving some social service benefits should have to demonstrate, by random testing, that they are not using illicit drugs?” A majority (76.1%) of the respondents answered “yes.”

**SOCIAL SERVICES AND RANDOM DRUG TESTING**

| <u>Yes</u>   | <u>No</u>    | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>76.1%</b> | <b>14.8%</b> | <b>9.1%</b>      | <b>100%</b>  |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of Republicans (86.6%), Democrats (65.7%) and independents (74%) all supported this policy idea.
- Income was not related to opinions on this question.
- Age was not related to opinions on this question.
- In terms of drug testing a majority (51.2%) of women favored it, a majority of males (60.3%) opposed it.

**2. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR POLITICAL INFORMATION**

A majority (77.8%) of those interviewed said “no” when asked the question, “have you ever used social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, to gain information about candidates in the upcoming election?”

**USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR POLITICAL INFORMATION**

| <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| 21.1%      | 77.8%     | 1.1%             | 100%         |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of Republicans (78.9%), Democrats (71.4%) and independents (81.1%) replied “no.”
- Income was not related to opinions on this question.
- Gender was not related to opinions on this question.
- While majorities of every age cohort did not use social media, those most likely to employ it were aged 18-35 (32.5%), while those least likely to do so were aged 62+ (11.9%).

**3. SUPPORT OR OPPOSE BUILDING XL KEYSTONE PIPELINE**

The question about building the XL Keystone Pipeline was similar to the one asked last year: “Do you support or oppose building the XL Keystone Pipeline which would carry Canadian oil through Montana, with some Montana crude being picked up by the pipeline and carried out of state.” A majority (74.2%) of those polled replied “yes” to this question. Last year 63.5% of the respondents backed the pipeline.

**SUPPORT OR OPPOSE BUILDING THE XL KEYSTONE PIPELINE**

| <u>Support</u> | <u>Oppose</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| 74.2%          | 13.9%         | 11.9%            | 100%         |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of Republicans (89%), independents (76.9%) and Democrats (50.5%) supported the pipeline.
- A majority (75.1%) of those backing the pipeline also supported trapping wolves. A plurality (45.3%) who opposed the pipeline also opposed trapping.

- Majorities of every income cohort supported building the pipeline. The cohort most supportive (87.2%) earned more than \$100,000.
- In terms of gender majorities of males and females backed XL, but more males (77.7%) than females (70.7%) did, and women (16.8%) were more undecided than men (6.7%) about the issue.
- A majority of every age cohort supported building the pipeline. Those most supportive (80.8%) were aged 50-61.

**4. LEGALITY OF TRAPPING WOLVES IN MONTANA**

A majority (67.7%) of the interviewees replied “yes” when asked, “do you believe it should be legal to trap wolves in Montana?”

**LEGALITY OF TRAPPING WOLVES IN MONTANA**

| <u>Legal</u> | <u>Illegal</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>67.7%</b> | <b>20.4%</b>   | <b>11.9%</b>     | <b>100%</b>  |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of Republicans (76.2%), Democrats (53.3%) and independents (68.6%) supported trapping.
- Income was not related to answers to this question.
- Age was not related to answers to this question.
- While majorities of males and females supported trapping, more males (72.3%) than females (62.5%) did so. And more women (15.9%) than males (8%) were undecided about the issue.

5. **ECONOMICALLY BETTER OR WORSE OFF THAN FOUR YEARS AGO**

In reply to the question, “compared to 4 years ago, in economic terms do you feel that you and your family are better or worse off than they were. A plurality (42.7 %) said “worse off.”

**ECONOMICALLY BETTER OR WORSE OFF THAN FOUR YEARS AGO**

| <u>Better Off</u> | <u>About the Same</u> | <u>Worse Off</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 22%               | 33.8%                 | 42.7%            | 1.5%             | 100%         |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A plurality (43.7%) of Democrats felt economically “about the same,” while a majority (61.6%) of Republicans and plurality (43.2%) of independents said they were “worse off.”
- A plurality (45.9%) of those “better off” supported the Affordable Care Act, a majority (63.9%) who felt worse off opposed it. A plurality (43.1%) of individuals (43.1%) “about the same” were undecided about the law.
- Income was not related to answers to this question.
- A plurality (47.1%) of males said they were “worse off,” a plurality (40.3%) of females “about the same.”
- A plurality of every age group said they worse off. Those aged 50-61 (50%) were most prone to give this response.

6. **RELIGIOSITY**

A plurality (42.6 %) of the individuals polled replied “somewhat religious” when asked, “in terms of religion do you consider yourself to be [very, somewhat, not very or not at all] religious.”

**RELIGIOSITY**

| <u>Very</u> | <u>Somewhat</u> | <u>Not Very</u> | <u>Not at All</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 34.5%       | 42.6%           | 10.3%           | 9.6%              | 3%               | 100%         |

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A plurality (47.8%) of Republicans were “very religious,” a plurality (42.7%) of Democrats “somewhat religious.”

- Pluralities of women (43.7%) and men (41%) were “somewhat religious,” while more women (39%) than men (29.7%) were “very religious.”
- Age was not related to religiosity.
- Income was not related to religiosity.