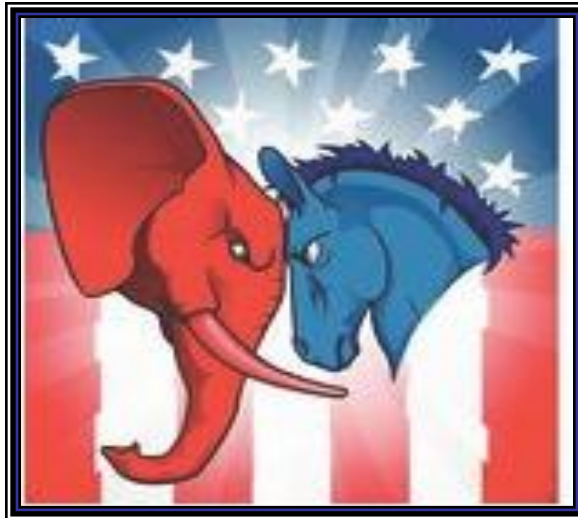


**The MSU-Billings Poll
National, State and Local Issues
~October 2014~**

28th Poll



26th YEAR

**Dr. Craig Wilson,
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Dr. Matthew McMullen
And
Dr. Joshua Poulette
Co - Directors**

**The “MSU-Billings Poll” is available on our website
www.msubillings.edu/urelations**



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INTRODUCTION

The “MSU-Billings Poll” began in 1989. This is the twenty-sixth year the survey is being conducted and during this time twenty-eight 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), Dr. Matt McMullen (Psychology), and Dr. Joshua Poulette (Political Science). We would like to thank Ms. Brenda Dockery for serving as the supervisor for this research project, Ms. Jessica Ridgway for assisting us and Mr. Matthew Woodard and Ms. Glenda Holbrook for helping with the word processing and the survey results.

This report summarizes the results of a statewide random sample telephone survey of 410 adult Montanans who said they were both registered and likely to vote. 54% of the respondents planned on voting absentee, 41.6% at the polls and 4.4% were undecided. The poll was conducted October 6th-11th, 2014. Students enrolled in the course Political Science 342, Media, Public Opinion, Polling and some additional students doing an independent polling project completed interviews for this survey. Some surveyors from the CATI lab also participated. The poll was completed using random digit dial methodology, which selects both the phone numbers and members of a household to interview. 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 +/- 5% margin of error at a confidence level of 95% (95% of the time the results will fall within the +/- 5% 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.

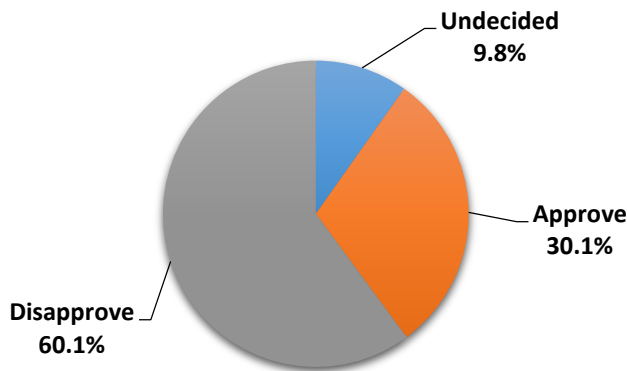
I. NATIONAL ISSUES

1. PRESIDENT OBAMA’S OVERALL PERFORMANCE IN OFFICE

This is the sixth year the “MSU-Billings Poll” asked respondents, “At this point in time do you approve or disapprove of President Barack Obama’s overall performance in office?” A majority of those polled (60.1%) replied “disapprove.”

In comparison, in 2013, 63.3% said “disapprove,” in 2012 63.3% of those questioned replied “disapprove”, in 2011, 57.5% agreed with this assessment. In 2010, 52.9% said “disapprove” and in 2009, 53% also replied “disapprove.”

2014 President Obama's Overall Job Performance



Actual Question: “At this point in time do you approve or disapprove of President Barack Obama’s performance in office?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Gender was not related to opinions about Obama.
- 69.6% of liberals approve of the President, 90% of conservative disapproved, as did a plurality 45% of moderates.
- 67.8% of Democrats approved of the President, 92.4% of Republicans and 71% of independents disapproved.
- Income was not significant.
- Education was not significant.
- Majorities of every age cohort disapproved of the President.

2. SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

A majority of 56.2 % of those polled were “opposed” when asked about the act. Last year 56.7 % of the respondents replied “oppose”.

SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
32%	56.2%	11%	100%

Actual Question: “Do you support or oppose the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)?”

Statistically Significant Relationship:

- Gender was not related to this question.
- 85.3% of conservatives oppose the act, as do 36.2% of liberals and 71.6% of moderates.
- 69.1% of Democrats support the act, 86.3% of Republicans and 68.9% of independents oppose it.
- 84.6% of those who approve of Obama approve of the act, 86.1% of those who disapprove of Obama didn’t like the act.
- A majority of all income groups opposed the act.
- Age was not related to opinion.
- Majorities of absentee and polling place voters opposed the act.

3. HURT OR HELPED BY AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

When asked whether they had been “personally hurt or helped by the Affordable Care Act,” a majority of 58.8 % of respondents replied “not hurt.”

HURT OR NOT HURT BY AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

<u>Helped</u>	<u>Not Hurt</u>	<u>Hurt</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
6.8%	58.8%	24.8%	9.6%	100%

Actual Question: “Which of the following statements most closely match your view regarding the Affordable Care Act?”

Statistically Significant Relationship:

- Gender was not related to the question.
- Majorities of liberals (66.3%), moderates (65.6%) and (52.4%) of conservatives were not personally harmed by Obamacare.

- Majorities of Democrats (68%), Republicans (52.7%) and independents (56%) had not been harmed by Obamacare.
- Majorities of those who approved (68%) and disapproved (52.4%) of Obama had not been hurt by the act.
- Income was not related to the question.
- Opinions expressed about this question were not related to education.
- Age was not related to this question.
- Majorities (73.1%) of those who supported the law had not been hurt by it, while a plurality, (49.8%) of individuals who opposed Obamacare were hurt by the law.

4. USE OF FORCE AGAINST ISIS - IRAQ

When asked whether or not they “support or oppose the use of U.S. military power against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in Iraq” a majority (74.1 %) of those polled said “yes.”

USE OF FORCE AGAINST ISIS - IRAQ

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
74.1%	12.2%	13.7%	100%

Actual Question: “Do you support or oppose the use of U.S. military air power against group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, sometimes abbreviated ISIS in Iraq?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of men (81.1%) and women (67.8%) support the attacks.
- Majorities of liberals, moderates and conservatives backed the attacks.
- Support for the attacks was not related to party or ideology.
- Support for the attacks was not related to opinion of Obama.
- Support was not related to income.
- Support was not related to education.
- Support was not related to age.

5. USE OF FORCE AGAINST ISIS - SYRIA

A similar question was phrased “do you support or oppose the use of military air power against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in Syria,” a majority (72.8%) of those surveyed said “support.”

USE OF FORCE AGAINST ISIS - SYRIA

<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
72.8%	13.2%	14%	100%

Actual Question: “Do you support or oppose the use of U.S. military air power against group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, sometimes abbreviated ISIS in Syria?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of males (80%) and females (66.2%) backed the attacks.
- Conservatives (79.5%) most approved the attacks, while liberals (19.8%) opposed them the most.
- Political party was not related to support for the attacks.
- Opinions were not related to Obama’s performance.
- Opinions were not related to income.
- Opinions were not related to education.
- A majority of every age cohort backed the attacks.

6. AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

One question asked “does the President have the authority to grant amnesty to several million illegal immigrants without the approval of Congress?” A majority of 74.1% replied “no.”

AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
11.5%	74.1%	14.4%	100%

Actual Question: “Does the president have the legal authority to grant amnesty to several million illegal immigrants without the approval of congress?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Gender was not related to opinions on this question.
- Majorities of conservatives (91.6%) and moderates (66%) opposed the immigration proposal, as did a plurality (48%) of liberals.
- Majorities of Republicans (92.4%) and independents (80%) opposed amnesty, as did a plurality (49.7%) of Democrats.
- The President’s approval rating and this question were not related.

II. GENERAL ELECTION

1. MONTANA SENATE SEAT VOTE

When asked, “if this year’s election for one of Montana’s U.S. Senate seats were being held today, whom do you think you would vote for?” A plurality (46.7%) indicated support for Daines.

MONTANA SENATE SEAT VOTE

<u>Republican</u> <u>Steve Daines</u>	<u>Democrat</u> <u>Amanda</u> <u>Curtis</u>	<u>Libertarian</u> <u>Roger</u> <u>Roots</u>	<u>Undecided/</u> <u>Someone</u> <u>Else/ No</u> <u>Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
46.7%	30.6%	2.2%	20.5%	100%

Actual Question: “If this year’s election for one of Montana’s U.S. Senate seats was being held today, whom do you think you would vote for?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority (53.2%) of males back Daines, a plurality of females (31.4%) back Curtis.
- A majority (74.7%) of conservatives back Daines, a majority (70.6%) of liberals back Curtis.
- A majority (81.4%) of Republicans like Daines, a majority (71.8%) of Democrats like Curtis.
- A majority (71.8%) of those who disapprove of Obama backed Daines, a majority (73.2%) of those who approve of Obama backed Curtis.
- Income was not related to vote intent.
- Education was not related to vote intent.
- Age was not related vote intent.
- A majority (70.4%) of those who oppose the Affordable Care Act support Daines, whereas a majority (73.3%) of ACA supporters back Curtis.
- A majority (58.4%) of those who oppose amnesty support Daines, and a majority (72.3%) of amnesty support back Curtis.
- A majority (77.8%) of those who support John Lewis also support Curtis, a majority (87.7%) of Ryan Zinke voters back Daines.
- A majority (76.7%) of voters who support Democrats in the Montana House races back Curtis, while 84.3% Republican Montana House voters back Daines.
- A majority (56.3%) of people who support the Keystone pipeline back Daines, a plurality (48.3%) of people who oppose the pipeline back Curtis.

- A majority (70.6%) of those who think the economy is worse than a year ago back Daines, a majority (54.7%) of those who think the economy is better back Curtis.
- A majority (50.8%) of those who support recreational marijuana back Curtis, a majority (58.1%) of those who oppose it back Daines.

2. MONTANA U.S. HOUSE SEAT VOTE

When the respondents were asked “if the election for Montana’s U.S. House seat was being held today, whom do you think you would vote for?” a plurality (39.8%) of likely voters indicated support for Zinke.

MONTANA U.S. HOUSE SEAT VOTE

<u>Democrat John Lewis</u>	<u>Republican Ryan Zinke</u>	<u>Libertarian Mike Fellows</u>	<u>Undecided/Someone Else/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
32.9%	39.8%	2.2%	25.1%	100%

Actual Question: “If this year’s election for Montana’s U.S. House seat was being held today, whom do you think you would vote for?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Gender was not related to vote intent.
- A majority (68.6%) of liberals support Lewis while a majority (68.6%) of conservatives support Zinke. A plurality (47.9%) of moderates back Lewis.
- A majority (73.2%) of Democrats support Lewis and a majority (72.3%) of Republicans support Zinke.
- 74.8% of people who approve of Obama back Lewis, (61.4%) of people who disapprove of Obama back Zinke.
- A plurality (45.5%) of voters aged 62+ support Lewis, a plurality (44.3%) of voters aged 50-61 support Zinke.
- 76.3% of supporters of the Affordable Care Act back Lewis, while 61.3% of those who oppose ACA back Zinke.
- A majority (72.3%) of those who support immigration amnesty back Lewis, a majority (50.3%) of those opposed back Zinke.
- A majority (55%) of people opposed to the Keystone pipeline back Lewis, a plurality (47.8%) of Keystone supporters back Zinke.
- A majority (59.7%) of people who think the economy is worse back Zinke, a majority (55.3%) of people who think it is better back Lewis.
- 54% of those who support recreational sale of marijuana back Lewis, a plurality (49.4%) of those opposed to the sale were Zinke supporters.
- A majority (74.3%) of Daines voters also support Zinke, a majority (84%) of Curtis voters like Lewis.

3. VOTE FOR MONTANA SUPREME COURT

When asked “if the election for one of Montana’s Supreme Court seats was being held today, whom do you think you would vote for?” A majority (69.8%) answered “undecided/no answer.”

VOTE FOR MONTANA SUPREME COURT

<u>W. David Herbert</u>	<u>Jim Rice</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
3.2%	27%	69.8%	100%

Actual Question: “If the election for the following Montana Supreme Court seats was being held today, whom do you think you would vote for?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of males (61.6%) and females (73.2%) were undecided about their vote.
- Majorities of Democrats (65.1%) and Republicans (69.6%) were undecided about their vote.
- Income was not related to vote preference.
- Majorities of those with a college degree (62.4%) vote and no degree (71.9%) were undecided about their vote.
- A majority of every age cohort was “undecided” about their vote.
- Majorities of Ryan Zinke (72.4%) and John Lewis (54.8%) voters were undecided about their vote in this race.
- Majorities of Steve Daines (69.1%) and Amanda Curtis (55.6%) voters were undecided about their Supreme Court vote.

4. VOTE FOR MONTANA SUPREME COURT

When a question was phrased, “If the election for the other Montana Supreme Court seat were being held today, who do you, think you would vote for?” 62.2% were undecided.

VOTE FOR MONTANA SUPREME COURT

<u>Lawrence Van Dyke</u>	<u>Mike Wheat</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
12.9%	24.9%	62.2%	100%

Actual Question: “If the election for another Montana Supreme Court seat were being held today, whom do you think you would vote for?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Gender was not significant.
- A majority (69%) of Republicans and a plurality (49.7%) of Democrats are undecided.
- Income was not related to vote intent.
- In terms of the Supreme Court race, a majority (71%) of likely voters were “undecided” about the sale of marijuana.
- 48% of people who backed Curtis also supported Mike Wheat. 15.7% of Daines backers supported Lawrence Van Dyke.
- Majorities of the supporters (55.6%) and opponents (62.8%) of recreational marijuana were undecided about their Supreme Court vote.
- Majorities of Daines (69.6%) and Curtis supporters (42.4%) were undecided about their vote in the Supreme Court race.

5. C-45 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

When asked about ballot measure C-45, “A constitutional amendment to change the name of the State Auditor’s office to Commissioner of Services and Insurance.” A plurality (37.3%) of those interviewed said they would vote against it.

C-45 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Undecided/No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
28.8%	37.3%	33.9%	100%

Actual Question: “Montana’s legislative ballot measure, C-45, is a Constitutional amendment to change the name of the state Auditor’s office to Commissioner of Services and Insurance. If voting today would you vote for or against this change?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Republican voters were less likely to support C-45 than Democrats.
- Ideology was not a significant predictor of preference.
- Age was not a significant predictor of preference.
- Gender was not significant.
- Education was not significant.
- Household income was not significant.

6. LR-126 CHANGE LAST DAY OF VOTER REGISTRATION TO FRIDAY PRIOR TO ELECTION

LR-126 would change the last day for late registration from Election Day to the Friday before Election Day. If voting today “would you vote to change the date of late voter registration?” A majority (56.1%) of respondents indicated they would vote “no” on LR-126.

LR-126 CHANGE LAST DAY OF VOTER REGISTRATION

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
35.6%	56.1%	8.3%	100%

Actual Question: “Montana’s legislative ballot measure, LR-126, would change the last day for late voter registration from Election Day to the Friday before Election Day. If voting today, would you vote to change the date of late voter registration?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Republican voters were significantly more likely than Democrats and Independents to support this change.
- More conservative voters were significantly more likely to support this change than were liberal voters.
- Older voters were significantly more likely than younger voters to support this change.
- Gender was not significant.
- Education was not significant.
- Household income was not significant.

7. VOTE FOR MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CANDIDATE

A question was phrased “if voting for your Montana House of Representatives representative today, would you vote for the Democrat, Republican, or some other candidate?” A plurality (39.1%) of respondents expressed a preference for the Republican candidate.

VOTE FOR MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CANDIDATE

<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Some Other Candidate</u>	<u>Undecided/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
32.5%	39.1%	5.4%	23%	100%

Actual Question: “If voting for your Montana House of Representatives candidate today, would you vote for the Democrat, Republican, or some other candidate?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Republicans were significantly more likely to prefer Republican candidates. Democrats were significantly more likely to prefer Democratic candidates.
- Conservatives were significantly more likely to prefer Republican candidates. Liberals were significantly more likely to prefer Democratic candidates.
- Age was not significant.
- Gender was not significant.
- Education was not significant.
- Household income was not significant.

III. OTHER QUESTIONS

1. BUILD XL KEYSTONE PIPELINE

A majority (67.8%) support “building the XL Keystone Pipeline across Montana.”

BUILD XL KEYSTONE PIPELINE

<u>Build</u>	<u>Don't Build</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
67.8%	14.6%	17.6%	100%

Actual Question: “Do you support or oppose building the XL Keystone petroleum pipeline across Montana?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Republicans were significantly more likely to support the project than Democrats.
- Conservatives were significantly more likely to support the project than liberals.
- Older respondents were significantly more likely to support the project.
- Females were significantly less likely to support the project.
- Household income was not significant.
- More highly-educated respondents were less likely to support the project.

2. U.S. ECONOMY BETTER OR WORSE

A slight plurality (36.6%) of those polled said “better” when asked the question “Do you believe the U.S. economy is better or worse off than a year ago?”

US ECONOMY BETTER OR WORSE

<u>Better</u>	<u>Unchanged</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
36.6%	20.0%	35.1%	8.3%	100%

Actual Question: “Do you believe the U.S. economy is better, unchanged or worse off than a year ago?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Republicans were significantly more negative about the economy than Democrats.
- Conservatives were significantly more negative about the economy than liberals.
- Age was not significant.
- Gender was not significant.
- Household income was not significant.
- More highly-educated respondents were more positive about the economy.

3. APPROVE OF SALE OF RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

In response to the query “do you support or oppose the legalization of the sale of recreational marijuana in Montana?” a majority (60.2%) of respondents replied “oppose.”

APPROVAL OF SALE OF RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
30.2%	60.2%	9.6%	100%

Actual Question: “Do you support or oppose the legalization of the sale of recreational marijuana in Montana?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Republicans were significantly more likely to oppose legalization than Democrats.
- Conservatives were significantly more likely to oppose legalization than liberals.
- Age was significant – older respondents were more likely to oppose legalization.
- Gender was not significant.
- Household income was not significant.
- Education was not significant.

4. MINE MOUTH TAX

In response to the query “Do you feel this rate [of coal extraction tax] is too high, too low or about right?” a plurality (40.2%) of respondents replied “about right.”

MINE MOUTH COAL TAX

<u>Too High</u>	<u>About Right</u>	<u>Too Low</u>	<u>Undecided/ No Answer</u>	<u>Total</u>
11.7%	40.2%	14.9%	33.2%	100%

Actual Question: “The current extraction tax on coal mined in Montana is 15% of its mine mouth price. Do you feel this rate is too high, too low or about right?”

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Republicans were significantly more likely than Democrats to say the coal tax was “too high.”
- Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to say the coal tax was “too high.”
- Age was not significant.
- Gender was not significant.
- Household income was not significant.
- Education was significant: more well-educated respondents were more likely to say the coal tax was “too low.”