



Access & Excellence

THE MSU-Billings Poll OCTOBER 2002



**Dr. Craig Wilson
And
Dr. Joe Floyd, Co-Directors**

The “MSU-Billings Poll” is available on our website
<http://www.msubillings.edu/spn/poll02.pdf>

The following students completed interviews for the survey:

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Anita Birdinground	Billings, MT
Lori Blain	Billings, MT
Jory Casterline	Glasgow, MT
Michael Creeden	Hardin, MT
Clark Curry	Baker, MT
Daniel Gatley	Billings, MT
Christopher Grogan	St. Helens, OR
Jamie Leischner	Baker, MT
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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the seventeenth “MSU-Billings Poll”, a statewide random sample telephone survey of adult Montanans conducted October 10-14, 2002. This is the thirteenth year the survey has been conducted. The students enrolled in Sociology 493, Applied Survey Research and Political Science 350, Public Opinion and Polling, completed the 415 interviews for this survey. Only registered Montana voters who said they were “likely” to vote were polled. The Co-Directors of the “MSU-Billings Poll” are Dr. Craig Wilson (Political Science) and Dr. Joe Floyd (Sociology).

The survey was completed using random digit dial methodology, which selects both phone numbers and members of a household to interview. The poll was conducted at the MSU-Billings’ CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) Laboratory. Up to five attempts were made to reach selected households. The survey results have a +/- 5% margin of error and 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 also affect survey results. The respondents are representative of the gender, urban (eight most populous counties) – rural and east-west distribution of Montana’s population.

Statistical tests were employed to determine whether statistically significant relationships ($p=.05$) existed between key variables.

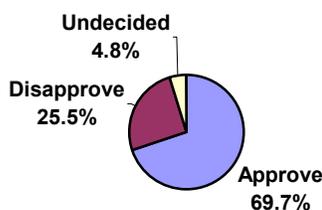
I. NATIONAL ISSUES

1. President George W. Bush's Job Performance

This is the second year the "MSU-Billings Poll" has asked about President Bush's overall job performance. Last year 86.7% of the respondents positively evaluated the job the President was doing, 9.7% disapproved and 3.6% were undecided.

This year the following job performance question was asked: "At this point in time, do you approve or disapprove of George W. Bush's overall performance in office as President." A majority (69.7%) of the respondents said "approve," while fewer said "disapprove" (25.5%), or "undecided" (4.8%).

President Bush's Overall Job Performance



Statistically Significant Relationships:

- In terms of their economic situation today, compared to a year ago, 83.5% of those who felt they were "better off" approved of Bush, 62.9% of those "worse off" also approved of the President, as did 69.3% of individuals viewing themselves as economically "about the same."
- 93.9% of Republicans, 59% of independents and 42.6% of Democrats evaluated the President positively.
- Age, gender, income and education were not related to opinions about Bush.
- A majority (82.9%) of those who felt Saddam Hussein should be removed from power with military force approved of Bush, as did a majority (73.5%) of those undecided about what to do. A majority (57.8%) of individuals who approved acting against Hussein disapproved of Bush.
- A majority (89.8%) of those willing to remove Hussein without a U. N. resolution viewed Bush favorably as did a majority (76.5%) of those undecided about this issue. A plurality (45.7%) of individuals who opposed acting without U.N. backing rated Bush negatively.
- Among those who approved of Bush, 26.6% planned on voting for Mike Taylor and 47.8% for Max Baucus. Among individuals disapproving of the President's job performance 9.4% said they would vote for Taylor and 73.6% for Baucus.

2. Middle Eastern Questions

A. Use Military Force to Remove Hussein from Office

A majority polled (61.9%) said, "yes" when asked whether they thought "that the U. S. should use military force to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq."

Use Military Force to Remove Hussein From Power

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
61.9%	26.3%	11.8%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of Republicans (75.6%) and independents (56.4%) wanted Hussein removed from office as did a plurality (46.3%) of Democrats.
- Gender, age and educational level were not related to opinions about this question.

B. Remove Hussein from Office in Absence of U.N. Security Council Resolution

Among those polled, a plurality (45.3%) did not believe “that the U. S. should use military force to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq in the absence of a U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force.” The results for this question fall within the +/- 5% margin of error for this survey.

Remove Hussein With Military Force in Absence of U. N. Security Council Resolution

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
42.4%	45.3%	12.3%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority (54.4%) of those approving of Bush favored military action in the absence of a Security Council resolution. A majority (81.1%) of respondents having a negative image of the President opposed acting without U. N. support, as did a plurality of individuals (50%) undecided about his job performance.
- A majority (55.6%) of those in families earning an average of \$50,001-\$75,000 a year most strongly backed military action without U. N. support, while those earning an average of \$35,000-\$50,000 most opposed (54.2%) it.
- A majority (53%) of men approved of acting without U.N. support, a majority of women (51.6%) opposed this possible action and more women (16%) than men (8%) were undecided about unilateral action.
- A majority (56.9%) of Republicans favored going it alone, but a majority (63.6%) of Democrats and plurality (48.7%) of independents opposed independent action.
- Males age 57-67 most favored (58.8%) acting alone, while women 68+ (58.3%) most opposed this possibility.

C. Osama bin Laden Dead or Alive

A majority (51%) of the respondents said, “alive” when asked if they felt that “al-Quaida leader Osama bin Laden is dead or alive.”

Osama bin Laden Dead or Alive

<u>Dead</u>	<u>Alive</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
25.1%	51%	23.9%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority (56.8%) of females and plurality (43.5%) of males thought bin Laden was alive.
- Those aged 18-37 (60.5%) were most likely to think bin Laden was “alive,” while those 38-56 (29.7%) were most apt to respond “dead.”
- Women aged 18-37 (64.6%) were most likely to think bin Laden was “alive,” males 38-56 (38.3%) most likely to think he was “dead” and men 68+ (50%) most apt to be undecided about his fate.

3. Questions Regarding Political Campaigns

A. How Important it is To Know Who Pays for Political Ad

When asked, “[h]ow important is it for you to know who pays for or sponsors a political ad,” a majority (51.8%) of those surveyed answered “very important.”

<u>How Important it is to Know Who Pays for Political Ad</u>			
<u>Not Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Total</u>
16.7%	31.5%	51.8%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Individuals aged 57-67 (59.1%) were most likely to think it was “very important” to know who paid for a political ad, while the 18-37 (24.8%) age cohort most often said it was “not very important.”

B. Are U. S. Elections Won by Candidate With Most Money to Spend?

A majority (70.3%) of the survey panel said, “yes” when queried, “[d]o you believe that elections in the U. S. are usually won by the candidate who raises and spends the most money?”

<u>Elections Won by Candidate With Most Money to Spend?</u>			
<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
70.3%	23.4%	6.3%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Those in families with an average yearly income of \$75,000+ (82.5%) were most apt to believe that the candidate with the most money usually wins elections, while individuals in families averaging less than \$20,000 (35.2%) were most likely not to believe this.
- More men (75.5%) than women (64.3%) believed that the amount of money mattered and more women (8.5%) than men (3.5%) were undecided about this issue.
- Those aged 38-56 (73.8%) were most likely to feel that money mattered and the 18-37 (28.1%) cohort was most unlikely to believe this to be the case.
- Individuals with the highest level of education, 17+ (86.2%) were most apt to believe money mattered, while the least educated group, 1-11 years (53.8%), most often disagreed that money mattered.

C. Level of Interest in 2002 Montana General Election

On a 1-5 scaled question, where “1” represented “not interested” and “5” “very interested,” the mean response of 3.9 among those polled indicated that to some extent they were interested in this year’s Montana general election. A plurality (43%) of those interviewed chose “5” (very interested).

Interest in Montana General Election

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Total</u>
6.4%	8.1%	17.8%	24.7%	43%	3.9	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority (53.1%) of respondents from families “worse off” economically than a year ago rated their interest in the election at “5,” as did pluralities of individuals from families “about the same” (39.6%), or “better off” (33.8%) economically than last year.
- A majority of women (52.4%) and plurality of men (33.7%) said their interest was “5”.
- Majorities of the 57-67 (63.2%), 68+ (57.1%) and 38-56 (43.3%) age cohorts identified their interest as “5.” A plurality (33.3%) of 18-37 years olds replied “4.”
- A majority (58.6%) of individuals with 17+ years of education indicated their interest at “5,” while pluralities of all other education cohorts 16 (42.1%), 13-15 (39.5%), 12 (39.8%) and 1-11 (41.7%) years also chose “5”.
- Those most interested in the election were females aged 57-67, 70.6% of whom picked “5,” while those least interested were the 14.8% of 38-56 year old males who chose “1.”

D. Visited Political Candidates’ Web Site

A majority (83.3%) of the interviewees responded “no” when asked: “[D]uring this year’s political campaign season have you accessed a political candidates’ Web site?”

Visited Political Candidates’ Web Site

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>
16.7%	83.3%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationship:

- While 22.7% of individuals having a cell phone had contacted a candidate’s Web site, 91.3% of those without one of these phones had not.

II. MONTANA STATE ISSUES

1. Job Performance of Statewide Elected Officials

Those surveyed were asked whether “[a]t this point in time” they “approve(d)” or “disapprove(d)” of the “overall performance in office” of Governor Judy Martz, U. S. Senators Conrad Burns and Max Baucus and U. S. Representative Dennis Rehberg.”

A. Job Performance of Governor Martz

In last year’s poll a plurality (37.8%) of the respondents held an unfavorable opinion of Governor Judy Martz’s overall performance in office. This year, a majority (69.2%) of those surveyed said they “disapprove(d)” of the Governor’s official performance.

Governor Martz's Job Performance

<u>Approve</u> 19.5%	<u>Disapprove</u> 69.2%	<u>Undecided</u> 11.3%	<u>Total</u> 100%
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Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Governor Martz's approval rating was related to opinions about the 2001 Montana Legislature. Majorities of every group rating the legislature on a 1-5 scale, where "1" represented "poor" and "5" "excellent," viewed Governor's performance negatively. Those viewing Martz most negatively (85.7%) rated the legislature at "1" and those evaluating the legislature at "5" rated the Governor least negatively (55.6%).
- In the 2002 Montana House of Representatives contests, majorities of those planning on voting for Democratic (86.9%), Republican (58.5%) or candidates from neither party (60%) disapproved of the Governor's performance.
- Majorities of Democrats (87%), independents (71.8%) and Republicans (55.3%) rated Martz negatively.

B. Job Performance of Senator Baucus

Last year, a majority (53%) of those interviewed rated Senator Max Baucus's job performance favorably. In this year's poll, a majority (60.7%) of the interviewees "approve(d)" of the Senator's actions in office.

Senator Baucus's Job Performance

<u>Approve</u> 60.7%	<u>Disapprove</u> 28%	<u>Undecided</u> 11.3%	<u>Total</u> 100%
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Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of individuals coming from families economically "about the same" (68.3%), "better off" (57%) and "worse off" (53.8%) than a year ago evaluated the Senator positively.
- Majorities of women (66.7%) and men (55%) rated Baucus positively.
- Majorities of Democrats (68.5%), independents (61.5%) and Republicans (52.3%) felt Baucus was doing a good job.

C. Job Performance of Senator Burns

In the 2001 poll a majority (51.8%) of those interviewed held a favorable opinion of Senator Conrad Burns' job performance. This year a majority (62.7%) of the respondents said they "approve(d)" of the job he was doing.

Senator Burns' Job Performance

<u>Approve</u> 62.7%	<u>Disapprove</u> 22.2%	<u>Undecided</u> 15.2%	<u>Total</u> 100%
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Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of respondents coming from families economically “about the same” (68.3%), “better off” (67.1%) and “worse off” than a year ago (52.4%) evaluated Burns positively.
- Burns strongest support came from those in families earning \$75,000+ (74.6%) a year, while his least support was found among those making less than \$20,000 (47.9%).
- A majority (80.2%) of Republicans and pluralities of independents (48.7%) and Democrats (45.1%) rated Burns job performance positively.

D. Job Performance of Representative Rehberg

Last year a plurality (49.2%) of the interviewees rated Congressman Dennis Rehberg’s job performance favorably. This year a majority (57.1%) of the respondents said “approve” when asked what kind of job he is doing.

<u>Representative Rehberg’s Job Performance</u>			
<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
57.1%	15.9%	27%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Rehberg was viewed most positively by individuals from families earning \$75,000+ (73%) a year and least positively by those in the \$35,001-\$50,000 (49%) a year cohort.
- A majority (73.6%) of Republicans and pluralities of independents (48.7%) and Democrats (40.1%) viewed Rehberg positively.

2. Rate Performance of 2001 Montana Legislature

When asked a 1-5 scaled question, where “1” represented “poor” and “5” “excellent,” about how the interviewees rated “the performance of the 2001 legislature in Montana,” the respondents gave the legislature a mean rating of 2.6 (slightly positive). A plurality (43.7%) of the survey panel chose “3.”

<u>Performance of 2001 Montana Legislature</u>						
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mean</u>
16.2%	24.9%	43.7%	12.9%	2.3%	100%	2.6

Statistically Significant Relationships:

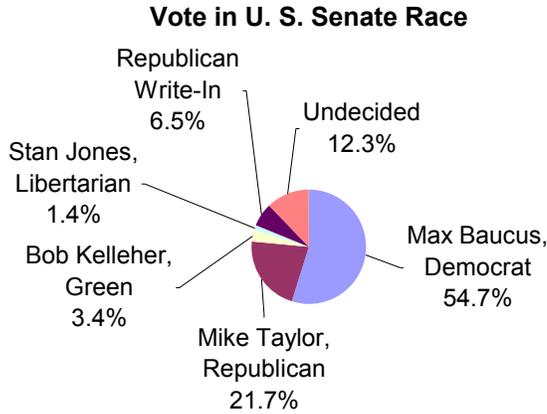
- Pluralities of Democrats (36.9%), Republicans (47.5%) and independents (48.6%) rated the Legislature at “3.”
- In terms of educational levels, those with 1-11 years of school (7.7%) were most apt to rate the Legislature “5,” while interviewees with 17+ years of education (31%) were most like to rate the solons actions “1.”

3. Vote Intention Questions

Those polled were asked whom they would vote for in Montana’s U. S. House and Senate races if the election was “held today.” The poll began the day Republican Mike Taylor withdrew from the U. S. Senate race. Because Taylor’s name will appear on the ballot a vote intention question, including Taylor’s name was asked about the Senate race. The additional option of supporting a possible “Republican write-in candidate” was added to the responses.

A. Vote in U. S. Senate Race

When asked whom they would “vote for” if “this year’s election for one of Montana’s two U.S. Senate seats were held today,” a majority (54.7%) of those interviewed said Baucus.



Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of those opposed to military action in Iraq (67.9%), or undecided (53.1%) about it favored Baucus, as did a plurality (49.4%) of individuals favoring the use of force.
- A majority (67%) of those opposed to action in Iraq without a Security Council resolution favored Baucus, as did pluralities of those individuals undecided (47.1%) or favoring action in the absence of a resolution (43.8%).
- Baucus voters comprised a majority (80%) of Steve Kelly’s backers in the U. S. House race, and pluralities of Mike Fellows (50%) and Dennis Rehberg’s (46.6%) voters.
- Baucus was supported by majorities of Democratic (75.3%) and independent (51.3%) voters and a plurality (38.6%) of the Republican electorate polled.

B. Most Negative U. S. Senate Race

When asked “[w]hich [of the] senatorial candidates do you feel has run the most negative campaign,” a plurality (32.3%) of those polled responded “Baucus.”

	<u>%</u>
Max Baucus	32.3%
Mike Taylor	26.3%
Bob Kelleher	.7%
Stan Jones	.7%
None	2.7%
Two or More	18.3%
Undecided	<u>19.0%</u>
Total	100%

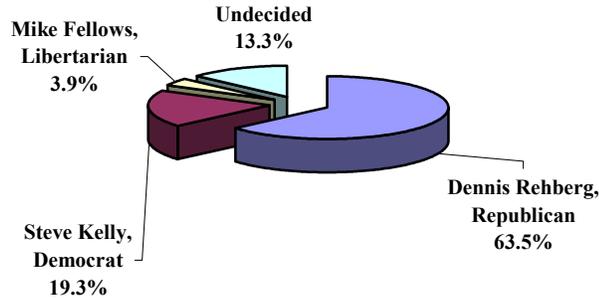
Statistically Significant Relationship:

- Pluralities of Republicans (46.2%) and independents (33.3%) viewed Baucus as running the most negative campaign, while a plurality of Democrats (38.9%) said Taylor had been the most negative.

C. Vote in U. S. House of Representatives Race

When asked, “[i]f the election for Montana’s seat in the U. S. House of Representatives were held today” whom would you “vote for,” a majority of those interviewed (63.5%) replied “Rehberg.”

Vote in U. S. House Race



Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority of Republicans (85.8%) and pluralities of independents (46.2%) and Democrats (42.6%) planned on voting for Rehberg.
- Among individuals who approved of the job the President is doing, 74.7% said they planned on voting for Rehberg and 10% for Kelly. Of individuals disapproving of the President 44.3% said they would support Kelly and 36.8% Rehberg.
- Majorities of those favoring ousting (70.8%) Hussein militarily, or opposed (50.5%) or undecided (55.1%) about the issue planned on voting for Rehberg.
- Among Rehberg voters, in the U. S. Senate race 28.8% of them planned on voting for Mike Taylor and 46.6% for Max Baucus.
- Among Rehberg voters, in the Montana House of Representative elections 62.9% planned on voting for Republican candidates and 23.9% for Democrats.

D. Most Negative U. S. House Race

A plurality (49.9%) of those questioned were “undecided” about which House candidate had “run the most negative campaign.”

Most Negative U. S. House Race	
	<u>%</u>
Dennis Rehberg	6.7%
Steve Kelly	5.1%
Mike Fellows	1.4%
None	33.5%
Two or More	3.4%
Undecided	<u>49.9%</u>
Total	100%

E. Vote in Montana House of Representatives Election

When asked a generic question about whom they would vote for “if the election were held today” to elect “a representative to the Montana State House of Representatives...in your district,” a plurality

(46.9%) of those questioned said the “Republican” candidate. In the 2000 “MSU-Billings Poll,” a plurality (42.4%) of respondents backed a Republican candidate and 36% a Democratic one.

<u>Vote in Montana House Election</u>					
<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
46.9%	36.9%	2.4%	3.9%	9.9%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of Republicans (81.2%) said they would vote for their own party’s candidates and a majority of Democrats (74.1%) for their party’s candidates. A plurality of independents (41%) were undecided about how they would vote.
- A majority (59.2%) of those planning on voting for Republican candidates in the state House elections favored dealing with the state budget deficit by decreasing state spending, while a majority (52.8%) of respondents supporting increasing taxes and fees planned to vote for Democrats. A plurality (44.7%) of interviewees favoring a combination of spending reductions and tax and fee increases also planned on voting Republican.

4. Vote on Initiative 146

The respondents were told that Initiative 146 “would require the State of Montana to spend 49% of the money it receives yearly from a settlement with the tobacco companies for tobacco disease research and expanded access to health insurance programs” and then asked if voting “today” they would “support or oppose the measure?” A majority (69.9%) replied “support.”

<u>Vote on Initiative 146</u>			
<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
69.9%	21.7%	8.4%	100%

5. Vote on Initiative 145

Those polled were informed that Initiative 145 “would create a public power commission to decide if the State of Montana should buy up to 12 privately owned hydroelectric dams at their fair market value. The dams would be purchased by state issued bonds that would be paid off by the sale of electricity” and then asked if “voting today” would they “support or oppose this measure?” A plurality (47%) “opposed” the initiative.

<u>Vote on Initiative 145</u>			
<u>Support</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
37.1%	47%	15.9%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Pluralities of women (48.4%) and men (46%) opposed the initiative and more women (21.1%) than men (10.5%) were undecided about the issue.
- The initiative had the most support among individuals with 1-11 (46.2%) years of education and the greatest opposition among respondents with 13-15 (58%) years of school.

III. OTHER ISSUES FACING MONTANA

1. Single Most Important Problem Facing Montana

When asked to “identify...the single most important problem facing Montana,” a plurality polled (22.2%) said “jobs/good jobs,” with the “overall state of the economy” (20.7%) being mentioned second most often. The results for this question fall within the +/- 5% margin of error for this survey. This question contained multiple optional answers which were not read to the respondents.

<u>Most Important Problem Facing Montana</u>	
	<u>%</u>
Jobs/good jobs	22.2%
Overall state of economy	20.7%
State budget deficit	6.7%
Education	15.7%
Health care costs	4.3%
Taxes	6.7%
Social Security/Medicare	1.2%
Homeland security/terrorism	.5%
Drought	1.0%
The state of agriculture	3.4%
Politicians/Government	4.6%
Crime	.7%
Alcohol/Drugs	2.2%
Other	5.5%
Undecided	<u>4.6%</u>
Total	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A plurality (26.9%) of women said jobs was the major problem facing Montana and a plurality (21.2%) of males identified the overall state of the economy as the key issue.
- In terms of education, a plurality (18.2%) of those with 1-11 years of school said politicians/government was the main problem, pluralities of those with 12 (31%) and 13-15 (24.7%) years of school identified jobs as the key issue and a plurality of individuals with 17+ (31%) years of school replied education.

2. Concern About West Nile Virus in Montana

When asked a 1-5 scaled question, where “1” represented “not concerned” and “5” “very concerned,” about “how concerned” those interviewed were about the “West Nile virus” existing in Montana, a plurality (30.4%) replied “1” (not concerned) and the mean response was 2.6 (slightly concerned about the virus).

<u>Concern About West Nile Virus in Montana</u>							
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mean</u>	
30.4%	22.4%	19.9%	11.3%	16%	100%	2.6	

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- In terms of the seriousness of the virus a plurality (23.9%) of women chose “3” and a plurality of males (39.8%) “1.”

- Those aged 68+ (32.7%) were most apt to respond “1” and the 57-67 (23.5%) cohort most often chose “5.”

3. Ban on Smoking in Indoor Public Places

Those interviewed were asked: “In the locality where you live, would you support or oppose a ban on smoking in all indoor public places including restaurants, bars and casinos?” A majority (58.1%) of those replying said “support”.

<u>Ban on Smoking in Indoor Public Places</u>			
<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
58.1%	37.3%	4.6%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of women (63.8%) and men (52%) backed the ban.
- Women aged 18-37 (75%) were most likely to back the ban and males 68+ (50%) most prone to oppose it.

4. Projected State Budget Deficit

Those answering the poll were asked about next year’s projected state budget deficit in the following terms: “When the 2003 Montana legislature meets, it is projected that the State of Montana will have at least a \$250 million dollar budget deficit” and then asked “[i]n terms of dealing with this deficit” if they favored “decreasing state spending,” “increasing taxes and fees,” or a “combination of spending reductions and tax and fee increases.” A majority (52.3%) favored a combination of spending reductions and tax and fee increases.

<u>Dealing With Projected State Budget Deficit</u>	
	<u>%</u>
Decrease State Spending	28.9%
Increase Taxes and Fees	12.8%
Combination of Reduced Spending and Revenue Increase	52.3%
Undecided	<u>6.0%</u>
Total	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of Democrats (53.7%) and Republicans (50.8%) and a plurality of independents (48.7%) favored a combination of budget cuts and tax and fee increases.
- Majorities of the age groups 38-56 (58.7%) and 68+ (53.6%) favored the combination approach, as did pluralities of the 18-37 (50%) and 57-67 (38.6%) age cohorts.

5. State Sales Tax Coupled With Lower State Income Taxes

A plurality (49.4%) of the interviewees said “support” when queried if they would “support or oppose a general sales tax in Montana if it were accompanied by a decrease in state income taxes?” The results for this question fall with the +/- 5% margin of error for this survey.

State Sales Tax Coupled With Lower State Income Taxes

<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
49.4%	46.5%	4.1%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority (64.6%) of individuals “better off” economically than last year backed the proposal, while a majority (51.7%) of those “worse off” and plurality (49.2%) of respondents “about the same” opposed it.
- Individuals from families making \$50,001-\$75,000 (63.9%) a year supported the plan to the greatest extent, while those in the \$35,000-\$50,000 (54.2%) income category most opposed it.

6. Effects of Coal Bed Methane on Agricultural Water Quality

The respondents were asked a 1-5 scaled question, where “1” represented “not concerned at all” and “5” “very concerned,” about their level of concern “about the effect of coal bed methane development on agricultural water quality in Montana.” The mean response was 3.16 (somewhat concerned). A plurality (25.6%) replied “3”, while 24.8% said “5”. The results for this question fall within the +/- margin of error for this poll.

Effects of Coal Bed Methane on Agricultural Water Quality

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mean</u>
17%	16.2%	25.6%	16.4%	24.8%	100%	3.16

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A plurality (31.8%) of women identified their level of concern as “5,” a plurality (23.8%) of men “3.”
- A plurality (34.3%) of Democrats said “5,” while pluralities of Republicans (28.9%) and independents (25%) replied “3.”

IV. CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES

1. Sentences for Felons

A plurality (49.9%) of the respondents felt that “the sentences imposed upon convicted felons by the State of Montana” were “too lenient.”

Sentences for Felons

<u>Too Lenient</u>	<u>About Right</u>	<u>Too Harsh</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
49.9%	33.7%	6%	10.4%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- In terms of education levels, a majority (58%) of those with 13-15 years of education were most apt to say “too lenient,” a plurality (41.4%) of those with 17+ years of schooling most likely to respond “about right” and respondents with 1-11 years of education most often (30.8%) replied “too harsh.”

- Males 57-67 (76.5%) most often replied “too lenient,” females 38-56 (38.9%) were most likely to answer “about right” and males 68+ (15.9%) most prone to reply “too harsh.”

2. Background Investigation for Handgun Buyers

When asked if they “support(ed) or oppose(d) a background investigation for handgun buyers,” a majority (79%) of those interviewed said they supported the existing background checks.

<u>Background Investigations for Handgun Buyers</u>			
<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
79%	17.1%	3.9%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Majorities of women (86.9%) and men (70.5%) supported background checks.
- More urban (83.2%) than rural (71.9%) Montanans thought the checks were a good idea.
- Those aged 38-56 (82.6%) most supported the checks and 18-37 (21.9%) year olds most opposed them.
- In terms of years of education, those backing the checks to the greatest extent were in the 17+ (86.2%) group, while the greatest opposition was among those with 12 (22.2%) years of school.
- Women aged 38-56 (91.1%) supported the checks to the greatest extent, while the greatest opposition was found among 57-67 (26.5%) year old males.

3. Seriousness of Methamphetamine Use in Montana

A 1-5 scaled question was asked, where “1” represented “not a problem at all” and “5” “a very serious problem,” about how serious the interviewees felt the “use of methamphetamine” was “in Montana.” The mean response was 4.18 (concerned) and a majority (55.6%) of those surveyed responded “5” (very serious).

<u>Seriousness of Methamphetamine Use in Montana</u>						
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mean</u>
5.3%	5.3%	11.1%	22.7%	55.6%	100%	4.18

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority (64.7%) of women and plurality (45.7%) of men rated the meth problem at “5”.
- Methamphetamine use was viewed most seriously by those with 13-15 years of education. (69.2% gave it a “5”) and in relative terms least seriously by those with 12 years of education (8.9% of whom rated it “1”).
- In terms of gender/age, those viewing the issue most seriously were aged 57-67, with 74.3% of women in this group rating the problem at “5”, as did 62.5% of men in this age cohort.

4. Possible Release of Non-Violent Inmates from Montana State Prison

A majority (52.8%) of the survey respondents said they would “oppose” “the pre-release of 400 non-violent inmates from the Montana State Prison system as a method of addressing the budget deficit facing Montana today.”

Opinion of Release of Non-Violent Inmates from Montana State Prison

<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
36.4%	52.8%	10.8%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Respondents from families earning \$50,001-\$75,000 (52.8%) a year were most likely to say they backed early release, while those in households making \$20,000-\$35,000 (66.3%) a year most often replied “oppose.”
- A majority (59.9%) of Republicans and plurality of independents (48.7%) and Democrats (45.7%) opposed early release.

5. Number of DUI Convictions Before Charging With Felony Criminal Endangerment

A plurality (35.7%) of those polled said “3” when asked: “At what number of DUI convictions should a repeat DUI offender be charged with felony criminal endangerment.”

Number of DUI’s Before Charging With Felony Criminal Endangerment

	<u>%</u>
Should Never Be Charged	2.2%
One	16.9%
Two	30.6%
Three	35.7%
Four	5.3%
Five	2.4%
Six	.7%
Seven	.2%
Eight	.2%
Undecided	<u>5.8%</u>
Total	100%

6. Are Education Programs in Montana Prisons a Form of Rehabilitation

A plurality (49.6%) of the interviewees said “yes” when asked if they felt the “educational programs offered to inmates in Montana Prison System are an effective form of rehabilitation.”

Montana Prison Education Programs Effective Rehabilitation

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
49.6%	35.9%	14.5%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationship:

- Majorities of Democrats (66.9%) and Republicans (53.8%) and a plurality (48.6%) of independents supported the education programs.

V. EDUCATION QUESTIONS

1. Should Teachers Have to Pass a Standardized Test?

When asked if they felt “teachers should have to pass a standardized test to teach in Montana,” a majority (87%) of those interviewed said “yes.”

<u>Should Teachers Have to Pass Standardized Test</u>		
<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>
87%	13%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationship:

- Majorities of independents (97.4%), Republicans (89.3%) and Democrats (82.8%) favored testing.

2. Opinion About Lawsuits Against The State Over Education Funding

After being told that “some Montana school districts are suing the State of Montana regarding what they claim to be an unconstitutionally inadequate level of funding for K-12 education in Montana,” those interviewed were asked if they “support(ed)” or “oppose(d)” “these law suits.” A majority (54.5%) replied “support.”

<u>Opinion About Lawsuits Against The State Over Education Funding</u>			
<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
54.5%	33%	12.5%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationship:

- Majorities of independents (66.7%) and Democrats (63.6%), as well as a plurality of Republicans (44.2%) supported the litigation.

3. Opinion About Consolidating Number of School Districts in Montana

Those surveyed were informed that “[c]urrently there are about 450 individual public school districts in Montana. Some people believe that consolidating school districts in Montana would save money,” and then asked “[d]o you support or oppose the consolidation of school districts in Montana.” A plurality (48%) of the interviewees said “support.”

<u>Opinion About Consolidating School Districts in Montana</u>			
<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
48%	42.2%	9.8%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationship:

- Those aged 38-56 (54.7%) were most supportive of consolidation, while the 18-37 (55.3%) cohort most opposed it.

4. Feelings About Funding Public K-12 Education in Montana

The respondents were next asked to identify which of several options “best describes your feelings about the funding of public K-12 education in Montana.” The options mentioned were:

1. “Public K-12 education provides too many services to students and therefore we pay too much in taxes for public education. Both educational services and locally imposed taxes which support educational services should be cut.”
2. “There is a lot of waste in public K-12 education in Montana. K-12 education needs to become more efficient and provide more services for less money.”
3. “K-12 education in Montana is under funded. Locally imposed taxes should be increased to maintain the level of service provided.”
4. “K-12 education in Montana is under funded. We need to find ways to increase the amount of funding going to education without increasing the tax burden on Montana residents.”

A plurality (49.4%) of those polled favored the option involving increasing funding without increasing the tax burden.

<u>Feelings About Funding Public K-12 Education in Montana</u>	
	<u>%</u>
Cut Educational Services and Taxes	10.7%
Make K-12 More Efficient With Less Money	24.4%
Increase Local Taxes to Maintain K-12 Services	15.5%
Increase Funding Without Increasing Tax Burden	<u>49.4%</u>
Total	100%

5. How Much Should Montana University Students Pay In Tuition

Those polled were next asked how much Montana university students should pay for their tuition in the following terms: “During the 1985-1986 academic year, in-state students in public higher education in Montana paid about 18% of the cost of their education in tuition while the remaining 82% of the cost of their education was paid from the state general fund. Today, in-state students pay about 42% of the cost of their education in tuition and the remaining 58% of the cost comes from the state general fund. What percentage of the cost of their education do you think in-state students in Montana should pay through tuition.” A plurality (21.5%) replied “21-30%”, while 20.3% said “41-50%”. The results for this question fall with the +/- 5% margin of error for this survey.

How Much Should Montana University Students Pay for Tuition

	<u>%</u>
0-10%	8.9%
11-20%	17.1%
21-30%	21.5%
31-40%	8.7%
41-50%	20.3%
51-60%	4.1%
61-70%	1.4%
71-80%	.5%
81-90%	.2%
91-100%	.7%
Undecided	<u>16.6%</u>
Total	100%

6. Home Schooled v. Public School Quality of Education

When asked if they felt that “home schooled or public schooled children get a better education,” a majority (53%) of the interviewees replied “public schooled.”

Home School or Public School Education Better

<u>Home School</u>	<u>Public School</u>	<u>The Same</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
22.4%	53%	11.6%	13%	100%

7. Impact of Sports Participation by Montana High School Students

A majority (80.5%) of those surveyed said “positive” when asked if they felt that “the participation in sports by Montana high school students has a positive or negative effect on their education.”

Impact of Sports Participation by Montana High School Students

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Total</u>
80.5%	14.3%	5.2%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Those in households with an income of \$75,000+ (91.5%) a year most valued sports participation, while those earning less than \$20,000 (28.2%) a year were most apt to view sports negatively.
- More urban (81.6%) than rural (78.7%) Montanans valued sports.

8. Opinion About Salaries of Montana Public School Teachers

Among those responding, to the interview, a majority (69.5%) said “underpaid” when asked if they thought “that public school teachers in Montana are underpaid, overpaid or paid about the right amount.”

Opinion About Salaries of Montana Public School Teachers

<u>Underpaid</u>	<u>Paid</u>	<u>Right Amount</u>	<u>Overpaid</u>	<u>Total</u>
69.5%		25.4%	5%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Those in households averaging \$75,000+ (82.3%) in income a year were most likely to view teachers as “underpaid,” individuals earning \$35,001-\$50,000 (35.2%) most often said they were paid about the “right amount” and people earning less than \$20,000 (7.6%) yearly most apt to feel teachers were “overpaid.”
- More urban (73.2%) than rural (63.3%) residents viewed teachers as “underpaid.”
- Respondents with 17+ (89.3%) years of education were most likely to see teachers as “underpaid,” while those in the 13-15 (32.9%) years category, to the greatest extent replied paid the “right amount” and individuals with 1-11 (23.1%) years of school were most apt to respond “overpaid.”

VI. OTHER QUESTIONS

1. Economically Better or Worse Off Than Last Year

A plurality (46%) of the interviewees replied “about the same” when asked the question “[i]n an economic sense, compared to a year ago, do you feel that today your family is better or worse off, or about the same.”

Economically Better or Worse Off Than Last Year

<u>Better Off</u>	<u>Worse Off</u>	<u>About the Same</u>	<u>Total</u>
19.2%	34.8%	46%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Individuals in families earning \$75,000+ (33.3%) a year were most likely to say they were “better off,” while those making less than \$20,000 (42.3%) most often responded “worse off”.
- More males (26.3%) than females (12.3%) were “better off” and more women (37.9%) than men (31.8%) were “worse off.”
- A majority of independents (68.4%) and plurality of Republicans (45.1%) replied “about the same.” A plurality of Democrats (46%) said “worse off.”
- Those aged 18-37 (28.8%) were most likely to be “better off,” those aged 68+ (48.2%) were most apt to be both “worse off” (48.2%) or “about the same” (50%).

2. Have a Cell Phone

A majority (55.6%) of those interviewed replied “yes” when queried “[d]o you have a cell phone?” A recent national study found that 51% of adult Americans have a cell phone.

<u>Have a Cell Phone</u>		
<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>
55.6%	44.4%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Those in families earning \$75,000+ (77.8%) a year were most likely to have cell phones, while those earning less than \$20,000 (42.9%) were least likely to have them.
- Individuals aged 18-37 (64.6%) were most likely to have phones, while those aged 57-67 (60%) were most likely not to have them.
- Males aged 18-37 (67.2%) were most apt to have a cell phone, while to the greatest extent males in the 57-67 (67.6%) cohort did not have one.