

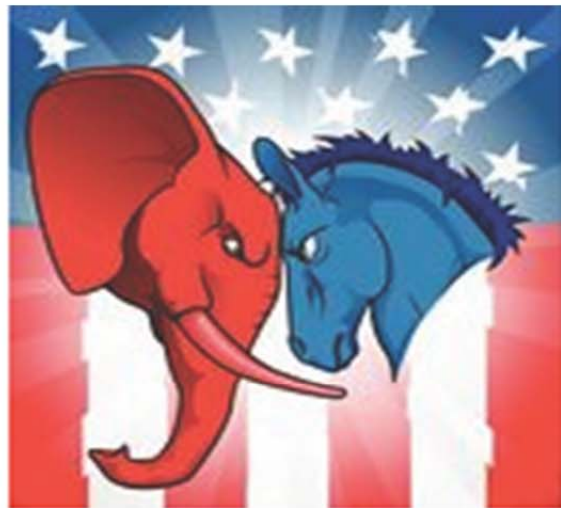


**THE MSU-BILLINGS POLL:
NATIONAL, STATE,
AND
LOCAL ISSUES – DAY 2**

OCTOBER 2011

26TH POLL

23rd YEAR



***DR. CRAIG WILSON, DR. SCOTT RICKARD
AND DR. CATHY GROTT, 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-third year the survey has been conducted, 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 Dr. Cathy Grott (Sociology-Methodology). We would like to thank Ms. Brenda Dockery for serving as the supervisor for this research project, Ms. Jonna Jones for also assisting us and Ms. Tami Eller for word processing the survey results.

This report summarizes the results of a statewide random sample telephone survey involving the responses of 411 adult Montanans. The poll was conducted October 17-21. Forty students enrolled in Political Science 342, Media, Public Opinion, Polling and Sociology 318, Sociological Research Methods, completed the 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. A sample of cell phone numbers was also included in the sample. 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.

III. ELECTIONS

Independents are often described as “key players” in elections. This year, for the first time, the MSUB poll asked independents which party they planned on supporting. Next, for each vote question declared they were independent Democrats or independent Republicans were tracked in the individual races to see if they actually supported the Democratic (Republican) candidate. These individuals were labeled as independent Republicans or Democrats and included in the second table (B) stating which independent respondents planned on supporting Republican or Democratic candidates.

So that the statistically significant material was not cluttered with too many party categories, the party percentages listed reflect the Democrats and independent Democrats category combined. The same was done with Republicans and independent Republicans becoming a single cohort.

1. INTEREST IN ELECTIONS

When asked about next year’s election in the following terms, “As of today, how interested are you in the upcoming 2012 general election,” a plurality (45.7%) of those polled said “very.”

INTEREST IN ELECTIONS

<u>Very Interested</u>	<u>Somewhat Interested</u>	<u>Not Very Interested</u>	<u>Not Interested At All</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
45.7%	29%	14.5%	7.9%	2.9%	100%

2. ELECTION OF U.S. PRESIDENT

When asked the question, “If the election for the position of president of the U.S. were held today, do you think you would vote for the Democratic or Republican nominee?” A plurality (40.6%) of those answering this question replied “Republican.”

ELECTION OF U.S. PRESIDENT

Table A

<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
32.8%	40.6%	5.9%	20.7%	100%

ELECTION OF U.S. PRESIDENT WITH INDEPENDENTS FACTORED IN
Table B

Democratic	<u>Independent</u> Democratic	Republican	<u>Independent</u> Republican	Other	Undecided	Total
20.2%	12.6%	27.5%	13.1%	5.9%	20.7%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships (Relating to Table A):

- 77.8% of Democrats supported the Democratic candidate and 83.1% of Republicans backed the Republican nominee.
- There was no relationship between gender, education and support for a candidate.
- A plurality (44.2%) of those supporting the Democratic candidate with some college/college education planned on supporting a Democrat. A plurality (44.9%) of Republicans with a college degree backed a Republican.
- 53% of Democrats who supported their candidate felt the federal healthcare legislation would make U.S. healthcare “much worse.” In contrast, 87.6% of Republicans who backed a candidate of their party also thought that the healthcare legislation would make future healthcare “much worse.”
- 75.9% of Democratic supporters approved of the president’s overall performance, while 90% of Republicans who opposed the president disapproved of his overall performance.
- 78.7% of those supporting the economic stimulus package were Democrats who supported a Democratic candidate. 67.1% of Republicans opposing the program planned on supporting a Republican.
- 45.8% of Democrats back the war in Afghanistan and 49.1% of Republicans oppose the war.

3. ELECTION OF GOVERNOR

When asked the question, “If the election for the position of Governor of Montana were held today, do you think you would vote for the Democratic or Republican nominee?” A plurality (32.6%) of those polled said “Republican.”

ELECTION OF GOVERNOR

Table A

<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
30.7%	32.6%	3.9%	32.8%	100%

ELECTION OF GOVERNOR WITH INDEPENDENTS FACTORED IN

Table B

<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Independent Democratic</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
19.0%	11.7%	24.8%	7.8%	3.9%	32.8%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships (Relating to Table A):

- 57.1% of individuals who approve of the president's overall job performance say they will vote for the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, while 87.4% of those who say they will support the Republican candidate disapprove of President Obama's overall job performance.
- 68.5% of those backing the Democratic candidate for Governor feel the president is doing a "good job" in foreign policy. 69.9% of those who support the Republican candidate for governor feel President Obama is doing a "bad job" managing foreign relations.
- 42.1% of those who liked the Democratic candidate for governor feel President Obama has done a "good job" managing the economy. 90.9% of those favoring a Republican candidate feel President Obama has done a "bad job" managing the economy.
- 73.8% of those supporting the Democratic candidate like President Obama on a personal basis. 47.8% of those backing the Republican candidate personally dislike President Obama.
- 86% of those who will support the Republican candidate for governor believe the health care legislation in the future will make healthcare "much worse." 45.7% of those who will back the Democratic candidate feel healthcare legislation will make healthcare better.
- Age, income, education and gender were not related to vote intention.
- 65.9% of those who believe the Tea Party reflects their political views will support the Republican for governor. 52.0% of those who believe the Tea Party does not reflect their views at all will back the Democratic candidate for governor.

- 63.9% of those who say they like the Republican candidate and 40.3% of those who will support the Democratic candidate feel religion is very important to them.
- 73.7% of Democrats planned on supporting their party's gubernatorial candidate, while 76.6% of Republicans held the same positive opinion about their candidate.
- 42.5% of those who say they will vote for the Republican candidate have a positive view of the 2011 Montana legislature. 42.4% of those who say they will support the Democratic candidate have a negative view of the 2011 Montana legislature.
- 52.4% of those who plan to back the Democratic candidate support the new marijuana law, while 69.1% who say they will support the Republican candidate support the new marijuana law.

4. **MONTANA U.S. SENATE CONTEST**

One quarter (25%) of respondents were undecided when asked if they would support the Democratic or Republican candidate in the 2012 Montana U.S. Senate race if it were held today.

A plurality (36.3%) of the respondents indicate they like the Republican candidate, while 35.5% indicate they would support the Democratic candidate.

MONTANA U.S. SENATE CONTEST

Table A

<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
35.5%	36.3%	3.1%	25.1%	100%

MONTANA U.S. SENATE CONTEST WITH INDEPENDENT FACTORED IN

Table B

<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Independent Democratic</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
23.3%	12.2%	24.1%	12.2%	3.1%	25.1%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships (Relating to Table A):

- 80.8% of Democrats planned on backing their party's candidate, as did 74.2% of Republicans. The same percentage 30.5% of independents indicated they would support the Democratic candidate.

- 76.9% of those who indicate they like the Democratic candidate for senator will also support the Democratic candidate for president. 87.4% of those who indicate they will vote for the Republican candidate for senate also like the Republican candidate for president.
- Those who hold Congress more responsible than the president for the annual deficit indicated by a plurality (45.3%) they like the Democratic candidate. Overwhelmingly, those who hold the president more responsible for the annual deficit indicated they will support the Republican (65.0%) candidate. Interestingly, in terms of those who hold both Congress and the president equally responsible for the annual deficit indicated by a plurality (45.4%) they will vote for the Republican candidate, while nearly one third of them (31.9%) are undecided.
- 43.5% of those who are “very interested” in the election said they would support the Republican candidate, while 36.6% of those who are “very interested” in the election will back the Democratic candidate.
- There was no relationship between the Montana U.S. Senate race and those who feel they are better off, worse off or about the same as 5 years ago.
- Those who said they are “very religious” indicated, by a plurality (46.8%) they will support the Republican candidate.
- There was no relationship between the Montana U.S. Senate race and an individual’s health insurance status.
- Almost half of those with a post-graduate education (49%) indicated they like the Democratic candidate. 40.8% of those with some college or a college degree indicated they will support the Republican candidate. Interestingly, a plurality (35.6%) of high school graduates are undecided as to whom they will back in the Montana U.S. Senate race.
- There was no relationship between income, gender, and age and candidate preference in the Montana U.S. Senate race.

5. **MONTANA U.S. HOUSE ELECTION**

When asked, “If the 2012 election were held today, do you think you would back the Republican or Democratic U.S. House candidate in your district,” a plurality (34.7%) of those surveyed said “undecided.”

MONTANA U.S. HOUSE ELECTION

Table A

<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
28.6%	34.0%	2.7%	34.7%	100%

MONTANA U.S. HOUSE ELECTION WITH INDEPENDENTS FACTORED IN

Table B

<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Independent Democratic</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
18.8%	9.8%	24.7%	9.3%	2.7%	34.7%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships (Relating to Table A):

- Gender, income, education and age were not significant in this race.
- A plurality (36%) of those who planned on backing a Republican felt the Tea Party “moderately” affected their views. 49.6% of Democrats said the Tea Party shared their opinions “not at all.”
- 64.4% of those who support the Democratic candidate for the U.S. House approve of the President Obama overall. 87.9% of those who support the Republican candidate disapprove of President Obama overall.
- 92.9% of those who support the Republican candidate for the U.S. House feel President Obama is doing a “bad job” managing international relations. 44.4% of those who support the Democratic candidate feel President Obama is doing a “good job” managing international relations.
- A plurality (44.4%) of those who support the Democratic candidate for the U.S. House feel President Obama is doing a “good job” handling economic affairs, while 92.9% those who support the Republican candidate say he is doing a “bad job.”
- 48.7% of Democratic backers supported the president’s economic stimulus package, while 80.1% of Republican voters did not support the proposal.

- 75.2% of those planning on supporting the Democratic candidate like the president on a personal basis. 48.6% of those favoring a Republican candidate dislike the president personally.
- A plurality of Republicans (48.9%) who planned on backing their party's candidate opposed the war in Afghanistan, while 63.8% of Democrats who said they liked their party's candidate were opposed to the war.
- 71.8% of Democrats who were going to back a Democrat held Congress most responsible for the budget deficit, while a plurality (46.8%) saying they would vote for the G.O.P. candidate felt the same way about Congress.
- 83.9% of Democrats backing their candidate for the U.S. House also planned on supporting a Democrat for president, while 87.9% of Republicans backing a G.O.P. candidate for the House said they wanted a Republican for president.
- 89.4% of those who support the Republican candidate feel the healthcare legislation would make healthcare "much worse." In contrast, 50% of those individuals who support a Democrat for U.S. House feel the legislation would make healthcare "much better."
- A plurality (41.7%) of those who support the Democratic candidate and a majority (64.7%) of those who support the Republican congressional candidate identify religion as "very important" in their lives.

6. **MONTANA STATE HOUSE ELECTION**

In reply to a question worded, "If the 2012 election were held today, do you think you would vote for the Republican or Democratic State House candidate in your district," a plurality (37.3%) said "undecided." The results for this question fell within the +/- 5% margin of error for this poll.

MONTANA STATE HOUSE ELECTION

<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
26.9%	32.4%	3.4%	37.3%	100%

7. **OPINION OF 2011 MONTANA LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

In reply to the question: “In general, do you have a positive or negative opinion about how the 2011 Montana Legislature performed,” a plurality (37%) of those surveyed replied “positive.”

OPINION OF 2011 MONTANA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
34.6%	32.1%	33.3%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A majority (62.0%) who hold a positive view of the 2011 legislature viewed the president’s overall performance negatively. 53% of individuals with a negative view of the legislature also disapprove of the president’s overall performance.
- A plurality (31.2%) of those with a positive view of the 2011 legislature say the Tea Party “moderately” affects their political views. A plurality (45.5%) of individuals who view the legislature negatively say the group does “not at all” influence their political perspectives.
- A plurality (42.3%) of Republicans have a positive view of the legislature and a plurality (40.4%) of Democrats a negative view.
- A plurality (48.6%) of those with a positive view of the legislature planned on voting for a Republican for president. A plurality (44.7%) of respondents having a negative view of the legislature planned on supporting a Democratic presidential candidate.

IV. OTHER QUESTIONS

8. **TEA PARTY**

When asked, “Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the Tea Party movement,” a plurality (34.8%) answered “favorable.” The results for this question fell within the +/- 5% margin of error for this poll.

TEA PARTY

<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
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34.8%	33.6%	31.6%	100%
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9. TEA PARTY OPINIONS

When those polled were asked the question, “To what extent does the Tea Party movement reflect your political opinions,” a plurality (29.1%) said “not at all.”

TEA PARTY AFFECT OPINIONS

<u>Great Deal</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
10%	23.5%	16.6%	29.1%	20.8%	100%

10. RELIGIOSITY

When a question asked how religious the respondents’ were was worded, “In terms of religious beliefs, do you consider yourself to be,” a plurality (49.5%) of those answering the question said “somewhat religious [how religious].”

RELIGIOSITY

<u>Very Religious</u>	<u>Somewhat Religious</u>	<u>Not Very</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
26.9%	49.5%	21.4%	2.2%	100%

11. HOW IMPORTANT RELIGION IN PERSONAL LIFE

When asked a 1-5 scaled question worded, “On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not important at all” and 5 being “important” how important is religion in your life,” a plurality of those surveyed (48.2%) to some extent said “very important.”

<u>1-2 (not important)</u>	<u>3 (neutral)</u>	<u>4-5 (important)</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
24.4%	25.2%	48.2%	2.2%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- Those aged 18-28 (37.1%) were most likely to say religion was not important in their life, while 64.2% of the 61+ age cohort say religion was “very important” in their life.

- To some extent a plurality (24.5%) of Democrats say religion was “not important” in their life, 30.7% of independents say religion “was not,” while 63.4% of Republicans say it was “very important” to them.
- Of those supporting the new marijuana law, 52.3% feel religion was “very important” in their life. 49% of individuals who say religion is “not important” in their lives also support the law.
- 40.1% of males say religion is very important to them, while 55.4% of females say religion is “very important.”

12. **OPINION ABOUT XL KEYSTONE PIPELINE**

When asked, “Do you support or oppose the XL Keystone pipeline carrying a type of Canadian oil through Montana, with some Montana crude oil being picked up by the pipeline in this state, and then continuing to Texas where the oil would be refined,” a majority (63.5%) of the respondents said “support.”

OPINION ABOUT XL KEYSTONE PIPELINE

<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
63.5%	14%	22.5%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- 51.0% of Democrats opposed the pipeline and 71.5% of Republicans support the pipeline. 65.9% of independents also support the pipeline.
- 74.5% males support the pipeline and 16.9% females oppose it.
- 50.0% of those who oppose the pipeline say they were economically worse off than 5 years ago. 16.5% of those who support the line were better off economically.
- There is no relationship between the vote in the U.S. House and the pipeline.

13. **GLOBAL WARMING OCCURRING**

In response to a question phrased, “On a global basis, do you feel that global warming is occurring,” a majority (55%) replied “yes.”

GLOBAL WARMING OCCURRING



<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
55%	33.8%	11.2%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- 75.8% of Democrats feel global warming was occurring, while 50.0% of Republicans disagreed.
- There is no relationship between belief in global warming and education level, age, income, and gender.

14. MEDICAL MARIJUANA LEGISLATION

A question about medical marijuana phrased: “The 2011 Montana Legislature passed a law placing stricter limits regulating the marijuana industry. This law placed more restrictions on medical marijuana use, made it harder to obtain medical marijuana cards and prevented those growing medical marijuana from advertising or selling the drug. Do you support or oppose this legislation?” A majority (62.3%) of the respondents said “support.”

MEDICAL MARIJUANA LEGISLATION

<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
62.3%	28.3%	9.4%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- 69.1% of those who support a Republican gubernatorial candidate support the medical marijuana law. A plurality (41.1%) of those who support a Democratic candidate for Governor opposed the law.
- 41.9% of those who oppose the medical marijuana law will support the Democratic candidate in the U.S. House, while 38.1% who support the medical marijuana law will vote for the Republican candidate.
- 72.6% of those with both public and private insurance support the strict medical marijuana legislation, while 45.8% of those who do not have insurance oppose the new legislation.

- 68.4% of respondents who oppose the passage of the new marijuana law also oppose medical marijuana users ability to buy guns or ammunition. 48.1% of those supporting the law feel they should not have guns or ammunition.

15. MEDICAL MARIJUANA – GUNS

In reply to a question which asked the respondents if they, “believe that medical marijuana users should be allowed to buy guns or ammunition,” a majority (54.6%) of those polled said “no.”

MEDICAL MARIJUANA – GUNS

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
30.2%	54.6%	15.2%	100%

16. BUYING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

In answer to a question phrased, “This Christmas, when buying presents, compared to last year, how much do you think you will spend,” a majority (53.6%) of those interviewed said “about the same.”

BUYING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

<u>More</u>	<u>Less</u>	<u>About The Same</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
8%	34.5%	53.6%	3.9%	100%

Statistically Significant Relationships:

- A plurality (36.4%) of those most likely to spend more for Christmas are 18-28 years of age. A plurality (30.5%) of those less likely to spend more are 61+ years of age or more.
- A plurality (42.4%) of those most likely to buy more were in the \$75,001+ income category and those most likely to spend less earned \$45,000-\$75,000.
- 71.6% of those who will spend less, disapprove of Obama overall, while 67.4% of those who approve of President Obama overall will spend about the same.
- 71.8% of those who will spend less this year for Christmas think they are worse off than they were 5 years ago, while 36.4% of those who will spend more feel they are better off than they were 5 years ago.

17. BETTER OR WORSE OFF ECONOMICALLY THAN 5 YEARS AGO

A plurality (45.4%) of those polled say “worse off” when asked, “compared to five years ago, in economic terms, do you feel that you and/or your family are better off, worse off, or about the same.”

BETTER OR WORSE OFF ECONOMICALLY

<u>Better Off</u>	<u>Worse Off</u>	<u>About The Same</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
15%	45.4%	37.4%	2.2%	100%

18. NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND – MONTANA

When asked the query, “Based on what you know, do you believe that in Montana the “No Child Left Behind program has been a success or failure?” A plurality (46.1%) of those polled replied “failure.”

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND - MONTANA

<u>Success</u>	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Some of Both</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
16.5%	46.1%	14.8%	22.6%	100%