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Rauner, Pritzker Lead Primary Polls; In General, Rauner Trails Both Pritzker and Biss

In the most recent statewide version of the Simon Poll™, Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner leads challenger Jeanne Ives, a state representative from Wheaton, in the Republican Primary, by 20 points, 51 percent to 31 percent. Businessman JB Pritzker leads State Sen. Daniel Biss in the crowded Democratic primary by 10 points, 31 percent to 21 percent. Former University of Illinois Board of Trustees Chairman Chris Kennedy trails in third place, at 17 percent.

In the poll of 1,001 registered voters across Illinois, conducted February 19 through 25, the margin for error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. It is important to remember that among self-identified primary election voters, the margin is significantly wider: plus or minus 6 percentage points in the 259-voter sample of Republicans, and 4.5 percentage points in the sample of 472 Democrats.

In hypothetical general election matchups, asked of the full sample, Gov. Rauner trails both leading Democratic candidates by similar margins: Pritzker leads the governor 50 percent to 35 percent, while Biss leads Rauner 48 percent to 34 percent.

“It’s interesting that Pritzker’s and Biss’s margins over Rauner are essentially the same in The Simon Poll,” said Charlie Leonard, an Institute visiting professor involved in the polling. “One explanation may be that in the minds of voters—who may know little about either Biss or Pritzker—the decision may come down to ‘Rauner versus not-Rauner.’ If the election were held today, I’d rather be ‘not-Rauner.’”

Both Pritzker and Biss lead the governor by wide margins in the City of Chicago and the Chicago suburbs (see Table 9), while downstate, Rauner leads Pritzker by three points and leads Biss by eight points—keeping in mind the smaller sample sizes and wider margins for error in the geographic subgroups.

“It is three weeks to go until the March 20th Primary and major events could still move these numbers,” said John S. Jackson, another designer of this poll. “However, for all the money and attention these two races have garnered, the results so far fairly faithfully reflect the bedrock strength of these two parties in the state of Illinois, and this advantages the Democrats.”

Attorney General Primaries

In the Republican primary for Attorney General, Harvard Law graduate and Champaign-Urbana attorney Erika Harold, well known in Republican political circles, leads the lesser-known Gary Grasso, a DuPage County board member, 18 percent to 14 percent, with almost two-thirds (65 percent) undecided.

The Democratic primary for Attorney General is as crowded as the gubernatorial field, with eight candidates vying for the nomination. State Sen. Kwame Raoul of Chicago leads the pack with 22 percent of respondents, vs. former Gov. Pat Quinn, with 18 percent. None of the other candidates registers double-digit support, and the undecideds total 39 percent.

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The margin of error for the entire sample of 1,001 voters is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. This means that if we conducted the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances, the population proportion would be within plus or minus the reported margin of error for each subsample. For subsamples, the margin of error increases as the sample size goes down. The margin of error was not adjusted for design effects. Among self-identified primary election voters, the margin is plus or minus 6 percentage points in the 259-voter sample of Republicans, and 4.5 percentage points in the sample of 472 Democrats.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas using the random digit dialing method. The telephone sample was provided to Customer Research International by Scientific Telephone Samples. Potential interviewees were screened based on whether they were registered voters and with quotas based on area code and sex (<60% female). The sample obtained 51% male and 49% female respondents. Interviewers asked to speak to the youngest registered voter at home at the time of the call. Cell phone interviews accounted for 60 percent of the sample. A Spanish language version of the questionnaire and a Spanish-speaking interviewer were made available.

Field work was conducted from February 19 through February 25. No auto-dial or “robo” polling is included. Customer Research International reports no Illinois political clients. The survey was paid for with non-tax dollars from the Institute’s endowment fund. The data were not weighted in any way. Crosstabs for the referenced questions will be on the Institute’s polling web site, simonpoll.org.

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute is a member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research’s (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative. AAPOR works to encourage objective survey standards for practice and disclosure. Membership in the Transparency Initiative reflects a pledge to practice transparency in reporting survey-based findings.

The Institute’s polling data are also archived by four academic institutions for use by scholars and the public. The four open source data repositories are: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research (<http://ropercenter.cornell.edu/polls/>), The University of Michigan’s Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<http://openicpsr.org>), the University of North Carolina’s Odum Institute Dataverse Network (<http://arc.irss.unc.edu/dvn/dv/PSPPI>), and the Simon Institute Collection at OpenSIUC (<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ppi/>).

Note: The “Simon Poll™” and the “Southern Illinois Poll™” are the copyrighted trademarks of the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University. Use and publication of these polls is encouraged- but only with credit to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIU Carbondale.

Frequency Tables¹

Table 1: Which Primary

As you may know, primary elections in Illinois will be held this March. Thinking ahead, are you likely to vote in the (ROTATE: Republican/Democratic) primary, or will you probably not vote in the primary elections??

Response	Percent (n=1001)
Republican	26%
Democratic	47%
Probably not vote	17%
Other/Don't know	10%

Table 2: Governor's Race: Republican

If the Republican primary for governor was being held today, would you vote for (randomize candidates) Bruce Rauner, Jeanne Ives?

Response	Percent (n=259)
Bruce Rauner	51%
Jeanne Ives	31%
Somebody else	3%
Other/Don't know	15%

¹ Values are rounded and may not sum to 100%.

Table 3: Governor’s Race: Democrat

If the Democratic primary for governor was being held today, would you vote for (randomize candidates) J. B. Pritzker, Chris Kennedy, Daniel Biss, Terry Getz, Bob Daiber, Tio Hardiman, Robert Marshall?

Response	Percent (n=472)
J.B. Pritzker	31%
Daniel Biss	21%
Chris Kennedy	17%
Tio Hardiman	2%
Terry Getz	1%
Bob Daiber	1%
Robert Marshall	1%
Someone else	1%
Other/Don’t know	25%

Table 4: Attorney General’s Race: Republican

And if the Republican primary for Attorney General were being held today, would you vote for (randomize candidates) Erika Harold, Gary Grasso?

Response	Percent (n=259)
Erika Harold	18%
Gary Grasso	14%
Someone else	3%
Other/Don’t know	65%

Table 5: Attorney General's Race: Democrat

And if the Democratic primary for Attorney General were being held today, would you vote for (randomize candidates) Renato Mariotti, Nancy Rotering, Scott Drury, Pat Quinn, Sharon Fairley, Jesse Ruiz, Aaron Goldstein, Kwame Raoul?

Response	Percent (n=472)
Kwame Raoul	22%
Pat Quinn	18%
Nancy Rotering	5%
Jesse Ruiz	4%
Renato Mariotti	3%
Sharon Fairley	3%
Aaron Goldstein	3%
Scott Drury	2%
Someone else	1%
Other/Don't know	39%

Table 6: Head-to-Head: General Election for Governor

If the general election for Illinois governor were being held today, and the Republican candidate was Bruce Rauner and the Democratic candidate was J.B. Pritzker (rotate) who would you vote for?

Response	Percent (n=1001)
J.B. Pritzker	50%
Bruce Rauner	35%
Someone else	4%
Other/Don't know	11%

If the general election for Illinois governor were being held today, and the Republican candidate was Bruce Rauner and the Democratic candidate was Daniel Biss (rotate) who would you vote for?

Response	Percent (n=1001)
Daniel Biss	48%
Bruce Rauner	34%
Someone else	5%
Other/Don't know	13%

Demographic Crosstabs²

Table 7: Governor's Race: Republican by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Bruce Rauner	46%	51%	53%
Jeanne Ives	36%	35%	25%
Someone else	4%	3%	3%
Other/Don't know	14%	11%	19%

Table 8: Governor's Race: Democrat by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
J.B. Pritzker	30%	31%	33%
Daniel Biss	20%	23%	15%
Chris Kennedy	18%	19%	9%
Terry Getz	0%	1%	1%
Bob Daiber	0%	0%	5%
Tio Hardiman	3%	2%	0%
Robert Marshall	1%	1%	1%
Someone else	2%	0%	2%
Other/Don't know	25%	23%	33%

Table 9: Horse Race: General Election for Governor by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Bruce Rauner	23%	33%	45%
J.B. Pritzker	61%	50%	42%
Someone else	3%	6%	2%
Other/Don't know	14%	10%	11%

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Bruce Rauner	24%	30%	46%
Daniel Biss	58%	51%	38%
Someone else	4%	6%	4%
Other/Don't know	15%	13%	12%

² Note about different MOE

Table 10: Attorney General's Race: Republican by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Erika Harold	21%	16%	19%
Gary Grasso	14%	14%	13%
Someone else	4%	4%	3%
Other/Don't know	61%	66%	65%

Table 11: Attorney General's Race: Democrat by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Kwame Raoul	25%	24%	10%
Pat Quinn	15%	17%	25%
Nancy Rotering	7%	5%	3%
Jesse Ruiz	5%	4%	2%
Renato Mariotti	3%	3%	2%
Scott Drury	1%	2%	3%
Sharon Fairley	3%	2%	3%
Aaron Goldstein	2%	3%	1%
Someone else	2%	1%	0%
Other/Don't know	38%	37%	49%