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Illinois Voters Ask: Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Illinois registered voters are divided over whether they'd like to leave the state or stay, according to the latest poll from the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Specifically, the poll found that 47 percent say they would like to move and 51 percent prefer to remain in the state. Just under 2 percent said they didn't know.

The poll also showed 20 percent said it was extremely likely, somewhat likely or likely they would leave the state in the coming year. Nearly 80 percent said it was unlikely.

Taxes are the single biggest reason people want to leave, the weather is next, followed by government and jobs. Specifically, 27 percent cite taxes as the motive for departing, 16 percent say weather, 15 percent cite government and 13 percent name jobs and education.

"There are lots of reasons why people want to leave," said David Yepsen, director of the Institute. "Not much can be done about the weather but policy makers can do something about perceptions of the quality of services, tax competitiveness, tax fairness and educational and job opportunities."

"People often don't feel they get good value for their tax dollars and with frequent stories of public corruption or the large numbers of governmental units, it's no wonder why they feel that way," he said.

People under 50 are much more likely to want to leave than the rest of the population. Fifty-seven percent of millennials (under 35) want to leave the state while 58 percent of those between 35 and 50 want to leave. Only 29 percent of adults over age 66 want to leave Illinois

"Policy-makers argue over whether people are leaving or not," Yepsen said. "The most troubling finding in this poll is that so many younger people are thinking about it. That's the state's future."

The measurements are one indication of how unhappy many people are with the state. The poll also found a staggering 84 percent of Illinois voters said the state was headed in the wrong direction while only 10 percent said it was on the right track.

The poll of 1000 registered voters was taken Sept. 27-Oct 5 and has a margin for error of 3.1 percentage points.

The poll mirrors what the Gallup Poll found three years ago. Then 50 percent of Illinois residents said they would leave the state if they could. No other state ranked higher for would-be departures. Gallup also found in 2013 that 19 percent of residents said they were extremely, very or somewhat likely to move in the coming year.

The latest Simon Poll also showed Illinois voters think the state is in worse shape than the country or things closer to home. There were 59 percent who said the country is headed in the wrong direction while 43 percent said their local area was moving the wrong way.

On a brighter note, there are 52 percent who say the quality of life in their area ranges from excellent to good.

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The margin of error for the entire sample of 1,000 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 for 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.

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 quotas based on area code and sex (<60% female). 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 September 27-October 2. 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.

Simon Institute polling data are also archived by four academic institutions for use by scholars and the public. The four open source data repositories are: Cornell University’s 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 "Paul Simon Public Policy Institute Poll," 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

OUTLOOK

Right/Wrong Direction USA

Generally speaking, do you think things in our country are going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Right direction	32.9%
Wrong direction	58.6%
Don't know	8.5%

Right/Wrong Direction Illinois

And what about the direction of the State of Illinois? Generally speaking, are things in Illinois going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Right direction	9.9%
Wrong direction	83.7%
Don't know	6.4%

Right/Wrong Direction Local Area

And how are things going in your city or area of the state? In general, are things in your city or area going in the right direction, or in the wrong direction?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Right direction	49.5%
Wrong direction	42.7%
Don't know	7.8%

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

Quality of Life

And how are things going in your city or area of the state? In general, are things in your city or area going in the right direction, or in the wrong direction?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Excellent	15.3%
Good	37.1%
Average	31.3%
Not so good	10%
Poor	6.3%

ILLINOIS OUT-MIGRATION

Likelihood of Leaving State

And how are things going in your city or area of the state? In general, are things in your city or area going in the right direction, or in the wrong direction?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Likely	20.0%
<i>Extremely likely</i>	4.7%
<i>Very likely</i>	4.1%
<i>Somewhat likely</i>	11.2%
Not likely	79.3%
<i>Not very likely</i>	17.9%
<i>Not at all likely</i>	61.4%
Unsure/Other	0.7%

Desire to Leave State

Regardless of whether you will move, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move to another state, or would you rather remain in your current state?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Yes, move	47.2%
No, remain	51.2%
Other/Don't know	1.6%

Reason Intend/Want to Leave

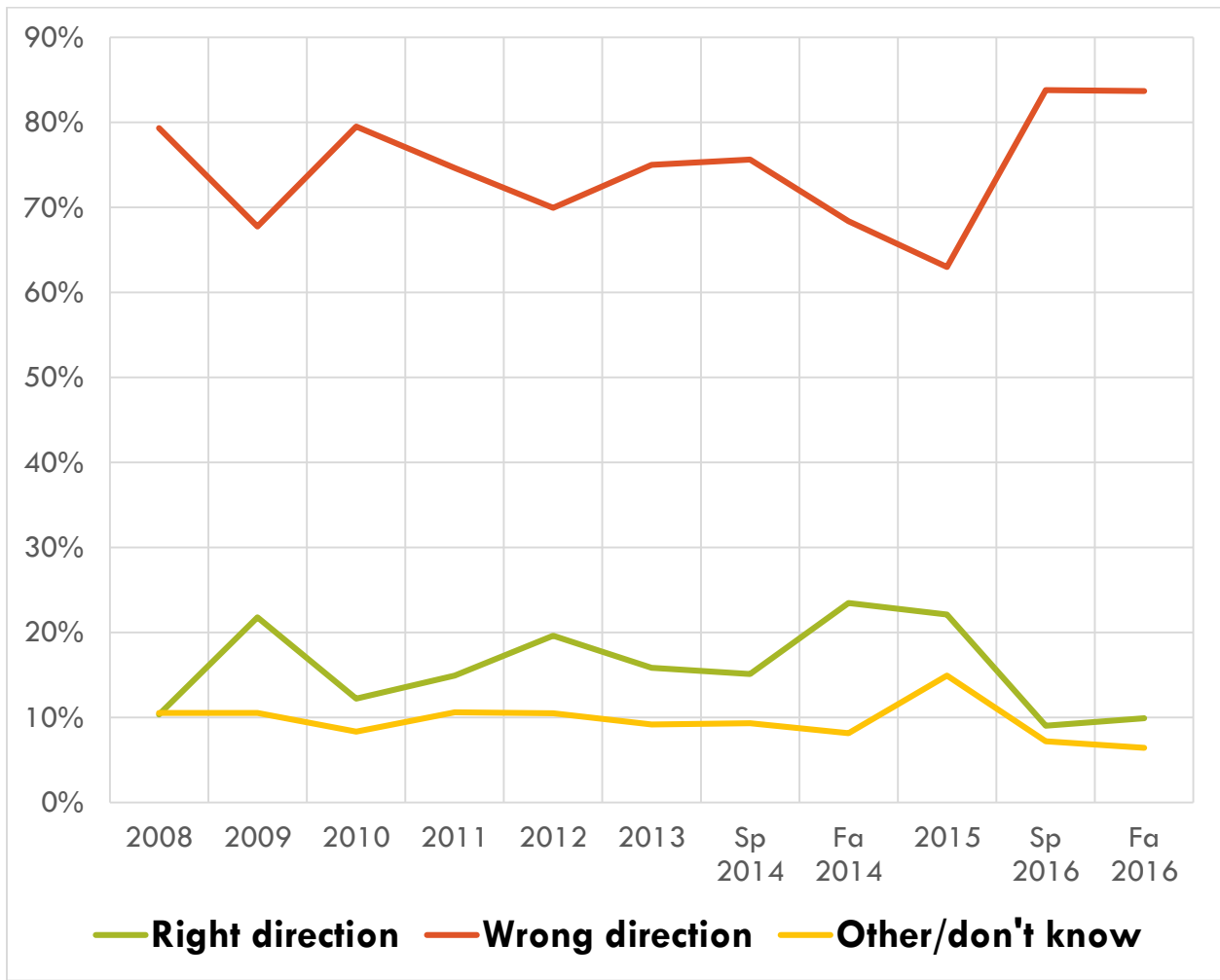
And what is the main reason you intend to move, or would like to move?

Response	Percent (n=454)*
Taxes	26.9%
Weather	16.3%
Government	15.0%
Job/Education	12.7%
Family	5.9%
Cost of Living/Economy	5.7%
Crime	5.3%
Housing	3.0%
Refused/DK	1.9%
Health	1.1%
<i>Other</i>	<i>6.1%</i>

*Only asked of people likely or desiring to leave the state.

Demographic Crosstab Tables²

Right/Wrong Direction Illinois: HISTORICAL TREND



² Values are rounded so may not sum to 100%.

Desire to Leave Illinois by AGE

