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Illinoisans Favor Legislative Redistricting Changes

Almost two thirds of Illinois voters support having an independent commission draw legislative district lines in the state, according to a poll by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University.

There were 64 percent who supported the change while 25 percent of Illinois voters were opposed. The sample of 1,000 registered voters was taken Feb. 15 – 20 and has a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points.

Supporters of a change argue the current system is gerrymandering because it allows state lawmakers to draw their own district lines and they argue it would be better for an independent group to do it. Supporters are currently circulating petitions to put a proposed redistricting change on the November ballot.

Opponents say the current system protects minority groups and that writing laws can't be left to unelected people.

The poll also found support for another proposed change to the state's redistricting system. There were 71 percent of registered voters who favored having the Illinois Supreme Court add a neutral tie-breaking vote to the redistricting panel created when lawmakers are deadlocked over drawing a plan. Only 19 percent oppose it, 10 percent are not sure.

Favorability towards legislative redistricting changes is consistent across all demographic and political groups.

"Illinoisans are in a mood to change things," said David Yepsen, director of the Institute. "In addition to redistricting changes, they also support restricting campaign contributions in judicial races and term limits for legislators."

*There were 72 percent who favored limits on campaign contributions. Voters were less supportive of providing public funding for judicial races (52 percent). Liberals are more likely to support judicial campaign finance reform than conservatives or moderates.

*Of all of the restructuring proposals asked about in this Simon Poll, the widest support was for term limits on state legislators. Seventy-eight percent of the sample favored term limits while

only 20 percent opposed the proposal and 3 percent didn't know. Term limits were most popular among Republicans.

*The poll also asked about support for right-to-work laws, one of Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner's proposals in his "turn around agenda." There are 61 percent of Illinois voters who said they would vote for this proposal or lean towards voting for it.

There were 33 percent who said they would oppose – or lean toward opposing – giving workers the right to opt out of labor union membership without risk to their job. Republicans are more favorable toward right-to-work laws, but a majority of Democrats also support Rauner's proposal.

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 result would be within plus or minus the reported margin for error for each subsample.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas using the random digit dialing method. 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 40 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 15-20. 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.

Simon Institute polling data are also archived by three academic institutions for use by scholars and the public. The three open source data repositories are: the University of Michigan's Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<http://openicpsr.org/repoEntity/list>), 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.*

Tables and Charts¹

LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

NEUTRAL PERSON

One proposal for improving the state legislative redistricting process would have the Illinois Supreme Court add a neutral person to the redistricting panel in case of a partisan tie. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent (n=1000)</u>
Favor	71%
Oppose	19%
Other/Don't know	10%

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION

Other people have proposed a constitutional amendment that would have legislative district maps created and recommended by a commission that is independent of the elected representatives. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent (n=1000)</u>
Favor	64%
Oppose	25%
Other/Don't know	11%

¹ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts²

JUDICIAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE

CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

A proposal to place limits on the amount that people could contribute to judicial campaigns, such as those for the Illinois Supreme Court. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Favor	72%
Oppose	23%
Other/Don't know	5%

Contribution Limits by IDEOLOGY

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Favor	80%	74%	66%
Oppose	18%	23%	29%
Other/Don't know	2%	4%	5%

PUBLIC FUNDING

A proposal to eliminate contributions to judicial races by providing public funding for all candidates who qualify for it. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Favor	52%
Oppose	43%
Other/Don't know	6%

Contribution Limits by IDEOLOGY

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Favor	62%	54%	40%
Oppose	32%	40%	57%
Other/Don't know	5%	6%	3%

² Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts³

TERM LIMITS

A proposal to limit state legislators to a total of eight years of service, whether in the House of Representatives, the State Senate, or a combination of the two. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Favor	78%
Oppose	20%
Other/Don't know	3%

Term Limits by PARTY

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Republican</u>
Favor	71%	78%	88%
Oppose	26%	19%	11%
Other/Don't know	4%	3%	1%

³ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts⁴

RIGHT-TO-WORK

Some states have passed right-to-work or open shop laws that say workers have the right to hold their jobs in a unionized workplace, whether they join the labor union or not. Would you vote for or against this proposal?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Vote for	57%
Lean for	4%
Lean against	3%
Vote against	30%
Undecided	4%
Other/Don't know	3%

Right-to-Work by PARTY

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Republican</u>
Vote for	52%	58%	65%
Lean for	3%	6%	4%
Lean against	3%	5%	1%
Vote against	36%	27%	23%
Undecided	4%	3%	4%
Other/Don't know	2%	2%	3%

⁴ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.