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Illinois Voters Split on Rauner

Illinois voters have become more polarized about the performance of Gov. Bruce Rauner in the past year, according to the latest poll by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University.

There are 50 percent who disapprove of the job the Republican chief executive is doing while 41 percent approve. The rest were undecided.

That is a marked change of opinion in a year. After only a few months in office in 2015, there were 37 percent who approved and 31 percent who disapproved while 32 percent still didn't know.

In other words, both his approval rating and his disapproval ratings have increased because fewer people have no opinion.

The latest poll of 1,000 registered voters was taken Feb. 15-20 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Rauner's worst ratings come from Chicago, where 34 percent approve and 58 percent disapprove. Opinion is more evenly divided in the suburbs, where 43 percent approve and 47 percent disapprove. Downstate, the numbers are similar: 43 percent approve and 49 percent disapprove.

"Public opinion in Illinois is deeply divided over the Governor's job performance and deeply divided on a variety of issues that are challenging the state and state government to meet the needs and expectations of the public," observed John S. Jackson, a visiting professor at the Institute and one of the designers of the poll.

The poll also found:

- * Illinois voters - an overwhelming 84 percent - say the state is on the "wrong track." Only 9 percent say things are headed in the right direction.

- * Illinois voters felt only slightly better about the direction of the country: 63 percent said the nation was going in the wrong direction and 29 percent chose “right direction.”
- * Voters are much more positive about their city or local area. Half (50 percent) said things were moving in the right direction and only 42 percent chose wrong direction for their local city or area.
- * Asked about the overall quality of life in their local area, 51 percent rated their quality of life as “excellent” or “good.” Only 16 percent rated it as “not so good” or “poor” and 32 percent chose “average.”

Since last July, Illinois has been caught in a budget stalemate between the governor and the Democratic majority controlling the General Assembly. There are few signs of the impasse breaking soon.

The poll found that about a third, 32 percent, said they or “someone in [their] immediate family has been affected by the Illinois budget stalemate,” while 62 percent of voters didn’t feel they had been affected.

“One reason this stalemate goes on is many simply don’t feel it is effecting their lives,” said David Yepsen, director of the Institute. “Those people aren’t likely to be pressuring policy-makers to do something to break the logjam.”

“Many programs that are funded are being paid for with loans or one-time money and that can’t go on forever,” Yepsen said.

Those who said they or their families had been directly affected were asked in what specific way they had been impacted:

- * 27 percent said they had lost a job or their job had been threatened by the budget impasse.
- * 27 percent said they had been impacted by cuts in social services.
- * Another 15 percent said they had been affected by cuts to higher education or cuts to the MAP grant program for low income students.
- * 10 percent said they had been hit by child care costs or loss of services and another 10 percent said the local economy had been negatively impacted by Illinois’ budget problems.

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Note: On Tuesday, March 8, 2016 the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute will present results and analysis, of these and other survey questions from the latest Simon Poll of Illinois voters. Topics include the Illinois presidential primary; public opinion on the direction of the nation and state; the state budget and taxes; government reform; treatment of veterans; and other social issues. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the program begins at 7 p.m. at the Varsity Center for the Arts, 418 S. Illinois Ave., Carbondale, IL. The event is free and open to the public, but registration is required by noon on Friday, March 4th to Leslie Brock at 618-536-7751.

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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 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

RAUNER APPROVAL

I would like for you to tell me how Governor Bruce Rauner is doing his job. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Governor Rauner is doing?

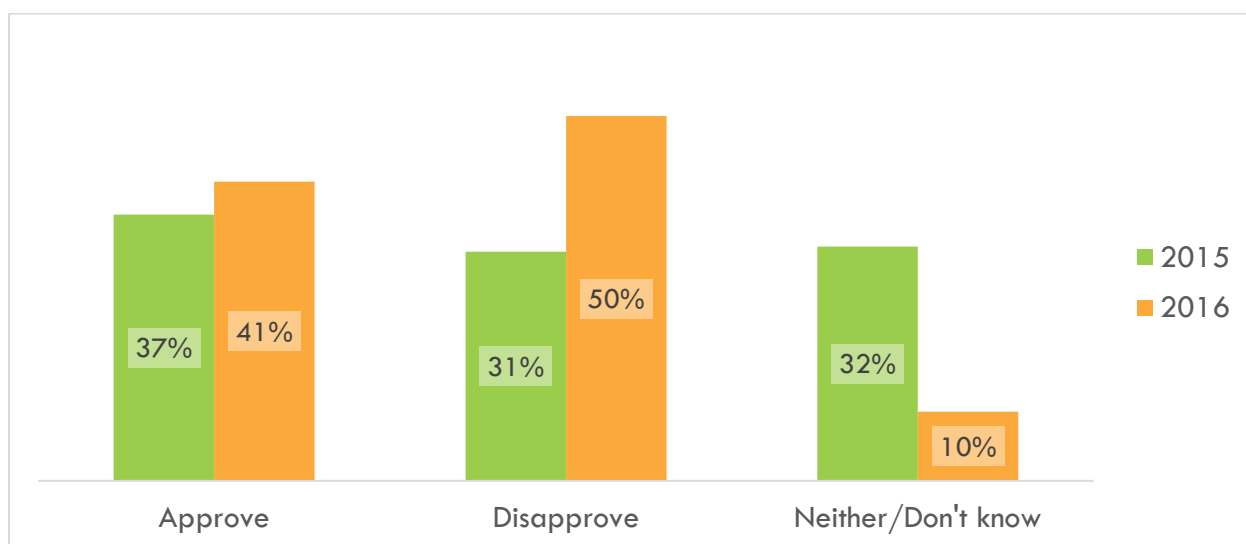
Response	Percent (n=1000)
Approve	41%
Neither	3%
Disapprove	50%
Don't know	7%

APPROVAL by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Approve	34%	43%	43%
Neither	3%	3%	2%
Disapprove	58%	47%	49%
Don't know	6%	7%	7%

APPROVAL by YEAR

	2015	2016
Approve	37%	41%
Disapprove	31%	50%
Neither/Don't know	32%	10%



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

Tables and Charts²

RIGHT DIRECTION, 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	29%
Wrong direction	63%
Don't know	8%

ILLINOIS

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

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Right direction	9%
Wrong direction	84%
Don't know	7%

LOCAL AREA

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

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Right direction	50%
Wrong direction	42%
Don't know	8%

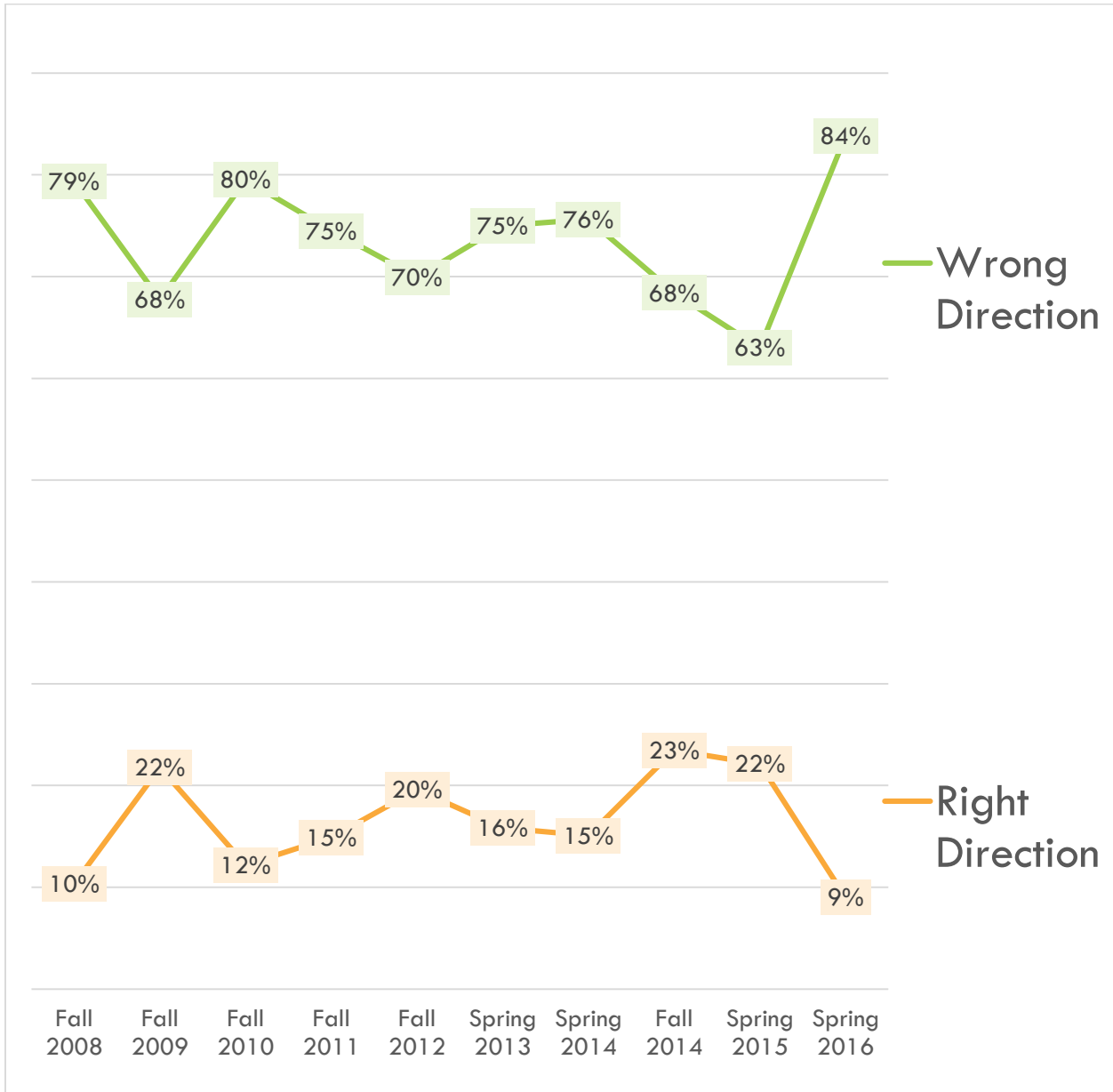
² Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts³

RIGHT DIRECTION, WRONG DIRECTION

ILLINOIS by YEAR

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
Wrong Direction	79%	68%	80%	75%	70%	75%	76%	68%	63%	84%
Right Direction	10%	22%	12%	15%	20%	16%	15%	23%	22%	9%



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

Tables and Charts⁴

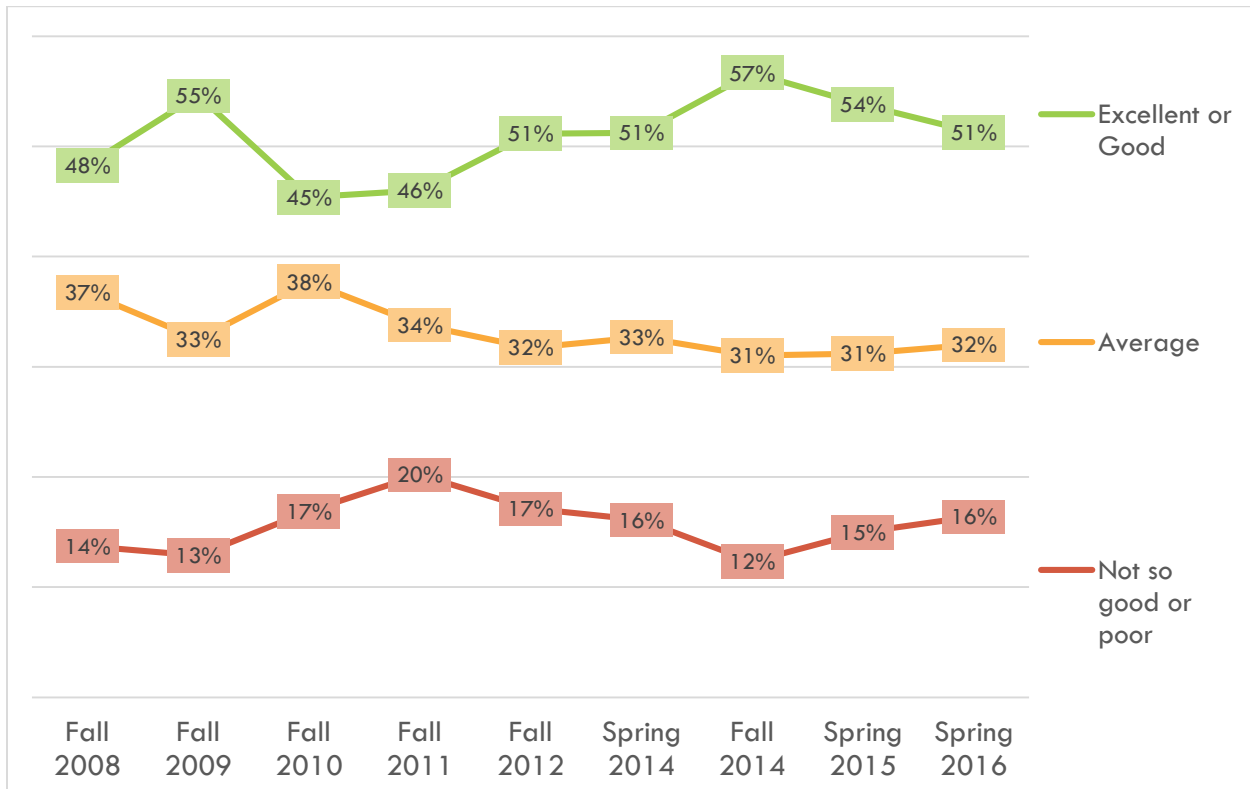
QUALITY OF LIFE

Regardless of what you think about how things are going in your part of the state, please tell me what you think about the overall quality of life in your area. Taking everything into account, would you say the overall quality of life in your area is excellent, good, average, not so good, or poor?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Excellent OR good	51%
Average	32%
Not so good OR poor	16%

QUALITY OF LIFE by YEAR

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
Excellent or Good	48%	55%	45%	46%	51%	51%	57%	54%	51%
Average	37%	33%	38%	34%	32%	33%	31%	31%	32%
Not so good or poor	14%	13%	17%	20%	17%	16%	12%	15%	16%



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

Tables and Charts⁵

EFFECTS OF BUDGET IMPASSE

Have you or someone in your immediate family been affected by the Illinois budget stalemate?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Yes	32%
No	62%
Other/don't know	6%

If yes, how has your family been impacted by the lack of a state budget?

Response	Percent (n=324)
Child care costs/services	10%
City government cuts	7%
Higher education (including MAP grants)	15%
Infrastructure decline (e.g. roads)	2%
Job lost/threatened	27%
Local economy	10%
Real estate market or housing (affordability, quality)	4%
Social services (generally)	27%
Other	12%
Don't know/no answer	12%

Note: answer choices were not offered. Answers were categorized by the interviewer.

⁵ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.