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Paul Simon Public Policy Institute inaugurates the “Southern Illinois Poll.”

Registered voters in Southern Illinois are in a bad mood, according to the first “Southern Illinois Poll” conducted by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute.

“They think the state and nation are headed in the wrong direction and they don’t like the new health care bill or the jobs the president, the governor or Congress are doing,” said David Yepsen, the director of the Institute. “They appear to be ready to again give their traditional margins to the Republicans for governor and U.S. senator in the November elections.”

On the positive side, people in Southern Illinois are more upbeat about things closer to home. “Two thirds think the quality of life in the region is average to excellent and that things are marginally headed in the right direction,” he said. “And despite their anger at Washington, they have favorable attitudes toward their local members of Congress, whether a Democrat or Republican.”

The poll of 401 registered voters in the area was taken April 5 to 13 and has a margin of error of 4.9 percent. The poll was conducted for the Institute by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas. It reports no Illinois political figures as clients and was paid with non-tax dollars from the Institute’s endowment fund.

Specifically, the poll found:

- There are 52.6 percent who believe the recently passed national health insurance reform plan is a bad thing. Only 26.7 percent think it is a good thing and 20.7 percent don’t know.
- People in southern Illinois think the country is on the wrong track and that the state of Illinois is in even worse shape. There are 69.8 percent who think the country is headed in the wrong direction and only 22.7 percent who believe it’s going in the right direction. There are 85.3 percent who think the state is headed in the wrong direction and only 6.5 percent who say it’s headed on the right path.

- Locally, registered voters are more upbeat but they still have mixed feelings about the region. There are 47.6 percent who think their city or area of the state is headed in the right direction while 41.9 percent think it's headed in the wrong direction.
- Republican gubernatorial nominee Bill Brady holds a wide lead over incumbent Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn among southern Illinois voters. Brady captures 48.6 percent of the vote while Quinn gets 25.4 percent. Green Party candidate Rich Whitney of Carbondale garners 5.2 percent. There are 19.2 percent who are undecided and 1.5 percent for another candidate.
- Republican U.S. Senate nominee Mark Kirk holds a similarly-comfortable lead over Democratic candidate Alexi Giannoulias. Kirk gets 42.1 percent; Giannoulias has 24.7 percent and Green Party candidate LeAlan Jones captures 4.5 percent. There are 25.7 percent who are undecided and 3 percent for another candidate.
- Quinn and President Barack Obama get poor job approval ratings from Southern Illinoisans. There are 59.6 percent who disapprove of Obama's work while 36.7 percent approve. Quinn has a disapproval rating of 54.6 percent and wins approval from 30.9 percent.
- Illinois House Speaker Mike Madigan gets mixed grades. There are 38.7 percent who disapprove; 23.4 percent who approve and 37.9 percent who don't know how they feel about his performance.
- While Congress gets low-marks, the two local members from the region fare better. There are 54.4 percent of Southern Illinoisans who have chilly attitudes toward Congress. Only 19.2 percent say they have warm opinions about the institution. But Democratic Congressman Jerry Costello wins approval from 45.1 percent of the registered voters with 24.2 percent disapproving. There are 30.7 percent who don't know. Republican Congressman John Shimkus wins approval from 41.9 percent and disapproval from 15.5 percent, while 42.6 percent don't know.
- Politically, southern Illinois leans to the right. There are 54.9 percent who say they are conservatives, 24.2 percent who call themselves moderates and 17.7 percent who say they are liberals. Also, there are 47.4 percent who say they are Republicans or independents who lean Republican and 33.9 percent who say they are Democrats or Democrats who lean independent.

The poll is the first conducted by the Institute that focuses exclusively on southern Illinois. Other results will be released this week and next.

"We are excited about the inauguration of a local poll," said Yepsen. "The Institute has done statewide surveys for the past two years but this is the first time it has done one focused on the 18 counties in the region."

The sample of registered voters came from Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Saline, Union, Washington, White and Williamson Counties.

"We hope to do both state and local surveys on a regular basis," Yepsen said. "It's appropriate for Southern Illinois University Carbondale to be the home for solid public opinion research about the area."

Political scientist Dr. Charles Leonard directs the poll for the Institute. He is assisted by help from Drs. John Jackson and J. Tobin Grant, also political scientists.

"Not only do the surveys give policy-makers and leaders guidance into the attitudes of people locally, but the preparation, execution and reporting of the data gives faculty and students experience in working with survey research," Yepsen said. Faculty members and graduate students can also use the poll to ask questions related to their research in a variety of fields.

"We want these polls to be fiercely independent and free of political bias or taint. We seek to use the best methodologies we can find and want no spin or slant to our questions or the reporting of the results. We want facts and data that will be open for all to see," Yepsen said.

He said, "over time, these surveys will enable us to chart the evolution of public opinion in the region and compare it to developments statewide and nationally. The information will be of use to researchers for a long time to come."

Note: The "Simon Poll" and "Southern Illinois Poll" are applying to be the copyrighted trademarks of the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University. Use or publication of these polls is encouraged - but only with credit to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIUC.



**Paul Simon Public Policy Institute
Southern Illinois University Carbondale**

Poll Results of Registered Voters in Southern Illinois

Conducted April 5-13, 2010

Released April 21, 2010

1. Generally speaking, do you think the health insurance reform law that was recently passed is a good thing or a bad thing?

Good thing	26.7%
Bad thing	52.6%
Other/Don't know	20.7%

2. The election for Governor of Illinois...if the election were held today, would you vote for...

Quinn	25.4%
Brady	48.6%
Whitney	5.2%
Someone else	1.5%
Other/Don't know	19.2%

3. Next, the election for the US Senator from Illinois...if the election were held today, would you vote for...

Giannoulias	24.7%
Kirk	42.1%
Jones	4.5%
Someone else	3.0%
Other/Don't know	25.7%

4. President Barack Obama. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job President Obama is doing?

Strongly approve	17.5%
Somewhat approve	19.2%
Somewhat disapprove	14.0%
Strongly disapprove	45.6%
Other/Don't know	3.7%

5. Illinois Governor Pat Quinn. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Governor Quinn is doing?
- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Strongly approve | 3.7% |
| Somewhat approve | 27.2% |
| Somewhat disapprove | 25.2% |
| Strongly disapprove | 29.4% |
| Other/Don't know | 14.5% |
6. US Congressman Jerry Costello. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Jerry Costello is doing?
- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Strongly approve | 11.2% |
| Somewhat approve | 33.9% |
| Somewhat disapprove | 12.5% |
| Strongly disapprove | 11.7% |
| Other/Don't know | 30.7% |
7. US Congressman John Shimkus. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job John Shimkus is doing?
- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Strongly approve | 14.0% |
| Somewhat approve | 27.9% |
| Somewhat disapprove | 8.5% |
| Strongly disapprove | 7.0% |
| Other/Don't know | 42.6% |
8. Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives Mike Madigan? Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Speaker Madigan is doing?
- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Strongly approve | 3.2% |
| Somewhat approve | 20.2% |
| Somewhat disapprove | 15.5% |
| Strongly disapprove | 23.2% |
| Other/Don't know | 37.9% |
9. We would like to know what you think about the direction of the United States of America. 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?
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| Right direction | 22.7% |
| Wrong direction | 69.8% |
| Other/Don't know | 7.5% |
10. 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?
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| Right direction | 6.5% |
| Wrong direction | 85.3% |
| Other/Don't know | 8.2% |

11. 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?

Right direction	47.6%
Wrong direction	41.9%
Other/Don't know	10.5%

12. Regardless of what you think about the direction in your part of the state, tell us 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	4.5%
Good	31.9%
Average	35.9%
Not so good	18.5%
Poor	9.2%

13. Generally speaking, in politics today, do you consider yourself:

Very liberal	3.5%
Somewhat liberal	14.2%
Moderate	24.2%
Somewhat conservative	35.2%
Very conservative	19.7%
Other/Don't know	3.2%

14. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Strong Democratic	14.2%
Not-strong Democratic	14.5%
Independent-Democratic	5.2%
Pure Independent	7.7%
Independent-Republican	14.5%
Not-strong Republican	16.2%
Strong Republican	16.7%
Other/Don't know	11.0%

15. Respondents were asked to rate a number of groups and institutions using a "feeling thermometer." Interviewers' instructions said, in part, "Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the group or organization. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward them. Rating the group at the midpoint, the 50 degree mark, means you don't feel particularly warm or cool." Their percentages of "cool," "neutral," and "warm" ratings for the US Congress are below:

Percent responding under 50 "cool"	54.4%
Percent responding 50 "neutral"	27.4%
Percent responding over 50 "warm"	19.2%

*Some columns do not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

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