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## **Half of Southern Illinoisans Support New Bobcat Hunting/Trapping Law**

Registered voters in southern Illinois show support for a new law allowing bobcat hunting and trapping in Illinois, according to results from a recent Southern Illinois Poll conducted by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

There are almost 54 percent of voters who stated they either strongly favored or somewhat favored this new law. Less than one-third (31.6 percent) stated they either somewhat opposed or strongly opposed the new law. Three-in-twenty (14.5 percent) did not know or answered otherwise.

Bobcat hunting was banned in 1972 and bobcats were a threatened species in Illinois from 1977 to 1999.

Results vary a bit by political party affiliation. The strongest support for the new law comes from Independents with 62.9 percent favoring it, 18.6 percent opposing, and 18.5 percent saying they don't know.

Among southern Illinois Republicans, 61.7 percent favor the new law, 27.1 percent oppose and 11.3 percent say they don't know. The lowest level of support comes from southern Illinois Democrats – who are nearly split - with 43.3 percent favoring the law, 41.5 percent opposing it, and 15.2 percent responding they did not know or otherwise.

“There is majority support in southern Illinois where hunting is a vibrant part of recreation and culture more so than some other parts of the state,” said Delio Calzolari, associate director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. “Some opposition may be related to the 40-year ban or sensitivity that bobcats were once a threatened species in Illinois. Even among voters who identify themselves as Democrats or liberals, voters support the new law in greater number than they oppose it.”

Support for the new law drops with increased education level. Three-fifths (58.3 percent) of voters identifying themselves as not having any college education strongly favored or somewhat

avored the new law, and only a quarter of these voters (25.9 percent) somewhat opposed or strongly opposed the new law.

Among voters identifying themselves as having at least a college degree only (49.5 percent) strongly favor or somewhat favor the new law and 40.1 percent oppose.

Public Act 99-0033, signed into law by Governor Rauner in July, goes into effect on January 1, 2016 and amends the Wildlife Code to permit and regulate bobcat hunting and trapping in the Land of Lincoln for the first time in 40 years. The law limits hunters to one bobcat per permit per season and stipulates that the hunting and trapping be non-detrimental to bobcats continuing to exist in the wild, but the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is not required to limit the number of permits issued each season. The fee for permits may not exceed \$5 per permit. Governor Pat Quinn vetoed a similar bill before he left office.

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The poll of 401 registered voters covered the 18 southernmost counties in Illinois: Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Saline, Union, Washington, White, and Williamson.

The sample has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that if we conducted the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances, the result would be within plus or minus 4.9 percentage points from the results obtained here.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas. Cell phone interviews accounted for 30 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 22 – 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. Crosstabs for the referenced questions will be on the Institute’s polling web site, [simonpoll.org](http://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 (OpenICPSR; <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/>).

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## Frequency Tables

### Bobcat Hunting in Illinois

*A new law permits bobcat hunting and trapping in Illinois, after it was banned for over 40 years. Do you favor or oppose the legalization of bobcat hunting and trapping in Illinois?*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent (n=401)</b>
Strongly favor	27.2%
Somewhat favor	26.7%
Somewhat oppose	11.2%
Strongly oppose	20.4%
Other/don't know	14.5%

### Views on Bobcat Hunting by Political Party

<b>Response</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>Republican</b>	<b>Independent</b>
Strongly favor	24.4%	29.6%	29.6%
Somewhat favor	18.9%	32.1%	33.3%
Somewhat oppose	12.2%	12.6%	5.6%
Strongly oppose	29.3%	14.5%	13.0%
Other/don't know	15.2%	11.3%	18.5%

### Views on Bobcat Hunting by Education

<b>Response</b>	<b>No College</b>	<b>Some College</b>	<b>Associate's Degree or More</b>
Strongly favor	33.1%	26.3%	23.3%
Somewhat favor	25.2%	29.3%	26.2%
Somewhat oppose	9.4%	7.1%	15.1%
Strongly oppose	16.5%	18.2%	25.0%
Other/don't know	15.7%	19.2%	10.5%