

League of Women Voters Statewide Survey of Louisiana Households

The League of Women Voters sponsored an automated interactive voice response (IVR) telephone survey of households in Louisiana. The random sample of household phone numbers was provided by Survey Sample International (SSI). The survey was conducted on May 25th and May 26th, 2016 and resulted in 762 respondents completing the survey. This size of sample yields a +/- 3.5% margin of error at a 95% level of confidence. The sample matches the parameters of gender, age, and population in congressional districts according to US census data.¹

The survey was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Edward Chervenak, Director of the UNO Survey Research Center, and analyzed questions about whether certain factors like flexibility in voting sites, election day registration, use of technology, and information levels would affect a respondent's decision to turnout to vote.

This IVR survey is a departure from traditional live telephone polling. IVR surveys reduce interviewer bias to zero by eliminating the live human interviewer. Every survey respondent hears the same question read the same way. Independent analysis from publications such as The Wall Street Journal, National Council on Public Polls, and The Pew Research Center all show automated, recorded voice surveys used to record candidate preferences have an accuracy level comparable to live interviewer surveys. One issue to be concerned with IVR is that only landlines are called. Calling cellphones with IVR technology is prohibited under federal law. This is why it is important to ask questions about the respondents' age and gender to properly post-weight the sample to the population parameters found in census data.

¹ Population figures used were from 2014. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2014. <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>

More Likely to Vote at Any Polling Site in State?

	Total	Males	Females	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	46	44	46	44	48	49	37
No	30	29	31	29	30	29	33
DK	24	27	23	28	21	22	31
(N)	762	376	386	171	258	198	135

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	46	52	50	41	47	45	39
No	30	34	32	29	20	29	37
DK	24	14	18	30	34	25	24
(N)	762	128	125	129	127	126	128

Respondents were first asked if they would be more likely to vote if they could cast a ballot at any polling site in the state. A plurality of people answered in the affirmative. One in three respondents said they would not be more likely to vote if they could vote at any polling site in the state with another one-quarter saying they were not sure.

There was little variation between men and women on responding positively to this question although men were slightly more ambivalent about this question than were women. When it came to the age categories, the oldest age group was least likely to claim that the opportunity to vote anywhere in the state would influence their turnout. One-third said it would not boost their chances of voting and three in ten were unable to say one way or another how flexibility in polling location would affect their turnout.

A majority of respondents in the first and second congressional districts stated they would be more likely to turnout if they could vote at any polling site in the

state while a plurality in the third, fourth, and fifth districts agreed with this position. Respondents in the sixth district were split on this question.

More Likely to Vote if Register on Election Day?

	Total	Males	Females	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	47	46	48	56	51	43	34
No	41	45	36	36	38	42	50
DK	12	9	16	8	11	15	16
(N)	762	376	386	171	258	198	135

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	47	52	53	44	46	50	37
No	41	40	32	41	42	39	50
DK	12	8	15	15	12	11	13
(N)	762	128	125	129	127	126	128

One reform that is often advocated to boost voter turnout rates is to allow people to register to vote on the same day the election is held.² We asked residents if they would be more likely to vote if they could register on the day of the election. The survey indicates that 47 percent of respondents would be more likely to vote if they could register on the same day they voted. However, another 41 percent thought that same-day registration would not result in them being more likely to vote.

Men and women were basically in agreement that same-day registration would make them more likely to vote. However, men were more negative than women

² Thirteen states and the District of Columbia presently offer same-day registration. <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-registration.aspx>

on this question, while women were more likely than men to not express an opinion on this question.

Attitudes on the relationship between same day registration and voter turnout was a function of age. As age increased, the percentage of respondents saying they would be more likely to vote decreased. Not surprisingly, younger people were 1.5 times more likely than the oldest respondents to say that same-day registration would make them more likely to vote. In fact, those age 65 and older were the only age category to report they were not more likely to vote if they could register on election day.

There was some disparity across congressional districts with district six being the outlier. A majority of respondents in that district said that they would not be more likely to vote if Louisiana had same day registration. That was in contrast to the opinion expressed in districts one, two and five, where 50 percent or more said same day registration would make them more likely to vote.

More Likely to Vote if Vote by Computer or Smartphone?

	Total	Males	Females	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	42	43	41	47	47	44	24
No	51	53	49	48	49	46	66
DK	7	5	10	5	5	10	10
(N)	762	376	386	171	258	198	135

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	42	47	50	52	48	30	25
No	51	50	38	43	48	61	64
DK	7	3	11	5	4	9	12
(N)	762	128	125	129	127	126	128

The overall opinion on the use of technology for increasing the likelihood of voting was negative. Half of all respondents said using a computer or smartphone would not make them more likely to vote. Another 42 percent they would be more likely to vote if they could digitally cast a ballot. Only 7 percent did not have an opinion on this question.

There were no significant differences between men and women on using technology to increase turnout. Surprisingly, the youngest age group was split on the question of using technology to cast a ballot. The 50 to 64 age group was also evenly divided. The only respondents to express that they were more likely to vote if they could do so via digital technology were age 30 to 49. Not unexpectedly, the oldest respondents were the most negative on this question as only one-quarter answered that they would be more likely to vote if they could do so by computer or smartphone, while two-thirds rejected the idea of using technology to increase their likelihood of voting.

There was a split across congressional districts on the use of technology to boost turnout. Respondents in districts two and three were more likely to approve of the idea of employing technology to vote. Respondents in district four were evenly split on their opinion about using technology to increase turnout. The respondents in districts five and six were most negative about the connection between digital equipment and increased voter turnout. In fact, respondents in district six were nearly 3 times more likely to respond negatively than positively on the question of using smartphone and computers to enhance turnout in elections.

More Likely to Vote if Voter if Had More Information about Candidates?

	Total	Males	Females	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	65	62	68	77	62	61	63
No	26	30	22	16	29	30	25
DK	9	8	10	7	9	10	12
(N)	762	376	386	171	258	198	135

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	65	57	72	70	66	68	57
No	26	28	22	20	29	23	32
DK	9	15	6	10	5	9	11
(N)	762	128	125	129	127	126	128

Respondents reacted positively to the idea of having more information about the candidates as a means to improving their likelihood of voting. Two-thirds thought that having more information about candidates would increase their prospects of voting, while one-quarter said it would not. Women were slightly more agreeable than men to the notion that more information would raise their chances of voting, while men were more likely than women to report that more information would not translate into higher electoral participation. Young people were the most positive age group on the link between information and turnout. While the older age categories were not quite as positive, they were all twice as likely to say that more information would lead them to boost their turnout rate.

Although there is some variation across congressional districts, a majority of respondents in all the districts said they would be more likely to vote if they had more information about the candidates. This sentiment was held most strongly in the second, third, and fifth districts

More Likely to Vote if Vote if There Were Fewer Elections?

	Total	Males	Females	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	36	39	33	43	34	33	37
No	47	49	44	32	55	51	43
DK	17	11	23	25	11	16	20
(N)	762	376	386	171	258	198	135

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	36	32	30	34	47	34	39
No	47	52	50	47	40	48	44
DK	17	16	20	19	13	18	17
(N)	762	128	125	129	127	126	128

Louisiana is categorized as a Jacksonian state. That means the state holds frequent elections for almost every official position in order to give the average citizen a large measure control over government. It appears that Louisiana residents have taken that principle to heart as they are more likely to say that holding fewer elections will not result in higher rates of turnout. Nearly one-half of respondents disagree with the idea that fewer elections will lead to enhanced electoral participation. Men are more likely than women to say that they would vote more if there were fewer elections. At the same time, a greater percentage of men than women say that fewer elections would not lead them to be more likely to vote. These conflicting findings are a result of women being twice as likely as men to not express an opinion on this question. Young people respond that they are more likely to vote if the state held fewer elections. However, one-fourth of them do not have an opinion on this matter. The other three age categories do not believe that holding fewer elections will make them more likely to vote. That sentiment is expressed by a majority among those age 30 to 64. Those respondents age 65 and older are relatively split on this question, with one-in-five not sure where they stand.

The fourth congressional district is the relative outlier on the question of whether fewer elections would result in a greater likelihood of voting. It is the only district where a near majority of respondents believe that having fewer elections would enhance voter turnout. Conversely, a majority of residents in districts one and two don't think that fewer elections would result in them increasing their chances of voting. Residents in district six are almost equally divided on the question.

Are You Registered to Vote?

	Total	Males	Females	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	93	93	93	85	94	97	96
No	3	3	4	5	5	1	2
DK	3	4	3	10	1	2	2
<i>(N)</i>	762	376	386	171	258	198	135

	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	93	95	94	91	94	95	92
No	3	4	3	3	5	1	4
DK	3	1	3	6	1	4	4
<i>(N)</i>	762	128	125	129	127	126	128

Over 9 in 10 respondents reported that were registered to vote. That percentage held across gender and congressional districts. There was, however, some variation across age as less than 90 percent of young people reported being registered to vote. They were also the age group that was most unsure of their status.

Quite possibly there is some social acceptability effects taking place on this question. According to the US Census, the size of the voting age population (VAP)

in Louisiana was 3.5 million in 2014. Records from the Louisiana Secretary of State from 2014 show that there were 2.9 million registered voters in the state. That equates into 82 percent of the state’s VAP being registered. The 10 percent inflation rate found in the survey results should be expected given that being registered to vote is a social norm in a democratic society. Given that people feel pressure to conform to that norm, it should come as no surprise that the self-reported registration rate is higher than it actually is.³

		Yes	No	DK	Total
		%	%	%	%
Would You be More Likely to Vote if You Could Register on Election Day?	Yes	46	58	65	47
	No	42	35	19	41
	DK	12	8	15	12
	(N)	710	26	26	762

We examined to see whether the respondent’s registration status influenced their opinion towards same-day registration as a means of enhancing voter turnout. A plurality of those who self-reported that they were registered to vote responded affirmatively to the notion that same-day registration would make them more likely to vote. However, they were almost as likely to say it would not increase their chances of voting. One-in eight were not sure.

As for the respondents who said they were not registered to vote, nearly 6 in 10 said that same-day registration would make them more likely to vote while one-third reported that it would not. Two-thirds of those who are unsure of their registration status replied that same-day registration would improve their chances of turnout out to vote. One-in-five of these respondents don’t think it will make them more likely to vote.

³ Given that the 2014 population data is the most recent records that are available, we use these figures in our calculation. When we use the 2014 registration data from the Secretary of State’s website, we obtain the 82 percent registration rate for that year’s VAP. The voter registration data from May 2016 indicates there are 2.93 million registered voters. If we use this figure in our computation, we find that 83 percent of the 2014 VAP is registered to vote.

Age

	Frequency	Percent
18 to 29	171	22.5
30 to 49	259	34.0
50 to 64	198	26.0
65+	134	17.6
Total	762	100.0

Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	376	49.4
Female	386	50.6
Total	762	100.0

Congressional District

	Frequency	Percent
District 1	128	16.8
District 2	125	16.4
District 3	129	16.9
District 4	127	16.6
District 5	126	16.5
District 6	128	16.8
Total	762	100.0

SURVEY SCRIPT

“This is a confidential League of Women Voters survey of Louisiana households. It will take less than 90 seconds. Here is the first question.”

Q1). Would you be more likely to vote if you could vote at any polling site in the state?

Press 1 for yes Press 2 for no Press 3 for don't know

Q2). Would you be more likely to vote if you could register to vote on Election Day?

Press 1 for yes Press 2 for no Press 3 for don't know

Q3). Would you be more likely to vote if you could vote using a computer or smart phone?

Press 1 for yes Press 2 for no Press 3 for don't know

Q4). Would you be more likely to vote if you had more information about the candidates?

Press 1 for yes Press 2 for no Press 3 for don't know

Q5). Would you be more likely to vote if there were fewer elections?

Press 1 for yes Press 2 for no Press 3 for don't know

Q6). Are you registered to vote?

Press 1 for yes Press 2 for no Press 3 for don't know

Q7). What is your age?

18-29 Press 1 30-49 Press 2 50-64 Press 3 65 or older Press 4

Q8). Are you male or female?

Male Press 1 Female Press 2

Thank you, this is the end of the survey.