

Press Release

February 2011 Winthrop Poll

Results of Winthrop Poll Taken In 11 Southern States Are In

Huckabee First Choice Among Probable GOP Primary Voters

Independents Most Dissatisfied With Track Country is On

Across-the-Board Agreement That Economy #1 Problem Facing Country

Almost 40% Jittery About Obama's Ability to Handle Threats to U.S.

Majority of Southerners Think Their Economy is Same or Better Than Nation's as a Whole

Rock Hill SC...The results of the latest Winthrop Poll, of 825 respondents in 11 Southern states, taken between Feb. 21 and Feb. 27 are in.

The poll was conducted among those 18 years and older from AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, and VA, with an oversampling of registered voters. The survey used Random Digit Dialing (RDD) and wireless phone number sampling. Data utilizing all respondents has a margin of error of plus/minus 3.41 percent.

Among the Winthrop Poll findings:

- **Mike Huckabee, who's said he won't run for president if he doesn't think he can win, should be heartened by his support from "Probable Republican Primary Voters."** When asked who they would vote for as the next GOP nominee for president, the 21.9% Huckabee received easily eclipsed Newt Gingrich's 12.9%. Sarah Palin garnered 8.7%, while Mitt Romney edged out Tim Pawlenty 6.9 to 6.2%. Ron Paul, who won the CPAC straw poll, posted 5.8%, while Michelle Bachmann, touted in recent days as a force to be reckoned with, was way back in the pack with 1.1%. (Note: Names read to respondents were taken from the list of those receiving votes at CPAC. Preferences of rank-and-file Republicans in the South and those of party activists may move closer as the election draws nearer).
- **Independents lead the way in dissatisfaction with the track the country is on, with more than three-out-of-four (75.5%) believing we are headed in the wrong direction.** This represents an increase of almost 20% in the number of Independents (57.7%) who voiced their disapproval in Nov. 2009 when Winthrop last polled 11 Southern states.
- **Registered Voters, Democrats, Republicans and Independents agree almost equally that the economy and economic/financial crisis is the #1 problem facing the country today.** However, of the top three responses offered by Democrats, 13.4% mentioned education (no other category did) and 15.5% of Republicans mentioned the price of oil/gas/other energy issues, a fact particularly relevant in light of the recent unrest in the Mideast.
- **Almost 40% of all respondents are not very confident or not at all confident about President Obama's ability to handle threats to the U.S.** Among Independents, 45.3% feel that way, and for Republicans it's 62%.
- **Almost twice as many people in the South felt that economic conditions in their region were very good or fairly good (37.3%) as compared to only 21% who characterize the national economy that way.**



February 2011 Winthrop Poll

The February 2011 Winthrop Poll includes respondents from the South (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia) who are 18 years old or older (i.e. a general population survey of adults), with an oversampling of registered voters.

The results presented here include responses from **825** respondents giving results which use all respondents a **margin of error of +/- 3.41%** at the 95% confidence level. Reported results using a subset of the entire sample will naturally have a higher margin of error.

The survey was in the field from **February 21 - 27, 2011**. Phone calls were made during weekday evenings, all day Saturday, and Sunday afternoon and evening. Weekday daytime calls are not made to avoid oversampling those who are more likely to be at home during the day (e.g. retirees, stay-at-home-moms, etc.).

Data are weighted by relative state population and race, age, and sex (within state).

The survey used (1) Random Digit Dialing (RDD), (2) wireless phone number sampling, and (3) sample taken from lists of registered voters.

PERCENTAGES MAY NOT SUM TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING AND STATISTICAL WEIGHTS

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?

| | All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Approve | 38.3% | 38.4% | 76.6% | 11.8% | 32.7% |
| Disapprove | 51.4% | 52.5% | 15.1% | 83.9% | 53.6% |
| Not Sure | 9.5% | 8.4% | 8.4% | 3.6% | 12.3% |
| Refused to Answer | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.0 | 0.7% | 1.4% |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the United States Congress is handling its job?

| | All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Approve | 16.9% | 16.8% | 27.6% | 11.1% | 13.9% |
| Disapprove | 65.3% | 66.0% | 62.8% | 65.0% | 71.8% |
| Not Sure | 11.4% | 10.5% | 7.9% | 8.6% | 13.4% |
| Refused to Answer | 6.4% | 6.7% | 1.7% | 15.4% | 1.0% |

Thinking about the current path that our nation is taking, do you think our country is on the right track or headed in the wrong direction?

| | All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Right Track | 19.6% | 19.5% | 41.8% | 5.3% | 13.7% |
| Wrong Direction | 64.2% | 64.2% | 41.4% | 73.7% | 75.5% |
| Not Sure | 15.2% | 15.3% | 16.7% | 20.6% | 8.5% |
| Refused to Answer | 1.1% | 1.0% | 0.0% | 0.4% | 2.4% |

Is your opinion of Michelle Obama favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Michelle Obama to have an opinion?

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|----------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Favorable | 40.8% | 68.1% | 21.5% | 38.4% |
| Not Favorable | 20.4% | 6.7% | 39.4% | 17.1% |
| Undecided | 16.1% | 4.6% | 17.9% | 20.9% |
| Haven't Heard Enough | 22.0% | 20.6% | 21.1% | 23.7% |
| Refused to Answer | .7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?

[**NOTE: No answer choices were read; callers coded in whatever respondent said into one of twenty seven possible categories. Top 3 are below]

| All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Economy/ economic- financial crisis 30.2% | Economy/ economic- financial crisis 30.5% | Economy/ economic- financial crisis 26.8% | Economy/ economic- financial crisis 31.7% | Economy/ economic- financial crisis 29.7% |
| Jobs or unemployment 13.4% | Jobs or unemployment 13.6% | Jobs or unemployment 18.8% | Price of oil/gas – other energy issues 15.5% | Jobs or unemployment 16.0% |
| Budget deficit or debt 11.4% | Budget deficit or debt 12.3% | Education 13.4% | Budget deficit or debt 14.0% | Budget deficit or debt 12.3% |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the situation in Egypt?

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Approve | 43.2% | 65.5% | 31.4% | 41.3% |
| Disapprove | 28.6% | 15.5% | 41.4% | 26.8% |
| Not Sure | 26.3% | 17.2% | 25.7% | 29.1% |
| Refused to Answer | 1.9% | 1.7% | 1.4% | 2.8% |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the economy?

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Approve | 32.4% | 74.6% | 5.0% | 23.0% |
| Disapprove | 58.2% | 18.3% | 93.2% | 61.2% |
| Not Sure | 8.4% | 7.1% | 1.1% | 13.4% |
| Refused to Answer | 1.1% | 0.0% | 0.7% | 2.4% |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling foreign affairs, in general?

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Approve | 38.5% | 71.8% | 8.9% | 41.0% |
| Disapprove | 46.5% | 16.4% | 79.6% | 43.4% |
| Not Sure | 13.7% | 10.9% | 10.7% | 14.6% |
| Refused to Answer | 1.3% | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.9% |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the budget deficit?

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Approve | 31.9% | 64.4% | 18.9% | 15.2% |
| Disapprove | 57.2% | 24.7% | 76.2% | 69.2% |
| Not Sure | 9.1% | 9.2% | 3.9% | 12.3% |
| Refused to Answer | 1.8% | 1.7% | 1.1% | 3.3% |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling healthcare policy?

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Approve | 36.1% | 78.6% | 9.6% | 27.8% |
| Disapprove | 52.5% | 17.2% | 70.7% | 64.2% |
| Not Sure | 10.8% | 4.2% | 18.6% | 7.5% |
| Refused to Answer | 0.6% | 0.0% | 1.1% | .5% |

How confident are you in President Obama's ability to handle threats to the United States? Would you say you are Very Confident, Somewhat Confident, Not Very Confident, or Not At All Confident?

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Very Confident | 31.2% | 56.5% | 17.9% | 24.1% |
| Somewhat Confident | 27.2% | 32.6% | 20.1% | 29.7% |
| Not Very Confident | 17.3% | 4.6% | 28.3% | 18.4% |
| Not at All Confident | 22.4% | 4.2% | 33.7% | 26.9% |
| Don't Know/ Refused to Answer | 1.9% | 2.1% | 0.0% | 0.9% |

Whether your current level of confidence is *high* or *low*-- compared to when President Obama first took office, are you more confident in his ability to handle threats to the United States, less confident in his ability to handle threats to the United States, or has your confidence in his ability to handle threats to the United States not changed.

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| More | 18.4% | 40.6% | 6.8% | 11.8% |
| Less | 28.0% | 10.9% | 37.3% | 34.0% |
| Not Changed | 51.0% | 46.0% | 54.8% | 51.4% |
| Don't Know/ Refused to Answer | 2.5% | 2.5% | 1.1% | 2.8% |

How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?

| | All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Very Good | 1.9% | 1.3% | 3.8% | 0.0% | 2.8% |
| Fairly Good | 19.1% | 17.7% | 27.7% | 9.3% | 22.6% |
| Fairly Bad | 42.8% | 44.3% | 42.0% | 52.0% | 38.2% |
| Very Bad | 33.7% | 34.3% | 23.9% | 38.1% | 33.5% |
| Don't Know/ Refused to Answer | 2.4% | 2.4% | 2.5% | 0.7% | 2.8% |

Right now, do you think that economic conditions in the country as a whole are getting better or getting worse?

| | All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Getting Better | 42.7% | 43.3% | 57.9% | 41.6% | 36.5% |
| Getting Worse | 45.0% | 44.7% | 21.7% | 52.7% | 53.6% |
| Don't Know/ Refused to Answer | 12.4% | 12.0% | 20.4% | 5.7% | 10.0% |

How would you rate the condition of the economy of the SOUTH as a region these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?

| | All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Very Good | 6.6% | 6.8% | 13.9% | 2.5% | 5.2% |
| Fairly Good | 30.7% | 30.0% | 36.1% | 23.9% | 33.6% |
| Fairly Bad | 33.0% | 33.1% | 36.6% | 33.2% | 33.2% |
| Very Bad | 23.6% | 24.2% | 9.2% | 35.4% | 20.9% |
| Don't Know/ Refused to Answer | 6.0% | 6.0% | 4.2% | 5.0% | 7.1% |

Right now, do you think that economic conditions in the SOUTH as a region are getting better or getting worse?

| | All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Getting Better | 41.1% | 40.0% | 59.0% | 32.3% | 41.5% |
| Getting Worse | 45.3% | 45.9% | 26.8% | 56.3% | 43.9% |
| Don't Know/ Refused to Answer | 13.5% | 14.2% | 14.2% | 11.5% | 14.6% |

Right now, do you believe that economic conditions in the SOUTH as a region are better than those of the nation as a whole, worse than those of the nation as a whole, or about the same as those of the nation as a whole?

| | All | Registered Voters | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Better | 30.6% | 32.2% | 30.8% | 36.8% | 33.5% |
| Worse | 15.8% | 15.4% | 18.3% | 11.8% | 13.2% |
| Same | 44.3% | 44.1% | 42.9% | 45.0% | 42.9% |
| Not Sure | 7.5% | 7.1% | 4.2% | 6.1% | 8.5% |
| Refused to Answer | 1.8% | 1.3% | 3.8% | 0.4% | 1.9% |

How concerned are you about the possibility of losing your job in the next year? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned... [only asked of those who are currently employed]

| | All | Registered Voters |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Very Concerned | 16.6% | 15.8% |
| Somewhat Concerned | 20.6% | 20.7% |
| Not Very Concerned | 26.9% | 27.6% |
| Not at All Concerned | 35.5% | 35.5% |
| Don't Know/ Refused to Answer | 0.4% | 0.4% |

Did concerns over the economy negatively impact your vacation plans in 2010?

| | All |
|-------------------|-------|
| Yes | 36.5% |
| No | 51.9% |
| Not Sure | 10.0% |
| Refused to Answer | 1.7% |

Which of the following would you say is the **MAIN** way in which concerns over the economy negatively impacted your vacation plans: you chose a less expensive destination, you decided to stay at home for your vacation, you chose to shorten your vacation, you took fewer vacations, you did fewer things while on vacation, you cancelled your vacation plans. [among those who said economy negatively impacted 2010 vacation]

| | All |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Less Expensive Destination | 16.0% |
| Stay at Home | 23.7% |
| Shortened Vacation | 8.8% |
| Took Fewer | 12.6% |
| Did Fewer Things | 7.4% |
| Cancelled Vacation | 29.4% |
| Not Sure | 1.9% |
| Refused to Answer | 0.3% |

Comparing this year to last year, when it comes to **entertainment**, do you think you will be spending more money than last year, about the same amount of money as last year, or less money than last year?

| | All |
|-------------------|-------|
| More | 9.2% |
| Same | 53.2% |
| Less | 36.8% |
| Not Sure | 0.8% |
| Refused to Answer | 0.0% |

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion: [ANSWERS ROTATED]

- In general, more government regulation of businesses is good because it prevents practices that take advantage of consumers

- In general, more government regulation of businesses is bad because it hampers innovation which helps the economy grow.

| | All | Democrat | Republican | Independent |
|----------------------------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Regulation Is Good | 27.0% | 49.0% | 11.1% | 22.3% |
| Regulation Is Bad | 54.2% | 33.9% | 66.3% | 64.9% |
| Don't Know/ Refused to Answer | 18.8% | 17.2% | 22.6% | 12.8% |

I'm going to read the titles and names of 15 people who have been mentioned as possible candidates for the 2012 Republican Presidential nomination. The names are in alphabetical order. Please listen to all the names before selecting one. **(NOTE: Names were taken from the list those receiving votes at CPAC. "Probable Republican Primary Voters" are defined as respondents who said they "Definitely" or "Probably" plan to vote in the 2012 Republican Presidential Primary AND are currently registered voters).**

Thinking ahead to the **2012** Presidential election, who would you vote for as your **FIRST CHOICE** to be the next Republican nominee for President?

| | Republicans, Including Leaners | Republicans, Including Leaners Who Are Registered to Vote | Probable Republican Primary Voters |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Minnesota Representative Michelle Bachmann | 1.3% | 1.4% | 1.1% |
| Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour | 1.7% | .9% | 1.0% |
| Former CEO of Godfather's Pizza Herman Cain | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.6% |
| New Jersey Governor Chris Christie | 7.8% | 7.3% | 7.6% |
| Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels | 2.4% | 2.5% | 2.7% |
| Former Speaker Newt Gingrich | 11.4% | 11.9% | 12.9% |
| Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee | 20.4% | 21.2% | 21.9% |
| Former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.3% |
| Former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin | 9.8% | 8.1% | 8.7% |
| Texas Representative Ron Paul | 6.4% | 6.5% | 5.8% |
| Former Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty | 5.5% | 5.8% | 6.2% |
| Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney | 6.7% | 7.0% | 6.9% |
| Former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| South Dakota Senator John Thune | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Other | 2.1% | 2.3% | 2.4% |
| Not Sure | 21.2% | 21.9% | 20.4% |
| Refused to Answer | 1.3% | 1.1% | 0.3% |

Do you feel you have saved, or are on track to save, enough to retire comfortably?

| | All |
|-------------------|-------|
| Yes | 42.6% |
| No | 40.7% |
| Not Sure | 8.9% |
| Refused to Answer | 7.7% |

Taking everything into consideration, do you think you'll be able to retire when you want or hope to retire?

| | All |
|------------------------|-------|
| Yes | 60.4% |
| No | 21.0% |
| Don't Know/ Refused | 18.6% |

Which of the following best describes your regional identity? [ANSWERS ROTATED]

Non- Southern

Converted Southerner

Native Southerner

| | All |
|------------------------|-------|
| Non-Southern | 18.0% |
| Converted Southerner | 21.2% |
| Native Southerner | 55.9% |
| Not Sure [Volunteered] | 2.4% |
| Refused to Answer | 2.4% |

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Methodology Statement

Survey Methodology – February 2011 Winthrop Poll

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The survey was in the field from **February 21 - 27, 2011**. Phone calls were made during weekday evenings, all day Saturday, and Sunday afternoon and evening. Weekday daytime calls are not made to avoid oversampling those who are more likely to be at home during the day (e.g. retirees, stay-at-home-moms, etc.).

Data are weighted by relative state population and race, age, and sex (within state).

The survey used (1) Random Digit Dialing (RDD), (2) wireless phone number sampling, and (3) sample taken from lists of registered voters. The registered voter sample was purchased from Aristotle/Voter Lists Online. However, because these lists have a natural lag of six or so months -- and the fact that this survey included the general population and not JUST registered voters --, RDD and wireless samples are crucial to ensure no adult in the geographical area of interest is systematically excluded from the sample. Both the RDD sample and the wireless sample were purchased from Survey Sampling International (SSI). A further explanation of RDD methodology, with descriptions taken from SSI's website, may be found below.

Phone numbers selected for the survey were re-dialed five or more times in an attempt to reach a respondent. Once a household was reached, we also employed procedures to randomize within households.

Computerized autodialers were not used in order to ensure the survey of wireless phones complied with the Telephone Consumers Protection Act and all FCC rules regarding contacting wireless telephones.

The Winthrop Poll is paid for by Winthrop University with additional support from The West Forum on Politics and Policy at Winthrop University.

Additional Explanation of RDD Methodology : (with descriptions taken from SSI website)

Samples are generated using a database of "working blocks." A block (also known as a 100-bank or a bank) is a set of 100 contiguous numbers identified by the first two digits of the last four digits of a telephone number. For example, in the telephone number 203-567-7200, "72" is the block. A block is termed to be working if some specified number of listed telephone numbers are found in that block.

Samples of random numbers distributed across all eligible blocks in proportion to their density of listed telephone households are selected. All blocks within a county are organized in ascending order by area code, exchange, and block number. Once the quota has been allocated to all counties in the frame, a sampling interval is calculated by summing the number of listed residential numbers in eligible blocks within the county and dividing that sum by the number of sampling points assigned to the county. From a random start between zero and the sampling interval, blocks are systematically selected in proportion to their density of listed households. Once a block has been selected, a two-digit number is systematically selected in the range 00-99 and is appended to the exchange and block to form a 10-digit telephone number.