

## October 2014 Winthrop Poll

### Methodology Statement

#### October 2014 Winthrop Poll of Likely Voters

The October 2014 Winthrop Poll interviewed **1082 LIKELY VOTERS** in upcoming South Carolina statewide election. After weights (for sex, age, and race) have been applied, results which use all respondents have a **margin of error of approximately +/- 3%** at the 95% confidence level.

The survey was in the field from 9/21-9/28, 2014. 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.). Conducting weekend calls is important to avoid systematically excluding certain populations (such as those who may work 2nd or 3rd shift during the week).

The survey used (1) Registration Based Sampling (wireless and landline phone numbers of registered voters in South Carolina purchased from Aristotle/VoterListsOnline) (2) Random Digit Dialing (RDD) and (3) wireless phone number sampling. Both 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 for RDD sample.

Additionally, we:

1. Screen for confirmation of voter registration status
2. Screen for likelihood of voting
3. Weight responses based on **sex, age, and race**

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.

## **FINDINGS**

### **October 2014 Winthrop Poll of Likely Voters in South Carolina**

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Republican Governor Nikki Haley holds a 10-point lead over Democratic challenger S.C. Sen. Vincent Sheheen in the November elections, according to the latest Winthrop Poll released Wednesday, Oct. 1.

Haley leads Sheheen by a 43.6-33.6 margin among likely South Carolina voters. Petition candidate Tom Ervin, a self-funded attorney and former judge, has a slight effect on the race with 3.9% of voters. Undecided voters could bring the election closer as 12.4% of likely voters said they do not know who they will choose to lead the Palmetto state.

Haley, the state's first female and Indian-American governor, beat Sheheen, a Camden attorney, in 2010 by 51.4% to 47% of votes.

Her lead comes as more than half of Winthrop Poll respondents (57.5%) say that economic conditions in South Carolina are fairly good. More than a third of respondents (36.1%) said conditions are fairly or very bad.

Those surveyed believe that the most important problems facing South Carolina are: jobs/unemployment (20.1%), education (18.3%) and economy (10.9%). Sixty-two percent of likely voters are optimistic that South Carolina's economic conditions are getting better.

Winthrop Poll callers surveyed 1,082 likely voters in South Carolina by landline and cell phones between Sept. 21-28. The poll has an approximately +/- 3% margin of error.

## **U.S. SENATE RACES**

With Republicans threatening to capture the control of the U.S. Senate from Democrats, both Republican incumbents are running strong races, said Scott Huffman, director of the Winthrop Poll.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham is the candidate chosen by 46.3% of likely voters, while Democratic and Working Families Party challenger Brad Hutto of Orangeburg drew 28% support. Petition candidate and former S.C. treasurer Tom Ravenel of Charleston has 8% of voter support. Undecided voters are at 12.2%.

In the other Senate race, Republican U.S. Sen. Tim Scott holds more than a majority lead (52.4%) over Democratic challenger Joyce Dickerson of Columbia (31.8%) and American Party candidate Jill Bossi of Tega Cay (1.8%).

## **PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA AND CONGRESS**

President Barack Obama's approval rating in South Carolina continues to be low at 38.2% and lags behind national approval for Obama by several percentage points.

Meanwhile, Congress' approval rating also remains low at 12.7%, a figure that is nearly equal to the national opinion of Congress.

South Carolina likely voters say the economy is the most important problem facing the United States (17.6%), followed by politicians/government (13.8%) and jobs/unemployment (8.2%). Meanwhile, respondents see the country in a slump with 58% saying the national economy is fairly or very bad. Another 38.5% called the national economy fairly good.

Nearly half (47%) see national economic conditions getting worse, while 44% foresee conditions getting better.

## **PUBLIC POLICIES AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

Freedom of Information (FOI) issues have been a major concern in journalism circles in South Carolina as state courts have restricted information. The Winthrop Poll asked likely voters if the members of the legislature should follow the same FOI rules as other public officials. Eighty-one percent of likely voters said legislatures should have to follow the same rules, which would mean exemptions would have to be removed so that all documents and communications would be open to disclosure rules.

Poll respondents are split on gambling casinos in the Palmetto state: In general, 47.3% favor, while 47.3% oppose and 4.7% are unsure. However, another Winthrop Poll question asked about if gambling casinos were allowed only in or near Myrtle Beach, prompting likely voters to oppose that option by 63.7%. Yet, the opposition was reduced to half when asked about gambling casinos in the Myrtle Beach area with government revenue designated for roads and other infrastructure needs. Huffmon noted, "attitudes on this issue are fluid depending on specific proposals; this makes it hard to pinpoint deeply held feelings with certainty."

Federal law forbids those convicted of criminal domestic violence from owning guns, which 79% of likely voters think should be ensured of enforcement in South Carolina through passage of a state law.

Nearly three-fourths of likely voters (72.4%) favor removing a restriction that prohibits counties from letting citizens vote on a one-cent sales tax to fund school building projects unless the county meets a minimum threshold of accommodations tax. Currently, only two coastal counties meet this threshold and have passed the one cent sales tax for school buildings.

South Carolina voters currently select the state education superintendent, and more than half of likely voters (59.8%) want to keep it that way. The next most popular option was for the superintendent to be appointed by the State Board of Education. Governor Haley has wanted to appoint the education superintendent but her initiative drew support from only 9.5% of likely voters

### **Results October 2014 Winthrop Poll of Likely Voters in SC**

T1. If the election for **South Carolina Governor** were held today would you vote for:

(names rotated)

	Likely Voters
Tom E. Ervin, a Petition Candidate	3.9
Steve French, the Libertarian Candidate	2.2
Nikki Haley, the Republican Candidate	43.6
Morgan Bruce Reeves, the United Citizens Party candidate	1.3

Vincent Sheheen, the Democratic Candidate	33.6
Other	0.3
Not Sure/ Undecided	12.4
Refused	2.6

\*INTERPRETATION NOTE: Polls which referred to Ervin as an “independent Republican” in the description have had him much higher. We described him as he will be listed on the November ballot.

T2. As you probably know, South Carolina is in the unique situation of having TWO separate races for United States Senator this year. I’d like to ask you about both.

First, if the election for United States Senator were held today would you vote for:

(names rotated)

	Likely Voters
Lindsey Graham, the Republican candidate	46.3
Brad Hutto, the Democratic candidate and Working Families Party candidate	28.0
Victor Kocher, the Libertarian candidate	2.6
Thomas Ravenel, a Petition candidate	8.0
Other	0.9
Not Sure/ Undecided	12.2
Refused	2.1

T3. Second, if the election for United States Senator were held today would you vote for:

(names rotated)

	Likely Voters
Jill Bossi, the American Party candidate	1.8
Joyce Dickerson, the Democratic candidate	31.8
Tim Scott, the Republican candidate	52.4
Other	0.1
Not Sure/ Undecided	13.8
Refused	0.0

T4. Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Barack Obama** is handling his job as President of the United States

	Likely Voters
Approve	38.2
Disapprove	56.0
Don’t Know	5.3

Refused	0.6
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T5. Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Congress** is handling its job

	Likely Voters
Approve	12.7
Disapprove	81.2
Don't Know	5.9
Refused	0.2

T6. What do you think is the most important problem facing the **United States of America** today? (top three)

	Likely Voters
Economy	17.6
Politicians/Government	13.8
Jobs/Unemployment	8.2

T7. What do you think is the most important problem facing the **South Carolina** today? (top three)

	Likely Voters
Jobs/Unemployment	20.1
Education	18.3
Economy	10.9

T8. How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?

	Likely Voters
Very Good	1.9
Fairly Good	38.5
Fairly Bad	36.2
Very Bad	21.8
Not Sure	1.5
Refused	0.1

T9. Right now, do you think that economic conditions in the country as a whole are getting better or getting worse?

	Likely Voters
Getting Better	44.0
Getting Worse	47.0
Not Sure	8.6

Refused	0.4
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T10. How would you rate the condition of the South Carolina economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?

	Likely Voters
Very Good	4.0
Fairly Good	57.5
Fairly Bad	28.6
Very Bad	7.5
Not Sure	2.1
Refused	0.3

T11. Right now, do you think that economic conditions in the South Carolina are getting better or getting worse?

	Likely Voters
Getting Better	62.1
Getting Worse	29.7
Not Sure	7.7
Refused	0.5

T12. How would you rate your financial situation today? As excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	Likely Voter
Excellent	9.2
Good	45.9
Only Fair	31.8
Poor	11.0
Not Sure	0.4
Refused	1.7

T13. Right now, do you think that your financial situation as a whole is getting better or getting worse?

	Likely Voters
Getting Better	52.6
Getting Worse	29.5
Not Sure	15.6
Refused	2.3

T14. Under the rules of the Freedom of Information Act, individuals and the press can request copies of documents and communications of public officials and governmental bodies or departments in South Carolina. However, there is an exemption for certain documents and communications of members of the South Carolina State Legislature.

(Next two statements rotated)

Some feel that the members of the legislature would be hindered in their ability to govern and create laws if all of their documents and communication were subject to Freedom of Information Act rules

while

Some feel that it is only fair that members of the legislature should follow the same Freedom of Information Act rules as other public officials.

How about you? Do you think members of the South Carolina State Legislature should continue to be exempt from Freedom of Information Act disclosure rules or should this exemption be removed, which would require all documents and communications of legislators to be open to disclosure rules.

	Likely Voters
CONTINUE to be exempt	13.9
REMOVE exemption	81.0
Not Sure	4.4
Refused	0.7

T15. Would you favor or oppose permitting a limited number of gambling casinos to operate in South Carolina?

	Likely Voters
Favor	47.3
Oppose	47.3
Not Sure	4.7
Refused	0.7

T16. Would you favor or oppose permitting a limited number of gambling casinos to operate in South Carolina, if they could only be located in or near Myrtle Beach?

	Likely Voters
Favor	31.4
Oppose	63.7
Not Sure	4.1
Refused	0.8

T17. Would you favor or oppose permitting a limited number of gambling casinos to operate in South Carolina, if they could only be located in or near Myrtle Beach and government revenue was designated for roads and infrastructure needs?

	Likely Voters
Favor	45.1
Oppose	49.4
Not Sure	4.7
Refused	0.9

INTERPRETATION NOTE: Attitudes on this issue are fluid depending on specific proposals; this makes it hard to pinpoint deeply held feelings with certainty.

T18. Currently federal law forbids people who have been convicted of criminal domestic violence from owning guns. However, there is no mechanism in this law which ensures consistent enforcement across all states.

Do you think the South Carolina Legislature SHOULD or should NOT pass a law to ensure full enforcement of this federal law in the state of South Carolina.

	Likely Voters
Should	79.0
Should NOT	15.2
Not Sure [volunteered]	4.5
Refused	1.3

T19. Under current South Carolina law, counties can allow residents to vote on whether to implement a one cent sales tax to be used for school district building projects **ONLY** if the county collects a minimum amount of accommodations tax, that is, taxes on hotel rooms and rentals. Currently only two coastal counties meet that threshold and have passed the one cent sales tax for school district building.

Would you favor or oppose removing the rule concerning accommodations tax and allowing all counties to permit residents to vote on allowing a one cent sales tax for school district buildings?

	Likely Voters
Favor	72.4
Oppose	22.2
Not Sure [volunteered]	4.6
Refused	0.7

T20. In South Carolina, the Superintendent of Education is an elected position. This is an elected position in 13 US states. In other states, the Superintendent of Education is appointed, either by the Governor, by the State Board of Education, or selected by the Governor from a list provided by the State Board of Education. For the state of South Carolina, would you prefer the Superintendent of Education:

(responses rotated)

	Likely Voters
remain an elected position	59.8
be appointed by the Governor	9.5
be appointed by the State Board of Education	18.2
be selected by the Governor from a list provided by the State Board of Education	10.2
Not Sure	1.8
Refused	0.5

T21. Governor by Sex



If the election for **South Carolina Governor** were held today would you vote for:

	Male	Female
Tom E. Ervin, a Petition Candidate	4.3	3.8
Steve French, the Libertarian Candidate	2.9	1.6
Nikki Haley, the Republican Candidate	52.5	36.2
Morgan Bruce Reeves, the United Citizens Party candidate	1.3	1.3
Vincent Sheheen, the Democratic Candidate	27.5	38.9
Other	0.0	0.4
Not Sure/ Undecided	10.7	14.0
Refused	0.9	3.9

T22. Governor by Race (White/Black only)

If the election for **South Carolina Governor** were held today would you vote for:

	Caucasian	African American
Tom E. Ervin, a Petition Candidate	5.5	0.8
Steve French, the Libertarian Candidate	2.5	1.2
Nikki Haley, the Republican Candidate	56.2	10.0
Morgan Bruce Reeves, the United Citizens Party candidate	1.0	1.9
Vincent Sheheen, the Democratic Candidate	19.9	71.8
Other	0.0	0.0
Not Sure/ Undecided	13.2	9.7
Refused	1.7	4.6

T23. Governor by Party with 'Leaners' as Independents

If the election for **South Carolina Governor** were held today would you vote for:

**NOTE: In this table ALL Independents, even those who say they "Lean" toward one party, are counted as "Independents"**

	Republican	Independents	Democrats
Tom E. Ervin, a Petition Candidate	3.5	7.2	1.6
Steve French, the Libertarian Candidate	1.1	2.4	1.9
Nikki Haley, the Republican Candidate	77.0	38.9	9.3
Morgan Bruce Reeves, the	0.0	3.4	1.3

United Citizens Party candidate			
Vincent Sheheen, the Democratic Candidate	8.4	27.3	72.8
Other	0.5	0.0	0.0
Not Sure/ Undecided	7.9	19.5	10.6
Refused	1.6	1.4	2.6

T24. Governor by Party with 'Leaners' as Partisans

If the election for **South Carolina Governor** were held today would you vote for:

**NOTE: In this table, Independents who report that they "Lean" toward one of the parties are counted as PART of that party**

	Republican	Independents	Democrats
Tom E. Ervin, a Petition Candidate	3.9	10.3	2.0
Steve French, the Libertarian Candidate	1.0	3.4	0.8
Nikki Haley, the Republican Candidate	73.2	27.4	10.4
Morgan Bruce Reeves, the United Citizens Party candidate	0.2	5.1	2.0
Vincent Sheheen, the Democratic Candidate	8.9	28.2	71.9
Other	0.4	0.0	0.0
Not Sure/ Undecided	10.8	24.8	10.1
Refused	1.5	0.9	2.8

T25. Governor by Age

If the election for **South Carolina Governor** were held today would you vote for:

	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Tom E. Ervin, a Petition Candidate	0.0	1.8	6.0	4.5
Steve French, the Libertarian Candidate	4.2	3.2	2.2	0.5
Nikki Haley, the Republican Candidate	32.4	37.1	44.8	56.4
Morgan Bruce Reeves, the United Citizens Party candidate	0.0	3.5	0.3	0.0
Vincent Sheheen, the Democratic Candidate	42.3	41.2	30.4	27.7
Other	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Not Sure/ Undecided	9.9	11.8	14.7	8.6
Refused	11.3	0.9	1.6	2.3

T26. Governor by Sex – WHITE LIKELY VOTERS ONLY

If the election for South Carolina Governor were held today would you vote for:

	White Males	White Females
Tom E. Ervin, a Petition Candidate	5.7	5.3
Steve French, the Libertarian Candidate	2.8	2.5
Nikki Haley, the Republican Candidate	64.3	47.9
Morgan Bruce Reeves, the United Citizens Party candidate	0.0	1.9
Vincent Sheheen, the Democratic Candidate	14.2	25.3
Other	0.0	0.0
Not Sure/ Undecided	12.2	14.2
Refused	0.8	2.8

T27. (first two statements rotated)

Proponents of an increase in the gasoline tax believe that it is the most fair way to get money for needed repairs to South Carolina's roads and bridges.

Opponents of an increase in the gasoline tax do not believe increasing the cost of gas to consumers is the best way to get money for needed repairs to South Carolina's roads and bridges.

Would you favor or oppose an increase in South Carolina's gasoline tax with the additional money going to repairs to South Carolina's roads and bridges

	Likely Voters
<b>Favor</b>	<b>43.5</b>
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>52.3</b>
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Refused</b>	<b>0.7</b>

T28. Would you favor or oppose an increase in South Carolina's gasoline tax if, even with the new tax, the cost of a gallon of gas in South Carolina remained lower than the cost in North Carolina or Georgia?

	Likely Voters
<b>Favor</b>	<b>51.5</b>
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>42.2</b>
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>Refused</b>	<b>1.0</b>

T29. Would you favor or oppose an increase in South Carolina's gasoline tax if it increased the cost of a gallon of gas in South Carolina to roughly equal to that in North Carolina or Georgia?

	Likely Voters
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<b>Favor</b>	<b>32.5</b>
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>60.7</b>
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>6.3</b>
<b>Refused</b>	<b>0.6</b>

T30. Would you favor or oppose an increase of five cents per gallon to South Carolina's gasoline tax?

	<b>Likely Voters</b>
<b>Favor</b>	<b>36.0</b>
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>60.8</b>
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Refused</b>	<b>0.5</b>

**NOTE: Since 51.5% were OK with a gas tax when it kept prices lower than those in NC & GA, but only 36% are OK with a 5 cent/gallon increase, we can surmise that voters think of these issues in relative, rather than absolute. Additionally, many voters must not be aware of the real difference between gas taxes in SC and gas taxes (and fees) in GA and NC since a 5 cent increase would still leave SC FAR below NC and GA.**

T31. One proposal last year would have increased the tax on gas in South Carolina by two cents a gallon every year for ten years. By the end of ten years, the amount of taxes and fees per gallon would be roughly equal to those levied in North Carolina and Georgia.

Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

	<b>Likely Voters</b>
<b>Favor</b>	<b>34.5</b>
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>60.7</b>
<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Refused</b>	<b>0.5</b>

### **Sample Demographics**

Demographic	Oct 2014 Winthrop Poll of Likely Voters (n=1082)	2010 Turnout from SC Election Commission
Male	45.6	44.8
Female	54.4	55.2
White	69.3	71.5
Non-White (This is how SC Election Commission reports Race)	28.1	28.5
Refused	2.5	na
18-44	40.1	29.59
45 and over	57.3	70.4
Refused	2.5	na