Policy Research Shop

2014 NH STATE OF THE STATE POLL

For Immediate Release

Professor Ronald G. Shaiko, Survey Director
(603) 646-9146
Ronald.G.Shaiko@dartmouth.edu

Professor Matthew Cravens, Survey Administrator
(603) 646-1291
Matthew.Cravens@dartmouth.edu

PRS Policy Brief 1314-06
May 8, 2014

Prepared By:
Zachary Markovich ‘15
Jake Perkins ‘14

This report was written by undergraduate students at Dartmouth College under the direction of professors in the Rockefeller Center. The Policy Research Shop is supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The PRS reports were developed under FIPSE grant P116B100070 from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents of the PRS reports do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Contact:
Nelson A. Rockefeller Center, 6082 Rockefeller Hall, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH 03755
http://rockefeller.dartmouth.edu/shop/ • Email: Ronald.G.Shaiko@Dartmouth.edu
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS 1
   1.1 NATIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS 1
   1.2 NEW HAMPSHIRE ECONOMY AND BUDGETARY POLICY 1
   1.3 RESPONDENTS’ PERSONAL FINANCES 2

2. PRESIDENT OBAMA AND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT 2
   2.1 PRESIDENT OBAMA FAVORABILITY 2
   2.2 PRESIDENT OBAMA JOB APPROVAL 2
   2.3 THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT 3

3. STATE POLICY PRIORITIES AND SOCIAL ISSUES 5
   3.1 SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION 6
   3.2 CASINO GAMBLING 7
   3.3 NORTHERN PASS PROJECT 8
   3.4 DECRIMINALIZATION OF MARIJUANA 8
   3.5 PHOTO IDENTIFICATION 9
   3.6 DEATH PENALTY 10

4. NATIONAL POLICY PRIORITIES AND ISSUES 11
   4.1 IMMIGRATION—PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP 11
   4.2 LAWS COVERING THE SALE OF GUNS 12

5. 2014 AND 2016 ELECTIONS 13
   5.1 2014 NEW HAMPSHIRE SENATE RACE 13
      5.1.1 Shaheen Approval and Favorability 13
      5.1.2 Senate Election Match-Ups 13
   5.2 2014 NEW HAMPSHIRE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION 15
      5.2.1 Hassan Favorability and Approval 15
      5.2.2 Election Match Ups 16
   5.3 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 17

6. SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS 20

7. METHODOLOGY 21
   7.1 SAMPLE WEIGHTING 21
President Obama’s job approval rating in New Hampshire falls to 36 percent (from 45 percent in 2013), while his favorability rating plummets to 28 percent (from 41 percent in 2013).

NH Senate Race within margin of error between incumbent Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D) and challengers Scott Brown and Bob Smith.

Governor Hassan leads Republican challengers by 20 points in trial heats.

2016 presidential trial heats show stiff competition between Hillary Clinton (D) and various Republican candidates.

HANOVER, NH—The Rockefeller Center’s seventh annual State of the State Poll surveyed a sample of New Hampshire registered voters (N=412) from April 21-25, 2014 to assess their opinions on policy issues, elected officials, and the state of the economy in New Hampshire and in the United States. The sample error rate is +/- 4.8 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Sample demographics and polling methodology are summarized at the end of this report.

1. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

1.1 National Economic Conditions
Respondents’ assessments of the U.S. economy have improved since last year. No respondents described the national economy as “excellent.” However, 16 percent indicated that the economy is “good” and 45 percent reported that the economy is “fair”; 37 percent of respondents indicated that the national economy is “poor.” In the 2013 State of the State poll, only 11 percent of respondents reported that the national economy was either “excellent” or “good,” while 88 percent responded that it was “fair” or “poor.”

1.2 New Hampshire Economy and Budgetary Policy
Respondents’ evaluations of the New Hampshire economy are similar to last year’s. One third of respondents (34 percent) reported that the state’s economy is either “excellent” or “good.” Just over half of respondents (54 percent) assessed the state economy as “fair,” and 12 percent reported that is “poor.” In last year’s poll, 35 percent of respondents assessed the state economy as “excellent” or “good,” 51 percent reported it as “fair,” and 13 percent described it as “poor.” By contrast, in the 2011 poll, 29 percent described the New Hampshire economy as “poor.”

New Hampshire voters remain concerned about the state’s budgetary situation. Similar to last year’s poll results, about 15 percent of respondents view the budgetary situation as “very serious” and 49 percent view it as “somewhat serious.”
1.3 Respondents’ Personal Finances
Continuing a trend that began in 2010, respondents’ assessments of their personal financial situations have improved. When asked to compare their current personal economic situation to one year ago, 23 percent believe that they are “better off,” up from 15 percent in 2013, while 57 percent of respondents say they are “about the same.” Twenty percent of respondents believe they are “worse off” economically than they were one year ago, down from 24 percent in 2013, 29 percent in 2012, 34 percent in 2011 and 38 percent in 2010. When respondents were asked whether their financial situation will be better, worse, or about the same one year from now, the majority of respondents (57 percent) believed that it would be about the same and 29 percent believed that it would be better, down from 32 percent in 2013.

2. PRESIDENT OBAMA AND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

While respondents’ general views on the economy have improved over the past year, their views of President Obama have not.

2.1 President Obama Favorability
Compared to last year’s State of the State poll results, New Hampshire registered voters have a much less favorable opinion of President Barack Obama. Only 27.8 percent of respondents report a favorable opinion of President Obama this year, down from 41.0 percent of respondents in the 2013 poll. Respondents with an unfavorable opinion of President Obama have climbed to 49.4 percent from last year’s unfavorable rating of 39.1 percent.

2.2 President Obama Job Approval
Respondents were also asked to assess how President Obama is handling his job as President. His job approval decreased from 44.8 percent in last year's poll to 35.8 percent of respondents this year. President Obama’s disapproval similarly increased, from 42.1 percent in 2013 to 54.3 percent in 2014.

President Obama’s favorability and job approval declined among Democrats, Republicans, and independents. Figure 1 presents Obama’s job performance approval distribution in 2014 by party. Among Democrats, Obama’s job approval declined from 81.0 percent in 2013 to 70.9 percent this year. His job approval among independents and Republicans deteriorated similarly. Only 38.5 percent of independents now approve of his job performance while 48.8 percent disapprove. Last year, 43.0 percent of independents approved and 37.0 percent disapproved. Among Republicans, 3.4 percent now approve of Obama’s job performance while 92.7 percent disapprove. Sixteen percent of Republicans approved of his job performance last year while 74 percent disapproved.
2.3 The Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, was signed into law in 2010. Respondents were asked whether they generally approved or disapproved of Obamacare. Figure 2 presents the results by party. Overall, 34.1 percent of respondents approved of the Affordable Care Act, 57.5 percent disapproved, and 8.4 percent were unsure. Only five percent of Republicans approve, with 91 percent disapproving. More Democrats approve of Obamacare (66 percent) than disapprove (22 percent). Fewer independents approve of Obamacare (36 percent) than disapprove (54 percent).
When asked if Obamacare has had a positive, neutral, or negative impact on their own personal healthcare situation, 10 percent of respondents replied with “positive,” 58 percent replied with “neutral,” and 28 percent with “negative.” Four percent of respondents volunteered that they were unsure. Among Republicans, only 1 percent reported that Obamacare has had a positive impact on their personal healthcare situation, 46 percent reported a neutral impact, 46 percent reported a negative impact, and seven percent volunteered being unsure. Among Democrats, 18 percent reported that Obamacare has had a positive impact. Twelve percent of independents indicated that the Affordable Care Act has had a positive impact.
3. STATE POLICY PRIORITIES AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Respondents were asked to identify the most important issue facing the state from a list of seven policy issues. As in last year’s poll, respondents identified “building a strong economy” as the top priority for state policymakers, followed by “improving education.” The following chart presents the percent of respondents identifying each issue as New Hampshire’s top policy priority in the 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 State of the State polls conducted by the Rockefeller Center.

![Figure 3. Obamacare Impact on Personal Healthcare](image)
Respondents were also asked about a range of specific issues facing the state, including prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, casino gambling in the state, universal background checks for firearms sales, the Northern Pass project, requiring photo identification for voting, and the decriminalization of marijuana.

3.1 Sexual Orientation Discrimination
When respondents were asked if they supported or opposed a state constitutional amendment to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, 61.7 percent supported the constitutional amendment. The majority of Democrats and independents support a state constitutional amendment to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation (80.7 percent and 64.5 percent, respectively); whereas 42.1 percent of Republican respondents support the amendment.
3.2 Casino Gambling
When respondents were asked if they supported or opposed the expansion of gambling in New Hampshire to include casino gambling, 46.6 percent supported expansion, 39.6 percent opposed, and 13.8 percent were unsure. These responses are similar to last year’s results—44.1 percent supported, 36.7 percent opposed, and 19.2 percent were unsure in 2013.
3.3 Northern Pass Project
New Hampshire registered voters are still divided over whether the Northern Pass Project should be built between Canada and New Hampshire. However, support for the project increased somewhat from 30 percent in 2013 to 40 percent this year. Opposition remained relatively stable, increasing from 31 percent in 2013 to 34 percent in 2014. Respondents who are unsure dropped from 39 percent to 26 percent.

![Figure 7. Northern Pass](image)

3.4 Decriminalization of Marijuana
Respondents were also asked whether they “support or oppose a bill under consideration in Concord that would decriminalize possession of up to one quarter of an ounce of marijuana.” Support decreased from 55 percent in 2013 to 50 percent this year. Opposition increased from 23 percent in 2013 to 36 percent this year.
3.5 Photo Identification
Almost three quarters of all respondents support requiring the presentation of photo identification in order to vote in New Hampshire elections. The majority of respondents support the measure (74.8 percent), while 18.8 percent oppose it and 6.4 percent report being unsure as to whether they support or oppose the policy. In 2013, the majority of voters registered as Democrats opposed the measure, but this year 57.9 percent of registered Democrats responded in support of the measure. Additionally, 92.0 percent of Republicans support required photo identification. The chart below outlines responses according to several demographic considerations.
3.6 Death Penalty

The poll asked respondents if respondents support or oppose the death penalty, or whether they are unsure. Just over half of respondents (52 percent) support the death penalty and 29 percent are opposed. Thirty percent of Democrats support it while 45 percent oppose the death penalty. By contrast, 63 percent of Republicans support the death penalty and only 17 percent oppose it. The chart below presents death penalty opinion broken down by party identification.

![Figure 9. Photo ID Requirement](image-url)
4. NATIONAL POLICY PRIORITIES AND ISSUES

4.1 Immigration—Pathway to Citizenship
Respondents were asked if they support or oppose a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who are currently in the United States. This question revealed that Republicans and Democrats have contrasting views on creating a pathway to citizenship. Just over half of Democratic respondents (53.2 percent) support a pathway, while just over half of Republicans (55.6 percent) oppose it. In a similar split, 25.4 percent of Democrats oppose the measure, while a nearly equivalent portion of Republicans (22.4 percent) support a pathway to create citizenship for undocumented immigrants. The chart below displays support and opposition for the pathway to citizenship by party identification.
4.2 Laws Covering the Sale of Guns
Respondents were asked whether laws covering the sale of guns should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now. Forty-six percent of respondents favor more strict gun laws while only 11 percent said that gun laws should be made less strict. Over three-quarters of Democrats (75 percent) reported that the laws should be made more strict while just 6 percent said that they should be made less strict. Among Republicans, 28 percent reported that gun sale laws should be more strict and 21 percent said the laws should be less strict. Forty-four percent of independents supported more strict gun laws.
5. 2014 AND 2016 ELECTIONS

5.1 2014 New Hampshire Senate Race

5.1.1 Shaheen Approval and Favorability
Slightly more respondents have an unfavorable opinion of Senator Shaheen than have a favorable opinion with 34.1 percent of respondents reporting a favorable opinion of Shaheen and 37.0 percent an unfavorable opinion. This represents a large decline for Senator Shaheen since last year when 46.0 percent of voters had a favorable opinion of Shaheen and only 22.0 percent had an unfavorable opinion. Additionally, more voters reported that they disapproved of Shaheen’s job performance than those that approved—33.7 percent of respondents approved of Shaheen’s job performance, while 34.8 percent disapproved.

Shaheen’s favorability can be contrasted with the favorability ratings of Senator Kelly Ayotte, who received both a higher favorability rating and a much lower unfavorable rating. Respondents reported a 38.0 percent favorable opinion for Senator Ayotte, compared to Senator Shaheen’s 34.0 percent favorability rating. Furthermore, 20.6 percent of respondents reported an unfavorable opinion of Senator Ayotte compared to the 37.0 percent of respondents that reported an unfavorable opinion of Senator Shaheen.

5.1.2 Senate Election Match-Ups
Respondents were provided with a series of match-ups for the New Hampshire Senate. Respondents were asked to choose between the incumbent U.S. Senator Shaheen and four other potential Republican nominees. These candidates included former Massachusetts
Senator Scott Brown, Republican activist Karen Testerman, former New Hampshire Senator Bob Smith, and former New Hampshire state senator Jim Rubens. The results of each of the trial heats have Senator Shaheen ahead in all four races, but two of the races are very much within the margin of error and are therefore statistically indistinguishable. In a race against Scott Brown, 39.2 percent would vote for Senator Shaheen, 35.7 percent for Scott Brown, and 25.2 percent are unsure. In a race against Karen Testerman, 39.2 percent would vote for Senator Shaheen, 18.2 percent for Karen Testerman, and 42.7 percent are unsure. In a closer race against Bob Smith, 38.2 percent would vote for Senator Shaheen, 32.4 percent for Bob Smith, and 29.3 percent are unsure. And finally, in a race against Jim Rubens, 38.3 percent would vote for Senator Shaheen, 19.0 percent for Jim Rubens, and 43.0 percent are unsure. The following three charts display the overall trail heat responses for each race along with assessments of the Shaheen-Brown and Shaheen-Smith races by political party identification.

**Figure 13. 2014 Senate Match Ups**
5.2 2014 New Hampshire Gubernatorial Election
5.2.1 Hassan Favorability and Approval
Twenty-eight percent of respondents report having a favorable opinion of Governor Hassan, while 20 percent report an unfavorable opinion. Both of these were exceeded by the 40 percent of respondents reporting a neutral opinion; 12.5 percent are unsure.
Respondents have somewhat more definitive opinions of Governor Hassan’s job performance as 45 percent approve while only 20 percent disapprove; 35 percent of respondents were unsure. These numbers represent less uncertainty relative to last year, when 54 percent reported being unsure of Governor Hassan’s job performance. Both Hassan’s approval and disapproval rates have increased by about 10 percent from last year.

5.2.2 Election Match Ups
Respondents were asked about potential 2014 gubernatorial election match-ups between Governor Maggie Hassan and Walt Haverstein, and Maggie Hassan and Andrew Hemingway. In both match-ups, Governor Hassan enjoys a significant lead, but with a large share of respondents indicating that they are unsure. When asked to choose between Hassan and Hemingway, 40 percent of respondents chose Hassan and 20 chose Hemingway; 41 percent were unsure. When asked to choose between Hassan and Haverstein, 40 percent chose Hassan and 19 chose Haverstein; 41 percent were unsure.

**Figure 16. Hassan v. Haverstein**
To gauge the current political landscape in New Hampshire regarding the 2016 presidential election, respondents were asked whom they would support in matchups between Hillary Clinton as the Democratic nominee and Rand Paul, Mike Huckabee, Chris Christie, and Jeb Bush as the Republican nominees. The results are presented in the figures below. The Clinton-Christie match-up was presented in last year’s poll. At that time, Clinton received 37.1 percent support while Christie received 32.3 percent support.
Figure 18. 2016 Presidential Match-Ups

Figure 19. Paul v. Clinton
Figure 20. Bush v Clinton

Figure 21. Huckabee v. Clinton
When asked if there was another candidate for President that they would support, 80 percent of respondents did not have another candidate in mind at the time. The potential candidates mentioned by five or more respondents include: Ted Cruz, John McCain, Mitt Romney, Marco Rubio, Donald Trump, and Elizabeth Warren.

6. SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2014 New Hampshire State of the State Poll respondents are representative of the registered voter population of the state. Respondents are evenly divided by gender with 49.7 percent male and 50.3 percent female. On the partisan identification measure, the respondents closely reflect the voting population in New Hampshire with the plurality of respondents identifying as "undeclared" or independent (45 percent), 23.6 percent identifying as Democrats, and 29.6 percent identifying as Republicans. Just under three-quarters of the respondents are married (72 percent), while 8.2 percent are divorced, 5.3 percent are widowed, and 14.5 percent are single. Respondents reported their 2012 household income as follows: 13.7 percent earned less than $40,000, 40.8 percent earned between $40,000 and $100,000, and 34.7 percent earned more than $100,000. When asked how often respondents attend religious services, 21.9 percent attend once a week or more, 12.8 percent attend 1-2 times a month, 22.2 percent attend a couple of times a year, and 43.2 percent rarely or never attend religious services. The sample respondents are more highly educated than the New Hampshire general population with more than 60 percent of the respondents having college degrees (60.1 percent), including 17.7 percent with Masters degrees and 3.3 percent with doctoral degrees (e.g., M.D., J.D., Ph.D.). We have no comparable education level data for registered voters in the state, however.
7. METHODOLOGY

During the week of April 21-25, 2014, students from The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College conducted a telephone survey of a sample of registered voters in New Hampshire. Drawn randomly from a statewide database of New Hampshire registered voters, including registered voters with only cell phones, the respondents were asked a range of questions relating to the political, economic, and social state of affairs in New Hampshire and the country. Additionally, respondents were asked to select candidates for President in trial heats of the 2016 election and for Senate in trial heats of the 2014 election. The 46-question survey took approximately ten minutes to complete. Calls were made between the hours of 6:30 pm and 9:00 pm on Monday through Thursday evenings. Additional call-backs were made during daytime hours on Friday, April 25 when specified by respondents. Over the course of the week, callers made three attempts to contact each of the registered voters drawn in the sample. A total of 412 survey interviews were completed during the five-day calling period, yielding an error rate of +/-4.8 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

7.1 Sample Weighting
The poll sample includes a larger share of older individuals than New Hampshire’s registered voter population according to Census data. The poll sample is 15.5 percent age 18 to 44, 44.8 percent age 45 to 64, 22.9 percent age 65 to 74, and 16.8 percent age 75 and older. Census estimates of the New Hampshire registered voter population in 2010 are 35.6 percent age 18 to 44, 44.3 percent age 45 to 64, 12.0 percent age 65 to 74, and 8.1 percent age 75 and older. The poll sample is weighted to reflect these differences in age group distribution.