



CRITICAL INSIGHTS

RESEARCH FOR PRECISE PRAGMATIC DIRECTION

Critical Insights on Maine[™] Tracking Survey

~ Fall 2011~

Residents' Views on Politics, the Economy,
& Issues Facing the State of Maine

October 2011

Focus Groups • Surveys • Public Opinion Polling

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Introduction



Background & Methodology

- Each Spring and Fall, Critical Insights conducts the *Critical Insights on Maine*TM Tracking Survey, a comprehensive, statewide public opinion survey of registered voters which covers a variety of topics of interest to business, government, and the general public.
 - In addition to general interest items (the results of which are released to the media as a public service) the survey also includes a number of proprietary items included in the poll on behalf of sponsoring entities, with results of those items released only to those sponsors.
- For the current wave of the study, Critical Insights completed a total of 600 telephone interviews with randomly selected likely voters across the state between October 18-23, 2011.
 - With a sample of 600 interviews, results presented here have an associated sampling error of +/- 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
 - All interviews were conducted with self-reported registered and likely voters; final data was statistically weighted according to relevant demographics to reflect the voter base in Maine.
 - On average, the entire survey instrument – including both general interest items and all subscriber questions – was 17 minutes in administrative length.
- This document presents results of general interest questions which Critical Insights makes public to the media.
 - Where appropriate, comparisons of current results are made with findings from past iterations of the *Critical Insights on Maine*TM Tracking Survey.



Research Highlights



*Issues Facing Maine &
Perceptions of the Economy*



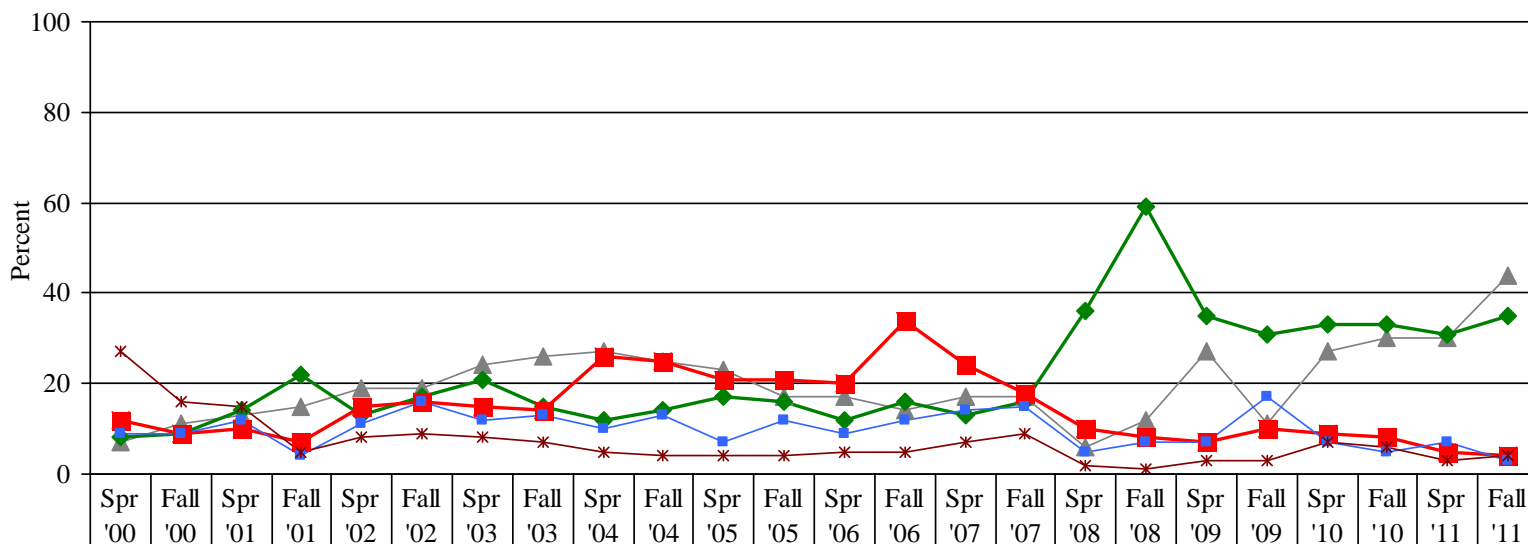
Perspectives on Issues Facing the State of Maine

- While concerns about the **economy** remain consistent with results observed in the past several iterations of the *Critical Insights on Maine™* Tracking Survey, **unemployment** surpasses economic concerns and emerges as the most important issue facing Maine at this time, cited by more than 4-in-10 residents.
 - Specific concerns about **unemployment** were noted by only 11% of Maine residents two years ago, but has since risen steadily to hit an 11-year high of 44% for the *Critical Insights on Maine™* Tracking Survey.
 - As was observed in previous iterations of the survey, despite continuing concerns, unprompted mentions regarding the **economy** continue to hover at about half the frequency noted in the Fall of 2008, when economic concerns reached a high of 59%.
 - Interestingly, while these concerns tend to be equally prevalent among all resident subgroups, broad concerns about the economy are significantly higher among more affluent Mainers (\$75,000 or more annually).
 - **Taxation, education, and healthcare** round out the top concerns mentioned by Mainers, with results for taxation and healthcare concerns dropping when compared to the previous wave of *Critical Insights on Maine™*.
 - **Taxation** is an issue particularly with male residents, while those in the Northern region of the state express more concern than others over **education**.



Issues Facing the State of Maine

*In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Maine today? **



| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| ▲ Unemployment | 7 | 11 | 13 | 15 | 19 | 19 | 24 | 26 | 27 | 25 | 23 | 17 | 17 | 14 | 17 | 17 | 6 | 12 | 27 | 11 | 27 | 30 | 30 | 44 |
| ◆ Economy | 8 | 9 | 14 | 22 | 13 | 17 | 21 | 15 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 16 | 12 | 16 | 13 | 16 | 36 | 59 | 35 | 31 | 33 | 33 | 31 | 35 |
| ■ Taxes | 12 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 15 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 26 | 25 | 21 | 21 | 20 | 34 | 24 | 18 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| ■ Health care | 9 | 9 | 12 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 12 | 13 | 10 | 13 | 7 | 12 | 9 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 17 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 3 |
| * Education | 27 | 16 | 15 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 4 |

* Top responses shown.



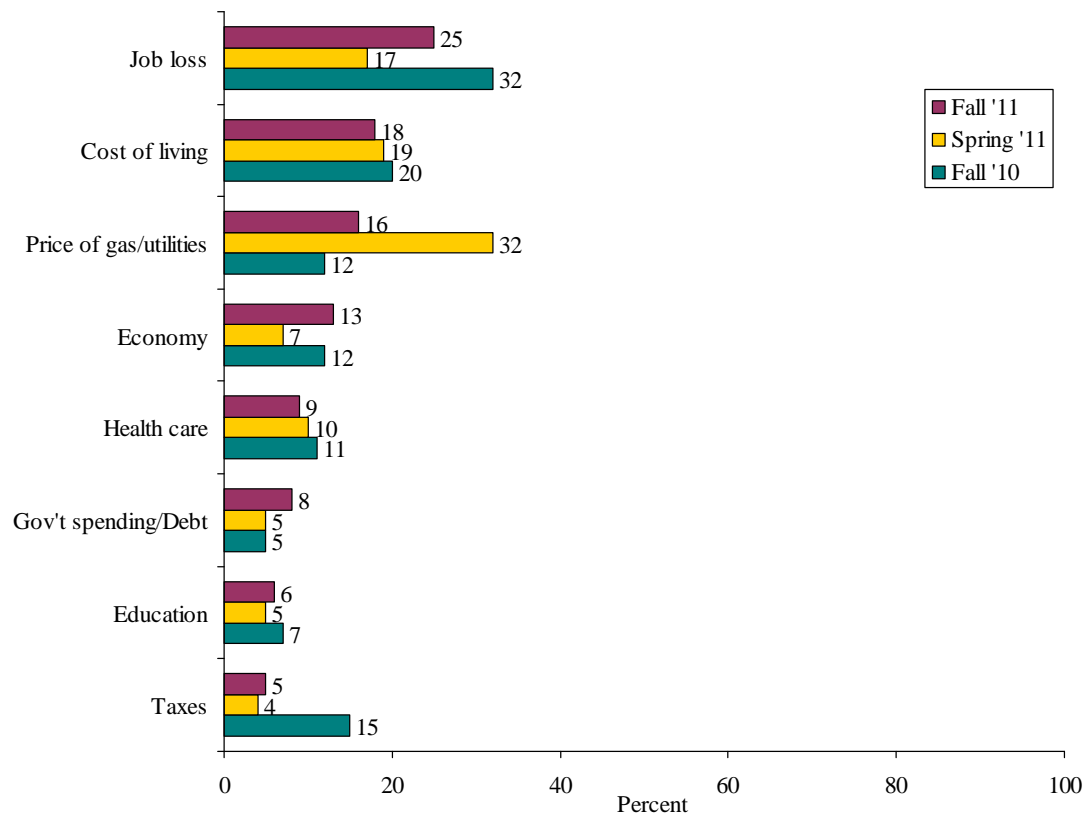
Perspectives on Near-Term Economic Concerns

- When voters were asked to cite the specific economic concern that will be causing them the most worry over the next six months, the issue of job loss (mentioned by fully one-quarter of residents) rose to the top spot again as it had in the Fall 2010 wave of *Critical Insights on Maine*TM – not surprisingly given current concerns about unemployment as an overall issue facing Maine.
 - Other chief financial concerns in the near term include the overall cost of living (18%) – remaining relatively stable with results observed in other recent waves of the survey – and concerns about gas and utility prices (16%).
 - These results are a departure from what was observed in the Spring ‘11 survey, when in a bit of a reversal, concern over gas prices was 32% and concern over job loss was 17%.
 - While results tend to be evenly distributed among resident subgroups, the issue of gas and utility costs is of particular concern to less affluent residents and those who reside in Northern Maine.
- Similarly, when residents were asked specifically to note their level of concern over the next 12 months that they or someone else in the household might be out of work, nearly 3-in-10 claimed to be concerned.
 - Concern was most acute among Mainers with a lower socio-economic status.



Near-Term Economic Concerns

As you think about the next 6 months what economic or financial situations concern you the MOST?

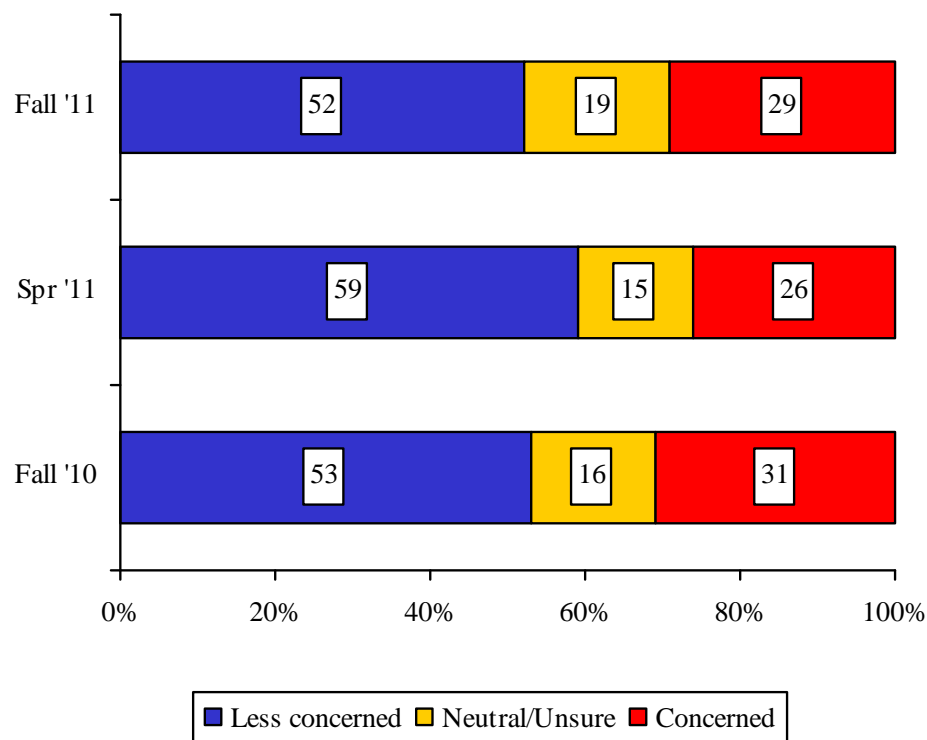


* Top responses shown. Multiple responses accepted.



Concern Over Job Loss

How concerned are you that in the next 12 months you or someone else in your household might be out of work and looking for a job?





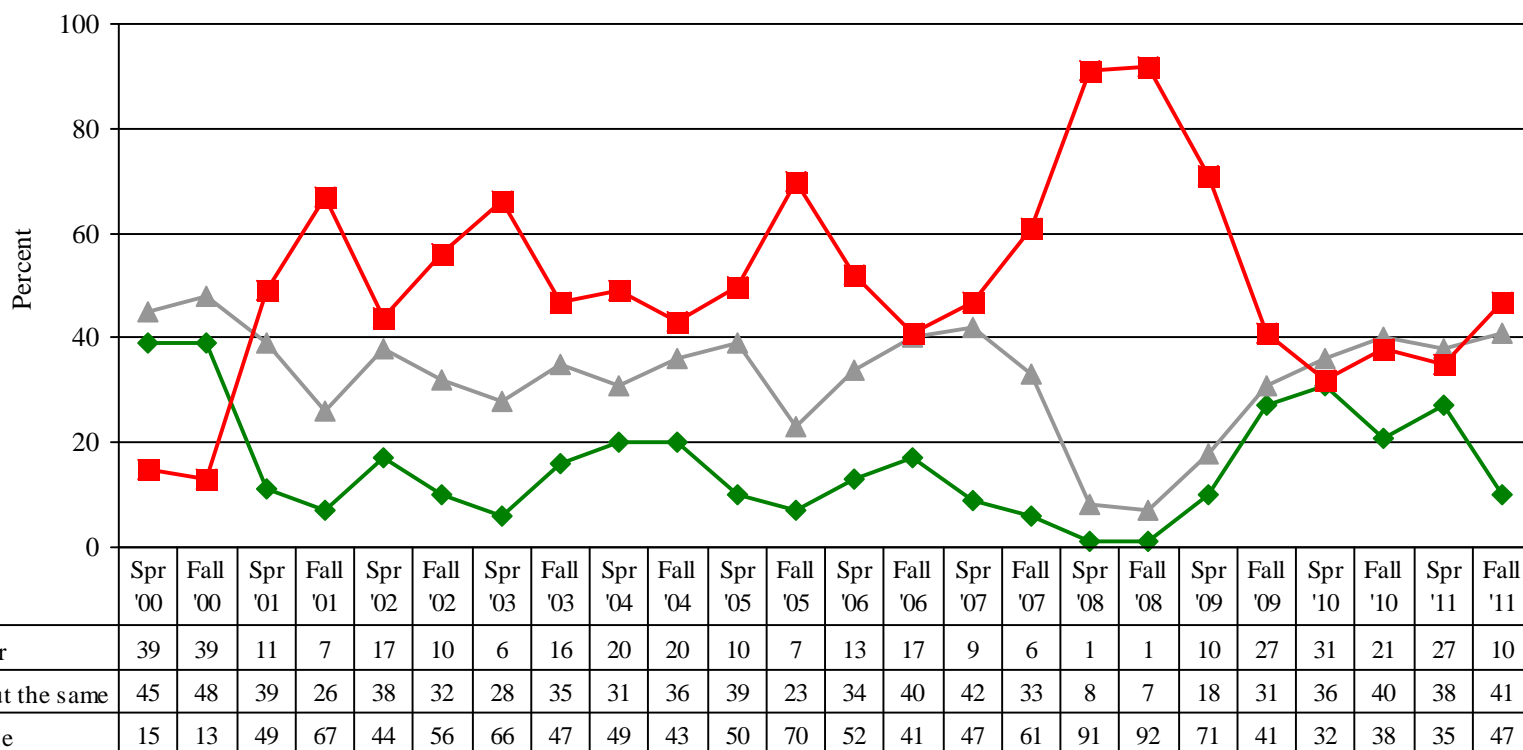
Maine Residents' Views on the Economy

- In a noticeably negative shift from recent waves of *Critical Insights on Maine™*, only one-tenth of residents feel that the economy is doing better than it was 12 months ago (down from 27% in the Spring 2011 survey), while 47% feel it is doing worse (up from 35% in Spring '11).
 - The proportion of poll respondents saying the economy is “about the same” as it was a year ago is comparable to results from recent waves of the survey.
- Looking ahead to the coming year, nearly one-third of Mainers (30%) anticipate things will improve – comparable to results from the most recent surveys.
 - The proportion of residents expecting things to be “worse” in 12 months is almost identical to Spring '11 results, showing a minor uptick since the Fall 2010 survey.
 - Pessimism about both the current and future state of the economy is highest among residents 45 years of age or older.
- Residents' overall sense of economic pessimism is also reflected in their estimates of the timing for economic recovery, with fully two-thirds (67%) noting that they believe the recession will last at least another two years.



Current State of the Economy

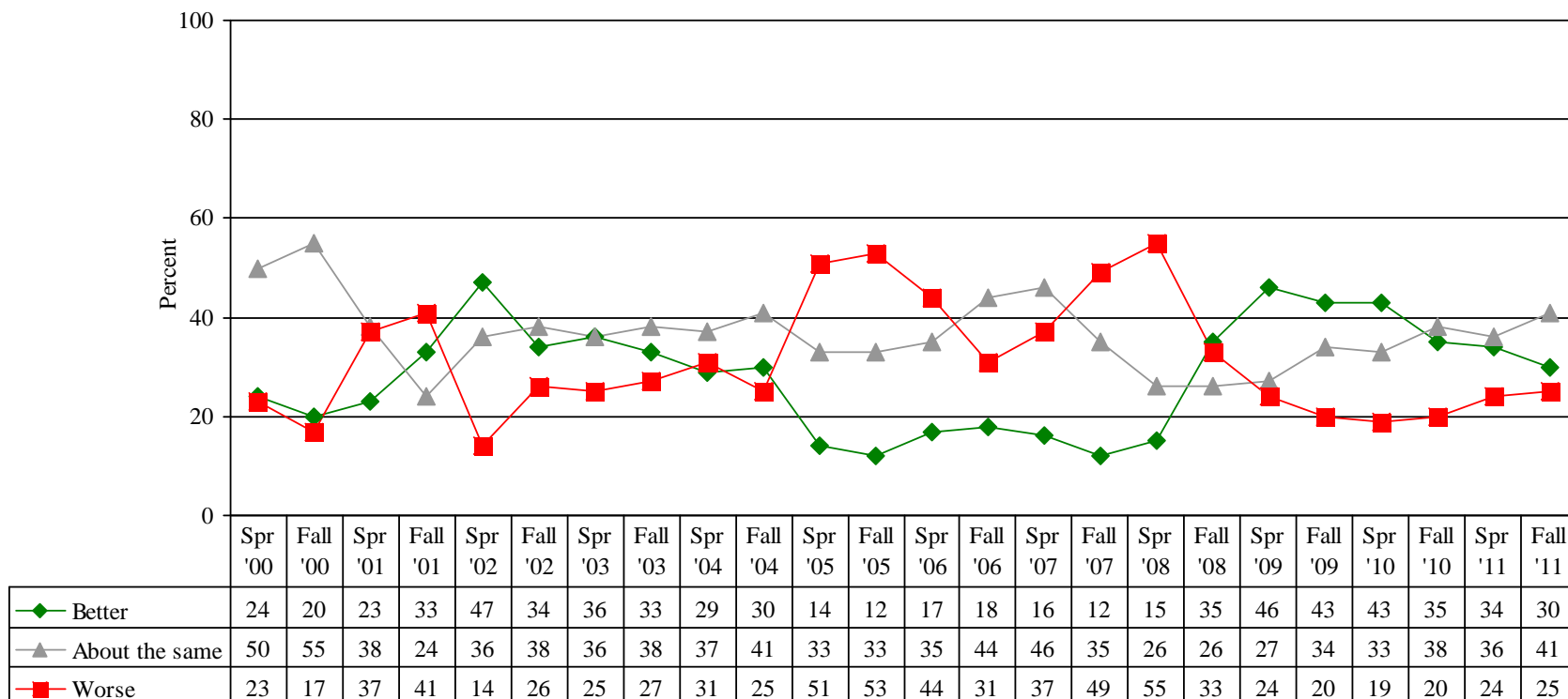
Compared with 12 months ago, how would you describe the overall status of the economy? Would you say it is...





Future State of the Economy

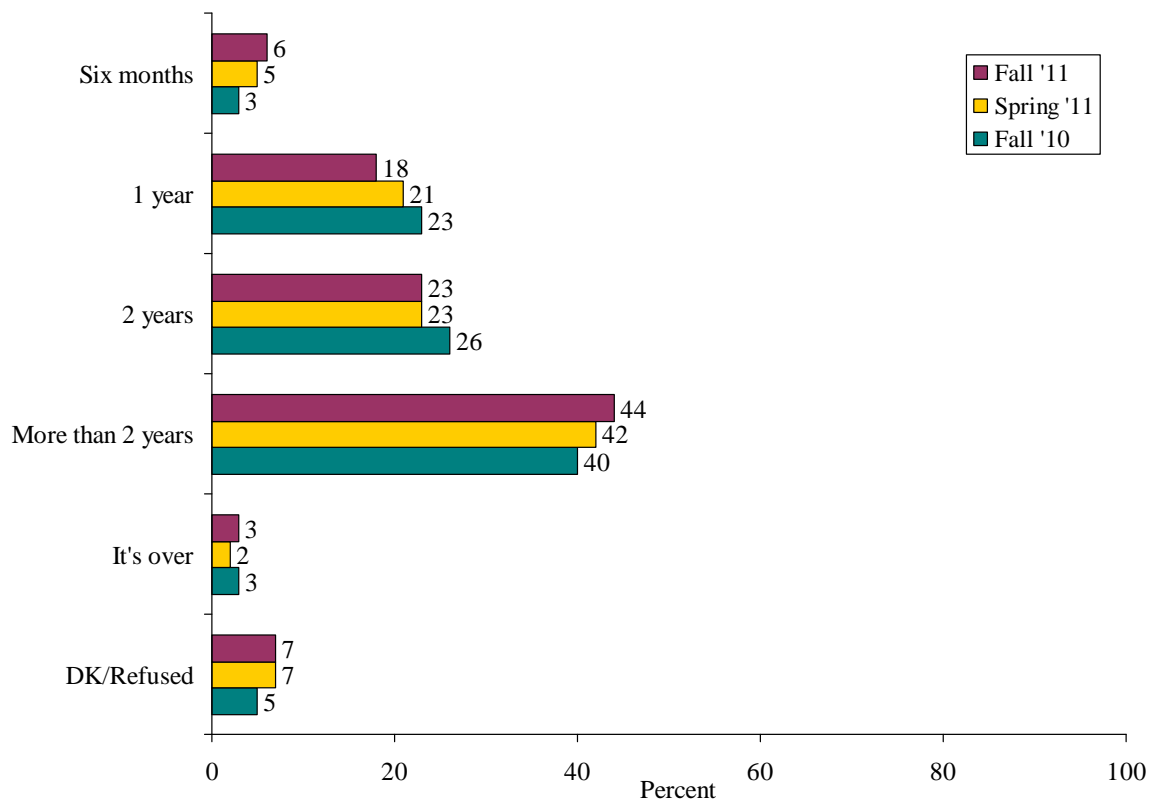
Now think about the future of the economy. In the next 12 months, do you think the economy will be . . .





Length of the Recession

How much longer do you think the current recession will last: Six months, 1 year, 2 years or More than 2 years?





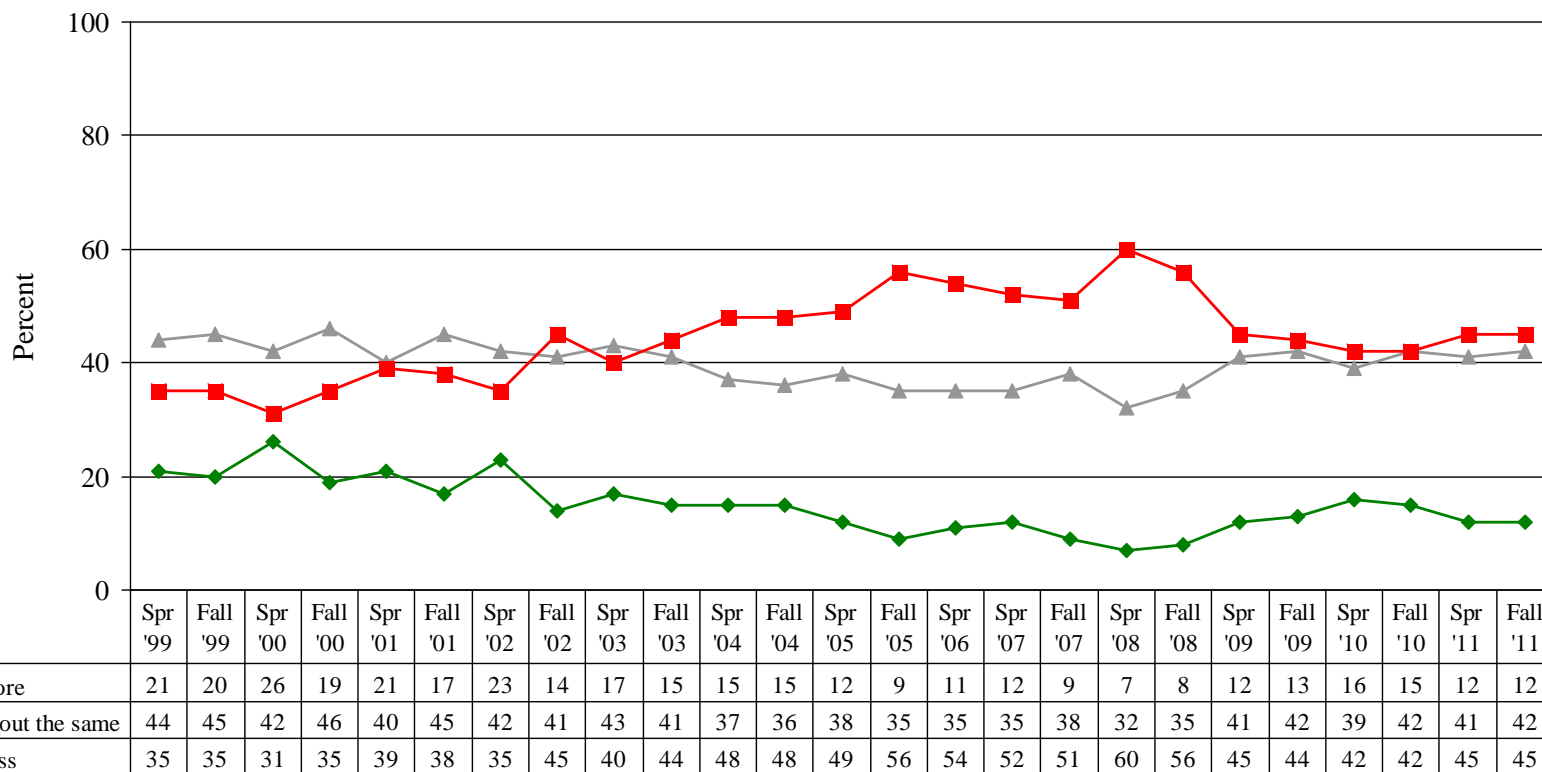
Maine Residents' Personal Household Financial Situation

- Despite the economic downturn and employment concerns, Maine residents' ability to save – a key indicator of personal and household financial health – has remained relatively stable over the past two years and is nearly identical to Spring '11 results.
 - Only a small bloc of residents (12%) are saving more than they did last year, and the proportion of residents saving less hovers at 45%.
 - Among different income brackets, lower-income households are finding it harder to save than middle- and upper-income households; indeed, more than half (51%) of households making under \$50k say they are saving less than they did last year.
- Like personal savings, results for anticipated levels of holiday spending have also remained stable over time.
 - Nearly half of residents polled (49%) suggest that their holiday spending this year will be less than in '10; this is particularly true among lower- and middle-income residents.
 - A comparable proportion of Mainers (45%) say they will be spending about the same amount as last year, especially higher-income residents.
 - Notably, very few residents claim that they will be spending more than last year during the upcoming holiday season (4%).



Household Financial Situation: *Personal Savings*

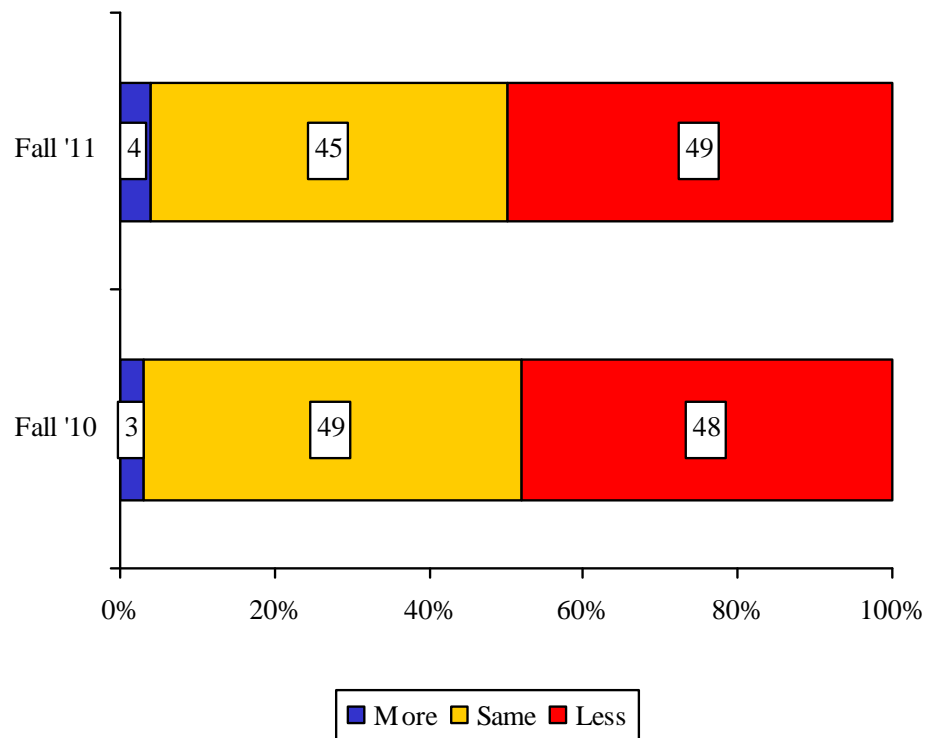
Compared to last year, would you say your household is putting more into personal savings, about the same amount, or saving less?





Intended Holiday Spending

*Thinking about the upcoming holiday season, are you planning to spend **MORE** than you did last year on holiday gifts, will you spend about the **SAME** as you did last year, or will you spend **LESS** than you did last year?*





*Observations on
National and State Politics*



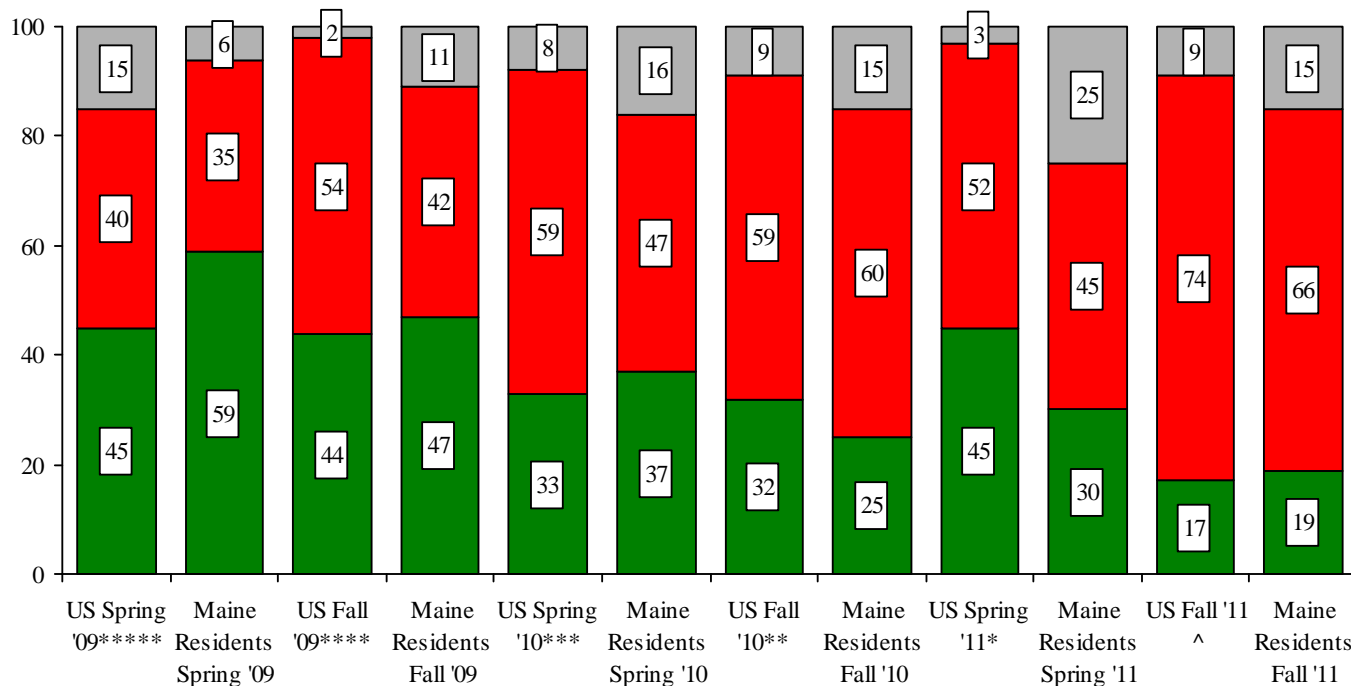
Maine Residents' Perspectives on the Direction of the Nation

- Pessimism concerning the nation's overall direction has intensified over the past six months, both among Maine residents and the country as a whole.
 - Indeed, only 19% of Maine residents and 17% of U.S. residents say the country is headed in the right direction; by comparison, 66% of Mainers and 74% of U.S. residents say the country is on the wrong track.
 - Democrats and the youngest residents have the most positive outlook, while Republicans, Independents, and Mainers age 35 or older tend to be more pessimistic regarding the nation's direction.
- Maine residents are more optimistic about the direction of the state than they are the nation as whole, with fully 4-in-10 stating that the state is headed in the right direction (up 17 percentage points since last spring).
 - An equal proportion of residents (40%) feel that the state is heading in the wrong direction.
 - Almost half of Mainers who state that Maine is going in the right direction attribute their views to the job the Governor is doing.
 - Among those who feel that that stat is headed in the wrong direction, 37% attribute their views to the Governor and 31% to the bad economy and lack of jobs.
- It is interesting to note that while Democrats are more likely to feel that the nation is heading in the right direction, Republicans are more likely to suggest that the state is heading in the right direction.



Direction of the Nation: *Maine vs. U.S.*

All in all, do you think things in the nation are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?



^ Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, Oct. 6-10, 2011

*Source: AP-GfK Poll. May 5-9, 2011

**Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll. Oct. 14-18, 2010

***Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, March 11, 13-14, 2010

****Source: Washington Post/ABC News poll, Oct. 15-18, 2009

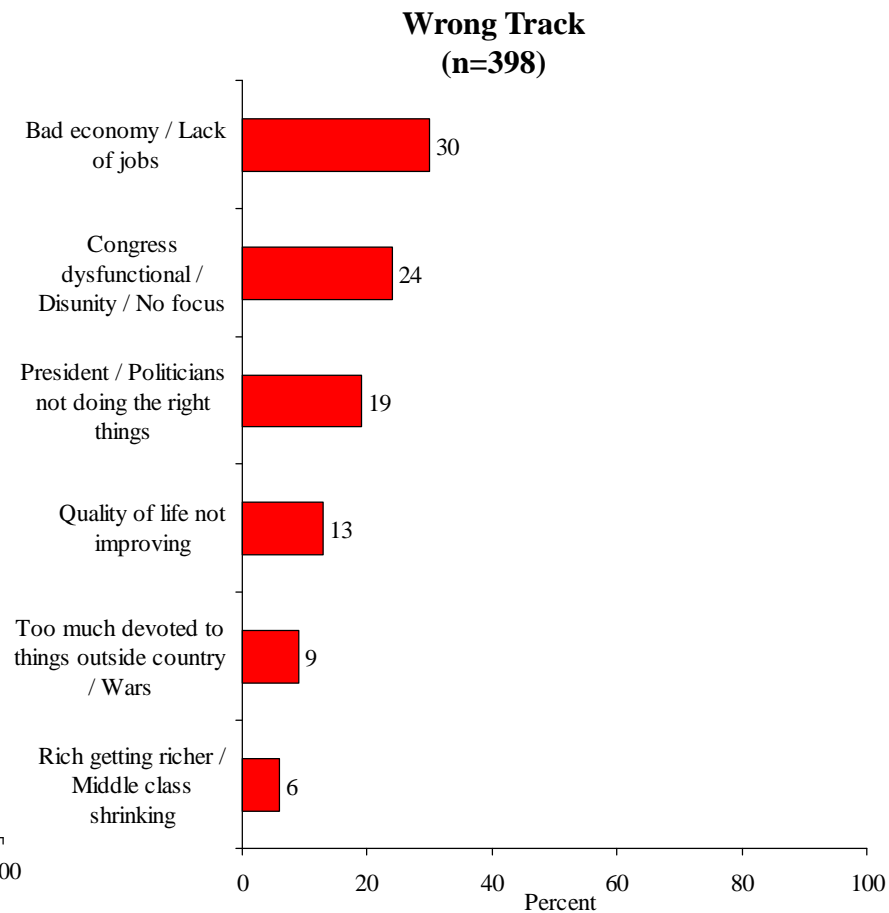
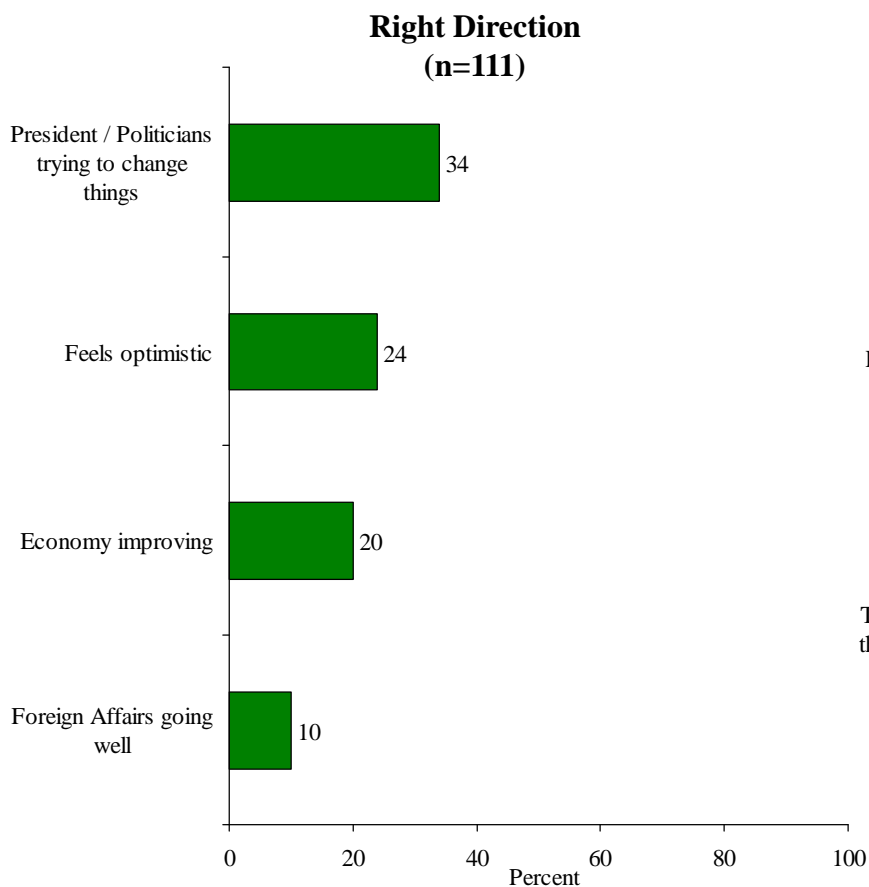
*****Source: CBS News poll, May 6-12, 2009

■ Right Direction ■ Wrong track ■ Unsure



Reasons for Nation Heading in Right/Wrong Direction

Why do you say that?

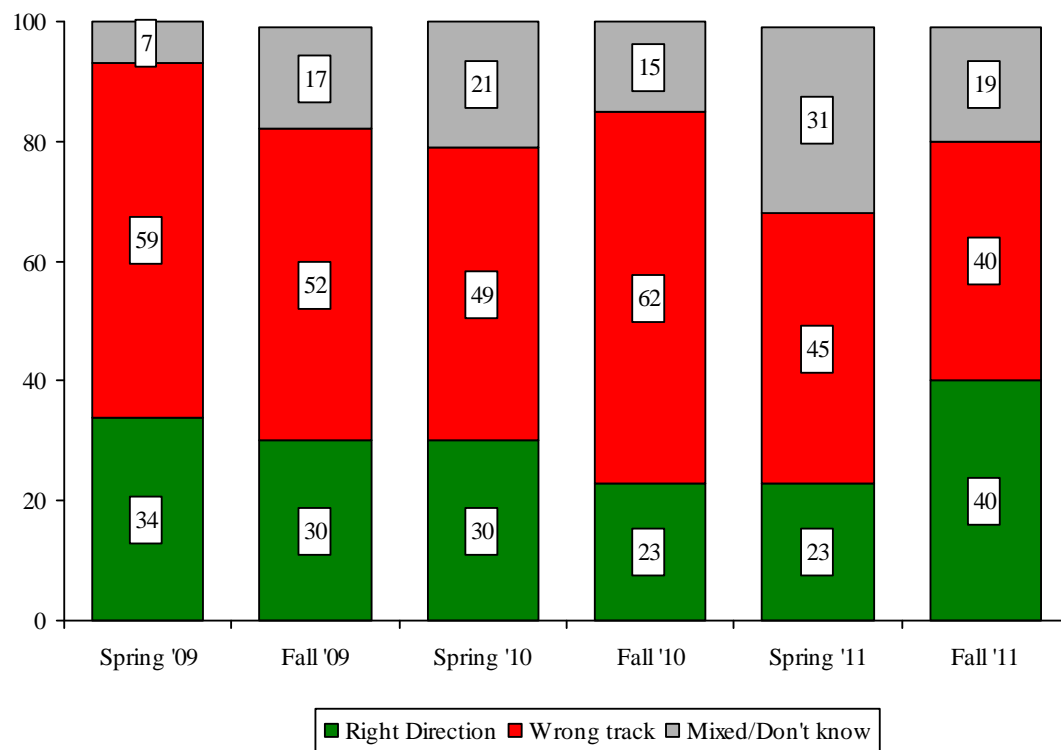


* Top responses shown. Multiple responses accepted.



Direction of the State of Maine

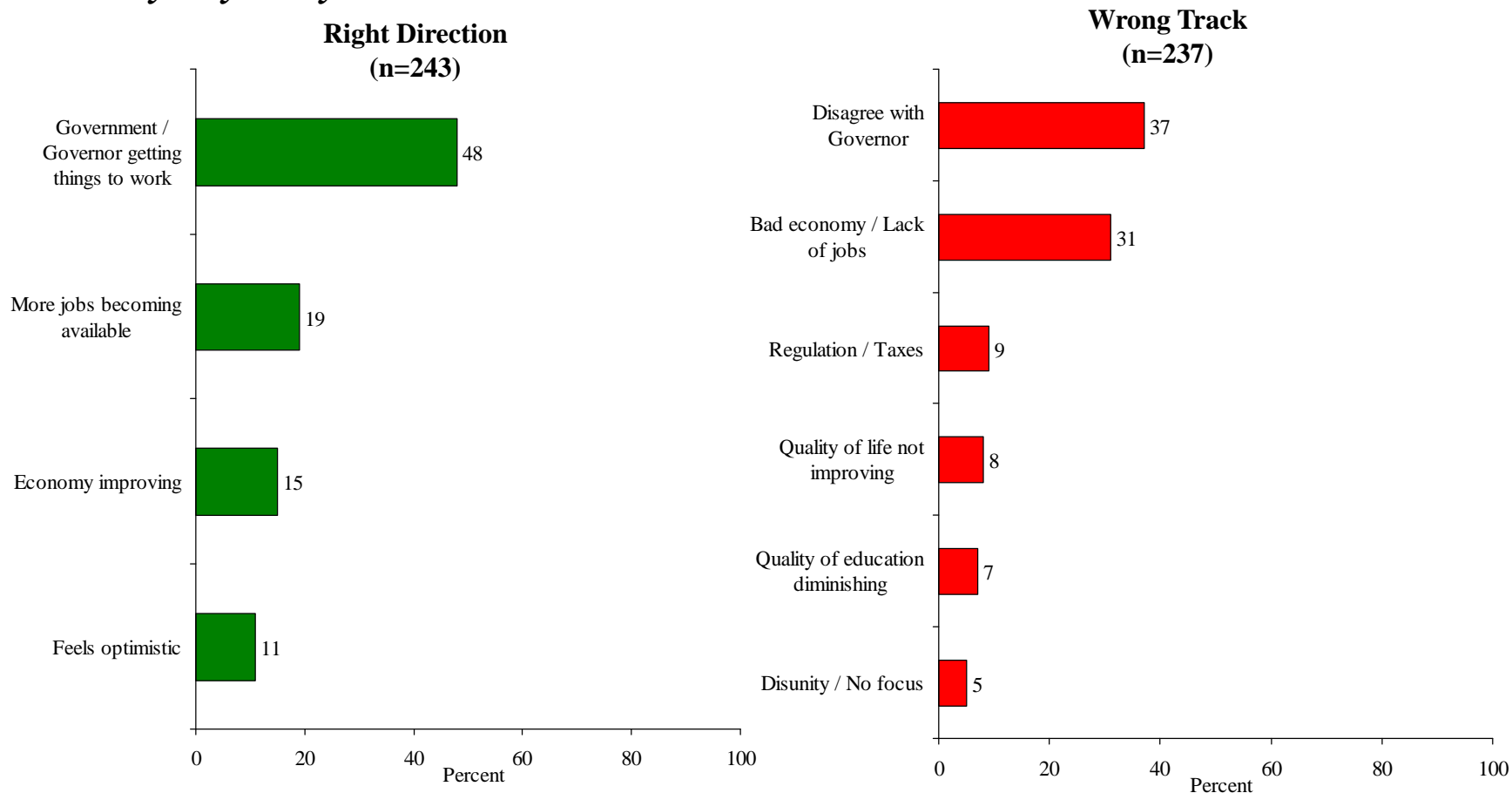
All in all, do you think things in Maine are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?





Reasons for State Heading in Right/Wrong Direction

Why do you say that?



* Top responses shown. Multiple responses accepted.



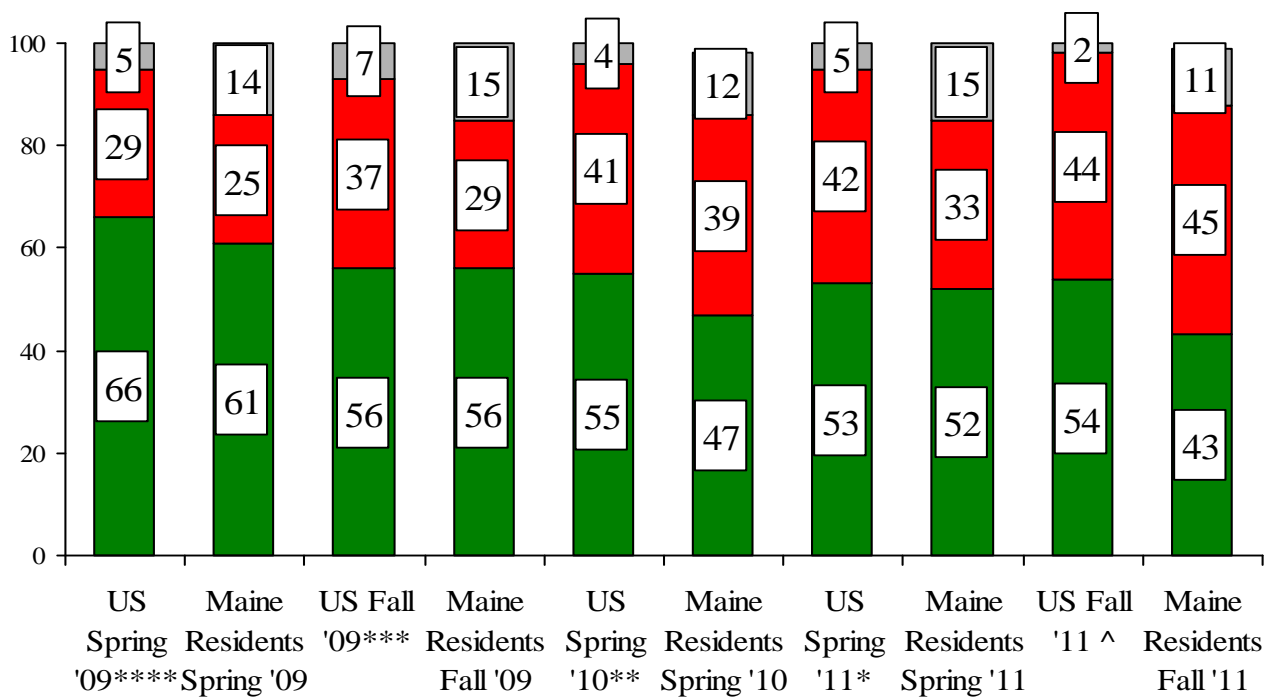
Maine Residents' Views on President Obama

- President Obama's favorability ratings among Maine residents is the lowest it has been during his Presidency (43%).
 - Maine residents' favorability toward the President is markedly lower than the national results (54%).
 - About 7-in-10 Democrats (71%) have a favorable view of the president, compared to three-quarters of Republicans (76%) who have an unfavorable view.
- Only 36% of Maine residents have a positive view of how the President is handling the economy and more than half (54%) disapprove, similar to national results.
- Also on par with the country as a whole, half of Mainers polled do not approve of how the President is handling taxes.
 - Again, approval of the President's performance is closely tied to political party affiliation.



Presidential Favorability Ratings: *Maine vs. U.S.*

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of President Barack Obama?



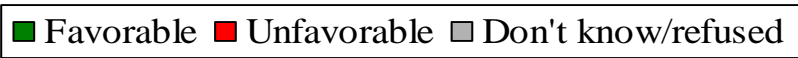
^ Source: ABC-GfK poll, Oct. 13-17, 2011

*Source: Daily Kos poll, April 28-May 1, 2011

** Source: Daily Kos poll, May 3-6, 2010

*** Source: Daily Kos poll, Oct. 19-22, 2009

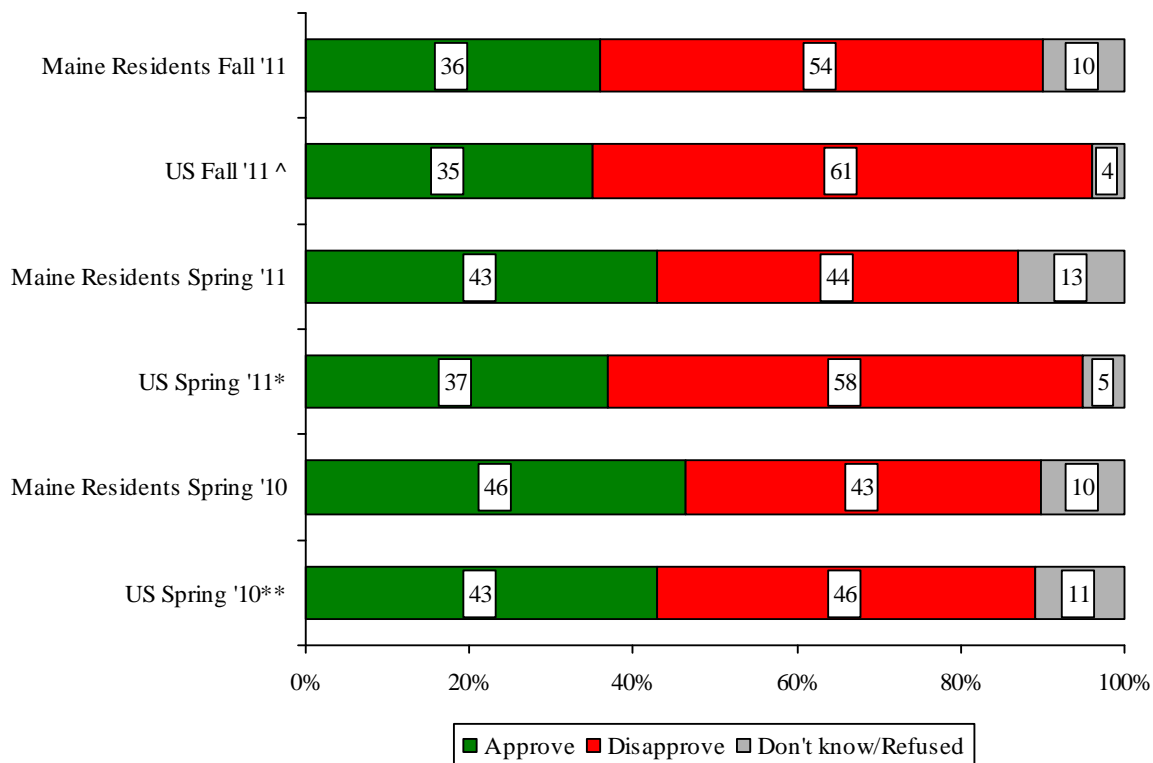
**** Source: Daily Kos poll, May 18-21, 2009





Assessment of Presidential Job Performance: *Economy*

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



^ Source: ABC News/Washington Post poll, Sept. 29-Oct. 2, 2011

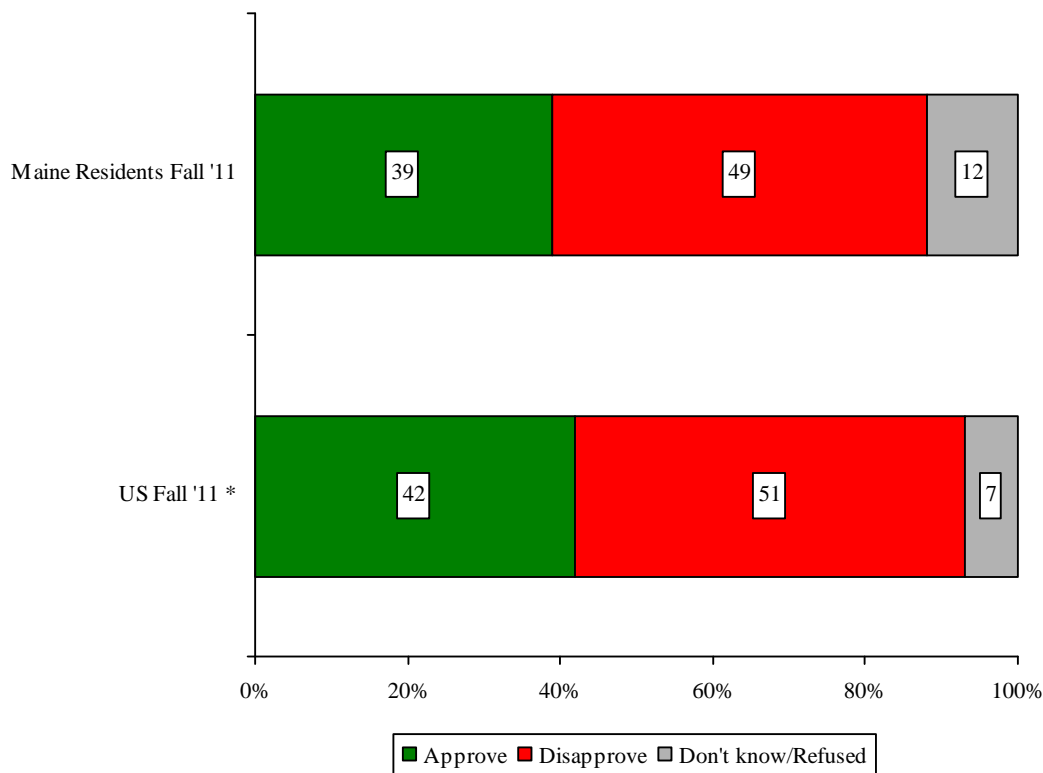
* Source: NBC News poll, May 5-7, 2011

** Source: CBS News/New York Times poll, April 5-12, 2010



Assessment of Presidential Job Performance: *Taxes*

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

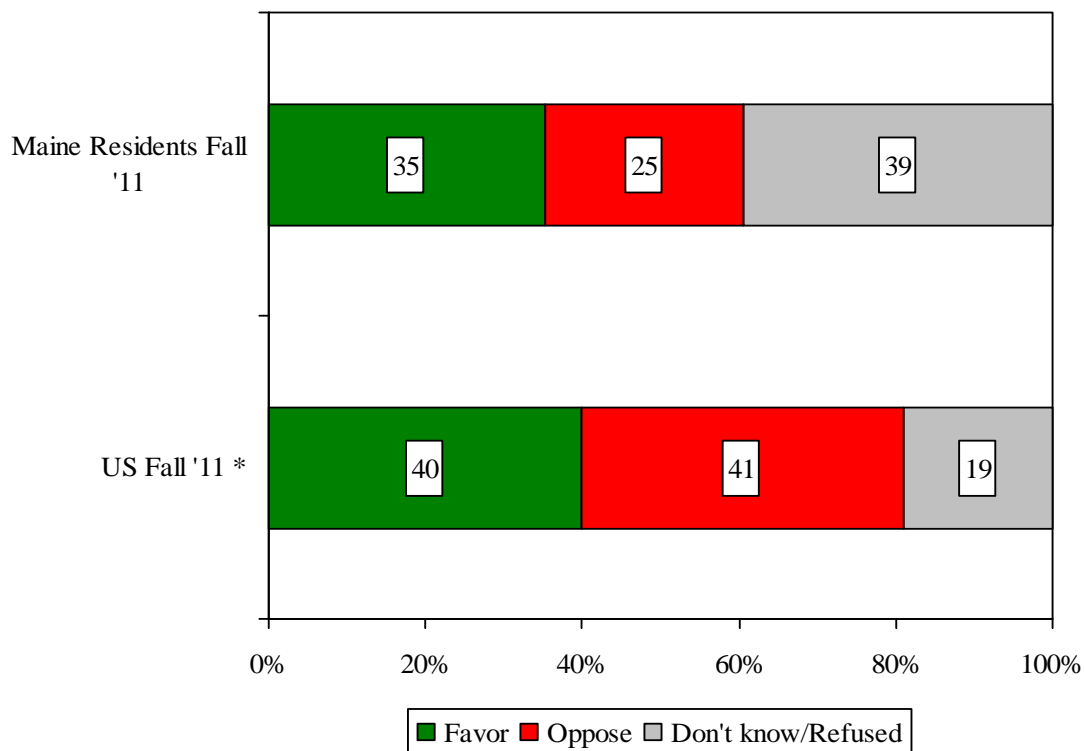


*Source: ABC News/Washington News poll, Sept. 29-Oct. 2, 2011



Views Toward Israel/Palestinians

Do you favor or oppose the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip?



* Source: CNN/ORC poll, Sept. 23-25, 2011



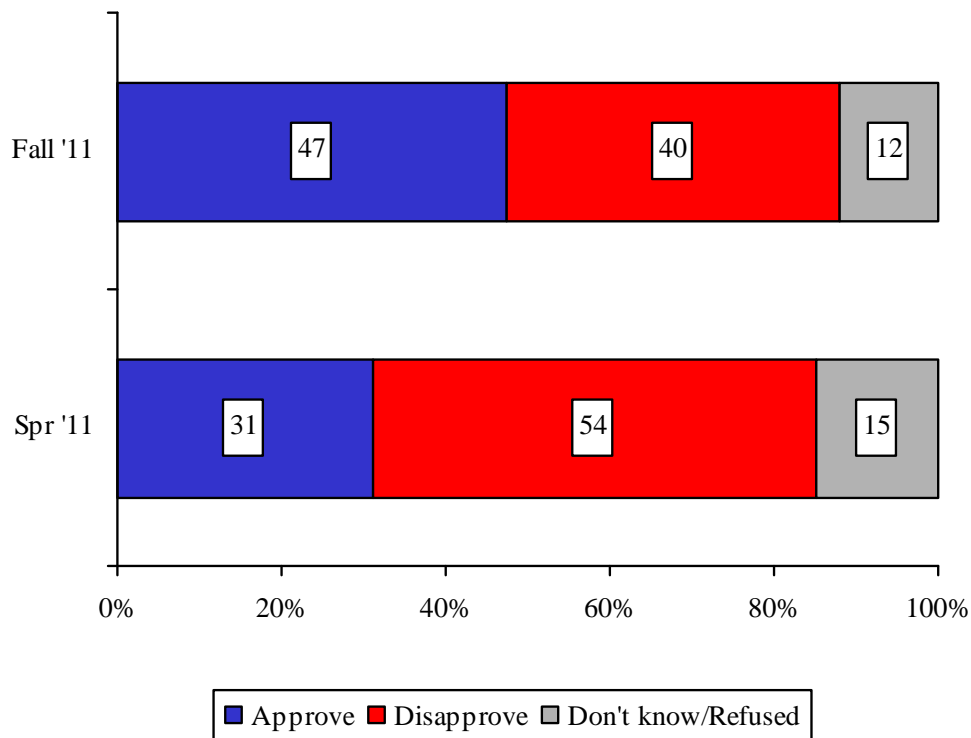
Approval Ratings for Governor Paul LePage

- Nine months into his tenure as Governor, 47% of Mainers express approval for the job Governor LePage is doing as Governor – up 16 percentage points from the Spring 2011 *Critical Insights on Maine™* survey – fully 4-in-10 disapprove of the job the Governor is doing.
 - While 71% of Republicans approve of Governor LePage’s job performance, 62% of Democrats disapprove. Independents’ views of the Governor are mixed.
 - Men, less highly educated Mainers, and the youngest residents polled are more likely than other subgroups to approve of the job the Governor is doing.
 - Conversely, women, college graduates, and residents who are 35 years of age or older are more likely to disapprove of the Governor’s job performance.



Approval Ratings of Governor Paul LePage

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Governor LePage is handling his job as governor of Maine?





Voter Preferences



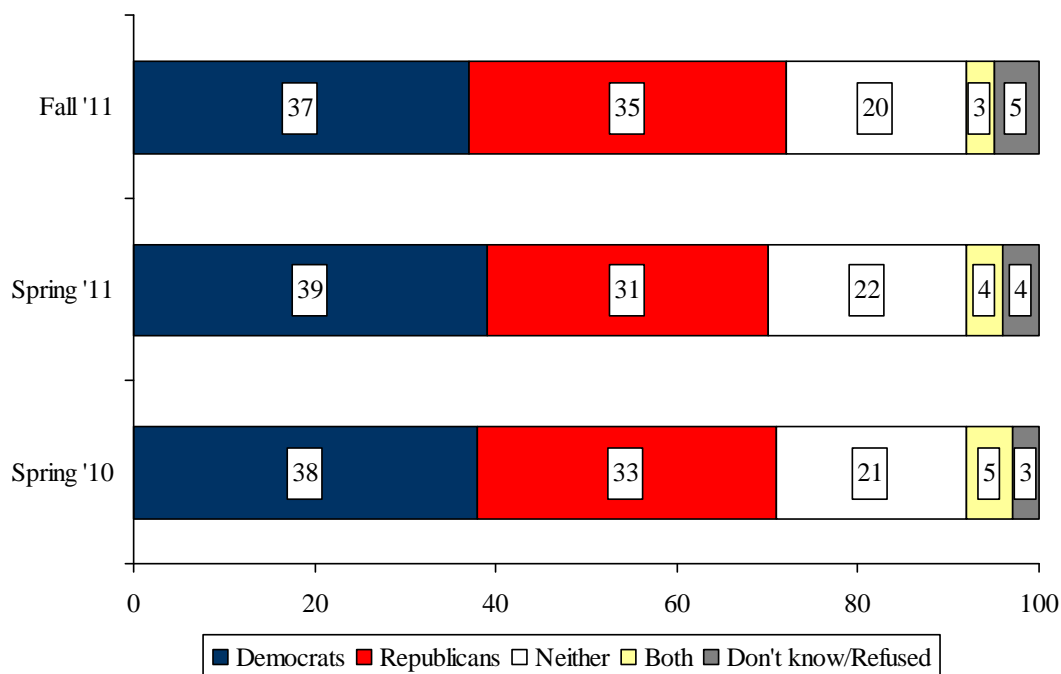
Stated Voter Political Affiliation

| <i>In what political party are you registered to vote?</i> | Percent of Sample |
|--|--------------------------|
| Democrat | 33% |
| Republican | 31 |
| Independent | 31 |
| Don't know/Refused | 4 |



Party That Best Serves Interests

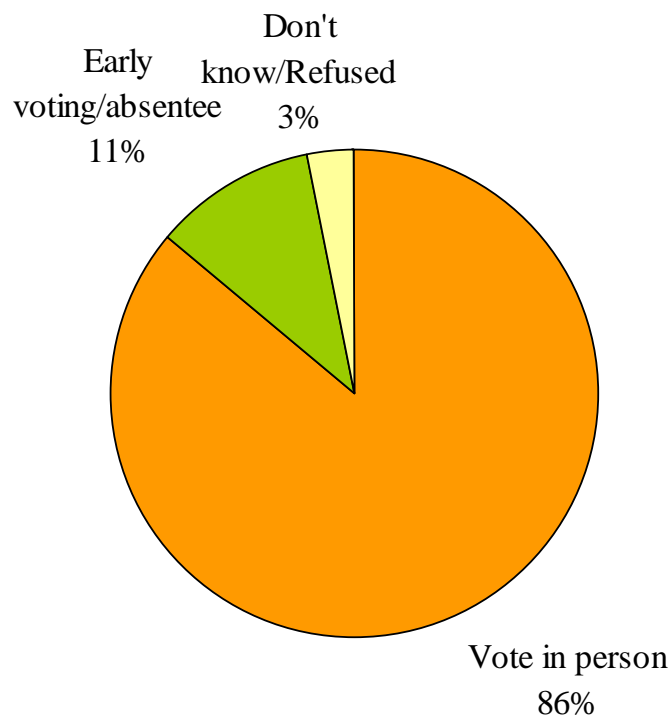
Which of the following two political parties – Democrat or Republican – do you feel best serves your interests?





Stated Voter Plans for November 8th

Do you think you'll vote in person at your polling place on Election Day, or vote before Election Day by early voting or mail-in/absentee ballot?





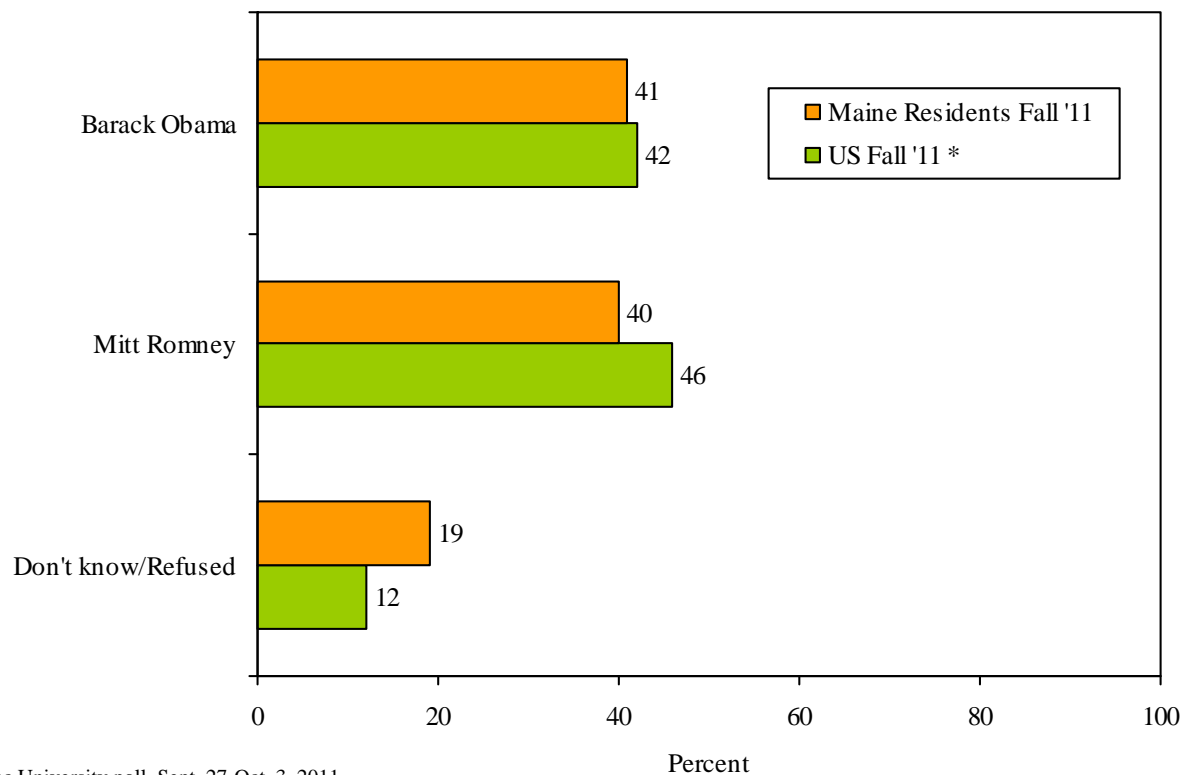
Presidential Race

- Consistent with Presidential approval ratings noted previously in this report, more than 4-in-10 Mainers say they would vote for Barack Obama over Republican candidates Mitt Romney or Rick Perry if the 2012 election were held today.
 - Results for President Obama are nearly identical to national results, but Mainers tend to be more indecisive than the country as a whole rather than claiming they would vote for either Romney or Perry.
 - Older and more highly educated Mainers are significantly more likely than others to say they would vote for President Obama.



Presidential Voter Preference: *Obama vs. Romney*

If the 2012 election for president were being held today, and the candidates were Barack Obama the Democrat and Mitt Romney the Republican, for whom would you vote?

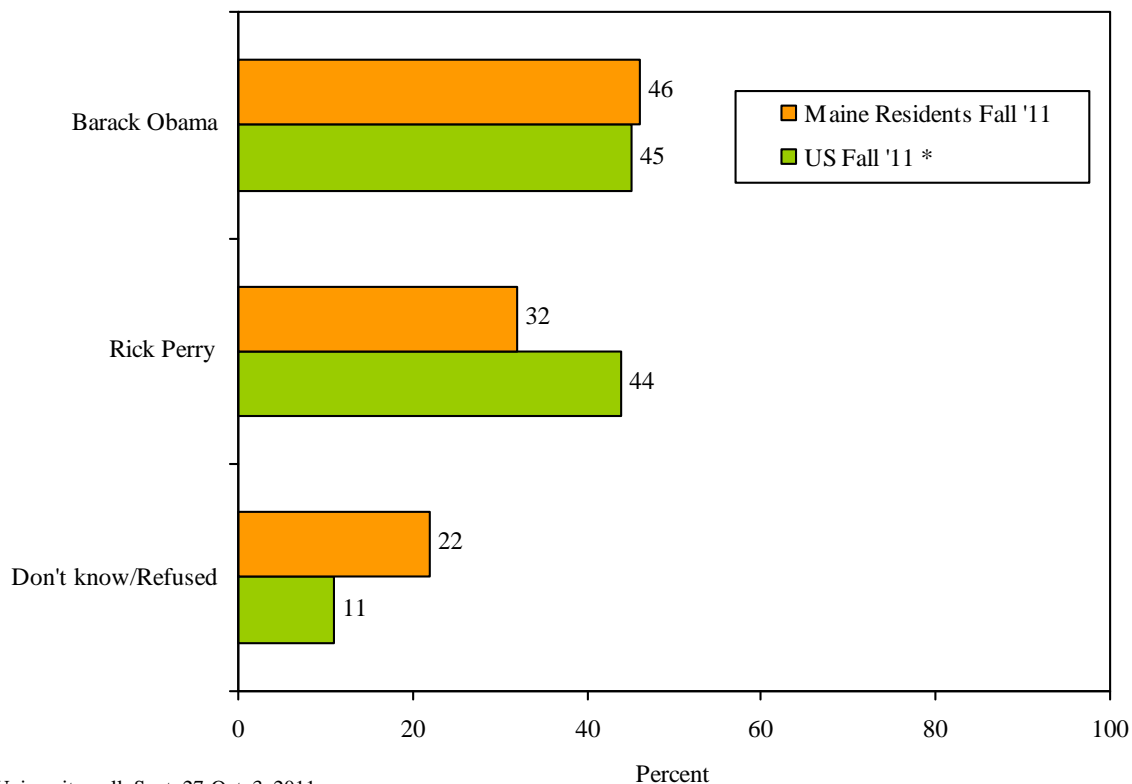


* Source: Quinnipiac University poll, Sept. 27-Oct. 3, 2011



Presidential Voter Preference: *Obama vs. Perry*

If the 2012 election for president were being held today, and the candidates were Barack Obama the Democrat and Rick Perry the Republican, for whom would you vote?



* Source: Quinnipiac University poll, Sept. 27-Oct. 3, 2011



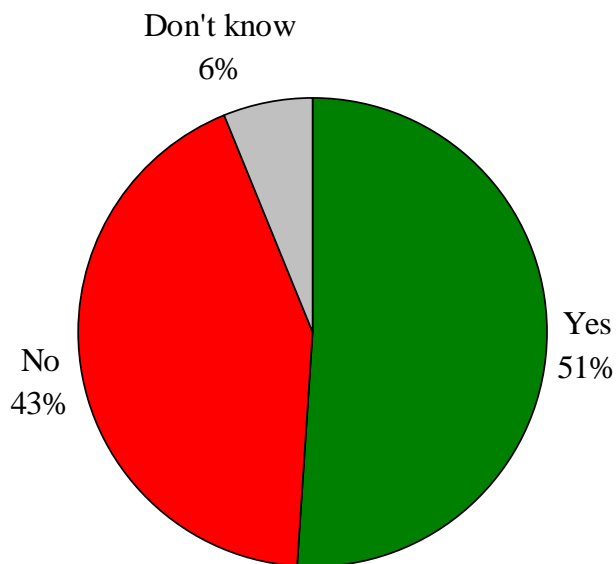
November 8th Referendum Questions

- Overall, just over half of Maine voters polled (51%) report that they intend to vote ‘Yes’ on Question 1, that would repeal the requirement that new voters register at least two business days prior to an election.
 - Support for this ballot question is highest among college-educated residents and Democrats.
- Of the remaining voters, 43% state that they intend to vote ‘No’ and 6% are undecided.
- Results are mixed on Question 4 which would amend the Constitution of Maine to change the years of redistricting the Maine Legislature, congressional districts, and county commissioner districts.
 - Indeed, 32% of voters say they intend to vote ‘Yes,’ 33% would vote ‘No,’ and 34% are undecided.
 - Support for this ballot question is highest among men and Mainers with a higher socio-economic status.



Stated Voter Intentions on Question 1

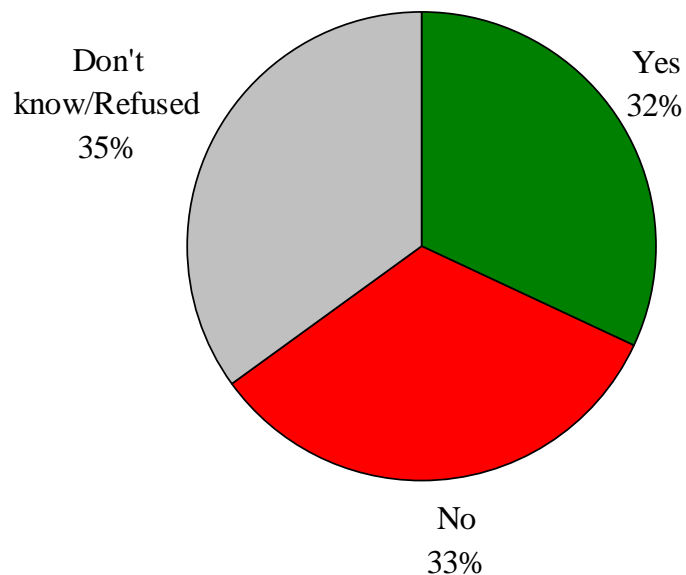
“Do you want to reject the section of Chapter 399 of the Public Laws of 2011 that requires new voters to register to vote at least two business days prior to an election?” If you were voting today, please tell me how you vote: Yes or No.





Stated Voter Intentions on Question 4

“Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to change the years of redistricting the Maine Legislature, congressional districts and county commissioner districts after 2013 from 2023 and every 10th year thereafter to 2021 and every 10th year thereafter?” If you were voting today, please tell me how you vote: Yes or No.





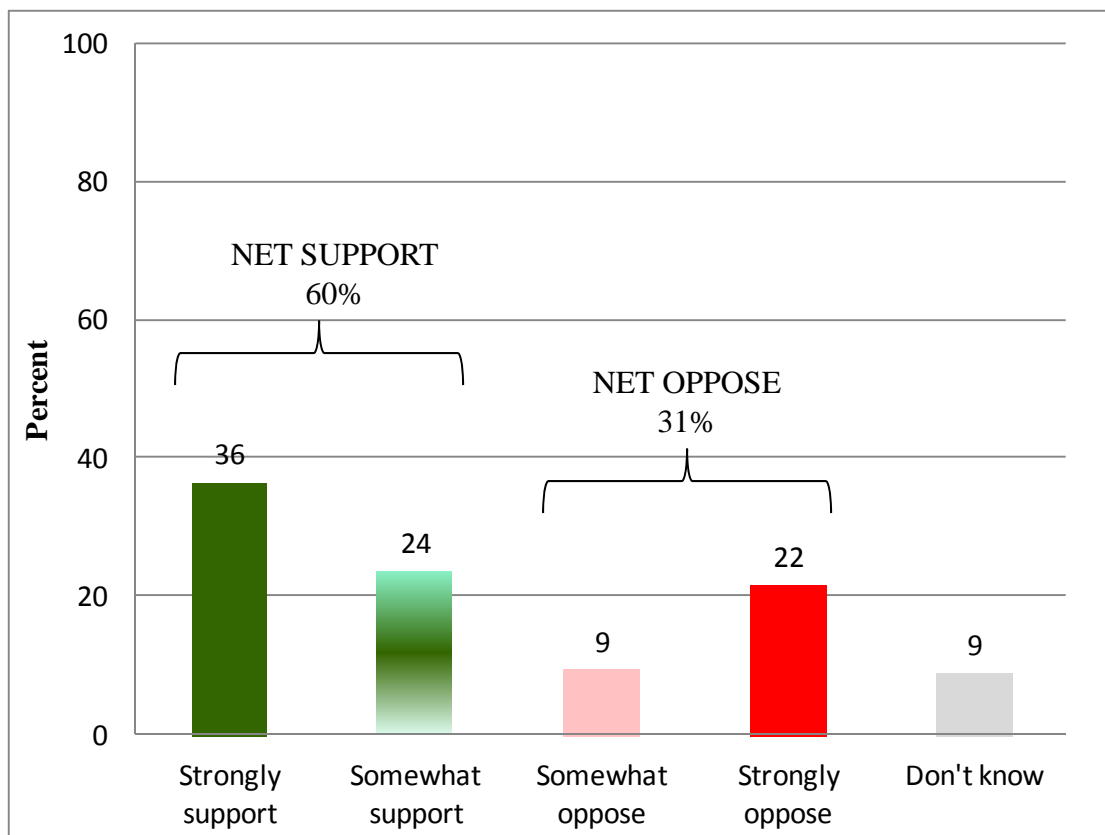
Support for North Woods National Park Feasibility Study

- Overall, fully 6-in-10 Maine residents polled are supportive of conducting a feasibility study to create a National Park in Maine's north woods.
 - By contrast, 3-in-10 are in opposition to the proposed study.
- Support is most likely to be observed among college educated, younger (18-34 years of age), residents of the Southern or Central regions and registered Democrats.
 - Opposition is most prominent among Northern or Coastal residents and registered Republicans.



Attitudes Regarding National Park Feasibility Study in Northern Maine

Do you support or oppose a feasibility study on whether to create a National Park in Maine's North Woods?

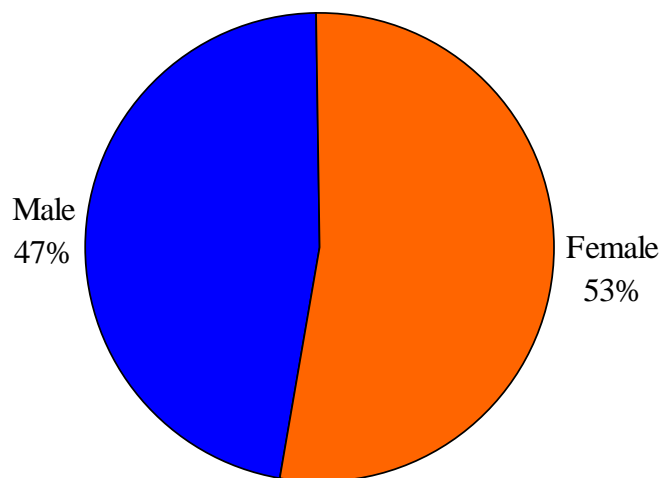




Sample Profile



Respondent Gender and Age



| <i>Into which of the following categories does your age fall?</i> | Percent of Sample |
|---|--------------------------|
| 18 to 34 | 13% |
| 35 to 44 | 29 |
| 45 to 54 | 21 |
| 55 to 64 | 20 |
| 65 to 74 | 11 |
| 75 and older | 6 |



Household Composition

| <i>How many adults 18 years of age or older, including yourself, live in your household?</i> | Percent of Sample |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | 14% |
| 2 | 61 |
| 3 or more | 23 |

| <i>How many children, under the age of 18, live in your household?</i> | Percent of Sample |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | 17% |
| 2 | 17 |
| 3 or more | 7 |
| None | 58 |



Tenure of Residency in Maine

| <i>How many years have you lived in the State of Maine?</i> | Percent of Sample |
|---|--------------------------|
| Less than 5 years | 2% |
| 5 to 10 years | 8 |
| More than 10 years | 88 |



Socio-Economic Dimensions: Education and Income

| <i>What is the highest level of education you have completed?</i> | Percent of Sample |
|---|--------------------------|
| Some high school or less | 4% |
| Graduated high school | 23 |
| Technical/Vocational/Community College | 4 |
| Some college | 20 |
| Graduated college | 34 |
| Graduate school | 14 |

| <i>Which of the following categories best describes your total household income before taxes last year?</i> | Percent of Sample |
|---|--------------------------|
| Less than \$15,000 | 5% |
| \$15,000 to \$24,999 | 6 |
| \$25,000 to \$34,999 | 9 |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999 | 13 |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | 22 |
| \$75,000 or more | 29 |
| Don't know/Refused | 16 |