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Winthrop Poll: S.C. Residents Surveyed About Economy, Women's Issues and Sea-Level Change

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Winthrop Poll: S.C. Residents Surveyed About Economy, Women's Issues and Sea-Level Change

Quick Facts

- With the Great Recession occurring five years ago and the nation undergoing a slow recovery, South Carolina residents say jobs/unemployment is the most important problem facing the Palmetto State (16.7%), followed by education (16.3%), economy (12%), politicians/government (5.4 %) and moral values (4.4%).
- S.C. residents agree overwhelmingly (87%) that women in the Palmetto State face discrimination. Almost half - men and women equally – said women here face some discrimination.



Scott Huffman

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – With the holiday season underway, more than half of the **South Carolina residents** surveyed by the **Winthrop Poll** think they will spend about the same as last year on gifts.

Almost 16% said they would spend somewhat or significantly higher, while more than 26% said they would spend somewhat or significantly lower.

With the **Great Recession** occurring five years ago and the nation undergoing a slow recovery, South Carolina residents say **jobs/unemployment** is the **most important problem facing the Palmetto State** (16.7%), followed by education (16.3%), economy (12%), politicians/government (5.4 %) and moral values (4.4%). Meanwhile, respondents cited the following as the **most important problems for the country**, in the order of importance: economy, politicians/government, jobs/unemployment and immigration.

More than half (51.8%) see national economic conditions getting better, while 42.3% foresee conditions getting worse. Respondents also are optimistic about South Carolina's economic conditions, with 67.6% saying they are getting better. Regarding their own financial situation, 60.1% say it is getting better.

Winthrop Poll callers surveyed 852 residents in South Carolina by landline and cell phones between Nov. 9-16. Forty percent of the respondents were reached via cell phone. The poll has an approximately +/- 3.4% margin of error. View the questions and responses.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

S.C. residents agree overwhelmingly (87%) that women in the Palmetto State face **discrimination**. Almost half - men and women equally – said women here face some discrimination. Some 12.5% of the respondents (7.5% men and 17.3% women) said there is a lot of discrimination, while 26.7% said women face a little discrimination. Only 1 in 10 people said S.C. women face no discrimination.

Nearly half of respondents (39.8% men and 52.6% women) said the **S.C. state government** is out of touch with the needs of most women. Only 37% said the government is in touch.

Those responses parallel other topics of concern for women, including:

- Job opportunities for women:** 54.7% (43% men and 65.6% women) think there are worse opportunities for women than for men with similar education and experience.
- Government intervention:** Three-fourths of respondents said the S.C. government should pass

laws requiring private companies to pay the same amount to men and women with the same job, while still allowing for different pay based on seniority or job performance.

- **Poverty:** 43.4% of those polled said women - either somewhat or a lot more - live in poverty more so than men.

- **Domestic violence:** Nearly 60% said the government does not do enough to combat domestic violence.

Yet **feminists** in South Carolina receive a mixed response. A little more than a quarter of respondents said they were neutral about feminists, while 37.5% were somewhat or very positive and another 23.9% were somewhat or very negative.

SEA-LEVEL CHANGE

Sea-level rise is an issue for South Carolina, particularly for those on the coast. More than half of respondents said they think the sea level is rising, though nearly 19% said they were not sure.

The **Winthrop Poll** asked when those surveyed think the effects would harm S.C. residents and property – now, in 10, 25, 50 or 100 years for all of South Carolina, for the coastal counties and for non-coastal counties. The results fell across the spectrum. The highest percentage of respondents – 23.7% – felt that in 25 years that the coastal counties of Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, Georgetown, Horry and Jasper counties may be affected.

There was, however, support by nearly three-fourths of the respondents for state and local governments to make S.C. coastal communities better prepared for sea-level rise and impacts on coastal processes, such as erosion and storm surge.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND LEADERS

President Barack Obama's approval rating in South Carolina remains low at 40.6% and lags behind national approval for Obama by several percentage points.

Meanwhile, **Congress' approval rating** also remains low at 14.1%, a figure that is nearly equal to the national opinion of Congress.

Approval ratings of leaders in South Carolina all seemed to benefit from recent electoral success:

- Governor Nikki Haley, 53.3%
- S.C. State Legislature, 45.4%
- U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., 49.5%
- U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., 58.1%

Electoral success especially benefited **Tim Scott** who went from 36.9% of South Carolinians having no opinion of him in the last general population **Winthrop Poll in April 2014** to only 19.1 having no opinion now. It appears that most of those "no opinions" were converted to approval.

Tea Party membership is claimed by only 6.3% of those surveyed, while only 22.9% approve of the movement. Some 44.7% aren't sure enough about the movement to have an opinion. Both Tea Party membership and approval are roughly doubled among Republicans and Republican-Leaning Independents.

POLL FUNDING, METHODOLOGY AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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

[View more information about the poll methodology.](#)

For additional information, or to set up an interview with **Poll Director Scott Huffmon**, please contact **Judy Longshaw** at longshawj@winthrop.edu or 803/323-2404 (office) or 803/984-0586 (cell).

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