



CRITICAL INSIGHTS

RESEARCH FOR PRECISE PRAGMATIC DIRECTION

Critical Insights on Maine[™] Tracking Survey

~ Spring 2011~

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

May 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™* 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 voters across the state between May 5-9, 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 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 18 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™* Tracking Survey.



Research Highlights



*Issues Facing Maine &
Perceptions of the Economy*



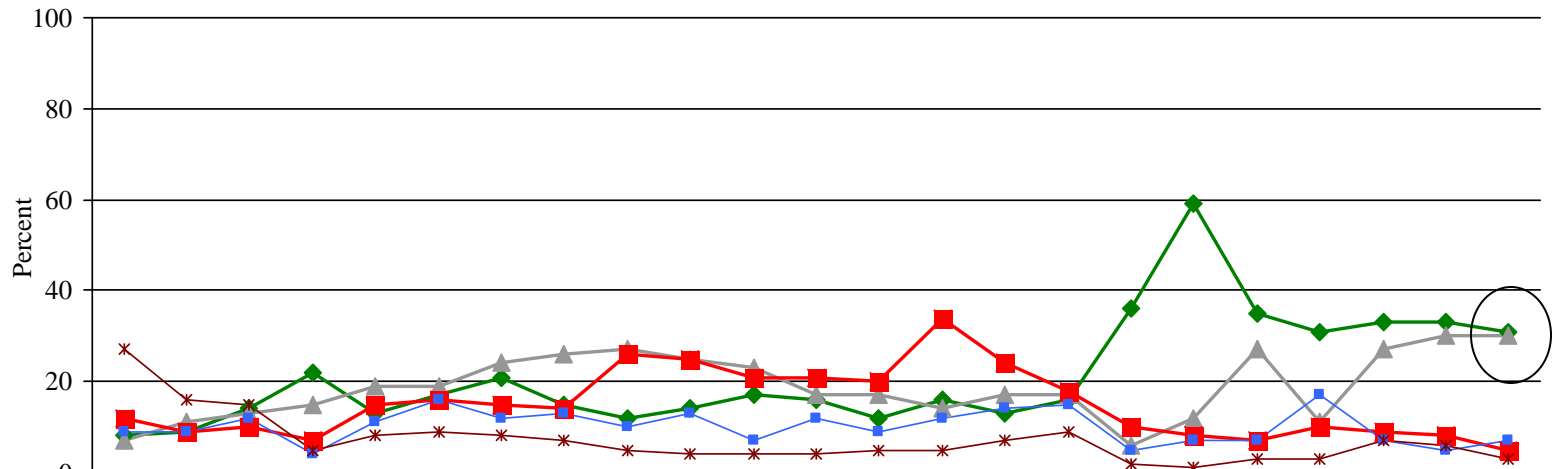
Perspectives on Issues Facing the State of Maine

- Similar to results observed over the past 18 months of the *Critical Insights on Maine™* Tracking Survey, residents continue to be concerned about the economy, as fully 3-in-10 cited this as the most important issue facing Maine.
 - 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 hit a 10-year high of 59% for the *Critical Insights on Maine™* Tracking Survey.
 - Specific concerns about **unemployment** continue to keep pace with economic concerns, which was noted by only 11% of Maine residents 18 months ago, but has since risen to second place in the Fall 2010 (30%) and current (30%) assessments.
 - As in past surveys, broad concerns about the economy are higher among more well-educated Mainers, while specific concerns about unemployment are equally prevalent among all resident subgroups, with the exception of registered Republicans who tend to report much greater concern about jobs.
 - With the national debate about health care subsiding somewhat in recent months, the issue seems to have been trumped by the economy, with unprompted concerns about **health care** lagging in terms of top-of-mind stated concerns at 7% currently (down from 17% in the Fall 2009 wave of the survey).
 - **Taxation, State government** and **education** round out the top concerns mentioned by Mainers, with results for taxation and education concerns dropping when compared to recent waves of *Critical Insights on Maine™*.
 - Education continues to be an issue among younger residents.



Issues Facing the State of Maine

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



	Spr '00	Fall '00	Spr '01	Fall '01	Spr '02	Fall '02	Spr '03	Fall '03	Spr '04	Fall '04	Spr '05	Fall '05	Spr '06	Fall '06	Spr '07	Fall '07	Spr '08	Fall '08	Spr '09	Fall '09	Spr '10	Fall '10	Spr '11
◆ Economy	8	9	14	22	13	17	21	15	12	14	17	16	12	16	13	16	36	59	35	31	33	33	31
▲ Unemployment	7	11	13	15	19	19	24	26	27	25	23	17	17	14	17	17	6	12	27	11	27	30	30
■ Taxes	12	9	10	7	15	16	15	14	26	25	21	21	20	34	24	18	10	8	7	10	9	8	5
■ 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
* Education	27	16	15	5	8	9	8	7	5	4	4	4	5	5	7	9	2	1	3	3	7	6	3

* Top responses shown.



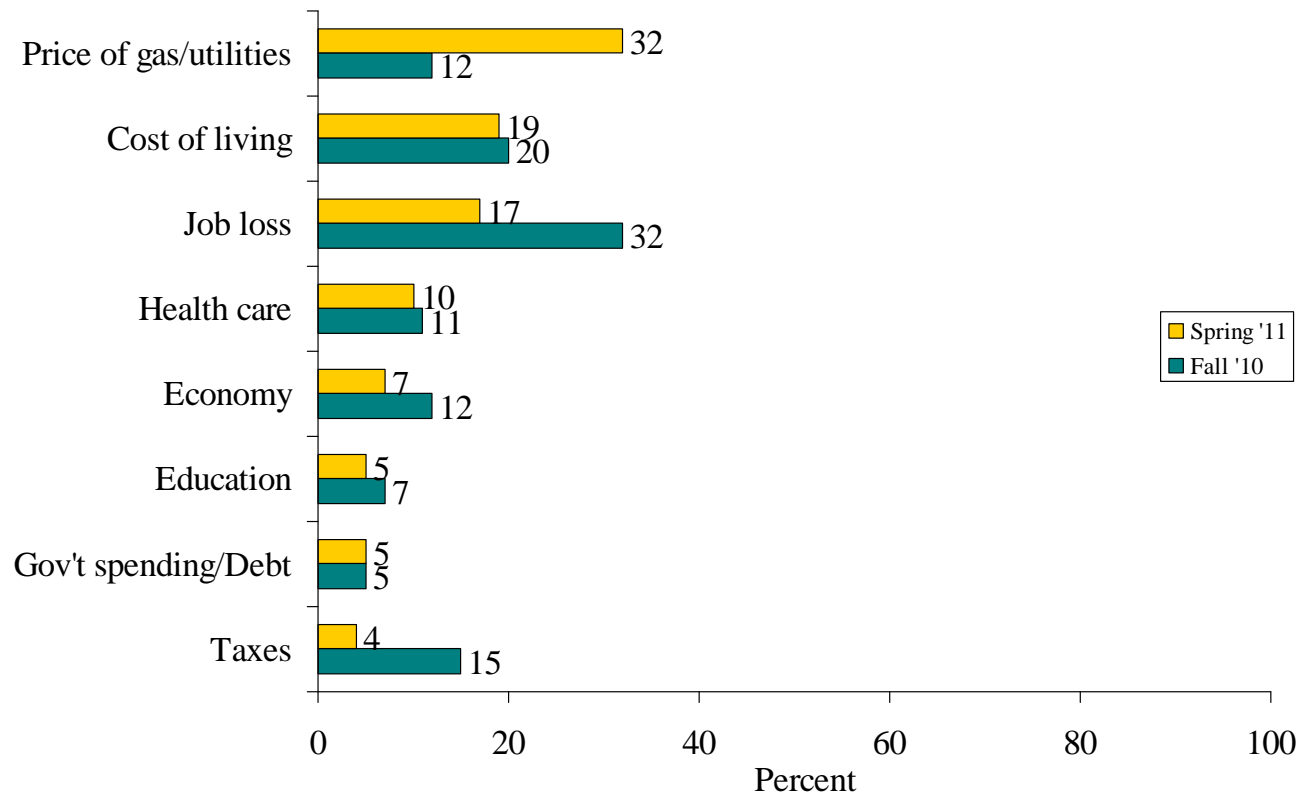
Perspectives on Near-Term Economic Concerns

- When voters were asked to cite the specific economic concern that will be causing them the most worry over the next six months, due to recent increases in the cost of gas, this issue outpaces even the broader concerns about the economy as a general issue facing Maine by about one-third of voters (32%).
 - Other chief financial concerns in the near term include the overall cost of living (19%) and concerns about job loss (17%).
 - These results are a departure from what was observed in the Fall '10 survey, when concern over gas prices was only 12%, while concern over job loss was 32%.
 - Even though health care concerns are mentioned by about 1-in-10 residents overall, nearly double that figure of seniors (age 65+) express concern about this issue.
- 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, one-fourth claimed to be concerned.
 - Concern was most acute among Mainers from the Central region of the state.



Near-Term Economic Concerns

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



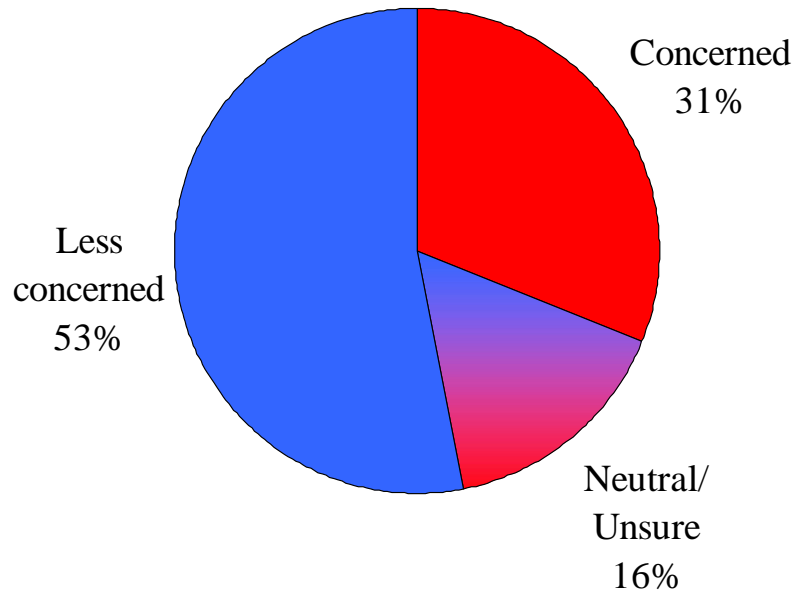
* Top responses shown. Multiple responses accepted.



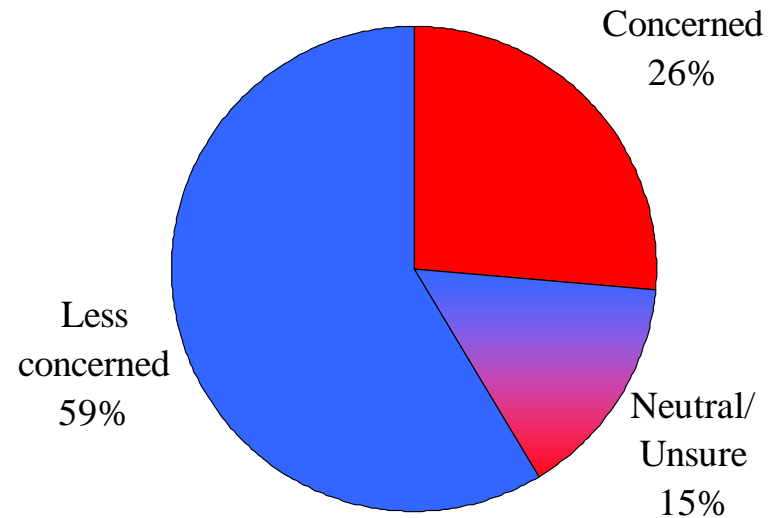
Concern Over Job Loss

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?

Fall '10



Spring '11





Maine Residents' Views on the Economy

- Up slightly from the Fall '10 wave of *Critical Insights on Maine™*, about one-fourth of residents feel that the economy is doing better than it was 12 months ago (up from 21% in the Fall 2010 survey).
 - The proportion of poll respondents saying the economy is “somewhat” or “much worse” than it was a year ago is comparable to the Fall 2010 results, with 35% stating that the economy is worse, compared to 38% six months ago.
 - Democrat voters are more likely than those in other political parties to say the economy has gotten better.
 - As noted in previous surveys, these results are substantially more positive than the results observed in the Spring and Fall of 2008.
- Looking ahead to the coming year, about one-third of Mainers (34%) anticipate things will improve – nearly identical to the most recent survey.
 - The proportion of residents expecting things to be “worse” in 12 months is relatively stable, though has shown a minor uptick since the Fall 2010 survey.



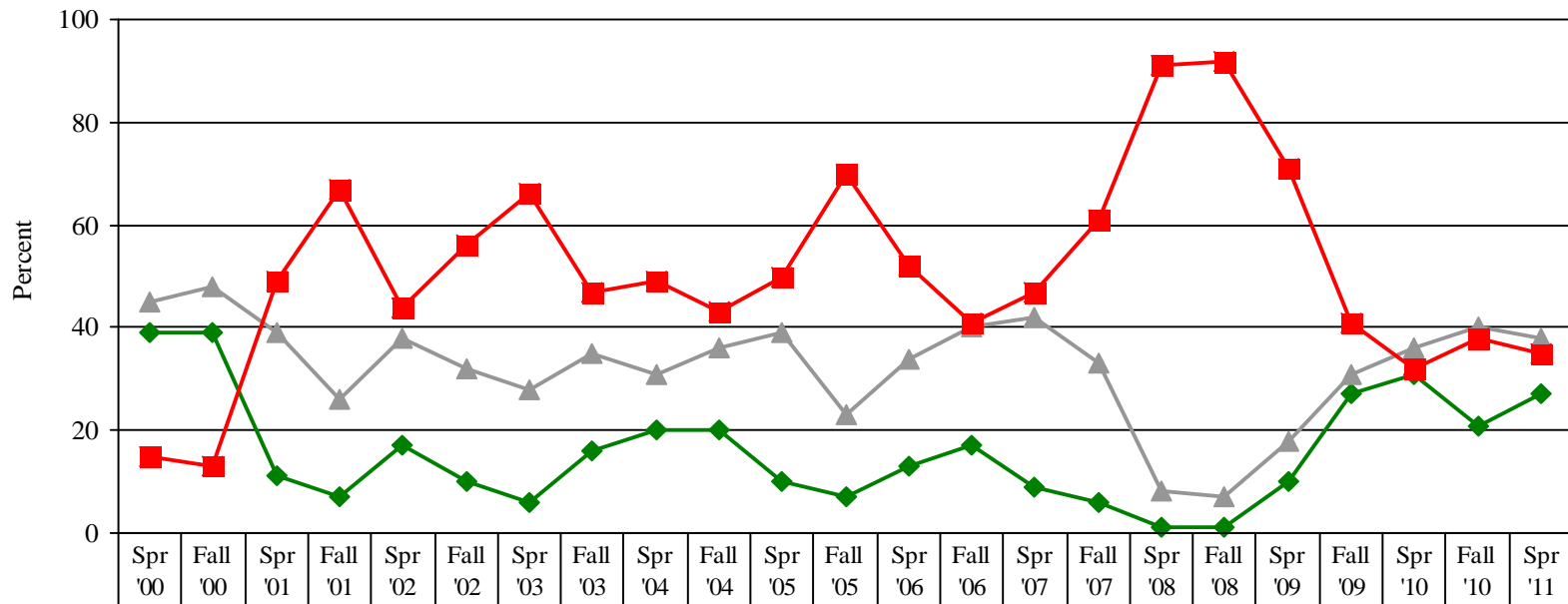
Maine Residents' Views on the Economy

- Optimism about the current state of the economy is more prevalent among Democrats, while optimism about the future state of the economy is strongest among residents from the higher income brackets (i.e. \$75,000+).
 - Pessimism about the economy is highest among residents 65 years of age or older, and those who reside in the Central Region of Maine.
- Residents' overall sense of economic pessimism is also reflected in their estimates of the timing for economic recovery, with a strong majority (65%) noting that they believe the recession will last at least two years.



Residents' Perceptions of the Current State of the Economy

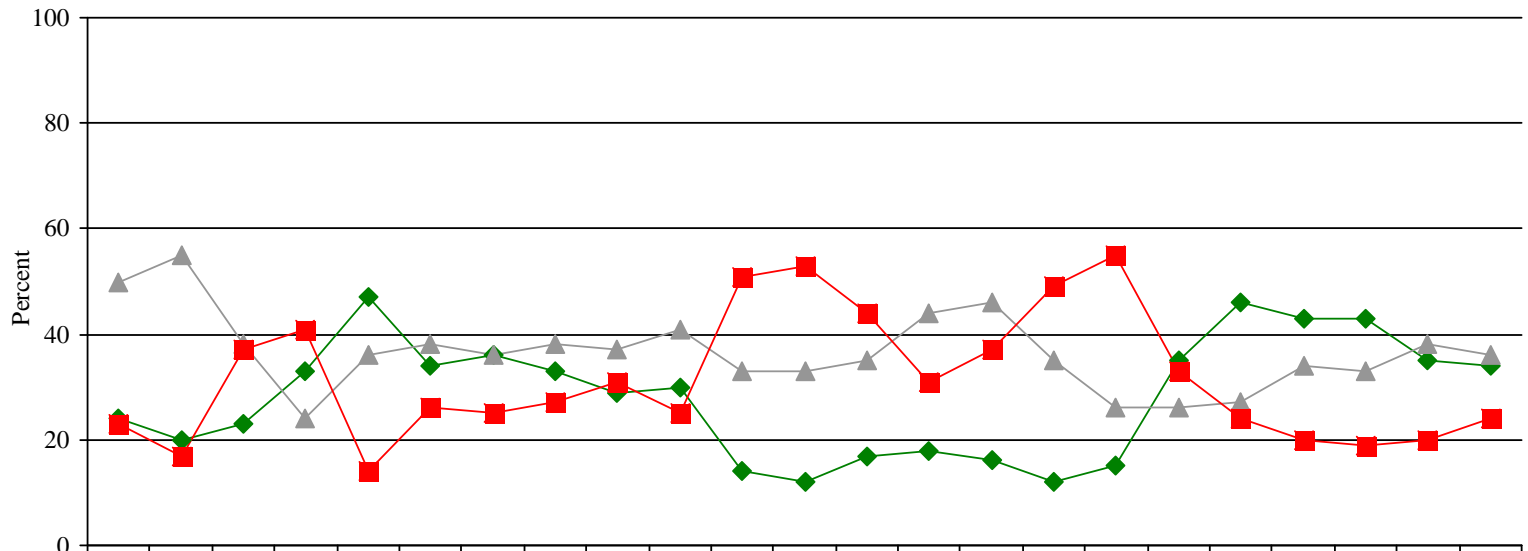
Compared with 12 months ago, how would you describe the overall status of the economy? Would you say it is...





Residents' Perceptions on the 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 . . .

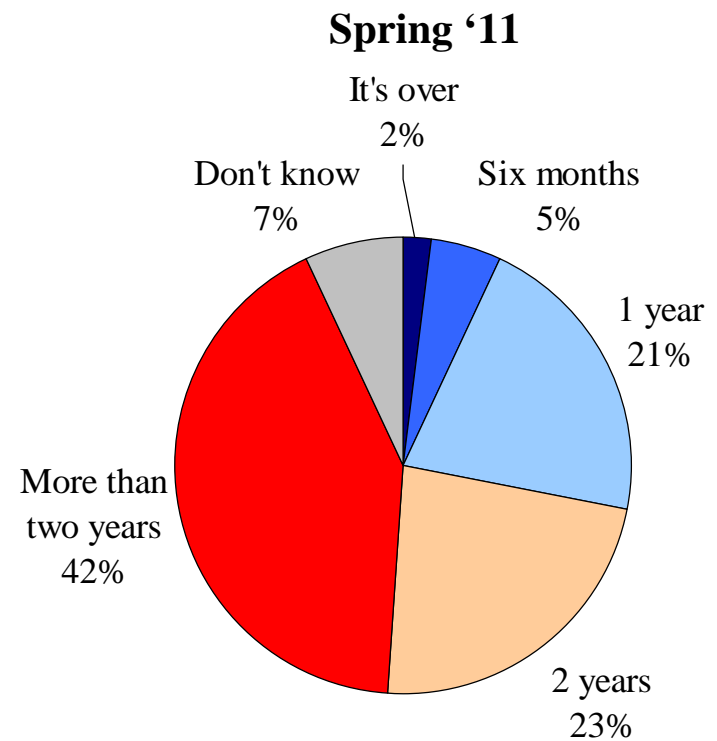
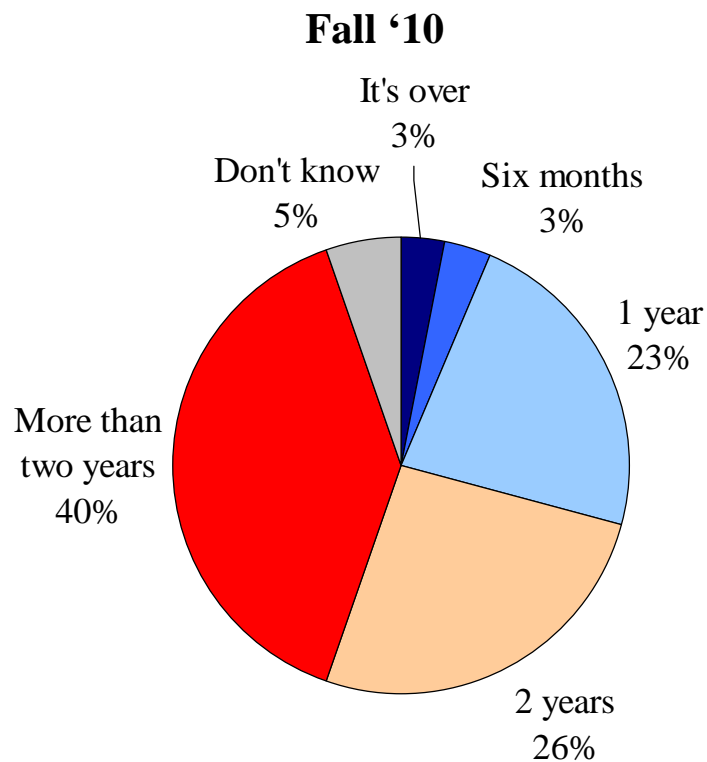


	Spr '00	Fall '00	Spr '01	Fall '01	Spr '02	Fall '02	Spr '03	Fall '03	Spr '04	Fall '04	Spr '05	Fall '05	Spr '06	Fall '06	Spr '07	Fall '07	Spr '08	Fall '08	Spr '09	Fall '09	Spr '10	Fall '10	Spr '11
◆ Better	24	20	23	33	47	34	36	33	29	30	14	12	17	18	16	12	15	35	46	43	43	35	34
▲ About the same	50	55	38	24	36	38	36	38	37	41	33	33	35	44	46	35	26	26	27	34	33	38	36
■ Worse	23	17	37	41	14	26	25	27	31	25	51	53	44	31	37	49	55	33	24	20	19	20	24



Residents' Perceptions on Length of the Recession

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





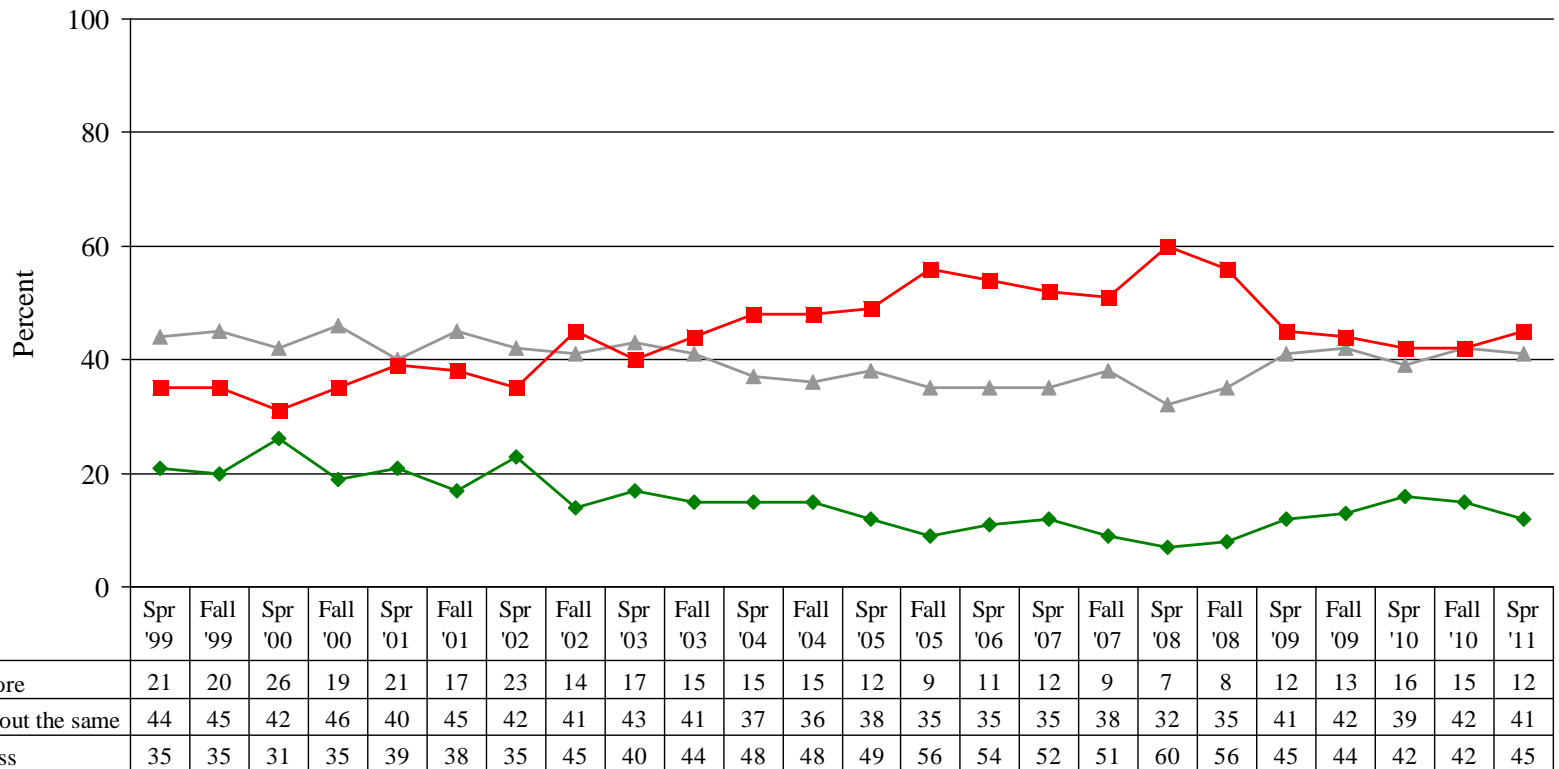
Maine Residents' Personal Household Financial Situation

- Despite the economic downturn and employment concerns, Maine residents' ability to save – a key indicator of personal and household financial health – is relatively stable, with only a minor slip since the Fall 2010 survey.
 - 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- and middle-income households are finding it harder to save than upper-income households. More than half (53%) of households making under \$50k say they are saving less than they did last year, compared to about one-third of households making \$75k or more.



Residents' 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?





*Observations on
National and State Politics*



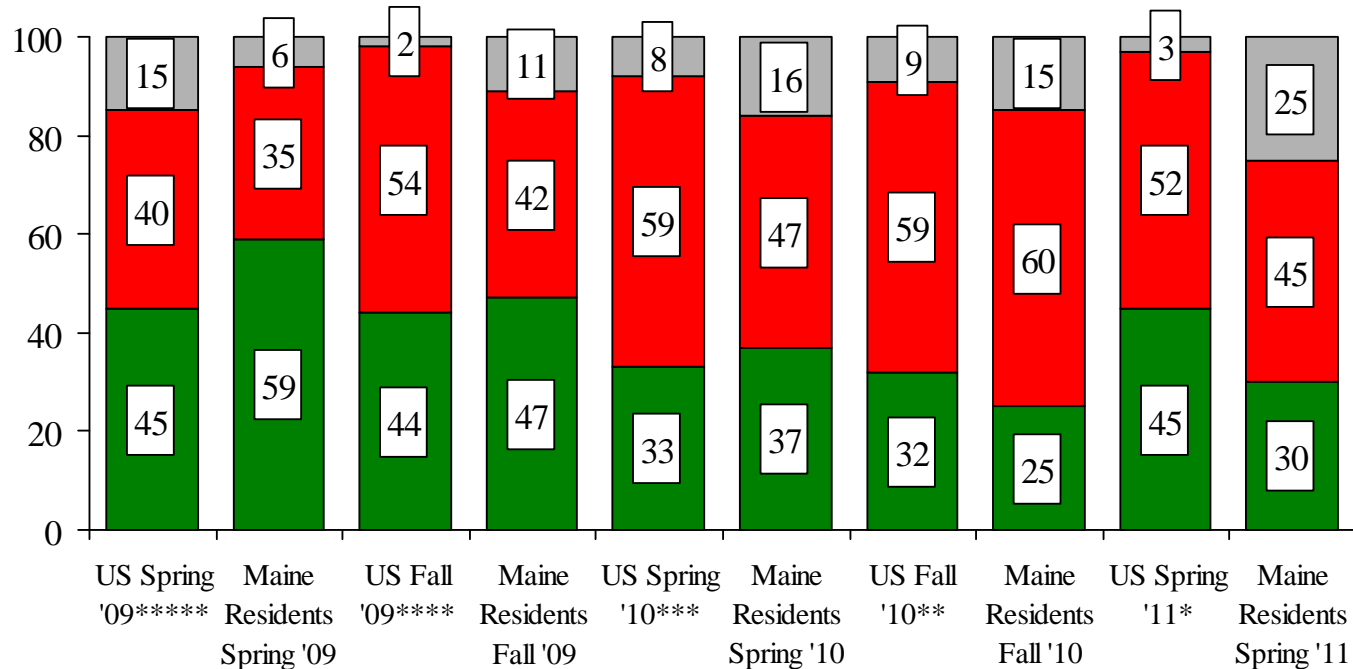
Maine Residents' Perspectives on the Direction of the Nation

- Overall, Maine residents are currently much less optimistic than the country as a whole concerning the nation's overall direction.
 - Indeed, only 3-in-10 Maine residents (30%) say the country is headed in the right direction while 45% of U.S. residents feel that the country is heading in the right direction. By comparison, 45% of Mainers say the country is on the wrong track.
- Maine residents' views are in line with recent measurements.
 - Democrats have the most positive outlook, though both Democrats and Independents have a more positive outlook regarding the nation's direction than do Republicans.
- Maine residents tend to be less optimistic about the direction of the state than they are the nation as whole, with fewer than one-fourth stating that the state is headed in the right direction (down 7 percentage points since last spring).
 - The proportion of residents who are uncertain, or have a mixed view of the direction of the state continues to increase over the past two years, with fully 3-in-10 respondents having a mixed view on the direction of the state.
 - Half of Mainers who state that Maine is going in either the right or wrong direction attribute their views to the job the Governor is doing – whether he is doing a good or bad job as governor.
- 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: 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

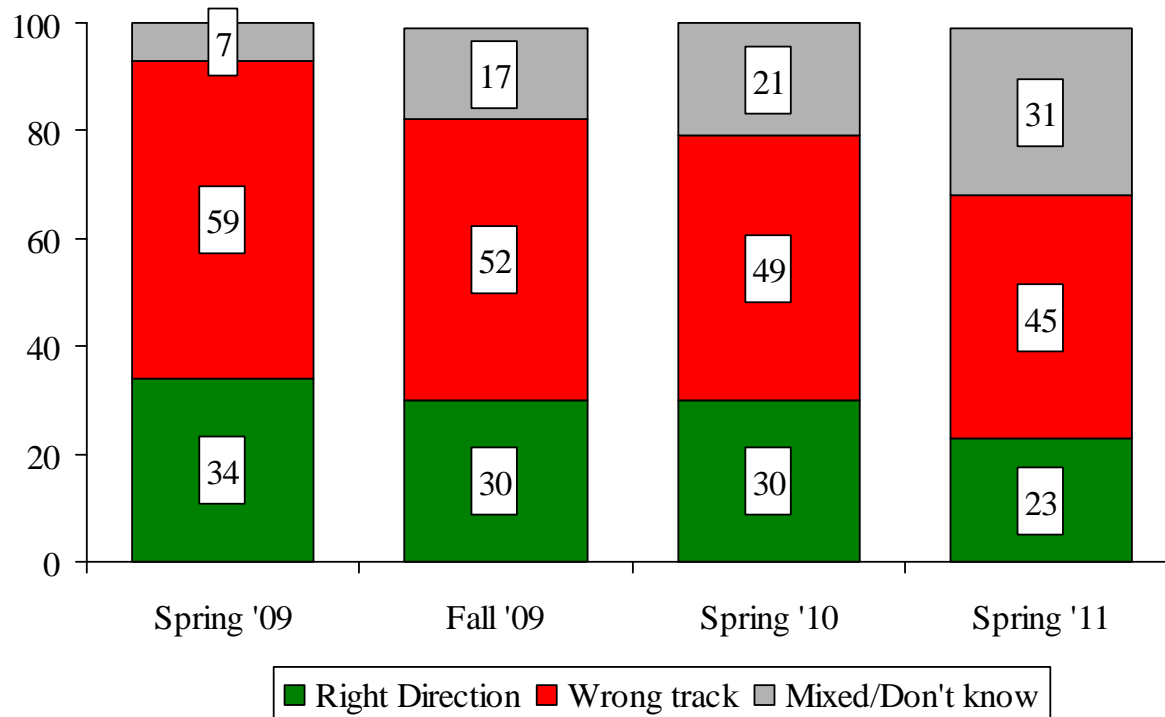
****Source: Washington Post/ABC News poll, Oct. 15-18, 2009

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



Residents' Perspectives on the Direction of the State of Maine

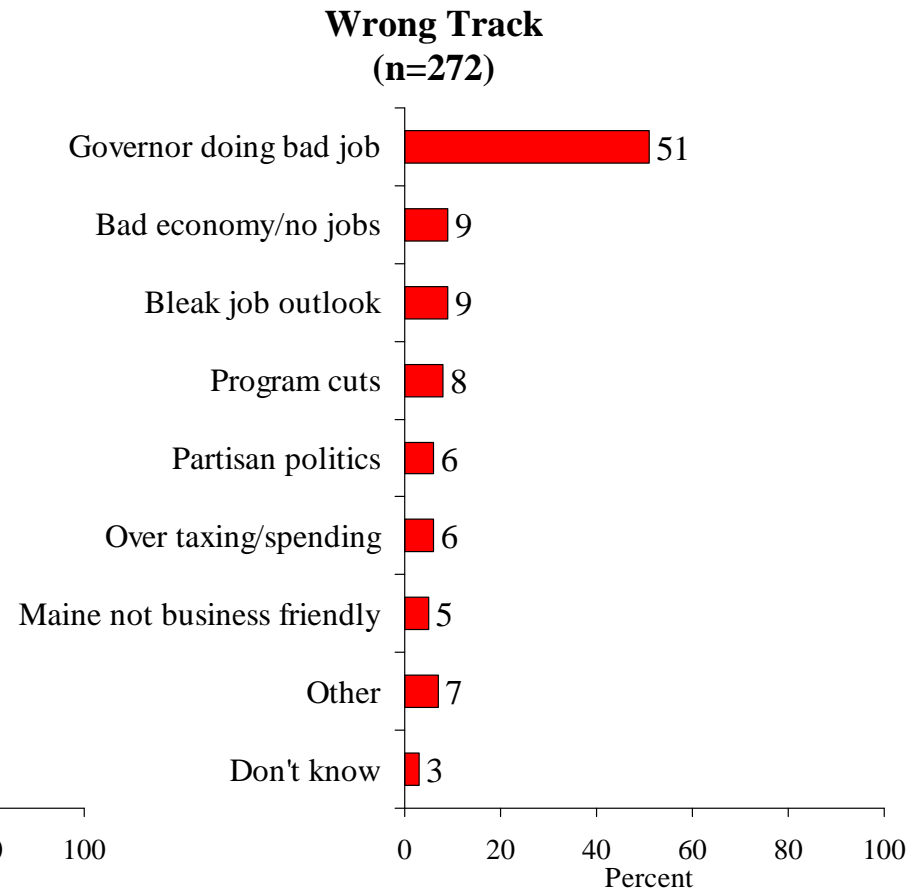
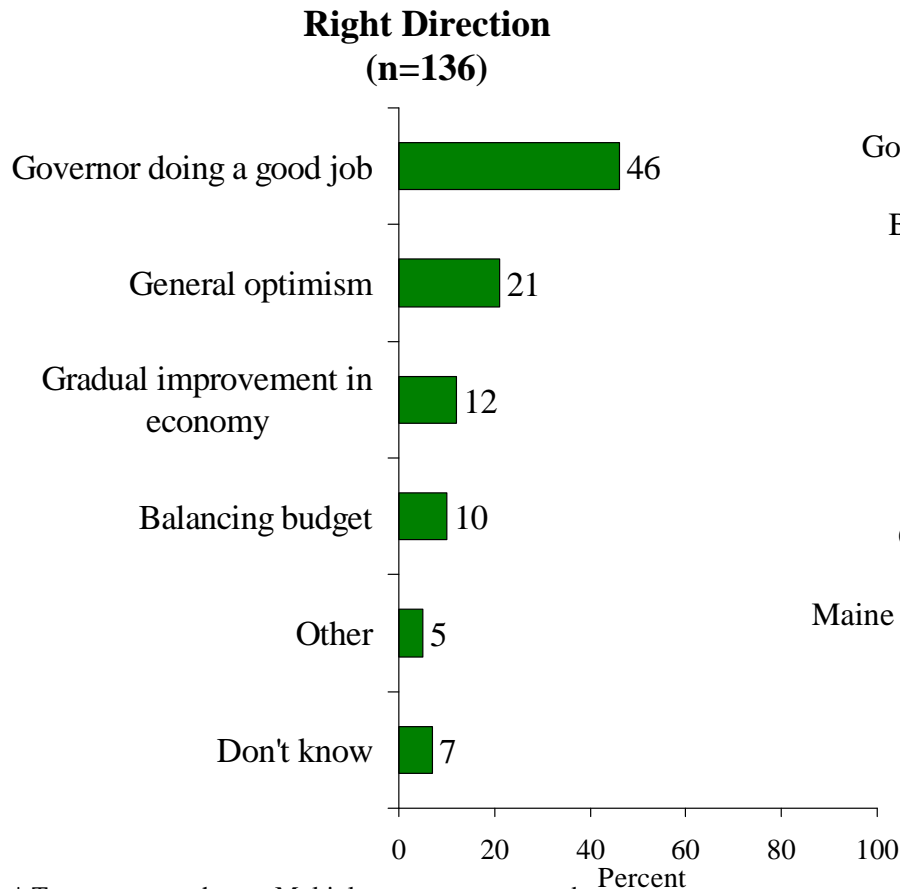
All in all, do you think things in Maine are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?





Reasons for State Heading in Right/Wrong Direction

Why do you say that?

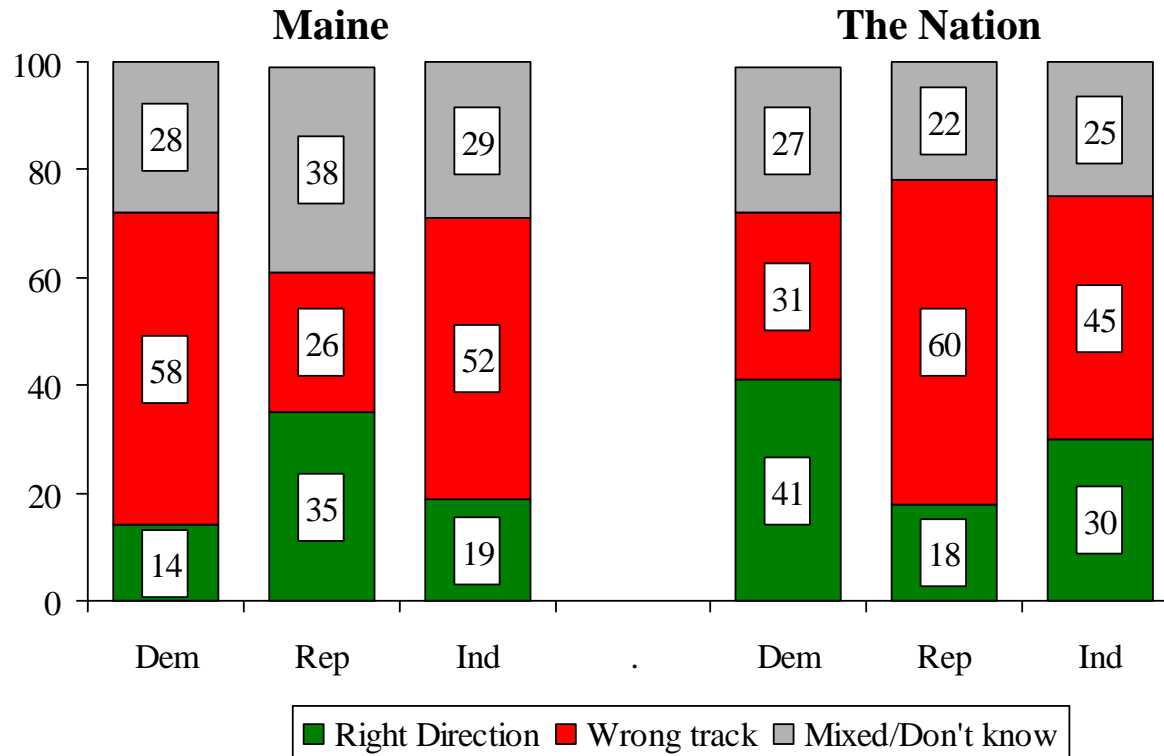


* Top responses shown. Multiple responses accepted.



Residents' Perspectives on the Direction of the Nation and State of Maine by Party Affiliation

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





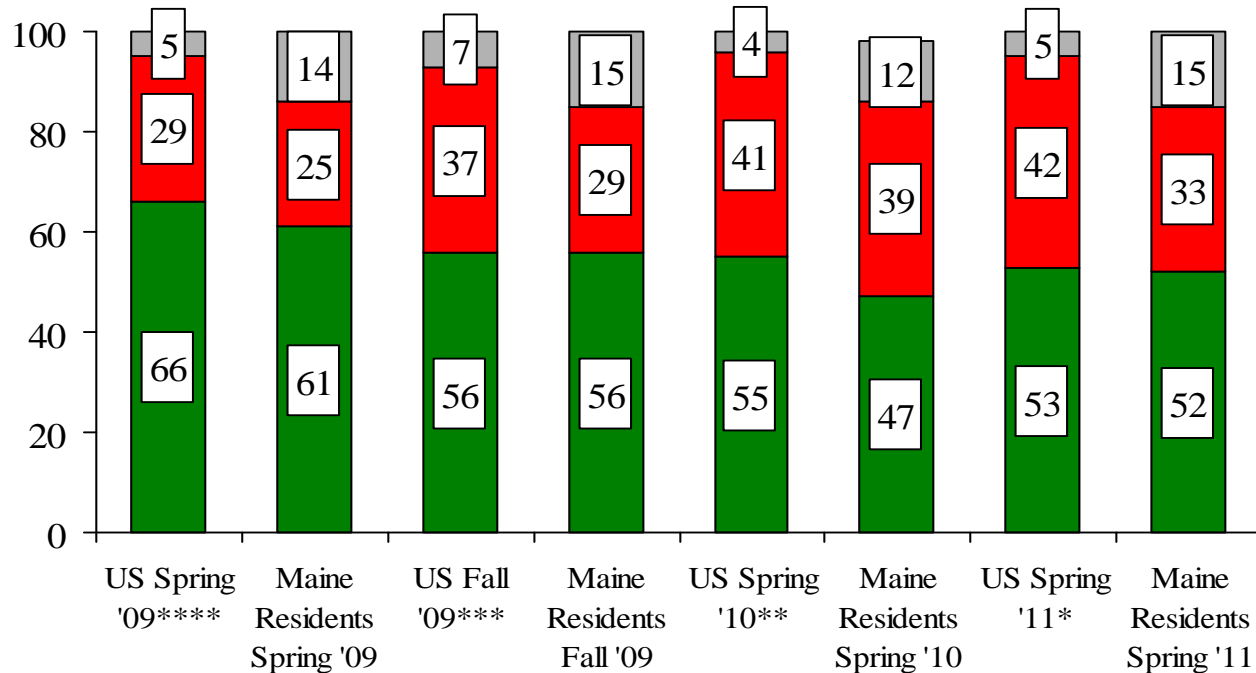
Maine Residents' Views on President Obama

- While down since the initial stages of his presidency, President Obama's favorability ratings among Maine residents is somewhat higher than last spring (52% versus 47%).
 - Mainers favorability toward the President are in line with the national results.
 - Fully 8-in-10 Democrats (81%) have a favorable view of the president, compared to nearly two-thirds of Republicans (65%) who have an unfavorable view. Half of Independents have a favorable opinion of President Obama, though 1-in-5 (21%) are unable to form an opinion.
- Even though Maine residents have a more positive view of the Presidents handling of the economy, still, fewer than half (43%) approve of how he is handling the nation's economy.
- Fully half of Mainers polled do not approve of how the President is handling the budget deficit or health care reform.
 - 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 Daily Kos poll April 28-May 1, 2011.

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

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

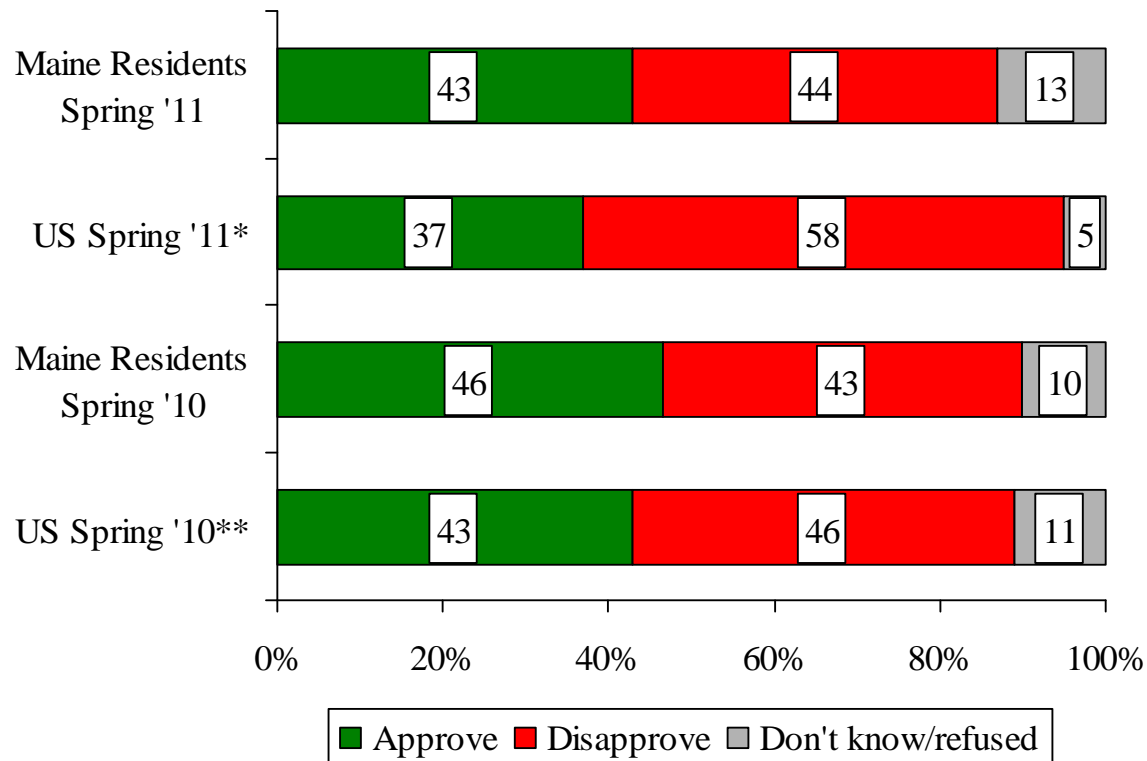
**** Source: Daily Kos poll, May 18-21, 2009

■ Favorable ■ Unfavorable ■ Don't know/refused



Assessment of Presidential Job Performance: *Economy*

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



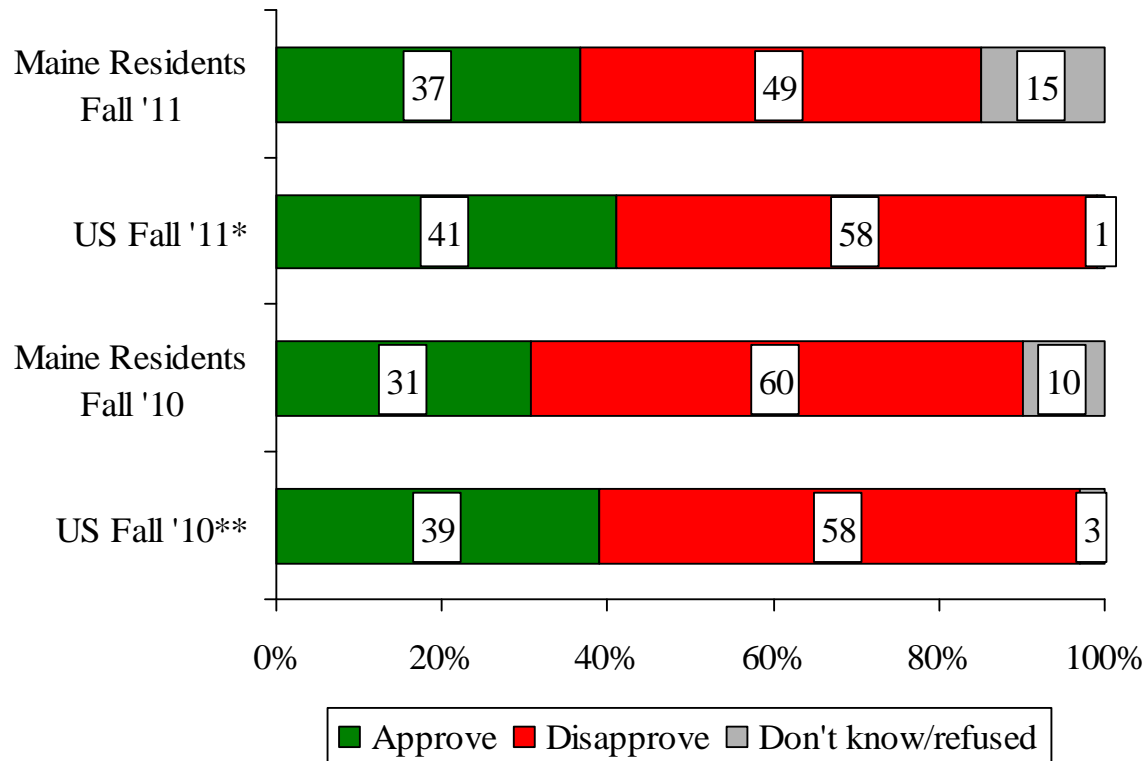
* Source: NBC News Poll . May 5-7, 2011.

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



Views on President Obama's Handling of Budget Deficit

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



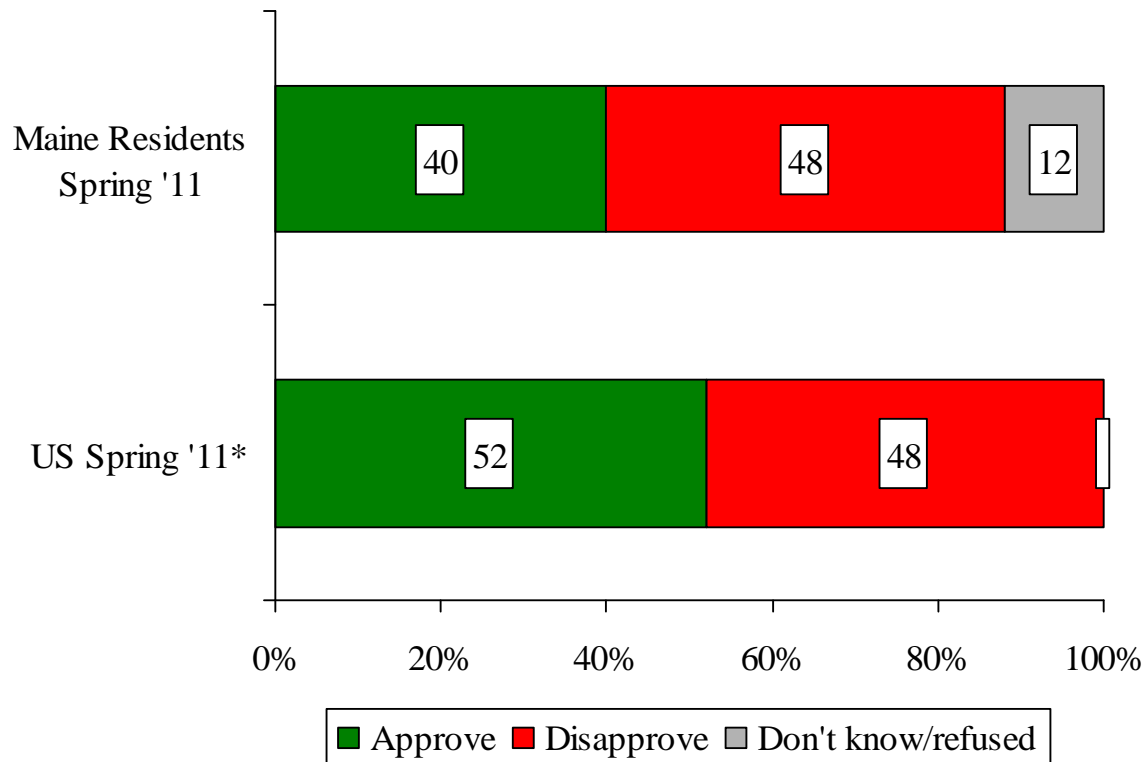
*Source: AP-GfK Poll . March 24-28, 2011.

**Source: ABC News/Washington Post Poll. Aug. 30-Sept. 2, 2010



Views on President Obama's Handling of Health Care Policy

Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Barack Obama is handling health care policy?



*Source : AP-GfK Poll . March 24-28, 2011.



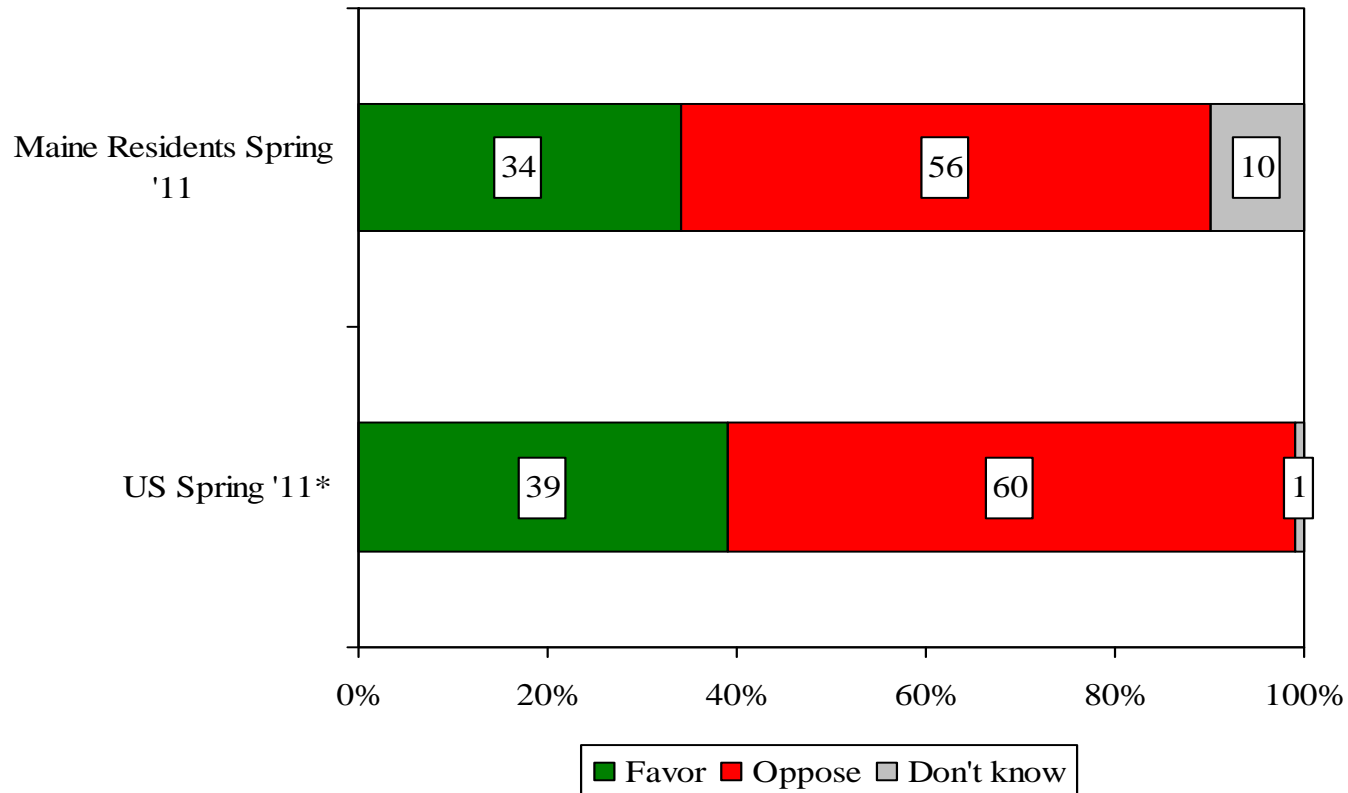
Nuclear Energy

- When asked whether they favor or oppose building more nuclear power plants, a strong majority (56%) of Mainers oppose this type of energy development.
 - Only about one-third favor further development of nuclear energy.
 - Opposition to nuclear power plants is strongest among women (69%), as well as self-identified Democrats (67%).
 - Nuclear energy development is most likely to be favored among men (48%) and Republican respondents (46%).
- Only about 1-in-5 Mainers feel that a nuclear emergency similar to the one that happened in Japan could occur in the U.S.
 - Nearly half of the men and Republican residents polled indicate that this type of situation is likely, while about one-third of Coastal Maine residents think that it is likely to occur.



Views Toward Nuclear Energy

In general, would you favor or oppose building more nuclear power plants at this time?



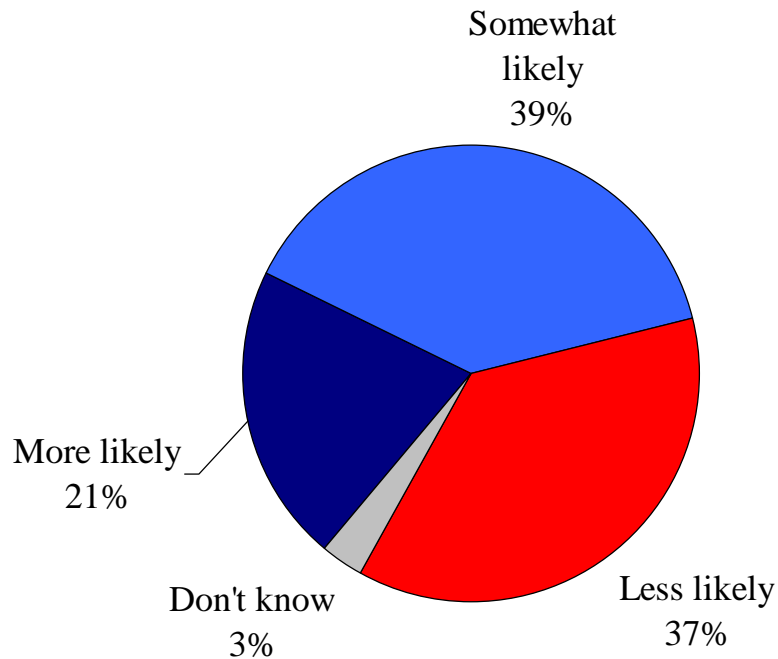
*Source : AP-GfK Poll . March 24-28, 2011.



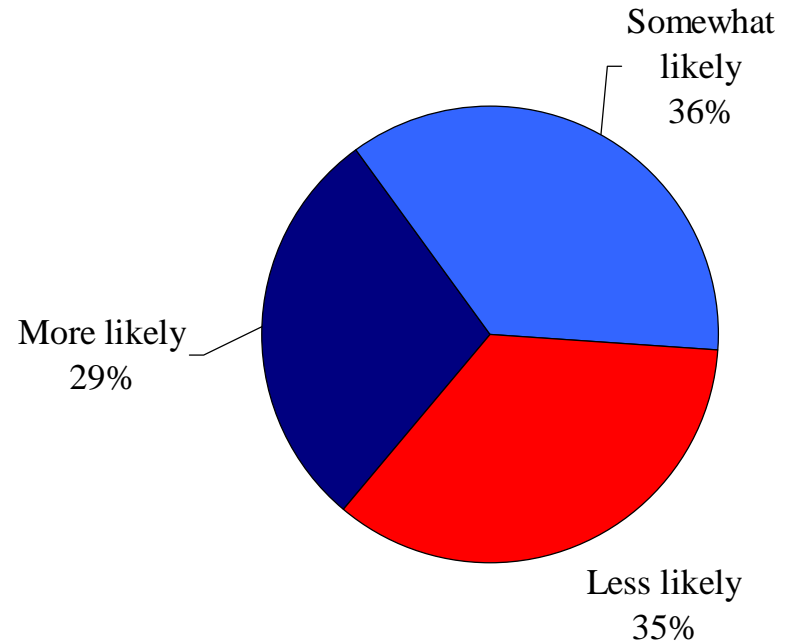
Views Toward Nuclear Energy

How likely do you think it is that a nuclear emergency like the one that has happened in Japan could happen in the U.S.?

Maine Residents Spring '11



US Spring '11*



*Source : AP-GfK Poll . March 24-28, 2011.



Voter Preferences



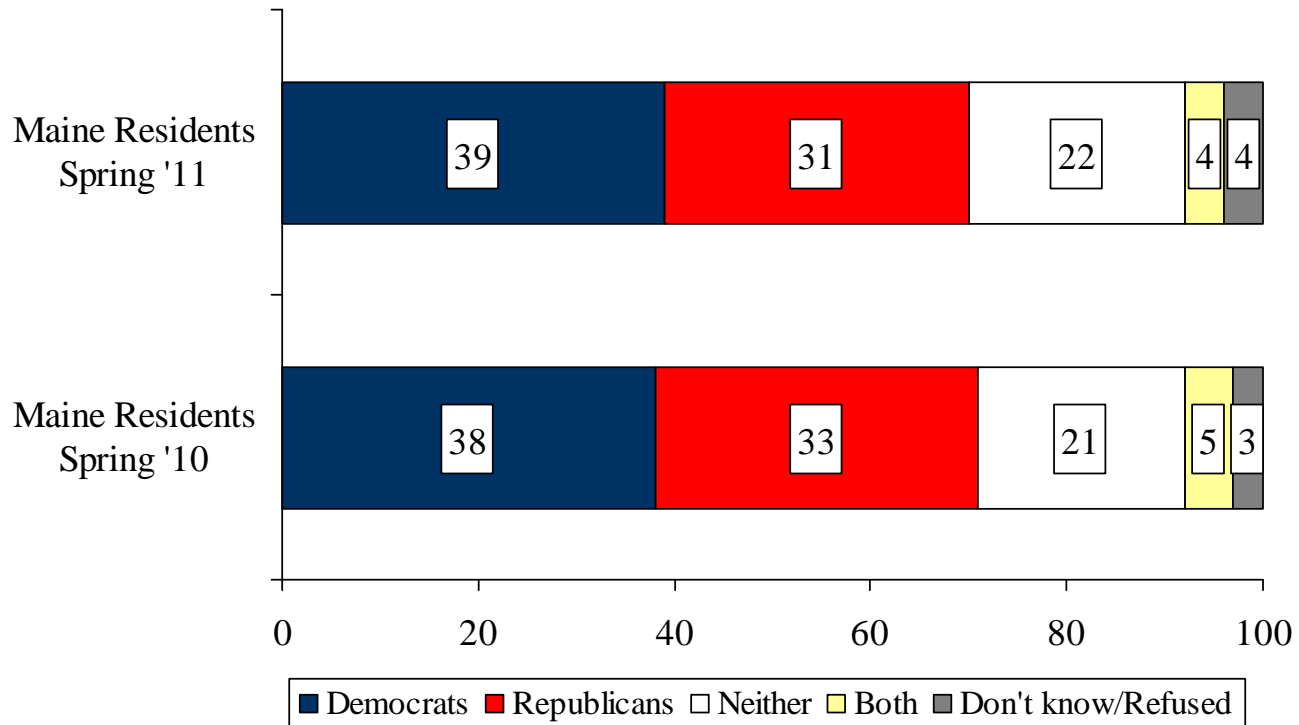
Stated Voter Political Affiliation

<i>In what political party are you registered to vote?</i>	Percent of Sample
Democrat	33%
Republican	33
Independent	26
Don't know/Refused	7



Party That Best Serves Interests

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





Approval Ratings for Governor Paul LePage

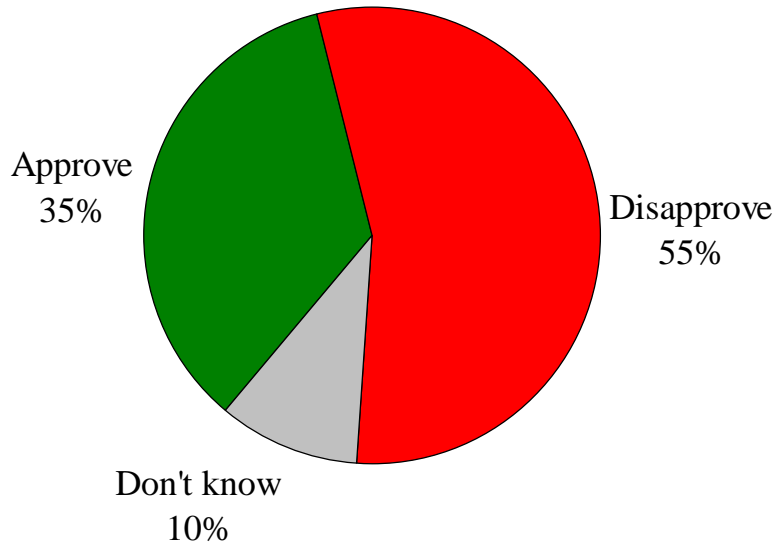
- Early into his tenure as governor, only about 3-in-10 Mainers express approval for the job Governor LePage is doing as Governor; more than half (54%) disapprove of the job the Governor is doing.
 - The Governor's approval ratings are in line with those observed for Governor Baldacci prior to leaving office.
 - While 6-in-10 Republicans approve of Governor LePage's job performance, nearly 8-in-10 Democrats (77%) disapprove. Independents are also likely to disapprove of the governor's job performance (63%).



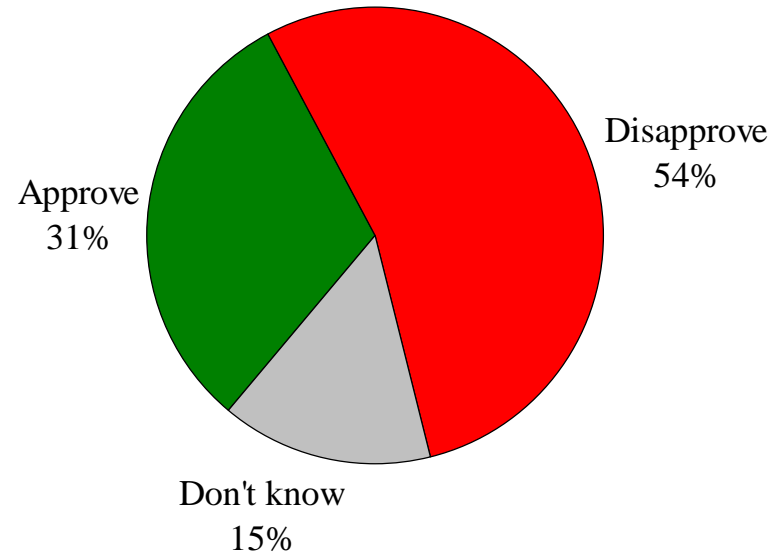
Residents' Approval Rating of Governor Paul LePage

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

**Governor Baldacci:
Fall '10**



**Governor LePage:
Spring '11**





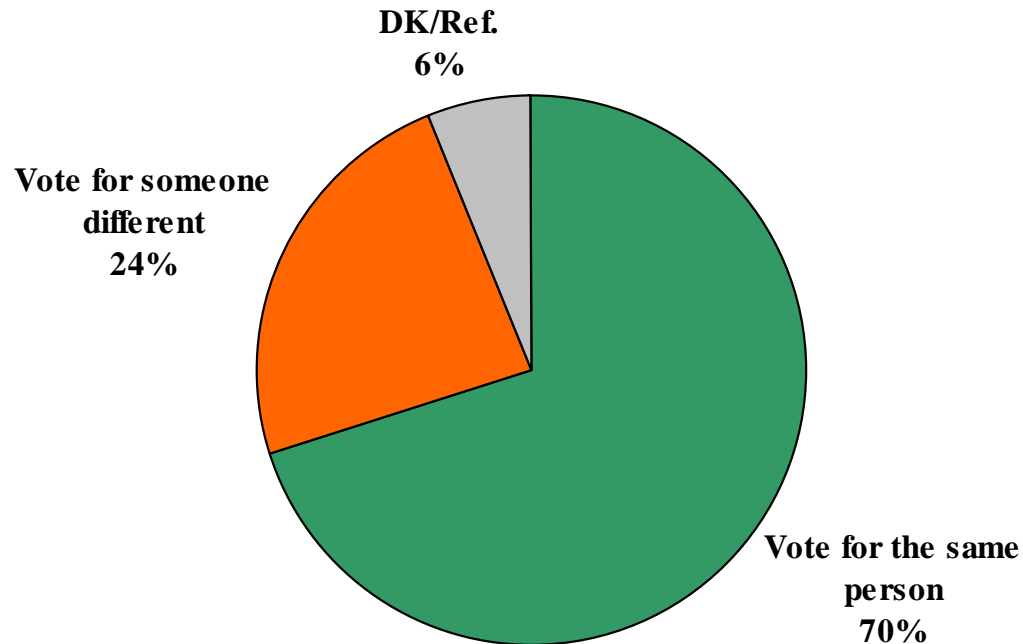
Perspectives on the Opportunity to Vote Again for Maine Governor

- When asked how they would vote in the election for Maine Governor if they had the opportunity to vote again, fully 7-in-10 residents polled say they would vote for the same person, while about one-quarter claim they would vote for someone different.
 - Southern Maine residents and self-reported Democrats and Independents are significantly more likely than others to say they would change their vote, while Republicans would be more likely to vote for the same person again.
- Among respondents who would change their vote for Governor if given the opportunity, nearly half say they would vote for Eliot Cutler.
 - Men, more highly educated residents (i.e. have a college degree), and those living in Southern Maine are significantly more likely to say they would vote for Cutler.
- Notably, a sizable bloc (24%) of respondents who say they would change their vote “don’t know” who they would vote for.



Preferences: Voting Again for Maine Governor

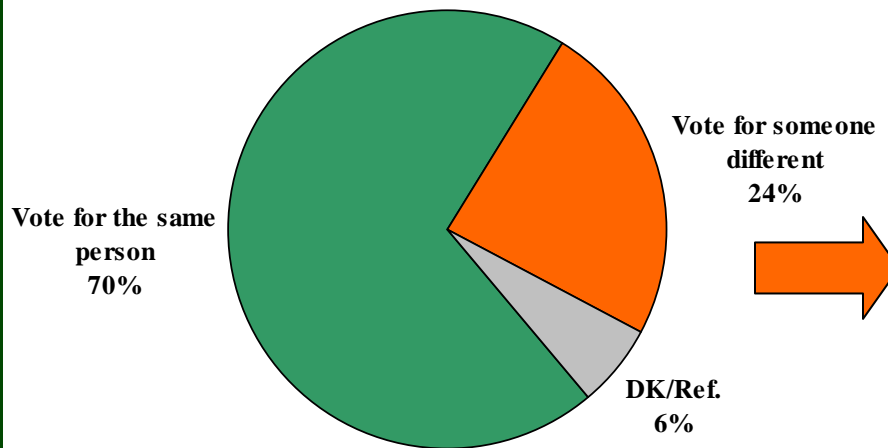
Knowing what you know now about the outcome of last November's vote for Maine Governor, if you had the opportunity to vote again, would you...





Gubernatorial Candidates of Choice, Among Residents Who Would Vote Differently

Knowing what you know now about the outcome of last November's vote for Maine Governor, if you had the opportunity to vote again, would you...



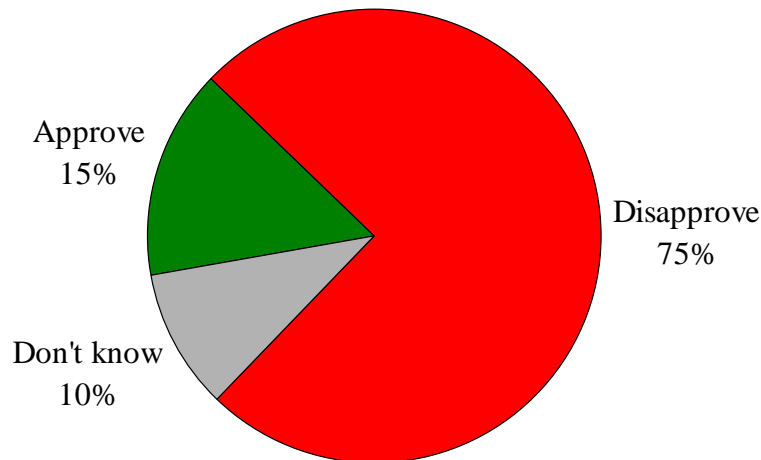
<i>Would you mind saying who you would vote for today? *</i>	Percent (n=145)
Independent, Eliot Cutler	45%
Democrat, Libby Mitchell	15
Republican, Paul LePage	4
Don't know	24
Refused	5

* Asked of respondents who say they would vote for someone different. Top responses shown. Remaining responses can be found in the Detailed Tabulations.



Views Toward iPads for Kindergarten Students in Auburn

Do you approve or disapprove of the plan to provide kindergarten students in the City of Auburn with iPad 2 devices for the 2011-2012 school year at a cost of \$200,000?



- Mainers overwhelmingly disapprove of the plan to provide iPads to kindergarten students in Auburn.
- It is interesting to note that residents with children in the household are even more likely to disapprove of this plan, as well as younger respondents (i.e. 34 years of age or younger) and women.



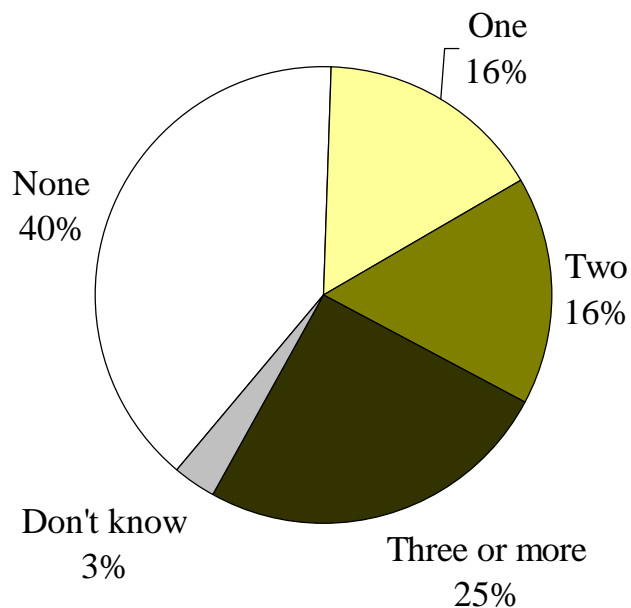
Vacation Plans for the Upcoming Summer

- When asked how many trips they were going to take during the upcoming summer vacation season, it is worth noting that fully 4-in-10 Mainers do not intend to take any trips.
 - Lower income residents (i.e. <\$50k), less highly educated respondents (i.e. high school or less) and residents 65 years of age and older are least likely to suggest that they will be taking any trips this summer.
- Among Mainers who intend to take vacation trips this summer, half indicate that they plan to stay in New England, but outside of Maine.

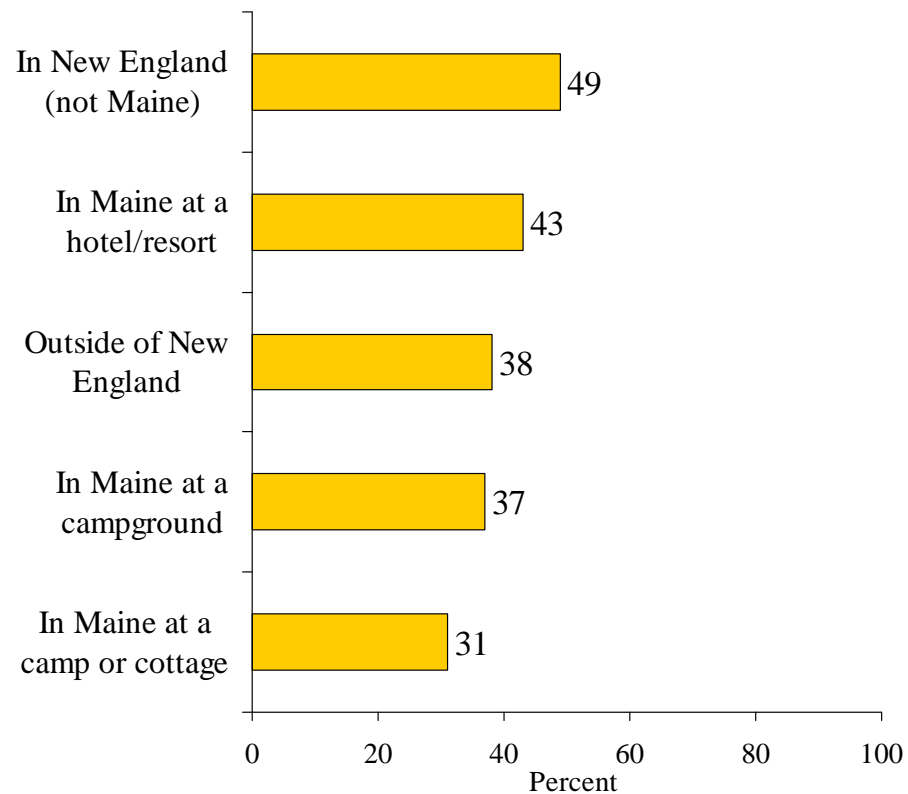


Vacation Plans

During the upcoming vacation season, between Memorial Day and Labor Day, how many trips do you plan on taking where you spend at least one night away from home?



Of the trips you mentioned, how many will be . . . ?

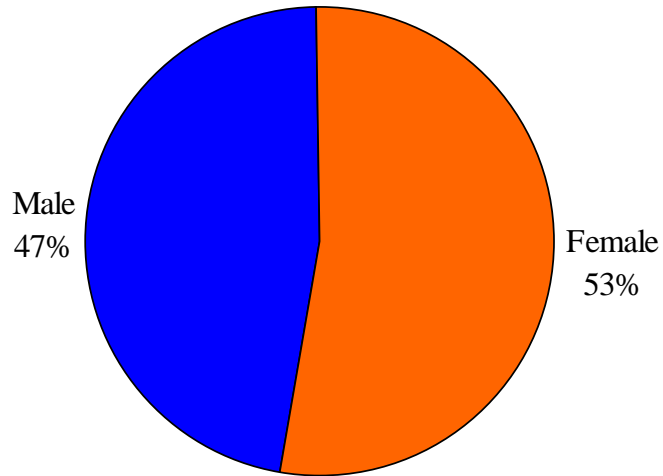




Sample Profile



Respondent Gender and Age



<i>Into which of the following categories does your age fall?</i>	Percent of Sample
18 to 34	18%
35 to 44	24
45 to 54	18
55 to 64	23
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	16%
2	59
3 or more	23

<i>How many children, under the age of 18, live in your household?</i>	Percent of Sample
1	10%
2	16
3 or more	7
None	64



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	6
More than 10 years	90



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	18
Technical/Vocational/Community College	3
Some college	21
Graduated college	33
Graduate school	18

<i>Which of the following categories best describes your total household income before taxes last year?</i>	Percent of Sample
Less than \$15,000	3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	6
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17
\$75,000 or more	29
Don't know/Refused	20