

2011 Simon Poll

Tables 1 – 4

Release 10/21/2011

Budget Survey Questions

Table 1: Solutions to Budget Problem

2009 – 11 Statements About The Budget

The state of Illinois has a budget deficit of over 3.7* billion dollars. I'm going to read three statements that people have made about how to fix the deficit, and ask you which one comes closest to your views, OK? If you haven't thought much about the issue, just tell me that.

	2009	2010	2011
Illinois' public programs and services have already been reduced significantly. We can only fix the problem by taking in more revenue, such as a tax increase.	9.5%	9.3%	6.9%
The state takes in plenty of money to pay for public services but wastes it on unnecessary programs. We can fix the problem by cutting waste and inefficiency in government.	56.5%	57.0%	57.7%
Illinois' budget problem is so large it can only be solved by a combination of budget cuts and revenue increases.	27.3%	26.6%	28.5%
Haven't thought much about it.	3.4%	3.4%	3.0%
Other/Don't know	3.4%	3.7%	3.9%

* In 2009, "over 12 billion dollars"; in 2010, "over 13 billion dollars."

Table 2: Budget Cut Proposals

Do you favor or oppose cuts in:	2008	2009	2010	2011
Spending on kindergarten through high school education?				
Favor	10.7%	13.0%	14.0%	16.5%
Oppose	85.6%	84.4%	82.1%	80.0%
Other/Don't know	3.6%	2.7%	3.9%	3.5%
Spending on state universities?				
Favor	20.9%	31.9%	34.0%	38.2%
Oppose	72.0%	61.4%	57.4%	54.1%
Other/Don't know	7.2%	6.8%	8.6%	7.7%
State spending on public safety, such as state police and prison operations?				
Favor	16.8%	16.3%	21.0%	20.6%
Oppose	77.3%	79.8%	74.5%	73.8%
Other/Don't know	5.9%	4.1%	4.5%	5.6%
Spending on natural resources, such as state parks or environmental regulation?				
Favor	21.2%	32.0%	40.0%	36.7%
Oppose	73.3%	63.0%	53.1%	55.6%
Other/Don't know	5.5%	5.0%	6.9%	7.7%
Spending on programs for poor people*?				
Favor	20.6%	20.4%	24.9%	25.2%
Oppose	73.0%	72.4%	66.3%	64.7%
Other/Don't know	6.4%	7.3%	8.8%	10.1%
Spending on programs for people with mental or physical disabilities?				
Favor	NA	11.8%	12.4%	12.3%
Oppose	NA	85.3%	83.2%	83.5%
Other/Don't know	NA	3.0%	4.4%	4.2%
Spending on pension benefits for state worker's retirement? **				
Favor	24.1%	39.5%	45.5%	45.5%
Oppose	65.7%	53.4%	47.3%	48.0%
Other/Don't know	10.2%	7.2%	7.2%	6.5%

* In 2008, "programs for the needy."

** In 2008, "state workers' retirement"

Table 3: Revenue Increases

Do you favor or oppose:	2008	2009	2010	2011
A proposal to add brackets to the state income tax structure so that higher-income residents pay higher taxes?				
Favor	65.9%	NA	NA	NA
Oppose	28.8%	NA	NA	NA
Other/Don't know	5.2%	NA	NA	NA
Raising the state income tax rate from 3 percent to 4 percent [†] ?				
Favor	NA	32.1%	40.9%	NA
Oppose	NA	65.5%	56.2%	NA
Other/Don't know	NA	2.4%	2.9%	NA
Raising the state sales tax rate?				
Favor	17.0%	21.4%	24.5%	22.0%
Oppose	78.1%	75.5%	72.9%	74.1%
Other/Don't know	4.9%	2.4%	2.6%	3.8%
Expanding the sales tax to cover services like dry cleaning or haircuts, which are not currently taxed?				
Favor	28.4%	44.1%	45.2%	50.1%
Oppose	67.6%	53.3%	51.4%	45.9%
Other/Don't know	4.0%	2.7%	3.4%	4.0%
A proposal expanding legalized gambling in the state?				
Favor	46.6%	44.5%	49.9%	56.8%
Oppose	46.9%	51.4%	46.3%	38.8%
Other/Don't know	6.5%	4.1%	3.8%	4.4%
Selling state assets, such as the lottery and the Illinois toll road system, to private investors?				
Favor	37.8%	25.9%	30.4%	NA
Oppose	52.2%	63.5%	60.1%	NA
Other/Don't know	9.9%	10.6%	9.5%	NA
A proposal to increase the tax on cigarettes by \$1 per pack?				
Favor	NA	NA	NA	69.2%
Oppose	NA	NA	NA	28.5%
Other/Don't know	NA	NA	NA	2.3%
A proposal to apply the state income tax to the retirement income of those earning more than \$50,000 a year? ^{**}				
Favor	NA	NA	NA	42.9%
Oppose	NA	NA	NA	48.9%
Other/Don't know	NA	NA	NA	8.2%

[†] In 2009, "3 percent to 4.5 percent."

^{**} Collapsed data from a two-part question

Table 4: Borrowing to Pay Late State Bills

The State of Illinois is late paying its bills to organizations that perform services and provide goods to the State. By law, it has to pay those vendors a high rate of interest on those late bills. I'm going to read two statements some people are making about how the State should deal with this situation, then ask you which statement comes closer to your views. If you haven't thought much about the issue, just tell me that.

The State should borrow money at a lower interest rate to pay off those late bills, saving money on interest and getting money to businesses and organizations that need to be paid.	39.1%
The State should just pay its bills as well as it can with current funds and not borrow money to try to fix its problems.	50.3%
Haven't thought much about it	8.7%
Other/Don't know	1.9%