

For release March 11, 2021

Franklin & Marshall College Poll: March 2021

Summary of Findings

For media or other inquiries:

Berwood Yost, Director
byost@fandm.edu
717.358.3922

@FandMPoll
getvue.co/profile/fandmpoll



Table of Contents

Key Findings 1

General Sentiment 3

State Issues 4

President Biden: Job Performance 5

Methodology 8

Table A-1: Economic Outlook 9

Table A-2: Attitudes About The Coronavirus Vaccine 10

Table A-3: Presidential Job Performance 11

Table A-4: Trump Legacy 12

Table A-5: The Vote Against Certifying 2020 Election Results 13

Key Findings

The March 2021 Franklin & Marshall College Poll finds two in five (36%) of the state's voters believe the state is "headed in the right direction," which is significantly lower than the recent, pre-pandemic high of 57% reported in October 2019. Voters list COVID-19 (31%) as the most important problem facing the state today, as they did in our October 2020 survey. Concerns about government and politicians (27%) and the economy (12%), including unemployment, personal finances and business retention, follow as top concerns.

Sizable proportions of the state's registered voters continue to support increasing the state's minimum wage (67%) and legalizing the use of marijuana (59%). Support for both these policies has been consistently high over recent years. About three in ten (31%) registered voters have received a COVID-19 vaccine, but partisan differences in attitudes about the coronavirus vaccine are clear: more Democrats (40%) than Republicans (26%) have received a vaccine and more Democrats (74%) than Republicans (36%) who have not been vaccinated say they will "definitely" get the vaccine.

About two in five (41%) voters in Pennsylvania believe President Biden is doing an "excellent" or "good" job as president. President Biden's current rating is higher than President Trump's and lower than President Obama's rating in Pennsylvania at the same point in their terms. The President's approval rating for his management of the coronavirus outbreak is higher (50%) than his overall job approval rating. President Trump received lower (33%) ratings for his management of the coronavirus compared to his overall job performance.

The state's registered voters are evenly divided on the legacy of the Trump presidency. About the same numbers of voters say the Trump presidency was "good" (50%) for the United States as say it was "bad" (48%). Ratings of the Trump legacy are highly partisan and ideological, with most Republicans (87%) and conservatives (90%) saying it was "good" and most

Democrats (87%) and liberals (92%) saying it was “bad.”

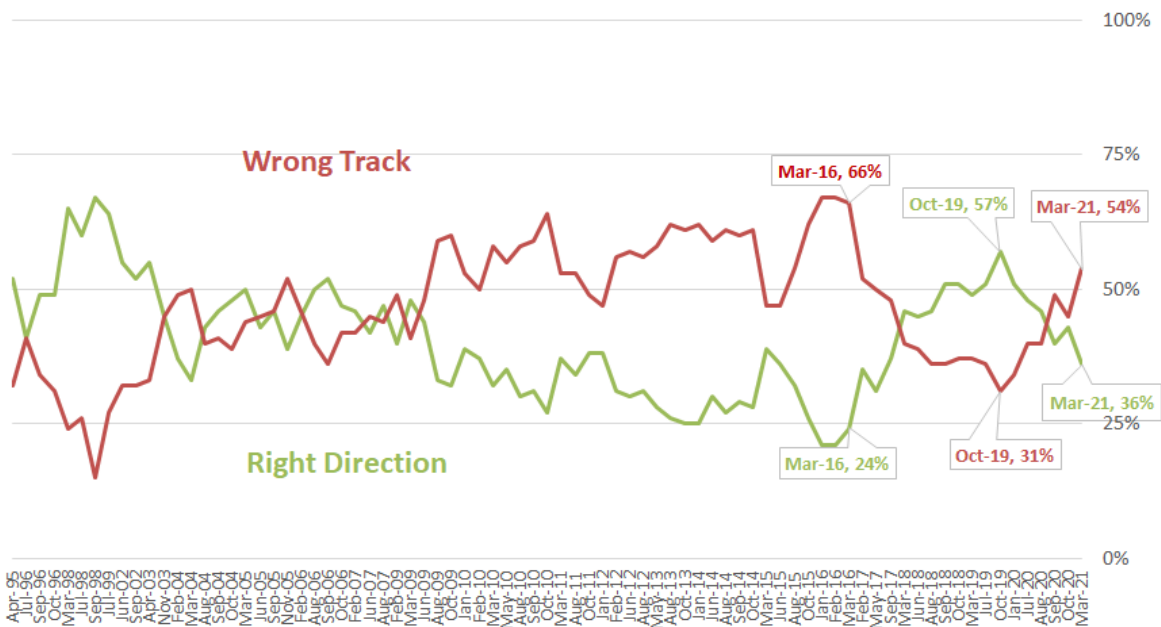
Three in five (61%) registered voters disapprove of the vote against certifying the results of the state’s 2020 presidential election that was supported by eight members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation. Partisan feelings about the certification of the state’s election results are explained a bit by how Republicans place themselves within the party. About two in five (42%) Republicans say they are aligned with former President Trump’s wing of the party, while a similar proportion (38%) say they more closely align with traditional Republicans. Most conservative Republicans (51%) place themselves in the Trump faction, while most moderate Republicans (53%) place themselves in the traditional faction.

General Sentiment

Two in five (36%) of the state’s voters believe the state is “headed in the right direction,” which is significantly lower than the recent, pre-pandemic high of 57% reported in October 2019 (see Figure 1). More Democrats (56%) than independents (35%) or Republicans (17%) believe the state is “headed in the right direction.”

Direction of State Over Time, Pennsylvania residents 1995-2021

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



Note: Beginning in 2012, question asked only of registered voter, prior surveys included all adults.



Figure 1. This figure shows how registered voters in Pennsylvania feel about the general direction of the state. The red line shows the proportion that believes the state is “off on the wrong track” and the green line shows the proportion that believes the state is “headed in the right direction.” More voters currently believe the state is on the wrong track than headed in the right direction.

Most respondents say they are “better off” (11%) or “about the same” (69%) financially as they were last year, although one in five (17%) believes their finances will be “worse off” a year from now. The proportion that believes they will be worse off next year is the largest expression of economic pessimism recorded in a Franklin & Marshall College survey since March 2011. Republicans, conservatives, those without a college degree, and older respondents tend to express greater economic pessimism (see [Table A-1](#)).

Concern about the performance of government and politicians has become more prominent in recent years and is predicated, at least in part, on voters’ general dissatisfaction with how well they believe government works for them. The March Poll finds that only one in four (29%) of the state’s registered voters believes the actions of the US House and Senate represent the collective will of Americans, only one in five (21%) believes the government’s operations are transparent, and only one in ten (11%) believes there is little official corruption in the federal government.

State Issues

Sizable proportions of the state’s registered voters continue to support increasing the state’s minimum wage (67%) and legalizing the use of marijuana (59%). Support for both these policies has been consistently high over recent years.

About three in ten (31%) registered voters have received a COVID-19 vaccine. Half (49%) of those over 65 years of age report they’ve been vaccinated, which is consistent with national figures.¹ Partisan differences in attitudes about the coronavirus vaccine are clear: more Democrats (40%) than Republicans (26%) have received a vaccine and more Democrats (74%)

¹ See updated national data at https://www.langerresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/SEAN-COVID-19-Survey-Summary_3-5-21.pdf

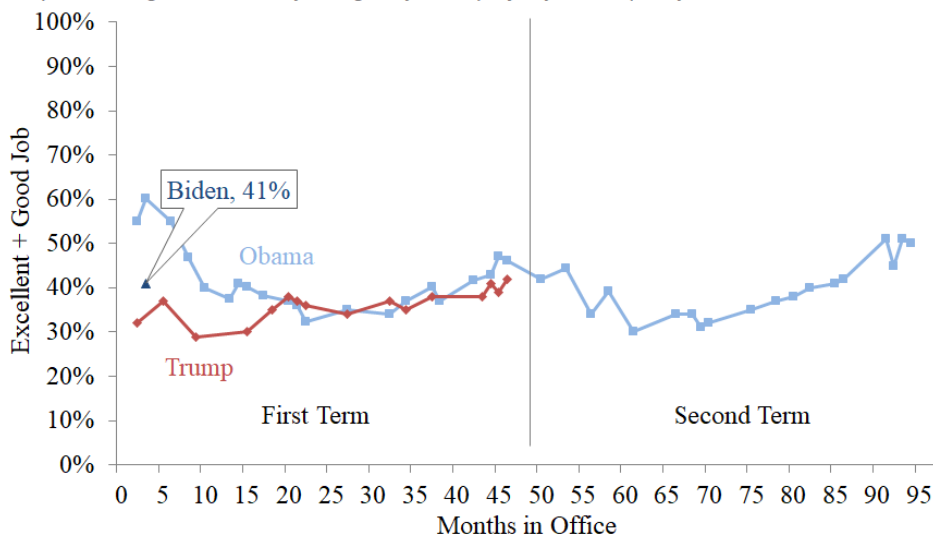
than Republicans (36%) who have not been vaccinated say they will “definitely” get the vaccine (see [Table A-2](#)).

President Biden: Job Performance

About two in five (41%) voters in Pennsylvania believe President Biden is doing an “excellent” or “good” job as president. Figure 2 compares President Biden’s job ratings to President Obama’s and President Trump’s job ratings; President Biden’s current rating is higher than President Trump’s and lower than President Obama’s rating in Pennsylvania at the same point in their terms. A majority of Democrats (83%) rate the President’s performance positively, while few Republicans (6%) or independents (27%) do so (see [Table A-3](#)). Conservatives (7%) are

Comparison of Presidents’ Job Performance Ratings, Pennsylvania voters March 2021

How would you rate the way that [fill President] is handling his job as President? Would you say he is doing... an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job as President?



Source: Survey conducted March 1 – 7, 2021



Figure 2. This figure shows how registered voters in Pennsylvania rate the performance of President Biden in relation to Presidents Obama (blue line) and Trump (red line) at similar points in their terms. President Biden’s rating in Pennsylvania is higher than President Trump’s but lower than President Obama’s at similar points in their terms.

much less likely than moderates (55%) or liberals (83%) to give the President positive job approval ratings. The President's approval rating for his management of the coronavirus outbreak is higher (50%) than his overall job approval rating—Republicans (16%) and independents (42%) provide notably better ratings for his coronavirus management. President Trump received lower (33%) ratings for his management of the coronavirus compared to his overall job performance.

The state's registered voters are evenly divided on the legacy of the Trump presidency. About the same numbers of voters say the Trump presidency was "good" (50%) for the United States as say it was "bad" (48%), although more said his presidency was "very bad" (38%) than said it was "very good" (29%). Ratings of the Trump legacy are highly partisan and ideological, with most Republicans (87%) and conservatives (90%) saying it was "good" and most Democrats (87%) and liberals (92%) saying it was "bad" (see [Table A-4](#)).

Three in five (61%) registered voters disapprove of the vote against certifying the results of the state's 2020 presidential election that was supported by eight members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation. Majorities of liberal (88%) and moderate (72%) voters disapprove, as do one in three (36%) conservatives. Majorities of Democrats (86%) and independents (55%) also disapprove, while about two in five (42%) Republicans do (see [Table A-5](#)).

Partisan feelings about the certification of the state's election results are explained a bit by how Republicans place themselves within the party. About two in five (42%) Republicans say they are aligned with former President Trump's wing of the party, while a similar proportion (38%) say they more closely align with traditional Republicans. Most conservative Republicans (51%) place themselves in the Trump faction, while most moderate Republicans (53%) place themselves in the traditional faction. More non-college educated Republicans (46%) place themselves in the Trump faction than do college-educated Republicans (34%). Of course, most Republicans identify as conservatives (see Figure 3). The realignment of the state's partisans into more ideologically consistent groups has taken place among those in both parties during the past 20 years.

Partisanship and Ideology Over Time

Pennsylvania voters

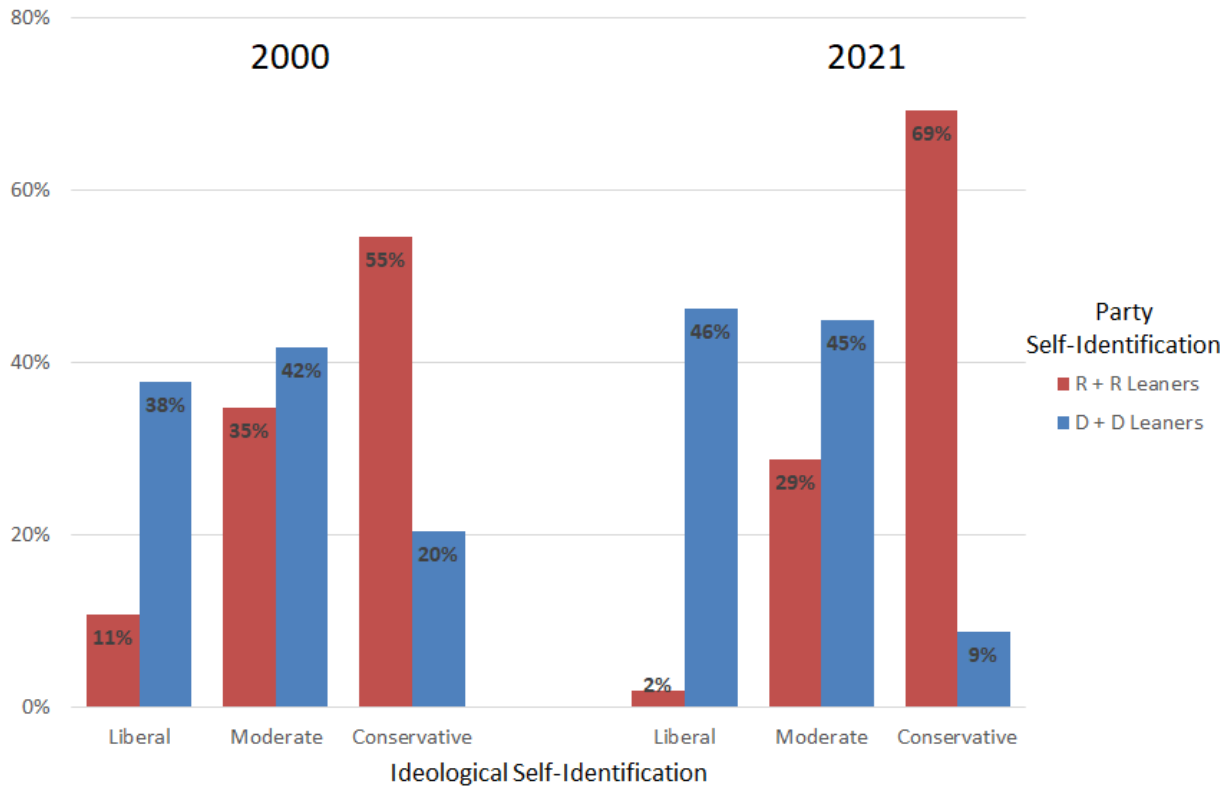


Figure 3. This figure shows how registered voters in Pennsylvania have changed ideologically over the past two decades. The left-hand image shows the self-reported ideology of partisans in 2000 and the right-hand image shows the current self-reported ideology of partisans. Republicans (red bars) have become more conservative and Democrats (blue bars) have become more liberal over time.

Methodology

The survey findings presented in this release are based on the results of interviews conducted March 1 – 7, 2021. The interviews were conducted at the Center for Opinion Research at Franklin & Marshall. The data included in this release represent the responses of 588 registered Pennsylvania voters, including 269 Democrats, 236 Republicans, and 83 independents.² The sample of voters was obtained from Marketing Systems Group. All sampled respondents were notified by mail about the survey. Interviews were completed over the phone and online depending on each respondent's preference. Survey results were weighted (age, gender, education, geography, and party registration) using an iterative weighting algorithm to reflect the known distribution of those characteristics. Estimates for age, geography, and party registration are based on active voters within the PA Department of State's voter registration data. Gender and education is estimated using data from the November 2018 CPS Voter Registration Supplement.³

The sample error for this survey is +/- 5.5 percentage points when the design effects from weighting are considered. In addition to sampling error, this poll is also subject to other sources of non-sampling error. Generally speaking, two sources of error concern researchers most. Non-response bias is created when selected participants either choose not to participate in the survey or are unavailable for interviewing. Response errors are the product of the question and answer process. Surveys that rely on self-reported behaviors and attitudes are susceptible to biases related to the way respondents process and respond to survey questions.

² The question reported here is self-reported voter REGISTRATION and is consistent with past reporting practices. The survey also asked about self-reported voter IDENTIFICATION, which shows a slightly different partisan split: 47% identify as Republican (n=267), 7% as Independent (n=43), and 43% as Democrat (n=243). Partisan comparisons in this summary show self-reported registration.

³ Data downloaded from IPUMS-CPS, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org, accessed 12/31/2019.

Table A-1: Economic Outlook

Pennsylvania voters, March 2021

Now looking ahead, do you think that a year from now, you and your family will be better off financially than you are now, worse off, or about the same as you are now?

	Better off	Worse off	About the same	Do not know
Party*				
Republican	21%	26%	47%	6%
Democrat	22%	4%	65%	9%
Independent or something else	20%	25%	51%	5%
Ideology*				
Liberal	23%	2%	66%	9%
Moderate	22%	13%	60%	5%
Conservative	19%	28%	45%	8%
Gender**				
Male	25%	17%	52%	6%
Female	17%	15%	59%	9%
Age*				
Under 35	42%	10%	43%	5%
35-54	28%	15%	51%	7%
Over 55	12%	19%	59%	9%
Education*				
HS or less	17%	20%	53%	10%
Some college	18%	23%	51%	8%
College degree	25%	9%	59%	6%
Race*				
White	21%	16%	57%	6%
Nonwhite	21%	18%	40%	22%
Race & Education, White Voters*				
White, No College Degree	17%	23%	53%	6%
White, College Degree	25%	7%	62%	6%
Employment*				
Fulltime	28%	12%	53%	6%
Other	23%	17%	48%	12%
Retired	10%	20%	63%	7%
Income*				
Under \$35,000	12%	21%	53%	14%
\$35,000-\$75,000	20%	19%	54%	7%
Over \$75,000	28%	13%	56%	4%
"Born-again" or evangelical Christian*				
Yes	24%	24%	43%	9%
No	20%	13%	60%	7%
Region*				
Philadelphia & Southeast	24%	10%	57%	8%
Northeast	12%	23%	50%	16%
Allegheny & Southwest	24%	15%	58%	4%
Northwest	10%	14%	67%	9%
Central	21%	22%	50%	7%
Urban-Rural Classification**				
Large Central Metro	24%	13%	59%	5%
Large Fringe Metro	23%	10%	59%	8%
Medium Metro	20%	22%	48%	10%
Small Metro	12%	22%	52%	14%
Micropolitan	19%	16%	62%	3%
Noncore	24%	34%	37%	6%

* p<0.01 ** p<0.05

Table A-2: Attitudes About The Coronavirus Vaccine

Pennsylvania voters, March 2021

If a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 were to be available to you today, would you definitely get the vaccine, probably get the vaccine, probably not get the vaccine, or definitely not get the vaccine?

	Yes	No	Do not know
Party*			
Republican	51%	47%	2%
Democrat	85%	13%	2%
Independent or something else	56%	42%	2%
Ideology*			
Liberal	91%	7%	2%
Moderate	74%	24%	2%
Conservative	48%	50%	2%
Gender*			
Male	65%	35%	0%
Female	62%	31%	6%
Age**			
Under 35	54%	41%	5%
35-54	57%	40%	3%
Over 55	72%	25%	3%
Education*			
HS or less	59%	39%	2%
Some college	52%	44%	4%
College degree	78%	19%	3%
Race			
White	63%	34%	3%
Nonwhite	72%	21%	7%
Race & Education, White Voters*			
White, No College Degree	53%	44%	3%
White, College Degree	78%	20%	3%
Employment*			
Fulltime	65%	32%	3%
Other	46%	49%	5%
Retired	75%	23%	2%
Income			
Under \$35,000	55%	41%	5%
\$35,000-\$75,000	58%	38%	3%
Over \$75,000	69%	30%	1%
"Born-again" or evangelical Christian*			
Yes	44%	53%	3%
No	70%	26%	4%
Region*			
Philadelphia & Southeast	78%	18%	4%
Northeast	75%	19%	5%
Allegheny & Southwest	57%	39%	4%
Northwest	37%	63%	0%
Central	56%	42%	3%
Urban-Rural Classification**			
Large Central Metro	71%	26%	3%
Large Fringe Metro	72%	26%	2%
Medium Metro	63%	35%	2%
Small Metro	44%	48%	7%
Micropolitan	54%	43%	3%
Noncore	57%	33%	10%

* p<0.01 ** p<0.05

Table A-3: Presidential Job Performance

Pennsylvania voters, March 2021

How would you rate the way that Joe Biden is handling his job as president? Would you say he is doing an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job as President?

	Excellent/Good	Fair/Poor	Do not know
Party*			
Republican	6%	91%	3%
Democrat	83%	15%	3%
Independent or something else	27%	68%	5%
Ideology*			
Liberal	83%	16%	1%
Moderate	54%	41%	5%
Conservative	7%	90%	3%
Gender*			
Male	35%	61%	4%
Female	47%	50%	3%
Age*			
Under 35	38%	50%	12%
35-54	30%	69%	1%
Over 55	49%	48%	4%
Education*			
HS or less	35%	59%	6%
Some college	36%	60%	4%
College degree	49%	49%	2%
Race*			
White	39%	58%	3%
Nonwhite	55%	36%	9%
Race & Education, White Voters*			
White, No College Degree	32%	64%	4%
White, College Degree	49%	49%	1%
Employment**			
Fulltime	36%	61%	3%
Other	32%	61%	7%
Retired	53%	45%	2%
Income			
Under \$35,000	47%	51%	3%
\$35,000-\$75,000	39%	56%	5%
Over \$75,000	39%	59%	2%
"Born-again" or evangelical Christian*			
Yes	22%	73%	5%
No	48%	50%	2%
Region*			
Philadelphia & Southeast	64%	31%	5%
Northeast	25%	70%	4%
Allegheny & Southwest	42%	55%	4%
Northwest	35%	65%	1%
Central	27%	71%	2%
Urban-Rural Classification*			
Large Central Metro	56%	36%	8%
Large Fringe Metro	57%	41%	3%
Medium Metro	31%	66%	3%
Small Metro	17%	82%	2%
Micropolitan	22%	78%	0%
Noncore	23%	72%	5%

* p<0.01 ** p<0.05

Table A-4: Trump Legacy

Pennsylvania voters, March 2021

In general, do you think the Trump presidency was good or bad for the United States?

	Good	Bad	Do not know
Party*			
Republican	87%	11%	1%
Democrat	12%	87%	0%
Independent or something else	52%	42%	6%
Ideology*			
Liberal	8%	92%	0%
Moderate	34%	64%	3%
Conservative	90%	10%	0%
Gender*			
Male	57%	43%	0%
Female	44%	53%	3%
Age*			
Under 35	33%	61%	5%
35-54	58%	41%	1%
Over 55	48%	50%	2%
Education*			
HS or less	57%	39%	3%
Some college	55%	43%	2%
College degree	42%	57%	1%
Race*			
White	53%	45%	2%
Nonwhite	30%	67%	3%
Race & Education, White Voters*			
White, No College Degree	61%	37%	2%
White, College Degree	41%	58%	1%
Employment*			
Fulltime	54%	45%	1%
Other	49%	46%	5%
Retired	45%	54%	1%
Income**			
Under \$35,000	38%	60%	2%
\$35,000-\$75,000	52%	45%	3%
Over \$75,000	51%	49%	0%
"Born-again" or evangelical Christian*			
Yes	70%	25%	5%
No	43%	56%	0%
Region*			
Philadelphia & Southeast	29%	68%	3%
Northeast	67%	33%	0%
Allegheny & Southwest	52%	47%	1%
Northwest	60%	40%	0%
Central	60%	38%	2%
Urban-Rural Classification*			
Large Central Metro	33%	64%	3%
Large Fringe Metro	40%	59%	1%
Medium Metro	55%	42%	2%
Small Metro	71%	29%	0%
Micropolitan	72%	26%	1%
Noncore	71%	29%	0%

* p<0.01 ** p<0.05

Table A-5: The Vote Against Certifying 2020 Election Results

Pennsylvania voters, March 2021

Eight of Pennsylvania's representatives in Congress voted against certifying Pennsylvania's election results for the 2020 Presidential election. Do you approve or disapprove of their vote?

	Approve	Disapprove	Do not know
Party*			
Republican	50%	42%	8%
Democrat	8%	86%	6%
Independent or something else	36%	55%	10%
Ideology*			
Liberal	5%	88%	7%
Moderate	24%	72%	4%
Conservative	54%	36%	11%
Gender			
Male	34%	57%	9%
Female	28%	65%	7%
Age*			
Under 35	14%	69%	17%
35-54	40%	55%	4%
Over 55	29%	62%	9%
Education			
HS or less	34%	55%	11%
Some college	36%	57%	7%
College degree	26%	67%	7%
Race*			
White	33%	60%	7%
Nonwhite	22%	61%	17%
Race & Education, White Voters*			
White, No College Degree	38%	55%	7%
White, College Degree	26%	68%	6%
Employment			
Fulltime	36%	57%	7%
Other	24%	68%	8%
Retired	28%	64%	9%
Income**			
Under \$35,000	33%	56%	10%
\$35,000-\$75,000	28%	61%	10%
Over \$75,000	31%	65%	4%
"Born-again" or evangelical Christian*			
Yes	43%	47%	10%
No	28%	66%	6%
Region**			
Philadelphia & Southeast	24%	67%	9%
Northeast	41%	45%	14%
Allegheny & Southwest	34%	61%	5%
Northwest	44%	52%	4%
Central	30%	62%	7%
Urban-Rural Classification			
Large Central Metro	24%	63%	13%
Large Fringe Metro	29%	66%	5%
Medium Metro	31%	61%	8%
Small Metro	40%	50%	10%
Micropolitan	39%	54%	6%
Noncore	50%	40%	10%

* p<0.01 ** p<0.05