



CRITICAL INSIGHTS  

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RESEARCH FOR PRECISE PRAGMATIC DIRECTION

# *Critical Insights on Maine*<sup>TM</sup> Tracking Survey

## Spring 2007

### Maine's Views on Politics, the Economy & Issues Facing the State

Focus Groups • Surveys • Public Opinion Polling

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[www.criticalinsights.com](http://www.criticalinsights.com)



# Background & Methodology

- Each Spring and Fall, Critical Insights conducts the *Critical Insights on Maine*<sup>™</sup> Tracking Survey, a comprehensive, statewide public opinion survey of Maine residents which covers a variety of topics of interest to business, government and the general public.
- For the current wave of the study, Critical Insights completed a total of 600 telephone interviews across the state between April 20 and 27, 2007.
  - With a sample of 600 interviews, results presented here have an associated margin of error of  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points at the 90% confidence level, or  $\pm 4.0$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
  - All interviews were conducted by trained and professionally-supervised interviewers at Critical Insights' Portland-based telephone data collection center.
  - On average, the survey instrument was 20 minutes in administrative length.
    - Refusal rates for the study were approximately 4% overall, indicating that the sample was not tainted by non-response error.



*Issues Facing Maine &  
Perceptions of the State's Economy*



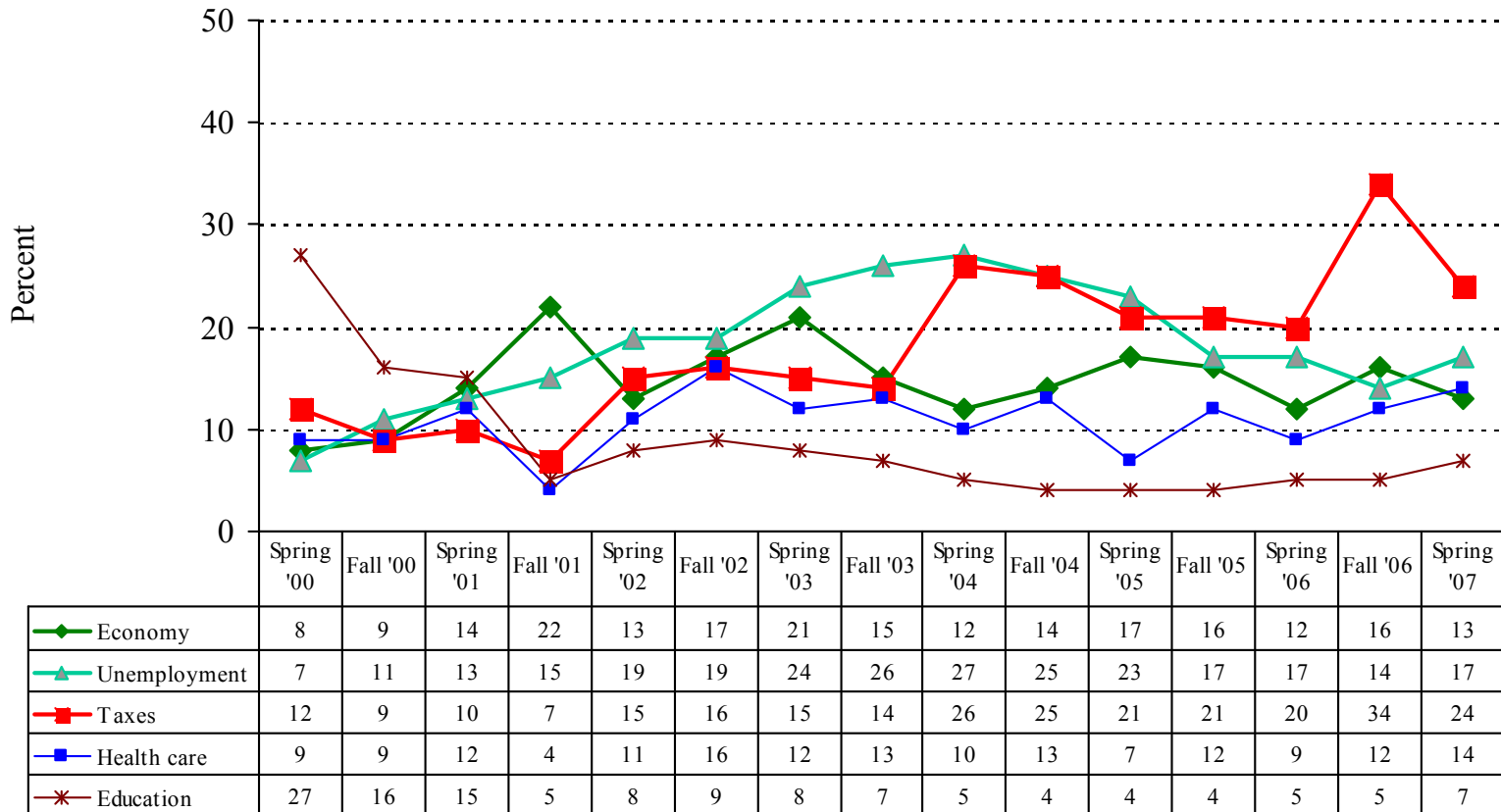
# Maine Issues & the State's Economy

- **Among key issues tracked over time, taxation continues to be the key issue on the minds of Mainers.**
  - Following the heightened interest surrounding TABOR in the Fall of 2006 (when fully one-third of residents claimed it was the key issue facing the State), citations of taxes or taxation have returned to previously observed levels, with 24% of residents seeing taxes as the State's key issue.
- **Overall, perceptions of the Maine economy continue to be rather negative.**
  - Presently, fewer than 1-in-10 residents (9%) claim that the economy is better now than it was 12 months ago, while nearly half of Mainers (47%) see the economy as being worse compared to a year ago.
    - It is worth noting that Mainers in the key wage-earning demographic between 35 and 64 years of age lodge the greatest level of negativity toward the economy.
  - Further, while few Mainers (16%) share the belief that the economy will improve over the next 12 months, nearly 4-in-10 residents (37%) are rather pessimistic and hold the view that the economy will actually worsen over that time frame.
  - And – in a measure which often serves as a barometer of personal economic stability and security – fully half of Mainers polled (52%) indicate that they are putting less into their personal savings, while a small minority (12%) claim they are saving more.



# Residents' Perceptions of Key Issues Facing Maine

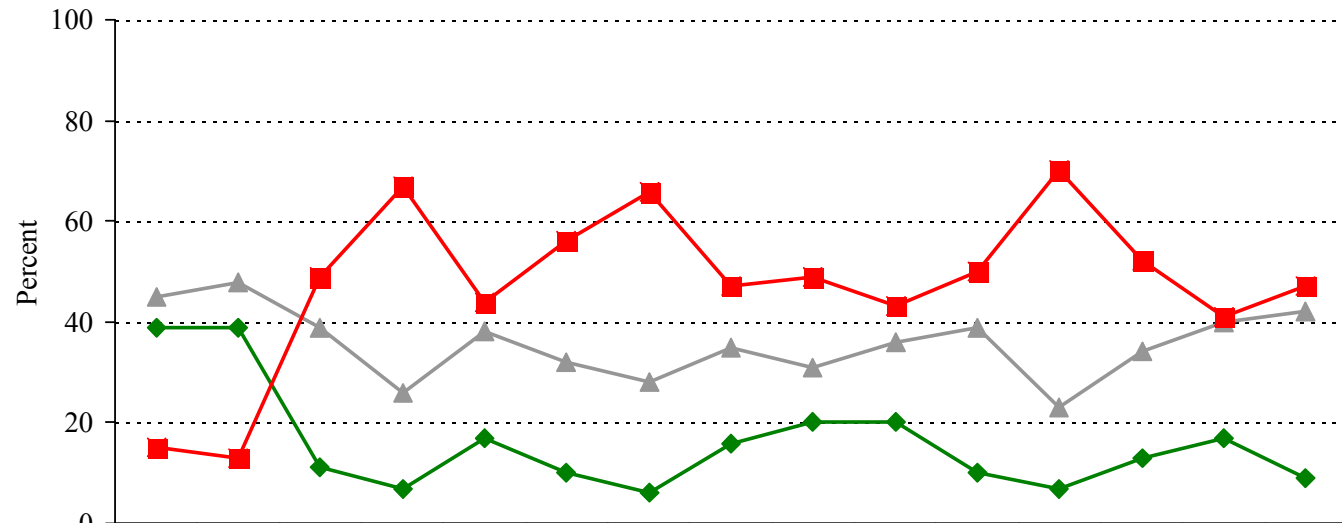
*What do you consider to be the primary issue facing Maine today?*





# Residents' Perceptions of the Current State of the Maine Economy

*Compared with 12 months ago, how would you describe the overall status of the economy?*

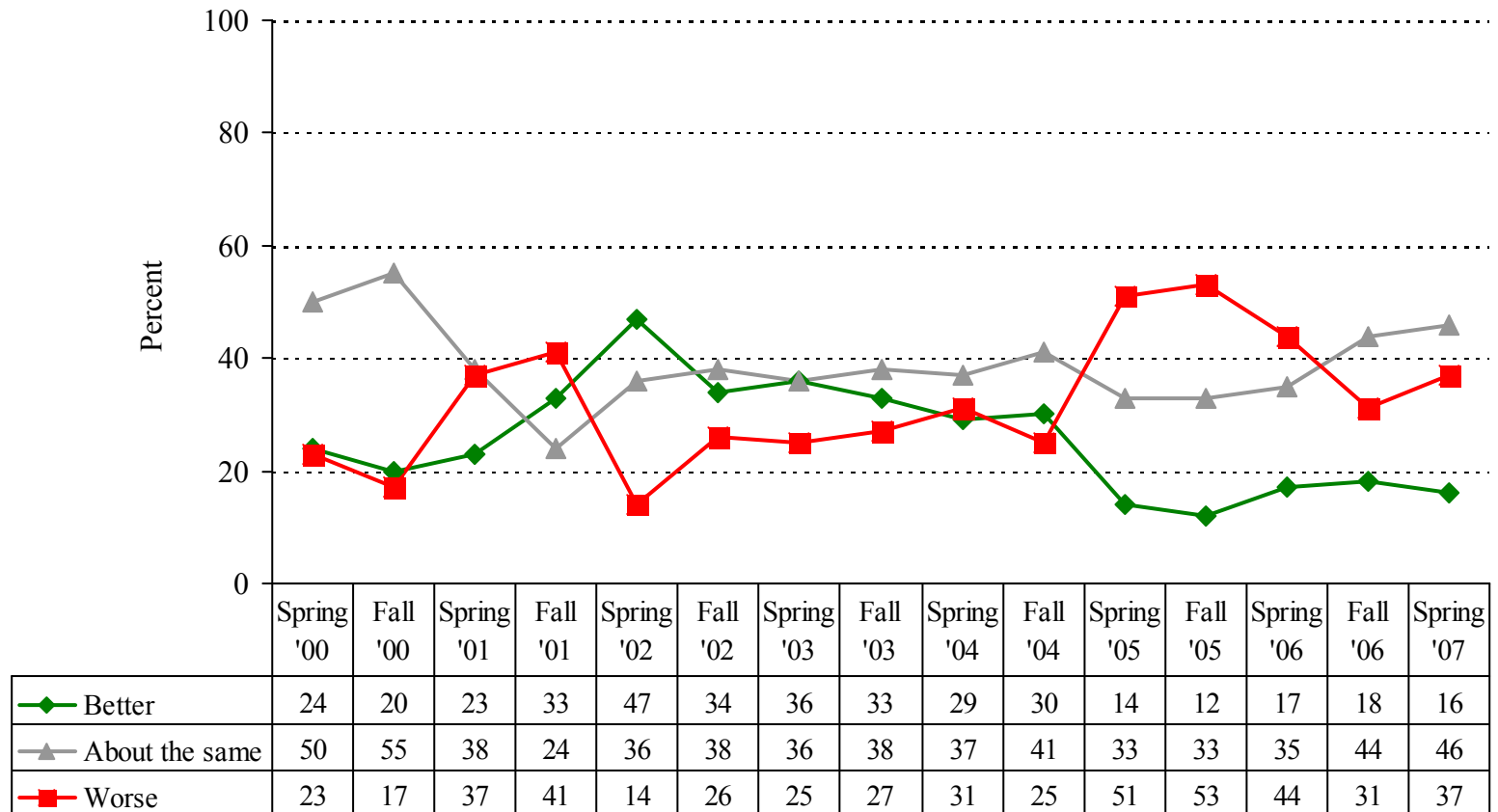


	Spring '00	Fall '00	Spring '01	Fall '01	Spring '02	Fall '02	Spring '03	Fall '03	Spring '04	Fall '04	Spring '05	Fall '05	Spring '06	Fall '06	Spring '07
◆ Better	39	39	11	7	17	10	6	16	20	20	10	7	13	17	9
▲ About the same	45	48	39	26	38	32	28	35	31	36	39	23	34	40	42
■ Worse	15	13	49	67	44	56	66	47	49	43	50	70	52	41	47



# Residents' Perceptions on the Future State of the Economy

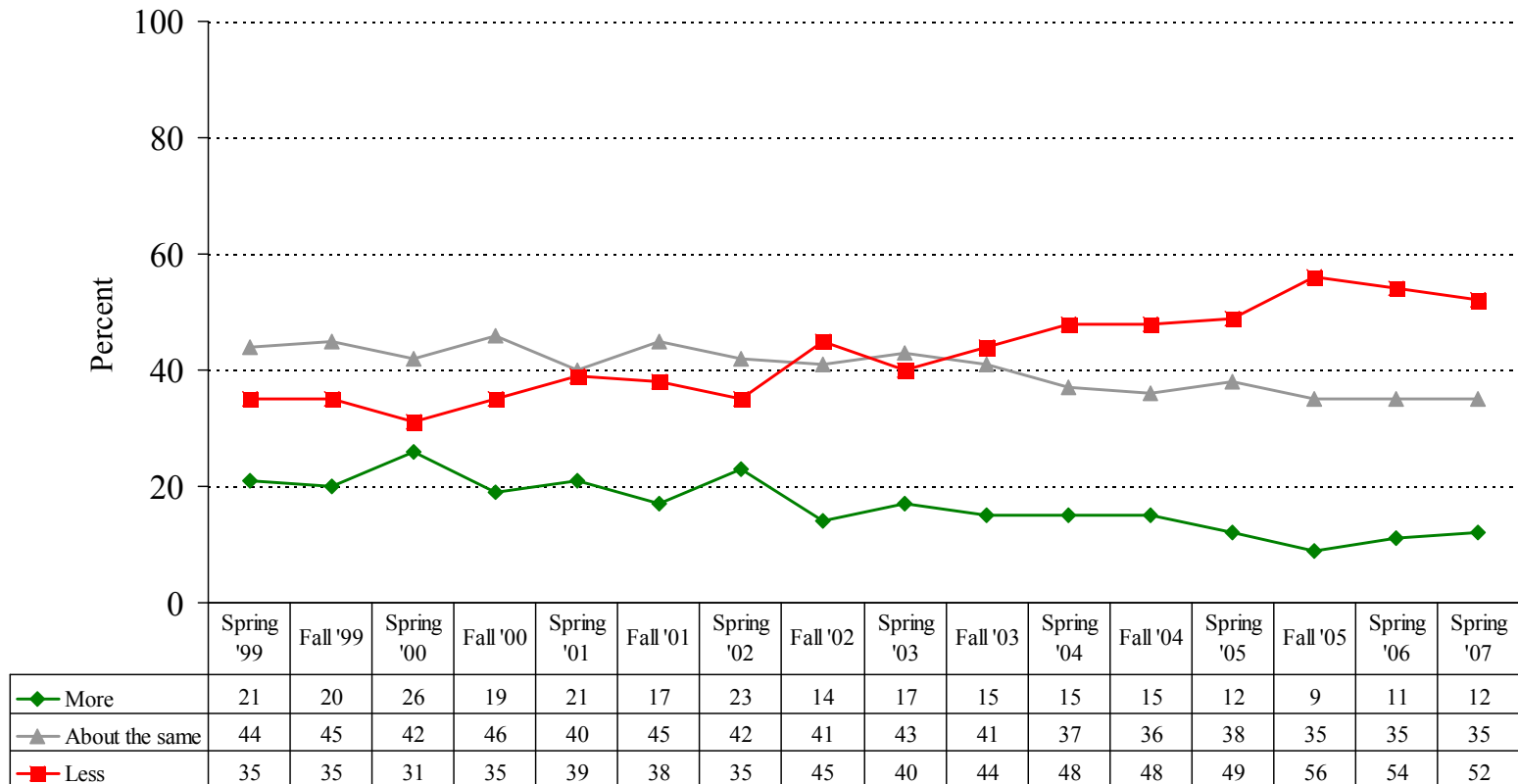
*In the next 12 months, do you think the economy will be . . .*





# Household Economic Status: 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 Maine Politics*



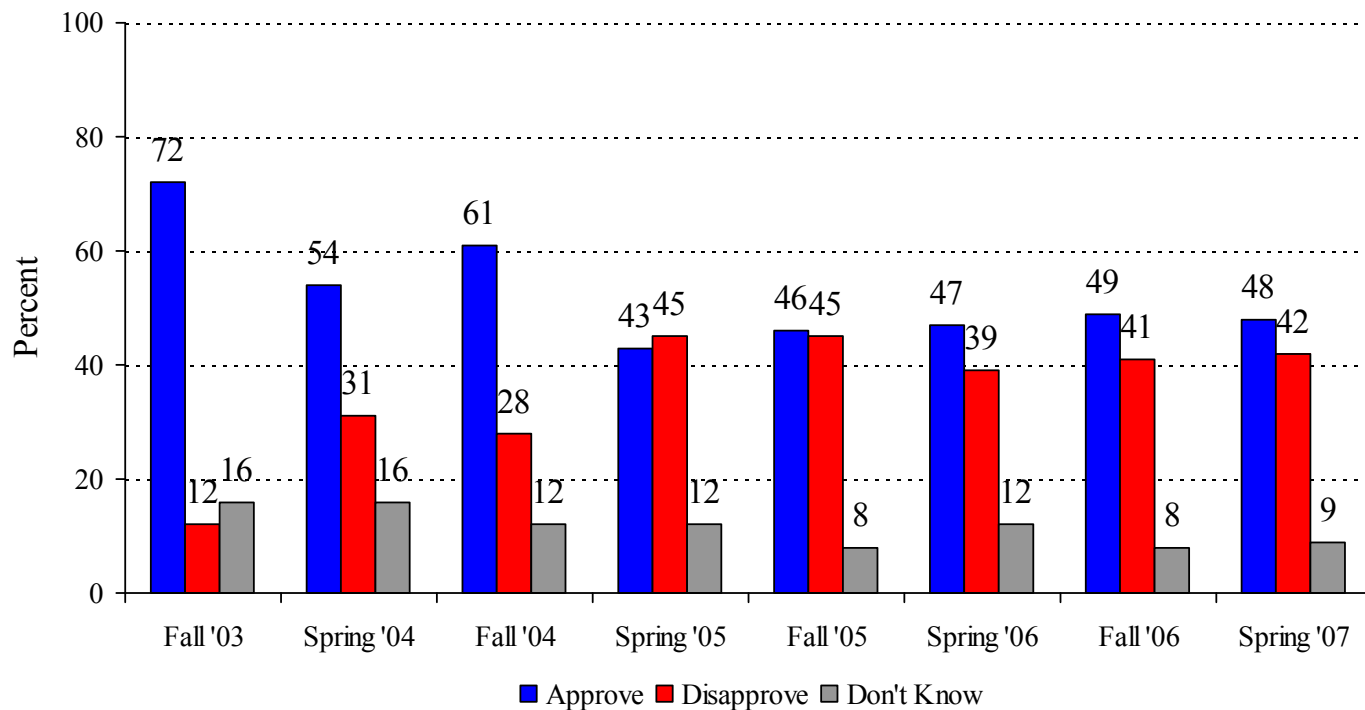
# Mainers' Perspectives on Governor John Baldacci

- Consistent with polls dating back to 2005, **Mainers continue to offer mixed reviews of Governor John Baldacci's job performance.**
  - After leveling off in 2005, the Governor's approval ratings have remained consistent over the past several iterations of the *Critical Insights on Maine*<sup>TM</sup> Tracking Survey.
  - Current results indicate that just under half of Mainers polled (48%) approve of the Governor's job performance, with 4-in-10 noting disapproval of the way he is handling his job.
  - Not surprisingly, approval of the Governor's job performance is highest among Democrats (61%), as well as among women (52%), college educated respondents (53%), those from lower income households (< \$25,000 per year – 57%), and residents of the Southern region of the state (58%).
  - Conversely, disapproval of the Governor's job performance is most robust among registered Republicans (56%) and residents who identify taxation as the greatest issue facing the State (53%).



# Residents' Approval Rating of Governor John Baldacci

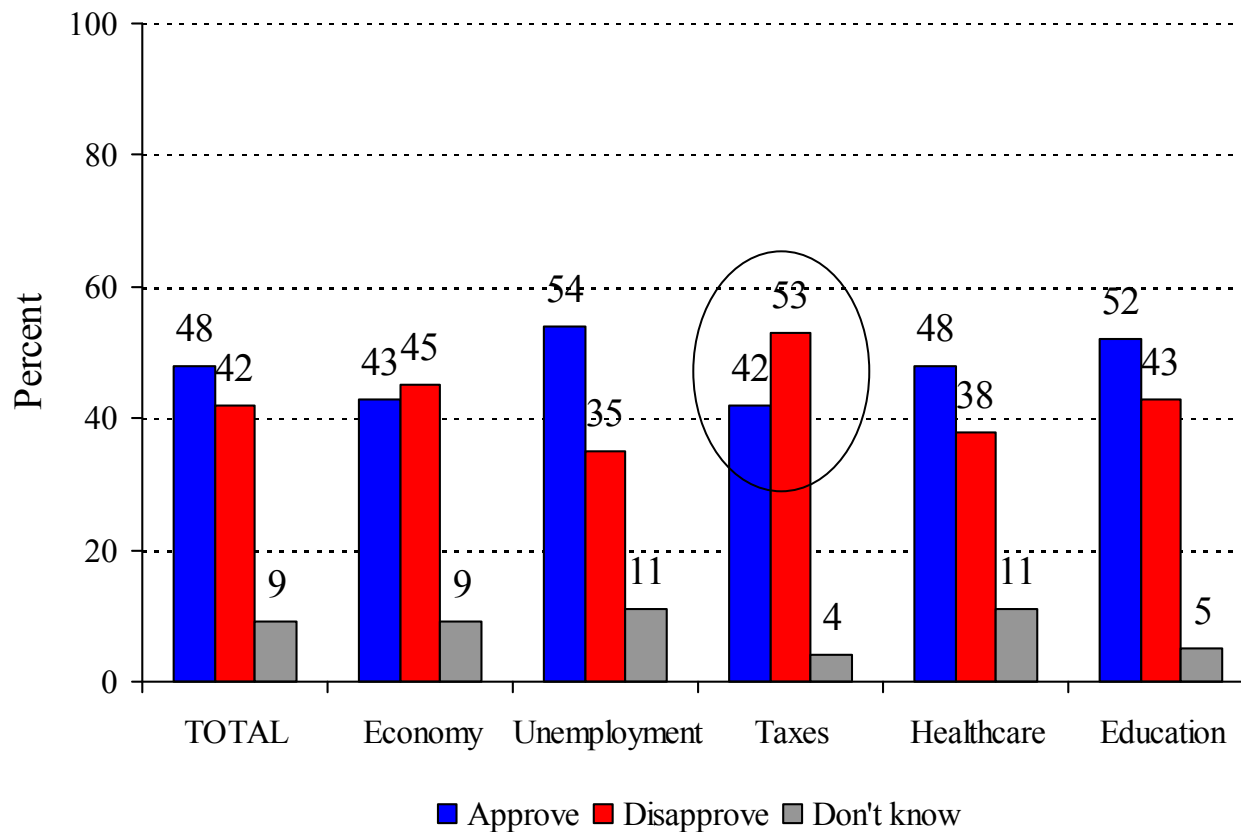
*In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Governor Baldacci is handling his job as governor of Maine?*





# Residents' Approval Rating of Governor John Baldacci

## According to Key Issues Facing Maine

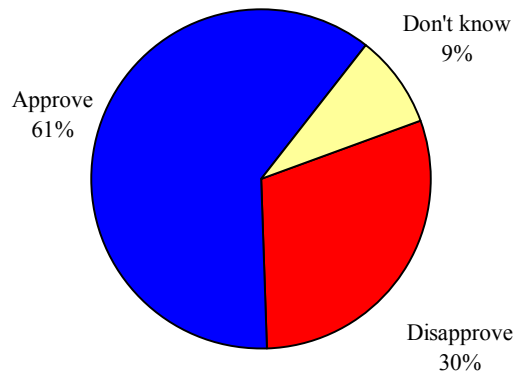




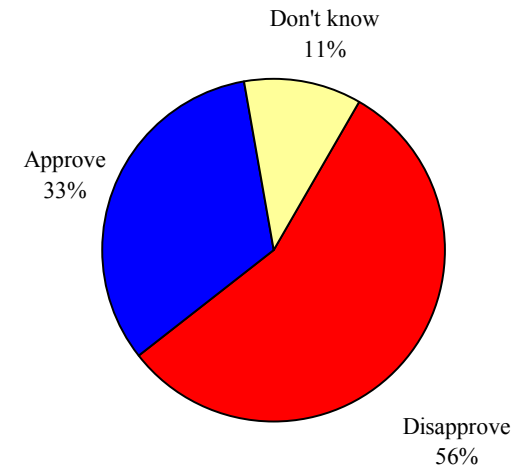
# Governor Baldacci Approval Rating

## According to Political Party

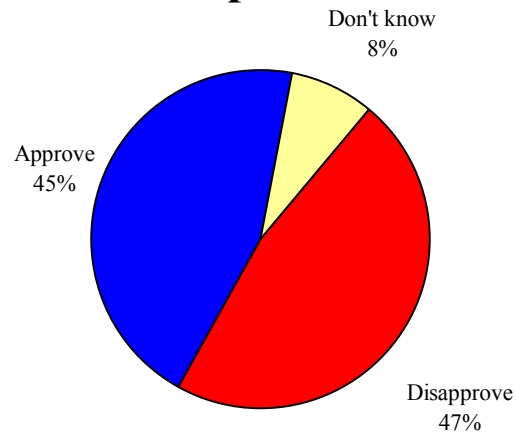
### Democrats



### Republicans



### Independents

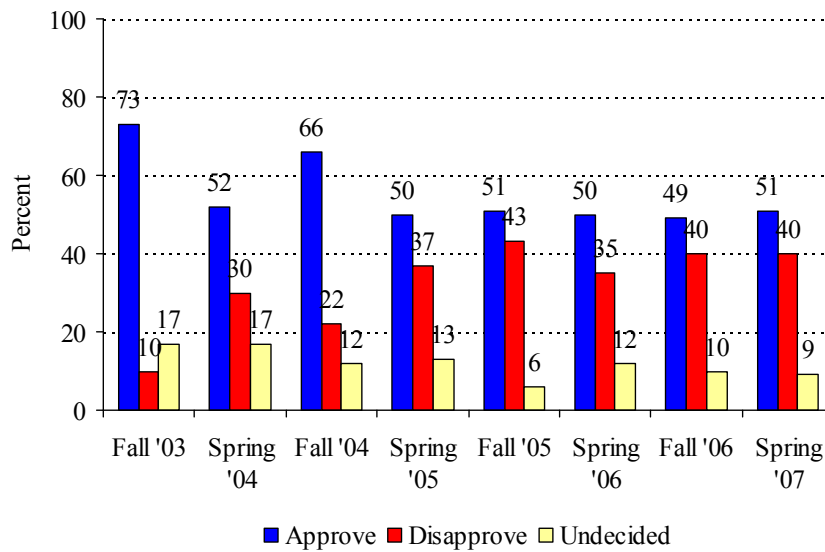




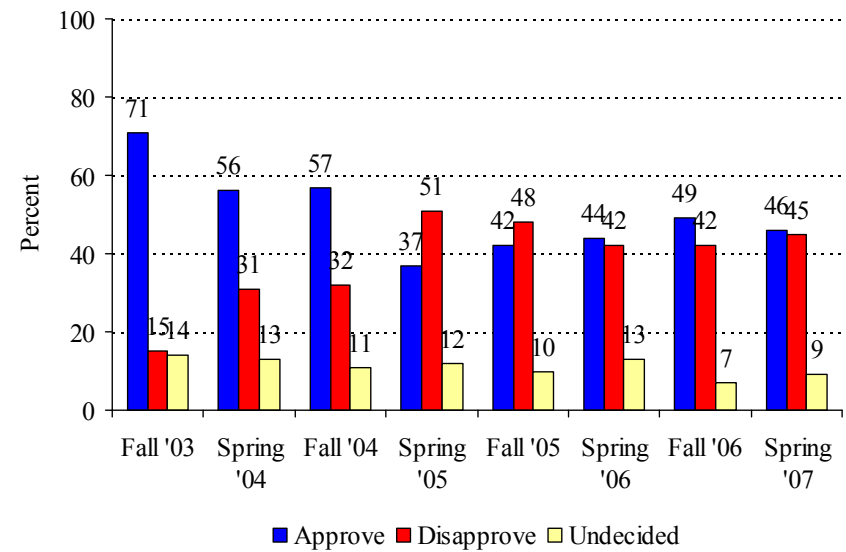
# Governor Baldacci Approval Rating

## According to Congressional District

### Congressional District 1



### Congressional District 2





# Mainers' Perspectives on Likely U.S. Senate Candidates

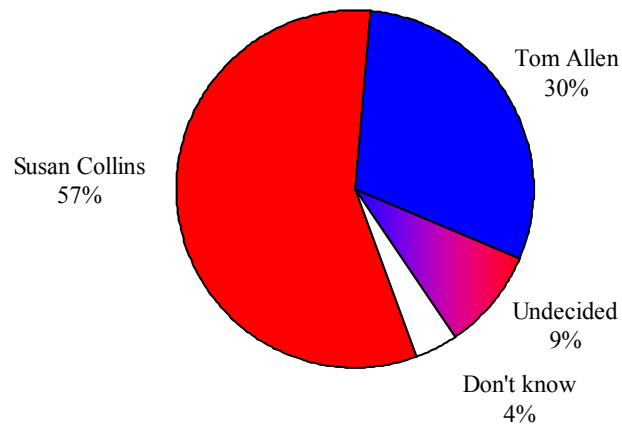
- With the election still a year and a half away, **incumbent Senator Susan Collins holds a 25-percentage point lead over potential challenger Congressman Tom Allen.**
  - Among Maine residents polled, nearly 6-in-10 (57%) claim that they would cast their vote for Susan Collins if the election for Senate were held today, with 3-in-10 (30%) claiming they would vote for Tom Allen.
    - Only about 1-in-10 residents remain undecided at this juncture.
    - Results are consistent when data are examined according to reported “likely voters.”
  - While it is noteworthy that Tom Allen garners support from a majority of the Democrats polled (54%), an overwhelming majority of Republicans (85%) claim that they would support Senator Collins in the 2008 election.
    - The two-term incumbent Senator also garners about two-thirds of the support (65%) from political independents, as well as some likely votes from Democrats (35%).



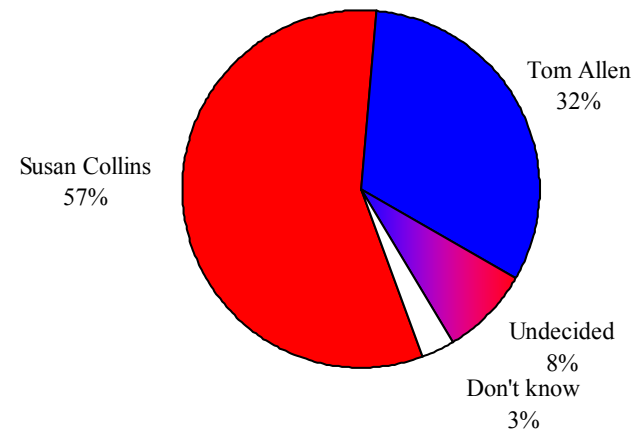
# Residents' Preferences for the U.S. Senate

*If the election were held today, who would you vote for the U.S. Senate?*

## All Respondents



## Likely Voters



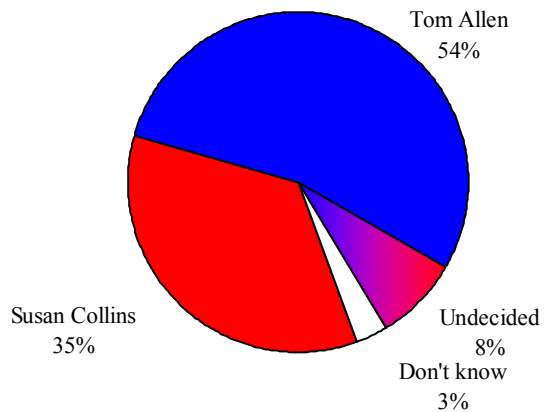




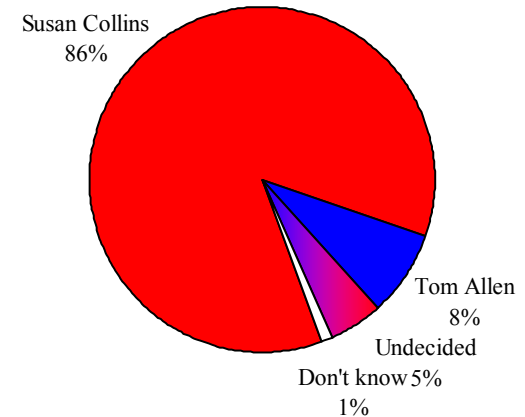
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*If the election were held today, who would you vote for the U.S. Senate?*

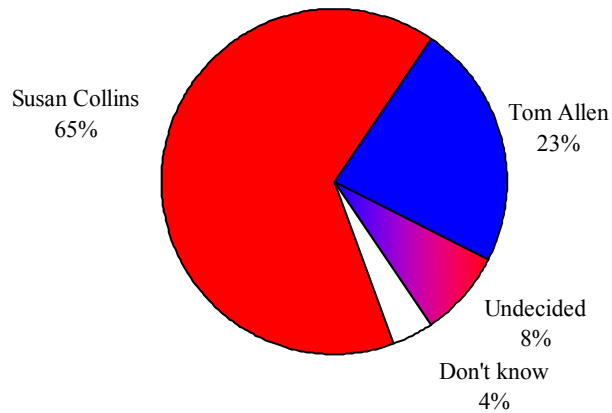
## Democrats



## Republicans



## Independents

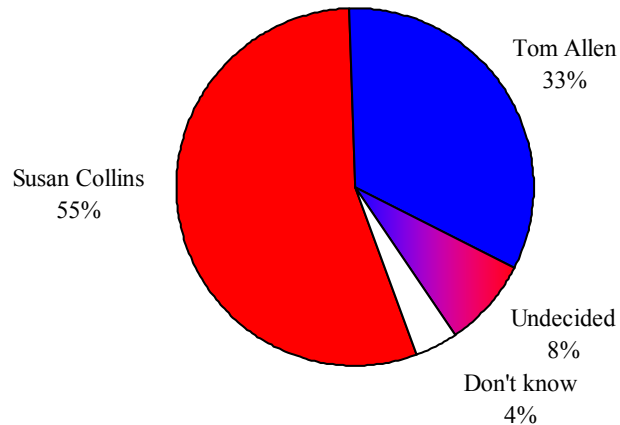




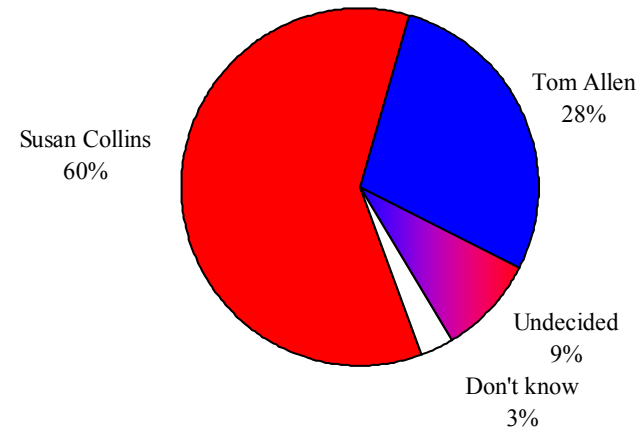
# Residents' Preferences for the U.S. Senate

*If the election were held today, who would you vote for the U.S. Senate?*

## Congressional District 1



## Congressional District 2





*Observations on  
President George W. Bush &  
the War in Iraq*



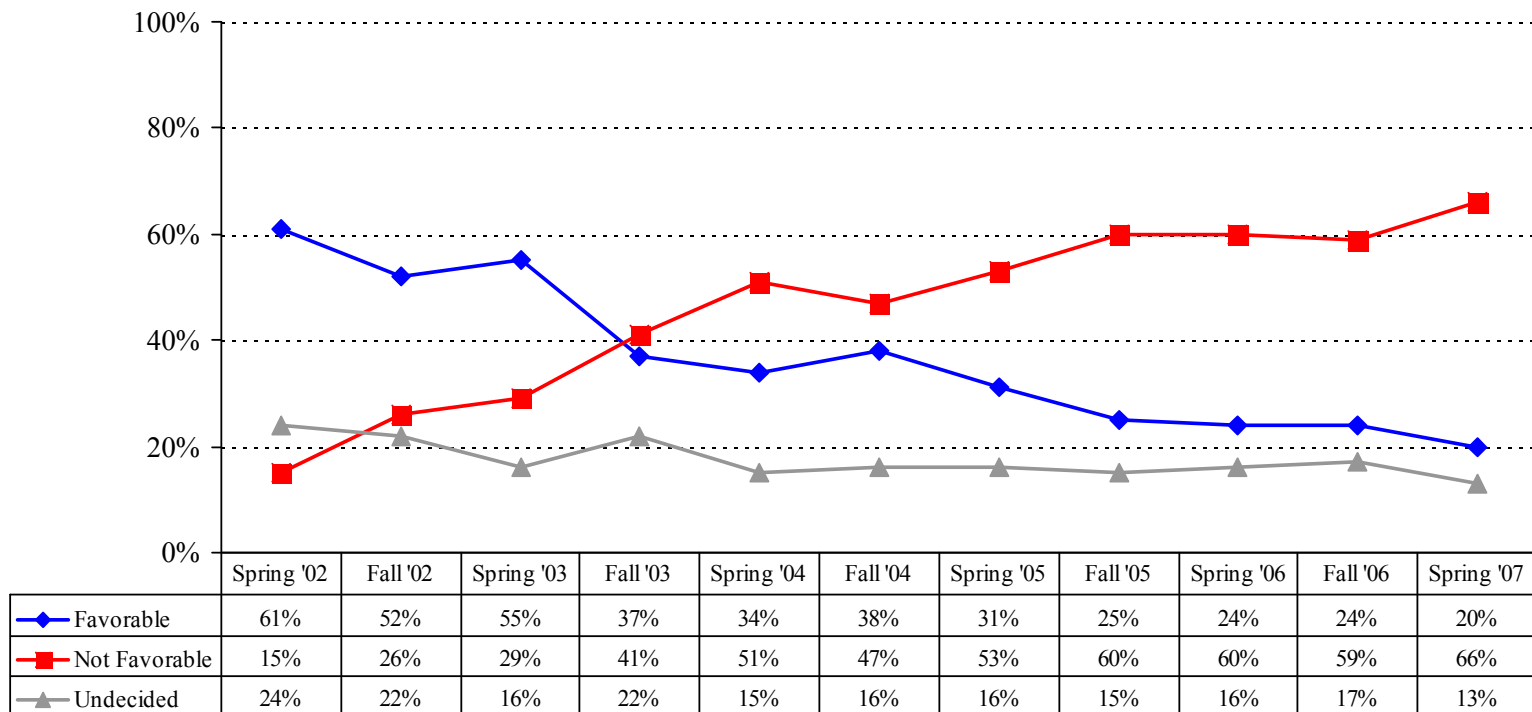
# Mainers' Perspectives on President George W. Bush

- Among Mainers polled, **favorability toward President Bush is at an all-time low.**
  - Representing a continuation in the decline observed over the past several waves of the *Critical Insights on Maine*<sup>TM</sup> Tracking Survey, the President's favorability ratings among Mainers now stands at a historic low of only 20%.
    - By contrast, fully two-thirds of Mainers polled (66%) claim to have an unfavorable opinion of the President (also an all-time high in the *Critical Insights on Maine*<sup>TM</sup> Tracking Survey).
  - While the President's favorability ratings are generally low nationally (38%, as recorded in a recent FOX News/Opinion Dynamics Poll), Mainers have an even less favorable opinion.
  - Favorability toward the President is even more limited among certain resident subgroups, particularly among Democrats (6%), independents (19%) and more well-educated residents holding a college-level degree or more (19%).
  - Further, support is continuing to erode among Republicans.
    - Indeed, even among the President's own party, fewer than half (42%) have a favorable opinion, and 1-in-5 Republicans (19%) remain undecided – a striking figure for any elected official who has been in office for more than six years.



# Maine Residents' Favorability Ratings of President George W. Bush

*Is your opinion of President George W. Bush favorable, not favorable, or undecided?*

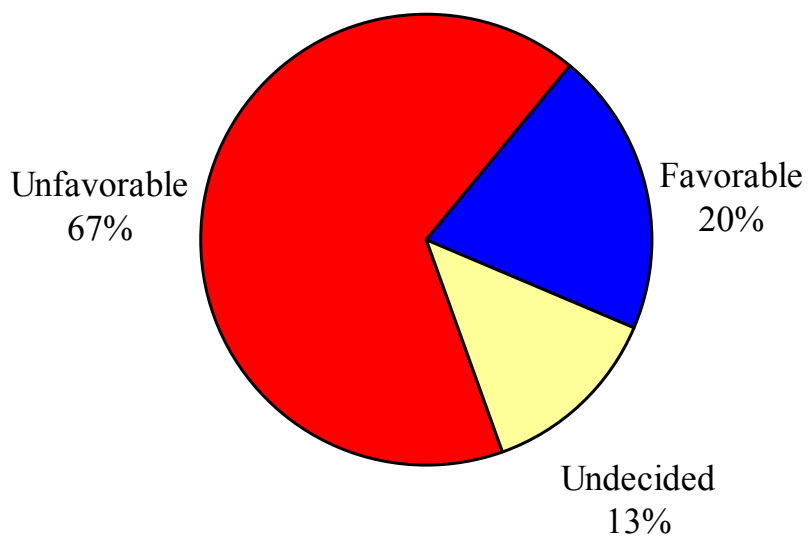




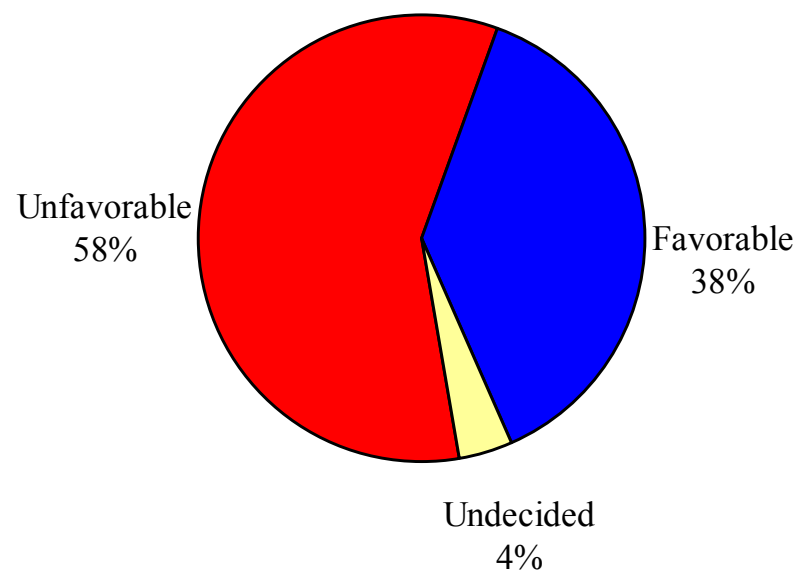
# Favorability Ratings of President George W. Bush

*Is your opinion of President George W. Bush favorable, not favorable, or undecided?*

**Maine**



**National\***



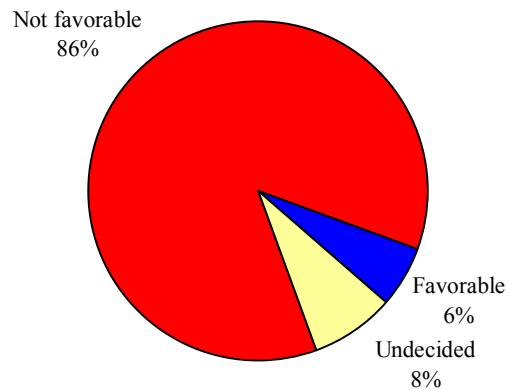
\*FOX News/Opinion Dynamics Poll. March 27-28, 2007. N=900 registered voters nationwide. MoE  $\pm$  3.



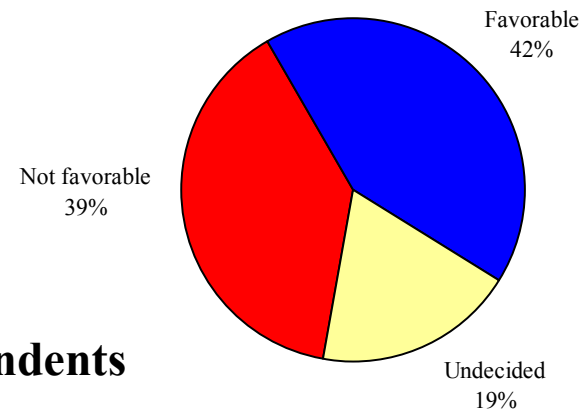
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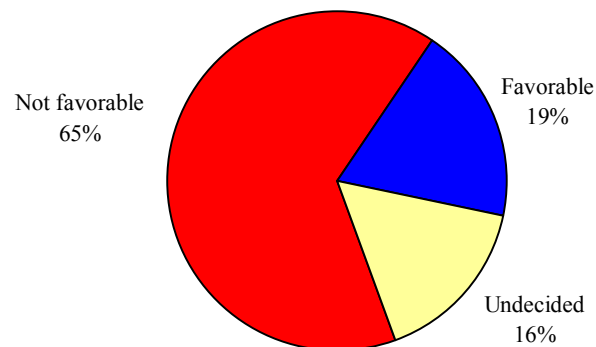
## Democrats



## Republicans



## Independents

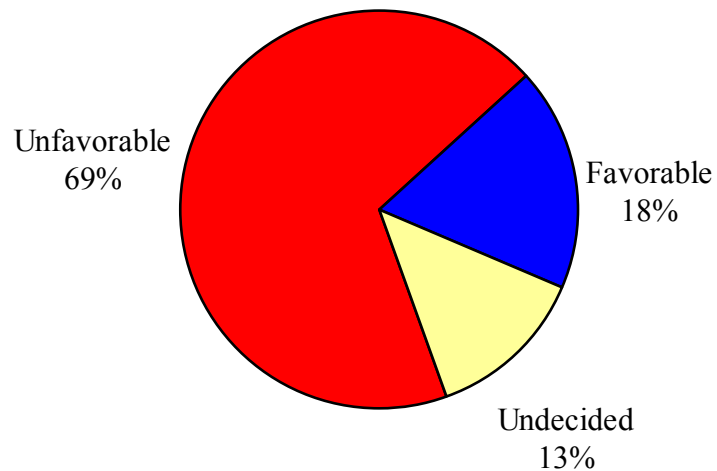




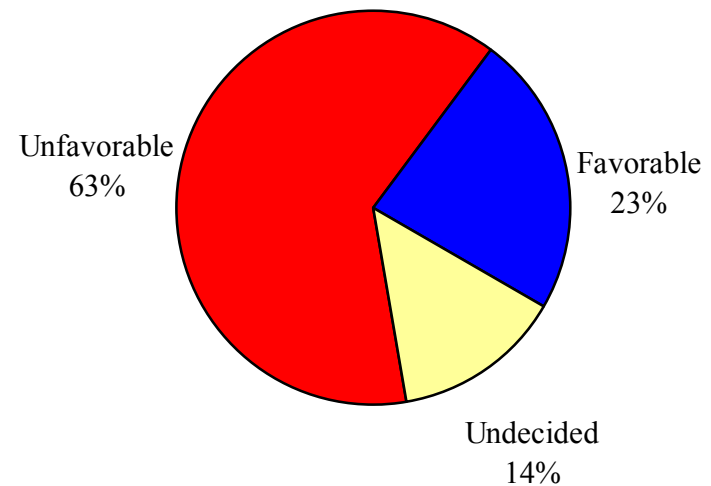
# Favorability Ratings of President Bush

*Is your opinion of President George W. Bush favorable, not favorable, or undecided?*

## Congressional District 1



## Congressional District 2







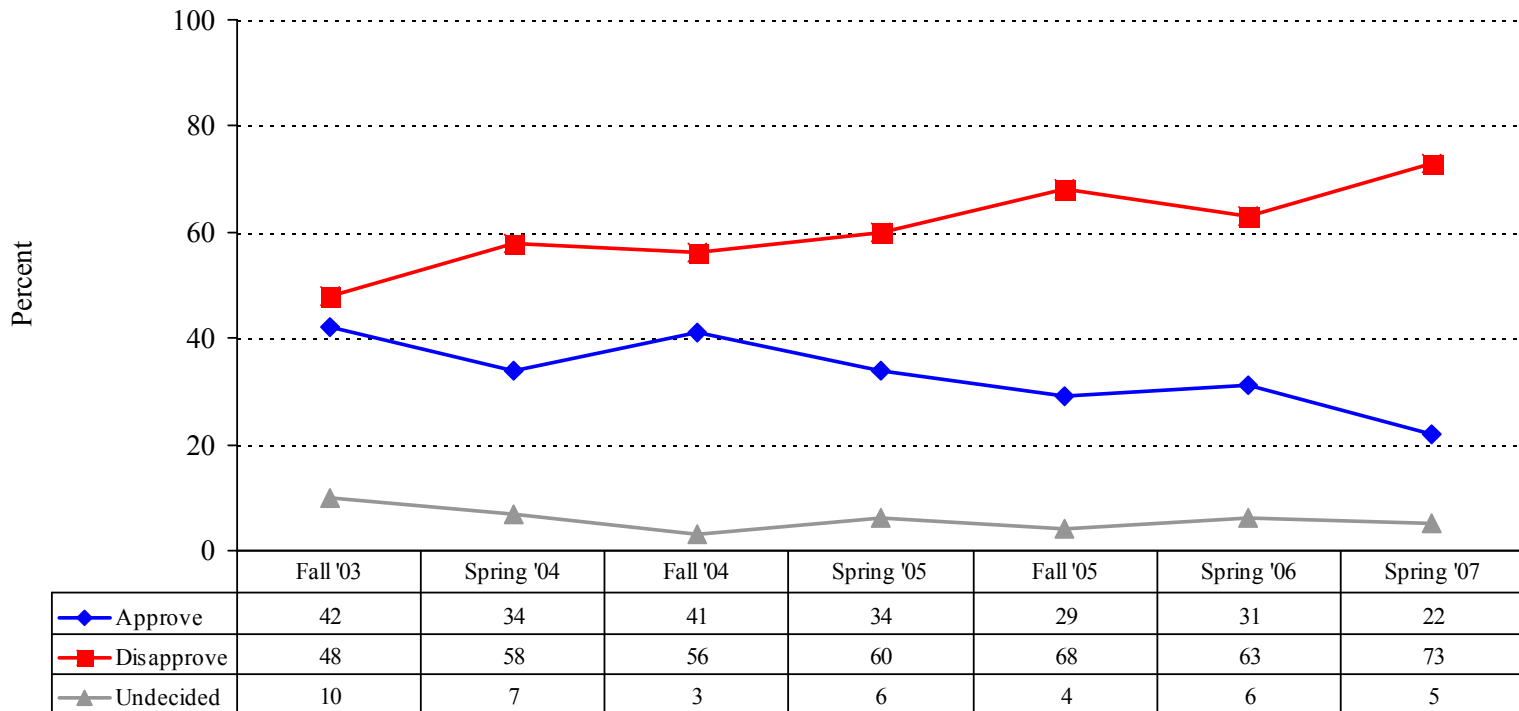
# Mainers' Perspectives on President Bush and the War in Iraq

- **Mainers' backing of the President's handling of the war in Iraq continues to erode, with support now at an all-time low.**
  - Indeed, since the *Critical Insights on Maine*<sup>TM</sup> Tracking Survey began gauging support/opposition in 2003, the current proportion of residents expressing approval (22%) is the lowest registered to-date.
    - By comparison, nearly three-quarters of residents polled (73%) currently disapprove of Bush's handling of the Iraq situation.
  - These figures are in-line with those observed at a national level (as recorded in a recent CBS News/New York Times Poll).
  - While Mainers' approval of Bush's handling of Iraq remains highest among Republicans in the State (42%), nearly half of members of his own party (48%) disapprove.
  - Not surprisingly, nearly 9-in-10 Maine Democrats disapprove of the President's handling of the war.
- **Additionally, most Mainers oppose Bush's proposed "surge" in Iraq.**
  - Similar to national figures (as noted in a ABC News/Washington Post Poll), fewer than one-quarter of Maine residents polled (22%) support the notion of a troop surge, while fully 7-in-10 oppose it.



# Bush's Handling of War in Iraq

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way President is handling the situation with Iraq?*

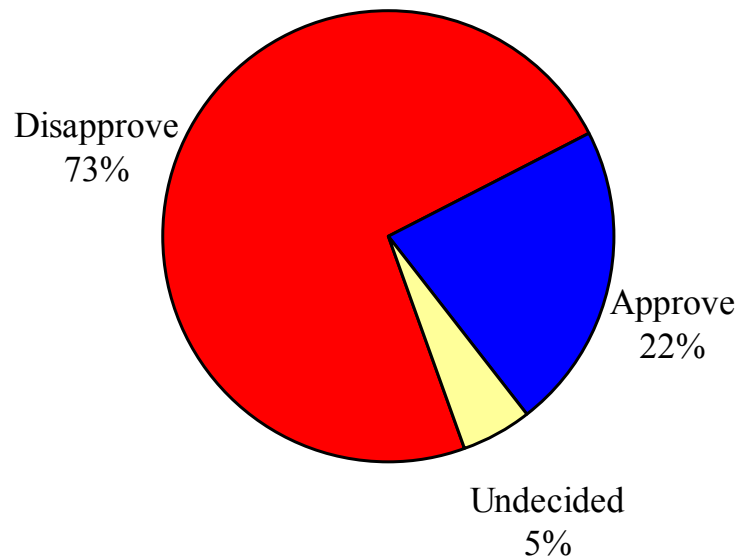




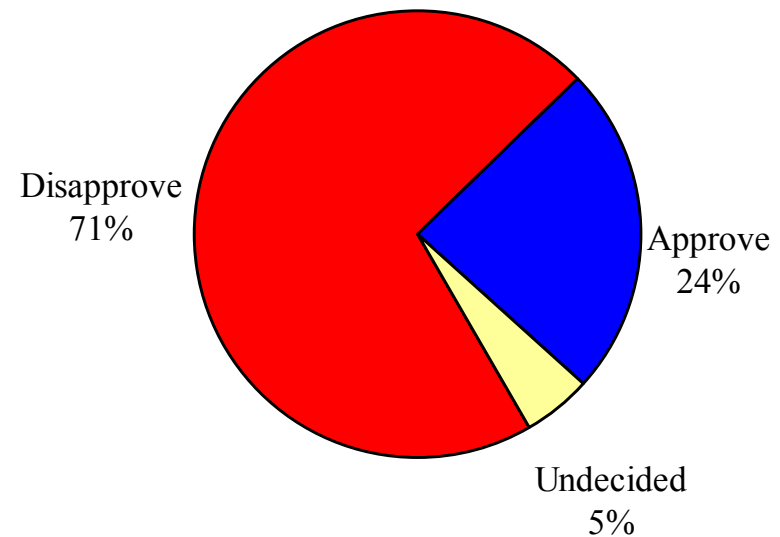
# Bush's Handling of War in Iraq

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way the President is handling the situation with Iraq?*

**Maine**



**National\***



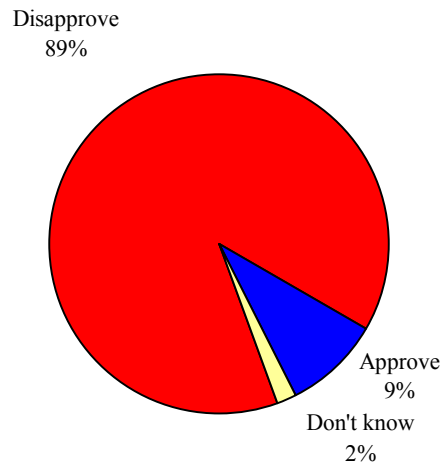
\*CBS News/New York Times Poll. April 20-24, 2007. N=1,052 adults nationwide. MoE  $\pm$  3 (for all adults).



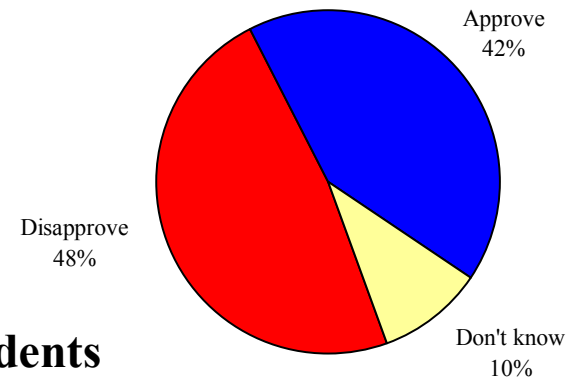
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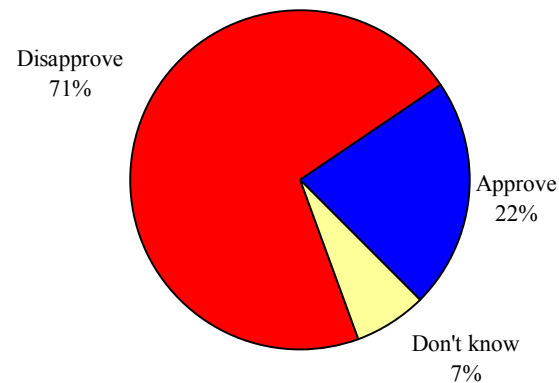
## Democrats



## Republicans



## Independents

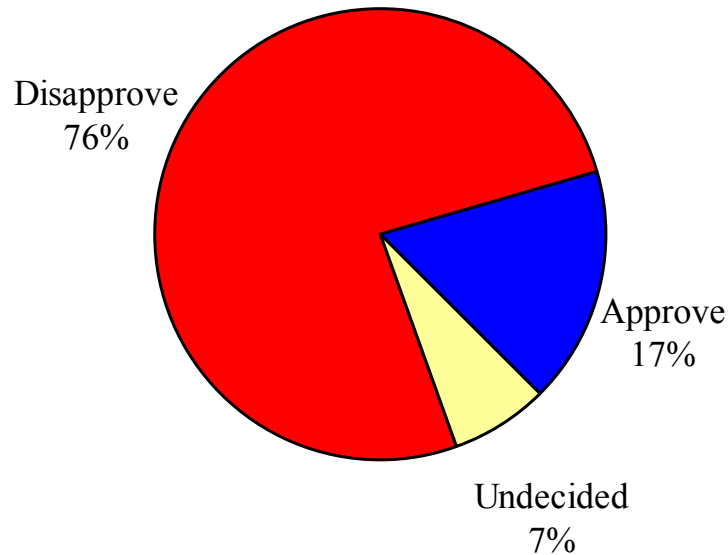




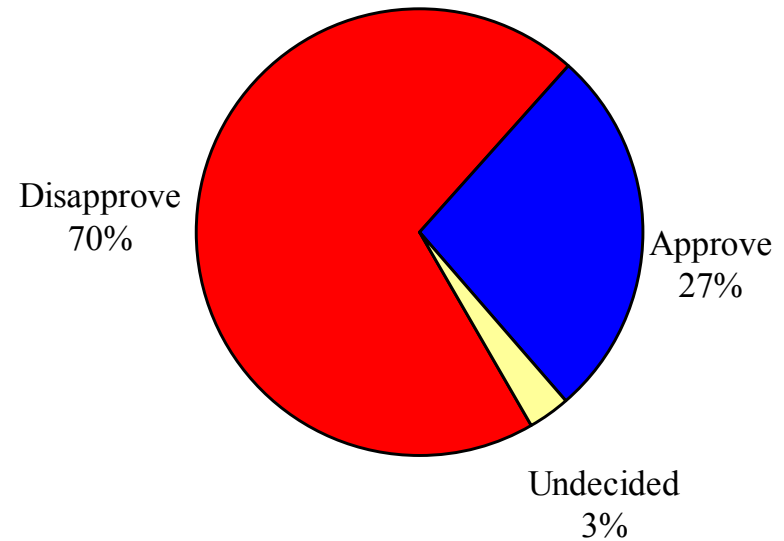
# Bush's Handling of War in Iraq

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way the President is handling the situation with Iraq?*

**Congressional District 1**



**Congressional District 2**

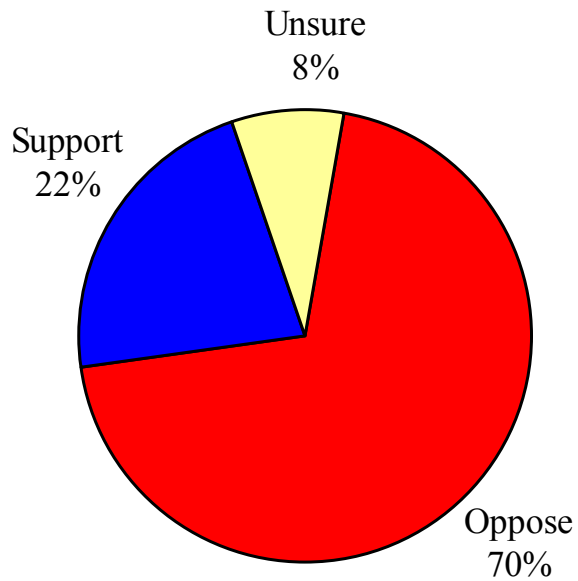




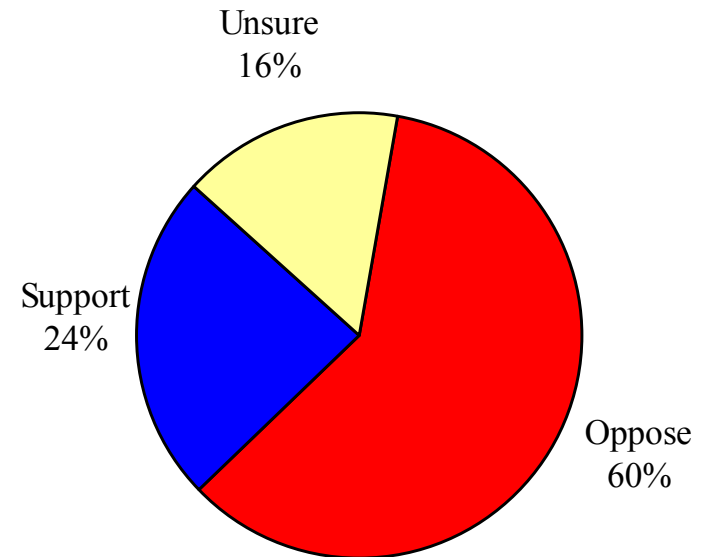
# Support For Proposed Troop Increase in Iraq

*Do you support or oppose Bush's proposal to send approximately 22,000 additional US military forces to Iraq?*

**Maine**



**National\***



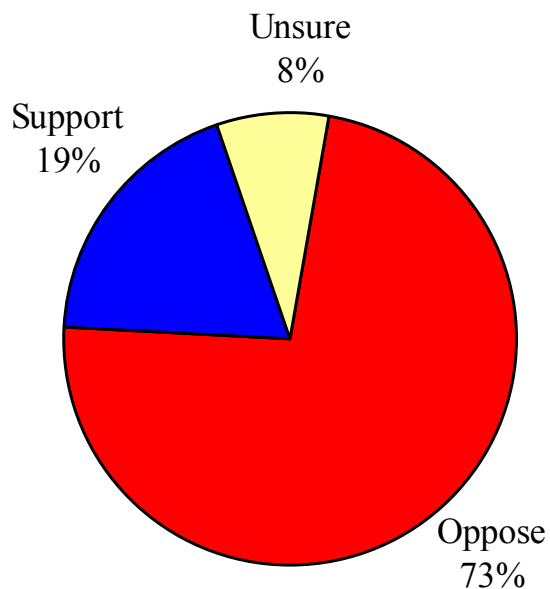
\*ABC News/Washington Post Poll. Feb.22-25, 07. n=1082 adults nationwide.



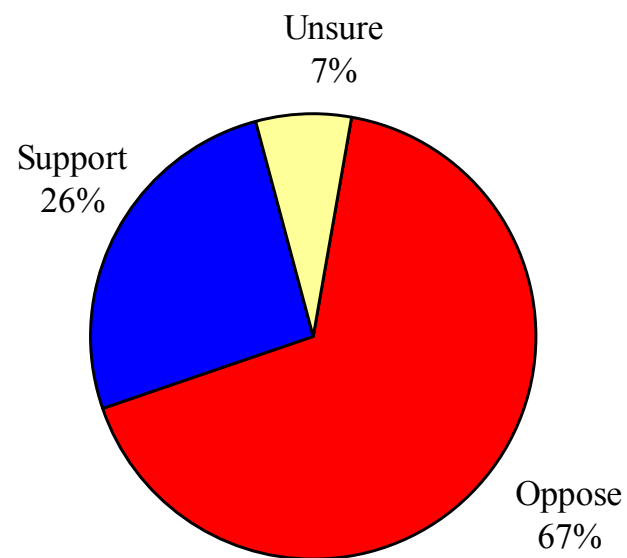
# Support For Proposed Troop Increase in Iraq

*Do you support or oppose Bush's proposal to send approximately 22,000 additional US military forces to Iraq?*

## Congressional District 1



## Congressional District 2





*Observations on  
Potential 2008  
Presidential Candidates*





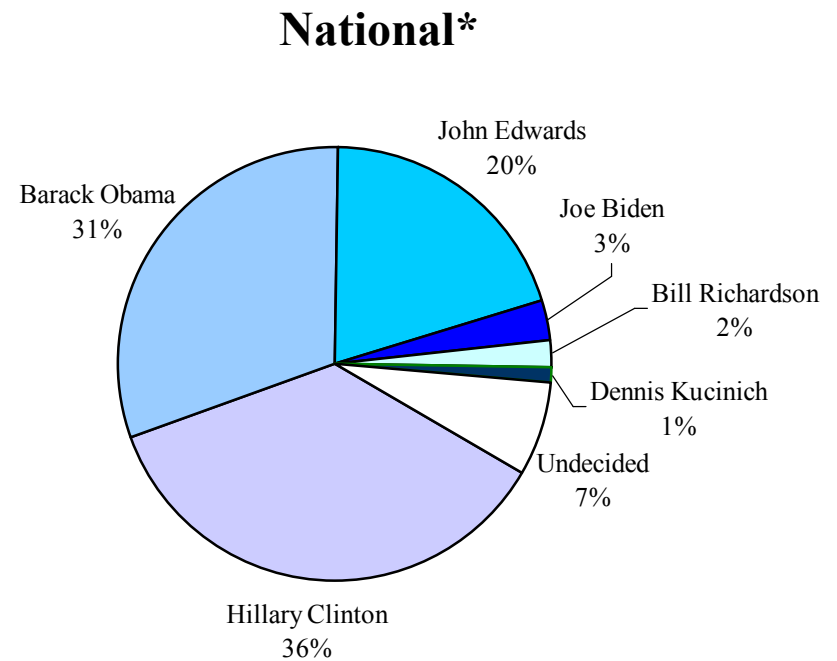
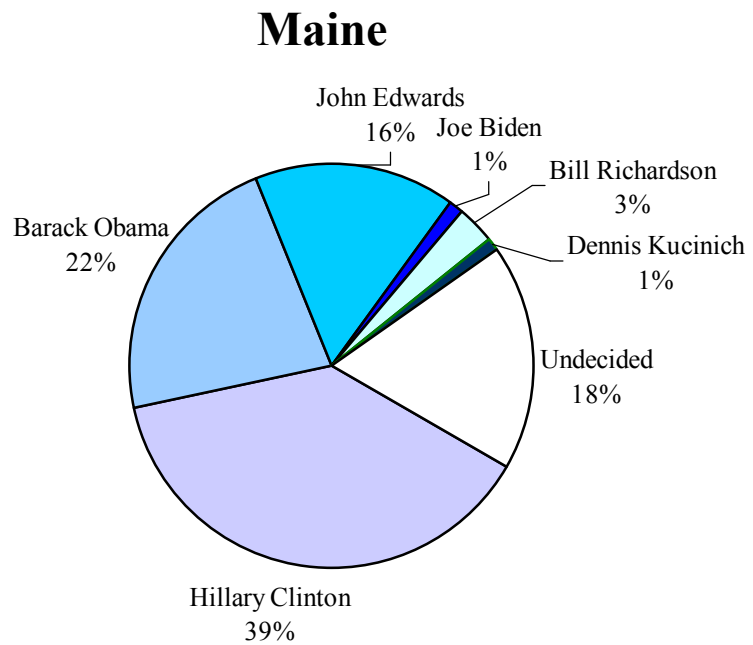
# Mainers' 2008 Candidate Preferences

- **A majority of Maine Democrats would support either Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama for President.**
  - Consistent with the hierarchy noted in recent national polls, when self-reported Maine Democrats were asked to state their candidate preferences among the current group of self-declared candidates, the largest blocs would support Sen. Hillary Clinton (39%) or Sen. Barack Obama (22%) as the Democratic nominee for President in 2008.
  - Notably, nearly 1-in-5 of the Maine Democrats polled remain undecided at this point regarding their preferred candidate.
- **Among Maine Republicans, Rudolph Giuliani and John McCain appear to have garnered the greatest level of support.**
  - While results in the current wave of the *Critical Insights on Maine*<sup>TM</sup> Tracking Survey are a bit more fragmented and include more “undecided” Republican voters than recent national polls, results are consistent in that Rudolph Giuliani and John McCain appear to have the largest blocs of support.
    - Giuliani garners support from nearly one-quarter of Maine Republicans (24%), followed closely by McCain at 21%.
  - As was also observed among Maine Democrats, a sizable bloc of Republicans (25%) are undecided in their candidate selection.



# Residents' Candidate Preferences in Democratic Primary

*If the Democratic primary for president were held today, for whom would you vote?*



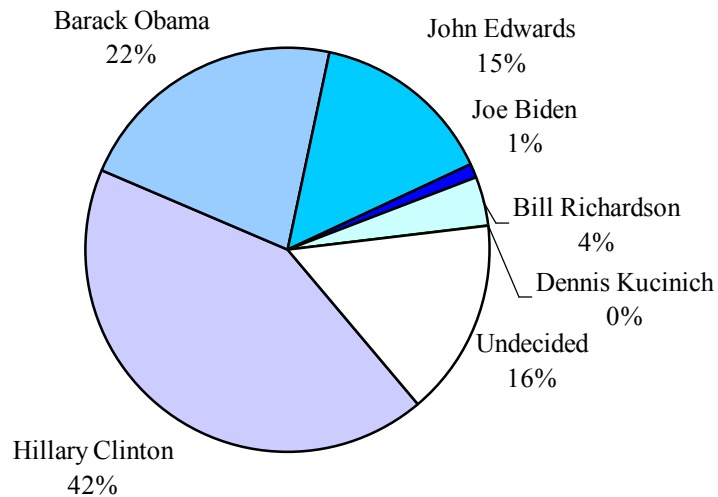
\*NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart (D) and Neil Newhouse (R). April 20-23, 2007.



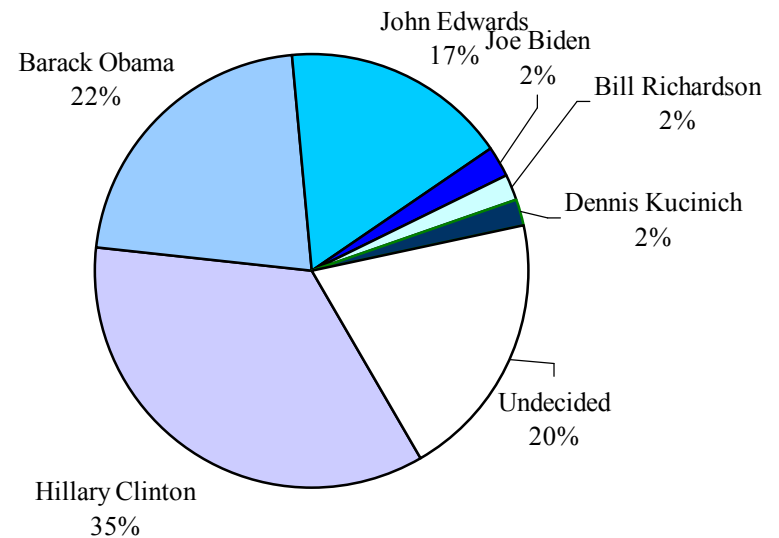
# Residents' Candidate Preferences in Democratic Primary

*If the Democratic primary for president were held today, for whom would you vote?*

## Congressional District 1



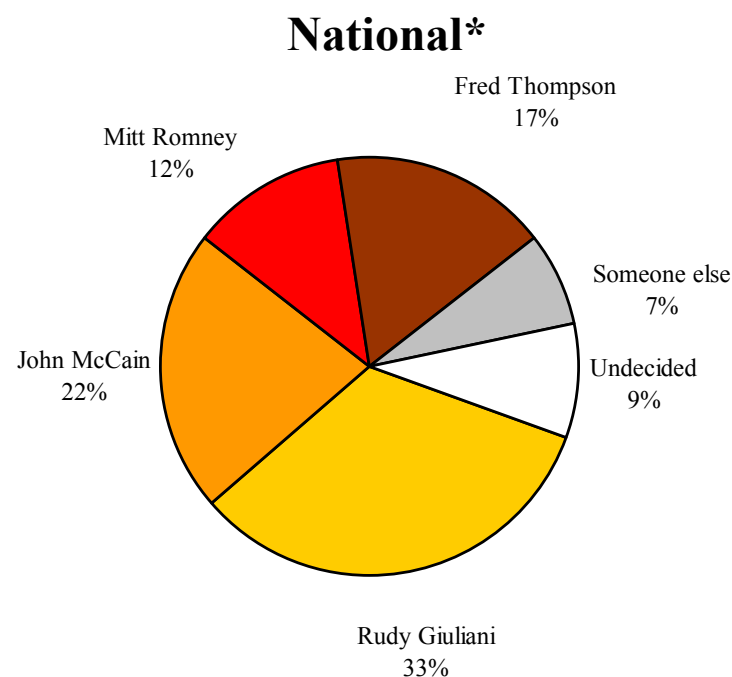
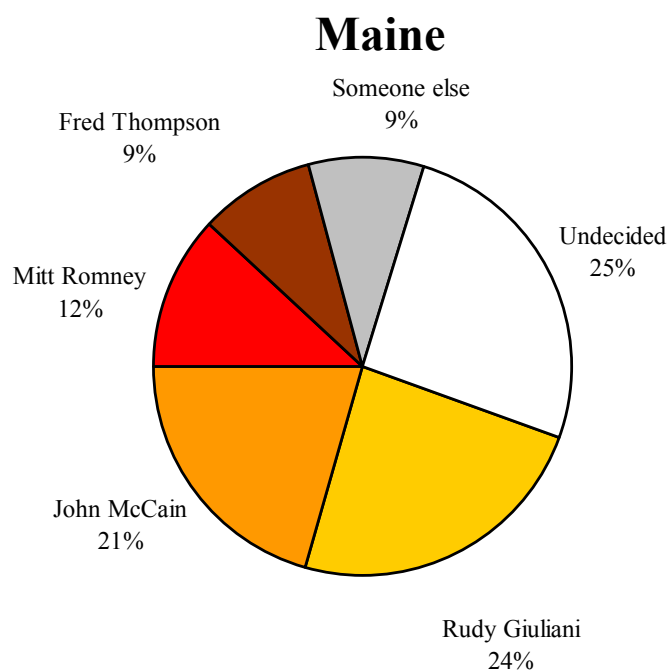
## Congressional District 2





# Residents' Candidate Preferences in Republican Primary

*If the Republican primary for president were held today, for whom would you vote?*



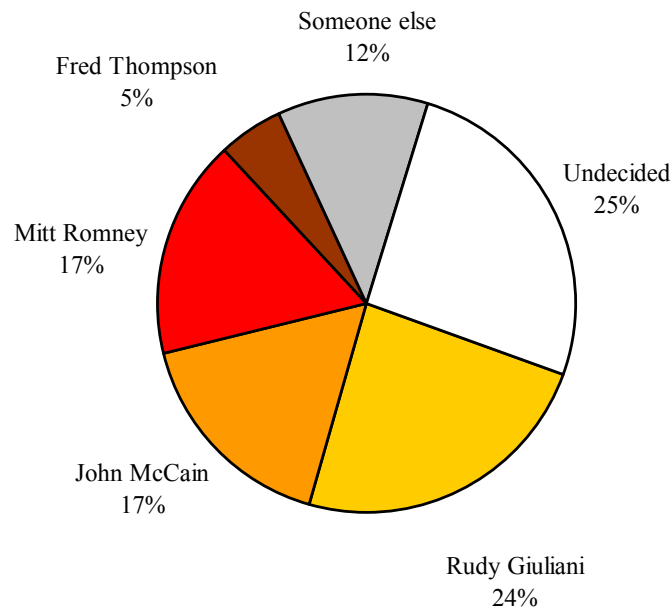
\*Zogby America Poll. March 22-26, 2007. n=376 likely Republican primary voters nationwide. MoE  $\pm$  5.2. Asked of registered Republicans in the State of Maine.



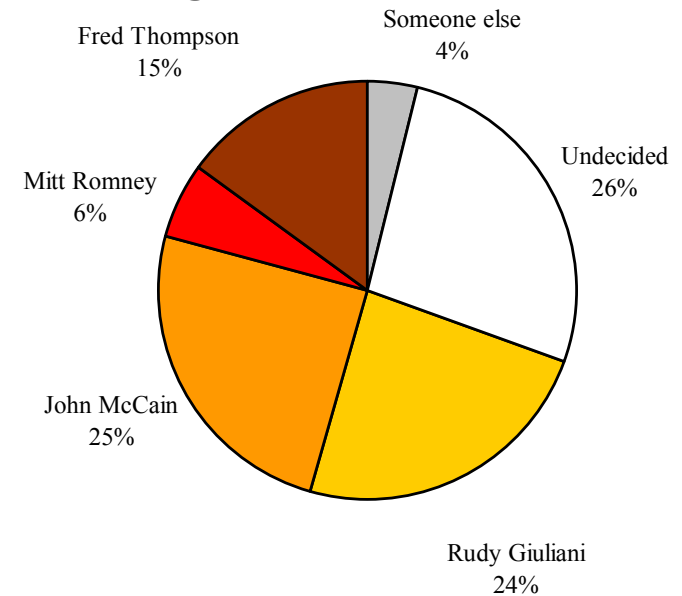
# Residents' Candidate Preferences in Republican Primary

*If the Republican primary for president were held today, for whom would you vote?*

## Congressional District 1



## Congressional District 2





# *Mainers' Attitudes Toward Global Warming*



# Mainers' Views on Global Warming

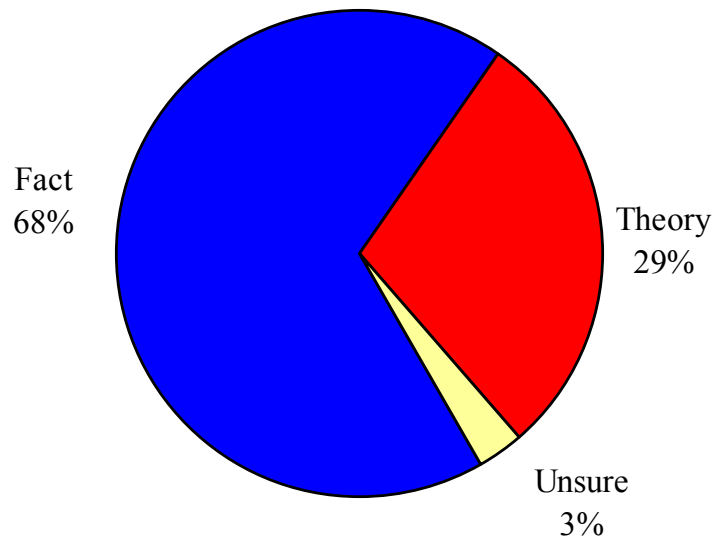
- **Compared to the rest of the nation, Mainers are more accepting that global warming is fact, rather than theory.**
  - Indeed, when asked whether their view of global warming is that it is a *proven fact* or a *theory, yet unproven*, more than two-thirds of Mainers polled (68%) claim that global warming is indeed a fact.
    - By comparison, a lesser proportion of U.S. residents (58%) see global warming to be fact.
  - In Maine, the view that global warming is a fact is more likely to be shared by Democrats (78%) and political independents (76%), as well as by more highly educated residents (those with a college degree or more – 77%).
- **Most Maine residents support Governor Baldacci's proposal to cut emissions and reduce pollution caused by energy production.**
  - Two-thirds of Maine residents polled are supportive of the Governor's proposal to promote pollution reduction with the aim of slowing global warming.



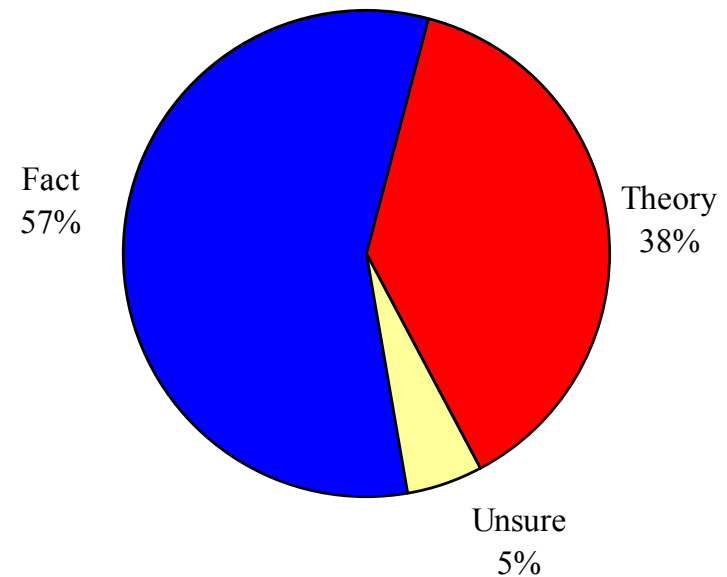
# Current View on Global Warming

*Which of the following statements comes closest to your view of global warming?  
Global warming is a proven fact. Global warming is a theory that has not yet been proven.*

**Maine**



**National\***



\*CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll. Jan. 19-21, 2007. n= approx. 500 adults nationwide. MoE  $\pm$  4.5.

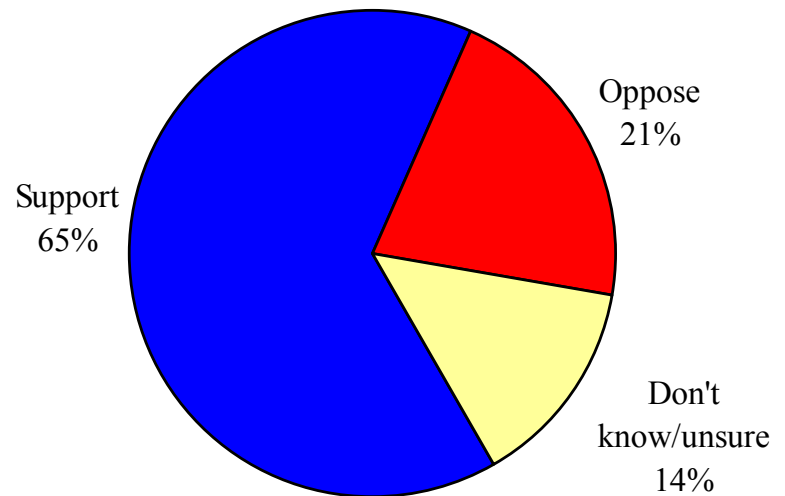




# Support for Baldacci's Global Warming Proposal

*Governor Baldacci is presenting a plan that is intended to slow global warming by limiting pollution from large power plants and creating financial incentives for energy producers to cut emissions. The plan would require power generators to pay for the right to release heat-trapping carbon dioxide. The money they pay the state would be given out in grants to promote energy efficiency and conservation. Do you support or oppose the Governor's proposal?*

- Nearly two-thirds of residents polled are supportive of the Governor's proposal to promote pollution reductions in hopes of slowing global warming.
- Cutting along party lines, this proposal is supported by nearly 8-in-10 registered Democrats, but by fewer than half of the State's Republicans.





# *Impact of Lobster Price Increases*



# Anticipated Impact of Price Increase on Lobster Purchasing Decisions

*How much of an impact will the recent increase in the price of lobster have on your purchase of lobsters?*

- Overall, about 4-in-10 Mainers polled claim that the increase in the price of lobsters will indeed have some impact on their purchase of lobsters.
- Close to half (45%) claim that the price increase will have no impact.
- Another 14% of Maine residents claim they never buy lobsters.
  - This is particularly true of Mainers who reside in the northernmost region of the State, as 1-in-5 claim that they never purchase lobsters.

