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# The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008- 2016: Roots of Gridlock

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# THE SIMON REVIEW

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## The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008 - 2016: Roots of Gridlock



By: John S. Jackson, Charles W. Leonard and Shiloh L. Deitz

Paper #47 - June 2016

## THE SIMON REVIEW

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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List of Tables .....	ii
List of Figures .....	iv
1 Introduction .....	1
1.1 The Longitudinal Data .....	5
1.2 The Roots of Gridlock.....	7
2 The Data Analysis .....	9
2.1 Direction of the nation, state, and local area .....	9
2.2 Reform Proposals for Illinois .....	19
2.2.1 Term Limits .....	19
2.2.2 Open Primaries.....	24
2.2.3 Redistricting.....	26
2.3 Social Issues .....	32
2.3.1 Abortion .....	32
2.3.2 Same-Sex Marriage.....	35
2.4 Ideological Self-Identification and Party Identification.....	39
2.4.1 Ideology .....	39
2.4.2 Party Identification.....	41
2.5 Strategies for Handling the Budget Deficit .....	45
2.5.1 Potential Program Cuts .....	50
2.5.2 Potential Sources of New Revenue.....	56
2.5.3 The Illinois Income Tax Increase .....	56
2.5.4 Other Revenue Alternatives .....	62
3 Conclusion.....	72
Appendix A: Data Notes.....	78
Appendix B: States with Term Limits .....	79
Bibliography .....	80

## LIST OF TABLES

---

Table 1. Direction of the United States.....	9
Table 2. Direction of the United States by Political Party .....	12
Table 3. Direction of Illinois.....	12
Table 4. Direction of Illinois by Political Party .....	14
Table 5. Direction of the Local Area .....	16
Table 6. Direction of the Local Area by Political Party .....	17
Table 7. Term Limits .....	19
Table 8. Term Limits by Political Party.....	20
Table 9. Term Limits on Political Leaders .....	22
Table 10. Term Limits on Political Leaders by Political Party.....	23
Table 11. Open Primary .....	24
Table 12. Open Primary by Political Party .....	25
Table 13. Legislative Redistricting, Party Hat.....	27
Table 14. Legislative Redistricting, Party Hat by Political Party .....	27
Table 15. Legislative Redistricting, Neutral Person .....	28
Table 16. Legislative Redistricting, Neutral Person by Political Party .....	29
Table 17. Legislative Redistricting, Independent Commission .....	30
Table 18. Legislative Redistricting, Independent Commission by Political Party .....	30
Table 19. Abortion .....	33
Table 20. Abortion by Political Party .....	34
Table 21. Same-Sex Marriage.....	35
Table 22. Same-Sex Marriage by Political Party.....	37
Table 23. Ideology .....	40
Table 24. Party Identification .....	42
Table 25. Budget Deficit – Cuts, Revenues, or Both.....	47
Table 26. Budget Deficit by Political Party .....	49
Table 27. Favor Proposed Cuts.....	50
Table 28a. Cuts to Pension Benefits for State Workers’ Retirement by Political Party.....	53
Table 28b. Cuts to Natural Resources (Such as State Parks or Environmental Regulation) by Political Party.....	53
Table 28c. Cuts to State Universities by Political Party .....	54

Table 28d. Cuts to Public Safety (Such as State Police and Prisons) by PARTY .....	54
Table 28e. Cuts to Programs for Poor People by Political Party .....	55
Table 28f. Cuts to K-12 Education by Political Party .....	55
Table 28g. Cuts to Programs for People with Mental or Physical Disabilities by Political Party	56
Table 29. Restore Temporary State Income Tax Increase .....	58
Table 30. Restore Temporary State Income Tax Increase by Political Party .....	60
Table 31. Favor Proposed Revenue Sources.....	62
Table 32a. Expand Gambling by Political Party.....	64
Table 32b. Raise Sales Tax by Political Party .....	65
Table 32c. Tax Services by Political Party .....	66
Table 32d. Tax Retirement Income by Political Party.....	67
Table 32e. Tax Retirement Income over \$50k by Political Party.....	67
Table 32f. Graduated Income Tax by Political Party .....	69
Table 32g. Millionaires Tax by Political Party.....	70
Table 32h. Raise Gas Tax by Political Party .....	71

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

Figure 1. Direction of the United States .....	10
Figure 2. United States Going in the Right Direction by Political Party .....	11
Figure 3. Direction of Illinois .....	13
Figure 4. Illinois Going in the Wrong Direction by Political Party .....	14
Figure 5. Direction of the Local Area .....	16
Figure 6. The Local Area Going in the Right Direction by Political Party .....	17
Figure 7. Term Limits .....	20
Figure 8. Abortion.....	33
Figure 9. Same-Sex Marriage .....	36
Figure 10. Support for Same-Sex Marriage by Political Party .....	38
Figure 11. Ideology .....	41
Figure 12. Budget Deficit – Cuts, Revenues, or Both .....	47
Figure 13. Oppose Proposed Cuts.....	51
Figure 14. Favor Raising Temporary State Income Tax Increase by Political Party .....	61
Figure 15. Oppose Proposed Revenue Sources .....	63

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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Since January 1, 2015, Illinois has been frozen in a governmental and political gridlock that has dominated the state's political discourse, consumed the energies of all involved, and created chaos in governmental and non-profit agencies that normally deliver state services. It has also created untold hardship and suffering among those who are most dependent on state services. The conflict has especially threatened to drastically reduce the quality and missions of the institutions of public higher education in Illinois, a state system that was widely recognized as one of the best in the nation and the world.

All of this disruption was engendered by an intense political conflict and by a policy stalemate over the state budget and the scope and basic requirements for the state's delivery of public goods and services. Since the founding of the American republic there have been profound disagreements over the size and scope of the public sector, the public's obligations, and the collective responsibilities to provide the programs and services known as "collective goods".

Which programs and services are the public's responsibilities? And which functions can be more efficiently and effectively delivered by the government than by the private sector?

That fight continues well into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, if anything, it has intensified in recent years with the advent of such groups as the grassroots Tea Party movement and the Freedom Caucus in the United States Congress. Those groups are deeply opposed to most taxes and any increase in the national deficit, always in favor of reducing the burden of taxes on individuals and corporations, and deeply committed to reducing the size and scope of government (except for defense) at the national level. They favor returning responsibilities and authority to the states and local governments, and to the private sector.

Illinois, like most states, has been caught up in these national political tides. In Illinois this conflict was brought on by an aborted state income tax increase, passed in 2010 (effective in 2011). The tax increase was designed to be reversed in January of 2015, the same month a new governor and new General Assembly would take office. Many knowledgeable observers believed that the "temporary" increase would of necessity be made permanent, or at least extended for a significant period after the November elections of 2014, because the requirements for the increased revenue would be so compelling. The 2014 statewide elections for governor and for members of the new General Assembly were fought, in part, over the need for that tax increase to continue and over an evaluation of how the new revenue created by the increase had been used in the four years it had been in effect.

Questions were raised: Was the new revenue used to pay down the massive backlog of unpaid bills the state had already accumulated, especially to the state's annual share of the bills due to support the public pension systems, which had been ignored for the past decade? Or was the new money applied to new and unnecessary programs and squandered on fraud and a bloated state



bureaucracy? Also, which parts of the state had been winners and losers in the scramble for scarce resources? Had the City of Chicago been unfairly favored in comparison to the rest of the state? What was the future of the state if the tax and budgetary system problems were not addressed?

What new measures should be enacted to make the state's business climate more attractive? What policies would ensure the creation of more jobs? Those were the major themes and talking points in the 2014 statewide campaign for governor, and they often spilled over into state legislative races as well.

One of the candidates, Democratic incumbent Pat Quinn, was a career political figure and a holder of various offices who had worked his way up to lieutenant governor in 2003. Then, when incumbent Governor Rod Blagojevich was impeached and removed from office by the General Assembly in 2009, Quinn became governor. He was elected to his own term in 2010 and was running for re-election in 2014.

Republican Bruce Rauner was a wealthy businessman who had never held public office. He ran on a general platform promising to apply business practices and his management background in the private sector to state government. In their quite different backgrounds, the two candidates epitomized the very deep differences between the two parties in their basic philosophies toward government and the role of the public sector (Jackson, January 2015).

Any citizen interested in Illinois politics will recognize these generalizations about the role of government and the state of the budget are also driven by the very specific fight between the executive and legislative branches of government. Opinions about the role of government and the state of the budget are even more specifically driven by a deeply personal contest between Rauner and the Democratic leadership of the majority in the General Assembly, especially Speaker of the House Michael Madigan, and, to a lesser extent, Senate President John Cullerton.

The gridlock in state government set in early after the new governor was inaugurated in January of 2015. It grew more divisive and much bitterer, and seemed to deepen as each month went by. The major focus was the fight over the new budget, which was scheduled to take effect at the beginning of the next fiscal year (FY), July 1, 2015 and run until June 30, 2016. For the first time in its history, as a result of this fight, the state was unable to adopt a new budget by the beginning of the new fiscal year, or reasonably soon thereafter. The state constitution, which requires the governor to submit a balanced budget to the General Assembly for its consideration, and the General Assembly to adopt a balanced budget after working its legislative will, was simply ignored by both parties. The ensuing conflict meant that state agencies had no budget to work from and no guidance as to what level of spending to adopt. The only exception was K-12 education, which was the only budget bill Governor Rauner signed, out of a total of 11 budget bills the General Assembly sent to him in July.

The budget battle dragged on through the fall and winter of 2015, and then well into the spring of 2016. The state's backlog of unpaid bills, which was being paid down slowly, began to build a bigger deficit again (Civic Federation, January 14, 2016).

Local governments had their state revenue-sharing funds reduced or held up until some of them took the state to court and won court orders for the state to start sending the money. In addition, many social service agencies saw their state funds reduced materially, or cut entirely. Most have cut services and personnel, and some have already gone out of business. The state's most vulnerable populations have been hit hardest by these wars. It is not an exaggeration to maintain that a sense of crisis, bordering on chaos, has developed in these state agencies and institutions of higher education, with no end in sight.

Higher education was not as fortunate as K-12 education and was left at the end of the budgetary line. For almost ten months the state's public universities and community colleges had no budget and no funding from the state. The state's college and university students saw their Monetary Assistance Program (MAP) grants funded piecemeal from local accounts by some universities and community colleges, while others stopped funding MAP grants at all. Some of the public universities announced that they might not be able to open in the fall term and Chicago State University announced that they would have to close on April 30<sup>th</sup> if no state funding was received. Eastern Illinois University and Western Illinois University announced extensive jobs cuts and all the universities contemplated extensive losses in jobs for the next fiscal year.

Then on April 22, 2016 a Higher Education budget bill was passed by the General Assembly and sent to the governor providing \$600 million, or 31%, of the fiscal year 2015 base to cover all of fiscal 2016. This provided stopgap summer funding to the universities and the community colleges in fiscal 2016, allowing them to remain open for the summer and early fall. Fiscal year 2017 now looms. All state universities and community colleges are now making active and increasingly drastic plans for deep spending reductions, including extensive faculty and staff layoffs. Several universities announced the real possibility that they cannot continue to operate when the stopgap funding is gone. All are faced with a dramatic scaling back of their missions.

While the immediate conflict in Illinois is between the political leaders and political elites, the public is deeply involved and even ultimately responsible. Any democracy must rest on the consent of the governed. Ultimate sovereignty has to rest somewhere, and in a democracy it rests on the people. This is *the* basic tenet of mass democracy. In the United States that consent is mostly given through the popular vote. That is why we say repeatedly that "elections have consequences".

That is where public opinion comes into play and polls become relevant. This paper provides our most recent documentation of the results of some of those polls, i.e. the statewide polls taken by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute (PSPPI) at Southern Illinois University Carbondale between 2008 and 2016.

## The Climate of Opinion in Illinois 2008-2016: The Roots of Gridlock

The Simon Poll datasets are available online at [www.simonpoll.org](http://www.simonpoll.org) and archived by three academic institutions for use by scholars and the public. The three open source data repositories are: the University of Michigan's Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<http://openicpsr.org/repoEntity/list>), the University of North Carolina's Odum Institute Dataverse Network (<http://arc.irss.unc.edu/dvn/dv/PSPPI>), and the Simon Institute Collection at OpenSIUC (<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ppi/>).

## 1.1 THE LONGITUDINAL DATA

Longitudinal studies of public opinion are uniquely valuable research tools because they offer the opportunity for analysis of the magnitude and direction of change over time. They can also indicate continuity—and the assessment of continuity is just as valuable as the assessment of change.

Longitudinal studies of public opinion are relatively more difficult to execute and to analyze than a single snapshot taken at one point in time. Most public polls—especially those conducted for the media (which is what most Americans have access to)—are snapshots. A series of cross-sectional analyses requires repeating the same questions to comparable samples of the same populations, in this case registered Illinois voters, at multiple points in time.

Of course this requires a long-term strategic research plan to gather the continuing roll of pictures as well as the resources to repeat the same questions to carefully chosen survey samples that reflect the entire population. That is the research objective in longitudinal studies, and it is essential to demonstrating and analyzing either change or continuity over time.

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale has made that commitment. We have been doing a series of comparable statewide polls since 2008. These polls now constitute multiple snapshots of public opinion in the state. Minor variations in question wording are noted on the tables and charts presented in this paper. With some exceptions, the sample size has generally been 1,000 respondents, which affords a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent. All of our samples are well within the professional norms for reputable statewide polls. (See Appendix A for all the sample sizes and margins of error associated with each).

This paper reports the results for those ten polls<sup>1</sup>. The longitudinal data for previous years have also been published in two earlier *Simon Review* papers. The first such longitudinal study was summarized in a paper written by Charles Leonard in 2011. It presented the results of three statewide polls taken in 2008, 2009, and 2010 (Leonard, March, 2011). Leonard and graduate students Ryan Burge and Emily Carroll wrote a second and similar analysis in January of 2012. It presented the data from 2008 to 2011 (Leonard, Burge, and Carroll, January, 2012).

A third paper by John Jackson and Leonard covered the 2010-2014 era (Jackson and Leonard, June, 2014). The current paper extends that record to include the results for the entire data set beginning with 2008 and ending with our most recent statewide poll taken in February of 2016.

In these polls and papers, we tapped a series of public policy and political questions that roiled public opinion and Illinois politics during that period. We also have set these discrete issues into a larger theoretical context where we try to raise some fundamental questions relevant to the operation of mass democracy in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. Illinois is a particularly good venue for raising such basic questions since it is often referred to as a “bellwether” state, one of the most

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<sup>1</sup> The series includes nine years of data, however in 2014 we polled twice.

“typical” in the union. Illinois mirrors all the demographic and economic characteristics of the nation as a whole and thus makes a good case study for raising some of the fundamental questions of mass democracy (Ohlemacher, 2007).

Illinois’ current budget morass more specifically provides a cogent case study of one state’s refusal to deal with its long-term structural debt and a myriad of other issues surrounding it. It is an extreme case, to be sure, the most extreme in the nation currently. Moreover, this calamity is happening in a large Midwestern state, which is one of the most representative of the nation as a whole. This story provides some important lessons about the state of American democracy and about the limits and challenges of representative government and the system of checks and balances as they play out within the realities of America’s polarized politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century—especially where the budgetary process is involved.

The Illinois example also serves as a sort of laboratory experiment and cautionary tale in which a series of campaigns over the past decade have failed abysmally to deal honestly with the budget and pension issues and have failed to teach the voters the entirely predictable consequences of those failures.

## 1.2 THE ROOTS OF GRIDLOCK

The current Illinois governmental crisis illustrates graphically what happens over the long term when mass electoral democracy fails because of the public's lack of interest in the details of public policy—and especially the facts about public budgeting. This failure is then compounded when those in the political leadership class fail to engage the public's interest in such hard topics—and fail to use the campaigns as an opportunity to advance the level of civic education. This is the record for the state of Illinois recently. The record for the nation as a whole is little better, judging by the current contents of the 2016 presidential campaign, which is under way as this paper is written.

With the benefit of the Simon Poll's longitudinal public opinion data, placed in the context of recent Illinois history and leavened with our understanding of the workings of partisanship and ideology, we set out to help explain how the state has arrived at the present point. We find ourselves at a spot in which elected leaders on both sides of the aisle, with diametrically opposed and uncompromising viewpoints, claim the mantle of public support for their bargaining positions. In Illinois' political history and in the responses of Illinois voters to public policy questions over time, can we find the roots of today's gridlocked policies? That is our hope in this paper, as we march in and out of survey data, history, and a few side trips into rudimentary political science, as follows:

We begin the analysis with the simple question of how the voters perceive the direction of our country, and, in particular, the direction of the State of Illinois. Is it heading in the right or the wrong direction? Are there partisan differences in the way Illinois voters perceive its direction? Will Republicans think the state is going to perdition if the other party controls the governor's mansion, and Democrats vice versa? This and a subsequent section on the continuity and change of partisan distribution in Illinois lead us to these questions. Partisans and ideologues on the two opposing sides may be evenly matched, perhaps lessening their incentives to cut a deal or to be seen as capitulating.

Stipulating for the moment that Illinoisans have a dim view of the direction of their state, how might we best reform our politics toward better outcomes? The Simon Poll has been testing voters' support over time for such issues as term limits, open party primaries, and changes to the way we draw our legislative maps. Support for political reform is broad, deep, and often bipartisan in the state, as our data will show, yet reform is not forthcoming from the elites. Politicians' steadfast refusal to consider reforms "everybody wants" may stoke resentment of and resignation toward outcomes the mass public will see as preordained and dishonest.

The Simon Poll also has good data on public attitudes toward two contested social issues, women's access to abortion and the rights of same-sex couples to marry. On same-sex marriage, we not only demonstrate significant movement in public opinion from 2008 to 2016, but we are able to demonstrate pockets of the public in which resistance to change is steadfast. These opposing sets of viewpoints are closely tied to ideology and political party. It raises a question:

Do opposing groups' views of the other side as intolerant, bigoted or immoral inhibit their leaders' willingness to work across the aisle?

Since the crux of the budget impasse is the state's deficit and how to steer public policy to address it, how have Illinoisans viewed the deficit crisis in recent years? It is not a new phenomenon. With distrust of state government high and a tolerance for taxation low, voters are predisposed to believe this problem is due to incompetence, dishonesty, or some combination of the two. Political candidates seem content to feed this deeply engrained attitude among the voters, who in turn seem to be content to be led in this direction, rather than to challenge the relatively simple facts and arithmetic that led to underfunding of state services.

We confront budgetary questions starkly and simply over time, asking Illinois voters where in the budget the cuts should come from and, absent those, where they might be willing to tolerate revenue increases, usually in the form of increased taxation. What we find, in short, is an adamant insistence, in effect, of having our cake and eating it too. Here, perhaps, is the taproot of the gridlock weed: an unwillingness on the part of the leadership to present hard news and explain its remedies, coupled with an unwillingness on the part of the led to hear it.

While Illinoisans consistently oppose service cuts and revenue increases at the same time, our data indicate in some places the beginnings of opinion change toward what we regard as a balanced approach to spending and taxing. We see a grudging willingness to cut in a few areas (though areas in which it pains these authors to contemplate), as well as a glimmer of acceptance of revenue enhancements to close the gap.

We conclude by contemplating what it means for the people to be led through difficult decisions in hard times, and the necessary qualities of the led as well as the leaders. Whose responsibility is it when the leaders we have sent to Springfield bring the ship of state near to ruin? What responsibility do the mass media bear to help us gauge the truth of what our leaders tell us, and to help us vet the feasibility of their remedies? And finally, what does history tell us about how past leadership has maneuvered Illinois through similar crises? As we know, history did not begin the day we walked through the door.

## 2 THE DATA ANALYSIS

### 2.1 DIRECTION OF THE NATION, STATE, AND LOCAL AREA

The question about the direction of the nation and whether “things in our country are going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction” is a generic one, widely used by pollsters and widely quoted in the mass media. It is thought to tap a general sense of how the voters are feeling about the nation’s future and current political climate. It is also used as something of a surrogate for how the voters are evaluating the president and the government in Washington.

In the case of the Simon Polls, we have utilized this question consistently since 2008. In addition to the nation as a whole, we added the voters’ evaluations of both state and local governments to the mix. This then gives us the ability to offer some comparisons for all three levels of government. Table 1 and Figure 1 provide the results for perceived direction of the United States.

**Table 1. Direction of the United States<sup>2</sup>**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a <sup>3</sup>	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Right direction</b>	6%	42%	30%	19%	42%	42%	30%	32%	33%	29%
<b>Wrong direction</b>	90%	50%	60%	71%	50%	49%	60%	57%	53%	63%
<b>Other/don't know</b>	4%	7%	10%	9%	9%	10%	10%	10%	13%	1%

The first observation from these data is that the negative evaluations exceed the positive ones by a considerable margin in each year (see Figure 1). The only time it was even close was in 2009, the year President Obama took office. In 2012 and 2013 the margins were narrower, but still the net was negative. Then in our first 2014 poll, the negative outweighed the positive by a two to one (60 percent to 30 percent) margin. The midterm elections of 2014, when the discourse was filled with rancor and partisan and ideological division, may well have exacerbated these negative evaluations. During the midterm elections that year Republicans mounted an aggressive critique of President Obama’s administration and of his Democratic allies in the Congress. The state of the American economy received the most focus, and a slow recovery from the Great Recession of 2008-2009 dominated the headlines. This critique worked admirably for the Republicans in 2014, when they continued their dominant hold on the U. S. House and picked up enough seats in the Senate to flip it to their control for the first time since 2006.

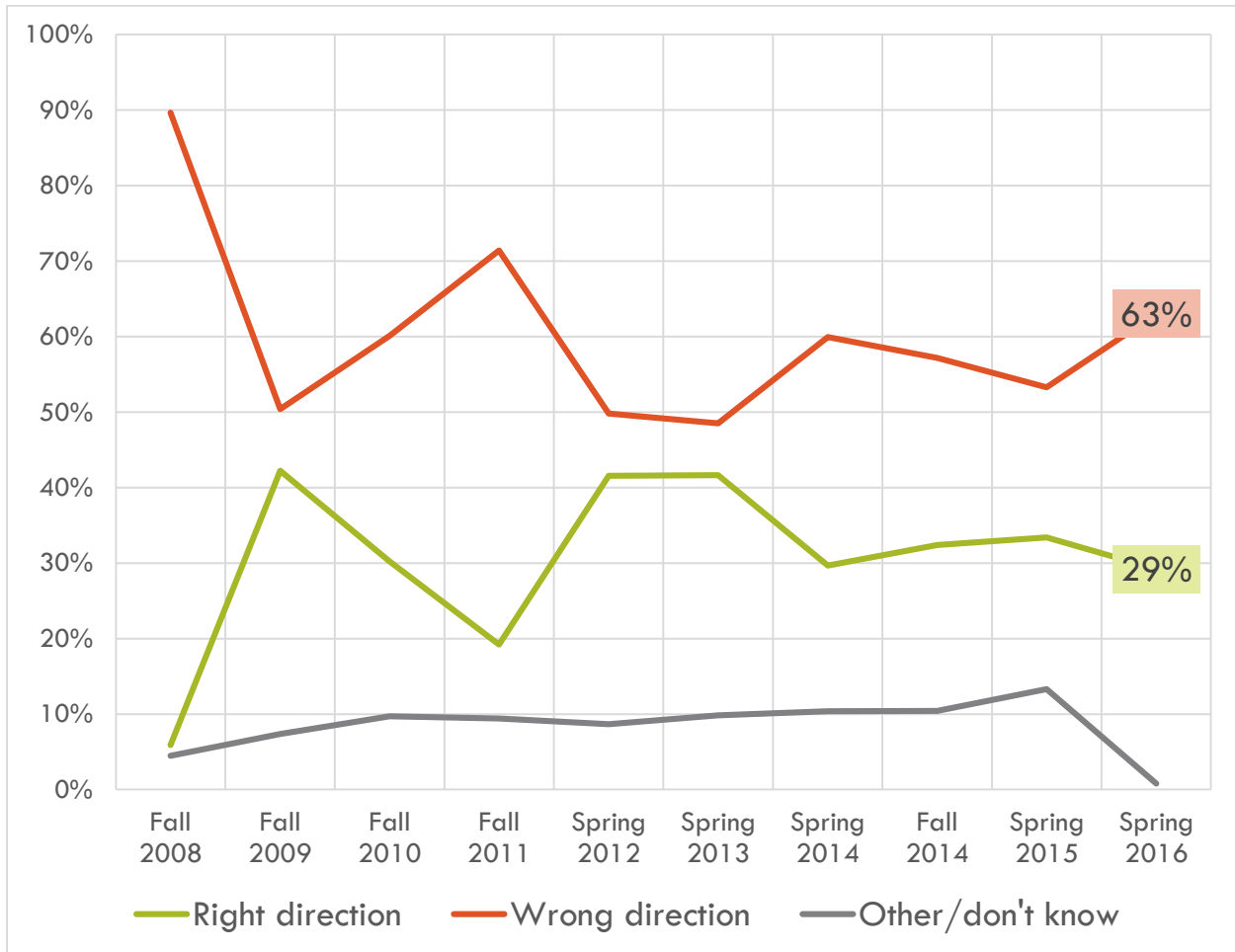
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The question asked: Generally speaking, do you think things in the United States are going in the right direction, or are they off track and going in the wrong direction?”

<sup>3</sup> 2014a refers to a poll conducted in the spring. 2014b refers to a fall poll.



Figure 1. Direction of the United States



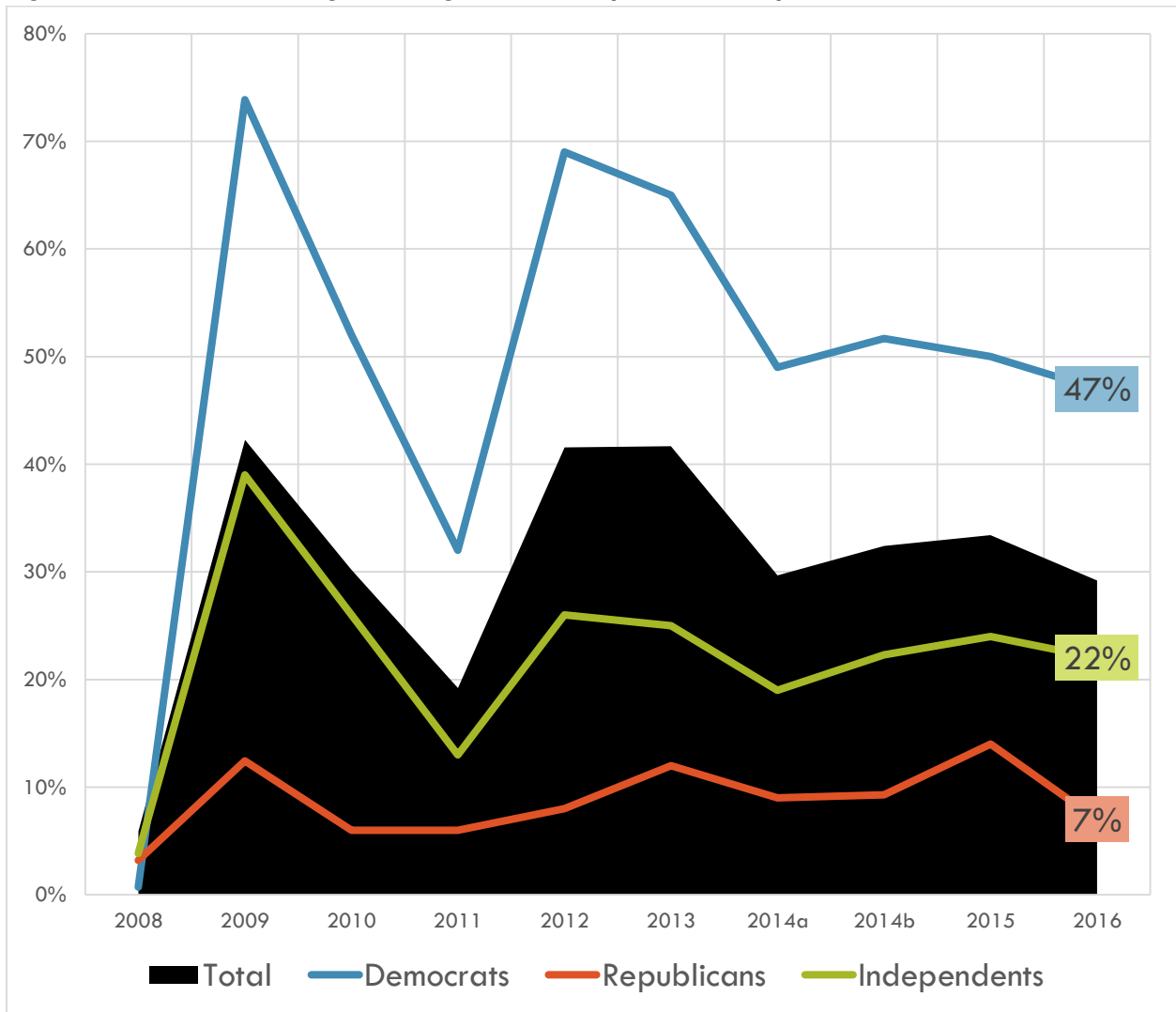
In 2015 the gap narrowed slightly to twenty points with a 53 percent wrong-track and 33 percent right-track margin. In 2016 the negative margin was even more lopsided at 63 percent wrong-track and 29 percent right-track, or 34 percent net in the negative direction.

Again, 2016 is a national election year in which the two sides are deeply polarized and the rhetoric about the state of the nation and the competence of the Obama administration is hot. The tone and content of the national dialogue, which is particularly on display in presidential election years, certainly drives at least some of the voters' perception of how well the country is doing and what its future may hold. Here the political elites are helping to shape the public's perceptions and evaluations of the nation's health, with the assistance of the mass media.

Most research indicates that elite opinion leads and shapes mass opinion more often than the other way around, although there are some rare instances in which the public gets out ahead of elite opinion. The interplay between the leaders and the led, and the ultimate accountability of the governors to the governed is one of the fundamental tenets of mass electoral democracy. The leaders have the upper hand most of the time.

In the election year cases, it is thus not surprising that there are deep differences in the partisan evaluations of how well the nation is doing, as Table and Figure 2 demonstrate. The Republicans are much more negative in their evaluations; the Democrats are much more positive with the Independents in between, as we would expect. This is just one of the many indicators of the deep polarization that has gripped the country since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indeed, the 2016 Republican total of 88 percent who say “wrong direction” and only 7 percent who say “right direction” is about as large as the gap has ever been, and shows the enormous partisan differences in this evaluation. It is exceeded only by the Democratic gap of 96 percent negative and only 1 percent positive in 2008, another national election year, reflecting the deep unpopularity of then President George W. Bush.

**Figure 2. United States Going in the Right Direction by Political Party**



**Table 2. Direction of the United States by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Right Direction</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>29%</b>
	Democrats	1%	74%	52%	32%	69%	65%	48%	52%	50%	47%
	Republicans	3%	12%	6%	6%	8%	12%	9%	9%	14%	7%
	Independents	4%	39%	26%	13%	25%	25%	19%	22%	24%	22%
<b>Wrong Direction</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>63%</b>
	Democrats	96%	24%	34%	55%	22%	24%	37%	37%	34%	42%
	Republicans	80%	86%	92%	90%	89%	83%	88%	86%	79%	88%
	Independents	90%	57%	37%	79%	61%	68%	71%	66%	59%	69%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1%</b>
	Democrats	2%	2%	14%	13%	10%	11%	15%	12%	16%	10%
	Republicans	6%	1%	2%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	6%	4%
	Independents	6%	4%	11%	8%	13%	7%	10%	12%	17%	9%

The next question posed the same right-track/wrong-track evaluation for the state of Illinois. Table 3 and Figure 3 provide the data for that question.

**Table 3. Direction of Illinois**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Right direction</b>	10%	22%	12%	15%	20%	16%	15%	23%	22%	9%
<b>Wrong direction</b>	79%	68%	80%	75%	70%	75%	76%	68%	63%	84%
<b>Other/don't know</b>	11%	11%	8%	11%	10%	9%	9%	8%	15%	7%

It is clearly evident from these results that, however negative the voters' evaluations of the direction of the nation may be, they are much more negative toward the State of Illinois. Negative evaluations of Illinois also increased in the latest Simon Poll, conducted in February of 2016, despite the fact they were already pretty bad.

Figure 3. Direction of Illinois

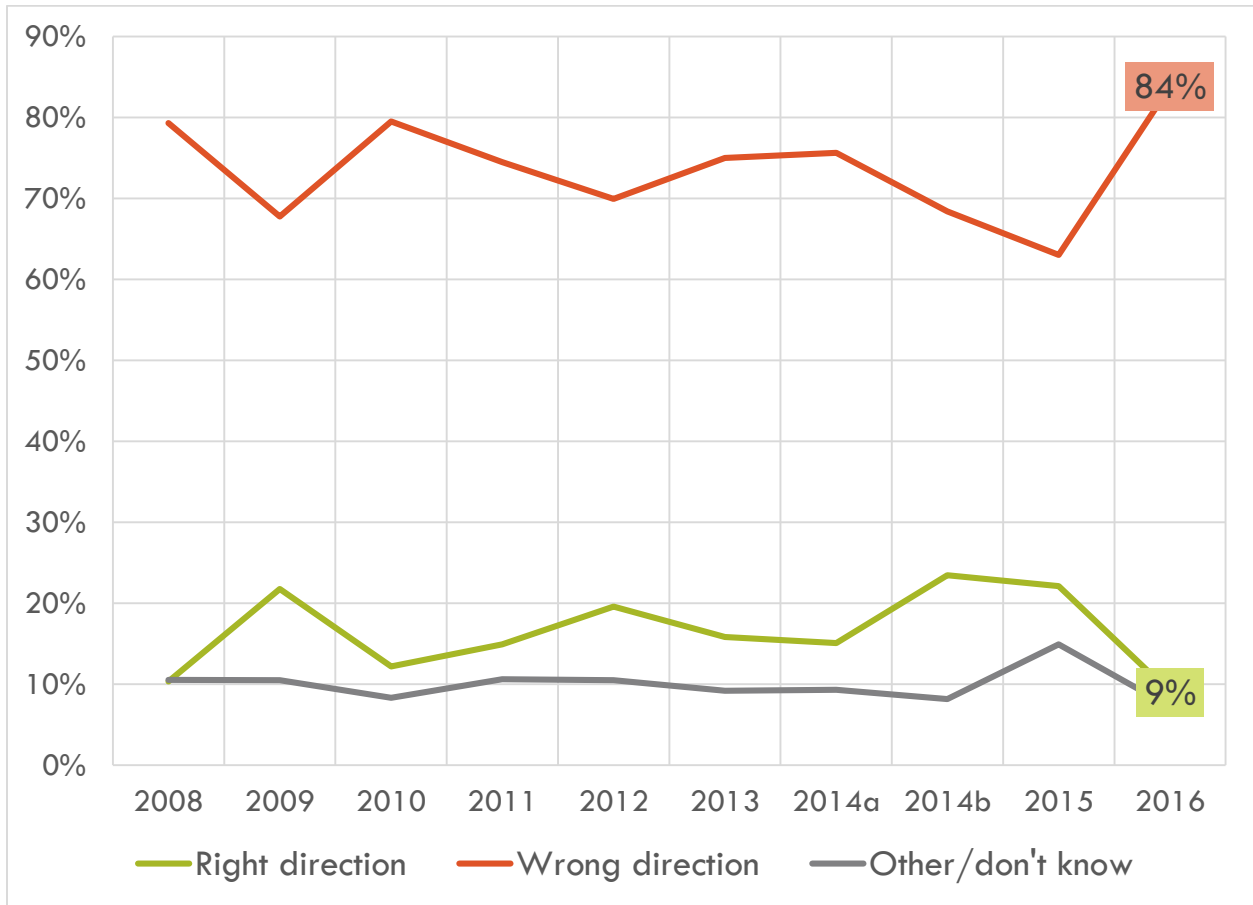
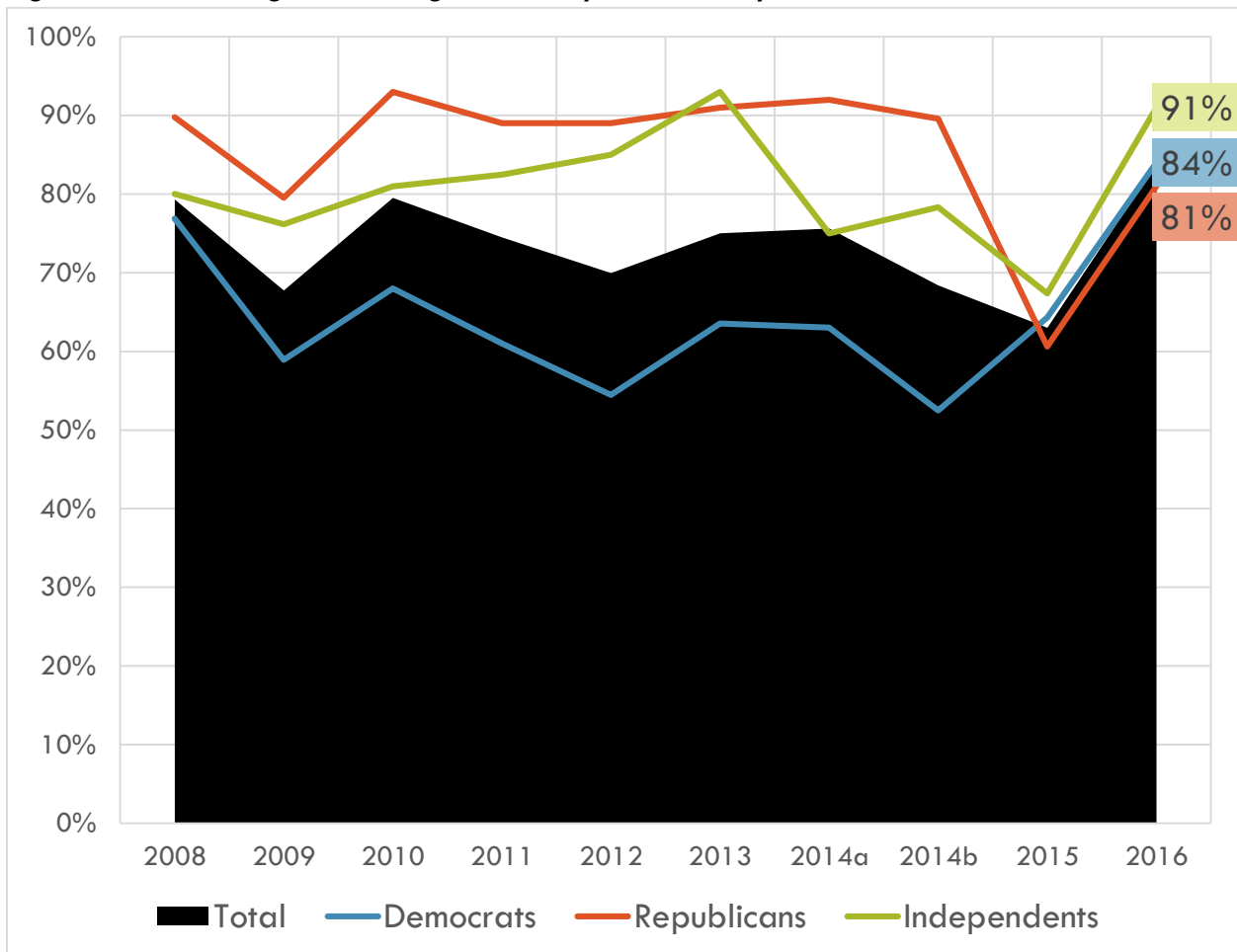


Table 4 and Figure 4 show that recently there have not been major differences between partisans on this issue of right-track versus wrong-track evaluations. Indeed, this is a rare instance where an almost bi-partisan consensus in the negative direction exists in Illinois. For example, in 2015, 64 percent of Democrats and 61 percent of Republicans chose the wrong-track option, which was also chosen by 67 percent of the Independents. In 2016, 84, percent of Democrats and 81 percent of Republicans said wrong track. The partisans were exceeded by 91 percent of the Independents who chose the negative evaluation.

**Table 4. Direction of Illinois by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Right Direction</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>9%</b>
	Democrats	13%	33%	21%	25%	31%	25%	25%	37%	23%	8%
	Republicans	6%	18%	0%	4%	7%	5%	5%	6%	24%	13%
	Independents	12%	20%	8%	10%	7%	5%	8%	17%	19%	5%
<b>Wrong Direction</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>84%</b>
	Democrats	77%	59%	68%	61%	54%	64%	63%	53%	64%	84%
	Republicans	90%	80%	93%	89%	89%	91%	92%	90%	61%	81%
	Independents	80%	76%	81%	82%	85%	93%	75%	78%	67%	91%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>7%</b>
	Democrats	10%	8%	11%	14%	14%	12%	12%	11%	13%	7%
	Republicans	4%	3%	3%	6%	4%	4%	3%	5%	15%	7%
	Independents	8%	4%	11%	7%	8%	2%	17%	4%	14%	4%

**Figure 4. Illinois Going in the Wrong Direction by Political Party**



This indicator is not entirely devoid of partisan differences, however, if one views the stretch of Illinois history between 2008 and 2014, when there was a Democratic governor in office, Republicans were much more likely to select the wrong-track option at a rate up to 90 percent in most of those years. The Democrats were somewhat less dyspeptic, with approximately two-thirds of them choosing the wrong-track option during those years of Democratic one-party control of the legislature and the governor's office. However, the negative evaluations had become the dominant view by a bi-partisan supermajority by 2016.

That the negatives so dramatically outweigh the positive evaluations at the state level, and that it is a bipartisan condemnation, is somewhat unusual. The more usual pattern in other states is for the federal government to receive the most negative marks, followed by the state and then local governments. In fact, this Jeffersonian belief that "the best government is that which is closest to the people" is one of the fixed stars of the American political culture. Illinois has consistently been an exception to that hoary rule if these data are any indicator.

As we pointed out in an earlier paper, there are undoubtedly some objective reasons that the state's evaluations are so drastically negative in Illinois. Illinois has long suffered from the ill effects of what is popularly called a "culture of corruption." We have had two of our last three governors go to federal prison along with a long list of convicted felons from federal, state and local levels of government. This culture of corruption has become almost a cliché in Illinois, but it does indicate a widespread perception that all too many elected and appointed officials in Illinois have been corrupted by their desire for private gain and have consistently put self-interest above the public interest. That is a widely accepted narrative about the political culture of this state and it shows in these data (Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, September 2012).

There was a fertile field of skepticism and cynicism about Illinois government and politicians already in place for the fall elections of 2014 when we elected a new governor and all of the house and one-third of the senate. Those new officials, many of whom were incumbents in the General Assembly, took office in January of 2015. As was detailed in the Introduction to this paper that was also the point at which the state's temporary income tax increase was set to expire. It would have required action by the lame duck governor and General Assembly, or quick action by the newly elected governor and legislature to save the income tax increase and ensure its continued stream of revenue.

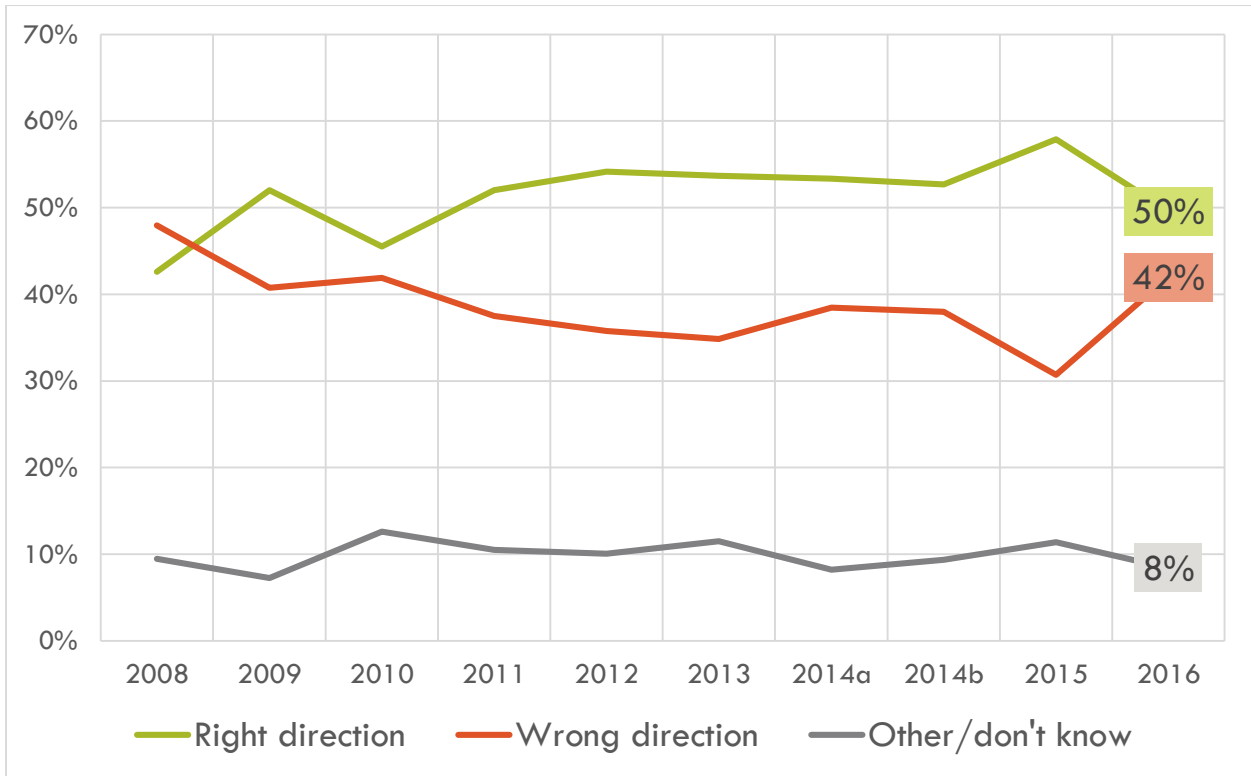
Of course, that did not happen. The new revenue stream, which had been in place since January of 2011 was allowed to expire, and the immediate loss to the state was approximately \$5 billion per year. There was no way to make up that loss without new taxes and sources of revenue, and those were not forthcoming. As we will show in subsequent sections of this paper, there are good reasons, rooted in the state of public opinion, why these hard choices were not made and why the deficit was allowed to reappear and expand. The result has been the political gridlock and governmental chaos described earlier.

The only level of government and geographic identity that receives approval from the voters of Illinois is at the local level. Jefferson would be proud. These results are presented in Table 5 and Figure 5.

**Table 5. Direction of the Local Area**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Right direction</b>	43%	52%	46%	52%	54%	54%	53%	53%	58%	50%
<b>Wrong direction</b>	48%	41%	42%	37%	36%	35%	38%	38%	31%	42%
<b>Other/don't know</b>	9%	7%	13%	10%	10%	12%	8%	9%	11%	8%

**Figure 5. Direction of the Local Area**



In Figure 5, for the first time, we find the evaluations to be consistently more positive than negative. In 2008, which was the year of the nation’s financial meltdown and the beginning of the Great Recession, we find the only exception. Indeed, the net difference is usually 10-20 percentage points in the positive direction, although the gap narrowed to 8 percentage points in our most recent 2016 poll. In Illinois people apparently identify positively with the city, town, or rural areas where they live, work, and play.

**Table 6. Direction of the Local Area by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Right Direction</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>50%</b>
	Democrats	35%	54%	53%	55%	62%	57%	59%	60%	60%	49%
	Republicans	48%	62%	41%	49%	44%	56%	50%	50%	62%	54%
	Independents	43%	52%	41%	52%	48%	42%	49%	43%	50%	46%
<b>Wrong Direction</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>42%</b>
	Democrats	54%	43%	37%	34%	29%	32%	33%	33%	30%	43%
	Republicans	43%	33%	44%	41%	46%	34%	44%	39%	29%	39%
	Independents	48%	45%	48%	40%	37%	47%	41%	47%	35%	46%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>8%</b>
	Democrats	11%	3%	10%	11%	9%	11%	8%	7%	11%	8%
	Republicans	9%	5%	16%	11%	9%	9%	6%	10%	10%	7%
	Independents	9%	3%	11%	8%	15%	11%	10%	10%	14%	9%

**Figure 6. The Local Area Going in the Right Direction by Political Party**

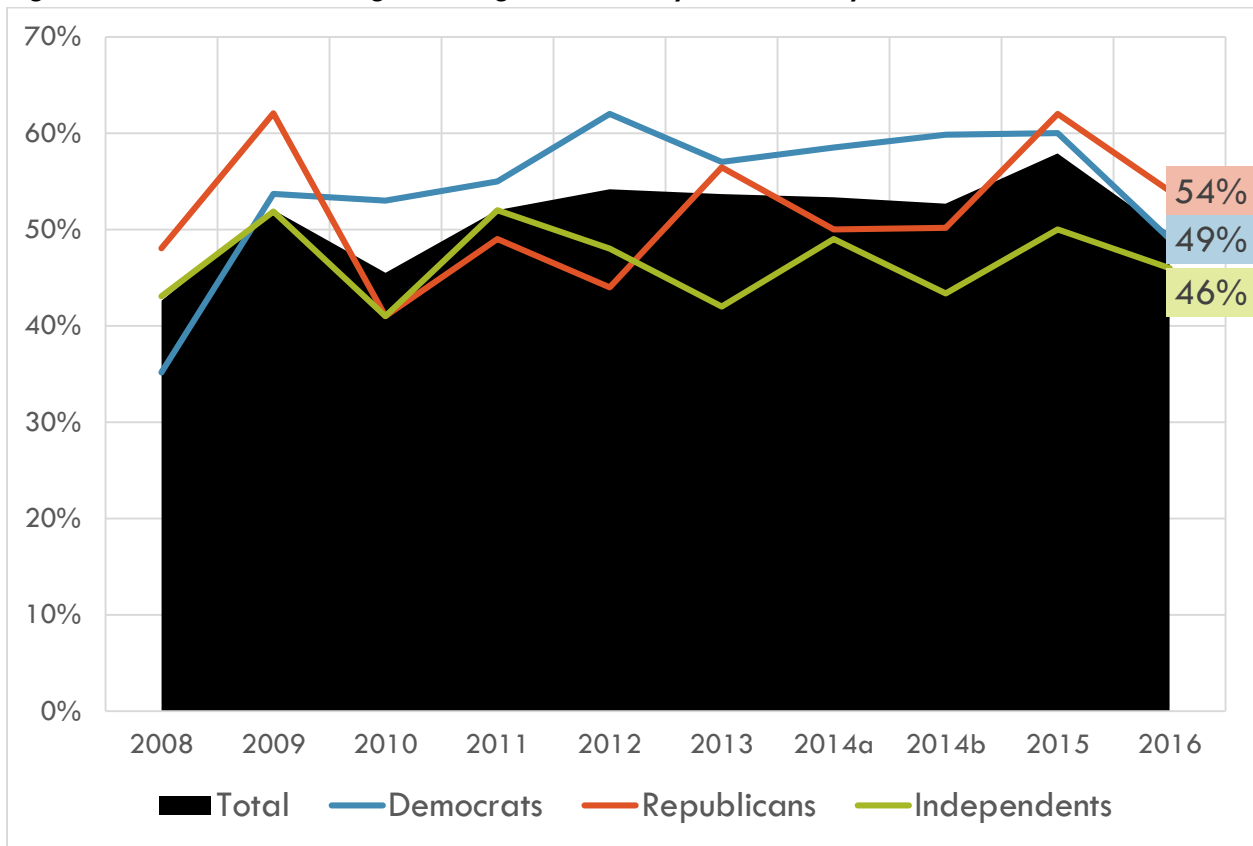




Table 6 and Figure 6 show that there are not major systematic differences between the parties on these evaluations of the local governments. Some years the Republicans are more negative and other years the Democrats are. Local governments are often elected in non-partisan elections, and most people claim that there is “no partisan way to fix potholes,” i.e. the provision of local goods and services is not seen as a partisan question. Perhaps, as a result, the important independent variable of partisanship simply does not seem to have the same explanatory power as it does at the higher levels of government.

These local communities, or neighborhoods in the big cities, are where people live out their day-to-day lives. These are where what the literature calls “friends and neighbors” governments are elected and provide the immediate goods and services which people depend on daily. This is the public face of government for most people. It may well be that the bills for those goods and services are being paid partially or entirely by the state or the national government. People are largely unaware of the finer points of “fiscal federalism” and of the fact that many federal and state pass through funds are provided to local governments. This is fertile ground for elected officials to gloss over the fact that the bills are being paid by a higher level of government and for demagogues to demand tax cuts while also demanding that their favorite program receive increases. On balance, the voters think things are much more positive than negative at those close-to-home locales.

As is evident from all these data taken together, the partisan differences on these evaluations are systematic and fairly dramatic. The Republicans at each of the top two levels have tended to be more negative about the direction of the nation and state. Only at the local level are the negative versus positive gaps close for the two parties. The Independents generally are found in the middle.

Perhaps this is the inevitable result of one party being popularly identified as the party of government and the other being the party that has the most faith in the private sector and is congenitally distrustful of government. That is not to say that Republicans do not like some programs. They are devoted to the national defense and agricultural support systems at the national level and to public order and safety at the local levels; however, they generally campaign on pledges to shrink the size and scope of government and reduce the national debt.

The Democrats are on guard to try to preserve and/or expand the services that governments render to their constituents. They are identified in the public’s mind as the party of government because the interest groups they represent are often public sector employees and because the recipients of some of the most prominent governmental programs tend to vote for the Democrats.

Most political campaigns are played out against those very different partisan positions, and the political debate often emphasizes them. The result is the partisan and ideological polarization that marks our politics today. Our results indicate that the people learn the mass civics lessons they are being taught by their leaders with some clarity. They also tend to vote accordingly.

## 2.2 REFORM PROPOSALS FOR ILLINOIS

### 2.2.1 Term Limits

Given the level of dyspeptic feeling toward Illinois government and politics our polls have documented, it is not surprising that the voters of Illinois look very positively on a number of governmental and political reforms the Simon Poll has tested across a number of years. Our overall generalization from years of conducting these surveys is that Illinois voters say they want change and almost any reasonable proposal for change will gain widespread public approval.

We start here with term limits proposals for the state legislature. National polls have consistently demonstrated that term limits are extremely popular with the American public. That support, plus a well-funded and aggressive campaign by conservative interest groups in the 1990s is the reason there are currently 15 states with term limits on their legislators (See: Appendix B, NCSL data). The concept is widely favored by the voters of Illinois, as Table 7 demonstrates.

**Table 7. Term Limits<sup>4</sup>**

	2010 <sup>5</sup>	2011 <sup>4</sup>	2012 <sup>4</sup>	2014	2016
<b>Strongly Favor</b>	57%	54%	54%	62%	60%
<b>Somewhat Favor</b>	23%	21%	25%	18%	18%
<b>Somewhat Oppose</b>	8%	9%	9%	8%	10%
<b>Strongly Oppose</b>	7%	11%	9%	9%	10%
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	5%	6%	4%	3%	3%

In our most recent 2016 poll, 78 percent of respondents either strongly favored or somewhat favored term limits for state legislators. Only 20 percent opposed or somewhat opposed this change. As Figure 7 demonstrates, this level of support has been constant over the years we have been polling, with approximately three-fourths or slightly more consistently approving of the idea.

<sup>4</sup> The question asked, “A proposal to limit state legislators to a total of eight years of service, whether in the House of Representatives, the State Senate, or a combination of the two. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?”

<sup>5</sup> In 2010-2012 the question asked, “proposal to limit state representatives to five consecutive two-year terms and state senators to three consecutive four-year terms”

Figure 7. Term Limits

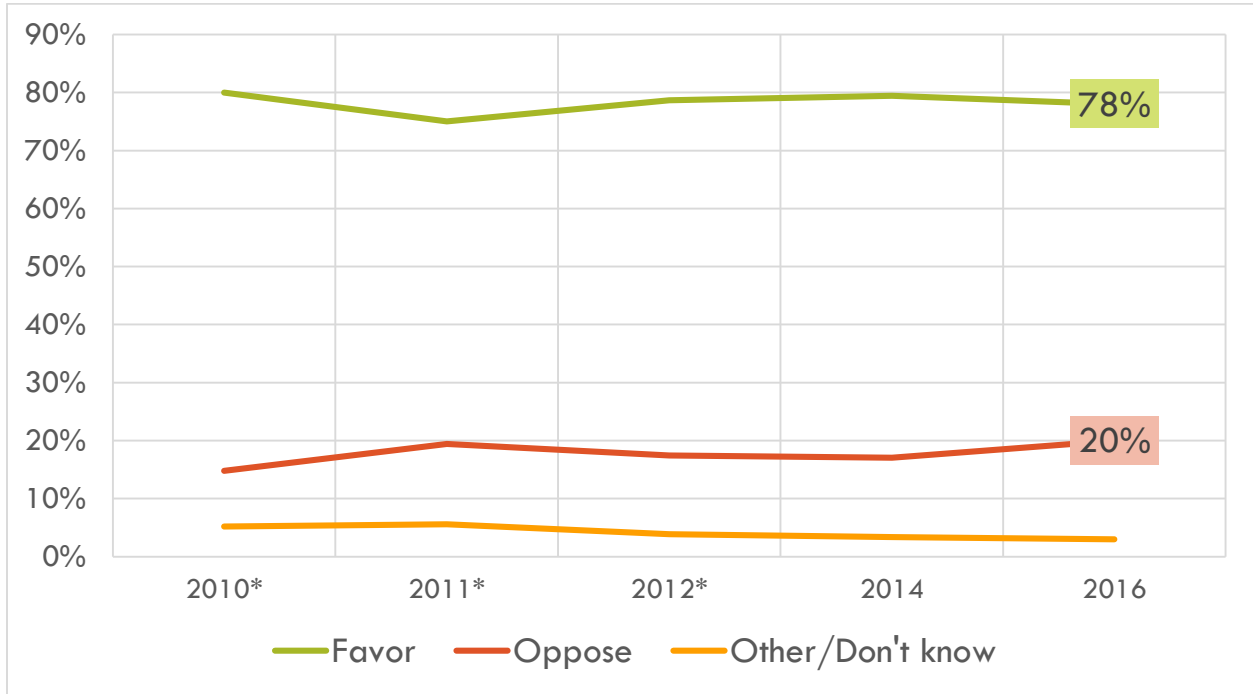


Table 8. Term Limits by Political Party

		2010*	2011*	2012*	2014	2016
<b>Strongly Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>60%</b>
	Democrats	49%	50%	49%	52%	50%
	Republicans	65%	62%	63%	73%	74%
	Independents	62%	55%	58%	68%	63%
<b>Somewhat Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>
	Democrats	26%	23%	28%	22%	21%
	Republicans	19%	19%	20%	14%	15%
	Independents	22%	18%	23%	10%	16%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>
	Democrats	10%	10%	10%	10%	13%
	Republicans	7%	7%	7%	5%	4%
	Independents	6%	9%	4%	11%	13%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>
	Democrats	9%	12%	10%	12%	12%
	Republicans	5%	7%	7%	4%	7%
	Independents	5%	13%	8%	11%	6%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>
	Democrats	6%	5%	3%	5%	4%
	Republicans	4%	5%	2%	1%	1%
	Independents	5%	5%	8%	0%	3%

Table 8 shows that Republicans are consistently more in favor of term limits than Democrats. The strong Republican support for term limits is what one would expect, since the term limits movements of the 1990s were almost exclusively led by conservative and Republican forces both nationally and in the various states. It is logical that this proposal would be more appealing to the party that traditionally does not like or trust government, and that wants to limit governmental power.

One way to accomplish this goal might be to limit the time public officials can serve and to make sure that there is always a high rate of turnover among elected officials. This ensures new blood and new ideas, but it also ensures that there will be a constant supply of amateurs with little or no governmental experience in office. The expertise and institutional memory of veteran legislators would be lost. Critics contend that this higher rate of turnover, especially in the legislative branches, would ensure the strengthening of the executive branch, professional staffs and of interest groups, who do not change with each election.

It is notable that term limits for legislators has been one of the major proposals in Governor Bruce Rauner's "Turnaround Agenda." That term refers to his platform of policy changes he wants to see enacted in Illinois which would, in his view, improve Illinois government and in particular to produce a more positive business environment. It is necessary to stress that Rauner's term limit proposal has some fairly tough limits. That is, his plan would allow only eight years of combined service in either or both bodies of the General Assembly, a limitation shorter than that in force in other states with term limits.

This is like other items in the governor's package, however, in that the change is very difficult politically to attain, since it would require a majority vote in both houses of the General Assembly and then a constitutional amendment submitted to a vote by the people. Legislators are generally not well disposed toward constitutional and policy changes that could potentially put them out of office. The plan would also require several years to implement, since the process of amending the Illinois Constitution is complicated and entails several steps that are hard to achieve. As a treatment for the state's budgetary problems, the benefits of term limits are vague and would only occur, if at all, well into the future. Nevertheless, the proposal has very wide support, and very little opposition, among Illinois voters.

A variation on the term limits theme is the proposal for mandatory term limits for legislative leaders, such as speaker of the House or president of the Senate. The legislative bodies could enact this measure, although that is highly unlikely. Another route would require a constitutional amendment, which, again, would also be difficult. Table 9 provides our results on this measure.

**Table 9. Term Limits on Political Leaders<sup>6</sup>**

	2009	2010	2012	2014
<b>Strongly Favor</b>	42%	57%	54%	65%
<b>Somewhat Favor</b>	42%	24%	24%	18%
<b>Somewhat Oppose</b>	12%	7%	9%	8%
<b>Strongly Oppose</b>	4%	5%	7%	6%
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	11%	7%	6%	3%

This is one of the most popular reform proposals we have ever polled. As Table 9 shows, most years more than 80 percent endorse the proposal, with 2012's 78 percent being the only exception. Not only that, but those who strongly support the proposal are well above a majority in every year except 2009, when the strongly support position was endorsed by 42 percent, with another 42 percent in the support category. Only 12 percent to 16 percent either oppose or strongly oppose each year. Indeed, the support for this proposal was so overwhelming we quit adding it to the poll after 2014, since there seemed to be so little variation from year to year. We assert that strong popular support for leadership term limits is another of the fixed stars in public opinion in Illinois.

We of course think that this almost consensus positive view of the proposal for placing term limits on legislative leaders is closely related to public perceptions of current Speaker Michael Madigan, the longest-serving Speaker of the House in the United States. Madigan has been Speaker of the Illinois House for 31 out of the past 33 years losing only one term (1995-1996) when the Democrats were out of power. He has also been the state chair of the Illinois Democratic Party since 1998. When people think of the leaders of the Illinois legislature they think of Michael Madigan rather than the President of the Senate, John Cullerton, who has held that position for a much shorter time and is not nearly as widely known. When people think of the Democratic Party in Illinois they likely think of the Speaker first, even before the Mayor of Chicago, who formerly held the dominant position.

In addition, our polls and virtually any reputable statewide poll consistently show that Madigan's job approval rating is very low statewide. On the other hand, he is widely supported and popular in his legislative district as his overwhelming victory against a Rauner-supported opponent in the March 2016 Democratic Primary graphically demonstrated. He is also widely supported and virtually unchallengeable among the Democratic members of the House who routinely re-elect him Speaker every two years.

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<sup>6</sup> The question asked: "Limit how long legislators could serve in leadership positions - such as Speaker of the House or President of the Senate - before they stepped down to let other legislators lead. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?"

**Table 10. Term Limits on Political Leaders by Political Party**

		<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Strongly Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>65%</b>
	Democrats	32%	50%	50%	60%
	Republicans	48%	62%	60%	74%
	Independents	46%	63%	59%	62%
<b>Somewhat Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>18%</b>
	Democrats	41%	28%	26%	20%
	Republicans	43%	23%	21%	14%
	Independents	44%	19%	21%	17%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>
	Democrats	20%	6%	10%	10%
	Republicans	7%	6%	7%	7%
	Independents	7%	10%	5%	6%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Democrats	6%	8%	9%	8%
	Republicans	2%	3%	7%	3%
	Independents	7%	3%	6%	14%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>3%</b>
	Democrats	N/A	8%	5%	2%
	Republicans	N/A	5%	5%	2%
	Independents	N/A	5%	9%	0%

The fact that this item is related to Speaker Madigan is demonstrated in Table 10. There one finds that the Republicans are the strongest supporters of this proposal, followed closely by the Independents. The Democrats are less likely to strongly support or support this item; however, even among Democrats support is widespread. More than three-fourths of the voters either favor or strongly favor this proposal. In 2014 the total reached 80 percent among Democrats and 88 percent among Republicans.

Here political leaders are out of step with the mass public. This is particularly true of the Democrats, where the elite-level support for longtime Speaker Madigan exceeds that among the mass base of the party, much less with the rest of the public. This misalignment of public opinion and current policy is undoubtedly one of the roots of the popular alienation and distrust that the polls show among the mass public today. When Governor Rauner adopted term limits as one of his major planks in the “Turnaround Agenda,” he was tapping into a wellspring of popular sentiment in Illinois, and his advocacy for this popular proposal is probably one of the reasons his job approval rating, while underwater, has remained as positive as it has, especially among Republicans.

**2.2.2 Open Primaries**

Illinois has a long-running argument over whether we should adopt what is called an “open primary,” one in which no test of party affiliation is required to vote. By contrast, the “closed primary” is one in which some sort of partisan identification is required. In the most stringent form of the closed primary system, one must register as a partisan at the time of initial voter registration and only vote in that primary.

Illinois’ variation on that theme is that we do not have partisan registration, and thus there is no such thing as a “registered Democrat” or “registered Republican” in Illinois. What the state does require is that, in order to vote in a primary, the voter must openly request the ballot for the Democratic or the Republican Party at the polling place. This is a mild form of closed primary and is often classified as a “hybrid” between the open and closed primary. Still, many people object to this requirement and cite it as a reason for not voting in primaries.

Supporters of the closed primary are essentially the party organizations on both sides of the aisle. They note that it is after all the party primary and the parties should have some control over their label and who runs bearing the party imprimatur in the fall campaign. The party organizational cadres fear the practice of “raiding,” which is that strong partisans from the other party crossover and vote in large numbers for what they perceive to be the weakest candidate in order to saddle the opposition with a candidate who is unelectable in the fall. There is relatively little empirical evidence that such conspiracies exist or that they are even feasible, but the possibility of partisan mischief is widely feared anyway.

The regular party people also value the record of party voters the closed primary creates, which is thought to assist them in party organizational activities. For those reasons, the incumbents in the General Assembly from both parties have consistently resisted changing the system. Table 11 provides the results from the years when this question was asked.

**Table 11. Open Primary<sup>7</sup>**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Strongly Favor</b>	62%	58%	56%
<b>Somewhat Favor</b>	13%	13%	14%
<b>Somewhat Oppose</b>	8%	7%	9%
<b>Strongly Oppose</b>	10%	13%	14%
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	7%	8%	7%

Like term limits, this proposal to change to an open primary is highly favored by voters, as Table 11 indicates. Again, from 70 to 75 percent of the respondents either strongly favored or

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<sup>7</sup> The question asked “a proposal to change the primary election process in Illinois so that voters do not have to publicly declare which party’s ballot they have chosen. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”

somewhat favored the proposal to get rid of the requirement that a partisan ballot be requested in order to vote in the primary.

**Table 12. Open Primary by Political Party**

		2010	2011	2012
<b>Strongly Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>56%</b>
	Democrats	60%	53%	51%
	Republicans	58%	58%	58%
	Independents	72%	72%	71%
<b>Somewhat Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>
	Democrats	13%	14%	17%
	Republicans	14%	14%	11%
	Independents	14%	12%	7%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>
	Democrats	8%	9%	9%
	Republicans	9%	6%	11%
	Independents	5%	3%	6%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>
	Democrats	11%	15%	16%
	Republicans	13%	13%	13%
	Independents	5%	8%	8%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>
	Democrats	8%	9%	7%
	Republicans	7%	8%	8%
	Independents	4%	4%	8%

Table 12 shows that the grassroots supporters of the two parties do not evidence major differences in their levels of support for the open primary. It should not be surprising that Independents show the most overwhelming levels of support for the proposal. Their support verges on a consensus against any variation of the closed primary. The Independents are exactly the people who closed primaries are designed to prevent from voting, so they are understandably the most opposed to that form of primaries.

Overall, Republicans are marginally more favorable toward this reform proposal than Democrats, but the differences are not great. It is only the very active party organization people who really understand the party organizations' case in favor of closed primaries and the Democratic Party's organization in Illinois overall has traditionally been somewhat stronger than that of the Republicans.

Former Governor Pat Quinn was an avid supporter of the open primary plan and for over two decades he campaigned in favor of making that change. He even tried to change the primary



process with an amendatory veto (he added it to another bill which had already passed), while he was in his second term. The General Assembly, with overwhelming bipartisan support, promptly overrode his veto and our current plan stayed in place.

This is another place where the political leadership of the state, in this case from both parties, is out of step with a very large majority of the voters. It is perhaps another of the root causes of some of the popular criticism and cynicism that pervades the Illinois political culture.

### **2.2.3 Redistricting**

Legislative redistricting is another reform the Simon Poll has tested over the last several years, and a reform area that the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute has studied for more than a decade. We see the current system, where the party people and the incumbents essentially draw up the maps and then the majority party's plan ultimately prevails in the redistricting wars, as a source of some of the cynicism and mistrust that pervades Illinois government. Our current system is popularly referred to as a plan in which "the office holders choose their voters instead of the voters choosing their office holders."

Many experts also contend that gerrymandering, which is endemic to almost all the states, no matter whether they are controlled by Democrats or Republicans, is one of the root causes for the partisan and ideological polarization that has bedeviled Washington politics for a generation, and which is now spreading to the states, including Illinois. If a state has a large number of districts that are safe for one or the other mainstream parties, there is little to no competition from the other party. This means that the only practical way to challenge an incumbent is in his or her party's primary. Such challenges usually come from the extremes of the political spectrum, and thus the impulse to be more partisan and more ideologically pure is strong for incumbents in deep red or deep blue districts. Legislative compromise is then much harder to achieve. This has been the record for the U.S. Congress for at least two decades. This is also clearly the case in Illinois, where the two parties simply refuse to make the compromises that separation of powers and divided government require.

Some states have provisions to add one person as a tiebreaker to the legislative committee or commission that draws the maps in the first place if a partisan impasse occurs. The 1970 Illinois Constitution calls for two tiebreakers to be nominated, one each by the Democratic and the Republican Party, with one of their names then literally drawn out of a hat. Thus, the tiebreaker is an establishment loyalist of one or the other parties. This practice has led to several iterations when the tiebreaker was required and thus the winning party was able to impose its map on the losing party. This randomly selected tiebreaker usually then results in a period of ten years of advantage for the winning party. When explained in our polls, this constitutional plan has been widely opposed by most voters.

Tables 13 and 14 show the levels of approval (or disapproval) for the current plan. Table 13 shows that when the constitution's current provision for the randomly selected tiebreaker is

explained the voters disapprove of it by wide margins. Table 14 shows that this disapproval is shared across party ranks.

**Table 13. Legislative Redistricting, Party Hat<sup>8</sup>**

	2009	2010	2012	2013
<b>Strongly approve</b>	2%	2%	4%	4%
<b>Approve</b>	15%	10%	15%	11%
<b>Disapprove</b>	42%	41%	19%	20%
<b>Strongly disapprove</b>	27%	35%	55%	56%
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	14%	13%	7%	9%

**Table 14. Legislative Redistricting, Party Hat by Political Party**

		2009	2010	2012	2013
<b>Strongly approve</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Democrats	1%	2%	6%	5%
	Republicans	1%	2%	4%	3%
	Independents	2%	1%	5%	7%
<b>Approve</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>11%</b>
	Democrats	21%	11%	15%	14%
	Republicans	15%	9%	14%	9%
	Independents	17%	10%	17%	7%
<b>Disapprove</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>20%</b>
	Democrats	48%	43%	18%	22%
	Republicans	52%	39%	19%	18%
	Independents	49%	42%	18%	19%
<b>Strongly disapprove</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>56%</b>
	Democrats	30%	31%	54%	51%
	Republicans	31%	35%	57%	62%
	Independents	32%	39%	54%	56%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>
	Democrats	N/A	14%	7%	9%
	Republicans	N/A	15%	6%	8%
	Independents	N/A	8%	7%	11%

One way to manage the more pernicious effects of the partisan maps is to have a neutral body, or as neutral a body as can be found in the real world, draw the map. We asked the voters whether

<sup>8</sup> The question asked: “Currently, when the political parties can't agree on a legislative redistricting plan, they end the stalemate by pulling a party's name out of a hat. Do you approve or disapprove of this tie-breaking process?”

they favored having the Illinois Supreme Court add a neutral person to the redistricting panel in case of a partisan deadlock. In legal circles this kind of neutral expert is called “a special master” and has been used in many highly controversial cases where such special, nonpartisan expertise is needed. In the South during the Civil Rights Era, for example, such a special master was used to draw up school district boundaries in an effort to comply with various court orders for desegregation that legislative bodies did not want to implement.

**Table 15. Legislative Redistricting, Neutral Person<sup>9</sup>**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014b	2016
<b>Strongly favor</b>	19%	19%	36%	42%	36%	27%	35%
<b>Favor</b>	52%	48%	34%	33%	35%	44%	36%
<b>Oppose</b>	13%	13%	10%	8%	9%	11%	10%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	5%	7%	7%	9%	11%	5%	9%
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	12%	13%	13%	8%	9%	13%	10%

In our 2016 poll, a strong majority, 71 percent of the respondents, endorsed this plan, while only 19 percent opposed it. From Table 15 we can see that an overwhelming number of Illinois voters think some other plan for redistricting is highly desirable. This would be one way to leave the basic legislative system intact but change it in an incremental fashion. Table 16 shows that the plan has bipartisan appeal.

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<sup>9</sup> The question asked, “One proposal for improving the state legislative redistricting process would have the Illinois Supreme Court add a neutral person to the redistricting panel in case of a partisan tie. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”

**Table 16. Legislative Redistricting, Neutral Person by Political Party**

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014b	2016
<b>Strongly favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>35%</b>
	Democrats	21%	22%	37%	42%	39%	31%	36%
	Republicans	22%	16%	38%	45%	33%	23%	32%
	Independents	22%	17%	32%	43%	28%	27%	37%
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>36%</b>
	Democrats	61%	51%	33%	33%	33%	46%	36%
	Republicans	56%	46%	37%	33%	43%	43%	40%
	Independents	61%	48%	38%	30%	28%	40%	34%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>
	Democrats	13%	10%	10%	9%	9%	10%	10%
	Republicans	16%	14%	8%	7%	8%	14%	9%
	Independents	14%	19%	9%	10%	12%	13%	12%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>9%</b>
	Democrats	5%	6%	7%	9%	10%	3%	6%
	Republicans	6%	10%	6%	8%	9%	7%	11%
	Independents	3%	5%	8%	9%	19%	4%	13%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>
	Democrats	N/A	11%	12%	8%	9%	10%	12%
	Republicans	N/A	15%	12%	7%	8%	12%	7%
	Independents	N/A	11%	13%	7%	12%	17%	3%

A more fundamental change would require a constitutional amendment. It would take the job of drawing the maps away from the state legislature, where it is constitutionally placed now, and give it to an independent commission. This attempt to take partisan politics out of the redistricting process, or at least make that influence somewhat less direct, is used in several other states now and it is growing in popularity. For example, Arizona and California have both adopted such a plan in the past decade and those plans are widely regarded as having worked well (Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, April 30, 2013).

The most famous and most strict plan is the one long used in Iowa, where an independent group of technical experts, drawn from the legislature’s civil service staff, must draw the map, and they are enjoined from considering incumbency, partisanship, or place of residence of the incumbents in drawing the boundaries. The legislature can’t amend early iterations of the plan, and generally the Iowa Plan is regarded as the most stringent model of shielding the remap process from partisan and incumbent considerations.

Our data indicate the when presented with the alternative of allowing such an independent commission to draw the maps, the proposal is widely approved by both Democrats and Republicans as Tables 17 and 18 show.

**Table 17. Legislative Redistricting, Independent Commission**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014b	2016
<b>Strongly favor</b>	13%	32%	38%	34%	30%	35%
<b>Favor</b>	40%	33%	32%	32%	34%	28%
<b>Oppose</b>	20%	12%	10%	11%	11%	13%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	8%	7%	9%	12%	7%	13%
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	19%	16%	11%	11%	17%	11%

**Table 18. Legislative Redistricting, Independent Commission by Political Party**

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014b	2016
<b>Strongly favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>35%</b>
	Democrats	16%	29%	38%	32%	33%	36%
	Republicans	10%	40%	41%	38%	27%	37%
	Independents	15%	28%	36%	39%	30%	40%
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>28%</b>
	Democrats	42%	35%	34%	29%	34%	27%
	Republicans	39%	31%	32%	36%	34%	30%
	Independents	39%	35%	29%	35%	38%	28%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>13%</b>
	Democrats	19%	13%	10%	12%	10%	16%
	Republicans	22%	9%	9%	9%	15%	11%
	Independents	19%	14%	16%	9%	9%	10%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>13%</b>
	Democrats	7%	8%	10%	14%	8%	9%
	Republicans	7%	7%	9%	6%	7%	14%
	Independents	8%	6%	7%	11%	7%	16%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>
	Democrats	16%	16%	8%	13%	15%	12%
	Republicans	21%	13%	9%	7%	16%	9%
	Independents	19%	17%	12%	7%	16%	6%

In 2016, 63 percent of Illinois voters polled endorsed this change, while 26 percent were opposed or strongly opposed. The approval rate has been as high as 70 percent in previous polls, while the opposition generally stays in the mid-teens to somewhat above twenty percent. Again, this is a place where the actions of those who are the political decision-makers supporting the status quo are out of step with the views of a considerable majority of voters. We speculate that many Illinois voters are willing to try almost any reasonable-sounding plan for addressing some of the ills of government in a time of political malfunction and gridlock. The hypothesis is that partisan

gerrymandering in the redistricting process contributes to polarization in policy making. The same is true for closed primaries. In these two instances, changing the redistricting system would clearly and directly alleviate some of the most egregious effects of what is now a deeply gridlocked and dysfunctional system.

## 2.3 SOCIAL ISSUES

### 2.3.1 Abortion

Informed observers generally consider Illinois to be a fairly liberal state on social issues. This is largely because the mainstream of the Republican Party in this state is not composed of the kinds of deep-dyed social conservatives that have taken control of the party in many other states, particularly in the South. For example, State Senator Bill Brady was the Republican nominee for governor running against Pat Quinn in 2010. He was a social conservative who won the Republican primary that year because of divisions on the more moderate side of the party. Brady's very conservative stances on the social issues then became a liability in the general election. His loss to Pat Quinn was widely perceived to have hinged on his conservative stances on the social issues, which did not play well—especially in the suburban collar counties surrounding Chicago, where Republicans have to do very well to make up for their losses in the city.

Nevertheless, there is certainly a strain of public opinion in the state that supports the conservative side on the major social issues of the day. The state would not be as representative of the nation as a whole if it were not somewhat divided on these questions. Polarization of opinion is the predominant feature of national polls, and the nation as a whole is deeply divided on some of these most contentious issues. So, the Simon Poll has consistently included questions covering the conflicts over the social issues prevalent across the country today.

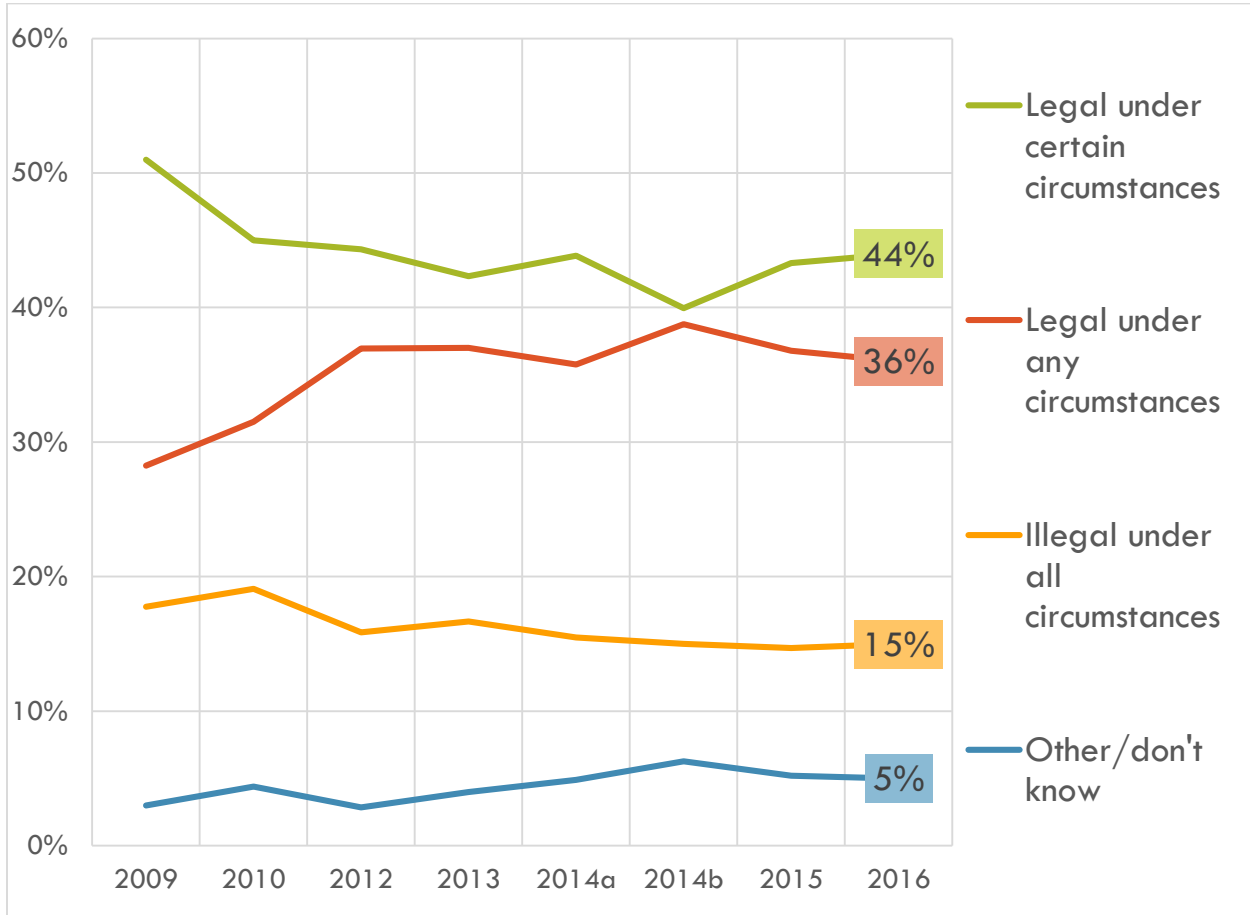
The case of *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973, when the U. S. Supreme Court held that a woman's choice to have an abortion was a fundamental privacy right protected by the U. S. Constitution. However, the fight has gone on continuously since then and, if anything, has intensified as many states' legislatures have passed new restrictions on abortions. Congress also has added more stringent prohibitions against federal funding for abortions. Although this was not originally a partisan issue, in 1980 the two parties for the first time took diametrically opposed positions on the abortion question, and enshrined those positions in their party platforms (Craig and O'Brien, 1993).

Ronald Reagan in 1980 was the first Republican president to clearly oppose abortion and to make it a part of his presidential campaign when he beat incumbent Jimmy Carter. Today in both parties, the possibility of nominating and confirming Supreme Court Justices, based in part on their view of whether to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, is a standard litmus test of prospective presidents. Since then, the very highly charged issue of abortion rights and restrictions has also added to the partisan and ideological polarization which has divided the nation.

**Table 19. Abortion<sup>10</sup>**

	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Legal under certain circumstances</b>	51%	45%	44%	42%	44%	40%	43%	44%
<b>Legal under any circumstances</b>	28%	32%	37%	37%	36%	39%	37%	36%
<b>Illegal under all circumstances</b>	18%	19%	16%	17%	15%	15%	15%	15%
<b>Other/don't know</b>	3%	4%	3%	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%

**Figure 8. Abortion**



As can be gleaned from Table 19 and Figure 8, Illinois lives up to its reputation as being predominantly liberal to moderate on this social issue. If we focus first on the “always legal,” i.e. the most pro-abortion stance, this option consistently attracts one third or more of the respondents.

<sup>10</sup> The question asked: “Do you think abortions should be legal under all circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?”



The next option is “should be legal under certain circumstances” which is effectively where the law stands today. Since 2010 there has been a consistent plurality in the mid-forties who support the status quo. If you add these two “pro-abortion” or “freedom of choice” positions together, the product is between three-fourths to eighty percent who support abortion rights for women. In 2010 the clear “right to life” position was supported by 19 percent of the Illinois voters. In 2012 it had dropped to 16 percent and it has stayed at 15 to 17 percent every year since then.

As Table 20 shows, there are clear and stark partisan differences between the support for the right to life and the freedom of choice positions. The Democrats are much more likely to support the pure freedom of choice option, while the Republicans are much more likely to support the pure right to life position, although the two parties are similar in their levels of support for the in between “legal under certain circumstances” position. The Independents are usually located between the two parties.

**Table 20. Abortion by Political Party**

		2009	2010	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Legal Under any Circumstances</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>36%</b>
	Democrats	43%	42%	48%	50%	51%	52%	47%	49%
	Republicans	13%	20%	23%	20%	15%	17%	22%	20%
	Independents	26%	34%	39%	26%	43%	39%	40%	31%
<b>Legal Under Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>44%</b>
	Democrats	43%	42%	40%	37%	37%	36%	40%	38%
	Republicans	55%	47%	52%	51%	56%	48%	50%	54%
	Independents	55%	46%	40%	53%	40%	42%	42%	50%
<b>Illegal Under All Circumstances</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>
	Democrats	12%	12%	11%	10%	7%	8%	10%	9%
	Republicans	32%	30%	23%	27%	27%	30%	25%	24%
	Independents	17%	14%	15%	12%	16%	11%	9%	13%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>
	Democrats	1%	4%	1%	3%	5%	4%	3%	4%
	Republicans	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%	5%	4%	3%
	Independents	2%	6%	7%	9%	2%	8%	9%	6%

In Illinois there is a definite and steady body of opinion taking the strongest stand possible against abortions and the pro-choice position; however, it is a decidedly minority view and it has

declined marginally. That may be one of many reasons that Illinois has not voted for the Republicans in a presidential election since 1988, when George H. W. Bush defeated Michael Dukakis in the Prairie State. This year’s presidential election will again feature a pro-choice Democrat against a pro-life Republican. Both sides are already touting this as a particularly important choice, since it will have direct implications for the selection of Supreme Court Justices; the death of Justice Antonin Scalia offers the opportunity for shaping the court for years to come.

Whether they admit it or not, presidents choose Supreme Court nominees partially based on their position on *Roe v. Wade*. Then the debate and vote in the Senate is certainly driven in part by the nominee’s views on this one issue. As the 2016 debate over the question of replacing Justice Scalia has shown, the choice of Supreme Court nominees and the ideological direction of the court is then important in the presidential race. This stark dichotomy certainly will be one important factor in the collective decision the voters have to make in the presidential election in the fall of 2016.

### 2.3.2 Same-Sex Marriage

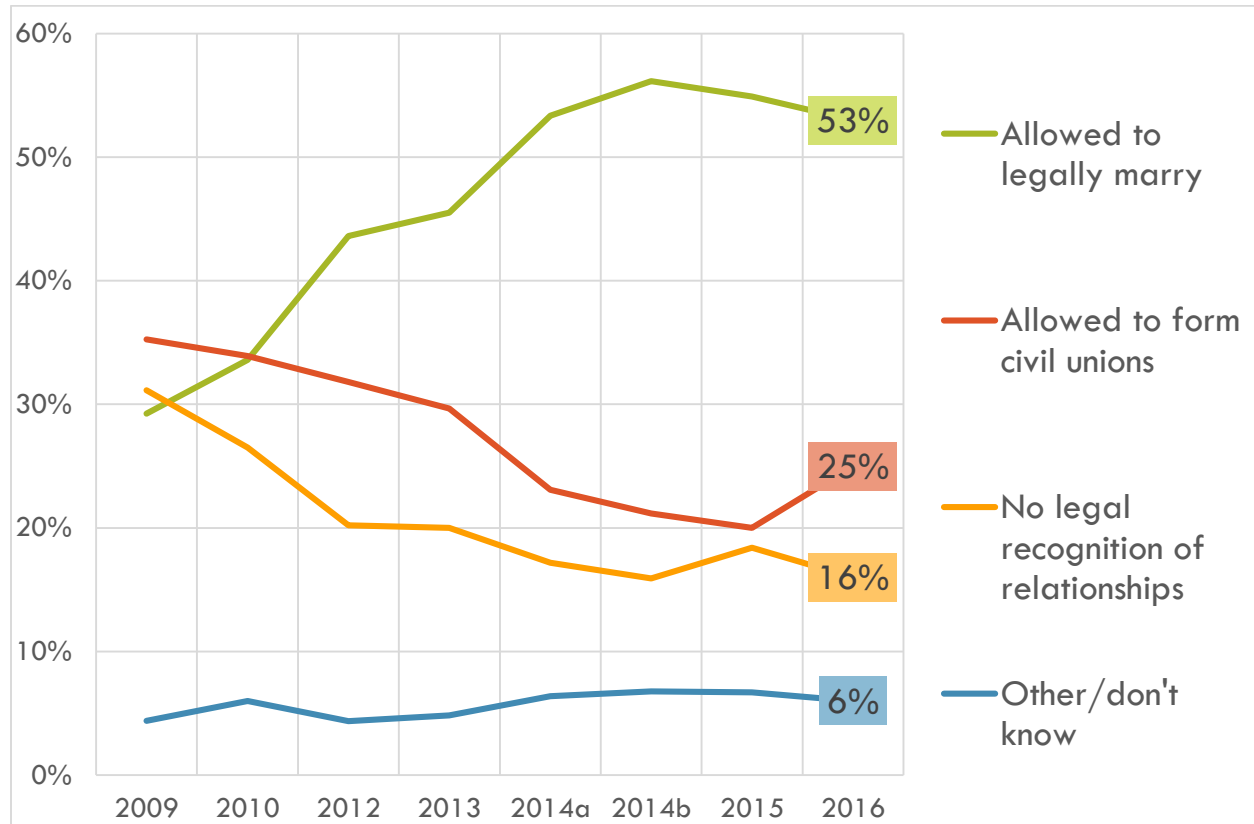
The rights of gay and lesbian people, especially their right to marry, has become equal to the abortion issue in generating conflict and controversy at the state and national levels. It has been another fundamental driver of the partisan and ideological polarization which has divided the nation over the past two decades. That which was originally a national issue has now spread to many states, and has impacted state politics as well as federal elections. Table 21 provides the results of our question, “Which of the following three statements comes closest to your position on the legal rights of gay and lesbian couples in Illinois?”

**Table 21. Same-Sex Marriage<sup>11</sup>**

	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Allowed to legally marry</b>	29%	34%	44%	46%	53%	56%	55%	53%
<b>Allowed to form civil unions</b>	35%	34%	32%	30%	23%	21%	20%	25%
<b>No legal recognition of relationships</b>	31%	27%	20%	20%	17%	16%	18%	16%
<b>Other/don't know</b>	4%	6%	4%	5%	6%	7%	7%	6%

<sup>11</sup> The question asked: “Which of the following three statements comes closest to your position on the legal rights of gay and lesbian couples in Illinois? Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry; Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not to legally marry; or there should be no legal recognition of relationships between gay and lesbian couples?”

**Figure 9. Same-Sex Marriage**



This is an issue where opinion clearly has evolved, and has even changed dramatically in the fairly short period since the Simon Poll has included this question (see Figure 9). In 2009 the “legalize marriage” position had 29 percent support. Then in 2010, the legalize marriage position attracted 34 percent support. By 2014, for the first time, a majority of 53 percent supported the full legal rights position. In 2016, an identical 53 percent took the same position. Our first poll in 2009 found that 35 percent of Illinois voters favored the “legalize civil unions” position, which was a compromise at that time. In 2012 an almost identical 32 percent took the same position. This bounced around from 30 percent in 2013 to 23 percent and 21 percent in 2014, 20 percent in 2015 and 25 percent in 2016 as the climate of opinion changed. Movement toward the full legal rights position rather than toward the more conservative position undoubtedly fuels this drop.

The opposition, which wanted no legal recognition for same-sex couples, was 31 percent in 2009. It then dropped to 27 percent of all Illinois voters in 2010, and by 2016 only 16 percent firmly opposed.

This is a case in which public opinion is clearly following and reacting to changes in public law and the actions of governmental officials. In 2015, the Illinois General Assembly passed, and Governor Pat Quinn signed, a law giving gay and lesbian couples full rights to marry. This in effect rendered null the then-current position in which Illinois recognized the rights of gay

couples to form civil unions. That law was only adopted in 2010, which shows how quickly and dramatically both elite and mass opinion has evolved on this controversial area.

In 2015, the U. S. Supreme Court, in a deeply divided opinion, extended the same rights nationally. A majority of Illinois voters have adopted this position as their own. This is one of the clearest examples we have observed in several decades of political elites and the mass media leading a quick and dramatic change in public opinion nationally. Illinois lawmakers responded with alacrity to that decided opinion shift.

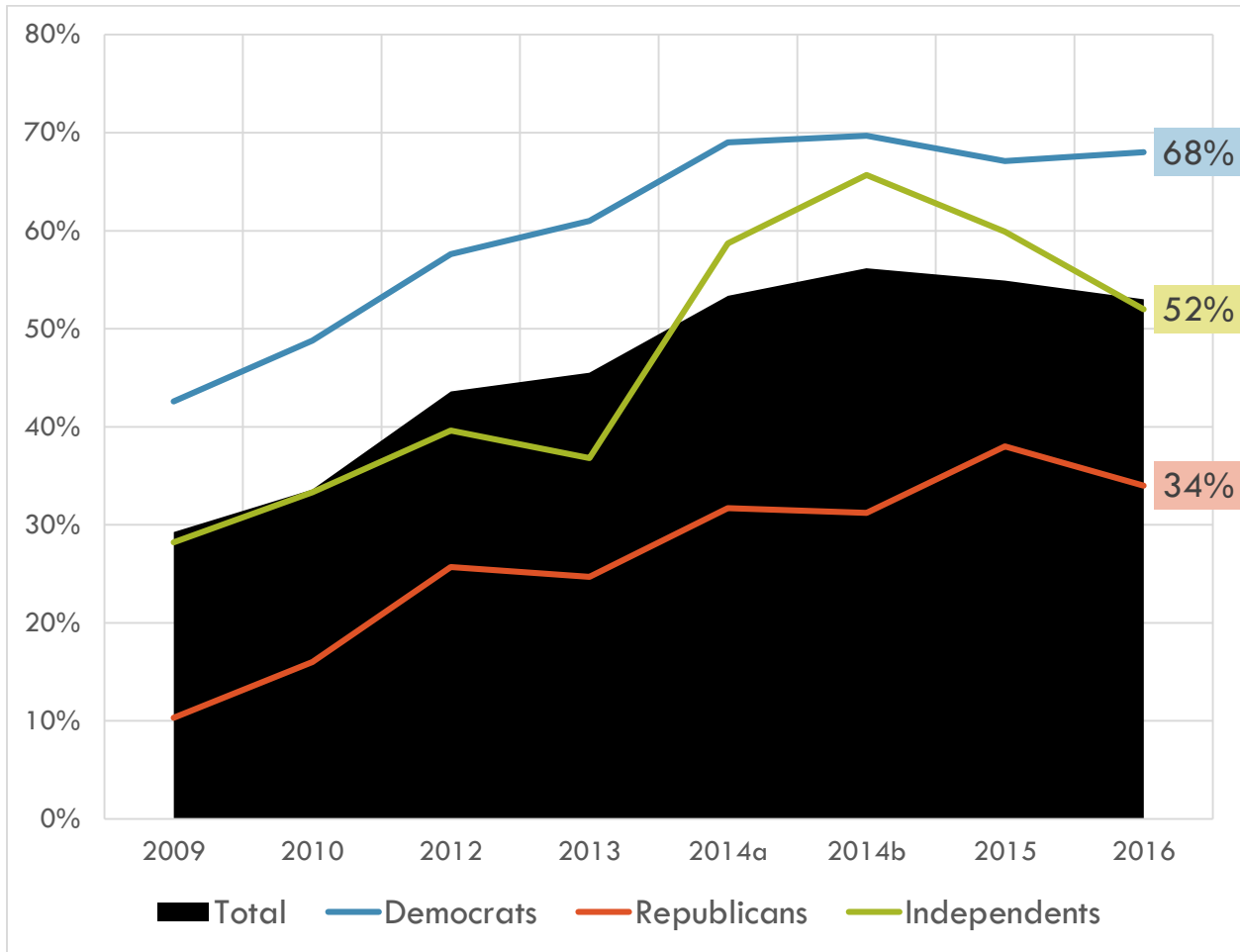
Table 22 and Figure 10 show just how much this matter divided the two parties. Clearly the major support for granting full legal rights for gay people comes from the Democrats, who have been at 50 percent or above on this issue since 2012. Just as clearly the Republicans are the major opponents, where we find that from 10 percent to 38 percent supported equal marriage rights for this group. Republicans have led the opposition to granting any legal recognition to this group. However, even among Republicans the levels of support for equal rights for gay people have more than doubled since 2009.

As usual the Independents are between the two extremes of the two parties; however, their position has been much closer to the Democrats than to the Republicans, and their position has evolved markedly in the direction of majority support for the rights of gay people. While this is still a divisive issue, and it attracts different results in the national campaigns, it may be one where the evolution of public opinion is predominantly in one direction and it may become less controversial over the next few years.

**Table 22. Same-Sex Marriage by Political Party**

		2009	2010	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Legally Marry</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>53%</b>
	Democrats	43%	49%	58%	61%	69%	70%	67%	68%
	Republicans	10%	16%	26%	25%	32%	31%	38%	34%
	Independents	28%	33%	40%	37%	59%	66%	60%	52%
<b>Civil Unions</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>
	Democrats	33%	28%	24%	20%	15%	14%	14%	16%
	Republicans	39%	40%	42%	40%	39%	35%	30%	39%
	Independents	36%	40%	34%	46%	14%	19%	20%	27%
<b>No Legal Recognition</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>
	Democrats	20%	18%	14%	15%	12%	11%	15%	11%
	Republicans	48%	39%	29%	31%	24%	28%	28%	24%
	Independents	26%	21%	22%	14%	11%	10%	14%	12%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Democrats	4%	6%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%
	Republicans	3%	5%	3%	5%	5%	6%	5%	3%
	Independents	10%	5%	5%	4%	16%	5%	6%	9%

Figure 10. Support for Same-Sex Marriage by Political Party



## **2.4 IDEOLOGICAL SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION**

Scholars who study public opinion in general and voting behavior in particular recognize that the two most useful and powerful direct explanations for both political opinions and behavior are ideological self-identification and party identification. Political scientists have been studying these phenomena for more than half a century, and they regard these two psychological attitudes and value commitments to be the most important independent variables tapped by the polls and other research methods (Campbell, et al., 1960).

In the modern era of political polarization, mass differences in party identification and political ideology have come to define that polarization at both the individual voter level and mass political level. When aggregated upward to the mass level of political and governmental jurisdictions they become the key explanations for why elections turn out as they do and then how and why governmental institutions, such as the Congress and state legislatures, behave as they do. Thus, when you get governmental gridlock, as has been true all too frequently at the national level and in the state of Illinois recently, the immediate explanations are deep divisions in both ideology and partisanship, and an unwillingness to compromise on those basic commitments.

### **2.4.1 Ideology**

Table 23 provides seven years of Simon Poll results on the ideological self-identification for the voters of Illinois. It provides a longitudinal picture of both continuity and change in this important variable. Taking the liberal alternatives first, when one combines the “very liberal” and “liberal” categories together, there is some movement evident in the data (see Figure 11). Starting in 2010, a total of 27 percent claimed those two labels. By our most recent poll in 2016 the liberal identifiers had reached one-third (34 percent) of the total. In fact, this change, with up to 32 percent of the total electorate in Illinois being liberal had been reached by 2012 and the replication of those results for the years since indicates that this change is stable and probably long-term.

On the conservative side, again combining both the “very conservative” and “conservative” categories, one can see some movement away from that position in Illinois. Our initial poll in 2010 showed 40 percent of the Illinois voters who claimed the conservative position. By our second 2014 poll, this total had declined to 32 percent and by 2016 it stood at 33 percent. Note that this 33 percent total is nearly the same as the 2016 total for the liberal categories. This is precisely the result you would expect in an era marked by ideological and partisan polarization, and it indicates just how polarized we are and how closely matched the two camps are. It is no surprise that gridlock and an unwillingness or inability to compromise has been the result and has become the norm at both national and state levels.

Over the long term, national polls have demonstrated a marked advantage for conservatives over liberals in ideological identification. This advantage long stood at approximately 2 to 1 and in the

range of about 40 percent conservative to 20 percent liberal. This advantage to the conservatives has caused many conservative and Republican leaders, as well as some pundits, to claim that the United States is essentially a “center right” nation.

In more recent years, however, the movement has been in the liberal direction with more recent national polls showing a continuing conservative advantage, but one which has declined to 37 percent conservative to 24 percent liberal. In that same Gallup poll, 35 percent claimed the moderate mantle, making it the second largest ideological group in the U. S. (Saad, Gallup, January 11, 2016).

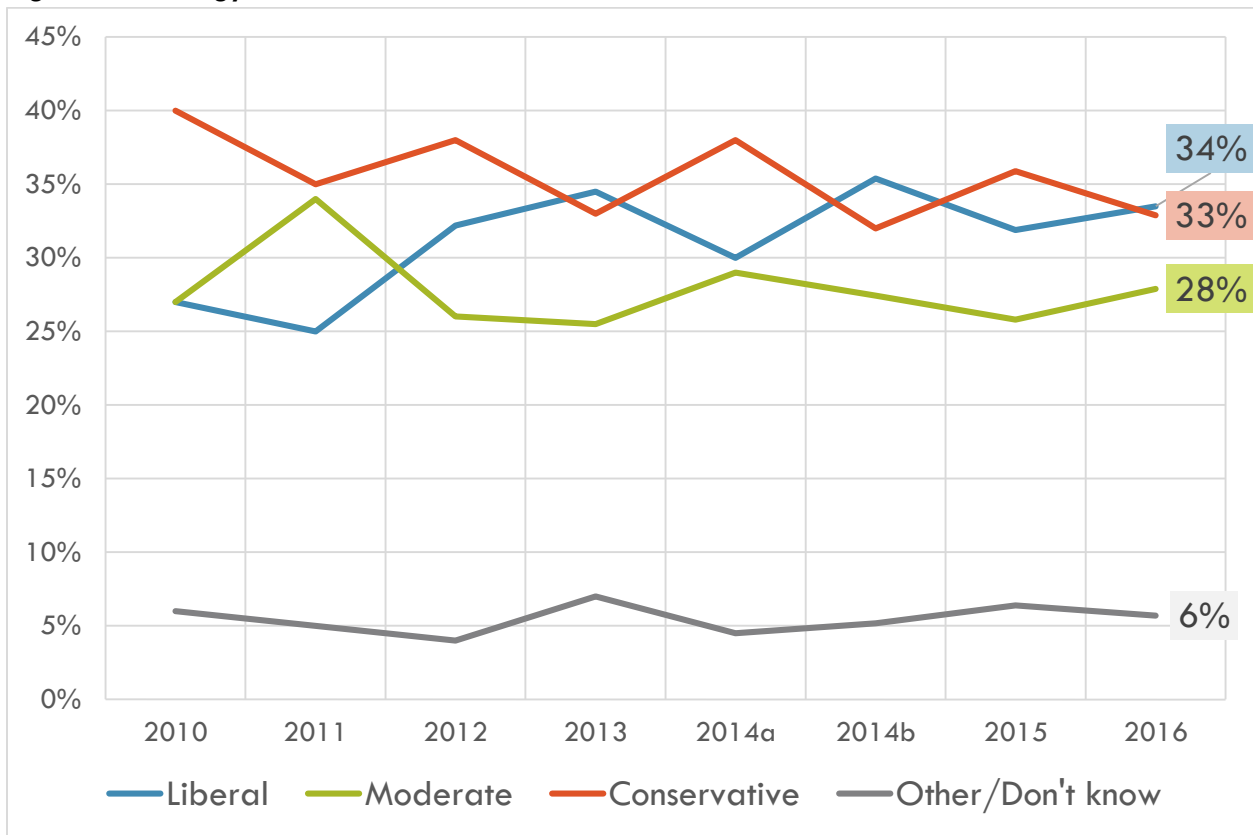
By comparison, our results for Illinois show that it is more liberal and less conservative than the nation as a whole, and it has also moved in a more liberal direction over this period, as has the nation. Future polls at both the national level and in Illinois will show whether our results caught a temporary movement or some permanent changes, either of which would be important for the functioning (or malfunctioning) of both the state and federal governments.

**Table 23. Ideology<sup>12</sup>**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Very liberal</b>	7%	8%	9%	11%	10%	13%	11%	12%
<b>Somewhat liberal</b>	20%	17%	23%	24%	20%	23%	21%	21%
<b>Moderate</b>	27%	34%	26%	26%	29%	27%	26%	28%
<b>Somewhat conservative</b>	25%	24%	25%	23%	24%	22%	24%	22%
<b>Very conservative</b>	15%	11%	13%	10%	14%	10%	12%	11%
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	6%	5%	4%	7%	4%	5%	6%	6%

<sup>12</sup> The question asked: “Generally speaking, in politics today, do you consider yourself very liberal...?”

Figure 11. Ideology



### 2.4.2 Party Identification

Party identification is probably the single most utilized and analyzed concept of all in the great body of political science research over the past six decades. It has been shown repeatedly by a wide variety of studies to have systematic analytic power as an independent variable. Party identification has a *direct influence* on voting and other political behavior and it also has an *indirect influence*. Party identification is usually closely correlated with and undoubtedly directly influences a substantial part of the variance in voting. Increasingly so, as the nation has polarized, it has become a powerful explanation for mass voting behavior.

Party identification's indirect influence is exerted through shaping what messages we pay attention to and causing us to exhibit a systematic bias in the ways we evaluate these messages. The most important of these attitudinal components are candidate images and our positions on the issues of the campaign. Extensive research has long demonstrated that party identification is a "master cue" or is the "perceptual screen" through which the voter evaluates the candidates and the issues (Campbell, et al, 1960).

As one of the best-known examples, party identification is always correlated very closely with how the American public evaluates the job the president is doing or how well the governor of a state is doing. Research also shows that party identification systematically influences voters'



positions on the issues. For example, if the name “Obamacare” is linked to a provision of the Affordable Care Act, the evaluations of partisans are closely linked to partisanship, whereas if the provision itself is cited or the generic Affordable Care Act is cited, the partisan component is reduced. A wide range of other issues show the same consistent bias by partisanship.

This also means that party identification is systematically related to a variety of individual and institutional outcomes across all levels of government in the United States. As such it is one of the staple items included in almost all major public opinion studies. Table 24 provides the results for the Simon Poll for 2008 through 2016.

**Table 24. Party Identification<sup>13</sup>**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Strong Democrat</b>	24%	22%	18%	22%	26%	26%	23%	27%	22%	23%
<b>Mild Democrat</b>	10%	11%	9%	8%	13%	13%	13%	9%	10%	9%
<b>Democrat leaning Independent</b>	11%	11%	13%	14%	13%	13%	12%	12%	15%	15%
<b>Pure Independent</b>	9%	4%	18%	19%	8%	10%	6%	17%	15%	12%
<b>Republican leaning Independent</b>	10%	11%	11%	11%	12%	9%	14%	8%	12%	13%
<b>Mild Republican</b>	11%	10%	8%	9%	10%	10%	8%	8%	7%	7%
<b>Strong Republican</b>	11%	12%	14%	11%	14%	13%	14%	11%	10%	12%
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	15%	19%	8%	5%	8%	8%	10%	9%	10%	9%

These results show that Democrats significantly outnumber Republicans in Illinois no matter whether one examines strong or weak partisans and/or Independents who lean toward one party or another. This is, of course, what one would expect in a traditionally blue state, and particularly one with a major city, like Chicago, where the Democratic Party tradition is historic and very strong.

In 2012 and 2013 a slight majority of Illinois voters identified in some degree with the Democrats. In 2015 and 2016, 47 percent claimed some degree of Democratic identification. This result is essentially the same as the 46 percent of the nation who evidence some level of identity with the Democrats in national polls (Jones, Gallup, April, 2016). It is not surprising that Illinois is routinely identified as a predominantly blue state.

For the Republicans, the three categories of partisans combined for a total of 32 percent in 2008, 33 percent in 2009 and 2010. It increased somewhat to 36 percent in our first poll in 2014 dropped to 29 percent in 2015 and stood at a net of 32 percent in 2016. So, the results for the Republicans ended where they started at 32 percent across our nine years of polling. Looking at

<sup>13</sup> The question asked: “Generally speaking do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?”

the national polls we find that a total of 40 percent of the voters identify at some level with the Republican party (Jones, Gallup, April, 2016). Thus Republicans in Illinois are significantly less numerous than they are at the national level.

Republicans are still clearly the minority party statewide in Illinois. We will see what the advent of Governor Rauner's victory in 2014 and subsequent paralyzing partisan gridlock will do to the identification levels of both parties in ensuing years. Currently both parties are getting blame for helping create and prolong the gridlock, especially the failure of the state to produce a budget for FY2016, which is rapidly coming to a close as of this writing.

From these data we can see that the pure Independent category has declined somewhat during the era we have studied. It started at 9 percent in 2008 and rose to 18 percent in 2010, and has declined to only 12 percent in our most recent poll. National polls find about this same level of pure Independents. The most recent totals for the national polls are at 14 percent for the pure Independent category (Jones, Gallup, April 4, 2016).

This low level of identifiers in the pure Independent category is the reasonable by-product of this deeply polarized era. Especially since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, more people have come to choose sides and to take on partisan identification, similar to the way they identify with and root for their favorite sports team. There are also similarities with religious and racial identification. Partisanship has increasingly become an intrinsic part of the individual's social identity and increasingly important to how they view the larger world (Green, et al, 2002; Heatherton, 2001).

As we become more ideological and more partisan in our individual identities, we become more polarized. At the aggregate level, this phenomenon plays out in the now widely recognized "red state" versus "blue state" designations (Gelman, 2008). Indeed political cultures and aggregate partisanship have now become so ingrained and so endemic that the result is a very high correlation between the state-level voting outcomes for most states from year to year and election to election.

This leaves only eight to ten "swing states" or "battleground states" each presidential election year. In 2016 this is predicted to include only about nine states where there is a realistic chance that either party can win the presidential race and thus the electoral college vote in that particular state. Naturally those states are where the candidates will spend most of their time, attention and money.

Illinois is not likely to be one of those battleground states. In presidential races Illinois has been a safely Democratic or "blue state" since the 1988 election, when George H. W. Bush beat Michael Dukakis in Illinois. We have been a reliable vote for the Democrats since Bill Clinton beat Bush in 1992. Thus we are unlikely to see much direct evidence of the national campaigns aimed specifically toward the voters here in Illinois.

This does not mean, however, that the Republicans cannot expect to win some statewide offices. The current governor, one sitting U.S. senator, the lieutenant governor, and comptroller are all

Republicans. Though Illinois leans Democratic, the right Republican candidate, riding a promising partisan wave, can win in Illinois. There also remain multiple counties and legislative districts where the Republican have consistently won and controlled local politics since they came to prominence with the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

It is best to think of partisanship and ideology predominantly as stabilizing factors where immediate change from election to election is slow and unremarkable. However, over longer trends, as shown in our data from the Simon Polls, there is also some change evident. This means that the campaigns and the candidates themselves are also very important apart from their partisanship and ideology. The candidates nominated by the parties, the amounts of money they can raise, their treatment by the mass media, and their ability to organize a compelling campaign and articulate a cogent narrative for their campaigns all still count for something and can create movement and change in the next election.

## **2.5 STRATEGIES FOR HANDLING THE BUDGET DEFICIT**

As was explained in the Introduction to this paper, the State of Illinois has been mired in a complete stalemate over the budget since Governor Bruce Rauner took office in January of 2015. While the budgetary problem has reached crisis proportion during the first year and a half of his administration, the roots of the problem go much farther back. Paul Simon sounded the alarm about the state's short-changing their contribution to the state pension system as far back as 1965 (Simon, 1965). Budgetary experts have been warning of a structural deficit in the Illinois budget at least since the first year of the Blagojevich Administration. By then it was clear that the state routinely supported more programs and services year after year than the dependable revenue stream could sustain. Those programs served needs, and they had clients, staffs, and interest groups that supported them. Reducing or deleting any of them would have been difficult and conflict-ridden. They often had fierce defenders in the form of local legislators who saw the programs' clients, staffs, suppliers, and friends as their own constituents. Legislators and governors alike were reluctant to create the disruptions and accept the political costs that go with serious budget cuts, so the programs continued to be funded—even though the aggregate total left an annual budget deficit when real revenue and expenditure data were used.

The result was a continuing ad hoc approach to fixing the immediate problem of deficit financing with bandages and budgetary gimmicks rather than tackling the fundamental cash flow problem.

The most egregious of these temporary fixes was the constant underfunding of the state's pension systems. Most states treat the state's obligations to its pension systems as a real legal obligation that must be met every fiscal year. In Illinois the pension payment has been treated like a discretionary item that could be paid or not each year, depending on the state's financial conditions—and more importantly the political fortunes of the governor and the prospects for the General Assembly in the next election. For example, Governor Blagojevich constantly ignored the advice of many experts and refused to consider a general tax increase as the solution to the obvious deficit. Instead he and the General Assembly countered with various forms of budgetary legerdemain, borrowing the money to make the state's pension payments one year and taking a "pension holiday" (i.e. paying nothing into the system) in others. The deficit in both the pension funds and in the overall general revenue part of the state budget continued year after year in the Blagojevich era.

So, the problems with the state budget certainly did not originate with Bruce Rauner. They got worse and more intractable almost immediately after he took office, though, and the stalemate developed with his first budget message where he outlined his plans for the FY2016 budget. Those plans included deep cuts in several main-line programs and services, coupled with no new revenue. Rauner also insisted that the General Assembly had to enact his "Turnaround Agenda" as a precondition for negotiating a budget. This agenda included a variety of proposals for restraining and reversing the power of labor unions in general, and particularly unions in the public sector, as well as a variety of other reform items such as workers' compensation changes, term limits, redistricting reform, and tort reform. All of these items have been on the state's

political agenda for years and were unlikely to be adopted by the majority Democrats who controlled the Illinois House and Senate.

In addition, in past administrations, no matter the partisan division of the legislature and the governor, such substantive issues had not been attached to the budget. Furthermore, all previous administrations had been able to produce a budget that the General Assembly enacted after making its own changes. The Rauner proposal quickly led to an impasse. The fight was joined and still continues unabated.

Since the state's temporary income tax increase had expired on January 1, 2015, mere days before he took office, and since this revenue reduction immediately blew a \$4 billion to \$5 billion hole in the existing budget, this meant that new revenue had to be found, or drastic decreases in the state services had to be identified and implemented. The governor had campaigned on the promise that he was opposed to the extension of the state's temporary income tax increase. Almost all Republicans and many Democratic candidates for the General Assembly campaigned on the same promise. Many others simply stayed quiet on the matter, even though the loss of significant state revenue was looming. Most candidates made no effort to offer realistic plans for what the loss of this much revenue would actually mean for state government and where the cuts could come from.

With all this as a backdrop, the Simon Poll has been asking a series of state budget- and revenue related questions since 2009. The longitudinal data have become more and more relevant to the budgetary debate. Table 25 and Figure 12 show the results for one of those questions.

The question was posed as follows:

“The state of Illinois has a budget deficit of over 6 billion dollars.<sup>14</sup> I am 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. If you haven't thought much about the issue just tell me that.

Illinois' public programs and services have already been reduced significantly. We can only fix the issue by taking in more revenue, such as a tax increase.

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.

Illinois' budget problem is so large it can only be solved by a combination of budget cuts and revenue increases.”

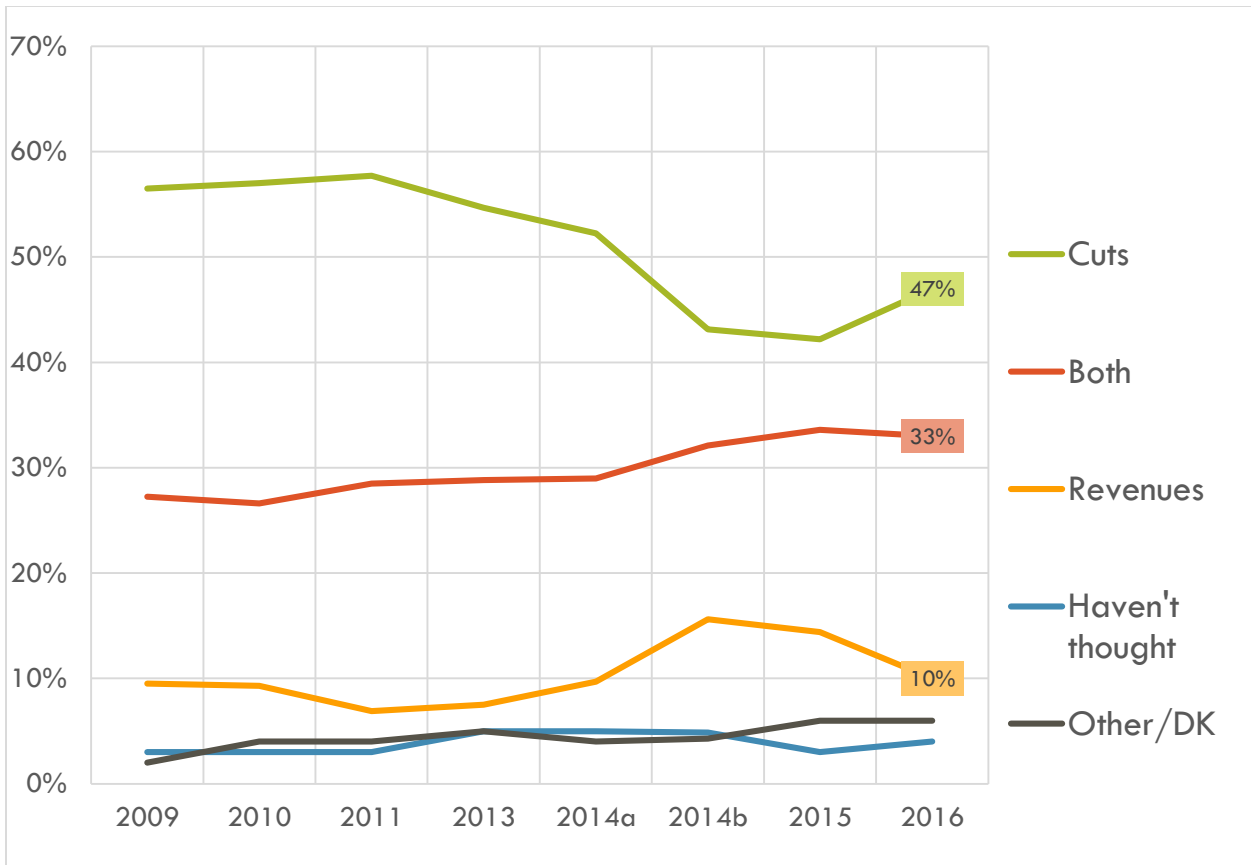
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<sup>14</sup> The deficit amount was appropriately changed each year to match the actual deficit.

**Table 25. Budget Deficit – Cuts, Revenues, or Both**

	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Cuts</b>	57%	57%	58%	55%	52%	43%	42%	47%
<b>Both</b>	27%	27%	29%	29%	29%	32%	34%	33%
<b>Revenues</b>	10%	9%	7%	8%	10%	16%	14%	10%
<b>Haven't thought</b>	3%	3%	3%	5%	5%	5%	3%	4%
<b>Other/DK</b>	2%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%	6%

**Figure 12. Budget Deficit – Cuts, Revenues, or Both**



We contend that these three generic plans summarize succinctly the major alternatives available for dealing with the state’s budgetary crisis. This is not a new issue; opinion leaders, public officials, and the major media have discussed it across the state for more than a decade. The problem has only grown worse over that period. It is instructive to note how public opinion has changed—or in this case, not changed much—since we began studying the budget conflict.

For example, those who supported the necessity for new revenue were 10 percent of voters in 2009, 9 percent in 2010, and 10 percent in 2016—no change since our initial measurement. This

is not exactly an outpouring of support for an increase in revenue. However, if one looks at the other two alternatives, we see some modest change.

On the option that combines tax increases with cuts in services, in 2009 and 2010 27 percent of the state's voters supported this alternative; it grew to 29 percent in both 2011, 2013 and our first 2014 poll, and to 32 percent in the second poll that year. Then in 2015 this option grew to 34 percent and in our most recent poll the support for a combination of measures stood at 33 percent.

One could cautiously take this growth from 27 percent to 33 percent as positive news, given that in 2011 the new income tax had just taken hold, and that in 2016 the effects of the loss of the revenue from that tax increase had become readily apparent to anyone who took the time and effort to look at the budgetary picture in Illinois. Certainly by then the conflict over what to do about the deficit had become intense, and the media devoted significant amounts of attention to the conflicting positions of the Democrats and Republicans on this matter.

Then there is the widely held, hard core belief that cutting waste and fraud would be the simple and painless way to deal with the problem. This view, which holds that governmental programs are always inefficient, that the private sector can always do things more efficiently, and that the government is way too big and filled by unproductive bureaucrats who are underworked and overpaid is deeply embedded. This narrative is deeply engrained in American political culture, and it is easy to see its popularity in the state of Illinois.

As the Table indicates, well over half in 2009 and 2010 supported the "cut waste" option. Support for that option remained above 50 percent up through our first 2014 poll. Only in our second poll in 2014 and then again in 2015 did support for this position dip to less than half: 43 and 42 percent. Most recently it came in at 47 percent in our 2016 poll—a sizable plurality, which may have grown a bit between 2014 and 2016.

This bedrock belief that waste and fraud are widespread and consume major proportions of the total state budget makes it difficult to confront the actual realities of budgeting in Illinois. Those who want to split the baby and have a real conversation about applying both solutions have grown somewhat in 2016, but they still account for only one-third of the total in our most recent poll. Those who wanted to consider raising revenue alone started at 10 percent in 2009 and wavered from 7 percent to 16 percent in the interim and returned to 10 percent in 2016.

As long as a majority, or near-majority, think the solution is easy and generally painless and that it only requires sacrifice from someone else, then it is going to be very difficult to have a rational public dialogue about the realities of budgeting in this state. The current budget impasse directly reflects this major characteristic of public opinion in Illinois and it is one that does not appear to have changed in a major way in the wake of that impasse. This is another of the roots of the gridlock that has enveloped Illinois government since the beginning of 2015 and comes close to paralyzing it today.

There is a clear correlation between party identification, self-identified ideology and one’s views on these major budgetary conflicts. Table 26 provides the detailed data.

**Table 26. Budget Deficit by Political Party**

		2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Cuts</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>47%</b>
	Democrats	49%	49%	42%	44%	43%	35%	35%	36%
	Republicans	69%	68%	75%	70%	63%	55%	51%	60%
	Independents	56%	53%	68%	58%	57%	46%	47%	50%
<b>Both</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>33%</b>
	Democrats	30%	30%	37%	36%	33%	35%	37%	36%
	Republicans	24%	23%	19%	22%	25%	28%	35%	32%
	Independents	28%	32%	24%	26%	25%	36%	27%	34%
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>
	Democrats	14%	14%	12%	11%	14%	18%	18%	16%
	Republicans	4%	4%	2%	2%	7%	14%	9%	4%
	Independents	10%	9%	3%	7%	6%	12%	14%	9%
<b>Haven't thought</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Democrats	4%	4%	4%	5%	7%	6%	4%	5%
	Republicans	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%
	Independents	3%	2%	2%	2%	5%	4%	3%	4%
<b>Other/DK</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Democrats	2%	3%	5%	1%	3%	6%	6%	7%
	Republicans	1%	3%	2%	3%	4%	1%	3%	2%
	Independents	2%	4%	3%	7%	6%	4%	10%	3%

Put simply, Republicans and conservatives are clearly more likely to choose the “cut waste and inefficiency” option than are Democrats and liberals. Moderates and Independents fell somewhere between, as usual. These are important and systematic differences between notably different and fairly stable groups, which account for much of the conflict in the state’s politics and certainly reflect the very different stances taken by the political leadership on the two sides of the aisle.

Taking the long view, though, we might reach the conclusion that a slow movement may be taking place as budgetary realities sink in through the filter of “cut waste” orthodoxy. The “cuts-only” position has dropped 10 percentage points since 2009. If we add those taking the “add revenue” position to those choosing “cuts plus tax increases,” that total has grown six points. Thus, the percentage point gap between those who acknowledge the need for even some level of revenue increase and those who believe cutting waste alone can do the job has fallen from 20 points in 2009 to just 4 points in 2016.



**2.5.1 Potential Program Cuts**

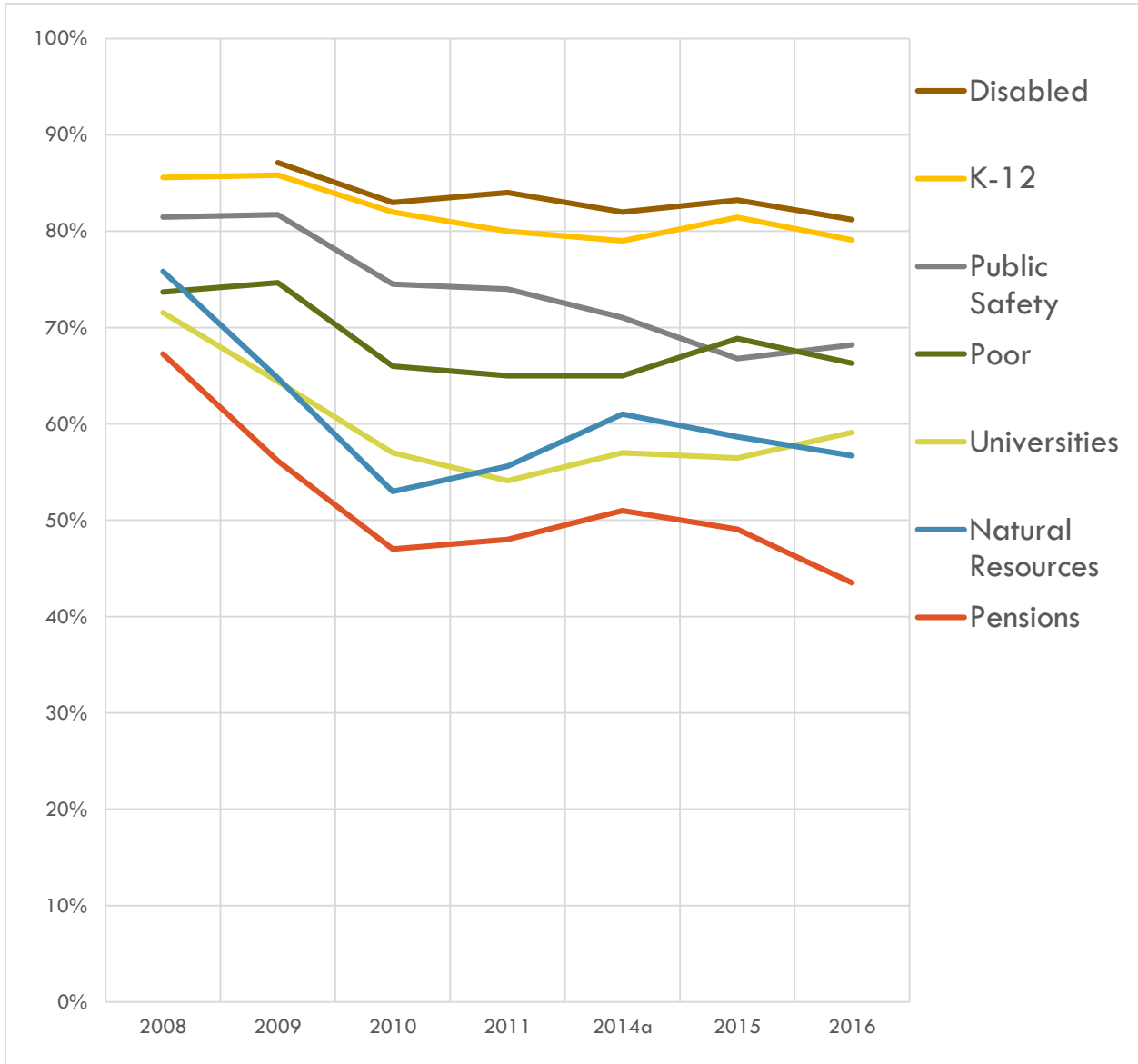
We have been exploring public opinion on potential program cuts since the inception of the Simon Poll. If there is not to be a general revenue increase and if so much of the public is enamored with making budget cuts, where should they come from? We chose some of the most prominent and most expensive governmental program areas and asked the respondents their views on cutting them.

The specific question was as follows: “There have been a number of proposals to address the state’s budget problems by making cuts in state programs and services. I’m going to read several areas where people have suggested that the state could make cuts. For each one that I read, I’d like you to tell me whether you favor or oppose budget cuts in that area.”

**Table 27. Favor Proposed Cuts**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014a</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
To state spending on pension benefits for state workers' retirement	<b>22%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>49%</b>
To state spending on natural resources, such as state parks or environmental regulation	<b>19%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>38%</b>
To state spending on state universities	<b>21%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>35%</b>
To public safety, such as state police and prison operations	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>
To state spending on programs for poor people	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>
To state spending on K-12 education	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>
To state spending on programs for people with mental or physical disabilities	<b>N/A</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>

**Figure 13. Oppose Proposed Cuts**



From the results in Table 27 and Figure 13, it is pretty clear that, in general, program cuts are not a popular alternative in Illinois. There is not majority support for cutting any of the program alternatives we offered. The only two that came close, in terms of favor versus opposed, were cuts to universities and cuts to public pension systems. There the gap between support for cuts and opposition to cuts was fairly close; however, even there more respondents opposed than supported such reductions.

As members of university faculties who also have a stake in the State University Retirement System (SURS), two of the authors of this study are pained by these results; however, in both cases these results indicate that both the state's universities and its public employee retirement

systems have some work to do in trying to increase public support and do a better job of explaining what they do and why they are important to the future of the state. But even for those two functions, most of the state's voters consistently oppose cutting them. Overwhelming majorities of Illinois voters wanted, by a wide margin, to spare the other state programs we tested from budget reductions.

Illinois voters almost universally want elementary and secondary education, for example, protected against proposed budget cuts. Those who favor cuts in K-12 are in the teens in all our polls, and those who opposed them exceed 80 percent of our respondents in almost all of our polls. These results should be gratifying for those who work in the field of public education at the elementary or secondary levels. Note that all except the 2016 poll were conducted before the most recent budgetary crisis, which resulted in many state programs having their budgets reduced, jobs lost and programs closed or greatly reduced. That which was only a hypothetical exercise earlier has become a stark reality in 2015 and 2016. There has been very little movement in public opinion over this period.

The respondents to our surveys were predominantly opposed to cuts in a broad range of other state services. In public safety, for example, those who favored cuts to that area were consistently in the 20 percent range while those who opposed were well above 50 percent and reached three fourths of the respondents in 2010.

Likewise, natural resources programs—state parks for example—were widely supported by over a majority and those who wanted cuts in these areas were a clear minority.

Other areas in which we asked about cuts could loosely be called social programs. We asked about reductions in programs for poor people and the disabled, and the results in Figure 13 show that opposition to cuts in those areas exceeds 80 percent. We were surprised initially by these findings, since one could get the idea from much of today's political rhetoric that social programs are out of favor and opposed by many who think of them as coddling and corrupting people who are not working and who are undeserving of public assistance. These results, on the contrary, point to Illinois being a state with predominantly liberal opinions on issues related to social welfare.

Based on past research and the power of partisanship and ideology as explanatory variables, we would expect that conservatives and Republicans are more likely to favor budget cuts in specific areas, and liberals and Democrats are more likely to oppose them. Also, Independents and moderates should be found somewhere in-between. In general, those expectations were supported by the data. Conservatives and Republicans were especially more likely to support cuts to universities and to public pension systems, for example. For the sake of simplification, the data for ideology are not shown in the body of the paper. However, in other areas, such as proposed cuts to public safety, Republicans were only slightly more supportive of cuts, or equally likely to oppose them as the results in Table 28 (a) – (g) indicate.

**Table 28a. Cuts to Pension Benefits for State Workers' Retirement by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>49%</b>
	Democrats	20%	30%	33%	31%	34%	35%	41%
	Republicans	24%	56%	58%	64%	55%	58%	62%
	Independents	27%	46%	54%	51%	43%	53%	53%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>44%</b>
	Democrats	71%	69%	60%	63%	59%	58%	53%
	Republicans	64%	43%	35%	32%	39%	38%	32%
	Independents	65%	52%	38%	40%	46%	41%	37%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>
	Democrats	10%	1%	7%	6%	7%	8%	7%
	Republicans	13%	1%	6%	4%	6%	4%	6%
	Independents	8%	2%	8%	9%	11%	6%	9%

**Table 28b. Cuts to Natural Resources (Such as State Parks or Environmental Regulation) by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>38%</b>
	Democrats	15%	21%	33%	27%	24%	28%	29%
	Republicans	25%	51%	49%	51%	45%	46%	51%
	Independents	19%	33%	41%	42%	27%	39%	39%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>57%</b>
	Democrats	82%	78%	61%	68%	70%	67%	66%
	Republicans	68%	48%	45%	41%	48%	48%	44%
	Independents	79%	65%	50%	51%	65%	53%	58%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>
	Democrats	3%	1%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%
	Republicans	7%	1%	6%	8%	7%	5%	4%
	Independents	2%	2%	9%	7%	8%	8%	3%

**Table 28c. Cuts to State Universities by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>35%</b>
	Democrats	19%	21%	25%	26%	28%	24%	23%
	Republicans	27%	45%	46%	54%	50%	37%	51%
	Independents	19%	39%	37%	42%	38%	29%	35%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>59%</b>
	Democrats	77%	78%	68%	69%	68%	72%	71%
	Republicans	66%	53%	43%	38%	43%	51%	44%
	Independents	69%	61%	54%	49%	51%	60%	58%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Democrats	5%	1%	7%	6%	4%	7%	6%
	Republicans	7%	2%	11%	8%	7%	7%	5%
	Independents	13%	0%	9%	9%	11%	10%	7%

**Table 28d. Cuts to Public Safety (Such as State Police and Prisons) by PARTY**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>
	Democrats	14%	16%	21%	20%	24%	30%	28%
	Republicans	13%	15%	23%	23%	23%	22%	23%
	Independents	15%	19%	20%	18%	33%	24%	28%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>68%</b>
	Democrats	82%	84%	75%	76%	73%	66%	66%
	Republicans	84%	83%	73%	70%	72%	74%	74%
	Independents	79%	80%	74%	78%	59%	63%	66%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Democrats	4%	0%	4%	4%	3%	4%	6%
	Republicans	3%	2%	4%	7%	5%	5%	3%
	Independents	6%	1%	5%	4%	8%	13%	5%

**Table 28e. Cuts to Programs for Poor People by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>
	Democrats	13%	10%	14%	14%	15%	14%	17%
	Republicans	33%	39%	40%	41%	42%	39%	38%
	Independents	27%	22%	22%	29%	32%	18%	20%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>66%</b>
	Democrats	85%	89%	81%	80%	80%	82%	78%
	Republicans	59%	55%	48%	47%	47%	51%	50%
	Independents	63%	74%	68%	57%	56%	69%	68%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>
	Democrats	2%	1%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%
	Republicans	8%	6%	12%	12%	11%	10%	12%
	Independents	10%	4%	10%	14%	13%	14%	12%

**Table 28f. Cuts to K-12 Education by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>
	Democrats	6%	8%	7%	9%	10%	11%	12%
	Republicans	20%	17%	22%	26%	29%	22%	22%
	Independents	17%	14%	15%	21%	21%	16%	20%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>79%</b>
	Democrats	93%	92%	91%	90%	89%	87%	86%
	Republicans	78%	81%	71%	70%	67%	75%	72%
	Independents	85%	86%	81%	76%	73%	80%	77%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Democrats	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
	Republicans	3%	2%	7%	4%	5%	3%	6%
	Independents	2%	0%	4%	4%	6%	4%	3%

**Table 28g. Cuts to Programs for People with Mental or Physical Disabilities by Political Party**

		2009	2010	2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>
	Democrats	8%	9%	10%	10%	10%	13%
	Republicans	14%	17%	15%	21%	16%	17%
	Independents	12%	14%	13%	17%	15%	14%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>81%</b>
	Democrats	91%	89%	88%	88%	88%	84%
	Republicans	84%	77%	79%	75%	80%	80%
	Independents	86%	81%	83%	79%	80%	80%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Democrats	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	Republicans	2%	6%	6%	4%	4%	3%
	Independents	1%	5%	4%	3%	5%	6%

### 2.5.2 Potential Sources of New Revenue

We turn next to a series of questions we have asked intermittently since 2010, that is, if there is going to be the need for new revenue, from where will it come? In our view the need is almost self-evident in light of how dramatically the budget impasse of 2015 and 2016 has negatively impacted Illinois’ ability to pay its bills and wreaked havoc on the state’s programs and services.

The uncertainty and dislocations created by the universities’ lack of state aid between July 1, 2015 and a stopgap funding bill passed in late April of 2016, especially have devastated the field we know best, higher education. We anticipate entering fiscal year 2017 without a budget as well. Both sides in the budget fight profess that they are willing to consider new sources of revenue in order to balance the budget, but each places a stipulation on that proposal that renders the offer unacceptable to the other side. So, if there were to be new revenue finally generated out of the budget stalemate, what would be the most likely sources? We begin with the story of the recent Illinois income tax increase, since it has been the only major source of new revenue recently, and since the controversy over it overshadows all other aspects of the Illinois budgetary crisis.

### 2.5.3 The Illinois Income Tax Increase

The 1970 Illinois Constitution requires that the governor submit annually a balanced budget. The exact wording is, “Proposed expenditures shall not exceed funds estimated to be available for the fiscal year as shown in the budget” (Article 8, Section 2 a).

The Illinois General Assembly then is required “...to make appropriations for all expenditures of public funds by the State. Appropriations for a fiscal year shall not exceed funds estimated by the General Assembly to be available during that year” (Article 8, Section 2 b).

In 2010 it was becoming painfully obvious that Illinois could not continue indefinitely on its year-to-year deficit financing, so the state finally enacted an increase in the Illinois income tax that year.

The new, temporary income tax increase was passed with strong support from Governor Pat Quinn and the Democratic majorities in both houses. The Republican minority leaders of the General Assembly opposed it and the increase was passed without any Republican votes. The increase was originally set to expire at the start of calendar year 2015, but few knowledgeable observers thought that it would be allowed to expire given the state's structural deficit.

At the beginning of FY2011 the individual income tax rate increased from 3.0 to 5.0 percent on personal income and from 4.8 to 7.0 percent on corporations. There was also a 2.5 percent property replacement tax on corporations, for a total of 9.5 percent (Stone, 2014). There is considerable controversy over how these rates compare nationally and especially with neighboring states. It is difficult to make definitive statements on that regard, but generally it is not at all clear that the new rates were widely out of the norm for the 43 states which have an income tax or even compared to our Midwestern neighbors (Hoffman, April 4, 2016; Dye and MacManus, 2012; Chicago Tribune, 2011).

Not surprisingly, the tax increase and whether to allow it to expire became a hotly debated topic in the 2014 elections, particularly in the race for governor (Yaccion, 2014). Governor Pat Quinn, who had signed the 2010 tax plan, defended it and maintained that much progress had been made in using the new revenue to address the backlog of bills and to pay for the pension system obligations. Objective data supported Quinn's view (Long, October 16, 2014, 26-27). However, the governor proved to be inarticulate at best in explaining the progress that had been made on the budget deficit, and he got very little help from other Democratic officeholders in advancing that narrative.

Bruce Rauner, the Republican candidate for governor and his party generally maintained that no progress on the deficit had been made and that the new money had been wasted on new programs and plans that benefitted the governor and his friends. There was enough evidence of waste in some specific programs to make that claim seem credible. The critics often also said or intimated that the city of Chicago was the origin of much of that waste. A particularly badly run \$55 million Anti-Violence program on Chicago's south side, where significant evidence of corruption and cronyism was uncovered by Illinois Auditor General Bill Holland, lent further credence to both charges (Jackson, 2015, 10). Governor Quinn went from claiming the mantle of "reformer" for most of his political life to being viewed by a majority of the public as having become a part of the problem in Illinois' long running "pay to play" political culture.

Pat Quinn lost the governor's race by 142,284 popular votes and lost 101 of Illinois' 102 counties. After that resounding repudiation of Quinn, the Democratic majority leaders in the General Assembly were in no mood to try to continue the income tax increase and certainly the Republicans wanted it to expire. The tax, as promised in the original legislation, became truly



temporary on January 1, 2015, half way through FY2015. The individual rate was reduced to 3.75 and the corporate rate was reduced to 5.25 (Long, October 16, 2014). The state immediately saw its monthly revenue decrease markedly and the deficit started growing rapidly again for the last half of FY2015, and then loomed even larger for 2016.

Neither Governor Rauner nor the General Assembly fulfilled their constitutional duties in FY2016. Indeed, the balanced budget requirement has been honored only in the breach for the past decade or more, and past budgets have been balanced only by accounting gimmicks like overestimating the amount of revenue that might be taken in and underestimating the amount of spending that would be required by the existing programs, or temporarily borrowing money from other fund sources, or taking pension payment holidays in order to achieve a technically balanced budget.

Nevertheless, in past years, the budget adopted was at least theoretically balanced. In reality, most knowledgeable observers recognized that it was in fact not balanced, as subsequent expenditures and revenues reports proved by the end of the year. But at least the state had an operating budget each year, and it was funded by appropriations from the state legislature. In 2015 and 2016, both the governor and the General Assembly ignored their constitutional requirements to achieve a balanced budget and to not spend money unless it was appropriated by the General Assembly, reaching a whole new level of governmental failure. While there were multiple policy, political and philosophical disagreements between the parties involved in this fight, the main hostage was the state budget, which cuts across all those other subjects.

The roots of the current crisis had taken deep hold in the state’s government and politics as a result of these decisions made by the political leadership of the state—but also heartily endorsed by the voters in the 2014 elections. All of this is the backdrop for Table 29.

**Table 29. Restore Temporary State Income Tax Increase<sup>15</sup>**

	2009	2010	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	33%	41%	29%	27%	32%	35%	32%
<b>Oppose</b>	66%	56%	63%	60%	56%	62%	64%
<b>Don't know</b>	1%	3%	8%	13%	12%	3%	4%

<sup>15</sup> In 2015 and 2016 the question was asked: “do you favor or oppose a proposal to restore the temporary state income tax increase, raising it from 3.75 to 5 percent?” In 2014 (spring/fall) and 2013 it was asked “do you favor or oppose a proposal to make permanent the temporary state income tax increase? In spring 2014 there was also a companion question that asked “The Governor’s budget office estimates that if the temporary tax increase expires, it will add \$2 billion dollars a year to the state’s budget deficit. If you were convinced this were the case would be favor or oppose....” Questions before 2013 asked generally about an income tax increase. In 2009 the number was from 3% to 4.5%, in 2011 it was from 3% to 4%.

Table 29 reports the results of a question which asked respondents whether they wanted an income tax increase, or after its enactment, whether they wanted to make the temporary tax increase of 2010 permanent. We first asked the question in 2009. That year 33 percent endorsed the idea as a way to handle Illinois' structural deficit. In 2010, the year the increase was enacted, this total had increased notably to 41 percent who favored or strongly favored the idea. We contend that this 8 percent increase in support was the result of the very public campaign that the governor, some state legislators, opinion leaders and some in the media had led in favor of this solution. When political leaders and opinion leaders put an idea on the public agenda and then explain it and defend it, at least some of the public will listen. The tax increase, although certainly not widely popular, passed the General Assembly in 2010 and became effective on January 1, 2011.

We did not ask about the income tax in 2011 and 2012; however, by 2013 the date of its scheduled expiration was coming closer, and the danger that the state would have another very serious budgetary problem if it expired was becoming more and more evident. Accordingly, in 2013, we changed the question to focus on making the temporary income tax increase permanent.

In the 2013 poll, 29 percent voted "yes" on this proposal. In our first poll in 2014, 27 percent favored this proposal and in our second poll later in the year 32 percent favored it; however, most still opposed. By 2015, those who wanted to make the increase permanent had grown to 35 percent, or over one-third of the statewide voters.

Perhaps this modest growth was a result of mass learning taking place as the reductions in the income tax took a serious toll on the state's services and as some began to realize that the loss of the new revenue stream was not free. If so, this is a mark in favor of political experience teaching the public hard lessons about public budgeting.

On the other hand, support for keeping the temporary tax increase declined to 32 percent in our most recent poll. Our only explanation for that modest downturn—even in the face of lots of evidence that the lost revenue, coupled with the budgetary impasse was taking a fearful toll—is that the tax proposal fell victim to our polarized partisan warfare where the proposal became deeply identified with the two parties. Governor Rauner led the charge against any tax increase in the absence of action on his "Turnaround Agenda."

The percentage of voters who either oppose or strongly oppose keeping the income tax increase has bounced around in the low 60 percent range, with no meaningful variation. In the 2016 survey, almost two-thirds of the voters surveyed had either accepted or not noticed the budgetary problem that has caused disruptions and chaos in state government. If they noticed it, they apparently had concluded it was an acceptable price for holding down their tax bills.

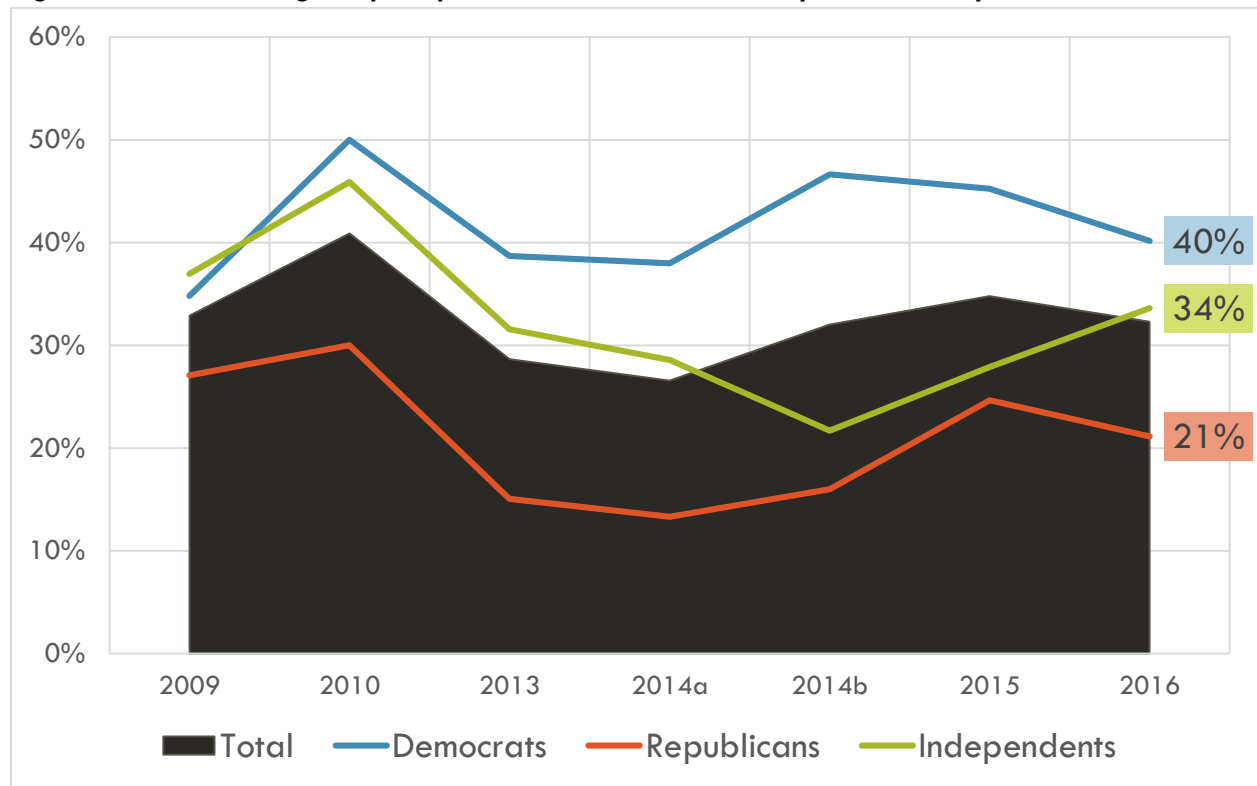
One of our questions in 2016 asked if either the respondent or an immediate member of their family had been directly affected by the budgetary crisis. Only 33 percent of the respondents said

that they had been directly impacted. There are many objective reasons to contend that this assessment of the direct effects of the budgetary crisis is wildly low and that virtually every resident of Illinois has indeed been impacted and that the impact is decidedly negative. However, this view requires that the public recognize that they have a clear stake in the existence and delivery of what the economists call “collective goods,” that which we do together through government rather than individually. However, that view is not widely shared in the American political culture, with its strong emphasis on the rugged individualism of the American people. We will return to this discussion in the conclusion of the paper.

**Table 30. Restore Temporary State Income Tax Increase by Political Party**

		2009	2010	2013	2014 <sup>a</sup>	2014 <sup>b</sup>	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>32%</b>
	Democrats	35%	50%	39%	38%	47%	45%	40%
	Republicans	27%	30%	15%	13%	16%	25%	21%
	Independents	37%	46%	32%	29%	22%	28%	34%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>64%</b>
	Democrats	63%	47%	54%	49%	42%	52%	55%
	Republicans	73%	66%	78%	77%	75%	73%	77%
	Independents	63%	52%	61%	60%	64%	70%	61%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Democrats	2%	3%	8%	13%	12%	3%	5%
	Republicans	0%	4%	6%	10%	9%	2%	2%
	Independents	0%	2%	7%	11%	14%	2%	5%

**Figure 14. Favor Raising Temporary State Income Tax Increase by Political Party**



Both partisanship and ideology account for some of the fairly significant differences between the voters of Illinois on these important tax and revenue issues. Put simply, conservatives and Republicans were far more likely to oppose making the tax increase permanent. (See Table 30 and Figure 14 for the party data. The ideology data are not presented here.) This is quite consistent in keeping with one of the fundamental tenets of the Republican Party, which is widely identified as the party of low taxes and small government. The Republicans also believe the private sector can and should take care of many of the collective functions that governments perform today.

Support among Illinois Republicans for, depending on the year, imposing, maintaining, or restoring this income tax increase never reached one-third, topping out at 30 percent in 2010. In our 2016 survey, only about one in five Republicans (21 percent) favor restoring the increase.

On the other side, Democrats and liberals were more likely to support the income tax increase, although only in 2010 did that support even reach 50 percent. In the spring of 2016, only four in ten (40 percent) favored restoring the tax. A third of Independents (34 percent) similarly favored the income tax restoration.

**2.5.4 Other Revenue Alternatives**

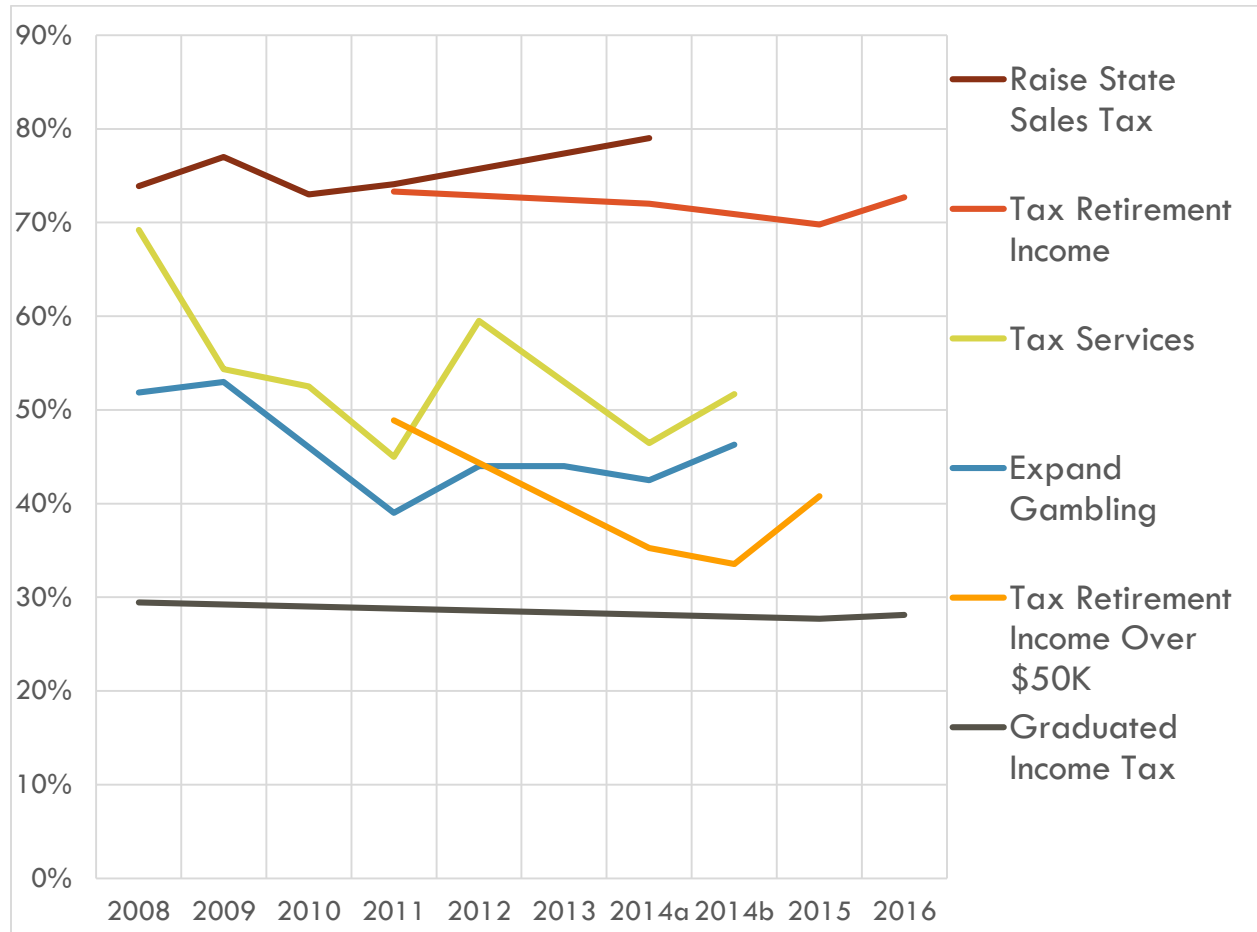
The next section continues the quest for alternative revenue sources to address the Illinois budget crisis. As noted above, at the beginning of FY2011 the individual income tax rate increased from 3.0 to 5.0 percent on personal income and from 4.8 to 7.0 percent on corporations. It was allowed to expire on January 1, 2015. The budget shortfall exploded and many people immediately started talking about the real need for new revenue. Table 31 and Figure 15 provide the longitudinal results of our questions on possible sources of new revenue.

**Table 31. Favor Proposed Revenue Sources<sup>16</sup>**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
Expand gambling	42%	47%	50%	57%	50%	53%	N/A	53%	50%
Raise sales tax	22%	22%	25%	22%	N/A	18%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tax services	28%	45%	42%	50%	37%	44%	N/A	49%	45%
Tax retirement income	N/A	N/A	N/A	21%	N/A	22%	N/A	24%	22%
Tax retirement income over \$50k	N/A	N/A	N/A	43%	N/A	53%	N/A	56%	54%
Graduated income tax	65%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	66%	66%
Millionaires tax	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	68%	76%	75%
Raise gas tax	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	26%	41%

<sup>16</sup> The gas tax question listed specifics in 2015 (10 cents). The millionaire tax question in 2014b added "...to provide additional funding to public schools."

**Figure 15. Oppose Proposed Revenue Sources**



Support for gambling as a new source of revenue has hovered consistently close to 50 percent in all our polls. This option is attractive because to many in the public it seems to be a fairly painless alternative. Legislators across the nation are notorious for turning to the so-called “sin taxes” on gambling, cigarettes, and liquor as a way to raise new revenue. No one has ever lost an election based on a vote for increasing the sin taxes.

Of course, gambling revenue is not free. Numerous social costs are borne by those who are addicted, and by their families, employers, and the general public, but those costs are rarely felt directly by the public. Further, the direct costs to the individual gamblers tend to fall disproportionately on lower socio-economic groups and people who are not particularly politically articulate. In addition the demand for gambling is limited. For example, a new gambling casino in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, has a negative impact on the gambling crowds in Metropolis, Illinois. So, gambling is a fairly popular alternative but also limited as a realistic source of new revenue for Illinois.

**Table 32a. Expand Gambling by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>50%</b>
	Democrats	45%	48%	53%	60%	55%	58%	54%	51%
	Republicans	41%	36%	48%	53%	45%	47%	50%	50%
	Independents	44%	51%	51%	59%	42%	56%	54%	47%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>46%</b>
	Democrats	51%	51%	43%	36%	40%	40%	42%	44%
	Republicans	52%	64%	50%	43%	50%	50%	46%	47%
	Independents	50%	48%	43%	37%	53%	38%	41%	52%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Democrats	4%	1%	4%	4%	6%	2%	4%	5%
	Republicans	6%	0%	2%	4%	5%	3%	3%	4%
	Independents	6%	0%	6%	4%	5%	6%	4%	1%

Over the eight years we have been asking about gambling expansion, opinion on the subject has bounced up and down, but Democrats, on average, have been more likely to support the idea. In the last couple of years, though, support appears to have converged at about half of partisans in both camps. The more volatile opinions of political Independents appear to average out at nearly half as well.

One more realistic option is to increase the sales tax. The sales tax is usually a more popular option with legislators because it is placed on goods and services widely needed, and the burdens are widely shared by consumers. It has the further advantage of seeming fairly innocuous, almost invisible on minor sales transactions. Thus, when legislators are pushed into a corner and must increase revenues, they frequently turn to the sales tax. However, simply increasing the state sales tax is not particularly popular in Illinois. The basic state sales tax is 5.0% plus 1.25% which is collected by the state but returned to local governments (1.0 to cities and .25 to the counties) making the base total 6.25. In addition, local governments can add another increment to the 6.25% (under some fairly stringent limits). Thus, when the local overlay of sales tax is taken into account the overall sales tax rate can reach the 8 to 11 percent range. This is not a great option for decision makers, and our polls show limited support for that proposal. In fact it was the least popular proposal in the years of 2008 to 2010 when we included it.

Opinion on the sales tax is relatively stable over time, and support for raising it remains low. Opposition stands near or above three-quarters across the time period we have been asking about it. While Democrats are somewhat more likely than Republicans to support it, their favorability toward it never reaches three in ten, peaking at 27 percent in 2010.

**Table 32b. Raise Sales Tax by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2014a
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>18%</b>
	Democrats	25%	19%	27%	25%	23%
	Republicans	16%	19%	20%	20%	12%
	Independents	23%	28%	32%	20%	29%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>79%</b>
	Democrats	70%	80%	71%	71%	73%
	Republicans	83%	81%	77%	78%	86%
	Independents	69%	72%	66%	77%	70%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>
	Democrats	5%	1%	2%	4%	3%
	Republicans	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%
	Independents	8%	0%	3%	3%	2%

A more palatable option would be to broaden the base on which the sales tax is built—especially to include taxing more services. This is a potential source of new revenue that has not been widely considered by the public in Illinois or debated in political campaigns. Nevertheless, it should be advanced as a potential solution to the state’s very real budgetary crisis.

The national and state economies have changed from a manufacturing base to a service-oriented economy over the past two decades, but the tax system has not changed to tax services. There are a total of 168 different categories taxed in some states, and the average state taxes 51 different services (Rushton, 2014). Illinois taxes only five consumer service categories (Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, May 20, 2015). Illinois taxes goods much more than services. So, many observers have concluded that the Illinois tax system has simply failed to keep pace with the substantial changes in the economy. A tax on services may make sense in a service economy.

This option does not yet command majority support, but it comes close, as Table 32c demonstrates. Just as importantly, the gap between those who favor this option and those who oppose it is ten percent or less, so the opposition does not widely outscore the supporters.

Since 2009 Democrats have, on average, had a slim majority who support the idea of broadening the base of the sales tax to include services. While Republicans, as expected, are less likely to do so, half did in our 2015 poll, and their support has risen above 40 percent twice more. Once leaders are pushed to find new ways to pay for the services Illinoisans say they want, a modernized sales tax system that includes services may have the fewest painful side effects.



**Table 32c. Tax Services by Political Party**

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>45%</b>
	Democrats	32%	52%	43%	56%	48%	51%	50%	52%
	Republicans	22%	41%	34%	42%	24%	37%	51%	38%
	Independents	27%	44%	43%	54%	33%	43%	46%	43%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>52%</b>
	Democrats	66%	48%	46%	40%	50%	47%	45%	44%
	Republicans	74%	59%	60%	54%	73%	60%	47%	60%
	Independents	71%	56%	52%	44%	47%	54%	51%	52%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Democrats	2%	0%	5%	3%	2%	2%	5%	4%
	Republicans	3%	0%	6%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%
	Independents	6%	0%	5%	3%	2%	3%	3%	5%

Illinois is one of the very few states that do not levy the state income tax on retirement income. This is great benefit to retirees, many of whom retired on relatively low incomes and who had given up some of their current pay benefits to attain this retirement income exemption. It also makes Illinois an attractive state for retirees to settle in, although harsh winters tend to mitigate that advantage somewhat. Not surprisingly, the exemption for retirement income has long been contentious, and the idea of applying the state income tax to it has been debated often. Table 32d results show that the proposal is not very popular.

One way to make a retirement tax somewhat more progressive in Illinois would be to exempt the first \$50,000 of retirement income. This option is more popular than the simple proposal to start taxing retirement income for everyone (see Table 32e). In 2015 and 2016 this proposal garnered support from a majority of the respondents. This option may come back into the mix if the state ever decides to get serious about raising additional revenue.

**Table 32d. Tax Retirement Income by Political Party**

		2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>22%</b>
	Democrats	23%	25%	28%	26%
	Republicans	19%	16%	22%	18%
	Independents	23%	27%	16%	16%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>73%</b>
	Democrats	73%	69%	65%	68%
	Republicans	77%	78%	73%	78%
	Independents	72%	71%	82%	79%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Democrats	4%	6%	7%	6%
	Republicans	4%	6%	6%	4%
	Independents	5%	2%	2%	4%

Table 32d shows the initial unpopularity among registered Illinois voters the four times we have presented it in the Simon Poll. While more popular among Democrats than among Republican or Independent respondents, support even among Democrats never reaches 3 in ten, topping out at 28 percent in 2015.

**Table 32e. Tax Retirement Income over \$50k by Political Party**

		2011	2014a	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>54%</b>
	Democrats	50%	58%	61%	58%
	Republicans	34%	46%	36%	50%
	Independents	42%	62%	49%	59%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>41%</b>
	Democrats	42%	31%	28%	36%
	Republicans	60%	44%	36%	46%
	Independents	50%	29%	44%	37%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Democrats	8%	11%	11%	6%
	Republicans	6%	10%	10%	4%
	Independents	8%	10%	7%	4%

Table 32e requires a little more explanation: Respondents who, in the “tax retirement income” question responded that they opposed the proposal, were asked a second question—whether they would support or oppose the tax if it exempted from taxation the first \$50,000 of retirement income. Table 32e combines the responses of those who favored it in the first iteration, plus those who favored it after considering that it would exempt the first \$50,000. (This presumes that

everyone who in the first question supported taxing retirement income would also support it in the second.)

Since 2014, majorities of respondents have supported taxing retirement income above the first \$50,000, and half or more of Democrats have supported it in all four of the surveys in which we have included it. It is also instructive to note that half of the Republicans in our 2016 sample supported it as well.

There is a real movement in Illinois to create a more progressive income tax system. The 1970 Constitution requires a flat rate income tax for individuals and corporations. In addition, it effectively caps the corporate tax rate by requiring a ratio of not more than 8 to 5 between the individual rate and the corporate rate (Article 9, Sec. 3 (a)). This compromise from the Constitutional Convention of 1969 was meant to help gain popular approval in the referendum required to adopt the new constitution. Since then, the flat rate has been jealously guarded by those who like the status quo and benefit from it.

Most states with a state income tax use a graduated or progressive system rather than the flat rate. In fact only four other states use the flat tax system required in the Illinois constitution (Dye and MacManus, 2012, 475).

There is an increasing discussion of making the Illinois tax progressive, mostly among those on the political left, who have joined the chorus in favor of amending the Illinois Constitution on this matter. Democratic legislators in the House and Senate have recently introduced a bill that would shift Illinois to a graduated income tax system (Petrella, April 19, 2016, 1).

Of course, such an amendment is complicated by the need for approval both by the Illinois General Assembly and then the endorsement of a majority of voters in a statewide referendum. So, any new revenue from such a change would arrive at least two years, if not more, after the legislature acted on it.

Nevertheless, it is a viable alternative and we have started including it in our statewide polls. Table 32f shows that this proposal has strong support. We first asked the question in the inaugural Simon Poll in 2008, in which two-thirds supported the graduated income tax. Then, because of competition from other issues we abandoned the graduated income tax question until it began to re-enter the discussion in 2015. Even seven years later, in 2015 and 2016, a net of 66 percent of the voters in those polls either favored or strongly favored the proposal for a graduated income tax—suggesting some measure of stability on the question.

**Table 32f. Graduated Income Tax by Political Party**

		2008	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>66%</b>
	Democrats	79%	80%	83%
	Republicans	49%	50%	44%
	Independents	60%	65%	68%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>
	Democrats	16%	16%	12%
	Republicans	46%	45%	51%
	Independents	31%	28%	27%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Democrats	4%	4%	4%
	Republicans	5%	5%	5%
	Independents	8%	7%	5%

To no one’s surprise, Democrats are significantly more likely than Republicans to favor imposing a graduated Illinois income tax rate—the gap in favorability between Democrats and Republicans in the 2016 survey was 39 percentage points. Even so, note that just over half (51 percent) of the Republicans this year opposed the proposal. Independent voters, as has been the pattern, show levels of support in the middle of their partisan compatriots.

A variation on the graduated income tax is a relatively new plan to increase the state’s income taxes an extra 3 percent on those who make more than \$1 million per year. Significantly, the Speaker of the House, Michael Madigan, has advocated very publicly for this source of new revenue. In fact, an advisory referendum was placed on the November 2014 general election ballot, where it passed handily, with 59.9 percent in favor.

It is even more popular in recent Simon Polls. A net of 75 percent of the voters in our 2016 poll endorsed this plan, while only 23 percent opposed it. The results were similar in 2014 and 2015. Whether this plan would produce enough new revenue to cover the budget problem is hotly contested; however, it is notable that the basic idea is attractive to three-fourths of the voters.

**Table 32g. Millionaires Tax by Political Party**

		2014b	2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>75%</b>
	Democrats	84%	86%	88%
	Republicans	41%	63%	56%
	Independents	66%	72%	77%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>
	Democrats	13%	11%	10%
	Republicans	55%	34%	42%
	Independents	27%	25%	22%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>
	Democrats	3%	2%	2%
	Republicans	5%	3%	1%
	Independents	7%	3%	1%

The high popularity of the so-called “millionaire’s tax” carries over even into Republican partisans in recent years. In 2015 six of ten Republican respondents (63 percent) favored the surcharge, as did somewhat fewer (a 56 percent majority) in the 2016 poll. It is nearly a consensus favorite among the Democrats in our most recent sample, with 88 percent supporting it.

Another recent proposal for gaining new revenue is to increase the state’s gasoline tax. This would provide the funds for a capital budget devoted to transportation needs. This tax is in effect a sales tax and has not been increased in many years. Now might be an opportune time for making such an increase, since gasoline prices have been relatively low for months and generally the price of crude oil has been low for well over a year. In addition, there are infrastructure improvement needs, such as building and repairing highways, bridges, and streets which seem ever more obvious as the state has not had a new capital program since early in the Quinn Administration.

Since this is a recent development we only included it in our 2015 and 2016 polls. As one can see, by 2016 there was a relatively solid level of support for the idea even if not a majority (see Table 32h). Those who favor this proposal total 41 percent while 56 percent oppose it. This idea has not been debated widely, but the gap between those who favor and those oppose this new form of revenue is not particularly wide and certainly the opposition is not as great as for many other proposals.

The partisan gap on the gasoline tax was 15 points between Democrats and Republicans in the 2016 poll—the results of which were far more favorable than in the poll the year before. Even while a plurality of Democrats opposed the gas tax, a forceful two-to-one majority opposed it among the Republican partisans. Independents were in-between, as usual, but still showed a majority in opposition.

**Table 32h. Raise Gas Tax by Political Party**<sup>17</sup>

		2015	2016
<b>Favor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>41%</b>
	Democrats	34%	47%
	Republicans	18%	32%
	Independents	25%	44%
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>56%</b>
	Democrats	64%	49%
	Republicans	81%	66%
	Independents	74%	53%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>
	Democrats	2%	3%
	Republicans	1%	1%
	Independents	1%	3%

There are a few proposals on this list of revenue increases for which a case might be made—particularly the broadening of the sales tax on services, taxing retirement income above \$50,000, imposing a graduated income tax system, and imposing a so-called millionaire’s surtax. It is unclear whether the first two could bridge Illinois’ yawning budget gap, and it is questionable whether the second two could overcome the prodigious impediments placed on the Illinois Constitutional amendment process.

Producing a “grand bargain” and a complete overhaul of the Illinois tax code might have been a worthwhile outcome of the budget debate of 2015-2016 if our leaders had taken advantage of the opportunity the crisis presented; however, to date, they have not done so.

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<sup>17</sup> In 2015 the question asked “would you favor or oppose raising the state gasoline tax by 10 cents per gallon?” While in 2016 the question was just asked about a general gas tax.

### 3 CONCLUSION

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We have established that the 2010 temporary income tax increase was not widely popular with the voters of Illinois. In general Americans have an aversion to taxes; tax increases are usually not popular. One explanation of the acronym for the Tea Party's name when it first appeared on the political scene was that it meant "Taxed Enough Already," words taken from signs often waved at their rallies. This sentiment is not limited to the Tea Party, although that group may represent its more virulent form. A recent Rasmussen poll, for example, showed that 61 percent of all Americans believe they are overtaxed (Rasmussen, March 26, 2016). Illinois voters are not much different from the nation as a whole on that count. It was not surprising that the candidate who was opposed to making the temporary tax increase permanent won 101 of the 102 counties in the 2014 governor's race.

On the other hand, it is also clear that program cuts are unpopular, too. History shows and our data support that opinion leaders and the general public alike show consistent aversion to cutting programs or services, so public officials have to tread carefully. These two deeply entrenched popular impulses work in diametrically opposed directions. You cannot have programs without the revenue to support them. If the budget is in deficit, you must find new revenues to support the programs available, or you must reduce them, at least when all borrowing options are exhausted.

Americans tend to want it both ways, i.e., they want to have their public goods and services and want someone else to pay for them. This is what Free and Cantril long ago said is a major, enduring feature of American public opinion. Most people are what they call "symbolic conservatives" and simultaneously "operational liberals" (1967). The people profess to want low taxes and balanced budgets, but they are quite averse to cuts in the services they want and depend on daily.

We think this is an excellent synopsis of one of the major features of American public opinion in general, and a consistent indicator of public opinion in Illinois in particular, where this paradox is a long-term trend. It helps to explain how and why most voters can hold these contradictory opinions about meeting the challenges of governing—and especially about the problems of budgeting.

Just because we can understand the theory, however, does not make it any easier for political leaders to make public policy. Our government is primarily one of incrementalism, but the incremental decisions must add up every year to a total product that meets the needs of the people at a price the state can afford. The leaders must seek a path forward when crisis hits, and they must have the wisdom and courage to take political risks and to find ways to marshal governmental resources to meet the demands of the total state. This is the role they volunteered for when they ran for election and took the oath of office. They can—and almost all of them will—worry about the next election and the size of their caucuses in the legislature. But if this is

their primary motivation, then the contradictory impulses of public opinion will not be easily reconciled.

The leadership and political courage necessary to overcome this hard dichotomy has not been evident in Illinois politics over the decade and a half since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Stalemate, ignoring budgetary realities and a stubborn clinging to the status quo have been the order of the day. Thus, legislative and governmental gridlock have resulted in an almost total breakdown in the Illinois budgetary process. As a result the Civic Federation, a highly respected Chicago based budgetary watchdog group, recently projected that the state's operating deficit for FY2017 will be \$6.6 billion. They further predicted that unless there is a tax increase and additional budget cuts the backlog of unpaid bills that Illinois will accumulate will be \$12.8 billion by the end of Fiscal 2017 (Civic Federation, May 3, 2016). They earlier recommended controlling spending and increasing the income tax back to 5.0%, taxing retirement income, and broadening the base of the sales tax (Civic Federation, February 11, 2016).

In addition, Illinois Comptroller Leslie Munger recently reported that over \$900 million had been used in the past few fiscal years to pay interest and late fees associated with the state's failure to pay its bills on time (Associated Press, April 2, 2016). As the comptroller noted, this is a total waste of the state's limited resources, and it adds up to almost a billion dollars that could have been spent on real programs and services. This loss could be considered *a new direct tax* earmarked to pay for the maintenance of the political climate in Illinois and the status quo for office holders.

Thousands, even millions, of Illinois citizens have suffered direct or indirect hardship and loss as a result of the failure of their political leaders, on both sides of the aisle, to act and to provide for one of the most fundamental obligations of government, such as the annual adoption of a budget and appropriation of the money necessary to fund the programs and services embedded in that budget in a timely manner. The 1970 Illinois Constitution enshrines that obligation in clear language, and which each public office holder has sworn an oath to uphold.

This congenital failure of leadership on the part of the public officials involved—and the ultimate failure of the mass voters to hold them accountable—has deep roots in Illinois politics, the regional divisions of the state, and the political culture. Experts have been warning about the structural deficit Illinois has temporized with at least since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was evident to all who paid any attention that the state had a commitment to more services and people than its revenue stream would support.

The belated recognition of this imbalance led the political leadership class, in the form of the leaders of the General Assembly and then-Governor Pat Quinn, to finally take action when they passed an increase in the Illinois income tax in 2010. When it came on line in FY2011 the state started the long and slow process of tackling the backlog of bills that had built up and which then Comptroller Judy Barr Topinka started to pay down systematically. More importantly, it started to meet the state's annual obligation to pay its share of the public pension requirements. While



this is the way other states routinely treat this requirement, such payments of the state's obligations were almost unprecedented in Illinois and that is why we are now regarded to have an accumulated public pension deficit of approximately \$110 billion, the worst in the nation. Progress was being made on that problem up through 2014, although many still felt the state had too many long-term obligations for the revenue available.

Unfortunately, this was not the major message of the political campaigns of 2014. The dominant narrative of that campaign was the charge that all the new revenue had been wasted and nothing had been done about the deficit. The only major political official who made the case for the tax increase was Governor Quinn, and he was maladroit, at best, in explaining and defending the tax increase. Then, when he lost 101 of the 102 counties in the governor's race, the die was cast. The election of Governor Bruce Rauner on the promise to roll back the increase made that expiration almost inevitable. The majority Democrats in the General Assembly had no incentive to make the increase permanent after the election.

It was only predictable that the resulting revenue losses would mount quickly and the state would return immediately to the structural deficit that had dogged it for a decade. The most objective and independent budget watchers in the state did predict the deficit returning if the tax increase expired (Civic Federation, March 3, 2014; Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, December 22, 2014). The backlog of unpaid bills started accumulating again. Quick action was required, and none was forthcoming. Indeed, once the political gridlock set in, and the finger pointing started, the resulting budgetary and governmental dysfunction was inevitable.

As of this writing, no relief seems to be in sight, and the state is now faced with starting the new fiscal year of 2017 with no official budget having ever been adopted for fiscal year 2016 and a large percentage of the total state expenditures for FY2016 not having been appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly as required by the Constitution. This would be the first time in the modern history of the state that an entire calendar year has elapsed without a formal budget being adopted by the General Assembly and signed by the governor.

The State Comptroller recently announced that state legislators and the constitutional officers will not be paid on time and will have to get into the queue for late payment, just like other state agencies and vendors (Dudek, April 17, 2016). There is even the potential now for a widespread governmental shutdown being discussed, if the courts take seriously the constitutional requirement that money expended must first be appropriated. This adds many state agencies to the plight of the state universities, several of which have quite publicly discussed the possibility of having to close or at least drastically reduce their operations. The numbers of jobs lost or in jeopardy of being lost at each institution has been publicly and widely announced and has been widely decried—so far to no avail.

None of this had to happen. It was not foreordained; it was not an act of God or a tragedy wrought by Mother Nature. The actions taken were those of the public officials responsible for the operation of the government. We can learn from instances when state government did not

fail, when the budgetary chips were on the line, and when political leadership and courage were exhibited.

When Jim Edgar ran for governor in 1992 he faced a similar circumstance. There was a deficit in the budget left over from the Jim Thompson era and there had been a “temporary” income tax increase enacted to address that deficit. During his campaign, Edgar took the position that the temporary tax increase would need to be extended and become permanent. His Democratic opponent at that time, Neil Hartigan, took the opposite position on the tax increase.

When Edgar won, he got busy and worked with the leadership of the Illinois General Assembly on both sides and made the tax increase permanent. He then submitted and the General Assembly started adopting balanced budgets in which the real revenues matched the real needs of the state. It was a painful and controversial facing of reality, but Edgar and the General Assembly at that time rose to the occasion. Edgar then went on to win a second term and most observers thought he would have won a third term if he had chosen to run. He is now widely respected for the political courage he exhibited in that era and widely regarded to be one of Illinois’ most successful governors.

Long before Jim Edgar was governor, another Illinois Republican Governor, Richard Ogilvie, initiated Illinois’ first income tax. Before that the state had relied on sales taxes, gasoline taxes and a patchwork of other sources of revenue, but by 1968-1969 it was evident that the state needed a fundamental overhaul of its tax and finance system. Then too, the state had been laboring under the burden of a structural deficit and the tax system had not kept pace with significant changes in the Illinois economy.

Ogilvie took the lead on advocating for the first state income tax, initially set at 2.5 percent for individuals and 4.0 percent on corporations. The new income tax became the major source of state revenue after its enactment. Ogilvie was provided crucial assistance in this endeavor by then Senate President W. Russell Arrington, a Republican, who reluctantly took on the challenge at the governor’s request and shepherded the proposal through the General Assembly.

In the House, the Republican Speaker of the House, Ralph Tyler Smith, provided significant cooperation and help on that side. In addition, the Democratic Mayor of Chicago, Richard J. Daley, recognized the need for new revenue for the city and got on board. He and other mayors were enticed by the fact that one-twelfth of the new money would become the source of state revenue to be shared with local governments. Daley’s help included directing the Democratic Minority Leader in the House, John P. Touhy, to provide the necessary Democratic votes when the Republicans were not able to reach a majority without Democratic help. The state income tax then became the most important source of state revenue after its passage. Thus, the income tax increase became a truly bipartisan solution to the state’s real financial problems at the time (Gove and Nowlan, 1996, 41-44; Lawrence, December, 1982).

Ogilvie is now regarded as the father of the modern Illinois finance system, the governor when the new state constitution was adopted, and one of the most important and courageous governors in state history. Robert Howard in his book on Illinois governors summarizes Ogilvie's legacy thusly: "Among Illinois governors, he rates as one of the statesmen" (Howard, 1988, 293. For other important sources, see: Nowlan, 1982; Gove and Nowlan, 1996; Kenney and Brown, 1991; Pensoneau, 1997).

Political leadership and political courage are important, even crucial factors if mass democracy is going to succeed. Political elites must have the courage to tell the truth, and to make fact-based arguments about the hard topics such as tax and budget realities. They then must have the capacity to explain their actions to the public and to defend those actions in the next election. That is where the public has the ability to hold their leaders accountable, and that is the key function of periodic free and competitive elections in a mass democracy.

The voters, in turn, must pay attention and respect the facts and realities, and demand empirical evidence for the claims being made by candidates for office. The mass media have a special obligation to do the civic education necessary to meet these expectations and to help the public understand what the real facts are and where the candidates stand. If the media are going to enjoy the privileges and protections of their special status bestowed in the First Amendment, they must do more than they have been doing to meet the high demands of mass democracy. Otherwise they will encounter and perhaps have to deal with candidates who have no real regard for their special role and who pander to populism by attacking reporters and promising to curtail First Amendment rights, as has been true in the 2016 presidential campaign.

Our leadership defects and deficits are matched by—and in fact enabled by—a "followership deficit" as well. We the people must have the good sense to govern ourselves if mass democracy is going to work. If we do not live in a fact-based world—in which the voters take an interest in government and acquire basic knowledge about the issues and the candidates—then only emotion, fear, and prejudice will prevail in our elections. There is ample evidence of such motivations dominating the voting of many millions of Americans in the current election cycle.

Our data support the argument that the voters themselves bear significant responsibility for the current debt crisis and gridlocked government. Not only did they elect the leaders responsible for this state of affairs, but their steadfast insistence on the untenable high-service/low-tax status quo gave the politicians permission to drive the vehicle of state to the edge of the cliff, where it teeters today on the brink.

We must demand more of our candidates and ourselves as we try to ensure rational decision making by well-informed and committed voters when election time rolls around. We must also demand the same in the making of public policy. This means paying attention between elections, as well as when there are contending candidates and political ads dominating our television and political commentary lighting up Twitter and Facebook.

The current crisis in Illinois government, coupled with relatively recent shutdowns in the federal government, and gridlock at both the national and state levels, demonstrate graphically what happens when both leaders and followers fail these basic requirements for effective democratic government to succeed.

All of this is essentially a fight over the size and scope of government, a conflict embedded in the debate over the adoption of the U. S. Constitution and which has raged since then. It is also a conflict about the role of government in the citizens' lives which requires a basic understanding of why we have and need government at all in our daily lives.

In seeking some answer to those questions, it may be helpful to consider the words of Illinois' most famous and respected president, Abraham Lincoln. As is often the case he had some succinct words of wisdom, which should be considered today. He wrote:

“The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to be done, but cannot do, at all, or cannot, so well do, for themselves- in their separate and individual capacities” (quoted in Holzer and Garfinkle, 2015, 243).

For Lincoln this meant providing for physical security and the common defense, and a program of what he called “positive action” which included national programs to build roads and canals, re-establishing the national bank and a national currency which Andrew Jackson had stopped, and the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862, which established the great system of land grant universities in the middle of the Civil War.

Political leaders of today could do well to consider those words from Lincoln and the programs he supported as some guidance for what government needs to be doing and then have the political courage to raise the revenue to pay for it and then accept the obligation to educate the public about the choices they have made, the rationale for those choices, and then stand behind those choices and be responsible for them in the next election. Only then will mass democracy meet the compelling demands that the United States faces in the global and highly competitive political and economic system of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## APPENDIX A: DATA NOTES

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<b>YEAR</b>	<b>SAMPLE SIZE</b>	<b>MARGIN OF ERROR</b>
2008	561	+/- 4.1
2009	800	+/- 3.5
2010	1000	+/- 3.1
2011	1000	+/- 3.1
2012	1261	+/- 2.8
2013	600	+/- 4.0
2014a	1001	+/- 3.1
2014b	1006	+/- 3.1
2015	1000	+/- 3.1
2016	1000	+/- 3.1

## APPENDIX B: STATES WITH TERM LIMITS

Derived from the National Conference of State Legislatures

State	Voted Yes	Year Enacted	HOUSE		SENATE		Consecutive (C) or Lifetime Ban (LB)
			Limit	Year of Impact	Limit	Year of Impact	
Arizona	74%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C
Arkansas	60%	1992	6	1998	8	2000	LB
California*	52%	1990	12*	1996	12*	1998	L
Colorado	71%	1990	8	1998	8	1998	C
Florida	77%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C
Louisiana	76%	1995	12	2007	12	2007	C
Maine	68%	1993	8	1996	8	1996	C
Michigan	59%	1992	6	1998	8	2002	LB
Missouri**	75%	1992	8	2002	8	2002	LB
Montana	67%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C
Nebraska	56%	2000	n/a	n/a	8	2006	C
Nevada***	70%	1996	12	2010	12	2010	LB
Ohio	68%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C
Oklahoma*	67%	1990	12*	2004	12*	2004	LB*
South Dakota	64%	1992	8	2000	8	2000	C

\*Legislators may serve a total of 12 years in the legislature during their lifetime they may split the 12 years between the house chamber and the senate chamber, or spend the total time in just once chamber.

\*\*Term limits were effective for eight current members of the House in 2000 and one senator in 1998 due to special elections.

\*\*\*Although term limits were enacted in 1996, The Nevada Legislative Council and Attorney General ruled that term limits could not be applied to legislators elected in the term limits were passed. They were therefore applied to legislators elected in the 1998 election.

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