



February 2006 Utah Voter Poll

Executive Summary

With the Utah State Legislature wrapping up its 2006 session, the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy (CSED) at Brigham Young University conducted its second Utah Voter Poll to assess the attitudes of voters toward issues facing the state and toward various political leaders.

The results of the Utah Voter Poll indicate that there are several issues on which the voters and their political leaders agree. There are also some areas of significant disagreement.

- 40.4% say that “MOST of the surplus should be kept by the state and used to pay for education, transportation, and other state priorities, but SOME of the surplus should be given back to taxpayers.”
- 57.6% favor “Eliminating the sales tax on food WITHOUT raising other taxes to compensate.”
- 30.3% support a “flat tax WITH deductions for charitable donations.”
- 55.6% at least “somewhat favor a voucher system.”
- 56.7% at least somewhat agree with “proposed legislation [that] would require Utah schools to teach that the scientific community does not agree on a single theory that best describes the origins of human life.”

As Utah considers changes to election law, the Utah Voter Poll also asked voters to respond to various reform proposals.

- 44.2% of voters “strongly agree or somewhat agree” that voters should be allowed to vote 14 days before election day.
- 53.5% of voters “strongly agree or somewhat agree” that citizens should be allowed to register and then vote on election day.
- 70% of voters “strongly agree or somewhat agree” that voters should be allowed to vote in any primary election regardless of their party affiliation.

Utah voters generally expressed support for the idea of common polling places that consolidate several election voting locations into a single voting place.

Finally, in anticipation of the 2006 elections, the poll also asked voters to express their feelings toward some of Utah’s political leaders and institutions.



- 76.1% “strongly approve or approve” of the job Jon M. Huntsman is doing as Utah Governor.”
- 48.7% “strongly approve or approve of the job the Utah State Legislature is doing.”
- 50.9% think that Senator Hatch “probably or definitely deserves reelection.”

The poll also reveals that Democratic Congressman Jim Matheson would be a more formidable opponent than the current Democratic candidate Pete Ashdown. 55.9% of voters say they would vote for Senator Hatch in a head-to-head contest with Pete Ashdown. 45.2% of voters said they would vote for Senator Hatch in a matchup with Representative Matheson.

For further discussion of the results or methodology, please use the following contact information:

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Question Wording and Results

1. First, we would like to ask your opinion about the performance of the current state government and leaders.

[govapp] Do you approve or disapprove of the job Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. is doing as Utah Governor?

- Strongly approve, 11.9%
- Approve, 64.2%
- Disapprove, 12.6%
- Strongly disapprove, 2.4%
- Don't know, 8.9%
- N=292

2. [legapp] Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Utah State Legislature is doing?

- Strongly approve, 0.9%
- Approve, 47.8%
- Disapprove, 21.5%
- Strongly disapprove, 11.2%
- Don't know, 18.6%
- N=292

3. [hatre] Has Senator Orrin Hatch performed his job well enough to deserve reelection or is it time to give a new person a chance?

- Senator Hatch DEFINITELY deserves reelection, 19.0%
- Senator Hatch PROBABLY deserves reelection, 31.9%
- It is PROBABLY time to give someone new a chance, 20.1%
- It is DEFINITELY time to give someone new a chance, 23.7%
- Don't know, 5.3%
- N=292

4. [hunter] Has Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. performed his job well enough to deserve reelection or is it time to give a new person a chance?

- Governor Huntsman DEFINITELY deserves reelection, 27.9%
- Governor Huntsman PROBABLY deserves reelection, 45.2%
- It is PROBABLY time to give someone new a chance, 10.6%
- It is DEFINITELY time to give someone new a chance, 8.1%
- Don't know, 8.2%
- N=292



5. [favor] For each of the following persons, please indicate whether you have a favorable or unfavorable impression, or if you have not heard enough about that person to have an opinion.

	Very Unfavorable	Unfavorable	Favorable	Very Favorable	Haven't Heard Enough to Have an Opinion
Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. (R)	3.3	11.0	47.8	29.0	8.9
Senator Orrin Hatch (R)	12.9	17.2	44.8	21.5	3.5
Senator Robert F. Bennett (R)	8.1	15.7	41.4	18.2	16.6
US Senate candidate Peter Ashdown (D)	0.4	5.5	6.3	1.2	86.6
Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson (D)	42.5	21.6	20.3	9.7	6.0
State Senator John L. Valentine (R)	1.2	4.6	12.3	1.3	80.5
State Representative Greg J. Curtis (R)	2.7	6.7	6.9	0.5	83.1
State Senator Mike Dmitrich (D)	0.6	5.7	10.2	2.6	80.9
State Representative Ralph Becker (D)	1.1	4.7	8.0	1.9	84.3

[fagovjhg faseorhg faserofg fausecag faslacmg fastsejg fastrepg fastsemg fasrepg1]

6. [hatvash] If you were voting for the U.S. Senate today and the candidates were Orrin Hatch and Peter Ashdown, who would you vote for?

- Orrin Hatch, Republican, 55.9%
- Peter Ashdown, Democrat, 27.3%
- Don't know, 16.8%
- N=288

7. [hatmat] If you were voting for the U.S. Senate today and the candidates were Orrin Hatch and Jim Matheson, who would you vote for?

- Orrin Hatch, Republican, 45.2%
- Jim Matheson, Democrat, 42.0%
- Don't know, 12.8%
- N=288

8. [surplus] This year the state of Utah is expected to have a budget surplus of about \$1 billion. Which of the following options comes closest to your view?

- ALL of the surplus should be kept by the state and used to pay for education, transportation and other state priorities, 31.6%
- MOST of the surplus should be kept by the state and used to pay for education, transportation and other state priorities, but SOME of the surplus should be given back to taxpayers, 40.4%
- SOME of the surplus should be kept by the state and used to pay for education, transportation and other state priorities, but MOST of the surplus should be given back to taxpayers, 20.7%
- ALL of the surplus should be given back to taxpayers, 4.1%



- Don't know, 3.3%
- N=288

9. [foodtax] State lawmakers have proposed eliminating the sales tax on food. Which of the following do you favor?

- Eliminating the sales tax on food WITHOUT raising other taxes to compensate, 57.6%
- Eliminating the sales tax on food AND raising other taxes to compensate, 9.8%
- KEEPING the sales tax on food, 24.5%
- Don't know, 8.1%
- N=288

10. [taxes] Some state lawmakers favor a "flat tax," meaning that everyone pays the same tax rate regardless of income. Others favor a "progressive tax," meaning that those who have a higher income should pay a higher tax rate. Which of the following do you favor?

- A flat-tax WITH NO deductions for charitable donations, 13.0%
- A flat-tax WITH deductions for charitable donations, 30.3%
- A progressive tax WITH NO deductions for charitable donations, 3.3%
- A progressive tax WITH deductions for charitable donations, 43.0%
- Don't know, 10.3%
- N=287

11. [rap] In Utah, the state allows county and city governments to increase the local sales tax to pay for Recreation, Arts, and Parks (RAP tax). Voters in a number of local governments, including Salt Lake County, Orem City, and Summit County have chosen to have a RAP tax. Should the state legislature continue to allow county and city governments to have a RAP tax or not?

- Yes, 62.9%
- No, 23.6%
- Don't know, 13.5%
- N=282

12. [vouchers] Some have proposed that the government provide a certain amount of money for each child's education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial, or private school they choose. This is called the "voucher system." Would you like to see such an idea adopted in the state of Utah?

- Strongly favor, 17.2%
- Favor, 21.7%
- Somewhat favor, 16.7%
- No opinion, 9.6%
- Somewhat oppose, 12.8%
- Oppose, 11.0%



- Strongly oppose, 11.0%
- N=287

13. [evolu] Proposed legislation would require Utah schools to teach that the scientific community does not agree on a single theory that best describes the origins of human life. Do you agree or disagree that schools should be required to teach this?

- Strongly agree, 18.3%
- Agree, 23.0%
- Somewhat agree, 15.4%
- No opinion, 8.8%
- Somewhat disagree, 4.3%
- Disagree, 9.8%
- Strongly disagree, 20.4%
- N=285

14. [evinfo] Proposed legislation would allow for the creation of common polling places in Utah. These are locations that consolidate several election day voting locations into a single voting place.

[Note: at this point, the survey respondents were randomly assigned to two possible conditions:

- *Group 1 received the general question about common polling places first (14a), followed by the agree/disagree statements (14b).*
- *Group 2 received the agree/disagree statements first (14b), followed by the general question about common polling places (14a)]*

14a. [evopinio, cvop2] Considering what you have heard about common polling places, do you favor or oppose the creation of common polling places?

	Group 1 [evopinio]	Group 2 [cvop2]
Strongly favor	2.8%	4.0%
Favor	10.4%	10.0%
Somewhat favor	17.7%	29.1%
No opinion	23.6%	14.0%
Somewhat oppose	18.0%	18.0%
Oppose	22.9%	16.6%
Strongly oppose	4.7%	8.2%
N =	137	143

14b. [evstate] For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

	Str. Agree	Smwht Agree	Neither	Smwht Dis.	Str. Disagree
Common polling places would result in cost savings by cities and counties because they could consolidate voting into fewer locations. [common2]	11.6	41.1	27.9	15.8	3.6
Common polling places would require some voters to travel too far from their homes, making it difficult for them to vote. [common3]	31.9	41.2	16.9	8.1	1.9
Common polling places would allow election officials to train a smaller number of poll workers more effectively. [common4]	13.0	48.3	26.5	8.4	3.8
Common polling places should NOT be more than five miles away for any voter. [common5]	42.0	36.2	15.7	4.3	1.8
Common polling places should be required to be located within 1 mile of public transportation in areas of the state where public transportation is available. [common6]	41.3	37.2	16.4	4.3	0.7
Common polling places will make it too difficult for voters with disabilities to make it to the polls. [common7]	19.8	30.1	32.2	15.0	3.0

15. [vreform] For each of the following existing laws or proposed changes, please indicate whether you Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

	Str. Agree	Smwht Agree	Neither	Smwht Dis.	Str. Disagree
Voters should be allowed to vote early, up to 14 days before election day. [vrvoshbg]	18.0	26.2	21.3	20.7	13.8
Voters should be required to present some form of identification the first time they vote after registering or if they vote early. [vrvoshg1]	56.9	36.0	5.2	1.9	--
Citizens should be allowed to both register and then vote on election day. [vrcitshg]	21.6	31.9	12.2	22.4	11.8
Voters should be allowed to vote in any primary election race regardless of their party registration. [vrvoshg2]	43.5	26.5	9.3	9.2	11.8

[demointro] Our next series of questions is for classification purposes and will help us properly analyze responses to this survey. As you may already know, we never disclose the identity of any individual. Your answers will always be kept strictly confidential. We only report results for groups of people, not for individuals.

16. [internet] How often do you use the Internet?

- Once or more per day, 87.0%
- A few times a week, 11.3%
- A few times a month, 0.9%
- Hardly ever, 0.8%
- N=173

17. [age] What year were you born? (1900 - 1985)

- 18-24, 14.5%
- 25-34, 24.4%
- 35-44, 17.0%
- 45-54, 20.4%
- 55-64, 13.4%
- 65+, 10.3%
- N=276

18. [sex] Are you:

- Male, 46.2%
- Female, 53.8%
- N=275

19. [partyid] Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a(n):

- Strong Democrat, 10.4%
- Not so strong Democrat, 3.9%
- Independent leaning Democrat, 10.7%
- Independent, 10.0%
- Independent leaning Republican, 15.5%
- Not so strong Republican, 13.9%
- Strong Republican, 35.6%
- N=270

20. [ideology] On most political matters do you consider yourself:

- Strongly conservative, 21.9%
- Moderately conservative, 36.4%

- Neither, middle of the road, 17.0%
- Moderately liberal, 15.4%
- Strongly liberal, 5.4%
- Don't know, 3.9%
- N=277

21. [educa] What was the last year of school you completed?

- High school graduate, 16.0%
- Some college, 40.5%
- College graduate, 27.6%
- Post-graduate, 15.9%
- N=276

22. [religion] What, if any, is your religious preference?

- Protestant, 5.5%
- Catholic, 2.9%
- LDS / Mormon, 68.8%
- Jewish, 0%
- Other, 4.5%
- No preference / No religious affiliation, 10.1%
- Prefer not to say, 8.2%
- N=275

23. [active] How active do you consider yourself in the practice of your religious preference?

- Very active, 60.0%
- Somewhat active, 12.9%
- Not very active, 5.6%
- Not active, 9.5%
- Does not apply, 8.1%
- Prefer not to say, 4.0%
- N=276

24. [employ] What is your current employment status?

- Self-employed, 10.7%
- Employed by someone else, 58.1%
- Unemployed, 2.4%
- Homemaker, 9.4%
- Retired, 12.8%
- Student, 6.6%
- N=274

25. [race] Are you:

- Native American, 1.1%
- Asian, 0.3%
- Black / African American, 1.2%
- Hispanic / Latino, 2.7%
- White / Caucasian, 93.7%
- Pacific Islander, 0.5%
- Other, 0.5%

26. [marital] What is your marital status?

- Married, living with spouse, 72.1%
- Separated, 0.9%
- Divorced, 3.9%
- Widowed, 1.9%
- Never married, 20.7%
- Domestic partnership, 0.5%
- N=274

27. [income] What do you expect your 2006 family income to be?

- Under \$25,000, 16.2%
- \$25,000 - \$39,000, 18.4%
- \$40,000 - \$49,000, 12.3%
- \$50,000 - \$74,999, 25.6%
- \$75,000 - \$99,999, 13.8%
- \$100,000 - \$149,999, 8.2%
- Over \$150,000, 5.6%

28. [email] Does anyone else use the email address to which this survey's invitation was sent?

- Yes, someone else uses the same email address as I do, 15.4%
- No, no one else uses my email address, 84.3%
- I'm not sure if anyone else uses my email address, 0.4%
- N=272

29. [results] Would you like to receive an email detailing the results of this survey?

- Yes, 88.8%
- No, 11.2%
- N=274



30. [willing] If invited, how likely will you be to complete another survey for the Utah Voter Poll in the NEXT 3 MONTHS?

- Definitely will not, 0.2%
- Will not, 3.9%
- Probably will not, 2.1%
- Uncertain if I will, 4.3%
- Probably will, 35.1%
- Will, 26.6%
- Definitely will, 27.8%
- N=274

31. [satisf] Finally, for quality control purposes, please rate your experience taking this poll. Would you consider the experience...

- Excellent, 29.0%
- Good, 57.5%
- Fair, 12.9%
- Poor, 0%
- Don't know, 0.6%
- N=266

32. [comment] If you have any comments or suggestions about this survey or politics in Utah in general, please enter them here.

- omitted



Methodology

The Utah Voter Poll uses the proven sampling frame and methodology of the Utah Colleges Exit Poll (<http://exitpoll.byu.edu>) to construct a valid Internet-based survey panel of Utah voters. On election day 2004 voters were randomly selected to participate in the Utah Colleges Exit Poll as they left the polling place where they cast their votes. The random sampling used in the exit poll produces a representative sample of Utah voters. Some voters were asked to participate in the regular exit poll while others were asked to give us their email addresses and participate in future Utah Voter Polls over the Internet. Thus, unlike many Internet-based surveys, the Utah Voter poll is based on a probability sample of Utah voters and is *not* a convenience sample. More information on the Utah Voter Poll can be found at: <http://utahvoterpoll.org>.

Survey Field Dates:

January 31 to February 9, 2006

Sample Size and Margin of Error:

The sample size for each question is listed above. We have data on at least one question from 299 respondents and completed surveys from 266 respondents. The margin of error for a simple random sample with a sample size of 299 is about + or - 5.7 %. For a slightly smaller sample size (266) this would be about 6%. The Utah Voter Poll is drawn from the KBYU/Utah Colleges Exit Poll which has a more complicated sample design and a “design effect” multiplier that will make the margin of error slightly higher.

Response Rate:

The response rate for the Utah Voter Poll was 26% (see calculations below). Potential respondents were sent three invitations to participate, spaced a few days apart over the survey field period. Our decision to send three invitations follows standard practices for internet surveys seeking to maximize response rates with minimal field time and disruption to potential respondents. Our 26% response rate is slightly higher than we expected from our inquiries with other web survey firms and given the length of the survey.

Response rate calculation:

Number of Valid emails: 1140

Number of Responses: 299

Response rate: $299/1140 = 0.26$

Weighting:

The raw data were statistically adjusted using a technique called “rim weighting” to correct for potential nonresponse error and potential coverage error. Nonresponse error would occur if the nonrespondents to this survey from our sampling pool (the email addresses collected on Election Day 2004) differed significantly from our actual respondents on their responses to the survey items. Coverage error would occur if the group that opted into the Utah Voter Poll panel on Election Day differed significantly from the group that we are really trying to survey and draw inferences about (all Utah Voters). It is impossible to be absolutely certain about the existence of nonresponse and coverage error, and weighting uses what we know about nonresponse and coverage to minimize the chance of nonresponse error and coverage error.



Utah has very high computer ownership and internet access rates among the general population. Because voter turnout is associated with higher levels of education and income, the computer ownership and internet access rates among voters are likely to be even higher than the general population. Still, internet surveys will tend to overrepresent people with higher incomes, higher levels of education, younger people, and men. This tendency is true among the Utah Voter Poll panel as a whole as well as among the respondents to this survey. Our weighting procedure takes the distributions for age, education, income, gender, and party identification from the 2004 Utah Colleges Exit Poll and uses them to statistically adjust the data so that respondents belonging to overrepresented groups are given less weight in the analysis and those in underrepresented groups are given more weight.

Rim weighting is when the weights are applied iteratively, one variable at a time, until the distributions for all of the variables of interest closely reflect their targets. The data were weighted by education, age, income, gender, and partisan identification. When the weights are applied, the categories for education, age, income, gender, and party identification are generally within one percentage point of their actual values on the exit poll. We weighted by party identification because the topic of this survey is politics and party identification is such a consistent predictor of political attitudes and behavior. However, the distribution of partisan identification in the unweighted data is not dramatically different from the distribution in the weighted data.

Contact Information

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