

Louisiana Statewide Poll

Gubernatorial Election August 2023

Sponsored by WWL-TV, WBRZ, KTBS-TV, KATC,
The Times-Picayune/The Advocate, Urban League of Louisiana
and the Public Affairs Research Council



Survey information

- Survey was conducted August 14-19, 2023 under the direction of Ronald A. Faucheux, Ph.D., Faucheux Strategies, LLC.
- Faucheux Strategies is nonpartisan and based in Louisiana. It is not working for any gubernatorial candidate in this election, nor any PAC that's affiliated with a gubernatorial candidate. In addition, it has not worked for any of the current gubernatorial candidates in the past.
- Survey based on a representative statewide sample of 800 completed interviews with likely voters in Louisiana.
- Interviews conducted by live, professionally trained telephone interviewers via cell phones (82%) and landlines (18%).
- Margin of error for full sample: +/- 3.46%.
- Because of rounding, some of the data columns do not add up to 100%.
- Racial composition of sample: 30% African American, 64% white, 6% other.

Overview

- In this poll, Republican **Jeff Landry** is running first (36%), Democrat **Shawn Wilson** is second (26%) and independent **Hunter Lundy** is third (7%). The rest of the candidates poll between 2% and 6% of the vote.
- Landry is now best positioned to win. His personal rating is net positive: 50% favorable, 28% unfavorable.
- While there is still time to alter the election's dynamics, the window of opportunity is closing quickly on the five candidates in single-digits.
- Outside of Landry, the **other candidates remain largely unknown** statewide. While only 22% **don't know enough** about Landry to rate him, between 67% and 83% **don't know enough** about the other candidates to rate them; their low recognition is limiting their ability to grow their support. Personal campaigning, media messaging and TV ads from the lesser-known candidates, and their friendly PACs, have so far failed to break through to voters.
- For a candidate now running in single-digits to emerge as a serious center-right alternative to Landry, that candidate needs to immediately sharpen his or her messages, lay out a clear choice for voters and mount a full-scale attack campaign to increase Landry's negatives. To open such a path, single-digit contenders may need to reassess their candidacies and consider uniting around one candidate. It would not be easy to make this happen.
- To show how the election is **polarized by party**:
 - Landry dominates Republican support; he gets 63%, while others range between only 1% and 9%.
 - Wilson dominates Democratic support; he gets 60%, while others range between only 1% and 13%.
 - Landry also wins independents with 30%. Lundy is second with 18% and the rest range between 3% and 10%.

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Overview continued

- Wilson is currently polling 54% of Black voters in the primary, a level of support he has the potential to increase. Landry runs second among Black voters with 14% (which is higher than many would have expected) and Lundy runs third with 6%. The others receive a total of 6%, with 18% undecided. More Blacks are now undecided than are Whites, 18% vs. 10%.
 - Example: If Wilson can grow his African American support from 54% to 72% in the primary, which is possible, and hold the 12% of White votes he now receives, he'd increase his Election Day strength to 30% or more, depending upon voter turnout.
 - Note that Wilson now polls more votes in the primary (26%) than his total **positive recognition** (17%). Wilson is greatly helped in the primary by being the only major candidate with the Democratic label.
 - Lundy may have growth potential among **independents**, those voters who are not affiliated with either major party. More independents are undecided (22%) than Republicans (9%) or Democrats (13%).
- **Hypothetical runoff:** Landry now beats Wilson by 18 points in a runoff, 54-36. Although Wilson has more room to grow than does Landry, Landry doesn't need to grow his current runoff support to win, assuming he can hold and turn out the 54% he now receives. If Wilson can win 90% of Black voters in the runoff, which means he'd have to cut Landry's 20% Black support in half, and win all undecided Black voters, he'd rise to about 43% of the total vote. To get closer to 50%, Wilson would need to maximize African American turnout and expand the 20% of White support he's now polling.
- **On issues:**
 - The top **first-choice issue picks** are crime, education, insurance rates and the economy/jobs.
 - To **reduce crime**, most voters would rather get tough and keep criminals in prison longer than focus on systemic issues (51% to 41%).

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Overview continued

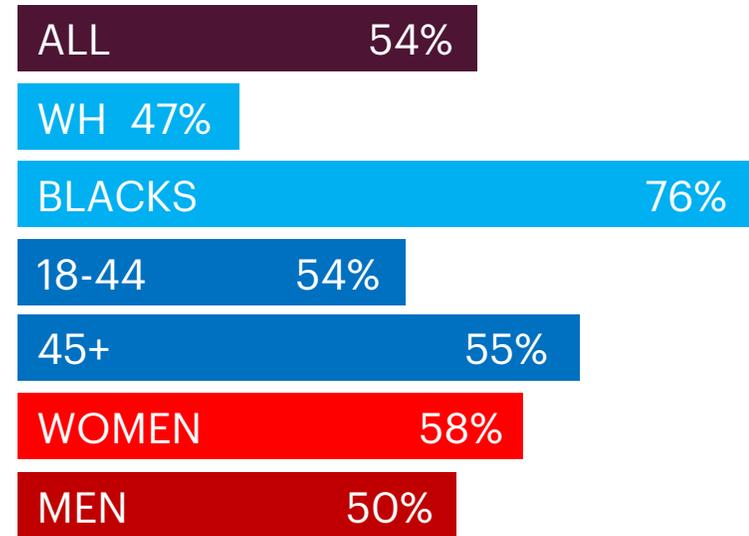
- To **grow the state's economy**, most voters want to improve the business climate by cutting taxes and red tape (41%). Substantial numbers also want to improve the state's quality of life to attract more people (33%) and develop a skilled work force (20%).
- More voters favor changing Louisiana law to **expand the right to an abortion** than keeping the law as it now is (50%-42%).
- **Joe Biden's** approval rating in Louisiana is 36%, which is 4 points below the vote he received in the state in the last presidential election (40%).
- **Donald Trump's** favorable rating in Louisiana is 50%, which is about 9 points below the vote he received in the state in 2020 (59%).
- Gov. **John Bel Edwards** maintains the support of a majority of voters. His job approval rating is 54%.

Job approval ratings

Question: Of the following public officials and organizations in Louisiana, please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the job they're doing-- if you haven't heard of them, just say so....

	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE
President Joe Biden	36%	58%
Gov. John Bel Edwards	54%	36%
Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser	41%	18%
Louisiana State Legislature	36%	35%

Job approval ratings of Gov. John Bel Edwards by demographic groups



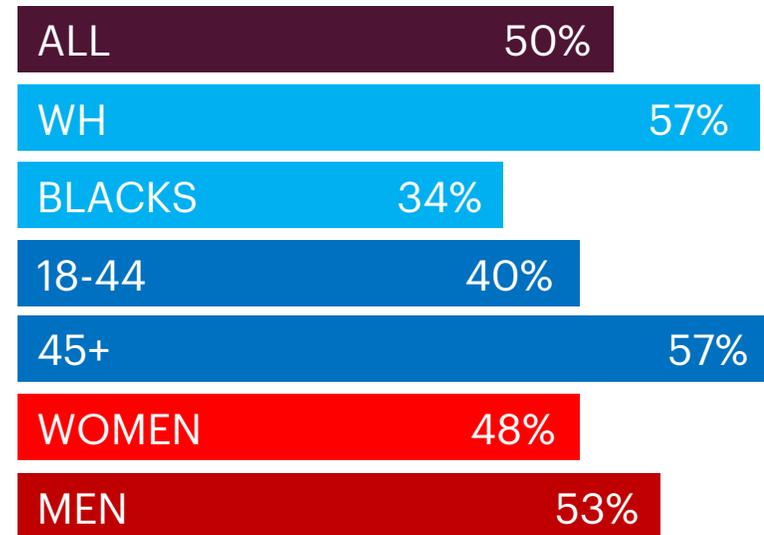
- In the 2020 presidential election, Biden received 40% of the vote in Louisiana. His job approval rating is now 4 points below, at 36%. Biden's rating is 72% among Democrats, 32% among independents and 3% among Republicans.
- Edwards' approval is 32% among Republicans, 82% among Democrats and 48% among independents.
- Nungesser 's approval is 52% among Republicans, 34% among Democrats and 32% among independents.
- The Legislature's approval is 44% among Republicans, 30% among Democrats and 28% among independents.

Favorability ratings

Question: For each of the following people, please say whether you have a favorable, or unfavorable opinion of them if you have never heard of them, just say so --

	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE
Jeff Landry	50%	28%
Shawn Wilson	17%	12%
John Schroder	20%	14%
Stephen Waguespack	19%	14%
Sharon Hewitt	15%	11%
Hunter Lundy	14%	11%
Richard Nelson	9%	8%
Donald Trump	50%	44%

Favorable ratings of **Jeff Landry** by demographic groups



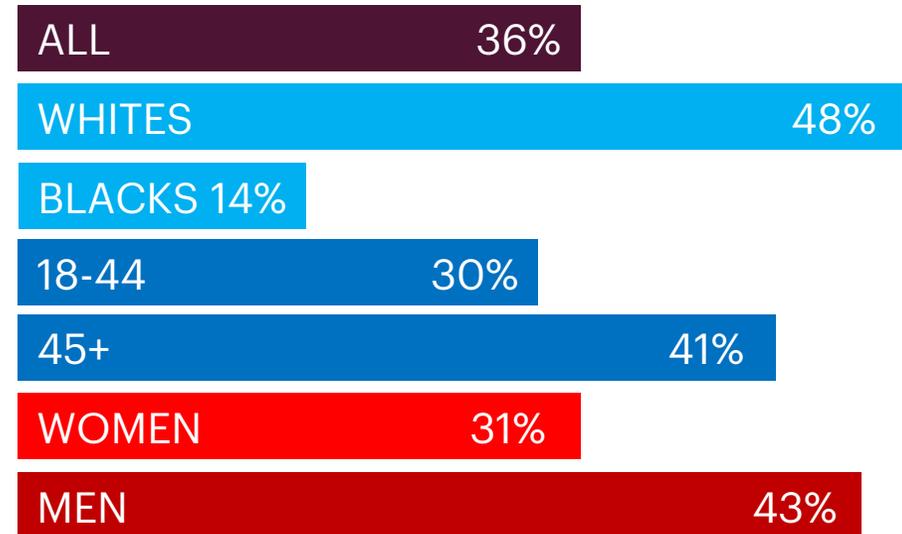
- Outside of Landry, the rest of the candidates remain largely unknown statewide.
- Percentage of voters who **know enough** about each candidate to rate him or her: Landry 78%, Schroder 34%, Waguespack 33%, Wilson 29%, Hewitt 26%, Lundy 25%, Nelson 17%.
- Percentage of voters who **don't know enough** about each candidates to rate him or her: Landry 22%, Schroder 66%, Waguespack 67%, Wilson 71%, Hewitt 74%, Lundy 75%, Nelson 83%.
- **Landry** is 71% favorable among Republicans, 27% Democrats and 48% independents.
- **Wilson** is 8% favorable among Republicans, 29% Democrats and 9% independents.

Gubernatorial open primary: Trial heat

Question: If the election for governor of Louisiana was held today, would you most likely vote for which ONE of the following candidates (**ROTATE NAMES**)....

Jeff Landry (R)	36%
Shawn Wilson (D)	26%
Hunter Lundy (I)	7%
Stephen Waguespack (R)	6%
John Schroder (R)	4%
Sharon Hewitt (R)	3%
Richard Nelson (R)	2%
Somebody else	2%
Don't know	14%

Landry's vote by demographics



- Republican Landry is first, Democrat Wilson is second and independent Lundy is third.
- **Republicans** are voting 63% for Landry, 9% for Waguespack, 6% for Schroder, 5% for Hewitt, 3% for Lundy, 2% for Nelson and 1% for Wilson; 9% are undecided.
- **Democrats** are voting 60% for Wilson, 13% for Landry, 6% for Lundy, 4% for Waguespack, 2% for Schroder, 1% for Hewitt and 1% for Nelson; 13% are undecided.
- **Independents** are voting 30% for Landry, 18% for Lundy, 10% for Wilson, 5% for Hewitt, 4% for Schroder, 4% for Nelson and 3% for Waguespack; 22% are undecided.
- Of those who picked "somebody else," all names received less than 1%.

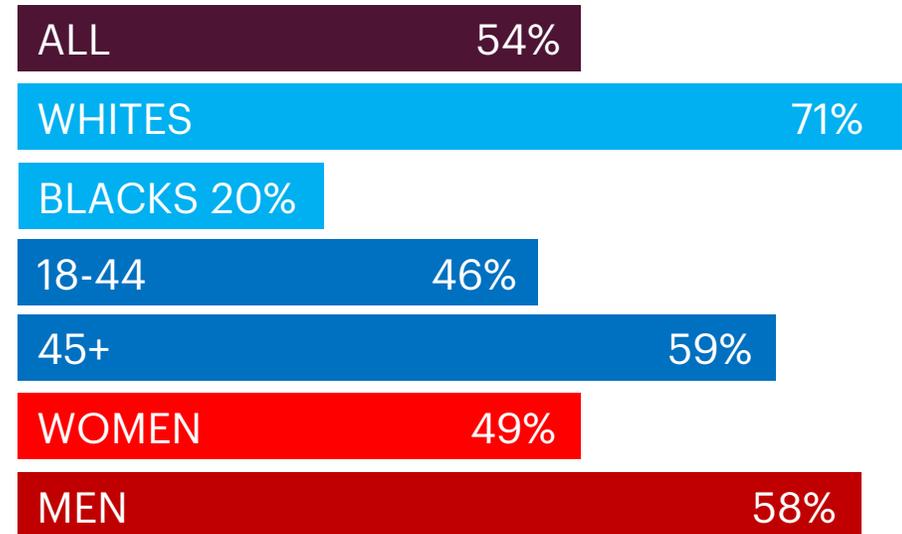
Gubernatorial election: Runoff

Question: If the two candidates in the runoff for governor were (**ROTATE**) Shawn Wilson, a Democrat, and Jeff Landry, a Republican, which one would you likely vote for?

Jeff Landry (R)	54%
Shawn Wilson (D)	36%
Don't know:	10%

- Republican **Landry** posts an 18-point lead over Democrat **Wilson** in a hypothetical runoff. Landry's strongest constituencies are Republicans, voters 45 and older, men and White voters.
- **Republicans** are voting 90% for Landry and 6% for Wilson.
- **Democrats** are voting 73% for Wilson and 16% for Landry.
- **Independents** are voting 59% for Landry and 25% for Wilson.
- In a Landry vs. Wilson runoff, expect Wilson to expand his **Black voter support** beyond the 71% he's now polling; 9% of Black voters are undecided and 20% now say they'd vote for Landry in a runoff (which is more than Republicans usually get in hotly contested partisan runoffs). Democrats will surely focus on this area of potential growth.
- The major demographic groups in which Landry receives less than 50% are Blacks (20%), 18-44-year-olds (46%), women (49%) and college graduates (43%).
- 16% of independents, 11% of Democrats and 4% of Republicans are undecided in the hypothetical runoff. As such, Wilson has a bit more room for growth than Landry—but as long as Landry holds a majority of the vote, he wouldn't need to grow to win.

Landry's vote by demographics



Louisiana: Most important problems

Question: Which ONE of the following is the most important problem facing Louisiana (**ROTATE**)....

Follow-up: Which ONE of the following is the second important problem facing Louisiana (**ROTATE**).....

	Most important	Second most important	Combined First + Second
Too much crime and violence	18%	15%	33%
Low quality of education	16%	14%	30%
High insurance rates	12%	14%	26%
Not enough economic growth and jobs	11%	16%	27%
Bad roads and unsafe bridges	8%	12%	20%
Too much poverty	6%	6%	12%
High state and local taxes	4%	8%	12%
Lack of racial equality	3%	6%	9%
Lack of quality/affordable health care options	2%	4%	6%
Harmful risks to the environment	1%	4%	5%
All of them (volunteered)	18%	*	18%
None of them (volunteered)	*	1%	1%
Don't know (volunteered)	1%	1%	2%

- The top four **first-choice** issue picks are crime, education, insurance rates and the economy/jobs.
- **Economy/jobs** ranks fourth among first-choice picks, but rises to first among second-choice picks.
- The top four issue picks based on **combined first and second choices** are crime, education, the economy/jobs and insurance rates.
- Top two and top three choices are fairly closely bunched together.
- Note that nearly one-in-five voters volunteered "**all of them**" as their first choice issue; this indicates widespread discontent.
- Top first-choice issues for **White voters** are crime (18%), education (16%), insurance rates (14%).
- Top first-choice issues for **Black voters**

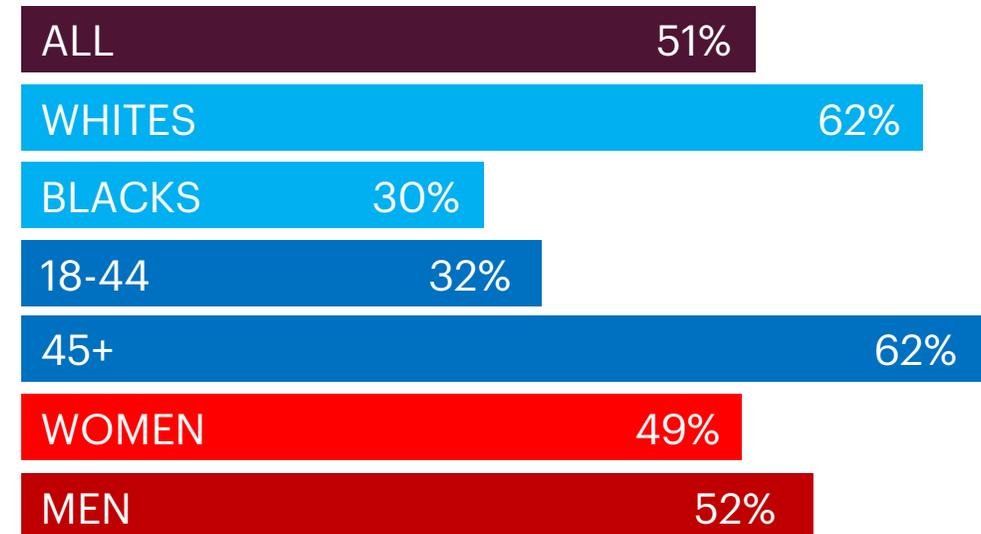
The combined column does not add up to 100 because it is based on results from two separate questions. The most important and the second most important numbers don't always exactly add up based on rounding.

Reducing crime

Question: Which ONE of following comes closest to your opinion on reducing crime--**(ROTATE)** we need to get tough on crime and put criminals behind bars longer -- or, we need to emphasize systemic issues of race, poverty and unemployment instead of more incarceration.

Get tough on crime and put criminals behind bars longer	51%
Emphasize systemic issues of race, poverty and unemployment instead of more incarceration	41%
Both (volunteered)	4%
Neither (volunteered)	3%
Don't know (volunteered)	3%

Those who answered **get tough on crime** by demographics



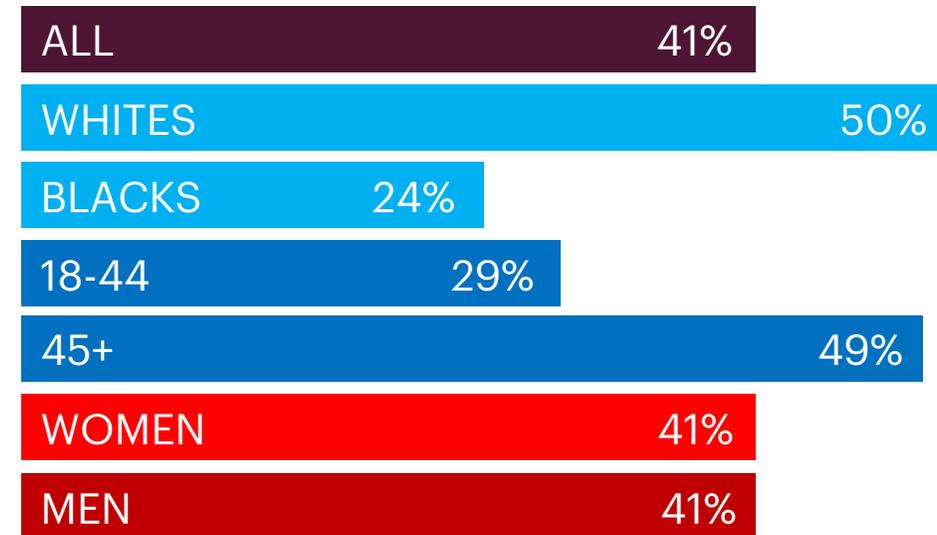
- 74% of Republicans, 23% of Democrats and 58% of independents select **get tough on crime**.
- 18% of Republicans, 69% of Democrats and 28% of independents select **emphasize systemic issues**.
- Based on the previous question ("Louisiana's most important problems"), Black voters and White voters both pick crime as the top issue. But when solutions are probed in this question, there is a 32-point **racial divide**.
- There is also a wide **generational divide** (30 points) on this issue.

Growing Louisiana's economy

Question: Which ONE of the following comes closest to your opinion on growing Louisiana's economy--**(ROTATE)** we need to improve the state's business climate by cutting taxes and government red tape--or--we need to develop a skilled work force--or--we need to improve the quality of life in our state so more people want to move here?

Improve business climate; cut taxes, red tape	41%
Improve quality of life in state	33%
Develop a skilled work force	20%
All (volunteered)	5%
None (volunteered)	1%
Don't know (volunteered)	1%

Those who answered **improve business climate**; cut taxes, red tape by demographic groups



- 61% of Republicans, 27% of Democrats and 30% of independents say **improve business climate; cut taxes and red tape**
- 20% of Republicans, 47% of Democrats and 35% of independents say **improve quality of life**
- 14% of Republicans, 24% of Democrats and 27% of independents say **develop a skilled work force**
- Based on these numbers, a statewide campaign platform that includes **all three proposals** would be most effective

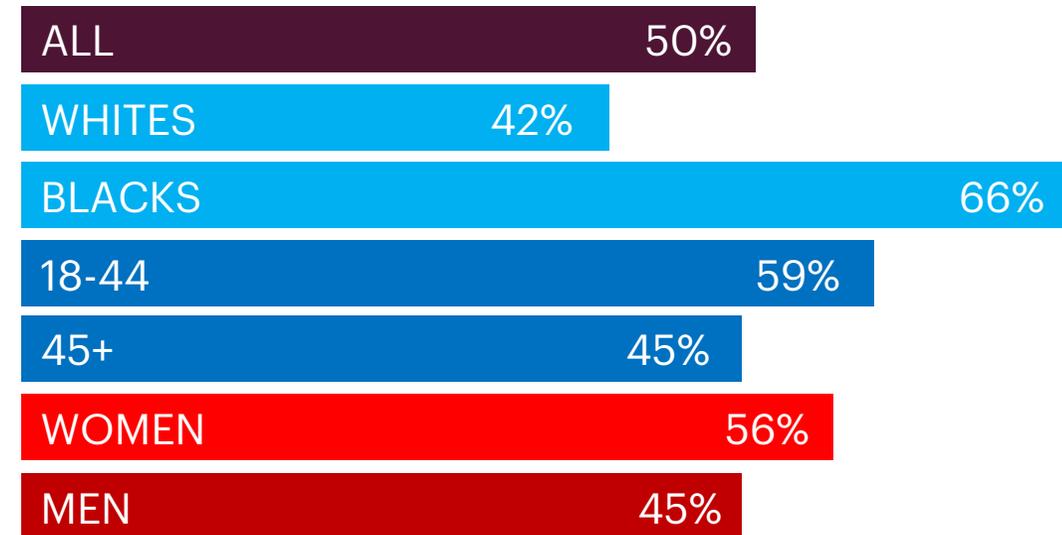
Louisiana's abortion law

Question: Louisiana law bans all abortions, except when the mother's life is in danger. Would you rather keep the law AS IS, or would you rather see it changed to expand a woman's right to an abortion?

Keep law as is	42%
Change law to expand right to abortion	50%
Don't know (volunteered)	8%

- 69% of Republicans, 16% of Democrats and 36% of independents say **keep law as is**.
- 21% of Republicans, 79% of Democrats and 55% of independents say **change law to expand right to abortion**.
- On this issue, there are **substantial divides** on race (24 points), generation (14 points) and gender (11 points).

Those who answered change law to **expand right to abortion** by demographics



Gov. Edwards' death row inmate proposal

Question: Governor John Bel Edwards has proposed removing most state inmates convicted of capital crimes from death row. Are you for or against this proposal?

For proposal 41%
Against proposal 51%
Don't know (volunteered) 8%

- 73% of Republicans, 27% of Democrats and 52% of independents are **against** the proposal
- 20% of Republicans, 64% of Democrats and 40% of independents are **for** the proposal
- There is a wide **racial divide** on this question, at 29 points.

Those who answered that they are **against** Gov. Edwards' death row inmate proposal

