



September 27, 2010

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## **I. Survey Methodology**

The Elon University Poll is conducted using a stratified random sample of households with telephones and wireless telephone numbers in the population of interest – in this case, citizens in North Carolina. The sample of telephone numbers for the survey is obtained from Survey Sampling International, LLC. Methodological information is also available at: <http://www.elon.edu/e-web/elonpoll/methodology.xhtml>.

### ***Selection of Households***

To equalize the probability of telephone selection, sample telephone numbers are systematically stratified according to subpopulation strata (e.g., a zip code, a county, a state, etc.), which yields a sample from telephone exchanges in proportion to each exchange's share of telephone households in the population of interest. Estimates of telephone households in the population of interest are generally obtained from several databases. Samples of household telephone numbers are distributed across all eligible blocks of numbers in proportion to the density of listed households assigned in the population of interest according to a specified subpopulation stratum. Upon determining the projected (or preferred) sample size, a sampling interval is calculated by summing the number of listed residential numbers in each eligible block within the population of interest and dividing that sum by the number of sampling points assigned to the population. From a random start between zero and the sampling interval, blocks are systematically selected in proportion to the density of listed household "working blocks." A *block* (also known as a *bank*) is a set of contiguous numbers identified by the first two digits of the last four digits of a telephone number. A working block contains three or more working telephone numbers. Exchanges are assigned to a population on the basis of all eligible blocks in proportion to the density of working telephone households. Once each population's proportion of telephone households is determined, then a sampling interval, based on that proportion, is calculated and specific exchanges and numbers are randomly selected. The methodology for the wireless component of this study starts with the determining which area code-exchange combinations in North Carolina are included in the wireless or shared Telcordia types. Similar to the process for selecting household telephone numbers, wireless numbers involve a multi-step process in which blocks of numbers are determined for each area code-exchange combination in the Telcordia types. From a random start within the first sampling interval, a systematic  $n$ th selection of each block of numbers is performed and a two-digit random number between 00 and 99 is appended to each selected  $n$ th block stem. The intent is to provide a stratification that will yield a sample that is representative both geographically and by large and small carrier. From these, a random sample is generated. Because exchanges and numbers are randomly selected by the computer, unlisted as well as listed household telephone numbers are included in the sample. Thus, the sample of telephone numbers generated for the population of interest constitutes a random sample of telephone households and wireless numbers of the population.

### ***Procedures Used for Conducting the Poll***

The survey was conducted Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, through Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, of 2010. During this time calls were made from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The Elon University Poll uses CATI system software (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) in the administration of surveys. For each working telephone number in the sample, several attempts were made to reach each number. Only individuals 18 years or older were interviewed; those reached at business or work numbers were not interviewed. For each number reached, one adult is generally selected based on whether s/he is the oldest or youngest adult. Interviews, which are conducted by live interviewers, are completed with adults from the target population as specified. Interviews for this survey were completed with 584 adults from North Carolina. For a sample size of 584, there is a 95 percent probability that our survey results are within plus or minus 4.1 percentage points (the margin of sampling error) of the actual population distribution for any given question. For sub-samples (a subgroup of the overall sample), the margin of error is higher depending on the size of the subsample. When we use a subsample, we identify these results as being from a subsample and provide the total number of respondents and margin of error for that subsample. In reporting our results, we note any use of a subsample where applicable. Because our surveys are based on probability sampling, there are a variety of factors that prevent these results from being perfect, complete depictions of the population; the foremost example is that of margin of sampling error (as noted above). With all probability samples, there are theoretical and practical difficulties estimating population characteristics (or parameters). Thus, while efforts are made to reduce or lessen such threats, sampling error as well as other sources of error – while not all inclusive, examples of other error effects are non-response rates, question order effects, question wording effects, etc. – are present in surveys derived from probability samples.

### ***Questions and Question Order***

The Elon University Poll provides the questions as worded and the order in which these questions are administered (to respondents). Conspicuous in reviewing some questions is the “bracketed” information. Information contained within brackets ( [ ] ) denotes response options as provided in the question; this bracketed information is rotated randomly to ensure that respondents do not receive a set order of response options presented to them, which also maintains question construction integrity by avoiding respondent acquiescence based on question composition. Some questions used a probe maneuver to determine a respondent’s intensity of perspective. Probe techniques used in this questionnaire mainly consist of asking a respondent if their response is more intense than initially provided. For example, upon indicating whether s/he is satisfied or dissatisfied, we asked the respondent “would you say you are very ‘satisfied’/‘dissatisfied’”. This technique is employed in some questions as opposed to specifying the full range of choices in the question. Though specifying the full range of options in questions is a commonly accepted practice in survey research, we sometimes prefer that the respondent determine whether their perspective is stronger or more intense for which the probe technique is used. Another method for acquiring information from respondents is to ask an “open-ended” question. The open-ended question is a question for which no response options are provided, i.e., it is entirely up to the respondent to provide the response information.

### ***The Elon University Poll***

The Elon University Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Center for Public Opinion Polling (Hunter Bacot, Director & Mileah Kromer, Assistant Director), which is a constituent part of the Institute for Politics and Public Affairs (George Taylor, Director); both these organizations are housed in the department of political science at Elon University. These academic units are part of Elon College, the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University. The Elon University administration, led by Dr. Leo Lambert, President of the university, fully support the Elon University Poll as part of its service commitment to state, regional, and national constituents. Dr. Hunter Bacot, a professor in the department of political science, directs the Elon University

Poll. Elon University students administer the survey as part of the University’s commitment to experiential learning where “students learn through doing.”

## II. Survey Instrument and Percent Distributions by Question

Interviews were completed with 584 adults from households in the North Carolina. For a sample size of 584, there is a 95 percent probability that our survey results are within plus or minus 4.1 percentage points (the margin of sampling error) of the actual population distribution for any given question. Due to rounding, column totals may not equal 100 percent as indicated. Data are weighted to reflect the adult population in terms of gender, age, and race.

<b>About the Codes appearing in Questions and Responses</b>	
<b>Response Options not offered</b>	Response options are <u>not</u> offered to the person taking the survey (respondent), but are included in the question as asked (and usually denoted by brackets, [ ]). Response options are generally offered only for demographic questions (background characteristic, e.g., age, education, income, etc.).
<b>v = volunteered response</b>	Respondents volunteer response option. As response options are <u>not</u> offered to those taking the survey, some respondents offer or volunteer response options. Though not all volunteered options can be anticipated, the more common options are noted.
<b>p = probed response</b>	Respondents self-place in this option or category. A probe maneuver is used in questions to allow the respondent to indicate whether her/his response is more intense than initially provided for in the choices appearing in the question. For example, on probe questions the interviewer, upon a respondent indicating that she/he is satisfied (or dissatisfied), is instructed to ask him/her “Would you say you are “very satisfied”?”

## Frequency Table

First, what do you think is the most important issue facing the state of North Carolina?  
(open ended)

	April 2010	September 2010
ECONOMY	56.4	60.0
EDUCATION	10.9	13.0
HEALTH CARE	8.5	3.0
TAXES	5.6	3.4
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	1.9	2.1
CRIME & DRUGS	1.6	---
Total (N=584; +/-4.1%)	N=607; +/-4.1%	N=584; +/-4.1%

Note: issues mentioned less than 1 percent are not listed, or are denoted by dashes (--).

Next, I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about offshore oil drilling. As you are likely aware, drilling for oil is going to be open to areas that include the North Carolina Coast . . . Just so that we are clear, when talking about "offshore drilling" we are talking about the federal government leasing the rights to explore, develop, and produce oil and gas in waters off the U.S. coast. So, with this in mind, do you [support or oppose] offshore drilling for oil and gas off the coast of North Carolina?

	March 2009	April 2010	September 2010
STRONGLY OPPOSE (p)	13.6	12.7	26.8
OPPOSE	15.2	17.4	13.2
SUPPORT	35.3	36.4	29.9
STRONGLY SUPPORT (p)	30.8	26.5	21.4
DON T KNOW (v)	4.6	6.5	8.7
REFUSED (v)	0.5	0.5	0.0
Total	100.0 N=758; +/-3.6%	100.0 N=607; +/-4.1%	100.0 (N=584; +/-4.1%)

Did the Gulf oil spill [not affect, or affect] your views about drilling for oil off the North Carolina coast?

	Percent
NO, DID NOT AFFECT	43.8
YES, DID AFFECT	49.4
NEITHER (v)	3.3
DON T KNOW (v)	3.5
REFUSED (v)	0.1
Total (N=584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

Now, I'd like to change topics again, and ask you about the national economy . . . Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way President Obama is handling the economy?

		Percent
	STRONGLY DISAPPROVE (p)	33.1
	DISAPPROVE	17.4
	APPROVE	30.8
	STRONGLY APPROVE (p)	13.5
	DON T KNOW (v)	5.1
	REFUSED (v)	0.2
	Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

Since taking office, have President Obama's economic policies made economic conditions [worse or better,] or have these not had an effect yet?

		Percent
	WORSE	36.6
	NOT HAD AN EFFECT YET	33.5
	BETTER	27.2
	DON T KNOW (v)	2.6
	REFUSED (v)	0.1
	Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

Do you think [the Republican party or the Democratic party] is doing a better job of managing the national economy?

		Percent
	DEMOCRATIC PARTY	33.1
	REPUBLICAN PARTY	23.8
	NOT DECIDED/NOT SURE AT THIS TIME (v)	9.5
	NEITHER PARTY (v)	29.1
	DON T KNOW (v)	4.3
	REFUSED (v)	0.2
	Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

Now, I'd like to ask you about some proposals being considered in Washington . . . As you are likely aware, there has been some discussion about the proposal to provide additional funds for the stimulus package. . . Do you [support or oppose] the addition of these funds?

		Percent
	STRONGLY OPPOSE (p)	26.4
	OPPOSE	22.2
	SUPPORT	26.6
	STRONGLY SUPPORT (p)	11.6
	DON T KNOW (v)	12.9
	REFUSED (v)	0.3

	Percent
STRONGLY OPPOSE (p)	26.4
OPPOSE	22.2
SUPPORT	26.6
STRONGLY SUPPORT (p)	11.6
DON T KNOW (v)	12.9
REFUSED (v)	0.3
Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

**Do you think funds provided by the federal government through a stimulus package will have a [positive or negative] effect on the United States economy?**

	Percent
EXTREMELY NEGATIVE (p)	16.5
NEGATIVE	24.5
POSITIVE	35.3
EXTREMELY POSITIVE (p)	10.1
NEITHER NEGATIVELY OR POSITIVELY (v)	5.0
DON T KNOW (v)	8.2
REFUSED (v)	0.3
Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

**Do you think the assistance the federal government proposes for transportation infrastructure will have a [positive or negative] effect on the United States economy?**

	Percent
EXTREMELY NEGATIVE	3.8
NEGATIVE	16.3
POSITIVE	46.4
EXTREMELY POSITIVE	12.9
NEITHER NEGATIVELY OR POSITIVELY	6.3
DON T KNOW	14.2
REFUSED	0.1
Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

**Now, I'd like to ask you about the economy and its affect on you personally. . . . By the end of this year, do you expect your personal financial situation [to get better, stay about the same, or get worse?]**

	Percent
GET WORSE	23.1
STAY ABOUT THE SAME	47.7
GET BETTER	26.5
DON T KNOW (v)	2.7
Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

**Has the downturn in the economy affected your own financial situation?**

	Percent
NO	29.3
YES	68.9
DON T KNOW (v)	1.8
Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about the economy in North Carolina. . . Do you expect the state economy [to get better, stay about the same, or get worse] by the end of this year?

	Percent
GET WORSE	30.1
STAY ABOUT THE SAME	42.9
GET BETTER	25.1
DON T KNOW (v)	1.9
Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

Thinking about the state economy overall, do you think that . . . [it has started to improve, that the worst is yet to come, or that it has leveled-off but has not started to improve yet?]

	Percent
THE WORST IS YET TO COME FOR THE ECONOMY	27.0
THE ECONOMY HAS LEVELED-OFF, BUT HAS NOT STARTED TO IMPROVE	48.5
THE ECONOMY HAS STARTED TO IMPROVE	20.6
DON T KNOW OR NOT SURE (v)	3.9
Total (N-584; +/-4.1%)	100.0

**Changing topics to the 'Tea Party'. . . I'd like to know if you are [very familiar, somewhat familiar, or not at all familiar] with the "Tea Party"?**

	February 2010	September 2010*
NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR	28.0	18.9
SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	48.8	54.5
VERY FAMILIAR	17.6	22.2
HEARD OF IT BUT NOT VERY FAMILIAR WITH IT (v)	2.2	2.0
DON T KNOW (v)	3.4	2.0
REFUSED (v)	0.0	0.3
Total	100.0 508; +/-=4.4%	100.0 N-584; +/-4.1%

*\*respondents answering "not at all familiar," "don't know," or "refused" to the above question (for the current survey only), skip the following questions about the Tea Party; these remaining questions are based on a subsample of respondents (N= 460; +/-4.7%).*

**Do you [support or oppose] the Tea Party's political message, or do you not know enough about their message to comment on it?**

	Percent
STRONGLY OPPOSE (p)	18.2
OPPOSE	13.0
SUPPORT	21.8
STRONGLY SUPPORT (p)	13.1
DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT IT	21.7
DON T KNOW (v)	12.3
Total (N= 460; +/-4.7%)	100.0

*This question was not asked in the February 2010 survey.*

**Regardless of your knowledge of the Tea Party . . . Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] view of the Tea Party movement?**

	Percent
STRONGLY UNFAVORABLE (p)	19.8
UNFAVORABLE	20.6
FAVORABLE	31.0
STRONGLY FAVORABLE (p)	14.5
DON T KNOW (v)	13.9
REFUSED (v)	0.2
Total N= 460; +/-4.7%	100.0

*\*though this question was asked in the February 2010 survey, caution is warranted in comparing these current results to those February results; the February 2010 results are based on responses from all survey participants, while the current results are limited only to those respondents indicating at least a minimal familiarity with the Tea Party (in the first question).*

**Do you [agree or disagree] with the Tea Party's political message, or do you not know enough about their message to comment on it?**

		Percent
	STRONGLY DISAGREE (p)	19.2
	DISAGREE	13.8
	AGREE	23.7
	STRONGLY AGREE (p)	11.7
	DON T KNOW ENOUGH TO COMMENT	25.5
	DON T KNOW (v)	5.4
	REFUSED (v)	0.8
	Total N= 460; +/-4.7%	100.0

*\*though this question was asked in the February 2010 survey, caution is warranted in comparing these current results to those February results; the February 2010 results are based on responses from all survey participants, while the current results are limited only to those respondents indicating at least a minimal familiarity with the Tea Party (in the first question).*